Government Railways in Cape Town in the 1900s
A Resource for Resistance

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MPhil examination in Architecture and Urban Studies 2018/19.

18,864 words
This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.
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<td>CGR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cape Harbour Board</td>
<td>CHB</td>
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<td>Public Works Department</td>
<td>PWD</td>
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<td>Sea Point Railway Company</td>
<td>SPRC</td>
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<td>South African Spectator</td>
<td>SAS</td>
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<td>Cape Archives</td>
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<td>National Library of South Africa</td>
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ABSTRACT

In the historiography of South African railways there is a common argument that the building of railways formed part of white nation-building. This study seeks to answer to what extent this argument might be true by investigating the nature of the Cape Government Railways (CGR) during the early 1900s.

Empirical evidence supports my argument against the common point of view that the Cape Government Railways (CGR) stimulated segregation. Instead, the present study finds that the CGR operating in Cape Town at the turn of the twentieth century was a resource for resistance because of its contribution to social resistance infrastructures ‘from below’ and, at the same time, to the economic interest of the Cape Government in the contestation of land with private companies, ultimately aiming at railway-related land development ‘from above’.

The findings represent results of a thorough written and visual analysis of records held at archives and libraries in England and South Africa as well as of interviews with academics and experts in social and railway history.
Hereby I articulate utmost gratitude for the indispensable academic and moral support I received whilst studying for my MPhil degree in the Department of Architecture at Cambridge and at the University of Cape Town.

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Many thanks to my college, Clare Hall, for the generous financial support. With the Tutor’s Awards I was able to consult records housed in libraries in London and Oxford, as well as the living expenses to complete my studies. With the help of the Boak Student Support Fund, I funded a one-month field trip to Cape Town to conduct research for my dissertation at the University of Cape Town. The fair amount of warm social culture at Clare Hall was incredible for my wellbeing in the coldest November days and I am truly thankful for everyone involved in supporting me.

Before, during, and after my fieldwork in Cape Town, I was honoured to be assisted by incredible people, whom I thank immensely for contributing to my dissertation with tips, references, and extensive conversations about the history of South African trains. Thank you for your honesty and help in decision-making during my stay in Cape Town, Professor Sophie Oldfield. Thank you, Professor Vivian Bickford-Smith, for the powerful comments on my fieldwork preparation. Professor Saul Dubow, thanks for ‘adopting’ me in the World History seminar, which was my favourite. Thank you, Professor Lawrence Hamilton, for incisive comments on my work. Dr Elizabeth van Heyningen, thank you for assisting me and introducing me to Peter Coates and Charles Lewis, two mines of information and knowledge, to whom I am extremely grateful.
A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In this dissertation the term marginalised peoples refers exclusively to the population consisting mainly of Black Africans in Cape Town, also called Black Capetonians (Malay, Africans, Coloureds), at the turn of the twentieth century. Malays, who spoke the Bantu language and were artisans, represented the majority, whereas the black elite a small part of Cape Town’s population at the turn of the twentieth century.

The term Africans is used as an alternative word to native, which is employed in official records with a hint of racism. I refer to the black elite, which represented a small percentage of the Coloureds or Cape Coloureds, who were born in inter-marriages. These stereotype labels described people of different ethnicities, for example, Mfengu descent. When I refer to other groups of people, I mention them explicitly, for instance, whites, poor whites (including Europeans) or Cape Dutch, who were Boers or Afrikaners from Transvaal. I do not consider other ethnic groups (such as Chinese) in this study.

The municipalities relevant for this study are as following. The Municipality of Cape Town at the Table Bay was surrounded by the Green and Sea Point Municipality in the West at Three Anchor Bay, and on the East side by the Woodstock Municipality, responsible for the development of land at Salt River, and by the Municipality of Maitland.

On the local scale in Cape Town, my references to the railways intend the same railway path (part of the Cape to Cairo vision of Cecil Rhodes in 1890). Thus, I will refer either to the Government Railways, the CGR, the Northern Line, the Cape Town-Bellville line or the railway departing from Cape Town via Wellington to Johannesburg.
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INTRODUCTION

‘Are infrastructures technological systems, and the way to understand them a process of analyzing networked machines? Are they financial instruments, practices of accounting and budgets, or management structures and organizational techniques? [...] Or are they social, composed of practices of visiting, drinking tea, and greeting, investments into sociality that can pay off by creating a web of connections that can be relied on for all sorts of social, economic, and political work?’

In the historiography of South African Railways there is a common argument that the building of railways formed part of white nation-building. This study seeks to answer to what extent this argument might be true by investigating the nature of the Cape Government Railways (CGR) during the early 1900s.

Anticipating the later decades of intensified racial discrimination in South Africa, this study considers developments at the turn of the twentieth century that provide evidence for a very different interpretation of the government’s railway programme. Focusing on the line that leaves Cape Town and operates outward towards Kimberley, a part of Cecil Rhodes’ Cape to Cairo plans for a railway between South Africa and Egypt in the 1890s, I argue that the CGR in Cape Town in the early 1900s became a means for the black community to resist the constraints of colonial society in two ways: first, they provided the infrastructure for social resistance to the colonial government; second, they served the government in the struggle for land between the state and private interests.

The literature review of the current scholarship about the history of South African railways reveals only a few available accounts of their urban, social and spatial historical analysis.

Historical geographer Gordon Pirie argues that informal segregation on trains was legalised only after the Great War in the shadow of apartheid and that the railways in Cape Town represented the apparatus of racial segregation. Historical geographer Gordon Pirie argues that informal segregation on trains was legalised only after the Great War in the shadow of apartheid and that the railways in Cape Town represented the apparatus of racial segregation. His study addresses the physical dimension of the railways in shaping the functions of the city, dividing industrial areas from residential

ones, and the latter by race. He does not discuss, however, the relationship between the
government and the different stakeholders of private transportation companies within the
port city and the social consequences of the spatial organisation imposed by the government
due to the railway programme.

Furthermore, geographer Solène Baffi states that the railways were the mechanism for urban
segregation.\(^3\) She maps a spatial transformation of the railway network management within
South Africa and within the suburban rail network in Cape Town over time to show the
geopolitical consequences on railways. This process started with the development of
individual railway companies in the Cape Colony and it eventually resulted in the
establishment of a national management system called the South African Railways and
Harbour Board. It came into being in 1910 when the Union of South Africa was founded. Even
though she focuses on managerial changes that occurred through the interaction between
public and private on both local and national levels her study does not include the view ‘from
below’ on the reception of railways nor any insight on marginalisation as the socio-political
effect of the railway programme on the landscape.

Architectural historian Jeremy Foster, on the other hand, concentrates on how
representations of architecture and the South African landscape on postcards are related to
railway operation, either representing the untouched wild nature experienced by tourists as
rail travellers or the busy, prosperous factories with steaming chimneys to attract
entrepreneurs from Great Britain.\(^4\) Rather than exploring how social marginalisation resulting
from the South African railways impacts cities such as Cape Town, he focuses on how the
large-scale network of the South African railways shapes the perception of a white South
African landscape of prosperity, tourism, opportunities and nation-building.

Similarly, historian Saul Dubow frames the railways from a Victorian point of view,
contributing to white nation awareness since the confederation programme which sought to
unify all British colonies in the Cape.\(^5\) He focuses on the national institutions in which the
government invested to reflect national awareness through social and educational networks
resulting from the mobility enabled by the unification in 1910. In his study the reception of

\(^3\) See Baffi S. ‘Railroads to Civilization: The Railroad in South Africa’s Territorial Policies’. L’Espace Geographique,
the railway ‘from below’ is missing and he does not approach railways from a spatial point of view.

In contrast to the above-mentioned scholars, who deliver either local or large-scale views on the geo-politics and history of the imperial railway ventures in South Africa with respect to white South African nation-building and awareness, or on the spatial configuration of slums based on racial and class discrimination, I emphasise throughout my work the reception of the railways at a local scale in Cape Town only. This perspective ‘from below’ about the experiences of the railway by marginalised people is scarcely in the literature. The Victorian culture which does appear in the existing literature lives in the social fabric of Cape Town alongside the experiences of marginalised people. In this light, I also focus on the reception of the CGR by the government – the perspective ‘from above’, thus, endeavouring to revise the postcolonial discussion on large-scale railway infrastructure in South Africa by recasting the role of the CGR on a local scale in Cape Town.

First, I challenge the above-mentioned scholarly views relying on Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre and Janice Perlman to outline the purpose of this study, which is to understand the social impact of this large-scale infrastructure from Cape Town to Kimberley on the port city. To Foucault, infrastructures ‘reveal forms of political rationality that underlie technological projects and which give rise to an “apparatus of governmentality.”’ In other words, from Foucault’s ‘state of domination’ and the concept of contestation in the dialogue between public and private, railways become the representation of the political intentions of the government and the manifestation of governance resulting from power relations with other actors. From a capitalist point of view, Foucault states that infrastructures reflect the market economy and represent progress. Lefebvre argues that modern technology affects society and that progress produced marginalised peoples. He states that ‘scholars in science and technology studies and geography have analysed how infrastructures mediate exchange over distance, bringing different people, objects, and spaces into interaction and forming the base on which to operate modern economic and social systems.’ Further, in his book, *Le droit à la ville (The Right to the City)*, Lefebvre calls for action to reclaim the city from the effects of

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6 See Larkin, p.328; see also Foucault M. The Government of Self and Others, 2011, p. 70.
8 See Larkin, p.332: ‘Infrastructures were integral to the organization of a market economy and the concept of progress that was central to liberalism’; see also Foucault, 2011.
9 See Larkin, p.330; see also Lefebvre, The Production of Space, 1991.
capitalism that precipitated social inequalities in the course of the past two hundred years.\textsuperscript{10} Perlman mirrors this view by explaining that marginalisation is a phenomenon that results from economic exploitation and that marginalised peoples face difficulties in their struggles for social change.\textsuperscript{11}

Second, I challenge the argument that the South African railways were utilised as a tool for segregation by referring to the dialectic process of infrastructures studied by Nikhil Anand, Brian Larkin, Walter Benjamin and AbdouMaliq Simone, in which I ground my claim that the reception of the CGR by the marginalised people has not been addressed, and thus, the CGR operated also as an agent for resistance. I illustrate moving beyond the functionality of railways how and why people ‘from below’, because of being subjects of deep political emotions such as frustration related to the railway development, circumvent or use the physical infrastructure of the CGR by constructing social networks to resist social injustice or to make alternative living.

Anand, who analyses water supply in slums in Mumbai, addresses the duality of infrastructure, consisting of techno-politics and social networks of alternative labour around that infrastructure.\textsuperscript{12} His argument is relevant to my study as it offers clarification with respect to how the government planned the railway development as well as what the outcomes of the physical realisation of infrastructure could mean for the public.

Larkin similarly asserts that infrastructures are physical networks\textsuperscript{13} and that we need to look beyond their functionality because they also embody other independent aspects, such as

\textsuperscript{10} See Lefebvre, The Right to the City, 1996.
\textsuperscript{11} See Dean, Review: The Myth of Marginality, 1977 by Perlman, pp.567-569.
\textsuperscript{12} See Larkin, p.331: ‘Anand’s ethnography draws together engineers, political fixers, slum dwellers, politicians, activists, and bureaucrats into a single system through the technical operation of water supply [...] Slums without water engage dadas, powerful patrons who use their connections to pressure elected officials to provide infrastructural connection. In return, the dada rewards those representatives by delivering electoral support. In Anand’s analysis, essentially two infrastructural systems interact: water delivery, with its systems of pipes, engineers, and bureaucracy that make up the technical end of water provision (the aspect of infrastructural supply that constitutes the entire large-scale system for Hughes and others); and the social networks, forms of patron-clientship, and “phatic labor”. [...] Anand brings together these two differing conceptions of infrastructure not, in the final instance, to analyze water supply but to reveal the production of what he terms “hydraulic citizenship, a form of belonging to the city enabled by social and material claims made to the city’s water infrastructure”; see also Anand 2011, p. 545.
\textsuperscript{13} See Larkin, p.327: ‘Infrastructures are material forms that allow for the possibility of exchange over space. They are the physical networks through which goods, ideas, waste, power, people, and finance are trafficked.’
The study on infrastructures, he continues, needs to focus on ‘how (in)visibility is mobilized and why.’ With regard to my case study, I intend to reveal the emergence and purpose of invisible networks absorbed by the physical railway in addition to the development of the visible railway.

Another noteworthy affirmation made by Benjamin is that railways represent the dreams of individuals. For him, infrastructures conserve history in themselves and by doing so their impact on us as individuals is not only technopolitical but also emotional as they mobilise deep political emotions such as frustration about governmental decisions. The desire of the Cape Government was to develop the land for railway facilities and to mobilise a mass of black population to benefit the railway programme. This had repercussions for the black community which expressed its feelings of frustration.

Echoing Benjamin, Simone describes a new concept of infrastructure as a form of survival for marginalised Africans in African cities. They develop their own social networks that operate among individual persons who connect within the city to establish alternatives of co-existence in a socially unjust political system, alternatives that form people as infrastructure. I aim to tackle such social networks that emerge based on the frustration and urge of marginalised peoples in relation to the railway development and operation to claim their right to the city and circumvent the original physical reality of the railway in Cape Town.

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14 See Larkin, p.329: ‘But infrastructures also exist as forms separate from their purely technical functioning, and they need to be analyzed as concrete semiotic and aesthetic vehicles oriented to addressees. They emerge out of and store within them forms of desire and fantasy and can take on fetish-like aspects that sometimes can be wholly autonomous from their technical function.’

15 See Larkin, p.336: Invisibility is certainly one aspect of infrastructure, but it is only one and at the extreme edge of a range of visibilities that move from unseen to grand spectacles and everything in between. [...] The point is not to assert one or another status as an inherent condition of infrastructures but to examine how (in)visibility is mobilized and why.’

16 See Larkin, p.333 on Benjamin: ‘Roads and railways are not just technical objects then but also operate on the level of fantasy and desire. They encode the dreams of individuals and societies and are the vehicles whereby those fantasies are transmitted and made emotionally real. [...] for Benjamin, commodities, buildings, and streets contained within them the movement of history: They were embodiments of objective historical forces, but they simultaneously enter into our unconscious and hold sway over the imagination. They ‘form us as subjects not just on a technopolitical level but also through this mobilization of affect and the senses of desire, pride, and frustration, feelings which can be deeply political.’

Applying these theories, I break down my argument concerning the CGR as a resource for resistance into three research questions, each one of which is addressed within the frame of a chapter.

a) What are the decisions upon which the Cape Government shaped the political discourse in the South African legislation within the dialectic between the British Empire and South Africa in order to benefit the development of the railway programme in Cape Town?

b) How did the marginalised peoples respond to the economic narrative of the railway programme fostered by the Cape Government Railways (CGR), and the government’s decisions to legalise urban segregation in 1902 and to continue the operation of trains with informal discrimination of their passengers on board and at stations?

c) How do power relations in the contestation of land development between state and private sectors shape the CGR as the physical manifestation and agent of resistance to private stakeholders in Cape Town?

To tackle the socio-political effect of Cecil Rhodes’ infrastructure ambition Cape to Cairo originating in Cape Town in the late nineteenth century, I set out research boundaries reviewed in the ensuing section.

The time frame of the present study spans over two decades beginning in 1890, the year Rhodes became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. Even though Rhodes served the Cape Government for only six years, he intensified the racial discrimination policy fostered by his predecessor Prime Minister Sir Gordon Sprigg and innovated his railway proposals to serve diamond and gold extraction. The period ends in 1910 when the Union of South Africa was established. This was a union of the colonies of the Cape, Natal, Transvaal and the Orange Free State. This is year is pivotal in the urban history of Cape Town related to the CGR. Because of the conflict with the Afrikaners (who opposed the railway programme), which culminated in the Anglo-Boer War in 1899, the city experienced expansion in the aftermath of the war in 1902 and constant labour migrancy related to the mineral revolution. Thus, the selected time frame reveals the origins in railway development, management and operation, which paved the way to confederation.
On the local level, this study focuses on the municipality of Cape Town and its two neighbouring municipalities, Green and Sea Point, and Woodstock, to show that the two suburban railway lines connecting these communities had different developmental questions. Both examples, nevertheless show the CGR to be an arm of the government and reflect the physical manifestation of these territorial issues, which are addressed in greater detail below. On the one hand, Papendorp, the immediate village to the East of Cape Town, named Woodstock in 1885, developed as an independent municipality because of the railway-facilities housed there. The carriages depot, the Salt River Locomotive Works and the locomotive depot in Bellville fed the entire railway line to the diamond fields in Kimberley and to the gold fields in Johannesburg. On the other hand, the private Sea Point Railway Company is an excellent example of the intricate contestation between state domination and private enterprises for land. Because the line was bought by the CGR in 1905 and forced the closure of rival transportation companies to monopolise the land development, this line displays the power of the state in land development through the CGR. I also focus on this line because it was brought to a halt, unlike other suburban railway lines bought by the CGR, such as the Southern line to Wynberg and Simon’s Town (see figure 1).

![Diagram maps the railway lines in Cape Town between 1890 and 1910 to justify the focus of my research on Sea Point, Woodstock and Salt River.](image)

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18 Charles Lewis navigated me through the development of Cape Town’s suburban network until 1960.
The present study focuses attention on the black community and not on the poor white migrants or the landless Boers. The mechanism of the railway programme was land ownership and resulted – through the Glen Grey Act passed by Rhodes in 1894 – in a mass of poor Black Africans. Thus, most of Cape Town’s population represented an intricately entwined social structure resulting, in part, from railway development and operation. Simultaneously, the deployment of Black Africans as railway workers addressed class and racial issues. Their existence as third-class customers massively contributed to the railway company’s income at the turn of the twentieth century. By focusing on the black community, I aim to emphasise the origins of the racial conflict that preceded apartheid and the early existence of resistance infrastructures of the black population. As I endeavour to show, the nature of the conflict between the British and the Boers, who were against the progressive railway programme, was primarily managerial in nature.

RESEARCH METHODS

I applied three research methods as follows.

The first, in the form of a written analysis, synthesises information from official records such as government publications, annual reports of the general railway manager, minutes of railway-development-related conferences, correspondence between the Public Works Department, the Native Affairs Office, and the Harbour Board, newspapers and theses housed at the UCT libraries and the Cape Archive in Cape Town, at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, at the Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, as well as the University Library in Cambridge in the Rare Books Collection. These sources provided insights into the political discourse on the railway programme in the Cape Government. The second set of documentation consists of memoranda of travellers, passengers, observers, as well as the South African Spectator newspapers and railway poetry by railway workers, consulted in the National Library of South Africa in Cape Town and in the British Library Newspaper Repository in London. Both groups of sources served to capture the reception of the decision-making of the government regarding the railway programme by the black community – the majority of the population in Cape Town.
My second method utilises a thorough visual analysis. By comparing photographs, drawings, paintings, plans and maps from a range of years found in the Cape Archives as well as in social history books held in the African Studies Library at UCT and in the University Library (Cambridge), I observed certain urban transformations that occurred in relation to the railway operation in Cape Town and in Woodstock and based on this evidence, I produced my own maps. One shows that resistance infrastructures to the railway operation happened at the same time and place but disrupted the physical infrastructure of the railway and the district boundaries. Another depicts the domination of buildings related to railway-facilities within the municipality of Woodstock, suggesting the type of land development fostered by the government in that area.

The third method features interviews conducted by me with descendants of railway users and workers and is brought in to better understand the family histories of those involved and affected by the railway operation one hundred years ago. In spite of the challenging nature of this enterprise, I was able to locate and interview the former librarian, Peter Coates, and railway manager, Charles Lewis, both whom have over seventy years of expertise in railway and social history. Input from the latter pair, as well as from the son of a painter who worked for the press on board the court trains, helped me focus my critical assessment and navigated me through family memories. In preparation for this task, I studied Afrikaans, which served to initiate and audio-record fifty interviews with commuters and officials of the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) on the platforms of seventeen railway stations of the Northern line operating from Cape Town toward Bellville. The questionnaire prepared by me for this purpose set out to explore the reception of the urban transformations that occurred as a consequence of the railway operation. The anonymous interviewees were of different ethnicities, such as Cape Dutch, with British backgrounds but born in the Cape or migrants from the Congo, Zimbabwe or other South African cities, such as Johannesburg or Durban, and were aged between twenty and eighty-nine, of whom forty percent were women and sixty percent were men. They provided primarily their contemporary travel experience but little information on their parents. This method helped me to understand the critical decay of railways in order to justify the imperative need to study the historiography of South African railways.
1 \textbf{POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON RAILWAYS}

‘More precisely, we can say that it is through interests that government can get a hold on everything that exists for it in the form of individuals, actions, words, wealth, resources, property, rights, and so forth.’\textsuperscript{19}

This chapter focuses on the socio-political context in which the railway programme evolved and shaped the railway as a resource for resistance. Relying on Foucault’s explanations about the interests of the government in market economy reflected in infrastructures, as well as on Benjamin’s affirmation that infrastructure shapes us as subjects on a technopolitical level, I explore two significant decisions taken by the Cape Government in the political discourse on the Cape Government Railways (CGR) at the turn of the twentieth century: first, restricted land ownership to ensure control over land development; second, the deployment of Black Africans in the economy of the railway development and operation. I argue that the role of the railway changed from the initial role of opening up territory for economic purposes based on mineral extraction to contributing to resistance.

1.1 \textbf{Land Ownership and the Dialectic between the British Empire and South Africa}

Land ownership was the mechanism that determined the control of land development through the railway-building by the Cape Government Railways in the Cape Colony in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Relying on Foucault’s observation about the government’s power to control \textit{everything},\textsuperscript{20} I explore the legislation, adapted from Great Britain in South Africa, on a regional and on the local scale in Cape Town, to promote railways.

According to the dialectic between the British Empire and South Africa, different acts were passed to bring \textit{Britishness} to the Cape Colony by adopting general political tendencies from Great Britain in the Cape.\textsuperscript{21} The connection between Great Britain and South Africa enabled

\textsuperscript{19} See Foucault, The Government of Self and Others, Lecture 2, pp.44-45.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. ‘In the principle to which governmental reason must conform, interest is now interests, a complex interplay between individual and collective interests, between social utility and economic profit, between the equilibrium of the market and the regime of public authorities, between basic rights and the independence of the governed. Government, at any rate, government in this new governmental reason, is something that works with interests. [...] government can get a hold on everything that exists for it’
\textsuperscript{21}See Bickford-Smith, Ethnic pride and prejudice, 1995.
at economic progress for Great Britain and I explore how land ownership became the central measure in the legislation of the Cape Government to achieve this goal. In the 1870s legislation in the Cape experienced a shift due to the mineral revolution. The nature of the railway and land development legislation was based on exploitation – like in the English industrial revolution – and produced a racial and monetary stratification of the society in the Cape. For example, the separation and the different legal treatment of British and Irish workers in English industrial towns was translated in the Cape to the disadvantage of the poor, including both whites, and different ethnicities of black migrants such as Mfengu, Malay, Black English-speaking Capetonians and Bantu-speaking Africans. 22

Land ownership (more precisely, the lack thereof) restricted the residents’ right to vote. In Great Britain, the Great Reform Act in 1832 was a crucial change to the electoral system following citizens’ claim that it was unfair. In the following ten years the working class protested in Chartism movement for the equality of voting for every man. By the 1850s, the Westminster System fostered an equality-oriented parliament with Protestant beliefs which prohibited discrimination. Another key act was passed in 1867 to enfranchise a part of the urban male working class. Thus, all men had the right to vote regardless of ethnicity or wealth. In Great Britain more people could vote in the 1890s because restrictions on property ownership were loosened by the parliament from 1880 and completely abolished in 1885. 23

Whereas, in South Africa, after slavery was abolished in 1837, the first constitution established under the responsible parliament in the Cape in 1853 prohibited class and racial discrimination allowing everyone but Khoi and ex-slaves to vote. This constitution represented probably the most democratic one in the world at the time. 24 In the Cape, under Prime Minister Cecil Rhodes, the legislation tightened land ownership restrictions to prevent and finally exclude from voting most of the population in the Cape consisting of Black Africans.

Land use was distinct in Great Britain from that in South Africa. With respect to land development, the late-nineteenth century railways in Great Britain supported suburbanisation. Eventually, the centres of industrial cities became overcrowded and the Cheap Trains Act in 1883 introduced the workers’ trains to decongest them. Commuters

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24 Interview with Charles Lewis, government 1853 no racial discrimination; see also Dubow: A Commonwealth of Knowledge, 2006, p.64: constitution in 1853 enabled poorer whites and more affluent blacks to have a voice in government.
bought cheap train tickets to travel from outer residential areas to industrial work areas.25 In Cape Town, the Cape Government Railways were responsible for land development exclusively for railway-related facilities along existing and new lines, such as tree plantations to harvest timber for railway sleepers and workshop buildings. The area around Bellville was a plant nursery and supplied the Cape Province.26

As a result, the legislation based on voting rights, land ownership restrictions, and land development in the 1880s was different in the Cape from the one in Great Britain because the country sought to exploit most of the resources overseas. In other words, the Cape Government set out legislation aiming land development related to railways to benefit the railway-building. Thus, the dialectic between Great Britain and the Cape had geo-political roots.27

Relating to Benjamin’s affirmation that infrastructure embodies dreams and forms us as subjects of techno-politics28, I explore how the Cape Government operated on both the regional and the local level with legislation on land ownership in order to extract as much as possible from the land for its dream – the railway programme.

On a larger scale, the Cape Government sought control over the territory. In 1870 all British dominions were united into a Confederation under the British Empire. This significant year marked the beginning of rapid industrial progress in South Africa. The conflict between the English and the Afrikaners in the 1870s was based on the disagreement between the British who wanted to construct the railway further toward the hinterland and the Afrikaners who opposed these plans.29 Two further key years are those of the First Anglo-Boer War (1871) and of the Ninth Frontier War in Transkei (1878), when the British conquered land in the Transvaal owned by Afrikaners and annexed under Prime Minister Sir Gordon Sprigg the

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25 See Cannadine, 2017
26 See Green, When the Journey’s over, 1972, pp.22-23.
28 See Larkin, p.333 on Benjamin: ‘Roads and railways are not just technical objects then but also operate on the level of fantasy and desire. They encode the dreams of individuals and societies and are the vehicles whereby those fantasies are transmitted and made emotionally real. [...] for Benjamin, commodities, buildings, and streets contained within them the movement of history: They were embodiments of objective historical forces, but they simultaneously enter into our unconscious and hold sway over the imagination. They ‘form us as subjects not just on a technopolitical level but also through this mobilization of affect and the senses of desire, pride, and frustration, feelings which can be deeply political.’
29 See Dubow, A Commonwealth of knowledge, p.110: Race: Blacks and Boers, biological racism took root in 1870s; p.113: Boer= enemy of progress; notion that Boers were self-sufficient, had no awareness of time and lacked the material desire of commercial enterprise and improvement.
previously independent native territory of Transkei (see figure 2). To hold off the simultaneous conflict with Afrikaners and the natives the Cape Parliament gradually shifted the restrictions on land ownership in the 1870s.

![Map showing the British and the native territories, 1887](image)

Figure 2: Map showing the British and the native territories, 1887.³⁰

The shift in politics in the 1870s was triggered by the discovery of diamonds (1867), resulting in the change from a responsible to a representative government.³¹ In 1872, Prime Minister John Molteno’s liberal party represented a parliamentary democracy probably similar to the Westminster System fostering a multi-racial franchise in the frame of which anyone could own property. This became fragile when the economic interest in diamonds emerged, initiating racial discrimination.

Following Molteno’s quitting after the Transkei war, the progressive party of his successor Sir Gordon Sprigg took over. The latter built a government in which officials were elected within a voting system based on land property. Annexing Transkei resulted in a population of the

³⁰ UL, Maps AA 501.88.3. We can see the railway line from Cape Town to Kimberley. The British territories are the Cape Colony, Bechuanaland, Griqualand West, and on the East side Natal, Transkei, Basuto Land, Pondo Land, Griqualand East, and Tembuland. Only Zulu Land remains native territory.
³¹ See Bickford-Smith, Ethnic pride and prejudice, p.62.
Cape Colony dominated by Black Africans, and the whites in parliament were afraid of losing power to the Black Africans. So, they adapted their laws against the Black Africans from Transkei and passed the Registration Bill and the Transkei Acts (1887), in partially to restrict voting and also to access land for railway-building. The first steps of Sprigg’s native policy followed the total exclusion from voting through restrictions in communal land ownership, which paved the way more directly toward racial discrimination. This resulted in the poorest members of the population not owning land and, with that, not being able to vote. The gradual exclusion of Black Africans from voting came during the second railway construction phase after 1875, when Sprigg passed a railway act in 1888 proposing further development and additional railway routes, which later proved to be unaffordable.32

After Sprigg’s resignation, his successor, Prime Minister Cecil Rhodes (1890-1896), passed the Glen Grey Act of 1894, excluding all Black Africans from voting. In order to extend the railroad from Cape Town to his diamond fields in Kimberley he introduced a cheap black labour system (see figure 3). He disqualified the poorest classes of all race groups including poor whites from voting through land tenure, affecting a large number of African voters (Xhosa-speakers from Transkei were illiterate), as a result of which only a small number of educated urban Black Africans remained eligible to vote.33

32 Interview with Peter Coates: political context before Rhodes on Sprigg and the frontier war in 1872; change in government; not always racist government, Rhodes introduced blacks to serve; UL, Cape Illustrated Magazine, vol 6, 1898: Gordon Sprigg resigned because of his railway policies.
33 Ibid. Bickford-Smith, p.144.
Sprigg became Prime Minister again in 1900. Owing to the Second Anglo-Boer War, Cape Town experienced overcrowding and the government forced systematic removals of Africans, which concluded in an act for urban segregation passed in 1902 – the Native Reserve Location Act. Based on a sanitary excuse this Act legalised the displacement of Black Africans from the central District Six to Ndabeni as a response to a public protest about the temporary

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accommodation situation, in which Africans had to pay rents but were not allowed to own land. This marks the start of the black-white conflict. Even though, the conflict between the Afrikaners and the British was rooted in the railway construction, and the conflict between the British and the natives concluded in racial discrimination (1902), both originated in the Cape Government aiming to obtain land ownership in order to enable railway construction. This shows that the large-scale political discourse on railways brought marginalisation and shaped the railway as a tool for resistance ‘from below’, a point that will be further discussed in the second chapter of the present study.

At the local level, while relying on Foucault’s statement that the government has the power to institute control of *everything* in order to pursue its interests, the Cape Government faced obstacles in its land domination through the CGR.

In the early 1900s, Sprigg’s progressive government fostered strategic control over the shore lines of the Table Bay at Woodstock for development opportunities to enable transhipment logistics and in Simon’s Town for the navy. This techno-political discourse on railways represented an intricate scenario including the CGR, the Municipality of Maitland, the public authorities and other private investors on the domination of land at Papendorp (Woodstock) for railway-related facilities of the CGR. The General Manager of Railways discussed land development plans for the line from Cape Town to Wellington in 1900s with the Cape Harbour Board, the Chief Traffic Manager and the Public Works Department, as well as with different actors (land speculators with their own development interests). The land was owned by the Cape Government, who pursued its interests through the CGR to obtain land for railway-related facilities. Consequently, the CGR bought other railway companies. For example, the Wynberg line was bought in 1871 by the CGR and was extended to connect Cape Town with the military naval hub in Simon’s Town.35 Even though this railway line passed through the so called ‘Southern suburbs’ – residential areas – it emerged out of a strategic need to connect both shore lines around the Cape peninsula.

From an economic point of view, the CGR in Cape Town built a monopoly over other private transportation companies. The Sea Point Railway Company (SPRC) opened in the late nineteenth century and was managed by the Green and Sea Point Municipality to attract

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wealthier passengers on board. These passengers’ means of transportation to the village of Sea Point prior to the railroad had been the tram. The competition between the CGR, the Tramway Company, and the local SPRC (registered in London), was triggered because the Government Railways aimed to attract customers and to prevent land development controlled by private investors. This conflict between the two municipalities of Cape Town and Green and Sea Point Municipality culminated in the closure of the tramway and the acquisition of the SPRC by the CGR in 1905.36 Thus, the CGR acted to protect the government’s interests and monopolised the city to foster the economy of the railway company (see figure 4).

Figure 4: The map shows the SPR line to the Three Anchor Bay at Sea Point, the Wynberg line operating toward Simon’s Town via Papendorp (Woodstock), Rondebosch, and Wynberg, as well as, the line that leaves Cape Town for Wellington.37

37 UL, Maps c 18.L.13, Environ of Cape Town in Bacon’s New Map of Transvaal 1889.
As such, discourse surrounding local land development between the Cape Government railways, public authorities, and private investors shaped the landscape in very specific ways. The competition of the CGR with other suburban railway lines and tramway companies was the representation of the CGR becoming a tool for resistance from the perspective of the government ‘from above’ and will be further discussed in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

1.2 Economic Narrative: Cheap Labour and Native Travellers

The economic background that facilitated the railway development was based on two aspects: cheap labour, and native travellers making up the majority of the railway passengers.

As discussed in the previous section, the evolution of the government from Molteno to Sprigg then Rhodes (Molteno – 1870s multi-racial franchise, Sprigg – 1887 Transkei Acts, Rhodes – 1894 Glen Grey Act) showed a gradual political exclusion of Black Africans based on restrictions of communal land-ownership; this enabled the government to control the land and, consequently, produced a disadvantaged stratum in society that could then be recruited to work for the railways.

The Black Africans contributed to the railway programme both as workers and travellers, which culminated in a tension ‘from below’ discussed in Chapter Two.

1.2.1 Cheap Labour

Understood by way of Foucault’s affirmation, that infrastructures reflect market economy and progress,38 the cheap labour system based on migrancy fuelled the railway construction and operation that evolved from Sprigg’s native policy attempts through Rhodes’ insatiable mercantile appetite.39 The shortfall of available unskilled labour forced the Cape Government to import Black Africans from East London. Despite the fact that Alfred Mangena represented

38 See Larkin, p.332: ‘Infrastructures were integral to the organization of a market economy and the concept of progress that was central to liberalism’, also see Foucault 2011.
39 Interview with Peter Coates; also CA-PWD 2/762: memoranda 1886-1903.
the black workers and complained about the misconduct on the part of the government, the workers received no compensation for transportation costs from East London.\(^{40}\)

Relying on Lefebvre’s argument that modern technology and capitalism produced marginalisation and social inequalities,\(^{41}\) as well as on Perlman explaining that marginalisation is the phenomenon resulting from economic exploitation and the deprived struggle,\(^{42}\) the results of the cheap labour were indeed overcrowding, marginalisation, urban segregation and unemployment, and the railway continuously remaining understaffed due to short-term contracts.

Overcrowding occurred after the South African War, when the railways served to evacuate the Afrikaners from Johannesburg to Cape Town.\(^{43}\) Poor living conditions of the migrant railway workers and deprivation of sanitary conditions led to marginalisation. Ultimately, this brought about urban segregation when the government responded to the 1901 outbreak of the plague with urban racial legislation for the first time in 1902. Black Africans were displaced to Ndabeni.\(^{44}\) In order to maintain progress in the railway construction, the Cape Government Railways exploited the Black Africans as much as possible. In 1903, the railway workers’ workdays exceeded those of the harbour workers, while being paid less than the latter. Because an increasing number of people were imported from East London, Cape Town remained overcrowded and by 1904 the native location in Ndabeni was full. There was a proposal to move Black Africans to a location near the docks.\(^{45}\) In 1908, Cape Town remained overcrowded, however; at the same time, the Cape Government Railways – despite worker influx – continued to be understaffed.\(^{46}\)

Keeping in mind the economic theories of Francis Fukuyama, who asserts that free market capitalism and consumerism point to ‘the end of history’ – the end of humanity's

\(^{40}\) CA-CHB 262: labour, ships with natives from East London in 1901 & 1902.

\(^{41}\) See Lefebvre, The Right to the City, 1976.

\(^{42}\) See Dean, Review on: The Myth of Marginality, 1977 by Perlman, pp.567-569.

\(^{43}\) Interview with Vivian Bickford-Smith on the role of railways during the Boer War.

\(^{44}\) See Bickford-Smith, The Emergence of the South African Metropolis, 2016.

\(^{45}\) CA-CHB 268: working conditions in 1903.

\(^{46}\) CA-CGR 11/5/2 Chief Traffic Manager in 1908 on railways being understaffed.
sociocultural evolution\(^{47}\) – it is thus fair to conclude that in railway planning and construction aided by the cheap labour system the aspect of humanity was left out.\(^{48}\)

### 1.2.2 Native Travellers

Another economic factor, to which the annual reports of the General Manager of Railways referred was the Cape Government Railways’ decision to deploy the ‘native travellers’ in the financial programme of the railways, because they represented the majority of passengers. The mass contributed to a stable annual income for the company through the purchase of a large number of low fares. Thus, the CGR encouraged them to travel and invested in the upgrading of their accommodation on board in the third-class carriages.

Referring to Mike Davis’ book, *Planet of Slums*, in which he draws attention to the policy framework of Structural Adjustment Programmes that, through privatisation embody the free-market competition,\(^{49}\) the railway company in Cape Town sought to sell as many tickets as possible to remain competitive. The concept of travelling with two travel classes, which operated in Great Britain at the time, was deemed inappropriate by the General Manager of Railways of the Cape. The abolition of the second class on the Cape railways, to adapt the trains to English standards, was discussed but this would have meant not only an increase in the price of the third-class tickets and loss of native travellers but, a decrease in the price of first-class tickets. It was in the interest of the CGR to keep the fares of the third-class as affordable as possible so that greater numbers of eligible passengers could continue to fuel this economy without disruption and increase of wages.\(^{50}\)

The treatment of passengers travelling by train and their accommodation on trains and at stations during their journey suggests that the Black Africans were disadvantaged but also used the train for their own needs and mobility. For example, in the 1890s there were no

\(^{47}\) See Fukuyama F. The End of History and The Last Man, 1992.

\(^{48}\) Interview with anthropologist Francis Nyamnjoh on Rhodes Must Fall. Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa


\(^{50}\) UCT, Government Publications, Annual Reports of the General Manager of Railways (1890-1908): 1891 and 1893 on railway traffic and abolition of the second class, 1894 discourse of two classes and experience of travelling, 1896: reaction to third class passengers and native travelling.
dining cars on trains and food was served in compartments in the first and second class.\textsuperscript{51} Third-class travellers had to take their own food on board due to the lack of facilities for refreshments for them. They could obtain sandwiches through a window of the refreshment rooms but in the 1900s were not allowed to enter these rooms. If they wished to be served other food, needed permission from the refreshment manager.\textsuperscript{52}

Furthermore, at the turn of the century there was a lack of waiting rooms for natives at all of the railway stations and the overcrowded third-class carriages did not have seating or lavatories; sometimes these were cattle trucks. At the recommendation of the Chief Manager in 1898, an upgrade at all stations was instituted, which entailed the building of sheds and latrines – a substantial improvement with respect to the comfort of natives and Coloured passengers; this stipulation also included the addition of sanitary accommodations at the tail ends of trains.\textsuperscript{53}

As a result, Black Africans represented an economic resource in sustaining the railway operation, while availing themselves of the access to transportation despite informal discrimination. From this position, those individuals who resisted the injustice generated intellectual and social networks to share frustration about the railways.

\subsection{1.3 Conclusion}

This chapter has explored two decisions made within the political discourse on railways by the Cape Government: first, restricted land ownership to ensure control over the land development; second, the deployment of Black Africans in the economy of the railway development and operation.

According to Foucault’s assertion that the government has interests to control \textit{everything},\textsuperscript{54} land ownership was its mechanism for railway-building at the regional as well as local level. In Chapter Three, I show how this political framework of restricted land ownership transformed...

\textsuperscript{51} See Green, 1972, p.7: description of diner cars and rear carriage of goods guard.
\textsuperscript{52} CA-PWD 2/763: Legislative council, August 1892.
\textsuperscript{53} CA-PWD 2/762 Resolutions passed by the Native Congress at Kubusi, Stutterheim, 5 and 6 April 1898; House of Assembly on Native Congress of King’s Williams Town.
\textsuperscript{54} See Foucault, 2011.
the Cape Government Railways into a resource for resistance ‘from above’ to the competition with public authorities and private transport companies.

To paraphrase Benjamin, we are subjects of techno-politics due to the way in which we engage with infrastructure. Because of frustrations originating in the cheap labour system introduced by Rhodes, and because of the ability of the black community to access the railway as travellers, the Cape Government Railway in Cape Town became a resource for resistance ‘from below’ to the consequences of this economic narrative: overcrowding, unemployment and marginalisation. In Chapter Two, I show which of the resistance infrastructures determined the impetus of black empowerment against the colonial government.
2 RAILWAY OPERATION AS RESOURCE FOR RESISTANCE INFRASTRUCTURES

‘I wish to extend the notion of infrastructure directly to people’s activities in the city. African cities are characterized by incessantly flexible, mobile, and provisional intersections of residents that operate without clearly delineated notions of how the city is to be inhabited and used. These intersections, particularly in the last two decades, have depended on the ability of residents to engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices. These conjunctions become an infrastructure – a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city.’55

This chapter explores the resistance infrastructures resulting from the legislation for railway development and operation of the CGR in Cape Town, which defined the CGR as an agent for resistance ‘from below’. I argue that unanswered complaints concerning the lack of humane treatment and social decay because of the informal segregation on trains and at stations on the Cape Town-Bellville railway line (part of the Northern line managed by the Cape Government Railways) contributed to frustration. Even though marginalised peoples were disadvantaged with respect to service, accommodation and travel experience, they were able to use the trains. To counteract social injustice social networks emerged within the African community that characterise, for example, the Coloured elites, the working class and the unemployed. These networks disrupted the regimented society of Cape Town.

2.1 Informal Segregation on Trains

Following Lefebvre’s assumption that modern technologies and capitalism produced marginalisation, and social inequalities, and that people tend to address their right to the city, as well as Perlman’s explanation of marginalisation suggesting that deprived people face difficulties in their struggle for social change, I build my argument on Larkin’s proposal to explore the reason of the mobilisation of infrastructure’s ‘(in)visibility’. Further, Benjamin’s assertion that infrastructure contains ‘the movement of history’ and is deeply charged with political emotions such as frustration, serves to reveal the ways in which the physical

55 See Simone, p.407.
infrastructure of the railway is known to have both infuriated and inspired the marginalised peoples.

Relying on the economic narrative of the railway programme described in the previous chapter, which defined the black community as exploited workers and third-class passengers, as evidence suggests, I argue that the marginalised peoples also enjoyed the disadvantaged access to mobility.56 By analysing different types of trains, I argue that the black community experienced informal discrimination, which entailed differences in service and accommodation on trains as well as spatial separation and inconveniently arranged time schedules at stations. Thus, according to Benjamin, the railway embodied, political feelings. I also reflect upon Larkin’s suggestion on the motivation of marginalised peoples in resisting this injustice.

Funeral trains show the obvious type of discrimination through travel time and distance. The cemetery was located in Maitland, with a section for whites and another for natives one stop further. Thus, because of the spatial sequence of stations, Black Africans were at a disadvantage. The train stopped for them at the last station, which was also the first station for the start of the return journey to Cape Town. As such, the departure time allowed mourners only a short amount of time at the cemetery.57

Sunday trains show a spatial disadvantage for the communities neighbouring the stations. The trains rendered the tramways less congested but served the same stations. Also, the Sunday trains brought white men to work on additional accommodation in the black community at Ndabeni – the first legalised urban segregation project from 1902. In 1903 Reverend Father Bull and Mdolomba complained to the government about working on Sundays. These trains affected the community because the development of the railways fuelled an open scandal about the increase of white labourers on Sundays in Cape Town. The construction site of the new huts in front of the Wesleyan Church was noisy during services in black churches (St. Cyprian’s and Wesleyan).58

56 Interview with Peter Coates: no racial regulation on trains before 1910; see also Pirie, 1992.
58 Ibid. CGR reports of the General Manager of Railways, 18 May 1898: need for more Sunday trains to counteract trams; same issue in newspaper Cape Argus: 29 November 1899; CA-PWD: 2/1/31: complaints re Sunday working
European mail ships arrived in the bay in Cape Town from where the mail was transported to Johannesburg via Cape Town’s main station. The mail trains started at the East Pier and operated monthly as additional coaches to the luxurious long-distance trains. The social impact related to the informal segregation on transportation was that the natives could travel from the docks to Cape Town’s main station but not on the long-distance trains. These trains used different platforms at Cape Town’s main station, where only passengers with expensive long-distance tickets could continue the journey, which implies a spatial segregation at Cape Town’s railway station.

It becomes evident, that the humane treatment was missing on trains and at stations of the Cape Town-Bellville line. Even though the black community was aware of discrimination through spatial disruptors and inconvenient time schedules it had little choice other than voicing futile complaints, in instituting positive change; consequently, they valued access to transportation. Thus, relying on Larkin’s suggestion to examine why ‘(in)visibility is mobilised’, the frustration from disadvantaged access to mobility is an indicator for the emergence of social networks for resisting this social injustice, in which the railway represented a resource of resistance ‘from below’.

2.2 Resistance Infrastructures ‘from below’

Taking into account Larkin’s affirmation that we need to look beyond the functionality of infrastructures to understand ‘how (in)visibility is mobilized’, my case study on the local level in Cape Town, explores types of such invisible networks absorbed by the physical railway. To define networks of alternative labour for survival or of claiming social rights, I refer to Benjamin who states that roads and railways embody emotions and they impact us not only

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of white men building huts in Ndabeni in letter by Reverends to the Assistant Resident Magistrate’s Office, The Secretary to the Native Affairs Department in Cape Town; correspondence between Chief Inspector of the Public Works Department, Native Affairs Department, From September to November 1903.

59 Interview with Charles Lewis on mail ships. The East Pier used two services from Rhodesia and ships from Port Elizabeth (because no deep water) until 1934.

60 See Larkin, p.336: ‘Invisibility is certainly one aspect of infrastructure, but it is only one and at the extreme edge of a range of visibilities that move from unseen to grand spectacles and everything in between. [...] The point is not to assert one or another status as an inherent condition of infrastructures but to examine how (in)visibility is mobilized and why.’
from a technopolitical perspective, but also ‘through this mobilization of affect’. Even pre-colonial African societies operated based on ideas of survival and social corporations. Thus, Simone’s notion people as infrastructure becomes appealing when studying the alternative forms of survival of the marginalised in African cities. To him, these consist of people connecting within the city to make a living, thus circumventing the socially-unjust political order. Anand claims instead that infrastructure has a dual role of being not only political technique but also providing opportunities for alternative labour networks around it that form their members into ‘citizens’ through their labour infrastructure. Moreover, geographer David Harvey notes that collective power can claim social justice. In order to do so, according to Hamilton, activists and leadership are indispensable.

I argue that the railway became a resource for resistance ‘from below’ because the black community claimed its right to the city in at least three ways in order to express their awareness of as well as to challenge injustice. The Coloured elite tackled political issues and formed its social network through the distribution of the South African Spectator newspaper

63 See Larkin, p.333: ‘Roads and railways are not just technical objects then but also operate on the level of fantasy and desire. They encode the dreams of individuals and societies and are the vehicles whereby those fantasies are transmitted and made emotionally real. […] for Benjamin, commodities, buildings, and streets contained within them the movement of history: They were embodiments of objective historical forces, but they simultaneously enter into our unconscious and hold sway over the imagination. They ‘form us as subjects not just on a technopolitical level but also through this mobilization of affect and the senses of desire, pride, and frustration, feelings which can be deeply political.’

62 See Kopytoff I. The African Frontier: The Reproduction of African Societies, 1987, p.24: ‘In brief, each person was attached to several latent groups of solidarity. Depending on the context, one expected support from each and offered it to each of them. In times of conflict, one tied to mobilize the support of the maximum contextually relevant group. Since traditional African societies were largely structures in terms of corporate groups, individual survival was possible only by being under the protective umbrella of one or another such group, and the larger and more powerful it was, the safer one was.’


64 See Larkin, p.331: ‘Anand’s ethnography draws together engineers, political fixers, slum dwellers, politicians, activists, and bureaucrats into a single system through the technical operation of water supply […] Slums without water engage dadas, powerful patrons who use their connections to pressure elected officials to provide infrastructural connection. In return, the dada rewards those representatives by delivering electoral support. In Anand’s analysis, essentially two infrastructural systems interact: water delivery, with its systems of pipes, engineers, and bureaucracy that make up the technical end of water provision (the aspect of infrastructural supply that constitutes the entire large-scale system for Hughes and others); and the social networks, forms of patron-clientship, and “phantatic labor” […] Infrastructure […] brings together these two differing conceptions of infrastructure not, in the final instance, to analyze water supply but to reveal the production of what he terms “hydraulic citizenship, a form of belonging to the city enabled by social and material claims made to the city’s water infrastructure”; see also Anand 2011, p. 545.

65 See Harvey D. 2008, p.23: ‘The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.’

across Cape Town. The black working class mobilised to protest political decisions on the Grand Parade. Unemployed became criminal gangs who undertook illegal ventures and spread from Woodstock and District Six in Cape Town, operating as an alternative to the regimented work they refused or could not find. These social infrastructures of resistance used the physical infrastructure of the railway. For this reason, I argue that the network for resistance came about at the same time and place as the colonial ventures, which means that they represented the reception of the railway management and operation ‘from below’.

2.2.1 The Black Elite and The South African Spectator

Lefebvre’s idea of *right to the city* and Gilian Hart’s notion of *relational comparison*, which imply that the deprived share experiences and rely on them to build networks to resist injustice,\(^{67}\) apply to the social infrastructure of resistance constructed by the black elite in Cape Town. Their infrastructure was employed through political leadership, which, according to Hamilton, can bring change or at least promote hope for change.

Empirical evidence reveals the role of the black press in exerting resistance to social control instituted by the railway built by Cecil Rhodes. Relying on Larkin’s appeal to explore how ‘(in)visibility’ mobilises, the ideas stipulated and solidified by the Pan-African newspaper *The South African Spectator* provisionally dissolved the physical infrastructure of the city. Railway stations became selling points and served the Pan-African network in Cape Town (see figure 5). The newspaper’s editor Peregrino constructed a socio-political infrastructure for the Coloured elite as a counterpart to the physical one, regimented by Rhodes in 1902 (see figure 6). Sites, advertised in the newspaper, operated as nodes of this network as people met crossing different districts within the city (see figure 7).

Figure 5: Front page of The South African Spectator.\textsuperscript{68}

![Image of South African Spectator]

\textsuperscript{68} SAS, December 6, 1902.

Figure 6: F.Z. Peregrino, the editor of SAS.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{69} thejournalist.org.za.
With reference to Simone,\textsuperscript{70} this network disrupted the physical infrastructure of Cape Town through the actions of groups of people and their knowledge-sharing to allow Lefebvre’s \textit{right to the city}, in this case, of the disadvantaged black community. This new spatial layer persisted in challenging the political order by creating a network of communal identity for survival. Referring to Hart, the black community connected to share experiences and to spread the word, for example, of cases in the United States of America where blacks had rights and better jobs.

This phenomenon occurred as a second layer in the same area, where the infrastructure contributing to the colonial economy was operating. To reinvent the social cohesion, heavily disturbed by resource extraction activities and the railway, people temporarily appropriated existing venues. Meeting regularly, members from different districts subverted the physical infrastructure.

\textsuperscript{70} See Simone, 2004.
infrastructure and organised a new infrastructure. Thus, Simone’s proposition is applicable in my case study on Cape Town, where social networks overpass boundaries and spread along the railway which in this sense became their resource for mobility in their resistance struggles ‘from below’.

### 2.2.2 The Working Class and Protests on The Grand Parade Square

Lefebvre argues that ‘the working class can become the agent, the social carrier and contest, by its very existence, the class strategy directed against it.’ Simone suggests that Africans circumvent the physical infrastructure of the city to claim their rights through new networks created by themselves for survival. Further, Benjamin noted that infrastructure shapes us on an emotional level; this resonates with Hart, who claims that marginalised peoples share experiences and networks based on feelings of frustration and represent the catalyst for marginalisation and the reception of the railway by the deprived and exploited working class.

Thus, the working class, employed in the railway development and consisting of Black Capetonians (Malays, Coloureds and Africans), started emancipating through oral sources and black poetry on trains from the early 1870s. More poems were produced to describe the resignation of working on trains in the late 1890s, ‘how they scar my own native land’. These manifestations of frustration increased in momentum during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) when the work force in the railway management and operation was needed to

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71 Pupeza V. How the Pan-African newspaper The South African Spectator served the black elite in exerting resistance to social control resulting from the railway operation in Cape Town in 1902, abstract of essay submitted as content of the MPhil.
72 See Simone, 2004: People as Infrastructure; how Africans in Johannesburg create alternative networks.
73 See Lefebvre; Writing on cities, p.158: The right to the city [...] can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life. It does not matter whether the urban fabric encloses the countryside and what survives of peasant life, as long as the ‘urban’, place of encounter, priority of use value, inscription in space of a time promoted to the rank of a supreme resource among all resources, finds its morphological base and its practico-material realization. Which assumes an integrated theory of the city and urban society, using the resources of science and art. Only the working class can become the agent the social carrier and contest, by its very existence, the class strategy directed against it.’
75 See Larkin, p.333, reference to Benjamin: ‘mobilization of affect’.
77 See Bickford-Smith, Ethnic pride and racial prejudice, p.70.
78 See Bleek/Lloyd collection ‘Specimens of Bushman Folklore’, 1911, pp. 290-298.
carry on railway constructions. In 1901, these manifestations of feelings about their relocation outside the city, to which the government responded with the first urban segregation act – The Native Location Act – in 1902, took place on the Grand Parade Square (see figure 8). The black community was represented by Alfred Mangena, their secretary in the Native Affairs Office, who led the protest (see figure 9). These kinds of black consciousness movements were rare, and when they took place they were interrupted and not addressed in favour of the activists (see figure 10).

Figure 8: Map of the Grand Parade.81

80 See Wright, Railway Poems during the Anglo-Boer War, 2018.
81 See Picard, Grand Parade, 1969.
This network of people fighting to resist the harsh working and unjust living conditions concentrated on the central Grand Parade Square, in proximity to Cape Town’s main railway station (see figure 11). The Parade was significant as a setting for economic prosperity and, at the same time, for protests against social injustice consequent to the railway operation in the early 1900s and a testimony of the presence of both the Victorian elite and the resistance to urban planning by the marginalised peoples. The railway implementation facilitated not only

\[82\] See Bickford-Smith, Ndabeni: first forced removal, 1987; Image shown in the movie.

\[83\] Ibid. Image shown in the movie.
the colony’s economy but the transformation of the prominent Parade. The location and buildings on the Grand Parade as well as the events reflected both ‘Britishness’ and social exclusion, marginalisation, in a class-biased society (see figure 12). On the one hand, the City Hall, built in 1905 represents the defeat of the Afrikaners in the Boer war. The urban transformations of the Parade, on the other hand, serve to better understand the evolution of marginalisation in Cape Town. Even though there were no direct architectural imprints the marginalised peoples (who according to Perlman’s view, struggle for social change) achieved urban changes through resistance and urban memory (see figure 13).84

Figure 11: Photograph of the Parade with platforms and brick wall.85

Figure 12: Photograph of the Parade from Post Office c.1906.86

84 See Pupeza, How railway operation transformed Cape Town’s Grand Parade Square into a setting for British identification and for marginalised peoples’ protests at the dawn of the nineteenth century; unpublished, abstract of essay submitted on 15 April 2019 in my MPhil.
85 CA-AG Collection 12862.
86 CA-Elliott Collection 9358.
The upshot of these protests was the repeal of the Masters and Servants Act at the end of the 1900s. Following the first protest, the working class continued protesting, for example, in 1908 against the wage reduction of railway workers at Salt River. At the turn of the twentieth century, the song *Shozoloza* was sung by the workers on their way to the mines and expressed their hardship. They continued to unify, resist, share and build a resistance network through protests and poetry in the following decades. An early Black African poet B.W. Vilakazi wrote the poem *Woza Nonjinjikazi* in the 1930s to encourage resistance to the ‘iron monster’ and was followed by the first song by Hugh Masekela *Stimela* (in Zulu: the coal train) which described the everyday life experience of railway workers in the 1970s. These songs and poems unified the railway infrastructure with the sufferance of the people; consequently,
Larkin’s proposition that infrastructure embodies also ‘mobilization of affect’ applies. The cause of these protests and feelings were the CGR and thus, the railways became resource for resistance ‘from below’ mobilising masses of people on the Grand Parade ever since the protest in 1901 (see figure 7).

2.2.3 The Unemployed and Crime

Relying on Anand’s duality of infrastructure railways did not only shape the black community on a techno-political level, but they represented an opportunity for alternative, illegal jobs. In contrast to the previous section, which follows Simone’s proposition that people circumvent the physical infrastructure of railways to make a living, Anand suggests that they use the existing infrastructure to make their own alternative one. In this section I show another way of how, with regard to Benjamin, the (in)visibility of infrastructure is mobilised.

After the Anglo-Boer War, unemployed Black Africans went to Cape Town and found that robberies and crime were an alternative way to circumvent unemployment resulting from the political situation of the railways. Those who suffered most as a result of the war were the lumpenproletariat in the rural areas. They represented the poor unemployed in the early 1900s. The criminals came by train from the diamond and gold fields in the Rand to Cape Town. The city became the national centre of crime because of the railways that brought and connected these suffering, unemployed people, who protested against the authorities, to town.

Once again Simone’s proposition that Africans circumvent the regimented work order imposed by the railways is relevant. Eric Hobsbawm and Charles van Onselen talk about the phenomenon of crime on trains. There are social and anti-social bandits, constituting networks of activists, landless people, who inside these networks are seen as heroes who fight

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92 See van Onselen, Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914, 1982, p.195: ‘industrial revolution that engulfed in southern Africa after the discovery of diamonds and golf there was a particularly rapid succession of social formations. In the midst of these traumatic changes there was no time for the landless to linger in the countryside. Those suffering most acutely from the ravages of proletarianization were swept into the migrant labour system and carried to the cities and compounds. [...] living [...] on the margins of industrial society, they were transformed into essentially urban gangs.’ [...] ‘these lumpenproletarian groups struck at the most vulnerable members of the industrialising system – the black migrant workers making their way home with wages.’

93 See Bickford-Smith, Cape Town in the twentieth century, 1999, pp.39-40.
for justice.\textsuperscript{94} Bandits are activists and banditry represents a ‘form of self-help to escape it [society] in particular circumstances’.\textsuperscript{95} Hobsbawm differentiates between social and anti-social banditry. Social bandits are reformers who become a symbol of resistance ‘against the forces which disrupt and destroy it’. Banditry can change society if it takes momentum to a larger scale.\textsuperscript{96}

Relying on Anand’s \textit{duality of infrastructure}, for example, in the 1880s a Cape Town station personality was a Malay known as Ou Dapat who made an informal living using the train. While vendors sold their fruit, sweets or newspapers and men polished their shoes, he was known by all shopkeepers in Cape Town and farmers took advantage of his shopping knowledge. He took early trains to travel far to his customers, the farmers living in Orange River. He recommended, for instance, R.M. Ross the hardware merchants at the corner of Strand or St. George Street, doctors or attorneys on a commission from shopkeepers, hotels or boarding-houses, such as Madeira House in Stal Plein. However, in the long-term with the impressive halls and platforms of the railway station such characters could not make a living.\textsuperscript{97}

In contrast, in the 1900s theft, drug and liquor dealing, gambling and prostitution happened in the frame of gangs, secretly tied together through.\textsuperscript{98} These gangs showed disrespect to authority through their organisation, language and appearance. Crime occurred on the streets, and in restaurants, trains and hotels. Police were bribed and were hand in glove with the criminals. However, while the appearance of these gangs was closely related to (the dysfunction of) railway development, they were also making use of the railway.

\textsuperscript{94} See Hobsbawm E. Bandits, 2001, p.20: ‘The point about social bandits is that they are peasant outlaws whom the lord and state regard as criminals, but who remain within peasant society, and are considered by their people as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported.’

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid. p.29: ‘Banditry itself is therefore not a programme for peasant society but a form of self-help to escape it in particular circumstances. Bandits, except for their willingness or capacity to refuse individual submission, have no ideas other than those of the peasantry […] of which they form a part. They are activists and not ideologists or prophets from whom novel visions or plans of social and political organizations are to be expected.’

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid. pp.30-31; ‘social bandits are reformers, not revolutionaries. … however, turn this modest, if violent, social objective of bandits – and the peasantry to whom they belong – into genuine revolutionary movements. […] it [banditry] becomes the symbol, even if spearhead, of resistance by the whole of the traditional order against the forces which disrupt and destroy it. A social revolution is no less revolutionary because it takes place in the name of what the outside world considers ‘reaction’ against what it considers ‘progress’. … p.33: ‘When banditry thus merge into a large movement, it becomes part of a force which can and does change society.’

\textsuperscript{97} See Green, pp.8-9.

\textsuperscript{98} See Pinnock, Gangs in Cape Town after 1994, p.44: ‘Nothing binds a group so tightly as a closely held secret’.
The Rough gang in Woodstock operated in the 1900s. Coloured gangs operated in District Six where living conditions were bad and it was overcrowded. The Hannover Street Burglars Club was active in Hannover Street, another one called the ‘Malay mob’ in Harrington Street, another one worked in Buitenkant Street with hijack vans and the Steal Club met outside a hotel to play music. Prostitution and gambling took place in 40 Caledon Street, in a restaurant, and in 40 Primrose Street in a gaming house.99

Beaufort West became the drug dealing hub on the Cape Town – Kimberley railway path.100 Possibly, the way in which these drugs were transported from the port of Cape Town to the up-country dealers was on the same route as the original goods that were transported by train.

In conclusion, the lowest class, representing the poorest Black Africans and the unemployed after the war, could evade the harsh working conditions in the mines through crime in Cape Town, the city which became the one with the nationwide highest crime rate, from Woodstock to District Six, because the railway facilitated a resource for resistance to the lived realities ‘from below’ (see figure 7).

2.3 Conclusion

At a local scale within Cape Town, the physical infrastructure of the CGR (trains and stations on the Cape Town-Bellville railway) represented the manifestation of the black community through ‘mobilization of affect’, as Benjamin puts it, because of their feelings related to the hard work conditions and the disadvantaged travel experience on trains. Relying on Larkin’s theory, I show ‘how and why (in)visibility of infrastructure’ is mobilised. Thus, the railway became a resource for resistance ‘from below’ because it facilitated the emergence of alternative networks by using the infrastructure of the CGR. Marginalised peoples resisted the social injustice in order to claim Lefebvre’s concept the right to the city or made an alternative living, as Anand suggests.

99 See Bickford-Smith, Cape Town in the twentieth century, 1999, pp.39-44.
Informal segregation took shape by discriminating against passengers on different types of trains through spatial disruptors or inconvenient time schedules. Thus, following Larkin’s suggestion to examine why ‘(in)visibility is mobilised’, the frustration from disadvantaged access to mobility by trains is an indicator for the emergence of social networks for resisting this social injustice, in which the railway represented a resource for resistance ‘from below’.

To examine how these infrastructures mobilised, I refer to different types of social networks within the African community, for example, the Coloured elites, the working class and the unemployed, relying on Simone’s concept *people as infrastructure*. Spatially, these networks disrupt the regimented society of Cape Town and of its neighbouring municipalities. They developed at the same time and place as the main imperial ventures in Cape Town. The cause of protests were feelings related to the CGR and thus, the railways mobilised the Coloured elites to promote resistance and the working class on the Grand Parade ever since the protest in 1901. By establishing gangs the lowest class could evade from the harsh working conditions in the mines through crime in Cape Town, where the *(in)visible* representants operated across the city from Woodstock to District Six.
3 MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

‘Foucault argues, power is everywhere and is closely tied up with existing forms of domination, repression and constraint. As he puts it, ‘humanity does not start out from freedom but from limitation’. Not only do we start out from limitation, but we cannot fully escape the social power relations and positions of relative power that characterize human existence. We can, however, resist them; in fact, according to Foucault, power always produces resistance in one form or another. As we better understand how existing power relations dominate and repress us, we begin to see the ‘possibility of self-determination’ through this resistance.’

This chapter argues that the government used the Cape Government Railways (CGR) not primarily to decongest Cape Town, but rather as a resource for resistance ‘from above’ to the interest in urbanisation of public authorities and other private transportation companies. At a local scale, I discuss the intention of the CGR to control, first, the land development in the municipality of Woodstock, and second, the techno-politics of the CGR in the competition with other suburban railway lines and tramway companies regarding different developmental goals.

3.1 Domination of Land Development in Woodstock

According to political theorist Lawrence Hamilton, Foucault seeks to tackle the status of heterogeneity – the power relations between individuals and institutions which ‘enable and disable individuals’ in their actions. The exercise of power by public authorities, indeed, defined the position of the CGR in the Cape Government. In order to prevent land use for other parties, the government deployed the CGR to contest and dominate the land in Woodstock for the railway programme. Relying on Larkin, I aim to determine the ways in

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102 Ibid. p.481: ‘Montaigne, Nietzsche and Foucault are the most sensitive to the inter-relations between freedom, resistance, discipline, power and empowerment in human action. This is because they are concerned to identify the power relations – roles, institutions, practices – and individual powers that enable and disable individuals to carry out intended tasks.’; see also Foucault, 2011, lecture 2 on English utilitarianism: the question of limiting the exercise of power by public authorities, liberalism and the implementation of a new art of government in the 18th c. The nature of political critique of knowledge (savoir), status of heterogeneity.
which and the purpose for which the visibility of infrastructure mobilises.\textsuperscript{103} Thus, I reveal how the development of the physical railway infrastructure became to dominate the shore area at Woodstock for railway-related facilities. Further, from an anthropological point of view, Claudia Gastrow’s analysis departs from the materiality of African urbanism in Angola, which opens ground for political contestation and shapes urban experiences.\textsuperscript{104} Aihwa Ong states that areas with large buildings embody the state’s sovereign power on an international level.\textsuperscript{105} I claim that the visibility of the railway-related infrastructure of the CGR with tracks and buildings represented the physical manifestation of the political decisions of the Cape Government in the early 1900s.

At a local level, applying Foucault’s affirmation on the exercise of power by public authorities, I study land contestation in the Municipality of Woodstock, which owes its existence to railway-facilities like the depot for carriages and the Salt River Locomotive Workshops that served all trains operating toward Johannesburg via Wellington departing from Cape Town.\textsuperscript{106}

The land along the shore line of the Table Bay was owned by the Cape Government and the General Manager of Railways discussed its development with the neighbouring municipality of Maitland, the Cape Harbour Board, the Chief Traffic Manager and the Public Works Department, as well as with different speculators. Despite their different interests from those of the CGR, in the following I show three examples of power relations in which the CGR successfully protected the interest of the government in land development to benefit the railway programme.

First, in a meeting in January 1903, the CGR did not approve building lots on the Old Salt River Outspan for grazing in the Maitland Municipality, a neighbouring area to the Woodstock municipality. The railway department would only accept and recommend the application of the Town Councillor of Maitland to the government if the land usage was for development of the railway programme in Maitland. The Municipality of Maitland sought to use the strip of land close to the shore for ‘health purposes’ (see figure 14).\textsuperscript{107} In a meeting in February 1903,  

\textsuperscript{103} See Larkin, p.336: ‘The point is [...] to examine how (in)visibility is mobilized and why.’
\textsuperscript{104} See Gastrow, 2017, p.379: ‘Urban aesthetics are an unstable ground for both complicity and dissent, a site for the opening of political contestation.’
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, p.378: ‘the capacity of the state to perform its sovereign power on an international stage’; see also Ong A. Hyperbuilding: Spectacle, speculation, and the hyperspace of sovereignty, 2011 (cited by Gastrow, 2017).
\textsuperscript{106} Interview with Charles Lewis: Salt River Workshops developed from 1859 because of the railway operation.
\textsuperscript{107} CA-CGR minutes 1902-1904; memorandum of meeting from 8 January 1903 at the Municipality of Maitland.
the General Manager of Railways encouraged town traffic to construct the Dock Road from Cape Town towards Woodstock and asked for permission to use more land owned by the Harbour Board, reclaiming land in Maitland and Salt River. The CGR wanted to prevent the Council from assuming possession of the other side of the road because he wanted to erect large stores along the seaside road.108

Secondly, there was a conflict not only on municipal level between the Municipality of Woodstock and the Municipality of Maitland but from the late 1880s the urban strip at Woodstock developed through speculators because of access to tramways and the railway. The Public Works Department in charge for the maintenance of infrastructure kept the roads in Woodstock in bad condition probably because they wanted to favour the tram and railway traffic.110 This gave an opportunity to speculators, who started their business and advertised on land properties in Woodstock111 – previously the village of Papendorp and from 1885 named Woodstock112 (see figure 15). For example, the Melbourne Terrace row houses still

108 CA-CRG minutes 21 February 1903: Sprigg, the Commissioner, the Mayor, General Manager of Railways.
110 See Coates, Companion to Track and Trackless: Cape Argus, 4 August 1892: Woodstock roads kept bad, traffic runs on tramways.
111 Interview with Peter Coates: Municipality of Salt River residential areas since 1880s; large properties first.
exist today (see figure 16). Despite the fact that less building lots for residential areas were advertised in the area of Salt River (part of the Woodstock Municipality) by the turn of the twentieth century Salt River was changed by speculators into a less desirable suburb (see figure 17).

Figure 15: Advertisement for developments 1881.113

Figure 16: The Melbourne Terrace in Woodstock.114

113 Cape Argus, 22 November 1881, advertisement of speculators.
114 CA-The Woodstock Whisperer, p.32: Melbourne Terrace, houses built by speculators; is a single-storey terrace of seven units with cast-iron verandas and is an example for typical developments of the Woodstock area, ground
As speculators continued pursuing their goal so did the CGR continue to contest land and successfully impose their power on a development for railway-related facilities. The surrounding municipalities along the railway line, the Municipality of Woodstock with its depot for carriages and the Salt River Locomotive Workshops and the Municipality of Bellville with the locomotive depot represent a proof for what Larkin suggests to study – how and why this infrastructure became visible – representing the materialisation of the contestation of land for railway-related facilities (see figure 18). In 1903, Mr J Harrop Chair, the caretaker of the Salt River Railway Institute, acknowledged the bad conditions in which a great number of workers laboured in overcrowded spaces, which instigated their disloyalty at work, and he asked for a new building. At Salt River there was mainly white skilled labour and hard labour was performed by Black Africans. Referring to Gastrow’s affirmation that African urbanism represents political contestation, the Municipality of Woodstock became the mechanism of the railway which served all local and up-country trains to the gold fields in Rand and because it managed the land development around the Salt River Workshops (see figure 19).

Figure 17: Salt River c.1900.115

116 CA-CRG minutes 1903: Salt River and Woodstock: complaints about labourers’ accommodations in Memorandum of 28 September 1903 by Mr J Harrop Chair of Salt River Railway Institute; CA-PWD 2/323: Letters received 1900-1904 on disloyalty of Salt River workmen.
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Figure 18: Four plans showing the railway-related development in Woodstock in 1878\textsuperscript{118}, 1891\textsuperscript{119}, 1901\textsuperscript{120} and 1909.\textsuperscript{121}

Figure 19: Evolution of the Salt River railway station from 1874 to 1886 to 1910.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{118} Map based on an extract of a map from Coates, Track and Trackless, 1878.
\textsuperscript{119} Map based on an extract UCT Digital Library’s Sewage map from 1891
\textsuperscript{120} Map based on an extract of the Cape Town Division map CA-Cape Division 1901
\textsuperscript{121} Map based on Municipality plan of Woodstock ,CA M3/369, see also CA-CGR 15/15/1.
Another developmental measure of the CGR was the land economy of the company and the goal of paying less tax through restrictions of service and reduction of salaries of railway workers in order to fulfil the interest of the government in controlling railway-related land development.

For example, even though the land was meant for the railway development, the CGR decided upon the buildings to be built, according to the expected profit. In 1904, a conflict between the CGR, the municipality of Woodstock and the contractors originated in the municipal authorities in Woodstock being against accommodation for goods at stations. Contractors complained to the CGR about the lack of facilities to accommodate their goods, however the CGR restricted this service wanting to use all trucks and by allowing accommodation of goods the railways would do less trips. So, they were against this development because there was congestion in Cape Town which caused delay in traffic. Yet, in the annual reports extensive funds were approved for accommodation.123

Also, in 1908 the government assessed two options of legislation of taxation based on Merriman’s Bill (1899), renewed in Act 63 (1904),124 to empower the CGR over other companies through land property. The Income Bill assessed the income derived from ownership – the profit on the land companies occupied for their businesses.125 Because the Income Bill resulted in being unfavourable for the CGR, who refused to pay the taxes, the government opted for the Retrenchment Bill to reduce the salaries of civil servants by 5% in May. The South African Party, who suggested these bills, wanted to tax the natives, the poorest, however the opposition suggested putting taxes on land.126 Two months later at Salt River Woodstock experienced major strikes on taxations and lower incomes initiated by workers in the fixed establishment at Salt River who were forced to work less.127 Thus, the company made more earnings through the land development and the government collected money from salary taxation. What was beneficial for the promotion of the railway programme and to related land development came at the cost of the poorest.

123 CA-CGR minutes 1902-1904.
124 CA-CGR 11/5/2 newspaper cuttings: Friday, 7 August 1908, South African News.
125 Ibid. Cape Times, 7 August 1908.
127 Ibid. Cape Times, 22 July 1908.
In conclusion, these three measures underpin Foucault’s ‘state of domination’ and how the CGR contested land development in the Municipality of Woodstock in the discourse with other neighbouring municipalities, public authorities and speculators for railway facilities in the interest of the government. Thus, the CGR represented the resource of resistance ‘from above’ of the government in these power relations.

3.2 The Railway: Resource for Resistance ‘from above’

According to Hamilton, who invokes Foucault’s assertion that power relations between the state and the private are heterogenous and determine inseparable forms of domination and limitation, power cannot be escaped but resisted because ‘power always produces resistance in one form or another’. Further, Hamilton argues that people are constrained in the context of power relations. Thus, I project his affirmation on the people who managed the CGR to understand their ‘possibility of self-determination’ through resistance, out of which the railway company determined itself to resist pressure. The CGR resisted not only public authorities or institutions but diverse stakeholders in order to protect the interest of the government in the railway programme.128

The multi-layered conflict between the Cape Government Railways (CGR) and the private Sea Point Railway Company (SPRC) represents an example of self-determination by the CGR. The Government Railways opposed and gradually limited the power of other transport infrastructure (tramways, private railway companies and roads) moving beyond the conflict with public authorities or other municipalities. From an economic point of view, by including residents of the Green and Sea Point Municipality as customers of the CGR, the latter became a complex agent for resistance ‘from above’, because they controlled the competition on service with other transport infrastructures, to generate revenues on the government’s land themselves.

The Sea Point Railway Company (SPRC), registered in London, opened in the late nineteenth century after negotiations on whether a private company could keep the construction costs lower than the government for a railway line to substitute the congested collective tramways

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to Sea Point. The SPRC was managed by the Green and Sea Point Municipality to attract wealthier passengers on board, who previously travelled to the village of Sea Point by tramway. The competition between the CGR, the Tramway Company and the local SPRC, initiated because the Government Railways aimed to attract customers to make own profit on land owned by the government and to prevent investments by other private transportation. Within this conflict the CGR exerted its power gradually. The struggle of the two Municipalities of Cape Town and Green and Sea Point, responsible for the Tramway Company and for the SPRC, respectively, culminated in the closure of the Tramway Company. Subsequently, to widen the Dock Road in Cape Town that connected Woodstock to Salt River for railway facilities, in 1903, the General Manager of Railways considered removing one of the tracks belonging to the private Sea Point Railway Company. This implied moving the terminus of the SPR in Adderley Street in Cape Town further away from the goods station (see figure 20).

Finally, two years later, the CGR acquisitioned the SPRC.

From an economic point of view, when the CGR bought the SPRC it shifted the resistant Sea Point residents to become its customers. Originally, the SPRC’s policy relied on the residents...
of the Green and Sea Point Municipality paying shares to the SPRC according to the Metropolitan and Suburban Railway Company Act from 1889 which had authorised the Sea Point Railway. The municipalities of Cape Town and Green and Sea Point did not want to merge because the SPR operated to decongest the multi-ethnic trams and the Sea Point residents feared that easy access from Cape Town to Sea Point would allow rapid urbanisation, the loss of previously unrestricted shore access but also an increment in land price at Sea Point (see figure 21). Because through the operation of SPR the CGR experienced a loss of passengers, once the SPR was bought by the CGR, the Government Railways determined themselves to resist this obstacle in order to improve the company’s income by promoting railway traffic with a new ticket system on the CGR. Ordinary passengers with monthly tickets used the tram while the railway fares were more expensive and if someone did not want to pay the fare but to travel to Sea Point without trams they had no other choice unlike residents at Salt River who would use the already overcrowded railway. Not the goal but the result of this venture were racism and segregation.

![Figure 21: Sea Point community.](image)

132 Ibid. p.11: ‘the reason why the residents of Green Point and Sea Point have not themselves already taken up shares is that they have no faith in the scheme; this is erroneous, the explanation is that there are so many directly and indirectly interested in the Tramway Company that they evidently prefer being shaken and ‘pitched’ to and from on the tramcar rather than help to push on a system which will give superior comfort and convenience, and virtually bring Sea Point within easy access of Cape Town as is the Gardens’.

133 Ibid. p.125: ‘the municipality issued a notice saying that the regulations of the Town Council should limit the number of passengers that travel by car (it’s intended tramcars), and Tramway Company should prevent to carry more passengers than it is allowed; no other tickets than on board should be issued and discontinue books of tickets; at rush hour impossible to discriminate holders of books of tickets and ordinary passengers (native travellers on trains?), ‘those who lived on the Salt River side could take refuge in the already overcrowded Government railway carriages but the Sea Point people had the tramway or nothing.’ The Editor, 26 August 1901; 134 UL, Views b 502.90.1. c.1900, Cape Town and District.
Finally, the CGR determined itself to resist not only public authorities but also other transportation infrastructures in order to make own profit. By gradually limiting and finally closing the Tramway Company and by purchasing the Sea Point Railway Company in 1905 as well as by turning originally disinterested Sea Point residents in the Sea Point Railway into its own costumers, the CGR became an agent for resistance ‘from above’ to private companies to contest land profit for the government.\textsuperscript{135} The ticket fares system was not necessarily a goal of racial discrimination but rather it represented an economic measure taken by the CGR to resist the pressure resulting from the competition with other private transportation companies and to increase its own income through the ticket service on business developed on land owned by the government.

### 3.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed techno-political measures taken by the CGR on the local scale in Cape Town that are in accordance with Foucault’s ‘state of domination’. The CGR represented the resource of resistance ‘from above’ from the perspective of the government, because in an intricate system of power relations it contested land for the municipal development for railway-related facilities at Woodstock as well as it achieved land economy purposes responding to the competition with other private transportation companies.

Relying on Larkin’s suggestion to examine the visibility of infrastructure in its way of emergence and purpose, the development of railway-related facilities in Woodstock was the materialisation of the power relations in the contestation of land between the CGR, public authorities, the Municipality of Woodstock and speculators.

By purchasing the Sea Point Railway Company and forcing the originally unconvinced potential customers, the Sea Point residents, in using the line, the Government Railways determined themselves to resist through oppressing the Tramway Company in their service, and thus by forcing Sea Point residents in paying higher fares and becoming its customers.

\textsuperscript{135} Interview with Peter Coates: tramways vs railways: railway built as an upgrade to the situation, so people did not have to sit next to each other; see also Rhind p.183: tram vs train in 1907, first and third class, no second class on trams, pro-tram to benefit general public, competition of the tramway resulting in loss of Sea Point line.
4 CONCLUSION

This study provides arguments against the common point of view that the Cape Government Railways (CGR) stimulated segregation. Instead, the present study finds that the CGR operating in Cape Town at the turn of the twentieth century was a resource for resistance because the body contributed to social resistance infrastructures ‘from below’ and, at the same time, to the economic interest of the Cape Government in the contestation of land with private companies, ultimately aiming at railway-related land development ‘from above’.

The first chapter of this dissertation explored two decisions upon which the Cape Government shaped the political discourse in the legislation in South Africa within the dialectic between the British Empire and South Africa to benefit the development of the railway programme in Cape Town: first, restricted land ownership to ensure control over the land development; second, the deployment of Black Africans in the economy of the railway development and operation. According to Michel Foucault, the government operated with interests in a heterogeneous system of relations between public and private. Thus, land ownership was the government’s mechanism for railway-building at a regional and at a local scale. This political framework of restricted land ownership transformed the CGR into a resource for resistance ‘from above’ to the competition with public authorities and private transport companies. Relying on Walter Benjamin, we are subjects of techno-politics because of the infrastructure. Because of frustration originated in the rough work conditions within the cheap labour system introduced by Cecil Rhodes, and because of the ability of the black community to access the railway as travellers, the CGR in Cape Town became a resource for resistance ‘from below’ to consequences of this economic narrative: overcrowding, unemployment and marginalisation.

The second chapter examined at a local scale within Cape Town, the ‘mobilization of affect’, as Benjamin puts it, the feelings of the black community related to their employment and their disadvantaged travel experience on trains. Relying on Brian Larkin, I show ‘how and why (in)visibility of infrastructure’ is mobilised. Thus, the railway became a resource for resistance ‘from below’ because it facilitated the emergence of alternative networks to resist the social injustice or to make an alternative living, as Nikhil Anand suggests, by using the infrastructure of the CGR in order to claim Henri Lefebvre’s concept the right to the city. Informal segregation
took shape by discriminating against passengers on different types of trains through spatial disruptors or inconvenient time schedules. Thus, relying on Larkin’s suggestion to examine why ‘(in)visibility is mobilised’, the frustration from disadvantaged access to mobility by trains is an indicator for the emergence of social networks for resisting this social injustice, in which the railway represented a resource for resistance ‘from below’. Within the African community, relying on AbdouMaliq Simone’s concept *people as infrastructure*, for example, the Coloured elites built intellectual networks through the newspaper The South African Spectator; the working class organised protests on the Grand Parade Square; the unemployed built gangs and employed crime as a means of survival. Spatially, these networks disrupt the regimented society of Cape Town and its neighbouring municipalities. These networks developed at the same time and place as the main Victorian ventures in Cape Town. The cause of protests were feelings related to the CGR and thus, the railways mobilised the working class on the Parade ever since the protest in 1901. The lowest class could evade the harsh working conditions in the mines by establishing criminal gangs in Cape Town, where the *(in)visible* representants operated across the city from Woodstock to District Six.

Chapter three explored the power relations in the contestation of land development between the CGR and public authorities, neighbouring municipalities, private stakeholders and speculators on a local level in Cape Town. From the perspective of the government, the CGR represented the resource of resistance ‘from above’ for railway-related facilities on land owned by the government. To prove Foucault’s ‘state of domination’ and Anand’s affirmation that infrastructures have a technopolitical role, I gave two distinct examples. First, relying on Larkin’s suggestion to examine the visibility of infrastructure in its way of emergence and purpose, the municipal development for railway-related facilities in Woodstock was the materialisation of the power relations in the contestation of land between the CGR, public authorities, the Municipality of Woodstock and speculators. Secondly, referring to Foucault, power relations result in forms of resistance because they dominate and force us to the ‘possibility of self-determination’. As a result of power struggles with rival private transport companies, such as the Sea Point Railway Company or the Tramway Company, the CGR resist to this fierce competition through land economy purposes. By purchasing the Sea Point Railway Company and forcing the originally unconvinced potential customers, the Sea Point residents, in using the line, the CGR determined themselves to resist through oppressing the
Tramway Company in their service, and thus by forcing Sea Point residents to become customers and pay higher fares.

In light of most postcolonial scholars encouraging the acquisition of knowledge about the past while ‘growing out’ of colonial legacies, and with respect to the research gap on social history of South African infrastructure in early 1900s, my study served to better understand concepts about the physical infrastructure of railways that go beyond its functionality and reveal socio-political effects in the society ‘from below’. Thus, I challenged the argument that the South African railways were utilised as a tool for segregation by referring to their multi-layered nature and by emphasising the realities ‘from below’. In Foucault’s explanation of the intricate conflicts of intention and power domination by the government, Anand’s duality of infrastructures, Larkin’s call to examine ‘how and why (in)visibility is mobilised’, Benjamin’s ‘mobilization of affect’ and Simone’s concept of people as infrastructure, I ground my claim that the CGR operated more as an agent for resistance ‘from below’ as well as ‘from above’.

**RELEVANCE OF STUDY**

Why is such a study on Cecil Rhodes’ railway programme important today?

Oral histories, which uncovered that Cecil Rhodes’ legacies persist today, confirm the justification for my efforts in contributing to the historiography of the socio-political effects of the Cape Government Railways on Cape Town at the turn of the twentieth century.

My fieldwork on the platforms of seventeen railway stations of the Northern line operating from Cape Town toward Bellville and previous own travel experience on the same railway line gave me an opportunity to witness people’s behaviours at the stations, such as robberies or punishments for travelling without a ticket. Also, the transcriptions of fifty interviews with commuters, of which twelve percent talked about their families and were from sixty to eighty-nine of age, and with ticket office and general managers of the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA), which represent other twelve percent, and who also travelled by train, reflect the contemporary acute decay of the train management and the passenger services.
To my enquiry about their perception of physical urban transformations consequent to the railway operation, most interviewees, regardless of age or ethnicity, referred repeatedly to the lack of safety and reliability of trains – to the inherently missing human aspect. Their reactions were unexpected. Apparently, the spatial transformations did not concern them, and their experience of the journey focused on personal safety rather than on mobility.

Because postcolonial scholars encourage us to produce knowledge about the past and to grow out of colonial legacies, my study served to better understand the duality of infrastructures, their multi-layered nature and intricate conflicts of intention. Therefore, I give two examples illustrating the necessity to analyse the past in order to understand where contemporary issues originate.

First, I evoke a scene I witnessed and on an interview I conducted with one ticket office manager of PRASA. At a station, just before my interview in which the officer said this kind of practice is illegal today but was common early last century, one waiting room on the platform housed a crowd of people behind a closed and guarded lattice gate. Those people haven’t had paid their tickets and were caught and held at the station until they decided to pay. Some other stations also had small gated niches for a couple of passengers, while others have open waiting rooms re-functionalised to temporary prisons. (see figure 22a-c).

In addition to this kind of passenger treatment and experiences, one significant consequence for most travellers, who prefer travelling by train because it is the cheapest transportation, are delays which can jeopardise their jobs. Another one is being robbed by gangsters who live along the railway tracks and make a living from their prey, for instance, handphones.

Moreover, surprisingly a Black African suggested, as a potential improvement of the situation, that five Black Africans should be replaced with one white railway manager in the parliament. They also believed that during apartheid the trains operated more reliably and had safety guards both on platforms and at the stations, which also allowed travelling by night.

Second, private taxi companies compete with PRASA, the state-owned company, responsible for the passenger traffic and the maintenance of the stations and lines. To disrupt the passenger traffic on the railroad they engage in vandalism and steel communication tools, which obviously cause the deterioration of service and tremendous train delays. The tracks
and land are owned by Transnet, which is owned by the Department of Public Enterprises of the South African government. These power relations force passengers to use the more expensive transportation mean (see figure 22d-f).

Consequently, for example, taxi hubs make a separate business and there is no coordination among transport companies. This shows how important it is to understand the role of resistance of the CGR in the early 1900s when the CGR bought every private railway company and closed other transportation companies to ensure everyone uses the CGR railways. Now it is the other way around: the private taxi and bus companies control the public transport.

In conclusion, the present dissertation represents the groundwork for a further research on the social history of the South African railways at the turn of the twentieth century, intertwining both perspectives ‘from below’ and ‘from above’ on the reception of the railway. I aimed to understand how marginalised dealt with marginalisation resulting from the railway operation and how the government reacted to foster the railway operation, in order to engage in ways of social inclusion.
Figure 22: Contemporary photographs of Woodstock, Salt River and another station on the Cape Town-Bellville line kept anonymously for interviewees’ sake from March 22, 2019. a-c) Waiting room as temporary prisons: On the left we see the open waiting rooms, the overhead bridge, part of the original station, and the industrial silos at Salt River, elements which prove the urban transformation over more than 150 years. In the middle we see the bridge vendors making a living with stolen handphones from train passengers. On the left we see the temporary prison of a different station. d-f) No service at Woodstock: On the left from the overhead bridge, we see the Central Business District in Adderley Street and the Signal Hill. In the middle the only time table switched on that is, however, working and shows that all trains are delayed. On the right we see the landmark: red-brick brewery built in 1901.
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Mr. Peter Coates is an ex-librarian of the National Library of South Africa and is his 70s.

Urban historian Prof. Vivian Bickford-Smith teaches at the University of Stellenbosch and is an expert in Cape Town’s social history.

Personal conversation with anthropologist at UCT, Professor Francis Nyamnjoh.

Selection of anonymous interviewees on platforms: A 77-year old Coloured men was a former railway worker at Woodstock. A Cape Dutch descendant who works as a fisherman in Cape Town provided insight on his conservative education and was on his way to visit his 90-year old father. He assessed where mistakes related to multi-ethnicity might have been made. An Afrikaans-speaking male railway traveller in his mid-60s explained how he lost jobs because of the notorious train delays.

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