

# UK Media's Pathology of the Asylum Seeker & the (mis)Representation of Asylum as a Humanitarian Issue

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This article argues that, broadly speaking, there are two strands of media representation of the asylum issue in the UK press— asylum-friendly and anti-asylum coverage – and that this dichotomy corresponds to a left-right political leaning. By so doing, the press provide their own understanding of asylum seekers and refugees: firstly, as ‘folk devils’ or the evil cultural ‘other’ mainly in the anti-asylum press, and secondly, as ‘victims’ mainly in the asylum-friendly press. The article consists of two main parts. The first discusses the ways in which the media analysis converges with asylum seekers/refugees’ perceptions of the media coverage. The second considers asylum seekers/refugees’ perceptions that through such representation, parts of the UK press have failed to communicate an already-existing meaning of asylum as defined by international conventions. Perceptions that the misrepresentation contributes to UK citizens’ ignorance of asylum as a humanitarian issue and hostility against asylum seekers/refugees are also considered.

**Asylum seekers/refugees, media representation, moral panic, folk devils, UN Convention, humanitarian issue, citizens**