

Narrative and power

My fieldwork is conducted along the US-Mexico border with individuals and organisations that aim to stem the flow of undocumented migrants into the USA. In doing so, they refer to a narrative of danger in which Mexican drug cartels are spreading violence and corruption into the USA. This narrative offers two aspects to its adherents. One, it provides the necessity for individuals to act as the government is not effective in this regard. Two, it offers an entry into public discourse that diverts attention away from claims that those who oppose immigration are racially motivated. There is a third aspect, the narrative creates a framework as to how people perceive their experiences along the border in ways that often contradict evidence. Through data collected with individuals and organisations who actively oppose undocumented migration across the US-Mexico border I will show how narrative is not simply used, but how narrative becomes a living entity that constructs perception and moral discourse in individuals and social collectives.