

Temporary Urbanism (2010–2024): A Systematic Literature Review of Typologies, Contexts, and Gaps

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Abstract

This systematic literature review synthesizes 40 peer-reviewed academic studies published between 2010 and 2024 on the evolving field of temporary urbanism. The review explores how temporary urban interventions are defined, categorized, and deployed across various global contexts, including cultural, ecological, and crisis-driven applications. It also examines the methodological landscape of the field, which remains predominantly qualitative and case study-based, and highlights the conceptual fragmentation across different terminologies such as tactical, DIY, interim, and pop-up urbanism. Using the PRISMA methodology, the study identifies recurring patterns, key typologies, and persistent research gaps—particularly in geographic representation, digital integration, and policy engagement. Temporary urbanism emerges as both a grassroots practice and a tool of governance, capable of enabling adaptive, inclusive, and experimental forms of city-making. The paper argues for more interdisciplinary, technology-enhanced, and globally inclusive approaches to temporary urbanism research, especially as cities confront socio-political instability, rapid urbanization, and climate uncertainty. This review provides a consolidated foundation for future studies seeking to bridge tactical spatial practices with long-term urban planning strategies.

Keywords: *Temporary Urbanism, Tactical Urbanism, Systematic Review, Urban Planning, PRISMA*

1. Introduction

Urban change in the 21st century is marked by volatility, uncertainty, and an increasing departure from rigid spatial planning paradigms. The last decade has seen an intensification of efforts to reimagine public spaces through adaptive, bottom-up interventions that challenge the traditional frameworks of city-making. Temporary urbanism, in this context, has emerged not only as a spatial strategy but also as a sociopolitical discourse (Caputo, 2024). While initially seen as a response to crises or vacancies, recent perspectives frame it as a proactive, experimental layer of the urban fabric—allowing cities to rehearse potential futures, engage marginalized actors, and respond to urgent challenges like climate adaptation and digital transition (Almulhim, 2025).

Urban environments have become increasingly dynamic and fragmented in the context of global economic volatility, environmental crises, social movements, and technological disruptions. Cities are no longer merely sites of permanent, formalized development, but spaces characterized by transience, flexibility, and experimental forms of inhabitation. Within this landscape, **temporary urbanism** has emerged as a key phenomenon, offering alternative strategies for using, imagining, and governing urban space. The concept encompasses a wide range of practices, from pop-up parks and guerrilla gardens to temporary housing solutions and tactical interventions aimed at revitalizing underutilized spaces.

Temporary urbanism challenges traditional notions of planning and development, emphasizing instead **adaptability, citizen participation, and low-risk experimentation**. Scholars argue that temporary

interventions allow cities to respond more rapidly to social needs, economic shifts, and environmental challenges compared to conventional, long-term urban planning models (Tonkiss, 2013; Andres et al., 2021). Temporary projects also foster inclusivity and innovation, providing platforms for marginalized voices and grassroots creativity to reshape urban landscapes in ways that formal planning often overlooks (Stevens & Dovey, 2022).

Despite its growing prominence, temporary urbanism remains conceptually fragmented. Terms such as **tactical urbanism**, **DIY urbanism**, **interim urbanism**, and **pop-up urbanism** are used interchangeably in the literature, often with subtle differences in meaning (Ferrerri, 2020; Galdini, 2020). Moreover, the practices themselves range widely—from spontaneous, community-led activities to highly orchestrated, policy-driven interventions sponsored by municipalities or private developers. This conceptual and operational diversity poses challenges for comparative research, policy formulation, and theoretical development.

At the same time, the political dimensions of temporary urbanism have come under increased scrutiny. While temporary uses are often celebrated for their creative and participatory potential, they are also critiqued for serving as tools of neoliberal governance, urban branding, and speculative development (Ferrerri, 2021; Bragaglia & Caruso, 2020). Temporary interventions may be co-opted to mask deeper structural inequalities, providing cosmetic improvements without addressing the underlying causes of urban exclusion or spatial injustice. This dual character—both insurgent and instrumental—makes temporary urbanism a rich but contested domain of inquiry.

Geographically, much of the research on temporary urbanism has focused on European and North American contexts, particularly cities such as Berlin, London, New York, and Barcelona (Romić & Šćitaroci, 2022; Hincks et al., 2020). Studies from the Global South remain relatively scarce, although temporary practices are highly visible in cities across Latin America, Africa, and Asia, often operating under different social, political, and infrastructural conditions. Broadening the geographic scope of research is essential for developing a more nuanced, globally relevant understanding of temporary urbanism.

Temporary urbanism research has primarily relied on qualitative methods, such as case studies and ethnographies (Robinson, 2022; Ferrerri, 2021). While effective for capturing context, the field lacks longitudinal and mixed-methods research. Broader interdisciplinary work—combining urban planning, sociology, ecology, and digital tools—is essential to grasp its evolving dynamics. Considering the identified conceptual and methodological gaps, a systematic review is timely. Although narrative and theoretical reviews exist, none have mapped the field using PRISMA standards across a similar temporal or geographic range.

This paper therefore aims to address the following research questions:

1. How is temporary urbanism defined and classified in the literature?
2. What typologies of temporary urban uses have been proposed?
3. In what contexts are temporary urban interventions deployed (e.g., crisis response, cultural activation, ecological reclamation)?
4. What research methods have been employed to study temporary urbanism?
5. What gaps and future research opportunities have been identified?

This review of 40 peer-reviewed studies (2010–2024) aims to clarify key concepts, reveal patterns, address research gaps, and suggest directions for future inquiry. The paper proceeds as

follows: Section 2 details the PRISMA-based methodology; Section 3 presents findings by research question; Section 4 offers theoretical and policy reflections; Section 5 concludes with insights and future directions.

2. Methodology

This study follows a systematic literature review methodology based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The aim is to ensure transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor in synthesizing the existing research on temporary urbanism.

2.1 Search Strategy and Databases

To capture the breadth and evolution of the field, a structured search was conducted across major academic databases, including **Scopus**, **Web of Science (SSCI and AHCI)**, **ScienceDirect**, **Taylor & Francis Online**, and **SpringerLink**. In addition, targeted searches were performed on **Consensus AI** and **Google Scholar** to identify recent and emerging studies not yet indexed in traditional databases.

The search terms included combinations of keywords such as:

- "Temporary Urbanism"
- "Tactical Urbanism"
- "Interim Urbanism"
- "Pop-up Urbanism"
- "DIY Urbanism"
- "Temporary use in cities"
- "Urban interventions"
- "Tactical city planning"

Boolean operators (and, or) and truncation symbols were used to refine the search queries across platforms.

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The following criteria were applied to select studies:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Published between January 2010 and April 2024
- Written in English
- Focused explicitly on temporary uses or interventions in urban environments
- Employing conceptual, empirical, or theoretical analysis related to urbanism, planning, or social impacts

Exclusion Criteria:

- Conference proceedings, book chapters, editorials, or non-peer-reviewed reports
- Articles focusing solely on material/technical aspects of construction without spatial, social, or planning relevance
- Non-English language publications
- Studies centered on temporary rural, agricultural, or non-urban settings

2.3 Screening and Selection Process

The search initially yielded 63 records after duplicates were removed. Titles and abstracts were screened independently by two reviewers to assess relevance to the research questions. Full-text articles were then assessed against the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

During the full-text review:

- 23 studies were excluded for reasons such as non-peer-reviewed status (n=4), focus solely on technical aspects (n=2), insufficient conceptual or empirical relevance to temporary urbanism (n=3), and non-English language (n=3).
- The final sample consisted of 40 peer-reviewed journal articles.

This process is summarized in the PRISMA flow diagram (Appendix B).

2.4 Data Extraction and Synthesis

Key information was extracted from each study, including:

- Author(s) and year
- Study location
- Type of temporary intervention examined
- Conceptual definitions or frameworks used
- Research methods employed
- Major findings and identified gaps

Data were organized into thematic categories corresponding to the five research questions of this study. A combination of narrative synthesis and thematic coding was applied to identify recurring patterns, typologies, contextual factors, and research gaps.

2.5 Quality Assessment

Given the heterogeneity of methodologies and disciplinary backgrounds in temporary urbanism research, a formal quality appraisal checklist (e.g., CASP, JBI) was not applied. However, only peer-reviewed articles published in reputable academic journals were included to ensure baseline quality. Methodological rigor was also assessed during data extraction, with particular attention paid to clarity of definitions, transparency of methods, and depth of analysis.

2.6 Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged.

First, although efforts were made to capture grey literature and emerging studies through alternative platforms such as Consensus AI and Google Scholar, some recent preprints or non-indexed studies may have been missed.

Second, by focusing exclusively on English-language publications, important contributions from non-English academic traditions may have been excluded.

Finally, the evolving nature of temporary urbanism means that new forms, contexts, and theoretical frameworks may have emerged after the review cutoff date (April 2024).

Despite these limitations, this systematic review provides a comprehensive and analytically robust synthesis of the field, setting the foundation for a more coherent and inclusive research agenda on temporary urbanism.

3. Findings

This section synthesizes findings from the reviewed studies, structured around the five core research questions. It addresses definitions, typologies, application contexts, methods, and research gaps, supported by thematic tables.

3.1 Conceptual Definitions and Classifications of Temporary Urbanism

The first dimension examined concerns the conceptualization and classification of temporary urbanism across the reviewed studies. Understanding how scholars define and categorize temporary interventions provides a foundation for analyzing their practices, impacts, and evolution over time.

Temporary urbanism is framed through overlapping terms such as tactical, pop-up, DIY, interim, and guerrilla urbanism. While all relate to short-term spatial transformation, they differ in scale, actors, formalization, and duration. (Tonkiss, 2013; Stevens & Dovey, 2022). Classifications often focus on either the agent of action—bottom-up (citizen-led) or top-down (institutional)—or temporal intent, ranging from ephemeral (hours/days) to semi-permanent uses over years. Bottom-up practices tend to be participatory and grassroots, while institutional efforts may serve as interim steps in broader redevelopment strategies (Ferreri, 2021; Andres et al., 2021).

In terms of function, temporary urbanism practices have been categorized into:

- **Social activation:** revitalizing public spaces and fostering community engagement
- **Economic revitalization:** reanimating underused commercial areas
- **Environmental remediation:** promoting green space and sustainable uses
- **Crisis response:** providing rapid, low-cost solutions in times of urban disruption

Although the diversity of forms and motivations is one of the strengths of temporary urbanism, the lack of unified definitions complicates comparative studies and policy transferability.

3.2 Typologies of Temporary Uses

The second dimension of the literature explores the various typologies of temporary urban interventions. Several typologies have been proposed in the reviewed studies, based on factors such as the duration of interventions, the initiators (bottom-up or top-down), the function or purpose, and the physical characteristics of the spaces involved.

Common categories of temporary uses identified in the literature include:

- **Cultural and Creative Uses:**
Temporary art installations, pop-up galleries, performance spaces, and festivals that aim to activate public spaces and foster community engagement (Ferreri, 2020; Stevens & Dovey, 2022).
- **Economic Uses:**
Pop-up retail stores, food markets, and startup incubators that temporarily occupy vacant spaces to stimulate local economies and entrepreneurial activity (Martin et al., 2020).
- **Community and Social Uses:**
Urban gardens, play streets, communal workshops, and co-housing initiatives that strengthen neighborhood ties and promote collective action (Robazza, 2020).
- **Environmental and Ecological Uses:**
Guerrilla gardening, temporary parks, and ecological remediation projects aimed at enhancing green infrastructure and biodiversity (Hincks et al., 2020).
- **Crisis and Emergency Uses:**
Temporary shelters, clinics, or housing for displaced populations in response to economic, health, or environmental crises (Debrunner & Gerber, 2020).

These categories may overlap in practice. Table 1 summarizes the main typological categories of temporary urbanism practices identified in the literature. *(Note: Typologies often overlap, and projects may transition across categories over time.)*

Table 1. Typologies of Temporary Urban Uses

Typology	Description	Key References
Cultural/Creative	Artistic events, pop-up galleries, festivals	Ferreri (2020); Stevens & Dovey (2022)
Economic	Temporary retail, markets, incubators	Martin et al. (2020)
Community/Social	Urban gardens, communal spaces, participatory projects	Robazza (2020)
Environmental/Ecological	Temporary parks, guerrilla gardening, green remediation	Hincks et al. (2020)
Crisis/Emergency	Shelters, health facilities, temporary housing	Debrunner & Gerber (2020)

3.3 Contexts of Use: Crisis, Culture, and Ecology

The third dimension of the literature concerns the various **contexts** in which temporary urban interventions are deployed. Temporary urbanism is often deployed in response to socio-economic, cultural, or ecological triggers. Temporary urbanism has been applied in diverse contexts, including but not limited to:

- **Crisis Response:**
Many studies highlight the use of temporary interventions in times of economic, environmental, or social crises. During periods of austerity, for instance, cities have increasingly relied on low-cost, temporary solutions to repurpose vacant spaces, provide emergency shelter, or stimulate economic recovery (Tonkiss, 2013; Ferreri, 2020).
- **Cultural Activation:**
Temporary uses frequently serve to activate public spaces culturally, hosting festivals, pop-up museums, art installations, and performance spaces. These initiatives often aim to foster social cohesion, enhance place identity, and attract tourism (Stevens & Dovey, 2022).
- **Ecological Reclamation:**
Some interventions focus on ecological goals, transforming vacant lots into temporary green spaces, urban farms, or rain gardens. These practices not only improve environmental quality but also raise public awareness about sustainability and resilience (Hincks et al., 2020).

Table 2 summarizes the primary contexts identified in the literature for the application of temporary urbanism.

Table 2. Contexts of Temporary Urbanism Applications

Context	Description	Key References
Crisis Response	Economic recovery, emergency housing, disaster mitigation	Tonkiss (2013); Ferreri (2020)
Cultural Activation	Festivals, art exhibitions, pop-up cultural venues	Stevens & Dovey (2022)
Ecological Reclamation	Green spaces, urban gardens, environmental awareness initiatives	Hincks et al. (2020)

3.4 Research Methods Used in the Field

The fourth dimension examined relates to the research methodologies employed in the study of temporary urbanism. Studies in this field employ five main approaches:

- **Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis:**
Many scholars engage in theoretical reflections on the nature of temporality, urban transformation, and the socio-political functions of temporary interventions (Tonkiss, 2013; Stevens & Dovey, 2022). Conceptual frameworks often draw from sociology, critical urban theory, and political geography.
- **Case Study Research:**
Case studies are the most prevalent method, focusing on specific cities, neighborhoods, or interventions to derive broader insights. European cities such as Berlin, London, and Amsterdam frequently appear as focal points (Andres et al., 2021; Romić & Šćitaroci, 2022).
- **Comparative Analysis:**
Some studies compare temporary interventions across different urban contexts, revealing variations in governance models, community engagement, and outcomes (Ferreri, 2021; Bragaglia & Caruso, 2020).
- **Semi-Ethnographic and Longitudinal Research:**
A smaller number of studies adopt longitudinal perspectives, examining the lifecycle of temporary projects over extended periods and their transformation into permanent infrastructures (Robinson, 2022).

- **Taxonomy Development and Typology Mapping:**
Several scholars focus on constructing typologies and classification systems for temporary uses, aiming to systematize the field and clarify conceptual ambiguities (Hincks et al., 2020).

However, large-scale quantitative and mixed-methods studies remain rare. Table 3 summarizes the main research methodologies identified across the reviewed studies.

Table 3. Research Methods Used in Temporary Urbanism Studies

Methodology Type	Description	Key References
Theoretical/Conceptual Analysis	Critical reflection, conceptual modeling	Tonkiss (2013); Stevens & Dovey (2022)
Case Study Research	In-depth analysis of single/multiple cases	Andres et al. (2021); Romić & Šćitaroci (2022)
Comparative Analysis	Cross-city or cross-case comparisons	Ferreri (2021); Bragaglia & Caruso (2020)
Semi-Ethnographic/Longitudinal Research	Long-term social/physical impact tracking	Robinson (2022)
Taxonomy and Typology Development	Classification and framework building	Hincks et al. (2020)

3.5 Gaps in the Literature and Future Research Opportunities

This section highlights key research gaps and proposes directions for advancing the field of temporary urbanism.

Geographic Bias:
Most studies are concentrated in Europe and North America, with limited research on temporary urbanism practices in the Global South. Cities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia are underrepresented, despite having rich traditions of informal and adaptive urbanism (Riesto et al., 2018; Ferreri, 2021).

Conceptual Fragmentation:
There is a lack of comprehensive theoretical frameworks that can coherently integrate the diverse phenomena falling under temporary urbanism. Terms such as "tactical," "DIY," and "pop-up" urbanism are often used inconsistently across studies (Andres et al., 2021).

Methodological Limitations:
The field is dominated by qualitative case studies. While these offer valuable depth, there is a need for mixed-methods research, longitudinal studies, and large-scale comparative analyses to enhance generalizability (Robinson, 2022).

Limited Engagement with Digital Technologies:
Emerging tools such as digital twins, GIS mapping, and smart city platforms remain underexplored in relation to temporary urban interventions (Teo et al., 2022).

Sustainability and Resilience Focus:
While ecological temporary uses are discussed, the role of temporary interventions in promoting long-term urban resilience and climate adaptation strategies remains insufficiently theorized (Hincks et al., 2020).

Policy and Governance Analysis:

More research is needed on how temporary urbanism is framed, regulated, and institutionalized through policy, and how it interacts with broader neoliberal urban agendas (Bragaglia & Caruso, 2020).

Table 4 synthesizes the main gaps and proposes future research opportunities.

Table 4. Research Gaps and Future Research Opportunities

Research Gap	Future Research Opportunity	Key References
Geographic Concentration	Studies on temporary urbanism in the Global South	Riesto et al. (2018)
Conceptual Fragmentation	Development of integrated theoretical frameworks	Andres et al. (2021)
Methodological Narrowness	Mixed-methods, longitudinal, and comparative studies	Robinson (2022)
Digital Technology Integration	Application of smart technologies in temporary uses	Teo et al. (2022)
Sustainability and Resilience	Role of temporary interventions in climate adaptation	Hincks et al. (2020)
Policy and Governance Gaps	Analysis of regulatory frameworks and neoliberal co-option	Bragaglia & Caruso (2020)

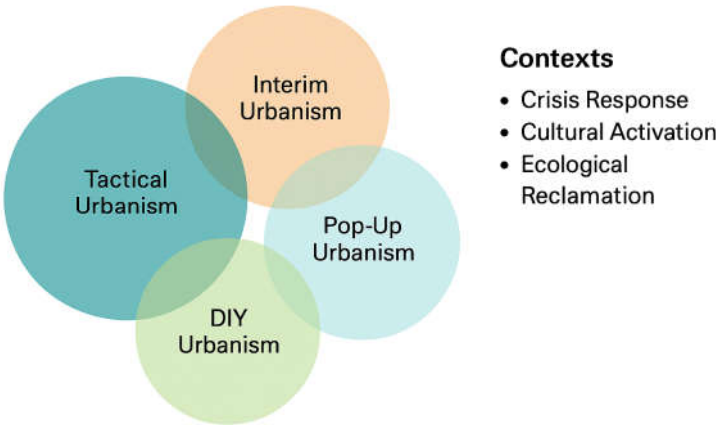


Figure 1. Typological and Contextual Dimensions of Temporary Urbanism

Figure 1 visualizes the intersection of key temporary urbanism typologies with contextual drivers, emphasizing the field’s multidimensional nature.

4. Discussion

This systematic review reveals the growing complexity and strategic significance of temporary urbanism in contemporary city-making. While temporary interventions are often perceived as spontaneous and grassroots, the findings demonstrate that they increasingly intersect with formal governance structures, economic strategies, and ecological agendas. This dual nature—simultaneously insurgent and institutionalized—requires a critical reassessment of the field's conceptual and practical boundaries.

4.1 Temporary Urbanism Between Resistance and Instrumentality

One of the key tensions emerging from the literature is the ambiguous political positioning of temporary urbanism. On the one hand, temporary interventions provide opportunities for citizen-led action, democratization of space, and creative resistance against dominant urban narratives (Ferrerri, 2021; Robazza, 2020). On the other hand, they are often instrumentalized by municipalities and developers as low-risk strategies to manage vacant land, stimulate economic revitalization, and enhance urban branding (Bragaglia & Caruso, 2020).

This ambiguity underscores the importance of examining not only the spatial forms of temporary interventions but also their underlying political economies. Temporary urbanism can simultaneously empower communities and perpetuate neoliberal urban agendas, depending on who initiates, controls, and benefits from these interventions.

4.2 Conceptual Fragmentation and the Need for Synthesis

The findings confirm that temporary urbanism remains a fragmented concept, characterized by multiple overlapping terminologies and typologies. While this diversity reflects the richness of urban experimentation, it also complicates comparative research and theoretical advancement (Stevens & Dovey, 2022).

There is a need for more integrated conceptual frameworks that can accommodate the wide variety of practices, actors, temporalities, and contexts observed across studies. Synthesizing insights from critical urban theory, political ecology, and digital urbanism could provide a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

4.3 Methodological Gaps and Research Design Challenges

The methodological review highlights a dominance of qualitative, case study-based approaches in the field. While these methods yield valuable contextual insights, there is a pressing need for mixed-methods designs, longitudinal studies, and comparative research across different cultural and economic settings (Robinson, 2022).

Moreover, future research should explore how digital technologies—such as GIS, participatory mapping, and digital twinning—can enhance both the study and practice of temporary urbanism, particularly in the context of rapid urbanization and climate adaptation (Teo et al., 2022).

4.4 Temporary Urbanism and Urban Futures

Temporary urbanism offers cities tools to adapt to uncertainty, enabling experimentation with spatial solutions before large-scale investments. Its value lies in fostering flexibility, community agency, and iterative learning aligned with the 'urban laboratory' concept (Stevens & Dovey, 2023). Beyond improvisation, it signals a shift in planning culture—from static blueprints to adaptive governance. As cities confront climate risks and social volatility, temporary strategies serve not just as interim solutions but as a mode of resilient urban transformation (Caputo, 2024; Almulhim, 2025). The integration of digital platforms, participatory technologies, and geospatial tools further positions temporary urbanism as a key actor in shaping inclusive, anticipatory urban futures.

4.5 Interdisciplinary Approaches and Smart Urbanism

As the field evolves, interdisciplinary approaches are becoming increasingly vital in understanding the layered implications of temporary urbanism. Recent literature integrates perspectives from architecture, public health, urban informatics, and climate science (Caputo, 2024). These cross-cutting themes allow researchers to examine not only spatial outcomes but also the emotional, cultural, and behavioral responses triggered by temporary uses of urban space. Moreover, technologies such as smart sensors, AI-driven planning tools, and digital twins are beginning to play a role in shaping temporary interventions (Almulhim, 2025). These tools can aid in optimizing the duration, location, and environmental impact of such interventions while enhancing participatory governance mechanisms.

4.6 From Tactical to Strategic: The Evolution of Temporariness

While early conceptualizations of temporary urbanism often emphasized guerrilla or DIY tactics, contemporary applications increasingly reveal a shift toward strategic, institutionalized use. City governments now integrate temporary installations into resilience planning, cultural policy, and long-term redevelopment visions. As highlighted by Stevens and Dovey (2023), temporary projects can evolve into frameworks for adaptive governance when scaled and iterated over time. This maturation underscores the need for new theoretical lenses capable of distinguishing between short-lived interventions and sustained, phased urban transformation processes.

However, realizing this potential requires moving beyond viewing temporary interventions as mere tactical fixes or aesthetic enhancements. Policymakers, planners, and scholars must critically engage with the socio-political dynamics that underpin temporary urbanism to ensure that it contributes meaningfully to long-term urban sustainability, equity, and justice.

Additionally, the future of temporary urbanism lies in its capacity to evolve from reactive to proactive urban strategies. Emerging research suggests that cities can adopt a hybrid model, leveraging temporary uses not only during crisis response but also as part of anticipatory urban planning, especially in climate-sensitive and rapidly urbanizing regions. This would require improved integration between digital platforms, urban policies, and community engagement frameworks.

The inclusion of smart technologies—such as real-time spatial analytics, augmented reality simulations, and environmental monitoring—can further enhance the agility and responsiveness of temporary interventions. These tools can also democratize design processes by enabling broader participation through virtual interfaces, helping to embed equity and accessibility into ephemeral spatial practices. In conclusion, expanding the scope of temporary urbanism research to include technological, strategic, and cross-cultural dimensions will allow cities to more effectively harness temporariness not just as a stopgap, but as a transformative planning paradigm for uncertain futures.

5. Conclusion

This study contributes to the consolidation of temporary urbanism as a multifaceted field that bridges tactical spontaneity with strategic planning. Its growing relevance in both Global North and South contexts highlights the need for more inclusive theoretical frameworks and context-sensitive applications. In rapidly urbanizing regions, especially in Africa and Southeast Asia, temporary urban interventions have taken forms that are deeply embedded in informal economies and cultural practices—yet these remain underexplored in mainstream literature (Porter, 2015; Caputo, 2024).

Further research should investigate the co-evolution of temporary urbanism and emerging digital infrastructures, especially with respect to participatory governance and smart city frameworks.

Additionally, the intersection of temporary uses with issues of spatial justice, migration, and gender should be critically examined. As cities grapple with environmental uncertainty and socio-political fragmentation, temporary urbanism offers not only interim relief but long-term adaptive capacity. Recognizing its plural forms and aligning them with urban equity goals will be key to unlocking its full transformative potential.

This systematic literature review has synthesized the conceptual, typological, contextual, methodological, and critical dimensions of temporary urbanism, based on 40 peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2024. The findings reveal that temporary urbanism is no longer a marginal or purely grassroots phenomenon; rather, it has become a significant mode of urban transformation intersecting with governance, economic strategies, cultural activation, and ecological innovation.

Temporary urban interventions offer cities valuable tools for adaptability, resilience, and participatory experimentation. However, the review also highlights the conceptual ambiguities and political complexities inherent in these practices. Temporary urbanism oscillates between resistance and instrumentality, between grassroots empowerment and neoliberal co-optation, challenging simplistic categorizations.

The study identifies key research gaps, including geographic biases, conceptual fragmentation, methodological limitations, insufficient engagement with digital technologies, and limited exploration of sustainability and governance dimensions. Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing the theoretical robustness, practical relevance, and global inclusivity of temporary urbanism research.

Future studies should adopt interdisciplinary, mixed-methods approaches, broaden geographic scopes to include the Global South, and critically examine how temporary interventions interact with long-term urban development trajectories. Integrating digital tools, resilience frameworks, and socio-political analyses will be crucial for fully understanding and leveraging the transformative potential of temporary urbanism.

In an era marked by uncertainty and rapid urban change, temporary urbanism represents both a challenge and an opportunity for reimagining how cities adapt, innovate, and democratize their spaces. By critically engaging with its complexities, scholars and practitioners can ensure that temporary urban interventions contribute not merely to aesthetic or tactical improvements, but to more just, sustainable, and inclusive urban futures.

Declarations

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Highlights

- Temporary urbanism blends grassroots resistance with strategic governance.
- The field remains conceptually fragmented and methodologically case-driven.
- Ecological, cultural, and crisis contexts shape temporary interventions.
- Research gaps include digital integration and Global South representation.
- Temporary uses can inform resilient, inclusive, and adaptive urban futures.

Appendix A. Included Studies Summary Table

Author(s)	Year	Title (Short)	Key Themes
Andres et al.	2021	New directions in temporary urbanism	Conceptual Frameworks
Ferreri	2021	The Permanence of Temporary Urbanism	Temporality & Politics
Tonkiss	2013	Austerity and makeshift city	Crisis Use
Stevens & Dovey	2022	Temporary and Tactical Urbanism	Typologies & Agency
Hincks et al.	2020	Temporary Uses and Urban Transformation	Ecological Interventions
Martin et al.	2020	Temporary Uses in Urban Studies	Economic/Cultural Uses
Robazza	2020	Build Art, Build Resilience	Community & Resilience
Bragaglia & Caruso	2020	Temporary Urbanism as Policy	Governance
Romić & Šćitaroci	2022	Temporary Interventions in Public Space	Case Studies
Robinson	2022	Comparative Urbanism	Longitudinal Analysis

Appendix B. Excluded Records Summary Table

Author(s)	Year	Title	Reason for Exclusion
UN-Habitat	2015	Temporary housing solutions for crisis response	Not peer-reviewed
Modulab Inc.	2018	Modular shelter systems for urban adaptation	Technical focus only
Gonzalez, L.	2011	Intervenciones temporales en el espacio público	Language exclusion (Spanish)
Schmidt, R.	2016	Guerilla gardening as ecological tool	Language exclusion (German)
UrbanBlogSource	2019	Why pop-up parks are cool	Not academically rigorous
Kumar, V. et al.	2014	Temporary installations in rural India	Non-urban context
Mehta, S.	2007	Festival space use before 2010	Outside date range (pre-2010)

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