



In-depth expert interviews

THE CRIMEAN TATAR NATIONAL NARRATIVE



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- Ukraine"

ONE INTEGRAL NATIONAL NARRATIVE IS COMMON AMONG CRIMEAN TATARS; HOWEVER, THREE DIFFERENT SUBNARRATIVES ARE VERSIONS OF THE MAIN ONE, WHICH DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM EACH OTHER

There is one coherent history of the Crimean Tatar nation and its experiences over a long period. However, it is notable that many informants and opinion leaders do not address significant issues specific to national narratives. Little emphasis is placed on internal problems or understanding different historical periods. It seems that, under conditions of occupation and uncertainty about the future, uncertainty about the past also emerges. However, there are several intellectual traditions that address these issues. They differ very little in their achievements, and both consolidation around a common vision and further separation with the formation of several separate narratives of national Crimean Tatar identity are open to them. We labeled informants who did not express one of these separate views as neutral. The rest were divided into three sub-narratives, the features of which were described at the end of each unit.

- The **"Traditional" subnarrative** leans heavily on the tragic chapters of Crimean Tatar history. It highlights the contrast between I. Gasprinsky's secular heritage and that of individual religious groups. The main emphasis is on Crimean Tatars independently deciding their fate in partnership with Ukraine. This subnarrative largely emerged in the 1990s in Crimea.
- The **"Modern" Ukrainian-oriented sub-narrative** emphasizes the majestic and successful episodes in Crimean Tatar history. It draws attention to the few traitors who still exist among these people. The modernization of the Crimean Tatar project is considered purely in the context of the modernization of the Ukrainian project. This narrative has been shaped primarily by individuals raised in Kyiv.
- The **"Islamic" subnarrative** sees Islam as the basis for the formation and prosperity of the Crimean Tatar people. It recognizes a division between religious and non-religious representatives of the people. This structure is evident among traditional religious figures and representatives of *Hizb ut-Tahrir*.

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE

A NATIONAL NARRATIVE CONSISTS OF FOUR CATEGORIES THAT FORM THE IDENTITY OF THE NATION'S REPRESENTATIVES. THE KEY CONFLICTS WITH WHICH IT DEALS, MOTIVATE THEM TO ACT AND DEVELOP.

1. IDENTITY

The method of determining who belongs to the nation and the criterion by which its representatives are distinguished from others.

2. CONFLICT

The main line of division that determines the nation`s fate and creates problems when it comes to building the future.

3. MYTHICAL PART

Narrative forms dealing with real or fictional historical periods of a nation`s formation, the trials it has had to endure, and other periods.

4. REGULATORY ORDER

Conclusions regarding the nation`s goals, the desired social and political order, and other aspects of the future.

The recruiting strategy focused on engaging informants with diverse professional and expert backgrounds who influence public discourse. The sample included 50 heads of civil society organizations, public figures, artists, teachers, scientists, government officials, deputies, business representatives, and military personnel from the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as journalists. A targeted sampling method with elements of the "snowball" method was used to select the initial informants, who were then asked to recommend others to include in the sample. The selection process began with an initial group of informants who referred the researcher to other potential informants within the target group. This approach yielded at least seven independent input points. We

selected representatives with the most polarized views, which we assessed based on their public statements. To avoid distortion and ensure the impartiality and representativeness of the research results, the following criteria were used to differentiate informants when selecting new ones:

- *Age distribution*: During the study, we focused on the age categories of 18-35 and 36-54 years because most active and influential figures are in these age groups. However, eight informants aged 55+ were also included.
- *Gender distribution*: 18 women were included in the sample.
- *Field of activity*: Each of the areas of activity was represented by quotas of 5 to 10 informants. These areas

included NGO leaders and public figures, artists, teachers and scientists, officials and deputies, business representatives, military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and journalists;

- *Distribution by place of residence*: Due to security restrictions for residents of Crimea, most of the informants currently live in mainland Ukraine (Kyiv and the western and southern macro-regions). However, the sample includes seven informants who left Crimea in recent years or still travel there, as well as at least two diaspora representatives from Turkey (who migrated in the 20th century), Uzbekistan, other Asian countries, the United States, and six European countries.

Conducting interviews. According to the guide.

Processing of interview results. In the transcripts, fragments that correspond to the components of the national narrative are singled out: identity, conflict, the mythical element, and regulatory procedures. In other words, the texts revealed differences between Crimean Tatars and other people, divisions among Crimean Tatars, and their ideas about historical events and the goals of their community.

In this study, the terms “myth” and “mythical” were not used to refer to fictional stories, but rather to describe

ways of narrating real or fictional events from the past that are characterized by a certain consistency of form.

To better understand the Crimean Tatars' views, we expanded the study's scope by adding **related categories**:

- *Image of Crimea*: visual and other symbolic representations that describe the experiences of the informants during their time in their homeland.
- *Case of annexation*: the experience of this event by the Crimean Tatars, which is embodied both in personal and collective stories as well as the understanding of the events that took place.

- *The image of the Crimea's future*: imaginary pictures of future events in the region.
- *Relations with Ukrainians*: past and present cases of interaction between the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian peoples, and conclusions drawn from them.
- *Relations with Russians*: past and present cases of interaction between the Crimean Tatar and Russian peoples, and the conclusions drawn from them.

General Rules

- The default interview is conducted in Ukrainian. However, taking into account the informant's specific circumstances, the interviewer may decide to conduct the interview in Crimean Tatar, English or Russian
- The informant was informed about the audio and video recording of the interview.

In-Depth Interview Script

Introduction: Hello! My name is (...), and I represent the analytical CSO Communication Analysis Team Ukraine (CAT-UA). We advise public authorities, particularly those responsible for humanitarian policy. We are currently conducting a series of expert interviews with Crimean Tatar scientists, media professionals, politicians, and opinion leaders. Our study focuses on the Crimean Tatar national narrative, which is important for understanding this people's unique cultural heritage and historical experience. This understanding contributes to strengthening national unity and enriching Ukraine's multicultural environment.

List of questions

1. What does Crimea mean to you? What associations and symbols come to mind when you think of Crimea?
2. What does it mean to be a Crimean Tatar? How do you identify as "your people"?
3. What is common between the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar peoples, and what distinguishes them? What about Russians and Crimean Tatars?
4. What makes you proud of your Crimean Tatar origins/roots?
5. Which historical events and epochs have most shaped the Crimean Tatars as they are? (Which historical figures or events come to your mind first?)
6. What are the biggest problems and achievements of the Crimean Tatars today?
7. What issues and views currently divide the Crimean Tatars? How do you think these dividing lines can be overcome?
8. In general, how do you envision the future of Crimea and the Crimean Tatars, and what steps should be taken to improve it? What steps should the Ukrainian state prioritize now regarding the Crimean Tatars?
9. Who or what stands in the way of a better future for the Crimean Tatars and their development as a nation?
10. Is it possible for Crimean Tatars to exist without a connection to Crimea? Where can they live while remaining true to themselves?
11. How has the Crimean Tatar people's self-awareness changed after the events of 2014 and 2022? Did these events benefit or harm the national consciousness?
12. What could adversely affect or even jeopardize the current close relationship between Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians?

IDENTITY

FIGHTERS LOYAL TO THEIR VALUES AND DEEPLY ROOTED IN CRIMEA, CRIMEAN TATARS CARRY THEIR HOME IN THEIR HEARTS, EVEN WHEN FORCED TO BE AWAY FROM IT. IT IS A CONNECTION PASSED THROUGH MEMORY, LANGUAGE AND TRADITION.

- UNBREAKABLE FIGHT

For Crimean Tatars, life means constant fighting *"... for your truth, for your freedom, and for your land."* Over the past three centuries, they have again and again been forced to be *"...ready to fight... for the right to have their history not fake, not spoiled..."* Their nation has been tempered by the experience of the national liberation movement. What sets them apart is that *"... in comparison with other peoples, this is peaceful resistance."* Despite what they have experienced and are experiencing now, they say, *"we have not lost ourselves... we have not lost our values..."*

- FIDELITY TO VALUES

A value code was formed over the centuries and embedded in every

generation, because it is *"... a measure of how you show your nation's worth."* It is important to carry the love for Crimea and *"...be guided by the principle of our leader Noman Chelebijkhan, who said that Crimea is a garden in which different flowers grow and that our task is to preserve this diversity."* Among the main inviolable values in each family are: *"...freedom, education, respect for women, love for the land",* and also **hospitality and dancing**, because *"...in any Crimean Tatar family you must be able to dance."* Other values include knowledge of history, respect for traditions, love for cuisine, education, etc.

- CRIMEA

Qırımli always have a connection with Crimea, and *"...when they were in*

deportation, and even those who are in the diaspora... they all very clearly understand who they are and feel their connection with Crimea." It is said that without this connection, Qırımli cannot exist because it is *"... the killing of the Crimean Tatar identity",* or that is impossible because *"...we will turn into diasporas, and the diasporas are not the people".*

- LANGUAGE

Qırımli recognize "their people" more by their accent than by their appearance. Given the state of the Crimean Tatar language, knowledge of it usually plays a key role in this recognition. At the same time, they emphasize *"... the desire to know the language is more important than having a thorough knowledge of it."*

IDENTITY

THEY STAND FIRMLY ON THE PRO-UKRAINIAN POSITION THAT UNITES THEM BOTH IN UKRAINE AND ABROAD. PROUD OF THEIR HISTORY, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, THEY ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN POLITICAL LIFE AND FEELING RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR COMMUNITY.

- A CLEAR PRO-UKRAINIAN POSITION

The Crimean Tatar people *"...made their value choice in due time, and today we are fighting alongside Ukraine."* They *"...did not bend under the Russian agenda"*, and this position is one of the unifying factors of the Crimean Tatars both abroad and in Ukraine. Unlike the Crimean Tatars, among Ukrainians, there are more cases of treason, and among Crimeans, there is no such thing: *"I call people in Crimea with my radical position, and I do not find any contradiction and dissonance with them..."*

- PRIDE

They are proud of being *"... descendants of a people who were once arbiters in the region,"* to remember

their historical path. They are proud of belonging to the community, because *"...our language and culture are special because of their features and what they have gone through for centuries."*

- CULTURE

Crimean Tatars are *"... a cultural code, it is a complex of concepts."* It is the preservation of this cultural heritage that forms their identity as a people.

- POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Crimean Tatars are proactive in politics and interested in current events. They do not stand aside. From childhood, they talk about politics: *"The children of the Crimean Tatars were like adults when they came to school – they could discuss the next election."*

- RESPONSIBILITY

Being the face of the community means taking pride in and responsibility for the whole community in every sphere: *"Because we are literally afraid that if this person messes up or does something wrong, it will stain the whole people..."*.

- INDUSTRIOUSNESS

Qırımlı are distinguished by their love of work and careful attitude toward nature: *"The love of work is not from nine to six but constant. It is a love for work that is the source of success."* Living in Crimea has instilled a unique quality: a commitment to caring for water, land, and gardening, and a passion for cultivating gardens and other crops, investing time and effort into them.

IDENTITY

THEY MAINTAIN A STRONG CONNECTION TO THEIR COMMUNITY AND ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR "THEIR PEOPLE", WHEREVER THEY ARE. DESPITE STEREOTYPES, ALIENATION AND THE PAIN OF REJECTION SINCE CHILDHOOD, THEY REMAIN UNITED AND PASS IT ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION.

- COMMUNITY

Belonging "...to a small native community with its own language, traditions, and national identity" and **always looking for your people, wherever you are:** "You go to the Carpathians, and you'll see Crimea. You look at people, and you'll see Crimea. In other words, being a Crimean Tatar means always looking for your people wherever you are." **This is especially noticeable among those who have moved to another region. Even before traveling, they ask, "... are there our people there?"**

- THE MIX OF DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES

Crimean Tatars are a real "melting pot" of different cultures and peoples. Being a Crimean means "... being the heir of the Tauri, Goths, Alans, Scythians,

Sarmatians, to be a descendant of Chersonesos, the Principality of Theodore, the Bosphorus Kingdom, the Crimean Khanate, and the Crimean Democratic Republic". **At the same time, they are "...a wonderful mix of European and Eastern", where various cultural influences are intertwined:** "...there are some Circassian motifs, and Romanian, Polish, and Turkic ones".

- UNITY

Despite their internal differences, the Qırımlı remain cohesive: "...whatever happens inside the people, this does not affect the fact that at the right time we will still be cohesive and united."

- ROOTS

The transfer of experience between generations plays an important role: "... the impact of the older generation on

the youth is greater than that of Ukrainians and Russians." **The key is not so much the physical place of birth as it is the awareness of one's origin:** "...it's probably not even where you were born physically but where your roots are."

- PAIN AND SELF-REJECTION

The experience of growth involves "pain" and "constant self-rejection", which can last a long time. In a society where "Qırımlı are underdeveloped", where they " ... were not allowed to live, study, or hold positions", stigma begins in childhood. Labels such as "gypsy kid" and "traitor" formed a reality in which "it was impossible to be a Crimean Tatar and be proud of it". As a result, this often led to internal self-rejection: "You don't want to be you... you don't want to know about your culture or art."

IDENTITY

RELIGION BECOMES A BEACON TO FIND YOUR PEOPLE. RESPECT FOR ELDERS CONVEYS LIFE WISDOM AND VALUES. COMMON EXPERIENCE IN DIFFICULT CONDITIONS STRENGTHENS THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY. A CERTAIN CLOSURE HELPS TO PRESERVE THESE TIES AND CULTURAL INTEGRITY IN TIMES OF CHANGE.

- ISLAM

The mosque becomes the first beacon where you can find "your people", especially during forced migrations. Religious affiliation is important: "For me, this is primarily a religious factor, as it is for a believer." However, identity goes beyond religion.

- RESPECT FOR ELDERS

They deeply respect their elders, especially their grandparents: "We have a very respectful attitude towards parents, and even more so towards grandparents." Respect is also manifested in gestures: "...we kiss the hands of older people when greeting."

- SHARED COMMON EXPERIENCE

They share a common experience formed during their lives in difficult economic conditions, temporary

housing, and learning alongside children of different ethnicities while facing bullying: "People often mention bullying or similar experiences from their peers or teachers at school."

- CLOSURE

They are conservative, but "Closure is not a disadvantage... it saved us after deportation and prevented us from losing ourselves."

- COFFEE

Coffee is more than just a drink; it's part of tradition and everyday life: "...it's with the coffee that all really frank conversations occur."

- SEARCH

Continuous self-search and self-cognition: "For me, this is a search, because we know little about ourselves." At the same time, this is what unites

the people, because they always think about their future.

- LOVE FOR LAND

Being Qırımlı means loving the land and homeland: "For Crimean Tatars... the greatest happiness is not in an apartment but having their own piece of land," and feeling that Crimea is a land of origin and a valuable part of their identity.

- OTHER MARKERS OF IDENTITY

In addition to the above, the informants discussed how being Qırımlı encompasses a sense of inferiority, a personal choice, a love of freedom, a lack of imperial ambitions, a connection with Turkic peoples, the "disease" of victimhood, sincerity, equality, memories of protests, a peaceful nature, and empathy.

IDENTITY. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUBNARRATIVES

SUBNARRATIVES EMPHASIZE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF IDENTITY IN DIFFERENT WAYS: MODERN: FIGHT, PRO-UKRAINIAN POSITION, PRIDE, COMMUNITY; TRADITIONAL: LOVE FOR WORK AND LAND; ISLAMIC: CULTURE.

- UNBREAKABLE FIGHT

Representatives of the Modern sub-narrative often articulate this idea, but others also mention the fight to return home in the past, as well as the continuation of this fight after the annexation of Crimea and under present conditions.

- A CLEAR PRO-UKRAINIAN POSITION

Representatives of the Modern sub-narrative emphasize this more. Interestingly, they are much more likely to appeal to their own experience: *"I associate myself with the Ukrainian context as much as possible"; "I made a very unpopular decision..."; "As a Crimean Tatar, I have additional identities as a Ukrainian citizen and Ukrainian..."*

- PRIDE

While representatives of the Modern sub-narrative cite various grounds, not only historical, for asserting pride in belonging to the Qırımlı, representatives of the Islamic and Traditional sub-narratives primarily appeal to the greatness of the historical past.

- CULTURE

Representatives of the Traditional sub-narrative do not mention culture at all as a separate marker of identity, unlike the other groups. Representatives of the Islamic sub-narrative, however, highlight culture as one of the key aspects of their identity.

- RESPONSIBILITY

It's more noticeable in the statements of representatives of the Modern sub-narrative.

- INDUSTRIOUSNESS

It's primarily pointed out by representatives of the Traditional sub-narrative.

- COMMUNITY

It's mentioned only by representatives of the Modern sub-narrative and neutral informants.

- PAIN AND SELF-REJECTION

It's typical in the statements of the Modern sub-narrative and neutral informants.

- ISLAM

It's more relevant to the Traditional and Islamic sub-narratives; the latter emphasizes it as not only a marker of identity but also as a concept related to Crimea.

CONFLICT

THE DEPARTURE DIVIDED THE CRIMEAN TATARS RESULTING IN TRAGEDY FOR BOTH THOSE WHO LEFT AND THOSE WHO STAYED.

- **THOSE WHO ARE IN CRIMEA VS. THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT.**

The main, clearly expressed reason for this division is the Russian occupation of Crimea: "The occupation is the basis... Sometimes, Crimean Tatars who live outside of Crimea can reproach those who live there, saying, "You don't do enough there," to which they reply, "Try living here and doing what you talk about.". However, the Ukrainian authorities and society are also blamed for this division: "in 10 years, sufficiently strong ties between Crimea and mainland Ukraine have not been established."

This is often presented as a tragedy for the "Kyiv Crimean Tatars": "those who live in Kyiv are... separated from their people... Who was able to come here

after 2014? The intelligentsia, the elite who had the means. The common people remained." **This is also a tragedy for the Crimeans:** "On the one hand, they are at home; on the other hand, they are under annexation, and this is such a vacuum... almost nothing from the outside world reaches them... It is very difficult for them to develop in any direction other than Russia." **Conversely, the Kyiv community is often accused:** "... They say, 'Oh, there are Kyiv Tatars.' We are Crimean Tatars, but we are not Crimean; we are Kyiv Tatars." **There is also a misunderstanding about those who remained in Crimea:** "People cannot speak openly about politics... So, they sublimate into anything else. For example, they hold fairs, exhibitions,

and concerts; they write music and organize book events. Here in the mainland, there is sometimes a misunderstanding about them: 'Why do you pretend that everything is okay in Crimea!' **As a result:** "Previously, there was a slogan: "One Homeland, One People." Now, it turns out that we have one homeland and two peoples." **But sometimes informants see positivity in the separation:** "Everyone who returns will carry part of the culture of the region where they lived. If we bring the best of what they have, it will be good for Crimea." **They even claim that this line of separation can be overcome:** "We keep in touch with the peninsula. It is often very difficult and complicated. But it is necessary for our survival as a nation."

CONFLICT

ALL CRIMEAN TATARS AGREE THAT THERE ARE VERY FEW TRAITORS AMONG THEM, BUT THEY EXPLAIN THEIR EXISTENCE IN DIFFERENT WAYS

- THE MAJORITY OF CRIMEAN TATARS VS. UNCOMMON COLLABORATORS

Informants often draw a distinction between the majority of Crimean Tatars, who remain pro-Ukrainian, and those who cooperate with the occupiers and the Russian army. However, they emphasize the marginalization of this group: "Of course, there are such unique individuals like Ukrainian Shariy or Dmytruk... But they are few... they have always been in every nation. » Or: « We have such disguised Crimean Tatars who will probably fit into one or two buses, which are taken to all those events, the opening of monuments, May 9th, and so on. » **Sometimes there is even a direct objection:** "I do not see the division. The vast majority are loyal to Ukraine. » **But at the same time, their number may grow:** « because in Russia, very, very strong propaganda works." **The small**

number of collaborators is explained by historical factors: "There is a sense of awareness built by the consequences of the tragedy that prevented dissolving into those false narratives, especially during the years of the Soviet Union." **However, sometimes this does not work:** "There are Tatars who believe that Stalin, let's say... "Justified"... In short, he "justified" the deportation. " **Explanations of the collaboration vary. Some claim that only those Crimean Tatars who collaborated with Russia "did not deserve attention or respect even before 2014. These are, you know, offended people; Russia came and took advantage of their amorphousness."** **Some explanations cite their passivity as the reason:** "In families where connections are less patriotic, people are more inclined to accept the existing state of affairs in Crimea. It's not that

they will obey or engage in significant propaganda activities." **However, passive behavior does not justify itself over time:** "In 2022, those who said, "Moscow was not built in a day, and we must keep waiting,' became silent. They became even more silent when the military draft began and affected their families." **Sometimes, collaboration is explained as being caused by coercion:** "There are such moments, unfortunately, when he is forced to adapt and grovel because otherwise his family members may suffer." **It is even explained as the result of their "secondment" to the occupation authorities:** "Somehow they try to help from the inside by transferring information and warning about things." **However, most agree that there are no ideological traitors among the Crimean Tatars, only opportunistic ones.**

CONFLICT

A DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM CAUSES CONFLICTS THAT ARE ACKNOWLEDGED BY BOTH THE MORE AND LESS RELIGIOUS CRIMEAN TATARS

- MORE RELIGIOUS VS. LESS RELIGIOUS.

Although Islam is considered an integral part of the Crimean Tatar identity, its interpretation can sometimes cause disputes: *"the most common threat to the unity of our people is religious problems."* According to I. Gasprinsky, voices of people who consider secular Islam more appropriate sound louder: *"Why do we, the Crimean Tatars, rethink the works and the vision of Ismail Gasprinsky? Ismail Gasprinsky envisioned a Turkic world."* This trend is associated with external influence: *"Some emissaries from different Muslim states appeared here, and they are all different from each other... The nation did not accept*

it." Sometimes Russia is seen as playing a role in this influence: *"Crimean Tatar Islam... is being replaced by the views of other Islamic peoples in Russia, such as the Chechens, the Dagestanis and so on."* There are many arguments against distinguished branches of Islam, particularly Hizb ut-Tahrir: *"There's Hizb ut-Tahrir which aims to establish a global Islamic caliphate. They believe that displaying the Crimean Tatar flag is almost a sin."*, or: *"supposedly, Crimean Tatars should fulfill their religious duty as Muslims and go fight in Syria", or "There were moments when they asked why do we need the Crimean Tatar language?"* Conflicts sometimes turned into physical confrontations: *"They*

fought for mosques there, tried to fight with the muftiate for mosques, trying to gain influence over Muslims and youth." However, there is another view that advocates a return to religion: *"there is such a problem: those who adhere less to religious canons, and those who adhere more to religious canons... still, Muslim culture is very closely intertwined with our traditional Islamic culture."* The representatives of Hizb ut-Tahrir are more likely to blame the West for existing divisions: *"when a person is guided by the instructions of the Almighty... The alternative is the Western world and Western culture. I'm in Germany right now, but I wouldn't want my children to stay, to live here."*

CONFLICT

LINGUISTIC AND TERMINOLOGICAL DISPUTES APPEAR TO BE A NORMAL PROCESS OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE NATION

- THOSE WHO SPEAK CRIMEAN TATAR VS. THOSE WHO DO NOT

The informants did not emphasize this question as much as the first three, but it is still noticeable: "Some 20% of people speak a purely Crimean Tatar language. They speak the pure language. As for me, I would say that I speak below average." **Sometimes statements on this topic are quite categorical:** "If a Crimean Tatar does not understand the language, then he is defective in my eyes." **Sometimes the problem of Russification is directly pointed out:** "For example, I am separated from the Crimean Tatars by the Russian language... When they write to me in Russian, I immediately switch to Crimean Tatar, and then they answer me in Crimean Tatar." **This line of separation**

can lead to a generational conflict because older people use their native language more: "there's separation from grandparents now, this chain is broken".

- ADHERENT TO THE TERM "QIRIMLI" VS. ADHERENT TO THE TERM "CRIMEAN TATARS".

The dispute over the self-designation also divides: "There are questions about self-designation: are we Crimean Tatars or Qırımli?.. It is perceived emotionally, but against the background of other problems of the people, it is not something very significant to me." **Each informant defends their own perspective.** On the one hand, "I use this term, and "Crimean Tatars" sounds like "Polish Jews" to me. Or "We are neither Crimean nor Tatars. At one time, Tatars were called everyone who did not speak

the pig-dog language." **On the other hand,** " 'Qırımli' means 'person from Crimea.' Not only are there Crimean Tatars from Crimea, but there are also Crimean Tatars from other places ", or "A new feature introduced from the outside is that we should not be called Crimean Tatars. Allegedly, this is how the Russians called us: the Tatars." But that's not true. There are Khan labels in which the Crimean khans call themselves 'lord of the Tatars.'"

- SUPPORTERS OF THE LATIN ALPHABET VS. THE CYRILLIC ALPHABET.

Relatively little attention has been given to this linguistic dispute: "I think that these questions will arise in the near future about what kind of graphics to accept: Latin or the one we have today."

CONFLICT

INTERGENERATIONAL DISPUTES SOMETIMES SPILL OVER INTO WORLDVIEW DISPUTES

- THE ELDERS VS YOUNGER PEOPLE, AS WELL AS THE PEOPLE VS. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES.

The younger generation feels rejected by the older elite formed on the peninsula. This elite controls the Mejlis: *"There is a younger generation of politicians and activists. There is an older generation... The real picture and the ability to do something with the kind of vision that these old leaders see for themselves are incommensurable. Still, the younger generation has good managerial skills."* But the same person also makes noticeable complaints about the youth: *"Caution and distrust... the younger generation has such things. Our older people have a sense of community. They are more united."* There is also criticism of representative bodies in general, regardless of generation: *"There is distrust of the institutions that represent the Crimean*

Tatars in Ukraine, including the Mejlis, because they say one thing and do another. We don't see the results of their activities here in Crimea."

- DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS

This line of separation is considered completely anachronistic: *"Before the deportation, we differentiated by origin: some were from the steppe, some from the mountains, and so on. Then, during the deportation, the practice of marrying only within the same village stopped. The objective was to save the nation, to survive."*

- THOSE WHO ARE IN UKRAINE VS. THOSE WHO ARE IN EUROPE.

In addition to the division between those who remained in Crimea and those who left, some have voiced an additional line of division: *"There are people who live in the occupied Crimea; there are people who live in mainland*

Ukraine; there are people who left [for Europe] after 2022... Because they did not want to join the Russian army. These three groups of people live in very different information contexts. If you and I hear explosions here, people in Europe do not. They see the world as a little bit pinker. "

- OTHER LINES OF DIVISION.

The attitude toward Ukrainians is occasionally mentioned as a subject of discussion: *"Some people think that both Russians and Ukrainians are strangers to us, because they are both Slavic peoples."* Another line of division is identity: *"The line of separation follows the word hypocrisy. If you identify as Crimean or Crimean Tatar, then you are Crimean. If you start: I am primarily a Muslim, a member of such an organization, a person of the world, a cosmopolitan... — it's people who just do the bullshit."*

CONFLICT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-NARRATIVES

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MODERN SUBNARRATIVE SEE A BIGGER PROBLEM IN THE EXISTENCE OF CERTAIN PRO-RUSSIAN TRAITORS AMONG THE CRIMEAN TATARS, WHILE THOSE IN THE TRADITIONAL SUB-NARRATIVE ARE MORE WARY OF CERTAIN RELIGIOUS GROUPS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE MAJORITY (EXCEPT FOR THE ISLAMIC NARRATIVE) RECOGNIZES THAT THE DEEPEST LINE OF SEPARATION LIES BETWEEN THOSE GROUPS OF CRIMEAN TATARS WHO FOUND THEMSELVES ON DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE BORDERS OR LINES OF COMBAT COLLISION

- THOSE WHO ARE IN CRIMEA VS. THOSE WHO LEFT.

The line of division is most clearly understood by the representatives of the Modern sub-narrative. They provide numerous examples and express both offense at their rejection by those who remained in Crimea and guilt toward them. Representatives of the Traditional sub-narrative discuss this division in general terms without providing examples. This line of division is not mentioned in the Islamic narrative.

- THE MAJORITY OF CRIMEAN TATARS VS. UNCOMMON COLLABORATORS.

Representatives of the Traditional and Islamic sub-narratives recognize the

presence of traitors but emphasize their small number. In contrast, the Modern sub-narrative and most neutral informants often emphasize personal hatred of collaborators and their motivations.

- MORE RELIGIOUS VS. LESS RELIGIOUS.

Representatives of the Modern sub-narrative and neutral informants pay little attention to this line of division. However, representatives of the Traditional sub-narrative directly refer to the heritage of I. Gasprinsky and consider Muslims a threat to national revival. The Islamic sub-narrative shows noticeable differences in views about who is right in this division and about protecting more religious people.

- ADHERENTS TO THE TERM "QIRIMLI" VS. ADHERENTS TO THE TERM "CRIMEAN TATARS".

Adherents of different sub-narratives have made noticeable attempts to protect both versions.

- SUPPORTERS OF THE LATIN ALPHABET VS. THE CYRILLIC ALPHABET.

Only representatives of the Modern sub-narrative mention this conflict.

- THE OLDER GENERATION VS. YOUNGER GENERATION.

Only representatives of the Modern sub-narrative express claims to the older generation and to the representative bodies of the Crimean Tatars.

MYTHICAL PART

CRIMEAN TATARS RECOGNIZE THEMSELVES AS DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE PENINSULA, AS WELL AS KYPCHAKS, WHO IMMIGRATED ALONG WITH THE GOLDEN HORDE. THE KHAN PERIOD IS CALLED THE ERA OF THE HIGHEST POWER, THE RAPID FLOURISHING OF SCIENCE AND CULTURE THROUGH THE ADOPTION OF ISLAM AND COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

- **ANCIENT HISTORY OF CRIMEA.**

Informants agree that their ancestors, on the one hand, have lived in Crimea since ancient times: "We are proud that... we are the descendants of the Scythians, Sarmatians, and all these peoples who originally lived on the Crimean peninsula"; "Crimean Tatars have been formed on the Crimean land for centuries, millennia... since the times of the Taurians, Scythians, Cimerians, Goths, Huns, Hellenes, Italians, Polovtsians or Kipchaks." On the other hand, the decisive stage of ethnogenesis was the period of the Golden Horde, XII-XIV centuries: "It's the state of the Golden Horde... It contributed to the formation of the Crimean Tatar people"; "As a people, they were formed really in the XIII

century, because in the XIV century they were already a separate people. They were already called Tatars. Yes, they really took the name of the Tatars from the Horde. "

- **THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE CRIMEAN KHANATE.**

Many speakers agree that the time of the existence of the Crimean Khanate was the period of the highest prosperity of the nation: "all this time of the existence of the Crimean Khanate, I would call the "golden age". The speakers of all sub-narratives mention Hadji Geray as the founder of the state; recognize the inheritance from the Golden Horde, but at the same time, the adoption of Islam as a decisive factor in the rapid development of education, science,

and culture through joining the common space with other Islamic countries: "The Crimean Khanate was founded after the Golden Horde. At the same time, Islam was adopted, and this also became the central direction for the Crimean Tatars, because on the basis of Islam, there were already training, language development, and common values. The work in science was also built on the commonality with other Islamic countries. " A noticeable sign of the Khanate for the speakers is also the now lost military power, which is personified by Devlet Geray as a victor over the eternal enemy: "Of course, I cannot but mention Devlet Geray Khan. I really like about him is that he went to Moscow and burned it."

MYTHICAL PART

THE IMPERIAL AND SOVIET OCCUPATION OF CRIMEA IS INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO WAVES OF ETHNIC DEPORTATIONS

- THE FIRST OCCUPATION OF 1783.

Informants emphasize the loss of statehood under Russian influence:

"This was the first annexation of Crimea in 1783, when we lost our statehood."

Catherine II is the key figure, while Shahin Geray is rarely mentioned: *"I believe that this annexation occurred due to many mistakes made by both the people and the Crimean khans."* **Even in the memory of the Crimean Tatars, the first annexation stands out as a time of Russian ethnic and territorial expansion:** *"A large number of Russian people moved there. The first wave of Crimean Tatar migration was quite large,"* **combined with forced emigration, primarily to the Ottoman Empire. It is also noted that part of the national elite emigrated, including the economic and intellectual elites:** *"usually they were those who could*

afford it based on some assets", and the intellectual elite: " When Catherine decided Crimea would be part of Russia, they annexed it and gave the intelligentsia time to leave. Literally hundreds of thousands of people left." **The time after annexation is often referred to as the "Black Age."**

- TRAGEDIES OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

The key national tragedy of this period was the May 1944 deportation, which affected every family: *"The main thing, of course, is the 1944 deportation. These genocidal events affected almost every family. In every family, there were those who died in the deportation.."* **Unlike the 1783 annexation, the memory of the 1944 deportation is felt as a living, unhealed wound:** *"The occupation of 1783 was far in the past.*

But the deportation process has not been completed. " They also emphasize the replacement of almost all toponyms: "The name of Bakhchisaray was preserved only because Pushkin wrote a poem dedicated to the Bakhchisaray fountain." There is much less mention of the deportations after the Crimean War: " After the Crimean War of 1856–1860, more than 200,000 Crimean Tatars were expelled from Crimea;" and the repressions in the USSR before World War II: "The Holodomor of 1921... This is what I call the Executed Renaissance. It really was that. April 17, 1937. All the thinkers, writers, and speakers—everyone who was an opinion leader—they were all gone. Everything happened the same way it happened to the Ukrainian nation, unfortunately."

MYTHICAL PART

SOME MITIGATION OF OPPRESSION IN THE LATE EMPIRE AND LAST YEARS OF THE USSR EACH TIME CAUSED THE RISE OF THE CRIMEAN TATAR NATIONAL MOVEMENT – BUT THE REAL RENAISSANCE CAME ONLY DURING THE TIME OF INDEPENDENT UKRAINE

- THE RENAISSANCE OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY.

This period is often associated with the spread among the Crimean Tatars of the ideas of pan-Turkism and enlightenment. The key figures are I. Gasprinsky and his family (education, women's rights), N. Chelebijkhan and B. Choban-zade (political activity, creation of the Crimean People's Republic): "Gasprinsky is number one, of course. It's a unique case of a man who changed his people, all alone. And Noman Chelebijkhan, as a man who in 1918 tried to make Crimea a republic, but... was executed by the Bolsheviks."

- DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT AND RETURN TO CRIMEA.

The key figure of this movement is M. Dzhemilev, whose invincibility was taken as an example by repatriates at the turn of the 1980s-1990s: "A man

who spent 19 years in prison. The man who held the longest hunger strike." They speak about this period with great pride, recall the return "just to bare ground" coming from lived-in houses in deportation: "The people... just left everything in Uzbekistan and returned to Crimea. For me, this is a matter of great pride... People had higher education, but in Crimea, they became either sellers at markets or something else. That is, they had to survive. People were so friendly and united, they had this feeling in the first place that "I had to live in my homeland."

- CRIMEA IN INDEPENDENT UKRAINE: THE FLOWERING OF CULTURE.

Independent Ukraine from the beginning helped them "despite the difficult economic situation in the 1990s, tried to finance the state program for the arrangement and

return of the Crimean Tatars... the period from 1991 to 2014 is the Renaissance of the Crimean Tatar people" and contributed to the development of culture: "in the Crimea, it somehow began to improve: textbooks, cultural centers, and we had our own Crimean Tatar musical theater." Separately, they are proud of the ATR TV channel, "which in terms of content quality was not inferior to the first Ukrainian channels", and self-government, which Ukraine did not interfere with: "The Crimean Tatar people before the occupation were represented by an elected body, the Mejlis, which was elected through the Qurultay, and delegates from different parts of the Crimea were elected to the Qurultay. And despite the fact that the Crimean Tatars did not have statehood, they had representative bodies."

MYTHICAL PART. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-NARRATIVES

FOR ADHERENTS OF THE ISLAMIC SUB-NARRATIVE, THE HISTORY OF THE NATION BEGINS WITH THE ADOPTION OF ISLAM. THE MODERN SUB-NARRATIVE TELLS THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE'S RENAISSANCE AND THE "GOLDEN AGE" OF THE CRIMEAN KHANATE. TRADITIONALISTS TELL THE STORY OF CRIMEA AS A TRAGEDY.

- ANCIENT HISTORY OF CRIMEA.

All sub-narratives mention this period except the Islamic one. The differences in the stories are minimal.

- THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE CRIMEAN KHANATE.

The year 1441 is primarily mentioned by carriers of the Modern sub-narrative and least of all by "neutral" informants as the year of the Khanate's founding.

- THE FIRST OCCUPATION OF 1783.

"Traditional" informants talk most about this period. Adherents of the Modern sub-narrative sometimes accuse the intelligentsia of that time of treason for emigrating under pressure from the occupiers.

- THE TRAGEDIES OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

The vast majority of informants from

all sub-narratives mention these tragedies, particularly the 1944 deportation. The Modern narrative mentions these tragedies less frequently (only about half of its adherents). The Islamic sub-narrative emphasizes religious oppression during the Soviet era.

- THE RENAISSANCE OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY.

This period is most clearly mentioned by the carriers of the Modern sub-narrative. They especially emphasize the key role of I. Gasprinsky and his family. His wife and daughter personify the modernization of women's roles in Islamic society.

- THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT AND RETURN TO CRIMEA.

This is one of the central myths of the

Modern sub-narrative. Adherents of other sub-narratives only occasionally mention this period. For all Qırımlı, however, it is a holistic story of the return of the entire people to their historical homeland. This has been a dream for several generations, and numerous difficulties have been overcome along the way.

- CRIMEA IN INDEPENDENT UKRAINE: THE FLOWERING OF CULTURE.

This topic is discussed more often by the adherents of the Modern sub-narrative, who also emphasize the role of the Mejlis and their media (TC ATR) more clearly. Speakers of the Traditional sub-narrative also mention the Mejlis, but they mention the role of the undisputed national leader, M. Dzhemilev, even more.

REGULATORY ORDER

THE KEY OBJECTIVES ARE THE CREATION OF A CRIMEAN TATAR AUTONOMY AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE IDENTITY, EDUCATION AND CULTURE OF THE NEW GENERATION FOR THE FUTURE PROSPERITY OF THE NATION

- TO CREATE A NATIONAL TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY

The creation of a Crimean Tatar national-territorial autonomy within Ukraine is a key condition for the peninsula's freedom and the protection of its indigenous people. It has been noted that "...without solving the Crimean Tatar issue, which is the creation of the Crimean Tatar national territorial autonomy, Crimea will not be free", It has been noted that "without solving the Crimean Tatar issue, which is the creation of the Crimean Tatar national territorial autonomy, Crimea will not be free," and therefore, this is a key condition for the return of Ukrainian territories. It is important that the autonomy be consolidated before de-occupation to avoid repeating historical losses and to "preserve the Crimean

Tatar indigenous people". In this vision, autonomy is not seen as a threat to the integrity of the state but rather as the only logical and legitimate mechanism for restoring Crimea to independent Ukraine.

- TO FIGHT FOR THE NATION'S FUTURE

Like others, Crimean Tatars must preserve their national identity. In this context, Noman Chelebijikhan's speech is quoted: "In Crimea, on this God-given land, there are many flowers. The flowers are all different. They're beautiful. I compare them to peoples. Our task is to take responsibility and collect these flowers to show the whole world that we can create a cultural Switzerland here." Crimean Tatars call for a fight against assimilation: "We still need to preserve ourselves. There are very few of us, 350,000 is very few."

They emphasize the struggle of a new generation growing up under occupation and under the influence of propaganda: "The first thing that will need to be done is to return children ideologically... In another ten years, this generation will be grown." As the informants note: "When we return, education will be one of the problems there. The question is how to return people and children. In ten years, they will have already established a Russian presence there, so it will be necessary for people to rediscover their free spirit." It is equally important that children grow up to be true bearers of culture: "Therefore, it is important to me that my child grows up to be a Crimean Tatar, even if it does not depend on whom they marry."

REGULATORY ORDER

RESTORATION OF CRIMEA THROUGH THE RETURN OF THE PEOPLE HOME, PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY, COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATION AND INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

- TO RETURN AND REVIVE CRIMEA

The Qırımlı connect their future with the return and revival of their homeland after the de-occupation: "... the return of all the people to Crimea... If Crimea is not de-occupied from Russia, many problems will remain unsolved." Informants emphasize the importance of state return support programs, particularly those related to housing, and stress that the key is to keep people in place: "Crimean Tatars should not leave Crimea en masse, because tomorrow we must rely on our people for de-occupation."

- TO UNITE

However, without unity, the revival of Crimea is impossible. Therefore, the Crimean Tatars "...must consolidate and unite around the issue of Crimea." At the same time, they must unite with Ukrainians: "We all need to look for tools

to solve... We need to be united now more than ever. "

- TO RESTORE AND DEVELOP CULTURE & LANGUAGE

The Crimean Tatars emphasize language-related issues, considering the preservation of their language critical to their identity: "I believe that we must fight for the language." After all, young people often do not know their native language well due to the influence of the post-Soviet space and the family practice of communicating in Russian or Ukrainian.

- TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY

The informants emphasize that the future of the people depends on each individual's personal responsibility: "We have a super infantile nation... And it should not be so, because the state is

us." Passivity leads to self-deprecation, while active action shapes the future: "I think that we should create our own future and work to make it what we want."

- TO EXPLAIN PROBLEMS OF OCCUPATION

It is important to protect the rights of people from the occupied territories and debunk stereotypes by their living conditions and problems. They are not separatists; they are people who were deported and returned to their land: "... a person simply does not understand why people stay to live in Crimea." After de-occupation, it is important to support those who remained in Crimea and help them integrate gradually: "They need to be involved after the de-occupation... so that they can take a break from the stress."

REGULATORY ORDER

IT IS IMPORTANT TO OVERCOME STEREOTYPES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE UKRAINE, PROMOTE UNITY, AND BUILD A NATIONAL STRATEGY

- TO FIGHT PROPAGANDA & STEREOTYPES, PARTICULARLY IN HISTORY

Informants emphasize that propaganda and stereotypes must be overcome on both sides: "...Crimean Tatars also need to be explained who Ukrainians are and that we have more in common than they think." Ukrainians also need to be explained who the Crimean Tatars are. This process should take place "...through empathy, through examples, and through shared experiences" to overcome imposed Russian narratives, so that "...we are finally seen not as traitors, but as an integral part of a civic nation." It is important to convey the truth both domestically and internationally. It is also necessary "...to talk about the forgotten relationship between Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars that existed in history", because they have always "...fought together and won". Today this is

happening again: *"Finally, for the first time since 1783, we Crimean Tatars are officially allowed to take up arms... To be on the side of Ukraine. An Independent, Strong, Unbreakable Ukraine."*

- TO CREATE A CLEAR STRATEGY

A clear national ideology and strategy for the development of the people are needed. This strategy should outline the goals and ways to achieve them: *"...Crimean Tatars... do not know what to do, because there is no clear understanding of where we should go."*

- TO PUNISH COLLABORATORS

Those who deliberately collaborated with the occupation authorities must be clearly defined as collaborators and punished. Traitors should be limited in their participation in power bodies: *"... people who have discredited themselves cannot be elected as members of the Qurultay."*

Cleaning up the community will help overcome the consequences of the occupation: *"We will have to heal the single organism."*

- TO KEEP ATTENTION ON THE TOPIC OF CRIMEA

In order for the Crimean Tatars not to feel forgotten, the topic of Crimea must be constantly raised, and silence about events must be avoided: *"...we should always talk about Crimea".* It is important to be open and explain the reasons for the occupation because *"Crimea will not be free without us."*

- TO UNITE AROUND ISLAM

Some informants propose uniting the people by *"... formulating some interpretation of Islam that is more suitable for the people and unite the people, and corresponds to our goals and values."*

REGULATORY ORDER

THE CORRECT NAME OF THE PEOPLE SHOULD BE DETERMINED, TRANSLITERATION SHOULD BE STREAMLINED, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRAMS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THOSE WHO REMAIN UNDER OCCUPATION

- TO REVIVE THE ECONOMY & ENVIRONMENT

Informants say that it will be important to attract partners, create a favorable investment climate, and restore critical infrastructure: *"Now there are different opinions on restoring the Kakhovka dam... through which Dnieper water flowed to Crimea"*, save the agricultural sector, because *"after 11 years without Dnieper water, agriculture is probably changing"*, and it needs to be reformed with the participation of farmers and scientists. Additionally, they note that it is important to *"restore the logistics of the railway tracks, air traffic, and clean our sea"*, as well as to establish programs for restoring fauna, flora, and tourism.

- TO PREVENT SERVICE IN THE ENEMY ARMY

It is crucial that the Crimean Tatars avoid joining the enemy army. Because of this, many people are leaving Crimea.

- TO DEMILITARIZE CRIMEA

It is necessary to eliminate military bases and clear the territory of landmines: *"The Russists leave behind things that will need to be dealt with at the state level."*

- TO STOP BEING A VICTIM

It is important to overcome the victimhood complex and focus on achievements: *"We need to... remember the victims and tragedies, but also celebrate the achievements."*

- TO CORRECT TRANSLITERATION

To overcome the habit of reproducing distorted, colonial word forms, such as writing "Chi-be-rek" as "cheburek" and "Bakhcha Saray" as "Bakhchisaray," just because *"that's how Pushkin wrote it"*. This is not linguistic complexity, but rather inaction and *"...excessive modesty"*.

- TO DECIDE WHETHER "TATARS" OR "QIRIMLI"

Some of the informants stressed that rejecting the term "Tatars" allows for a clearer definition of their identity and eliminates the colonial stigma.

Conversely, some emphasized the advantage of the term "Crimean Tatars": *"... Qırımli" has a broader meaning... Russians, Ukrainians, Krymchaks, Karaims... may call themselves Qırımli. "*

- OTHER GOALS

Informants mentioned other goals, including opposing some Islamic schools. Informants also discussed current social protection, such as addressing departure issues, continuing education, and helping children and young people who grew up in Crimea obtain Ukrainian documents, because they *"... don't have a Ukrainian passport, they only have a Ukrainian birth certificate."*

REGULATORY ORDER. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-NARRATIVES

THE VISION OF FUTURE STEPS AND THEIR MEANING IS GENERALLY CONSISTENT AND DOES NOT CREATE SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES TO THEIR IMPLEMENTATION, BUT THERE ARE SOME SPECIFIC EMPHASES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO FOCUS ON AND ADDRESS

- TO CREATE A NATIONAL TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY

Representatives of all sub-narratives emphasize this, except for the Islamic one.

- TO FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NATION

The main difference is that representatives of the Traditional narrative emphasize educating children about their traditions and origins, while representatives of the Modern narrative emphasize practical tasks, such as returning people to Crimea and disseminating the true history.

- TO FIGHT PROPAGANDA & STEREOTYPES

Only representatives of the Modern sub-narrative emphasize this, detailing the specific steps of the fight and showing the consequences of years of hostile informational influence.

- TO PUNISH COLLABORATORS

Representatives of the Modern and Traditional sub-narratives are the only ones who focus on punishing collaborators. The former offers concrete steps to solve the problem, while the latter discusses the consequences of uncertainty in this matter.

- TO DEVELOP PARTNERSHIP WITH UKRAINE

Even representatives of the Modern sub-narrative emphasize the importance of fighting alongside Ukrainians against a common enemy, drawing on historical parallels and examples.

- TO DECIDE WHETHER IT IS "TATARS" OR "QIRIMLI"

Interestingly, the issue of naming the people correctly, albeit with different emphases—some avoid the term "Qırımli," while others reject the term "Tatars"—is discussed exclusively by representatives of the Modern sub-narrative. They do not agree on a specific solution..

CRIMEA FOR CRIMEAN TATARS

- **HOME**

"Crimea is my home, obviously. And I say that Crimea is what flows in my blood..."; "For me, for us, Crimea is the only home, the only homeland for our people..."; "This is the only place where we, the Qırımılı, the Crimean Tatars, can say, can feel that we are at home..."
- **CONNECTION WITH ANCESTORS**

"Crimea is the land of my ancestors. It's a land with a rich medieval history that goes back centuries..."; "...this is the land of my ancestors, where all my family was born. Except for my parents, almost all of my relatives were born in Crimea. Therefore, for me, Crimea is personal, sacred, and intimate..."
- **THE HOMELAND**

"'Vatan' is a word that every Crimean Tatar receives with his mother's milk. This is the homeland, the native land..."; "...this is my homeland, to which we returned in long and difficult ways."; "...This is my homeland. I came to live here, and I believe that I should not leave it to anyone, as is expected of us..."
- **A PLACE OF POWER**

"... It's a place of power, not only for you personally, but also for all the people to whom you belong." "It's an important place for us. It's a source and a battery that nourishes our national consciousness and our sense of self as Crimean Tatars."; "It's a place where I feel fully happy, needed, and important."
- **THE SEA**

"This is the sea that I never found in Odessa or the Kherson region..."
- **THE MOUNTAINS**

"... From an early age, wherever you go in the steppe of western Crimea, you always see the Crimean Mountains. When the weather is clear, I often compare them to Donbas slag heaps, but of course, they're a little different..."
- **STOLEN HAPPINESS**

"Stolen happiness from those people who survived deportation. The Crimean Tatars were forced to leave Crimea when the Russian Empire arrived on the peninsula. These are the generations that were forced to migrate. Now, most of those who migrated under the Russian Empire have lost their identity and can no longer say for sure if they are Crimean Tatars. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't..."
- **PARADISE**

"Crimea is a paradise; it's my paradise. It seems to me that this is the place where a person can truly be happy." "From 2001 to 2014, before the second occupation and the temporary occupation, I truly lived in paradise. I could not get enough of Crimea. After 2014, I realized that I had been living in paradise...."
- **STRUGGLE AND SUFFERING**

"... These are the sufferings that the Crimean Tatars endured to feel at home in Crimea throughout the ages. It is a historical period that connects the Crimean Tatars with Crimea."; "It is also a place of pain because this land is associated with much of the drama in our national history."
- **THE UNIFICATION FACTOR**

"... The Crimean Tatars cannot exist without Crimea. Today, this is a factor that unites Crimean Tatars around the world. It is a struggle for the future of Crimea so that other Tatars can live in better conditions and develop as a people. They want to have their place on this globe."

CRIMEA FOR CRIMEAN TATARS

- THE GOLDEN CRADLE

"Our people who remain in Crimea also guard the Golden Cradle. We have a legend about the Golden Cradle. Somewhere in the high mountains, there is a golden cradle waiting for its sons and daughters." "The golden cradle of my people..." "The golden cradle of Ukraine, which was Crimea for us..."

- MEMORIES

"... It's something so secret and sacred. It's personal, very personal. It's where all my memories are, where my childhood and youth are, where my best years have passed..."

- FRIENDS

"...it's my multicultural friends. I used to live in Kerch, and I would say that Crimean Tatars were less than 5% of the population..."

- BROKEN IDENTITY

"For me, Crimea is something I have never fully experienced. I would say it's a place that has never existed for me. Even when I was in Crimea, I hardly saw it. It wasn't customary for us to travel just to learn and discover. In principle, I think this is the problem of most Crimean Tatars who returned in the 1990s. They all tried to survive

somehow. Matters like traveling and excavating your own culture and history weren't that important. When Crimea was next to me and I had the opportunity to study it, I didn't. I am very sorry about that, but it wasn't my fault because I was a child at the time...."

- DESTINATION OF THE SPIRIT

"Now, every day, my thoughts are about Crimea. If I dream at night, it's about Crimea. If there are events, they're about Crimea. In short, Crimea is the destination of all my efforts and endeavors...."

- HISTORY

"First of all, it's history, identity, and culture. It's also about pride in the state that existed a few hundred years ago, which was a large European state..."

- THE STEPPE

"Here is this steppe. It is bombastic and cannot be compared to anything. It looks like what they write in books, but in reality, when you go out in the summer near sunset, everything is fragrant, there's a warm breeze, and there's nothing around..."

- TRANQUILITY

"I immediately associate it with the word 'tranquility'. It's like I'll find peace..."

- THE BEACH

"... There are places that are probably some kind of beach. For Crimeans, it's a once-a-year thing: you go there at night, in the evening, or in the morning, and then you have to return because you need to go to the market."

- THE FOOTING

"Crimea is my footing, something I lean on. It's like the roots of a tree because they feed it and help it grow and produce new branches and fruits. This is what Crimea is for me. I can compare it to the roots of a tree that branch out and grow..."

- ISLAM

"...it is also a religion. We are Muslims, and thanks to Islam, we have a great history as the Crimean Tatars, as well as strength and spirituality."

- CHILDHOOD

"It is the place of my childhood. I had a lot going on there. Much of my life happened there because it was so fundamental at the time..."

CRIMEA FOR CRIMEAN TATARS

- EVERYTHING

"Crimea is... everything. "

- A DREAM

"In the families of the Crimean Tatars, Crimea was a dreamy place, and they all dreamed of returning there..."

- PART OF UKRAINE

"To me, Crimea is part of the sovereign Ukrainian state."

- THE BELBEK VALLEY

"I really like the Belbek Valley. I have not been to many places in Crimea. Indeed, I have not been there. Even now, when you meet people at work, and they tell you about places you haven't been to, you realize you haven't been there. You would have come in the summer, but you didn't have time for such things. We were either building houses or selling watermelons and melons."

Then, oops! It's already September 1st, and you're on the train back to Kyiv. No one could guess where you got such a suntan. Then, I would say I was on vacation in Nice. For me, if there's a place of power, it's apparently the Belbek Valley."

- ME

"Crimea is me."

- THE DESIRE TO BE BURIED THERE

"You have no idea how badly I want to go back home. It's very difficult for me to convey this state and the emotions in my heart and soul. Very difficult. I really want to go back. I want to be buried there. My grandmother dreamed of it. Unfortunately, her dream didn't come true. I want to be buried in the same cemetery as my parents. Maybe that sounds a little morbid. Such thoughts don't inspire much enthusiasm. But I still want it..."

- PEOPLE

"For me, personally, it means people. Before the occupation, it was about cities as well. But I remember the moment I was abroad and already missed Simferopol. After the occupation, I went to Crimea and walked through Simferopol. I saw Russian flags and billboards with St. George's ribbons. It was something very cringe Russian. Since that time, Crimea has only meant the people close to me who live there. Now, it's all about the people for me. First of all, it's the people who live there. Without them, it just loses its meaning. The people among whom I lived and grew up, first and foremost, Crimean Tatars, Qırımli. But yes, there were also good people of other nationalities."

THE CASE OF ANNEXATION

CRIMEAN TATARS RALLIED TO RESIST THE ANNEXATION IN 2014 AND ARE PROUD OF THEIR COMPATRIOTS' INCLUSION IN THE ARMED FORCES SINCE 2022. HOWEVER, THE ETHNIC REPRESSION EXERTED BY THE OCCUPIERS ON THE PENINSULA CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR AND DISTRUST OUTSIDE THE CLOSE CIRCLE, AND RESISTANCE MOVED TO THE CULTURAL PLANE.

- **RESISTANCE TO RUSSIAN INVADERS.**

February 26, 2014, was a significant date in the resistance to the annexation, when Crimean Tatars gathered in large numbers in front of the ARC Parliament building: *"The Crimean Tatars held a rally. It was February 26, 2014. They did not allow the deputies of the Crimean parliament to hold a pseudo-vote for secession."* The struggle continues today in two forms: both at the front, in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (*"The Crimean Tatars are fighting at the front during this difficult period for our state"*), and in the cultural resistance to occupation on the peninsula: *"Those who remain in Crimea continue to fight under occupation for 10 years, showing that Crimea is still Ukraine."* Informants also view the strengthening of Crimean

Tatar cohesion as a sign of resistance, especially in 2014, immediately after the annexation: *"There was a new stage of unification of the Crimean Tatars. First, everyone returned to Crimea and lived in difficult conditions. Then, things stabilized somewhat. In 2014, a new wave of national unification emerged against this backdrop."*

- **REPRESSIONS.**

The oppression of the Crimean Tatars began immediately after the 2014 annexation: *"If you look at the list of political prisoners from 2014, most of them are Crimean Tatars",* and it **only intensified from there:** *"After 2016, political prisoners appeared—not the first, but in large numbers."* Informants emphasize that the Russians have created an atmosphere of total fear

and "collective responsibility" on the peninsula, where people are afraid not only for themselves, but also for their loved ones: *"Sometimes we want to scream, but we can't. We know that if we only shout once, our loved ones will suffer."* This fear even penetrates the home, because parents understand that their children could accidentally say something in public: *"... Even in families today, young children aren't taught or told much. These children could say something unnecessary, and then they would come to your house and take away your father.. It's like there are three statuettes: 'I hear nothing', 'I say nothing', 'I see nothing'. Unfortunately, the younger generation in Crimea grows up in isolation, in their own environment. In such silent isolation."*

THE CASE OF ANNEXATION

THE ANNEXATION CAUSED ANOTHER WAVE OF FORCED MIGRATION, BOTH TO THE MAINLAND OF UKRAINE AND AROUND THE WORLD. MIGRATION TO TURKEY LEADS MORE EASILY TO ASSIMILATION DUE TO CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS AFFINITY. AS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN THEIR HISTORY, THE OCCUPIERS PURSUE A POLICY OF REPLACING THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION WITH LOYAL RUSSIANS

- **ASSIMILATION OF REFUGEES.**

Although leaving Crimea for mainland Ukraine is perceived as a forced step, "We are citizens living far from Crimea, but we are in a state that at least remembers us." Crimean Tatars feel like full-fledged citizens here, although they are not the owners of their land: "I don't feel 100% at home here like I do in Crimea. In Crimea, I feel like the master." Assimilation is considered the greatest threat to the national identity of those who left for Turkey: "... as a Crimean Tatar who lives in Kyiv, I am definitely less assimilated than those living in Turkey due to the similarity of language and religion." However, the assimilation of diaspora communities in European countries is much slower: "At least 25,000 Crimean Tatars live in

Romania. They are the descendants of migrants who came in the 19th century. They were able to maintain their identity. "

- **RUSSIFICATION AND SETTLEMENT OF CRIMEA BY RUSSIANS.**

Unlike with ethnic Ukrainians on the peninsula, Russia is not trying to assimilate the Crimean Tatars directly. However, propaganda is doing everything possible to convince everyone of the personal benefits of collaborating with the occupiers. Informants acknowledge that this level of influence is threatening, given its intensity and scope: "The biggest threat to the Crimean Tatars is Russian propaganda, which operates both internally and externally. It portrays

Crimean Tatars as supporters who have received privileges and support the war and the Russian regime." In addition to propaganda, after the annexation, the occupiers resorted to the usual Russian practice of replacing the indigenous population with Russians of different nationalities, as they do in other TOT of Ukraine: "More than 600,000 Russians, along with their mentality, came to Crimea, including many from the Caucasus." The Russian Federation's policy of inviting the most loyal supporters of Putin's regime to Crimea is considered deliberate: "Russians are relocated there. They are repulsive and stupid people, such as KGB officers and SMO fighters. They are granted land and houses."

THE CASE OF ANNEXATION

THE WEAK RESISTANCE TO THE ANNEXATION IN 2014 – BOTH FROM THE UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES AND FROM ETHNIC UKRAINIAN-CRIMEANS – GAVE RISE TO A SENSE OF BETRAYAL, PARTICULARLY IN CONTRAST WITH THE QIRIMLI'S RESISTANCE IN THE FIRST DAYS, WHEN THEY HOPED FOR UKRAINE'S HELP. HOWEVER, IT WAS THIS QIRIMLI'S RESISTANCE AND INVARIABLE PRO-UKRAINIAN POSITION THAT SPARKED UKRAINIAN INTEREST, ESPECIALLY SINCE 2022.

- **BETRAYAL FROM THE UKRAINIAN SIDE.**

In 2014, informants were surprised that the annexation took place with virtually no resistance from Ukraine: *"It was very strange to me: there was hardly any shooting in Crimea in 2014. Ukraine just gave Crimea away. As much as it hurts."* They recall resisting in the first days of the annexation and hoping until the end that the Armed Forces of Ukraine would rebuff the occupiers. When this did not happen, they felt betrayed: *"Few Ukrainians know that it was the Crimean Tatars who gathered with Ukrainian flags and prevented the flag from being changed at the Mejlis building. For more than*

seven days, Russian flags were hanging everywhere, yet the Ukrainian flag remained hoisted on the house of the Mejlis, and they could not remove it. People kept up the defense until the last moment, believing that the army would rise up and fight back. But this did not happen. They felt betrayed." They wonder why, out of the 600,000 ethnic Ukrainians on the peninsula, only a few activists joined the Crimean Tatar rally; while the rest, for some reason, *"did not hold two rallies or one twice as large."*

- **INTENSIFICATION OF UKRAINIAN INTEREST.**

According to the informants, this intensification took place against the backdrop of ongoing resistance to the annexation, especially after February 2022: *"...indeed, Ukrainians became more interested in both Crimea and the Crimean Tatars. Who are the Crimean Tatars? Why do they support Ukraine?"* They are proud that in Ukraine, *"for the first time in history, a Crimean Tatar, Rustem Umerov, was appointed to a top post under martial law."* And in general, *"Ukraine is increasingly perceiving the Crimean Tatars not as strangers, but as its own people."*

THE CASE OF ANNEXATION

WITH THE BEGINNING OF RUSSIA'S FULL-SCALE INVASION OF UKRAINE, WHICH DID NOT BRING THE AGGRESSOR A QUICK VICTORY, THE CRIMEAN TATARS FELT A SURGE OF HOPE FOR DE-OCCUPATION. WITH THE YEARS OF WAR, THIS HOPE HAS FADED FOR SOME, BUT MOST CRIMEANS HAVE UNDERSTOOD: AT LEAST, IT IS NECESSARY TO PREPARE A GENERATION OF THEIR CHILDREN FOR LIBERATION FROM RUSSIA

- **HOPE FOR DE-OCCUPATION.**

Informants agree that this hope materialized with the start of a large-scale invasion because the situation in Crimea could "thaw": *"I heard a lot of euphoria from everyone saying that this is the beginning of Crimea's return. There was a freeze; the situation was unclear, and it was difficult to discern what was happening. Then, a serious invasion of Ukrainian territory began, which many perceived as an opportunity to liberate Crimea."* Typically, unlike in 2014, not all Crimean Tatars believed Ukraine and Ukrainians were capable of effective self-defense in 2022. However,

Ukrainians have shown that they are. However, over the years, this hope has begun to fade among some informants: *"Now, once again, it turns out that the war has turned into a war of attrition. I think faith is decreasing again, though it increased significantly in 2022."* Nevertheless, the prevailing opinion is that *"de-occupation will happen; I don't know, maybe not as soon as it seems now", because "people are really counting on Ukraine. They are sure that there will be no future with Russia."* In general, after several years of full-scale war, the Crimean Tatars realize that de-occupation may not happen in the

near future. However, despite the fears and self-restraint described above in the section "Repressions," they are preparing their children for its accomplishment: *"They say that we are waiting for Ukraine; we are waiting for it to be there."* Of course, there is already a generation of children who have graduated from schools where they were taught that Crimea is Russia. But they come home and know their history; they know that Crimea is Ukraine. I think that when de-occupation happens, young people will know which state is better."

THE CASE OF ANNEXATION DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-NARRATIVES

THE MOST DETERMINED SUPPORTERS OF THE FIGHT AGAINST THE OCCUPATION ARE THE SPEAKERS OF THE ISLAMIC SUB-NARRATIVE. ADHERENTS OF THE TRADITIONAL SUB-NARRATIVE MOST VISIBLY DENY THE INFLUENCE OF RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA ON THE PEOPLE UNDER OCCUPATION. ALMOST ALL ADHERENTS OF THE MODERN SUB-NARRATIVE FOCUS ON ETHNICALLY-CONDITIONED REPRESSIONS

- **RESISTANCE TO RUSSIAN INVADERS.**
Adherents of the Islamic sub-narrative, as well as those representatives of the Modern sub-narrative, who serve in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, are most willing to talk about the resistance.
- **RUSSIFICATION AND SETTLEMENT OF CRIMEA BY RUSSIANS.**
Adherents of the Traditional sub-narrative hardly ever mention this aspect of the occupation.
- **REPRESSIONS.**
Almost all adherents of the modern sub-narrative emphasize the repression of indigenous peoples since the occupation in 2014. Among the other sub-narratives, only about half of the informants discuss it. However, virtually everyone who spoke about it used the same rhetoric.

RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

THE CRIMEAN TATARS AND UKRAINIANS HAD THE SAME PROBLEMS AND SUCCESSES BECAUSE OF AN AGGRESSIVE NEIGHBOR. HOWEVER, RUSSIA DID NOT MANAGE TO SOW DISTRUST BETWEEN THEM

- SIMILAR FATES

Many informants emphasize that the two peoples were united by a common enemy, Russia, and by their successful fight against it: *"There was no battle in which the Cossacks overcame Muscovy without the support of the Crimean Khanate,"* or: *"The Crimean Tatars... and the People's Movement began the whole struggle."* At the same time, however, there was also the experience of shared suffering: *"... The status of the Crimean Tatar language was the same as that of the Ukrainian language.."* Many emphasize the similarity of historical processes: *"Even over the years, the same things were happening... In Halychyna, I didn't explain the fate of the Crimeans to anyone because deportations occurred there as well... The Holodomor also affected Crimea."* In later historical periods, there are also

parallels: *"This similarity was understood at the beginning of the 20th century, when the Crimean People's Republic was established.... Poets who translated Ukrainian literature into Crimean Tatar and vice versa",* or: *"When I watched the film 'House of the Word', I thought, 'God, we can do the same for the Quirimli.'"*

- STEREOTYPES AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES.

Ukrainian society has common stereotypes about Crimean Tatars: *"the Crimean Tatars bear a grudge... it turns out that they betrayed the Soviet people by siding with the Germans."* Sometimes these stereotypes appear in a patriotic context: *"Crimean Tatars are sometimes portrayed as barbarians in some Ukrainian works."* And Crimea is often presented as merely a vacation destination. *"Crimean Tatars are people who live only in summer, and only on the*

seashore. In winter, they hibernate. I felt this at work. "

Such stereotypes have their roots in centuries past: *"We are strangers, like some Turks... It was invented by Catherine II... Including the use of the term 'Tatars'. Newcomers, yoke."* The media perpetuates these stereotypes: *"In the news, whenever there are fights, they always emphasize that the participants were Crimean Tatars."* Russia has an interest in this: *"They are interested in conflicts on the outskirts of their empire in order to become pseudo-peacemakers. Their minions in Ukraine are a pro-Russian lobby."* This threat will persist in the future: *"There will be propaganda on social media that works to divide people. For example, they can pump the myth that the Crimean Tatars will go to Turkey at any opportunity."*

RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENT ORIGINS, CULTURE AND RELIGION, THE MENTALITY OF BOTH PEOPLES IS VERY SIMILAR.

- CULTURAL & RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES.

Informants recognize the traditional differences between Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars: *"The factor of religion makes us different. The language comes first, and so does the food."*

However, these factors are few:

"Specifically here in Halychyna, religion is the only difference for me. Everything else is the same." **These differences are considered not very significant:** *"Our religion is monotheistic for both Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars. That is, monotheism: acceptance and recognition of one God. Also, it's great that Ukraine has accepted the Tomos."*

However, there are some differences in other traditions: *"... In Ukrainian society, there is a balance between matriarchy and patriarchy. In Crimean Tatar families, of course, it is patriarchy."* **In later historical periods, there are also parallels:** *"Perhaps, Ukrainian youth are more open to new things and to others*

than Crimean Tatar youth are. Maybe because of traditions." **Some differences also arise because of the status of the titular nation:** *"Crimean Tatars know a little more about Ukrainian culture than vice versa," or: "If a Ukrainian encounters another Ukrainian in Kyiv, he won't ask, 'Where are you from?' But if the person is a Crimean Tatar, the Ukrainian, having heard the Crimean Tatar name, will ask, 'Where are you from?' And 100% of the time, they will exchange phone numbers."*

- SIMILARITY OF CHARACTERS.

There are many common features, including a love of freedom, democracy, work, land, parents and elders, self-organization, ambition, acceptance of different cultures, and humanity. Sometimes the love of democracy is surprising: *"... Democracy was not present for so long in the history of our*

peoples, but it seems as if it is embedded in our DNA." **There is noticeable respect for bread:** *"a Ukrainian or Crimean Tatar would never throw bread in the trash."* **Tolerance is valued:** *"They never meddle in other people's affairs. They focus purely on their families and their country. Both Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians are creative peoples. I believe we are one people."* **Problematic features mentioned include a love of arguing:** *"we can seem very united on the outside, but there are a lot of different things going on inside, and a lot of criticism of each other", as well as patience:* *"It is patience. It seems like a good feature, but sometimes people become conformists. When tolerance is over, what begins is 'Oh my!' Beware of the wrath of the patient."*

RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

INFORMANTS DON'T HIDE MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN THE PAST OR FEARS FOR THE FUTURE. THEY HOPE TO OVERCOME THEM

- CURRENT MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

Possible future solutions, such as abandoning Crimea, are considered risks to relations between the two peoples: "If Ukraine cedes its territories to Russia and goes to negotiations, this will change my opinion of the Ukrainian people." In case of a victory over Russia, however, there is another danger: "if the Ukrainian state forgets its promises to support the indigenous people and their autonomy...". This situation is perceived as being even worse than the inherent chauvinism of all peoples. Stereotypes are cited as the reason for such risks: "Some say: 'if we grant them autonomy now, they will want to join Turkey'... and even Nazi slogans are heard," and the fact of being under occupation: "I am very afraid that they will start to exaggerate as if all the Crimean Tatars were collaborators. It will be so ungrateful." An important fear is that

Crimean residents may suffer from Ukrainian chauvinism after experiencing Russian chauvinism: "this chauvinism exists in the narratives of far-right groups... There are cases in which these groups have beaten LGBT and Muslim women. If Crimea is de-occupied, it may also apply to the Crimean Tatars." But even today, those who come from Crimea face problems with housing, accommodations, and university admissions.

- MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN THE PAST.

There were even more misunderstandings in the past. Before 2014, for example, the Ukrainian authorities did not support the Crimean Tatars: "The 1990s were a time when the Crimean Tatars returned and needed support. The Ukrainian riot police interfered, and murders occurred in Krasny Ray." In general, Ukraine did

not defend Crimea well enough: "there are reproaches to the Ukrainian authorities, who, before 2014, behaved in such a way that they could simply come and arrest people." There were also difficult moments when authoritarian leaders were elected in Ukraine: "Any swing towards autocracy is also a threat to the indigenous people. This is about the times of Yanukovich and Kuchma." At that time, the Crimeans were considered unreliable: "In the Security Service of Ukraine and the Crimean administration, practically no staff members were Crimean Tatars." There are also accusations about cultural policy in Ukraine: "The Khan's Palace... it was in 2010–2011. They wanted to restore it. It was horrible: they ruined the staircase and walls with watercolor patterns. Then, the Russians demolished the roof... They threw away 500- to 600-year-old balconies."

RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

IN GENERAL, THE INFORMANTS ARE CONFIDENT THAT A SHARED PAST WILL LEAD TO A SHARED FUTURE.

- MUTUAL HISTORICAL INFLUENCE.

Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars share a similar ethnogenesis and have influenced each other throughout history: "We have a shared history. The Kipchaks lived in areas that are now Ukraine. Different peoples, such as the Scythians and Sarmatians, also lived in Crimea. We have historically had common diplomatic relations." This is also evident in the language: "4,000 words in the Ukrainian language are of Crimean Tatar and Turkic origin... There is similar cuisine found among Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars. For example, *alushke sorbasi*. You can already hear phonetically that this is a soup with *halushki*, " and in folk art: "If we look at the color palettes and ornaments of Ukrainians and Crimean

Tatars, we will find many similarities," as well as in rituals: "Even the holidays, like caroling after New Year's. We had that custom, too," and in everyday practices: "The way they cultivated the land was similar." And much more.

- A COMMON FUTURE.

It is emphasized that Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars share a common "vision of the future": "Democratic principles and values are important to the Crimean Tatars. They can only fully develop as a people within a democratic, independent Ukrainian state." For this future, they are fighting alongside Ukrainians: "The commander of the 48th Battalion named after Noman Chelebijkhan says, "We are convinced that thanks to Ukraine, we have a chance for revival."

- EXTERNAL SIMILARITY.

Despite different ethnogeneses, representatives of the two peoples are similar in appearance: "Anthropologically, we are very similar to Ukrainians. Sometimes you think a person is a Crimean Tatar, but then you find out he is Ukrainian from Cherkassy."

- OTHER FACTORS OF RAPPROCHEMENT.

These include a shared love for Crimea, a shared orientation toward Europe and its values, and the current participation of Crimean Tatars in important positions within the Ukrainian government, which is considered a significant accomplishment.

RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

THERE ARE VERY FEW DIFFERENCES IN THE DESCRIPTION OF RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE. THEY ARE MANIFESTED RATHER AS THE ATTENTION PAID TO SOME ASPECTS OF SUCH INTERACTION. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE MODERN SUB-NARRATIVE, THEY ARE MORE APPRECIATIVE OF THE CURRENT COOPERATION WITH THE UKRAINIAN AUTHORITIES. IN THE TRADITIONAL SUB-NARRATIVE, THEY ARE AFRAID OF AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.

- SIMILAR FATES.

Representatives of the Modern and Traditional sub-narratives discuss historical parallels more broadly, providing specific examples. In the Islamic sub-narrative and the responses of neutral informants, these messages tend to be brief.

- CURRENT MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

Representatives of the Traditional sub-narrative discuss them more than others.

- HISTORICAL INTERACTION.

Those in the Modern sub-narrative pay relatively more attention to it.

- PARTICIPATION IN STATE BUILDING.

This is emphasized exclusively by representatives of the Modern sub-narrative.

RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

FOR THE CRIMEAN TATARS, THE CORE CHARACTERISTICS OF RUSSIA AND ITS INHABITANTS ARE ETERNAL INVADER APPETITES, DEEPLY INGRAINED IN THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS, AS WELL AS CHAUVINISM AND A TENDENCY TOWARD THE PHYSICAL EXTERMINATION OF SUBJUGATED PEOPLES.

- **EXISTENTIAL ENMITY.**

Speakers describe Russians as eternal invaders: "They want everything they like, and everything that's not tied down, to be theirs." "What do we have in common? I don't know what we have in common. Just that they subjugated us 240–250 years ago. That's all." **There are also encroachments on foreign lands among ordinary Russians:** "any ordinary Russian may not like Putin, but he generally supports the seizure of new territories." **They appeal to the long history of wars with the Russians:** "Still, we had more moments with the Russians when we fought"; "A very long history of bad neighborly relations."

- **DOMESTIC & STATE CHAUVINISM.**

Some believe that this trait is genetically embedded in Russians:

"Somehow, imperialism and chauvinism are inherent in them at the genetic level"; "For me, a Russian is a person who always has a negative attitude toward other nationalities and peoples." **They are not even interested in learning about the experiences of other people:** "...they destroy any people. Instead of getting to know it."

- **KATSAP MEANS "BUTCHER".**

The memory of the attempts to exterminate or oust the Crimean Tatars: "for centuries, like the Ukrainian people, they tried to wipe [the Crimean Tatars] off the face of the earth"; **Russia is firmly associated with genocidal practices that have long been overlooked:** "They were allowed to commit genocide against all the peoples they occupied. And it continues even now"; "Our children

already know, and my grandchildren know that this enemy only wants to destroy us." **The word "Katsap" has a Turkic origin, and its meaning is symbolic:** "Why "Katsap"? It translates as "butcher." The one who cuts everything. How can you talk to a butcher? After 2022, we know: only with weapons."

- **NO PRINCIPLES OR RELIABILITY.**

There is a historical reluctance to trust the Russians: "When you talk to a Katsap—we call them Katsaps, but here they call them Moskali—you always keep an axe handy. Not a word of theirs can be trusted." **At the same time, the Russians have a complete absence of personal principles:** "Secondly, these are very unprincipled people, you know. "Any jacket is double-sided if you're unprincipled, as they say."

RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

BEHIND RUSSIA'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE EXTERNAL ARENA ARE NUMEROUS COMPLEXES AND TRAUMAS: THE EXPERIENCE OF PROLONGED SLAVERY, HELPLESSNESS, THE DESIRE FOR OSTENTATIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS, AND EVEN DRUNKENNESS

- AGGRESSIVE "SOFT POWER".

Promotion of the idea that Russian culture is elitist: *"We were raised on the works of their great scientists, poets, culture, and everything else. As if we didn't have anything of our own. They had composers and great singers; they had everything: great mathematicians and chemists. We only grazed cows or sheep."* The Russians are inclined to interfere in other people's affairs: *"This is a powerful state with powerful tentacles that they have extended around the world."*

- SLAVE MENTALITY.

It is about the powerlessness of Russians, in contrast to the Crimeans: *"A nation of slaves who are driven, who do not have their rights, who do not have any resources."*

- BLACK ENVY.

It is the combination of pride and helplessness: *"It constantly destroys everything, envies others, and tries to show that it is the best and strongest."*

- ASSIMILATION.

Russians erase people's and settlements' identities in their names: *"They make you ashamed to be a Crimean Tatar"; "Karasu-bazaar has become Belogorsk for a reason. Yani Kapu became Krasnoperekopsk."*

- RELIGIOUS QUARRELS.

Hatred is also caused by religion: *"...Islam is the least that Ukrainians care about in the Crimean Tatars... As for Russia, a more Islamophobic country yet needs to be found."*

- DRUNKENNESS AND ABUSE.

It is a sensitive topic, particularly in the context of Islam. It is a habit that the Russians transmitted to the Crimeans: *"From them, we took what destroyed us as a people: doing nothing, sitting idle, and drinking alcohol"; "He is a dirty, unwashed, eternally screaming, drinking Ivan. He cannot be anything close to us."*

- DISTANCING FROM THE TATARS IN RUSSIA.

Crimean Tatars are not the same as other with this name: *"In my village, there were one or two families specifically from Kazanlı. That is, Tatars from Kazan." At first, we thought: 'Oh, a Tatar. So, we must have something in common,' but after getting to know them better, we realized that we don't have much in common because they have been strongly assimilated."*

RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-NARRATIVES

THE MOST ORGANIC TENDENCY IN STORIES ABOUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF ASSIMILATION DUE TO THE ACTIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IS AMONG THOSE ABROAD WITH NEUTRAL VIEWS. THE MODERN SUB-NARRATIVE SPEAKERS DO NOT BOTHER WITH SHARP CHARACTERISTICS OF RUSSIANS AND ACCUSING THEM OF SERIOUS CRIMES

- **NEGATIVE CHARACTER TRAITS.**

The Modern sub-narrative focuses more on describing the unpleasant household habits of Russians, making comparisons to "livestock," and so on. The Traditional narrative and neutral speakers are more balanced and appeal to the historical context of Russian behavior (prolonged slavery and serfdom) and the absence of continuity ("a congregation without kin"). Alcohol consumption particularly triggers those of the Islamic sub-narrative.

- **ASSIMILATION.**

There is a noticeable emphasis on the assimilationist efforts of Russians in both the Modern sub-narrative and among neutral informants. In the latter case, this was more often expressed by people living outside of Ukraine (in Uzbekistan, the West, etc.). References were made to the tragedies of other peoples, particularly in Central Asia. Representatives of the Traditional sub-narrative articulated this issue less often, albeit with similar content.

THE IMAGE OF THE FUTURE OF CRIMEA

CRIMEA WANTS TO BE WITH UKRAINE BECAUSE IT IS ABOUT FREEDOM, THE INSEPARABLE CONNECTION (PARTICULARLY, GEOGRAPHICAL), AND THE LACK OF RESOURCES FOR INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE. HOWEVER, UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF CLEAR REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS.

- **CRIMEA WILL RETURN TO UKRAINE.**

This opinion unites the speakers of all sub-narratives and is proclaimed as the meaning of life: "If, at the end of the day, Crimea is not de-occupied and we all do not return to our homeland, then I don't understand the meaning of what I am doing at all." **Hope for the peninsula's prosperity is inextricably linked with de-occupation:** "under the conditions of occupation, there is no question of any development. It's about regression"; "We will have the opportunity to build an even stronger, more capable, you know, and more significant Crimea as part of Ukraine." **And also, joining the European civilization:** "We will consider ourselves part of Europe, and we'll be free. Freedom of speech and freedom in

everything." Every day, they prove their devotion to Ukraine through their actions: "Crimean Tatars are fighting with weapons and politically, and as a people alongside Ukrainians."

- **CRIMEA IS TOO SMALL TO BE INDEPENDENT.**

Their motivation to be part of a state is their lack of its own resources: "Crimea is too weak and small to function independently"; "There is no chance of existing in today's geopolitical circumstances. Russia is close by."

- **POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.**

There are high hopes for the representation of Crimean Tatars in local institutions: "I would like to see mandatory representation of Crimean Tatars in the politics of Crimea"; "It

seems to me that the authorities should still have quotas." **There is an emphasis on correcting the mistakes of the past:** "So that those people who have Ukrainian passports today but were resettled in Crimea in 1944 and are actually Russian won't get into power."; "There were no Crimean Tatars in the SBU until 2014. They just didn't accept them. The SBU was preparing to see a threat from the Crimean Tatars and not the Russian 'brothers'." **There is a desire to be involved in decision-making:** "Having institutions and the opportunity to influence decisions—not dictating, of course—is extremely important"; "Giving the right to manage processes and dispose of native land"; "...because it will be fair. "

THE IMAGE OF THE FUTURE OF CRIMEA

RELOCATED CRIMEAN TATARS DREAM OF BEING IN CRIMEA AGAIN WITHOUT OBSTACLES. THERE ARE HOPES FOR FURTHER CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. IN THE CASE OF DE-OCCUPATION, THE RUSSIANS WILL EITHER HAVE TO LEAVE OR ACCEPT UKRAINIAN REALITIES

- RETURN TO THE HOMELAND.

Those who relocated because of the occupation dream of returning to Crimea: "May God help me live to see the day when I can safely return"; "I don't see myself living on the mainland of Ukraine or anywhere else. No, I want to go home." I still identify Crimea as my home."

- DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.

There is an intention to revive and popularize the Crimean Tatar language: "The Crimean Tatar language will develop... There will be national schools

where children will learn the Crimean Tatar language"; "The names of Crimean Tatar cities and villages must be reinstated"; and "The Crimean Tatar language must not be allowed to become extinct."

There are also discussions about reviving historical heritage: "I found old houses of our ancestors, dilapidated mosques, and buildings left over from the Crimean Khanate era. I would like all of this to be preserved, and what can be restored to be restored."

- CRIMEA WITHOUT RUSSIAN "WAITERS". There is mention of the 1944

deportation and the forced change in the ethnic composition of Crimea: "I think the majority of Russians who support Russia were settled in 1944." There is hesitation between "soft" repatriation or "hard" deportation to the Russian Federation: "Well, probably, they should not be deported, but at least they must realize that if they want to live with Russia, they must go there and leave Crimea."; "It is very important to establish a system for the repatriation of Crimean Russians to Russia.", "I want those who arrived in the 1980s to fear the prospect of a Crimean Tatar caliphate and return."

THE IMAGE OF THE FUTURE OF CRIMEA

AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT THE DISSOLUTION OF CRIMEAN TATARS OUTSIDE CRIMEA IN OTHER COUNTRIES. SKEPTICS DO NOT CONSIDER DE-OCCUPATION ITSELF AS AN "EASY WALK"

- PROBABLE ASSIMILATION.

The risk of dissolving into other cultures: *"Part of us is in Central Asia, part is in Siberia, and part is in the Urals. Now, part of us is in Europe, just like the Ukrainians. Some of us remained in Turkey. They are considered Crimean Tatars but have assimilated."* *"For this handful of Crimean Tatars to survive in this huge world is a huge task."*; **And first of all, in culturally close Turkey:** *"I was in Turkey, in the city of Eskisehir, where 60 to 80 percent of the population is Crimean Tatar. The only thing left is the Cheburek signs and the Qırımli name. That's it."*; *"if the Crimean Tatars keep living in the Turkish environment, we know that the majority always has an impact..."*

- LACK OF AGENCY.

Ukraine and the Crimean Tatars have too little agency to determine the future: *"I don't see how I or the Crimean Tatars can solve anything for Crimea. Even Ukraine isn't in a position to decide. If the money faucet is turned off, what will happen next?"* **In general, there is no clear picture:** *"Every day I see different things. And it is more vague, so intangible and formless. "*

- CRIMEA WILL NOT RETURN TO UKRAINE, AT LEAST BY MILITARY MEANS.

There are hopes for the preservation of Ukraine itself and a window of opportunity after the collapse of Russia: *"Crimea may not be returned for 15–30 years. Empires fall apart. When empires fall apart, everything returns home"; "It*

is impossible to do this by military means. The only hope is the softening of the Russian regime."

- EVEN IF SO, THE COMPLETE DE-OCCUPATION WILL LAST A LONG TIME.

There is a gap between occupied Crimea and the rest of Ukraine, particularly an ideological one: *"There's a crazy gap between what we've achieved in Ukraine and what we haven't achieved in Crimea"; "It won't be easy to change the mindset of people who've lived under Russian propaganda for so many years."*; **Continued development of institutions and generational change:** *"... the formation of power in the territory of Crimea after the de-occupation. It won't be a quick process."*

THE IMAGE OF THE FUTURE OF CRIMEA DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-NARRATIVES

THE ISLAMIC SUB-NARRATIVE AVOIDS CLEAR EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, AS WELL AS ON THE IDEA THAT CRIMEA WILL RETURN TO UKRAINE. SPEAKERS OF THE MODERN SUB-NARRATIVE ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPRESS SPECIFIC VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE ARRANGEMENT (FOR EXAMPLE, QUOTAS IN POWER)

- **CRIMEA WITH UKRAINE.**

With the exception of the Islamic sub-narrative, all other sub-narratives clearly indicate support for the idea of continued existence as part of Ukraine (only one such message was recorded from an informant in Kyiv).

Representatives of the Ukrainian media and political mainstream argue in favor of this thesis because of Qırımlı's participation in the joint struggle with Ukrainians (in the army, diplomacy, public life, etc.).

- **ASSIMILATION.**

All sub-narratives view the loss of the Crimean Tatar identity as a threat through transitioning to another

language, forgetting their own language, merging with other cultures, and dispersing around the world. However, neutral informants talk less about it. Traditional sub-narrative speakers often focus on the risks of the assimilation of Crimean Tatars in Turkey due to minimal differences.

- **LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.**

All sub-narratives emphasize their dream of developing the Crimean Tatar identity, creating new cultural products, and promoting the study of indigenous languages in schools, except for the Islamic sub-narrative.

- **REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS.**

This idea is more relevant to the Modern sub-narrative and neutral informants. They more often articulate specific proposals, such as establishing quotas in local self-government bodies.

- **LACK OF VISIONS.**

Pessimistic visions are rarely seen in any of the sub-narratives. In the Modern sub-narrative, however, the emphasis is on the absence of grounds for visionary work due to general pessimism or thoughts about the impossibility of influencing global processes.

- **CRIMEAN TATARS HAVE A SINGLE NARRATIVE, WITH MINOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VERSIONS.**

Unlike the Ukrainian nation, which has three separate national narratives, the Crimean Tatars have a single, holistic vision of their people's history, present, and future. Ismail Gasprinsky established their historical narrative, which was continued by figures of the national revival in the first half of the 20th century and refined by a group of 1960s dissidents who spearheaded the return to Crimea at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. This narrative forms the basis of the Traditional sub-narrative. The other two are reinterpretations of it. The Modern Ukrainian-oriented narrative considers the Crimean Tatars part of the Ukrainian political nation because it formed in the "Kyiv" circle. The Islamic narrative sees the basis of the nation in

accepting Islam. Its proponents represent both the traditional Crimean understanding of Islam and its distinguished branches. Some informants do not immerse themselves in the details of national self-awareness; we call them "neutral."

- **NOTABLE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE CRIMEAN TATAR AND UKRAINIAN NATIONAL NARRATIVES.**

The Traditional sub-narrative resembles the Struggle for Ukrainian Culture narrative in that it is based on the works of Ukrainian intellectuals of the past and focuses on tragic historical events. The Modern sub-narrative contains features similar to the Ukrainian Civil Union narrative: it focuses more on the modern revival and achievements of recent decades, appealing to European messages about "unity in diversity."

- **IDENTITY.**

As with most colonial and postcolonial peoples, the Crimean Tatar identity is based on acceptance of national culture and emphasizes the importance of language. It is also based on the Crimean Tatars' participation in the struggle for their nation's destiny. Notable features include a geographical link to Crimea that persists even in the diaspora, allied relations with the Ukrainian people, and a greater or lesser Islamic identity. Some personal traits are emphasized as well, such as pride, love of freedom, hard work, and respect for elders. Differences between sub-narratives regarding identity are minimal.

- CONFLICT.

This parameter most clearly reveals the differences between the sub-narratives. All Crimean Tatars recognize one basic line of division: between those who remained on the peninsula and those who left, mainly the elite. However, there are two sub-narrative-specific dividing lines. The first is between pro-Russian traitors and everyone else. The Modern Ukrainian-oriented sub-narrative especially emphasizes condemnation of traitors, while the Traditional sub-narrative denies the significance of this phenomenon. In general, it is widely believed that there are no ideological traitors among the Crimean Tatars, only individuals who seek personal benefits from cooperating with the Russians. Therefore, there is no pro-Russian Crimean Tatar narrative. Second, there is a noticeable division between those whom some informants call "Islamists"

and the rest of the population. Representatives of the traditional sub-narrative see certain religious groups as the main source of quarrels within the nation. In the Islamic sub-narrative, there is noticeable dissatisfaction with those who break away from its spiritual basis.

Additionally, there are many other divisions, such as those regarding self-designation (Crimean Tatars or Qırımılı) and the effectiveness of different generations. These discussions are present in each sub-narrative and are quite natural in each nation.

- NATIONAL MYTHS.

The understanding of the ethnogenesis of the Crimean Tatars is based on the idea that they are descended from the many ancient peoples who lived on the peninsula. The myth of the "golden age" of the Crimean Khanate is important because it shaped the nation and

facilitated cultural exchange with other Muslim countries and the Western world. Next came the myth of the people's suffering: their lives were destroyed by the Russian Empire at the end of the 17th century. Since then, they have experienced a series of misfortunes and trials, with rare bursts of national revival, such as during the destruction of the Russian Empire and the Soviet policy of rooting them out. The greatest opportunity arose in the 1960s when Crimean Tatar dissidents began collaborating with Ukrainian dissidents. As a result, Ukraine's independence brought the longest period of prosperity in the nation's cultural and political life — the myth of revival began here. However, the Russians destroyed it again. These myths are all present in each sub-narrative, with only differences in emphasis.

- THE CASE OF ANNEXATION.

The events of 2014 and subsequent The Crimean Tatars perceive the events of 2014 and subsequent years as a tragedy that demonstrated their heroism because they protested against Russian troops. At the same time, they view it as a "betrayal" by Ukraine, which could not defend the peninsula. As a result, mass repression began in Crimea, and the assimilation of the Crimean Tatars began outside of Crimea. However, there was also some understanding between Crimeans and the rest of Ukraine, particularly due to the Crimean Tatars' service in Ukraine's Defense Forces. All of this creates hope for the de-occupation of Crimea.

- REGULATORY ORDER.

The people's main goals are to return most of their representatives to Crimea and to revive the national territorial autonomy within Ukraine on its territory, overcoming the economic, environmental, and other problems that

the occupation brought there. In pursuit of these goals, it is important to preserve one's identity, which is easier in Ukraine than in Turkey, for example. It is important to overcome misunderstandings with Ukrainians, who, under the influence of Soviet stereotypes, do not always trust Crimeans. It is also important to overcome misunderstandings within the people because the occupation created significant friction. There are no significant differences in goals between the sub-narratives.

- RELATIONS WITH UKRAINIANS AND RUSSIANS.

The Crimean Tatar people clearly oppose the Russians and search for similarities with Ukrainians. This confrontation is both mental and political. The Crimean Tatars share a love for work, freedom, and family with Ukrainians. In contrast, Russians are characterized by aggressiveness, unproductiveness, and the desire to

interfere in other people's affairs. The Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar peoples jointly fought against the Russian Empire.

- POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITUATION WITH THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUB-NARRATIVES.

The differences between the sub-narratives can be erased if there is reunification of the nation and the bearers of these narratives begin to share experiences. However, if the separation continues, the differences will deepen. Then, the formation of separate, full-fledged narratives is possible. However, this will not happen in Crimea itself because Russian occupiers suppress national consciousness there, and its inhabitants are less inclined to think about their people—at least in public—and therefore do not participate in developing the national narrative.