Using Space Syntax to understand multi-layer, high-density urban environments:

What can be done by other means on a syntactic issue using space syntax theories but prior to a full study using the methods

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Ra'anan Gabay and Iris Aravot

Technical-Israel Institute of Technology, Israel

Abstract

Adopting the empirical attitude of Space Syntax, a set of environments were observed and discussed in the light of the conclusions from Space Syntax theory and literature reviews. Based on this, the author suggests a way to use Space Syntax for analysing Multi Layer High Density Urban Environments (MLHDUE).

Most MLHDUE are considered dismal failures. How may one adapt Space Syntax to provide useful analysis of MLHDUE? How may one create useful design feedback to ameliorate this reality? Case studies show that in multi layer environments the commodity in short supply is the continuity on the pervasive layer, or in other words: Who gets priority on ground and who is exiled to other levels? Projection of the public realm on to auxiliary layers tends to reproduce social structures.

Case studies seem to support the hypothesis proposed. A successful move to expand the public realm into the third dimension may be part of the grid intensification process resulting from the essential urban dynamic suggested by Hillier, therefore governed by similar phenomena. A successful MLHDUE needs one main integrating layer mixing different types of movement. Secondary layers may be relatively more specialised and segregated. The research suggests slight adjustments to contemporary space syntax practice and specific case studies to examine.