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In search for ubonics: the economics of ubuntu between ubuntu and economics baptist industria for new upscaling and inclusive manufacturing space in Tembisa Ekurhuleni

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ABSTRACT

The condition of the black people in the South African situation at present, is my concern. In spite of political changes, certain conditions persist: racism, with its problems of elitism and exclusion, and the debilitating poverty which continues to be reflected in the township economy. This dissertation addresses the conditions under which the black people are living in the townships. These people have a growing political awareness and need to engage with issues of the use of architectural space and economic theories which would improve living conditions. We will consider the lessons learnt through this heuristic analysis.

Racial space, racism and discrimination as it is revealed through the allocation of places itself within that space, so affecting the environmental psychology, and the identity of the people: the people's psyche, agency and self-esteem. As spatial practitioners we must respond in a way to counter-act this exclusion, through the re-interpretation of the environment on the assumption that this should inform the nature of the space. And by so doing, we are addressing the fundamental relationship between racial exclusion and wealth and ownership. This is at the core of the problems we are facing in our society, problems which need to be ratified to avoid this situation of inequality. Here I try to investigate the racial question, relating it back to the problem of exclusion, focusing on the racially-based distribution of space. I propose that the nature of those spaces should be revised, leading to a new 'dawn': a spatial revolution brought about by Ubonics – a search for the economics of Ubuntu through a more inclusive architecture related to economic practice.

Townships are an evident physical manifestation of spatial and economic inequality in South Africa. Located on the fringes of the traditial urban economies, townships are plagued by underdevelopment and a heightened activity in informal enterprise which can be a solution to a problem in a context of exclusion . The abundance of 'informal' enterprise activity is not beneficial as it tends to perpetuate underdevelopment because of an inherent low productivity, distribution problems and an inability to link with formal markets. There are diverse activities represented in the informal sector. In this study we examine the informal and formal sectors in Tembisa, and the nature of their space, making a distinction between spaces that are problematic, and showing how they perpetuate inequalities. I have developed a framework for the classification of the informal enterprises in terms of the principles of semiotics, identifying the spatial enterprise characteristics. On the basis of a survey using a structured questionnaire, we then find out where and how people work, developing a programme for our building and also applying this framework. We also aim to identify the programme with spatial invention and design enterprises for the emergence of Modern Informal Enterprises (MIEs), with the intention of stimulating the local economy. Townships cannot achieve internally driven local economic revitalization without the presence of, or at least sufficient conditions to support, modernized and upscale informal enterprises. Strategies to support these new enterprises have been designed to revitalize the township economy and must be differentiated to suit the needs and constraints of the different categories of informal enterprise, by providing a possible way of managing this new system.

How can space humanize people again?
How can the spaces of economic exclusion be transformed into spaces of economic inclusion?
How can the economy be more inclusive?
Could Ubuntu be used as a tool to negotiate reconciliation?
What if space is design, and reflects the spirit of Ubuntu?

Preliminary results reveal a possible solution to the negative socialization of people within this space. I then propose the need to change the nature of space in order to facilitate a new dawn of spatial revolution brought about by the introduction of Ubonic spaces of inclusion. The economics of Ubuntu are investigated through an inclusive architecture related to economic practice. Our conclusion is that exclusionary economic space may be transformed into inclusive concept of Ubonics. This may be achieved by infusing Ubuntu into the economic environment. Following an in-depth multi-dimensional analysis of preliminary research results, a 'manifesto' design for the concept of a Ubonic inclusive socially interactive space in a more inclusive and humane manner will be presented.