

CfP for the session

Stories we tell: Storytelling and the politics of *small* and *different* stories in geographical research

“Stories, unlike data, contain the affective legacy of our experiences. They are a felt knowledge that accumulates and becomes a force that empowers stories that are otherwise separate to become a focus, a potential for movement.” (Million 2014: 32-33)

The proposed session is inspired by Million's (2014) observation on the power of stories and de Leeuw and Morgan's (2020: 520) addition of thinking carefully about how and where, by whom and for whom stories are told (i.e. storytelling). We want to create a space to explore the potential of storytelling and storylistening and the telling of and listening to “small” (Frenette 2024, Lorimer 2003) and “other” stories (Solorzano/Yosso 2012) for geographical research at a theoretical, methodological and empirical level.

While ethnographic research can already look back on a tradition of narrative formats (Coppens et al. 2020: 255) and autoethnographic approaches in particular emphasise various forms and formats of narrating personal, subjective and intimate moments (Ellis/Bochner 2000: 739), storytelling has so far played a crucial role in geographies that care about the small, embodied and relational productions of place and space (Harris 2022, Vasudevan et al. 2023). Some researchers have discussed the potentials and challenges of storytelling and narrative geographies, such as Schröder (2022) and Peterle (2021) in relation to comics or Piscitelli (2023) on the medium of documentary film. While these discussions have mostly focussed on formats, in this session we want to take a closer look at storytelling as a methodological approach.

We understand geographies of (small) stories as a critical and interdisciplinary perspective that “experiments with narrative forms and textual and visual storytelling practices as creative ways to deconstruct dominant discourses about cities, places, and spatial identities and to activate the plurivocal composition of spatial-meanings” (Peterle 2021: 9). Stories are both particular and personal as well as expressions of larger social, political and cultural contexts (Cameron 2012: 574), and the telling, sharing and hearing of stories is relational, embodied, and affective (McKittrick 2021: 6). Stories and storytelling can thus also serve to pay more attention to the subtleties, pitfalls, uncertainties and incompleteness of academic work (McKittrick 2021: 7-8).

In line with the conference theme *Geographies of Creativity / Creative Geographies*, in this session we would like to explore how storytelling and geographies of (small) stories are particularly suited to making the invisible visible, intervening in existing power relations and making geographical research more communicable outside of academia.

We welcome feminist, creative, innovative and/or political perspectives on and discussions on storytelling. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- What geographical issues are particularly suitable or relevant for using storytelling in order to develop transformative and “other” perspectives on society? What is the significance of these “other” stories?
- What remains or becomes invisible in geographies of storytelling and listening?
- To what extent are geographies of storytelling suitable for analysing power (mis)relations?
- To what extent can the positionalities and situatedness of all research participants be considered in storytelling?
- What methods are suitable for storytelling?
- To what extent is storytelling suitable for communicating science to a broader public?

Presentation format: Both traditional paper presentations and other formats or approaches to presentation and storytelling can be used.

We look forward to receiving proposals (abstract of approximately 250 words) **by 28 February 2025** o Melike Peterson (peterston@uni-bremen.de) and Katrin Singer (katrin.singer@uni-hamburg.de).

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