

A Mixed-Linguistic Approach To Media Representations Of Migration

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Abstract:

This article examines how Scottish news media have reconfigured the public meanings of Polish migration across two periods: the Early post-accession, pre-Article 50 phase (2004–2016) and the contemporary phase (2024–2025). Using a mixed-methods design, we analyse 165 articles from three outlets—Daily Record, The Herald, and The Scotsman—combining corpus-linguistic indicators (share of frame hits, article coverage, rate per 1,000 tokens) with sentence-level co-occurrence (Jaccard) and qualitative discourse analysis. We identify a durable, cross-outlet triad that organises contemporary coverage: (i) regulatory design and technocratic governance (salary thresholds, sponsorship licensing, inspection/compliance, ILR), (ii) service performance as the principal evaluative lens, and (iii) discursive norms that either normalise securitisation (crime ↔ statistics) or sustain proportionality (crime ↔ cooperation), with culture/memory receding to a stabilising background. Outlet-specific logics persist: procurement/industry materialises abstract rules in Daily Record; cooperation/proportionality “fuses” and status-linked precarity are foregrounded in The Herald; and procedural attribution remains distinctive in The Scotsman. The findings extend conditional-inclusion accounts by showing how mediatization ties migration politics to service logics: migrants are framed as “pillars of the system” yet remain present-but-precarious, their standing contingent on volatile rule regimes and administrative redesigns. We conclude with implications for reporting standards and policy communication designed to reduce categorical spillover while preserving institutional attribution and transparency.

Keywords:

Conditional inclusion; Scottish press; Polish migrants.