

Users as Indicators and Interplay Factors

Changes from public-private into restricted-neglected spatial relations generate new planning models that “deconstruct difference and contradiction in the name of preservation,” and support social exclusion.² Typical users of Black Swan Spaces reject imposed architecture and initiate new programs that have no intention to be successful (in normative terms) or recognized by authorities. Going beyond survival strategies, new tenants also build sustainable communication systems and transfer these developments to new locations. They are not urban pioneers that simply bridge the holes in urban development, rather unknown heroes that repurpose abandoned spaces and impose new socio-political values without coqueting with authorities.

Black Swan Spaces can also be transitional places for marginalized social groups (Fig. 1), places of informal economy (Fig. 2), or even places for illegal gatherings and entertainment (Fig. 3). What is obvious is that users serve as indicators of missing programs and urban polarization. Their micro-political statements in colonized spaces should be recognized by urban theorists not just as irregularities, rather as vital answers to urban uncertainty.

Furthermore, parallel to squatting strategies is the innovative nature of reclaiming, in which architecture acts as the scenography for the theater of everyday life. Different subcultures, marginalized society, and urban pirates bring voices of diversity into neglected territories, confronting the “banalization” of public life and the order of bureaucratic systems.

The appearance of Black Swan Spaces could be also understood as “poetic shock,” reminding us that urban contradictions and paradoxes are equal part of the urban arena, right beside the planned city embedded in parameters and land-use policies. Dealing with the unexpected in urban areas, we also have to consider “individual logic of cities” where certain cultural and economic preconditions distinguish surprise.

As Black Swan Spaces are ephemeral and difficult to grasp, our only task is to interpret the messages that informal urban actors are throwing, without capitalizing on them for the sake of urban renewal and other forms of spatial control.

*Fig. 1**Fig. 2*