

From Deservingness to Precarity: Linguistic Constructions of Belonging in Polish Media Discourse on Ukrainian Refugees

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My presentation examines how Ukrainian refugees are represented in Polish media discourse following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Its aim is to identify the dominant evaluative frameworks shaping these representations and to explore how they interact within broader narratives of social inclusion, economic participation, and institutional governance. The study employs a corpus-assisted discourse analysis approach, combining quantitative corpus methods with qualitative interpretation. The dataset consists of Polish online media texts published between February 2022 and June 2024. The findings show that representations are primarily structured around a deserving frame, emphasizing vulnerability, victimhood, and humanitarian need as the main sources of legitimacy. A secondary precarious frame highlights instability, dependency on institutional support, and temporary status. The demanding frame appears less frequently and is typically expressed through indirect references to economic pressure, resource allocation, and systemic strain. Importantly, these frameworks often co-occur, producing layered representations in which refugees are simultaneously portrayed as vulnerable, economically relevant, and subject to administrative regulation. The study concludes that Polish media discourse reflects a dynamic tension between humanitarian solidarity and socioeconomic evaluation. While moral legitimization remains dominant, it is increasingly intertwined with economic and regulatory perspectives, resulting in a complex and evolving representation of refugees.

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