

The dimensions of public space: evaluative approaches towards the improvement of Roxas Avenue as public space

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Throughout the evolution of cities, streets have served as vital arteries, connecting people, facilitating commerce, and fostering social ties. However, in many Asian urban areas, streets are losing their role as communal spaces due to heavy traffic and various obstacles, sidelining pedestrian activity. This study focuses on understanding public spaces, particularly in terms of their physical layout, activities they accommodate, and the image they project. Using the Form-Activity-Image (FAI) model as the main research tool, the study examines Roxas Avenue as a case study. The FAI model helps dissect the street at a granular level, evaluating each block at different times. Statistical analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and the Good Public Space Index. The results shed light on Roxas Avenue's urban dynamics. The Form analysis reveals that most blocks have a rugged layout, leading buildings to mix functions due to limited space. This influences their relationship with public spaces and the activities they host. In terms of activity, Roxas Avenue lacks spaces that encourage prolonged user engagement and social interaction. The Image dimension highlights a limited impact along the Avenue, with the night market standing out as a significant contributor to its appeal. Building on these findings, the study proposes practical strategies to improve Roxas Avenue's urban design, aiming to revitalise it as a vibrant public space. This framework also serves as a roadmap for enhancing the role of streets as inclusive and dynamic community places.