

The Discursive Construction of Migration and Security. The Perspective of Poland in a Cross-European Dimension

Since the outbreak of the migration crisis in 2015, the migration has become one of the key issues that have dominated public debate in Europe. The mass migration of millions of people from Africa or the Middle East has become a real problem for many EU Member States. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the situation has been exacerbated as millions of refugees from war-torn Ukraine have been attempting to flee to western Europe.

In response to the growing importance of the issue of migration, the countries of the European Union enacted the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (the so-called Migration Pact): a series of laws regulating asylum procedures or introducing mechanisms obliging EU countries to cooperate in the reception of migrants.

The prominence of migration and related security concerns in the agendas of both the media and politicians across the European Union ensures that these issues remain widely discussed. In other words, political and media actors play a key role in shaping public perception by constructing the image of migrants and defining the concept of security, thereby legitimising or challenging particular interpretations of reality.

In this context, the situation of Poland is particularly interesting. Historically, it has been a country of emigration rather than immigration. This state of affairs has changed relatively recently, influenced by events in the last few years, such as the outbreak of the migration crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border, the influx of refugees from Ukraine (which Poland, as a frontline country, has admitted the most), and the facilitation of work visa procedures for foreigners). Moreover, in 2025, Poland took over the presidency of the Council of the European Union, which makes it likely to set the tone for EU migration policy.

This project aims to reconstruct, analyse and interpret the discursive practices and strategies employed by the main media and political actors. The main point of reference is Poland: articles on the news pages of major television corporations (TVP Info, TVN24, Polsat News, TV Republika) and parliamentary debates on migration will be analysed. Moreover, in order to broaden the perspective beyond the level of reception of the discourse, the project envisages semi-structured interviews with journalists of the aforementioned stations who cover migration issues. This will make it possible to explore the motivations and perspectives of those who shape our perception of this phenomenon.

Recognising the importance of the issue of migration in the European Union as a whole, the project does not stop at analysing only Polish discourses, but assumes to place them in a broader European context. In order to achieve this goal, articles on migration published by the Italian media (RAI and La7) will also be analysed, as well as plenary debates on the phenomenon in the European Parliament. This will provide a broad picture of the discursive image of migration in the European Union and make the results obtained interesting not only at the local level.

In terms of tools and methods, the project envisages the use of the research toolbox of digital humanities. Topic modelling and corpus linguistics techniques will be used. Through this use of algorithms and statistical tools, it will be possible to work on corpora consisting of several million words and the results obtained will be reliable. Going beyond the linguistic dimension, the results will be interpreted through the lens of social theories of agenda setting and just securitisation.