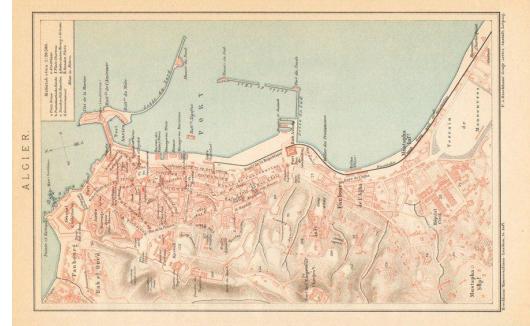
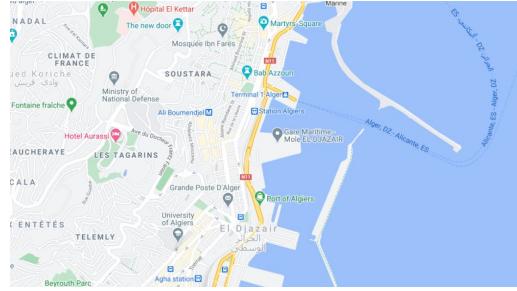


Final Term Project

Introduction

This project is a continuation of my midterm project. There will be a greater concentration on real life data collected from Next GIS. The data collected includes Airports, Highways, Public Transportation routes & Railways. This data will be represented through the software QGIS. This project will look at motorways, roads, street names and how they have changed over time.

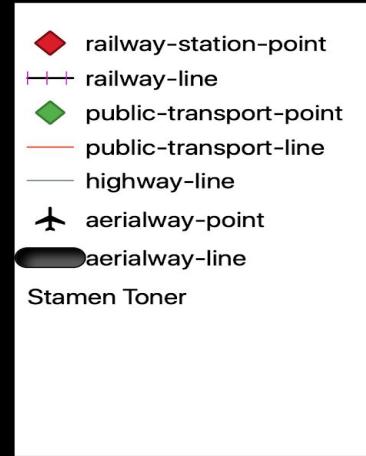
Algiers is the political, administrative, and economic capital of Algeria. It is the nation's largest and busiest city and it is the second largest city in North Africa after Cairo. Streets are very important. They are both a tool of transportation and a symbol of memory; where history has unfolded. Algiers is also densely populated - it is home to almost 4 million people. This population has grown rapidly outpacing the city housing stock.





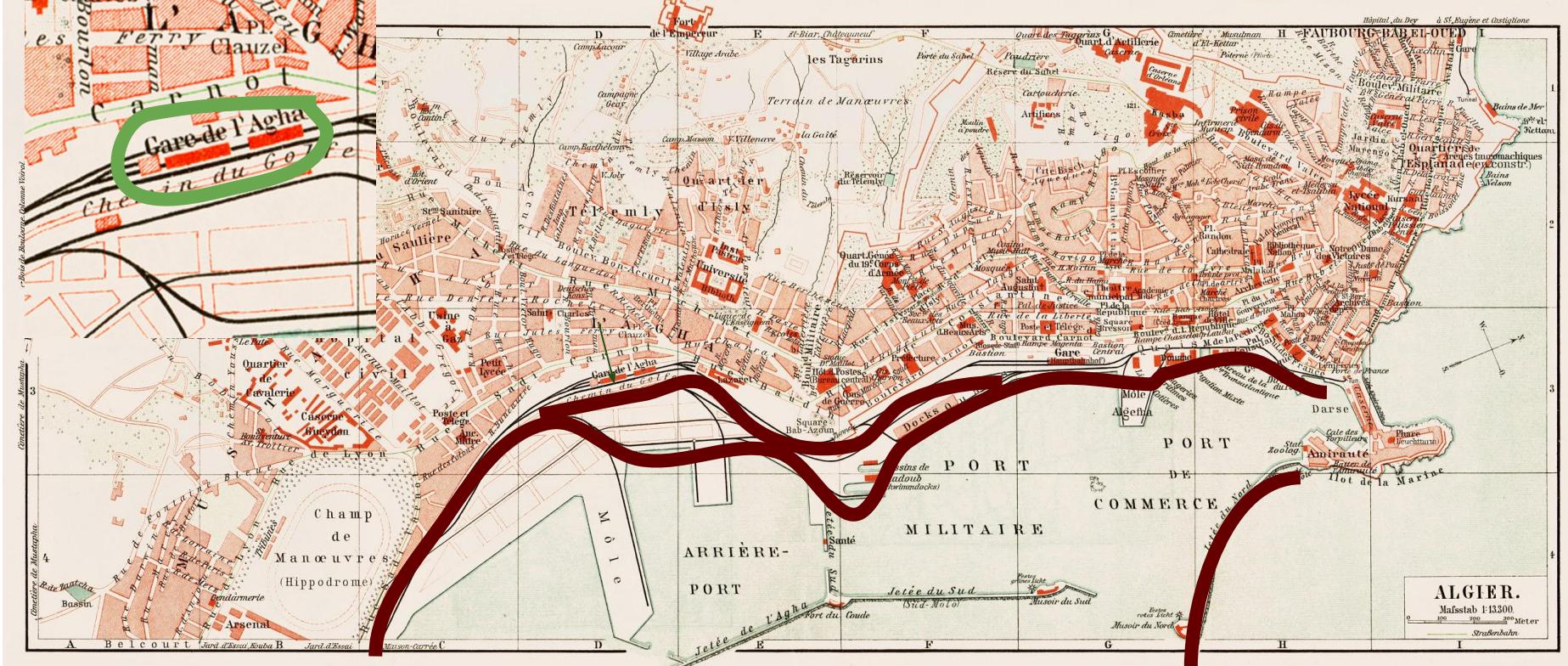
Shot from Google Earth of Algiers. Narrow streets, densely populated area, note the "Musée Ali la Pointe".

Public Transportation



Data from NextGIS

Algiers- 1913 Here we see that the coastal railway was very similar back in 1913 (at the height of the French colonial power) to the railway today. Fast and frequent rail service were established between Oran, Algiers and Constantine in the 20th Century. Today, the main rail line runs parallel to the coast and extends from the Moroccan border to the Tunisian border. Many spatial features change but coastlines do stay the same.



Highways- In pink



The French colonial administration built a functional and impressive road system, mostly for military purposes. After independence, it was allowed to deteriorate to some extent but new roads have been built linking the Sahara oil fields to the coast, making the port a crucial location for commerce. On attaining independence, Algeria inherited a transportation network geared toward serving French colonial interests. However, the network did not integrate the country nationally or regionally, and few north-south routes existed. However, an efficient road network was in place in the densely populated Tell region, complete with express highways around the city of Algiers (Baouni).

There are over 96,000 kilometers of paved roads, including 1394 kilometers of expressways, and 29,000 kilometers of unpaved roads. The total road system covers around 127,000 kilometers across Algeria. And as we have seen from the film Nationale 1 - the journalist Chawki Amari travels from the Algeria-Niger border up Route Nationale 1, a road which runs 2500 km from Algiers to Niger. This road has been described as the "backbone" of Algeria and also as 'La route nationale a 6 mil ans'. (Movie Nationale 1).

Public Transportation in Algiers

In less than 50 years, the population of Algiers increased from 500,000 in 1962, to 3 million, with 8% of the national population concentrated in an area of 810km² - less than 0.03% of the total national surface area. Even though many pied-noirs left for Europe, the population has drastically increased. Unlike some of the major global cities in the world where public transportation systems are relatively well established, Algiers, with ancient neighborhoods such as the Casbah, and a growing population, has yet to achieve an efficient and sustainable public transportation system capable of reducing the extensive use of private cars. As seen in the previous map (with the pink motorways) there are many highways and other roads, this encourages motor vehicle use. Although the map of Algiers seems to indicate that there are numerous public transport points (shown as green diamonds), they are run down. On Expat.com it states: "Algiers roads are in a good condition. However, you are likely to take some time to adapt with the behavior of local motorists. Many of them seem to have lost the notion of priority over the years and simply ignore road signs! You are advised to be very careful while driving in the capital city, especially since overtaking is allowed both on the right and on the left." (Expat.com). This made me smile as I think a lot of people say this about places; it was said to me before moving to NYC. People say it about Irish drivers also. Similarly, in Mohar and Joyce's presentation they stated that in the Hawmas the drivers would drive the wrong way down a one way street- but that's the way it worked, and the police would give them no hassle.

Every day, there are more than 5 million trips taken within the city of Algiers, half of which are through motorized modes. It has been estimated that there are 478 vehicles per 1000 inhabitants (2013 Baouini). It is possible to interpret this phenomenon of traffic & distribution of motorways as indicative to how the French planned the urbanisation of the city. We will see this in greater detail.



Vast number of cars present, the yellow line on the bottom left image is a traffic jam around a roundabout.

Shot from Google Earth

Timeline in Streets and Significance



The organisation and structure of the streets changed in between the Ottoman regime and the French conquest. The French provided street designations and undertook the numbering of houses. Houses and streets were numbered in the 1930's. In 1835, an intensive street naming operation, using national and military names drawn mostly from the Algerian campaign was launched. Control over Algiers' street network was both important and strategic for French conquerors. By naming streets the French government deligitamized other ways of engaging with space.

The Streets



Figure 1. The streets of Algiers were designed to recall those of the French cities of the Métropole. Top, the Rue Abane Ramdane in Algiers. (Author's photo, July 2011.) Bottom, the Rue de Rivoli in Paris. (Kopp Corentin, Flickr, Creative Commons.).

Roads in the casbah were divided into three main uses. The streets in the lower casbah were designated for public, military, and business functions and were often swarmed with crowds. (Celik,45) The streets stretching between the upper and lower casbah served as communication methods and efficiently cut through the urban space. In contrasts, the upper casbah streets were narrow and they were often dead ends to represent the private needs of the family, and were easily closed off with gates to protect the neighborhoods. The first French urban planning interventions were directly linked to **military interests** and centered within the lower city. The existing street network was considered unacceptable by early European settlers, and indigenous religious buildings and shops were appropriated and destroyed to widen thoroughfares and increase military access to ports. Thus, the streets widened drastically. The streets were an exercise of **military power** rather than a space of public gathering, and land ownership was easily erased through French political interference. In addition, as Grabar notes, the streets of Algiers were designed to resemble those of the Metropole. The roads were modeled after European ones.

Street Names-Under French Rule

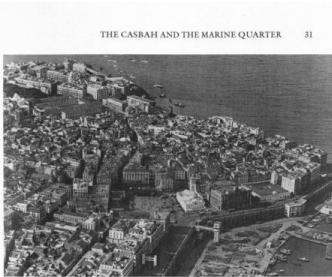
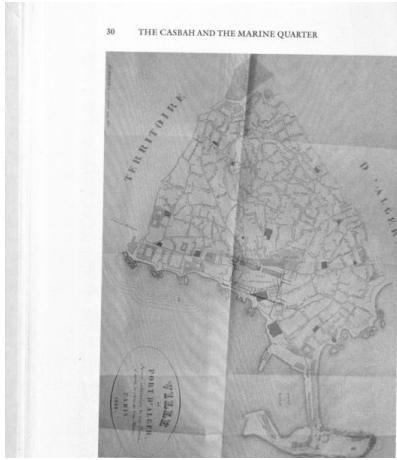


Figure 11. Aerial view of the Place du Gouvernement, 1934. The al-Jadid Mosque is to the right.

also dates from this period.³¹ To facilitate military movements and vehicular circulation in the upper casbah, a plan in 1834 proposed a new gate on the south walls and an artery connecting this gate to the citadel. In addition to serving the army, the new "grande route" would bring life to the residents of the upper town by providing an alternative to the existing "exceptionally narrow" streets, totally inaccessible to vehicles.³² The project, which also regularized the central square, was not executed.

Poirel, an engineer, had a reorganisation proposal in 1837 to regularize and widen the streets networks- he wanted to reorganise the entire settlement. Urban planning became a tool of the French colonizers to spatially establish such methods, effectively enacting divisions between occupying and indigenous groups, and guaranteeing economic gain. The naming of streets, and especially giving them French names, supported the colonial occupation by making the city more familiar and navigable.

In 1848, this urban planning project came under the control of Delaroche. He wanted to mold Algiers into a European city. This included having large squares and wide roads as seen in the previous slide. In this project, Delaroche was planning on destroying some of the casbah by widening their quintessential narrow roads to facilitate military movements and vehicle circulation. The naming of street names by the French were in honor of people such as Napoleon III and Charles Frederick Chassé. This is important to note and it is in stark contrast to the renaming of streets after independence in 1962 . At this time they were renamed in remembrance of Algerian heroes who fought for liberation, such as Ali la Pointe (which we will see in the next slide). For example, the French named Boulevard de l'Imperatrice celebrating the visit of Empress Eugenie and Napoleon III to Algiers (Celik,33). The Boulevard was designed in an all white fashion with arches, which represents a very European style. In colonial Algeria, under French rule, the street names held memories of events which at the time were very important to the French. But for the French, naming the streets had a power dynamic side to it also- for strategic reasons. As we will see in the next slide, there is a contrast between the meaning and symbolism of the naming of streets however, what they do have in common is **that they represent a time in space, a memory.**

Street names

réalité, des contournements pour prendre en définitive des formes ordinaires. A ce titre, l'exemple de la rue Larbi Ben M'Hidi, une des rues principales du centre-ville, est éloquent. Il montre en quoi l'espace imaginé par le concepteur est en rupture avec l'usage dans une sorte de "déréalisation des lieux"³¹⁹ selon l'expression de J. F. Augoyard, autrement dit une appropriation des espaces par "non-lieu".

Aménagée en voie piétonnière en 1985, la rue Larbi Ben M'Hidi a été conçue pour asseoir au centre d'Alger un "*nouvel art de vivre*" avec terrasses de café et espaces de promenade selon le modèle des villes européennes. Or, cette rue s'est rapidement rapprochée des quartiers populaires avoisinants pour en devenir le prolongement naturel. D'espace ludique selon les pouvoirs publics, elle est devenue un "espace souk" où les "trabendistes" de toute sorte étaient leur marchandise à même le sol. Des groupes de jeunes désœuvrés déambulent à longueur de journées "menaçant" la sécurité des passants et surtout celle des riverains (résidents et commerçants) qui, par presse interposée, se sont plaints du bruit, de l'insécurité et de la concurrence déloyale. Contrairement aux exemples européens, où les commerçants riverains d'une rue piétonnière deviennent partenaires privilégiés pour le contrôle et l'occultation du nouvel espace public libéré de la circulation

Let's look at a few in detail. Within 5 years of independence, the city had renamed more than 300 streets. Many of the street names are named with a political sentiment behind it. Blv Che Guevara, rue Patrice Lumumbada commemorated and honoured independence & revolutionary leaders. In addition, many are named after war heroes. Many areas in the casbah were named and associated with unforgettable moments for Algerians. The houses where resistance fighters were caught, tortured and sometimes murdered became engraved in public memory. For example, Rue Sidi bin Ali was the hiding place and explosive laboratory of Yacef Sadi. Sadi escaped miraculously during the invasion on the 6th of February 1956.

Street names hold memories, Yacef Sadi and Zohra Drif were caught on the 24th of September 1958 on Rue Caton. This memory is now associated with Rue Caton. Similarly, on Rue de la Grenade is where Djamil Bouhired's father and brother were tortured in front of her for hours. (Celik, 47). Space and memory are tightly linked. Thus, street names are more than just a carving in the wall, they are symbolic, they hold meaning and memories and they can recreate history. It is important to rename these streets, for the Algiers to distance themselves from their haunted past, to not have to remember Napoleon but rather remember Ali la Pointe.

The role that Streets Play

As mentioned on slide 6: The streets were an exercise of **military power** rather than a space of public gathering, and land ownership was easily erased through French political interference. Is this still the case? As seen in *Omar Gatlato* (1976) the streets play an integral role in gathering and a social role. Especially now with the Hirak, streets play a very important function. They hold memories but they are also creating new ones. The renaming of space in the current climate in Algiers is also happening during the current unrest.



How memory and space are linked can be described as a dialectical relationship: the past is reimagined in the present, but simultaneously provides a template on which to base assessments of the present, and the future. New memories are made in the climate of the Hirak in the same space where blood was shed during independence.



Young people would often hang out on the streets. In addition, the markets would also organise themselves along the streets. This is strongly portrayed in the movie *Omar Gatlato*.

The emergence of Street art

Graffiti, street art and murals are emerging across Algiers. Does this street art change the function of the streets? What does it add? This street art has made the streets even more accessible and even more of a public space. Art is a reason for people to gather and meet. It creates a space for people to express themselves but it is also a form of entertainment for people to go and enjoy. To quote Karim Ouaras from University of Oran:

"Graffiti writings are approached here as a tool of protest used by voiceless graffiti writers to display and express their critical opinions towards political authorities and civil society alike."

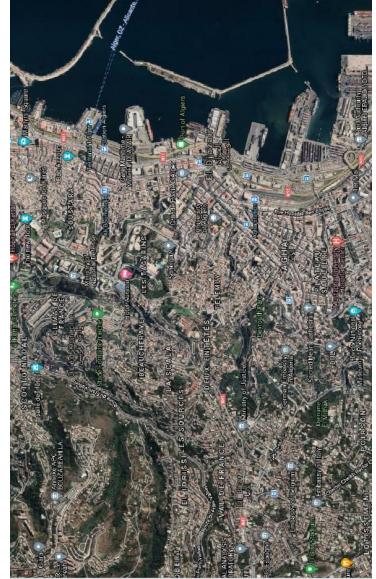
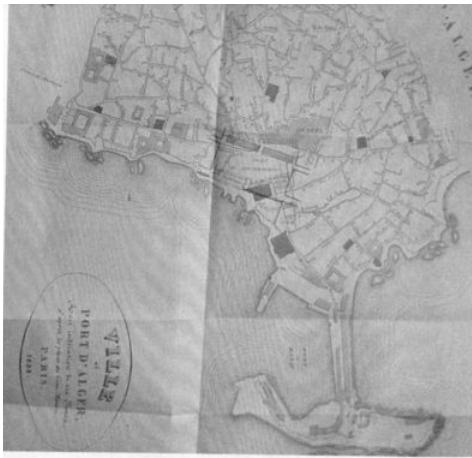
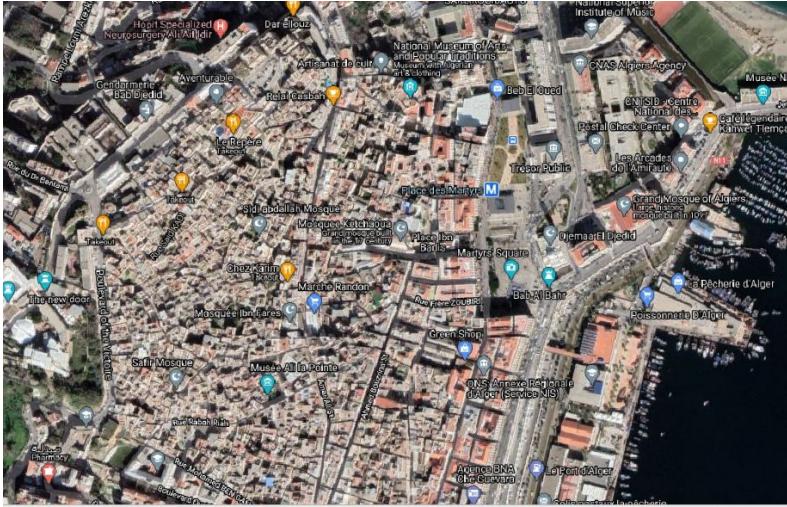
Street art as a means of speech and expression. A different medium of expression. It can be powerful and impactful.

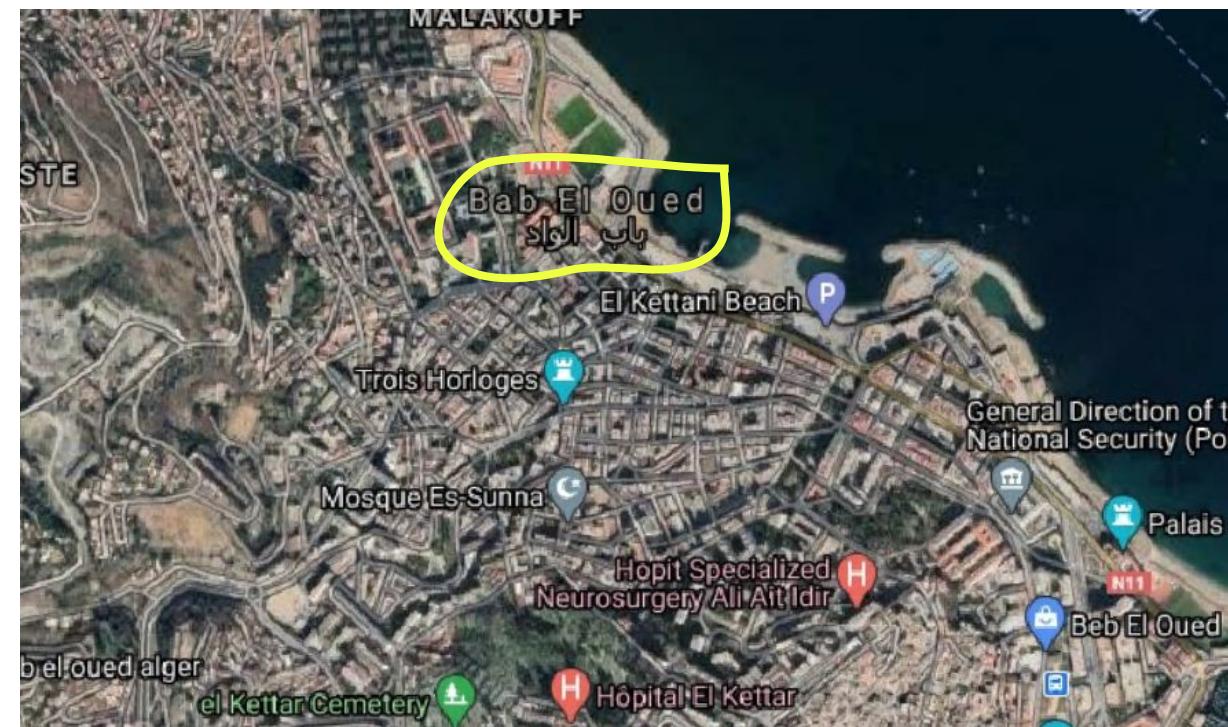


Neighborhoods

There are many neighborhoods in Algiers that have developed independently in response to the urgent pressure of a booming population. Since the 1960s, the city has grown by nearly half a million people each decade, as mentioned above. In addition, though there has been some low-income housing construction, mostly notably the Socialist Villages and the New Urban Housing Zones (ZHUN) of the 1970s, there does not seem to have been any sustained efforts at maintaining or renovating either the now-overcrowded colonial districts or the Casbah.

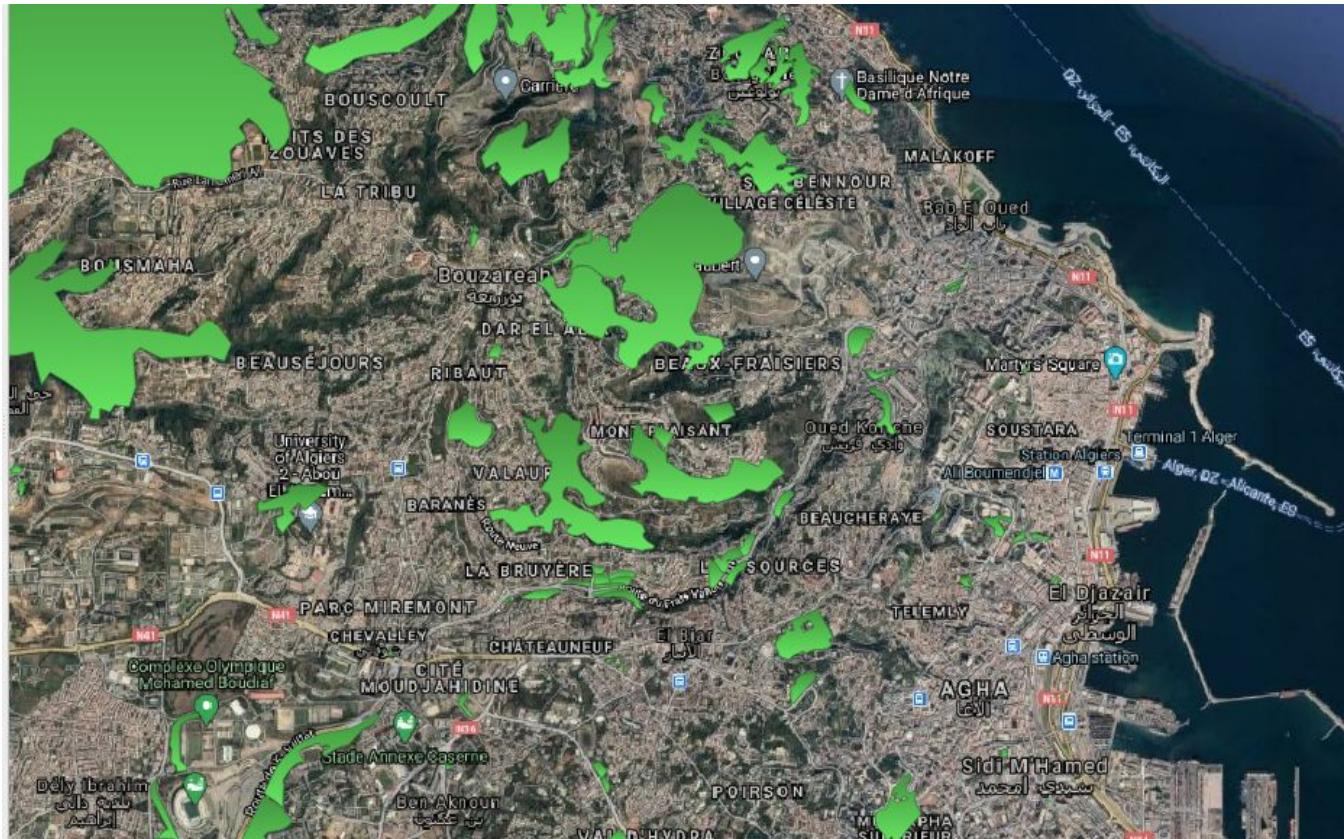
There is also the low-income Algiers neighbourhood of Bab el-Oued. This neighbourhood is 1.2 km², situated in the valley of an underground river, the Oued M'kacel, beside the sea on the northern side of the western headland of the bay of Algiers.





Bab El Oued is an example of a densely populated area in Algiers.

Vegetation vs Urban space



As demonstrated on the map, there are very few green spaces in the city of Algiers in contrast to the urbanisation and crowded neighborhoods.

Data from NextGIS

The Port

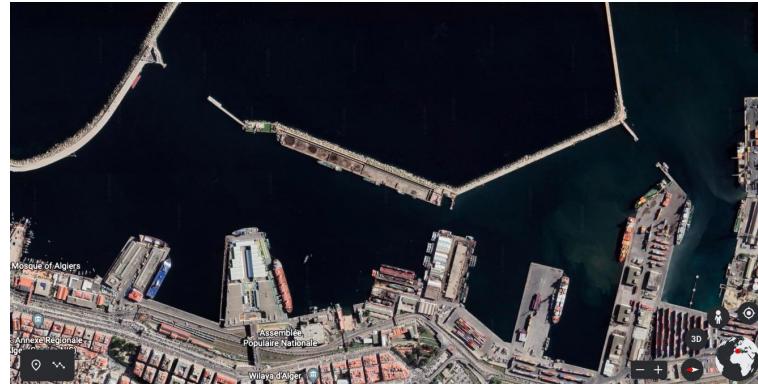
14

THE CASBAH AND THE MARINE QUARTER

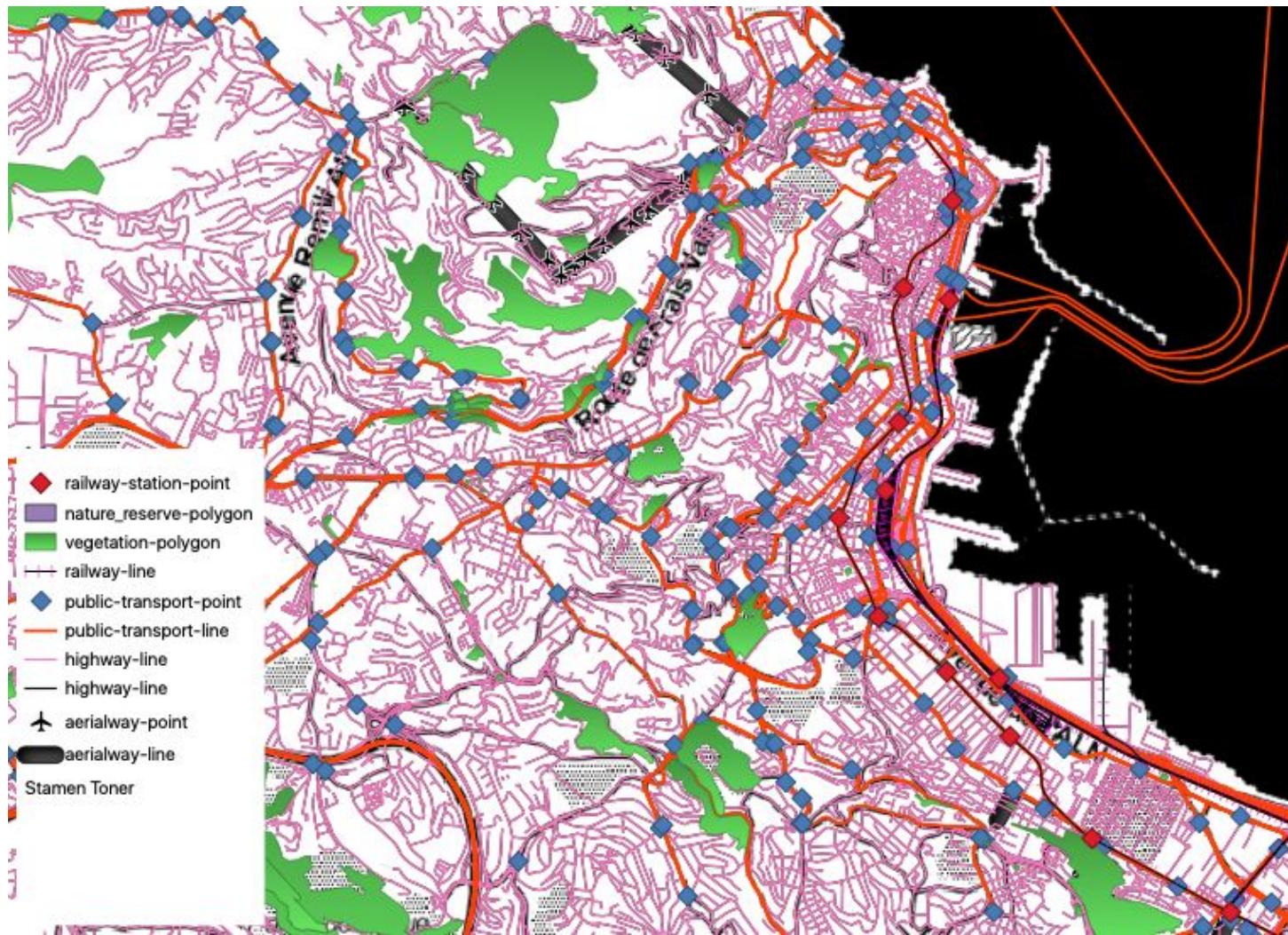


Figure 3. View of the waterfront, c. 1830. In the foreground is the al-Jadid Mosque; to the right is the al-Kabir Mosque. The Bab al-Bahr (Sea Gate) is to the left of the al-Jadid Mosque.

Finally, we will look at the port of Algiers. Algeria was one of France's longest-held overseas territories. Algeria was a major source of income for the French. The bulk of Algeria's wealth was in manufacturing, mining, agriculture and trade and it was all controlled by the French. With decolonization in 1962 in Algiers alone, 300,000 settlers abandoned more than 98,000 housing units. People simply left, handing their keys to trusted servants or just walking away from their property and belongings to board the boats to Marseille (NATASHA MARIE LLORENS). Today, Algiers is the most important port in the North Africa region. By virtue of its geographic position, Algiers is at the heart of international commerce. It has both the largest international airport and the commercial port in the country, which are major hubs for commerce.



Layered Algeria



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