

Bridging the Gap

Landscape Architecture Doctoral Colloquium

Sunday, September 11, 2016, HSR Rapperswil, Switzerland
This colloquium is part of the ECLAS Conference 2016

Target Group

This colloquium is addressed to both current/prospective **doctoral students** and **senior researchers** who are supervising thesis processes. It may also be of interest for prospective supervisors who wish to learn from peers about tutoring methods in this field. The overall objective is to share and discuss methodological aspects within the European landscape architecture research community. The meeting is open to all research themes and methodological approaches. Thematic groups will be formed according to the responses received to this call.

Focus of the Colloquium

As a practice-led discipline landscape architecture faces a challenge when trying to impose some sort of methodology on a somewhat theory-resistant subject. While the positivist sciences provide a well-equipped box of quantitative tools for investigating the physical layers of our environment and some for the social aspects, qualitative instruments from the domain of social sciences are often required for interpreting the human factor, especially in a deep way. The application of methods found in or developed by neighbouring disciplines has become common practice in landscape architecture research.

Conversely, the planning and design process itself has developed into a research method in its own right: Landscape architecture can create new knowledge through design and by the critical review or post occupancy evaluation of designs and implemented projects. However, this approach is only at the beginning of evolving its full potential. Furthermore, the product (or the process) itself can be regarded as an issue for research. We use case-study methodologies, critical analysis and hermeneutics for positioning landscape architecture in our cultural and social context. All of these can be valid approaches. Luckily, none of them tells the whole story on their own.

This is of course a reduced and incomplete spotlight on the situation but it shows the dilemma all (not only) young landscape architecture researchers face: **How can we create new knowledge?** In our colloquium we will try to approach this question by means of an interactive discourse among young and senior researchers from Europe and beyond.

How to get involved as a thesis supervisor or senior researcher

The colloquium is intended to be a combination of individual mentoring, group discourse and thematic input on research methods. Thematic contributions in the form of a 15-20 minutes presentation can be made on the following topics:

- **Research methods:** Presentation of a specific methodical approach and its application in research projects (possibly linking to neighbouring disciplines, thus 'bridging the gap')
- **Research design:** Building a research framework, setting the research question, deciding on the approach, selecting methods, techniques...
- **Supervising doctoral students:** what makes a good supervision?

How to get involved as a doctoral student

Current and prospective doctoral students are invited to present a **poster** (A1) of their methodical approach in relation to the research hypothesis or question.

You are asked to answer the following questions with no more than 50 words each:

Title of my research project

- Please state the short and the long version of your doctoral thesis.
- What is my research topic and why did I select it?
- Please explain what has been your (initial) assumption/hypothesis that you wish to prove or disprove. This section is not only about assumptions, etc., but also about context and scientific and societal relevance.

What is my research question and which research strategy & approach have I selected to answer this question?

- Please explain why and on the basis of which methodological consideration you have chosen this research strategy. This section is, of course, also about specific sub-questions. Often there are (too) many sub-questions (!).

What is my research method and why have I chosen it?

- Please explain your methodological framework and the methods you selected in order to implement your research strategy/approach.
- There can (also) be multiple methods of course, each relating to a specific sub-question. Which guidance did you have/use when you select(ed) your research method?

What is, or will be, my empirical evidence and how will I collect and analyse my data/evidence?

- What kind of evidence will be generated and how will it be analysed?
- Explain, for example, your choice of case study and your selection of study areas, and any other approach to generating evidence.
- In this context it might be useful to also explain your way of operationalizing the theoretical concepts that are included in your research question.

The poster is to be prepared according to a template (file for download).

Submission deadline: **31st of August 2016** to this e-mail: **colloquium@eclas.org**

Prospective doctoral students

If you are a future doctoral student and still in the process of developing a thematic framework you are also invited to attend the discussions. In that case you may not submit an outline but please send an e-mail to the organiser to inform them of your intention to attend.

Organisational Issues

- Time** Sunday, 11th of September 2016, from 9 am – 6 pm
- Location** HSR Rapperswil, CH, lecture halls 5.002/5.003
- Costs** 50 CHF (fee is additional to ECLAS conference registration fee)
Reduced conference fee for doctoral students/students available
Please register: www.eclas2016.ch

A certificate of attendance will be issued on behalf of ECLAS.