Seminar Series II

Cyprus Network of Urban Morphology

Street Patterns of Ethnic Diversity in London’s Super-Diverse High Streets

Abstract

London has been described as having a ‘mysterious labyrinth’ of streets. In fact, this supposed labyrinth has a structure, but it is only revealed by analysis of the spatial configuration of the city’s street network. London’s pervasive centrality, comprised of myriad intensifications of mixed-use high streets, forms a network of town centres both small and large. Space syntax analysis reveals that London’s most successful town centres are located on multi-scale routes through the city; while the diversity of land uses within those centres is supported by the presence of a variety of building types, sizes and street morphologies.

The emergence of ethnic super-diversity in Britain has resulted in a transformation of many town centres, where small minority ethnic businesses, shops and markets provide a dual purpose: both a home away from home for the incomer to negotiate their place in the new urban setting as well as an opportunity for the immigrant to build a familiar world of acquaintance, based on the trust and good faith provided by the rational nature of the marketplace.

This seminar will present a study of ten local high streets in London, which investigated whether the presence of minority ethnic business diversity is shaped by the contextual spatial characteristics of the high streets studied. It also examined the spatial and morphological signatures of the case studies, finding a strong relationship between spatial and urban form factors and a greater presence of minority ethnic businesses.

Biography

Laura Vaughan studied architecture at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem in the 1980s. She is currently Director of the Space Syntax Laboratory at the UCL Bartlett School of Architecture, where she is Professor of Urban Form and Society. Professor Vaughan is a Fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Historical Society. Since 2004 she has led a series of research projects investigating the spatial patterning of poverty, segregation, and economic and social exchange. Her recent publications include an edited collection, Suburban Urbanities (UCL Press, 2015), which considered the evolution of London’s suburban high streets since the nineteenth century. Professor Vaughan has collaborated with experts in history, geography, crime science, public health, anthropology, transport and planning. She is currently writing a book on Mapping Segregation, due out in 2018.

Tuesday, 25, April at 4:30pm - 6:30pm

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