Settler Colonial Studies

ISSN: 2201-473X (Print) 1838-0743 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rset20

On permanency: rethinking settler colonialism in Algiers or Fanon's *lieu en ébullition*

Sheyda Aisha Khaymaz

To cite this article: Sheyda Aisha Khaymaz (18 Jul 2025): On permanency: rethinking settler colonialism in Algiers or Fanon's *lieu en ébullition*, Settler Colonial Studies, DOI: 10.1080/2201473X.2025.2535137

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2025.2535137

Published online: 18 Jul 2025.

SETTLER COLONIAL STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2025.2535137

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

On permanency: rethinking settler colonialism in Algiers or Fanon's *lieu en ébullition**

Sheyda Aisha Khaymaz

Department of Art and Art History, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, USA

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the potential offered by deploying a settler colonial critique in Algeria. Issues around sovereignty constitute its central topic, as I consider the following questions: What did sovereignty mean for Algerian Arab and Kabyle communities subsequent to independence? How has colonial urban design historically shaped – and continued to shape – power relations? Under the theoretical umbrella of Frantz Fanon's *lieu en ébullition* (boiling place), this paper analyses the mechanisms by which Algiers had become bifurcated by the 1950s and how urban architecture served not only as a tool that reified antagonistic colonial power relations, but also as a site where demands of sovereignty took tangible form. I consider the notion of permanency, both that of colonialism and urban architecture, to elucidate the role of the built environment in instituting an antithetical order of coloniser versus colonised. Following the scholarship on the built environment of colonial Algeria that has grown in recent decades, this work demonstrates that the seeds of alterity sown by the French architectural and urban practices persisted beyond independence, embedding spatial hierarchies that continue to shape lopsided power relations well into the twenty-first century.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 29 July 2024
Accepted 8 July 2025

KEYWORDS
Algiers; architecture; urbanism; amazigh; Indigenous sovereignty

132 years. That is the span Algeria spent under the direful shadow of colonisation – a chapter inaugurated when French boots first trod upon the soil of Algiers on 5 July 1830. This era carved unfading scars upon the city, not solely through overt acts of brutality and corporeal harm but also through more unobtrusive, yet no less malignant, modifications to its urban fabric. In the streets of Algiers, the modifications manifested as a systematic reimagining of space: traditional quarters demolished, thoroughfares widened for military control, and European-style buildings erected, all serving to create a visible hierarchy that would outlast colonial rule itself.

James McDougall[1] tells us that a binary lens, that is, Arab versus Amazigh, has dominated North African historical writing. This very framework, he offers, has served as a

CONTACT Sheyda Aisha Khaymaz sheyda.aisha.khaymaz@utexas.edu Department of Art and Art History, The University of Texas at Austin, 2301 San Jacinto Blvd, Stop D1300, Austin, TX 78712-1421, USA

*The article has benefitted greatly from the comments of Penelope Davies and her Fall 2022 cohort at the University of Texas at Austin. Previously, it was presented at the 2023 Art History Graduate Symposium at Florida State University, and I am grateful to the attendees for their comments and questions. I am also very thankful to Eddie Chambers for his editorial amendments, and the anonymous reviewers for their productive feedback and suggestions.

'ready mechanism' for analysing the multiple complexities – linguistic, cultural, and class-based – of Algerian society. This article walks a similar path. Not because the split between Arab and Amazigh tells the whole story of Algerian reality, but because examining how this division came to be helps us understand the nation's plurality, the many ways of being Algerian, and the many demands for sovereignty.

This paper explores the potential offered by deploying a settler colonial critique in Algeria. Issues around sovereignty constitute its central topic, as I consider the following questions: What did sovereignty mean for Arab Algerians and Indigenous Kabyle communities subsequent to independence? How has colonial urban design historically shaped – and continued to shape – these power relations? Drawing primarily on the theorisations of Frantz Fanon and Patrick Wolfe and recent scholarship on Algerian history, I analyse the mechanisms by which Algiers had come to be bifurcated by the 1950s and how urban architecture served as a tool that reified antagonistic colonial power relations. The article's emphasis on permanency – both colonial and architectural – provides insight into how the built environment established and maintained an antithetical order, one that divided people as well as space.

By deploying a settler-colonial critique to Algeria, I specifically mean holding Wolfe's analytical lens, one that is primed for Anglo-settler societies like Australia and North America, against the French colonisation of Algeria. Even as Wolfe himself never quite turned his gaze there, his framework offers three useful vectors of analysis: elimination of natives, colonialism as structure rather than finite event, and spatial segregation creating power dynamics that persist beyond occupation. Through this lens, we see how colonial spatial organisation fostered social stratification not just between Europeans and natives during French rule, but also between Arab and Amazigh communities after independence. Yes, exclusionary violence exists everywhere, and yes, Algeria has long been a palimpsest of interlopers. But there is something particular about how settler logics were mapped onto Algerian space in a fashion that foments a specific dichotomy – cleaving of urban spaces, displacement of rural populations, and later, an architectural grammar that encoded a new postcolonial identity – worked to cement a dichotomous logic. The material organisation of difference under colonial rule mobilised a chasm, effectively eliding the multi-diverse context of historic Algeria and reducing complexity to binary opposition. Here, space functioned simultaneously as the site where settler-colonial logics were ratified and as the mechanism itself that produced these very logics, operating in concrete and abstract dimensions that work in unison.

This concrete-abstract dialectic is key. As such, my analysis oscillates between apparently literal and metaphorical spatial treatments. Henri Lefebvre[2] repeatedly alluded to space as 'concrete abstraction', a phrase capturing the paradoxical way abstractions like exchange value, property rights, or mathematical calculations become tangible forces that organise physical space and social relations. Lefebvre's analytic[3] distinguishes 'representations of space' (the conceptualised space of planners, urbanists, and technocratic subdividers imposing official spatial organisation) from 'representational spaces' (space directly lived through associated images and symbols).

As I explore below, colonial Algiers exemplifies the former, where administrators align 'what is lived and perceived with what is conceived',[4] configuring a city that cemented European spatial ideologies. Post-independence contestations like the Berber Spring embody the latter – space overlaid with symbols as communities work to transform

and reclaim dominant spatial arrangements. The Amazigh flag hoisted in public squares – a subject I will revisit shortly – not only functions, then, as a symbolic gesture but also as a spatial practice that contests how physical space gets defined and controlled. I see the two as wreathed spatial politics: concrete environments manifest abstract ideologies of separation and hierarchy, while seemingly abstract cultural struggles produce concrete effects on how physical space is experienced.

And nowhere is this clearer than in what I call, following Fanon, *lieu en ébullition*. In 1962, on the heels of independence, Algerians faced a crossroads as they began navigating their newfound freedom. For political leaders and intellectuals of the time, the pursuit of independence represented more than simply gaining political sovereignty; it involved defining what it meant to be Algerian. The Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) leadership and cultural figures were thus driven by an intense longing, an imperative even, to establish a national culture, an identity they considered uniquely their own. This project, however, was neither uniform nor uncontested, as various communities within the new state held different visions of Algerianness.

This longing for an authentic national identity and the resultant tensions are foreshadowed by Fanon,[5] who wrote, 'The colonised intellectual who wants to do authentic work must know that the national truth is, first and foremost, the national reality. He must reach for the *boiling place* [*lieu en ebullition*] where knowledge is prefigured'. For Fanon, this *lieu en ébullition* was where authentic national culture surfaced through resistance and self-determination. Here, in this charged space, the story of a nation is not merely recorded but actively written by its people through the contingencies of the present. Yet we might also see it, I venture to argue, as a site where sovereignty itself took form – a space where different demands for autonomy were both defined and expressed. The *lieu en ébullition* will return in three distinct instances later in the discussion: the Algerian War of Independence, the Berber Spring, and the Black Spring.

Sovereignty's 'underpinning is spatial', I posit, echoing Lefebvre.[6] Space, as reiterated throughout, is simultaneously produced via social relations and produces those relations in turn. My exploration of *lieu en ébullition* extends this insight. When Fanon enjoined the colonised intellectual to 'reach for the boiling place where knowledge is prefigured', he recognised revolutionary consciousness does not surface in abstract thought alone but in embodied experiences of concrete spaces. *Lieux en ébullition* are then sites where power relations grow most intensely concentrated and contested. Algiers, for instance, became such a boiling place during the War of Independence precisely because its material organisation enabled forms of resistance inseparable from its physical structure.

I mobilise this concept to trace how certain sites – where colonial spatial hierarchies were simultaneously exposed and challenged – accumulate political energy through their spatial arrangements, thereby evolving from quotidian spaces into crucibles where new forms of sovereignty are engendered through embodied resistance practices. By focusing on these *lieux en ébullition*, I aim to show how spatial hierarchies established during colonisation continued influencing post-independence power dynamics.

'The colonisers come to stay' and 'settler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies', famously wrote Patrick Wolfe[7] in his oft-cited, formative title, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (1999), in which he postulated the settler's logic as eliminating the Indigenous. Suffice it to say, then, that the French arrived in Algiers with no intention to leave. The enduring architectural legacies of the

colonial era, too, corroborate this premise of permanency. The permanency of a thing exists not just in its physical presence, but in how it persists across time: It is fundamentally a temporal experience. This article, then, is equally as much about time as it is about space. When settlers arrived in Algeria, they did not just occupy space. They fractured time itself. Past, present, and future split apart, forced onto divergent paths. Remembrance, too, is thus foiled in postcolonial memory. But if time can be manipulated as easily as space, we then need to ask: What makes something truly permanent? Which, if any, facets of settler colonialism in Algeria can be considered permanent, and are they susceptible to challenge, change, or unequivocal rejection?

In a similar vein, Fanon[8] pointed out in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) that colonialism entails more than only the subjugation and suppression of colonised peoples; it also erases their cultural heritage and distorts, to a tremendous extent, their historical narrative. In this way, by distorting and devaluing precolonial history, colonial powers attempt to annihilate the past, a practice that amounts to, as Fanon had it, a perverse manipulation of logic. Below, I trace how the built environment became an instrument in this devaluation of a people's history.

Control through the built environment: the transformation of Algiers

Let us visualise a coastal capital resting atop the cerulean shores of the Mediterranean Sea, fractured by subtle (and later concrete) boundaries that carve through its heart, creating a labyrinth that divides communities as though sliced by a physical knife. The settler came here to stay, as just mentioned, with no ostensible intention to leave. The settler continued to live among the natives in a manner Fanon[9] characterised as peaceful coexistence, on which I will expound in due course. Yet, behind the smokescreen of this idyllic notion, the city was riven by architectural interventions designed to segregate the settler from the native population, who were made sure to be kept out of sight, confined to dwellings the French deemed unsightly.[10]

'L'Algérie, c'est la France', the French famously proclaimed throughout the colonial era, a statement that decidedly cast Algeria not as a far-flung colony but as an integral part of France itself – a home away from home, as it were (Figure 1). This was no simple rhetoric. With Algeria a *colonie de peuplement*, Algiers served as the capital to three French departments (Alger, Oran, and Constantine) administered by the Interior Ministry post-1848 revolution. When François Mitterrand,[11] as Interior Minister, spoke these same words in 1954 as Algerian independence fighters were rising, he was reinforcing a particular colonial delusion. The French settlers who made Algeria their home existed in a psychic environment distinct from those in other French African territories. They lived as if in France itself, unlike the white colonisers in 'black Africa', who, Denis MacShane[12] argues, remained conspicuous outsiders with little influence in Metropolitan France.

Within weeks of capturing Algiers in 1830, the French initiated a sweeping urban redevelopment strategy. 'The destruction was so fast, and so complete', André Raymond[13] writes, that in just two years the heart of Algiers lay in ruins. Not even sacred spaces were spared – the Jamaa as-Sayyida (Sayyida Mosque) fell with the rest of the central district. Beyond stamping the French power and presence on the city, colonial administration sought to reimagine Algiers with a resplendence that would mirror the modernisation efforts in Paris. One may very well dwell, then, on how Paris and Algiers

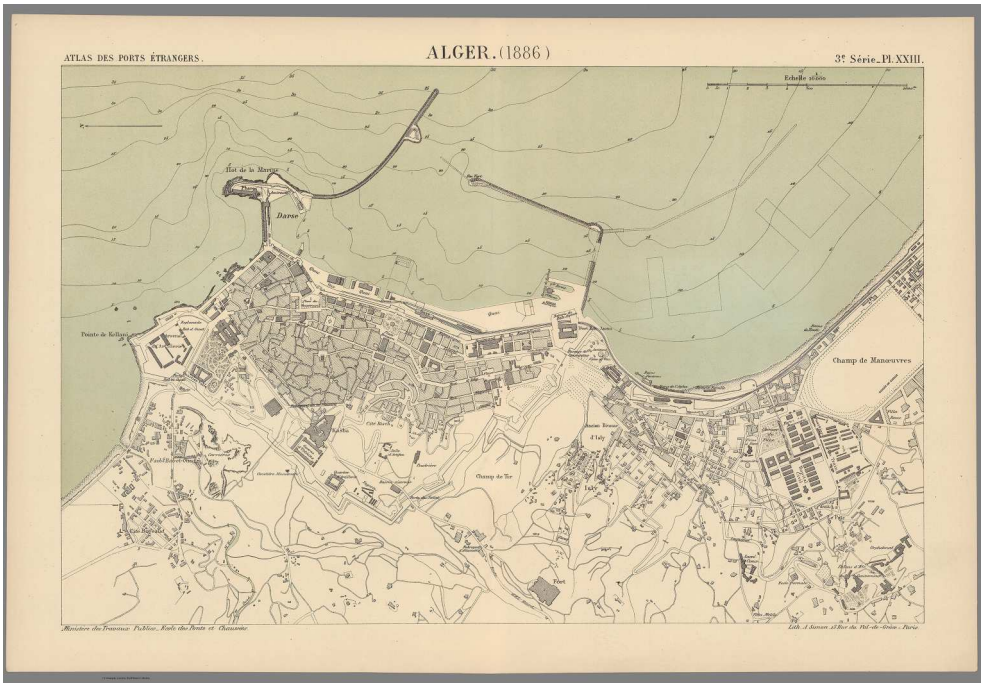

Figure 1. A Simon, *Map of Algiers*, 1886, engraving, 28 × 44 cm. (Photo: David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries).

were both remade in parallel. In Paris, Haussmann's project of 1853–70 tore through mediaeval neighbourhoods, imposed wide boulevards that facilitated military control, displaced the working class, standardised building façades, and so on. But our concern lies elsewhere, with colonial Algiers, where transformations cut to the heart of what it means to be made 'other'. The interventions here were not solely architectural; they rendered the indigenous city alien to itself, pushing its people to the margins of existence.

Algiers' natural topography allows for a physical bifurcation; that is, Algiers is what historian Greg Bankoff[14] would call 'two cities within a city'. The lower (public) city lies on a flat plane near the coast, while the upper (private) city sits on an incline, earning the district its apt name, *El Djabel,* meaning 'the mountain'. The upper city was inhabited by the *baladi*, the Indigenous population, who primarily resided there and engaged in limited commercial activities. Below, the sailors and Janissary elite inhabited a space that contained not just their dwellings but all the city's commercial, judiciary, religious, and social life.[15] This split in the function of spaces was supported by the geography, as stated: the flat lower ground against the rugged slope falling to the sea – the Casbah. The streets, too, marked this division. In the upper city, they snaked unevenly, ending in cul-de-sacs, forming enclosed neighbourhoods called *hawma*. Below, a pattern of open streets prevailed. What we find in these contrasting forms, Raymond[16] tells it, is a distinct model of Arab-Ottoman urban design, centred around opposition.

Structurally, the city followed the pattern of many other great Arab cities, built around a central core where three main streets converged. The *rue de Bāb al-Gazira* (subsequently renamed *rue de la Marine*) connected to the port – a place of commerce but also of

corsairs, where both trade goods and human captives (trafficked[17] during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) entered the city. The *rue de Bâb ʾAzzūn* led south through its namesake gate, a channel for domestic goods entering and foreign goods leaving. The third street, *Bāb al-Wād* (*el-Oued*), ran north but held less commercial importance, ending in a cul-de-sac. These three arteries formed a triangle at the city's heart. At this intersection stood the Palace of the Dey to the northwest and the Sayyida Mosque to the northeast. The *rue de Bāb al-Gazira* stretched eastward through the central *souqs*, where streets formed a network running west-east and north-south. Along this route stood the Sayyida Mosque, followed by the al-Gadid (Fishery) Mosque with its *Badastān*, and the Great Mosque on the south side, before reaching the port gate of *Bāb al-Gazira*.[18] Though this pattern was expected of many Arab cities, Algiers' core operated with unique intensity, as Raymond[19] shows us. Here, unlike other cities, political life, administration, military power, religious practice, cultural activity, and economic forces did not separate into distinct zones. Instead, they merged into a single concentrated hub of urban life.

The colonial administrators seized upon the city's natural contours and extant urban patterns. The lower city was denuded of its autochthonous architectural forms through rigorous implementations and refashioned into a European enclave – a gleaming hub of judicial, administrative, and public edifices.[20] Left unkempt and visibly weary, the upper city, today a UNESCO heritage site, became exclusively inhabited by the native population. The upper city's immunity, while its lower counterpart faced decimation, was no accident or mismanagement. By the mid-1840s, as we shall soon see, the French administration had made a calculated decision to bifurcate the upper city. They would leave the uppermost section untouched, Kahina Amal Djiar reveals,[21] preserving it as a museum, if you will, of what they deemed 'original barbarity' – a place where 'all barbarism hunted down by civilisation'[22] would be cornered at the summit.

The decade following the occupation was mired in a series of military fortifications, perhaps of the most radical kind the city had ever seen. These interventions entailed confiscating numerous buildings, including houses, mosques, warehouses, and inns, to be repurposed as military forts.[23] Additionally, this era was characterised by the literal broadening of horizons: the city's main thoroughfares mentioned earlier, *rue Bāb al-Wād*, *rue de Bâb ʾAzzūn*, and *rue de Bāb al-Gazira*, were pried open wider than ever before.[24] And it was by this means, by razing residential and public structures situated along these streets, that the colonial administration created more space for the movement of the armed forces. The streets of old Algiers, in contrast, were once measured simply by the width of two loaded donkeys – a living, quotidian scale that the rumbling march of armed troops would soon supersede (Figure 2).[25]

The eastern Algerian city of Sétif offers us another example. Once enclosed by great walls, under colonial rule, the city shed its boundaries. Its gates opened onto roads linking it with Algiers, Bougie, Constantine, Aumale, and Biskra on all four sides. The colonial powers made Sétif porous to outsiders, as Joëlle Bahloul[26] shows, yet for the inhabitants, movement remained restricted. When they did travel, it was out of necessity, to find work in Algiers.

Colonial urbanism's assault on Indigenous space-making practices cannot be overstated; yet, if there ever was a case where it transfigured not only the physical composition of a city but also the psyche of its long-time inhabitants, it was in Algiers. The aggressive urban interventions that took place here, meshing poorly with the city's

Figure 2. One of the many narrow streets of the Casbah, Algiers. October 2023. (Photo: the author).

vernacular architecture, produced not simply physical segregation but, more potently, as scholars tell us,[27] two opposing sensibilities and two camps of people locked in conflict. Indeed, the architecture of the nascent colonial capital clashed pointedly with the so-called precolonial city, and it did so in no uncertain terms.[28] This apparent binary dissonance was far from occurring by chance. According to architectural historian Zeynep

Çelik,[29] such dissonance was a French creation, a method of asserting 'a visual order that symbolized colonial power relations'.

The spatial segregation enforced between 1840 and 1880 led to what scholars[30] have termed 'the birth of the European city', which was accompanied by an accelerated urban expansion beyond the city's nucleus during the same period (Figure 3). Traditional residential quarters of Algiers, composed of narrow, dead-end streets, were razed to implement a grid system where each street connected one residential block to another.[31] The city was splayed wide, cracked open like an egg, its concealed spaces suddenly exposed and linked. This deliberate reconfiguration, which catered to the influx of settlers, in turn, prompted the Indigenous inhabitants into a reluctant retreat towards the increasingly congested and precarious upper city.

The successful implementation of the block system laid much of the groundwork for the so-called European city. By the early to mid-twentieth century, Algiers had started to look and feel a lot like its eponymous counterpart. In 1931, the modernist architect Le Corbusier set foot in Algiers to deliver a series of lectures on urbanism for the centennial celebrations. By the next year, though never officially commissioned, as Çelik[32] tells it, he produced an audacious blueprint he named the *Plan Obus* (Shrapnel Plan), which, in its glaring military epithet, demanded the demolition of all old buildings in the lower city. Though not substantially different from the plan Henri Picot and other architects at the Service Municipale l'Urbanisme had already secured approval for in 1931 (clean contour lines, geometric forms, concrete structures), Le Corbusier's *Plan Obus* was truly a modern machine; that is, it contained multiple parts that worked in unison: a waterfront business centre in the *Quartier de la Marine* (Project B), apartment blocks nearby on the heights of *Fort l'Empereur* (Project C), a high-flying bridge connecting the two, and cutting across, a seafront expressway 100 metres above the seafront (Project A) (Figure 4).[33]

The inaugural iteration of *Plan Obus* was published in 1931, only to face consecutive rejections. In 1934, a rebuff from the Algiers City Council[34] was particularly sobering: 'You want to upset everything in Algiers'. Though his grand vision for the city seemed to bear no fruit, by 1936, following his final rejection, Le Corbusier had already been appointed to the urban planning commission.[35] Over the ensuing two decades, the French succeeded in transforming the urban panorama of Algiers into a canvas of geometric precision, with rectangular blocks rising as the fundamental organising principle. Building façades were bejewelled with ornamental details *à la manière européenne,* featuring bow windows and continuous balconies (Figure 5). At the confluence of the streets mentioned above stood the *Place du Gouvernement* (now *Place des Martyrs*) (Figure 6). It was the new bustling town square, embracing the Mediterranean Sea on the one side and European denizens on the other. Spacious streets outspread from its nucleus. All were adorned with uniform, two- or three-story arcaded buildings, whose ground floors served retail functions, while the upper levels offered residential quarters (Figure 7).[36]

And it was in this way, through the strategy of widening urban space, among others, that the French were able to institute a structural demarcation between coloniser and colonised.[37] More unsettling, however, are the psychological consequences of these implementations. This dichotomy, in this case, wide versus narrow, was indispensable to colonial urbanism and, above all, related, as Çelik observes,[38] to discourses of difference

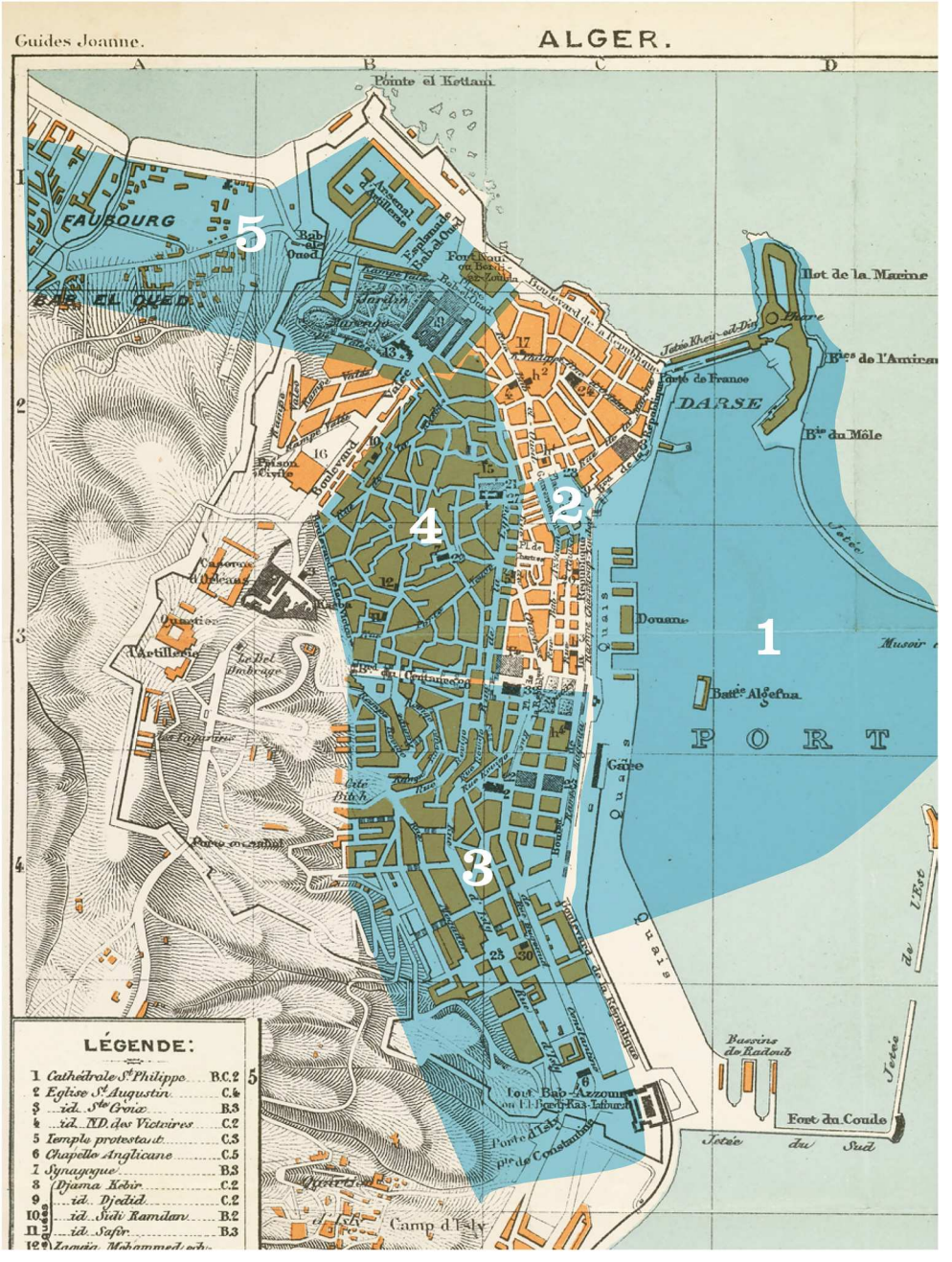

Figure 3. An 1888 Plan of Algiers highlighting the waterfront area (1), the Place du Gouvernement area (2), the 'French' quarter of the city (3), the Casbah district (4), and the Bab el-Oued district (5). Composite image created by the author from an engraving by Louis Piesse, Algérie et Tunisie (Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1888). (Photo: Getty Research Institute).

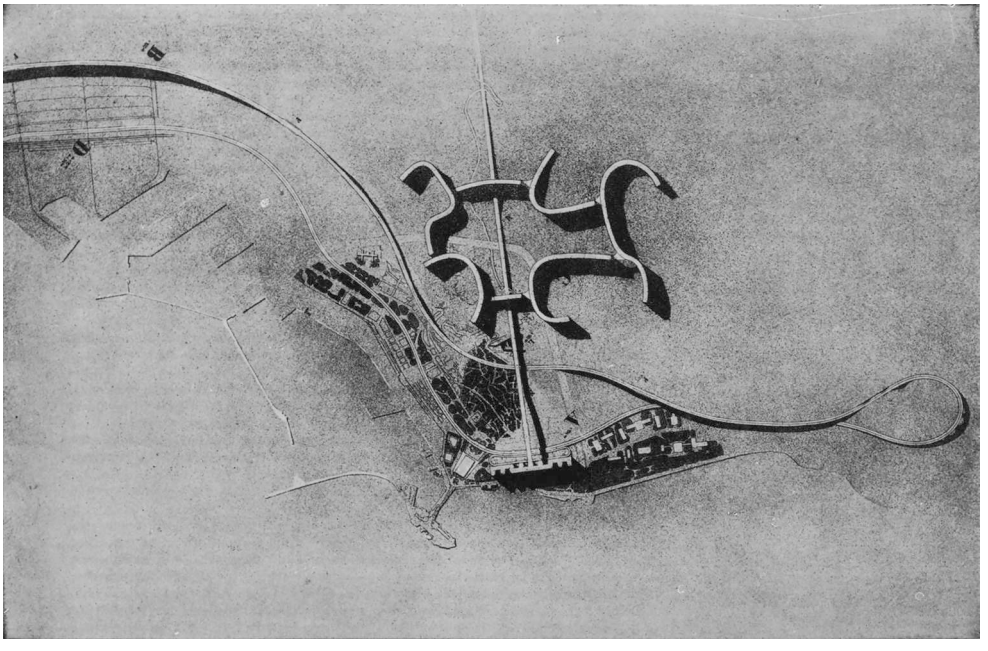

Figure 4. A bird's eye view of Le Corbusier's *Obus Plan* showing the connecting bridge, apartment blocks, the business centre, and the highway, 1933. (Photo: Vincent, Freal & Cie, Paris).

Figure 5. Place de l'Émir-Abdelkader, Algiers, October 2023. (Photo: the author).

Figure 6. Place des Martyrs with Al-Jadid Mosque in the background, Algiers, October 2023. (Photo: the author).

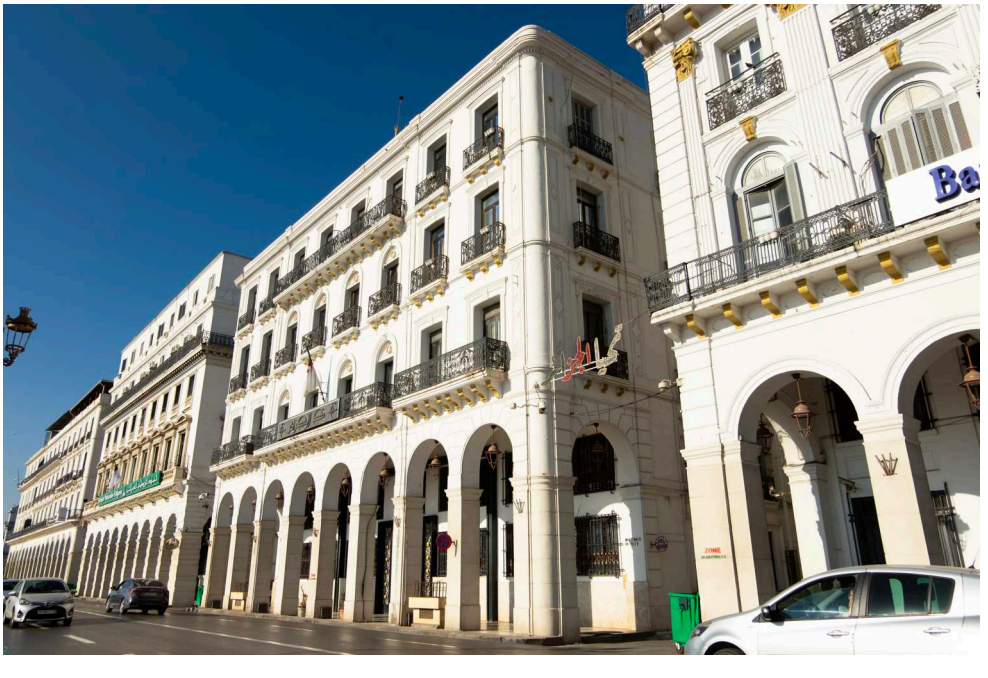

Figure 7. The Seafront, Boulevard Ernesto Che Guevara, Algiers, October 2023. (Photo: the author).

and alterity. The primary model governing all construction endeavours in Algeria at this time was rooted in racial, cultural, and historical distinctions, with spatial segregation serving as a tangible means of reinforcing these differences.[39]

Permeable boundaries: the fluidity of segregated spaces

The makeup of Algerian society had historically been highly fragmented and diverse due to various outside influences, such as those of Andalusians, Ottoman Turks, and even Black Africans in some capacity.[40] But it was the settler logic that set in motion a Manichaean ideal. Despite historical cultural variations, the French polity in Algeria, as I have stated, established severe social stratification among its peoples.

It was through manipulating the sense of space that the conviction of the insuperable difference between the coloniser and the colonised was constructed and maintained. Take, for instance, Saadi Yacef, the Algerian freedom fighter and former FLN military chief who would later play El-Hadi Jaffar – a character based on himself – in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers*. Yacef,[41] who also helped shape the screenplay with Franco Solinas, spoke directly to this spatial division in a 2004 interview:

> I was born in the Casbah, a very large section of Algiers, with an unimaginable density of population. There were 400,000 inhabitants in the Casbah, which boiled down to about 40,000 people per square kilometre. That was where I first became conscious of the system of apartheid, if you will, which made the Algerians into nothing more than slaves. I became conscious of the fact that I wasn't considered fully a human being, but only half human.

These people, seen as only half-human by the colonisers, were granted only half-spaces compared to their European counterparts. The more Algerians were dissuaded from the new town square, the more the Casbah constricted and grew oppressive. Zohra Drif,[42] another freedom fighter, speaking of the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62), described how this spatial division cut through the psyche itself:

> It was really shocking you had a country in war but a part of that lived in total peace, absolute security, and another part was subjugated to extremely terrible treatment. So, the part occupied by the French continued to live as if there was no war.

This psychological discordance, it is clear, ensued from French colonial urbanism. We hear this in the words of Choukri Mesli,[43] co-founder of the avant-garde Algerian artist group Aouchem, who moved to the Casbah from Tlemcen in 1947. His memory of Algiers was of a city controlled by what he called a mob of racketeering louts (*voyous*):

> We Algerians had a double life. We existed in social duality, and that was not always self-evident; it is true what Jean Amrouche says: the colonised Algerian is simultaneously in both systems. This simultaneity is disturbing because the two systems are incompatible, unsupportable.

The oppression and deprivation precipitated by the French dominion and its subsequent warfare were accordingly reflected in the ways in which urban space was manipulated. The insights provided above aptly capture this reality. In much the same way, Fanon[44] contended that colonialism ushered in an 'atmosphere of doomsday' and that it plunged the colonised world into a peaceful violence characterised by homogeneity.

European homogeneity: a confluence of the French and the Spanish and the Italian in a homely colonial cosmopolis named Algiers. In seeking to articulate this seemingly homogenous but, in reality, dichotomous coexistence, Fanon[45] writes: 'The settler's town is a well-fed town, an easygoing town; its belly is always full of good things. The settlers' [*sic*] town is a town of white people, of foreigners'. And later draws a most visceral contrast[46]: 'The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs'.

Fanon's language, laden as it may be with pejoratives by today's standards, is emblematic of the prevailing European attitude of his time.[47] The colonial attitude reveals itself nakedly in the local press of early twentieth-century Algiers. Pierre Chalustre,[48] writing in *L'Afrique du nord illustrée* in 1931, celebrates the demolition around the Archbishop's Palace and Cathedral with undisguised fervour (Figure 8):

> Let us, therefore, wholeheartedly applaud such a disappearance and hope that many others will follow without delay. In this way, we will be able to see vile and dangerous slums with no picturesque character being replaced by indispensable buildings, allowing wide and airy streets to be opened up. In the cases mentioned above, the old hovel will be replaced by an automatic telephone centre, and Divan Street will be widened by four meters. At last!

A year later, Algiers' mayor Charles Brunel (1929–36) continues this theme in the same weekly[49] – revering the Archbishop's Palace as a 'beautiful historical monument' while

ALGER. — Un coin de la vieille ville qui disparaît Place du Gouvernement.

Figure 8. Image accompanying the article by Pierre Chalustre, 'Une Heureuse Disparition', *L'Afrique du nord illustrée*, 26 November 1932. (Photo: L'Afrique du nord illustrée).

condemning the adjoining structures as 'hideous … without grace, without order', built with 'inconsistent materials' threatening imminent collapse.

Words like 'picturesque' and 'graceful' lie in these accounts as counterpoints to a language of disgust. Men like Chalustre and Brunel – typical of their settler class – saw only decay in the ageing woodwork and weathered façades of autochthonous structures. Their perception shaped an urban policy that, as Dona J. Stewart[50] precisely names it, sought to 'sanitize what was perceived as unsanitary'. To imbue, in other words, with grace the edifices seen as 'hideous' and 'vile'. The wider and brighter the settlers' town grew, the more the natives were compressed, hidden away in enclosures that colonisers deemed unsightly.

The goal, to be clear, was never simply decimation of local architecture. The 'preservation' policy championed by officials like Brunel and later Eugène Pasquali, Chief Engineer of Algiers Town Planning, exposes the degree of colonial paternalism at work. The process operated through multiple mechanisms: selective adaptation, where colonial architects extracted indigenous elements, reshaped them to European sensibilities, and created hybrid forms that claimed local aesthetics while asserting European supremacy; infrastructural 'improvements', where new construction and urban planning were presented as progress while methodically dismantling indigenous social structures and the spatial relationships that sustained community life; and, under the pretext of protecting local forms, selectively curating an image of an 'authentic' indigenous culture for consumption by the white colonial gaze, whether through tourism, export of local craft objects, or other forms of commodification.

For evidence, one can very well consider how the upper city (the Casbah) itself was split into two zones of interest. The upper section, bounded by *rue Randon*, *rue Marengo*, and *boulevard de la Victoire*, became 'protected' territory if only because tourism demanded it. It was the Casbah, after all, that made Algiers a tourist attraction, as visitors yearned for exotic spectacles. This quarter would escape destruction. Çelik[51] shows the precise regulations for reconstruction: new structures must follow Algerian and Moorish designs; cornices, windows, lattices, canopies, doors, tiled surfaces, and painted or carved woodwork all must be 'preserved' or recreated to match originals. Meanwhile, the lower Casbah, between *rue Marengo* and *rue Bāb al-Wād*, was recast as a 'museum quarter' where new workshops would manufacture mechanised versions of local crafts for tourist consumption. The 'slums' would then be purged, sanitised. But the upper Casbah would also serve as propaganda for the righteousness and necessity, as Djiar[52] shows, for the French occupation.

As segregation solidified, the upper Casbah's population density grew unbearably, with Kabyle immigrants forming the majority. By 1931, census figures[53] showed 54,000 people compressed there – nearly 3,000 per hectare, representing a whopping 2,700 percent increase from the 2,028 of 1921 and substantially exceeding the 1,430 of 1881. Families existed in single rooms, Çelik tells us,[54] with neither plumbing nor electricity, sometimes dependent on a shared courtyard well.

Indigenous Hawaiian scholar and activist Haunani Kay Trask[55] characterises the physical and psychological suffering experienced by Indigenous peoples as a direct outcome of this 'peaceful violence, of the ordered realities of confinement, degradation, ill health, and early death'. Trask's arresting and poignant description of this peaceful violence as white, that is to say, Anglo-European, captures the essence of Indigenous struggle,

which she defines as separate yet sovereign. 'We are separate now: separate, hostile, and unequal', Trask[56] makes it clear, underscoring the profound sense of isolation that shapes the colonised experience. Yet, this very separation prompts her to portray[57] the Indigenous resistance as distinct: 'Not one path, but many paths'. In this way, Trask shows that resisting assimilation into this homogenous yet segregated coexistence and rejecting this peaceful violence is what ensures the survival of Indigenous peoples under colonial oppression.[58]

Let us look closer at where life actually happens. Domestic space, as Bahloul[59] tells us, forms the 'material representation of the social order', yet also challenges our understanding of home as a more or less concrete space. Society reproduces itself through the symbolic order embodied in living spaces. To remember one's original house is to recall a perfect social order. In Dar-Refayil house in Sétif, Bahloul paints a vivid picture of people arranged in a vertical hierarchy: Arab-Muslim and Jewish families living in a social order that echoed Algiers' own division between lower and upper city. And yet, these spaces were porous,[60] rendering segregation not absolute but layered and textured. This pattern applies equally to Algiers. Dar-Refayil's interiors functioned simultaneously as sheltered refuges and as openings to the city beyond. Each dwelling existed in the tension between protection and exposure.

Place is remembered through the senses, Bahloul[61] argues – time itself constructed from images and odours. Cramped in small rooms, Dar-Refayil residents experienced a world of sensations that Casbah dwellers surely would recognise: the mingled odours, overcrowded courtyards, struggles for basic hygiene, and the challenge of sleep. Bodies pressed against bodies. Air that never freshened. Diseases that spread easily. Even here, hierarchy asserted itself. A woman's marriage meant no longer sleeping on floor mattresses but graduating[62] to a raised bed. Those who remained on the floor occupied lower status. Unlike those who moved between floor mattresses, having a fixed bed signified status. The very building reinforced social order – Muslims on the ground floor, Jewish families above, with basements and upper floors marking lower social standing. Streets belonged to the masculine and to danger; interior spaces to the feminine and conviviality.[63]

If home lives in our senses and memory, then during the War of Independence, the Casbah houses became something entirely new. As the meaning of Algerianness shifted, so did the sensory experience of the upper city: sounds, smells, textures all began to assume different meanings in the struggle for liberation. Just a year before war erupted, Mayor Jacques Chevallier's administration launched an 'indigenous housing project' to relocate natives into newly built flats with courtyards meant to preserve what colonisers saw as the basis of Algerian social life. Their other purpose was less benevolent: eliminating shantytowns they feared might shelter 'terrorists'. But a year later, as Djiar[64] points out, Algerians would confound colonial expectations by rejecting the very communal structures the French had tried to reproduce and control.

Anticolonial struggle rewrote daily life, turning erstwhile transgressions into acts of resistance: abandoning the veil, mastering radio technology, detaching from family ties, and deferring to individualism. During the Battle of Algiers, the French military imposed strict spatial control over the Casbah, implementing census operations, numbering buildings, and conducting regular sweeps that threatened not only collective action but also communal life. Family members, as Djiar[65] tells it, necessarily became individualistic, but this individualism also served a purpose in guerrilla warfare. It was during this

Figure 9. Terraces of the Casbah, Algiers, October 2023. (Photo: the author).

time that Casbah homes became, despite the dangers, Fanon's *lieux en ébullition*, where spatial resistance arose in the face of the very structures meant to curtail it. Even under such intense surveillance, some residents still took extraordinary risks to offer passage to *mujahedeen* (fighters) through courtyards, rendering these censused and controlled spaces sites of contestation against colonial dominance.

After the French exodus, Algerians claimed some 98,000 houses[66] left behind. But the European city had been so thoroughly transformed that lower Algiers could not be reclaimed in a way that honoured its historical meaning. Despite socialism's promises, Djar[67] shows us how class divisions quickly reappeared. By the 1980s, individualism that emerged with the war had penetrated deeper into the Casbah. The traditional courtyard houses – once the centre of communal life – fell from favour. Residents increasingly turned away from the exigencies of shared living, found certain spaces awkward, and watched the historic structures crumble around them. Today, only the roof terraces of the Casbah's traditional courtyard houses remain[68] as truly communal spaces (Figure 9).

Even amidst severe segregation, liminal spaces like the Moorish café (*café maure*) revealed the impossibility of absolute separation, as Omar Carlier's research[69] shows. These establishments became sites where boundaries occasionally dissolved through moments of crossing, selective adaptation, and cultural exchange, though such zones of intermixing would later diminish under intensified French counterrevolution efforts.[70]

A myth that shapes the demands for sovereignty

The French arrived in Algeria, as stated earlier, to stay. And the French indeed destroyed to replace. Replaced Indigenous bodies with equal zeal as they replaced buildings. In fact,

replacing the native population with European settlers was an official colonial policy. From the first decree of colonisation in April 1841, which facilitated provisional grants for settlers, to the upheaval of February 1848, characterised by the proletarian revolution that toppled the July Monarchy and ushered in the Second Republic in France, the population of European settlers in Algeria had swelled to a staggering 109,000.[71] By the early 1900s, the majority of the population of Algiers was European, and an Algerian majority would not be reached again until 1956–57.[72] The tides of history were then to turn on 5 July 1962, when Algeria reclaimed its independence from French colonial rule, marking a triumphant chapter in its history, albeit one hard-earned with much bloodshed and great sacrifice.

Notwithstanding the colonial intentionality of permanency, Algeria's victory meant that the settlers had to leave.[73] This outcome raises a critical question: Does a settler-colonial critique remain relevant for postcolonial Algeria? I argue that it does, but it requires a recalibration of existing theoretical frameworks. Robin D.G. Kelley's critique[74] that 'settler colonialism on the African continent falls out of Wolfe's purview' applies squarely to Algeria, where French settlers were eventually ousted – a situation that challenges Wolfe's dictum of total victory or total failure. This theoretical gap has practical consequences for understanding Algeria's postcolonial condition. Here, French colonisers implemented what Kim TallBear[75] identifies as a pervasive colonial logic that positioned certain populations (Kabyles) as 'closer to moderns, that is, Whites', while othering certain others (Arabs) as fundamentally different. The colonial mind, it is true, deems those who more closely resemble the appearance, culture, and social structure of the predominantly white colonisers as more capable or deserving of assimilation and upward mobility in the colonial hierarchy. In Algeria, this racialised hierarchy manifested concretely in two prevalent ideas in the historiography of the country: 'the Kabyle myth' and 'the Berber question'.

'The Kabyle myth' dictated that the Kabyles, indigenous to the Kabylia region in Algeria's north and typically fair-skinned, shared a closer cultural affinity with the French than their darker-skinned (though not invariably) Arab counterparts. Kabyles were thus regarded as more amenable to the French colonial structure in this regard than Algerian Arabs. The myth's construction was threefold: part 'wishful thinking', part colonial 'hallucination' of French ethnographers, and part observation of actual Kabyle life.[76] The French gaze fixed upon specific material features of Kabyle society, namely, their settled agriculture, picturesque villages, stone dwellings, social organisation, craft production, and self-governance structures, then treated these as evidence of supposed 'democratic' qualities. This myth contained, Hugh Roberts[77] has it, elements of truth, as do most myths, though by the 1960s Arab scholars had effectively nullified its veracity. The essential point here is not whether individual elements of Kabyle society matched European ideals, but rather how these elements were assembled into a narrative that served colonial power. This is how myths work in the service of empire – not through pure invention, but through selective emphasis and underhanded interpretation.

This myth's finality is another topic of debate. When Patricia Lorcin[78] writes, 'The Kabyle Myth is an ideological structure of the colonial past, not the postindependence present', she points to the very problem under examination in these pages. For if this myth was purely historical, why does it continue to shape present perceptions? The binary construction of Arab versus Amazigh, to which McDougall alluded earlier, may

have found its genesis here. The dichotomy, rather than dissolving with independence, seems to have transformed, taking on new forms and meanings in the postcolonial period, a topic I will revisit shortly.

Some colonists, in an attempt to leverage said binary differentiation, hypothesised about Kabyle origins. They assigned Gallic or Roman ancestry to Kabyles,[79] while figures like Colonel Eugène Daumas[80] claimed Germanic roots – all to manufacture connections to French identity in service of the ultimately failed strategy to '*kabyliser l'Algérie*'. The Kabyles dwelled in what may be considered picturesque, mountaintop villages on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea that purportedly recall peasant villages of the French countryside. Arabs, on the other hand, were unduly stereotyped as adrift nomads and overzealous Islamicists. Jane E. Goodman[81] points out the risibility of such a conception since nomadic Amazigh communities do exist across the Sahara; one can find, as well, urban Arabs who populate large cities.

Under colonial rule, even the relationship between urban Algiers and rural Kabyle life came to be strained. Yet, it was not a simple opposition of spaces, but a complex machination of displacement. France's population logic in Algeria operated through a hierarchising mechanism. Consider Alfred Sauvy, the first director of the National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED), appointed by de Gaulle, the same Sauvy who gave us the now unfashionable term 'Third World' (*Tiers Monde*). Sauvy at the helm, the institute's first publication, which broached the subject of foreigners' settlement in France, revealed, as Alexis Spire[82] discusses, a double imperative: controlling Algerian emigration and encouraging those 'ethnically desirable'. This selection process hinged on the emigrant's supposed 'capacity to assimilate into French society'.[83]

The destruction of Kabyle rural economy through colonial land appropriation set in motion a strategic pattern of migration. Moving first to Algeria's urban centres like Algiers and then to France, the Kabyle people dominated Algeria's emigration flows until the 1940s, Lorcin[84] and Rahal[85] show. The colonisers' urban planning and rural land seizures worked as two sides of the same coin – while one reshaped the city, the other dismantled traditional rural life, forcing the Kabyle people to adapt through displacement.

But this is not the whole story. In *Architecture of Counterrevolution* (2022), Samia Henni exposes the ways in which the physical infrastructure of counterrevolution became inseparable from the domination and assimilation of Algerian people. The systematic destruction of living spaces set in motion with Algiers' capture a century earlier continued right through the War of Independence, now with rural villages becoming prime targets for outright elimination. Rural regions, especially isolated mountain areas like the Aurès, were seen as revolutionary epicentres that required spatial control. To that end, the French army, as Henni tells us,[86] created *camps de regroupement* – controlled environments where agrestic populations were concentrated. They destroyed villages and established zones of insecurity that soon became territories proscribed to locals, all in response to the growing independence movement. Soon enough, Algeria's entire landscape, Henni has it,[87] was blanketed with modifiable military structures and tight networks of checkpoints, watchtowers, outposts, border fortifications, minefields, and electric barriers – a system enabling ongoing counterrevolutionary campaigns. These controlled territories then expanded into operational zones, pacification areas, and forbidden regions.

France's colonial enterprise then demanded absolute control of space and bodies. Their strategic construction work and population management operated in an annular

manner: racial assumptions justified spatial control while spatial arrangements reproduced assumed racial hierarchies. This is where rural and urban populations became ensnared in the same system of control. 'The Kabyle myth' was furthered as, it is clear, a colonial strategy of division. To solidify, in other words, the assumption that the native Algerian populace was stitched together by no more than a facile dichotomy of Kabyles versus Arabs. Both were consequently subjected to different treatments, and the Kabyles were ultimately 'singled out', Goodman[88] writes, 'for special attention'.

Colonial policy, scholars note,[89] channelled Kabyles in specific directions, granting them access to French education (with colonial schools opening earlier and more numerously in Kabylia than elsewhere) and steering their migration toward metropolitan French factories rather than Algeria's Arabic-speaking interior. Moreover, French replaced Arabic as the Kabyles' second language. As French spread through Kabylia, it also raised the possibility of Kabyles being absorbed into French culture through linguistic assimilation.

Yet the outcome could not have proved more complex. The cultural expression that developed among Kabyles post-independence took on neither a French nor an Arabo-Islamic character. Instead, they developed what Roberts[90] identifies as a distinct Kabyle identity, one that uniquely synthesised Amazigh, Arabic, and French elements.[91] The sovereignty movement of the 1980s, then, was not a simple protest against assimilation into Algerian national culture as defined by the government. Rather, they did not mind assimilation, as Roberts[92] shows, inasmuch as it was on their own terms.

The 'Berber question', too, might very well be a Kabyle question. When the Algerian state barred Kabylian author Mouloud Mammeri from giving a lecture on his newly released collection of traditional Amazigh poetry at Tizi Ouzou's Hasnaoua University on 10 March 1980, the deep cleavage between Algeria's power and its Kabyle population came into sharper focus – a divide that had been long in the making. Boasting a significant Indigenous population in the heartland of Kabylia, Tizi Ouzou became a *lieu en ébullition*, as the ban ignited months of tumultuous protests and violent encounters with the authorities, leading to what would be called the Berber Spring, or Tafsut Imazighen. What had been a long-standing cultural conflict between the state and Imazighen now found its moment of crystallisation, as demands for sovereignty took physical form in protest.

The Berber Spring gave us three distinct strands of protest, as identified by Roberts[93], and although he did not frame them as demands of sovereignty, we might safely regard them as such. The protesters' demands were not uniform. Some saw themselves defending Amazigh language and culture from extinction – speaking not just for Algeria but for all Amazigh communities. Another group refuted the dogmatic conception and insensitive implementation of Arabisation policies. Still others focused specifically on gaining official recognition for Tamazight as a second national language alongside Arabic.[94] The Berber question, to be sure, took different forms across time. But in the 1980s, Roberts[95] tells us, it emerged primarily as Kabyle resistance to mandatory Arabisation in schools and public offices. He thus locates the heart of the matter in the Kabyle demand for Tamazight to be recognised as Algeria's second national language, equal to Arabic.

Problems with defining settler colonialism in Algeria

Picture, if you will, the African continent and its nations divorced from a critique of settler colonialism. This occurs under the assumption, not entirely misplaced, that the settlers'

exodus has blossomed into a postcolonial state of being. In the same breath, one might consider the new Algerian nation, having shed its colonial chains, impervious to a settler colonial critique. A return to Trask's enunciation of separate sovereignties, however, helps us reconsider the presumption that reclaiming land – a growing Indigenous movement across Turtle Island (North America) and Country (Australia) known as Land Back – corresponds to sovereignty in all respects. But, Trask insists, do not mistake political independence as a direct path to sovereignty.

In the aftermath of conflict and the dawn of a new era in Algeria, the nation found itself under the umbrella of a nationalist regime, where sovereignty was primarily painted with the broad strokes of Arab dominance. The shaping of Algeria's official national culture took a specific direction under its first two presidents, Ahmed Ben Bella and Houari Boumédienne. They built their vision of Algerian history and nationhood, as McDougall shows,[96] on a singular doctrine: that of an essentially Arabo-Islamic Algeria. As early as 1956, the future president Ben Bella,[97] despite his own mixed Amazigh heritage, stood in Tunis and proclaimed three times over, 'We are Arabs, we are Arabs, we are Arabs!'; later, he would further paper over Algeria's cultural complexity by reframing its liberation struggle as an 'Arab revolution'.

Following independence, Algeria began to rebuild not only edifices but also the meaning of space itself. Shelia Crane[98] shows us how Ben Bella's policy of *autogestion* (self-management) was an attempt to break the foundations of architecture free from colonial design. The questions turned radical: Who controls materials, distributes sources, organises labour, and teaches the next generation?[99] What does it mean, in other words, to build a structure towards a decolonised end? In one sense, *autogestion* efforts were intended to replace colonial structures; in another, they were to rewrite the entire system of building practices.

Architects like Abderrahman Bouchama refused to accept how colonial mind had reduced[100] Islamic architecture to surface ornament and Moorish art to arabesque. What he demanded was recognition of the structural and philosophical integrity of Arabo-Islamic building traditions. Bouchama claimed the arch 'as the precolonial source for an architectural tradition rooted in Algeria by way of al-Andalusia'.[101] The palm grove patterns from Saharan oases and interlacing forms of Alhambra, moreover, became the visual markers through which Algeria recognised itself. Bouchama's declaration that 'the arch that sings is truly Arabic'[102] can then be read as a demand for sovereignty. Serving as a document of belonging, the new nation's built environment assumed Arabness as a structural identity.

Meanwhile, Anatole Kopp and Pierre Chazanoff, architects from Paris's Bureau d'études et de réalisations urbaines (BERU), epitomised another vision. Invited by Ben Bella's new minister of social services in 1962, they came to renovate[103] the *bidonvilles* of Oued Ouchaya on Algiers' outskirts. Their project instantiated socialist architecture's post-revolutionary ideals – forming construction collaborations with locals who would inhabit the new town, utilising local materials and labour, creating employment, and offering skills training. Here, the future residents exercised real power. When they insisted that a polluted stream functioning as an open sewer should be canalised, the architects, Crane shows,[104] took heed. These competing architectural visions – Bouchama's Arabo-Islamic forms and Kopp and Chazanoff's socialist modernism, whereby building peoplehood and building structures were rendered inextricable – expose the built environment as

contested territory, a *lieu en ebullition*, where colonial heritage and demands for sovereignty continued their collision after the departure of the French.

By 1965, Ben Bella would have been overthrown by his Minister of Defence, Boumédienne, in a coup d'état that condemned him to fifteen years of house arrest, effectively ending Algeria's brush with *autogestion*; the latter would himself face an attempted coup shortly after. Against this backdrop of power struggles, the confinement and degradation that had been the daily realities of the native population under French rule found a way to persist, albeit in different guises, in the postcolonial era. The Imazighen, despite having thrown off the settler yoke, found themselves on the fringes, marginalised and belittled by the National Liberation Front, commonly known by its French acronym FLN, the Arab-nationalist party at the helm. State apparatuses were weaponised to erase Indigenous culture, pursuing a blanket policy of Arabisation. This affair left the Imazighen in a precarious position, prompting an unyielding yet non-uniform trajectory of redefining what Amazigh sovereignty(ies) meant. In a way, one could think of it as a pursuit of separate sovereignties, an endeavour to carve out space for peaceful coexistence with their Arab compatriots – quite literally.

Ben Bella's government initiated Arabisation through education policies, importing, for instance, Egyptian tutors to teach Arabic.[105] But it was under Boumédienne that the programme solidified with the move to make Arabic mandatory in all administrative institutions by 1968 and the sole language of primary education by 1971. The process of linguistic domination moved slowly but unabatedly (pausing briefly[106] during Mostefa Lacheraf's time at the Ministry of Education between 1977 and 1978), culminating in the 1998 law that banned the public use of any language other than Arabic. The Berber Spring simultaneously epitomises and portends all these tensions and power struggles coming to a head, boiling over, if you will. The resultant unease lay simmering in Kabylia for years, erupting again in what is called the Black Spring (Tafsut Taberkant) of 2001–02 after Massinissa Guermah's death in gendarmerie custody. All this while the state withheld recognition of Tamazight as a national language until 2002 and only granted it official status alongside Arabic in 2016 – a belated acknowledgement that, as Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard[107] might argue, extends only parsimonious rights rather than true sovereignty.

'Without Algeria's Arabization program', Goodman[108] writes, 'the Berber Spring would likely never have happened'. The students who took to the streets during the Berber Spring were those who entered school in the 1960s[109] and came of age in 1970s' classrooms, where speaking their mother tongue brought corporeal punishment. Year by year, they absorbed a state-imposed hierarchy, a system that placed their linguistic identity at the bottom. This critical chapter in Algerian history then stands for more than protest: it signifies a collective indignation against systemic erasure and injustice. I argue that Amazigh activism today continues to strive for what we might call separate sovereignties – not quite secession nor essentialism, but the space for multiple ways of being to exist peacefully without domination.

Not one path, but many paths.

The misrecognition and the overt, undue politicisation of the Amazigh flag in recent years attest to the military power – a vestige of the liberatory struggle – still visibly concentrated on Algeria and to the power relations that remain lopsided since the colonial era. To

exemplify, it is worth revisiting another specific point in time: 19 June 2019, when the erstwhile chief of the Algerian army, an FLN old guard, the late Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaïd Salah, declared the public display of the Amazigh flag unlawful.

This edict landed upon the fertile ground of the ongoing *Hirak* ('movement', from Arabic), a wave of peaceful public marches that had been unrolling since February of that year (Figure 10). Initially a ripple in Kabylia against the then-president Abdelaziz Bouteflika's bid for a fifth presidential term, the movement swiftly burgeoned into a resounding outcry for political and economic reforms. A plea for ending corruption and ushering the nation into a truly democratic system. Generations of Algerians, from young to old, claimed the streets each Friday, painting a colourful tableau of collective resistance (Figure 11). Songs were composed, flags hoisted, and slogans[110] filled the streets: 'Let them all go', 'the generals in the trash'. In the weeks following the Amazigh flag ban, forty-one demonstrators found themselves arrested by the authorities and charged with 'undermining the integrity' of the country.[111] Some, it was reported, were apprehended not for displaying the flag of their heritage, but for so much as having it in their possession. True, during *Hirak*, the dragnet of authority entrapped many Arabs, too – journalists, peaceful protestors – and these widespread arrests wounded the collective spirit. Although the National Committee for the Liberation of Detainees kept careful record on their Facebook page of each arrest, trial, release, and judicial process, the evidence is much too flimsy to draw definitive conclusions about whether Amazigh

Figure 10. Kabyle demonstrators displaying the Amazigh flag during a Hirak march, Tizi Ouzou, March 2019. (Photo: Le Patrimoine Nnegh).

Figure 11. An elderly couple participating in Hirak demonstrations, with Amazigh and Algerian flags displayed side by side in the background, Tizi Ouzou, April 2019. (Photo: Le Patrimoine Nnegh).

protestors suffered disproportionate targeting. It still points, however, to the calculated strategy employed by Algerian authorities, to their deliberate provocation of identity-based divisions to fragment solidarity and weaken the movement.[112]

A similar pattern emerges in May 2021, when the state designated the Movement for Self-Determination of Kabylie (MAK) as a 'terrorist entity' alongside the Islamist Rachad group,[113] drawing a false equivalence between movements with fundamentally different histories and aims. The cutthroat response to the Amazigh flag during early *Hirak* demonstrations speaks not just of immediate political calculation but of a deeper

historical unease with Amazigh cultural expression. Yet it simultaneously exposes how the government weaponised these identitarian differences, which I have traced throughout, as instruments to suffocate the uprising.

Amazigh intellectual Mohamed Boudhan offers an imperative perspective on the Amazigh flag as a symbol of Amazigh identity, which is largely understood as a cultural identity, one that does not require allegiance to a particular nation-state construction. Boudhan[114] asserts that since Amazigh peoples are established across a vast swathe of the Northern African landscape, including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt (Siwa in particular), Libya, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and the Canary Islands, the Amazigh flag functions less as a banner of separation (*rāyat infiṣāl*) and more as a banner of unity and union (*rāyat wiṣāl ūwaḥdah*) of the Imazighen. And if one must allude to separation at all, adds Boudhan, it is the national flags of said states that represent the arbitrary borders that separate Amazigh peoples.

Amazighity, to be clear, is not about belonging to a citizenry but rather to a people, not to a country, but to a homeland.[115] Boudhan notes,[116] meanwhile, that in his domicile, Morocco, it was the onset of Arabisation in 1912, accelerated post-1956, that morphed the ancestral hearths of the Imazighen into an Arab domain. Parallel policies of Arabisation were enacted in the new Algerian state, too, as I have shown. All things considered, the above discourse seeks not to exclude the Arab populace from an important political conversation germane to their domicile nor to discount the significant positive impact of the long-standing Arab presence in the region. Rather, my aim is twofold. First, to challenge the political narrative that misconstrues the Amazigh flag as a symbol of separatism and secession when, in fact, it symbolises Indigenous unity, and second, to further illustrate that the seeds of difference sown during the region's colonial epoch continue to produce an Other: a weary subject of caution.[117] The Imazighen continue to wave their flag, though with much strife and at times in the face of potential incarceration, due to the ideology-driven refusals of Arabists to acknowledge Amazigh collective memory, identity, and language, each of which, it is clear, cuts across any nation-state framework.

Suppose we subscribe to Wolfe's unambiguous articulation of settler colonialism as a zero-sum game in which the settler has no intention to leave. In that case, we inevitably depict a narrative of extremes. Settler colonialism, then, in Lorenzo Veracini's words,[118] 'tells a story of either total victory or total failure'. Either the Indigenous population is eradicated and replaced by a settler population, or the project of settler colonialism has wretchedly failed. When confronted with this outlook, one is undoubtedly inclined to rethink the French settler colonisation of Algeria: Can it, should it, be classified as a failure? The landscape of Algeria post-1962 abounds in complexity and barbed tension, which bled into the Civil War of the 1990s and continues, some would say, to this day, entirely thwarting the simplistic framing offered by Wolfe.

Scholars[119] have mounted a variety of challenges to Wolfe's logic of elimination, contending that 'native resistance to the nation-state through legislative modes shows an explicit refusal against settler colonialism's logic of elimination'. Such an assertion is in keeping with the spirit of Trask,[120] who points to the Irish, the Kurdish, the Palestinian, and the Māori, all of whom have maintained their communities and held their ground against oppressive colonial onslaughts for millennia through sheer resistance. That Indigenous peoples cannot be totally eradicated is also underlined by Kelley,[121] who offers intriguingly similar sentiments: 'The terror never succeeded, not then and certainly not

now. It is not succeeding in Standing Rock; it is not succeeding in Palestine; it is not succeeding in the ghettos and barrios of North America or the favelas in Brazil'.

Today's Algeria is no Palestine, no Hawai'i. In other words, not a settler society. Nevertheless, the need to deploy a settler colonial critique in the Algerian context remains, as I have demonstrated, all the more relevant. Furthermore, Tiffany Lethabo King introduces another critical dimension to this conversation, one that calls for a re-examination and critique of Settler Colonial Studies itself. King[122] notes that the field has, perhaps unwittingly, produced a skewed analytic – hyperfocused on the settler's relationship with land while papering over, if not outright disregarding, the settler's relationship with violence.

This peaceful violence, this peaceful coexistence.

Evidently, France's 'parasitic' relationship with Algeria, as King might put it, came to an end with their withdrawal from the region. Yet, the case of the Amazigh within the Algerian nation-space exhorts us to treat national liberation and Indigenous sovereignty(ies) as distinctly separate, as opposed to coterminous, notions. Here, one is pulled into even murkier waters when attempting to decolonise the postcolonial. But the postcolonial, Robert J.C. Young[123] reminds us, 'operates simultaneously as the colonial'. Colonial legacies, that is to say, continue to play out in postcolonial realities, if only because they orchestrate a profound cultural metamorphosis from the very moment of colonial contact.

Wolfe's hasty omission of Africans, and more specifically those who are now 'turned into Black Americans', from his logic of elimination might indeed reveal a gap in his theoretical considerations.[124] As Kelly, too, contends, Wolfe potentially misrecognised African indigeneity and may have even unwittingly contributed to obfuscating these multifaceted discourses. In tandem, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's[125] ruminations are critical to note:

> Wolfe's assertion that Indigenous peoples were colonised for land, and Black Americans for their labour, is problematic, and has caused harm in our relationship inside and outside of academic thinking. Wolfe erased African Indigeneity through the logics of elimination in the transatlantic slave trade, and did not address settler colonialism as a structure and a process *on the African continent*. I now think of this every time I see or type 'settler colonialism'.

Simpson's insights are generative, no doubt. Nevertheless, Wolfe's generative and widely recognised maxim, 'invasion is a structure not an event'[126] warrants an appraisal, to which I hope to have done justice. The crux of my argument posits a critical necessity: to reignite settler colonial critique in Algeria in order to grapple with the complexities of not only its post-independence period but also its present moment. This seems imperative if only because the violence of settler colonial structures of a seemingly bygone era has remained demonstrably in full effect for decades to come.

Conclusion

The hard-won independence brought not only euphoria but also new possibilities for Algeria. Yet this emergent nation was swathed in boundless complexity; it bore, for one, the weight of an architecture of power once meticulously erected by its erstwhile colonisers. Inescapably, they inhabited, and continue to inhabit, these very structures.

Present-day Algiers, with its resplendent waterfront that mirrors, in more ways than one, a metropolitan European cityscape, bears testament to its recent past as a city of the European.[127] Meanwhile, the Kabyle populace, traditionally dwelling beyond urban centres but subjected by the colonial administration to various displacements and migrations, also carries the scars of the Manichaean framework bequeathed by the French. The era of independence from colonial rule witnessed the colonisers' ouster, but the ensuing vacuum gave rise to an inevitable new foe, also known as the nation state. The Amazigh, their language, and their cultural insignia were positioned as adversaries to the ostensible unity of this novel structure. Yet, a question still lingers: Can Algeria truly be deemed postcolonial? One could argue, on the one hand, that the prefix 'post-' could, in fact, denote a culture that was irrevocably altered upon first contact with the coloniser; the blueprint of colonial thought, on the other hand, persists, doggedly embedded in the policies and governance of Algerian leaders. As such, the nation continues to be ensnared in the eerie after-image of its colonial chapter, thereby suspending its postcolonial veracity in a state of ambiguity.

As such, the emphasis of this article rested heavily on the oft-neglected critical analysis of settler colonialism in Algeria. Furthermore, the discourses explored herein indicate that rethinking sovereignty from multiple angles is no less than a logical course of action. Undoubtedly, it introduces another layer of texture to the very quest for liberation from colonial rule. Algeria's struggle for independence, it is true, was an arduous, protracted, and grotesquely violent one; consequently, the eventual achievement of independence was all the more justified and momentous. But grappling with the implications of settler colonialism entails reorienting one's understanding of it away from a singular historical event and into a pervasive structure in keeping with Wolfe's assertion. This revised understanding demands a concurrent re-evaluation of liberty and sovereignty and the mechanisms by which freedom and self-governance can be attained in a context woefully marred by colonial legacies.

My interpretation of Wolfe's dictum was considerably more literal, however. I posited that settler colonialism's tangible structures were bound up inextricably with those intangibles, with the former established and maintained principally by the French administration's urban policies and practices. In this light, the Berber Spring of 1980, among others, stood as Fanon's notion of *lieu en ébullition* made manifest. This event situated the mother tongue as a wellspring of unity, sovereignty, and futurity, and by so doing, it fomented a space where a different Algeria, one defined by many voices speaking together, could be imagined.

Notes

1. James McDougall, 'Myth and Counter-Myth: "The Berber" as National Signifier in Algerian Historiographies', *Radical History Review* 2003, no. 86 (2003): 67. The Amazigh, known in the plural as Imazighen, are the Indigenous inhabitants of northern African regions, historically referred to, as some argue today pejoratively, as Berbers. The Imazighen have traditionally established themselves in a wide area stretching from the Canary Islands in the west to the Siwa Oasis in the east, with each group possessing distinctive languages, customs, and local variations. The term 'Amazigh', however, did not emerge as a shared identity consciousness until the 1980's event known as 'the Berber Spring', as I will later detail. It was this pivotal moment that led to the establishment of the *Mouvement Culturel Berbère* (MCB) by the

Berberist movement. Another matter of terminology requires careful attention here. In Francophone contexts, '*indigène*' (native) refers to the legal status of colonised peoples and has often been used derogatorily in Algeria. As such, my use of 'Indigenous' here might trouble some readers familiar with this history. But in Anglophone scholarship, the term carries different, and, I argue, more generative meaning. Critical Indigenous Studies scholars choose this term over 'native', 'aboriginal', or 'tribal' precisely for its political force. The capitalised 'Indigenous' recognises First Peoples as sovereign nations with inherent rights to their ancestral lands, rights that predate colonial occupation. The term helps us analyse colonial power relations by connecting diverse peoples worldwide through their shared experiences of colonisation and strategies for self-determination, while honouring their unique histories, cultural traditions, and divergent understanding of sovereignty.

2. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 69, 100, 306, 341, 402, 404.
3. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38–39.
4. Ibid., 38.
5. Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: La Decouverte Editions, 2002), 213 (my italics). All translations by the author unless otherwise stated.
6. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 404.
7. Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), 2.
8. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 210.
9. Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth*, 80.
10. In this analysis, I group together all colonised peoples of Algeria, without distinguishing between Arab, Kabyle, or Chaoui subject positions. These distinctions – and I use the word 'distinctions' with caution – remain vital to understanding Algeria's complexity. Yet for the purpose of examining colonial power structures, I treat Arab, Kabyle, and Chaoui peoples, along with all non-European inhabitants of Algiers during this period, as natives under a shared colonial subjugation. My use of the term 'Indigenous' is explained in endnote 1.
11. Denis MacShane, *François Mitterrand: A Political Odyssey* (London: Quartet Books, 1982), 61.
12. MacShane, *François Mitterrand*, 60.
13. André Raymond, 'Le centre d'Alger en 1830', *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 31 (1981): 75.
14. Bankoff describes the nineteenth-century city of Manila, under Spanish colonial rule, as two cities within a city: the stone-walled colonial city, protected from fire and earthquakes, versus the surrounding Indigenous city built of flammable bamboo. By mid-century, fires regularly devastated the Indigenous city while Europeans remained safely isolated within their walls. While this example may appear peripheral, Bankoff's discussion on the vulnerability of Manila's Indigenous population demonstrates the far-reaching deleterious consequences of colonial urban design that rest upon Indigenous precarity. For Bankoff's discussion, see Greg Bankoff, 'A Tale of Two Cities', in *Flammable Cities: Urban Conflagration and the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Greg Bankoff, Uwe Lübken, and Jordan Sand (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).
15. Raymond, 'Le centre d'Alger en 1830', 74.
16. Ibid., 74.
17. Ibid., 73.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 74.
20. Karim Hadjri and Mohamed Osmani, 'The Spatial Development and Urban Transformation of Colonial and Postcolonial Algiers', in *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: An Urban Kaleidoscope in a Globalizing World*, ed. Yasser Elsheshtawy (London: Routledge, 2004), 35.
21. Kahina Amal Djiar, 'Locating Architecture, Post-colonialism and Culture: Contextualisation in Algiers', *The Journal of Architecture* 14, no. 2 (2009): 161–83; Théophile Gautier and Madeleine

Cottin, *Voyage pittoresque en Algérie* (1845), Édité avec une introduction et des notes par Madeleine Cottin (Genève: Droz, 1973), 190.

22. Gautier and Cottin, *Voyage pittoresque en Algérie*, 190.
23. Hadjri and Osmani, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Algiers', 31; Raymond, 'Le centre d'Alger en 1830', 73–84.
24. Hadjri and Osmani, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Algiers', 31.
25. Ibid.
26. Joëlle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937–1962*, trans. Catherine du Peloux Ménagé (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 46.
27. Architectural historians Zeynep Çelik and Kahina Amal Djar, whom I regularly cite in these pages, are among the scholars who advance this point. But Djiar adds another layer of complexity to Çelik's Fanonian analysis. Starting with Fanon's observation that 'the colonized man is an envious man', that 'the look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy' (Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 39) Djiar shows how this envy corrupted daily life. Colonised Algerians began to mirror their oppressors: the coloniser's daily habits and routines slowly infiltrated native homes, reshaping domestic patterns from within. See Djiar, 'Locating Architecture, Post-colonialism and Culture,' 172–73.
28. Yet one must resist any simple narrative of a pure precolonial Algiers. The Mediterranean was never a closed system, with cultural exchanges occurring since ancient times evident in metalwork, weaponry, pottery, texts, coinage, and crops. Woolf traces many Mediterranean cities to entrepôts established by Phoenician, Greek, and Etruscan traders. It may be accurate to say, therefore, that the veracity of a 'precolonial Algiers' is elusive at best. Fifth-century BCE records show Phoenician presence, while Algiers became a Roman colony in the first century CE amid centuries of Amazigh inhabitation. After Rome's fall, Arabs ruled from the sixth century. In the mid-tenth century, Bouloughine Ibn Ziri, the first ruler of the Berber Dynasty *Zirids of Ifriqiya*, built El Djazair (Algiers) on Roman ruins. Following numerous invasion attempts by the Europeans during the Medieval period, Algiers became a Spanish settlement in the fifteenth century before Ottoman conquest a century later. For a history of ancient Algiers, see Greg Woolf, *The Life and Death of Ancient Cities: A Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
29. Çelik, 'Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon', 202.
30. Hadjri and Osmani, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Algiers', 31.
31. Ibid., 31–3.
32. Zeynep Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 74.
33. Willy Boesiger, *Le Corbusier* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 158; Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City: Elements of a Doctrine of Urbanism to Be Used as the Basis of Our Machine-Age Civilization*, trans. Pamela Knight, Eleanor Levieux, and Derek Coltman (New York: Orion Press, 1967); Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations*, 75.
34. Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, 253.
35. Boesiger, *Le Corbusier*, 160.
36. Çelik, 'Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon'; Hadjri and Osmani, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Algiers', 31.
37. While outwith the remit of this article, I should like to note that Çelik importantly highlights the one-sided framing of historiography on colonial urbanism in Algiers, in that it portrays the Indigenous population whose city was ferociously dismantled as inert bystanders. For a more detailed discussion on the Indigenous perspective and the way in which protests have come to form a portion of the native oral literature, see Çelik, 'Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon', 198–217.
38. Çelik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations*, 5.
39. Ibid., 5.
40. Goodman, *Berber Culture on the World Stage*, 7.

41. Gary Crowdus, 'Terrorism and Torture in the Battle of Algiers: An Interview with Saadi Yacef', *Cineaste* 29, no. 3 (2004): 32.
42. Zohra Drif (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace & Security, 2018) 3 min., 43 sec.; online video; from YouTube, *Algerian Freedom Fighter Zohra Drif*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiRkoyfoRmE (accessed November 12, 2022).
43. Françoise Liassine, *Choukri Mesli* (Alger: Enag Editions, 2002), 24.
44. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 80–1.
45. Ibid., 39.
46. Ibid.
47. I first encountered the visual impact of a side-by-side comparison of Fanon's two quotes in Çelik's article, 'Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon', which I have cited earlier. To better illustrate the concept of social duality, I have adopted Çelik's methodology and would like to credit the author for their contribution to this article.
48. Pierre Chalustre, 'Une Heureuse Disparition', *L'Afrique du nord illustrée*, November 26, 1932, 15.
49. Charles Brunel, 'L'exhumation de l'Archevêché', *L'Afrique du nord illustrée*, April 1, 1933, 8.
50. Dona J. Stewart, 'Middle East and Urban Studies: Identity and Meaning', *Urban Geography* 22, no. 2 (2001): 178.
51. Çelik, Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations, 42.
52. Djiar, 'Locating Architecture, Post-colonialism and Culture', 169.
53. Çelik, Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations, 44.
54. Ibid.
55. Haunani Kay Trask, 'The Color of Violence', *Social Justice* 31, no. 4 (2004): 10.
56. Ibid., 14.
57. Ibid., 15.
58. Ibid.
59. Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory*, 129.
60. Ibid., 29.
61. Ibid., 104.
62. Ibid., 34.
63. Ibid., 44.
64. Djiar, 'Locating Architecture, Post-colonialism and Culture', 174.
65. Ibid.
66. Farouk Benatia, *L'appropiation de l'espace à Alger après 1962* (Algiers: Société Nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion, 1978), 28.
67. Djiar, 'Locating Architecture, Post-colonialism and Culture', 174–75.
68. Ibid., 178.
69. Omar Carlier, 'Le café maure. Sociabilité masculine et effervescence citoyenne (Algérie XVII^{e}-XX^{e} siècles)', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 45, no. 4 (1990): 975–1003.
70. Though absent the Berber Spring's patent and active resistance, we can still treat these cafés as boiling places wherein ideas of autonomy and peaceful coexistence were continually rewritten.
71. Myth has it that European settlers, originating mainly from a lower-class demographic in Spain, Italy, and southern France, arrived in Algeria barefoot and in such a dire condition that they were accordingly nicknamed *pieds noirs* (black feet). Despite colonial decrees offering land grants in rural Algeria, John Ruedy reveals the *pieds noirs* had little interest in farming, even when facing economic hardship. They chose instead to become small businessmen, tradesmen, government employees, or workers in construction and support industries. As a result, the most demanding labour continued to be performed by the Arab and Amazigh population. On the other hand, Amy L. Hubbell debunks the myth of *pied-noir* origins. These were not people with 'black feet'; rather they became *pieds-noirs* only upon 'returning' to a France many had never known. Before exile, they were simply *Français d'Algérie*. The popular origin stories (black military boots or feet darkened from stomping grapes) both falsely date the term to colonial beginnings rather than its actual emergence with the

1956 exodus. See John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 69–73; Amy L. Hubbell, *Remembering French Algeria: Pieds-Noirs, Identity, and Exile* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 1–44.

72. Another large Algerian city, Oran, also had its European population in the majority. Europeans were also settled in other large Northern African cities: half of the population of Tunis and a quarter of Casablanca consisted of Europeans. See Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 323; Benatia, *L'appropiation de l'espace,* 28.
73. There seems no reason to deny, however, the violence that marked Algeria's transition through the Évian Accords and the cease fire agreement. As early as 1956, terrorist groups calling themselves ultras emerged, among them the 'French Algeria Resistance Organisation' (ORAF). These groups, convinced of General Charles de Gaulle's betrayal, fought savagely to preserve their *Algérie française*. The ORAF's most devastating act came during the 'Battle of Algiers': the bombing of *rue de Thèbes* in the Casbah, the bloodiest single attack of that period. The ORAF was succeeded by other ultras: the 'French National Front' (FNF) and the 'Front for French Algeria' (FAF), each as fiercely opposed to Algeria's self-determination. From 1961 to 1963, as independence appeared on sight, the Organisation de l'armée secrete (OAS), a far-right group of French military officers and European settlers, vehemently fought against Algeria's liberation. Their failed coup d'état of 1961 gave way to a campaign of widespread destruction across Algeria and metropolitan France: daily bombings, assassinations, the deliberate ruin of Algerian infrastructure and cultural sites, including the burning of Algiers University library, in their 1962 'scorched earth' policy, and the brutal Battle of Bab el-Oued in Algiers. To be sure, this was no peaceful transfer of power, as the brief phrase 'had to leave' might suggest. The European exodus began in 1960, with many seeking work in a France they had never known, as McDougall put it. After Algerian independence, some 800,000 European settlers and Algerians who served as auxiliary soldiers in the French Army (*harkis*) fled across the Mediterranean–a mass displacement that Abderahmen Moumen shows us dwarfed all prior repatriations from France's crumbling empire, whether from Indochina, Morocco, Tunisia, or Black Africa. Violence, as we see, did not just accompany settler colonialism; it defined its very structure, even after the moment of its very undoing. James McDougall, 'Revolution and Civil War, 1942–1962', in *A History of Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 179–234; Abderahmen Moumen, 'De l'Algérie à la France: Les conditions de départ et d'accueil des rapatriés, pieds-noirs et harkis en 1962', *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps* 99, no. 2 (2010): 60–68. For more detailed discussions on the violence and terror during Algeria's struggle for independence, see Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Le Temps de l'OAS* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1995); Alain Ruscio, *Nostalgérie: L'interminable histoire de l'OAS* (Paris, La Découverte 'Cahiers libres', 2015); Malika Rahal, 'L'angoisse des Français d'Algérie', in *Algérie 1962 Une histoire populaire* (Paris: La Découverte, 2022), 39–53.
74. Robin D. G. Kelley, 'The Rest of Us: Rethinking Settler and Native', *American Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2017): 269.
75. Kim TallBear, 'Genomic Articulations of Indigeneity', in *Native Studies Keywords*, ed. Andrea Smith, Stephanie Nohelani Teves, and Michelle Raheja (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015), 143.
76. Hugh Roberts, 'Foreword', in *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Race in Colonial Algeria*, ed. Patricia Lorcin (London: Tauris, 1995), viii–ix.
77. Roberts, 'Foreword', viii-ix.
78. Patricia Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, xiv.
79. Jane E. Goodman, *Berber Culture on the World Stage: From Village to Video* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 8.
80. Charles-Robert Ageron, 'Du mythe kabyle aux politiques berbères', in *Université de Paris VII. Le Mal De Voir: Ethnologie Et Orientalisme: Politique Et Épistémologie, Critique Et Autocritique … :*

Contributions Aux Colloques Orientalisme, Africanisme, Américanisme, 9–11 Mai 1974, Ethnologie Et Politique Au Maghreb, 5 Juin 1975 (Paris), 336–37.

81. Goodman, *Berber Culture on the World Stage*, 8.
82. Alexis Spire, *Etrangers à la carte: L'administration de l'immigration en France* (1945–1975) (Paris: Grasset, 2005), 113.
83. Ibid.
84. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, xvii.
85. Rahal, *Algérie 1962*, 263–70.
86. Samia Henni, *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (Zurich:gta Verlag, 2022), 24.
87. Ibid., 26.
88. Goodman, *Berber Culture on the World Stage*, 7.
89. Hugh Roberts, 'Towards an Understanding of the Kabyle Question', *Maghreb Review* 5, no. 5–6 (1980): 118; McDougall, *A History of Algeria*, 190.
90. Roberts, 'Towards an Understanding', 120.
91. This great complexity reflects the fundamental tension between different conceptions of nationhood at play here: on one hand, the state-nationhood project of the newly independent government sought to create a unified Algerian identity primarily defined by Arab and Islamic characteristics; on the other hand, Kabyle communities maintained what some might recognize as a form of Indigenous nationhood – not defined by state borders but by shared cultural practices, language, and relationship to ancestral territory. The distinction between state-nationhood and Indigenous peoplehood helps explain why Kabyles could simultaneously participate in the anticolonial struggle alongside Arabs while asserting their own distinctive vision of what it meant to belong to an Algerian nation.
92. Ibid., 121.
93. Ibid., 115.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid., 117.
96. McDougall, 'Myth and Counter-Myth', 67–68.
97. McDougall, *A History of Algeria*, 240.
98. Sheila Crane, 'Algerian Socialism and the Architecture of Autogestion', *Architectural Histories* 7, no. 20 (2019): 1–19.
99. Ibid., 6, 10.
100. Ibid., 12.
101. Ibid., 10.
102. Ibid., 11.
103. Ibid., 7.
104. Ibid., 8.
105. An effort to cement a unified postcolonial nation state was largely behind this repression of pluralism. It was also, in some ways, to prevent the formation of separate territorial or cultural identities founded on what the dominant culture saw as almost heretical 'difference'.
106. Gilbert Grandguillaume, 'La confrontation par les langues', *Anthropologie et sociétés* 20, no. 2 (1996): 37–58.
107. For a compelling discussion on politics of Indigenous recognition, see Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).
108. Goodman, *Berber Culture on the World Stage*, 34.
109. Ibid., 36.
110. Omar Benderra, François Gèze, Rafik Lebdjaoui, and Salima Mellah, eds., *Hirak en Algérie: L'invention d'un soulèvement* (Paris: La fabrique éditions, 2020), 7.
111. Amnesty International, 'Algeria: 41 Arrested for Carrying the Amazigh Flag as Authorities Crack Down on Freedom of Expression, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/07/algeria-41-arrested-for-carrying-the-amazigh-flag-as-authorities-crack-down-on-freedom-of-expression (accessed November 15, 2022).

112. Ilhem Rachidi and Abdallah Aballagh, 'Algeria's Hirak: Fading Prospects for Democratisation?' *The Journal of North African Studies* 28, no. 6 (2023): 1521.
113. Ibid., 1528.
114. Mohamed Boudhan, 'Limadha Arfa' Al-Rayah Al-Amazighiyah Wa-Rayat Al-Rif Wa-La Arfa' Al-Rayah Al-Maghribiyah?', *Portail Amazigh*, 2017, www.portail-amazigh.com/2017/06/6.html (accessed October 22, 2022).
115. Even the idea of a homeland, however, is fraught. Cultural expression that departs from those sanctioned by the dominant authority carries the dread of demarcation or loss of geographic territory and is invariably a source of fear for the nation state. In turn, a shared homeland makes the dominant culture anxious about the implications of each cultural group earning sovereignty. Kabyle sovereignty, however, was not separatist in nature, as Roberts shows. With no natural resources of its own and dependent on Saharan oil revenues post-1960s, Kabylia needed to maintain its connection to the Algerian state. See Roberts, 'Towards an Understanding of the Kabyle Question'.
116. Boudhan, 'Limadha Arfa' Al-Rayah Al-Amazighiyah'.
117. Many misinterpretations of the Amazigh flag can be attributed to the orientation of anti-colonial struggles, which were chiefly mobilised against foreign colonisers with the goal of overthrowing their control. This focus often overshadowed the equally important objective of creating a postcolonial milieu where manifold Indigenous identities could be freely and respectfully expressed. Consequently, every time the Amazigh flag is displayed, it reanimates the anxieties about the potential disruption of the nation state's putative homogeneity and its territorial unity.
118. Lorenzo Veracini, 'Settler Colonialism and Decolonisation', *Borderlands e-journal* 6, no. 2 (2007): np.
119. Teves et al., *Native Studies Keywords*, 275.
120. Trask, 'The Color of Violence', 15.
121. Kelley, 'The Rest of Us', 274. Certainly, there are many ethical considerations inhered in the question of whether bodily presence alone constitutes a liveable life. In an oppressive, surveillance-heavy, genocide-oriented, resource-poor settler society, it seems as though existing physically seldom guarantees a liveable life. The fragmentation of existence caused by these conditions forces individuals to endure a form of everyday terror that renders their lives half-lived, deprived of the freedoms that accompany a life devoid of such burdens. A liveable life calls for a struggle for a life that is worth living, as defined not by external conditions but by the individuals themselves. Scholar Salwa Ismail proposes an intrinsic connection between the fight for survival and the fight for a liveable life. This fight, Ismail tells us, is not only for survival but for a form of bodily persistence that underlies acts of sovereignty and political agency that can, after all, provide that life. The pursuit of a liveable life is thus inextricably bound up with the politics of survival. The struggle for existence becomes a struggle for a meaningful, self-determined existence. See Salwa Ismail, 'The Politics and Matter of Liveable Lives in the Middle East' (keynote lecture, British Society of Middle Eastern Studies Annual Conference, Lancaster, UK, July 2, 2024).
122. Tiffany Lethabo King, 'New World Grammars: The "Unthought" Black Discourses of Conquest', in *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness*, ed. Tiffany Lethabo King, Jenell Navarro, and Andrea Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 82.
123. Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 20.
124. Kelley, 'The Rest of Us', 268.
125. Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Rehearsals for Living* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2022), 86 (my italics).
126. Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*, 2.
127. Nevertheless, this does not mean the city is devoid of other traces from its past settlers, such as the Turks. In fact, a considerable number of well-preserved edifices from the Ottoman era still remains. It can also be convincingly argued that these luxury waterfront buildings, once homes of Janissaries, became residences for the postcolonial political elite. This transition

does speak to a shift in the locus of power from foreign to local hands, albeit within a more or less intact class structure.

Data availability statement

The author confirms that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article and its supplementary materials.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Sheyda Aisha Khaymaz http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6585-2082