Between the Medina and the Metropole:
Race & Urban Planning from Algiers to Paris (1930-75)

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 2011

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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Race & Urban Planning from Algiers to Paris (1930-75)" by Hugh Pouliot in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dated: 24 August 2011

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Readers: _____

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Departmental Representative: _____

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DATE: 24 August 2011

AUTHOR: Hugh Pouliot

TITLE: Between the Medina and the Metropole: Race & Urban Planning from
Algiers to Paris (1930-75)

DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL: Department of History

DEGREE: MA   CONVOCATION: October   YEAR: 2011

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyses the endurance of colonial logics of assimilation and cultural segregation in contemporary urban France by connecting them with their origins in colonial Algeria. French urban planning and policy in Algeria emphasized the capacity of the urban environment to establish the cultural supremacy of imperial France, to 'evolve' Algerians toward French lifestyles and civility, and to provide stable and controllable social environments. The migration en masse of Algerians to France following the Second World War, and in the context of the Algerian war of independence, prompted the creation of new state institutions in France to house, integrate, monitor and police France's purportedly suspect, hostile immigrant population. This paper argues the refraction of this colonial apparatus during the post-war period has rippled into the contemporary era, posing significant obstacles to social cohesion between immigrants – and their descendents – and the white ethnic majority in France.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ENA	Étoile Nord Africaine
FAS	Fonds d'Action Social
FLN	Front de Libération National
HLM	Habitation à Loyer Modéré
MNA	Mouvement National Algérien
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCF	Parti Communiste Française
SAINA	Services de Surveillance, Protection et Assistance des Indigènes Nord-Africains
SAU	Sections Administratifs Urbains
SONACOTRAL	Societé Nationale de Construction de Logements pour les Travailleurs Algériens
SONACOTRA	Societé Nationale de Construction de Logements pour les Travailleurs
ZUS	Zones Urbaines Sensibles

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction

On 7 November 2005, in the midst of widespread civil unrest on the peripheries of virtually every major city in France, French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin made a predictable yet telling decision. Faced with rioting, the torching of vehicles, and violent confrontations with police in these suburbs overwhelmingly inhabited by low-income and minority populations, Villepin called a state of emergency, granting authorities the right to establish curfews, close public spaces, pursue unsubstantiated search-and-seizures and house arrests, and censor the press for up to twelve days. The intrigue is, of course, that the emergency measures law Villepin invoked was the same one drafted by the French state in April of 1955, conceived for the express purpose of suppressing civil unrest in French and Algerian cities during the Algerian war for independence between 1954 and 1962. Previously, the law had been invoked in only four other instances, all in French territorial holdings outside of mainland France, and only once outside of Algeria.[1]

Villepin's invocation in 2005 was, in a number of ways, a symbolic climax of the endurance of colonial logic in contemporary urban France, and a continuation of a public policy that preserved the integrity of the French city centre, while orchestrating the control and isolation of its racialized periphery. Likewise, remarks to reporters by Nicolas Sarkozy – then French minister of the interior – in which he referred to the ethnic minority youth who had taken to rioting and car-torching in the suburbs as *racaille*[2], seemed a public confirmation of these attitudes.

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[1] Paul A. Silverstein & Chantal Tetreault, 'Urban Violence in France', *MERIP Reports*, November 2005.
[2] *Racaille* is translated as 'scum', carrying distinct racial connotations.

The case of the 2005 riots in France brings to light a persistent current in French urban policy which, whether in the era of settler states or the post-colonial era of transnational migration, uses architecture and urban planning to achieve the differentiation and control of race and class. The design of cities as a reification of social and cultural hierarchies through architecture and the built environment, was a defining characteristic of the French colonial project in North Africa. From the outset of colonial rule in Algeria in 1830, the design, construction, and meaning of the built environment were contested and reimagined at every level – from the partitioning of entire cities, to subtle arrangements in single room habitations. With the advent of Algerian migration to France, which soared during the so-called 'Trente Glorieuses' years of postwar economic boom in France (1945-75), the French Ministry of the Interior required a domestic policy to address the waves of colonial subjects arriving on the edges of French urban centres. To do so, it referred directly to the lessons learned and practices developed throughout their colonial endeavour in North Africa: Algeria, the most invested of France's colonies, had long been considered an integral part of French territory, and unlike any of France's other colonies, one governed through the Ministry of the Interior itself.

The following study analyzes the means through which French colonial administrators managed indigenous populations in Algiers, and those through which Algerian migrant populations were governed in Paris. In the North African settler colony, urban planning and policy revolves around control and containment of an indigenous majority. In the European metropolis, urban planning and policy revolves around the control and containment of a foreign minority in peripheral suburban zones. However, in both cases, the priorities of urban planning and policy remain the same: establishing French cultural

hegemony through the built environment and assimilation or integration strategies; and ensuring the availability of native or immigrant labour, while safeguarding against the potential violence or subversion of this suspect, hostile community.

The French colonial mission in North Africa and Algerian migration to France during the Trentes Glorieuses were fundamentally driven and justified by economic rationales, namely, maintaining an abundant supply of cheap labour for industrial, agricultural, and service sectors; and moralism, the pursuit of a 'civilizing mission' for supposedly 'uncivilized' natives, or the 'modernization' of lifestyles and urban spaces in immigrant enclaves. From this recognition that the line separating the rigid époques of 'colonial' from 'post-colonial' dissolves. Architectural design and city planning are key contributing factors in the evolving, historical relationship between Algerian and French. This dissertation understands itself as an integration of the 'colonial' and 'post-colonial' periods, bridged by Algerian migration to France, and one characterized throughout by an urban policy that isolates and impoverishes one population in order to the preserve the other.

In 1957, following the liberation of his native homeland from French occupation, and in the context of the Algerian war for independence, Tunisian intellectual Albert Memmi provocatively wrote that 'assimilation is the opposite of colonization.'[3] That is to say, it is not the genuine intention of French colonization in North Africa to improve or invest in indigenous societies, nor is it ultimately to remake the indigenous subject into a French citizen. The colonizer detests the colonized's lack of European values and norms, and yet shuns and makes a mockery of attempts by the colonized to assimilate. To Memmi, the colonizer is in an ambivalent position. The practical outcome of this ambivalence is that the colonizer does not envision himself in the history or the future of the colony, and becomes

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[3] Albert Memmi, *Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 149.

uninterested in its amelioration beyond himself, 'for he is there only temporarily and invests in only what will bear fruit in his time...[he] never planned to transform the colony into the image of his homeland, nor to remake the colonized in his own image! He cannot allow such an equation – it would destroy the principle of his privilege!'[4] In short, the objective of colonization for Memmi was not, broadly speaking, the spiritual and cultural enrichment of native societies, but an economic and territorial venture for Europeans.

By the same token, the objective of Algerian immigration for the French was not necessarily the repayment of a 'blood debt' owed to Algerians for their contributions to the war effort. It was, rather, a response to the debilitating shortage of bodies to work in dangerous, low-paid industrial positions during the postwar economic explosion in France that continued into the early-mid 1970s. Labour migration from North Africa to France was viewed by both Algerian and French as a temporary arrangement, an extension of the colonial paradigm into the metropole for the sake of mutual economic benefit. However, over the course of this period, several factors – namely, the dissolution of French colonialism in North Africa, and the regrouping of North African families with their male patriarchs in France – caused the nature of this arrangement to change. This supposedly temporary arrangement suddenly began to appear quite 'permanent'.

While Algerian migration to France has been occurring in one form or another since the beginning of the 20th century, it was not until the final years of the postwar boom in France that the issue of migration from former colonies began to garner much attention in public debates or in the press. However, the financial crisis of 1973, the formal halt of immigration by the French in 1974, the national rent strikes in state-run migrant worker housing in 1975, and the eruption of violence in ethnic communities in French suburbs

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[4] Ibid, 69.

during the late 1970s inserted the 'problem' of immigration into public debate, where it has remained since.

The 'problem' of immigration in France has an inextricable spatial dimension. That is to say, the spatial barrier to social integration and inclusion in French cities – which can include everything from geographic isolation, poor facilities and amenities, excessive surveillance and police presence, and a lack of capital and local businesses among other things – could be the single largest obstacle to political, economic, and cultural integration for former colonial migrants and their French-born descendents. While the social and spatial dynamics of colonial and French metropolitan urban planning and policy have been well-explored on their own, the fact that they took place on separate terrains and under different political circumstances has meant they are rarely considered as parts of the same evolving process.

This dissertation is thus an historiographical venture towards a synthesis of colonial and postcolonial studies of French urban planning and policy and Algerian migration. To be sure, much has been written on the topics of French urbanism – that is, the everyday nuts and bolts of urban planning, as well as a broader philosophy about the role of urban planning in affecting broader social change – in the context of colonialism, and in the context of functionalist modernism in France. Indeed, reaching back to the restructuring of Paris by Georges-Eugène Haussmann under Napoleon III, French urbanism has long been underwritten by a desire to enforce control, compartmentalization, and surveillance of populations via the built environment. This dissertation intends to answer the following question: how did the French colonial experience in Algeria, and the arrival of colonial migrants in France, influence urban policy and practice in cities in France? Or, conversely, in

what ways do the urban dynamics of colonial Algiers mirror the ethnic, class, and spatial separation of contemporary Paris?

Shortly following the autumn riots of 2005, Paul Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault suggested, in an essay explaining the roots of urban violence in France, that the recent uprisings could be traced to the persistence of colonial logic in post-colonial urban planning and policy. The colonial cities of North Africa, 'in which native medinas were kept isolated from European settler neighbourhoods out of competing concerns of historical preservation, public hygiene and security […] have been effectively recreated in the post-colonial present, with contemporary urban policy and policing maintaining suburban *cités* and their residents in a state of immobile apartheid, at a perpetual distance from urban, bourgeois centres.'[5]

This is an intriguing and provocative claim; however, Silverstein and Tetreault do not substantiate or build upon it. Indeed, this is a question that has yet to be answered by any serious academic study in English or French, yet one which has the capacity to unearth multiple dimensions of contemporary issues surrounding the French *banlieues*, as well as the dilemmas of assimilation and social integration in colonial and post-colonial societies. As a genealogy of urban policy and design, this dissertation aims to harmonize a variety of historiographies and discourses on colonial and post-colonial immigration, urban planning and social integration. It is supplemented further by a study of colonial and post-colonial architectural journals, newspapers, and the writings of prominent urbanists from the period. The architectural journals *Chantiers Nord-africains*, published in Algiers between the 1920s and 1950s, and *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui,* published in Paris from the 1930s until the present day, which offer first-hand reflections on trends and practices in French urbanism. Likewise, the designs and essays of urbanists such as Le Corbusier, Hubert Lyautey, Henri

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[5] Silverstein & Tetreault, 'Urban Violence', 2005.

Prost, Maurice Rotival, Fernand Pouillon, and Roland Simounet – who all had varying roles in urban design in both France and North Africa – will exhibit their ways of thinking and representing space and its inhabitants in the colony and the metropole.

This dissertation builds upon a number of formative studies. The first is Zeynep Çelik's landmark study *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations* (1997), a history of urban design in Algiers during French colonial rule, which focuses particularly on the spatialization of racial difference in the city through housing design and the partition of the city according to ethnicity. Meticulously researched and well written, Çelik's study is the standard reference for the colonial urban history of Algiers. Paul Rabinow's *French Modern* (1989) is an 'anthropology of modernity'[6], as the author himself puts it, and a curious convergence of Rabinow's doctoral fieldwork in Morocco and his relationship with philosopher and historian Michel Foucault. Charting the evolution of an urban technocratic elite in France and Morocco, Rabinow shows the development of a notion of 'modernity' through urban political economy – the never-ending need to manage bodies and populations – in both the colony and the metropole. Urbanism, for Rabinow, is a 'grid of intelligibility' for the modern state, whose function is the management and transformation of not only physical space, but the social milieu as well.[7] Çelik and Rabinow's works constitute a strong framework for understanding the history and function of the colonial built environment, as well as the ideology of urbanism in both colonial and metropolitan contexts.

This project also draws upon the literature regarding Algerian migration to France, such as Benjamin Stora's *Ils venaient d'Algérie* (1992), Neil MacMaster's *Colonial Migrants and Racism* (1997), and Abdelmalek Sayad's *La double absence* (1999). Building

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[6] Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: norms and forms of the social environment* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 7.
[7] Ibid, 12.

on the existing literature on Algerian migration, I hope to elucidate the linkages between the movement of colonial populations, the growth of Algerian nationalism, and the recreation of colonial urban policy in France. Finally, Marc Bernardot's *Loger les immigrés* (2008) and Amelia Lyons's *Invisible Immigrants* (2009), among a number of others, provide an important framework for understanding the social welfare institutions developed for the surveillance and patronage of the Algerian community, and how they fit into the broader picture of immigration and urbanism in France.

Generally speaking, the impetus for this project is not driven by a significant disagreement within the secondary literature. Rather, it is the disconnect between them that largely inspired this project, which understands itself as an attempt to integrate a variety of perspectives on the colonial and post-colonial paradigms, in order to highlight the persistence of colonial logic through the two.

This project will unfold in three parts. The first section outlines the system of urban planning and policy established in Algeria by the French colonial administration, beginning from the beginning of colonial rule, but focussing primarily on the late colonial period after 1930. Whether military or civil, French engineering of the first urban projects under colonial rule emphasized the creation of a European city at the head of the African continent, attractive to European migrants, and well-protected from a hostile native population. Colonization in Algeria can be viewed as one of the first acts of developing a method of reifying ethno-cultural difference through urban planning.

Toward the turn of the century, an ever more prominent notion – that cities and environments in the colonies could and should be used as 'laboratories' to test projects for mainland France – began to take hold. French cities and their counterparts in colonial North

Africa were encountering many of the same political and demographic challenges: heightened rural-to-urban migration, overpopulated and unhygienic workers' quarters, and increased civil unrest in those areas. While large-scale urban projects necessitating massive seizures of land and resettlement of inhabitants presented many legal and political challenges in France, such manoeuvres were comparatively easy under the authoritarian rule of the colonial state. Young French architects, urban designers, and engineers were encouraged to cultivate their skills and pursue audacious urban experiments on colonial terrains.

In the 1920s and 30s, the practice of ethnography in the colonies, especially in the countryside, became increasingly important in relation to architecture and urban design. As migration to the cities increased, and administrators were increasingly forced to consider housing options for the swelling ranks of urban poor and homeless, ethnography of the Algerian hinterland deeply influenced both political and design choices for housing.

The mass housing projects that emerged as a result, which attempted to varying degrees to reproduce the traditional dwellings of rural Algeria, were not only experiments in urbanism, however. They also became experiments in social engineering, combining familiar elements of the rural household with 'modernist' European design and amenities. They were, in the eyes of their designers, intended to 'evolve' the native Algerian toward European lifestyles and social habits. From the 1930s onward, the construction of urban housing for rural migrants embodied what remained of the French 'civilizing mission', a mixed attempt at social engineering and population control, under the guise of social welfare. To late colonial administrators, housing represented the best chance to 'evolve' and sedate an increasingly irate native population. Close to a quarter of the funds committed under the 1958 Plan de Constantine, Charles de Gaulle's last ditch effort at appeasing agitators for

Algerian independence, were dedicated to housing and urban infrastructure; only education received more.[8]

The results of the Algerian Revolution speak to the level of success achieved by housing initiatives under the Plan de Constantine. In fact, the modernist workers' housing estates built under the plan became some of the most contested zones of conflict during the Battle of Algiers. Despite the enormous amount of resources devoted to housing, supply could never keep up with demand, and the estates that had been built did nothing to lessen the social tensions or spatial separations between Algerian and European. It could be argued that, if anything, it only gave them a more 'modernized' configuration. Ultimately, however, this dissertation will argue that the project of colonial urbanism did not die with the loss of Algeria as a colony. Instead, I argue that the project of colonial urbanism had already been given a life of its own in metropolitan France.

The second part of this project straddles the two periods and political circumstances, specifically in that it focuses on the oscillation and movement of colonial peoples and policies between Algeria and France. This section allows us to briefly consider the characteristics and history of Algerian migration to France. Specifically, I argue that the relative degree of mobility offered to Algerians during the colonial period allowed for the development of a sustained Algerian community within France. On top of this, it is argued that the growth of the Algerian community in France triggered the growth of a state apparatus to police and monitor it, based on the lessons and principles of colonial urban planning and policy. It also reified a public attitude of hostility and paranoia toward the growing presence of Algerian Muslims on French soil.

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[8] Zeynep Çelik, *Urbans Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers Under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 120.

The third part of this project analyzes the logic and practice of urban planning and policy in Paris since the reforms and renovations of Georges-Eugène Haussmann in the late 19th century, with a particular eye toward the housing and management of the city's Algerian migrant population. This section argues that the postwar period – which witnessed the invitation of Algerian labourers to France to counteract labour shortages in France, and a desperate surplus in Algeria – represents the large scale refraction of the colonial social and spatial paradigm onto several French cities, but especially Paris.

Algerian migrants to Paris, like those who had migrated to Algiers, tended to settle in groups in run-down apartments when available, but more often in the *bidonvilles* (shantytowns) that dotted empty landscapes in industrial zones on the outskirts of cities. By the early 1950s, although many Algerians had been brought to France to work in the construction sector, the overwhelming majority remained without suitable housing. With the eruption of the struggle for independence in Algeria in 1954, and the development of Algerian nationalist networks in the suburbs of Paris, the French ministries of the interior and of labour collaborated on the creation of a national institution to house and monitor France's Algerian migrant worker populations.

In 1956, the Sonacotral (Societé Nationale de Construction de Logements pour les Travailleurs Algériens) was created to reclaim lands occupied by *bidonvilles*, construct workers' housing, and to facilitate the assembly of Algerian migrant labourers into these hostel-type accommodations. Fashioned as a mechanism of urban renewal, social welfare and progress, the Sonacotral quickly developed a reputation for its aggressive land acquisitions, discriminatory practices, primitive housing units, and its restrictive, patriarchal regulations within its housing estates. Building on the lessons of urban planning and policy in Algeria,

and employing retired colonial military officers as building managers, the creation of the Sonacotral, it shall be argued, marked the precise recreation of a colonial social and spatial paradigm in urban France.

The Sonacotral estates were typically located on the most isolated and underserviced lands on the outskirts of the city; regulations were militaristic, and their enforcement could be quite brutal; living conditions were primitive and cramped. Finally, because it was reasoned that migrant workers' activities would be largely restricted to work and sleep, it mattered not to administrators and policy-makers that there would be no space for social interaction, nor the means or connections to access the rest of the city. The dominant assumption was that, since workers only came to France for a year or two at a time, the restrictive, mechanistic terms of this arrangement were permissible. Likewise, state and public opinion generally weighed against the integration of Algerian enclaves into society at large. Whether owing to racist discourses concerning Algerians' lack of 'evolution', good social habits and hygiene, as well as fears concerning their political volatility and potential for violence, it was generally agreed that immigrant communities should remain separate from the main city. Migration, after all, was thought to be only a temporary fact of urban life that required only provisional consideration.

The fourth chapter thus argues that the end of French rule in Algeria in 1962, the rise in family migration toward the end of the 1970s, and the decline of the economic boom in France finally revealed the cracks in this assumption. Renamed Sonacotra in 1964 to reflect a change in mandate to manage and house *all* migrant communities, the institution was left with a situation in which fewer and fewer supposedly 'temporary' immigrant workers were returning home, and, it will be shown, an urban framework for the settlement and

containment of migrant communities had already been established. The suburban *grands ensembles* to which migrant families were eventually allocated were generally the least desirable: isolated, run-down, and lacking in amenities, infrastructure, and social services. On the one hand, the mayors of communes and municipal politicians sounded alarms around the dangers of 'creating medinas' in French cities, and shunned the designation of migrant housing estates in their territory. Meanwhile, Sonacotra administrators were faced with the paradoxical situation of avoiding stigmatization and discrimination against communities that were physically isolated, low-income and demographically narrow. Whether condensed into their own communities, or dispersed in groups amongst working class French neighbourhoods, migrant groups suffered the same experiences of racism and physical isolation.

The remnants of a settler state mentality are tangible in French cities to this day; and this mentality, as it will be shown, is at the root of much of the social strife over inclusion, racism, integration, education, and social equality in contemporary urban France. Yet to unearth the roots of the history of migration and migrant housing in France is also to unearth their lineage from the same practices during the colonial era in North Africa. As the colonial metropolis par excellence and centre of the French empire in Africa, Algiers provides the ideal case study in the colonial context; similarly, as the heart of the French republic, and empire, Paris provides the ideal case study in the metropolitan context. Migration from rural Algeria into Algiers, and migration from rural Algeria into France were the result of similar push and pull factors – rural poverty, urban employment. Likewise, the French responded to the migration of Algerians to the colonial metropolis and to the European metropolis with the same doctrines, using the same techniques. The similarities between the experiences of rural

Algerians migrating to Algiers during the later colonial period, and those of Algerians migrating to Paris during the postwar period are both alarming and indicative of a continuity of an urban policy that – whether *indigène* or *étrangère,* in Algeria or France – at once demands assimilation but impedes integration. How do we understand this practice which through its fear and paranoia over cultural confrontation simultaneously creates one?

Chapter 2: Algiers: Colonial urbanism, housing & the civilizing mission

Dominance is not exclusive to colonial cities, but the use and manifestation of dominance in the colonial context is particularly blunt…colonial cities are important to understand, therefore, not because they are so different, but because the politics of decisions in them are more transparent.[9]

May the Metropole rejoice, and understand this lesson for herself.[10]

The French colonial mission in Algeria was predicated on the pursuit of a so-called *mission civilicatrice* (civilizing mission), and although this mission undertook a number of different forms over the course of colonial rule, its core essence remained more or less the same. In this chapter, it is argued that housing and urban planning and policy became an essential component of the French civilizing mission in Algeria. Through the processes of urban planning, housing design, and segregation of populations by class and ethnicity, we can see the articulation of a particular colonial logic – based on racist assumptions about French superiority, and a subsequent imperative for Algerian assimilation – which would replicate itself in the post-colonial period.

In 1830, following a series of conflicts over outstanding debts between Algerian merchants and French importers, and justified as an incursion against ongoing piracy against French shipping in the Mediterranean emanating out of Algiers, the French launched a military expedition and blockade against the Ottoman city. Yet what began as an opportunistic political manoeuvre by Charles X to bolster his domestic popularity and stabilize trade routes in the Mediterranean would, in fact, set the stage for almost a century

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[9] Nezar Al Sayyad, 'Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflections on Colonialism and National Identity', in Al Sayyad, Nezar, ed., *Forms of Dominance* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), 5.

[10] A. Laprade, 'Une ville créée spécialement pour les indigènes à Casablanca', in Royer, Jean, ed. *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux* (La Charité-sur-Loire: Delayance, 1932), 99.

and a half of colonial engagements in North Africa. Within a few years, beginning with the conquest of Algiers and gradually spreading across coastal ports and into the interior, French political, military and economic investment in its new North African holding only deepened, and a withdrawal seemed ever more unlikely. The military administration in charge of the territory pursued a large-scale seizure of agricultural land, while brutally suppressing regional resistance efforts, and subsidizing the settlement of lands by European merchants and farmers.

From the first days of occupation in Algeria to the very last, Algiers was the French imperial city par excellence. It was the centre of French rule in Africa – the blueprint and working model of the negotiation of French colonial governance, and platform for the civilizing mission to extend the enlightened culture and social mores of Europe into the 'barbarous terrains' of Islam. By extension, the physical arrangements of the city – both in how they defined everyday social relations between Algerians and French, and in how they have become so visually representative of cultural segregation – are strikingly emblematic of colonial rule in Algeria.

To be sure, the city inherited by the French following the exile of the Ottoman dey in 1830 had its own distinct spatial hierarchy. The Ottomans had concentrated military and political functions within the marine quarter, which straddled the low-lying lands along the Bay of Algiers, while residential quarters and commerce were located in the casbah, the citadel to the south overlooking the marine quarter. These public and private cities were nonetheless well-connected by a network of streets, and their architectures and planning were more or less stylistically harmonious.[11]

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[11] Zeynep Çelik, 'Historic Intersections: the Center of Algiers', in Çelik, Zeynep et al. *Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City Through Text and Image* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2009), 199.

The casbah of Algiers – a dense conglomeration of roughly fifty neighbourhoods, each with its own religious and political leadership bodies – was a diverse mixture of Arabs, Berbers, Moors, Andalusians, Christians and Jews, with a varied presence of Saharans and European consuls.[12] However, the built form of Algiers was strongly conditioned by the culture and politics of Islam, particularly with respect to the division of space along gender lines, with public space regarded as the terrain of males, and domestic space regarded as the terrain of women.[13] A typical home in the casbah was inward-facing, organized around a central court, whose entrances were indirect, and which rarely featured windows looking into the street. Upper levels of the home would open into the court as well, leading to the roof which, due to the proximity of homes to one another, constituted a parallel public realm storeys above the street where neighbours – usually women and their children – could interact and socialize.[14] The spatial and political configuration of the casbah led to the formation of strong social networks and religious cohesion.[15]

The French were acutely aware of the role of the urban layout in facilitating social, religious, cultural and political organization in the casbah. Accordingly, one of the immediate concerns of French military engineers in Algiers was the physical and moral deconstruction of the Islamic city. Utilizing the pre-existing separation of public and private cities, early colonial planning was characterized by widespread seizure and demolition of mosques, palaces, and other symbolic Ottoman structures in the marine quarter, and their replacement with colonnaded Beaux-Arts-style European residences and structures for administrative and

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[12] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 14.

[13] Amal Kahina Djiar, 'Locating architecture, post-colonialism, and culture: contextualization in Algiers', *The Journal of Architecture*, 14:2, 2009, 166.

[14] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 19.

[15] Djiar, *Locating*, 166.

military functions.[16] The other immediate priority of military engineers was to develop a network of wide boulevards and open public spaces. Before the arrival of the French, the widest arterial road in Algiers was three metres in breadth.[17] The broadening of streets and creation of public squares in the marine quarter – achieved through rather brutal and abrupt seizures and demolitions – were designed in part to allow for the mass movement and assembly of troops and vehicles, and to facilitate the further development of a parallel European city within Algiers.[18]

The ultimate goal of the military administration, which governed in Algiers until 1871, was establishing of French dominance, both real and symbolic. A most telling example occurred in 1852 when a clock was hung from the minaret at the Al Sayyida mosque in the central Place du Gouvernement square, effectively secularizing this last monument to the precolonial city in the marine quarter, and launching public life into the regimented work day. In 1860, the Boulevard de l'Imperatrice was built, spanning the waterfront in daunting symmetrical arcades, and lending the symbolic effect of locking the casbah away from the sea behind the orderly French colonial facades.[19]

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[16] Çelik, 'Historic', 201; Djiar, 'Locating', 168.
[17] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 13.
[18] Djiar, 'Locating', 170.
[19] Çelik, 'Historic', 206; Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 35.

Figure 2.1.[20] Boulevard de l'Impericatrice, renamed Boulevard Ernesto Che Guevara following the revolution in 1962, shown here in 2007. The colonnaded French structures on the waterfront still maintain their visual effect of locking in the casbah above and to the right.

Figure 2.2.[21] The Place du Gouvernement, in central Algiers, ca. 1899, with the Al Sayyida mosque to the right.

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[20] Damien Boilley. 'Large vue sur le front de mer d'Alger-Centre avec la Casbah en arriere plan', JPEG. 2007. Accessed via Wikimedia Commons, http://bit.ly/nmI5Q6, 16 July 2011.

[21] Author unknown. 'Alger: place du gouvernement', JPEG. Zurich: Photoglob AG, 1899. Accessed via Wikimedia Commons, http://bit.ly/qsHF8O, 16 July 2011.

As early as the mid-1840s, the French resolved to leave the casbah to its own devices, which both ensured the containment of the upper city, and avoided the potentially enormous cost of relocating its inhabitants.[22] It also gave birth to a policy of indifference towards management of the casbah. As historian Zeynep Çelik has put it, 'if demolition was no longer the issue, neither was maintenance.'[23] The early decision to let the casbah, also referred to as the Muslim quarter, stand meant that it continually figured into discourse on urban management, integration of populations, and even tourism until the very end of French rule in Algeria. Administrators, architects and city planners tended to view the casbah with a mixture of curiosity and disdain, referring to it as a mysterious and seductive woman, or as a sepulchral mess. In the words of one city official, 'the Arab believes he lives in his white town; he is [in fact] buried there.'[24] Architects complained of 'fighting against nature' when dealing with plans or incisions involving the casbah. Health officials cited hygienic concerns throughout the colonial period in their proposals for 'ventilations' – in other words, demolitions – in the Muslim quarter.[25]

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[22] Djiar, 'Locating', 169.

[23] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 38.

[24] Ibid 23, 25.

[25] Ibid 37, 41.

Figure 2.3.[26] Central Algiers, aerial view, ca. 1930s. The Muslim quarter is on the left; the European quarter is on the right.

By the end of the 19th century, as the city and its commerce grew, it seemed more and more that Algiers was destined to become the capital of French Africa, and a cosmopolitan city of commerce and cultural exchange. In the same moment, it was also understood that the European city in its physical dimension was the visual representation of the French civilizing mission, and the most tangible symbol of French culture in Africa.[27] The casbah, by extension, served as the backdrop for every visitor arriving by sea in Algiers – a sort of negative space against which the dynamism, order, and ornamentation of the European city stood. To the French, Algeria was the equivalent of a fallow field or an overgrown forest, waiting to be reduced, rebuilt, and revitalized. The so-called 'fight against nature' of French

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[26] Author unknown. Title unknown. Accessed via Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, (New York: The Orion Press, 1964; originally published as *La Ville Radieuse*, 1924) 232.

[27] Djiar, 'Locating', 162.

architects in Algiers was to rewrite the history of their North African capital in stone and steel, and to reclaim its terrain as their own.

The 1931 international conference on colonial urbanism in Paris marked a decisive shift in French colonial planning methods and attitudes toward the management of native populations in urban centres. Attended by the most prominent figures in urban planning and governance in colonies and protectorates from the Antilles to Indochina, the conference was also a watershed moment in the exchange of ideas and approaches that would largely define urban practices for the remainder of the colonial era. It was, in fact, the first and last of its kind.

Reports, presentations, and speeches delivered at the conference were quickly compiled and edited into a collection titled *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux*, which today constitutes one of the richest sources of perspectives and images of urban design and governance from the late colonial period. From the collection, in which reports and findings from Algeria and Morocco play the most prominent role, three essential characteristics can be discerned: a distinct shift in policy toward the cultural assimilation of *indigènes* (natives, or colonial subjects); the drive to establish the cultural dimensions of space in the colonies through comprehensive and careful urban planning; and a recognition of the colonies as potential terrains for experimentation in new architectural and planning practices to counter unrest, overpopulation, and urban decay in mainland France.

The opening remarks at the conference from Marshal Hubert Lyautey, an army general turned Resident-General of the French protectorate in Morocco, are particularly indicative of a popular new attitude toward colonial governance in the 1930s. Two policies, he emphasized, are essential to efficient colonial rule: first, an indigenous policy that allows

a closer union with native populations; second, a comprehensive policy of urbanism in order to facilitate the latter.[28] From the beginning of the twentieth century, there were two dominant philosophies regarding the social integration of native populations: assimilation, by which French culture and language superseded and replaced indigenous culture and language, often underpinned by a strong military presence; and association, which emphasized respect for, and preservation of, indigenous heritage, while encouraging the gradual integration of French lifestyle and language. A strong military presence would be rendered unnecessary, according to associationist philosophy, by the provision of housing, schools, hospitals, and other social services to dampen inclinations toward anti-colonial resistance.[29]

In his reflection on working in the protectorate of Morocco, architect and planner Henri Prost, the right-hand man to Marshal Lyautey, remarked that 'at this stage, the integration of Europeans and Muslims is impossible', but that the framework of urbanism could accommodate their cohabitation.[30] Urbanism, accordingly, was envisioned as the cornerstone of a policy of association: cities provided the ideal backdrop for the introduction of modern amenities and French language and culture to indigenous populations en masse. New attitudes thus underlined the importance of conserving pre-colonial medinas, and the social mores associated with them, in tandem with the construction of parallel French cities – referred to as the *villes nouvelles* (new cities) – featuring the clean lines, open spaces,

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[28] Hubert Lyautey, 'Préface', in Royer, Jean, ed. *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux* (La Charité-sur-Loire: Delayance, 1932), 7.

[29] Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 74.

[30] Henri Prost, 'Le développement de l'urbanisme dans le protectorat du Maroc, de 1914 à 1923', in Jean Royer, ed. *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux* (La Charité-sur-Loire: Delayance, 1932), 60.

standardization, and the modern infrastructures of a contemporary European metropolis.[31] The policy of drawing the two cultures – indigenous and European – together side by side thus served to highlight the lure, efficiency, and dominance of European design and culture, while preserving the historic and touristic value of pre-colonial architecture and culture.[32]

The philosophy of French urbanism itself was cultivated in the early twentieth century by the Musée Social, an influential thinktank based in Paris working on issues of political and social economy.[33] Building upon the garden city movement emanating from England, the Musée Social and French urbanists in general began to incorporate more holistic views of cities as complex and expanding systems, rather than agglomerations of houses and spaces. City planning was increasingly viewed as a bird's eye practice, designed to ensure the control, function, hygiene and efficiency of space and its inhabitants, an attitude that permeated circles in both the colonies and the mainland.[34] Yet the implementation of urbanist models met with resistance within political circles in France. In fact, the first French law on urbanism was passed not in France, but in Morocco, on 14 March 1919, which required a master plan for every city with over 10,000 inhabitants to regulate urban functions and growth. The law promoted comprehensive systems for urban layouts, circulation networks and road widths, and stipulations for public spaces, monuments, and buildings.[35] Paul Rabinow, whose *French Modern* studied the birth and expansion of urbanism in Morocco and France, has called urbanism 'the grid of intelligibility for the modern welfare

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[31] Wright 7

[32] Prost, 'Le développement', 60.

[33] Hélène Vacher, *Projection colonial et ville rationalisé: le role de l'espace colonial dans la constitution de l'urbanisme en France, 1900-1931* (Aalborg: Aalborg University Press, 1997), 75.

[34] Ibid 114-5.

[35] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 71.

state', whose goal is the transformation and discipline of the social milieu as a whole.[36] That is to say, urbanism combines all of the concerns of demography, geography, hygiene and order into one overarching practice that tempers and controls the social environment via the built environment. In 1931, at the colonial exposition in Paris, the director of architectural services in Algeria, Charles Montaland, praised urbanism as an 'artform which modern laws have only recently permitted'[37]; Henri Prost called it 'political brilliance' and 'artistic ingenuity'[38]; one commentator who attended a Musée Social exposition in 1927 called urbanism 'the eugenics of cities.'[39]

In a general report on the state of cities in North Africa, Guillaume de Tarde emphasized that while urbanism in the colonies had its own special dimensions, it had direct implications for urbanism in general.[40] Indeed, the issues plaguing French cities and cities in the colonies in the early twentieth century were nearly identical: overcrowding, homelessness and shantytowns; poor sanitation and infrastructure; ethnic and class tensions; and economic stagnation.[41] In particular, the explosion of shantytowns on urban peripheries after the end of the First World War, in both France and Algeria, served as tangible critiques of the inequalities that pervaded both metropolitan and colonial societies, as well as hotbeds of political tension and upheaval.

A pervasive notion across the political spectrum in France was that overseas territories provided the ideal terrains on which to pursue radical solutions to the social,

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[36] Rabinow, *French Modern*, 12.

[37] Charles Montaland, 'L'Urbanisme en Algérie: ses directives pour l'avenir', in Jean Royer, ed. *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux* (La Charité-sur-Loire: Delayance, 1932), 49.

[38] Prost, 'Le développement', 59.

[39] Wright 36.

[40] Guillaume de Tarde, 'L'urbanisme en Afrique du Nord: rapport général', in Jean Royer, ed. *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux* (La Charité-sur-Loire: Delayance, 1932), 27.

[41] Wright 54; Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 8.

political, and aesthetic problems facing French cities.[42] Indeed, the colonies had an immediate need to cure social tensions caused by acute shortage of housing and employment the same as France, but with some important differences. First, cities in North Africa were relatively small and undeveloped compared with the likes of Paris, Lyon or Marseille, and due to the authoritarian nature of government in the colonies, vacant lands – or even occupied lands – could be seized quite readily for major building projects. Second, because it was acknowledged that colonial terrains were to be used as experimenting grounds, and due to a relative lack of accountability between colonial administrators and the majority of their population, grandiose projects from young and inexperienced European architects and planners could be welcomed and put to the test almost immediately.[43]

Throughout his time in Morocco, Lyautey was adamant that the arts of government he had practiced in the colonies were equally applicable in France, and in fact he actively networked with demographers, planners, and urbanists in France to ensure his lessons were passed along back to the metropole.[44] The 1931 colonial exposition in Paris served as somewhat of a crescendo for the career of Lyautey – who retired from his duties in Morocco in 1925 and died in 1934 – as it unleashed a flood of insights about planning and urban planning and policy from cities across the colonies into public discourse.[45]

By the 1920s, Lyautey's basic principles of preserving pre-colonial medinas and creating European-style *villes nouvelles* in colonial cities had come to dominate the everyday wisdom of urban design in Algeria.[46] For this reason, it is important to underline briefly the

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[42] Wright 3.
[43] Ibid 18; Vacher 115.
[44] Paul Rabinow, 'Colonialism, Modernity: the French in Morocco', Al Sayyad, Nezar, ed., *Forms of Dominance* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), 171; Vacher 257.
[45] Vacher 214.
[46] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 39.

basic tenets of his background and philosophy, as well as the architects and designers with whom he was so deeply intertwined. Before arriving in Morocco, Lyautey served in the French army in Algeria, Indochina, and Madasgascar, taking part in a number of famous campaigns, including the first official French military campaigns into Morocco that ultimately resulted in the establishment of the protectorate. Once established in Morocco, Lyautey quickly earned a reputation for his audacity and his disdain for administrative formalism, famously declaring, 'La bureaucratie, voila l'ennemi!', and was referred to as a 'cat among pigeons.'[47] He criticized the moral crisis of French colonialism, while emphasizing the importance of respect for indigenous cultures and the incorporation of colonial subjects into the civil and military sectors. He routinely petrified the right-wing with his radicalism, while baffling the left as an adamant colonialist and social conservative who nonetheless conveyed ideas that appeared to be their own.[48]

One of the primary motives for Lyautey's urban policies in Morocco was the disgust he felt at witnessing the state of Algerian cities during his service, which lay in a chaotic mess of decaying pre-colonial neighbourhoods and 19th century French pastiches. Morocco, on the other hand, assumed as a French protectorate in 1912, was untouched on a broad scale by European incursions, and represented open season for Lyautey to pursue a comprehensive, contemporary, efficient metropolis.[49] Furthermore, as resident-general of a protectorate, Lyautey was far less bound to either an elected assembly or the broad population, a privilege to which he credited much of his success.[50]

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[47] George Wagner, 'Sur les problèmes coloniaux', *L'Echo d'Alger*, 31 January 1931.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Wright 88-92.
[50] Rabinow, 'Colonialism, Modernity', 172.

The exercise of state power envisioned by Lyautey and his administration was not one of destroying colonial subjects, but of transforming them.[51] Though his methods were highly authoritarian, Lyautey's policy of acculturation is a classic example of the exercise of soft power. The segregation and containment of the indigenous Moroccan population was justified on the basis that it protected 'traditional' Moroccan cities and culture from being overrun by European land speculators. It also supposedly protected European settlers from epidemics intrinsic to the Muslim quarters.[52]

The engineer of Lyautey's urban policies was Henri Prost, who arrived in Morocco in 1913 and oversaw urban development in the protectorate until 1923. Under Lyautey's wing, Prost's plans involved the creation of large European settlements, usually in the most picturesque, and defensible, lands possible, emphasizing green spaces and a *cordon sanitaire* (literally, sanitary cordon; more accurately, a greenbelt) separating European from indigenous quarters. Prost authored the plans for Marrakech, Fez, Rabat, Casablanca, and Meknes, among others, all of which embed his own personal belief in a legitimated social hierarchy into the streets, walls and greenbelts of the city.[53] Though elegant and aesthetically alluring at the time, Prost's rigid *villes nouvelles* and the pre-colonial medinas they surrounded very quickly became overpopulated – without adequate space for urban expansion, the medinas eventually spilled out, creating the very shantytowns Prost had been enlisted to sidestep.[54] While one can visualize how Lyautey and Prost's brand of benevolent segregation achieved the separation and distinguishing of cultures, it is an entirely other issue

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[51] Wright 76.
[52] Rabinow, *French Modern*, 293.
[53] Ibid 242.
[54] Ibid 302.

to fathom how segregation – given the label of 'urban apartheid' by some[55] – was supposed to bring the two cultures closer together.

The 1930s saw a series of urban renewal projects began in Algeria. Several teams of European and American architects and planners were invited to draw up new proposals for the city of Algiers, including Prost and his colleagues Maurice Rotival and René Danger, as well as the infamous Swiss-French architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret – better known as Le Corbusier. The moment was ripe to refashion of the image of French colonialism: public perspectives in France had been radically altered by the excitement of the centenary of French rule in Algeria, and by the energy and innovation exhibited at the colonial exposition in Paris, both of which fetched much attention in the French media. Curiosity about the colonial mission – which had acquired the rather unfavourable public image of a military enslavement operation – and enthusiasm for the modernization and Westernization of colonial cities grew substantially.[56]

The 1930 Plan d'Ajustement, d'Embellissement, et d'Extension, designed by René Danger, introduced the concept of zoning laws in Algiers, and paved the way for a series of projects aimed at reorganizing, restructuring, and modernizing the city. In general, three issues received the most attention: the modernization of the marine quarter; new housing for Europeans; and engagement with the decaying, anarchic Muslim quarter in the centre of the city. Conceived as such, it is not entirely surprising that new urban design projects in Algiers from the 1930s onwards, despite a renewed interest in integration and progress for Algerians, still isolated and drastically underprivileged developments for the indigenous population.

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[55] Janet Abu-Lughod, *Rabat: Urban Apartheid in Morocco*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
[56] Wagner, 'Sur les problemes coloniaux.'

In 1931, Prost, Danger, and Rotival unveiled their master plan for Algiers, which proposed extensive demolitions and reconstruction in the marine quarter; suburban apartment complexes for Europeans, connected by a series of underground motorways; and a number of new green spaces, stadiums and beaches in the city for leisure activities. [57] New minimalist housing complexes, also sited on the peripheries of the city but kept separate from developments reserved for Europeans, were proposed for the Algerian working class, in order to alleviate some of the overcrowding in the casbah.[58]

However, the majority of the components for the master plan were put on hold, revised, or abandoned altogether. While optimism existed for developments in the suburbs of Algiers, popular opinion held that alterations to the marine quarter must be kept to a modest scale and pace.[59] Maurice Rotival, more than Prost or Danger, responded to the ongoing public and political hesitation, writing in 1933 that the great imperial cities, such as New Delhi in India, were built from scratch, planned from the most minute to the most overarching detail, and provided the 'admirable framework for the expressions necessary for the direction of a grand empire.'[60] Yet by 1935, in the thick of the Great Depression and consequent shortage of public funding for building projects, even Rotival had come to proclaim the inevitability of suburbanization, with historic city centres left to be the sites of administration and politics.[61] The real experimentations could take place on the peripheries where land was cheap, and readily available.

The other most significant contributor to the climate of urban design in Algiers during the 1930s was Le Corbusier who, between 1930 and 1942, authored the Plan Obus, a series

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[57] Djiar, 'Locating', 170; Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 71.

[58] Zohra Hakimi, 'Du plan communal au plan regional de la ville d'Alger (1931-1948)', *Labyrinthe*, 13, 2002.

[59] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 71.

[60] Maurice Rotival, 'Contribution à l'aménagement de l'Alger futur', *Chantiers Nord-africains*, March 1933.

[61] Rabinow, *French Modern*, 356.

of six plans for the city. Le Corbusier is significant not because his designs were comprehensively and vigorously implemented – they were not, to be sure – but because his conceptions and ideas about colonized space so perfectly embody the spirit of colonial urbanism at the time. Central throughout his work is the notion of the house as a 'machine for living' – that is to say, he believed the house had a purpose for the individual and society beyond simply storing people and their things. More specifically, Le Corbusier believed that architecture, beginning at the level of individual units of dwelling, is behavioural[62]: it has the capacity to act upon people and society, to shape their tendencies and moods. Yet since the majority of his work had taken place in a European context, it is quite another matter to consider exactly what sort of people and society Le Corbusier's 'machines for living' in Algiers were designed to create and shape.

The six drafts of Plan Obus contained some slight variations but all made more or less the same proposal: a large multi-lane motorway gripping the natural curve of the harbour, connecting a financial district of high rises in the marine quarter with several proposed outlying suburban developments to the east and west. He also proposed the development of apartment blocks to the south of Algiers at Fort L'Empereur to house a quarter million people, whose designs featured glass walls, hanging gardens, garages, and other modern amenities.

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[62] Nathaniel Coleman, *Utopias and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2005), 116.
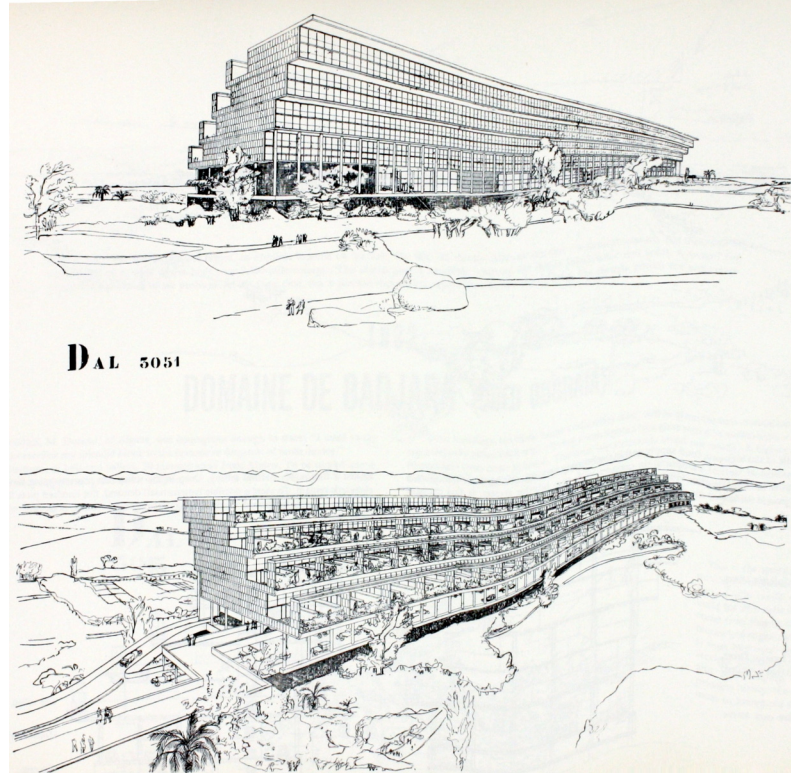
Figure 2.4.[63] Le Corbusier's proposed apartments for the outskirts of Algiers.

The most controversial and visually striking component of the Plan Obus, however, is certainly the viaduct proposed to connect the apartments at Fort L'Empereur to the business centre by passing directly over the casbah. Indeed, despite his fascination with the lifestyles and physical construction he witnessed in the casbah, a unanimous feature of Le Corbusier's plans for Algiers was a requirement for the destruction of roughly 60% of it to make way for the business centre. The remaining 40% was to be appropriated, renovated, and preserved as a historical artefact.[64]

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[63] Le Corbusier. Untitled. Accessed via Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, (New York: The Orion Press, 1964; originally published as *La Ville Radieuse*, 1924) 242.

[64] Le Corbusier. *The Radiant City* (New York: The Orion Press, 1964), 232.

Figure 2.5.[65] Le Corbusier's Plan Obus. This model features the business centre on the waterfront, connected with European housing to the south by a viaduct, which passes directly over the casbah below.

Le Corbusier's plans for Algiers largely ignore both the city and its residents, treating its topography and landscape as a blank canvas for redevelopment, and washing over its cultural and historic attachments.[66] The Plan Obus represents the westernization of Algiers at its most radical extreme: the historic Muslim quarter is emptied, and the apartments proposed are designed for nuclear families with automobiles and a desire for glass walls – did Le Corbusier envision any 'Africans' at all in the centre, or the suburbs, of the so-called 'capital of French Africa'? Le Corbusier's vision for Algiers immediately reminds one of Albert Memmi's remarks regarding the colonial city: clearly, the colonist has not come to Algeria to build for the native society, but for himself, and for the proliferation of his own culture.

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[65] Le Corbusier. Untitled. Accessed via Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, (New York: The Orion Press, 1964; originally published as *La Ville Radieuse*, 1924) 236.
[66] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 77.

The advent of the Great Depression followed by World War Two ensured that funds for many of these audacious building projects were put on hold until the mid to late 1940s. Le Corbusier's Plan Obus was definitively rejected in 1942, and by the time Prost, Rotival and Danger's master plan was revisited in 1948, cheap, large-scale housing projects to counter the tide of rural-to-urban migration had taken full priority over the municipal building chest.[67] In fact, aside from a number of demolitions in the marine quarter and the casbah, most of these ambitious renovations were never carried to their full extent in Algeria.[68] By the mid-1930s, at least on a municipal level, the question had become less about how to attract Europeans to the modernizing, opportunity-laden colonies, and more about how to manage the steady influx of dispossessed rural migrants into the city, and – in the words of one architect – how to 'prepare the way toward a progressive assimilation of European habits'[69] through the introduction of European-style living spaces for Algerians.

From the earliest period of French rule in Algeria, rural-to-urban migration had been a persistent feature of colonial society – consider, for example, that in 1830, the population of Algeria was ninety percent rural, a figure that would fall into rapid decline over the following century. The urbanization of Algeria was driven largely by a widespread and ruthless campaign of rural land expropriation by the French that left enormous numbers of peasants landless. During the 19th century, the French army claimed for European settlers the majority of lands left 'unused'[70] by nomadic tribes, and levied a policy of 'collective responsibility' against resistant sedentary mountain tribes, whereby one fifth of a tribe's

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[67] Ibid 79.

[68] Ibid 57.

[69] Ibid 115.

[70] French administrators presumed that, if land was not in immediate use at the moment of an audit, it was unused. However, nomadic tribes had varying seasonal uses for different lands. The seizure of 'unused' lands often meant the loss of the vast majority of a tribe's territory needed for basic sustenance.

lands would be annexed in the event of any rebellious activity.[71] The introduction of the French legal system of private property, however, was the single most devastating weapon used by the French against rural societies organized around collective ownership. Lands occupied by families and rural societies unable to furnish a deed proving their entitlements were subject to arbitrary evictions and mass expropriations, particularly if colonial surveyors had deemed the land desirable.[72] For the majority of the colonial period, peasant societies lived in abject poverty, extremely vulnerable to food shortages and famine. Seriously deprived, or dispossessed altogether, of their own lands, rural societies were forced seek waged labour on European-owned farms. However, an inflated labour pool meant landowners kept wages at a starvation-level minimum.[73] What is astounding about the state of rural society coming into the 20th century is that vineyards had become the dominant form of production, accounting for forty percent of Algerian exports by value, and using up an enormous amount of agricultural lands. Yet wine was a commodity that the majority of Algerian Muslims would never even consume.[74]

Between 1921 and 1930, the population growth rate in Algeria doubled. Land ownership was increasingly concentrated. The interconnectedness and dependence of the Algerian economy on Western economies, especially France, meant catastrophe for rural Algeria when the Great Depression struck.[75] Seeing no other option, and desperate for employment, hordes of landless peasants made their way into Sétif, Constantine, and most often, Algiers. However, the city of Algiers had not devised any strategy to account for the

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[71] Neil MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900-62* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 23-7.
[72] Lamprakos 187; MacMaster 27.
[73] MacMaster 32.
[74] Ibid 30, 186
[75] Ibid 175-6.

growth – or even the maintenance – of the Muslim quarter. Spaces that did exist in the casbah were overcrowded and deteriorating without any official resources for upkeep.[76] As a result, the first *bidonville* (shantytown) in Algiers crept out from the north side of the casbah in 1926, and was followed by several others in the years to come.[77]

The population explosion of the Muslim quarter in Algiers in the early 1930s did not catch French officials entirely off guard. For example, several presenters on Algiers at the 1931 conference on colonial urbanism in Paris conveyed that the problems of overpopulation and housing shortages in Algiers were the result of inadequate planning in decades past. They also acknowledged that the current levels of population in the casbah – at 2,800 people per hectare, compared with 1700 per hectare in Paris, already one of the densest cities in the world – were unsustainable.[78]

However, officials appeared either ignorant or wilfully blind toward the causes of such massive waves of migration. Henri Prost, for example, suggested that the current wave of rural-to-urban migration was the result of the fact that 'the advent of the automobile means natives from the farthest *bleds* (villages) are piling into cars with their entire families and making for the cities,'[79] as though it were the automobile, and not landlessness and poverty, that drove rural inhabitants to the cities. Likewise, officials were hesitant and unsure about ways of curbing *bidonvilles* in the colonial capital. Between 1938 and 1953, the official number of residents living in *bidonvilles* in Algiers skyrockted from 4,800 to 125,000; by 1954, Algiers was the fourth largest 'French' city, after Lyon, with 570,000 inhabitants,

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[76] Lamprakos 193.

[77] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 109.

[78] René Lespes & Paul Messeschmitt. 'La Ville, le port, le tourisme', *Chantiers Nord-africains*, March 1935, 163.

[79] Prost, 'Rapport général', 1931.

while 41.5% of the native Muslim population lived in some kind of informal housing, or had no housing at all.[80]

In its expansion, Algiers had begun to disintegrate. Newcomers to the city, who lived on a sort of periphery on a periphery in the *bidonvilles*, brought with them different skills, social and religious customs, and lifestyles from the urban Muslims with whom they were sharing spaces, and to this point had had relatively little contact with Europeans.[81] In March 1933, writing in the popular journal *Chantiers Nord-africains*, one Algiers architect reflected on the pressing need to halt migration from the countryside to the cities, and likewise, the need to relieve some of the pressures of overpopulation on the casbah of Algiers. While the author did not outline any suggestions regarding the problem of migration, he did identify the basic question facing architects and planners of his day who were confronting the problem of overpopulation: how were French designers and builders to edify the traditional Islamic building forms that correspond to the Muslim's lifestyle? By the same token, he wonders, how evolutionary housing could be created to bring Muslims closer in lifestyle to the French; how the casbah could be decongested; and, whether the Muslims were even willing to leave it.[82]

The project of housing native populations in Algiers from the 1930s onwards had two basic objectives: first, to advance the so-called civilizing mission in the colony by rehousing populations in hybrid accommodations that bridged Algerian and European forms that would 'evolve' colonial subjects towards a French lifestyle; and second, to eliminate the eye-sore and unrest of the *bidonvilles*, and to ensure that new Muslim quarters would be hygienic,

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[80] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 82, 110.
[81] Ibid 110.
[82] F. Bienvenu, 'L'habitacle indigène et les quartiers musulmans', *Chantiers Nord-africains*, March 1933, 245-6.

navigable, and easy to police. While benevolence and humanitarianism underpinned these social welfare initiatives for housing, it was clear that the control of native populations remained paramount, and that housing was very much a preferable alternative to increased police or military presence.[83] As Lyautey professed in Morocco, housing represented a means of transforming the indigenous subject, a dictum that colonial administrators in Algeria hoped would prove itself true.

It likewise represented a means toward establishing the cultural dimension of the colonial social and physical environment, a synthesis of European modernity with Algerian tradition and mystique. Colonial administrators dispatched architects, art historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and geographers into the Algerian countryside and the casbah alike to assess its houses, streets, and overall social functions and character, in turn, to inform its reconstitution in French modern form.[84] Ethnographic research into local history, domestic architecture, and daily patterns within the home was directly incorporated into designs for new housing units and their formation within a larger urban framework.[85] Many ethnographers themselves would write that the solution for the 'evolution' of indigenous society lay in the transformation of traditional residential forms.[86]

It was conceived as the task of the state to ensure the attachment of the Algerian to his trade and tradition, while also providing the means for a hygienic and modernizing lifestyle.[87] The notion that traditional Algerian culture and society were incapable of

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[83] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 114; Wright 75.
[84] Wright 7.
[85] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 96-7.
[86] Ibid 90.
[87] Montaland 52.

advancing without the intervention of French governance was pervasive.[88] One of the most common manifestations of ethnographic research in the Algerian countryside informing architectural production was the development of single-room units for rural migrant workers to the city. Lacking in many modern amenities, the units gave a few stylistic nods to houses found in rural Algeria, but were nonetheless deemed sufficient for integrating their inhabitants into urban life.[89]
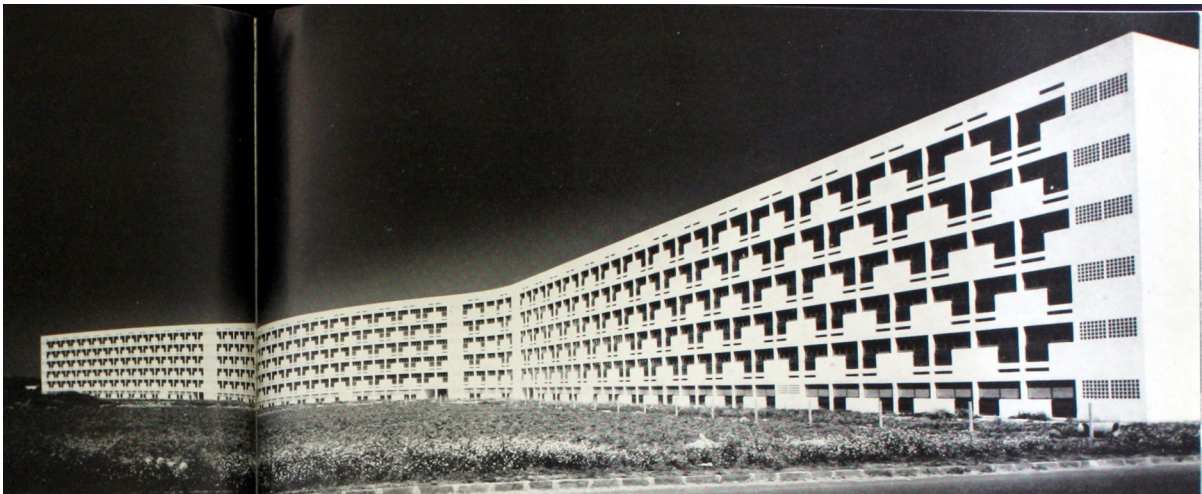
Figure 2.6.[90] Suburban evolutionary housing, ca. late 1950s.

Large scale developments of these units formed the backbone of a subsidized social housing initiative begun by the municipal government of Algiers in the 1930s. Located in clusters in the city's suburbs, the new housing complexes played a key role in the expansion of Algiers, and marked for the first time housing devised specifically for its indigenous

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[88] Shirine Hamadeh, 'Creating the Traditional City: A French Project', in AlSayyad, Nezar, ed., *Forms of Dominance* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), 245-8.

[89] Sherry McKay, 'Mediterraneanism: the politics of architectural production in Algiers during the 1930s', *City & Society,* 12:1, 2000, 89; Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 131.

[90] Lacroix. 'Habitat collectif économique'. Paris: L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, 1960. Accessed via *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, December 1959-January 1960, 50.

inhabitants.[91] Arguing that the 'Muslim habitat' should be distinct, the municipal administration built new social housing developments nearby peripheral industrial zones, separated by greenbelts from new residential developments destined for Europeans, which tended to hug the shoreline. These 'satellite cities' for Algerian workers would provide proximity to their places of employment, while facilitating the 'evolution' of rural workers and their families into urban life.[92] In fact, many developments were designed, built and distributed precisely according to the degree to which the intended Algerian inhabitants had advanced toward French lifestyle, ranging from 'semi-rural' to 'artisan' to 'evolved'.[93]

The problem of social housing initiatives in Algiers was that, over time, they only served to further entrench separation according to class, and segregation according to ethnicity.[94] It might also be noted that, despite a rhetoric about preserving indigenous traditions and reproducing indigenous forms in new developments, urban policy did not provide for the improvement or expansion of the already-existing casbah. To the contrary, the lack of infrastructural improvements in the casbah was justified by a supposed respect for its preservation.[95]

In 1954, the casbah of Algiers held the world record for human density, sheltering roughly 70,000 people in the space of twenty hectares. During the 1950s, an average of 100,000 new residents were arriving annually in Algiers.[96] Unable to curb the flow of migration from the countryside into the cities, and faced with mounting class tensions and revolutionary fervour within the casbah and the *bidonvilles*, the colonial administration's

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[91] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 130; Sherry McKay, 'Housing, Race and Gender in 1930s Algiers' *(ACSA European Conference*, 1997), 174.

[92] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 80.

[93] Ibid 116; McKay, 'Housing', 175.

[94] McKay, 'Housing', 175-6.

[95] Hamadeh 252-7.

[96] Djiar, 'Politics', 37.

grip on Algiers faltering. Both the French administration and the Algerian nationalist Front de Liberation National (FLN) viewed the casbah as the perfect refuge for insurrectionary activities.[97] The casbah, and housing in general, thus presented both a humanitarian and dangerously political question, which became inextricably woven into Charles de Gaulle's project to convince the world that Algeria was nothing but French: the 1958 Plan of Constantine.

De Gaulle announced the plan on 3 October 1958 in the eastern Algerian city of Constantine, coming hot off the heels of the ferocious Battle of Algiers, fought between French paratroopers and the FLN, wherein torture and bombing of civilian targets had become commonplace on both sides. While the French had secured a military victory in Algiers, political victory belonged mostly to the FLN. The plan was thus designed not only to allay fears of Europeans threatened by the prospect of Algerian independence, but to temper revolutionary zeal amidst the Algerian population, and to ease international scrutiny over French activities in Algeria as well.

The Algiers daily newspaper, *L'Echo d'Alger*, eagerly detailed the implications of de Gaulle's plans for Algeria's increased integration, and published articles highlighting how contemporary Algerians see themselves as French, and want to remain so. Floods of people roamed the European quarter of Algiers shouting, 'Vive de Gaulle!' Optimistic voices praised the plan as the key to an enduring fraternity between Algeria and France.[98]

In addition to campaigns to reduce unemployment, raise salaries, redistribute agricultural lands, and extend the right to vote to Algerian women and men alike, the plan's

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[97] Djiar, 'Locating', 174.
[98] R.-G Soule, 'La France et l'Algérie feront ensemble leur destin', *L'Echo d'Alger*, 4 October 1958; 'Integration dans les faits', *L'Echo d'Alger*, 4 October 1958.

two largest platforms were education and housing. Of the 15.5 billion francs in credit devoted to the plan by de Gaulle, 3.6 billion was dedicated to new housing and urban infrastructure, including the construction of two hundred thousand new housing units to shelter roughly one million inhabitants.[99] The Plan de Constantine, perhaps in a curious nod to Le Corbusier's Plan Obus, proposed relocating half of the casbah's population to new suburban housing complexes, as well as restoring the casbah itself – however, only the former was accomplished before the ultimate withdrawal of the French from Algeria.[100] As in previous decades, politicians and planners alike wagered that an improvement in Algerians' living conditions – the provision of a modest apartment, water, electricity – would not only 'evolve' Algerians towards French lifestyles and sensibility, but also soften some of the misery that could translate into anti-colonial resentment. Housing had effectively become the civilizing mission.[101] The Plan de Constantine, in this regard, wagered that the power of built environments over people would be instrumental in harnessing the trust of Algerians, and in turn, demonstrating French civility and benevolence to the international community.

In the fall of 1958, a referendum was held on a new constitution to form the Fifth French Republic and renegotiate the association between Algeria and France. With ninety-six percent of the vote – including the ballots of Algerian men and women – the constitution was approved, and de Gaulle was elected president a short period thereafter. Stability in Algeria appeared to be on the horizon, as the Plan de Constantine swung into high gear, and the FLN became increasingly marginalized from its more compromising supporters who were less committed to an entirely independent Algeria. Relative stability returned to the city, and

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[99] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 120.
[100] Lamprakos 203; Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 46.
[101] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 121, 173.

colonial officials seized this moment of opportunity to attempt to placate its colonized population, taking up expansive building projects with formidable urgency. Meanwhile, in February and March of 1959, *L'Echo d'Alger* released a series of essays and designs from prominent intellectuals and designers under the theme 'The Great Algiers? How do you see it in twenty or thirty years?' The various images and articles comprising the series curiously evoke many of the same aspects of Le Corbusier's Plan Obus and Prost's master plan from decades past, suggesting a completely reoriented city with a modernized waterfront, an underground network, skyscrapers – and made little, if any, mention of an indigenous population.[102] One must wonder: was the modern Algiers envisioned as one without Algerians at its centre – or at all – or would Algerians themselves have 'evolved' such that the casbah would be replaced by high-rises, and the category of *indigène* would have dissolved altogether? It is difficult to tell.

Two French architects who were designing large-scale residential projects in Algiers during the late colonial period are worthy of mention. Fernand Pouillon and Roland Simounet never collaborated, and had divergent inspirations for and notions about their work, but maintained keen interests in traditional Algerian form and style, and had mutual aspirations toward cultivating a 'modernist' casbah.[103] Pouillon, for example, is best remembered for the Diar es Saada, the Diar el Mahçoul, and the Climat de France, large-scale apartment complexes that incorporated some of the traditional orientation and ornamentation of Algerian homes. Built atop land previously occupied by *bidonvilles*, these developments also served initiatives to 'decongest' the casbah, thinning out and dispersing its

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[102] 'Le Grand Alger? Comment l'imaginez-vous d'ici vignt ou trente ans?' *L'Echo d'Alger*, 27 February, 28 February, 4 March 1959.
[103] Djiar, 'Politics', 41.

inhabitants in order to make the Muslim quarter more policeable. Furthermore, in the case of the Diar el Mahçoul, Pouillon's work reflected some initiative toward the integration of populations. This particular development aligned apartment complexes for Europeans and Algerians beside each other with some shared spaces and facilities, although class privilege was evident throughout – European apartments were expansive, made of stone, faced the sea, and were replete with exterior decoration and large balconies; Algerian apartments were smaller, made of brick, faced into the rough countryside, and enjoyed very little stylistic flourish or balcony space.[104]

Figure 2.7.[105] Fernand Pouillon's Diar Es Saada, in the city's southeast.

[104] Sheila Crane, 'Architecture at the Ends of Empire: Urban Reflections between Algiers and Marseille', in Prakash, Gyan & Kevin M. Kruse, *The Spaces of the Modern City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 102-110.

[105] Alberto Ferlenga. 'Fernand Pouillon: Le pietre di Algeri'. Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture. Accessed via Crane, Sheila, 'Architecture at the Ends of Empire: Urban Reflections between Algiers and Marseille', in Prakash, Gyan & Kevin M. Kruse, *The Spaces of the Modern City*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 103.

Simounet's most significant in Algiers was the Djenan al Hassan, designed to shelter new arrivals to the city in small, strictly independent apartment units. A direct reference to the visual effect and structural layout of the casbah, the Djenan al Hassan also made extensive use of Le Corbusier's modular concepts proposed under the Plan Obus.[106] Simounet also designed more simplistic 'transit housing', such as the fortress-like Carrière-Jaubert, which was intended to provide temporary accommodation for new migrants to the city and residents of demolished *bidonvilles*. However, as time passed, due to a continual shortage of available housing, residents of 'transit housing' would become much less 'temporary', with stays becoming more and more long-term.[107]

Figure 2.8.[108] Roland Simounet's Djenan al Hassan, in the outskirts of Algiers.

While Pouillon and Simounet represent more creative – even 'celebrity' – cases of urban design during the late colonial period, the pressures of rural-to-urban migration and the colonial authorities' fear of uprisings gave rise to ever more expedient and pragmatic options. The Plan de Constantine assigned the task of constructing mass housing to both

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[106] Crane 125; Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 165.

[107] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 161.

[108] Burke. 'Groupes d'habitations en Algérie'. Paris: L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, 1960. Accessed via *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, December 1959-January 1960, 87.

urban planners and civil engineers, the latter of which took a far more functional approach to urban design. Both parties could agree, however, that large-scale apartment complexes were the best available solution, in terms of cost, timeframe, and their ability to absorb large populations in relatively small amounts of space.[109]

A number of other aspects of housing for Algerians designed and built under the Plan de Constantine are worthy of note as well. Foremost, it is essential to note that, despite stylistic nods to traditional Algerian architectural forms, new housing was designed to break traditional social structures, and to facilitate the dispersal and easier management of native populations. Especially following the desperate and chaotic experience of the colonial authorities and French paratroopers in pursuing FLN militant cells in the casbah, new housing for Algerians emphasized physically controllable, navigable, and open spaces with clear shooting lanes.[110]
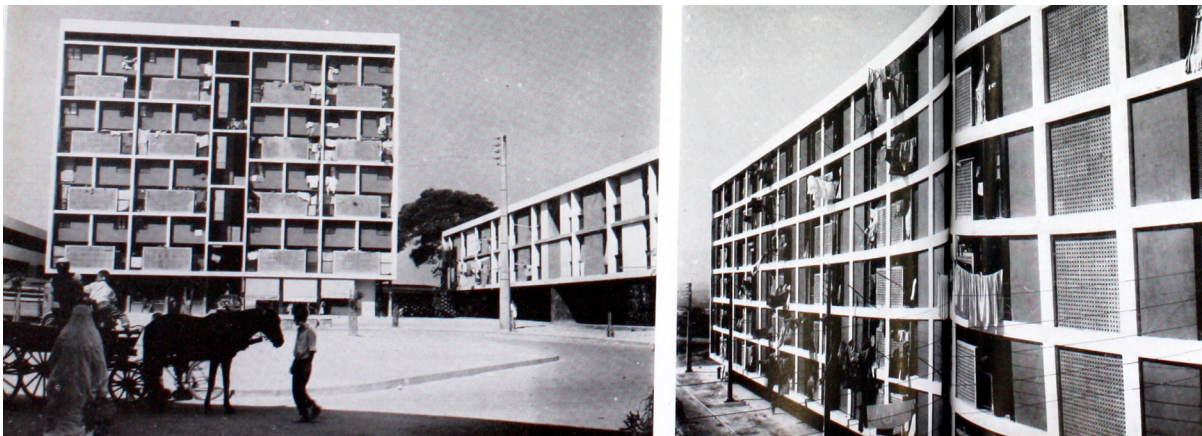
Figure 2.9.[111] Evolutionary housing in Hussein Dey, in the outskirts of Algiers.

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[109] Ibid 79, 85.

[110] Djiar, 'Politics', 38-9.

[111] P.A.I.R. et Burke. 'Cité de recasement au Djenan al Hassan, Alger'. Paris: L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, 1957. Accessed via *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, October-November 1957, 50.

The alternative spaces for socialization provided by the network of rooftops in the casbah – which, incidentally, had also facilitated the escape of FLN militants during the Battle of Algiers – were noticeably absent, as were the internal courtyards typical of the Algerian home, which fundamentally disrupted domestic patterns. Units were small and rigidly defined, designed to shelter only small nuclear families, and leaving no space for the traditionally extended Algerian family habitat, the incremental growth of families, or the arrival of other family members who had migrated to Algiers to find work or escape conflicts in the countryside.[112]

Figure 2.10.[113] Les Bâtiments des Dunes, in the industrial suburbs of Algiers, built under the Plan de Constantine.

[112] Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 165-6.
[113] Author unknown. Title unknown, JPEG. 2006. Accessed via Wikimedia Commons, http://bit.ly/nVXQie, 2 December 2010.

Furthermore, the dispersal of permits, land and funds for housing complexes had been carried out in piece-meal fashion manner without an overarching scheme, meaning that massive suburban projects were constructed without real links to the city, or to each other. The quotas established by the Plan de Constantine – 50,000 housing units per year for four years – promoted to a drearily number-oriented mentality regarding housing construction. By 1960, all construction was built according to the scheme of *barres et tours* (bars and towers), or single longitudinal units occupying the width or height, creating dismal and alienating suburban landscapes, barren of public spaces or viable transit links.[114] Urban Administrative Sections (SAU) were set up by the municipal government of Algiers in the late 1950s to provide education and other services to Algerians living in new housing, and in the casbah. The SAUs were also tasked with policing and surveying Algerians' everyday activities, and despite their mandate to integrate and 'evolve' indigenous families living in new housing, the presence of SAUs frequently led to conflicts and outbursts of violence.[115]

Meanwhile, due to enormous pressures from a number of different domestic and international bodies – including the United Nations, NATO, and the French left – de Gaulle, in September 1959, added a third option for the continued relationship between Algeria and France: self-determination. While the FLN and its government-in-exile in Tunisia enjoyed a minor resurgence, a widespread feeling of betrayal and anger swept the European population of Algeria. Revolts, riots, and street battles between Algerians, the police, and French extremists returned to Algiers in 1960. Fernand Pouillon's Diar el Mahçoul, in fact, became one of the most gruesome scenes of shootings and bombings, as French extremist snipers

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[114] Ibid 167-174.
[115] Crane 114-5.

took advantage of tower balconies, pushing 'the militarized structure and segregationist logic of Pouillon's architecture to a horrifying extreme.'[116]

Figure 2.11.[117] Fernand Pouillon's Diar El Mahçoul.

The French project to use housing and social welfare as a vessel for the civilizing mission gave mixed and undetermined results. Modern apartments did not, to put it plainly, keep their inhabitants from joining revolts against French rule; yet, whether those in revolt supported the FLN and its rigid platform of Arab nationalism is an entirely different question. The Algerian government that came to rule over Algiers after 1962 inherited a city that had suffered nearly a century and a half of demolitions, incursions, and experimentations. Projects hastily built under the Plan de Constantine very quickly

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[116] Ibid 115.

[117] Alberto Ferlenga. 'Fernand Pouillon: Le pietre di Algeri'. Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture. Accessed via Crane, Sheila, 'Architecture at the Ends of Empire: Urban Reflections between Algiers and Marseille', in Prakash, Gyan & Kevin M. Kruse, *The Spaces of the Modern City*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 105.

dilapidated and regressed into slums; other parts of the city had been demolished, but never rebuilt; and the post-1962 appropriation of the European quarter did not automatically allow the casbah to reclaim its cultural and spatial centrality in Algiers.[118] If anything, the casbah has been in perpetual need of rehabilitation and restoration ever since.

In this sense, the experiment of colonial urbanism was left unfinished in Algeria. But it did not end in 1962 either. Though the colonial rule of Algeria ceased that year, France's project of establishing control over its colonial populations had long been transposed onto the soil of the mainland, where the dynamics and the legacies of the colonial era are more than palpable today. After surveying urban design in Algiers from the earliest period, this chapter has shown the development of the discourse of colonial urbanism in Algiers and throughout North Africa. Above all, this discourse emphasized the 'civilizing' and 'evolutionary' capacity of architecture and urban environments, as well as their use for the control and racial separation of populations. The question can now be asked: how did Algerian migration to France extend the discourse and practice of colonial urbanism into the heart of the French republic, Paris?

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[118] Djiar, 'Locating', 174; Çelik, *Urban Forms*, 54, 176.

Chapter 3: Migration & Nationalism

This section, offered as an interlude between the colonial and metropolitan contexts, asks the following question: how did the circumstances of Algerian migration to France facilitate – and necessitate – the recreation of a colonial apparatus for the control of colonial populations in France? Ultimately, I argue that the relative degree of mobility offered to Algerians during the colonial period allowed for the development of a sustained Algerian community within France. Furthermore, I argue that the growth of the Algerian community in France triggered the growth of a state apparatus to police and monitor it, based on the lessons and principles of colonial urban planning and policy. It also reified a public attitude of hostility and paranoia toward Algerian Muslims' growing presence on French soil.

On 8 November 1848, Algeria was declared a part of France, primarily in order to placate anxious European settlers seeking better protection for their economic interests and their personal safety in the colony. Over the coming decades, many more initiatives were undertaken to further the integration of Algeria into the French economy and national territory. While these initiatives would never extend formal political, social, or legal rights to Algerian Muslims – who were said to be 'centuries away' from deserving such rights[119] – the unique status of Algeria as a French *département* was essential to the birth of Algerian migration to France. As one commentator on the subject has noted, the poverty and

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[119] MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants,* 6.

oppression of colonialism in Algeria alone was not enough to give rise to the phenomenon of emigration – rather, a series of legal and political measures that opened the doors and allowed it to take place.[120]

Two measures were particularly important in terms of introducing large groups of colonial subjects from Algeria to metropolitan France, and in allowing them a degree of mobility rights between the colony and the metropole. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, the French passed a law articulating the principle of *espace franco-algerien*, by which French companies could freely recruit industrial labourers in Algeria the same as they would in Brittany, Provence, or any other French department. By contrast, recruiting in France's other proximate colonial holdings, Morocco and Tunisia, required the negotiation of numerous potentially complicated regulations. Throughout the remainder of the colonial period, the principle of *espace franco-algerien* would continue to privilege labour recruitment from Algeria. In fact, because they were 'of the national territory', Algerian migrants in France could – in principle, though not necessarily in practice – claim certain welfare benefits, and technically were protected against expulsion in the case of recession or arbitrary firings, as was often the case with other foreign nationals.[121] In this way, Neil MacMaster has written that, following the introduction of the principle of *espace franco-algerien*, 'Algeria became the first Third World labour reserve for the European economy.'[122]

Following the Second World War, France came to recognize its dire need of foreign workers to assist in the reconstruction effort. Based on the requirements of projects

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[120] Ibid 22.
[121] Ibid 7.
[122] Ibid 16.

announced in 1945, France was short an estimated half million labourers, a third of which were proposed to come from Algeria.[123] From 22,000 in 1946, the Algerian population in France would grow steadily into the 1970s, though not only as a result of labour recruitment. In 1947, in recognition of a labour shortage in France, as a concession to political agitators in Algeria, and as payment of a 'blood debt' for Algerians' sacrifice in two world wars, a new French statute granted Algerian males complete freedom of movement in and out of metropolitan France.[124] The 1947 law, in particular, allowed for the growth of the Algerian community in France on an unprecedented scale.

Even the end of colonial rule in Algeria in 1962 did not stifle the waves of migrants making their way across the Mediterranean – in fact, the reverse became true. Under the terms of the Évian Accords, negotiated between de Gaulle and the FLN, Algerians continued to enjoy relative ease of movement between Algeria and France as they had during the period of colonial rule. However, with the advent of the 1973 oil crisis and economic recession, France formally ceased all inward labour migration, and the mobility enjoyed by the Franco-Algerian community was abruptly cut short.

The presence of Algerian migrant communities in France was both defined by and highly influential on the processes of colonialism in Algeria. The mobility offered to Algerians during the colonial period allowed for the labour migrations and remittances that were essential to keeping many dispossessed rural societies afloat. Some of the first political organizing for Algerian independence began in the migrant enclaves in Paris. As such,

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[123] Benjamin Stora, 'Immigrants and Political Activists: Algerian Nationalists in France, 1945-1954', in Hargreaves, Alec G. & Michael J. Hefferman. *French and Algerian Identities from Colonial Times to Present: A Century of Interaction* (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 41.
[124] Dominique Maillard, 'The Muslims in France and the French Model of Integration', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 16:1, 2005, 64.; Alec G Hargreaves, *Multi-ethnic France: immigration, politics, culture and society* (London: Routledge, 2007), 21.

Algerian migration to France marked the extension of the colonial paradigm into the metropole, as prolonged settlement and political organizing began to demand the increased attention of metropolitan authorities to facilitate the integration of migrant communities, and to counter anti-colonial activities.

Algerian migration to France was, essentially, an extension of the migration patterns already occurring in the colony.[125] Rural societies in the region of Kabylia to the east of Algiers, for example, had resolved seasonal work shortages or crop failure with temporary or long-term labour migrations for centuries prior to French presence in Algeria. The French were eager to harness this tradition. The processes of mass land seizure in Algeria thus achieved a dual effect: first, providing land to settler agrarians; second, flooding the colonial labour market with an abundant, cheap, and mobile unskilled labour force, ready to fill out positions on settler farms – or as the case would later be, in industrial and agricultural sectors in mainland France.[126] Although French industry had been recruiting select groups from the enormous surplus in the Algerian labour force since 1904, the first large-scale migration of Algerians into France coincided with the start of the First World War. An army-administered body was established to manage a force of roughly 80,000 Algerian labourers, enlisted to supplement industrial and agricultural positions vacated by French men leaving to join the front. Simultaneously, approximately 300,000 men – representing roughly one third of Algeria's adult male population at the time – were transferred from Algeria into French

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[125] Jim House, 'Colonial and post-colonial dimensions of Algerian migration to France', *History in Focus*, August 2006.
[126] MacMaster 32, 38.

military service.[127] For most, the war represented the first – and perhaps only – opportunity to experience life in the metropole.

Following the First World War, the vast majority of Algerian conscript soldiers and labourers were forcibly returned to the colony by the French army. A few thousand, however, remained in France to work, almost exclusively in cities. Having evaded repatriation by the army, sizable Algerian workers' enclaves formed and expanded in the outskirts of Paris, Lyon, and Marseilles.[128] A particularly low population growth rate and enormous casualties during the war meant France continued to receive Algerian migrant workers to fill out its industrial workforce, and with the exception of the period encompassing the Second World War, the Algerian population in France henceforth never dropped below 100,000.[129]

From its earliest days, Algerian migration to France has been marked by spatial and social isolation from mainstream French society. During the interwar period, despite representing a minor fraction of France's foreign-born population, Algerians bore the brunt of anti-immigrant discrimination. While Portuguese, Italian, and Spanish immigrants, by comparison, integrated relatively well, Algerian immigrants to France suffered particularly in the pursuit of work and housing, typically occupying the most dangerous and exhausting jobs and the most run-down apartments.

In Paris, during the interwar period, Algerians typically installed themselves in areas such as Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers, Gennevilliers, and Nanterre, initiating a long-term immigrant presence in Paris's northern suburbs. That said, at the time, seventy-five percent of Algerian migrant workers in France would leave within one year to return home, implying

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[127] Rabah Aissaoui, 'Algerian migration to France from the early twentieth century to the interwar period', (*Migration Education*, 2008) 1-2.
[128] MacMaster, 63.
[129] Ibid 3; House, 'Colonial'.

a fairly rapid turnover of the immigrant population.[130] For almost all parties involved, the phenomenon of Algerian migration to France was presumed to be tentative, used to relieve temporary economic pressures or work and labour shortages.

The social and spatial isolation of immigrant enclaves in Paris served to fortify links within the community, establish an ongoing social safety net, and create something of a national community within France. It might also be seen as a formative stage in the development of social and cultural insularity in immigrant communities in France. Migrant workers tended to group together along familial and regional lines, renting apartments and finding work together, and assisting new arrivals. They pooled money and saved for times of need. Cafés sprang up serving couscous, playing Algerian music, and becoming spaces of reprieve where migrants could socialize and exchange news from home. Confrontations with state and societal racism, the exacting tolls of industrial labour, and the nostalgia for home all contributed to a highly developed sense of solidarity within migrant enclaves.[131] Each new wave of Algerian migrants into Paris entered into a strong pre-existing social structure left by previous generations of immigrants – one that ensured the cohesion of the community, but also entrenched their exclusion from society at large. Abdelmalek Sayad, the late sociologist of Algerian migration to France, wrote that while this structure ensured the permanence of Algerian presence in France, it also ensured that the feeling of their presence was temporary; that it confirmed their exclusion from French society, as well as a rupture with their homeland.[132]

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[130] Kamel Bouguessa, 'Mode de vie et reproduction: la communauté algérienne en France pendant la colonisation', in Larbi Talha, *Maghrébins en France: immigrés ou émigrés?* (Paris: Editions CRNS, 1983), 63.
[131] Ibid 52-56.
[132] Abdelmalek Sayad, *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, trans. David Macey, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 57-8.

It might also be noted that the remittances sent from migrant workers in France during the interwar period constituted the sole lifeline of an estimated 600,000 people in Algeria. They also served to help guard Algerian landholdings against expropriation, or to buy land back from defunct settlers and keep indigenous families landed.[133] However, the role of France, specifically Paris, as one of the birthing grounds for Algerian nationalism tends to emerge as the single most significant result of the Algerian diaspora between the world wars.[134] Paris offered greater freedom of movement and expression, and the ability to exchange ideas with French labour union and communist networks. Algerians had international encounters with activists from other French colonies who were working in Paris, and the atmosphere of solidarity in the face of hardship provided fertile grounds for the growth of nationalist sentiments. As such, Paris presented a political climate completely unavailable to the Algerian worker in the colony.[135]

One such worker was Messali Hadj, the first prominent figure to publicly agitate for Algerian independence from France, and the widely-recognized father of modern Algerian nationalism. Messali's Étoile Nord-Africaine (ENA) was founded on 20 July 1926 with the assistance of the Parti Communiste Française (PCF),[136] whose agenda at the time promoted the dissolution of French colonial power overseas. Composed primarily of Algerian migrant workers – with some Tunisians, Moroccans, and sub-Saharan Africans as well – the ENA's membership expanded quickly: by mid-1927, it had grown to 13 sections across France, with

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[133] Bouguessa 61, 66.

[134] Amal Ghazal, 'A World of Their Own: the Algerian Diaspora and the Making of Algerian Nationalism', presented at *A Sense of Place: Arab World Diasporas and Migrations*, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 21 March 2011. Amal Ghazal has recently made the case that the contributions of the Algerian diasporic community in Tunisia to the formation of Algerian nationalism have been eclipsed by narratives regarding Messali Hadj and the ENA in Paris.

[135] Ibid 69; Sayad, *Suffering*, 99.

[136] Benjamin Stora, *Ils Venaient d'Algerie*, (Paris: Fayard, 1992) 31. According to Stora, the first North African workers' conference in Paris was actually organized by the PCF.

eight in Paris alone, and 3,500 members across the country.[137] Chapters of the ENA had spread across urban and rural Algeria by 1928.[138] By 1934, regular attendance at Parisian ENA meetings had grown from one or two dozen to several hundred.[139]

In 1933, the demands elaborated by the ENA to French colonial authorities would become an essential platform for claims for Algerian independence up to the revolutionary period. The first part of the program called for the immediate abolition of the Code de l'Indigènat, the set of laws codifing Algerians' legal inferiority; unrestricted freedom of movement within Algeria, France, and overseas; freedom of the press; elected, representative municipal government; education in French and Arabic for schoolchildren; enforcement of labour laws, as well unemployment insurance and pensions; agricultural credits for small *fellahs* (farmers); and recognition, with regards to Muslims in military service, of the Quranic prohibition against killing other Muslims.[140] The second part demanded the total independence of Algeria, the removal of occupation troops, and the creation of a national Algerian army. The third part demanded an elected constitutional assembly, universal suffrage, the return of large expropriated estates, the recognition of Arabic as Algeria's national language, and a handover of banks, industries and infrastructure to a newly created Algerian state.[141] Evidently, some aspects of the program were appeals to basic human decency; others were radical and direct challenges to French colonial power. What underlined all the demands of the ENA, however, was a basic appeal to the core values of 'republican' France.

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[137] Ibid 3.

[138] MacMaster 117.

[139] Ibid 37.

[140] North African soldiers would frequently be sent as part of French Army detachments to carry out campaigns against local rebellions.

[141] Mafhoud Kaddache & Mohamed Guenaneche, *L'Etoile Nord-Africaine 1926-1937* (Algiers: Office des publications universitaires, 2002), 60.

Indeed, the ENA drew clear distinctions between the republican values of 'revolutionary' France of the late 18th century and the 'feudalistic' practices of imperial, modern France. In speeches and newspaper articles, ENA agitators reminded Algerians and French that France as an imperial, colonial power no longer bore any resemblance to its revolutionary roots; rather, the ENA framed itself as the contemporary defender of universal human dignity and liberty. The ENA framed French colonialism as the enemy of both the French *and* Algerian people: in addition to the injustice it enacted upon Algerians, it had sullied the principles, mythology and legacy of the French Revolution.[142] By extension, Algerian nationalists called on the French people to support them in their struggle for universal values of equality and self-determination that both peoples shared.[143]

Consider the following passage from Messali Hadj:

We have here, Citizens, not only a pressing need, but a precondition for any attempt at mutual understanding and a fair and consistent application of principles which you have inherited from the revolution, and which must remain your code in your relationships with the colonial peoples.[144]

The ENA was dissolved by the French state in January 1937, citing 'anti-Jewish' and 'anti-French' tendencies, although Messali went on almost immediately to found the Parti du Peuple Algérien (PPA) in March of the same year. On the eve of the Second World War, fifteen years before the outbreak of the anti-colonial war of independence, all of the necessary components of modern Algerian nationalism had been laid out, and spread across

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[142] Rabah Aissaoui, 'Combattons pour rester « Algériens … algériens » : National identity and Difference in the Discourse of the Étoile Nord-africaine (ENA) and Parti du people algérien (PPA) in Inter-war France' (*Modern & Contemporary France*, 13 :2, 2005), 215-7.

[143] Rabah Aissaoui, 'Nous Voulons Dechirer le Baillon et Briser Nos Chaines: Racism, Colonialism, and Universalism in the Discourse of Algerian Nationalists Between the Wars in France' (*French History*, 17:2, 2003), 209.

[144] Kaddache 71. Author's translation.

urban and rural Algeria, and the diasporic communities in France as well.[145] The coming of the Second World War only kept the struggle for Algerian independence – and French efforts to undermine it – on the backburner.

While economic lobbies in Algeria, who petitioned for the restriction of Algerian migration to France, did not succeed in that primary objective, their widespread media campaign in France about the naïveté and susceptibility of Algerians to communist or nationalist subversion did turn a number of heads.[146] Having exploded in number from 13,000 in 1914 to 100,000 in 1924, the Algerian population in France was viewed in French public and political circles with ever-increasing suspicion and xenophobia. Fears about slum-inhabiting, tribally-oriented societies of Muslim immigrants living relatively autonomously in the city were multiplied through the French press. French authorities argued that unlike in the colony, where Algerians could be easily policed and monitored, France was without any systematic means of controlling its population of *indigènes*. In the words of one civil authority, 'in Algeria, they are under the surveillance of an administration created specifically for them. Nothing like this exists in France, where they have the same rights as everybody else and escape practically all authority.'[147]Anti-colonial organizing by the ENA had become prolific, and the close-knit migrant communities where it was based and drew its support were impenetrable to metropolitan authorities. It was not long into the 1920s before a number of state agencies developed programmes to integrate, survey and police the Algerian population in France under the guise of social welfare.[148] In a curious way, the question of

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[145] Benjamin Stora, *Algeria, 1830-2000*, trans. Jane Marie Todd, (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 19.
[146] House, 'Colonial'.
[147] MacMaster 155.
[148] Ibid 3-5.

'civilizing' Muslim subjects in the colony shifted almost instantly to become a question of 'integrating' Muslim immigrants in the metropole.[149]

In 1925, in response, a new policing and surveillance apparatus was created in Paris, and eventually developed in other urban centres. The Services de Surveillance, Protection et Assistance des Indigènes Nord-Africains (SAINA) was broadly tasked with 'native management' – which essentially fell under the categories of either welfare or policing. Its creation represents one of the first institutionalized examples of colonial population control in metropolitan France.[150]

While welfare and policing were administered as two separate sections of SAINA, often the former was used as a means to bolster the latter. SAINA's welfare arm was tasked with migrant workers' personal health and hygiene; job location, which included screening, and preparation of workers to be used in strike-breaking; advisory services such as personal documentation and money transferring; social services such as unemployment benefits and arbitration among Algerians; and repatriation to the colony. SAINA's welfare section also created specialized institutions for Muslims, such as workers' hostels and infirmaries.[151]

Despite their altruistic nature, welfare services under SAINA still kept surveillance and population control as their overarching priority. To a degree, all of their philanthropic endeavours – especially hostels and infirmaries – revolved around the collection of intelligence on ENA and other subversive activities, described by Messali Hadj in 1934 as 'barracks under the surveillance of the Rue Lecomte police.'[152] In turn, it was hoped that encounters with French institutions such as modern hospitals, or rudimentary French

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[149] Paul A Silverstein, *Algeria in France: transpolitics, race, and nation*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) 78.
[150] MacMaster 153-8.
[151] Ibid 161-9.
[152] Ibid 166.

language lessons, would endear and entrust migrant workers to the progressive, benevolent French state.[153] Yet as an all-encompassing body reserved for the provision of social services to migrant workers, SAINA represented another form of segregation of Algerians – even at an institutional level, they were kept separate from mainstream French society, under a parallel administration with radically divergent objectives.

Where SAINA was not involved in the provision of social services, it was devoted to the dismantling of the ENA, and rupturing networks between Algerians and labour or communist organizing groups. Throughout the interwar period, SAINA agents were present at almost every public meeting of the ENA, and spies were planted in the ENA executive. Operatives raided Algerian cafés, picking out and detaining those without proper identification or employment, who were then detained, interrogated, and often deported. Migrant workers suspected of involvement with the ENA would be reported to their employers, and their contracts were almost invariably terminated, clearing the way for their 'repatriation'.[154]

A number of executive members of the ENA – including Messali Hadj – were captured and either deported or exiled by SAINA in 1937. With the arrival of the Second World War and Vichy government in France, emigrations and returns to Algeria were virtually put to a halt, while anti-colonial activities were dramatically tempered. Meanwhile, the stranding of tens of thousands of Algerian migrant workers in France during the war meant a dramatic surge in the number of marriages between Algerian men and French women, and would foreshadow migration patterns that would begin to take hold following the close of the war: Algerians were beginning to have families in France. By 1953, roughly

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[153] Ibid 167.
[154] Ibid 158-9.

5,000 Algerian women and 11,000 children were in France, while entire families – women, children, even grandparents – were arriving in France from Algeria at the rate of one hundred per month.[155] By 1956, roughly one in eight Algerians in France was either a woman or a child, an admittedly low ratio, but one that would continue to rise over time, representing a definitive shift toward family reunification. France, it would seem, was witnessing the demise of the 'temporary' nature of colonial migration.

By analysing the growth of an Algerian community within Paris, this chapter has offered a background from which to understand the replication and imposition of a model of colonial urban planning and policy in France. Viewed with suspicion by both French authorities and the broader French public, the Algerian community in Paris was marginalized not only because of their religious and ethnic difference from the majority of the French population, but also by their spatial isolation. The growth of nationalist campaigns for North African independence in France spawned ever more aggressive responses from French authorities to isolate and monitor their Algerian population. With an understanding of the early growth of the Algerian community in Paris, may now turn to the question of the institutionalized isolation of Algerians through planning, architecture and welfare organizations were developed and extended into the contemporary era.

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[155] Ibid 179-81.

Chapter 4: Paris: Modernism, Housing & Social (dis)Integration

By analyzing the creation of state institutions mandated to manage Algerian populations in France, this section serves to show how a colonial logic was reconstituted through post-war urban planning and policy in France. In the context of post-war urban renewal and heightened family migration, and pre-existing political tensions in French urban peripheries, I argue that the segregation of Algerian communities in Paris established an enduring framework for the hostile social, political and spatial relationship between immigrant communities and the French state and public.

Between the 1850s and 1870s, just as the most extensive renovations were being carried out in Algiers by French military engineers, so too was Paris being redrawn under the direction of Georges-Eugène Haussmann. Against threats of revolt and disease, Napoleon III commissioned Haussmann in 1853 to redesign the city with an eye toward greater circulation, sanitation, and control – similar, indeed, to concurrent urban renovations in Algeria. Haussmann's goal for Paris, at its essence, was to modernize, systematize, and realign the city, which still retained the same structure and appearance as it had during the Middle Ages. With particular emphasis on circulation – of people and air – Haussmann's projects were designed to counteract the stagnation and spread of disease, such as the 1832

cholera epidemic that killed 20,000 Parisians, or about one in thirty residents. They were also designed to facilitate the flow of traffic and – for a city with a lengthy history of street revolutions that made particular use of street barricades and fortifications – the easy movement of troops and military vehicles.[156]

Projects carried out under Haussmann's direction cut open Paris's dense and calamitous mass of narrow streets and alleyways, and established a network of broad boulevards. Building codes were standardized, and new streets were kept obsessively straight, giving Paris its signature Beaux-Arts ornamentation and long-reaching avenues. Haussmann's plan also included a revitalization of public infrastructure, such as water purification and waste management systems, and the establishment of numerous and extensive green spaces for public leisure, as well as a greenbelt lining the city's medieval boundaries.[157]

To this day, Paris remains very much Haussmann's city. His bold and often brutal revisions to Paris radically improved quality of life, circulation, and aesthetics of the city; his renovations were so pervasive and influential that subsequent additions or renovations to the city usually referred to his design in one way or another. Haussmann's renovations to Paris would also have a defining legacy for those areas that lay beyond his greenbelt on which he himself never laid a finger. The enormous boulevards, public spaces, and infrastructural projects pursued under Haussmann's plan necessitated extensive demolitions, especially in Paris's more insalubrious areas. Haussmann was not particularly interested in building affordable housing, and as such, the suburbs of Paris became a 'dumping grounds' for the

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[156] David P Jordan, 'Haussmann and *Haussmannisation*: The Legacy for Paris', *French Historical Studies*, 27:1, 2004, 89-102.
[157] Ibid 89, 97.

urban poor displaced following his incisions and redevelopments in the city centre. As such, Haussmann's designs had the ultimate effect of preserving and augmenting Paris's medieval characteristics, with levels of poverty and deprivation increasing concentrically away from the city centre.[158]

Toward the end of the 19th century, the industrialization of the Parisian suburbs ushered in a wave of rural labour migrants seeking work in the growing construction and industrial sectors.[159] The laissez-faire management of outlying workers' communities meant housing tended to be informal and haphazard, while the communities themselves were left isolated and underserviced, breeding discontent and unrest.[160] The introduction of the metro to Paris in 1900 caused land speculation to skyrocket in areas connected by public transit, while increasing the concentration of poor populations in isolated outlying suburbs.[161] As population levels rapidly surpassed the availability and development of housing and infrastructure required, the working class suburbs of Paris took on the characteristics of slums. The French Communist Party (PCF) capitalized on this popular disillusionment, counting on the working class suburbs of Paris as one of its most crucial and influential bases of support. These contentious regions – which were visually, demographically, politically and economically distinct from the rest of Haussmann's Paris – became known as the *banlieues rouges* (red belts).[162]

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[158] Ibid 100; Rabinow, *French Modern,* 252; Matthew Taunton, *Fictions of the City: City, Class, Culture and Mass Housing in London and Paris* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 99.

[159] Rabinow, *French Modern*, 253.

[160] Hervé Viellard-Baron, *Les Banlieues: des singularités françaises aux réalités mondiales* (Paris: Hachette, 1999), 44.

[161] Rabinow, *French Modern*, 253.

[162] Annie Fourcaut, 'Les premiers grands ensembles: ne pas refaire la banlieue?', *French Historical Studies*, 27:1, 2004, 196; Solange Montagné Villete & Irene Hardill, 'Spatial peripheries, social peripheries: reflections on the "suburbs" of Paris', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 27:1/2, 2007, 54; Jordan 102.

Henri Sellier, a socialist mayor in the western commune of Suresnes who would later become president of a national social housing directive (*habitations à bon marché*, or HBM), was among the first to campaign for social housing in the Paris region. He suggested that tensions in the red belts could be curbed through state-directed improvements in living conditions in suburban communities.[163] Between the world wars, Sellier became one of urbanism's most dedicated proponents in France as he directed the construction of fifteen low-income housing projects in the Paris region, all built upon the garden city model.[164] He decried the industrialization of Paris's suburbs – which had been facilitated by the sale of an enormous ring of land outside the city's greenbelt in 1919 to private developers[165] – and the social costs it had incurred. Meanwhile, he proposed that countering land speculation, implementing of an effective transit strategy, and introducing of an unconventional new housing strategy, could re-integrate the city and its inhabitants.[166]

With regards to housing, Sellier acknowledged the work of Le Corbusier in particular,[167] whose vision of a vertical garden city had been elaborated in 1925. Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin, which was unveiled to the astonishment of many, advocated razing most of Paris north of the Seine River, to be replaced by a grid of sixty-storey residential towers, each with a city block to itself, surrounded by green space. While the radicalism of the Plan Voisin was naturally off-putting, Le Corbusier's proposal for the modernization and revitalization of Paris was both provocative and influential. Most of all, Le Corbusier's

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[163] Taunton 101.

[164] Vieillard-Baron 63; Rabinow, *French Modern*, 263.

[165] Jordan 101.

[166] Rabinow, *French Modern*, 263-6.

[167] Taunton 103.

model for high-rise living came to shape future discussions around how to address the overcrowded and unhygienic agglomerations burgeoning about the city's edges.[168]
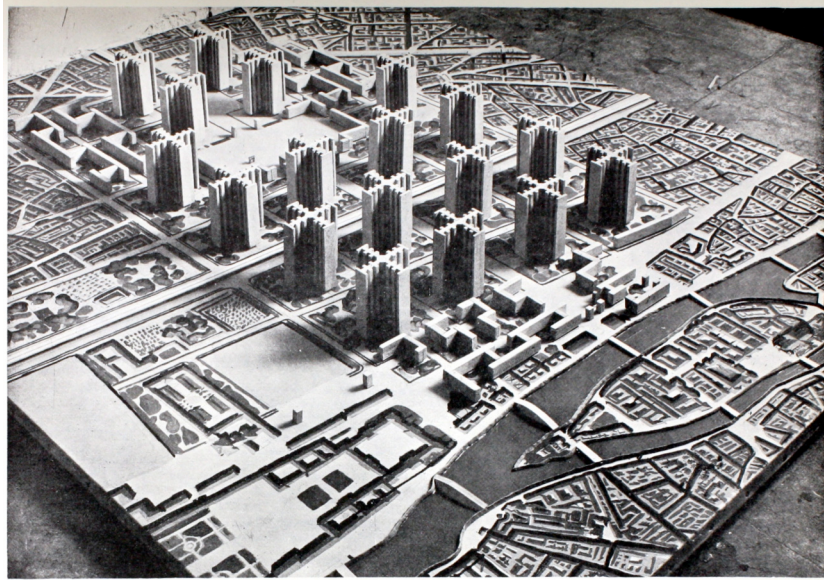
Figure 4.1.[169] A model of Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin for Paris.

The slums crowding Paris's suburbs increasingly came to be viewed as an ideal landscape and contained space for experimentations with large-scale, high-density residential projects. The idea that classical-era cities were incapable of adapting to the requirements of urbanization, industrialization and the drastic surges in urban populations that would ensue grew increasingly popular not only in France, but across Europe.[170] Coined *grands ensembles* (literally, large sets) by Maurice Rotival in 1935, suburban skyscrapers adorned by greenery and connected by large-scale transit arteries represented the ideology of modernity in architecture in the interwar period. The idea of the skyscraper would abolish class

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[168] Fourcaut 197-200.

[169] Le Corbusier. Title unknown. Accessed via Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, (New York: The Orion Press, 1964; originally published as *La Ville Radieuse*, 1924) 207.

[170] Vieillard-Baron 71.

distinctions, harmonize lifestyles, and serve immediate political and public health objectives as well.[171]

Prior to the war, perspectives in France had been fragmented, if not altogether ignorant, about class segregation emerging in the *banlieues*. While these perspectives acknowledged segregation as a natural result of the dispersal and diversity of urban space and functions, a new wave of urban geographers began to criticize patterns that had come to dominate the suburban landscape. To Pierre George, Abel Chatelain and Jean Tricart, for example, the *banlieues* represented the result of a political process which had for decades organized class differentiation through urban space – whether by intent, neglect, or both.[172] Despite being elaborated from the early 1950s onwards, theirs was not a position widely acknowledged or adopted until the 1980s.[173]

The coming of the Second World War put a halt to the implementation of any audacious new attempts at countering the growth of slums or revitalizing the city. At the war's conclusion, Paris presented a radically different landscape, with much more dire and immediate needs given the challenge of reconstruction. Several cities in eastern France had been virtually erased during the war, and the country as a whole had lost about sixteen percent of its total building stock – roughly 2.115 million structures.[174] In Paris alone, the war had left 250,000 people homeless, and as wave after wave of migration from the French countryside and the colonies arrived, shantytowns in the Parisian suburbs ballooned at an unprecedented rate.[175]

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[171] Ibid 65-6.
[172] Ibid 34-37.
[173] Ibid 27.
[174] W. Brian Newsome, *French Urban Planning 1940-1968: The Construction and Deconstruction of an Authoritarian System* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 1.
[175] Fourcaut 202.

In 1946, an exhibition in Paris proposed the reorientation of the French housing industry along the same lines as the American motor industry, emphasizing prefabrication and the mass industrialization of the home construction process – a radical notion at the time which would prove not so far away from living reality.[176] After being named minister for urbanism and reconstruction in 1948, Eugène Claudius-Petit declared the need for 20,000 new dwellings *per month*, for the next forty years.[177] A friend of Le Corbusier, Claudius-Petit was a firm believer in the progressive potential of architecture, and of urbanism to create an ideal, just society. He wrote and served on the editorial board at the prominent journal *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, and advocated that the reconstruction of France should serve not only to rebuild what had been destroyed, but also to provide a platform for the modernization of the nation's urban centres.[178]

Claudius-Petit's reconstruction plan was based on social uplift, security, and circulation. Slums were cleared to make way for 'streets in the sky', the residential high-rises that comprised an average of 3,000 homes. Working class families would be concentrated in these utopian high- and low-rise apartment complexes, with centralized schools and services, located near the rapidly industrializing suburbs, where inhabitants would presumably work.[179] In order to accomplish such enormous ends in such little time, state housing policy necessarily tended toward gigantism. Amidst heightened political pressure for results, production rates were regularly prioritized over the quality of the product.

The era of experimentation with the *grands ensembles* in France began in 1951, as the first estates were constructed in vacant outlying regions of cities, without comprehensive

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[176] Nicholas Bullock, 'Developing prototypes for France's mass housing program, 1949-53' (*Planning Perspectives*, 22, 2007), 8.

[177] Ibid 6.

[178] Ibid 6-8; Fourcaut 198.

[179] Silverstein & Tetreault. 'Urban Violence'; Vieillard-Baron 62, 131.

planning for transit and infrastructure, or much aesthetic concern.[180] The years that followed witnessed a veritable explosion in both the population of the Paris region, and the number of housing projects erected in the city's suburbs. In August 1957, the French government released funding for a five-year plan to build 300,000 new homes per year.[181] Through this five-year plan began the designation of *zones à urbaniser en priorité* (ZUP, or priority urbanization zone) in 1958, by which cheap, peripheral lands – often the sites of former shantytowns – were selected for urbanization.[182] In turn, *grands ensembles* designed to house between 15,000 and 20,000 people were developed upon sites around the city that offered proximity to industry and other places of work.[183]

   In the mid-1950s, suburban municipalities still reeling from the impacts of the war clamoured and competed feverishly for the privilege of these new residential complexes.[184] In total, some 550,000 new dwellings – whether in the relatively modest *habitations á loyer modéré* (HLM, or rent-contolled housing) or in the *cités d'urgences*, massive developments of unprecedented cheapness – were built in the Paris region between 1954 and 1962, almost all of them in the suburbs.[185] Meanwhile, the city's population grew by two million people.[186]

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[180] Vieillard-Baron 75.
[181] Fourcaut 207.
[182] Ibid 199.
[183] Ibid 212; Vieillard-Baron 77.
[184] Fourcaut 200.
[185] Taunton 106.
[186] Ibid 103; Fourcaut 202.

Figure 4.2.[187] *Grands ensembles* in Sarcelles, to the north of Paris.

For a short while, the *grands ensembles* symbolized the fresh face of modernization in France as it emerged from the ruins of the Second World War. Their standardization and rationalization of space, radical design and sheer size were celebrated as a triumph of urban planning and architectural creation. They had broken the traditional wisdom about the image and continuity of urban space, visually – and socially – separating the new city from the old. The suburbs had become structured as their own world apart.[188]

It was not very long, however, before enthusiasm over the *grands ensembles* transformed into isolation and resentment. Financial constraints had forced architects to shrink apartment sizes, and fewer amenities and infrastructure were allotted than originally planned. Prefabrication methods were undeveloped at the time, meaning sound insulation and the technical solidity of many apartments were drastically insufficient. A needlessly complex

[187] Mehdi Lallaoui. Title unknown. Accessed via Lallaoui, Mehdi, *Du bidonville aux HLM*, (Paris: Diffusion Syros, 1993) 33.
[188] Vieillard-Baron 62.

model for the construction and management of social housing – by which the state took one percent of companies' revenues in order to pay private construction companies to build and manage apartments, which were then sold to public and private employers, who then sublet the apartments to employees – promoted a sense of withdrawal, lack of ownership, and the prompt onset of dilapidation of apartments and alienation of residents.[189] The geographic isolation of most post-war constructions meant that schools, shops and other services were regularly unavailable.
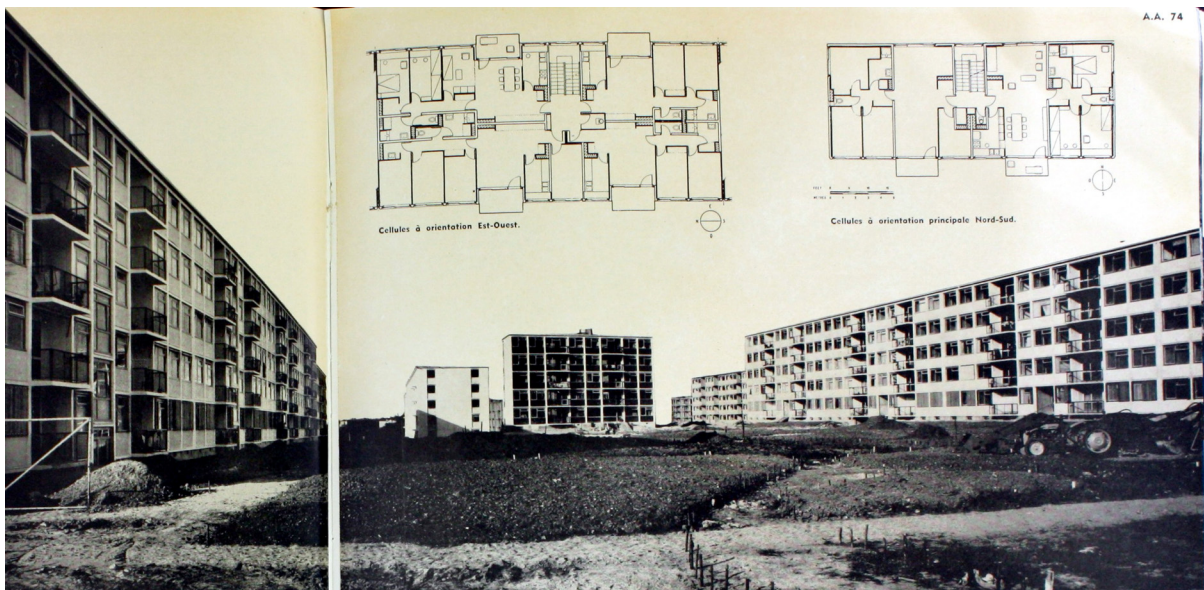
Figure 4.3. *Grands ensembles* at Marly Les Grandes Terres, 1957.

Similarly, most residents did not own cars, while commute times to Paris and other suburban communes were ludicrous, if transit was available at all.[190] While government funding had been made available for the construction of housing, funds to build collective facilities were considerably more difficult to obtain. Lack of collective facilities, social

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[189] Paul A Silverstein, *Algeria in France: transpolitics, race, and nation*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) 96.
[190] Kenny Cupers, 'Designing Social Life: the urbanism of the "grands ensembles"', *Positions*, 1, 2010, 98; Newsome, *French*, 2; Vieillard-Baron 86.

spaces, green spaces and streetscapes, and the sheer scale of the projects had quickly rendered the *grands ensembles* centres of isolation and alienation.[191] And unlike dense inner cities that tend to morph and evolve, the rigid and stark arrangement of the *grands ensembles* and the development of the massive Boulevard Périphérique encircling the old city in 1958, prevented the organic growth and integration of suburban communities into the existing city.[192]

Figure 4.4.[193] *Grands ensembles* at Nanterre, 1957.

Consequently, even as the *grands ensembles* were being built, debates emerged in political and sociological circles regarding their impacts on social life, as well as the broader social and political results of industrialized mass housing. While critiques of the *grands ensembles* were numerous and wide-ranging, there seemed to exist a general consensus that, in light of the post-war baby boom and increased migration from the colonies and

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[191] Cupers 98, 101.

[192] Taunton 116; Vieillard-Baron 86.

[193] Author unknown. 'Trois Immeubles á Nanterre'. Paris: L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, 1957. Accessed via *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, October-November 1957, 14.

countryside, they were the inevitable solution to demographic pressures, and the sensible model for future urban expansion. In attempting to address some of the emergent social issues attached to the *grands ensembles*, politicians and planners recognized that, at the most basic level, isolation and a relative lack of services were the price paid for cheaper living spaces.[194] Despite its initial hurdles, the construction of mass suburban housing complexes was not a question of if, but how.[195] For example, in a 1961 issue of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* devoted to Paris and its surrounding regions, André Bloc, the magazine's editor, penned an impassioned column acknowledging the need for the *grands ensembles*: 'we recall once more that the creation of a parallel city, far from dethroning historic Paris, is likely the only path out of our current difficulties, while ensuring the old city maintains its spiritual character and its influence.'[196]

At the same time, Bloc rejected the chaotic dispersal of the *grands ensembles*, and the lack of an overarching directive or comprehensive plan for suburban development. The future of Paris, to Bloc, had been left to ambitious bureaucrats who lacked conviction, creativity and vision, and were content to transform Paris into a 'replication of Brasilia.'[197] Others, such as Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, stressed the critical importance of collective facilities to the success of the *grands ensembles*. In Paris, monuments, public spaces, and amenities had been concentrated in neighbourhoods that represented only a fraction of the overall demographic picture, enforcing urban inequality, and undermining the social ecology of urban communities.[198]

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[194] Vieillard-Baron 95.

[195] Cupers 98.

[196] Bloc, André. 'Paris et region parisienne,' (*L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 97, 1961) 6.

[197] Ibid 7.

[198] Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, 'Espace social et urbanisme des grandes cités' (1952) in Marcel Roncayolo & Thierry Paquot, *Villes & Civilisation Urbaine, XVIIe-XXe Siècle* (Paris: Larousse, 1992), 357-61.

Taking their cue from Chombart de Lauwe's writings on the importance of equality and inclusion, and the relationship between urbanism and social ecology, studies were published in 1959 in the journal *Urbanisme*, and the commissioner for construction in Paris tabled an expansive panel to explore the issue. Experts in architecture, planning, social sciences, and government and community organizations collaborated on a series of guidelines for the construction and orientation of the *grands ensembles*. In addition to the inclusion of more collective facilities and amenities, the commission also reflected an increasing public desire for a scaling-down of future housing projects, and a push toward single-family homes.[199]

However, the *grands ensembles* were a social experiment in which the experimenters – architects and urban planners – were forced to defer their trials to the pragmatism and austerity of civil engineers, and the overwhelming imperatives of economic and political expediency.[200] Despite numerous reports and commissions, public discontent over the mismanagement and isolation of the new Parisian suburbs, and a public drive toward single-family homes, construction of the *grands ensembles* continued into the 1970s without significant improvements. At the end of the day, bureaucrats were comfortable with the facility and speed of the old models, while builders had invested too much time and too many resources into technologies and techniques for their construction.[201]

It was only once the *grands ensembles* became an issue of national political interest, driving deep into the presidency of Charles de Gaulle in the late 1960s, that their construction was abandoned. De Gaulle's successor, Georges Pompidou, phased out the

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[199] Cupers 96-8.
[200] Ibid 96.
[201] W. Brian Newsome, 'The Rise of the *Grands Ensembles*: Government, Business, and Housing in Postwar France' (*The Historian*, 66:4, 2004), 815.

construction of large housing estates in the early 1970s, ending what was likely the most aggressive building campaigns in French history. Needless to say, however, that campaign had definitively altered the French urban landscape, especially Paris, affecting the lives of millions, and millions more to come.

It is therefore most important to keep in mind the history of urban design in Paris since Haussmann when discussing the question of Algerian migration the city. Haussmannization in Paris pushed the urban poor to the city's edges – outside the city walls, as it were – and contributed immensely to suburban unrest and politicization of the periphery. The presence of the red belts outside of Paris indicated a high level of hostility and spatial isolation between the city's centre and its disadvantaged suburbs before mass migration from the colony. The mass arrival of Algerians in Paris can be viewed as the next phase of a long history of isolation of the underclass in the city. It might be noted, for example, that following the Second World War, as native French families grew out of the *grands ensembles* and into better accommodations, large concentrations of colonial immigrants came to replace them. The arrival of immigrants into troublesome suburban housing estates already acknowledged to be a world unto themselves, added a dimension of racism and xenophobia to an already high level of spatial isolation in the suburbs.

Indeed, as previously iterated, the question of immigration had long been a significant impetus for the modernization and development of the urban periphery in France, and it has since remained a focal point in the history of the French suburbs. While the post-war project of urban revitalization focused on mass housing as the solution to homelessness, unhygienic living conditions and civil unrest, its peripheral objectives of social control and surveillance are all the more apparent in the case of colonial immigrants from Algeria. To be sure, the

malaise of intercultural tensions in post-colonial French cities is inextricably linked to the question of immigration, the *grands ensembles* and their legacy of isolation. But it is also worth underlining that an integral component of post-war urban renewal in France was the importation and cultivation of a colonial apparatus for the management and control of racialized, lower class and suspect populations. And to this colonial apparatus we can trace the evolution and growth of the contemporary social malaise in France.

By the end of the 1940s, a half million Algerians were living in France, typically in Lyon, Marseille or Paris. Given that the charge of housing Algerian migrant workers usually fell to the companies who offered them their work contracts, migrant housing was typically haphazard, or non-existent. About half were lodged in some kind of company housing, while others were left to procure their own accommodation which – given a lack of hard cash, and a pervasive racism among landlords – meant many migrant workers sought shelter wherever it could be found.[202] Shantytowns like small villages sprouted up around the edges of Paris in Nanterre, Saint-Denis, Gennevilliers, and elsewhere, and over time grew in their size, organization, and impenetrability to metropolitan authorities.

Although Algerian migrants in France were outnumbered by those from Italy, Spain, and Poland, as an immigrant group they presented a unique case: an almost exclusively male population from a contentious colonial territory, held in deep suspicion by their host society, Algerians in France were nonetheless technically 'French', and could draw upon some of the associated privileges of mobility and welfare.[203] Shortly following the end of the war, with renewed calls for Algerian independence from France, the presence of a sizable Algerian

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[202] Amelia H. Lyons, 'Invisible Immigrants: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State in the Era of Decolonization (1947-1974)', PhD diss., (University of California, Irvine, 2004), 155.

[203] Marc Bernardot, *Loger les immigrés: la Sonacotra 1956-2006* (Broissieux: Editions du Croquant, 2008), 30-1.

population in the French mainland became cause for considerable social and political anxiety. In the early 1950s, post-war reconstruction efforts shifted from industrial redevelopment to housing, which became somewhat of a double-headed approach to welfare and the restoration of order on the urban periphery. While France had a long history of labour migration, the question of colonial migrant workers gave a whole new dimension to the task of managing and controlling a 'foreign' workforce.[204]

The outbreak of the Algerian war for independence in 1954 – and the realization that migrant enclaves in French cities had served as the sites for Algerian nationalist organizing, networking, and fundraising[205] – provoked a wave of new efforts toward isolating nationalist elements and reducing social unrest in migrant communities. More generally, these efforts were also geared toward winning over Algerian hearts and minds with the notion that the French empire and the republic were one and the same, and that Algeria was unequivocally French.[206] As the war deepened, the management of France's Algerian population also became linked to the potential fate of Algeria's European population. Seeking to establish its benevolence and to ensure the safety of the million or so European settlers in Algeria, France promised improved status and living conditions for Algerians in France in exchange for guarantees for the safety of Europeans in North Africa.[207]

The process of ameliorating Algerians' living conditions, while enhancing their controllability and surveillance, was a two-tiered endeavour. Winning over a half million Algerian hearts and combating Algerian nationalism required both a policing and welfare approaches, both of which were taken up in varying forms by the Fonds d'Action Social

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[204] Ibid 10-24.
[205] See Chapter 3.
[206] Amelia H. Lyons, 'Social Welfare, French Muslims and decolonization in France: the case of the Fonds d'action sociale', (*Patterns of Prejudice*, 43:1, 2009) 68.
[207] Maillard 67.

(FAS) and Société Nationale de Construction de Logements pour les Travailleurs Algériens (Sonacotral).[208] Migrant shantytowns in France, especially Paris, had become the recruiting grounds for the nationalist Front de libération national (FLN), not to mention, the source of 80% of its revenues, which it extracted via taxation of migrant families. The FLN was also usually the first in line to support those without adequate – or any – housing which, in 1957, in the heat of the war for independence, was around three quarters of the Algerians in France.[209] Solving the migrant shantytowns in France, especially in Paris, appeared the key to solving both anti-colonial organizing and urban degradation, such that FAS and Sonacotral fashioned themselves the metropolitan arm of the Plan de Constantine. Their objective was, like de Gaulle's programme in Algeria, designed to demonstrate to Algerians the benefits and benevolence of French governance, and to prove that nationalism and independence were unnecessary.[210]

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[208] Lyons, 'Social', 67-70.
[209] Ibid 74; Lyons, 'Invisible', 175.
[210] Lyons, 'Invisible', 10.

Figure 4.5.[211] Algerian migrant labours in rented quarters, ca. 1950s. Those unable to obtain housing through their employer or through the state were vulnerable to *marchands de sommeil*, who charged exorbitant rates for shared beds in shared rooms.

While FAS was designed to provide a range of social welfare services, and Sonacotral to provide workers' housing, the objectives and the real practices of the two organizations routinely overlapped. Working towards integrating migrant workers and improving their living conditions, the two organizations offered them the training and services necessary for their adaptation to, and performance in, the workplace: language skills, hostel beds, and technical training for industrial labour.[212] So-called migrant 'integration' strategies from this period speak to the pervasive perception of immigration in general as a temporary phenomenon.[213] While migrants themselves saw their life in France as temporary, migration itself had become an integral – and permanent – part of the colonial relationship and French capitalist labour market. However, the integration of migrants into French society

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[211] Lallaoui. Title unknown. Accessed via Lallaoui, Mehdi, *Du bidonville aux HLM*, 36.
[212] Ibid, 159.
[213] Bernardot, *Loger*, 9.

went only so far as to make them effective workers, while leaving them both spatially and socially disconnected from the larger society around them. Thus, despite the nominal intentions of improving Algerians' living conditions in France and providing the means for their social integration, social welfare services for Algerians in France were equally, if not more, designed to ensure their control and surveillance.

Sonacotral was established in 1956, two years prior to the creation of the FAS under Charles de Gaulle's Plan de Constantine, as a direct response to the Algerian war for independence. Cognisant of the political and humanitarian problem posed by the chaotic state of immigrant housing, the French ministry of the interior established Sonacotral to develop a comprehensive programme to address the growth of Algerian shantytowns in French cities.[214] Prior to the creation of Sonacotral, resources for Algerian migrant workers in France were either disorganized or altogether unavailable.[215] Sonacotral's programme was, for the first decade or so, much more pragmatic than comprehensive and coherent.

Until 1959, Sonacotral's primary means for acquiring lands for the construction of workers' estates was the opportunistic seizure and resorption of shantytowns.[216] During this period, Sonacotral was likely as involved in housing poor workers as it was in displacing them, in fact. Encampments, old suburban industrial buildings and army barracks that had been converted into informal dormitories were frequently seized, and there was never any guarantee that those displaced in the process would ever be re-housed.[217]

The dissolution of these *bidonvilles* was, politically, a popular approach, with three basic rationales: the living conditions in Algerian communities in Paris were unacceptable;

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[214] Bernardot, *Loger*, 29.
[215] Ibid 11.
[216] Marc Bernardot, 'Chronique d'un institution: La Sonacotra, 1956-76' (*Sociétés Contemporaines*, 33/34, 1999), 44.
[217] Bernardot, *Loger*, 56.

they had essentially become a second front in the Algerian war for independence; and lands occupied by informal housing could be incorporated into the broader programme for urban expansion in Paris.[218]
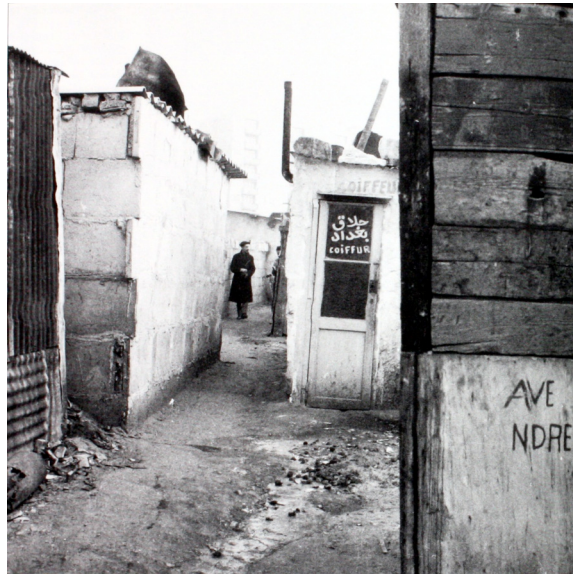

Figure 4.6.[219] Algerian *bidonville* in Paris.

Sonacotral, in fact, very quickly became highly sought after by suburban municipalities in the Paris region, especially in areas with high concentrations of Algerians or areas known to be hotbeds of communist organizing. In order to build, Sonacotral needed cheap land, and it sold its practice of shantytown dissolution to municipalities as the answer to urban dilapidation and political unrest.[220] The first task given to Sonacotral was the dismembering of the FLN stronghold in Nanterre, with the general goal of rupturing Algerian solidarity in the area, and identifying zones for the construction of workers' estates.[221]

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[218] Ibid 67-8.

[219] Lallaoui. Title unknown. Accessed via Lallaoui, Mehdi, *Du bidonville aux HLM*, 46.

[220] Ibid 67; Bernardot, 'Chronique', 45.

[221] Silverstein, *Algeria*, 92.

The first rounds of migrant workers' estates actually built by Sonacotral were set up in Nanterre and a number of other contentious boroughs outside of Paris. Due to advances in prefabrication techniques, once a site had been chosen and graded for construction, estates could be built up and completed in a mere thirty days.[222] While administrators eagerly welcomed the dissolution of the *bidonvilles* and rapid development of their local landscape, they almost instantaneously rejected the notion that Sonacotral would be replacing those sites with housing for Algerians.[223] It was not uncommon that, once Sonacotral had finished building migrant workers' housing in a suburban commune, local administrations would simply forfeit control over those territories, treating the estates as separate entities, as the sole responsibility of the state.[224]

Sonacotral administrators constantly struggled with the question of incorporating or segregating Algerians with the French population – wary of creating 'medinas' within Paris, Sonacotral was well aware that relocating large numbers of Algerians into 'French' communities generally resulted in convulsive and unpalatable responses.[225] Segregation thus tended to be the rule, rather than the exception. Workers' estates were immediately stigmatized, not least because of the strict separation enforced between Algerians and French, in spite of the fact they were gradually occupying many of the same urban spaces.

Separation was justified on two bases: first, that Algerians are sensitive to political fervour, and intermingling with communist networks should ideally be avoided; second, because the social tendencies and lifestyles of Algerian workers supposedly made them prone to transmitting epidemics. They must, accordingly, be kept at a considerable distance

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[222] Mehdi Lallaoui, *Du bidonville aux HLM* (Paris: Diffusion Syros, 1993), 35.
[223] Bernardot, *Loger*, 68.
[224] Ibid 109.
[225] Bernardot, 'Chronique', 47-8.

from families. Upon this basis, Sonacotral even enforced separation within Algerian communities, allocating primitive hostels for single male workers, while funnelling the small number of Algerian families in France into more complete apartments or transitional housing, though more often the latter than the former.[226]

Another curious component of the institution reminiscent of colonial-style supervision of the immigrant population in France was the make-up of Sonacotral's management and leadership staff. Eugène Claudius-Petit – the self-proclaimed 'apostle' of architecture and Le Corbusier, who had served under the French government-in-exile in Algiers during the Second World War – was chosen to preside over Sonacotral in 1956, bringing with him a strong set of devout Catholic values, and an understanding of the multiple objectives at work in the institution's mandate.[227]

Claudius-Petit's director-general was Jean Vaujour, previously the architect of the *villages de regroupement* in rural Algeria, put in place following the outbreak of the war of independence in 1954 – by which rural communities were uplifted and resettled in barracks-like communities, to be monitored and kept away from activist groups operating in the countryside and border regions.[228] A skilled politician and orator, it was Vaujour who framed the Sonacotral as the 'Plan de Constantine, Part Two'. With Claudius-Petit, Vaujour pledged to make the Sonacotral estates into the 'agents of moral and sanitary progress', shaping inhabitants' lifestyles and curbing the spread of disease in the *bidonvilles*.[229]

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[226] Bernardot, *Loger*, 9; Lyons, 'Social', 77.

[227] Ibid 44-7.

[228] Keith Sutton, 'The *Centres de regroupement*: the French Army's Final Legacy to Algeria's Settlement Geography', (in Hargreaves, Alec G. & Michael J. Hefferman. *French and Algerian Identities from Colonial Times to Present: A Century of Interaction*. Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993) 164-5.

[229] Bernardot, *Loger*, 48-52.

Figure 4.7.[230] Algerian *bidonville* in Paris. Note new mass housing estates in the background.

In general, the great majority of men hired to oversee Sonacotral's workers' estates were nearly-retired military or civil service officers with experience working in the colonies. Occasionally, positions were also given to young military officers, who could not pass ranks until the age of 36, who nonetheless had a desire to cultivate their skills in personnel management.[231] Claudius-Petit ascribed his preference for colonial officers to their understanding and familiarity with leading and commanding North African soldiers, their understanding of Algerian 'psychology' and lifestyles, and their potential familiarity with the Arabic language.[232] The officers themselves understood their mission and place in the estates very clearly: to survey and keep track of a hostile and foreign population, while carrying out the benevolent task of their education and integration into French society.[233] For example, some managers might arrange football matches or French film nights for migrant workers. It is also interesting to note the institution's preference for married officers; it was believed that

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[230] Lallaoui. Title unknown. Accessed via Lallaoui, Mehdi, *Du bidonville aux HLM*, 63.

[231] Chourki Hmed, 'Tenir ses homes: la gestion des étrangers "isolés dans les foyers Sonacotra après la guerre d'Algérie', (*Politix*, 19:76, 2006) 23.

[232] Abdelmalek Sayad, 'Le foyer de sans-famille' (*Actes de la recherches en sciences sociales*, 32-33, 1980), 103.

[233] Hmed 22-8.

a female presence within the estates would provide a normative reference for French-style marriage, and temper debauched behaviours.[234]

In 1959, as the war in Algeria escalated and Algerian families arrived in greater numbers, Sonacotral expanded its mandate to begin sheltering entire families by deverting significant resources away from workers' hostels and into transitional housing.[235] Transit housing was intended to become the site of 'social apprenticeships' for life in France, where a variety of welfare programmes could be delivered, including language courses, job skills programmes, youth education, and integration programmes for women.

Indeed, whereas services for males continued to focus on adaptation to the workforce, there was a discernible effort toward deepening Algerian women's attachment to France and French culture. Since FLN recruitment rates were high among single males living collectively, family units could be more amenable to the continuation of French Algeria. By providing Algerian women with classes in French culture, customs and home economics, social welfare directors hoped they could influence their husbands and children against participation in nationalist activities.[236]

In reality, transit housing was austere to say the least, usually constructed on the former sites of *bidonvilles*, sometimes even situated directly next to them. As such, the isolation and starkness of transit housing tended to perpetuate the previously existing class segregation. Despite its supposedly educational and temporary character, families were routinely left to stagnate in primitive transit housing for years, sometimes as long as a

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[234] Bernardot, *Loger,* 62.
[235] Ibid 69.
[236] Lyons, 'Invisible', 6.

decade.[237] Whether due to real shortages or simple discrimination, Algerians were seldom able to make the jump into public housing until the early 1970s.[238]


Figure 4.8.[239] *Bidonvilles* and *grands ensembles* in Paris.

Managers of public housing arbitrarily cited a lack of 'evolution' when rejecting Algerians' applications – thus retaining them in transit housing where they were subject to mandatory integration services – although justifications could vary greatly. Some cited worries over the appearance of giving preferential treatment to Algerian families over French ones; others feared Algerians would bring with them multiple generations of their families and overcrowd relatively small public housing units; some predicted that if too many

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[237] Bernardot, *Loger*, 60; Lyons, 'Invisible', 78, 215.
[238] Lyons, 'Social', 77-8.
[239] Lallaoui. Title unknown. Accessed via Lallaoui, Mehdi, *Du bidonville aux HLM*, 49.

Algerians were given homes in social housing, that 'a great many more will want to come to France', overrunning the public housing system. Others suggested they be kept in company housing in order to peg them more closely to fluctuations in the job market, and keep public housing spaces open for 'French' families.[240] The cruel irony of the situation was that, as employees in French companies who contributed 1% of their earnings to HLM public housing programmes, Algerians were actually paying into a public housing system to which they had no access, and were thus continually segregated from mainstream society in transit housing or the *bidonvilles*.[241]

Workers' estates presented a similar picture. Basic models called for 25 to 30 apartments, each apartment housing nine inhabitants, typically in three rooms of two and one room of three. Each inhabitant was designated a total 4.5 square metres of personal space within the apartments, which themselves were typically poorly insulated for sound and weather, poorly built, and prone to fires.[242] The state of migrant workers' estates in France at the time represented the much broader sentiment of French society towards immigrants, as well as the self-perception of migrant workers about their place in French society. Housing was viewed as a provisional offering for provisional workers; as a poor, temporary worker, the Algerian is kept in poor, temporary conditions. And their provisional status in France excused widespread inaction and complacence about their living conditions.[243]

Sonacotral workers' estates existed in a state of exception – as something of a burden of the state, occupants had no formal lease, and technically had no tenancy, and thus had no legal rights within their spaces of living. Just as the Algerian in France occupied an

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[240] Lyons, 'Invisible', 164, 179.
[241] Ibid 226.
[242] Bernardot, *Loger*, 54; Sayad, 'Le foyer', 91.
[243] Sayad, 'Le foyer', 91.

ambiguous place as technically 'French' but not really French, the status of Algerians within Sonacotral mirrored that ambiguity, as 'tenants' without real tenancy.[244] Sonacotral estates were not so much meant to be 'lived in' as to be simply slept in, their extreme disciplinary structure and austerity making them more barracks than homes. Few spaces existed in the apartments for socializing, cooking or eating, precluding the possibility of communal living.[245]

Workers continually found themselves at the mercy of their estate managers. During the Algerian war of independence, residents could be expelled at any time without notice for any kind of 'political activity', or the possession or introduction of literature and images deemed 'obscene' or 'anti-French'. More broadly, workers were not allowed female visitors at any time, nor were they permitted visitors during the evening. Under provisions for hygiene, propriety and order, residents were required to keep all of their personal items stored when not in use, to report any illness to management, and to refrain from eating in their rooms. Any kind of gambling was prohibited. Management also maintained the right to enter any room at any time of the day, for any reason, while regular visits were made to apartments at night-time to ensure that rules were being observed. Abdelmalek Sayad has thus argued that while the regulations within Sonacotral estates were nominally designed to encourage integration and adaptation of French customs and social habits, they were, in effect, used to survey and intimidate residents, and discourage their participation in subversive activities.[246]

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[244] Ibid 92.
[245] Ibid 100.
[246] Ibid 102-3.

Collaboration between Sonacotral and French police was also frequent. Maurice Papon, a senior civil servant in Algeria, was brought to Paris to combat FLN activities and organizing in the city's Algerian enclaves in early 1958. Using *harkis* – Algerian Muslims loyal to France who collaborated with the French Army during the Algerian War – as infiltrators, Papon attempted to penetrate the FLN's network in workers' communities, while using a number of other techniques, including terror, to uproot and disrupt FLN strongholds. Where Sonacotral had failed to clear Algerian *bidonvilles* in Paris, 'accidental' fires set by police in the *bidonvilles* became frequent due to both their effectiveness in clearing them, and their plausibility in cramped, poorly equipped communities.[247]

As the war in Algeria continued, so too did the isolation – and radicalization – of the Algerian population in France. Police raids into Algerian communities aimed at 'cleansing the medinas' were usually unsuccessful in capturing suspects, although they did succeed in arousing resentment amongst their migrant inhabitants.[248] Police declarations about the dangerous and unassimilable nature of Algerians were echoed in the press, augmenting public animosity towards Algerians living in France, whose continued presence baffled the French public in light of Algerians' declaration of sovereignty and independence from France.[249]

The integration of Algerians continued to suffer due to their social and spatial segregation by housing authorities, as well as the tendency of metropolitan French to quickly vacate areas of Algerian settlement.[250] The FLN actively kept Algerians separate from mainstream French society, intervening in relationships between Algerians and French, and

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[247] Lyons, 'Invisible', 180; House, 'Colonial and post-colonial'.
[248] MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants ,* 192.
[249] Ibid 193.
[250] Ibid 191-5.

keeping tabs on the Algerian community. The so-called café wars between the FLN and the moderate Mouvement National Algérien (MNA), which claimed the lives of 4,000 Algerians in France, aggravated more police incursions against migrant communities, while further marginalizing Algerians from each other and the society around them.[251]

Concerns had been circulating within Sonacotral's administration since 1958 regarding the dangers of ethnic concentration and class segregation in its estates, around which time Maurice Papon had also imposed a curfew on all Algerians living in Paris. In October 1961, the FLN elected to respond to the segregation of Algerians in France by organizing a large-scale protest in central Paris. Capitalizing on popular unrest and resentment against their continued repression and restriction, the FLN would demonstrate to the world its broad-based support within the Algerian community by breaking Papon's curfew.

On the evening of 17 October 1961, some 30,000 Algerians made their way into central Paris by bus, metro, and on foot. For many, it was their first time in central Paris. However, a force of roughly 8,000 police and gendarmes met them with astonishing violence and brutality. Roughly 11,000 were arrested and sent to football stadiums, police stations, and even internment centres unused since the Vichy period. One group of roughly 5,000 demonstrators did succeed in reaching central Paris, at which point, police fired into the crowd, pursuing fleeing demonstrators into nearby buildings and metro stations. Altogether, it is estimated that some two hundred demonstrators were killed by police under Papon's

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[251] Ibid 196.

authority.[252] Jim House and Neil MacMaster have recently characterized the events of 17 October 1961 as follows:

> …the extraordinary levels of police violence reached in October 1961 can be best understood as the culmination of a long cycle of colonial repression and the introduction of forms of state terror, which would normally be circumscribed to military theatres of operation in North Africa, into the metropolitan capital.[253]

What is also bewildering about the violence of October 1961 is the political circumstance in which it occurred. The prospect of self-determination for Algeria by late October 1961 seemed all but a sure thing. De Gaulle had long been restraining practices of torture and internment, and was in the process of negotiating a ceasefire and a new political arrangement for Algeria.[254] The eruption of police violence against a peaceful and unarmed demonstration, to which figures in the highest levels of the French state turned a blind eye or even condoned, was merely that; the police response had no hope of altering the course of political affairs in Algeria. While House and MacMaster have characterized the massacre as 'the apex of a long phase of brutal repression'[255] in Algeria, it could equally be deemed the harbinger of public and official rejection of the Algerian population in France, and a historical moment that reaches deep into the contemporary period. Indeed, to this day, a great deal of public and state amnesia shrouds the events of 17 October 1961, and the Algerian War in general.[256]

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[252] Jim House & Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[253] Ibid 15.

[254] Ibid 4.

[255] Ibid 15.

[256] Benjamin Stora, *La gangrene et l'oubli: la memoire de la guerre d'Algérie*. Paris: La Decouverte & Syros, 1998. Stora calls the Algerian War, in which two million French fought, and which had innumerable effects on the French national psyche, a blank page in national history. France's unwillingness to confront the historical

Decolonization and mass emigration from Algeria occurred simultaneously, less than a year following the so-called 17 October Massacre in Paris, bringing to France the people, the memories, and the social and political attitudes of the contested former colony. Practically overnight, 1.25 million *harkis* and European *pieds noirs* left Algeria for France.[257] In the months and years immediately following Algerian independence a number of factors – provisions under the terms of the Evian Accords, concerns over *pieds noirs* remaining in Algeria, and the unskilled labour requirements of the French economy – kept the doors for migration from Algeria into France wide open.[258] Given the terrible state of the rural economy inherited by the FLN, sabotaged by the mass flight of the *pied noir* technocratic and land-owning classes after independence, it has been argued that the conditions in post-colonial rural Algeria fed readily into the system of migration, just as they had during French rule.[259] Thus, as the European and *harki* population of Algeria were fleeing into France, so too were waves of Algerian migrant workers and their families. Over the decade following independence, the Algerian population in France ballooned to 800,000, quickly becoming France's single largest minority group.[260]

However, the realization of independence for Algeria also ended the French legal obligation to its Muslim 'citizens' from Algeria. State housing directives shifted drastically, turning efforts away from housing Algerians, and towards accommodating the massive repatriation of *pieds noirs*. The Algerian presence on French soil became something of an insult, as 'the former colonial subjects, perceived as inherently inferior, [who were] not only

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realities of the Algerian War – torture, summary executions, and so on – and of colonialism itself 'gnaws at the very foundations of French like gangrene'.

[257] Lallaoui 35.

[258] Lyons, 'Invisible', 353.

[259] MacMaster 20.

[260] Ibid 21.

the victors [in the war of independence] but were now colonizing the land of the "civilized" masters.'[261] Burdened already by an acute housing shortage, the arrival of a significant number of Europeans from North Africa following the end of colonial rule effectively kept former colonial migrants in France from making the transition into standard public housing. By 1966, nearly half of the shantytown residents in Paris were North African, compared with 20% Portuguese, 20% French, and 5.5% Spanish.[262] At the same time, the public impression of rejection and insult presented by the independence of Algeria made any campaign for the reinvigoration of welfare and social services for former colonial migrants a tough sell.[263] Thus, Algerians lingered in Sonacotral transitional housing or the *bidonvilles*, segregated from the general population. In the words of one Algerian transit housing resident:

> Right now, it's no good. We're lost now, we feel like we don't count. There are many of us who do not know what will happen. It's small, it's tight, there's noise. But it's the mud that's the worst. When it rains like this, there's mud everywhere. Every day, I clean my house, but when you walk in you'd say it just rained. When we came in here, we signed for four years. It's been nineteen years that we've been here. Before it was a slum. We didn't pay. Now, it's just a commercial slum.[264]

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[261] Ibid 2.
[262] Lallaoui 44.
[263] Lyons, 'Social', 78-9.
[264] Lallaoui 80. Author's translation.

Figure 4.9.[265] Sonacotra transit housing.

Over the course of 1963 and 1964, a crisis of ambiguity and ambivalence over welfare and integration for colonial migrants in post-colonial France resulted in debates about viability of institutions such as the FAS and Sonacotral. A final decision was made to keep them, at least temporarily, with revised mandates to serve all immigrant groups – no longer exclusively Algerians. Sonacotral was renamed Sonacotra (Société Nationale de Construction de Logements pour les Travailleurs), and gradually, immigrant communities from across the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa and the Antilles came to occupy Sonacotra units.[266] The increase in the units' national and ethnic variegation, however, did not significantly alter their social and economic homogeneity – Sonacotra's migrant estates

[265] Lallaoui. Title unknown. Accessed via Lallaoui, Mehdi, *Du bidonville aux HLM*, 78.
[266] Bernardot, *Loger*, 73, 85; Lyons, 'Social', 81, 84.

remained poor, physically and socially isolated, and bleak. Likewise, despite a name change and some minor revisions to the organization's mandate, its programmes, techniques and personnel retained their fundamentally colonial dynamic, essentially swapping the colonial language of 'assimilation' for the post-colonial language of 'integration'.[267]

If anything, there was an even more concentrated effort towards bringing veterans of colonial administrations into the organization, such as police inspectors, consultants and social workers.[268] Furthermore, despite the disappearance of anti-colonial organizing in immigrant communities in France, the organization's management maintained its fundamentally militaristic character. In 1972, for example, 92% of Sonacotra managers were from a military background, of which two thirds had served in North Africa. It is also worth mentioning that, of the remaining eight percent with civil backgrounds, half had served in North Africa. And of them all, only one in ten could speak any Arabic.[269] Thus, even a decade after the formal closure of French colonialism in Africa – with the exception of Comoros and Djibouti – Sonacotra's management structure had preserved its essential colonial character.

Responding to a trend that had been noticeably escalating since 1948, in 1960, Sonacotra began exploring expansion into the wider real estate market. Although family migration had been largely discouraged, more and more Algerian families were relocating to France, either fleeing conflict and poverty in Algeria, or seeking to reunite with husbands, fathers and brothers already established in the metropole. Up from 3,000 in 1953 to 20,000 in 1960, the trend of family settlement in France was an unnerving yet undeniable reality for

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[267] Lyons, 'Social, 87.
[268] Ibid 86.
[269] Sayad, 'Le foyer', 103.

French officials.[270] With the advent of independence in Algeria, and given the option of choosing either French or Algerian citizenship, many families elected to relocate to France.

Thus, after purchasing a real estate management company operating in Paris, Lyon, and Marseilles in 1960, Sonacotra set about immediately constructing massive new projects in the Parisian suburbs of Aubervilliers, Nanterre and Argenteuil.[271] The 1960 purchase and expansion was the beginning of the organization's goal of developing its capacity for management and financing, as well as the provision of housing for tenants other than single male migrant workers.[272]

As slum clearance programmes expanded in the later 1960s, opportunities for land seizures grew, and between 1966 and 1975, Sonacotra built two hundred new hostels around France – compared with sixty-nine in the previous decade. Meanwhile, as budgets for immigration-related services decreased, Sonacotra tapped increasingly into HLM funds drawn from the Law of 1% pool, and steadily increased the size of its estates designated for family housing.[273] All the same, the resettlement of families from *bidonvilles* to transit housing, and from transit housing to public HLMs, was chaotic and slow – there were always more people in the queue than could be rehoused.[274] Curiously, during the period between 1962 and 1973, under its new mandate, Sonacotra was more engaged in accumulating properties than fulfilling its concrete goal.

Over the course of the so-called Trente Glorieuses, or thirty years of post-war economic boom in France, the country's immigrant population doubled from 1.7 million to

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[270] Maillard 66.
[271] Lyons, 'Invisible', 219.
[272] Bernardot, Loger, 88-9.
[273] Ibid 83, 87.
[274] Vincent Viet, 'La politique de lodgement des immigrés (1945-1990)' (*Vigntième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 64, 1999), 96.

3.4 million.[275] In 1974, two thirds of France's foreign-born labour force was working in the industrial sector; meanwhile, more Algerians held jobs in France per capita than French nationals.[276] Immigration was undeniably one of the driving forces for the economic success France achieved after the devastation of the Second World War.

However, the 1973 Middle East oil crisis and economic recession throughout much of the Western world dramatically altered circumstances for the immigrant population in France. Foreign workers, although they represented only ten percent of the national labour force, accounted for two thirds of jobs lost in France during the recession.[277] With growing unemployment, public animosity against immigrants grew significantly, owing to a historical perception of immigrants as temporary economic fill-ins, and the very recent memory of the Algerian War. Immigrants – typically the 'last hired, first fired' – suffered particularly high levels of unemployment as many industrial positions were outsourced from France, while their prospects for social advancement, better housing and better jobs appeared to vanish overnight.[278] On a national scale, the recession left little space and little public sympathy for the rapidly deteriorating situation of immigrants in France.[279]

Seeking to offload some of the pressures presented by its unemployed surplus labour force, in 1974, the French state first ceased all inward migration – with some exceptions for refugees, family reunification, and specific professional applicants – while introducing a programme of *aide de retour* (repatriation assistance). Ideally aimed toward assisting the repatriation of foreign workers from North and West Africa, who presented a greater burden on state integration and welfare services, assistance packages were most vigorously taken up

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[275] Newsome, *French*, 186.
[276] Hargreaves 44, 53.
[277] Ibid 53.
[278] Newsome, *French*, 186; Lyons, 'Invisible', 358.
[279] Viet 91; Lyons, 'Invisible', 356.

by immigrants of Spanish and Portuguese origin. In a way, the programme backfired, and signalled to France that the country's African population was there to stay.[280]

Shortly after the recession, Sonacotra reported that, more and more, it was increasingly housing occupants whose incomes and levels of social mobility would not allow their ascension to a decent domestic life in the foreseeable future.[281] The economic recession in France had quickly and effectively shifted the national question of 'immigration' from one of monitoring and integrating a temporary and suspect population, to fielding a rising crisis of suburban stagnation, unemployment, crime, and lack of effective education or social services.[282] By 1975, Sonacotra tenants had coordinated a rent strike in estates across the country against rising rents and regimented and cramped living conditions. By 1978, four in five Sonacotra estates were not collecting any rent.[283] While the levels of police presence in the estates remained the same as ten or fifteen years prior, Sonacotra authorities were now confronting an entirely different situation. Its challenge was not exclusively male Algerian sympathizers of the FLN with an ambitious political agenda, but a diverse, multi-ethnic movement of single males as well as families demanding a basic improvement in their quality of life.[284]

The recession of the mid 1970s in France exposes both the profound failure of post-war urban management and social integration of immigrants, as well as the ultimate of indifference of France toward its immigrant population. Having engaged in a zealous campaign of cleaning slums – and subsequent displacement of their already disadvantaged inhabitants – and isolated suburban housing estates, the Sonacotra created and standardized a

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[280] Hargreaves 44.

[281] Bernardot, *Loger*, 108.

[282] Lyons, 'Invisible', 354.

[283] Viet 99.

[284] Bernardot, *Loger*, 113-36.

class of migrants unhoused and undesired across urban France. After the recession, Sonacotra's *de facto* mandate switched from housing immigrants to simply housing the unwanted.[285]

It was recently argued that following the economic crisis of 1973-1975 and the deindustrialization of Paris, the notion of the city's 'periphery' changed from a functional delineation to a more social one. As opportunities for employment in the industrial suburbs thinned, most of those with the financial wherewithal to relocate did so, leaving behind the most socially and economically disadvantaged.[286] Immigrant families were eventually allocated spaces in older, more run-down public *grands ensembles,* while French residents tended to move into the private housing market, or into newer HLMs being financed by the 1% payroll tax.[287]

By the late 1970s, the term *banlieue* in France had taken on a distinct connotation of a place of dilapidation, unemployment, social stagnation and crime. Moreover, due to a long-standing, concerted policy toward official separation coupled with a pervasive public racism, the immigrant suburbs came to represent a contentious, inassimilable and undesired remainder of the colonial era. Indeed, the question of 'immigration' and the *banlieues* in France has, since the end of rule in Algeria, revolved as much around present challenges of integration as it has around the lingering trauma of the Algerian War and deep-seated anxieties over France's colonial past.[288]

Into the 1980s, political and media discourse in France began to shift towards violence in the *banlieues*, and the notion of the 'second generation': a teeming cohort of

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[285] Ibid 136-7.
[286] Montagné Villete & Hardill 56.
[287] Hargreaves 65.
[288] Lyons, 'Invisible', 18, 353; Bernardot, 'Chronique', 57.

problem-children burdening the public housing and school systems, and eventually job markets and welfare programmes.[289] Reports gushed forth, generally surmising that the condition of North African youths in France stemmed from indecision over the culture of their parents and the society surrounding them.[290] Such simplistic and – seemingly – wilfully ignorant thinking has given rise to what Paul Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault, in the aftermath of the 2005 riots in France, called the post-colonial substitute for the civilizing mission – the integrating mission.[291] By this logic, for nearly five decades, the French state has declared its intent to transform its ethnic, suburban underclass youth into productive and well-adjusted French citizens. Yet, all the while, it has wondered out loud about their ability to integrate, their potential to upset social balance, and their potential for violence. It is often difficult, in such moments, to discern whether one is reading from an antiquated colonial bulletin from 1930s Algeria, or from an internet column in *Le Figaro* or *Le Monde*.

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[289] House 'Colonial and post-colonial'; Peggy Anne Phillips, *Republican France: Divided Loyalties* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), 49; Vieillard-Baron 85.
[290] Silverstein, *Algeria*, 26.
[291] Silverstein & Tetreault, 'Urban Violence in France'.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

After tracing the objectives and dynamics of urban planning and policy in Algiers, this dissertation has sought to elucidate the continuity of an urban policy based on racism and indifference beyond the colony and, indeed, beyond the colonial era. While the issue of immigration and it legacy in contemporary France refers to a diverse subset of issues, the questions of housing and social integration are among the most immediate and formative, and have long-standing roots in France's colonial policies in Algeria. As a renewed approach to the management of native colonial populations, the French policy of association – at its essence, a benevolent form of assimilation – had a profound impact on methods of urban design and governance in the colonies, and mainland France as well. Colonial urbanism, born from the new policy of association, emphasized the 'evolution' of the colonial subject; the preservation of pre-colonial culture and the promotion of modern French lifestyle, culture and hygiene; and the tempering of anti-colonial dissent. All of this was to be achieved through the separation – or segregation – of the two cultures. To the Muslim, the medina; to the settler, the metropolis. While enormous sums of public funds were devoted to creating and beautifying the European city, the Muslim quarters were continually left to disintegrate and overcrowd under a policy of either indifference or 'preservation'.

The arrival of Algerians in France, and the cultivation of Algerian nationalism, necessitated the prompt implementation of an effective method for the management of colonial immigrant populations in France. This dissertation has thus argued that the post-war economic boom in France saw an enormous influx not only of colonial subjects, but of colonial policies as well. In the context of the Algerian War, a precedent of hostility,

surveillance and isolation was established between immigrant communities and both the French establishment and the French public. The events of 17 October 1961, a horrifying and unprecedented display of racist violence in Paris, signalled the rejection of the city's immigrant population, and their perpetual relegation to its peripheries – both physically and symbolically.

Finally, this dissertation has attempted to show the ways in which the fundamentals of colonial urbanism remained in place in France long after the end of colonialism, and long after the end of immigration in 1974. The aftermath of Haussmannization in Paris, and immigrants' eventual inheritance of the most problematic of the *grands ensembles*, only further entrenched the physical and social isolation of immigrants in France. Thus, whether *indigène* or *étrangère,* whether assimilation or integration, whether Algeria or France, the case of Algerians and French urban planning and policy is invariably tainted by a functional racism shrouded in pretensions of social welfare.

The entry of Jean-Marie Le Pen's ultra-right Front National into the run-off vote in France's 2002 elections, in spite of the party's ultimate defeat, delivered a startling reminder of the endurance of anti-immigrant racism in contemporary French society. In a study prepared the same year by the European Commission, one in three Western Europeans reported that they felt there were too many people of another nationality living in their countries – and this sentiment was reportedly even more marked in France and Belgium.[292] Especially in light of the recent economic recession and financial collapse that is gradually wearing away at the integrity of the European Union, questions have resurfaced across the

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[292] Sophie Body-Gendrot, 'Living apart or together with our differences? French cities at a crossroads', (*Ethnicities*, 2:3, 2002), 369.

continent about the viability of multiculturalism, social integration and cultural accommodation.

Yet this happens in light of the utter dependence of Europe on cheap immigrant labour to keep the wheels of its economies spinning. In fact, it has reached a point where, in France, Germany and the UK, for example, the size of the immigrant workforce rivals the size of the European-born 'non-workforce' that is ostensibly being paid, through government welfare programmes, not to work.[293] Refrains about immigrants taking the jobs of Europeans – which are usually low-paid but essential service sector jobs that Europeans do not actually want – are common in right-wing political circles. Coupled with arguments concerning the inadaptability of immigrants from the Muslim world into 'secular' Europe, and their burden on public institutions, 'immigration' becomes an incredibly broad heading for a range of social and economic maladies.[294]

Immigration in France is still viewed as primarily an economic stopgap, and not as a structural aspect of modern society.[295] The immigrant is, supposedly, present in order to work, earn, save, and eventually return home. For example, in 1990, roughly 100,000 foreigners – virtually all men, of which 85% were from North and West Africa – were still living in primitive Sonacotra hostels in France.[296] In the same year, immigrants from the Maghreb – Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia – constituted 39% of France's national foreign population, but 56% of foreigners living in chronically disadvantaged urban areas.[297] Thus, while the economic role of the immigrant in France is given some recognition, their stakes –

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[293] Doug Saunders, 'It's a paradox: high unemployment with serious labour shortages', *The Globe and Mail*, 19 February 2011. Saunders also shows this to be the case in Canada as well.
[294] Hargreaves 8.
[295] Ibid 9.
[296] Ibid 64.
[297] Ibid 69.

and their children's stakes – in the political and social sphere are extremely limited. Given that the majority of France's immigrant population arrived from former French colonial holdings; that immigrants in France are concentrated in isolated and heavily-policed parts of the city; that they have little political recognition or representation, one is forced to ask: is this arrangement not eerily similar to the one configured under colonial rule? Have the medinas simply been relocated to the outskirts of the metropole?

In France, Algeria is continually held up as the all-telling example of why multiculturalism will not work.[298] If the Algerians could not be 'civilized' in Algeria, what is there to suggest they could be 'integrated' in France? Since its 18th century revolution, France has defined itself as a universalist egalitarian republic, wherein one's identity is defined by 'Frenchness' and allegiance to the French republic above all else. By extension, the state has done its best to sideline organizations based on ethnic, racial and religious identity, and to this day does not collect 'ethnic' data in its national census.[299] In the context of immigration, the notion of 'social integration' – which in North America tends to connote a more mutual process of recognition and accommodation – is interchangeable with assimilation in France. As Alec G. Hargreaves has written, social integration in France 'has been predicated on the assumption that social differentiation is or should be in the process of being reduced.'[300] The notion that multiculturalism represents an 'unacceptable Americanism', incompatible with France's republican model of integration, remains pervasive in political and academic circles to this day.[301]

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[298] Sophie Body-Gendrot, 'Police marginality, racial logics and discrimination in the *banlieues* of France' (*Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33:4, 2010), 661.
[299] Hargreaves 54; Body-Gendrot, 'Living', 371.
[300] Hargreaves 9.
[301] Ibid 9-10.

Immigrants in France – who, along with their second or third generation descendents, constitute roughly one quarter of the national population[302] – are thus left without a card to play in their fight for political recognition. The French republic, based on values of universalism, denies discrimination at the institutional level against ethnic minorities, and denies political participation based on ethnic identity. Precisely because France does not recognize 'ethnicity' within its citizenry, discrimination against foreign minorities is all the more easy to prolong. Since promoting the cause of immigrants in France is more likely to lose a party votes than to gain them, immigrants are generally left on their own. At the political level, the fight for minority recognition represents an impermissible insertion of communitarianism into national politics; but at a social level, it has been made clear that the majority population of France is not ready to respect the equality of its minority population of foreigners and their descendants either.[303]

The urban landscape offers a profound illustration of the political and social isolation of immigrants in France, and none better than in the capital, Paris. The fact that half of the households in France headed by immigrants from the Maghreb and Turkey are located in suburban social housing highlights the concentration of Muslim households in low-income, isolated urban regions.[304] Rapidly built using low-grade concrete and prefabricated materials, the suburban HLMs have dilapidated significantly since they were built during the 1950s-1970s. Four in five of the buildings built before Georges Pompidou called off the construction of the *grands ensembles* in the 1970s now suffer some combination of severe

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[302] Ibid 15.

[303] Body-Gendrot, 'Living', 381; Hargreaves 140. Hargreaves notes that majority populations tends not to refer to themselves as ethnic groups at all; rather, national identity is seen as the 'natural' condition of the majority.

[304] Hargreaves 65; Montagné Villete & Hardill 187.

water damage, insulation problems and broken elevators.[305] A decline in the industrial sector, a lack of viable local economies and local capital, and a deficit of good schools have resulted in an environment of high unemployment and petty crime.[306] Community organizations have established parallel social safety nets in many suburban immigrant communities that suffer a deficit of integration into the surrounding city and administrative networks. However, they are crucially underfunded, in part because of the hesitation of the state to invest in local associations said to be based on ethnicity and class.[307]

The suburbs are connected by train to central Paris, but very rarely connected to one another, further increasing their dependence on the city centre, and their disconnection from the rest of the city. While seven in ten social housing agglomerations are near a rail line, only four in ten are served by a station. One in three is boxed in by freeways, while four in five are boxed in by other major roads or communications arteries.[308] The French *banlieues* are like islands in the urban fabric, self-contained and isolated both physically and symbolically from surrounding communities.

Urban administrations in France have produced the framework of *zones urbaines sensibles* (urban sensitive zones, or ZUS) to designate areas of isolation and high concentrations of ethnic minorities living in public housing. Of 751 ZUSs, the majority are located in the suburbs of Paris. These zones are typically the most heavily policed in the country; in fact, the police are frequently the sole agents of the French state with which many communities have any sustained contact.[309] As it is usually the youngest and least experienced police who are assigned to the ZUSs, confrontations between officers who lack

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[305] Silverstein & Tetreault.
[306] Silvertsein, *Algeria*, 96.
[307] Silverstein & Tetreault.
[308] Ibid; Hargreaves 66.
[309] Body-Gendrot, 'Police', 657; Silverstein & Tetreault.

decision-making experience and maturity, and disenfranchised youth are frequent. Meanwhile, officers can apply for a transfer after nine months. The policing of the ZUSs thus lacks the experience, resources, and long-term familiarity and communication skills needed to do the job respectfully or effectively.[310] As Sophie Body-Gendrot has put it, 'delinquent policemen and delinquent youth are the leftovers of an indifferent mainstream society, political representatives and institutions that do not concern themselves with what happens at the margins and do not openly discuss discriminatory practices.'[311]

As such, the riots of 2005 need to be understood not as a clash of civilizations or an impasse between Islam and Christianity – or secularism, for that matter. Second and third generation members of immigrant families – whose youth were largely responsible for the rioting – are quite well acculturated to French society.[312] Rather, the riots represent the outcome of sustained antagonism between the French state and its underclass and minority populations, frustrated by political and social exclusion, physical isolation, unemployment, bad schools, and police harassment. In a small but significant way, the struggle for immigrant rights in France has come to mirror the campaign of Messali Hadj's Étoile Nord Africaine against the racist *Code de l'Indigénat* in the 1920s and 1930s. Branding itself the modern day bearer of the principles of the French Revolution, the ENA sought to extend the rights and privileges afforded under the republican model to all inhabitants of the French empire, from the mainland to the colonies. In the contemporary period, the struggle for minority rights in France reflects the same yearning for recognition and equality.

It is naive to conceive of French society today as merely the product of its 18th century revolution. By broadening the lens within which issues of immigration and

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[310] Body-Gendrot, 'Police', 670.
[311] Ibid 671.
[312] Hargreaves 8.

integration are traditionally considered to include colonial France, it is hoped that this dissertation is a step toward that realization. The French republican form of integration, borne of a social and political context that is centuries old, is inconsistent with contemporary realities, and eclipses one of the most formative periods in the nation's history: 132 years of direct and deeply-invested colonialism in Africa, during which Algeria was considered an integral part of French territory, even while its inhabitants were considered second-class subjects.

There is no way for France to rewrite its colonial history, nor to uninvite its immigrant population and their descendants. Despite a long-term treatment of immigration, and the immigrant, as a temporary requirement and an occasional irritation, the presence of a foreign, ethnic population – and their progeny – in France has become an irreversible fact. In the long term, immigration, ethnicity and the urban landscape are fundamental to the broadening of the meaning of integration. In particular, the ability of France to recognize its unavoidable legacy of colonialism, and to accommodate social differences rather than command their dissolution, will be fundamental to a broader peace and social cohesion. At the end of the day, the *banlieues* comprise an 'integral' part of the French national territory, just as Algeria once did. The difference today is that France cannot withdraw from the *banlieues* as it once did from its overseas colonies.

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