

MITOCW | 17. Spatial & Social Structure II: Bipolarity

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JULIAN Let me tell you what I've handed out to you. My argument is that race is the significant factor in urban history of South Africa. I will justify that at the beginning of my talk.

Secondly, the form of Johannesburg from 1876 onwards can be judged in terms of the location of Black people and attitudes towards Black people. Essentially, apartheid as a philosophy regarded cities as violently against the norm, which would keep Black people in rural or semi-rural situations by tribe.

There's an old colonial method of dealing with the population. And that's by keeping them in a tribal situation. The city, at its most magnificent, is an educative instrument, an enabler of change.

Change is what South Africa was trying to avoid. That is the hegemony of white people over Black people. And the city becomes a phenomenally important instrument.

I will try to take you through the five stages of South African urbanism in the case of Johannesburg-- the mining camp from 1876-- well, 1885 to 1917, the informal city, the rationalized city, the regional city, and the current open city, post-apartheid city.

I will look at the detail in the second city, the informal city. That is of a township called Western Native Township, which consisted of 15,000 people living in 2,000 houses, the first public housing buildings in Johannesburg during the influenza epidemic.

Every time public action takes place, spatially it's in a site which is considered to be either a dump site of some low value. And often the decision occurs because of some disease. The first movement out of the mining camp in 1904 occurs because of the plague epidemic.

And who happens to be, in South Africa, the most important man ever to live in South Africa even for a short time? Who is that?

AUDIENCE: Mahatma Gandhi.

JULIAN Gandhi. Yes, of course. Gandhi learnt his politics in South Africa before returning to India. And he was in Johannesburg. And the Indian township, which was burnt down because of the plague, he interceded with the Transvaal government to allow the people to return at night to dig in their basements to retrieve gold which they had stored away.

Anyway, Western Native Township is the first publicly built housing for Black people. I want to examine it from 1917 to 1965. If those of you've read what I've written about this, the story of Western Native Township appeared on the cover of three architectural magazines in three parts of the world in September 1966.

So it's a fairly well-known story. I'm repeating it for the 999th time. And I hope it's not too boring for you.

The second page is a summary of the location of Black people over time. You will see that Black people are moved from the center of the city further outwards in one vector towards the southwest. The bar graphs below indicates-- when we look at this slide, I'll indicate some of these subtleties.

The solid black is housing by the public. The horizontal line is housing by the private sector. You will see at the beginning of Soweto, the-- yeah, no. I'll go to this in some detail. I have to worry about time because we cover a lot of stuff.

The graph showing cumulative housing built indicates that the attempt to marshal the Black population in the city took an enormous leap in number from about 1950 onward. This was the building of the major part of Soweto, population of about 1.5 million people.

AUDIENCE: Is this is a public housing building?

JULIAN Yes.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: OK.

JULIAN Yeah, sorry. The next few pages deal with Western Native Township. These two pages which follow are a little difficult to follow, but deal with the four stages in the life and death of this township in regard to a number of things, the social organization.

BEINART:

This research was done from the Black newspapers, which have a long tradition in South African journalism. Much of this data is transcribed by one of my Black assistants doing this work. It's an extraordinarily difficult piece of work to do.

We had to justify some of the comments about gangs, about the origins of jazz and so on, through interview with older people to justify some of it. Although this is social science research, which approximates things more than anything else.

The next page is a quote from a book on fascism, architectural fascism. The paragraph which I marked, I think, explains the formal declaration of this township on the walls, which I will go to into some detail with you, as a piece of reconstruction of nature.

And I think this paragraph, which deals largely with our classical architecture works, deal very well with the issue of the facade. And the last page is just one example of the facades of these houses.

So to return to the beginning, racial segregation underlies all urban history in South Africa. It's the most extreme version of segregation based legally on the basis of race. Had South Africa not legislated race legally, the rest of the world would have left it alone.

There's discrimination on the basis of race in the American South still today, although the central government has acted in civil rights issues after many years of not doing anything about it. But in South Africa, from the earliest times onwards, there was a move reinforced by the Dutch Reformed Church to regard Blacks as temporary inhabitants although they were the majority of the society.

In 1904, a government white paper says, "let them understand that the towns of the colony are the special birthplace and abode for the white man who are the governing race." This is 1904. My god, South Africa only became a country in 1910. This is under British rule, British colonial rule.

1921, "it should be understood that the town is the European area in which there is no place for the London native, who neither works nor serves his or her people. The town is a white phenomenon. Blacks only visit for labor temporarily."

Between 1960 and 1985, one person per minute was prosecuted under the Pass Laws in South Africa. The Pass Laws required for you to have work continuously for 10 years for one employer, for example. If you were in the city and couldn't fulfill that demand, you're prosecuted under Pass Laws.

So you have a white city and a phenomenally migrant population-- migrant not in their own belief or judgment, but in the judgment of a hegemonous white population. Black people are only there to serve to serve the whites in cities, 1921

In 1976, Mr. MC Botha the minister of Bantu Administration-- again, the use of terminology is interesting. Blacks, Bantu is a linguistic group of languages. The minister of Bantu administration could either be the minister of Black administration, the minister of native education, the minister of African education, or the minister of Azanian education. It's one of these independence group named South African Blacks.

The use of the racial denomination is interesting. Because South Africa traded with Japan, Japanese were considered white in South Africa. Chinese were considered Black. Colored people or the miscegenous group are considered Black, but in this special category.

The whole idea is, if you denominate the population by tribal group, whites are the superior race by number. They beat the number of Zulu people in South Africa. So if you keep on categorizing people as Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Khoisan, whatever, Ndebele, and so on, you will break down the society into tribal groups, which the whites are the superior group.

It's an incredibly interesting and awful phenomenon, which comes out of this doctrine, whereby the doctrine is that the city is a polluting environment. It causes people to change. It educates people.

And that's frightening because it educates people to move out of hegemony of tribalism where you live according to code of behavior and moving to the cities where they become industrial workers, join trade unions, and are open to political democracy.

So the South African experience is fundamentally important for those of you who are interested in the details of policy in order to maintain white-- migrant labor is a phenomenon all over the world. Abu Dhabi depends on migrant labor. So does Dubai.

The relationship between Turkey and Germany has, for a long time, been a relationship of migrant labor. India has a phenomenal use of migrant labor still today, an interesting aspect of Indian urbanism.

AUDIENCE: Mexico to US.

JULIAN BEINART: Mexico to US, absolutely. I don't want to get into a discussion of the values or disvalues of migrant labor. But in the South African situation, migrant labor was not only labor from within South Africa, but Black labor from the adjoining countries, from Zimbabwe, as far away as Malawi on the basis of service to the gold mining and uranium mining industries, keeping people outside of the normal family situation, living in hostels, being paid money in order for them to export the money to the local poor origins.

The first city occurred because gold-- as I said in a previous class, Chicago and Johannesburg were the two most important cities of the 19th century. People can argue. You can postulate some other candidates, but which other city is founded in the 19th century?

Athens was rebuilt in the 19th century. It was virtually nothing. But new cities of the 19th century, I argue that Johannesburg and Chicago are the two significant examples.

Gold was discovered on the reef. That's the ridge which Johannesburg is built. And the mining camp which resulted in a plan which I'll show you, which has very small lots.

One of the reasons for making small lots in a mining camp is that there are many corner blocks. The corners go to bars. So you make small lots. Whenever you have to choose a lot size, the bigger the lot, the fewer corners there are.

So you can look at the plan of Manhattan in terms of the number of corners there are in the geometry and calculate how valuable it would have been had the blocks being shorter in length. Léon Krier, whose work we'll discuss in a few weeks' time, argues in his plan for Barcelona the subdivision of the Cerdá block of 1,000 into 3,000 or 3 times 300 or 4 times 250.

Tel Aviv has very small blocks. It has enormous traffic problems caused by the blocks are too small. Traffic conditions are bad enough in Manhattan given the long length of the blocks east-west, but we're not talking about Manhattan at the moment.

Gold attracts people very quickly. And 10 years after Johannesburg's birth, there were 100,000 people in the city. 50% were Black, Africans, Malays, coloreds, Indians, and Chinese.

Each of these groups was located in what is called a location. A location is a British colonial term for locating people whom you consider to be workers. And generally, they are Black or colored in some form or other. We find locations in Zimbabwe and Kenya and other parts of Africa as well.

This was a city of primitive feudal social relationship. There was a Bantu-- there was a Kaffir location. Again, remember, look at the word, the terminology. Kaffir an Arab word which refers to bad people. Coolie, what does the word coolie in Indian mean?

AUDIENCE: It's a worker.

JULIAN What does it mean?

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: It's a worker.

JULIAN A worker, but it's a pejorative word. I grew up in South Africa. And I remember buying fruit from the coolie store.

BEINART:

Language indicates intention fairly well in urbanism. One should be careful what we word, how we name, things. Numbering street by number has some implication. Calling a street Merrymount Street has other implications. We shouldn't take this too seriously.

This city ends with the disease. The plague, in 1904, forces the Emancipation of Black people immediately out of the Black, the Kaffir location to the site of the Anglo-Boer war camp 15 kilometers to the southwest. And that's the origin of Soweto.

It's a town called Pimville where Miriam Makeba comes from, a famous Black South African singer. And she's known as Pimm's Number 1. Pimm's Number 1 refers to a British drink. I'm getting too sophisticated here, playing games with language.

1917 to 1948, the informal city, it begins with the influenza epidemic of 1917. The cities now face to house Blacks for the first time. Next to the municipal dump, it chooses to develop Western Native Township.

The annual expenditure on Black housing is the same as the annual budget for the zoo. Sophiatown, which is a private enterprise environment. The cornation formed the western areas. This is the equivalent of Harlem.

It was where African music, journalism, African political parties, the cooperative movement, gangs, the nexus of Black culture develops in an extraordinary period of time of about 30 years. Sophiatown is free held. At that time, about 50% of Black housing is private. 50% is public.

It's the city of informal relationships. There's shared shopping on the seams, generally Indian shops. There's a strong self-help identity and many journey to work options, including walking to work.

The informal cities have become enormously overcrowded with South Africa's industrialization in the '39, '45 war and the South African so-called liberal political parties defeated in the '48 elections, replaced by the Afrikaner National Party.

The Afrikaner National Party-- driven by a number of fundamentalist initiatives. The word [AFRIKAANS], which is Afrikaans for Black danger, is a term which is employed to threaten white South Africans that the Blacks, who are the majority of the population, will destroy the white population and white civilization.

White civilization is promoted to the-- South African whites produced bad German opera whilst Blacks were playing jazz based on American music and music which they understood politically. I was part of the South African jazz movement for a while because I had a lot of jazz material from America when I was in graduate school.

And it contrasts, again, the informal popular notion of music which, in the South African case, in the South African Black case, migrates from playing the penny whistle, which is a very primitive instrument, to the saxophone. South African jazz musicians played the alto saxophone more than they played the trumpet, again, for reasons of choice, which based on the kind of musical vibrations that those instruments gave to them.

The whites emulated badly classical Western German music. So you have, in the Western areas, the growth of informal movement. I regard the declaration system in Western Native Township, which we'll discuss in a few minutes, as a popular phenomenon, which people use to make-- well, let's wait until we get there.

The notion that Blacks are a rural people is manifest in apartheid religion. It allows one to believe that Blacks should be returned to rural tribal existence. Public housing is built at low densities, no elevators. Blacks are racially subdivided into tribes in the new apartheid regime.

Soweto, Western Native Township, as you will see, did not separate people by tribe. This was in the setting of the informal city. And apartheid Soweto was allocated into separate ghettos of tribal entity.

Houses were built, so that people could be seen as rural people. The house in Western Native Township was about 250 square feet. It had seven people in it.

It had a porch of 100 square feet. The porch was where people at sundown should sit and watch the sun go down or the sunrise in the morning. It is absolute nonsense to build housing at that density with an open porch. No wonder that 70% of the porches were enclosed, as we will see in the process of the changes to the house, adding 100 square foot to the house.

There are a couple of other pieces to the apartheid story. Between 1955 and 1960, 33,000 houses were built, twice as many as in the previous 37 years. The effort houses a quarter million people in five years. In the Johannesburg brochure, it talks about it being the biggest housing project in the world.

Why were the houses not mass-produced? Why are they houses built of bricks and tin roofs?

AUDIENCE: The were hotels?

JULIAN Hum?

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: So they were built as hotels?

JULIAN Not quite, but it has to do with labor. The Bantu Building Act eliminated Black labor from the white building industry. Therefore, Black labor could only build for Black houses. In 1947, in Jabavu building costs were 1 rand per square foot. It dropped to \$0.60 per square foot during the apartheid era.

BEINART:

No industrialized building, only laying bricks-- the third city is a city of total insulation, isolation. In Soweto, population of 1.5 million with few shops, hardly any entertainment, the journey to work cost 300% more than in the second city, total reliance on the white central business district.

In the study of the white central business district of Johannesburg, I was always puzzled by why some of the most expensive men's clothing stores were next to the railway station for Blacks. And jazz records, the best record stores, were close by. If you have 1.5 million people whom you isolate, there's no apartheid in the selling of goods.

There is only apartheid in where you live and where you go to school and what your relationship with between race. Shopping is kept open to multiracial endeavor. The market works that way.

So where do the expensive stores, which can use the 19th century train system from Soweto to Johannesburg, where do they locate? They locate very close to the Black railway station.

Very briefly, because we have to look at a lot of material-- by 1970, the effort which produced Soweto could not be sustained. There was no more public housing built after 1970. A new urban regional pattern was conceived of.

That is to create a set of tribal enclaves called Bantustans, mainly for the largest for the Zulu and Xhosa, the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape province, the Zulu in the Natal, the Tswana, the only free state in the Transvaal provinces.

The idea would be to induce within centers factories to locate on the borders of these Bantustans, again, in an attempt to frustrate urbanization. So the pattern of the new regional city would have industries moving out of Johannesburg locating on the edges of a Bantustan a couple of hundred miles away. This is the same nonsense as the empowerment zones under the Clinton Administration in this country, that you could induce with the incentives industry.

Industry nourishes itself on urbanization. There are reasons industry are in dense cities, not in-- by and large, in dense cities. Decentralized industry occurs under special conditions as well.

But the notion that you pay industry special margins in order to locate, in order to maintain Blacks in rural areas as tribes, is a fantasy only to be concocted by a regionally illiterate mind. At one point, South Africa was contemplating getting the Japanese to build a monorail, to build a train line, from the Zulu areas in Natal 500 miles to Johannesburg, so that the industry could locate.

The famous story of David Goldblatt's photographs of 3 times 8, a Black laborer who lives in the Ndebele Bantustan and works in Johannesburg, spend 8 hours a day commuting, 8 hour day sleeping, and 8 hour a day working. One third of his day is spent in commutation by bus.

Of course, the system blew up. It blew up for a number of reasons. It blew up because there were some important figures involved.

It would not have occurred, the new fifth city would not have occurred, had the ANC not-- there's a long story behind all of this, which I haven't got time to tell you. But one day, if you're interested, I'll tell you about Margaret Thatcher's involvement with South Africa liberalism. She just died this week.

She shouldn't be venerated so much. She was one of the few agents who supported the South African white government. South Africa-- the United States, of course, it boycotted South Africa.

And SANOC, the South African National Olympic Committee had got South Africa kicked out of the Olympic games. In a sport-obsessed society, such as South Africa, it was as much rocked by international punitive actions against it taking part in international sport.

But Maggie Thatcher, in the end, couldn't convince the rest of the world-- South Africa depends on foreign investment. And Maggie Thatcher finally told Mr.-- whoever the white South African prime minister was the time that she couldn't any longer support the ANC, the African National-- forgive me. It's a long story.

Let's say South Africa changed. And let's look at Western Native Township because we can learn something from the environment of housing by looking in detail at housing. There are 5,000-- 2,000 houses of different types with 80% of them about 250 square feet.

The house is about 20 feet by 20 feet in dimensions with an 8 by 12 porch. Over time, people changed their houses, firstly, enclosing the porch.

Well, firstly, in a very tribal fashioned manner, the first residents who appeared in 1917 still had cows roaming around the premises. The first act was to decorate the front of their houses. The fronts of their houses were always decorated, never the sides or the back.

The house didn't have an internal toilet. The toilet was on the back of the house. The first attempt to-- the houses were two rooms plus a porch with a outfit for a coal stove in the first room.

The first inhabitants reacted to their houses the way they acted to tribal circumstances. They used mud and [NON-ENGLISH] decoration systems which you scrape a pattern in the mud and use cow dung to-- the house had no ceilings, had no floors, had no gates. It was about the most primitive, cheap item that the society could produce.

Over time, the enclosure of the porch started. It started by people buying rubbish material from Indian shops, old ceiling tiles, thrown away wood, some glass, and enclosed the porches in this way. You'll see them in the photographs.

This was dangerous. Fires broke out. And the magistrate, in his intelligence, proclaimed that the people who had enclosed the porches innocent, saying that under such density you couldn't blame people for making more space. He argued, however, that the future decoration and enclosures should be more permanent and more safe.

From that time onwards, the permanent decorations took place. These decorations form interesting for a number of-- you will see them. I don't know if you've seen them before.

First of all, the decorations are only on the fronts of the houses. We only decorate the front of our houses as well. There's no house in Newton which has a decorated backyard. It has an antebellum facade.

Number two, the houses are not free drawn decorations. There's a communal language which is created in order to-- so everybody decorates according to a communal language. The language consists of rectangular systems, circular systems, sun-dried systems, and half-moon systems.

Most often refer ambiguously to the past and the present. When I talked to a woman about why she used a circle on her house, she says to me-- and it's mainly the women who decide what the decorations are. She says to me, look, you're smoking. The ashtray you're using is circular. It's modern.

Another woman says, when you grow up in the country, you live on a flat plane. You see the sun rising. Therefore, a half-circle decoration is the sun rising or is the sun setting.

So there's a syncretism between rural and urban. It's almost as if the decorative system manages to nourish people both in terms of the origins and their past and the future that they see in the city. The city is allowing them to migrate as individuals and as a society from a rural society to an urban society.

Some of their houses, as I will show you, try to emulate white middle-class houses. There's an expensive suburb of Johannesburg called Houghton, H-O-U-G-H-T-O-N. There's a house called Hoyton in Western H-O-Y-T-O-N.

There's something miraculous about a system of this kind, a communally agreed upon system. This is where the first self-help community organizations occurred in Black South African cities. Another interesting thing is that you use abstract forms to depict real situations.

So if the fafi game, which is a Chinese gambling game, is played intensively in this environment-- there are 32 symbols. I think 32 or 24. A woman who runs a fafi saloon does-- I'll show you the image. There's a half-arch form on the outside of her house.

If you look at it carefully, she says to me, you will see it's a horse. A horse was my lucky symbol. It doesn't look like a horse at all.

The communist chairman of the first ANC Transvaal group puts a circle on this house with a serrated edge to the circle. When you ask him why he first uses this, he says, that's a Stalinist image. It promotes industry.

There's a whole set-- I will show you two of them-- of decorations which are based on the rectangular family which become blades. Why blades? Because razor blades was, you know-- people were killed regularly in this township. There was a lot of violence, a lot of gang warfare.

So blades become another form. But a blade, what is a razor blade made of? It's made of three circles-- a primitive razor blade-- and a rectangular outline.

The genius of being able to conform to a communal language and yet express your particular message is what a city should be like. You should be able to promote your individual experience, but live within a communal language. At least that's the way I would describe the formal attributes of a good city. Don't quote me on that.

There are a lot of byproducts. Let me just mention one or two for you to think about. The notion of the popular-- the poetics of the popular occur when you see African popular art is extensive and ranges all the way from tombstones in Nigeria to wall paintings to barbershop advertisements and so on.

The popular large margin of freedom in people to express themselves without the classical requirements of orthodoxy, it bends things. It changes things. Again, I refer you back to the definition of classicism in this paragraph I isolated.

Just before we look at the slide images, Let me see if I want to focus your attention on anything else. The role of the popular decoration is externalization-- the idea of the gaze, the idea of the house looking out on the street.

OK, I think this is-- when I first showed this material in London many years ago at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, somebody in the audience stood up and said, was I sharing this work as if these were drawings on ghetto walls, would I make an exhibition of Jewish markings on Nazi war camps?

I had always seen this and experienced this work as optimistic, as showing that people under extreme deprivation still have an image of responding to the city through educating themselves, through externalizing themselves, through communalizing and so on.

And it's curious that the relationship between deprivation and resistance should be seen as negative, but I can understand the argument as well. Does the popularization of items done by poor people and sold as tourist goods enable or-- it helps them economically? Does it improve their culture?

Who knows? We can debate these issues. I think the issue of deprivation and resistance has the fundamental aspect of an iconography of fascinating topics. I was surprised-- I didn't know how to answer the gentleman who asked-- who assaulted me in London. I've never been assaulted since. This material has been shared widely as part of the BBC film.

And let's look at this stuff. I think the marginal quality of things in an urban environment is the grease which allows people often to engage marginally in an activity. They cannot build their own houses. They cannot select a house under the Group Areas Act.

These people decorated their houses every year, despite the fact that they were renters. They assumed permanent ownership despite being renters because they were there for 25 years. They never assumed that they would be moved out.

So the notion of the popular, the notion of a fluid system which is generated in a city, is an interesting idea to me. Because the prismatic quality of identifying separate items in a city, the situationist's view of the city, is interesting in that regard. G. Debord's notion of Paris as being made up of fluid communities and *Towards Cosmopolis* book of the other, the new migrant environment in cities of permanent migrations is interesting, but we'll touch on these subjects a bit later.

And let's look at pictures instead. It's much more refreshing. OK. Turn off the lights.

The analysis on the right indicates the move towards the southwest. The horizontal lines are the public sector. In the early stages of the city, the mining companies provide housing in this Sophiatown housing.

As soon as the supply of Black is too small for the market, you have these white dots, squatter settlements take place at the beginning of the apartheid city. Because the demand, the supply of white housing is, too. And soon, the white housing is completely-- at least the market housing is completely eliminated. And Soweto, which is these two black volumes, creates a second city.

Next, this is the mining camp. Here's the Kaffir location-- there's no embarrassment about using the word Kaffir-- next to the Coolie location. The Coolie location is where the plague broke out and Gandhi intervened. Here are the small blocks of the white mining camp. Next.

The third city, Soweto-- an engineer's madness. All houses are built like huts. The notion that Blacks in Harlem in the United States are crime ridden and dense housing produces criminal behavior is sold as part of the nationalist government's orthodoxy.

You can see the only public space are large tracts of green space with a few isolated. There is no central business area. There are few schools. Whatever it looks like, it is. Next.

The building of Soweto starts with Pimville in 1904. The public supply of Black housing increases slowly, but has incredible spike with the advent of the nationalist government in 1948.

So from this point onwards, the whole governmental apparatus both at the national and at the city level is oriented toward the application of the Group Areas Act, the Pass Laws. The Johannesburg City Council passed 96 acts dealing with the Black people in each city in the few years of this second, third city. Next.

The tallest building in Africa, 52 floors, one of the tallest concrete buildings in the world, was designed by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill with separate toilets for whites and Blacks. So when I was visiting-- were invited by the students to come and give a lecture, when they were asked by students how they could design toilets for whites and Blacks separately, they were embarrassed and said, well, you know, you have to work where you-- the gold mining dumps are part of the landscape. Next.

The depiction of the center of city, this is the drawing for Charles Center, all depicting white people as the-- more and more, at the same time, the everyday environment was that of Black people. Next.

Soweto produced, amongst its horrors, the use of a 19th century fixed-line rail system and a bus system to take people to work. Here's a line waiting for a train. Springs is a suburb of Johannesburg. "Whites only to springs." It's a bit strange to look at this.

If you grew up in South Africa, this is what you grew up with. And it's amazing how striking it seems now. Next.

1976, the famous shooting of this young Black boy by the police in this riot against Bantu education, one of the beginnings of the collapse of the racial city. Next.

I just put in this diagram of somebody's approximation of apartheid city. And sector theory of Homer Hoyt-- which we referred to a couple of months ago in this class. The theory of Hoyt referred to the American city segregating itself out in terms of sectors, sectors moving, in the case of Johannesburg, in the opposite direction as Blacks.

Blacks in the industry always are in the south or the southwest. Whites always are in the north, moving northwards. Next. These areas here, this is this Ciskei and the Transkei. And this is the Ciskei and the Transkei and Zululand and Botswana.

And these are the Bantustans. Here is the notion of treating a rural population as rural, maintaining the rurality, but arguing that industry should be located on the perimeter using this local population. This uses strange terms.

Deconcentration points, what's a deconcentration point? Industrial development to deconcentration points in national states, I mean, this is like Nazi language. I mean, you know, planning language. Excuse me for getting a little sentimental about all of this. Next.

Western Native Township-- 2,000 houses, different types of houses, but largely 250 square feet. I'll just point out to you a couple of other things. These black lines running horizontally, what this community spontaneously does, if the block size is too large, the house becomes a passageway.

There are rituals. You knock on the door. You pass through. And you say hello to the woman of the house, and you walk out to the back of the house.

There are a number of community institutions. There are shebeens, which are illegal drinking-- alcohol is barred to Black people entirely under apartheid. You could only drink kaffir beer, which was sold by the government to get great profit.

A stokvels is an ongoing party. There are all of these self-help institutions, which are part of the popular culture place of this kind. Next. Here is the house as provided to the people.

Next. A number of types of house, it's a bit wrong. Almost 80% of the houses were type B without the additional dotted area at the top. Type B is this plus that if your porch is enclosed. It's 250 plus 100.

This is analysis of the walls of the house. These solid black indicates that the porch is enclosed and decorated. The hollow circles are where the porch is enclosed, but not decorated. The empty lots are nothing has happened.

You can see the intensity of decoration is larger in this area of the township, large close to the outside and entrance to the area and, also, because some of the prominent families lived in this area. Next. That's just what I've tried to explain. This is the density of decoration.

And this is the breakdown of facing street in terms of tribe. I think yellow is Tswana. Blue is Zulu. And three is Tsonga. And four, I think, is Xhosa. Five is Ndebele and so on. Next.

The result is that the street is made up of a consistent iconography, circles, sun systems, and other sun systems, a half-arch plus circles. This is an undecorated house.

In addition to changing the face of the house, the external environment of the fences, the mail delivery options, gates, trees are added to the city. Next.

Here is the original response on the left, mud and using a fork or your fingers to make traditional decoration. On the second is the second attempt to enclose the porch using throwaway material. Next.

You can see everything is taken into account from the mail delivery point through to floor polish zone, a garden, two half-gardens. The porch is not enclosed in this case, but is made into an outdoor room. The major wall is decorated by a rising sun. You can see the architectural ideas, which would make an architect like Louis Kahn proud.

Here is an example of a sun system embracing the whole of the thing. The porch is enclosed. There's a little-- one of the problems was that this porch was always asymmetrical in a facade. Here is a permanently parked automobile as an external room.

An interesting idea, you could actually use an automobile as a living room. I think a Lexus automobile attempts to be a living room, but a mobile one. I think it would be interesting in if we ever got to the state where we are to regard Lexus as permanent. Next. Two other examples-- here's a razor blade phenomenon.

AUDIENCE: Which one's the razor blade?

JULIAN The green.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: Oh, yeah. I see. Yeah.

JULIAN There's a version of it, a more abstracted version, and the more literal version of it there on top of which is a gable and a classical attempt to-- the sunrise of the gate. There's sunrise gates all over the world. I know with the sunrise-- I suppose, if you're interested in heliocentricity. When I once showed this material, a man who was an Egyptian heliocentrist said that this was all a subliminal sun devotion system. I don't understand that. Next.

Here are rectangular forms. You find this in Florence in decorative wooden wall systems. The old idea in heliocentricity is that this is a skin which is pinned down in the four corners, allowing these quarter circle set backs.

The architectural problem was often dealing with the asymmetry between the two sides. Next. Here the large form of the facade is reproduced in the mailboxes. On the other side is a combination of the rectangular system with a circular system. Next.

Difference in material-- this is all cheap concrete. The two circles-- next. The use of the color of the back wall of the main facade wall and the floating of a rectangular texture on it leaving the four circles in the background is predominant. Next.

Here's the razor blade. Three circles, four empty circles and a rectangle constitutes a razor blade. On the right-hand side is another version of the razor blade. We saw in the drawing. Next.

The fafi saloon lady elephant on the-- or horse I think it is on the right And the communist industrial rotor for the ANC leader on the right.

AUDIENCE: There are some colors that keep repeating themselves, like this light blue--

JULIAN Yeah.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: --kind of pistachio even and this light terracotta--

JULIAN Yeah.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: --is there a preference in the color that they use?

JULIAN No, not that I can answer. The trouble was that, during the period that we studied this community, I got to know this community through the Jazz movement, by taking Black musicians home at night.

BEINART:

And one night, the lights shone on these walls. And I said, my god, something strange is happening here. I never been here. Whites don't go to Black townships, not at that time in South Africa's history. It was too dangerous.

So by the time I got involved in this was in protests which was starting against the removal of Blacks from Sophiatown. So the demolition of Sophiatown caused enormous Black anger. And I was one of the people who was there as a supposedly urbanist.

And I came back to Western Native Township when the people were starting to be moved out. And colored people were being moved in to replace the Black people as temporary houses. Some of the color system is over painted by colored people on top of the Black people.

I have no record of what this thing looked like 10 years before. Nobody has. This is the only record that exists.

So I would have to guess. I think the colors would be more restrained. I think the color over painting-- you'd see pink and bright colors-- is probably not the colors that we used. Next.

This is an example of the problem of symmetry. This is the halfway line in the facade and this incredible architectural move of marking the center of the facade by a color shift and still then using these identical forms on either side. Next.

The half-circle-- again explained consistently as the sunrise or sunset. Next. The sun itself takes many forms. Next. That pink is a colored painting, over-painting.

One could do a study of the colored temporary migration before. This township doesn't exist anymore. It's gone. The coloreds who moved in is a temporary phenomenon.

AUDIENCE: So each inhabitant of the house usually would design completely their own?

JULIAN Yeah, yeah. Yeah, generally, the woman in the house.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: I see that.

JULIAN The husband was either too busy drinking or earning a living or being a member of a gang or whatever. The
BEINART: women in this-- this is a very matrilineal society. The people I spoke to who seemed to know most about the decoration of the houses were women.

And often, if I asked why did you choose the sun system, the answer would be the sun represents hope. Or where I grew up in the country, I saw the sunrise every morning. You know, what do you expect people to say?

If I were to ask you why you have a painting in your house, you say, I like Piero della Francesca, or I prefer Uccello. Or I happen to have a Picasso because my mother gave it to me when I was a child. Does somebody, say, give you analysis of Picasso's painting? Why do you expect these people to know more about the way? Next.

Two houses nearby-- these are white middle class houses, low white income, middle houses. They are often referred to as models for these people to look at as a symbol of improvement-- next-- whereas they come from an environment in their own countryside. This is a Ndebele decoration on the left and Zulu decoration on the right. Could you just turn on the light at the back?

AUDIENCE: The last one is a book of all this research?

JULIAN Sorry.

BEINART:

AUDIENCE: The last slide was a book of this research?

JULIAN No, it was published. It's been published extensively. I never wrote a book because I'm too lazy--

BEINART:

[LAUGHTER]

--to write books. I write long articles instead of books. Books are--

AUDIENCE: Was that normal?

JULIAN It was in *Edilizia Moderna*, a special issue on Africa, which I edited. This appears in a number of different forms.

BEINART: The piece, which I gave you in the required reading, is good enough.

And it's got enough of what I've said today in it. It's an endless story. I mean, what interests me more is your reaction to this material than the material itself.

I mean can you enlarge on this phenomenon where does it make you think of In Soweto, people don't decorate the external public facades anymore. They become like all of you. They buy expensive overstuffed furniture and the television set.

They've interiorized the environment as we have. Nobody in Manhattan cares about the public facade of the apartment block except for the way you enter it. You've got to have a canopy and a man dressed up in uniform for it to be expensive.

So we all have notions of explicating our status. If we were in a tribe, in an urban tribe, in a ghetto and had some way of wanting to improve our conditions, there's-- remember, there were seven people in these two rooms.

And sometimes there were additional items as well of space. But 80% of the houses had about two rooms. I think it's a very positive enlarging phenomenon that people have the capacity-- we regard children as having the capacity to demonstrate something unique when they do drawings. That capacity is lost as we become adults.

You could say these people are naive. They are primitive. They still have the courage or whatever it is to do something naive in front of their house. To them, it wasn't naive.

But it raises the issue of the popular in the urban phenomenon. And it's, I think, an extraordinarily interesting and important concept. Why this received such publicity when it was published and I was giving lectures all over the place was because people like John Turner here at MIT, [? Jonah Brockin ?] in Hartland before he came to MIT, were talking about changeable structures.

[? Jonah Brockin ?] book says that indwelling is a creative phenomenon, that we only need to build supports for people who can finish products themselves. Individuation, expression of individual identity, all of these meaningful items in urbanism are what this raises for me. South Africa is an extreme case. If this were class in pathology, it would be like showing a case of a dying cancer patient.

Look at the extreme. There is no more extreme public doctrine of racialism as in South Africa. And this is the response. This is one of the responses. Hundreds of thousands of people died in that regime as well.

But I don't know. What I can suggest is that you think about this phenomenon and transported into your own understanding of the cities that you live in and deal with and make plans for. If only everybody in the world had the capacity to react in this positive way to-- our cities would look different.