Legible cities:

The role of visual clues and pathway configuration in legibility of cities.

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Abstract

To make a city more legible there should be continuity between salient elements of the city; between main integrators and visible fields of the landmarks, to form a coherent structure. Alternatively, these elements should overlap to emphasise each other to make the city more legible. The relationship of these two elements in the city structure depends on the degree of irregularity of the layout and the presence of the rules of Gestalt of "good configuration". Each urban morphology, according to its degree of irregularity and presence or absence of Gestalt rules can be categorised as organised, semi-organised and unorganised. The role of landmarks or visual clues according to the type of morphology differs from one type to another. To make a legible city, there should be a coincidence between the maps of main integrators to the landmark setting to emphasise the main structure of the city in regular settings (organised and semi-organised structures). In irregular layouts, there should be continuity between the pattern of visible fields of landmarks and the main integrators of the city to form a coherent whole. The hierarchy of the urban axes in global and local level- most integrated and least integrated axes- will be followed by the hierarchy of the visual clues in global and local levels, which defines the nature of systems of reference in the structure of the city. The aim of the study presented by this article is to show how the interaction of landmarks and pathway configuration influence the legibility of the city.