

CORECON

The Coverage and Reception of
the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

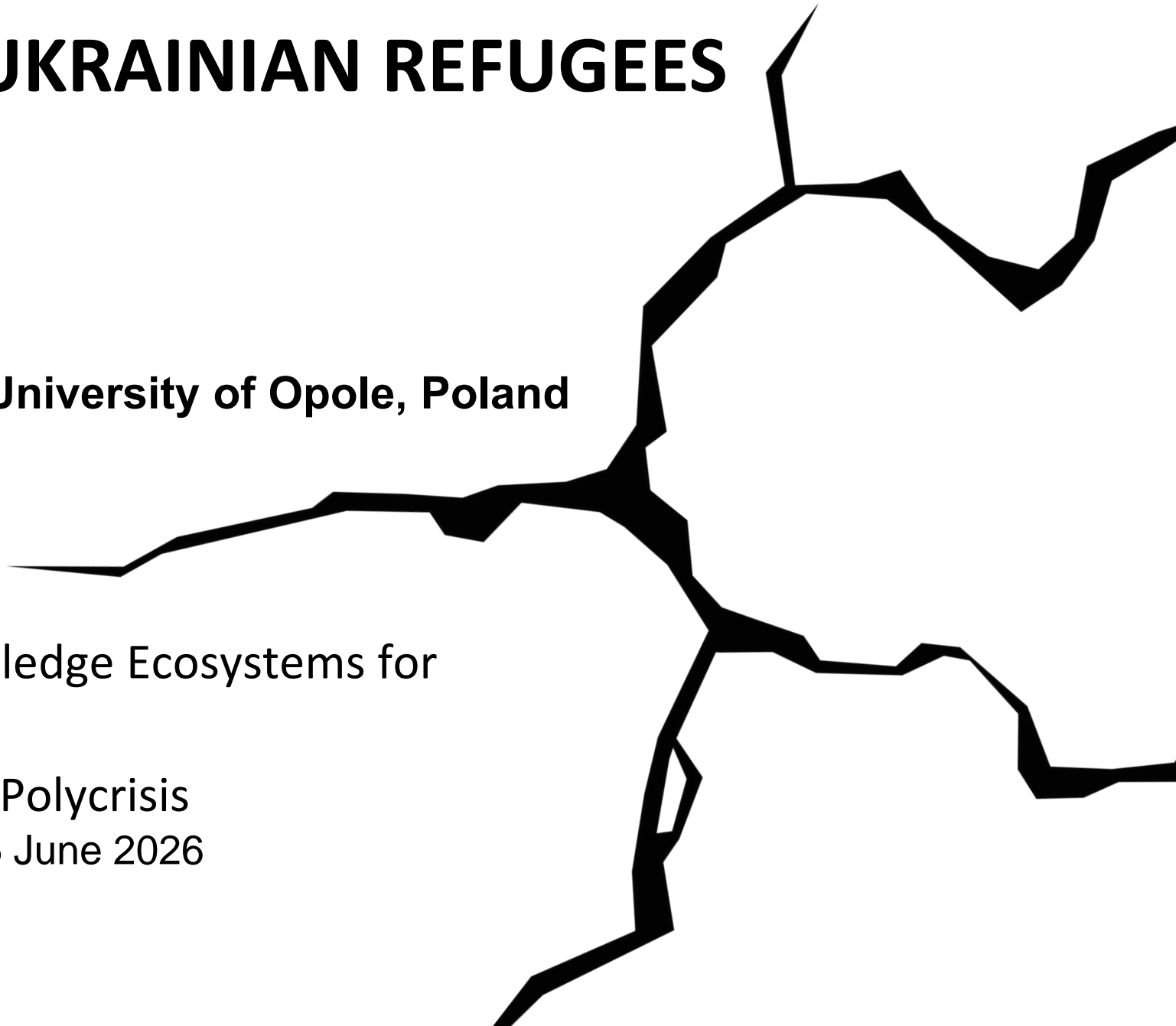


DESERVING, DEMANDING OR PRECARIOUS?
**A CORPUS-ASSISTED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES
IN POLISH MEDIA**

Rafał Krzysztof Matusiak, PhD, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania; University of Opole, Poland

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Research



- Matusiak, R. K. & R. Radziej (2025). Framing of the wartime economic situation in Polish business journalism during the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. *Media, War & Conflict*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506352251356835>
- Matusiak, R. K. (2026). Comparative Analysis of International Legal Terminology in Polish and Romanian Media Discourse: The Case of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict. W: K. Molek-Kozakowska, S. Terian-Dan (red.). *Mediated Discourses of Conflict Across Languages and Genres*. s. 33–48. Singapore: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-95-6992-2_3
- Matusiak, R. K. (2026). Deserving, demanding or precarious? A corpus-assisted discourse analysis of Ukrainian refugees in Polish media (submitted)
- Matusiak, R. K. (2026). When Solidarity Becomes an Economic Question: The Economization of Solidarity in Polish and Romanian Media Discourse on Ukraine (in progress)

Why Study Refugee Discourse?



- **Context:**
 - A. Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered unprecedented displacement
 - B. Poland became one of the main destination countries
 - C. Media played a central role in shaping public perceptions
- **Problem: Refugees are not represented uniformly.**
- **Media discourse may portray them as:**
 - A. deserving victims
 - B. demanding beneficiaries
 - C. precarious subjects
- **Research goal: identify dominant evaluative frameworks used in Polish media.**

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

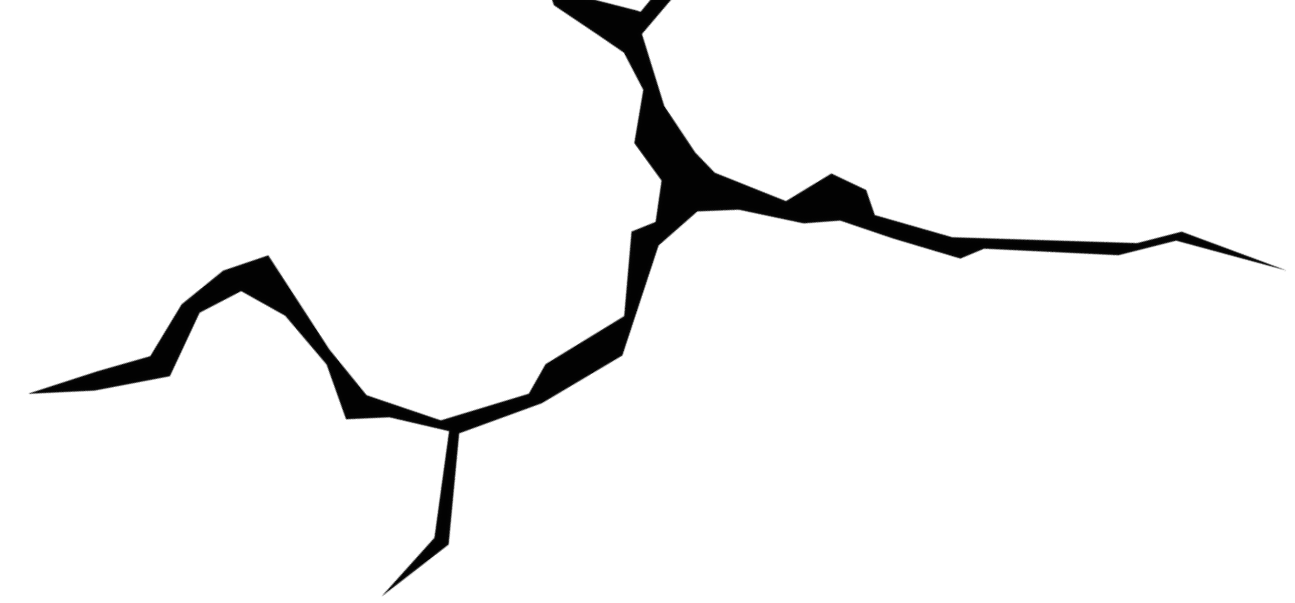


- Deservingness Theory
(van Oorschot, 2000)
- People are judged according to:
 - A. need
 - B. responsibility
 - C. reciprocity
 - D. identity
 - E. attitude

Three discourse positions

| Frame | Core Meaning | |
|------------|------------------|----------|
| Deserving | refugees deserve | support |
| Demanding | refugees create | burdens |
| Precarious | refugees occupy | unstable |

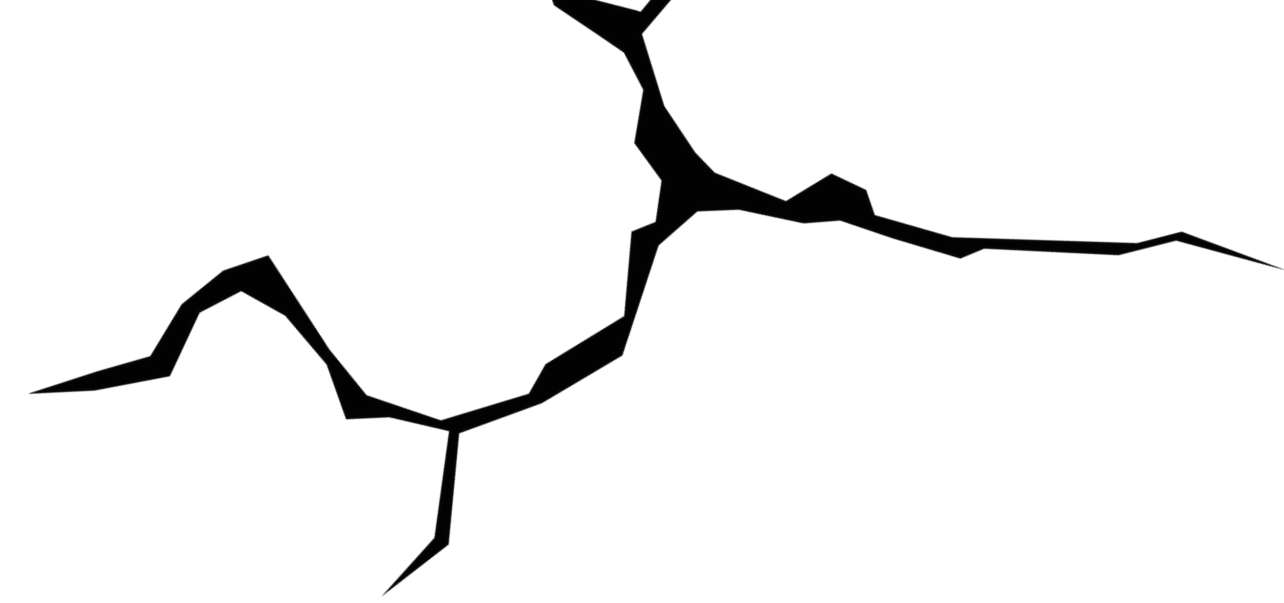
Corpus, RQs and Methodology



- **Corpus**
 - A. Polish online media
 - B. February 2022 – June 2024
 - C. refugee-related articles only
- **CADS approach**
 - A. Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies
 - B. Combines:
 1. quantitative corpus linguistics
 2. qualitative discourse analysis
- **Methods**
 - A. dictionary analysis
 - B. collocation analysis
 - C. keyword analysis
 - D. concordance analysis

- A. Which evaluative frameworks dominate media representations?
- B. How are they internally structured?
- C. How do different frames co-occur?
- D. What semantic domains characterize refugee discourse?
- E. How do reference terms reflect shifts in framing?

Analytical Model



REFUGEE DISCOURSE



DESERVING

DEMANDING

PRECARIOUS

victimhood

burden/cost

dependency

productivity

competition

temporary status

self-reliance

entitlement

housing insecurity

Main finding:

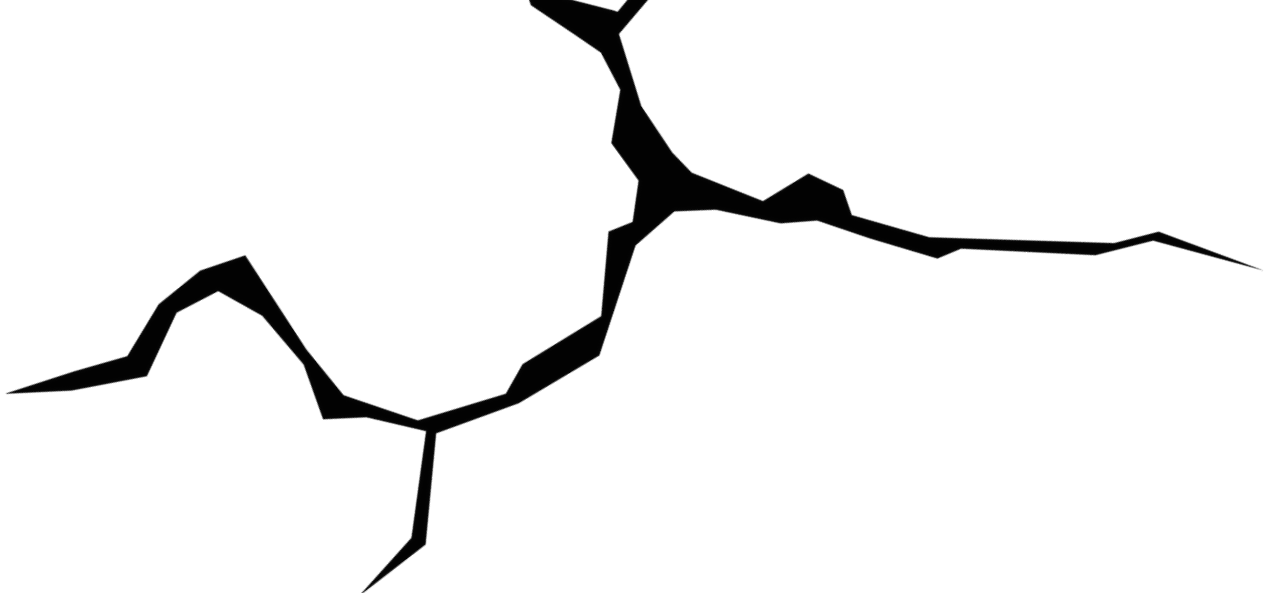
- The discourse is overwhelmingly structured by deservingness.
- Victimhood remains the primary source of legitimacy.

| Frame | Frequency |
|------------|-----------|
| Deserving | 2037 |
| Precarious | 1198 |
| Demanding | 911 |

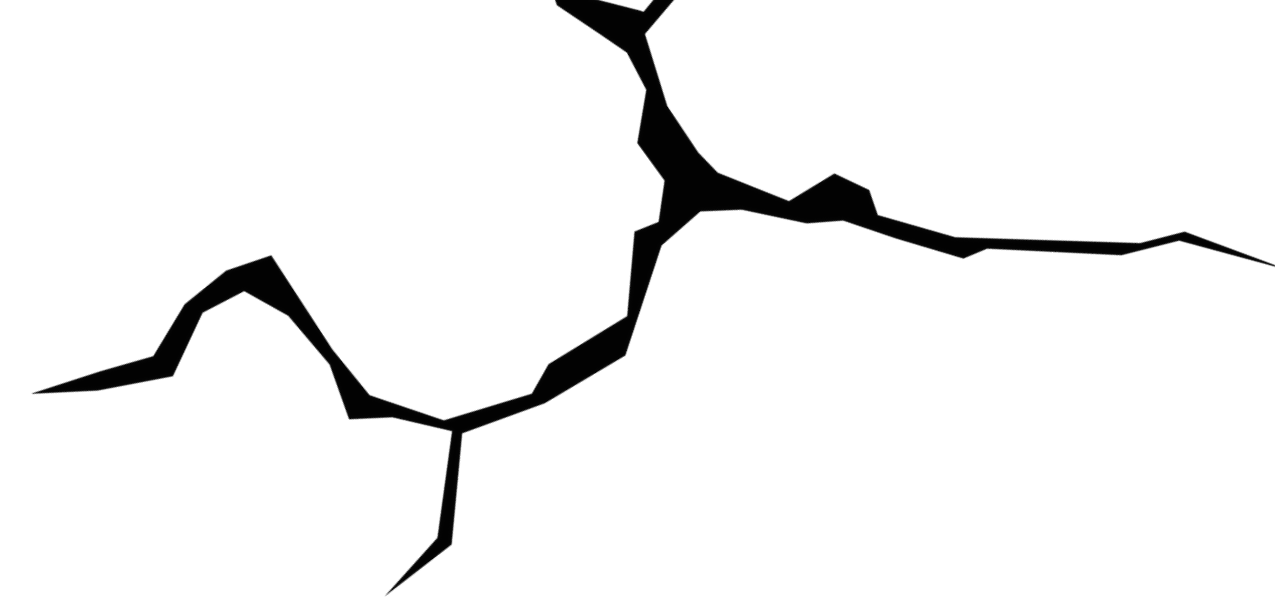
Internal Structure of the Frames



Figure 1. Relative Importance of Subcategories (NF per 10k tokens)



Internal Structure of the Frames



| Category | Deserving | Precarity and Dependency | Demanding |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| Frames | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victimhood & need = 1624 Work & productivity = 309 Self-reliance = 54 Gratitude/compliance = 50 | <p>Precarious frame</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aid dependency = 790 Temporary status = 247 Housing insecurity = 158 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition/threat = 513 Burden/cost = 292 <p>Less frequent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entitlement = 67 Abuse/fraud = 39 |
| Key insight | <p>Refugees are legitimized primarily through suffering rather than contribution.</p> | <p>Refugees appear as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supported protected yet unstable <p>A condition of conditional inclusion.</p> | <p>Negative evaluations are rarely explicit.</p> <p>Criticism appears through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> resource allocation welfare pressure economic management <p>rather than moral condemnation.</p> |

Hierarchical Structure of Discourse Frames



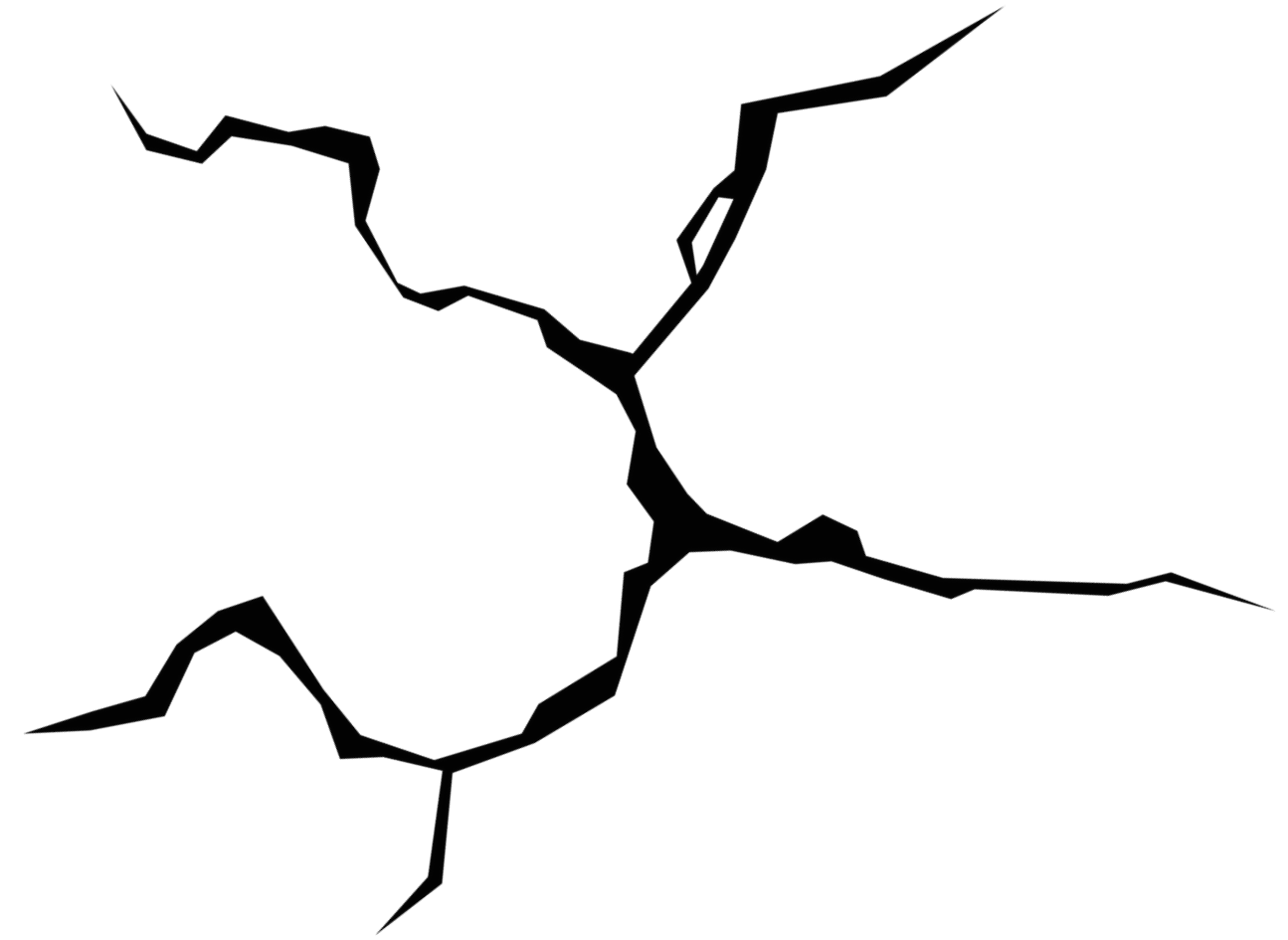
Figure 2. Hierarchical Structure of Discourse Frames

Interpretation:

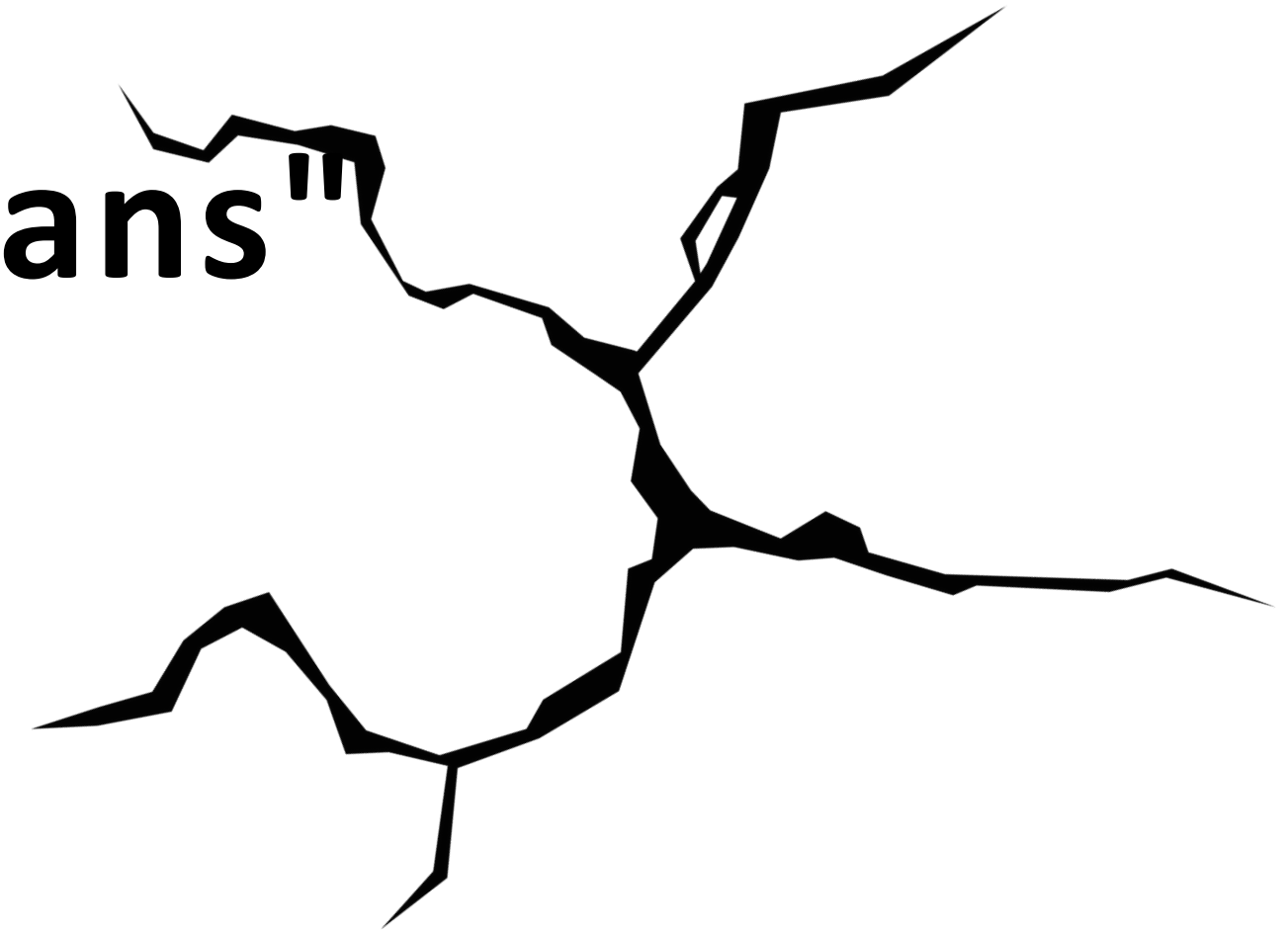
- deservingness dominates
- victimhood is the central node
- dependency is the core of precarity
- demanding discourse remains peripheral

Hybrid Representations

- **Context Analysis**
 - A. 117 dictionary hits
 - B. 102 contexts
- **Distribution:**
 - A. Deserving: 53.3%
 - B. Precarious: 28.3%
 - C. Demanding: 18.3%
- **Key finding**
 - A. Frames frequently co-occur.
 - B. Typical representation:
 - C. vulnerable + economically active + institutionally regulated
 - D. The discourse is layered rather than polarized.



From "Refugees" to "Ukrainians"



- **Labeling Shift**
 - A. **Ukraińcy ≈ 81.8%**
 - B. **refugee labels much less frequent**
- **Shift from:**
 - A. **humanitarian categorization**
 - toward
 - B. **socioeconomic and administrative categorization**
- **Refugees increasingly appear as a social group rather than an emergency category.**

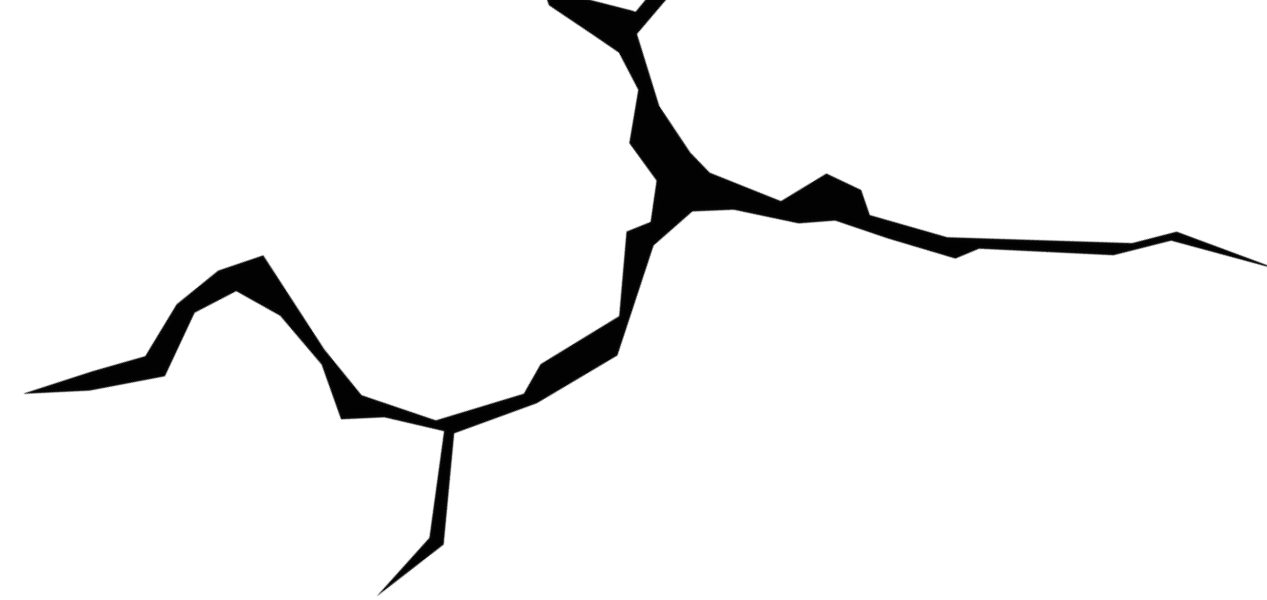
Concluding remarks

- Main Findings

- ✓ Deservingness dominates refugee discourse
- ✓ Victimhood is the principal legitimizing mechanism
- ✓ Precarity is expressed through dependency and temporariness
- ✓ Demanding representations remain secondary
- ✓ Humanitarian and economic evaluations coexist

- Final Argument

Polish media discourse does not simply include or exclude Ukrainian refugees. Instead, it continuously negotiates the terms of belonging between: solidarity ↔ socioeconomic evaluation



Contact

 grants.ulbsibiu.ro/corecon

 rafalkrzysztof.matusiak@ulbsibiu.ro

 rafal.matusiak@uni.opole.pl

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