



Landmark Libraries in Urban Space

HTW Chur (Switzerland) / FH Potsdam
(Germany)

Karsten Schuldt, Susanne Caviezel, Hans-Christoph
Hobohm, Rudolf Mumenthaler, Daniel Walser

Formal questions

- Project started in the beginning of 2014
- Participants: Department for Information & Department for Architecture (University of Applied Science Chur, Switzerland) and Department for Information Science (University of Applied Science Potsdam, Germany)
- Funding was requested from the Swiss Science Foundation and the German Science Foundation
 - Co-finance, special program for such joint research projects (Lead Agency)
 - Funding was rejected in autumn 2014, but to favorable reviews
 - Plans for re-submission in 2015

Research questions

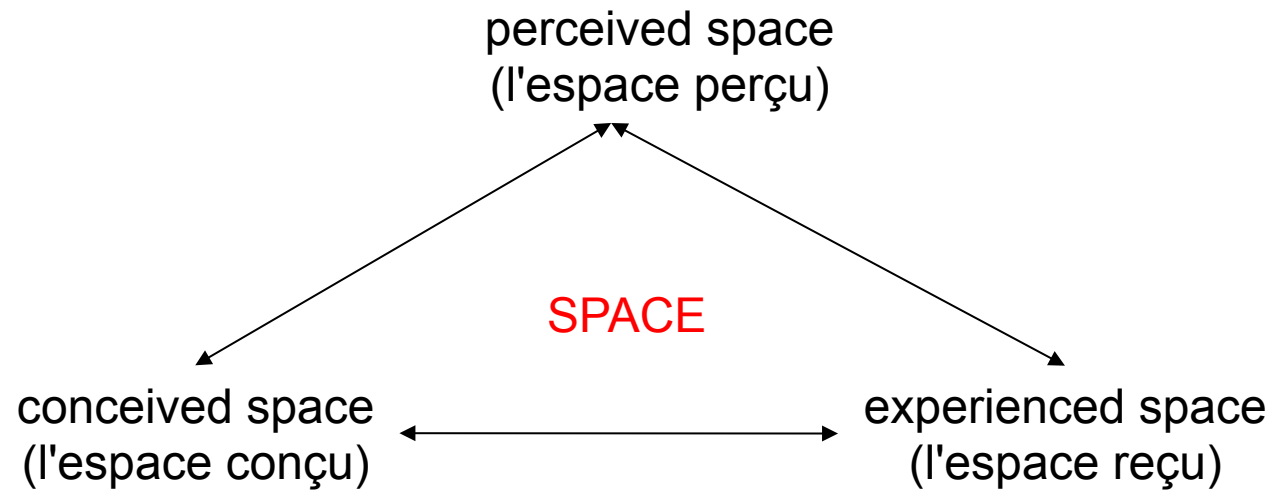
- Libraries in European cities are built as *Landmarks*
 - Landmarks should function as new reference points in the urban landscape
 - Landmarks should change the landscape (disrupt the view)
- Landmarks are built as a tool to change the urban evolution
- Libraries are one of the institution, which are used as such *Landmarks* (Beside museums)
 - Loved by architects and urban designers

Research question

- Do Libraries as Landmarks work? How do they work?
 - Do they change the urban landscape?
 - Why do they change the landscape?
 - Why do people think, that they can change the landscape?
- The questions should come from the position of (a) architecture, (b) urban design, and (c) libraries
- Methods: Grounded theory

Research question

- Theoretical background: Henri Lefebvre



Research questions

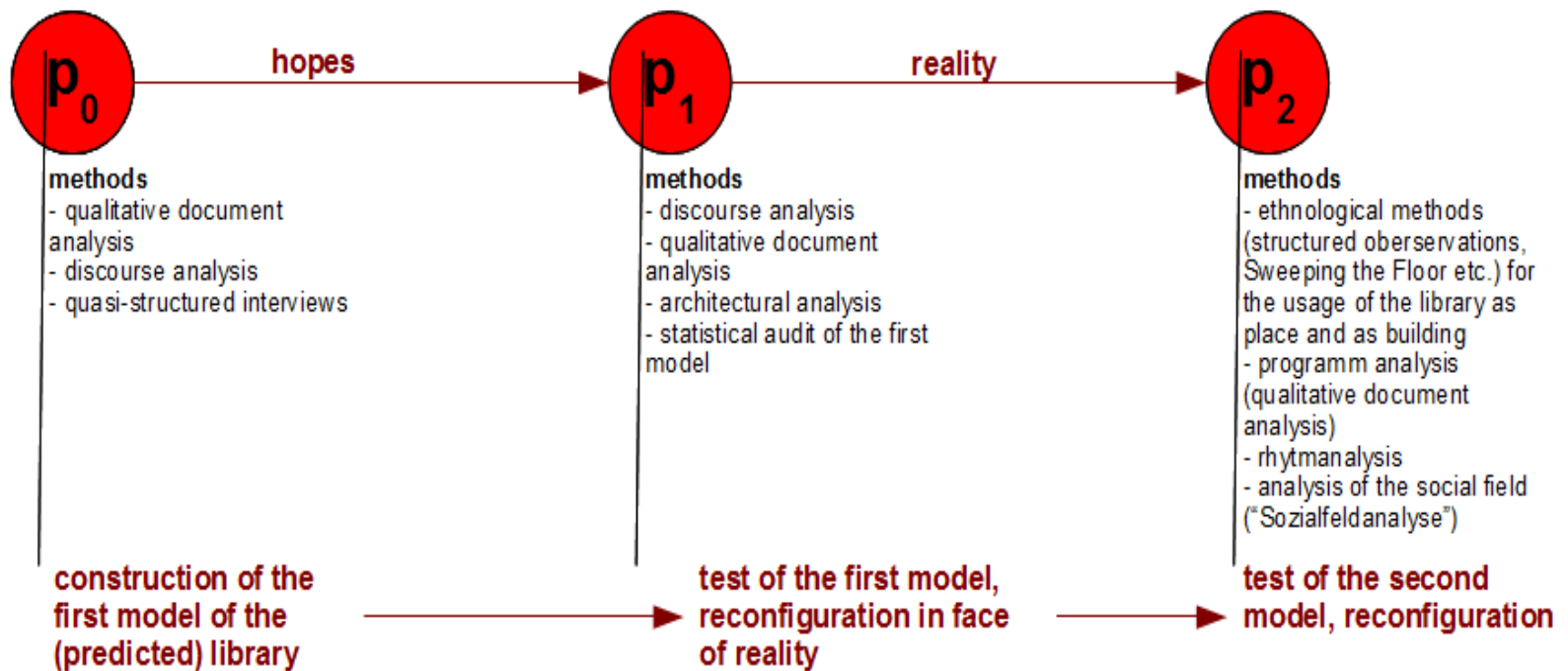
- RQ 1: Which promises and concepts of urban change are bound to the projected and later built landmark libraries? Which promises are held up until the end of the process and which promises vanish?
- RQ 2: Who influences the project and the working of the landmark libraries and how? Who is able to make its voice heard and which voices hush in the process or even never been heard?
- RQ 3: How should the landmark libraries change the urban communities they are in and how do they really change these communities? Do they function as agents of urban change?

Grounded theory

- Theoretical sampling
 - Switzerland and Germany as examples for challenges of European cities
 - Shrinking cities (East-Germany)
 - Overcrowded cities (Germany, Switzerland)
 - Gentrification (e.g. Berlin)
 - Villages become Cities (Switzerland)
- Built Models of “Landmark Libraries” (how will they look, what will they do, how will they be perceived?) at three point in time
 - P0: Start of the planning process
 - P1: When the library opens
 - P2: five-ten years after opening

Structure of the research process

Key
p₀ – planning phase
p₁ – opening phase
p₂ – running phase (today)



Expected outcomes

- Models of Landmark Libraries, tested
- Evidence of (a) thinking about libraries, (b) reality of urban libraries, (c) the influence of libraries in the urban space



Thanks for your attention.