

Punctual Urbanisms: Rapid Planning Responses to Urban Problems

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Abstract

Traditional urban planning projects require considerable time, political buy-in, and capital. Conversely, small-scale urban interventions can be executed quickly and inexpensively. However, the terms used to describe these projects—such as tactical, pop-up, temporary, or insurgent urbanism—are numerous and overlapping, making them hard to distinguish from each other. We suggest that a single unifying term, *punctual urbanism*, can capture these different urbanisms. To justify this choice, we provide definitions and examples, as well as an overarching framework for understanding these urbanisms on the basis of two dimensions: who is implementing them and what is their temporal scale.

Keywords

urban interventions, tactical urbanism, planning strategies, short-term projects, citizen/public participation

Traditional urban planning techniques, particularly comprehensive plans and their derivatives, take a considerable amount of time to be developed and implemented. Most projects also require substantial political buy-in and significant economic resources. These large and long-term interventions may or may not be executed. Many plans are known to gather dust on local government shelves (Burby 2003).

As a result, both community members and professionals have resorted to short, inexpensive projects that can be enacted quickly with fewer barriers to implementation. These projects can improve transportation, quality of life, food production, and even basic sanitation or shelter. Activists, practitioners, and researchers have referred to these projects using a variety of terms including tactical urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, participatory urbanism, do-it-yourself (DIY) urbanism, temporary urbanism, pop-up urbanism, and insurgent urbanism (Crisman and Kim 2019; Douglas 2018; Schaller and Guinand 2018; Heim LaFrombois 2017; Lydon and Garcia 2015; Talen 2015; Wesener 2015; Finn 2014; Mould 2014; Deslandes 2013; Iveson 2013; Hou 2010; Groth and Corijn 2005; Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski 1999). These urbanisms often have considerable overlap as well as some differences in agreement about the unique elements that each of them does or does not include.

With this in mind, the goal of this article is to systematically compile and analyze the different terms that are used to describe small-scale planning interventions. To date, the literature on the topic has either focused on only one or two of these urbanisms or, as we describe in the next section, has compiled definitions taken at face value without additional analysis (Barnett 2011). The purpose of a comprehensive review of

these terms is not to understand them as distinctive categories so much as to demonstrate that they are overlapping and in need of clearer refinement and categorization. Because of their overlap and shared characteristics, a unifying term or category would be beneficial to both practitioners and scholars as they implement or study these urbanisms.

We propose and use the overarching category “punctual urbanism” to group and understand these urbanisms. This term has been adapted from the analogous term punctual intervention (Casagrande 2020; Ellin 2013). This characterization captures the essence and substance of these urbanisms as described in the literature. First, they are *punctual*: they respond quickly to an urgent need that has in some way been identified through participatory means as traditional planning processes prove to be too slow and cumbersome. Second, they *puncture* the urban landscape in very site- and time-specific ways: they are generally small in scale, ranging from tiny interventions to larger interventions that nevertheless are imagined as sites of exception rather than adhering to master-planned and organized forms of urbanism. In terms of their temporality, they are

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conceived of as time-limited interventions, whether they are event-based, a pop-up or temporary installation, or, at most, are conceived of as some kind of incremental element that may or may not proliferate over time.

Finally, we provide a framework for comprehensively analyzing, organizing, and understanding the various punctual urbanisms. This is based on analysis across both formal and informal interventions, and with respect to the size, scope, and nature of the interventions themselves as they have been implemented, rather than the agendas, theoretical concepts, or motivations of their creators. This grounded framework is organized on the basis of two dimensions that capture the variance between different punctual urbanisms. The first dimension considers who is implementing the intervention, from the grassroots, from the public sector, from the private sector, or some combination thereof. The second dimension considers the temporal scale and materiality of the intervention, as an event, as a temporary installation, or as some kind of increment that is expected to grow. With few exceptions, all of the various punctual urbanisms can be understood as existing across these two dimensions, and terms that have matching qualities across these two dimensions turn out to be functionally equivalent.

Finding Examples of Punctual Urbanisms

Many authors have written about these urbanisms and their definitions, and this article reviews and builds upon these works. Some authors provide and argue for very specific definitions and characteristics, especially when referencing them in their own projects and manuscripts (Webb 2018; Heim LaFrombois 2017; Mehrotra and Vera 2018; Wortham-Galvin 2013; Kelbaugh 2000). A few other studies have been published that describe multiple terms, though they are either referenced in passing as a foil or synonym for one particular term of interest or they are left as independent terms without comparative analysis between them (Arefi and Kickert 2018; Talen 2015; Finn 2014). Similarly, Barnett (2011) wrote a short guide about the sixty “newest urbanisms,” providing a definition for each term. However, multiple terms share the same definition as they were taken at face value without critical analysis of the overlaps between them—and some terms, including ephemeral and insurgent urbanism, were not reviewed. Furthermore, he wrote about all kinds of urbanisms, not just those that are small scale or short term, which is the focus of this article. Nédélec (2017) also examined punctual urbanisms, but his article focuses instead on the symbolic and linguistic power of generating new terms rather than providing a systematic means for understanding how all of these terms relate to one another (his article is also only available in French, making access for the Anglophone world difficult).

This article systematically and comprehensively reviews this literature, providing a critical analysis of these terms, including their limitations, redundancies, and elisions. This provides both practitioners and scholars a foundation for further analysis and implementation of these punctual urbanisms.

We identified literature for analysis in this article by searching Google Scholar for keywords such as bottom-up urbanism, DIY urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, pop-up urbanism, urban hacking, urban acupuncture, and the like. Next, we examined the references within each article to expand our database. Originally, the keywords had to be in the article, conference paper, or book’s title to be included in the literature review. However, this method produced few results. Therefore, articles that contained the keyword or one of its wildcards in the text were also added. The articles selected for inclusion in this article are limited to those between the years 1990 and 2019 in the English language. We took an international perspective, however, by drawing examples from any part of the world that had reported examples of these urbanisms. After reviewing our findings, we narrowed our attention on ninety-eight journal articles, nineteen book sections, fourteen books, nine conference papers, three web pages, one magazine article, and one newspaper article, for a total of 145 sources. Each urbanism has between five and eighteen sources, with an average and median of nine and eight sources, respectively. We did not review urbanism if there were fewer than four articles dedicated to it, including user-generated urbanism, handmade urbanism, small urbanism, and interstitial urbanism. Likewise, we did not examine urbanisms that did not fully embody our definition of punctual urbanisms, as this would be beyond the scope of this article. This is the case with informal urbanism (Laguerre 2016; Dovey and King 2012; Mukhija and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014), which has overlap in certain cases with punctual urbanisms, but is a broad category of urban development primarily defined by its origins outside of the formal or state-sanctioned sectors. Informal urbanism is often developed over a long time period and can grow to become significant in size and scope, characteristics that are antithetical to punctual urbanisms.

Defining and Describing Punctual Urbanisms

We compiled a list of definitions and examples for sixteen commonly used punctual urbanisms that we detail in the next section. It should be noted that these definitions and examples do not come from our own normative claims but, rather, come from the respective authors that we are reviewing and, as such, include the contradictions and overlaps that we are identifying and critiquing. The key elements from the compilation are then used for comparison and analysis to group overlapping terms and to develop our framework for organizing and understanding distinctions across the various terms. As described in the penultimate section of this article, we evaluate which qualities from the various definitions held consistency and legitimacy and which qualities were idiosyncratic to a particular author or example and thus unhelpful for defining a punctual urbanism.

Table 1 provides definitions, examples, and representative citations of the sixteen most commonly described punctual urbanisms. The sections following the table provide additional details, descriptions, and limitations for these punctual urbanisms. The table displays a single example per punctual urbanism for clarity. We include more examples in the next sections

Table 1. Definitions and Examples of Punctual Urbanisms.

Term	Definition	Selected Authors	Related Urbanisms	Examples	Example Details
Bottom-up urbanism	A “locally-driven, citizen-initiated, low budget and temporary” (Danenberg and Haas 2019, 114) intervention which may at times be a collaboration with planning agencies (Brain 2019).	Arefi and Kickert (2018), Dias et al. (2018), Pak (2017), and Pissourios (2014)	Grassroots urbanism and open-source urbanism	“Trädgård På Spåret was founded in 2011 as a mobile, semi-temporary urban garden The initiators developed a proposal, including a self-financing model, to which the municipality responded with the offer for a land lease contract.” (Danenberg and Haas 2019, 116).	Name: <i>Trädgård På Spåret</i> [Garden on the Track] Date: 2011–ongoing Place: Stockholm, Sweden
Do-it-yourself (DIY) urbanism	The “unauthorized yet ostensibly functional and civic-minded physical alterations or additions to the urban built environment” (Douglas 2018, chap. 1).	Elder and Gerlak (2019), Heim LaFrombois (2017), Talen (2015), and Finn (2014)	Insurgent urbanism, everyday urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, Latino urbanism, and urban hacking	“The New York Street Advertising Takeover Project (NYSAT) organized dozens of artists and activists to whitewash over 100 billboards, to replace them with a non-commercial public communication, and to document these replacements.” (Iverson 2013, 12)	Name: NYSAT Date: 2009 Place: New York City, USA
Ephemeral urbanism	A “transitory design tool for urban activity and transformation based on soft, cheap, reversible, recycled and recyclable design resources” (Cid 2019, 17), often implemented by government, nonprofit, or corporate entities for large events.	Cid (2019), Mehrotra, Vera, and Mayoral (2017), and Vera and Scheerbarth (2014)	Participatory urbanism	“The Hindu festival <i>Durga Puja</i> produces a series of transformations at both the object and the urban scale, all of which are demolished or disassembled as part of the festivity or shortly after.” (Vera and Scheerbarth 2014, 7)	Name: <i>Durga Puja</i> [Worship to Goddess Durga] Date: Unknown—ongoing Place: India and Bangladesh
Everyday urbanism	The “spontaneous, un-pedigreed, un-self-conscious vernacular design of everyday urban settings” (Larice and Macdonald 2013, 344), which is often undertaken without authorization.	Hou (2019), Crawford (2013), Kelbaugh (2000), and Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski (1999)	DIY urbanism, insurgent urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, Latino urbanism, and urban hacking	“Urbanites . . . poured into the city’s downtown for the Alleypalooza, an annual festival taking place in a network of alleys. . . . Empty and deserted on a typical day, the alleys were transformed into a place for live performances, beer gardens, games of ping pong and air hockey, and overflow spaces for nearby galleries and restaurants.” (Hou 2019, 1)	Name: Alleypalooza Date: 2013 Place: Seattle, USA
Grassroots urbanism	The “bottom-up, citizen-led actions to improve common urban spaces” (Sandler 2020, 1) which often scale up through partnership with institutions or local government (Boyer 2015).	Sandler (2020), E. Berglund (2019), de Waal and de Lange (2019), and North and Nurse (2014)	Bottom-up urbanism and open-source urbanism	“This was a pavilion and greenhouse that became the [center] of alternative design art. . . . It was built from windows that the city had discarded from its own winter gardens. Although the structure was only supposed to be temporary, it hosted exhibitions, practical workshops, and other events exploring different ways of creating futures for seven years until development projects caught up with the plot.” (E. Berglund 2019, 204)	Name: <i>Happihuone</i> [Oxygen Room] Date: 2000–2007 Place: Helsinki, Finland

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Term	Definition	Selected Authors	Related Urbanisms	Examples	Example Details
Guerrilla urbanism	The implementation of “design interventions for the purpose of appropriating public space to improve the quality and experience of a place and to aid in citizen participation, civic innovation, community engagement, and activism” (Foth 2017, 2).	Crisman and Kim (2019), de la Peña (2019), Sang (2017), and Hou (2010)	DIY urbanism, insurgent urbanism, everyday urbanism, Latino urbanism, and urban hacking	“Can Batlló was the center of much of the organizing that occurred from 2009 to 2011, when activists mounted a vigorous campaign to force the city and landowner to relinquish control of the land. Today it offers a view of Bloc I1, the first building turned over to neighbor control in 2011 and the heart of a thriving self-managed social center.” (de la Peña 2019, 5)	Name: Can Batlló Bloc I1 Date: 2009–ongoing Place: Barcelona, Spain
Insurgent urbanism	An urban approach of “strategically deploying public spaces in the construction of a larger movement for democratic citizenship” (Davis and Raman 2013, 4) by social actors on the ground.	Maziviero (2016), Deckha (2015), Davis and Raman (2013), and Hou (2010)	DIY urbanism, everyday urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, Latino urbanism, and urban hacking	“Filipina guest workers occupy the ground floor of Norman Foster’s signature HSBC building (an icon of global capital) every Sunday, and transform it from an anonymous corporate entrance to a lively community gathering space where migrant workers picnic, chat, and reunite.” (Hou 2010, 7)	Name: Little Manila Date: 2010–ongoing Place: Hong Kong, China
Latino urbanism	The shaping of the built environment through the incorporation of Latino cultural identities and spatial practices (Arreola 2012; Lara 2012; Rojas 2010). The interventions are typically unsanctioned and done by Latino communities.	Arreola (2012), Lara (2012), Sandoval and Maldonado (2012), and Rojas (2010)	DIY urbanism, everyday urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, insurgent urbanism, and urban hacking	“Olympic Boulevard, otherwise a no-man’s land, has been ‘pedestrianized’ by the use of props. Gas stations have been converted into taco stands by the heavy use of props and only minor changes to the structure” (Rojas 1993,47).	Name: Olympic Boulevard Date: Unknown Place: East Los Angeles, USA
Lighter, quicker, and cheaper	An urban design approach “based on taking incremental steps, using low-cost experiments, and tapping into local talents” (Project for Public Spaces 2011, paragraph 3) and the projects are typically sanctioned, either initiated by local government or done by businesses or community organizations in collaboration with local government.	Black (2017), Golden (2014), Greco (2012), and Project for Public Spaces (2011)	Urban acupuncture and tactical urbanism	“The Canadian Federal Government provided a \$25 M grant to facilitate . . . work in redeveloping the Island with no guarantee that any more funds would be available. . . . Instead of using the money to redevelop the Island all at once, the team . . . decided instead to use an ‘incremental redevelopment’ strategy. Dilapidated buildings were stabilized, painted, and linked together with colorful pipes.” (Project for Public Spaces 2011, under “Creating Public Multi-Use Destinations”)	Name: Granville Island Date: 1972–ongoing Place: Vancouver, Canada

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Term	Definition	Selected Authors	Related Urbanisms	Examples	Example Details
Open-source urbanism	The production of “spatial commons that are both collaboratively designed to [fulfill] needs and desires rather than to produce profits, and self-managed by their users rather than owned by private or public entities” (Bradley 2015, 4). These generally take the form of construction manuals that are shared online.	Pardo-García (2018), Zhilin, Klievink, and de Jong (2018), Bradley (2015), and Jiménez (2014)	Bottom-up urbanism and grassroots urbanism	“ <i>Inteligencias Colectivas</i> . . . functions as an umbrella operation for a variety of urban grassroots and guerrilla architectural collectives. . . . The IC online repository holds today technical and audio-visual documentation pertaining to dozens of such projects, including for example a bicycle adapted to augment its cargo load, or even to function as a market stall.” (Jiménez 2014, 15)	Name: <i>Inteligencias Colectivas</i> [Collective Intelligences] Date: 2011—ongoing Place: Online from Spain
Participatory urbanism	An “urban action that is small and/or incremental, it responds to immediate needs that engage discourses of publicness, it stewards change that is wanted (defined by a specific group of people), and it can be implemented relatively quickly with low initial investment” (Wortham-Galvin 2013, 4). This process-based activity is typically initiated by a public agency.	Eising-Duun (2016), Napawan and Snyder (2016), Istenič (2019), and Chernyakova et al. (2012)	Ephemeral urbanism	“The UNICEF GIS platform is a youth-led civic media platform composed of a mobile and a web application, designed to engage residents in photo-documenting social and environmental risks. . . . The project implementation was carried out in a two step approach: an initial session to train key stakeholders and secondary workshops with local youths.” (Giusti et al. 2013, 4)	Name: UNICEF—Youth Mapping in Rio de Janeiro Date: 2011 Place: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Pop-up urbanism	The “short-term spatial appropriations that appear unexpected and unsolicited, visually and spatially occupying a site with something different and eye-catching” (Ferrerri 2016, 1). These appropriations are most often implemented by private commercial actors.	Fredericks et al. (2019), Schaller and Guinand (2018), Zhang (2018), and Ferreri (2016)		“Between 2008 and 2012, vacant spaces in the Centre were used for a variety of art and community projects ranging from pop-up theatre to temporary cinemas, to community mosaics workshops and art exhibitions, alongside more institutional uses.” (Ferrerri 2016, 9)	Name: Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre Date: 2008–2012 Place: London, England
Tactical urbanism	“An approach to neighborhood building and activation using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions and policies” (Lydon and Garcia 2015, 2). Projects are typically sanctioned, either initiated by local government or done by businesses or community groups in collaboration with local government.	Wohl (2018), Webb (2018), Silva (2016), and Mould (2014)	Urban acupuncture and lighter, quicker, and cheaper	“For example, in 2011 a group of concerned parents in Bristol, England appropriated legislation designed for street parties to close their street so that their children could play safely.” (Lydon and Garcia 2015, 40)	Name: Playing Out Date: 2011 Place: Bristol, England

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Term	Definition	Selected Authors	Related Urbanisms	Examples	Example Details
Temporary urbanism	The “short term, alternative use of a privately-owned and managed vacant space” (Madanipour 2018, 1094), but ownership can occasionally be public. The property owner will allow public users to occupy a dormant space, reclaiming the property once it is slated for development or use.	Ursić, Krnić, and Mišetić (2018), Wesener (2015), Bishop (2015), and Tardiveau and Mallo (2014)		“Pallet Pavilion was constructed . . . with the help of more than 250 volunteers and the support and sponsorship of more than 50 businesses. . . . Accompanied by a week-long programme of live events, the pavilion was deconstructed in April 2014 leaving the site vacant again. The deconstruction of the pavilion was not linked to upcoming permanent redevelopment plans but to operational difficulties.” (Wesener 2015, 9)	Name: The Pallet Pavilion Date: 2012–2014 Place: Christchurch, New Zealand
Urban acupuncture	The use of “[localized] small-scale socio-technical interventions to transform the larger urban context” (Fredericks et al. 2019, 5). The projects are often sanctioned, either initiated by local government or done by businesses or community groups in alliance with the public sector.	Casagrande (2020), Houghton, Foth, and Miller (2015), Messeter (2015), and Lerner (2014)	Tactical urbanism and lighter, quicker, and cheaper	“The Opera de Arame theatre, erected on the site of an abandoned quarry, was concluded in sixty days. . . . We started on January 15. Two months later, on March 18, we inaugurated the theater. To finish the project in such a short time, we used only one type of material, steel tubes.” (Lerner 2014, 111)	Name: Ópera de Arame [Wire Opera House] Date: 1992–ongoing Place: Curitiba, Brazil
Urban hacking	Urban Hacking is an “(un)[authorized] artistic and creative practices that aim to de/reconstruct the power structures and spatial politics of the urban public space” (Valjakka 2019, 2).	Valjakka (2019), Krewani (2017), Cox and Guaralda (2016), and Pogačar and Žižek (2016)	DIY urbanism, insurgent urbanism, everyday urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, and Latino urbanism	“Poon started teaching yarn bombing in June 2014, and her crew quickly grew. . . . Without asking for permissions, the crew has annually made interventions, usually for seasonal celebrations.” (Valjakka 2019, 6)	Name: Yarn Bombing Date: 2012–ongoing Place: Hong Kong, China

Source: Authors.

to demonstrate the wide range of interventions that punctual urbanisms have. The examples that we analyze come from the source literature which names the urbanism. Thus, the definitional contradictions inherent within this varied literature can become apparent as examples may at times have elements that misalign with the urbanism's stated definition.

Bottom-Up Urbanism

Dias et al. (2018) identify bottom-up urbanism's defining attribute as the thorough involvement of the community in the urban design process. This stands in contrast to top-down urban planning approaches, which centralize decision-making, are bureaucratically sanctioned, and prioritize the role of technical experts (Pissourios 2014). However, bottom-up and top-down urbanisms are increasingly intermingling, with bottom-up interventions gaining ground as essential components in urban development tool kits employed by top-down planning institutions (Arefi and Kickert 2018).

For Arefi and Kickert (2018), bottom-up urbanism can satisfy unmet needs for spontaneity and serendipity in an orderly city, as well as provide order in an informal city. Bottom-up urbanism, according to Pak (2017), possesses five characteristics: a focus on ephemeral spaces, incremental ad hoc change, open-ended self-regulation and organization, heterogeneous space appropriation, and novel use of aesthetics.

Hess (2019) provides one example of bottom-up urbanism in Toronto where the children of Scarborough Village walk through a private lot with a vacant house to get to school since it is four times faster than the public arterial that connects to their cul-de-sac. The fence on this property was damaged to create the shortcut, resulting in the built environment being altered to the detriment of the owner as part of the community appropriation of this space. While the bottom-up, ad hoc, and appropriated use of this space matches provided definitions, this example lacks the novel use of aesthetics from Pak's (2017) definition.

Danenberg and Haas (2019) highlight *Trädgård På Spåret*, a mobile and semitemporary urban garden located on abandoned rail tracks in Stockholm. This urban garden has been gradually created through citizen activism in an unconventional site, demonstrating incremental change, self-regulation, and citizen appropriation of the space, though its semitemporary nature does not neatly align with the notion of ephemerality. This example also showcases how citizens in well-organized cities fulfill their desires for experimentation through bottom-up initiatives, as suggested by Arefi and Kickert (2018).

Bottom-up urbanism is not without its critics. Some local governments argue that suboptimal policies can be avoided by reducing wide participation in decision-making in contrast to the ad hoc nature of bottom-up urbanism (El Asmar, Ebohon, and Taki 2012). Similarly, decentralized, bottom-up processes may result in time-consuming and ineffective activities in comparison to those managed by urban planning and design professionals (Dias et al. 2018). However, Brain (2019), like Arefi and Kickert, notes that both approaches can work together:

bottom-up urbanism can provide new collaborative placemaking strategies to top-down urban planning institutional processes and vice versa. This synergy was demonstrated in *Trädgård På Spåret* when the municipality offered a lease to the users of the urban garden.

The literature on and examples of bottom-up urbanism align with the definition from Dias et al. who emphasize their grassroots origins, even as they may, at times, involve the public sector, as illustrated by Brain and Arefi and Kickert. Authors describing bottom-up interventions also highlight their numerous different forms, which range from simple, appropriated pathways, to highly articulated community spaces (Arefi and Kickert 2018). In addition, bottom-up urbanism, just like DIY urbanism (Heim LaFrombois 2017) and tactical urbanism (Lydon and Garcia 2015), has been used by certain authors as an umbrella term for small-scale urban interventions (Arefi and Kickert 2018).

DIY Urbanism

Deslandes (2013) and Talen (2015) view DIY urbanism as deploying informality and amateurism in the reactivation of urban places through resident activism and civic engagement as opposed to expert-driven large-scale projects. Douglas (2014) suggests three examples of DIY activities: guerrilla greening, spontaneous streetscaping, and aspirational urbanism. Each of these examples reveals the "unauthorized yet ostensibly functional and civic-minded physical alterations or additions to the urban built environment" (Douglas 2018) that DIY urbanism represents, though these examples do not seem to be comprehensive of the possible range of DIY urbanism interventions.

Guerrilla greening has taken place in Tucson, Arizona, by rainwater harvesting advocates that installed curb cuts to irrigate vegetation and reduce flooding (Elder and Gerlak 2019). This action was initially unauthorized and conducted without municipal support. A good example of spontaneous streetscaping comes from citizens in the Cihangir neighborhood of Istanbul who painted a street staircase with multiple colors as a rejection of both the gray tones in the Taksim Square and the lack of civic engagement from the city (Fabian and Samson 2016). Aspirational urbanism, on the other hand, showcases the community members' development ideas on signs, public notices, and informational structures (Douglas 2014). For instance, the New York Street Advertising Takeover Project (NYSAT) replaced over 100 billboards with noncommercial public communication (Figure 1), as a way of de-privatizing public space (Iveson 2013). Of the three examples, the latter is perhaps the odd one out with its format not neatly aligning with the author's own description of DIY urbanism, the signage interventions operating more symbolically rather than functionally.

Delai Sam, an urban activist community in Moscow whose name means "DIY" in Russian, organizes a biannual festival with events like sustainable urban change workshops and park cleanups (Sawhney, de Klerk, and Malhotra 2015). These

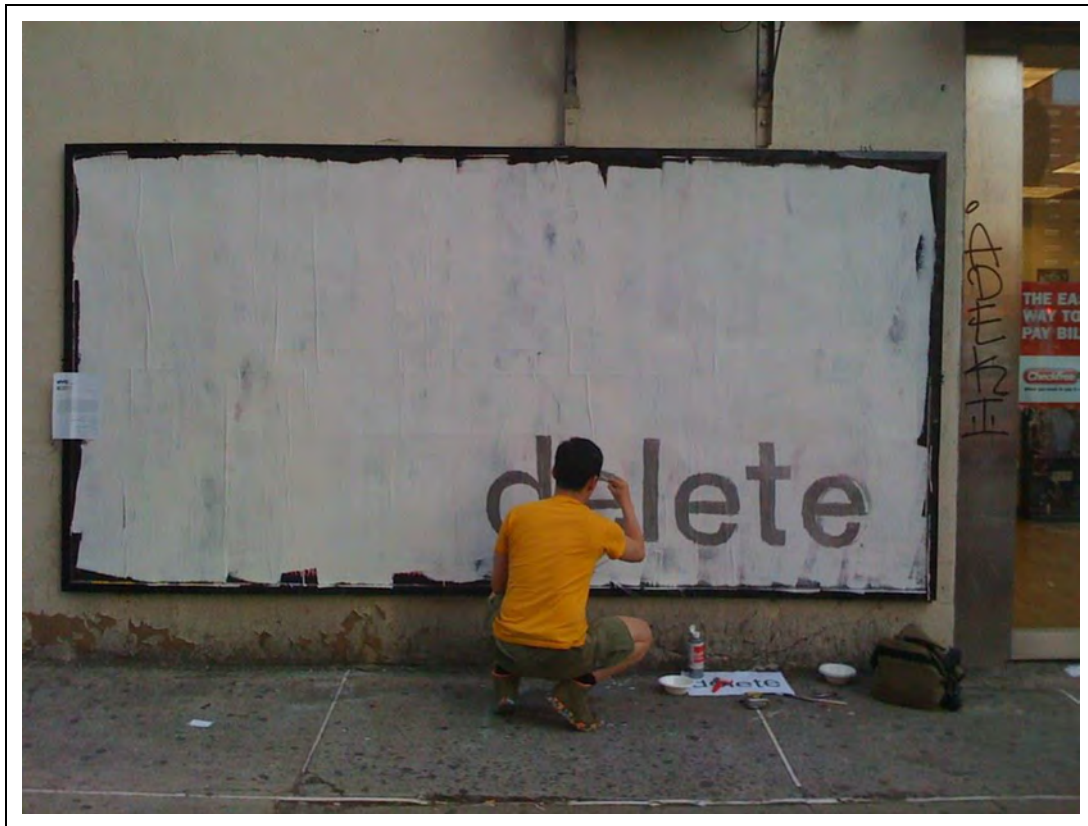


Figure 1. Replacing advertisements with artistic murals as a form of DIY urbanism. Source: “Delete billboard by Ji Lee” by Flickr user Barry Hoggard under license CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

festivals exemplify DIY urbanism because they physically transform urban spaces through informal actions implemented by community members: stenciling unauthorized signage to create bicycle routes, spraying interactive graffiti asking for community input, creating public benches, and installing bird-houses on park trees (Make Make 2012).

Supporters highlight its capacity to improve the city, while others raise concerns about its contributions to gentrification and lack of participants from disadvantaged populations (Elder and Gerlak 2019). This resonates with Finn’s (2014) affirmation that DIY urbanism is implemented by individuals with personal funds, and as a result, there is a lack of public approvals. Also, Heim LaFrombois (2017) critiques how some actions that could qualify as DIY interventions, like a homeless person sleeping in a park, are illegal and criminalized, while others, like a property occupation for an art installation, are celebrated and legitimized. Likewise, Iveson (2013) points out that implementing DIY experiments does not result in a large-scale change in urban policy if the practices aren’t framed within a broader political context.

DIY urbanism is mostly implemented by grassroots activists and organizations rather than the public and private sector. In addition, it has a very wide range of interventions that span from one-off events to long-lasting installations, as exemplified by multiple authors (Douglas 2018; Sawhney, de Klerk, and Malhotra 2015; Talen 2015; Finn 2014; Deslandes 2013).

Ephemeral Urbanism

Mehrotra and Vera (2016) state that ephemeral urbanism emphasizes changes to the built environment that are both quickly assembled and disassembled for a wide range of activities in urban spaces. For Vera and Scheerbarth (2014), the types of ephemeral urbanisms include refugee, disaster, celebration, transaction, extraction, religion, and military. The design resources employed tend to be inexpensive, reused and/or reusable, and recyclable (Cid 2019), as they strive to conserve the meaning and experience of urban projects rather than the object itself (Vera and Scheerbarth 2014).

Ephemeral design can be a driving force in the pursuit of sustainable development. For example, the project “Dress Rehearsal” in Barcelona was a temporary banquet for 900 people that used rescued produce in order to reduce food waste (Cid 2019). This event is a good example of ephemeral urbanism because of its quick assemblage and deconstruction, the use of inexpensive and gleaned materials, and the experiential meaning of the project, which was to “rehearse” environmental sustainability through food recovery.

Ephemeral urbanism has been employed to respond to the temporary but immediate needs of pilgrims and migrants. In India, for example, temporary cities are constructed for the yearly religious pilgrimages of *Durga Puja* and *Ganesh Chaturthi* (Mehrotra and Vera 2016). This kind of urbanism also



Figure 2. Dadaab refugee camps were meant to be ephemeral installations. Source: “Living conditions in Dadaab” by Flickr user Oxfam East Africa (Jo Harrison) under license CC BY 2.0.

provides fluid responses to emergent market opportunities, with the most common examples being off-street vendors and mobile goods suppliers that use reversible infrastructure (Mehrotra and Vera 2018).

Ephemeral structures, settlements, and events can negatively impact urban and rural spaces through land damage, trash remnants, and air pollution (Pathak et al. 2015; Gibson and Connell 2011; Moreno et al. 2007). Undesirable consequences are even more obvious, however, when ephemeral urbanism turns into an unintended long-lasting project. The refugee camps in Dadaab, Kenya, for example, have existed for more than two decades (Mehrotra and Vera 2018). While these camps provide people with certain basic services and infrastructure, they suffer severe health and safety issues (Figure 2; Médecins Sans Frontières 2019).

The enactment of this urbanism is diverse, with nonprofit organizations building refugee shelters, government institutions implementing military operations, and private entities organizing celebrations like festivals and concerts. However, the interventions themselves are intended to be short-lived, lasting only as long as defined by the event in question, though there are exceptions where this expectation does not play out as planned.

Everyday Urbanism

Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski (1999) define everyday urbanism as the unplanned design of urban settings used for everyday life, including the intertwined social practices within them.

Kelbaugh (2000) underscores that it does not prioritize the aesthetics or beauty of an intervention; instead, it celebrates the ingenuity and resourcefulness of space appropriation, particularly by disadvantaged populations. Design professionals are not experts, but coauthors with the community in a shared transformation process (Larice and Macdonald 2013; Kelbaugh 2000). As a result, Hou (2019) affirms the direct actions of everyday urbanism have been foundational in the development of citizen participation, public engagement, and democracy in city planning and design. Hilbrandt (2019) explains these actions have advanced urban transformations through collaboration with local authorities, resistance against state regulations, and encroachment of spaces in the absence of property enforcement.

For example, inhabitants of East Los Angeles demonstrate everyday urbanism by paving their lawns and repurposing them as outdoor stores or auto repair shops, giving rise to a fusion of domestic, social, and commercial activities (Crawford 2013). In Berlin, people have circumvented the law, turning sheds located in community gardens into homes by negotiating with the other gardeners (Figure 3), which results in the production of space through shared everyday experiences (Hilbrandt 2019).

Critics claim everyday urbanism builds by default instead of by design, which is reflected in problems brought on from the lack of planning and professional expertise, including unpleasant and incoherent projects (Larice and Macdonald 2013; Kelbaugh 2000). Also, the symbolic quality of the ordinary and the



Figure 3. Sheds in community gardens used as homes. Source: "Berlin - allotments from Westkreuz UBahn" by Flickr user damian entwistle under license CC BY-NC 2.0.

ugly is sometimes overpraised in the name of celebrating everyday practices, according to Kelbaugh (2000). Another issue is the unsanctioned nature of certain interventions that can infringe in the rights of others. People using their yard and the adjacent sidewalk as a full-time outdoor shop, for example, might negatively affect pedestrian right-of-way on sidewalks.

Everyday urbanism is conducted by individuals or grassroots activists most of the time, though the literature shows instances where interventions involve the public sector (Hilbrandt 2019; Hou 2019; Kelbaugh 2000). The interventions can be one-time events, seasonal activities, to incremental projects that stand the test of time. Everyday urbanism is very similar in both interventions and implementors to multiple punctual urbanisms, like DIY, insurgent, guerrilla, and Latino urbanism.

Grassroots Urbanism

North and Nurse (2014) define grassroots urbanism as promoting local experimentation in urban spaces through alternative methods of participation. Similarly, Sandler (2020, 77) says it is implemented from local, bottom-up efforts and attempts to "humanize the city in a variety of ways." According to E. Berglund (2019), the shared-management method commonly used by grassroots groups, which employs self-organizing processes as opposed to voting-based methods, is effective at holding members to their pledges and commitments.

North and Nurse (2014) differentiate grassroots networks from DIY initiatives because they can scale down to individuals and inspire action as well as scale up to challenge the status quo in government. For instance, the EcoVillage at Ithaca, a community of 150 residents dedicated to sustainable living comprised of housing, farms, small businesses, recreational,

and educational facilities (Figure 4), has scaled down its grassroots innovations through workshops, on-site internships, tours, and lectures (Boyer 2015). The EcoVillage's nonprofit association has also scaled up by partnering with institutions like the National Science Foundation in sustainability initiatives and by collaborating with Tompkins County planners regarding their climate mitigation and affordable housing strategies (Boyer 2015).

E. Berglund (2019) proposes three main characteristics of grassroots urbanism: valuing and protecting what exists, a desire for learning, and a desire for sharing. An example of valuing and protecting what exists can be found in the Yunyuan community in Guangyuan, China, where self-organized local groups have installed barriers and administration booths to control car access and keep their neighborhood pedestrian and bicycle-friendly (Zacharias 2012). A desire for learning in grassroots initiatives translates into building, furniture-making, sustainability, and gardening workshops, as well as joint knowledge on policy, planning, and political practices (E. Berglund 2019). A desire for sharing can be seen in cohousing models, a community structure made up of residences that revolve around a common house where shared meals and neighborhood meetings take place (Seyfang and Smith 2007). While these aspirational characteristics certainly exist within exemplars from the literature, they fail to focus on the central quality of bottom-up participation identified by North and Nurse (2014) and Sandler (2020).

There are doubts about the ability of grassroots urbanism to address deep-rooted problems, in part due to lack of public funding (North and Nurse 2014). The reasons for limited grassroots influence include the difficulty of scaling up, policy-makers' risk aversion, and reduced support mechanisms

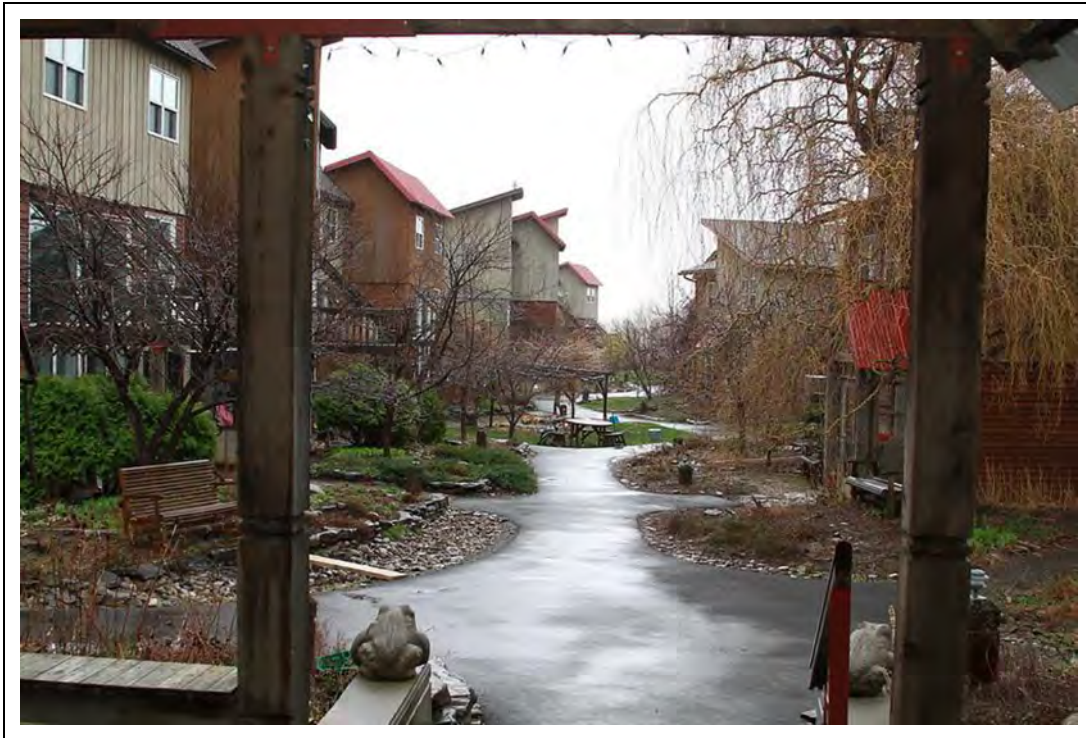


Figure 4. The EcoVillage is a co-housing community with shared governance among residents. Source: “EcoVillage” by Flickr user The Soup Guy under license CC BY 2.0.

(Seyfang and Smith 2007). Grassroots urbanism relies on self-management, shared responsibility, and voluntary commitment, elements that are hard to sustain over time and that can cause tensions among members (E. Berglund 2019). However, these issues could apply to most punctual urbanisms, and they are not exclusive to grassroots urbanism.

Grassroots urbanism is implemented by grassroots organizations, as the name itself implies, but the literature shows the public sector is involved to a certain extent (E. Berglund 2019; Boyer 2015; Seyfang and Smith 2007). This synergy between grassroots networks and the public sector has resulted in projects that are capable of incremental improvements in the urban space rather than just one-off events.

Guerrilla Urbanism

Foth (2017) defines guerrilla urbanism as the appropriation of public space through design interventions with the purpose of supporting civic innovation and activism. Guerrilla activists employ unanticipated approaches to yield provocative political messages and results (Caldwell et al. 2015) accompanied by a condemnation of established planning policies (de la Peña 2019). Hou (2020) highlights how guerrilla urbanism emphasizes the importance of social and political resistances through urban design.

Among examples of guerrilla urbanism that demonstrate a local pushback toward established planning policies are those by activists in Taiwan. Before the partial demolition of the

abandoned Nangang Bottle Cap Factory, artists painted street art and graffiti on the walls, both legally and illegally, to condemn its doomed future (Sang 2017). Another example are the street vendors in Los Angeles, CA, who take advantage of roads and sidewalks to temporarily install their food trucks, defying the rules for commercial use of public space and challenging local property rights regimes (Crisman and Kim 2019).

De la Peña (2019) has identified three pitfalls in guerrilla urbanism: superficial local knowledge, speed at the expense of sustained effort, and romanticized amateurism. Shallow community engagement and superficial knowledge of a place restrict the capacity of the interventions to address real local needs. The second pitfall is the rejection of quality, deliberate, and lasting actions in favor of quick and easy proposals. The third pitfall is the disregard for expertise in favor of romanticized amateurism, which may or may not result in successful interventions. This critique could equally apply to other punctual urbanisms, including DIY urbanism (Douglas 2014), tactical urbanism (Mould 2014), and urban acupuncture (Stokes et al. 2015), and doesn't necessarily apply to examples provided by Hou (2010; housekeepers occupying exterior private space in Hong Kong) or Crisman and Kim (2019; street vendors), suggesting that these authors are using this term to mean different things.

The unsanctioned nature of guerrilla urbanism means only grassroots activists tend to be involved in its implementation, with little to no involvement from the public and private



Figure 5. Insurgent infrastructure in the form of a community library. Source: “People’s Library Occupy Wall Street 2011” by Flickr user David Shankbone under license CC BY 2.0.

sectors. Interventions range from events to incremental installations. They tend to be indistinguishable from those classified as insurgent urbanism, though guerrilla urbanism is more commonly present in activities related to property rights regimes (Crisman and Kim 2019; de la Peña 2019).

Insurgent Urbanism

For Davis and Raman (2013), insurgent urbanism uses public spaces as part of a larger movement focused on democratic citizenship. Deckha (2015) affirms that the purpose of insurgent actions is to redefine the urban landscape and revitalize local amenities through resistance and counterpolitics. Deckha also states the groups involved have a sense of urgency for concrete action combined with utopian impulses. They highlight issues in a city through interventions that denounce the status quo, interventions capable of making effective public claims on municipal authorities (Maziviero 2016; Davis and Raman 2013).

For instance, the spontaneous interventions in Sao Paulo, including graffiti, public space occupations, and artificial grass on streets, were simultaneously demands for cultural investment as well as demands for social justice (Maziviero 2016). Through insurgent urbanism, the urban collectives of Sao Paulo got the authorities to address some of their concerns by creating the Periphery Development Act to direct municipal funds toward certain zones in the outskirts of the city (Maziviero 2016).

Similarly, the Occupy protests on Wall Street objected the unequal political and economic system of the United States through the physical intervention and occupation of space (Davis and Raman 2013). Some of the groups and individuals of Occupy Wall Street produced insurgent infrastructure like toilets, libraries, and wooden shelters in public spaces (Davis and Raman 2013), made all the more poignant by the public-private nature of Zuccotti Park (Figure 5).

Insurgent urbanism is not supported by all kinds of audiences due to the political agendas involved: there have been clashes between the insurgents themselves, society at large, and authorities (Davis and Raman 2013). The legitimacy of the social organizations involved and their actions is questioned because antagonism and vandalizing are tools used to enact change (Maziviero 2016). Likewise, some insurgent urbanists have failed to achieve their main purposes, like the opposition to the international Channel Tunnel Rail Link in King’s Cross, London (Deckha 2015), making their efforts seem fruitless from an outsider’s perspective. Occupy Wall Street, also, famously lacked clear political demands.

Insurgent urbanism is implemented by decentralized groups that are usually not endorsed by the public or private sector. Its interventions have a wide range of temporality, from momentaneous actions to long-lasting projects. Guerrilla urbanism and insurgent urbanism have been used interchangeably in planning literature (Arefi and Kickert 2018; Finn 2014; Hou 2010), though insurgent urbanism is more often employed for

purposes related to democratic citizenship (Maziviero 2016; Davis and Raman 2013).

Latino Urbanism

According to several authors, Latino urbanism highlights the shaping of the built environment through the incorporation of Latino cultural identities and spatial practices (Arreola 2012; Lara 2012; Rojas 2010). Spatial adaptations by Latinos often take place out of a financial or social need, giving their interventions a sense of authenticity, vibrancy, and dynamism that may be lacking in other forms of urban modifications (Sandoval and Maldonado 2012; Talen 2012), a quality that is also present in everyday urbanism (Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski 1999; Kelbaugh 2000). In Perry, Iowa, Latinos have revitalized formerly vacant storefront with their small businesses, given public parks life on weekends with their social activities, and organized a Latino Festival with the support of city officials and the private sector (Sandoval and Maldonado 2012).

According to Rios (2010), Latinos make claims in the city through three types of spaces: adaptive, assertive, and negotiative. Adaptive spaces reference appropriated environments for everyday use, like vacant properties employed by day laborers to have lunch together. Assertive spaces challenge dominant uses and activities in order to anchor a minority group in the urban landscape, including rituals and festivities like the Puerto Rican Day parade in New York City. Negotiative spaces go beyond symbolic representation in order to form communities accepting of different social groups, including the border towns between Mexico and the United States, where all kinds of people live side by side.

Irazábal (2012) underscores Latino urbanism has been criticized for masking structural social problems as well as romanticizing poverty and justifying overcrowding. This urbanism can also stereotype Latinos and their appropriation of space, propagating a colorful but inflexible “barrio aesthetic” (Irazábal 2012; Talen 2012). Likewise, the way Latinos transform their homes and communities generates urban spaces that are familiar and welcoming to Latinos (Rojas 2010; Mendez 2005), which may or may not be welcoming to other social groups.

Latino urbanism is implemented by individuals and grassroots groups, sometimes in collaboration with local government. The interventions range from one-off events like yard sales, to installations like food trucks, to incremental actions like homes that are also stores. The interventions employed in Latino urbanism are shared with other punctual urbanisms, including everyday and DIY urbanism, defined instead primarily by their cultural affinity (Crawford 2013; Pagano 2013).

Lighter, Quicker, and Cheaper (LQC)

The Project for Public Spaces (2011) is a nonprofit organization that coined the term lighter, quicker, cheaper (LQC), which they define as a low-cost, high-impact approach that

capitalizes on local knowledge in order to incrementally create community places. Greco (2012) highlights that iterative planning is crucial in LQC projects, which are seen as phases that go from temporary to permanent through time. According to the Project for Public Spaces, the benefits of an LQC approach include the opportunity to physically experiment in a community, the leveraging of local partnerships, and the development of a place-by-place strategy that can be adapted across multiple scales. The focus on iterative planning, experimenting, and partnering is also present in tactical urbanism (Wohl 2018; Munro 2017; Lydon and Garcia 2015) and urban acupuncture (Fredericks et al. 2019; Houghton, Foth, and Miller 2015; Lerner 2014).

In one example from 2016, the City of Calgary, in collaboration with the community, developed an adaptive pilot program of flexible traffic calming measures to address speeding issues and pedestrian safety (Black 2017). Calgary was able to implement these measures citywide by using inexpensive concrete traffic calming curbs instead of the more costly traditional curb extensions (Black 2017). This LQC project exemplifies how experimental approaches can get community buy-in and resolve important issues like traffic safety.

How light, quick, and cheap the LQC interventions are can be disputed. Granville Island, a shopping district in Vancouver (Figure 6), is considered an LQC project due to its incremental development strategy, even though it had 25 million Canadian dollars of funding in its inception (Project for Public Spaces 2011)—an amount that many would consider significant. It is not clear what exactly qualifies as light, quick, or cheap since there are no parameters defining these terms for urban projects.

LQC projects can be led by the community, the public sector, or private organizations, as long as local stakeholders play an active role in determining the character of the interventions (Golden 2014). The interventions tend to be installations with the goal of incrementally establishing themselves in the area. Additionally, it should be noted that the LQC branding has primarily been developed and promoted by the Project for Public Spaces, an organization that may have its own agenda beyond objectively describing a particular kind of urbanism.

Open-source Urbanism

Bradley (2015) describes open-source urbanism as producing collaborative designs where construction manuals are created and freely shared to be reproduced elsewhere. Zhilin, Klievink, and de Jong (2018) say it distinguishes itself from other urbanisms by combining the social aspect of citizen engagement with the technological requirements of design. Jiménez (2014) highlights that the description and documentation of the design process is essential rather than the outcome of the urban project.

The characteristics of open-source projects include the free redistribution of instructions for building projects and the permission to modify structures or plans at will during construction (Pardo-García 2018). For example, *Inteligencias Colectivas* from Spain, an umbrella operation for various architectural collectives, has an online repository with technical and



Figure 6. Granville Island: a lighter, quicker, cheaper project with a considerable inception fund. Source: “Granville Island” by Flickr user swxxxii under license CC BY-NC 2.0.

audio-visual documentation of multiple projects (Jiménez 2014). The repository gives instructions on how to adapt a bicycle into a market stall and how to use car tires and plastic trash to make a squatter’s settlement roof more structurally sound, among many other projects with commercial and domestic uses (Jiménez 2014).

Open-source urbanism is criticized for unintentionally legitimizing the withdrawal of public funds for the maintenance and implementation of infrastructure, parks, and public spaces (Bradley 2015), but this could apply to any of the punctual urbanisms that are implemented through individual means. In addition, according to Zhilin, Klievink, and de Jong (2018), there are currently no open design platforms dedicated exclusively to open-source urbanism practices, resulting in uncoordinated and disparate efforts at freely sharing design blueprints and manuals. In the case of *Inteligencias Colectivas*, they share projects mostly as inspiration and are unconcerned about a lack of details or inconsistent design information. Tactical urbanism, which is similar to open-source urbanism in its explicit intention of sharing practices and ideas (Lydon and Garcia 2015), tends to provide steps, examples, and suggestions for intervention implementation rather than tangible designs and plans to adapt.

The literature shows open-source urbanism is implemented mainly by grassroots organizations, followed by the public sector. The intention of the interventions is incremental, with projects leading to more projects based on the shared plans.

Participatory Urbanism

According to Wortham-Galvin (2013), participatory urbanism focuses on how ordinary citizens engage in placemaking. Chernyakova et al. (2012) emphasize participatory urbanism must be flexible, temporal, evolving, and include individual and collective participation, though this could be said for multiple punctual urbanisms, including grassroots and bottom-up urbanism. Participatory planning and participatory urbanism are not synonyms. Istenič (2019) explains that while participatory planning is an integral part of the traditional planning process through public consultations and related activities, participatory urbanism aims to be less individual-centered, relying instead on community-building through design principles and citizen involvement. This definition, however, appears to cleverly preempt many of the problems associated with participation and its ability to be co-opted as described by participation studies scholars (Lee, McQuarrie, and Walker 2015; Kely 2017) while ignoring examples of participatory urban which do not hold up to these ideals.

In one example from Ljubljana, the community garden *Onkraj gradbišča*, located on an abandoned construction site, is an example of successful participatory urbanism, thanks to the collaboration between the association *Obrat* and the self-organized coordination committee (Istenič 2019). The cultural and artistic association is responsible for legal issues, including the renewal of the permit for the temporary land use, while the community committee manages the gardening activities like



Figure 7. Hammocks, chairs, and toys are part of the pop-up landscape in this park. Source: “Spruce Street Harbor Park” by Flickr user Kevin Jarrett under license CC BY 2.0.

leasing garden plots, demonstrating the potential of a less individual-centered approach (Istenič 2019).

Another example is the UNICEF—Youth Mapping in Rio de Janeiro project, however, which engaged teenagers by providing them tools to digitally map environmental and structural hazards in their neighborhoods (Giusti et al. 2013). This activity allowed youth to be actively involved in the improvement of their community, since some of their concerns were addressed by the local authorities, but it still relies on institutional structuring of the participation process by UN officials (Giusti et al. 2013).

Keeping participatory urbanism from turning into participatory planning, especially when the authorities are involved, is complicated. Critiques arise when it turns into an “expert-driven, value-laden process” (Wortham-Galvin 2013, 25). Participatory urban activities can replace existing local urbanism in favor of a cosmopolitan experience that caters to upper-middle class people through fine dining, brand stores, and nightlife (Wortham-Galvin 2013), an issue also present with pop-up urbanism. Likewise, there has been no great transformation in spatial policy due to participatory urbanism initiatives in many of the cities where the process has been implemented (Istenič 2019), similar to DIY and guerrilla urbanism and urban hacking.

Participatory urbanism tends to be implemented by grassroots networks, the public sector, and nonprofit organizations, with some cases including input from private organizations. Most projects are one-time events, like the Youth Mapping

project, while a few others are installations, like the community garden *Onkraj gradbišča*.

Pop-Up Urbanism

Schaller and Guinand (2018) identify design installations that have spontaneously and unexpectedly appeared at a site for a limited time as pop-ups in the urban planning field. Ursić, Krnić, and Mišetić (2018) point out pop-up urbanism is not only dedicated to the improvement of public spaces, it also includes public and commercial events and community projects. According to Harris (2015), the characteristics of pop-up interventions are flexibility in terms of construction, relocation, and removal; interstitiality, an in-between aesthetics that visually interrupts an urban space; and immersion as a quality that allows for play and the reimagination of places.

Pop-ups integrate social life with urbanism, allowing people to grasp urban design proposals through short-span events and activities (Ursić, Krnić, and Mišetić 2018). Pop-ups include one-off dining events, temporary retail shops, food trucks, garage sales, entertainment festivals, craft fairs, and farmers markets (Baras 2015). For instance, Philadelphia’s Spruce Street Harbor Park turns into a pop-up landscape during the summer season with a beer garden, tables, chairs, hammocks, and toys for children (Figure 7; Schaller and Guinand 2018). Although most pop-ups have been born out of choice, some have resulted from necessity, like the pop-up marketplace

in Christchurch, New Zealand, that was generated after the downtown shops were destroyed by earthquakes (Baras 2015).

However, pop-ups can be exclusionary to those with limited income. For instance, to be able to attend *Dîner en Blanc* International (2020), an annual and international pop-up dinner event that takes place in public spaces, attendants must be capable of paying the membership fee, having all-white outfits, white chairs, a white portable table, and a white bag to bring their own meal if they are not purchasing it from the organizers. Likewise, pop-ups are used as a strategy to justify revitalization plans that push up land values, resulting in gentrification and displacement of low-income people in favor of the creative class (Schaller and Guinand 2018; Zhang 2018). Gentrification is also a problem identified in DIY, bottom-up, and tactical urbanism, among other punctual urbanisms.

The literature implies pop-up urbanism is usually implemented by the public and private sector rather than grassroots organizations (Schaller and Guinand 2018; Zhang 2018; Ferreri 2016). Likewise, the interventions range mostly from one-off events to seasonal installations, with a few exceptions of incremental projects.

Tactical Urbanism

Planning authors describe tactical urbanism as small-scale, inexpensive, and creative interventions with larger purposes dedicated to changing the built environment through scalable interventions and policy implementation (Webb 2018; Lydon and Garcia 2015). Marshall, Duvall, and Main (2016) explain the temporary actions are supposed to be pilot projects that give an idea of how a more permanent intervention would function in the same area. For Mould (2014), this design process separates tactical urbanism from other kinds of interventions that can be considered subversive or reactionary, like political protests. Silva (2016) underscores tactical urbanism's focus on change rather than aesthetics, a characteristic shared with everyday urbanism.

The bike-sharing system of Denver has been described as a tactical urbanism intervention that started as a green, temporary mobility option that developed into a permanent transportation solution (Marshall, Duvall, and Main 2016). The temporary bike-sharing intervention was the prototype that demonstrated the feasibility of a permanent bike-sharing program. Likewise, the "72 Hour Urban Action" competition in Israel is an example of tactical urbanism. This competition had teams planning and implementing community projects in seventy-two hours, including play areas, gardens, and market stalls, with the purpose of exemplifying how quick and simple it can be to intervene in urban spaces for the better (Mould 2014).

These actions are a way to avoid what are considered cumbersome bureaucratic processes in local planning departments (Mould 2014). They also tend to stem from the low response of public institutions in addressing people's priorities (Silva 2016). However, tactical urbanism as a term has gained such popularity that its role in citizen activism has declined and

turned instead into a buzz phrase for quick urban fixes that look cool (Mould 2014). Likewise, despite the overlap between informal practices and tactical urbanism, the media commonly overlooks the unauthorized interventions created by those socially marginalized, focusing instead on state-sanctioned, gentrifying activities by the creative class (L. Berglund 2019), an issue also present in DIY urbanism (Douglas 2018; Heim LaFrombois 2017) and pop-up urbanism (Schaller and Guinand 2018; Zhang 2018), as well as many other punctual urbanisms.

Tactical urbanism, like urban acupuncture and LQC, has been implemented by activists, the government, and the private sector. The interventions are pilot projects and prototypes meant to gradually increment and establish themselves in the community.

Temporary Urbanism

Vallance et al. (2017) define temporary urbanism projects as striving to turn private lands and properties into public spaces for a limited amount of time, spaces that are not overly supervised and controlled in the name of public safety. For Ferreri (2015), this urbanism views unused or vacant spaces as social and economic waste that could be useful for people in need of public space. According to Németh and Langhorst (2014), what differentiates temporary from enduring interventions is that the provisional actions are openly and deliberately time limited, regardless of whether they last for a brief or long time.

The expenses of developing and implementing temporary uses in vacant sites are commonly much less than the value they generate for their users, providing positive places for cultural expressions among heterogeneous populations (Wesener 2015). During the 1990s in Marseille, France, the owners of a former tobacco factory allowed the site to be used by the *Système Friche Théâtre*, a theater association heavily involved in community development (Wesener 2015). While the land is now the property of the City of Marseille, the theater association had originally obtained a limited occupancy agreement, courtesy of the tobacco company (Friche la Belle de Mai 2016). The theater association makes use of the former tobacco factory to this day (Figure 8), showing that temporary urbanism can be long-lasting.

Nonetheless, landowners may be met with resistance to build on their property when the provisional projects on it have become ingrained in a community, reducing the tolerance for future interventions in the name of temporary urbanism (Németh and Langhorst 2014). This was the case with the empty airfield of the abandoned Tempelhof Airport in Berlin, where the government lost the ability to develop on the site after citizens voted through a public referendum to secure it as a public park indefinitely (Hilbrandt 2017).

The literature on temporary urbanism exemplifies how collaboration of the private and public sector is crucial in these interventions due to property rights (Vallance et al. 2017; Wesener 2015; Németh and Langhorst 2014). The interventions are mostly events or installations that last for a specific time,



Figure 8. A theater association has gone from temporary to permanent user of a former factory. Source: “La Friche La Belle de Mai” by Flickr user mingusmutter under license CC BY-SA 2.0.

before a demolition or construction project takes place, for example, but there are some cases that have resulted in long-term projects through public input. This emphasis on private property and property rights appears to be what sets temporary urbanism apart from ephemeral urbanism, though they are both connected in their attention toward time.

Urban Acupuncture

Planning authors affirm urban acupuncture is not to cure urban problems but to limit their harmful influences by poking civic networks into action at strategic places in a quick and precise manner (Messeter 2015; Stokes et al. 2015; Lerner 2014). For Houghton, Foth, and Miller (2015), the interventions are meant to act as sparks that motivate people to get involved in place-making by reinvigorating neighborhoods. According to Fredericks et al. (2019), this urbanism has served as a dialogue tool between community members and planners around construction projects in areas that need urban repair.

For instance, the first pedestrian zone in Curitiba, Brazil, was implemented by the local government in just three days (Lerner 2014). This project employed a low-cost and light-touch approach (Stokes et al. 2015), characteristic of urban

acupuncture. Another example is the Urb[BNE] Design Collective, which engaged artists, volunteers, and businesses to propose and implement urban projects in Brisbane, Australia (Houghton, Foth, and Miller 2015). The projects included a paper art installation, a pop-up lunch, and a bike ride promoting cycling as a travel mode (Houghton, Foth, and Miller 2015). In this case, the community’s collective local knowledge (Casagrande 2020) of the city was essential to the design process, which identified underutilized streets to activate (Houghton, Foth, and Miller 2015).

Urban acupuncture can do more harm than good if outsiders consider community members as their target audience instead of the local experts partnering with them (Stokes et al. 2015). Likewise, the hastiness that is representative of urban acupuncture may limit the quality of certain urban projects, requiring costly modifications in the long run. As of 2006, the Wire Opera House, a steel tube construction built in less than three months in 1992 (Figure 9), has reduced its capacity from 2,000 to 1,000 spectators, as well as rejecting rock concerts from performing to keep the structure from shaking (Girardi 2006).

Urban acupuncture, like tactical urbanism and LQC, is implemented by all kinds of organizations, including grassroots activists and local authorities. Likewise, the interventions are



Figure 9. An opera house made of steel and built in only three months. Source: “Opera de Arame” by Flickr user herval under license CC BY 2.0.

usually installations or incremental projects meant to evolve with time and public input.

Urban Hacking

According to Valjakka (2019) and Gadringer (2010), urban hacking requires the destruction of power structures, rules, or systems in the environment in order to reconstruct space through usually unauthorized artistic and creative practices. For Hofmann, Mehren, and Uphues (2012), urban hackers create innovations by changing everyday situations through their appropriation. Also, Cox and Guaralda (2016) point out these actions enrich public spaces by providing users with unexpected feelings, sights, and sounds.

Busking, or playing music in public spaces for donations, is considered a form of urban hacking by allowing freedom of expression and stimulating spatial ownership, as well as providing a sensory experience to people walking in the public sphere (Cox and Guaralda 2016). Similarly, a critical mass of cyclists can momentarily transform car lanes into bike lanes, bringing attention to mobility choices (Hofmann, Mehren, and

Uphues 2012) and to a reinterpretation of street use and hierarchy. Urban knitting also invigorates streets and allures people to visit them, like the Halloween urban knitting intervention of spiders and ghosts in hand railings on Pottinger Street in Hong Kong (Valjakka 2019).

Hofmann, Mehren, and Uphues (2012) explain that urban hacking can modify an environment, but it alone cannot fix structural urban problems without a broader political movement, which resonates with Crisman and Kim’s (2019) assessment on guerrilla urbanism and Iveson’s (2013) evaluation on DIY urbanism (2013). Hence, reducing urban hacking to revolutionary behavior, provocation, vandalism, and selfie backgrounds are ways to dismiss it (Valjakka 2019; Krewani 2017; Hofmann, Mehren, and Uphues 2012). Also, the actions of urban hackers do not tend to be legally sanctioned, which can put them at odds with the law. Likewise, a certain level of technical proficiency is required if urban hacking is to add to the urban experience, instead of detracting from it (Cox and Guaralda 2016).

The literature on urban hacking aligns with Valjakka’s view on this urbanism as a form of civic engagement dedicated to the appropriation of urban spaces with little to no involvement from

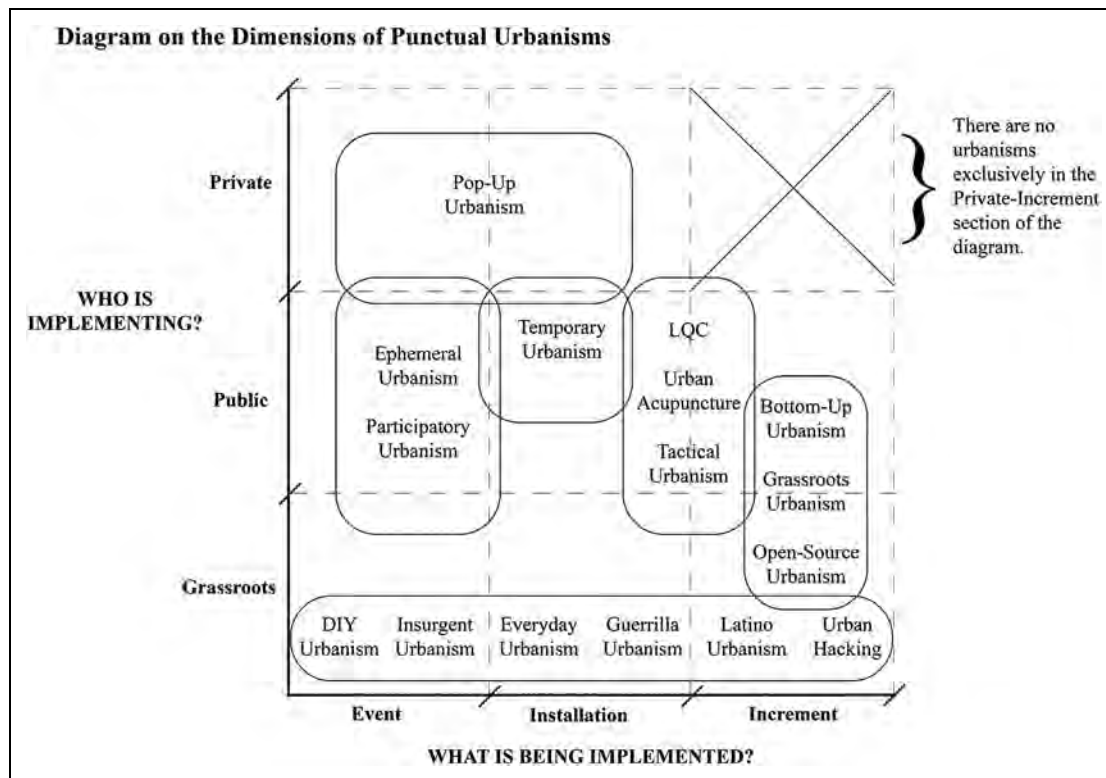


Figure 10. Two-dimensional matrix classifying types of punctual urbanism. Source: Authors.

the public and private sectors. Urban hacking interventions tend to be either event-based, like busking and graffiti art, or installation-based, like urban knitting, though there are also a few examples of incremental interventions like long-term political resistances.

Synthesizing Rapid Planning Responses: Punctual Urbanisms

To comprehensively analyze the range of rapid planning responses discussed in the literature, we scored the degree to which each response, as described in the literature, adhered to particular dimensions using an interrater reliability test. Initial dimensions considered included a response's participatory nature, whether it was legally sanctioned, its temporality, if it was small scale, and its degree of political or activist nature, among others, with scores that ranged from zero (does not describe this response at all) to three (describes the majority of the examples).

After an iterative process of analysis in which unreliable dimensions were removed, we identified the qualities consistently indicative of punctual urbanisms. These qualities can be synthesized into two dimensions upon which all of these forms of rapid planning responses can be analyzed and organized (Figure 10). The first dimension of critical differentiation between different forms of punctual urbanism stems from the elision that the "participatory" nature of punctual urbanisms creates: as the literature on participation suggests, there are a range of different forms of participation, some being legitimate and others

a kind of tokenism (Lee, McQuarrie, and Walker 2015; Fung 2009). Some are used as a tool by corporations to solicit something akin to unpaid labor (Kelty 2017), some are used by local governments to check a box or, worse, give the illusion of participation (Arnstein 1969), and others still emanate from the grassroots with little or no support from institutions (Castells 1983).

Thus, we propose to classify forms of punctual urbanism on the basis of who is actually implementing these plans, given that they are all participatory in one way or another. Are they primarily implemented from the grassroots by individual actors or community groups on the ground? Or by government entities in the public sector, who seek out community participation? Or are they ultimately championed through the private sector by businesses, developers, or other corporatist entities?

The second dimension of differentiation comes out of the scale and temporality of punctual urbanisms. This dimension has less to do with the *who* from the first dimension and more to do with the *what* that is actually being implemented. While all punctual urbanisms are in some way limited by scale and time, they do so in slightly different ways. Is the intervention primarily event-based, conceived of as a happening that does not depend on a specific materiality or architecture? Here, we might think of dining events or festivals in pop-up urbanism, or the Occupy protests in insurgent urbanism. Or is the intervention primarily installation-based, defined by its particular materiality and physical design? Here, we might think of the guerrilla greening in DIY urbanism or the transformation of private lots in temporary urbanism. Or, finally, is the

intervention conceived of as scale and time limited only initially, with some hope or expectation that it will act as an increment that proliferates throughout a particular geography? Here, we might think of the shared designs of open-source urbanism that are shared in the hopes that they will spread to new, unforeseen geographies.

Some punctual urbanisms can even be grouped as they exhibit generally shared characteristics and primarily differ in name only. Indeed, this is a key finding of our analysis: particular forms of punctual urbanism may be more alike than different, and such shared forms of punctual urbanism would do well to collaborate and share resources with one another. Participatory and ephemeral urbanisms are very similar on the basis of our analysis, with interventions primarily implemented by the public sector (with some occasional implementation by the private sector or by grassroots entities), and typically ranging from events to one-off installations—though participatory urbanism tends to focus more on process, while ephemeral urbanism tends to focus more on outcome. LQC, urban acupuncture, and tactical urbanism are very similar, characterized by some kind of participatory effort from the public sector aimed at either one-off or incremental installations which improve the urban landscape quickly and at a low cost. Open-source, grassroots, and bottom-up urbanism share an emphasis on an incremental temporality that is ideally scaled-up and are most often initiated from the grassroots though are at times initiated from the public sector—though open-source urbanism is unique in its technological emphasis. And, finally, urban hacking, and insurgent, everyday, DIY, guerrilla, and Latino urbanism all share a strongly grassroots-oriented implementation, spread across interventions that are event-based, installation-based, or are incremental—though insurgent urbanism is especially characterized by its focus on citizenship and guerrilla urbanism is especially characterized by its emphasis on property rights.

One additional finding from our two-dimensional matrix is the curious absence of a punctual urbanism occupying the cell marked by an incremental intervention by the private sector. We imagine that this is true because to have such a punctual urbanism would actually flout the typical aims of the private sector in the capitalist city. Private entities who are aiming to maximize their capital accumulation do so through entrenched practices of property development and improvement and to switch to processes that are intentionally participatory and intended to scale might threaten the bottom line. This also relates to the fact that incremental interventions cannot be implemented by the private sector without considerable collaboration from the public sector. For example, container bars and food truck pods, which could qualify as projects on the private and incremental cell, have to comply with public health and environmental safety regulations, the zoning code, and the business fees established by local authorities. In cities with strict policies against urban street food, these interventions by the private sector have not been successful without accompanying changes in municipal bylaws (Newman and Burnett 2013).

Conclusions

This article analyzes sixteen terms used to define small-scale urban interventions. Despite certain distinguishing factors among them, the quantity of terms and their overlapping features justifies the use of a single unifying term: punctual urbanism. Additionally, we determine two key dimensions that can be used to distinguish them from one other: who is implementing them and what is being implemented.

Punctual urbanisms share common benefits and strengths. First, they provide citizens with a tangible form of civic engagement beyond voting by involving people who may or may not know much about urban design/planning in the transformation of urban spaces. Next, these urbanisms tend to improve the use and aesthetics of public spaces, which may incite a larger movement of city repair. Also, they can bridge relationships between citizens and municipalities outside of traditional settings like public hearings and city meetings. Likewise, those involved in the process can, in the best examples, engage in an organic social mixture with people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds that might not have been produced in other settings.

However, punctual urbanisms have overlapping shortcomings. One of the most common is the lack of an official public participation process that considers all stakeholders. The undefined and ever-changing ways of getting involved in these urbanisms have been known to exclude certain groups of people. For example, meetings might be organized online, meaning people without internet access or digital knowledge would be left out. Or meetings held during certain hours might preclude participation by those who work full-time jobs or have family members to take care of. Likewise, punctual urbanisms that are not tied to political movements will have a hard time achieving structural policy changes in the urban realm (Crisman and Kim 2019; Istenič 2019; Iveson 2013; Hofmann, Mehren, and Uphues 2012). Beyond these concerns, the literature strongly suggests gentrification is the most damaging consequence related to these interventions (Crisman and Kim 2019; Elder and Gerlak 2019; Finn and Douglas 2019; Zhang 2018; Schaller and Guinand 2018; Heim LaFrombois 2017; Deslandes 2013; Mould 2014).

Some interventions are used as examples of more than one punctual urbanism since they are illustrating fundamentally the same activity. Yarn bombing is mentioned in guerrilla urbanism (Foth 2017) and urban hacking (Valjakka 2019) alike. Park(ing) Day has been described by both tactical urbanism (Lydon and Garcia 2015) and open-source urbanism (Bradley 2015). Likewise, *Dîner en blanc* is referenced in articles dedicated to guerrilla urbanism (Foth 2017) and pop-up urbanism (Baras 2015). Therefore, we believe the intervention itself, who is implementing it and what exactly is being implemented, is more important than the variety of terms that have been produced in the literature, some of which have been used more as a kind of branding than as rigorous analytic terms. Nonetheless, being able to distinguish one urbanism from the other provides

a framework and context to locate an intervention's place in the world of punctual urbanisms.

Future Research

The interventions used by punctual urbanisms include parklets, urban furniture, streateries, pavement-to-park efforts, and annual events. Future research could help define which interventions are more prominent in each punctual urbanism. This way, planning practitioners, as well as activists and community members, could better choose interventions according to the punctual urbanism that best serves their purposes.

Likewise, this article analyzes advantages and disadvantages of different punctual urbanisms according to planning literature. However, these arguments from the literature have largely been limited to a handful of case studies without comparison across other urbanisms. Therefore, future research could systematically assess the strengths and weaknesses of punctual urbanisms in relation to their most common interventions. In all, punctual urbanisms have been demonstrated to be a useful approach in an increasingly complex and politically fraught urban context, but our review demonstrates the inchoate nature of research in this field and the need for more systematic and comparative work on this increasingly used planning strategy.

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