Co-creation of Temporary Interventions in Public Space as a Tactic to Improve Community Resilience.

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Temporary urbanism initiatives have become a widespread practice amongst activists and practitioners aiming to trigger grass-roots processes of urban regeneration and social innovation. The study looks at the ways in which the collective creation of temporary installations in public spaces can re-activate the public realm through appropriation whilst involving unrepresented voices in the urban decision-making processes. This can trigger social dynamics that ultimately support communities in becoming more resilient. The article describes the process and findings of ‘Co-creation of Temporary Interventions in Public Space as a Tactic to Improve Community Resilience’, a five-year-long project which aims to empower various local communities to take ownership of urban spaces, decide on their use, and take action. Drawing on David Harvey’s notion of the ‘right to the city’ and the freedom to make and remake our cities as a human right, the project promoted a series of tactical, small-sized, co-created, temporary interventions in public spaces in Portsmouth, UK. Analysing obstacles and difficulties, understanding the social response obtained and iteratively self-reflecting on the results, the authors identified a
methodology for improving temporary co-creation practices to foster community resilience. Social inequalities and power-relations in the urban spaces can significantly affect the degree of appropriation of the public realm. The study addressed specific socio-spatial needs of community groups, dealing with active and dynamic existing groups and using a multi-disciplinary and multi-actor collaborative approach. By transferring full creative powers to the participants at an early stage, and encouraging a collaborative environment, it promoted a genuine socially inclusive process, meaningful to the participants and their involvement in city-making. Active participation in the collective creation of the public realm holds a transformative power. Projects like this help building new capacities, expanding individuals’ horizons and networks, tightening social bonds, and promoting a feeling of belonging to the city, which all contribute to the urban communities’ ability to become more resilient.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Guido Robazza is an Architect and Senior Lecturer at the Portsmouth School of Architecture. Guido’s research focuses on public spaces and city making. He coordinates an Urban Living Lab that promotes democratic processes of co-creation to design and build temporary urban interventions in the city with university students, public sector organizations and community groups. Guido’s expertise is in both teaching and practicing architecture. Throughout his career, he investigated urban transformation processes through a multidisciplinary approach (spatial, economic, social, environmental and political). Prior to his current position Guido worked as researcher at LSE Cities - Urban Age, where he developed an expertise on the techniques of quantitative and qualitative urban analysis, with a strong emphasis on methodologies of visual representation of complex systems of data. During his career in practice and as director of NoWall Architecture, an architecture practice based in London and Bogotá, Guido designed projects in both the private and public sectors, including master plans, urban regeneration projects, public spaces, parks and multi-functional buildings, taking part regularly in architectural and urban design competitions. His work was exhibited at the 10th Venice Architecture Biennale “Cities, Architecture, Society” and is currently being exhibited at the 17th Venice Architecture Biennale “How Will We Live Together”.