

Everyday Narratives and Migration Policy Processes

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Political narratives have, over the last couple of decades, gained momentum both in public debates and academia. While studies have analysed the use of political narratives in politics as well as their conceptualisation in theory, less attention has been paid in everyday contexts: how are political narratives, produced in policy processes, interpreted, enacted and reproduced in everyday stories and as part of popular narratives? In this paper, after reviewing the major literature on narratives, I apply the logic of everyday narratives in the political processes and structures of migration policy. The discussion is illustrated with a description of research undertaken within urban migration-receiving communities in Athens, which demonstrates how the narratives of non-migrants shape the experience of migration at a micro –level. Participants voice explicit opposition to particular measures, denying ‘foreigner’ or ‘victim’ subject positions and refuse to conform to established forms of political engagement. Although such instantiations of resistance should not be overstated, I conclude that everyday narratives and practices put a substantive emphasis on the co-constitutive rather than linear relationship between migration policy and political actors.