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03

context



“[T]he wall is not a familiar trope amongst the metaphors and figures associated with apartheid. The boundaries drawn by the apartheid regime were fluctuating, porous, and ill-defined and its most concerted attempts to make ‘borders’ [...] produced nothing more than vague and constantly morphing blobs on land surveyors’ maps and an incessant migration of people moving between the fragments of their lives”

(Bremner 2010:160)

A BORDER OF MOBILITY



Situated to the North-West of the CBD of Pretoria, the semi-formal urban district of Marabastad is in a state of constant oscillation. The contemporary nature of the township is defined by the diurnal migratory movements of people traversing city limits. The rich historic, cultural, political and religious value of Marabastad (Grobbelaar 2010:34) has been slowly and systemically overwritten by the infrastructural requirements of the modal interchange it has become. Movement networks from Belle Ombre Train Station to bus depots and taxi holding areas have formed a mutually beneficial relationship between the informal activity interspersed in the historical ruins and voids of the urban fabric.

In this state of urban instability (Van Eeden 2014:4.12) the study area, at first glance, presents the qualities of a vacuum border state (Jacobs 1992:259), where the over-simplification of use, through political ideologies, has resulted in large open tracts of land and urban decay. This then presents the notion that borders, for most people, most of the time, represent barriers (Jacobs 1992:257). However, in this post-modern hyperspace (Tally 2013:2) occupants have overcome the capacities of the individual human being to situate themselves and organise their surroundings without the means of figurative representation, coming to terms with the peculiarities of space and place through social formations as well as through individual interpretations.

Figure 3.1: Photograph: 'A Boy Climbing Through the West Bank Barrier' (Original photograph available online: <http://archive.doobybrain.com/2009/02/17/a-boy-climbing-through-the-west-bank-barrier/>, adapted by Author, 2016).



Figure 3.2: An aerial photograph indicating the location of the study area in relation to Church Square (Source: City of Tshwane Geographical Information Systems, viewed 03 February 2016 from http://www.tshwane.gov.za/Sites/About_Tshwane/MapsAndGIS/Pages/Tshwane-Geographic-Information-and-Aerial-Photos.aspx, adapted by Author).

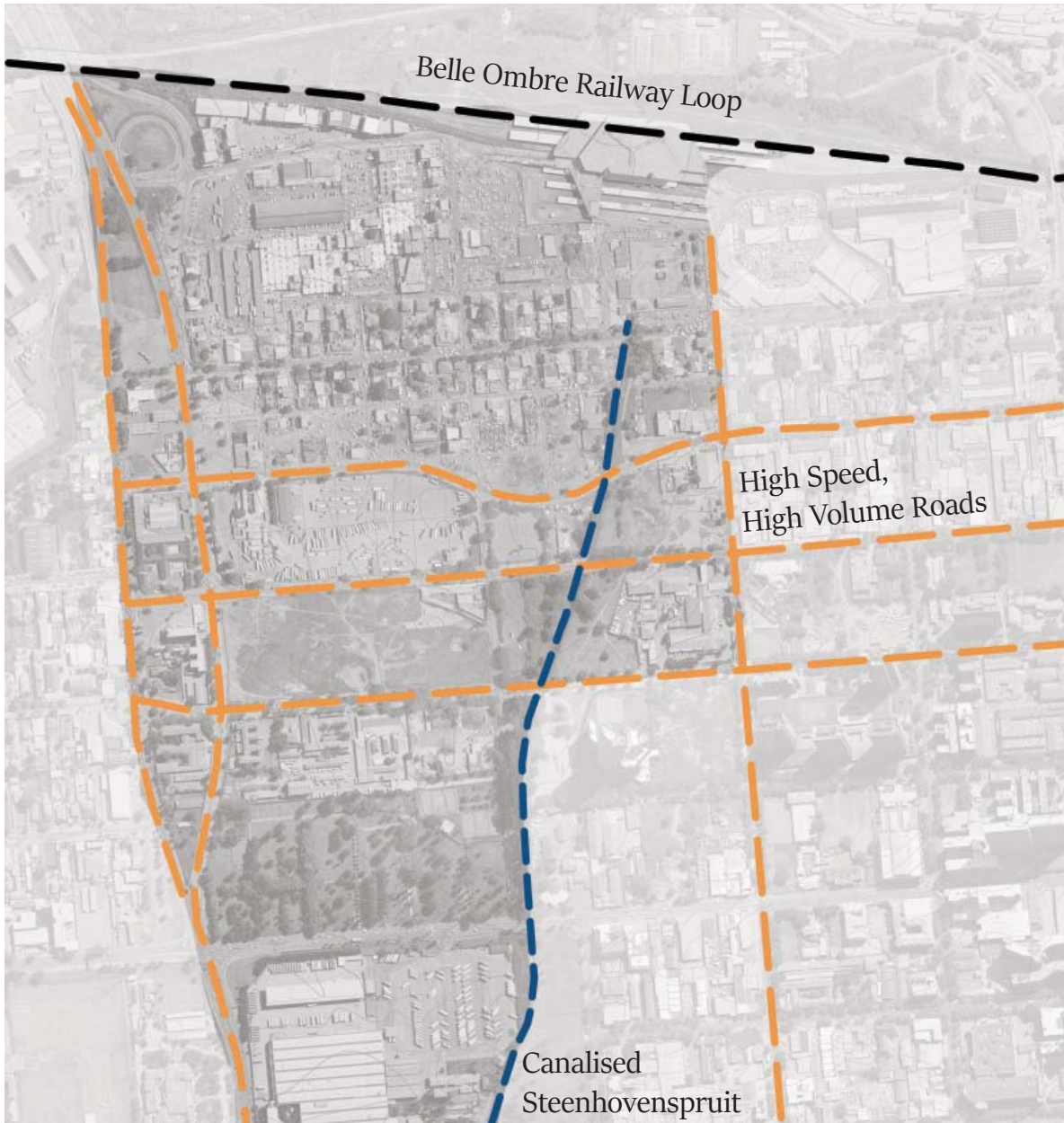


Figure 3.3: The urban elements that extend the qualities of the vacuum border state present in Marabastad.

A Legacy of Utopias

the historic development of a border

Existing informally for over a century, Marabastad, throughout its development has accumulated many layers of narratives and culture that culminate in the rich history present today. However, the township has over the years been subjected to numerous utopian ideologies of demolition, forced relocation and loss. The resultant legacy that challenges Marabastad is one of a diminished physical environment, reduced permanent population and social energy in which the unique cultural identity of Marabastad exists mostly in memory as a vague representation of its once vibrant past (Grobbelaar 2010:50).

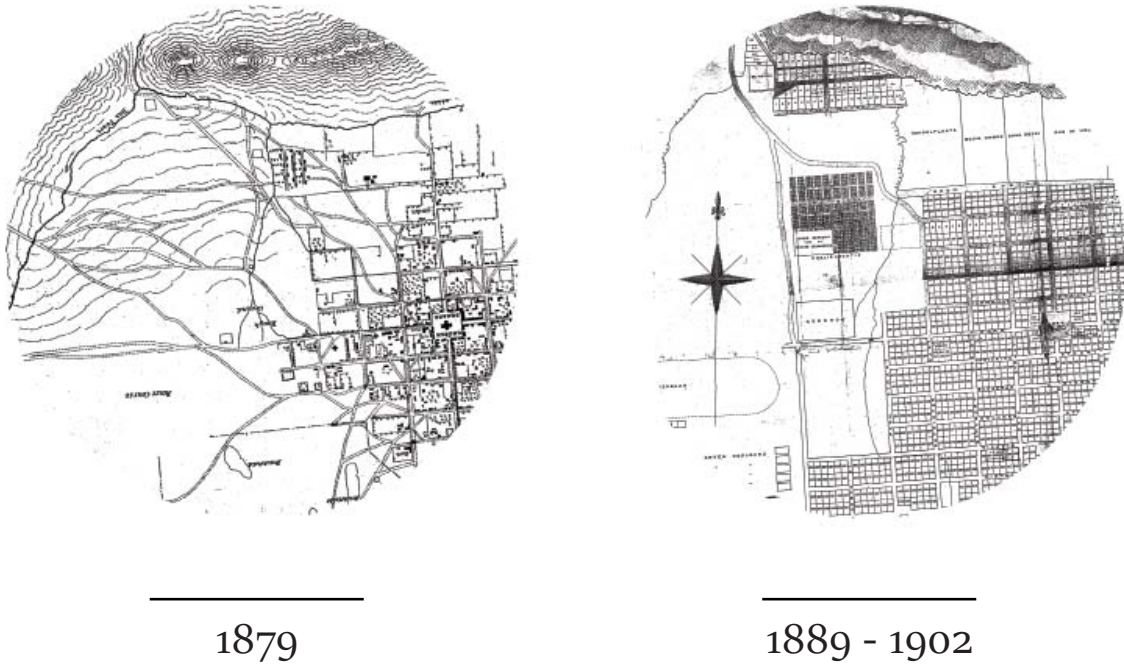
The first stage of utopian thought that began to define the development of Marabastad is characterised by the establishment of Pretoria as the capital of the Boer Republic in 1855. In search of work opportunities, large numbers of non-White migrant labourers who were not permitted to settle within the city began to populate the region along the Eastern banks of the Steenhovenspruit. By 1867 the area known as Schoolplaats had formally been established where the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Station provided then education, housing and land to black settlers. Drawn to the opportunities provided by the Mission Station, the Schoolplaats area was faced with squatting and overcrowding, and by 1867 the area had been declared an

informal settlement.

The rise of industrialisation in Pretoria defines the second utopia in the history of development in Marabastad. During 1883, a partnership between Sammy Marks, Alois Nellmapius, Isaac and Barnett Lewis saw the erection of the first factory, Eerste Fabrieken, to the East of Pretoria. The resultant increase in commerce brought about a second mass influx of migratory labour to the Capital and in 1888, the 'kraal' of the local chief 'Maraba', (situated at the convergence of the Apies River and Steenhovenspruit, South of the Daspoort Ridge) began to provide temporary settlement to the excess population of Schoolplaats. Later, in 1893 some 380 stands had been allocated to the Asiatic Bazaar location South of Marabastad for migrant Indian settlers. A rise in squatter camps within Pretoria, caused by the South African Wars, resulted in the establishment of New Marabastad as a refugee camp. Although intended to be temporary, the ruling British military authorities allowed people in their employ (i.e. Indian tradesmen) to establish brick houses and other permanent structures such as schools and churches.



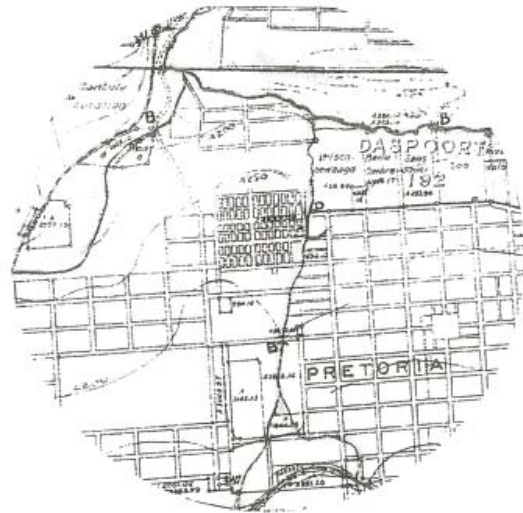
Figure 3.4: A montage of the Utopian influences that led to the development of Marabastad.



41 | **Figure 3.5:** Historical development of Marabastad from 1879 - 1936
(Unknown sources, compiled by Author, 2016).



1928



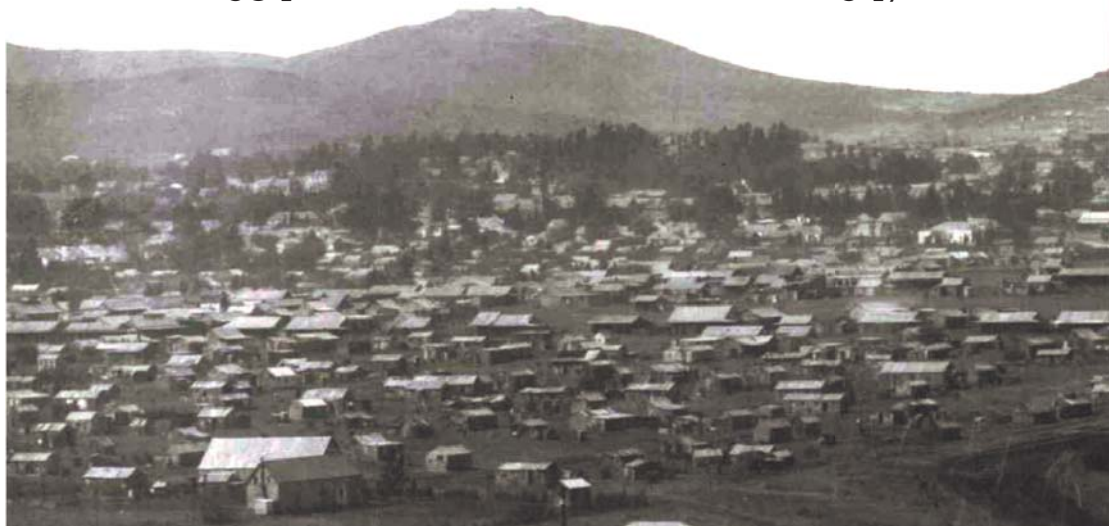
1936



1934



1947



43

Figure 3.6 (top): Comparative aerial photographs of Marabastad from 1934 - 1998
(Source: Meyer, Pienaar, Tayob Architects & Urban Designers, 1998).

Figure 3.7 (bottom): Photograph of Old Marabastad c. 1890 indicating an inherently transient environment
(Source: University of Pretoria Afrikana Collection, adapted by Author, 2016).



1965



1998

During the year of 1903 the municipality of Pretoria fell under new jurisdiction, resulting in the formalised non-White native locations of Marabastad, Asiatic Bazaar and the Cape Boys Location. Afforded higher social status by the government, Indian settlers were allowed to express their culture and erect permanent structures, and so in the ensuing years of this third utopia the Jamatkhana Mosque and Mariamman Temple were built. Amalgamated communities began to develop a 'Marabi' culture through expressions of music, dance, fashion and cinema all within an integrated and increasingly dense environment (Grobbelaar 2010:40-43).

Between 1912 and 1943 the ruling government of the time saw Marabastad as a thorn in the side of Pretoria, pronouncing the fourth utopia in the history of Marabastad. Different measures of control were implemented under the Native Land Act (No. 27 of 1913). Disguised as a utopian method of reducing conflict experienced between indigenous people, Boer settlers and the British government (Bremner 2010:163), the Act prohibited the sale of land to Blacks in White areas and vice versa (SAHO 2013). The resultant segregated geographies that arose from this legislative restriction saw the establishment of mono-racial housing estates, such as Bantule, on the outskirts of the city (O'Malley n.d.). Between 1912 and 1920 some 600 erven of Old Marabastad were forcibly relocated to Bantule in order to facilitate the infrastructural intervention

of Daspoort Sewage and Waste Water Treatment Plant (Van Eeden 2014:4.26). This, together with the canalisation of the Steenhovenspruit, (1920), to safeguard riverside industries and reduce inner-city flooding, further enhanced the disconnection between Marabastad and the CBD, thus extending the border-like nature of Marabastad.

Between 1930 and 1934 the Schoolplaats location became severely overcrowded and, due to lack of adequate fresh water supply, a highly unsanitary environment. Under the guises of the Slums Act of 1934 the area of Schoolplaats was condemned a 'slum' and de-proclaimed as a township, thus allowing the government to relocate non-White people to outlying locations with overtly 'non-racial' motives (O'Malley n.d.).

During this time (1934) of segregation and removal that typified the fourth utopia, the South African Steel and Industrial Corporation (ISCOR) began producing steel from the Pretoria Works plant situated to the West of the CBD. The large influx of industry brought about by the plant required access to cheap Black migrant labour and as such, in stark contrast to the policies of the time, saw the erection of a temporary hostel facility known as Tin Town to the South of New Marabastad (Friedman 1994).

The 1940s of South African history can be typified as a stage of erratic clashes along inter-racial lines (Grobler 1992:1). Often as a result of labour disputes, of political action, of pure interracial

clashes or a combination of various factors, the riot which occurred in Pretoria in December 1942 represents the best example of a confrontation in which all factors were involved. Originating over poor living conditions, overcrowding and low wages in the Tin Town hostel, Municipal workers embarked on a protest that resulted in the violent loss of 17 lives (ibid).

This event marks the beginning of the second iteration of the fourth utopia in the development of Marabastad. In response to the violence, the government began enforcing stricter control and segregation policies that culminated in the Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950). This divisive legislation created areas for the exclusive ownership and occupation of designated racial groups, retroactively separating urban areas into centrally controlled racial zones (O'Malley n.d.). Interfering with the concept of property rights, the Act made an immeasurable impact on Marabastad by forcibly removing residents to townships on the periphery of the City; Asiatic Bazaar residents to Laudium, Cape Boys Location residents to Eersterust, and Marabastad and Bantule residents to Atteridgeville and Saulsville (Naidoo 2007).

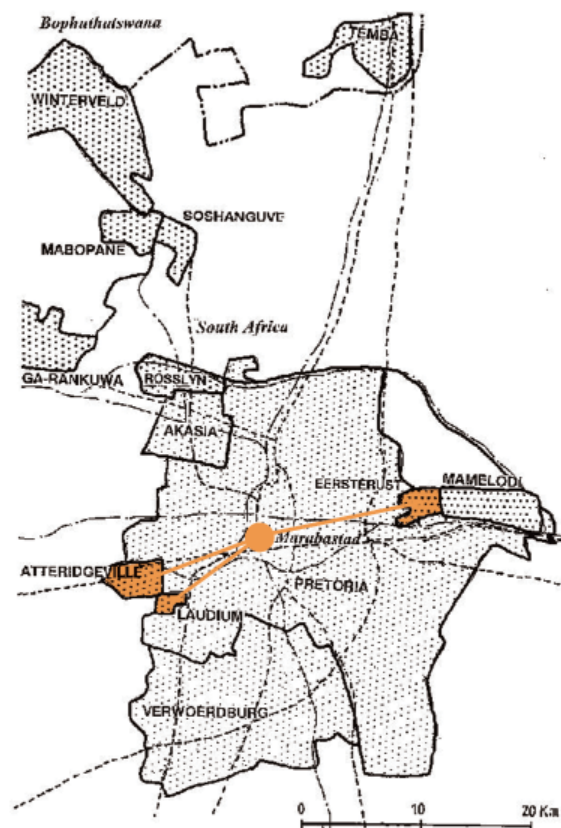


Figure 3.8: A map indicating the forced removal of residents from Marabastad to outlying townships (Source: Meyer, Pienaar, Tayob Architects & Urban Designers, 1998, adapted by Author).

Enforced Mobility

the dialectics of dependency

“One of apartheid’s central problematics was that while, on the basis of ideology, it aimed at setting racial groups apart, it acknowledged their co-dependency. It designed its boundaries as moving targets or to be breached” (Bremner 2010:168). Native labour was needed as raw material to keep whites alive and in a pattern of disjunctive inclusion (Mbembe 2008:49) the apartheid government enforced large-scale public transport infrastructure onto the landscape to sustain the ‘necessary’ economic relations between whites and non-whites in cities. Through the connecting of the CBD of Pretoria to marginal townships such as Atteridgeville, Mabopane and Soshanguve much of the once vibrant urban fabric of Marabastad was erased to accommodate these transport systems.

The first of these interventions was the unrealised freeway scheme of 1967 which resulted in the demolition of large portions of Marabastad (Van Eeden 2014:4.12). The second and possibly most powerful transport related interference was the Bel Ombre Train Station. Constructed in 1988, the station and tracks engulfed the area between Old Marabastad and the Asiatic Bazaar, forming an almost impassable border to the North of Marabastad (Grobbelaar 2011:39).

Hindered by the regimes of the past, contemporary Marabastad has become a

migratory node within Pretoria, receiving in excess of 40 000 daily commuters. Transferring people between train, bus and taxi networks on their journey to work and home, the diverse history and identity of the region has been replaced with a culture of mobility. “Transport [...] has been given precedence over culture, identity, rivers and ridges. As the township disintegrates around them, people flow between station, taxi and bus en route to somewhere else” (Van Eeden 2014:4.21).

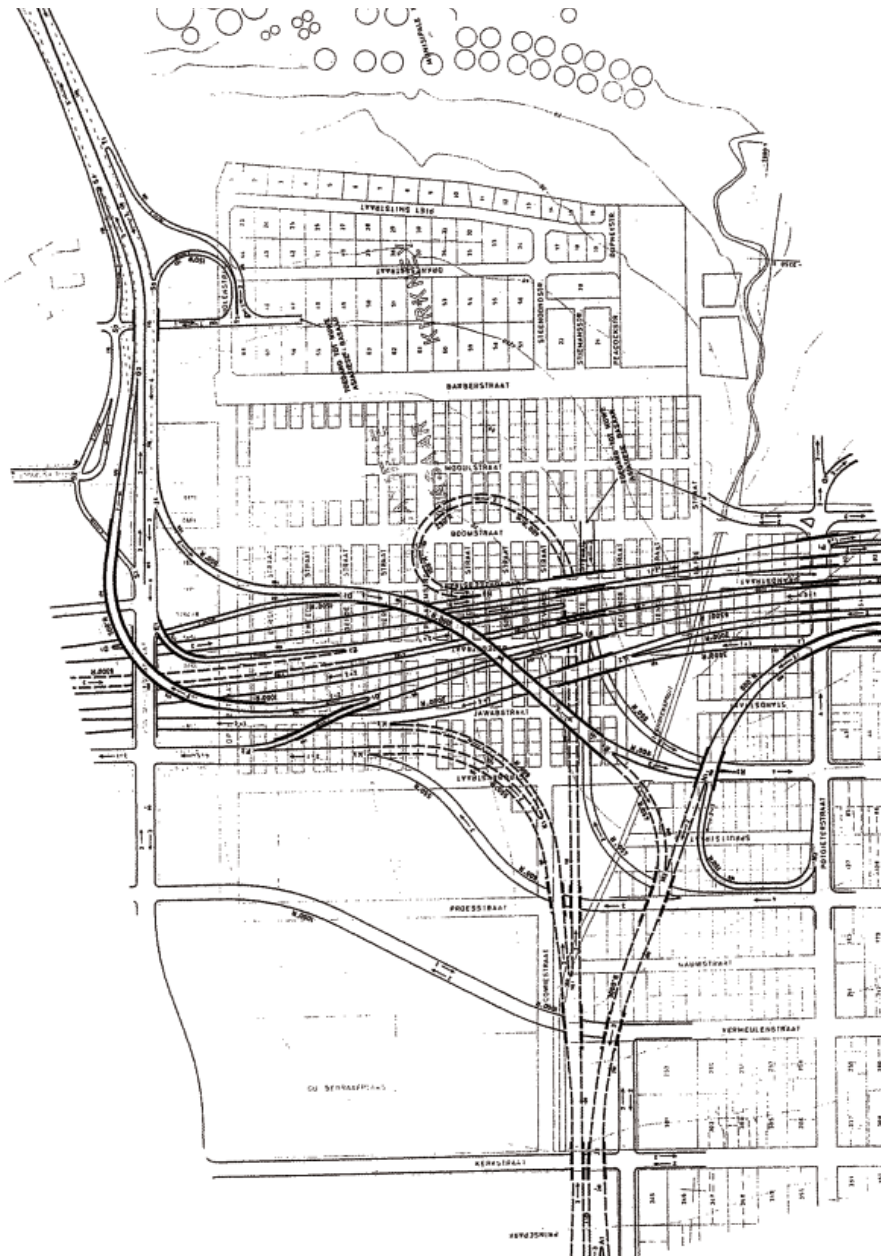


Figure 3.9: A layout drawing showing the extent and impact of the proposed freeway scheme of 1967
(Source: Meyer, Pienaar, Tayob Architects & Urban Designers, 1998, adapted by Author).

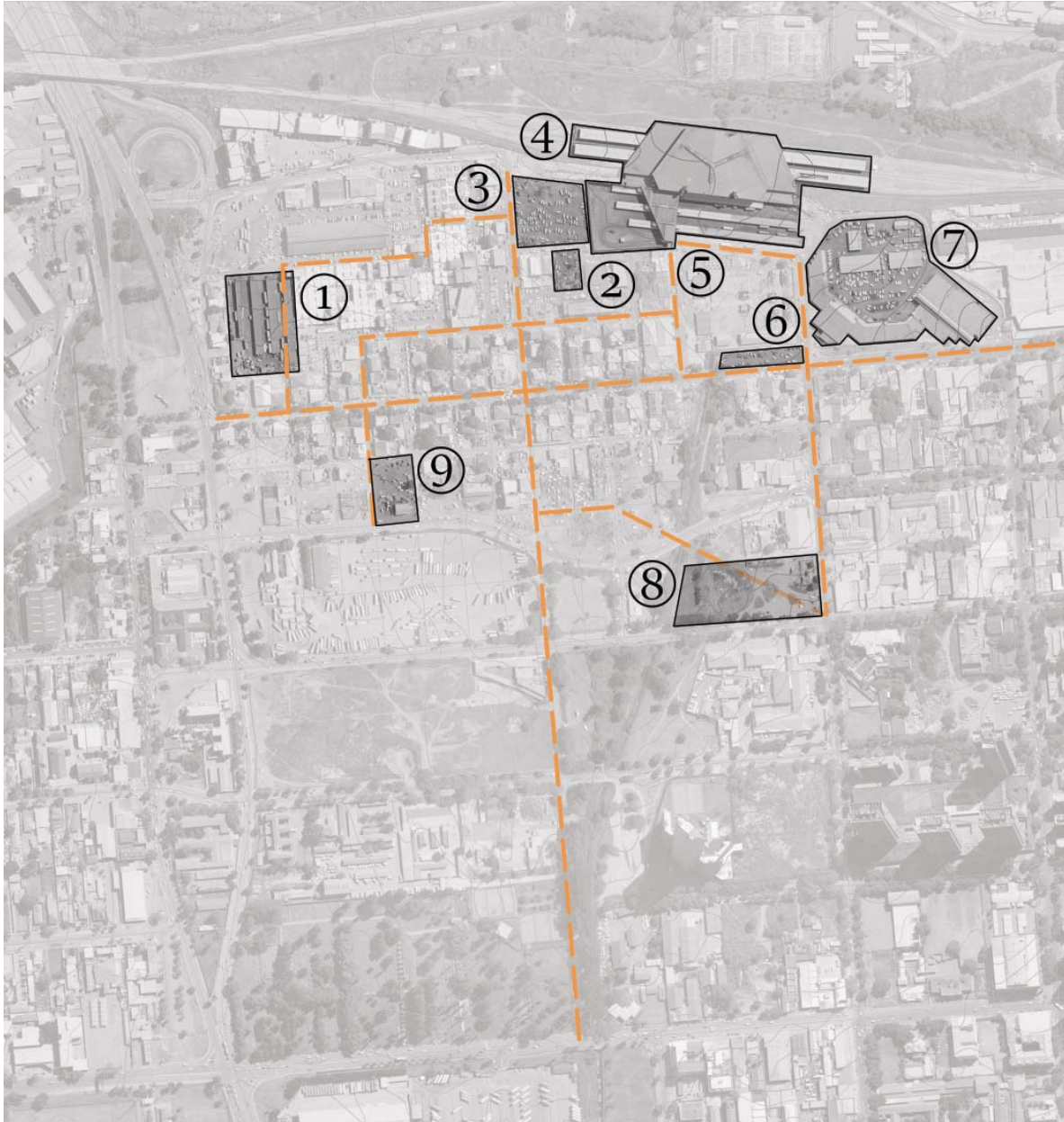


Figure 3.10: Aerial photograph of study area indicating major public transport nodes and the resultant pedestrian flows between them.
(Source: van der Westhuizen, 2009, adapted by Author).

- ① Putco Bus Rank
12,000 persons/day
- ② 7th Street informal taxi rank
500 persons/day
- ③ Bazaar Street informal taxi rank
3,500 persons/day
- ④ Belle Ombre train station
24,000 persons/day
- ⑤ Belle Ombre bus stop
9,000 persons/day
- ⑥ Proposed Inner City distribution bus stop
- ⑦ Belle Ombre Plaza taxi rank
700 persons/day
- ⑧ Proposed BRT terminal
11,150 persons/day
- ⑨ Jerusalem Street informal taxi rank
3,500 persons/day



1969



1977



1977

Figure 3.11: Historical movement patterns into Marabastad from outlying townships (Source: Meyer, Pienaar, Tayob Architects & Urban Designers, 1998, adapted by Author).



Latent Ruins

the disparity of general and specific

The legacies of fragmentation and disintegration have left Marabastad in disrepair. Voids and ruins scattered across the landscape now define the geography of the area. In certain instances these pockets of space, strengthened by extensive pedestrian flows, have been occupied by flourishing informal networks. Centred on the remaining fabric and utopian insertions of the past ('ruins') this tension between formal and informal activities can be understood through Jane Jacobs' (1992:262) notion of general and special land.

General land is the space in which the general public moves over and across freely on foot. Pedestrians, by their own choice, are offered the opportunity to circulate freely between points of interest. These spaces often include streets, parks, and the lobbies of buildings when used freely as street (Jacobs 1992:262).

Special land is thought to be the opposite of general land; it is a hindrance to pedestrian movement either because it is closed off to them or is of little concern to passers-by. Viewed this way special land is an obstruction however, special land makes a significant contribution to the use of general land: namely people. It supplies people either by accommodating them at work or home, or by attracting them to other activities. Without city buildings there is no use for city streets (ibid.)

This delicate relationship between general and special land, that is capable of defining successful border districts, is unfortunately unbalanced in Marabastad. However, intervening at certain 'ruins' of latent potential provides the opportunity to meaningfully engage in regenerating the losses caused by the past. Identified as sites with unrealised energy, these latent 'ruins' are often buildings that, through modernist abstraction, have been designed as mono-functional spaces of utilitarian operation. However, their specificity in attracting or accommodating people has, through opportunistic survival strategies, caused many of these 'ruins' and the crumbling edges surrounding them to be informally appropriated or occupied.



General space
Specific space



1934

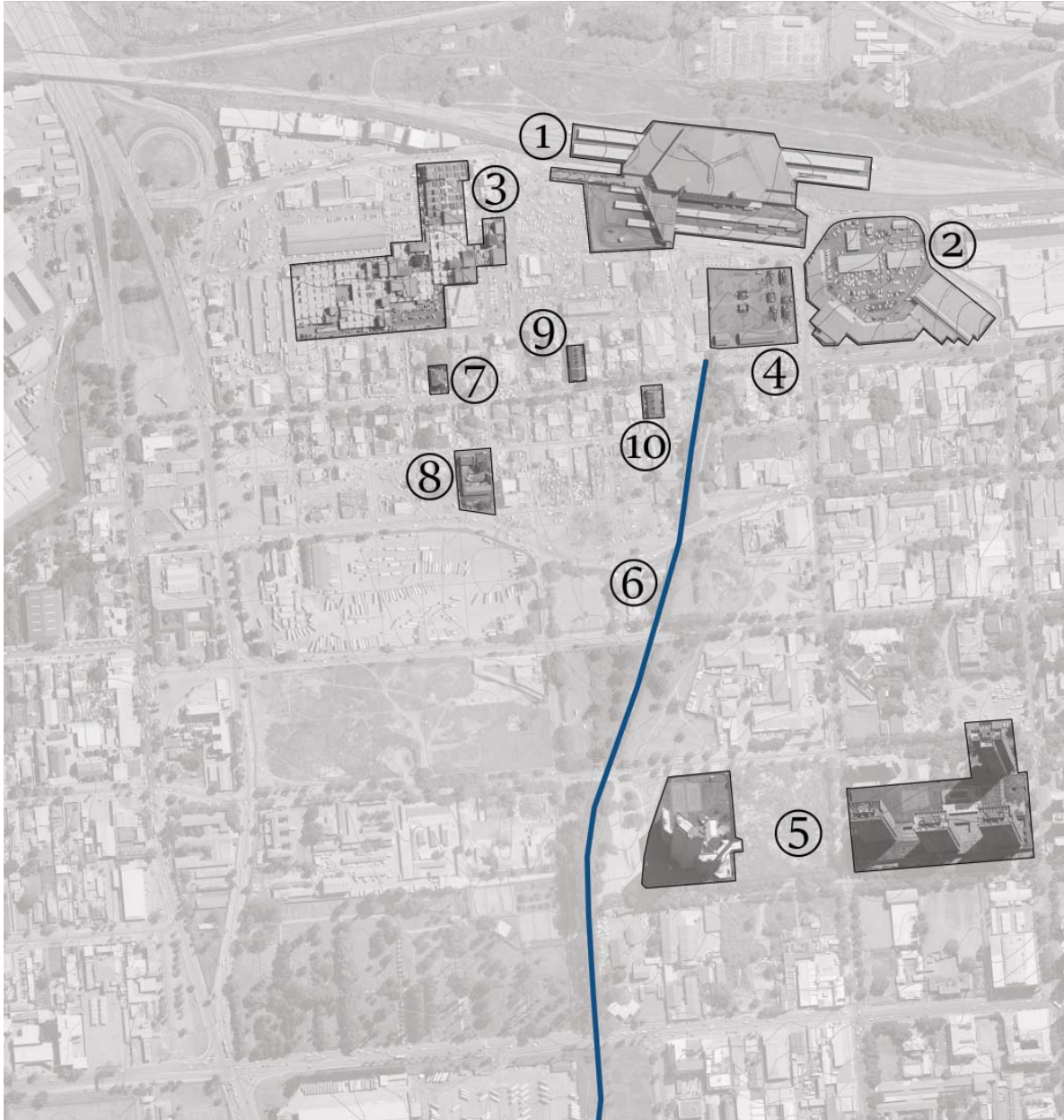


1965



1998

Figure 3.12 (right): A comparative density study capturing the formation of voids within Marabastad (Source: Meyer, Pienaar, Tayob Architects & Urban Designers, 1998, adapted by Author).
Figure 3.13 (left): An indication of the imbalance between general and specific space within Marabastad.



53 | **Figure 3.14:** Aerial photograph of study area highlighting the latent 'ruins' of utopian insertion.
(Source: Hough, Nicha & Patrick, 2016, adapted by Author).



- ① Belle Ombre train station
- ② Belle Ombre Plaza
- ③ Asiatic Trading Complex
- ④ Municipal electrical substation
- ⑤ Goedehoop housing complex
- ⑥ Canalised Steenhovenspruit
- ⑦ Jamatkhana White Mosque
- ⑧ Mariamman Temple
- ⑨ Orient Theatre
- ⑩ Empire Theatre

Legend:

- *bathing in the steenhovenspruit*
- *informal trading/ services under trees*
- *informal social spaces under trees*
- *cooking along the steenhovenspruit*
- *taxi holding areas*
- *outdoor religious spaces*



Figure 3.15: Urban mapping showing the activities that have appropriated the voids left behind by utopian insertions into the fabric of Marabastad (Source: Hough, Nicha & Patrick, 2016, adapted by Author).

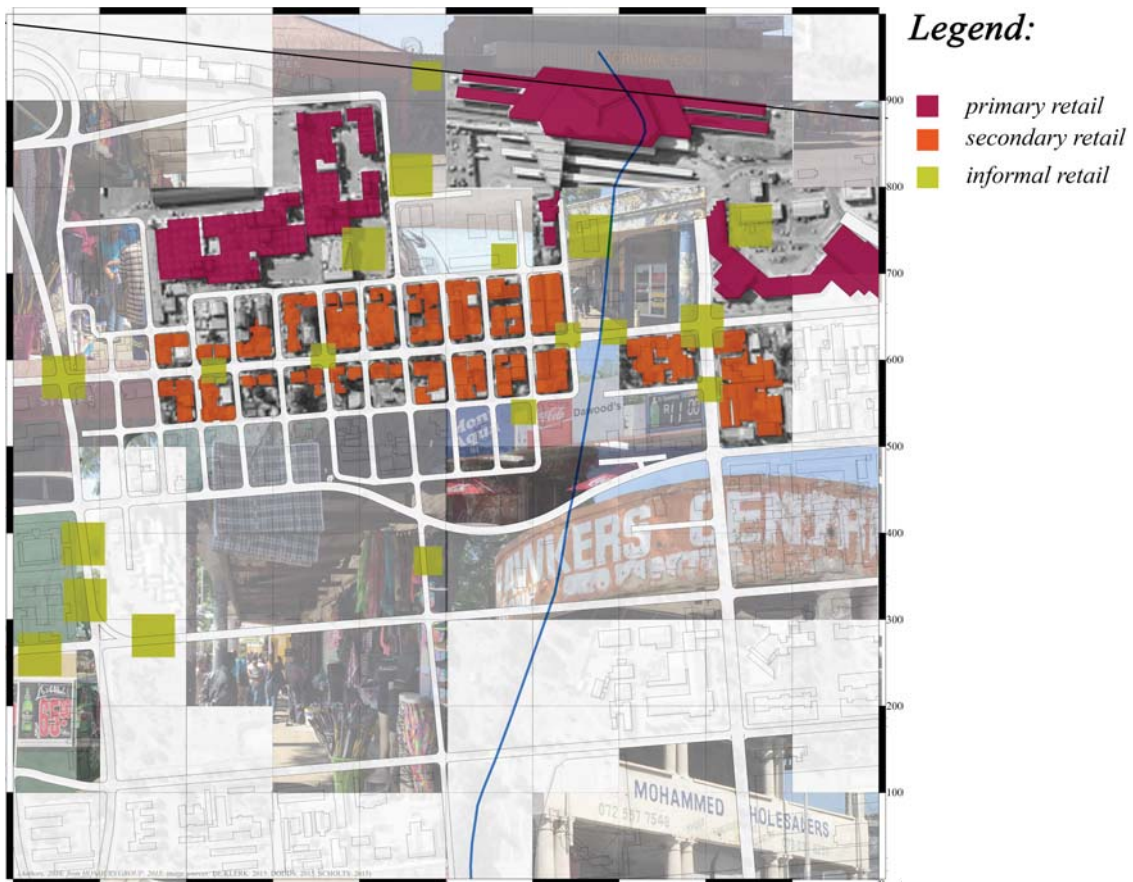
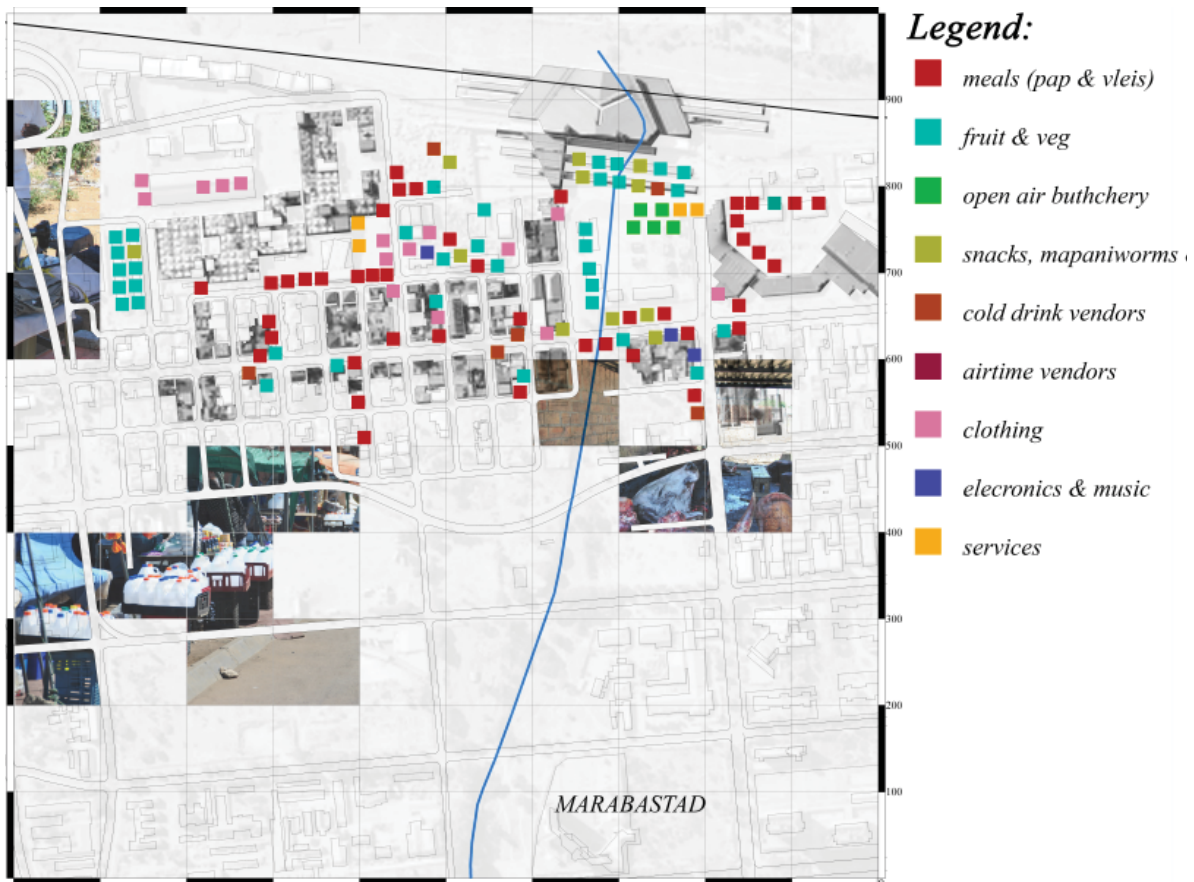


Figure 3.16: Urban mapping indicating relationship between primary retail, secondary retail and informal trade (Source: Hough, Nicha & Patrick, 2016, adapted by Author).





Looseness

possibility and diversity

Assigning dichotomies of general versus special land, and formal versus informal to the highly mobile and complex nature of the study area become limiting in understanding the informal networks and flows that define the unique spatial practices evident in contemporary Marabastad. “Instead of trying to fit African cities into pre-established modes of urban development, we [should] adopt a more open-ended approach that is less concerned with identifying and measuring attributes than in grasping relationships, connections and linkages” (Murray & Myers 2006:xiii).

A method of better comprehending the socio-spatial practices that are inherent to Marabastad in its current state is ‘loose space’. Conditions of loose space can be observed where activities not originally intended for locations take place, or spaces where fixed use no longer or never did exist (Bremner 2010:74). These spaces can include fictional constructs (heaven, hell, utopia), discovered (field, river bank) or fabricated (sidewalk, street, park), however, “for a site to become loose, people themselves must recognise the possibilities inherent in it and must make use of these possibilities for their own ends, facing the potential risks of doing so” (Holston 1999:47). As a mode of insurgent spatial practice, looseness, in essence denotes evaded regulation, mobility, speed, unpredictability,

opportunity and possibility, transformation and risk (Bremner 2010:74). The uncertain complexity of loose space is best manoeuvred as a hybrid suspension of smooth and striated space (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:474-5). Striated space is defined as space governed by policy and regulation, and is dimensionally ordered by an arrangement of cellular spaces, enclosed by walls and routes between enclosures (Bremner 2010:76). It defines movement between nodes in a progression of planned departures and arrivals.

The counterpart to striated space is smooth space. It is a spatial strategy of distribution without division which becomes directional rather than dimensional or metric. Lacking borders or envelopes, smooth space inherits the traits of the movement vectors passing through it or those temporarily occupying it, defining a territory of multiplicity (ibid).

The difference here, from the binary of general /special land, is that the relationship between smooth and striated space is not symmetrical or oppositional. Smooth space is persistently being transformed into striated space, and striated space reinstated to smooth space.

Through this method of observation Marabastad becomes a nomadic space where a sociability of duplicity and awareness is maintained as a mutating and competing interaction between modern state apparatuses and new indefinite network enclaves. Driven by desires more and more people utilise the area as nomads, re-

imagining the city as a point on a trajectory, to be moved through, but never left behind (Bremner 2010:80) as if it were an unending chain of connections and changes of direction in ones life. This logic speaks of urban inhabitants that are not only strong and resourceful, but also elastic and fluid, capable of secretly acquiring more territory for their individual success (Easterling 2005:4). Thus, the once striated nature of Marabastad has been “reconfigured as an in-between and re-territorialised into an unstable, intricate patchwork of overlapping, conflicting trajectories and quasi-exceptional domains” (Bremner 2010:81). Here, architecture and urban planning serve as civil assets or superfluous objects.



Figure 3.18: A visual interpretation of the constant mixing of smooth and striated space in Marabastad. (Source: Bremner, 2010 & Grobbelaar, 2011 adapted by Author).



Figure 3.19: A photographic montage indicating the qualities of the smooth spaces appropriating the voids between striated spaces.