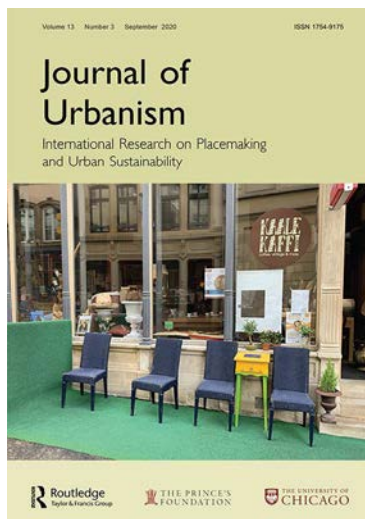


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Abstract:

Private ownership of publicly-accessible space is a phenomenon that is increasingly being adopted in new urban developments in many cities around the world. The purpose and role of these spaces, especially in Hong Kong, has been widely criticised for failing to effectively engage with the public realm of the city, a fact which, in addition to being a cause for concern for the Hong Kong government, has raised questions about the benefits of the programme.

Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, this study examines 28 public open spaces in private development (POSPD) in the financial district of Hong Kong with the aim of both

evaluating the spatial characteristics as well as understanding their potential contribution to the multilevel structure of this dense urban area.

The research further establishes a new evaluation index as an alternative theoretical framework to assess other critical aspects which may affect their capacity to encourage social activities.

The results of the study suggest that, although a large percentage of the POSPDs analysed are not providing positive impact to the district, they hold significant potential which, with new strategies in place, could greatly enrich the pedestrian and social experience in Hong Kong's dynamic and complex urban environment.