Introduction

• This dissertation project is a historical case study of a public library system in the Pittsburgh region, USA.
• The interpretive framework informing this project is a model called Machtkreislauf, or "circulation of power."
• The purpose of this poster is to provide a summary of the project with a view to its principal features.

Background

Research Problems

• This dissertation project is motivated by 3 interdisciplinary research problems (see Table 1).
• These research problems present 3 corollary research purposes.

Research Question

• This project ties the problems and purposes together by posing the following research question: How might the Machtkreislauf model be used to describe a public library system in the Pittsburgh region?
• This question addresses the problems from the 3 fields:
  • In library studies, the project will apply a new public sphere paradigm to the case of libraries;
  • In the political sciences, the project will refine and test the Machtkreislauf model; and
  • In the field of Pittsburgh history, the project will construct a regional perspective of library development.

Methodology

Design

• This dissertation adopts a historical case study approach.
• This project uses Qualitative Content Analysis as the method to develop the interpretive instrument (the coding frame) and to carry out data collection and analysis [5].

Tools

• The coding process is performed using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software package.
• Some results are displayed in network graphs using Gephi, a network visualization and analysis platform.

Results

• Results of the dissertation project are summarized below in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Selection</td>
<td>Discourse related to a regional library system in Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case begins in 1924 when a regional system was first proposed and extends to 2016.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source Collection</td>
<td>Archival documents: Primary and secondary sources from several archival collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>25 unstructured interviews with 15 individuals totaling 34 interview hours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field observations</td>
<td>14 hours of observations from 9 public meetings.</td>
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</table>

Development of the Coding Frame

• Innovations in the Machtkreislauf model: 5 types of power: Communicative, Administrative, Formal Decision, Economic, and Backroom Deals. |
• Distinctions between narrowcast/broadcast and coalesced public/diffuse public.
• Conceptual development of circuits, a type of relational institution [6] (see Figure 2 & 3).

• There are 3 research implications from this dissertation project that correspond to its 3 problems and purposes: |
  • In library studies, a new paradigm was successfully applied and new insights were generated.
  • In the political sciences, the Machtkreislauf model was revised and tested, leading to new concepts.
  • In Pittsburgh history, there is a fuller understanding of library development on a regional scale.

Future work will consider approaches using path dependency, sequence analysis, and inferential statistics.

References