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**The dynamics of liberal media discourse on the
Middle Eastern migration crises: the case of
Gazeta Wyborcza in 2015 and 2021**

Magister (MA) Thesis

Thesis written under the supervision of
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July 2023

Krakow, Poland

Field of Studies: European Studies

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of:

Magister (mgr) of European Studies in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies:
Jagiellonian University, Poland

International Master`s (IntM) in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies:
University of Glasgow, UK

Master of Arts in Social Sciences (MA) in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian
Studies: University of Tartu, Estonia

Word count of the thesis: 24,272 words excluding abstracts, table of contents, footnotes,
bibliography, and appendix

Authorship Declaration: I have prepared this thesis independently. All the views of other authors,
as well as data from literary sources and elsewhere, have been cited.

[Polina Klochko, 24.07.2023]



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Abstract

The thesis examines the newspaper coverage of Middle Eastern migration to Poland and the European Union in the years 2015 and 2021. The case study explains how the liberal-democratic Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* framed the 2015 refugee crisis from the Middle East and the 2021 border dispute between Poland and Belarus in its online and in-print archived publications. The study traces the evolution of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s migration framing using the mixed-method research design. The frame analysis based on R. Entman (1993) and D. Snow and R. Benford (1988) supplements the R-based unigram and bigram generation.

The study revealed the predominance of humanitarian and guest frames in newspaper discursive constructions. Meanwhile, the discrepancies in immigration coverage stemmed from such contextual factors as proximity and crisis responsibility attribution. While the 2015 crisis coverage focused on war-led emigration from the country of origin, the 2021 border crisis description prioritised the hybrid warfare of Belarus against Poland.

Keywords: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, liberal discourse, migration crises, text mining, R analysis, frame analysis

Abstrakt

Rozprawa analizuje publikacje prasowe na temat migracji z Bliskiego Wschodu do Polski i Unii Europejskiej w latach 2015 i 2021. Studium przypadku wyjaśnia, w jaki sposób polska liberalno-demokratyczna *Gazeta Wyborcza* konstruowała kryzys uchodźczy z Bliskiego Wschodu w 2015 r. oraz kryzys na granicy Polski z Białorusią. Podstawą analizy są publikacje internetowe oraz archiwa dziennika. Celem analizy jest rekonstrukcja ewolucji ram migracji na łamach *Gazety Wyborczej* za pomocą metody mieszanej. Analiza ramowa, odwołująca się do modelu R. Entmana (1993) oraz D. Snowa i R. Benforda (1988), zestawiona jest o statystyczną analizę danych z wykorzystaniem programowania R i wizualizacją za pomocą unigramów i bigramów.

Badania ujawniły dominację ram humanitarnych i gościnnych w konstrukcjach dyskursywnych gazety. Rozbieżności w badanym materiale prasowym wynikały z takich czynników kontekstowych, jak bliskość i przypisanie odpowiedzialności za kryzys. Podczas gdy obraz kryzysu z 2015 r. koncentrował się na emigracji z kraju pochodzenia spowodowanej wojną, opis kryzysu granicznego z 2021 r. podporządkowany był priorytetowi wojny hybrydowej z Polską, toczonej przez Białoruś.

Słowa kluczowe: Gazeta Wyborcza, dyskurs liberalny, kryzysy migracyjne, eksploracja tekstu, analiza R, analiza ramowa

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I. Introduction

Migration is a natural phenomenon of human mobility and relocation. The dictionary definitions of migration include such keywords as “travelling” (“Migration,” 2023), “moving,” “periodical passing,” or “changing location” (“Migrate,” 2023). While focusing on physical movement, the definitions ignore other aspects of the migration phenomenon, such as immigration perception in hosting societies, legal conditions for relocation, and causes generating movement. The narrow conceptualisation decreases the multidimensionality of migration, generating a frame rather than an accurate description. Based on Entman’s (1993) perception of frame construction, I conceptualise a *frame* as treating objective reality from a subjectively defined angle that singles out reality’s distinct aspects and ignores or silences others.

My study suggests that dominant recurrent frames that one might meet in dictionary definitions, newspaper articles, or televised programmes are co-shaped within the interactions of various actors. In line with the multistep communication model, the interactions between marginalised groups, opinion leaders, media, businesses, and institutions (Weimann, 1982, p. 765) generate a discursive pool of meanings that individual actors and institutionalised bodies use in constructing frames of world phenomena such as migration. *Discourse*, as a system of “meaning-production” (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 17), consolidates the frames, allowing humans to understand complex reality processes.

Robert Entman is one of the scholars who deconstructed meaning assignment and information transmission in a multistep framing sequence. For Entman (1993), *framing* was a “communication process” occurring between “the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture” (p. 52). The communicator develops a text that includes migration frames by combining the human movement fact with additional characteristics, such as migration’s subjectively defined causes or effects. Another layer of subjectivism includes personal judgements, as positive or negative connotations attributed to migration phenomenon that can be socially acceptable or contested. In the media sphere, the direct message transmission from the medium as a communicator to the audience, as receivers, would illustrate the traditional view of media preponderance in information communication (Weimann, 1982, p. 765). However, subsequent research illustrated that other actors had a say in constructing world phenomena. From a two-step

(Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1964) to a multistep flow (Weimann, 1982), communicators deliver texts co-shaped by the culture in which communication happens. For Entman (1993), *culture* was a pool of “commonly invoked frames” operating within society (p. 53).

1.1 Case study design and research puzzle

The duality between the communicator’s agency in frame construction and the conflicting pressures of social culture, setting the communication framework, was the core of my framing analysis. My research goal was to understand and explain how the liberal-democratic medium, acting as a communicator, constructed migration phenomena in the preset cultural context. For the disciplined interpretative case study (Odell, 2001), I chose Poland, its liberal newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and the Middle Eastern immigration to Europe in 2015 and 2021. The choice of the country, medium, and migration phenomena require additional explanations.

Poland is an interesting country for studying migration coverage as the state witnessed both aspects of migration, such as outward relocation of Poles, emigration, and inward inflow of third-country nationals, immigration. Poland is an emigration country traditionally (ex. Metz-Göckel, Morokvasic-Müller, & Müntz, 2008, p. 249). According to the 2020 data from the Central Statistical Office, approximately 2.24 million people left Poland for other European countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands (Główny Urząd Statystyczny [GUS], 2021). On another side, the country faced several migration inflows starting from the middle of the 2010s. The inflows primarily concerned refugees, immigrants escaping persecution at home, and asylum seekers, possible refugees awaiting status clarification by host country authorities (Amnesty International, 2022). During the 2015 migrant inflow to Europe from the Middle East, Poland was only peripherally involved, while in the early 2020s, the state became a frontline for the asylum seekers’ inflows from the terrains of Belarus and neighbouring Ukraine.

While in 2015 Poland was not listed among central burden-bearing countries, in 2021, the state became the first entrance land for the Middle Eastern immigrants relocated with the assistance of Belarusian leadership. Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka created favourable conditions for asylum seekers and illegal migrants from the Middle Eastern states to reach the border with the European Union. According to the Polish border control *Straż Graniczna* (2022),

the share of illegal crossings on the terrestrial border between Poland and Belarus was nearly twelve times higher than in 2020, with most migrants being Iraqi, Afghani, and Syrian nationals.

While the Polish-Belarusian border controversies were managed at the level of border defence, challenging the consideration of asylum-seeking applications, the 2022 military intervention of the Russian Federation in Ukrainian lands was approached differently. During one of the visits to the Polish-Ukrainian border, Polish President Andrzej Duda remarked that “Poland will accept all refugees” coming from Ukraine (“Prezydent Andrzej Duda o uchodźcach,” 2022). The differences in how Polish authorities managed asylum seekers’ inflows from the Middle East and Ukraine made me question what was unique about the migrants at the Polish-Belarusian border. Why did Polish leadership perceive their claims as invalid in the first place? Was such a position supported by other societal actors and reflected in culture, or was it exclusively tied to leadership? These questions do not reflect the main research goal of my study but are important to consider within the literature review.

It would be insufficient to focus on a single instance of immigration to understand *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s coverage of Middle Eastern migration to Poland. The 2015 events preceded the 2021 border controversies, as asylum seekers from the same region of origin and with similar legal causes for relocation escaped the Middle East via a different route. Thus, I needed to analyse the framing of both cases and compare them to see how Middle Eastern immigration coverage evolved in *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s publications and Polish culture. In this study, I provided a solution for the variation over time empirical research puzzle (Day & Koivu, 2019). In both migration inflows, the list of leading actors remained comparable and included Middle Eastern asylum seekers on one side and European and Polish authorities with the local community and media on the other. However, the contextual factors differed, so I assumed that cases’ coverage in *Wyborcza*’s texts included different discursive constructions, even though the 2015 immigration affected the 2021 perceptions of Middle Easterners.

A critical remark concerns the communicator I chose to study the coverage of Middle Eastern immigration. For the investigation, I adopted a case study design for several reasons. Firstly, Entman’s (1993) framework required a single communicator who produced the frames through a coherent text. Secondly, choosing a media outlet for in-depth analysis rather than interviews or focus groups with Polish individuals allowed me to make inferences about a narrowly

defined population group, avoiding limitations such as unrecognised deviant cases and sampling bias. My study reflects the immigration frames deemed appropriate among *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s editors and readership.

According to Troszyński and El-Ghamari (2022), the newspaper represented the liberal stance on immigration and was the most active publisher of immigration-related pieces in the observation period (p. 4). Its journalists contested the discourse of the ruling conservative party Law and Justice (PiS) (Troszyński & El-Ghamari, 2022, p. 9); thus, *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s framing differed from the migration perceptions of the Polish government. Meanwhile, Troszyński and El-Ghamari (2022) also acknowledged the audience's pressure on *Wyborcza*'s publications, as "the moods of Poles" affected the newspaper's framing (p. 9). Thus, the case analysis of *Gazeta Wyborcza* required combining inferences on medium-specific characteristics in immigration coverage with the broader societal frames' influence on how to perceive the inflows. Throughout the paper, I denoted the frames as social or societal interchangeably.

Gazeta Wyborcza's susceptibility to the pressures of Polish culture made me question the temporal uniformity of the newspaper's immigration framing. As a liberal-democratic outlet valuing human rights and dignity, *Gazeta Wyborcza* favoured "solidarity with refugees" in its texts (Troszyński & El-Ghamari, 2022, p. 9). Troszyński and El-Ghamari (2022) argued that the newspaper did not generate discursive hostility towards refugees, by contrast to conservative outlets (p. 7). Meanwhile, the conflicting pressures from other media and the gradual rise in anti-immigrant aspirations within the society urged *Wyborcza* to include "threads relating to the threat" immigrants pose, alongside the focus on more liberal ideas of "Polish" and "European solidarity" (Troszyński & El-Ghamari, 2022, p. 7). Thus, in the context of rising societal antipathy towards immigrants, liberal-democratic newspapers, such as *Gazeta Wyborcza*, were likely to evoke positions on immigration that might conflict with the outlet's framing.

Among the main advantages of selecting *Gazeta Wyborcza* from the pool of liberal-democratic outlets for empirical testing, I could list the newspaper's high interest in migration topic, adaptability to the changing demands of the audience and time, reliance on sales profits rather than state advertisements and other subsidies, alongside the long-standing tradition of journalism and reputation in Polish media. From 1989, *Gazeta Wyborcza* consolidated its liberal and democratic stance on Polish society's development, opposing authoritarian governance

patterns (“O nas,” 2023). The newspaper was the first in Poland to supplement print publications with “electronic reading” options (Hendricks, 2010, p. 136), so *Wyborcza* has a rich archive of 2015 textual materials. By imitating an online resource, the newspaper entered the “intermedia competition” (Różycka, 2014, p. 112) and expanded its readership, leading to a rise in subscription profits. The newspaper has a substantial audience and represents “the largest opinion-forming daily in Poland and Eastern Europe,” according to the research centre Polskie Badania Czytelnictwa (2022).

1.2 Research question and procedure

Gazeta Wyborcza’s adaptability to the gradual computerisation and responsiveness to the changes in societal discussion on migration reflected how media development goes hand in hand with social. Mediatisation, as the intermingling of “media, cultural, and social change” (Averbeck-Lietz, 2014, p. 112), reassures the power of media to affect world phenomena in a way that their perception cannot be isolated from media communication processes (Krotz, 2017, p. 106). Assessing the mediatisation of migration, one speaks about the amalgamation (Schulz, 2004) of socially accepted definitions of immigrants and media templates incorporated in its texts, leading to the mutual constitutiveness of the societal and media frames. The inseparability of media and socially induced changes made me adopt the *mediatisation of migration* as my central concept. Acknowledging the power of social culture, I explored how *Gazeta Wyborcza* represented immigrants in its publications. An alignment of the current scholarly output on Poland’s attitude to immigrants with the processing of the selected media channel’s textual and visual data allowed me to fulfil the research goal.

The main research question of the paper can be formulated as follows: “If *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s coverage of Middle Eastern immigration to Poland changed from 2015 to 2021, how could the differences be explained?”. To operationalise *Wyborcza*’s coverage, I constructed an original primary data sample of the newspaper’s online and in-print archived publications on Middle Eastern migration in 2015 and 2021. In addition, I interpreted the visual materials associated with textual output. I used a mixed-method approach merging a quantitative R-based text mining and qualitative frame analysis for text evaluation. The main peculiarity of my research

design is a combination of two-factored frame analysis with computerised automatic data processing. The n-gram generation and network analysis in *RStudio* provided an unbiased summary of the corpora's most frequent words and collocations. Meanwhile, frame analysis based on Entman (1993) and Snow and Benford (1988) reflected the conflicting factors influencing frame construction, such as internal outlet views and external societal pressures (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52).

Entman-based framing helped me assess Polish culture's covert impact on *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s discursive constructions. To place *Wyborcza*'s discourse within the broader culture, I deductively generated societal frames on Middle Eastern immigration from the scholarly output on asylum provision and refugee perception in Poland. The frames are issue-specific (de Vreese, 2005, p. 54) and tied to the migration phenomenon. Meanwhile, Snow and Benford (1988) deconstructed the framing process into three tasks: diagnostics, prognosis, and motivation. Task-based frame analysis represented Middle Eastern migration as a phenomenon with causes and solutions the society was encouraged to use. Thus, framing tasks explained which traits *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s authors attributed to migration, and which actions the paper framed as the most appropriate.

Therefore, the study's objectives can be summarised as follows:

- Explore social frames about Middle Eastern asylum seekers and refugees in Poland that were deductively inferred from scholarly publications;
- Construct and interpret quantitatively the textual data consisting of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s publications online and in print on 2015 and 2021 migration inflows;
- Qualitatively compare *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s output with deductively generated social frames to estimate the positioning of immigrants' representation in the Polish newspaper within the broader societal culture;
- Qualitatively describe *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s 2015 and 2021 migration framing using Snow and Benford's (1988) tasks.

The paper combined a theoretical overview with text-based and supplementary visual analysis. I departed with an in-depth key concept exploration. I conducted a preliminary field observation by disentangling the *mediatisation of migration* into media impact and migration

phenomenon. Speaking of mediatisation, I reduced my observation to media-induced changes as my methodological toolkit did not allow for measuring social change and made me take social frames as controlled variables. Then, I further conceptualised my central and related concepts, such as mediatisation, framing, agenda-setting, priming, and media logic. The last two subsections on theoretical frameworking included discussing the newspaper's place in the Polish media system and a comparative overview of 2015 and 2021 immigration inflows' perceptions in the Polish society with the societal frames' discussion. The research procedure contained a detailed explanation of the mixed-method analysis and results. In the discussion part, I summarised the research findings, answered the question, and delimited a space for future research contributions.

II. Theoretical background

The theoretical background chapter overviewed scholarly output on print media effects and migration phenomenon in the European Union. I began with a generalised computer-based literature observation. Combined use of the citation platform *Web of Science* and a *VosViewer* visualisation tool grasped a more significant number of texts than a qualitative approach. Moreover, it corrected for the effects of selection bias while individually picking the articles of interest. For sample tailoring, I used research queries unpacking the peculiarities of my research concept, *mediatisation of migration*. After interpreting the meaningful bibliographic clusters, I refocused on different aspects of my case study. One section critically analysed the approaches to mediatisation and media effects. Another specified the nuances of the Polish media space and *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s positioning. The last section contrasted the 2015 and 2021 migration inflows and connected the flows with the societal frames of migration.

2.1 Preliminary investigation of the migration studies and media effects fields

As a preliminary step in my critical analysis of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s coverage of Middle Eastern immigration, I conducted a computer-based bibliographic overview using the citation platform *Web of Science*. Founded in the early 1960s, the *Web of Science* is the oldest database accumulating academic output in a “selective, structured, and balanced” manner (Birkle, Pendlebury, Schnell, & Adams, 2020, pp. 363-364). One of the database's features is “English-language journals overrepresentation” (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016, p. 214), which is advantageous for compiling linguistically uniform and rich literature samples in English.

The retrieved text corpora included titles, authors, and abstracts. Data was subsequently uploaded into the software for bibliographic data processing and “visualisation of similarities” (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010, p. 524) called *VosViewer*. The “software tool ... for bibliometric networks” analysis (Van Eck & Waltman, 2021, p. 3) forms a map based on word co-occurrences and traces the most popular word combinations. As my central research concept, *mediatisation of migration*, is twofold, I gathered literature on two separate topics: print media effects on the audience and Middle Eastern migration to Europe. On the one hand, I positioned publications on

print media and its penetration in the online sphere within the research on media effects and distinguished media powers from the conflicting pressures from the environment and individuals' predispositions. On the other hand, I contrasted the opposing stances on migration management in the European Union. The research on border protection and legal policies curbing uncontrolled flows opposed a more hospitable approach to asylum provision.

2.1.1 Bibliographic map on media effects

The sample on print media effects¹ gathered 2586 publications issued between the 1960s and 2023 after additional filtering in *Social Sciences* and *Media Communications* domains. The search query evoked the literature on print media effects, newspaper production and dissemination in the EU, and the cohabitation of print media and the Internet. The latter pattern reflected the growing penetration of traditionally printed newspapers into the global Web. Instead of losing market shares, print media, including *Gazeta Wyborcza*, adapted to the computerised world. Besides sharing scanned newspaper versions online, newspapers “offer interactive multimedia content” generated exclusively for the online domain (Palmer & Eriksen, 1999, p. 33).

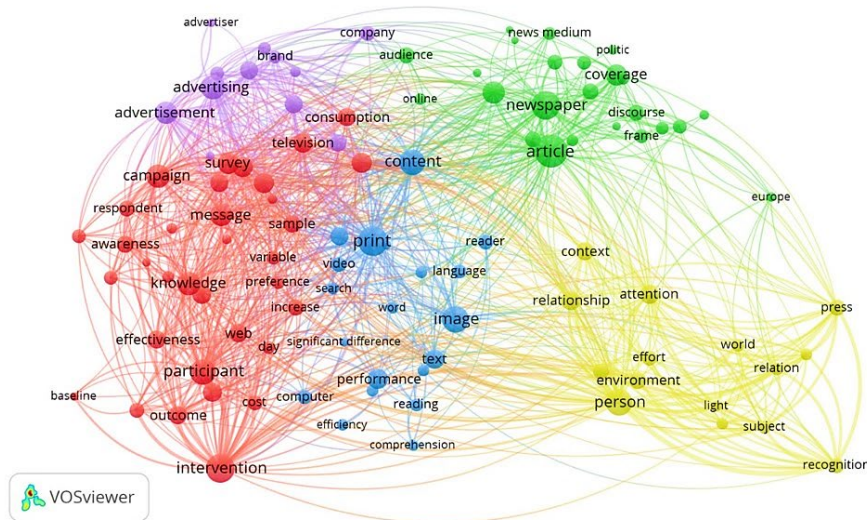


Figure 1. VOSviewer bibliographic clustering map on media effects

¹ Search query was the following: TS= (print AND media AND effect) OR TS= (newspaper AND EU) OR TS= (print AND media AND Internet).

The *VosViewer* processing resulted in five thematic clusters. The green cluster grouped the most cited words in the literature on print and online media's role in opinion shaping. Its "opinion" node related to such terms as "newspaper," "coverage," and "discourse," indicating print media power in influencing the discussion². The cluster also instructed that "content" and "frame" analyses were used in studying newspaper coverage of world events. Meanwhile, the purple cluster grasped the economic aspect of media activity. Apart from the role of information disseminator and opinion former, media share an interest in wealth accumulation. To increase their readership and sell more newspapers, "market-driven" outlets conduct market analysis to identify and satisfy the interests and "needs of potential consumers" (Beam, 2003, p. 368). Media companies use advertising and marketing for audience attraction and wise product communication. In the case of newspapers, the products consumed are articles and news pieces, while the goods advertised are printed press or monthly digital subscriptions.

The remaining clusters dealt with human agency and the conflicting impact of alternative information sources. The red cluster demonstrated the "intervention" of traditional media such as television and radio in raising "awareness" and shaping the audience's "knowledge"³. The scholarly community acknowledged media outlets' power to affect "the salience of attitudes toward the political issues" (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 177) and subsequently restructure debates about politics (O'Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery, & Fiske, 1994, p. 8). Agenda-setting capacities of the media intensify through intermedia manoeuvring, meaning the impact media agencies have on each other in shaping the general pool of knowledge (Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon, 1998, p. 225). Apart from the interconnectedness of the media agenda, personal news filtering also impacts people's perception of the political.

Blue and yellow clusters shifted the focus from the media to the people. The yellow cluster focused on the "person" and their interaction with the "environment," while the blue referred to information acquisition and interpretation. The latter cluster instructed on aligning textual and visual information sources, knowledge of languages, and the interconnection of print and computer-based platforms. Thus, the analysis of media effects shifted from the encoded messages

² See "*VosViewer* visualisation of the 'opinion' node in the bibliographic clustering map on media effects" in the Appendix.

³ See "*VosViewer* visualisation of the 'intervention' node in the bibliographic clustering map on media effects" in the Appendix.

to the decoded meanings. Media outlets pick up issues and ideas from the more expansive “socio-cultural and political system” (Hall, 1973, p. 3) to deliver selected information to the audience. By borrowing from each other, media outlets create a unique agenda as a tailored list of topics for popular discussion (O’Sullivan et al., 1994, p. 8). However, encoded messages reach the audience with distortions. Meanings are not simply “injected” into the readers’ minds as a pioneering hypodermic needle model assumed (McQuail & Windahl, 1993, p. 58) but are unpacked after the cognitive processing dependent on language and the discursive field (Hall, 1973, p. 3).

The discursive field, representing the plurality of discourse formations (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 135), unifies the messages actors construct and deliver. In Entman’s (1993) terminology, culture approximates the field of discursivity. For the reader, aka consumer, the discursive field represents a pool of world events’ interpretations for absorption. For the media channels, the field of discursivity generates competition for the readership and constrains individual agenda-setting powers. With the *World Web*’s popularisation, the struggle for the audience harshened as the costs of consuming information decreased, and national competition became global. In line with the media commercialisation argument, Pariser (2011) argued that media tended to please the audience’s requests as conformity increased profits (p. 39). The necessity to stay competitive pushed traditional media to partially relocate to the online content consumption world (Pariser, 2011, p. 40). Meanwhile, the audience filters out ideas challenging their “ideas of the world” (Pariser, 2011, p. 51) that one forms through personal experience, interaction with opinion leaders, media, and culture. Thus, the more the media outlets conform to the target audience’s expectations, the higher profitability is.

As a result, I had to treat *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s discursive formations from two different angles. On the one side, the medium sets the agenda and shapes public opinion, as the green cluster suggested. However, the readers co-shape the news agenda through economic leverage and personalised decoding mechanisms. Economic calculations prevent the media from presenting unpopular opinions, as disconformity decreases consumption. Apart from individual predispositions affecting consumption, researchers acknowledged a parallel impact of inter-media agenda-setting and societal context that accumulated operational frames copied and/or reshaped by the media.

In the following sections, I admitted the conflicting impact of the social environment and conducted the literature-based deductive frame generation. The Polish discursive field comprises a plurality of discursive constructions tailored by actors such as opinion leaders, government officials, big business and media corporations. Instead of forming representative data samples evoking the listed actors' stances on immigration, I explored the existing literature on Middle Eastern migrants' perceptions in the Polish community. Using secondary materials allowed me to deduce the frames commonly present in the national discussion, so I could further connect *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s media frames with the broader societal discursive field.

2.1.2 Bibliographic map on Middle Eastern immigration to the EU

The query for the second bibliographic clustering visualisation⁴ included keywords like “migration,” “crisis,” “EU,” “2015,” “media,” and “Middle East.” After additional filtering into the *Social Sciences* domain and limiting the publication scope to English language output, I collected 512 publications on the European Union migration crises published from 2014 to early 2023. I included the years preceding and following the migration waves to capture the dominant research perspectives before the crises and aftermath. Paper publishing takes a while, so I extended the second limit to early 2023 when the observation was conducted. Speaking of migration crises, I define the term *crisis* as an “open decision-making situation” (Schimmelfennig, 2017, p. 2). During such events, there are no predefined templates that policymakers and civil servants follow. Crises can also be referred to as *focusing events*, as those incidents reshape the agenda and attract “increased attention” from politicians and scholars (Birkland, 1998, p. 53).

The *VosViewer* clustering revealed two alternative poles of research on immigration in the European Union between 2014 and early 2023 (see *Figure 2*). The red cluster revealed the predominance of security and threat narratives in the legal output of the European Union and its members. Scholars analysed “asylum policies,” “border control” mechanisms, contestation and cooperation patterns between member states and supranational European institutions, such as the “European Parliament” and the “European Commission.” European policies were analysed

⁴ Search query was the following: TS= (migration AND EU AND 2015) OR TS= (migration AND crisis AND Poland) OR TS= (migration AND media AND Poland) OR TS=(migration AND Poland AND Middle AND East).

together with member states' national measures. In the end, “threat” and “security” nodes consolidated the critical framework as a standard operating procedure over asylum provision and immigration, in which the “migrant population” was treated as different (here I refer to the association with the node “difference”⁵). By contrast, the green node represented another strand of societal discourse which was more refugee-oriented and called for empathy and “solidarity.”

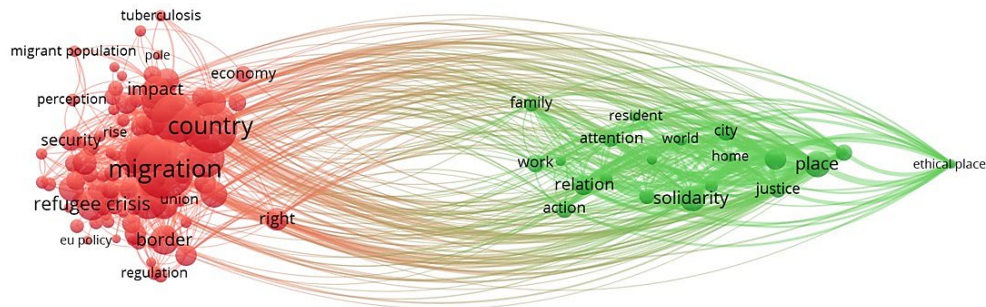


Figure 2. *VosViewer* bibliographic clustering map on Middle Eastern immigration to the EU

The term “crisis” as a non-neutral construction of human movement reflected the ambiguity of immigration treatment in the European community. The node belonged to the red cluster, indicating that the crisis predominantly encoded the negative colouring of immigration to Europe. The term is frequently used in media and politicians’ speeches as a “sudden and unexpected source of trouble” for the territorial units facing the inflow (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 32). “Crisis” was associated with such nodes as the “migration crisis,” “migration policy,” “security,” and “challenge”⁶. The visualisation hinted at the current debates about EU and member state migration regulation. However, immigration and asylum-seeking were also analysed positively.

⁵ See “*VosViewer* visualisation of the ‘migrant population’ node in the bibliographic clustering map on Middle Eastern immigration to the European Union” in the Appendix.

⁶ See “*VosViewer* visualisation of the ‘crisis’ node in the bibliographic clustering map on Middle Eastern immigration to the European Union” in the Appendix.

Scholars discussed the “crisis” associated with terms such as “health,” “care,” “justice,” and “solidarity”⁷.

2.1.2.1 Legal approach to immigration

The legal status distinguished a friendly approach to immigrants from a hostile. Statuses affected the degree of newcomers’ inclusivity in the hosting society (Könönen, 2018, p. 54). According to “deservingness” (Könönen, 2018, p. 55), immigrants were allowed in and granted rights or left behind the borderline. In Middle Eastern immigration cases, the binding terms were “migrant,” “refugee,” and “asylum seeker.” The non-governmental organisation Amnesty International saw *migrant* as a neutral umbrella term encompassing all “people staying outside their country of origin” (Amnesty International, 2022). Foreign newcomers are conventionally labelled “immigrants,” while the departure of fellow citizens for permanent residence abroad is entitled “emigration.” By contrast, “refugee” and “asylum seeker” statuses presuppose a threat impeding people’s peaceful existence in their home country (Amnesty International, 2022). Even though the relocation decision might be taken voluntarily, external factors such as security threats and life danger became decisive in migration. Refugees are those whose endangerment was legally confirmed, while asylum seekers’ concerns await verification (Amnesty International, 2022).

In the European Union, the “right to asylum” is codified in the *European Charter* (European Union, 2000). In line with the 1951 *Geneva Convention*, the EU member states and institutions adhere to the “non-refoulement principle,” prohibiting refugees’ expulsion and deportation to the country of origin against their will (United Nations Refugee Agency [UNHCR], 2010, p. 3). The *Convention* sustains the same distinction between the asylum-seeker and refugee statuses outlined by Amnesty International. The redefinition of an individual’s status happens on behalf of the national authorities’ decision (European Union, 2013c, p. 67). The European level intrusion is limited to drafting a “single procedure” and rules approximation (European Union, 2013c, p. 61), while locally competent bodies ensure the on-site implementation (European Union,

⁷ See “*VosViewer* visualisation of the ‘crisis’ node in the bibliographic clustering map on Middle Eastern immigration to the European Union: continuation” in the Appendix.

2013c, p. 67). *The Dublin III Regulation* defines Member States' responsibilities in considering applications. Without proven family ties in other EU states, the country of first entry decides whether international protection is required (European Union, 2013b, p. 40).

The 2013 *Dublin Regulation* received substantial criticism for the first border-crossing clause. The 2015 migration crisis revealed the narrowing of responsibility to the bordering countries (Davis, 2020, p. 262) except for specific family-related cases. Middle Easterners could opt for one of the two prevalent routes to Europe in 2015, the "Central Mediterranean" and "Eastern Mediterranean" (Hammond, 2015, p. 2). The former connected the African continent with Italy and Malta, while the latter stretched from Turkey to Greece (Hammond, 2015, p. 2). The International Organisation for Migration (2015) indicated that the Greek destination was mainly popular among Middle Easterners from Afghanistan and Iraq, while Syrian asylum seekers did not show specific route preferences. Thus, following *Dublin's* suggestions, Southern European countries had to deal with the disproportionate load compared to other EU states.

To level out *Dublin Regulation's* negative effects, the European Commission developed "a refugee relocation scheme" (Selo Sabic, 2017, p. 5). Selo Sabic (2017) noted that EU members received a share of refugees from Italy and Greece in proportion to a state's population, gross domestic product (GDP), the share of existing applications and unemployment (p. 5). The scholarly community and Eastern European states did not warmly accept the innovation. The scholars criticised quotas for refugee dehumanisation and choice deprivation (ex. Bozorgmehr, Szecsenyi, Stock, & Razum, 2016, p. 5). For Eastern Europeans, newcomers triggered religious concerns. Countries including Hungary, Poland and Slovakia discursively expressed the unwillingness to admit refugees of the "Muslim faith," preferring Christians instead (Barbulescu, 2017, p. 305).

Interestingly, "religion" did not appear in the *VosViewer* visualisation. Instead, the nodes "security" and "border" were more noticeable. In some discursive constructions, Europe was a "fortress" guarding the inner core against the broadly defined "Other" (Dalakoglou, 2016, p. 180). Immigration representation as an "existential threat" led to the securitisation (McDonald, 2008, p. 566) of refugee relocation within the Union. To guard the fortress, Frontex was proclaimed as a unifying body ensuring "EU external border controls" (Wagner et al., 2016, p.23),

while additional monitoring tools, such as the Eurodac fingerprint database (European Union, 2013a, p. 2), created the all-European data source on immigrants.

In summary, the EU-level legal procedures adjusted nationally transformed immigration into a multi-stage documented border management procedure. Immigration securitisation is the most prominent during claim evaluation by the countries of first entry. In line with the *Dublin Regulation*, the proximity to the crisis affected the size of the burden-bearing. Meanwhile, refugees, or individuals who secured European protection, benefited from more friendly institutional treatment. The hospitable refugee treatment belonged to the green cluster. The meaningful nodes included “care,” “justice,” “solidarity,” and “ethical place.” In Derrida’s (2005) terms, the “welcoming of the foreigner” was encoded under the notion of hospitality, being a Janus-faced creature (p. 7). Laws and other legislative restrictions approach its “unconditional” version conditionally (Derrida, 2005, p. 7). Through legislation drafting, governors fulfil the humanitarian responsibility to protect those in need while guarding national interests. The former German Chancellor Angela Merkel referred to “Christian values” (Barbu, 2016, p. 154), while in Greece, the former Minister of the Interior Prokopis Pavlopoulos depicted “hospitality” as a “national virtue” (Rozakou, 2012, p. 562). Thus, asylum provision as Europe’s “moral duty” (Rozakou, 2012, p. 566) was one of the discursive formations on the agenda existing besides its securitised version.

2.1.2.2 Limits of local hospitality

The perception of refugee assistance’s ethical correctness was also embraced through grassroots activism. The “pro-refugee mobilisation” includes local activities and international volunteerism (Cantat & Feischmidt, 2019, p. 381). *Volunteerism*, as membership in the mass organisation of people assisting others (Schroeder & Graziano, 2015, p. 7), represents pro-social activities humans participate in. To become pro-social, an action should include a *benefactor*, a person who assists, and the *recipient*, the one requiring help (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2012, p. 21). The most widespread benefactors include non-governmental organisations

and other “grassroots initiatives” satisfying refugees’ existential needs, such as alimentation, garments, and medication (Togral koca, 2019, p. 551).

The significant assistance deficiency was the focus on the physical pillars of the Maslow needs pyramid. Referring to Maslow’s analysis of human needs, I evoke individual physical and emotional necessities. In the pyramid’s classic version, the base pillars included physiologically backed “hunger, thirst and sleep” (King, 2009, p. 5). For instance, working with the Polish authorities, the United Nations Refugee Agency (2023) listed “accommodation facilities” as spaces for satisfying basic needs. The refugees also received minimum financial contributions for other expenses (UNHCR, 2023). Therefore, the guaranteed assistance implied secure housing and alimentation. Meanwhile, the pillars of individual spiritual fulfilment include self-realisation and social bonding (King, 2009, p. 5). The integration process in Poland was reserved for linguistic courses and free schooling (UNHCR, 2023), which were the most beneficial for youngsters.

The reservation reflected the priority of short-term humanitarian aid over long-term refugee integration. The explanation aligns with Andrzej Duda’s 2015 position on immigration: guaranteeing refugee protection while needed for personal security concerns (“Kryzys migracyjny to problem,” 2015). Returning to the crisis definition as an unexpected focusing event, I noticed that the inflows were treated as temporary occasions dependent on political changes abroad. The measures generated “urgent” helping and basic needs satisfaction rather than a long-term plan (Ociepa-Kicińska & Gorzałczyńska-Koczkodaj, 2022, p. 5).

The cluster-based interpretation of refugee assistance and asylum-seeking in the European Union demonstrated the dichotomy of Middle Eastern immigration perception. The *VosViewer* visualisation predominantly contrasted the frames on “threat” and “security” with the frames favouring “care” and “solidarity.” Apart from the bibliographic clustering, I witnessed such frames in distinct scholarly publications. For instance, Triandafyllidou (2017) compared a “moral responsibility” discourse embracing “humanitarian values,” “Christian solidarity,” and immigrants victimisation with a strikingly opposite “threat frame,” opposing “Europeans” to “migrants” (pp. 14-15).

Instead of staying within dichotomy limits, I broadened the perspective on immigration framing. As *Gazeta Wyborcza* highlighted “the need for solidarity with refugees” (Troszyński &

El-Ghamari, 2022, p. 9), securitised immigration coverage was infrequent. Conservative outlets like *Gazeta Polska Codziennie* are more suitable for exploring threat frames. By contrast, *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s focus on immigrants' humanisation allowed me to uncover the differences in discursive formations journalists and editors used in framing immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Therefore, I adhered to a well-established scholarly perspective on threat framing while broadening the understanding of immigrant-friendly discourses with a more nuanced frame list.

2.2 Mediatisation and media effects

The preliminary field observation disentangled the main concept, *mediatisation of migration*, into two subparts. In this section, I assessed some of the main approaches to mediatisation and its interconnection with related concepts. After outlining different scholarly perspectives on mediatisation, I focused on the media effects models helpful in identifying how the media shapes popular perceptions of reality through news pieces.

Mediatisation is a vague concept coined in the 1990s (Krotz, 2017, p. 106) to refer to the power media have in inducing “social and cultural change” (Averbeck-Lietz, 2014, p. 115). Averbeck-Lietz (2014) observed the skewness toward studying print media's impact on politics through communication practices from the classical perspective (p. 115). Skewness to a particular medium, as information selector and transmitter (Altheide & Snow, 1979, p. 11), connects the mediatisation concept with medium theory. Medium theory instructs that a communication medium possesses unique characteristics (Meyrowitz, 1994, p. 50) and evokes particular human senses. Media as an “extension of ourselves” (McLuhan, 2013, p. 18) address various human organs of perception to ensure the effective decoding of transmitted messages. Using Hall's terminology (1973), a medium accumulates information about world phenomena and delivers, or encodes, the message through communicative tools and delivery format selection for targeting human senses. In the case of the printed press, journalists refer to our sight, reading capacities, and ability to assess visual materials, while radio relies on hearing and encodes meanings through audio format.

I chose an example of images in printed and electronic newspapers to clarify how the medium selects effective transmission mechanisms. Depending on the page formatting, visuals in newspapers can precede the text to instruct the audience on what the news piece is about or illustrate case discussion in the middle and “break the monotony of news content” (Mogambi & Nyakeri, 2015, p. 7). Pictures as illustrations of events under discussion increase the story’s credibility through the illusion of presence. The audience symbolically aligns the media article content with visual proof and believes that the picture and the text are contextually identical and have the same meaning (Altheide & Snow, 1979, pp. 98-99). In news media, pictures increase the reporting trustworthiness. As a “human construction,” news pieces rely on visuals to enhance a link between the real event and its coverage (Hall, Davison, Featherstone, Rustin, & Schwarz, 2016, pp. 107-108).

An appeal to distinct human senses instructs the selection of media formats used for encoding messages. Formatting includes writing or speaking style and content structuring more appropriate for a medium (Altheide & Snow, 1979, p. 10). The formatting nuances are generalised under the umbrella term, “media logic.” In the lens of Altheide and Snow (1979), *media logic* denoted the process of information presentation and transmission via various media channels (p.10). Media logic has become so influential in modern societies that it started to shape “cultural content,” electoral campaigns, affect individuals’ relationships with religious denominations, and attitudes to sports events (Altheide & Snow, 1979, pp. 15-17).

Schulz (2004) further described the transforming capacities of media logic: by appealing to the human senses, media channels’ formatting styles improve content delivery and correct the encoding deficiencies of natural communication (p. 88). Apart from “vividness,” media correct transmission defects and control for time and space variables (Schulz, 2004, p. 88). Distance approximation and recording make communication flexible and appealing. Thus, the audience can observe real-life events, aka witness, by pressing a remote controller or becoming a third member in the conversation between a journalist and local opinion leader through the newspaper’s pages. Due to the higher efficacy, people occasionally substitute real-life experiences with their mediated versions (Schulz, 2004, p. 88). The change of habitual social practices with media-based replacements proves the penetration of media logic into various spheres of human life. As a result, social processes like migration amalgamate with media activities (Schulz, 2004, p. 89). For

instance, it becomes complicated to dissociate own experience with immigrants from the media frames and agenda.

The potential of media logic in assessing and shaping social processes led to the accommodation of third parties' behaviour to media routines. In politics, an accommodation is necessary for politicians to reach publicity (Schulz, 2004, p. 89) because of the media's power over preference formation and opinion-shaping in their audience. Scholars developed media effects models to assess media's influence in shaping the audience's viewpoints. The three models I focused on affect different aspects of human thinking and event interpretation. Agenda-setting narrows the range of topics under public consideration, while priming extends agenda-setting effects and interconnects past, present, and future topical issues. Meanwhile, framing goes beyond delimiting agenda scope and instructs the audience on ways of perceiving reality.

One of the pioneering approaches to deconstructing frames is Erving Goffman's frame analysis. Goffman (1986) understood frames as subjective definitions of situations we experience that are generated by organisations "that govern events" (p. 10). The broad conceptualisation of the main terms is the main reason why I did not pursue Goffman's frame analysis. I struggled to distinguish between Goffman's primary frameworks and keys operationally. The scholar conceptualised *primary frameworks* as "schemata of interpretation" attributing meaning to what is happening (Goffman, 1986, p. 21). Alongside, *keys* were the secondary constructions derived from reformulated primary frameworks (Goffman, 1986, p. 44).

Normative definitions' application to the corpus faced troubles while classifying frames into primary social frameworks and keys. As the former "incorporate the will, aim and controlling effort of the intelligence" (Goffman, 1986, p. 22), the researcher should monitor the exact occasion when the reality interpretation involving human agency from the beginning faces the secondary "transformation," the keying (Goffman, 1986, p. 45). In my understanding, the researcher has to dispose of the original frame labelled as pure and trace the meaning redefinition that occurs after keying and rekeying. The complexity of Goffman's approach and the requirement of a nearly laboratory-ideal environment made me choose in favour of other frame analysis techniques elaborated by Entman, de Vreese, Snow, and Benford.

2.2.1 Agenda setting and priming

Before proceeding with the nuances of framing and frame interpretation, I should define agenda-setting and priming as the techniques delimiting the discussion space for frames to flourish. Initially developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), *agenda-setting* denotes the capacity of mass media, such as television and press, to distinguish issues of interest and affect the “salience of attitudes” to the problems under discussion (p. 177). In their analysis of the 1968 presidential electoral campaign in Chapel Hill, United States, the scholars revealed a strong correlation between the media agenda and “voters’ independent judgements” about policy domain topicality and relevance in the campaign (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 180). A media outlet’s increased attention to a political or social issue makes the audience signal it out of the general pool as a matter of high importance (Coleman, McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 2009, p. 147).

In the case of agenda-setting, I stepped out from the limits of medium theory and looked at broader interactions between the media platforms. While considering the overarching media logic and its influence over the spheres of human life, I doubted that the printed press or television would become a dominant agenda setter for the whole community in the modern, highly competitive environment. Instead, I evoked inter-media agenda-setting powers, which distribute the laurels of making an issue salient among media platforms. Thus, agenda-setting is a complex process that depends on the medium’s agency and outlets’ peer pressure. *Intermedia agenda-setting* as “the influence ... mass media agendas have on each other” (Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998, p. 225) can be contrasted with individual gatekeeping reflecting personal preferences of selected medium’s editors, ideological outlook (Golan, 2006, p. 326), and medium-specific formatting habits.

Priming is often treated as “an extension of agenda setting” as the media effects model relies on the issue salience (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11). After putting a range of topics on the agenda and making them publicly discussable, the media indirectly set the perspective through which the audience evaluates politics and social phenomena. News media “alter the criteria” one uses in assessing follow-up situations due to being previously exposed to a narrowly defined agenda (Hart & Middleton, 2014, p. 581). To illustrate the media priming in action, I evoke the 2015 shooting in the office of the French newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. The focusing event was

prominent on the media agenda internationally and was covered in the corpora I retrieved from *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Therefore, the case influenced the perceptions of the “immigration of Muslims to Europe” across the Union (ex. Wolska-Zogata, 2015, p. 360).

In January 2015, the *Charlie Hebdo* tragedy was highly salient. Randomly selecting the 2015 article from the news broadcaster *BBC*, I noticed a highly prominent security frame in covering the attack. Journalists described the shooting as a “security crisis” and “terror” causing “maximum alert” in Paris (“Charlie Hebdo attack,” 2015). In addition to evoking fear before the shooters, the *BBC* team interconnected extremists’ images with their origin and religion. Thus, the event’s prominence on the inter-media agenda mobilised anti-Islamic feelings, especially in the Parisian community. As a consequence, the salience of topics related to Islamic culture and faith in the subsequent weeks would be treated negatively. In line with media priming, discussing hijab-friendly schooling or opening a new mosque would be interpreted more critically and with greater suspicion than before the shooting.

In the European context, the negatively covered cases such as the *Charlie Hebdo* shooting privileged security-oriented threat frames on Muslim Middle Eastern immigrants. For instance, Europe’s news channel *Euronews* shared the *BBC*’s securitised perspective and connected the 2015 extremists’ figures with the Muslim faith. The portal went even further and framed the shooting as a contestation phase between “the values which ... (Parisians) hold dear” and “barbaric” and “unacceptable” behaviour (“Parisians react,” 2015). Consequently, agenda centring on issues such as the *Charlie Hebdo* attack reproduced the hostile approach to the Muslim believers encoded in the security frame. Thus, Poland’s negative perception of the quota system in 2015 was likely primed by the negative stance on Muslim immigrants operating in Europe and reproduced through inter-media linkages.

2.2.2 Framing

In my analysis of the *Charlie Hebdo* case, I evoked a third media effects model helping the audience understand the world around (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11). *Framing* is a process of meaning assigning and event interpreting (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 198). In media research,

the framing approach is helpful in analysing meanings journalists attribute to the issues on their agenda. On the one hand, journalists help the audience make sense of socio-political and economic phenomena. For instance, in democratic polities, the media act as a required intermediary between state officials and the citizenry that channels information about the government's conduct to the electorate (Bennett, 1996, p. 375). Instead of monitoring governmental websites, the people resort to news agenda and journalists' reporting on official immigration rates or the national obligations for the EU quota relocation scheme.

On the other side, media possess mobilisation capacities, as the coverage advocates a specific line of reasoning that unites adherents and detaches antagonists (see Snow & Benford, 1988). Stretching the application of framing from social mobilisation studies to media analysis, I recall "core framing tasks": diagnostics, prognosis, and motivation (Snow & Benford, 1988, p.199). Starting from issue definition and responsibility attribution, the frame subsequently hints at problem resolution and incentivises action (Snow & Benford, 1988, pp. 200-201). In the *Charlie Hebdo* case outlined previously, *BBC* and *Euronews* pieces aligned terrorism on the streets of Paris with the Muslim faith attackers shared. The reference attackers made to *Charlie Hebdo*'s satirical cartoons on Islamic saints evoked in readers' memory the 2011 fire-bombing that preceded the shooting (see "Charlie Hebdo and its place," 2015). Thus, journalists created a subtle link between instability and Islam. *BBC* did not proceed with prognostic or motivational framing in the pieces discussed. Meanwhile, *Euronews*' interview-based publication (see "Parisians react," 2015) hinted to the audience the shared disapproval that might motivate individual protesters to gather. In the context of inter-media agenda-setting, media channels co-mobilised part of the local community to stand against the attack and march on the streets to support the French weekly (ex. Nelson, 2015).

Motivational framing bridges frame-building and frame-setting. Even though media messages might encode a framed response to the issue, the actual action depends on individual predispositions and social beliefs (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52). Meanwhile, diagnostic and prognostic framing are embedded in the frame-building process. The interpretation of a problem and its prognosed resolution encoded in the news piece reflects the inner medium's struggles. Factors such as newspapers' ideology, position on the market, code of conduct and others influence the angle of coverage. Meantime, external pressures from opinion leaders, elites, and other media co-

shape the representation (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52). As a result, a final frame is an interplay of the inner editorial kitchen and external societal pressures that incentivises the audience to respond and act.

The reference to diagnostic and prognostic framing was also present in the works of Robert Entman. Entman replicated frame-building stages such as problem definition, identification of key actors, and remedy suggestion in the number of research papers under framing functions (Entman, 1993; Entman, 2004; Entman, 2007). However, one of the scholar's major discoveries dealt with the context frames operate in. Initially, Entman added culture to a communicator/ receiver chain as a space for societal frames, while later, the scholar explained the multi-actor interplay connecting frames from the abstract culture domain with the communicator and receiver.

Entman (1993) departed by recognising the multiplicity of frames stocked in the "social grouping" discourse (p. 53). However, the scholar did not specify how culture's frames become encoded into the communicator's (media) texts. Entman provided an ideal template without offering a practical implementation. In the subsequent research, Entman developed a system of layered interconnection between elites, media, and the masses. Entman (2003) "cascading network activation model" traced the frame formation process from the US elites to the "news organizations" that verbally transposed the encoded meanings to the public (p. 419). The model illustrated the external pressures third actors, such as elites, exhibit on frame-building while accepting the public's capacity to upload ideas to the top through media coverage (Entman, 2003, p. 420). Thus, the frame-building process ended up being a mixture of inputs from all three actors.

The cascading model gave an insight into frame-building and frame-setting. On the one hand, elites, media, and the public participate in framing. Media is solely responsible for the final encoding of a message into the text, while the public decodes information and forwards challenging input to the network if required. Therefore, Entman's (2003) model challenges the unidirectional assumptions around media logic and its preponderant role in reshaping the environment. Media's unique position in transforming the world through its texts does not limit other actors in shaping transmitted messages. To bridge the medium's opinion-forming agency with the conflicting societal pressures, I combined and contrasted *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s framing with the frames reflective of Polish culture.

The following observation of the scholarly conceptual definitions of mediatisation and media effects led me to several conclusions. Firstly, the mediatisation process is interconnected with the social context. Media is not the sole driver of social change but one among societal actors such as elites and even the public. Thus, mediatisation is “media-centered” and singles out media’s importance in changing society while acknowledging the co-shaping power of “various intersecting social forces” (Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2015, p. 316). Secondly, the medium theory is crucial in explaining the selected medium’s formatting practices. Media platforms establish unique links with human perception organs and skills that enable more effective decoding of transmitted messages. Meanwhile, medium theory gives little explanation for media logic penetration in modern societies, as it ignores the interconnection of media channels in co-drafting the agenda, labelled “inter-media agenda-setting.” Finally, my analysis of media effects models and their application to the *Charlie Hebdo* shooting case revealed a strong interrelationship between the three. Agenda-setting, framing, and priming reinforce each other’s effects.

2.3 *Gazeta Wyborcza* and the Polish media system

The connection between mediatisation and social context makes reasonable the investigation of the Polish media system with the plurality of its inner actors. In this section, I placed the Polish case into the broader international media system classification and singled out *Gazeta Wyborcza* as one of the Polish media system’s pillars. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), the *media system* is a non-homogeneous, constantly evolving complex of media platforms “sharing some common characteristics” (p. 12). Hallin and Mancini developed ideal-type models that grouped shared characteristics commonly present in the national systems of North America and Europe. The Polish media system is located between the two models, *Polarized Pluralist* from the Mediterranean region and the *Liberal* one, prominent in the United Kingdom and the United States (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p. 49). The system’s hybridity is grounded in the historical context of Poland.

2.3.1 Historical context

Technological evolution initially brought the printed press as the earliest element in media systems, followed by the radio, television, and internet landscape. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the printed press audience comprised narrow literate circles of multicultural elites. The audience's intellectuality favoured the development of an "opinion press" that was usually interrelated with political groups and associated with a sophisticated "literary language" hardly comprehensible for a common dweller (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p. 28). As a result, journalism could not be strictly distinguished from political vocational positions and was primarily reserved for highly educated public circles. Poland's geographic positioning at the intersection of empires led to the multicultural composition of elites. The multiculturalism provoked the proliferation of minority language press in "Hebrew, Yiddish, Ukrainian, Belorussian, and German" (Bajomi-Lázár, Balčytienė, Dobрева, & Klimkiewicz, 2019, p. 290). However, the Second World War heavily affected the readership composition and newspaper diversity. The post-War territory losses caused the closure of numerous minority newspapers and linguistically homogenised Poland's print media space (Bajomi-Lázár et al., 2019, p. 290).

The consolidation of the communist regime in the late 1940s reshaped the Polish media system and made it more comparable to the Soviet example. The group of scholars, including Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1963), denoted the Soviet-type approach to media communications as "the Soviet Communist theory of the press" (p. 5). By press, the scholars meant "all the media of mass communication;" thus, the original intention was to classify all the media system's elements, including radio and television (Siebert et al., 1963, p. 1). However, Siebert et al. (1963) acknowledged the skewness to the printed press as their study object. The central elements of the Soviet mass communication model scholars proposed included media instrumentalization for ruling party purposes and high state interventionism (Siebert et al., 1963, p. 121). Consequently, the media framing served the communist party ideology, and the state perceived media as its satellite in spreading the doctrine and reinforcing ideological consolidation of the citizenry around communist ideals. Compared to the pre-war politically pluralist setting, the Polish media system lost its independent, partially partisan-based agenda-setting powers and became integrated into the communist apparatus as a tool of ideological propaganda (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, pp. 29-30).

However, the country's territorial position between the Western and Soviet worlds created a hospitable climate for the unique combination of democratic and communist ideological pressures. The Polish media space was not as isolated as the one in the Soviet Union, allowing for the earlier proliferation of Western cultural materials. The sizeable inflow of ideologically opposite produce was explained by geographic positioning and relatively unrestricted travelling in the Western territories compared to other communist countries (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p. 30). The coexistence of unofficial literature and cinematography from the West with private media ownership (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p. 30) sustained a conflictual pressure on the state's ideological monopoly in media framing.

Despite the influence of Western values in overcoming communist ideological homogeneity, the Polish state has already lost its trace to the "free media market" (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p. 30). The reinstalment of a viable multi-party system required fast transitioning to political pluralism and expression freedoms. Thus, the Polish media market faced widespread media privatisation and censorship lifting (Bajomi-Lázár et al., 2019, p. 291). The abolition of restrictions did not result in the overrepresentation of local media companies or larger Polish media conglomerates derived from the previously partially privatised media sectors. The lack of experience in competitive markets and the absence of restrictions for external ownership paved a path for "foreign groups" from Germany and Switzerland (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p. 31). The foreign leadership brought the elements of liberal media systems, such as commercially driven tabloids. By contrast to the traditionally elite-oriented media that operated in the pre-communist era, tabloids spread "popular journalism" and greater inclusion of topics relevant to the common citizenry than so-called quality newspapers (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 211). The latter newspapers targeted "mainly urban, well educated, and politically active" (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p.31) population layers and substituted the niche of their inter-war predecessors.

At the century turn, the Polish media market consolidated in a complex structure dominated by media holdings and groups with foreign and national ownership (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p.35). The modern media system is devoid of its original exclusive, elitist character and appeals to the mass audience. The press combines quality newspapers with more sensational and universal tabloids. The penetration of foreign capital in the 1990s prevented the media sphere's merger with politics and introduced an economic variable to the system. Driven by business profitability and

capital accumulation motives, foreign investors were less likely to engage in party politics and leant towards greater “political neutrality” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 198; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012, p. 37).

The historical exposure of Polish media to different management styles created an original media system which combined authentic Polish traditions with communist legacy and imports from the West. Despite foreign investors` widespread commercialisation and profit-making orientation, Polish journalistic culture preserved information processing and reality assessment in the list of professional skills (Hadamik, 2005, p. 219). Historical connections of Polish journalism with politics prioritised commentary over plain fact reporting, allowing journalists to fluctuate professionally between media and political spheres (Hadamik, 2005, p. 216). The connections with politics only strengthened in the communist period when media was instrumentalised to serve regime purposes. Thus, the traditional opinion-based journalism nurtured in Poland before the 1990s was further supplemented by the business culture of the rising media moguls interested in economic profitability.

2.3.2 Media system duality

Applying Hallin and Mancini`s modelling in evaluating the Polish media, one might replicate Dobek-Ostrowska`s argument on the Polish system`s duality. On the one hand, the system`s consolidation preceded liberal institutions, strengthening the connections of the media with other political actors and positioning the system within the Polarized Pluralist model. *Political parallelism*, or the “political orientations” differentiation among the media channels (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 102), developed before communism and was reborn after democratisation. However, political position differentiation is not grounded in party affiliation or the medium`s dependence on the benefactor but in journalistic autonomy. The printed press employees demonstrate high rates of individual political preference disclosure (Anikina, Dobek-Ostrowska, & Nygren, 2013, p. 49) and subject selection autonomy (Anikina et al., 2013, p. 62). Thus, the combination of commentary-based journalism with individual journalists` autonomy in agenda-setting and framing consolidated a particular ideological lens the newspaper uses to interpret reality. Apart from the journalists` role, the liberal trend of consumer orientation and audience

targeting pushed economically driven media owners to satisfy their readers' "clearly defined preferences" (Anikina et al., 2013, p. 49). In such a setting, media outlets are not motivated by political links but by correlating journalists' framing with readers' expectations.

One important remark concerns public broadcasting. State-owned *Polish Radio* (PR) and *Polish Television* (TVP) are more vulnerable to political fluctuations and external pressure from the governmental apparatus. Anikina et al. (2013) argued that broadcasters' journalists were less likely to express personal political preferences to leave room for political forces alterations in the government (p. 49). Klimkiewicz's (2022) media monitoring also noted the increased dependence of public broadcasters on the state. Klimkiewicz (2022) revealed a list of concessions and benefits state-owned media received for political flexibility, including "grants, loans or state advertising" (p. 17). Financial stimuli also extended to non-governmental platforms but primarily depended on the degree of sympathy for the government's agenda and frames (Klimkiewicz, 2022, p. 17).

Other powerful forces that affected the Polish media system were Catholic Church and newspapers with Catholic-focused content. Catholic newspapers are not a modern innovation and preserved their viability through the communist period (Hadamik, 2005, p. 215). Together with governmental authorities, opinion leaders, and secular media, Church officials and media platforms loyal to "Catholic tradition" (Krotofil & Motak, 2018b, p. 64) are listed among influential agenda setters in Poland. The prominent Catholic weeklies include *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Gość Niedzielny* (Krotofil & Motak, 2018b, p. 64). Another newspaper with "a strongly Catholic orientation" is *Sieci*, a medium famous for its right-wing and Euro-sceptic ideology (Krotofil & Motak, 2018b, p. 64). The weekly *Sieci* ranks among the top state advertisement budget receivers (Klimkiewicz, 2022, p. 17). Another powerful Catholic media actor is a national broadcaster, *Radio Maryja* (Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 94). Krotofil and Motak (2018a) argued that the media listed above were not economically affiliated with the Church authorities and represented separate branches in the broader societal picture, despite sharing a Catholic mental outlook (p. 94).

The absence of direct ownership structures connecting Church actors with the above-listed media outlets is one of the traits that differentiate the Polish system from the Mediterranean media environment. Dependence on the Church, either through professional interlinkage or financial sponsorship, is not the widespread Polish reality but an ideal template of the Polarized Pluralist

system (see Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Instead, pre-communist Polish journalism better fit the description, as numerous journalists had direct ties with politics (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012). In addition, state subsidies' conditionality manifests as a form of financial control acting authorities have over the sponsored medium's agenda and framing. Besides the political and economic links the PiS government enjoys with public broadcasters and ideologically friendly newspapers, the Polarized Pluralist Model's trace is present in the overrepresentation of commentary-based journalism. Agenda setting and position signalling (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 132) are as relevant in the Polish context as in Southern European.

Meanwhile, the import of Western media system patterns transposed some of the Liberal Model's traits, including tabloidisation and commercialisation. The commercial interests of foreign investors in circulation maximisation contradicted the traditional Polish commentary culture and introduced the values of fact centring and political neutrality (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 207). An observation that journalists' internal political predispositions frequently drove the issue coverage (Anikina et al., 2013) is another peculiarity of the Liberal model. The matching between journalists' coverage and readership's interests does not reflect a medium's political reliance on external actors but forms a win-win situation for the audience, media owners and channel employees. Thus, the Polish media system combines platforms that follow different interaction paths with the environment. Historical changes in social settings generated a unique amalgam of post-communist and liberal patterns that placed the system in between Polarized Pluralist and Liberal system models.

2.3.3 *Gazeta Wyborcza's* positioning

After outlining the historical setting the Polish media evolved in, and the system's leading traits, I proceeded with a discussion of the ongoing trends in a constantly evolving media complex. The imbalanced representation of foreign interest groups in the media sphere was advantageous in modernising and liberalising the market. However, over time, Polish legal regulations introduced restrictions prioritising national ownership.

The *repolonisation* tendency "aiming at increasing domestic (media) ownership" emerged legally in the 1990s and was actively embraced and extended by the PiS government in the 2020s

(Surowiec, Kania-Lundholm, & Winiarska-Brodowska, 2020, p. 34). Klimkiewicz (2022) noted that internal and external economic pressures media companies faced in the post-coronavirus pandemic era pushed economically driven foreign investors sell their shares in Polish media (p.16). Interestingly, in most cases, one might find “state-owned companies” or pro-PiS corporations on another side of the deal (Klimkiewicz, 2022, p. 16). Therefore, the outflow of foreign capital and its substitution with government-oriented ownership leaves space for strengthening political parallelism and subsequent media capture by the ruling conservatives’ interests. By *media capture*, I mean the government’s influences on the media industry that “suppress unfavourable information” and subject the media to the authorities’ desires (Prat, 2015, p. 669).

Active penetration of state interests in the media sphere made me question the position of national media that did not follow the government’s conservative reasoning. As locally owned, the media channels were not susceptible to the legal arrangements of repolonisation. Still, they do not benefit from partisan-based state advertisement contracts and primarily rely on their own. In this context, the case of *Gazeta Wyborcza* stood out as illustrative. *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s founding dates to the early years of Polish liberal statehood. Initially, the newspaper self-positioned as an “unofficial organ of Solidarity” (Goban-Klas, 1996, p. 25), a social movement that assisted in dismantling the country’s communist regime. The current editorial office pursues the original determination to fight illiberalism and self-defines as a European medium “opposing authoritarian government” (“O nas,” 2023). Thus, in the context of the ruling conservative party’s strengthening in media control, the newspaper aims to distance and preserve “financial stability and independence” (“O nas,” 2023).

From the early years of newspapers’ existence, its founders aimed to adopt the Liberal Media system’s features as journalistic professionalism and media independence. In 2002, the paper’s first editor-in-chief Adam Michnik refuted a bribe from the Polish businessman Lew Rywin and publicly disclosed the attempted bribery in the article “An act for a bribe, or Rywin comes to Michnik” (“O nas,” 2023). The “Rywin scandal” received high resonance in society as it revealed the deficiencies of Polish democracy on the verge of the country’s EU accession (Hadaj, 2003). Therefore, originating in Poland’s liberal movement, the newspaper’s leading journalists resisted the temptations of political partisanship and dependence and tended to encode independence from state or business interests in the newspaper’s values. Apart from

independence, *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s core values include fact-checking, empathy for readers and story actors, and technological innovativeness ("O nas," 2023).

The latter value orientation is particularly important for my study as the transformations news media adopt following technological progress demands are coherent with the mediatisation process. The changing environment stimulates media to evolve, while media channels trigger subsequent adaptations in social actors' habits and conduct. In 2014, *Gazeta Wyborcza* was the first Polish newspaper to introduce subscription fees for its online content (Jaska, 2016, p. 90). Decreased print media consumption and independence from state advertisement funds justified the step. A nearly two per cent readership decline between 2013 and 2014 indicated that the audience was losing interest in the quality newspapers like *Wyborcza* and turned more attracted to easy-to-read tabloids like *Fakt* or *SuperExpress* (Jaska, 2016, p. 87). Even though their figures' increase did not exceed one per cent (Jaska, 2016, p. 87), tabloids' consumption demonstrated an overall positive tendency. Consequently, *Wyborcza*'s focus on the online readership it embraced since 2006 ("O nas," 2023) served as a valuable addition to the traditional paper sales and allowed increasing the profit via a less competitive internet arena.

The proclaimed liberal orientation of the newspaper is also sustained by *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s majority owner, Media Group *Agora SA*. The group replicates *Wyborcza*'s values as reliability, media independence, or human empathy (Agora, 2023). Alongside, the media group sees Poland as "democratic and reasonable" (Agora, 2023), outlining the country's future in the liberal world. The adherence to the liberal values and opposition to the conservative trajectory sustained by PiS, as outlined on *Wyborcza*'s online page, nurture an ideological approximation of the company and its outlet with the Polish liberals.

The leaning of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s editorial culture towards liberal values should affect the coverage of Middle Eastern immigration to Poland from the early frame-building stages, as the newspaper's outlook is an internal factor shaping newsroom framing (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52). The values of empathy and ideological distancing from the conservatives made me predict *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s framing positioning within Polish culture's humanitarian frames, as the newspaper's ideology is more likely to evoke care and solidarity towards immigrants than a discussion over threat and security. Moreover, the predominance of frames promoting tolerance and human rights protection better fit *Agora*'s company values. To test my normative-based expectations, I

identified the features of four frames operating in the Polish discursive field and refined my expectations of *Wyborcza*'s positioning.

2.4 Middle Eastern migration to Europe from 2015 till 2021: the Polish social frames

The 2015 and 2021 crises with refugees and asylum seekers from the Middle East impacted Polish society differently. In 2015, the crisis was distant, and Polish citizens mainly encountered its presence in media reviews or politicians' speeches (ex. Cieślińska & Dziekońska, 2019), while Southern European states experienced more direct contact. Asylum provision was not a new phenomenon, but before 2021, most refugees came from neighbouring predominantly Slavic nations such as Ukraine, Russia, or Belarus (Cieślińska & Dziekońska, 2019, p.7). Meanwhile, the 2021 border crisis with Belarus did not concern Belarusian political refugees but opened a new terrestrial route to Europe for Middle Easterners as an alternative to the Eastern Mediterranean Sea path. Direct communication with a large non-Christian and non-Slavic asylum seeker inflow did not evoke a European legal procedure in dealing with refugees based on the *European Human Rights Charter* or a *Dublin Regulation* but was largely securitised and opposed at the state level.

The research on the Polish-Belarusian border crisis remains limited for several reasons. Firstly, the crisis is ongoing; thus, its analysis poses a danger for the researchers and inhibits inferences about its consequences. Secondly, ethnographic expeditions or even secondary data processing remain conditional upon legal restrictions on the entrance. The state of emergency introduced in the bordering regions in early September 2021 ("Bezpieczeństwo Polski," 2021) restricted journalists' and volunteers' access to the zone and limited assistance to immigrants or evidential media coverage (Klimkiewicz, 2022, p. 9). Finally, the dominant societal framing does not depict immigrants as central actors but focuses on the struggle between Europe and the illiberal Belarusian regime. Scholars referred to the crisis as "artificially created" for "hybrid warfare" (Filipec, 2022, p. 2), while Polish authorities spoke of Lukashenka's "instrumental game at the expense of immigrants" ("Bezpieczeństwo Polski," 2021).

In the European continent, modern hybrid warfare was traditionally associated with territorial controversies between Russia and Ukraine. Compared to the conventional battlefield encounters between the armies, as the one ongoing in Ukraine, hybrid wars also include "political

or information” contestations (Kofman & Rojansky, 2015, p. 2) and manifest as neo-wars. Therefore, evoking the “hybrid warfare” collocation frames the border crisis as a new contestation phase between Lukashenka and European authorities, personalised by the Polish officials and residents. In addition, the collocation primes the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. In the context of the full-scale warfare launched in February 2022, the securitised framing of immigration strengthens the threat perception and diminishes natural human empathy.

My list of immigration frames frequently evoked in the Polish societal discourses relied on *VosViewer* bibliographic mapping and more rigorous literature analysis. Firstly, I evoked the threat frame that securitises immigration. In some studies (ex. Lahav & Courtemanche, 2012), the threat frame was denoted as the security frame, so I adopted the second labelling to reflect Buzan et al. (1998) security framework I used in the analysis. Then, I subdivided the existing refugee-friendly approaches into more nuanced frame categories. The humanitarian framing, or “moral values” framing (Triandafyllidou, 2017, p.14), focuses on immigrants’ victimisation and the European duty to protect human rights. Meanwhile, I derived guest and multiculturalist framing from Jaskułowski (2019) study of Polish immigration discourses, encoded under the collocations “Refugees as Guests” (p. 121) and “Refugees Welcome” (p. 101). I combined scholarly descriptions with discursive constructions of Polish politicians, Church members, and civil society representatives to supplement the literature definitions. Then, I operationalised the frames as meaningful clusters and keywords mentioned in the Research procedure chapter.

2.4.1 Security frame

Security framing is not a unique response shaped after Poland’s transformation into a frontline country handling the immigration wave from Belarusian terrains. The first reflections of the frame appeared in 2015 and assisted the ruling Law and Justice party in gathering supporters in the electoral race. Topics such as “security and protection against the threat of refugees” (Klaus, 2017, p. 523) co-formed the party program with other social issues such as economic modernisation, prioritising and supporting Catholic Church, or opposing homosexuality and abortions (“Postulaty Prawa i Sprawiedliwości,” 2017). The scepticism originated from the lack

of trust in “foreigners, including refugees,” thus requiring increased surveillance (Klaus, 2017, p. 524).

Grounding the security frame in the literature, I process Poland’s discursive constructions over Middle Eastern migration through the security framework Buzan developed with their colleagues. Evoking the term “security,” PiS politicians and other societal actors construct an emergency condition that “takes politics beyond the established rules” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 23). The negative connotation attributed to another term, “crisis,” introduced in the preliminary bibliographic investigation section, performs a similar securitising move associating immigration with something unexpected and inherently troublesome. However, an attempt to discursively frame an event as an “existential threat” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 24), as illustrated by the non-neutral “crisis” term, does not guarantee migration crisis securitisation, as the move is not equal to the accomplished discursive fixation. To make an issue securitised, the audience must internalise the security frame as a valid reality representation (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25).

Following Buzan, Wæver, and De Wilde (1998), securitisation is a process of rhetorically constructing an actor or entity as existentially threatened by societal issues or other actors. The threat perception mobilises further state actions standing out from the standard operating legal and customary procedures. Applying security framework terminology to the 2021 border crisis, Poland represented a *referent object* or an entity whose survival was undermined by the threats embodied in Lukashenka’s regime and instrumentalised immigration. Meanwhile, Buzan et al. (1998) would call media, politicians, and other actors that reshaped and reproduced security frames *securitising actors*.

I would also note a dubious role associated with media position in securitisation theory. Referring to Entman’s (2003) cascading model, media outlets are affected by other actors’ narratives, including those of elites and the audience. Therefore, media combines the functions of a frame setter and mediator. The latter role is evident in Liberal Model’s informational journalism, prioritising “fact-centered” neutral reporting over commentaries (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 207). In the case of reporting on political speeches or interviewing, journalists may abstain from commentaries or inferences, allowing the audience to generate conclusions independently. Then, media becomes a *functional actor* (Buzan et al., 1998) co-shaping the agenda but not directly participating in security frames’ construction and replication. The functional presence can also be

attributed to adherents of other conflicting frames, as these actors also “significantly influence decisions in the field of security” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 36).

Analysing the origins of security framing, I connected Westphalian sovereign state-centring with a realist vision of international relations. A sovereign state framework creates delimitations between states, legalising their right to existence within the “international anarchy” realists advocate for (Grieco, 1988, p. 488). In this context, when “international sovereign is absent” (Jervis, 2014, p. 136), states guard their sovereignty claims using security alliances. To maximise security, Poland prioritises the alliance with European Union and NATO over the negotiations with the entity representing danger, the overlaying Russian-Belarusian alliance. The choice of *balancing* or allying with other sovereigns against the shared enemy (Walt, 2014, p. 145) in the hybrid war between Poland and Belarus levels up the dispute from inter-national to inter-complex.

The discursive construction of immigrants as agents in the “regionally based” security complex contestation consolidated the overlay narrative on “outside powers” inhibiting regional security (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 11-14). Alongside, the migration crisis proximity nurtured the insecurity perception. Consequently, the presence of factors simplifying the securitisation move’s transformation into a robust societal frame led to the extraordinary actions of the Polish state that border guards admitted being illegal nationally and internationally (see Sadura & Urbańska, 2021a). The *pushbacks*, or the border guards’ actions of forcing asylum seekers to return to Belarusian terrains (“Pushback,” 2023), violate *European Charter*’s right for asylum and inhibit the implementation of the *Dublin Regulation* agreement instructing Poland to estimate the validity of asylum applications.

Apart from the securitised contestation with an opposing security complex, the Polish perception of asylum seekers was based on the 2015 migration crisis heritage. Compared to the 2021 border crisis, the 2015 migration crisis was well-studied academically. In my review, I singled out Jaskułowski’s (2019) study, grounding my frames. The book exceeded my research scope and provided a qualitative assessment of “two group interviews” and “191 individual semi-structured interviews that were carried out in 2015–2017” with Poland’s citizens in Lower Silesian and Opole voivodeships (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 2). The interview-based primary data allowed for making inferences about the audience’s decoded frame perceptions and noting conflicting societal

discourses in a large-N interview sample. As a result, individual conversations with Poles served as a proxy for broader societal culture accumulating the internalised frames. The apparent drawback is the absence of generalisation and a subsequent possibility of missing frames due to regional and individual-based sampling limitations. The scholar grounded their conclusions in the literature to correct the deficiency.

In 2015, the existential threat did not concern the contestation between security complexes. Instead, the danger came from the civilisation clash. Huntington (1993) defined *civilisation* as “a cultural entity” united by the shared identity of its members (p. 2). In Buzan et al. (1998) terminology, the clash of civilisations threatened Poland’s societal security, endangering “traditional patterns of ... culture and religious ... identity” (p. 8). As members of Western European civilisation, Poles cherish Christianity, the Greek idea of freedom, and respect for law (for the founding blocks of European civilisation, see Daszkiewicz, 2017). Meanwhile, asylum seekers from the Middle East represent another civilisation, Islamic. The opposition of Islam to Christianity is one of the pillars preventing successful cultural amalgamation. The asylum seekers’ illegal border crossing disrespected the law, while the illiberalism of regimes asylum seekers flee hinted at the absence of freedom culture. Thus, the disparities between the civilisational contexts caused caution and security concerns.

The threat perception spread in Poland after the announcement of the refugee relocation plan (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 38). The burden-sharing strategies Europeanised the Polish discursive field and introduced Islamophobia. Prominent among the far-right politicians in Europe, Polish parties such as PiS made Muslims “the target of ... othering” (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 38). In the far-right discourse, Islam was framed as a destruction of European civilisation (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 41). Civilisation enmity was fuelled by focusing events such as the women’s violation in the German city of Cologne in 2015. Jaskułowski (2019) remarked that the media labelled immigrants as “invaders, terrorists, rapists, and economic migrants” unrightfully residing in the EU (p. 42). As an outcome, the civilisation clash created an unbridgeable divide between “us,” Poles, and “them,” immigrants, the people who do not adhere to our values, disrupt our community order, and cause physical and economic danger.

Sadura and Urbańska (2021a) noted the replication of “us versus them” discursive constructions in their 2021 conversations with the residents of the Polish border zone with Belarus.

During the first ethnographic trip to the emergency zone, scholars from Warsaw University remarked on the securitised pro-PiS discourse dominating the discussion among the borderland residents. Locals discursively detached from asylum seekers through othering and evoked such prepositions as “they” or “them” (Sadura & Urbańska, 2021a). Thus, the 2015 securitised coverage of immigration primed the perceptions of the 2021 border crisis. In both cases, securitising actors such as Poles opposing immigration, PiS supporters, and party members constructed and replicated the othering between immigrants and Polish nationals. The grounds underpinning othering included security concerns and economic and socio-civilisational reasons.

I included economic endangerment, distinguished by some scholars in a separate “economisation frame” (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017, p. 1756), as an element of security framing as in its negative connotation, the collocation “economic migrant” evokes a threat of degrading social welfare and increased competition in the labour market. Studying “the attitudes of natives toward immigrants,” Fietkau and Hansen (2018) highlighted the “economic” threats alongside “cultural-symbolic” dangers associated with civilisational differences (p. 120). Therefore, immigrants can “threaten the job security of natives or burden the welfare state” as much as endanger religion and culture (Fietkau & Hansen, 2018, p. 120). Linking the two frames, I grasped different ways in which immigrants can existentially threaten Polish society’s well-being.

The securitised discourse about economic migrants in Poland was present in PiS politicians’ discursive strategies depicting newcomers as a competitive labour force that would deprive Poles of “decent job” (Legut & Pędziwiatr, 2018, p. 47). Meanwhile, some Catholic bishops, such as Archbishop Hozer, expected immigrants to be unwilling to contribute to the Polish economy and get by on state allowances (Petrowa-Wasilewicz, 2015, as cited in Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 100). In either case, immigrants represented “economic burdens and threat to the host country’s prosperity” (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017, p. 1756).

Hence, in the security frame, the 2015 and 2021 migration crises originated from different existential threats. The former was civilisational, while the latter was ingrained in security complexes’ contestation. However, societal culture kept primed memories. Therefore, even though asylum seekers were not the key existential threat, the labels assigned in 2015 could be evoked and stretched on a more recent reality, combining the former civilisational discourse with the

debate over immigrants' instrumentalisation for Lukashenka's purposes. The 2015 security frame included the dangers that could also be evoked in 2021: terrorism, social order and economic endangerment, women's safety, or religious and cultural domination (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 78).

2.4.2 Humanitarian frame

Humanitarian framing directly opposes the securitised and hostile discourse of immigration rejectors. For its advocates, the refugee inflow did not depict a civilisational threat or a first move in the hybrid war but people escaping military dangers (Triandafyllidou, 2017, p. 14). Such a "victimization" frame portrays immigration as independent of asylum seekers' will and results from "circumstances that lie beyond" (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017, p. 1751). The refugees' framing coincides with the ideal-type definition from Amnesty International (2022), where life endangerment manifests as a primary reason for relocation from the country of origin.

The frame reflects the "fundamental principles" the European Union is based upon, including respect for human dignity, human rights, and non-discrimination (Maldini & Takahashi, 2017, p. 57). As adherents of those values, the European authorities normatively condemn the actions of illiberal regimes and accept the international and communal legislation protecting the rights of humans. The *European Charter of Fundamental Rights* postulated the prohibition of inhuman treatment to any human being, grounding the claims of stay for refugees escaping conflicts without "discrimination based on any ground" (European Union, 2012).

In the Polish public discourse, the humanitarian frame represented responsibility for "helping people fleeing the war" (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 106). European ideas of humanitarian assistance were combined with national myths and experiences. Jaskułowski (2019) remarked that the collective memory of World War II and the Poles' relocation escaping the warfare made some Polish citizens relate to the experiences of refugees and form a more positive attitude (p. 106). Refugee assistance transformed from a normatively appropriate behaviour to the attitude one expects from others in case of potential future need. As Greussing & Boomgaarden (2017) noted, refugees were "passive victims of circumstances" (p. 1757), so the change in the international arena might provoke a similar solidarity call to protect other nations in Europe, including Poland. Just like other states assisted Poles in the mid-twentieth century, Poles help the Middle Eastern

refugees at the beginning of the twenty-first. The focus on the Middle East indicated that warfare in the country of origin was crucial for refugee acceptance (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 107).

Although the broad definition of refugee includes other life-threatening factors such as “race, religion, nationality, ... political opinion” or group membership (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 107), the narrow framing of refugee claims came from the European context. Angela Merkel was one of the central figures in promoting the 2015 Union’s open-door refugee policy in Europe. During the 2015 Security Conference, Merkel focused on the military conflicts in the neighbourhood, such as terrorism in the Middle East and warfare in Syria (Merkel, 2015). The prominence of military conflicts and their coverage by influential European politicians narrowed the discursive field to a particular type of refugee framing, warfare-displaced people.

War-related nature of asylum-seeking was also present in discursive constructions of international media outlets. A topic modelling analysis by Nerghes and Lee (2019) revealed an association of “refugee” and “asylum” nodes with “war” and “syrians” in 2015 texts (p. 280). Terms’ interrelation in the model indicated the prominence of the keywords in creating a master node, the topic “Refugee Crisis” (Nerghes & Lee, 2019, p. 280). Therefore, the 2015 international agenda was mainly limited to warfare in the Middle East, particularly Syria, which primed the perception of the subsequent inflows.

In Polish politics, the most likely adherents of humanitarianism were the liberals who also favoured the narrow definition. In 2017, a few years after the outburst of the 2015 refugee crisis, the Civic Platform (PO) politician Grzegorz Schetyna voiced a distinction between “victims of wars” and “illegal migrants,” limiting refugee-seeking to political conflicts (Legut & Pędziwiatr, 2018, p. 41). Therefore, a war-skewed humanitarian discourse, initially consolidated at the EU level, downloaded to Polish national politics, and became internalised in opposition to relocation programmes.

Apart from the institutionalised political parties, other Polish actors constructed humanitarian frames and promoted the image of “Poles as helpers” (Krotofil & Motak, 2018b, p. 76). Even though Polish civil society and Church members are heterogeneous groups, their representatives are prominent in voicing and adhering to the humanitarian frame of immigration. On-ground volunteerism of non-profit organisations and individuals expresses a form of pro-social

behaviour where asylum seekers and refugees perform as recipients while Polish actors represent benefactors.

Polish civil society refugee assistance dates back to the early 1990s and focuses on various aspects of immigrants' life. Non-governmental organisations assist legally and psychologically, provide "language instruction" classes, and help with employment (Follis, 2019, pp. 4-9). Therefore, NGOs fulfil more of the Maslow pyramid's needs, targeting emotional necessities. Linguistic courses are also advocated nationally, but counselling and employment assistance can increase chances for successful personal and vocational development. Speaking of the Catholic Church, the institution ideationally embodies "the Christian duty to help those in need" (Krotofil & Motak, 2018b, p. 76). Representing migration crises through the humanitarian frame, Church leaders speak of refugees as "sufferers" (Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 98), reinforcing the victimisation discourse.

The humanitarian framing persisted in civil society discourse and some Church bishops' speeches in 2021. Grassroots initiatives originated from NGOs and individuals and predominantly targeted the physiological needs of Middle Easterners. Despite the governmental restrictions on entry, activists managed to assist asylum seekers with alimentation, finances, transportation, and medication (Halemba, 2022, pp. 5-6). Activists' discourse evoked the notions of "compassion and humanity" (Halemba, 2022, p. 7). A similar appeal to European humanistic values operated in the top circles of the Polish Catholic Church. Archbishop Gądecki distinguished the importance of "medical and humanitarian aid" (Łaciak, Smuniewski, & Boguszewski, 2022, p. 48), insisting on "providing help to the people who found themselves in a dramatic 'dead-end' situation" (Gądecki 2021b, as cited in Łaciak et al., 2022, p. 49).

In the media, liberal outlets were the most prone to construct and replicate humanitarian framing. The relevant examples are online media publications by the left newspaper *Krytyka Polityczna* that bridged academia and journalism (Sadura & Urbańska, 2021a; Sadura & Urbańska, 2021b). Sadura and Urbańska's publications provided primary data supplemented by journalistic commentaries. Even though the articles reported the first-hand experiences of Polish residents at the border, the investigation's reliability is limited due to prevalent non-recorded conversations. Field notes and researchers' memory grounded the final output (Sadura & Urbańska, 2021a), leading to the absence of secondary data for replication. However, the publications are non-

academic, so the research style did not aim at generating a high-quality output. Instead, the pieces narrated the situation at the border by bridging the authors' personal experiences with the stories of temporal and permanent residents.

The pieces reflect the liberal political orientations of the medium and the articles' authors. From the beginning, Sadura and Urbańska (2021b) constructed the border crisis as a "humanitarian catastrophe," framing a more humanistic attitude toward immigrants. Meanwhile, the authors noted the transformations in residents' discourses. While their first journey revealed the predominance of security frames in the speeches of Poles, the second field trip showed the gradual substitution of security discourses with humanitarian framing. Locals feared a rise in victims among asylum seekers as winter approached: "People will die, freeze, drown, *en masse* now" (Sadura & Urbańska, 2021b). Sadura and Urbańska (2021b) further replicated Poles' victimisation discourse portraying immigrants as frightened, "suffering," and "desperate."

To conclude, Polish humanitarian frames nearly exclusively focused on war-related immigration. Humanitarian framing characterises asylum seekers as passive victims of the unstable political environment in the country of origin that provoked human displacement. In response, the Polish community, including political parties and grassroots activists, encourage and provide necessary humanitarian assistance as devoted carriers of European values. In liberal media, the authors were prone to victimising refugees and reconstructing the humanitarian discourse of their respondents. The humanitarian framing reflected the ideological orientation of the outlet and the authors' predispositions.

2.4.3 Guest and multiculturalist frames

By contrast to humanitarian frames focusing on war-led immigration and European values, guest framing aligns aspirations to help with security concerns European states bear witnessing the large-scale asylum-seeking crisis. Jaskułowski (2019) characterised the adherents of guest frames as "ambivalents," or the Polish respondents who "were neither strongly against nor strongly in favour of receiving refugees" (p. 113). Thus, the guest framing intermediates security and humanitarian narratives, allowing its proponents greater discursive flexibility.

The aspiration to assist those in need while guarding Union's interests is embedded in the European and national legislations. European legal system, originating and gaining inspiration from ideational compassion and humanism, transposes norms into actions via the national governments. The combined application of the principles of subsidiarity and supremacy indicates that acts as the *European Charter* affect the Member states "when they are implementing Union law" (European Union, 2012). Meanwhile, Union members "safeguard the ability ... to take decisions" (Pavy, 2023). In the case of asylum seekers, European Union officials apply the *Dublin Regulation*. If Poland is the first country of entry, Polish officers process asylum applications. Thus, asylum seekers are subject to Polish national regulations.

The 2003 Poland's Act on foreigners' protection is based on humanitarian ideas of European treaties such as the *European Convention on Human Rights* ("Ustawa," 2003). Meanwhile, the Act also lists conditions that can terminate or deny refugee status provision. Rejection reasons include the absence of "serious harm" risk for the applicant or non-political crime commitment outside the Polish land ("Ustawa," 2003). Therefore, the transposed policies focus on deserving asylum seekers while protecting Poland and the EU from war criminals. Despite the non-refoulement principle that forbids refugees' return to their country of origin against their will, the inability to provide "convincing reasons" for persecution endangerment leads to refugee status termination and de jure allows to relocate the migrant ("Ustawa," 2003). Thus, the transposition of European norms to national legislation combines the national interests of the hosting state, the Union's and international legal requirements, and refugees' welfare considerations.

The main peculiarity of guest framing I observed is the insistence on deservingness as a criterion justifying humanitarian assistance. The listing of conditions for temporary protection was embodied in the legal acts and Polish residents' speeches (ex. Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 121). The fitting of immigrants within social categories reflects the ongoing debate in the European Union. According to Goździak and Márton (2018), European officials and national politicians aimed to "balance ... security" and "protection of human rights" (p. 125). Social and legal categories were the tools employed to resolve the controversy. "Sorting people into undeserving trespassers versus those who deserve rights and care" (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016, p. 13), the politicians attempted to bridge the norm-based duties with sovereign nation-states' protection.

The guest framing indicating the conditions for stay was noticeable in the speeches of Polish ruling party officials. Speaking of the humanitarian assistance realised in accommodation facilities for refugees in 2015, Polish President Andrzej Duda highlighted the humanitarian necessity to provide the refugees with “decent life” conditions (“Kryzys migracyjny to problem,” 2015). Alongside focusing on meeting refugees’ “biological” and “educational” needs, the leader also insisted on refugees’ return home “after the end of wars in their countries” (“Kryzys migracyjny to problem,” 2015). The latter framing element indicated how the President discursively supported human rights and European values while reminding about the asylum-seeking regulation as a legal ground for refugee stay in Poland.

A comparable example of guest framing can be traced in the speeches of Archbishop Gądecki. Along with the 2015 discourse on humanitarianism and assistance, the Archbishop added a security dimension and spoke of border protection. The guest frame can be found in the following phrase: “We need to show our solidarity to the people in need without damage to the security of the Republic of Poland and its citizens” (Gądecki 2021a, as cited in Łaciak et al., 2022, p. 50). Thus, the Archbishop asked the public to be compassionate, keeping Poland’s security interests in mind. In the speeches of Duda and Gądecki, one may find a similar pattern: the necessity to bridge national security and moral duties resulted in evoking deservingness criteria. While the Archbishop spoke of neediness, the President referred to international protection and grounded hosting.

While guest framing requires asylum seekers “to observe the rules of the host” (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 121) and respect migration and asylum regulations, multiculturalist framing is void of security narrative and represents an extreme version of European humanitarianism. Like humanitarians, multiculturalists believe in “tolerance and openness” (Cieślińska & Dziekońska, 2019, p. 9). However, multiculturalist framing is not limited to war victimisation and stretches beyond need-based assistance.

The key concepts of the frame are cosmopolitanism and individualism. Cosmopolitan and individualistic visions of immigration are not socially widespread and are distributed within secular and highly educated societal groups (Jaskułowski, 2019, pp. 104-105). Cosmopolites share a feeling that “we belong to a world” (Cheah, 2006, p. 486) rather than a nation-state. In the context of world society, border security and civilisation clash lose importance as every inhabitant of planet Earth owns the land. In multiculturalist framing, “freedom of movement and residence”

(Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 105) substitute admissibility criteria and other legal obstacles for human migration. In the Church discourse, multiculturalist framing traces are found in the “shared humanity” idea (Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 98). Referring to the refugees as “brothers and sisters” (Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 98), bishops discursively eradicated religious borders and embraced human equality.

Apart from cosmopolitanism, multiculturalist framing focuses on individuals instead of community stereotypes. Opposing generalisations, adherents of multiculturalist discourse value “individual qualities and identity” (Jaskułowski, 2019, pp. 104-105), stressing the importance of a case-by-case approach to asylum claims and the motives of immigrants. Individualism extends to the usefulness of immigrants’ skills. While securitisers fear labour market oversaturation, multiculturalist framing advocates believe in the added value foreigners can bring to national economies. Enhanced productivity and rich human capital (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 68) are perceived as assets rather than challenges.

Advocacy of global movement freedom comes from the personal experiences frame’s proponents had with international communities. After accumulating touristic insights (Cieślińska & Dziekońska, 2019, p. 9), multiculturalist Poles normalised international interactions and decreased their inner fears towards outgroups. Meanwhile, other cultures stopped being treated as an existential threat but became positive innovations. Some Poles proposed to imitate the multiculturalist environment of Western Europe and allow for a display of different cultures (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 108). Denoted as “boutique multiculturalism” (Fish, 1997, p. 378), such a version of multinational cohabitation embodies touristic experiences at home. According to Fish (1997), boutique multiculturalism centres on gastronomic delights, festivals, and other forms of amusement that supplement traditional titular culture (p. 378). Thus, multiculturalist framing is depoliticised and promotes an ideal-type community where differences are welcome and cause no trouble.

To conclude, I distinguished four frames of Middle Eastern immigration in Polish societal discourses based on scholarly publications and other secondary sources. The frames represent a discursive continuum, ranging from the most-refugee hostile to the most-refugee friendly⁸. The

⁸ See “Migration framing scale” in the Appendix.

security frame securitises immigrants as an existential threat to the European civilisation, Polish economy, and welfare. Meanwhile, the humanitarian frame advocates the moral duty to protect the people fleeing wars. The guest frame can be situated in-between security and humanitarian, as the discourse justifies immigrants' presence in Poland as hosts based on their valid refugee status. The remaining frame, multiculturalist, is the most immigrant-friendly and advocates global cosmopolitanism and human capital value.

To make the frames applicable to *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s frame-building analysis, I specified frames' discursive markers and discussed the mixed-method approach of my investigation. However, the unilateral frame analysis based on societal frames' presence within the corpora would not capture the medium's framing peculiarities. To highlight the importance of case study design, I supplemented social frames' identification in *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s corpora with framing tasks analysis, grounded in Snow and Benford's (1988) diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. The details of my research procedure are provided in the following chapter.

III. Research procedure

The research procedure bridges theoretical knowledge with empirical analysis. Data processing followed several stages. Departing from the automated R-based analysis, I associated computer-generated findings with immigration frames through qualitative interactions with the data. As societal frames generalise experts' views on Polish society's perceptions of migration, I added a framing task analysis based on Snow and Benford (1988). The frame-building tasks, such as diagnostics, prognosis, and motivation, revealed how *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s journalists characterised each migration crisis as a phenomenon and which behaviour newspaper authors perceived as appropriate in response to the critical juncture.

3.1 Mixed method research design

The mixed-method research design included quantitative n-gram generation using the programming language R, and subsequent frame analysis, based on the four societal frames and framing tasks by Snow and Benford (1988). The approach's main strengths are the high reliability of quantitative findings and contextually accurate inferences from qualitative frame analysis. Meanwhile, the two types of frame analysis allowed me to single out *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s migration crises' framing peculiarities while situating newspaper framing within the broader Polish culture.

The initial computer-based textual processing with the software *RStudio* outlined the general patterns of frame-building through the recurrent use of keywords and collocations, also called unigrams and bigrams, respectively. The visualisation of the most cited words in the retrieved *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s publications hinted at the authors' purposeful use of vocabulary. The high term frequencies predominantly reveal the perspective newspaper adopted toward migration and the angles used in the phenomenon's coverage. Alongside, term repetitions leave room for conflicting positions originating from public debate and inter-media agenda-setting that authors might discursively support or criticise. The unigram generation was followed by network analysis illustrating word interrelations inside the corpus. The network traces recurrent word combinations in the data distinguishing between the most and the least frequent. The method allowed me to interpret repetitive collocations in the corpora to ground newspaper frames.

The central focus on representing textual data as quantifiable frequencies corrected for limitations such as time scarcity and researcher bias. Unlike qualitative text processing, quantitative analysis is “less time consuming” thanks to automatic specialised software for regularity identification (Rahman, 2016, p. 106). The quantitative approach is less prone to biased data interpretation. As qualitative research aims at uncovering and interpreting hidden meanings, scholars are more likely to conflate inferences with “personal and subjective” viewpoints (Mehra, 2015, p. 4). Therefore, computer-based processing dependent on input data visualises communication patterns more objectively and neutrally, decreasing the subjectivity of interpretation. Automated data processing raises the reliability of findings, as other scholars can replicate the analysis using the same tools and data. Increased attention to the procedure details is required for high reliability to persist.

Meanwhile, the isolated use of quantitative techniques inhibits detailed context-sensitive conclusions. Qualitative analysis requiring the researcher’s manual interaction with the text gives “deeper insights into issues” (Rahman, 2016, p. 104) than data quantification. While the data collocation network can reveal the terms frequently associated with migrants and refugees, the visualisation does not demonstrate how *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s authors framed migration. Automated processing generalises newspaper coverage without separating newspaper-advocated stances and counterbalancing positions. Thus, the qualitative step served as an additional explanatory power that clarified quantified inferences. In the social sciences, a two-step analysis where quantitative results are further interpreted qualitatively is called “explanatory sequential” mixed-method design (Creswell, 2017, p. 65). The complementarity component design combines quantitative and qualitative stages as two significant parts of data analysis, where “results from one dominant method type are enhanced ... by results from another” (Caracelli & Greene, 1997, pp. 22-23).

3.1.1 R-based text mining

The first dominant step of my analysis was R-based *text mining*, the process of meaningful text distillation (Kwartler, 2017, p. 2). Text mining organises “unstructured data” massives, also referred to as corpora, into a structured analytical output that encodes a particular classification criterion (Kwartler, 2017, p. 9). In my research, the data was organised ordinally, ranging from the

most to the least frequent words and word combinations. I collected primary data from the official website of the newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* with the domain *Wyborcza.pl*. I subdivided the data into two temporal and two source categories. The temporal subdivision reflected the variation over time research puzzle (Day & Koivu, 2019) I tackled. Thus, I gathered articles published in 2015 and then repeated the procedure for the publications from 2021. The second subdivision resulted from the newspaper digitalisation promoted by the outlet since 2014. The digital subscription broadened the user-accessible content, so I contrasted archival print pieces available under the Club subscription with the online publications retrieved through the website keyword search. *Table 1* explains the adopted selection criteria in more detail.

Table 1

Data sample: search criteria and output

Timespan/Source	Online	Archive
2015: search query	<i>Kryzys migracyjny</i> (migration crisis)	<i>Kryzys migracyjny europa</i> (migration crisis Europe)
2015: publications	75 pieces between April, 9 – December 15, 2015	80 pieces between February 3 – December 30, 2015
2021: search query	<i>Kryzys migracyjny na granicy Bialorusi</i> (migration crisis at the border with Belarus) <i>Kryzys na granicy Bialorusi</i> (crisis at the border with Belarus)	<i>Kryzys migracyjny bialorus</i> (migration crisis Belarus)
2021: publications	81 piece between June 30, 2021 – January 3, 2022	47 pieces between August, 9 – December 30, 2021

In the data collection process, I started with online sources. I narrowed the timespan to the considered periods, January to December 2015 and 2021, respectively. In the latter case, I added several publications from early 2022 to correct the imbalance between the online and archival publications discussed in the next paragraphs. After generating the publication list, I stored the following data: author, title, publication text, issue date, and source link. All the publication sources with respective references are listed in the bibliographic section.

A similar procedure applied to *Wyborcza*'s archive. The archival data represent the newspapers' articles from the founding date, as indicated on *Wyborcza*'s web page, and possess a separate domain, *classic.wyborcza.pl* ("Archiwum Gazety Wyborczej," 2023). Using digitalised transcripts allowed me to collect the data more accurately and efficiently. I surpassed limitations, including archive copy absences in the library or selection bias from manual interaction with texts. However, the main disadvantage of digitalised archival data access is the title-based classification of articles, excluding information on the original page layout and visual support. For this reason, I analysed publications' visual elements only for the online-designated output available under the original domain. Meanwhile, the archive distinguished *Wyborcza*'s original pieces from other stored data, including *Wyborcza*'s local sub-outlets and publications collected under the non-defined category "Inne" (in English: "Other"). As my research does not estimate inter-voivodeship discrepancies in migration coverage, I excluded local data from the analysis. In the case of 2015 publications, the data sample was strictly narrowed to *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s main publishing section.

As for the 2021 data, the selection scheme was disturbed by the low number of stored data. The search query generated 2915 materials, but only three appeared topically relevant and filtered in the *Gazeta Wyborcza* publishing section. Thus, I extended my search scope to other publications while avoiding those that overtly claimed another outlet's authorship. Archival data was subject to an additional filtering criterion: "Accuracy." The regular online search generated highly accurate data, so the number of articles approximates the search output. However, the relevance of publications displayed was more limited in the archive's case. Thus, I limited my scope to the first ten pages available upon high-accuracy search.

After collecting textual and visual materials in the case of *Wyborcza*'s online publications, I proceeded with data pre-processing. I applied the same procedure for all four datasets: 2015 and 2021 online publications and 2015 and 2021 archival in-print articles. Proper word frequency assessment in the corpus relies on reducing word forms to their dictionary versions. I lemmatised the data using *Morfeusz* morphological analyser ("Morfeusz," 2023). Lemmatisation modifies the word endings and homogenises the word linguistic variations under the "normalized form" that preserves the infinitival ending (Plisson, Lavrac, & Mladenic, 2004, p. 83). *Morfeusz* was incompatible with the *RStudio* software, so data preparation followed several steps. First, I uploaded raw data in *RStudio* and tokenised the corpus. Tokenisation subdivides the text into

“words, terms, symbols, or some other meaningful elements called tokens” (Vijayarani & Janani, 2016, p. 38). Then, I removed unnecessary punctuation and pursued two rounds of stopwords filtration afterwards. For the first round, I used the multilingual Stopwords ISO Dataset under the language code ISO 639-1. Then, I removed unigrams from the Polish stopwords collection, available on the online platform GitHub.com (Diaz, 2020).

The end output of R-based pre-processing represented a database of isolated word forms and article titles to which the words correspond. Then, I uploaded unigrams into *Morfeusz* software for lemmatisation. The programme exclusively focuses on the Polish language, and its analysis generates “a list of interpretations” (Woliński, 2019, p. 3). A computerised word normalisation provides greater objectivity in data transformation and demonstrates high time efficiency, as lemmas are generated instantaneously. However, the major disadvantage of *Morfeusz* is its inability to distinguish between parts of speech, so the final output was subject to additional manual corrections. After checking the lemmas, I re-uploaded the transformed text to *RStudio*.

The R-based analysis included two main steps: visualisation of Top-15 words in data samples and bigram network construction. For unigrams, I counted their frequencies in the four data sets and visualised the results as bar charts. The bigram analysis depended on the lemmatised text corpora rearrangement by publication. The reorganisation of individual unigrams into lemmatised texts created connections between words inside the corpus. I visualised the collocations or bigrams with a citation frequency higher than ten in the network form where the colour of lines connecting terms reflected collocation frequencies. After completing text mining, I produced eight visualisations. Four reflected the fifteen most frequent words *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s authors used in their articles in 2015 and 2021, respectively, while four others showed how words formed meaningful constructions, encoding journalistic frames. Network analysis grounded a subsequent qualitative frame analysis.

3.1.2 Frame analysis

The frame analysis combined two main assumptions: acknowledgement of outlet-sensitive frame generation and simultaneous subjection of the medium’s output to the societal culture. The case study impedes generalisations about the Polish media sphere, so I maximised the research

utility by focusing on *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s framing of immigrants and migration crises. As a liberal opinion-forming outlet influential in the highly educated circles of Polish society, *Gazeta Wyborcza* fits in the repolonising scheme of the PiS government while contesting the government's conservative media capture. Based on the literature, I assumed the predominance of humanitarian frame constructions in the corpora while acknowledging the conflicting discursive pressures from other societal actors, including *Wyborcza*'s readership.

The conventional frame analysis I observed in publications such as Greussing and Boomgaarden's study of the 2015 refugee crisis (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017) involved inductive frame generation. Instead of denoting narrow context-specific frames, I used framing tasks by Snow and Benford (1988). As frames encode meanings, newspaper texts aim to convince the audience and homogenise event interpretation. During frame-building and reproduction, articles' authors identify the central actors of the migration crisis and the actors' goals and instruct societal responses to the challenges. Thus, newspaper attributes specific traits to the migration crisis as a social phenomenon, characterises refugees and immigrants, and proposes a template on how society tackles or should tackle the crisis.

Table 2

Central framing tasks

Framing task	Tools
Diagnostics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problem definition 2. Responsibility attribution
Prognosis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prognosed solutions
Motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expected audience response

Source: Snow & Benford (1988).

The line between prognostic and motivational framing lies in the plan's transformation into action. In the case of prognosis, frame setters identify "strategies, tactics, and targets" of problem resolution (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 201). Therefore, the frame encodes how Polish society should respond to the migration crisis. Meanwhile, Snow and Benford (1988) indicated that motivational framing transformed prognosed tactics into "ameliorative" action instructing specific moves and audience participation (pp. 202-203). Motivational framing illustrates the mediatization

concept, as the successful transition from prognosed solutions to accomplishable responses in crisis management demonstrates how media outlets such as newspapers can trigger socially meaningful changes. In-text manifestation of motivational framing can be concrete popular or institutional initiatives journalists characterise as appropriate. The remaining frame-setting patterns of motivational framing rely on the audience's individual predispositions.

Focusing on framing tasks rather than context-sensitive frame labelling removed the necessity of thorough discourse analysis. The problem definition, actor responsibility attribution, and action favouring can be derived from the generalised corpus analysis. Using computerised network analysis, I visualised the main actors involved and identified whom *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s team treated as responsible for the migration crisis. Meanwhile, the recurrent collocations allowed me to identify whether the stance on the crisis newspaper advocated was positive or negative. More in-depth qualitative work with relevant collocations in the original text contextualised the framing patterns. Keyword-based data search focused the work and detected context-based features as desirable conduct and actions.

Another part of the qualitative analysis placed *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s framing within the Polish discursive field. In line with Entman's (1993) framing conceptualisation, I assumed socially generated frames shape the communicator's message delivery. To incorporate culture's pressures on *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s texts, I found correlations and miscorrelations between journalists' pieces and deductive societal frames. To detect the frames in my corpus, I systematised literature-based keywords and collocations in thematic clusters using a mind mapping software *Xmind*. For the security frame, I identified four areas of inquiry: security and defence, border vulnerability, otherness, and welfare endangerment.

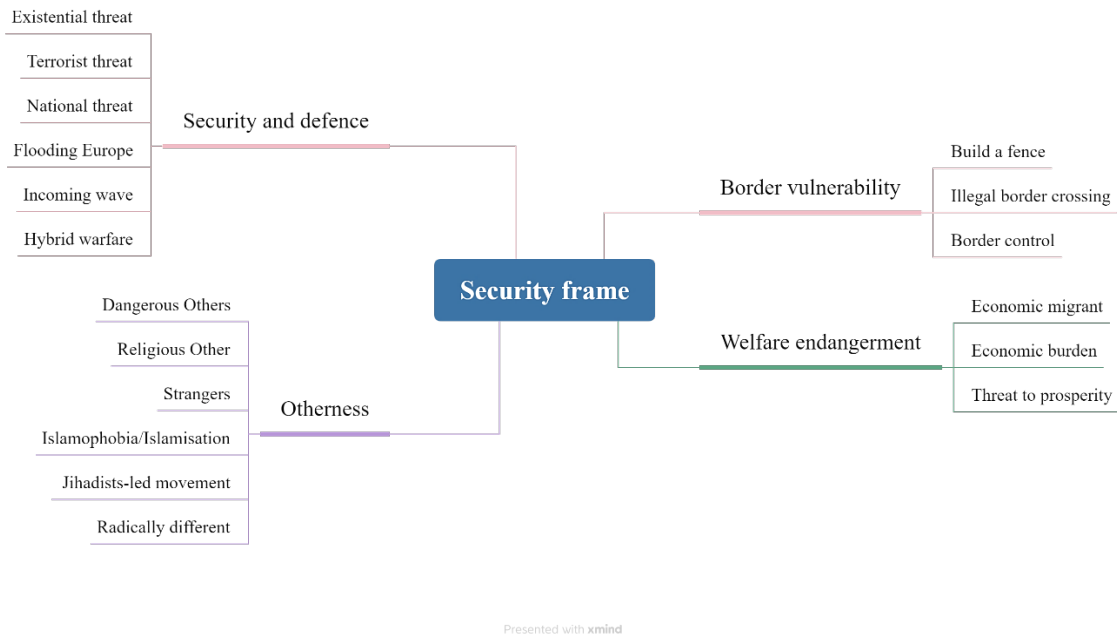


Figure 3. Security frame: keyword clustering

Security and defence cluster encoded securitised moves presenting immigrants, refugees, or a migration crisis as an existential threat to referent objects such as Poland, Polish residents, and the European Union. Klaus (2017) evoked the instrumentalisation of such topics as “security” and “protection against the threat of refugees” as some of the central in PiS party speeches during the 2015 electoral race (p. 523). The electoral campaign also featured a “terrorist threat on the part of refugees” (Klaus, 2017, p. 524), reducing the broader threat notion to the area of extremism. Securitising actors are not only afraid of radical religious groups and individuals but of the immigration phenomenon itself. The reporting on large numbers of asylum seekers that destined the European Union in 2015 framed an unfavourable predisposition to “refugee migration” as an “uncontrolled and dangerous process” (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 86). Such terms as “flood” and “wave” prime a sensation of dangerous natural disaster that cannot be managed. In the borderless Union setting, Southern states’ concerns transposed into Polish discourse and evoked the perception of national threat associated with “strangers” and the “us versus them” dichotomy (Krotofil & Motak, 2018b, p. 83).

All immigration concerns developed in 2015 further primed the 2021 border crisis coverage. Southern European states’ challenges with refugees and asylum seekers merged in the

security frames with new actors introduced to the scene. Belarusian leadership's assistance in relocating asylum seekers to the Polish-Belarusian border reframed immigrants into a driven force. At the same time, Lukashenka's government became a main existential threat. Halemba (2022) remarked on the Polish government-led media representation of migrants as "weapons" (p. 4), trafficked and smuggled to the border by the hostile security complex. "Hybrid warfare" is a valuable term encompassing primed concerns and modern challenges. As a multidimensional concept, hybrid threats accumulate "irregular tactics" as migrants' instrumentalisation for Lukashenka's purposes, "terrorist acts," and "criminal disorder" strangers produce in the hosting state (Hoffman, 2007, p. 14, as cited in Filipec, 2022, p. 4).

The remaining clusters logically resulted from security concerns. The impossibility of managing migration, equal to a wave or flood, evoked a discussion on extraordinary measures such as fence building (Klaus, 2017, p. 526). Terms such as "border crossing," "fence," or "border control" were listed among key securitisation frame indicators in Geussing and Boomgarden's study of Austrian newspapers (Geussing & Boomgarden, 2017, p. 1757). Apart from technical management difficulties, religious otherness manifested an unbridgeable civilisational discrepancy. Huntington's (1993) civilisation clash evokes notions of Islamophobia and Islamisation. Security frame advocates labelled Islam prayers as "radically different and hostile to 'our' Christian culture" (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 41). Religious threat perception can be coupled with terrorism and evoke frames with a structure similar to Belarusian hybrid warfare. Referring to the Catholic Church Archbishop Hoser, the Church member separated migrants from terrorists while acknowledging jihadists' potential influence on asylum seekers (Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 101). Thus, in Hozer's example, jihadists are the main threat, while migrants are their instrument.

While in some discourses, migrants act as instrumentalised secondary actors driven by external powers, in others, refugees represent an existential threat to the European welfare system. Successful asylum claims grant refugees financial benefits that securitising actors believe dissuade newcomers from working. Some Church bishops and PiS members classified refugees as "economic migrants" (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 40) who survive "on the dole" (Petrowa-Wasilewicz, 2015, as cited in Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 100) and refuse to contribute to the Polish welfare system.

The security frame is directly opposite to the humanitarian. Interpreting Western European civilisational heritage, humanists do not focus on the inter-civilisation clash but on civilisation’s own founding blocks. Respect for human freedom and Christian virtues extends beyond national limits towards asylum seekers and reframes societal perceptions of the refugee crisis from hostile to empathic. An ideal-type humanitarian framing centres on European civilisation’s virtues and singles out two ideational stances that justify migrant relocation in 2015 and 2021, such as warfare-led emigration, and European values cherishing human life. Most importantly, a just refugee does not decide to leave for pragmatic interests but is motivated by “wars, conflict, and violence in the regions of origin” (Triandafyllidou, 2017, p. 14). Impossibility of deciding own destiny and fate due to home-based military aggression led to refugees’ portrayal as victims who deserve “humanitarian assistance” (Legut & Pędziwiatr, 2018, p. 41).

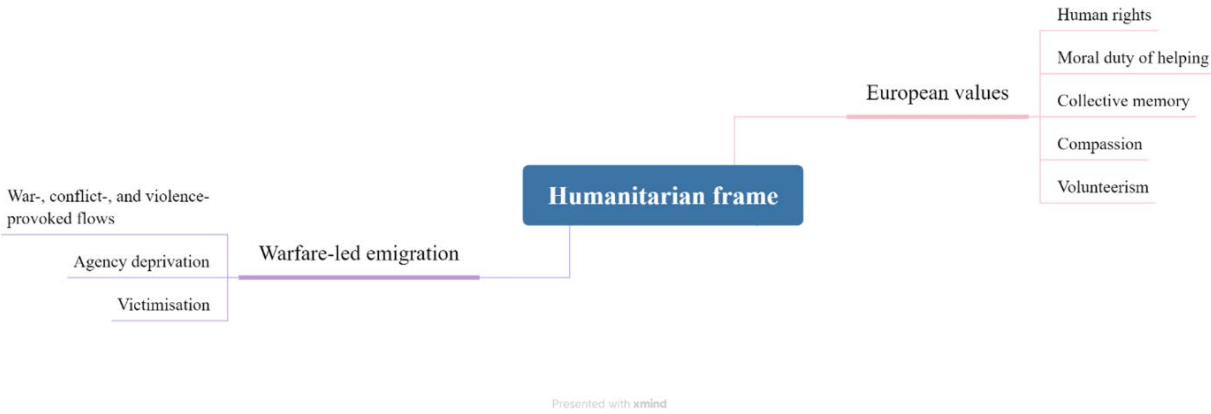


Figure 4. Humanitarian frame: keyword clustering

Idealised treatment of “hospitality as an ethical imperative” (Rozakou, 2012, p. 563) in the case of refugees has a solid background in European and international treaties. The *European Charter of Fundamental Rights*, *Geneva Convention*, or the *European Convention on Human Rights* instruct the proper attitude EU countries should adopt toward asylum seekers as humans and potential refugees. Using the *Charter*’s provisions (European Union, 2012), rights to human dignity and personal security justify war refugees’ admission in European states as their human treatment in the place of permanent residence comes into question. The same protection from

forced return “to a territory where ... threats to life or freedom” persist encodes the international *Geneva Convention* (UNHCR, 2010, p. 3).

European Union’s acts and treaties come from more abstract European values. A shared “moral duty” coupled with collective memories of warfare hardships developed in the humanitarian frame advocates a desire to assist (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 106). Motivations for helping might differ and include such grounds as Christian faith; family stories passed through generations; personal interactions with refugees; or personal experiences. Meanwhile, the final local community act is on-ground volunteerism, where Poles and foreigners as benefactors increase the well-being of recipients, asylum-seekers, and refugees.

However, the transposition of European norms into rules and regulations is less straightforward and combines humanitarian aspirations with state interests’ priority. European legalism embodies the detailed procedure on international protection that grants a status justifying refugee benefits. While Polish authorities and society believe in the rightfulness of refugee protection and the right to asylum, Poles assess the deservedness of temporarily assisted humans. The guest frame captures the duality of human compassion and national security concerns and focuses on the legal conditions enforced in immigration offices. Meanwhile, guest frames are also present in societal discussions. The criteria for differentiating between “legitimate” and “illegitimate,” “deserving” and “undeserving” (Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 100) mainly reflect the national regulations on asylum provision. Adherence to international and European laws and norms, justified endangerment at home, legal refugee status and, ideally, desire to leave once secure could summarise an ideal refugee mentality a guest frame advocate would envisage.

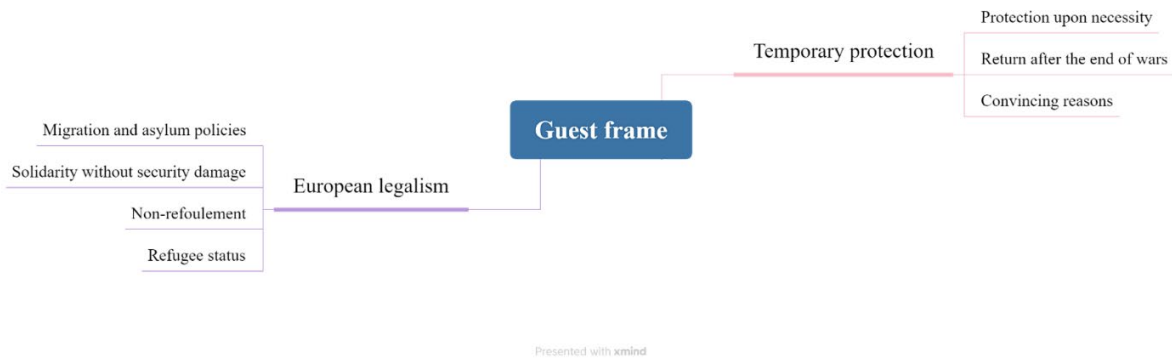


Figure 5. Guest frame: keyword clustering

While guest framing mediates between security and humanitarian discourses, multiculturalist frames maximise humanitarian empathy to the highest value. Multiculturalism bases on three pillars: cosmopolitanism, universalism, and cultural diversity. While security framing focuses on border protection, multiculturalist one abolishes human-generated terrestrial and maritime restrictions. Cosmopolitanism unifies the ideas of single humankind present in bishops' discourses (Krotofil & Motak, 2018a, p. 98) with the negation of “artificial” discursive subdivisions as nationality or religion voiced by some Polish citizens (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 104). Even though some multiculturalist discourses negate human categorisation into artificial classes, others promote culture-based diversity. For such multiculturalists, cultural plurality represented a form of “great experience” with different cuisines and music styles (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 109). Thus, while cosmopolitanism negates border vulnerability arguments, cultural diversity questions the harmfulness of civilisational otherness.

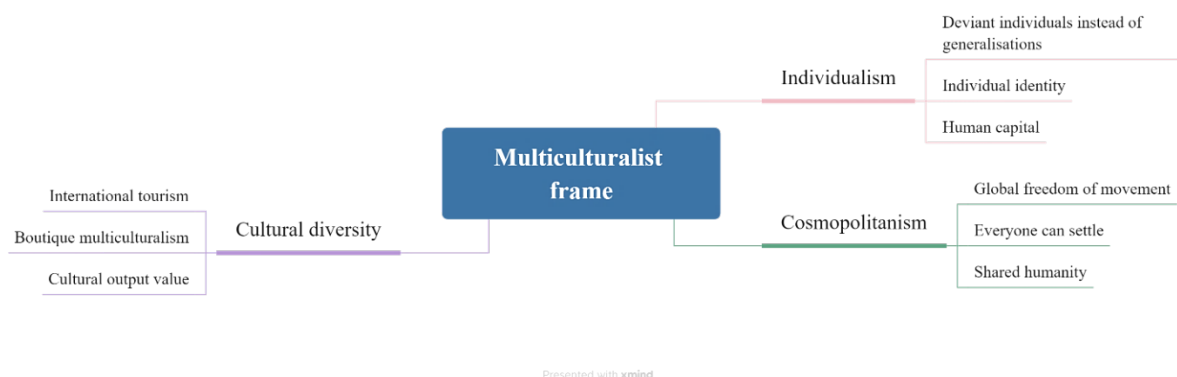


Figure 6. Multiculturalist frame: keyword clustering

The individualist-focused argument opposes social welfare threatening. Instead of representing migrants as a financial burden for taxpayers, the multiculturalist frame offers to treat refugees and asylum seekers as an economically beneficial labour force. Individualism advocates asylum seekers' assessment based on individual stories rather than cultural generalisations. While securitising actors depict the newcomers as strangers and humanitarians call them war victims, multiculturalist frame adherents would listen to each person separately. Individuals with “deviant” behaviour should not be mixed with other members of the same “religious or national group” due to joint affiliation (Jaskułowski, 2019, p. 105). The individualist reasoning backs up cosmopolitans' arguments, stating that modern world categorisations are outdated, by contrast to guest framing's classification upon deservingness.

3.2 Results

After operationalising media frames into thematic clusters and outlining the differences between framing tasks, I implemented the literature-based inferences and methodological tools in the data corpora analysis to answer the research question. In total, I processed 283 in-print and digital *Gazeta Wyborcza* articles. The visual materials grounding my findings, such as R-generated bar charts and collocation networks, are provided in the following section. I placed supplementary materials in the Appendix.

3.2.1 R-based unigram generation

The analysis of the fifteen most frequent words in each corpus indicated the similarity in keywords' list composition. The prominent words relevant to both crises' coverage included “refugee,” “people,” and “Poland”⁹. Interestingly, archival and online samples featured the most topical bigrams identically for the respective years. In the case of 2015 publications, it was a “refugee” with a citation frequency slightly exceeding 800 for an online corpus and approximately equal to 500 in the archival. As for the 2021 data, *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s texts persistently evoked the term “border.” About 430 repetitions for an archival corpus and around 900 for online-targeted pieces can be observed.

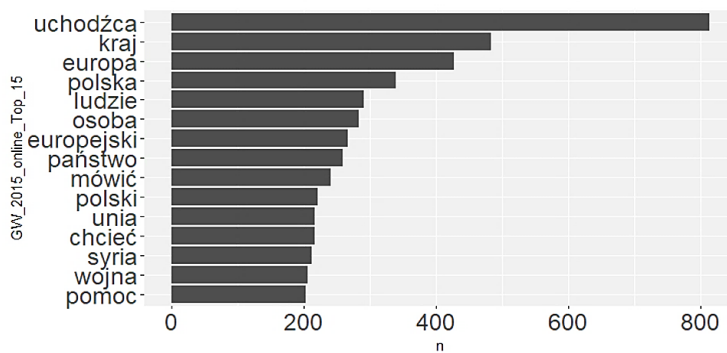


Figure 7. R-based unigram generation: Top-15 words in the 2015 online dataset

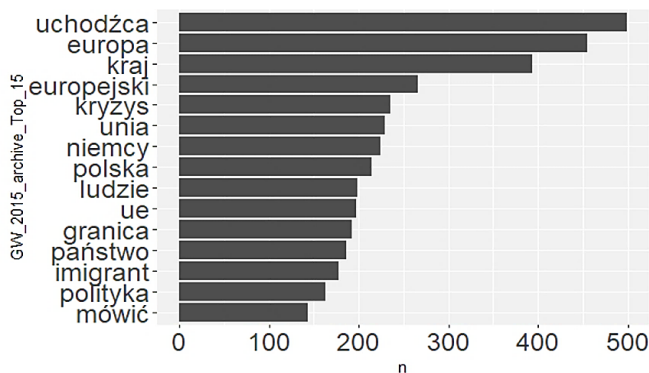


Figure 8. R-based unigram generation: Top-15 words in the 2015 in-print archival dataset

⁹ See “R-based unigram generation: English translation” in the Appendix for the English translation of the unigrams' bar chart visualisations.

The cross-chart temporal evaluation indicated that *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s authors labelled the 2015 migration to Europe as a “refugee crisis.” The archival in-print data indicated the high relevance of refugee management for Europe, while Poland was involved as a European Union member. The non-neutral use of the term “refugee” instead of immigrant or asylum seeker hinted at the humanitarian or guest framing in the texts, as the unigram represents a legal status encoding “a well-grounded fear of persecution in the country of origin” (“Ustawa,” 2003). Thus, the term simultaneously embraced foreigners’ legal protection and victimisation. The humanitarian framing was also expressed through the keywords encoding warfare-led emigration and European values. Unigrams of the online-based corpus such as “war,” “help,” and “Syria” reflected the discourses of war-provoked refugee flows and helping duty Europeans share. Meanwhile, the in-print publications demonstrated greater neutrality and did not instruct a humanitarian way for crisis definition. Instead, the sample introduced the keyword “immigrant,” which left space for other relocation grounds.

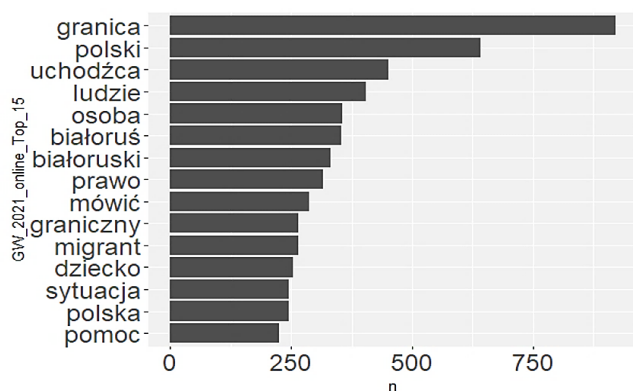


Figure 9. R-based unigram generation: Top-15 words in the 2021 online dataset

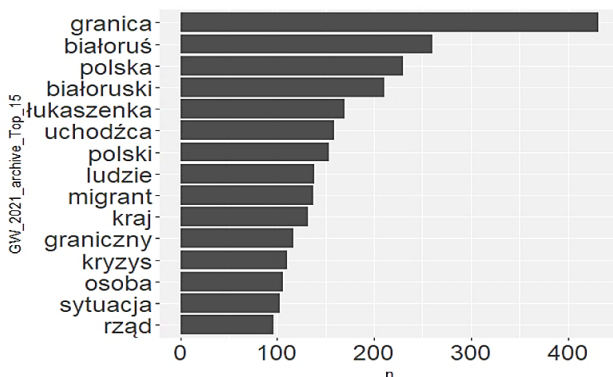


Figure 10. R-based unigram generation: Top-15 words in the 2021 in-print archival dataset

While the 2015 migration coverage in *Wyborcza*'s texts reflected the shared Union involvement in crisis resolution, the 2021 border crisis represented an inter-state contestation between Poland and Belarus. The terms “Europe,” “European,” or “Union” were absent in the visualisations. The 2021 coverage of immigration demonstrated greater discursive polarisation, as the publications evoked the terms “migrant” and “immigrant” in addition to a more frequent “refugee” unigram. As in 2015, the online sample demonstrated a greater leaning towards humanitarian framing, as texts repeatedly evoked the terms “child,” “help,” and “right.” Meanwhile, the in-print data shifted the focus from refugees to the “borderline situation,” depicting the crisis in the relationship between the “Belarusian government” and “Poland.”

3.2.2 Bigram network analysis: framing tasks and social frames

The collocation network analysis indicated the same refugee/border discrepancies in crisis definition as the unigram generation. The main problem articulated in *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s 2015 online publications was the refugee crisis. The network analysis indicated that the migration crisis caused the necessity to “accept refugees” (“przyjmować uchodźca”) and ensure the provision of the benefits granted under the “refugee status” (“status uchodźca”). The publications blamed the crisis on the “warfare” happening in the country of origin (“wojna domowy”) that stimulated refugees to ask for asylum. The leading solutions incentivised included legal duty fulfilment within “asylum” and “migration politics” (“polityka azylowy” or “migracyjny”).

Britain” (“Wielki Brytania”) or “Visegrad group” (“Grupa Wyszehradzki”). The network did not indicate Poland as a separate burden-bearing actor with its unique desires but instead fit the country within the broader European crisis management scheme. “Poland” node was associated with such terms as “accept” and “help” (“Polska przyjąć” and “Polska pomóc”).

The conducted network analysis interpretation based on Snow and Benford’s (1988) framing tasks indicated the predominance of humanitarian framing in *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s discourse. Describing refugees, publications mainly referred to the immigrants from Middle Eastern Syria or Iraq as “war victims” (“ofiara wojna”) or people “fleeing” persistent warfare (“uciekać wojna” and “wojna trwać”). The essential refugees’ demands included such bigrams as “want to stay” (“chcieć zostać”) and a “roof over head” (“dach głowa”). The satisfaction of basic human needs for security and a safe place to stay fits the human rights discourse relevant to humanitarian framing.

Meanwhile, I observed the security and guest framing traces that required more in-depth interactions with the original text. Guest framing reveals the expectations of legal procedure’s pursual and assistance upon justified refugee status. European legalism was embedded in such bigrams as “asylum application” (“wniosek azyl”), “asylum politics” (“polityka azylowy”), “stay permission” (“zgoda pobyt”), and highly cited “refugee status” (“status uchodźca”). The collocations indicated that relevant ministries followed the prescribed procedures in assessing asylum seekers’ claims. The possible explanations for a concerned attitude to immigrants can be subtly witnessed throughout the network. Such collocations as an “economic immigrant” (“imigrant ekonomiczny”) or “Islamic terrorist” (“islamski terrorysta”) were interconnected with the node “refugee” (“uchodźca”), even though most collocations discursively constructed a humanitarian stance on refugee protection. The following negative connotations reflected security and defence and welfare endangerment discourses of security framing.

However, qualitative analysis revealed that not all the collocations constructed security frames. In some discourses, the bigrams either encoded a non-securitised meaning or illustrated third actors’ positions. One publication combined the terms “economic immigrant” and “refugee” to describe refugees’ future integration into the hosting community (“Orędzie premier Kopacz,” 2015). Meanwhile, another piece represented an interview with the creators of the Polish anti-Islamic portal (Kalwas, 2015) and transmitted their securitised position

on immigration. *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s journalists also shared the discourses of such securitising actors as "Hungary" and its leadership (Kokot, 2015a). As collocations encoding security framing were not predominant in the network and qualitative text analysis attributed security frames to external actors, I treat the securitised discourses in the corpus as alternative views resulting from inter-media agenda-setting rather than a lobbied stance on immigration.

The intermediation *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s publications played between the audience and third parties' securitised discourses portrays the newspaper as a functional actor in the refugee securitisation process. While most of *Wyborcza*'s texts did not construct refugees as an existential threat, the authors employed securitised terminology and replicated the securitised positions of other actors providing for diversity. The combination of newspaper-supported frames with other positions illustrated the duality of the Polish media system. While *Wyborcza*'s authors did not refrain from commentary-based journalism and favoured a refugee-friendly stance, the editorial team also expressed political neutrality by sharing dispersed discursive formations attributing positive and negative connotations to immigration. Another explanation for mixing moral responsibility frames with securitised perspectives is *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s profit orientation. Including alternative viewpoints broadens the target audience, as the diversified perspective on immigration unites welcomers and ambivalents while leaving a chance for getting rejectors interested.

Meanwhile, my attention captured the pieces that purposefully evoked the securitised collocation of "economic immigrant" to specify the European position on immigration management. Speaking of the asylum seekers coming "to Germany through Balkans," *Wyborcza*'s author Wieliński (2015f) referred to economic migrants who instrumentalised the migration crisis to enter the EU. The journalist did not discriminate against non-warfare-led immigrants but acknowledged that "we cannot help everyone" (Wieliński, 2015f). Most economic migrants *Wyborcza*'s authors and experts criticised originated from the Western Balkan region rather than passed through (ex. Czarnecki, Jałoszewski, Bielecki, & Urzędowska, 2015).

I believe the discourse over asylum seekers' deservedness best fits the guest framing, as it combines respect for European and international regulations on asylum with protection granted upon necessity. In the journalists' discourses on Middle Eastern immigrants, I witnessed the humanitarian determination to assist just refugees, combined with a security threat economically

led relocates from “safe countries” (Czarnecki, Jałoszewski, Bielecki, & Urzędowska, 2015) represented for the European immigration system. In the informative article for the readership, *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s journalists framed refugees as people whose protection the international law required, while economic migrants were immigrants who wanted to “live better” and “earn more” (Czarnecki, Jałoszewski, & Kwaśniewski, 2015). Thus, economic migrants represent a securitised threat to economic welfare and the “labour market” (“rynek praca”), while refugees have a legally grounded right to stay. It is important to remark that economic immigrants and refugees represented two separate asylum seekers' groups in the journalists' discourses. While rejected asylum seekers were securitised, accepted refugees were legally offered hostage.

Another securitised collocation, “Islamic terrorist,” indicated the threat Muslim immigrants and people from lands controlled by the terrorist grouping Islamic State represented for Poles and the West. Bigrams reflecting security framing predominantly illustrated third actors' discourses or generalised about population groups under umbrella terms “Poland” or “West” (Krastev, 2015; Wieliński, 2015e). In the majority of publications where “Islamic terrorist” collocation was present, journalists repeatedly inserted paragraph opening for information exchange with the outlet, illustrating Entman's (2003) cascading networking between media and the masses. Despite evoking securitised perceptions the West and Poland have about immigrants, *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s team framed the discussion around refugees' comfort and proper refugee treatment, shifting the focus to the humanitarian framing of immigration.

Alongside the purposeful securitisation of economic immigrants and replication of external actors' securitised discourses, *Gazeta Wyborcza* shared the texts where securitised positions were countered. In the piece by Buras (2015b), the author summed up Polish politicians' securitised perception of immigration as a crisis to be fought against. The expert claimed Polish conservatives and liberals perceived the “wave of refugees” (“fala uchodźca”) as a “crisis symptom” to be targeted (Buras, 2015b). Meanwhile, Buras (2015b) framed migration from the Middle East as an outcome of “brutal civil wars” causing “humanitarian catastrophe.” Thus, while Buras used the collocation “wave of refugees,” the author did not frame refugees as a disease but as a war-led emigration in line with humanitarian framing.

To sum up, *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s predominant framing of the refugee crisis in the 2015 online publications was humanitarian, while in some cases, securitised discourses were embraced

under discussion, while Europe's role was to ensure refugees' acceptance. The crisis' cause was internal conflicts in the countries of origin, pushing asylum seekers to "escape the warfare" ("uciekać wojna"). Actors' composition was comparable for the two datasets and included individual states such as Italy, Greece, or the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, the archival data favoured greater personification, evoking leaders and politicians rather than listing states. French politician Marine Le Pen, Hungarian President Victor Orbán, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz were some of the most prominent names in the corpus. The frequent discursive referrals to the Western European politicians marked a more balanced representation of stories from the whole Union in the archival case. While the online publications' network listed only "Central" and "Eastern Europe" ("Europa środkowy" and "wschodni"), the archival also included "Western" countries among its nodes ("Europa zachodni").

The balanced representation of the migration crisis in all parts of Europe grounds *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s insistence on refugee relocation within the Union. The appropriate societal action the newspaper advocated is a relocation system, as confirmed by in-depth keyword analysis and bigram generation. A collocation "influx of refugees" ("napływ uchodźca"), conventionally described as a security frame's marker, evoked migration politics' systemic deficiencies rather than a comparison with a natural disaster. While *Wyborcza*'s journalists Grochal and Kondzińska (2015b) replicated the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs' call for solidarity, the Commissioner for the Human Rights Nils Muižnieks called the influx "a political crisis rather than a refugee" one (Muižnieks, 2015). Thus, the newspapers' editors and journalists relied on the agenda-setting powers of the outlet and constructed a coherent refugee-friendly immigration perception by assembling journalists' personal and expert commentaries. Meanwhile, conflicting viewpoints were also introduced to the reader but less frequently. For instance, the collocation "refugee influx" can be met in its securitised meaning but in the context of Belarusian media and political community prejudices to Europe (Poczobut, 2015), thus framing the connotations' lower objectivity and relevance.

Another controversial collocation in the network was "border control" ("graniczny kontrola") and its variation, "border protection" ("ochrona granica"). Instantaneously, I would refer the bigrams to the border vulnerability category of the security frame. However, the in-text

The main problem under discussion was a “border situation” (“sytuacja granica”) that involved “illegal border crossings” (“nielegalny przekroczenie granica”), and the nomadic-like behaviour of migrants trapped between the EU states and Belarus. The responsibility was discursively attributed to the Belarusian president Lukashenka and his regime (“reżim Lukashenka”) for sponsoring “hybrid warfare” (“wojna hybrydowy”) and bringing people from the Middle Eastern states such as Iraq and Afghanistan to Europe’s Eastern borders. The framing of asylum seekers reflected the heterogeneity within Polish society. *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s publications reproduced two stances about immigrants: official securitised framing and *Wyborcza*-supported combination of humanitarian and guest frames. For securitising actors such as Polish, Latvian, and Lithuanian governance, asylum seekers were “persons without documents illegally crossing the border” (Bieliaszyn, 2021b). Meanwhile, *Gazeta Wyborcza*’s reporter Czuchnowski (2021b) and newspaper authors Kramek and Wróblewski (2021) highlighted the illegality of pushbacks if immigrants requested international protection. Thus, in governmental discourses, immigrants at the border represented an existential threat, while *Wyborcza*’s framing was more supportive of asylum seekers’ instrumentalisation rather than their active agency.

Action plans and implemented responses differed depending on the immigrants’ framing. The Polish officials, including President Duda, Prime Minister Morawiecki, the Minister of National Defence Błaszczak, and the Minister of the Interior Kamiński, advocated the securitised immigration representation within the limits of border vulnerability security framing. As illegal immigrants, the border crossers had to return to Belarus (“powrót Białoruś”). The specificity and urgency of the situation at the border justified “exceptional procedures” in border management (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 499), such as “state of emergency” (“stan wyjątkowy”) and “barbed wires” (“drut kolczasty”) in the border zone. Meanwhile, Kramek and Wróblewski (2021) treated extreme measures as an “empty demonstration of power.” Perceiving the right for asylum as a solid ground for suspending illegal crossing accusations, *Wyborcza*’s authors insisted on the adherence to international law and human rights protection, discursively correlating humanitarian and guest framing.

The network analysis confirmed the overall preponderance of humanitarian framing in *Wyborcza*’s 2021 online publications. The node “refugee” was associated with a unigram “help” (“pomoc”), instructing the audience to express compassion. The refugees at the

border required “humanitarian” assistance, specifically “medical” (“medyczny”). Compared to 2015, the humanitarian framing did not focus on war-led emigration but prioritised European values. The bigrams reflecting the helping moral duty and rights protection included “human life” (“ludzki życie”), “bring help” (“nieść/ udzielić pomoc”), human right (“prawo człowiek”), and referrals to “rights of the child” and its family (“prawo dziecko”). Meanwhile, the guest framing bridged the humanitarian concerns for human life and securitised necessity to assist those with convincing reasons. The data set featured collocations of “refugee status,” “asylum application,” and “protection application,” similar to the 2015 data. In addition, the authors referred to the legal grounds embodying European moral values, such as the “Geneva Convention” (“Genewski Konwencja”) and “international law” (“prawo międzynarodowy”).

The 2021 in-print archival data featured the same collocations as an online corpus, even though with lower referral frequencies. Bigrams “border guard” and “Polish-Belarusian” were evoked more than 60 times. As in the online data, the critical juncture was the situation at the border with Belarus. The crisis was either described as borderland or migratory. In the archive data, the unigram “refugee” was not central and lacked a developed network of collocations. The only bigram associated with the term was “Afghanistan.” Thus, I conclude that archival data sets’ focus shifted from refugees, prominent in other corpora, to the security complex contestation between the European Union and Belarus, omitting the securitisation of immigrants. The border crisis opposed European Union and its members as Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania, to “Lukashenka’s regime,” conducting a “hybrid warfare.”

problem was the refugee crisis caused by the warfare in the asylum seekers' countries of origin. In 2021, *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s authors framed a border crisis resulting from the Belarusian regime's hybrid warfare. Prognostic and motivational framing was similar in both crises. On the institutional level, journalists advocated adherence to the international legislation on asylum while encouraging national procedures' modifications. At the grassroots, the newspaper's team favoured helping and providing humanitarian assistance to refugees.

The immigrants' framing in the crises was comparable, as all the corpora encoded humanitarian frames about refugees and guest frames about asylum seekers. *Gazeta Wyborcza* constructed a guest frame of immigration, meaning that compelling grounds for temporary protection and valid asylum requests exempted immigrants from illegal border crossing charges. The 2015 experience primed the 2021 perception of immigration, as Union's guest framing remained in *Wyborcza*'s discursive constructions. Insistence on humanitarian assistance upon justified grounds for asylum seekers' presence in Polish territories manifested in both online and archival samples of the 2021 newspaper publications.

I attribute the differences in migration crises' framing to contextual peculiarities. Poland's proximity to the crisis is one of the factors shaping the coverage. In 2015, *Wyborcza* distinguished European Union's agency in conflict resolution while pressuring the Polish political community for solidarity in refugee allocation. In 2021, attention shifted to Poland's internal decision-making. By contrast to the 2015 interest in the actions and speeches of European political leaders, the 2021 publications cited the words of the Polish President and ministers. Another factor concerns the crisis responsibility attribution. In crises coverage, *Wyborcza* victimised refugees and condemned immigrants who could not justify their requests for international protection. However, the reasons behind asylum seekers' inflow shaped the discursive constructions. In 2015, the warfare in the countries of origin pushed refugees to seek asylum, so the blame was attributed to domestic regimes and radical groups such as the Islamic State. Meanwhile, in 2021, the newspaper constructed Lukashenka and his government as a leading aggressor, provoking tensions at the border.

The visuals' analysis similarly reflected cases' contextual differences. On the one hand, the 2015 coverage primed the 2021 visual setting. On the other hand, the disparities in problem definition predetermined the change in the reasoning behind image selection. Most pictures

accompanying the textual data were placed at the top right corner of each web publication. Consequently, the visualisations encoded the main message delivered via text and predicted the topics journalists` addressed.

The 2015 online publications mostly depicted refugee families in movement¹⁰, travelling by train, boat, or on foot. The images illustrated the refugee wave and influx cited in the corpus. Nearly in each picture, children were present, framing a more refugee-friendly attitude toward the people fleeing their homes. Meanwhile, the pictures of male asylum seekers, probably referencing economic immigrants, were seldom. Hence, the visualisations were consistent with the predominantly humanitarian framing of immigration. Besides the general refugee composition, editors added the visuals of humanitarian assistance performed by regular people and police officers¹¹. The scenes visualising immigration policies` implementation, such as fingerprint collection, reinforced the guest framing on legitimate asylum seekers.

In the 2021 pieces, images illustrated such collocations as “barbed wire” and “border guard”¹². The fence, military and border guards frequently appeared on *Wyborcza`*s web pages. Thus, the shift in discourse from refugees to the border was also remarkable in the visual materials. Another set of pictures visualised the families with children asking for asylum, priming the 2015 refugee crisis coverage. The humanitarian stance on immigration reflected the scenes of gathering food and clothes for those in need¹³ and the visuals of Christian crosses¹⁴. The latter encoded a dubious meaning. On the one side, the crosses` pictures called for Christian empathy and compassion, while on the other, they victimised refugees dying from inhuman conditions at the border. Both meanings encouraged the audience to help rather than fear.

¹⁰ See “Refugees in movement: examples of assessed visuals” in the Appendix.

¹¹ See “Humanitarian assistance to refugees: 2015 data” in the Appendix.

¹² See “Barbed wires and border guards in visuals” in the Appendix.

¹³ See “Humanitarian assistance to refugees: 2021 data” in the Appendix.

¹⁴ See “Christian crosses in the images” in the Appendix.

IV. Discussion

My study analysed how the liberal-democratic newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, acting as a communicator in Entman's (1993) terminology, discursively described the 2015 and 2021 Middle Eastern migration crises in its texts. *Wyborcza*'s publications encoded a framed perception of the migration phenomena and passed the frames to its online and offline readership for decoding. While my analysis is media-centred and focused on the discursive constructions *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s authors evoked to co-shape the Polish agenda and migration crises perception, I acknowledged the conflicting impact of other societal actors. *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s output was affected by the Polish culture, the dominant frames operating within the society, inter-media agenda-setting, the pressures media channels exhibit on each other in generating the topics under discussion, and the interests of its readership, the news consumers.

I adopted a mixed-method explanatory sequential research design (Creswell, 2017) to reflect the mutual constitutiveness of media and social environments encoded in the mediatisation concept. This approach combined automated text processing in R with the qualitative frame analysis. Thanks to the complementary qualitative part, I located the findings from medium-specific analysis based on Snow and Benford (1988) within the broader societal culture, operationalised in the deductively generated migration frames. The deductive frame-generation relied on the academic output analysis, combining automated bibliographic processing in *VosViewer* and classic literature reviewing. The end frames' operationalisation represented meaningful thematic clusters derived from grouping the keywords inherent in each of the four frames, security, humanitarian, guest, and multiculturalist.

The mixed-method analysis revealed that the newspaper framed the crises and their leading actors differently. The 2015 critical juncture was described as a refugee crisis resulting from non-democratic regimes' disrespect of human rights that drove Middle Easterners to seek asylum in Europe. The predominant victimisation of refugees contrasted with the securitisation of economic immigrants or asylum seekers who could not legally justify their endangerment at home. Meanwhile, in 2021, *Wyborcza*'s authors focused on the border crisis caused by hybrid warfare with Lukashenka's regime. While the migration crisis description has changed, the newspaper replicated the humanitarian frames on refugee assistance, originating in the 2015 discourses. The

guest framing's insistence on just asylum claims was prominent throughout the corpora. Visual materials preceding the texts reinforced humanitarian, and guest frames journalists evoked and illustrated the hardships asylum seekers faced.

The main factors shaping migration coverage differently are proximity and conflict responsibility attribution. The 2015 refugee crisis resulted from the country of origin's failure to ensure security for its nationals and urged Europeans to protect those in need. Meanwhile, in 2021, the refugees' neediness was sidelined in favour of the security complex contestation between Poland and Belarus. As for the proximity, publications depicted the 2015 refugee inflow to Europe as a matter of European-level decision-making, where Poland's role was secondary. The newspaper framing mobilised European solidarity and enhanced refugee-protection national mechanisms.

Meanwhile, in 2021, Poland was the frontline state, managing the crisis from the perspective of border endangerment. The replication of PiS-government security frames reflected *Wyborcza*'s functional role in immigration securitisation, as the securitised stances were retrieved from the societal culture and discursively disapproved in favour of humanitarian compassion to refugees. The replication of conflicting discourses illustrates the duality of the Polish media system, as journalists combine their commentaries with alternative discursive constructions, seeking ideologically neutral reporting. Meanwhile, the introduction of alternative viewpoints also reflects the profit-maximising interests of *Wyborcza*'s owners, as securitised framing replication allows for attracting the audience sceptical about immigration.

The frame analysis of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s migration constructions leaves room for follow-up research. While I noted the predominance of humanitarian refugee frames and guest asylum seekers framing, I did not find examples of multiculturalist framing. As Jaskułowski (2019) remarked frame's minoritarian presence in the Polish culture, deviant case studies as interviews and focus groups would broaden the understanding of the multiculturalist frame. The qualitative techniques could also give an insight into civil society's participation in migration management and assessment. The collocations referring to NGOs and other helping bodies featured throughout the networks, while journalists did not attribute any connotations to their work. The discursive constructions of civil society members would supplement the pool of commonly invoked migration frames alongside the Church, party, media, and individual discourses. In addition,

qualitative techniques' application in assessing civil society's activism could illustrate the consequences of motivational framing. While journalistic frames encode the desired actions, the texts do not explain how the audience decodes meanings.

Concerning online and print media coverage of the 2015 and 2021 Middle Eastern immigration to Europe, I see the necessity for cross-outlet evaluations. While my study provided a nuanced cross-temporal analysis for a single liberal-democratic newspaper, comparisons with other liberal Polish media could indicate whether humanitarian and guest frames' persistence in the discursive constructions is a trait inherent in *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s framing or reflective of broader liberal-democratic discourse on immigration. Broadening the research scope to other Polish media, such as conservative outlets and tabloids, would generate a complete picture of print- and online-media immigration framing in Poland. The cross-case analysis would also illustrate the inter-media agenda-setting powers and how distinct media outlets co-shape the agenda and phenomenon framing. Besides cross-media studies, scholars can deepen the understanding of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s frame construction. My study provides the generalised perspective of *Wyborcza*'s framing, controlling for the regional sub-outlet discrepancies in migration coverage. The investigations focusing on inter-voivodeship sub-outlets' framing of migration can reveal the additional contextual factors that shaped immigration coverage in regional *Wyborcza*'s publications.

The generalised perspective on *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s framing of the Middle Eastern immigration crises is one of the limitations of my investigation. The case study design inhibited broader conclusions on print media coverage of the 2015 and 2021 migration crises. Meanwhile, the reservation to the liberal newspaper restricted the inferences on the securitised immigration framing functionally evoked in *Wyborcza*'s texts. Security framing's sidelined presence in the corpora resulted from societal pressures and profitability concerns rather than the authors' genuine interest in securitising refugees; thus, I was not able to provide a nuanced analysis of the threat frames while focusing on moral responsibility framing, using Triandafyllidou (2017) classification. Alongside, the academic output on the migration crises in Poland is incomplete without a detailed analysis of the most recent 2022 refugee crisis from Ukraine. The lack of comparison between Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugee frame-building in Polish media,

including *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and societal culture is another domain I did not explore that remains to be studied.

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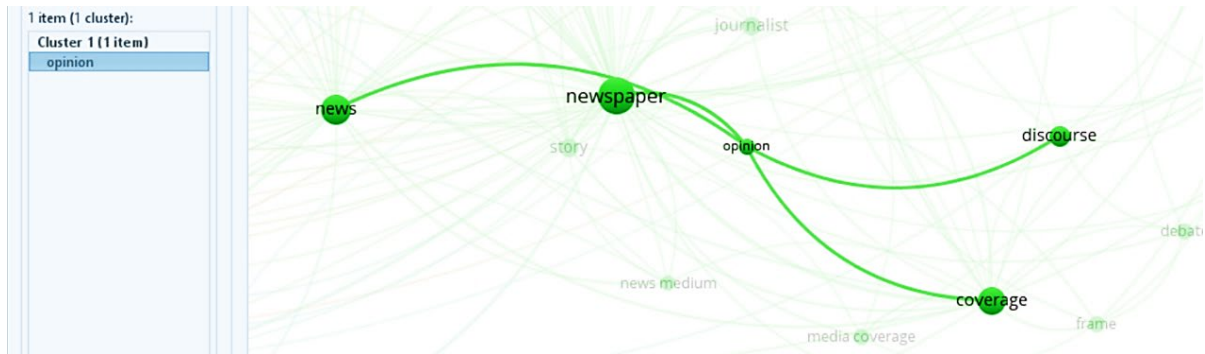
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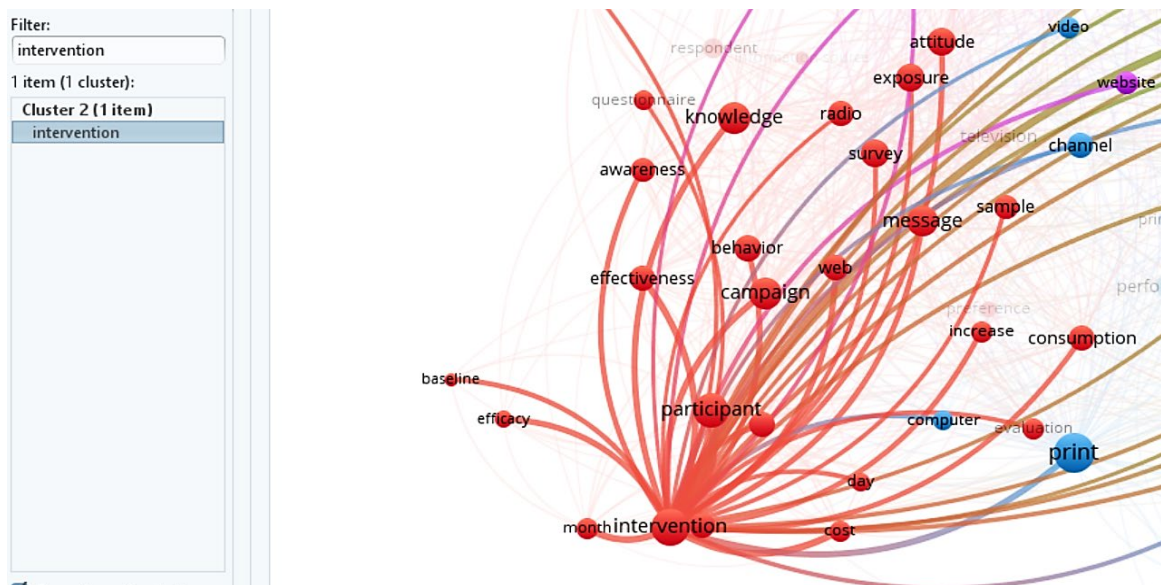
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Appendix

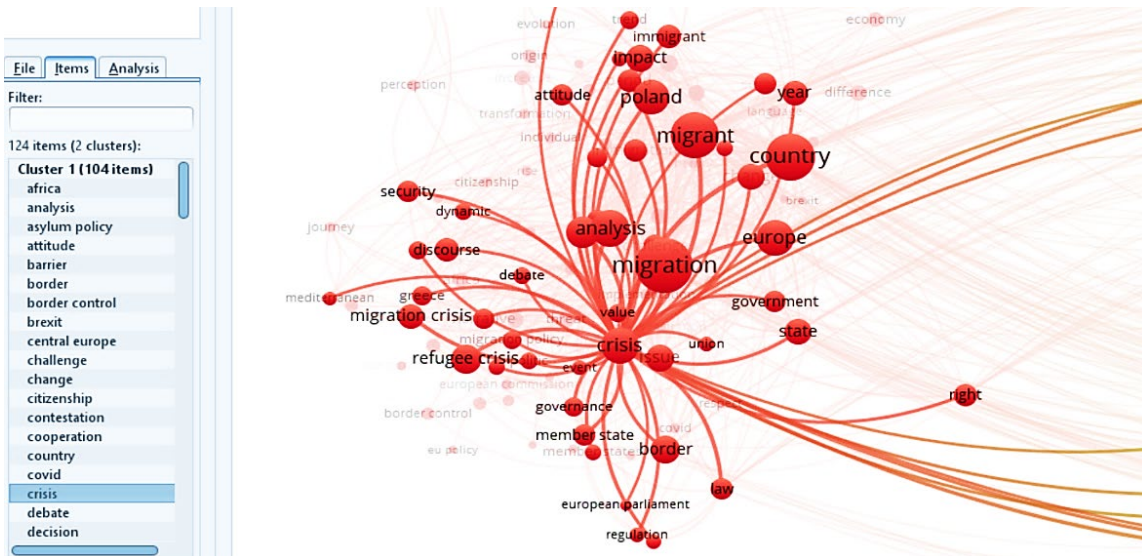
1. *VosViewer* visualisation of the “opinion” node in the bibliographic map on media effects



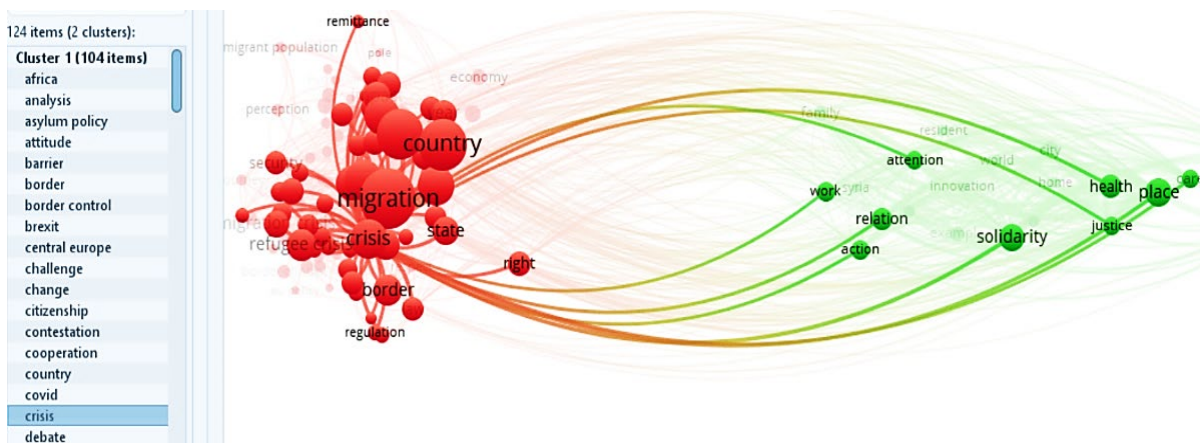
2. *VosViewer* visualisation of the “intervention” node in the bibliographic map on media effects



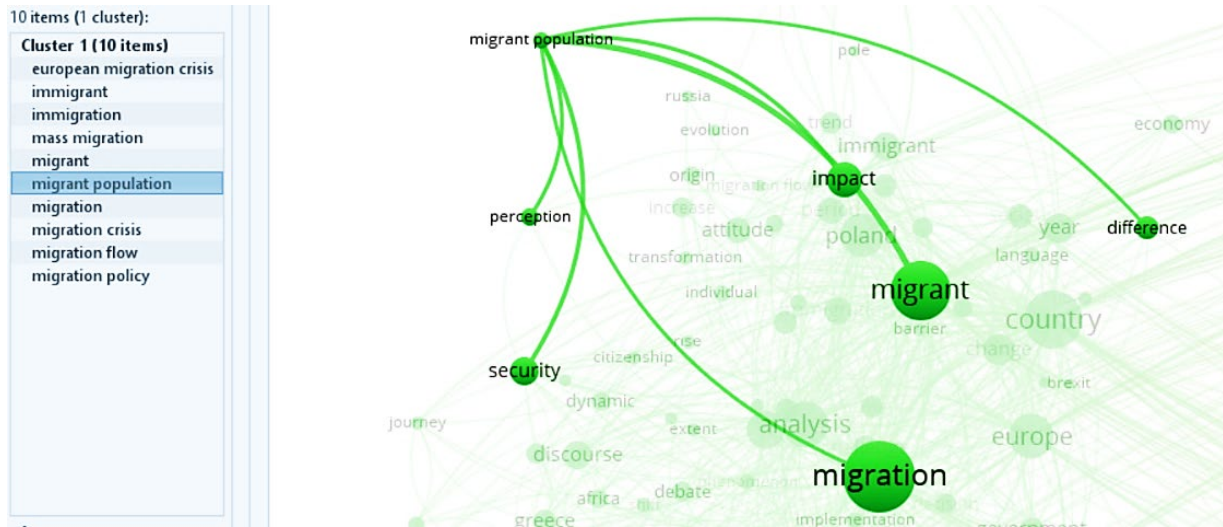
3. *VosViewer* visualisation of the “crisis” node in the bibliographic map on Middle Eastern immigration to the European Union



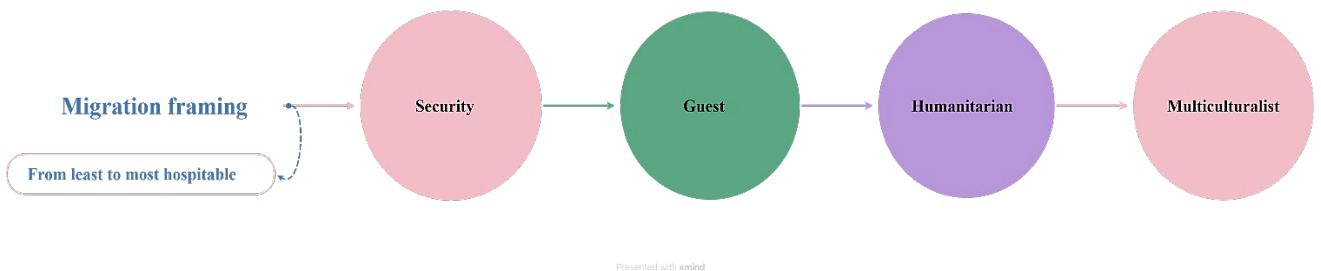
4. *VosViewer* visualisation of the “crisis” node in the bibliographic map on Middle Eastern immigration to the European Union: continuation



5. VosViewer visualisation of the “migrant population” node in the bibliographic map on Middle Eastern immigration to the European Union



6. Migration framing scale



7. R-based unigram generation: English translation

2015 archive	2015 online	2021 archive	2021 online
refugee	refugee	border	border
europe	country (geogr)	belarus	polish
country (geogr)*	europe	poland	refugee
european	poland	belarusian	people
crisis	people	lukashenka	person
union	person	refugee	belarus
germany	european	polish	belarusian
poland	state (polit)	people	right
people	say	immigrant	say
eu	polish	country (geogr)	borderline (adj)
border	union	borderline (adj)	migrant
state (polit)*	want	crisis	child
immigrant	syria	person	situation
politics	war	situation	poland
say	help	government	help

Note. I drew the translation differences between the synonyms kraj and państwo based on Katarzyna Kłosińska's interpretation. The scholar from Warsaw University treats the former as referring to geographic categories, while the latter encodes a more political meaning. For additional details, see Kłosińska, K. (2016, November 26). Kraj a państwo [Country and state]. Retrieved from <https://sjp.pwn.pl/>

8. Refugees in movement: examples of assessed visuals



Source: Trzaskowski, R. (2015, July 10). Minister Trzaskowski: Imigranci potrzebują pomocy Polski. [Minister Trzaskowski: Immigrants need Poland's help]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl>



Source: Fundacja Helsińska: Ze względu na historię Polska nie może unikać przyjmowania uchodźców. [Helsinki Foundation: Due to its history, Poland cannot avoid accepting refugees]. (2015, September 4). *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>



Source: Kalwas, P. (2015, September 9). Twórcy portalu Euroislam: Otwórzcie oczy. Szariat jest nie do pogodzenia z kulturą europejską. [Creators of Euroislam: Open your eyes. Sharia is incompatible with European culture]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>

9. Humanitarian assistance to refugees: 2015 data



Source: Leszczyński, A. (2015, September 12). Odbiorą pracę, zgwałcą kobiety, połamają krzyże. [They will take jobs, rape women, break crosses]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>



Source: Urzędowska, M. (2015, September 7). Jedyne kraj bez problemu z imigracją to Korea Północna. Czy to model, na którym chcemy się wzorować? [The only country without an immigration problem is North Korea. Is this the model we want to emulate?]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>



Source: Jarkowicz, M. (2015, September 26). Zapłacimy za wyższy płot. Jak Unia pomaga Erytrei [We will pay for a higher fence. How the EU is helping Eritrea]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl>

10. Barbed wires and border guards in visuals



Source: Jurszo, R., & Gurgul, A. (2021, August 24). Płot Błaszczaka przetnie Puszcę Białowieską? Naukowcy ostrzegają: to będzie katastrofa dla rysia, zagrozi migracjom wilków i żubrów. [Will Błaszczak's fence cross the Białowieża Forest? Scientists warn: it will be a disaster for lynx, it will threaten the migration of wolves and bison]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>



Source: Klimowicz, J. (2021, August 27). "Pierwszej nocy dostali nasze jedzenie, śpiwory, ale potem przyszły rozkazy, żeby nawet leków nie dawać". REPORTAŻ Z GRANICY. ["The first night they got our food, sleeping bags, but then came orders not to even give medicine." REPORTING FROM THE BORDER]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>

11. Humanitarian assistance to refugees: 2021 data



Source: Nodzyńska, P., & Łowicki, D. (2021, October 26). Kto "sponsoruje śmierć", a kto wozi uchodźcom tony darów. Reportaż wideo z Michałowa. [Who "sponsors death" and who brings tons of gifts to refugees. Video reportage from Michałowo]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>



Source: Dostatni, T. (2021, September 26). W uchodźcach i ofiarach przestępstw seksualnych popełnionych przez duchownych odnajdujemy twarz cierpiącego Chrystusa. [In the refugees and victims of sexual crimes committed by the clergy, we find the face of the suffering Christ]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>

12. Christian crosses in the images



Source: Brejdygant, S. (2021, August 25). Honor Wojska Polskiego hańbi ten, kto zabrania pomocy uchodźcom niesionej zgodnie z konwencją genewską. [The honor of the Polish Army is disgraced by those who forbid assistance to refugees in accordance with the Geneva Convention]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>



Source: Wilgocki, M. (2021b, November 25). Przemysław Sadura: Przed 2015 r. mieliśmy dużo więcej empatii dla uchodźców. A potem przyszedł PiS. [Przemysław Sadura: Before 2015, we had much more empathy for refugees. And then the PiS came]. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Retrieved from <https://wyborcza.pl/>