Storytelling

Julia Sattler

1. Preliminary Remarks

Since the 1980s, the concept of storytelling has moved beyond the literary and cultural arena into other dimensions of public life. It has become a subject of interest in fields of research and application beyond the Humanities, among them Design, Management, Marketing, Economics, Geography and Urban Planning. Starting from an outline of the so-called 'story turn' in these disciplines as well as from a short reference to the 'spatial turn' in the Humanities and Social Sciences that makes for much potential for interdisciplinary cooperation, this contribution outlines the potential and challenges of storytelling as a tool and as a practice for the metropolitan context and metropolitan research.

Highlighting the role of stories and storytelling for spaces, specifically urban spaces, it focuses on the importance of storytelling in relation to the constitution of space and the creation of a locally specific spatial identity. Context-wise, it looks at the work that has been done in the area of Urban Planning in relation to storytelling, both in research and in practice. This also means that, outside of the more general approximation to the topic, storytelling here will be defined mostly in relation to functional storytelling in the public arena, leaving out other dimensions usually subsumed under the same term, such as storytelling in the family context, the religious or ritual contexts, and so on. In its analytical part, the paper addresses examples from the United States and from Germany before concluding with questions and recommended literature for further consultation.

2. Framework and Contexts

In the past three decades, several disciplines, including the Social Sciences as well as Architecture and Urban Planning, have gone through a conceptual and methodical shift that is sometimes referred to as the 'discursive turn' or 'story turn.' As these descriptors suggest, the shift points to an openness toward ideas from the Humanities, which traditionally work with concepts and ideas such as discourse, narrative, story and im-

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age creation. With special consideration of the urban fields of inquiry, Goldstein et. al. (2015) suggest that there has been a "cultural turn" among urban scholars, which has led to a more nuanced and flexible understanding of the city and of urbanity, both of which are now conceived of as more than empirical, quantifiable entities. Stories and the engagement with storytelling as a cultural practice offer alternative ways to conduct research as compared to the work with data and hard measurable facts. This leads to "a mode of planning that is based on 'being-in-the-world' rather than being apart from it" (Throgmorton 1996, xix).

Stories and approaches shaped by storytelling give access to an affective domain of the city, to its psychogeography and its multiple historical, cultural and social layers. It also enables an insight into the construction of urban narratives, which are larger patterns or units of discursive construction, and basically the result of multiple stories working together to create specific ideas about the city more generally, or one particular city. Building on that, Urban Planning, Architecture and related disciplines can make use of this knowledge when developing new projects, or in the context of urban regeneration efforts. In these fields, a careful analysis of the storytelling behind a project can also contribute to explaining why an approach may have been less well received or why it may even have failed.

Pauwels places the emergence of the "story turn" at the origin of the "era of emotional capitalism" (113) in the United States of the mid-1980s. This shift in thinking was the result of business and politics beginning to take storytelling more seriously following "the influence of European intellectuals like Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco and Paul Ricoeur" (2020, 112), who all emphasize the importance of stories in the creation of meaning. The interest in storytelling first emerged in Marketing as part of a new form of "aesthetic capitalism" (Pauwels 2020, 114) that aims to convince the audience of a product via the directed use of stories, thus making use of the functional aspects of storytelling. Similar shifts occurred in other fields, transforming areas of research that had previously defined themselves via their strict use of quantifiable data into fields occupied with the human creation of meaning. It is evident that in the contemporary era, every dimension of public life is shaped by storytelling. This includes the stock markets, for example, which undergo changes depending on expectations voiced in the form of storytelling (e.g., Shiller 2019).

Christophe Mager and Laurent Matthey (2015) attribute the emergence of the idea of the "urban planning narrative" to Secchi (1984), who "drew […] the attention of planners to the production of myths." This shift contributed to changing the understanding of the planning discipline toward one "centred around the production of images" (Mager/Matthey 2015, 2), and enabled a focus on stories. By the second half of the 1990s, James A. Throgmorton had established the idea of urban planning as a type of storytelling under the header of the "argumentative" or "rhetorical turn in planning" (1996, 36). Building on Martin Krieger (1981) and other scholars who had commented on "the importance of storytelling in planning, analysis and the social sciences" (Throgmorton 1996, 46), Throgmorton states that the crucial recognition leading to an interest in texts and in storytelling was that planners and planning as a profession can profit from knowledge about storytelling both financially as well as in terms of their dealing with fieldwork

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(1996, 52ff.), again pointing to the functional understanding of storytelling that shapes the discipline's approach to and work with it.

Still, the approaches developing out of the 'story turn' in the arena of Urban Planning and connected fields ranging from Urban Design to Human Geography speak to the importance of imagining the city beyond its mere constructed spaces (Sandercock 2010, 18). Working with spaces via storytelling takes into account "the relationship between personal experience and expression, and the broader contexts within which such experiences are ordered, performed, interpreted and disciplined" (Cameron 2012, 573). Evidently, Michel Foucault's findings on discourse and discipline play an enormous role in the shift that is often termed the 'story turn.' According to the French philosopher, knowledge and meaning are produced via so-called discursive formations that are in turn shaped by power and power dynamics (Armstrong 2012, 29). Via their constant circulation, discourses create meanings and normalize certain behaviors or approaches as opposed to others and thus intervene into all possible areas of the real world. To work with storytelling in any capacity presupposes an (at least implicit) understanding of the workings of discourse and of narrative.

A discussion of storytelling in relation to urbanity and Urban Studies cannot do without the turn in the opposite direction, however briefly, and focus on the development referred to as the "spatial turn" in the humanities. Döring and Thielman (2008) argue that the term "spatial turn" originated in geography, specifically in the research of Edward Soja in *Thirdspace* (1996). In this work, Soja called for the renewed inclusion of the spatial dimension in research conducted in the Social Sciences as well as in geography itself. The suggestion was picked up by other fields, and especially in the humanities, which led to the recognition how developments and processes manifest themselves spatially (Presner et. al. 2014, 69). Many of the studies undertaken under the header of the "spatial turn" in the Humanities have remained curiously disciplinary instead of establishing a research agenda interlinking the Humanities and the built environment or planning practice, and "the perceived gap between a supposed 'urban fictionality' and a supposed 'urban reality' persists" (Sattler 2018, 124).

Taken together, these two developments – the 'story turn' and the 'spatial turn' – have led to a greater openness of various disciplines towards each other and to new approaches in all fields involved, but especially in those relating directly to the urban arena. They have contributed to the emergence of new conversations in relation to sustainability (e.g., Eckstein and Throgmorton 2003), urban design and landscape planning (e.g., Childs 2008), public housing (e.g., Vale 2013 and 2018) and the development of the post-industrial city (e.g., Eisinger 2003; Doucet 2018). In studies of this kind, a focus on storytelling and communication has led to conscious engagement with questions of power and knowledge, as well as with the stories' specific roles in urban contexts. They have also resulted in the increased visibility of approaches in research and in practice that highlight storytelling as a tool in Urban Planning and as a way to improve planning practice.

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3. Story and Storytelling: An Approximation

The practice of storytelling is deeply engrained in human history and identity – the human being is often referred to as a storytelling animal. Humanity is here defined by stories and by storytelling. Still, there are different understandings of what a story is, what kind of information it should contain, and how it should mediate this information: "For some story is an object of knowledge, for others a form of practice, and for others it is a mode of academic expression" (Cameron 2012, 575). This makes it difficult to come up with one definition of story or of storytelling. The same is true for the effect of stories, which is the subject of an ongoing debate in the Humanities and Social Sciences alike: While it is possible to examine stories circulating in the public arena to come to conclusions about discursive formations at a defined moment in time, such conclusions are not automatically given, nor are they ultimately required for every process of storytelling (cf. Cameron 2012, 580).

One factor that is common to storytelling despite the heterogeneity of definitions is that storytelling is always an act of volition. Stories cannot tell themselves, there needs to be an individual or a collective telling them. In this way, stories are passed on from one person to another, or from one group of people to another. The process of passing on a story can transgress boundaries, such as generational or national ones. Stories can contribute to building communities and to the establishment of a shared identity and shared knowledge. Stories can, but do not necessarily have to, go beyond those facts and "produce ethical relations between otherwise distant and unequally positioned subjects" (Cameron 2012, 583). For the purpose of a definition, the stories and texts addressed here may be oral in form, they may be constituted of written words, but they may certainly also come in different media formats, including representations in films and on websites. Storytelling is increasingly being undertaken in relation to forms that are usually considered non-narrative, such as data and statistics. In this context, storytelling serves to make data accessible (Vora 2019, 17) and to support data-based processes of decision-making (Vora 2019, 14).

Sandercock (2010) has shown that storytelling contributes to the production of urban knowledge. It establishes the city or the region from a more subjective perspective than statistics would, thus linking up to the idea of converting data and facts into "stories" mentioned above: Empirical data only assumes meaning in the context of a story. Storytelling can thus contribute to practices of placemaking (de Certeau 1974; Rose 1993). In the urban or metropolitan context, storytelling is one way how the past, the present and the future of a site – a neighborhood, a town, a city, a region – are constructed and conveyed to others; stories are indeed constitutive of perceived "realities'" (Throgmorton 1996, 46). An action in the past and its consequences become imaginable via the use of words combined into storylines that provide an answer to the question how the site has become what it is. Stories can also point out potential paths towards a site's future developments. This does not mean that telling a story about something automatically makes it 'real.' But especially when using stories in order to further certain arguments, e.g., relating to the use of a structure or an urban area, these stories will need to be able to connect to the perceived 'reality' of that site to be understood, or, to speak with Throgmorton, they need to be "persuasive" (1996, 38ff.).

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Certainly, in the context of a community, this also means that not everyone can tell every story, or that every story will be heard to an equal degree, or by the same listeners. Barbara Eckstein goes so far as to say that "[m]ost storytelling – arguably all storytelling – is about setting community boundaries, including some audience members within its territory and excluding others" (2003, 13). Hence, storytelling and personal and community agency are closely intertwined. In the postmodern era, debates about which story should be told, and how, and by whom, have moved to the public arena and form an important part of the ongoing debates about visibility and about social justice. Storytelling and identity politics are intimately interlinked. Recent social movements such as Black Lives Matter show that urban space is loaded with oftentimes unrecognized and implicit meaning, and that the question of who can take ownership of the city is strongly linked to such construction of meaning.

Every story depends on interpretation; and personal experience plays into this process (Cameron 2012, 574). While generally, a story aims to convince the reader of a certain reading and the author can try to support a specific reading, it is not possible to predict how readers may perceive a story and whether they may have a completely different understanding of it as compared to what the author envisioned. In the literary fields, approaches such as reader-response theory and reception aesthetics answer to this gap.

In relation to the audience, stories need to make use of an accessible language. The wording must be age-appropriate and amenable to readers and/or listeners in a way that keeps them interested. A good story pays attention to this on several levels: "An effective story […] fully exploits the materials of time (duration, frequency of repetition), time-space (chronotope), and space (scale, perspective, remoteness), deliberately arranging them in unfamiliar ways so that they conscript readers who are willing to suspend their habits of being and come out in the open to engage in dialogue with strangers" (Eckstein 2003, 35–36).

There is no prescribed length for a story, but those stories used in the planning-related field are often brief. For the purposes here, a story is understood to be a construction which makes use of methods and tools as well as conventions, such as those relating to the establishment of one or more specific points of view, as well as the use of metaphors, symbols and other forms of imagery. These kinds of stories can certainly be generic, especially when used in the context of marketing and branding efforts, or to communicate the effectiveness of a suggested plan, but that does not mean they cannot be sophisticated at the same time. Ben Highmore (2013) has explored the significance of metaphors in relation to urban spaces. He has shown that images relating to health are crucial not only to talk about urban spaces and their inherent qualities (e.g., the park as a "lung" of the city), but also regulate who has access to these spaces, and what will happen if such limits of access are transgressed.

In addition to imagery, emplotment is crucial to storytelling. This is also the case even in its mostly functional form as used in plans or marketing documents: While stories can be voiced in any arena, not every utterance is a story and "[t]elling stories is not just listing events" (van Hulst 2012, 300). The so-called plot, in which events build on each other (e.g., via a pattern of cause and effect), connects "story elements in such a way that they form a coherent whole" (van Hulst 2012, 300). Storytelling commonly

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means that there is a defined setting for the events to happen, and that there are characters who react to and interact with their environment and with each other as part of the plot. Like this, for example, different groups of actors (the characters) can become included in the story in the interest of promoting more diversity. It also enables readers to imagine what a future scenario might imply for different interest groups, such as different minorities living together in the shared space of a densely populated urban quarter. This suggests that at least ideally, stories attain to a democratic quality of dealing with urban space and offer potential for discussion.

Thus, stories and storytelling processes in the context of a planning project can help to establish a dialogue between different groups in a population (e.g., different groups of inhabitants in a neighborhood undergoing urban renewal) and may lead to heightened empathy and trust between those involved (van Hulst 2012). But this factor also impacts what kinds of stories can be told. Traditionally speaking, a 'good' storyline will come in the shape of a conflict, a crisis, and ultimately, its resolution. This represents an instance where the characters undergo a development and fundamental change (Throgmorton 1996, 49). A positive outcome, i.e. ending – for example the acceptance of a proposal and its positive results for the future of a neighborhood – is already part of the process of storytelling in this particular context. Thus, these kinds of stories come with a particular agenda or goal and are by implication limited in their potential for unexpected outcomes. They are in that sense always results of a compromise.

Still, not all storytelling is inherently good or leads to more inclusiveness and diversity. It bears remembering that there will never be a situation in which everyone's story can be told and taken into account. By implication, storytelling practice should only be used if there is indeed space to include what is learnt in the process, so as to avoid misunderstandings and false expectations on all sides involved. Throgmorton stresses the ethical aspects relating to the idea that stories are constitutive in the creation of spaces and beyond. It is crucial, then, to ask how a community should develop, and which stories should be used in these contexts (1996, 52).

Moreover, since it steps beyond the rational paradigms of traditional planning, storytelling and storytelling research can support or even enable interdisciplinary dialogue between the planning-oriented disciplines and fields in the humanities. This can be productive in the context of the emerging discipline of Urban Cultural Studies. Here, the publications of Buchenau and Gurr (2015, 2018) and Eckstein and Throgmorton (2003) bear mentioning. At the same time, the focus on storytelling has led to a myriad of complex questions relating to urban culture, such as whether cities can indeed be "read" like texts (as claimed by Throgmorton 1996) and what such a reading process may mean in relation to the built environment and its semiotics (Hassenpflug et. al. 2011).

4. Storytelling and/in Urban Planning

In his monograph *Planning as Persuasive Storytelling*, James A. Throgmorton calls for an entirely new understanding of Urban Planning as a field of research and practice. He suggests for those in the planning profession to take into account that "planning can be understood as a fragmented and heterogeneous mix of stories and storytellers in which

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no one rhetoric has a *prima facie* right to be privileged over others" (1996, 38, italics in the original). Following this understanding and interlinking it with knowledge about storytelling, those who plan for a site are creating texts (maps and plans, for example) which "interpret the city *and* planning" (Throgmorton 1996, 38, emphasis mine).

This suggests they are authors engaged in a dual process. In this process both an understanding of the city-as-text as well as of the process of its development (via planning) is shaped. The resulting text – a second-order text, as according to Throgmorton it is a text about another text, namely the city – is then read and interpreted by others: by citizens, but also, for example, by political authorities or the sponsors of a project. Planning becomes a field inherently concerned with texts of various kinds. This also concerns its dealings with maps and with treating data like a narrative text.

Since Urban Planning focuses on the creation or re-creation of sites at a point of time in the future, it is especially the future-directed form of the story that helps envision a situation that is not there yet: "[W]e can think of planning as an enacted and future-oriented narrative in which the participants are both characters and joint authors" (Throgmorton 1996, 47). Here, stories can serve to inspire and motivate change in those reading, watching and/or listening. Storytelling and related activities create space for citizen participation: Citizens working with planners become authors of their own planning-texts. Via such activities, planners can support trust and empathy. This may lead to a higher acceptance of spatial changes. Storytelling can contribute to successful facilitation processes and to building stronger networks and alliances (Goldstein et. al. 2015, 1299).

At the same time, stories need to be composed bearing in mind that there is an audience who will either be persuaded by them or not. In what Throgmorton terms a "rhetorical approach to planning" the focus would have to be on finding those elements which are especially persuasive to the audience. This suggests that there are specific characteristics of a planning story that make it convincing. These can be learned by planners and their affiliates and then used for this purpose: "[P]lanning can be likened to good fiction and […] planners are future-oriented storytellers who write persuasive and constitutive texts that other people read (construct and interpret) in diverse and often conflicting ways" (Throgmorton 1996, 46). From a Humanities perspective, it is debatable whether one can indeed 'learn' to write a good story building on one's knowledge of writing techniques and conventional storytelling elements alone. In addition, everybody is embedded in their own story and identity, which is sometimes difficult to recognize and disassociate from in the process of writing a story with a specific purpose.

In the context of Urban Planning, it is possible to differentiate between efforts to "combine the urban planning narrative with storytelling and to establish storytelling as a prescriptive or descriptive model for planning practice" (Mager/Matthey 2015). While some approaches focus on "storytelling as a model *of* the way planning is done", others concentrate on "storytelling as a model *for* the way planning could or should be done" (van Hulst 2012, 299). The first approach equates processes of planning to storytelling, while the second looks at how planning practice can be made better via stories (van Hulst 2012, 302–303).

According to Throgmorton, who has also served as mayor of Iowa City, planning as a practice can be equated to the practice of storytelling. His statements link planning

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with persuasive storytelling about the future. The stories planners work with are not isolated from their social settings, but rather, for a plan to be successful, planning stories need to resonate in them. Throgmorton's approach stresses the likeness between the practice of Urban Planning and the practice of storytelling and helps consider planning-related documents from their conception to the finished masterplan as stories following defined guidelines. This understanding, which does not investigate that a planning process also contains other parts, such as finance planning or environmental considerations, at least indirectly suggests that for planners to become better at persuading their various audiences – from the city council to the company holder to the general public – they need to tell better and more convincing stories. Planning practice thus can improve its persuasiveness by taking its lesson from storytelling. It is important to note that this improvement in and of itself does not say anything about the role of social justice or equality in the context of a project.

Still, such 'better' stories can potentially help different interest groups in a planning process to be able to follow each other's arguments and counterarguments in relation to a plan. This understanding is representative of storytelling as a model for a better planning practice. Leonie Sandercock argues that "planning is performed *through* storytelling" (2003, 12, emphasis mine). Storytelling can be useful where conflict resolution is needed or where several parties need to be heard in order to carry out a project. In this instance storytelling becomes a model *for* planning, a 'tool' that can be employed by the experienced practitioner to be more effective in working towards positive change. In practice, both conceptions of storytelling work hand in hand and share many characteristics. Any approach in Urban Planning that centrally focuses on storytelling – be it as a model *of* planning or as a model *for* planning – is likely not an instance of bureaucratic planning but one that involves the community and necessitates a dialogical approach (van Hulst 2012, 303f.).

While there are different ways of telling a story, "[i]n planning, like in politics, if you want to persuade actors of the necessity of change, it seems that you first have to tell a story about decline" (van Hulst 2012, 310), which can then be followed by a story of hope. This suggests that there is a formula for storytelling in relation to Urban Planning, and that there are indeed storytelling rules to follow: "Collaborative planning stories are both descriptive and normative, making sense of the world while providing guidance for change amidst turbulence and uncertainty" (Goldstein et. al. 2015, 1297). This comes with ethical implications – storytelling about decline, as a force constitutive of reality, can also contribute to the very production of decline, for example (e.g., Beauregard 1993).

5. Storytelling and Planning Practice

Storytelling has been used in planning practice for a long time, though it has not always been referred to in this way. Rubin (2010) has shown how the use of detailed imagery of the living conditions of the poor in New York City in the famous work of the Danish-American journalist Jacob A. Riis has contributed to social reform and a betterment of the living conditions in the tenements of large metropolises (*How the Other Half Lives*,

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1890). One potential question is how contemporary ways of including storytelling relate to earlier such efforts at social progress—in how far Riis may be read as an early advocacy planner—especially when it comes to the correlation of storytelling with contemporary identity politics.

In his 1996 study *Planning as Persuasive Storytelling*, Throgmorton uses the electrification of the city of Chicago as an example of how planners used storytelling to carry out the project of modernizing the city. In this context, storytelling is used to forward technological progress and to promote social equality. In *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the Erasure of Memory* (1997), Norman Klein points out the imagination and construction of Los Angeles via storytelling. He emphasizes, for example, the strategic use of "classic booster language" (2008, 27) across several decades and shows how carefully designed promotional stories shaped the city's layout and its policies of public transportation, but also the development of its industries. Here, studying past instances of storytelling and its uses enables today's planners and others to recognize the intended and unintended effects of the practice and can make for a more careful dealing with the subject of storytelling, but also with questions of equity.

Storytelling and storytelling practices in an urban context also come into play when advocating for urban regeneration and redevelopment projects. With regard to the city of Detroit, storytelling has been used in the context of urban renewal efforts in the 1950s in order to make space for a highway and erase a predominantly African American neighborhood (Thomas 1997). Thus, while storytelling and the use of stories bears much potential for bottom-up processes including the citizens, there are examples where stories have been used in the context of top-down projects and where this has led to less acceptance of a plan despite its inclusion of a story.

The use of storytelling in the context of top-down processes is still relevant in the contemporary post-industrial setting of Detroit, for example in relation to the *Detroit Future City* plan, which, as Daniel Clement and Miguel Kanai show, is not citizen- but corporate-oriented and "may exacerbate the racialized spatial injustices" (Clement/Kanai 2015, 369). This is evident, for example in relation to the designation of the city's most disadvantaged neighborhoods as "'innovation landscapes'" (Clement/Kanai 2015, 369), which in the long run may enable their clearance for new purposes, much akin to the erasure of the "Black Bottom/Paradise Valley" neighborhood during urban renewal. A similar focus on economic progress can be detected in relation to the storytelling of investment projects by private individuals, such as those of Dan Gilbert. These projects work using powerful slogans of "opportunity" while not taking into account "social justice and educational possibilities" (Sattler 2018, 131) for all citizens alike. It is certainly not a coincidence that in recent years, in the context of large-scale and oftentimes private redevelopment efforts in the city that do not follow a holistic plan or "story" for Detroit, investors have been compared and linked to colonizers (Sattler 2018, 131).

In terms of contemporary projects, the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) is an urban regeneration project that explicitly makes use of storytelling and larger narratives about the future of a post-industrial region. For ECoC 2010, the idea of the German Ruhr Region turning into a 'new kind of metropolis' was established. Here, the organizers developed a larger narrative about urban regeneration using many local and localized

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stories to build a new post-industrial identity for the region. While the participatory approach of the ECoC was recognizable in the program and contributed to the citizens' feeling pride in relation to their local history, the idea of a 'metropolis in the making' was by and large rejected. This was due to the already existing structure and identity of the region, which consists of more than fifty larger and smaller cities and townships and does not fit the established definition of a metropolis (see Sattler 2020; Reicher et. al. 2011). While the ECoC, which is funded by the EU, is always evaluated, a relevant study with regard to storytelling and the ECoC has been undertaken in Matera in Italy (Iaffaldano/Ferrari 2020).

In relation to storytelling and its use in projects, a critical question to ask relates to citizen agency and the uses of the practice. If storytelling becomes a tool for advertising a planning project, citizens may react very differently as compared to a situation in which they feel their own stories matter and become represented in the plan. Storytelling as used in relation to the Creative City established by Richard Florida could be one example of how stories are utilized in the context of large-scale investment projects, also on a global scale.

6. Further Points of Connection and Contention

Now that stories and questions of storytelling have become recognized as a productive source for research as well as an idea to be used by planners in their daily work, there is plenty of material to focus on in the urban context, but certainly also beyond. Much potential lies in asking how exactly urban planning documents include local and other stories. There may be much to gain from a study of how these documents convey and establish urban knowledge, and how this can be used in different disciplines working with cities and practices of city-making. Similar questions can be asked in relation to 'unusual' formats of storytelling and their potential for planning: filmic documentaries, for example, or poetry, would be genres needing further inquiry.

The emergence of digital formats and digital tools of urban research and exploration opens up new possibilities for planning in conjunction with storytelling. Sandercock and Attili (2010) call for an investigation of how voices that usually remain unheard in planning processes might become included, and how the new media may contribute to such processes. Investigations in this direction have been undertaken by Hallenbeck (2010) for Vancouver and by Wagner (2010) for New Orleans. Any planning process including storytelling and community inclusion necessarily needs to address questions of power, and of the complexities emerging in planning processes where planners are outsiders in relation to the communities they plan for. Here, many questions remain open in relation to the ethical complexities of speaking for others (Sandercock/Attili 2010, 326) – this is especially true in the 21st century, when speaking has become very politicized again.

With regard to planning education, Sandercock (2010) calls for a detailed discussion of storytelling and its potentials for a more interdisciplinary curriculum in the field. Already in 2003, Barbara Eckstein had argued for the establishment of better and more analytical tools for planners to critically re-examine storytelling. She remarks that the

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equations that have been established linking storytelling to planning processes are often not as clear at a second glance, for example because, while the author of a story or other publication is often one particular individual, in reality "[g]roups or institutions produce plans" (Eckstein 2003, 15) rather than individual persons. In addition, plans are written with a specific aim in mind and thus the "storyteller is narrating to control the action of others" (Eckstein 2003, 20). The kind of storytelling that matters to planning is storytelling with an intention, which is less deconstructive compared to the type of storytelling fiction focuses on. Eckstein warns planners to be more careful in dealing with the material and argues for the need to introduce planners to "explicit knowledge about how stories work as narrative forms" (Eckstein 2003, 23). That said, one should not neglect the potential of storytelling or of the planner as a kind of storyteller who can acknowledge heretofore untold stories, once more advocating for the inclusion of this kind of knowledge into planning education.

In the Humanities, there has also been encouragement to include plans and maps in teaching (Sattler 2018). Vormann (2018) and Wendt (2018) wish for greater recognition of interdisciplinary research and teaching in American Studies, a field that has traditionally understood itself as interdisciplinary, but tends to stick close to other Humanities instead of engaging with such fields as Architecture, Urban Planning or Engineering.

What unites these approaches and appeals is the quest to find the right words and a new terminology: If "storytelling claims to be politically and theoretically transformative, we need a better vocabulary and critical framework with which to assess such stories, and to determine whether they deliver on their political and theoretical promises" (Cameron 2012, 586). These findings call for both greater attention to detail, but also for more investigation of the process of storytelling and its potential for urban development and related fields. Such research will need to clarify how storytelling is related to processes of urban scripting at large. Storytelling will also have to be regarded in close relation to larger narratives and their formation.

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