

## Centrality Process in Orthogonal Grid - Case Study Suzhou

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### **Abstract**

This paper presents findings of a study on the centrality process of Suzhou across seven centuries. It is aimed to improve our current understanding about the form-function relationship, in particular, complementing Hillier's work on live centres in deformed grids (Hillier, 1999) by a case study of orthogonal grid. Previous study on Suzhou has shown that there were twice major centre-shifts within the evolution process from 13th century. However, since the early 20th century, the centre-shift process seems to cease somehow, despite the fact that the expanding speed of the city was even faster than before. This puzzle, referred as "absence of centre shift", brings into foreground the research question of "what are the key spatial factors for generating live centres". By investigating spatial and social dimensions of the city in five historical moments, this study verifies Hillier's findings and sheds light on the puzzle. It goes further to relate this study to the current debate about the applicability of Space Syntax in regular grids raised by Ratti (2004). Whilst, it points out that there are considerable difference between these two types of grids in terms of centrality process.