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**The Battle of Algiers (1966) and its Impact on the American
Black Movement during the 60s**

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Declaration of Originality

I declare that "The Battle of Algiers (1966) and its Impact on the American Black Movement during the 60s" dissertation is my original work. Where other people's work has been used (from other authors), this has been appropriately acknowledged and referenced in accordance with standard referencing practices. The dissertation has not been submitted, wholly or substantially, towards the award of a degree at this or any other institution.

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Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to every Algerian who cherishes one's identity and culture, and to our beloved martyrs who sacrificed their lives for us to have a decent life.

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the influence of the acclaimed political film "The Battle of Algiers" on the Black Panthers and the Black movement in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. The film, directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, depicts in documentary-style the Algerian National Liberation Front's (Front de Libération Nationale / FLN) fight against the French colonial regime. The study tends to prove that "The Battle of Algiers" influenced deeply the Black Panthers and caused a profound change in American society in the 1960S and 1970s. A combination of historical analysis, film interpretation, and Black Panther Party documents and journals, are employed to explore the film's impact on political consciousness and social activism. The first chapter is about the literature view, brief history of the Algerian National War, the Black Movement, and the relationship between Political Cinema and the wave of independencies. The second chapter dives deeply into the analysis and discussion of the relevance and influence of the film on the Black Panthers. The film's realistic depiction of urban guerrilla warfare and the Algerian people's resilience inspired the Black Panthers leaders and members, who saw the resemblance of the Algerian conflict to fight for civil rights and self-determination. "The Battle of Algiers" catalyzed the Black Panthers' adoption of revolutionary strategies and tactics and highlights the film's role in fostering international solidarity between the Black Panthers and anti-colonial movements worldwide. Its position as a significant cultural and political device influenced and shaped the trajectory of the Black movement and the Black Panther Party in the 60s and 70s.

Key words: FLN, Black Panthers, Battle of Algiers.

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List of Acronyms

FLN: *Front de Libération Nationale*, in French [in English National Liberation Front]

SCLC: Southern Christian Leadership Conference

UNIA: Universal Negro Improvement Association

IMDb: Internet Movie Database

UN: United Nations

IRA: Irish Republican Army

PLO: the Palestine Liberation Organization

EZLN: *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*, in Spanish [in English Mexico's Zapatista Army of National Liberation]

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

KKK: Klu Klux Klan

General Introduction

The world witnessed, between 1945 and 1960, a wave of independencies due to the rise of nationalism. Several countries were decolonized and gained autonomy. The Algerian War of Independence was one of the longest and bloodiest anti-colonial struggles of the 20th century. Waged from 1954 to 1962 against French colonial rule, the Algerian people fought the unjust and brutal colonial regime in the country. Over than million and half martyrs sacrificed their lives for freedom. the Algerian Revolution had a profound impact on global politics and inspired liberation movements around the world. No event was more pivotal in the war than the Battle of Algiers in 1957, a violent urban guerrilla campaign by the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) against French paratroopers. The battle gained international attention and solidarity for the Algerian cause. The period of decolonization was accompanied by the rise of political cinema. Several films about social and political themes gained international acclaim.

A decade after one of the most ruthless battles in Algerian history, the 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers* by Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo brought the Algerian revolution to a wide audience, influencing anti-colonial movements across Africa, Asia, and the Western world. No group was more inspired by the film than the Black Panther Party, the revolutionary black nationalist and socialist organization in the United States. Formed in 1966, the same year as the film's release, the Panthers saw parallels between the Algerian struggle against French rule and their fight against racial oppression and police brutality in America.

The Battle of Algiers validated the Panthers' vision of militant black resistance. They adopted the aesthetics, language, and philosophy of the Algerian revolution as portrayed in Pontecorvo's film. The Panthers used the film as a model for their activism, identity, and radical politics. Like the

Algerians in the film, the Panthers embraced armed self-defense and guerrilla tactics against an oppressive state. They saw revolution as the only means to achieve black freedom and built connections between anti-colonial movements in the Third World and racial politics in America. While discussing the impact of one of the most prominent social justice groups in the history of America, one might ask questions such:

-How can an Algerian film shape and influence the ideology of a transcontinental community?

-What resemblance does an Algerian film share along with an American political group such as the Black Movement?

-How can the legacy of *The Battle of Algiers* still be present in modern social and activist movements?

This dissertation examines the impact of *The Battle of Algiers* on the Black Panther Party and anti-colonial politics in the postwar period. The film broadcast the spirit of Algerian resistance around the world, radicalizing movements from Algiers to Oakland. Pontecorvo's masterpiece captures a pivotal turning point in global politics - the eclipse of empire and the rise of radical anti-imperialist movements. The research's objective is highlighting the role of *The Battle of Algiers* in shaping and influencing the American society in the 1960s, and to address the existence of a piece of the Algerian identity in the history of America. The approach tackled in this dissertation is analytical.

The *Battle of Algiers* lives on today in the enduring struggle for independence and equal rights. For the Black Panthers, *the Battle of Algiers* was the battle of Oakland - a fight for freedom, dignity, and control over their destinies. The film left an indelible mark on the Panthers and shaped their revolutionary vision. Just as Algeria gained independence from France, the Panthers sought freedom from an oppressive system built on racism and police

brutality. *The Battle of Algiers* fueled their radicalism and became a model of black resistance that still inspires today. The rise of wave independence in the world, with the endorsement of cinema, helped influence the Black Movement in America. Pontecorvo's film ignited the revolutionary fervor of the Black Panther Party and turned the dream of liberation into a reality.

**Chapter One:
Historical
Background and the
Role of Political
Cinema**

1.1 Introduction

The Algerian revolution against French colonial rule began in 1954 and ended with Algeria gaining independence in 1962. The Battle of Algiers (between November 1954 and December 1957) was a turning point in the war that earned worldwide attention. At the same time, radical¹ black movements were growing in the United States, inspired by key political leaders like Marcus Garvey. Politically motivated films also reached popularity, influencing anti-colonial movements across the world. History carries a lot of chapters regarding the Algerian revolution, the black freedom struggle in America, and the rise of political cinema in the postwar period.

1.2 The Rise of the Wave of Independency in Algeria

French rule in Algeria spanned 132 years, starting with the invasion of Algiers in 1830 and ending with the Algerian War of Independence in 1962. The occupation brought drastic changes to Algerian political and social systems, economy, and demographics. Algiers and other coastal cities came under the jurisdiction of French administrators while the interior remained under the rule of traditional leaders. Many clashes and revolts occurred throughout the colonial period as Algerians resisted French efforts to control the country and introduce radical changes. The long struggle finally culminated in Algeria gaining independence after decisive battles and international diplomacy weakened France's hold on the colony.

¹ Radicalism encompasses beliefs and actions aiming for fundamental changes in political, economic, or social conditions. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019)

1.2.1 The Algerian Revolution and its Impact on the World Politics

The Algerian national revolution is a pivotal moment in the history of North Africa. The revolution started to free the Algerian lands from the French colonial rulers that had dominated Algeria since the 19th century. It was a brutal and ferocious war that resulted in the country's liberation from colonialism. In his preface to Franz Fanon's book *The Wretched of the Earth*, the French philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre described the conflict in Algeria as "the most savage war of the 20th century." Similarly, historian Alistair Horne, in his book *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, has characterized the conflict as "one of the most violent and protracted decolonization struggles of the twentieth century." (1978)

The Algerian revolution ignited primarily due to political and economic reasons. Algerians were treated as inferior people, deprived of basic elemental human rights, and exploited for their resources. The French declined to grant the right to self-determination. This attitude towards Algerians resulted in the antagonism of the French colonial authorities and, eventually, a compulsive desire to liberate the country from the hands of the colonizers.

A group of Algerian nationalists formed the National Liberation Front (FLN) and subsequently started the revolution. In November 1954, the FLN began to resist the French colonial regime, launching an armed conflict. These Algerian nationalists adopted guerilla warfare techniques against the French settlements, military bases, and infrastructure. They received harsh repression from the French colonial authorities, which resulted in the death of tens of thousands of Algerians. To restrict the revolutionaries, the French troops relied on torture and summary executions, however, this only fueled the revolt further.

The war proceeded for years, and the international community began to take notice of the atrocities done by the French colonial government. The United

Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 1514, also known as the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples," in 1960. It affirmed the right of all colonized peoples to self-determination and independence. Specifically, it stated that "all peoples have the right to self-determination" and that "inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence." (Schmid, n.d.,).

The resolution was a vital victory for Algeria and other colonized nations. It legitimized their independence struggles and put diplomatic pressure on colonial powers like France. Even though UN resolutions are non-binding, Resolution 1514 helped shape global opinion in favor of decolonization and weaken the argument that European powers were "civilizing" their colonies. France initially opposed and voted against "Resolution 1514", but eventually accepted Algeria's right to self-determination in the face of fierce criticism over its brutal war methods. The resolution thus proved instrumental in forcing France to negotiate with the FLN, leading to the Evian Accords in 1962. (Jansen & Osterhammel, 2017)

In 1962, negotiations between the FLN and the French government were held, resulting in the signing of the Evian Accords, granting Algerians the right to self-determination. Algeria gained its independence on July 5th, 1962, and became a free country. Independence has been one of the most momentous historical events worldwide. The determination of the Algerian conflict has inspired a variety of political and social movements around the world. (Horne, 1978)

The Algerian National Revolution contributed to the rise of non-aligned countries, which was one of its most significant impacts on world politics. The Non-Aligned Movement, founded in 1961 in Belgrade by the leaders of newly independent African and Asian nations, aspired to foster political autonomy,

economic growth, and diverse cultures. This movement was stimulated by the Algerian fight for independence, which encouraged other countries to reject the Western-dominated Cold War order and pursue autonomous political paths. The non-aligned countries posed a serious threat to the binary division of the world at the time, and they were crucial in the emergence of a more multipolar international order. The Algerian Revolution had a profound impact on international relations. It caused a major crisis within NATO, strained Franco-American relations, intensified the Sino-Soviet split, exacerbated tensions between the Arabs and Israelis, and raised awkward questions about race and colonialism. (Connelly, 2002)

The Algerian National Revolution had a significant impact on African politics. The first President of Ghana and a key figure of the Pan-African movement Kwame Nkrumah was among the important leaders who were influenced by the Algerian Revolution. Kwame Nkrumah was thoroughly impressed by the Algerian national uprising and saw it as a powerful representation of people's resistance against colonialism and imperialism. He perceived the Algerian struggle as a part of a broad liberation and self-determination movement in Africa. Nkrumah stated in one of his 1960 speeches: "The Algerian Revolution is the dawn of the new Africa. It is the signal for the total liberation of our continent" (Nkrumah, 1955, n.p.).

The Ghanaian leader was notably fascinated by the use of guerrilla warfare tactics against the French colonial forces by the FLN and even advocated for the use of similar approaches in other African struggles. Nkrumah wrote in his book *Africa Must Unite* (1963): "The guerrilla struggle is the only effective weapon of the oppressed and exploited people in their fight against their oppressors" (Nkrumah, 1963). The influence on Nkrumah was not solely ideological, moreover practical. Nkrumah provided support to the FLN, including fighters' training and diplomatic assistance. In 1960, Ghana hosted the All-African

Peoples' Conference, which brought together anti-colonial and liberation movements from across the continent, along with the FLN. The conference was a vital moment in the history of African unity and solidarity and sustained to strengthen the ties between the Algerian resistance and the Pan-African movement.

1.2.2 The Impact of the Battle of Algiers on World Public Opinion

The Battle of Algiers was a severe and ruthless warfare between the FLN and the French, which took place in Algiers and remained for 8 years. Violence, brutality, and human rights abuses were the highlight of the latter in both parts. This event was a critical milestone for the Algerians and had an enormous effect on world public opinion. The Battle marked the beginning of a new phase of the resistance. The FLN had been targeting essentially the rural areas. However, with the Battle, they shifted their focus from the rural areas to the urban centers and targeted French civilians and military personnel. **(See figure 01)**

Figure 01: Algerians Resisting the French, AUG 20, 1955



Source. From *TimeToast*. (n.d.). *The Effect of Imperialism on Algeria*. *TimeToast*.
<https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/the-effect-of-imperialism-on-algeria>

The FLN carried out a resistant attack against the French in the city of Philippeville. The organization killed 71 French civilians and 52 French supporters, targeting mainly local politicians. The local French police killed over 100 FLN members and injured hundreds more.

Brutal repression, including torture, extra-judicial killings, and forced disappearances were the primary reactions of the French. Mamdani argues, in his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*: "*The Battle of Algiers* was a decisive moment in the decolonization process. It exposed the brutality of colonialism and sparked international condemnation of French tactics, which included torture, forced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings." (2004, p151)

The international media extensively covered the conflict. Numerous images of violence and brutality were exposed to the world. Several anti-colonial and liberation movements globally viewed *The Battle* as a symbol of the struggle

against colonialism and imperialism. One of the classic films of political cinema *The Battle* contributed to shaping the popular understanding of the conflict.

The actions and statements of major political figures and intellectuals at the time show how the Battle of Algiers affected public opinion around the world. Human rights groups, including Amnesty International, strongly criticized the uprisings and issued for the abolition of French rule in Algeria as a consequence. The General Assembly of the United Nations additionally was involved, granting a resolution in 1960 that advocated for the Algerian people to claim the right to autonomy. According to historian Alistair Horne, “The Algerian war came as a profound shock and embarrassment to liberal French opinion. It was the first time that France had embarked on a major colonial war since the Dreyfus Affair had torn the country apart over the issue of justice and human rights” (Horne, 1978).

In conclusion, the Battle of Algiers had a significant impact on public opinion, changing the discourse surrounding colonialism, imperialism, and political violence. The Battle of Algiers continues to influence contemporary struggles for social and political change, serving as a powerful symbol of resistance to oppression and injustice. This astounding milestone has left an indelible impression on Algerian history, and its influence on global public opinion is still evident.

1.3 The Rise of the Black Movement in the United States During 1960S

Significant social, cultural, and political changes were brought about by the Black movement in the US during the 1960s and 1970s. This movement arose following the Civil Rights Movement, which had successfully fought against legal segregation and discrimination in the South of the USA during the 1950s and the early 1960s. However, the quest for racial equality was far from over,

and in the next couple of decades, the Black movement was dedicated to addressing the deeper profound structural discrimination and systemic racism that remained in American society.

Several Black groups and activists in America during the 1960s and 1970s were stimulated by one of the influential political figures Marcus Garvey, who paved the road of Black activism.

1.3.1 Marcus Garvey and the Black Movement

Marcus Moziah Garvey, was a Jamaican black nationalist leader born on August 17, 1887, at St. Ann's Bay, and died on June 10, 1940, in London, England. He is one of the most influential figures in shaping the Black movement in the United States in the early 20th century. Garvey emphasized several ideas concerning Black Nationalism such as the importance of Black pride and self-determination, arguing that Black people should reject and repel white supremacy and establish their own independent economic, political, and cultural institutions.

He is the godfather of Pan-Africanism, the idea that Black people across the globe shared a common history and destiny, and should cooperate to achieve their liberation and establish a unified African state, he once stated: "a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots". Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which became one of the largest Black organizations of the early 20th century.

The UNIA provided a platform for people of color to assemble and discuss issues of race, politics, and economics. These types of platforms inspired later Black organizations like the Black Panther Party and the Nation of Islam.

Garvey's messages and ideologies resonated with many Africans and Afro-Americans who suffered limitations and injustices of white-dominated society and helped to inspire the Black pride, empowerment movements of the 1960s, and even broader movements for African independence and decolonization.

1.3.2 The Characteristics of the Black Movement in the 60s

The characteristics of the Black movement in the 60s were based on a diversity of approaches, ideologies, and strategies. Some Black activists and organizations, such as the Black Panther Party, embraced a militant and confrontational stance, advocating for armed self-defense and the establishment of a separate Black nation. Others continued to use nonviolent civil disobedience and community organizing as means of achieving social change, such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

The SCLC's nonviolent approach was not only a response to the violence of segregationists, but also a reflection of its founders' deep religious convictions. For figures like Martin Luther King Jr., nonviolence was not only a political strategy but a spiritual one that reflected their belief in the transformative power of love and compassion. Taylor Branch states in his book *Parting the Waters* that America in the King Years provides an in-depth history of the SCLC and its use of nonviolence. Branch discusses how figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Abernathy integrated nonviolent civil disobedience into the SCLC's strategies and tactics. (Branch, 1988)

Art was unusually adopted as an approach to express the issues and the messages of the cause such as the Black Arts Movement, which aimed to transform cultural norms and challenge Eurocentric aesthetics through the arts. One of the major legacies of the Black movement was remodeling American politics and public discourse. Issues of racism, poverty, and social injustice

were raised by black activists and organizations on a national level, opposing and challenging the severe circumstances at the time and rooting for significant change. This movement encouraged and inspired a new generation of activists, many of whom would dedicate themselves to various social justice movements, such as feminism, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) rights, and environmentalism.

In conclusion, the Black movement in the US during the 1960s and 1970s was a turning point in American history that resulted in crucial social, cultural, and political shifts. This movement has contributed to highlighting systemic racism and inequality in American society, and it still serves as an inspiration for many organizations and activists today.

1.4 Political Cinema and the Wave of Independencies

The wave of independence movements and cinema have been associated in a complicated manner. Cinema has been a means of expression that played a significant role in many independence movements. It has provided a place for voicing various political and cultural profiles and creating a sense of national identity and pride.

Political films aim to address social issues, themes or ideologies in order to raise awareness, spark discussion or promote change. Characteristics of political films may include:

Social commentary: Political movies often provide commentary on issues like inequality, oppression and corruption in society.

Historical context: Many political films are set against the backdrop of important historical events or time periods, shedding light on the politics of that era.

Underrepresented groups: Political movies frequently give voice to underrepresented or marginalized groups, highlighting their challenges and experiences.

Call to action: Political films sometimes encourage viewers to take action through voting, activism or political discourse.

Controversial topics: Political movies tend to tackle controversial subjects, leading to debate and discussion among audiences.

One of the earliest examples of political filmmaking is hard to pinpoint precisely as early movies often contained political elements. However, a notable early example is "*The Great Train Robbery*" (1903) directed by Edwin S. Porter. While mainly a crime drama, it also touched on issues like social inequality and the role of law enforcement.

Another early example is "*The Birth of a Nation*" (1915) directed by D.W. Griffith. This controversial movie, which portrayed the Ku Klux Klan (K.K.K) positively, sparked significant criticism for its racist themes and depiction of African Americans.

Many African countries witnessed several waves of decolonization and independencies in the 1950s and 1960s, and cinema has existed and contributed to these movements culturally and politically.

Ousmane Sembène from Senegal, and Djibril Diop Mambéty from Mali, are both filmmakers who used cinema to explore issues of identity, colonialism, and the fight for independence and freedom. Their films encouraged them to create a sense of pride and identity among Africans and to stand up against the prevailing narrative of the colonial regime.

Manthia Diawara, a prominent scholar of African cinema, believes that African cinema is a cinema of decolonization, a cinema of nation-building, and a cinema of cultural affirmation (1992).

African cinema became the vehicle for expressing the new consciousness that emerged with the independence movements, for defining an African identity, for projecting an African culture, and for exposing the reality of colonialism and neocolonialism.

The fight for independence and self-determination has continued to be advocated by cinema in more modern times. As an illustration, filmmakers like Hany Abu-Assad and Annemarie Jacir have used their films to emphasize and portray the daily challenges of Palestinians, and to counter the dominant narrative of Israeli occupation.

The wave of independence movements that have ravaged the world has been significantly influenced by film, which has served as an influential tool for political and cultural expression among those struggling for freedom and independence, while also cultivating a sense of identity and pride.

1.5 Conclusion

The 1960s witnessed the confluence of several radical social movements and phenomena that shaped the political landscape of the decade. The Algerian War of Independence, the rise of Black radicalism in America, and the emergence of politically charged films intersected during this turbulent period in complex and influential ways. Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 political drama film *The Battle of Algiers* brought the revolutionary spirit of the Algerian liberation movement to global audiences and impacted anti-colonial and black radical movements. The film graphically depicted the Algerian struggle against French colonial rule,

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generating international sympathy for the FLN's cause and inspiring liberation activists around the world.

More broadly, *The Battle of Algiers* - along with other political films of the era - helped spread the message of anti-colonial struggle and militant resistance to oppression. It connected viewers with the Algerian independence struggle while fueling the zeitgeist of radicalism and revolution that characterized the decade. The film exemplified the power of cinema to bring far-flung liberation movements to global audiences and cross-pollinate ideas that could inspire real-world social change.

**Chapter Two: *The
Battle of Algiers* and
its Impact on the
Black Panthers**

2.1 Introduction

Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 most critically acclaimed film *The Battle of Algiers* brought the Algerian struggle for independence from French colonial rule to global prominence. The gripping drama depicts the escalating conflict between revolutionary FLN fighters and French paratroopers occupying the capital city of Algiers. Formed the same year *The Battle of Algiers* was released, the Black Panther Party drew inspiration from the Algerian revolution and adopted aspects of the style and philosophy exhibited in the film. This chapter will examine Pontecorvo's film, providing historical context for the Algerian revolution and its portrayal on screen. It will then discuss the formation of the Black Panther Party, its goals and tactics, and how *The Battle of Algiers* influenced the Panthers' ideology and approach, shaping their vision of revolution and methods of resistance. Through analyzing both the film briefly and superficially and the Black Panthers' ideology, this chapter explores the transmission of revolutionary ideas across nations and eras, showing how art can spread political awareness and action far beyond its time and place of creation.

2.2 Gillo Pontecorvo's Biography and His Film *The Battle of Algiers* (1966)

Gillo Pontecorvo had a diverse background before becoming one of Italy's leading filmmakers. He was born in Pisa in 1920 to a Jewish family and originally studied music. However, he eventually switched to chemistry and moved to Paris in the late 1930s to pursue his studies.

When Fascist Italy enacted anti-Semitic legislation in 1938, Pontecorvo became politicized and joined the Communist Party in 1941 after Germany occupied France. He served as a liaison for Italian partisan groups and refugees

in southern France. Pontecorvo's skills as a tennis player allowed him to travel across borders without arousing suspicion.

After the war, Pontecorvo worked as an apparatchik for the Communist Party until 1956 when he left and became an independent filmmaker. Before entering cinema, he worked as a photojournalist for Agence Havas (now Agence France-Presse) in Paris. Pontecorvo's 1966 masterpiece *The Battle of Algiers* put him on the map as a major director. The film's neo-realist style depicts the Algerian struggle for independence from French colonial rule during the 1950s. Shot on location in Algiers with an Algerian film studio, Casbah Film, the film powerfully captures the escalating conflict between FLN fighters and French paratroopers.

The Battle of Algiers was hugely successful, especially in the U.S. where it was nominated for three Academy Awards. The film had a profound impact and influence, inspiring protest movements worldwide. Pontecorvo's subsequent films *Queimada!* (1969) [in English: *Burned*] and *Ogro* (1979) [in English: *Ogre*] continued his focus on anti-colonial and political themes. Pontecorvo died of heart failure in Rome in 2006 at the age of 86, leaving behind a small but influential body of work characterized by a passionate commitment to social justice. [Source from - IMDb Mini Biography By: Pedro Borges]

2.2.1 Film's synopsis

Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* is based on real events during the Algerian War of Independence against French colonial rule. The film is inspired by Saadi Yacef's memoir *Souvenirs de la Bataille d'Alger* (in English: *Memories of the Battle of Algiers*), written while he was imprisoned by the French.

The Algerian government chose neither an Algerian nor French director to remain impartial, and Pontecorvo shot the film in a documentary-style using non-professional actors. The focus is on the disenfranchised Algerian population and their struggle, seen from both the FLN rebels' perspective and the French military.

The story follows Ali La Pointe, who rises through the ranks of the FLN to become a leader, only to be eventually captured by the French in 1957. The film traces the rebels' guerrilla campaign and bombings in response to French repression as the occupation grows increasingly brutal.

The prologue establishes the historical context of over 130 years of colonial rule. As a response to the colonial brutality, the FLN launches an urban insurgency in Algiers through assassinations and bombings. To repress the Algerians, the French employed torture, surveillance, and crackdowns on the Algerian population in an attempt to quash the rebellion.

The film's raw and unflinching portrayal of violence exposes the nefariousness of war and colonial occupation. Pontecorvo presents a largely objective and cynical view that forces the audience to confront hard truths. While set during the Algerian War, the film's themes of resistance, oppression, and dehumanization give it a universal resonance that transcends its specific context. Roger Ebert, an American film critic, states: *The Battle of Algiers*, a great film by the young Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo, exists at this level of bitter reality. It may be a deeper film experience than many audiences can withstand: too cynical, too true, too cruel, and too heartbreaking. It is about the Algerian war, but those not interested in Algeria may substitute another war; *The Battle of Algiers* has a universal frame of reference. (2006)

The Battle of Algiers follows the stories of several key characters, including Ali La Pointe, a young FLN leader, and Colonel Mathieu, the French

military commander in Algiers. The film highlights the central role of women in the FLN, including Halima and others who carry out clandestine operations. As the revolt escalates, both sides resort to increasingly brutal tactics, culminating in a bloody massacre in the Casbah district. (Pontecorvo, 1966)

The political drama piece generated controversy upon its release due to its sympathetic portrayal of FLN violence. France banned the film for several years, though it later gained cult status and became influential among political activists and filmmakers worldwide.

Today, *The Battle of Algiers* is regarded as a classic of political cinema. It offers a powerful critique of colonialism through its unflinching depiction of the horrors of occupation and revolution. The film humanizes both sides of the conflict while condemning the brutality of war. It served as an inspiration for many freedom and justice movements. Pontecorvo's neo-realist style, focusing on ordinary people swept up in political turmoil, makes the story feel authentic and timeless. The film's depiction of guerrilla warfare tactics against a more powerful adversary has been considered an influence by several protest groups.

In summary, through memorable characters, raw realism, and moral complexity, *The Battle of Algiers* captures the brutality, futility, and tragedy of the Algerian War in a way that continues to resonate politically and cinematically decades after its release.

2.2.2 Characters in film

The film revolves around several major and minor characters from both the Algerian and the French parts. There are a few characters that the audience follows for periods, but not much is done for them to dive deeper into the world

and experiences. As the film progresses the complexity of each character from a major one to a bystander is undeniably difficult to ignore.

Here is an overview of the characters and the order in which they appear in the motion picture:

- **Ali La Pointe**

Ali is a young Algerian hero who joins the FLN's guerilla war warfare. He is first seen as a small-time offender who participates later on in the organization and is a crucial key figure executing their operations. Ali has a bit of complexity and firm characteristics, severe, stubborn and ambiguous persona. He is portrayed by actor Brahim Haggiag, a former FLN member himself. The movie is centered around Ali's life and provides a detailed depiction of his journey to status within the FLN. Despite being given an image of a successful operator in raids and attacks against the French military, he got captured and tortured. In the end, he is put to death.

- **Colonel Mathieu**

Mathieu is the head of the French military in Algiers. He appears in the middle of the film after several bombings and assassinations arose in the European city at the time (Algiers). Mathieu is depicted as a shrewd and calculating strategist who has no limits and is capable of undertaking any means necessary to destroy the FLN. heartless and sadistic are strong elements of his persona. His portrayal by actor Jean Martin is based on the real-life General Jacques Massu, who commanded the French soldiers at the Battle of Algiers. He instructs his forces to torture the rebels and employ other cruel techniques to get information from prisoners. In the end, he dissolved the FLN successfully.

- **The Women of the FLN**

Many women held important positions in the operations accomplished by the resistance during the battle. They appear throughout the movie, often in moments where they engage in undercover operations like detonating bombs or smuggling weapons. The women are shown to be clever and courageous, but also vulnerable and in jeopardy of being captured or killed. Fouzia El Kader, an actress, portrays one of the women, Halima. It was groundbreaking for its time to portray these women as being part of the uprising passionately and successfully.

- **Djafar**

Djafar is a veteran FLN member who recruits Ali La Pointe and becomes his mentor. He is later captured by the French and tortured to death. He is played by Saadi Yacef, the writer of “Souvenirs de la Bataille d'Alger” on which the film is based on. Djafar represents the head of the organization and through the movie is shown as a wise, intelligent, and strategist leader with unique characteristics that developed over the numerous events the battle witnessed, from the assassinations to the general strike...

- **Omar (*Petit Omar*)**

He is a child, the youngest participant in the FLN. Petit Omar is the one who delivers Ali La Pointe his first assignment. The role of the children in the struggle is represented through his character. He is played by Mohamed Ben Kassen and portrayed as brave, tough, and dedicated to the cause as much as any other adult in the film. Omar, unfortunately, did not live to have witnessed the Algerian independence, yet he chose death rather than submit to the French authorities.

- **Larbi Ben M'Hidi**

A key FLN figure who was captured and killed by the French. He was not featured in a lot of scenes, yet his presence is fundamental in understanding the nature of the Algerian resistance. In this scene on the top of the roof where he was having a conversation with Ali La Pointe about Ali's dissatisfaction with not using the guns during the days of the strike. Ben M'Hidi portrayed peaceful, wise, and tactician characteristics that led the Algerian cause to the UN. He was played by Mohammed Baghdadli. It is claimed that he hung himself in the cell but many Algerians say he died of very barbarous and extreme methods of torture.

The characters are sometimes fictional and sometimes real, and intertwined together to represent the heroes of the Algerian National War, men, women and even children. (See **Figure 02**)

Figure 2: Militants and Heroes of the Algerian National War



Source, *La vraie bataille d'Alger*, Jacques Massu, Plon, 1971

From left to right, behind: Djamila Bouhired, Yacef Saadi, Hassiba Bent-Bouali.

In front: Samia Lakhdari, Petit Omar, Yacef Saadi's nephew, Ali la Pointe, with a gun in hand, and Zohra Drif.

Around 1957

In every scene that does not include an army or resistance strategy meeting, the camera seems to find its way to the bystanders, the citizens of Algiers who are caught in this violent power struggle. The audience might grasp a sense of the complex world that they inhabit, unescapable violence, lost and scattered in a political game. These are the main and real people of this movie.

2.2.3 Critics and reviews

The Battle of Algiers has received widespread critical acclaim and recognition since its release. It is now regarded as a seminal work of political cinema that has influenced filmmakers and activists worldwide. The film won several prestigious awards, most notably the Golden Lion at the 1966 Venice Film Festival. Reviews were overwhelmingly positive, praising the film for its realistic portrayal of the Algerian conflict, unique documentary style, and balanced representation of both the French colonists and Algerian revolutionaries. (IMDb, n.d.)

James Christopher, a top critic on Rotten Tomatoes, said: "Brilliantly directed set-pieces and remarkable thronging crowd scenes make the film a masterpiece; the ominous familiarity of its subject makes it a must-see." (IndieWire Staff, 2021) Despite initial controversy, especially in France where the film was banned for a few years, the film was very well received. Its release coincided with the May 1968 protests in France, increasing its political significance and polarizing audiences.

In recent decades, the film has been widely celebrated as a classic of political cinema. It is admired for capturing the complexity of the conflict, depicting guerrilla warfare with gritty realism, and acknowledging the perspectives of both the colonial and anti-colonial sides. The film continues to inspire activist groups and organizations today. As film historian Philip Kemp wrote in his 2007 review, "Forty years on, the film's lost not a fraction of its power."

2.3 The Black Panther Movement

The American Black Movement had various activist social and political groups. One of the most prominent influential groups are the Black Panthers Part. Here is a brief and general summary of the history of the Black Panthers

2.3.1 The Black Panther Party History

The Black Panther Party was an African American revolutionary party, originally named Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, it was founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. This political organization was created to challenge police brutality against the African American community. At first, the party's mission was to patrol African American neighborhoods and defend residents from brutal police actions. While adopting a dress code based on black berets and leather jackets, the Black Panthers established armed citizen patrols in Oakland and other American cities. It had about 2,000 members at its peak in 1968. The Panthers eventually evolved into a Marxist² revolutionary group that demanded guns possession for all African Americans, being excluded from mandatory military service and all restrictions imposed by so-called "white America," getting released from prison, and that receive reimbursement for the centuries of exploitation they had endured at the hands of "white people". The organization declined in the early 1970s due to internal rifts among members, violent shootouts with police, and FBI counterintelligence operations aimed at undermining the Party. While short-lived, the Black Panther Party's militant activism sparked national conversations around civil rights, racial inequality, and police brutality that continue to impact social justice movements today. (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020)

² Marxism is a social, political, and economic theory originated by Karl Marx, advocating class struggle and a socialist system with common ownership of the means of production. (Merriam-Webster, 2019)

2.3.2 Political and Social Context of the 1960s

The United States underwent a substantial political and social transformation during the 1960s and 1970s, which were transitional decades. During this time, fresh political concepts emerged, the Cold War escalated and a multitude of social movements emerged. During these difficult years, a number of significant events, movements, and individuals shaped the American nation.

The following content summarizes key aspects of American social policy in the 1960s based on information from the article *American Social Policy in the 1960's and 1970's* by Jerry D. Marx, Ph.D., M.S.W., University of New Hampshire. Here are some of the biggest events and movements during this era:

- **The Civil Rights Movement**

One of the influential social movements of the 1960s was the Civil Rights Movement, which advocated eradicating racial segregation and prejudice against African Americans. Leading activists such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Rosa Parks were responsible for the movement's peaceful protests, civil disobedience, and legal system challenges. To abolish institutional racism and ensure equal rights for all citizens, regardless of race, The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 were groundbreaking regulations that tried to dismantle institutional racism and ensure equal rights for every citizen, regardless of race.

- **The Women's Liberation Movement**

The Women's Liberation Movement, likewise known as the feminist movement, achieved popularity in the 1960s and 1970s. This movement arose

as a reaction to the conventional and traditional roles and expectations placed on women in American society. Raising awareness about gender imbalance and advocating for women's rights was not uncomplicated work. Activists such as Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and Germaine Greer were vital in highlighting and increasing attention to these issues. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the 1973 Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion, are two examples of the movement's notable contributions to legal and social change.

- **The Anti-War Movement**

One of the unforgettable wars in US history, The Vietnam War (from 1955 to 1975), was a great source of political and social unrest. In the 1960s as a response to the growing opposition to the war, the anti-war movement emerged notably among young people and college students. Forms of expression such as civil disobedience, and protests, were frequently used by activists to demand an end to the war and the withdrawal of American troops. The movement ultimately contributed to the eventual leave of US forces from Vietnam in 1973.

- **The Counterculture Movement**

The counterculture movement was based on the rejection of conventional values and norms, as well as an endorsement of alternative lifestyles and beliefs. The "hippie" culture was often associated with this movement, which supported communal living and promoted peace and love. Various artistic and musical trends, including the Beat Generation or "Beatniks" as it was coined, the Psychedelic Rock genre gained popularity at the time. Folk music emerged as a form of protest, as example, Joan Baez, influential folk, Known for her beautiful

voice and passionate performances. She used her music as a vehicle for activism and protest. She actively participated in civil rights marches, and anti-war parades, and campaigned for various social causes. Songs like "We Shall Overcome" and "Diamonds & Rust" showcased her commitment to speaking out against injustice. The counterculture movement's influence remains in several areas of contemporary American society, including fashion and environmentalism.

- **The Watergate Scandal and the Crisis of Confidence**

The 1970s saw a significant shift in the political landscape of the United States, as the nation grappled with the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal. The Watergate scandal, which involved a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters and subsequent cover-up by the Nixon administration, led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974. This event, along with other political and economic challenges, contributed to a growing sense of disillusionment and mistrust in the government, often referred to as the "crisis of confidence."

2.3.3 The social change made by the Black Panthers in America During the 60s

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Black Panther Party profoundly influenced American society. The organization sought to challenge racial and social inequality, and its efforts led to several notable social changes:

- **Community programs:**

The Black Panthers initiated numerous community programs, known as "survival programs," to address the immediate needs of African American and marginalized communities. These programs included free breakfast initiatives for children, health clinics, legal aid services, and educational programs.

With its community service programs, the Party had a more ambitious, revolutionary end in mind, a process that Fred Hampton, head of the Chicago Party chapter, encapsulated in this way: "First you have free breakfasts, then you have free medical care, then you have free bus rides, and soon you have FREEDOM!" (Nelson, 2011, p.58).

Such initiatives not only provided essential services to underserved communities but also raised awareness about systemic inequalities and the need for social change

- **Police accountability:**

Due to the Black Panthers' efforts to track and oppose police brutality, people's awareness increased about the issue and assisted in making the police more accountable. The organization's practice of "copwatching," which involved openly carrying firearms while witnessing police interactions with individuals, brought attention to the need for transparency and accountability in law enforcement (Seale, 1991).

- **Political activism:**

The Black Panthers' activism inspired a new generation of African American political leaders and activists, who continued to fight for racial equality and social justice in the United States.

... all formed organizations that carried the name Black Panther Party, evoking the radical ethnic discourse of the organization. From the legacy of the Black Power movement are ethnic studies programs on college campuses, Kwanzaa, and a rich celebration of ethnic diversity and social activism in Latino, Asian American, and other communities throughout the United States. (Joseph, 2006, p. 228)

The organization's emphasis on grassroots organizing and community mobilization influenced subsequent civil rights movements and organizations, such as the Black Lives Matter movement.

- **Coalition-building:**

The Black Panthers attempted to establish ties with other marginalized communities and progressive organizations locally as well as globally. Algeria is one example of an international outlet that provided political asylum and refuge to not only the exiled members of the Black Panthers but welcomed many activists and provided medical help to oppressed groups and communities.

Eldridge Cleaver, a leader of the Party, ended up in Algiers – not an unusual place for radical activists to find themselves in the 1960s. (**See Figure 3**)

Figure 3: Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers in 1969.



Source, The National. (2019, May 9). Black Panthers: Revolution and then exile, an American's time in Algeria. The National. Retrieved from <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/books/black-panthers-revolution-and-then-exile-an-american-s-time-in-algeria-1.872006>

As a result, there was a stronger push for social change in areas such as racial equality, gender equality, and economic justice (Cleaver, 1999).

- **Cultural impact:**

The Black Panthers had a significant impact on American culture, particularly in the realms of fashion, music, and art. Earl Anthony, in his *Picking up the Gun: A Report on the Black Panthers Hardcover*, claims that the organization's distinctive style, including the black berets, leather jackets, and raised-fist salute, became symbols of resistance and empowerment. (1970)

The Panthers also influenced the development of the Black Arts Movement, which sought to create art that reflected the African American experience and promoted social change (Smethurst, 2005).

In summary, the Black Panther Party established community programs, encouraged police accountability, sparked political activism, fostered coalition building, and influenced American culture during the 1960s and 1970s, which brought crucial social change to the country.

2.4 The Impact and Relevance of "The Battle of Algiers" on the Black Panthers' Ideology and Goals

The Black Panthers found inspiration in *The Battle of Algiers* due to its portrayal of the Algerian people's armed resistance against French colonial rule (Austin, 2006). It is claimed that the film was used as training for recruits.

Less than a month in, the prosecution claimed it had proof that the Panthers used *The Battle of Algiers* as a training video, furthermore, that guerilla warfare tactics in the film informed the defendants' alleged cataclysmic plan (Zimroth 1974,160; Chaberski 1975, 192)

The film's focus on integral organizing and community mobilization in the fight for independence aligned with the Black Panthers' emphasis on black people grouping and grassroots activism in their efforts to combat racial inequality and police brutality (Seale, 1991). The film's portrayal of the Algerian struggle for independence as part of a broader global movement against colonialism and imperialism also resonated with the Black Panthers' internationalist perspective, as they sought to build solidarity with other oppressed peoples around the world (Cleaver, 1999) Kathleen Neal Cleaver, former member of the Black Panthers, in her book, *Women, Power, and Revolution*, said: "In a world of racist polarization, we sought solidarity. We called for Black power for Black people, ... " (n.p)

Pontecorvo's masterpiece also resonated with the Panthers' belief in the necessity of armed self-defense and revolutionary struggle against oppressive systems (Cleaver, 1999).

Curtis J. Austin argues in his book *Up Against the Wall* that the Black Panthers believed that by mimicking the Vietnamese and Algerian guerrillas, by studying Che Guevara's and Malcolm X's theories and practices, they could once and for all bring about their liberation. (2006)

The film's emphasis on the Algerian people's fight for self-determination and empowerment leveled with the Black Panthers' objective of empowering not only African Americans but other marginalized communities in the United States.

Its influence extended beyond the party's ideology and goals, shaping its strategies and tactics as well. The Panthers adopted the film's significance on urban guerrilla warfare and clandestine operations as part of their revolutionary struggle against racial oppression and systemic injustice (Austin, 2006).

The Battle of Algiers had a vital part in shaping the Black Panther Party's ideology, goals, and strategies. The film's vivid and surreal portrayal of the Algerian fight for liberation and its focus on grassroots organizing, armed resistance, and self-determination matched with the Panthers' own struggle against racial oppression and systemic segregation and injustice in the United States. The film's influence on the Black Panthers highlights the power of cinema in shaping political discourse and inspiring revolutionary movements around the world.

2.4.1 Shaping the Black Panther Party Through Filmmaking Strategies in The Battle of Algiers

The Battle of Algiers is acclaimed for its realistic, gritty portrayal of urban warfare and its proclaiming anti-colonial message. Due to the special production techniques and distinctive style adapted in motion picture making, Pontecorvo was able to capture the chaos and intensity of the conflict in a way that was believable and connected with audiences. Eric Hynes, critic from Rottentomatoes, says about the film: “it uses realism as an effect, documentary as a style. You feel that you're really there, and you can't help but be moved.”

Here are some of the primary techniques employed by the production that assist create such a realistic atmosphere that eventually influenced the tactics and strategies of the Black Panthers:

- **Handheld cameras:**

The film was shot almost entirely using handheld cameras, which assisted to capture raw action. The handheld cameras were essential, they provide a vivid imitation of the violence and chaos the people dealt with and create an experience full of intensity and ferocity for the viewers. Pontecorvo's film is a stunning achievement of cinematic art, using handheld cameras and documentary-style realism to create a sense of immediacy and authenticity that draws the viewer into the heart of the conflict. (Thompson, 2013)

- **Non-professional actors:**

Many actors were amateurs and non-professionals, including some that witnessed and participated in the actual battle. Saadi Yacef was an FLN member during the war and played the character of Djafar in the film. This approach increased the plot's authenticity and realism and contributed to the shaping of a documentary-like atmosphere.

- **Location shooting:**

The filming took place in Algiers. The scenes were not shot in a studio, the production team filmed in the actual buildings and streets where the conflict had taken place. This method had saved them a lot of money yet its purpose was to match and come closer to the events as had happened.

- **Natural lighting:**

The lighting in cinematography is fundamental, and many filmmakers and producers hire professionals to create harmony between all the aspects of producing a film. Pontecorvo relied on natural lighting in shooting whenever possible, which provided the film with a harsh, documentary-like quality and atmosphere. This approach was especially effective in the film's many nighttime scenes, in which the only light source was primarily streetlights.

- **Quick cutting:**

The film's editing is fast-paced and dynamic, with quick cuts between different scenes and points of view. This method highlighted the sense of chaos and confusion to grasp a glimpse of the reality of Algiers's conflict.

All these techniques synchronize to mimic a harsh reality into an unforgettable piece of art. Christopher Nolan, best known for his cerebral, often nonlinear, storytelling, acclaimed writer-director, has called Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 historical drama "a timeless and affecting verité narrative, which forces empathy with its characters in the least theatrical manner imaginable. We care about the people in the film simply because we feel immersed in their reality and the odds they face."

The producers fixated on the techniques and methods mentioned to deliver an exceptionally original and powerful film. *The Battle of Algiers* has left an ineffaceable mark in political cinema since being released and has been a huge source of inspiration for numerous filmmakers.

The imitation of *The Battle of Algiers* of the horrific reality of the war influenced the Black Panthers' tactics and strategies in several specific ways:

- **Urban guerrilla warfare:**

The film depicted the use of urban guerrilla warfare by the FLN as a form of resistance in the European city as a new step in the struggle against French colonial forces. This procedure involved small, independent groups accomplishing surprise attacks, sabotage, and assassinations in urban places. The Black Panthers adopted similar tactics, focusing on urban environments and using guerrilla warfare techniques to challenge heavy-handed systems and authorities in the United States. The violent rhetoric used by the Panthers undoubtedly had its benefits as thousands of blacks, particularly in urban areas, viewed their bravado as long overdue. (Austin, 2006).

- **Clandestine operations:**

The Battle of Algiers showcased and highlighted the importance of clandestine operations and maintaining secrecy within the FLN. The film portrayed the vital role of secret members of the FLN, especially women, in affecting the war against French colonialism. The Black Panthers learned from this and developed a secretive organizational structure, with members operating in small, independent cells to minimize the risk of infiltration and disruption by law enforcement agencies. “Newton [Black Panthers’ leader], from the very

start, had recruited men off the street to engage in clandestine operations,” (Austin, 2006, p138).

- **Propaganda and media:**

The film highlighted the factor of propaganda and media in garnering support, affecting and altering public opinion in favor of Algerians being independent. The Black Panthers recognized and used the power of media to their advantage, creating their newspaper, "The Black Panther", to distribute their message, raise awareness of their cause, and counter negative portrayals and allegations in mainstream media.

At that time I knew that what Huey P. Newton was saying about the colossal event had occurred. Because many, many cameramen were there. Many, many people had covered this event of black people walking into the Capitol, and registering their grievance with a particular statement. A message, Executive Mandate Number One, that Huey P. Newton had ordered me to take to the Capitol, to use the mass media as a means of conveying the message to the American people and to the black people in particular. (Seale, 1991, p95).

- **Community organizing and mobilization:**

The Battle of Algiers emphasized the importance of grassroots organizing and community mobilization in the fight for independence. Throughout the film, Pontecorvo imitates the actual strategies of the FLN to create a credible and reliable community to resist the French. The Black Panthers adopted this approach, focusing on building strong community ties and organizing local divisions to address issues such as police brutality, racial inequality, and

economic injustice. "By this time we had chapters in Seattle, Southern California, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and our national headquarters in Oakland. Every time they attacked us, the Party grew." (Seale, 1991, p132).

- **International solidarity:**

The film represents the Algerian War as part of a broader global movement against colonialism and imperialism. The Black Panthers embraced this internationalist perspective, seeking to raise solidarity with other oppressed peoples worldwide and tracing inspiration from various anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles.

In a world of racist polarization, we sought solidarity. We called for Black power for Black people, Red power for Red people, Brown power for Brown people, Yellow power for Yellow people, and, as Eldridge Cleaver used to say, White power for White people,... (Cleaver, 1999, n.p).

2.5 The Legacy of "The Battle of Algiers" in Black Panther History

The Black Panther Party and other social justice movements have been inspired immensely by *The Battle of Algiers*. The Black Panthers related to the film's depiction of the anti-colonial struggle, resistance against oppressive forces, and the fight for self-determination because they saw parallels between the Algerian quest for independence and their struggle against racial segregation and systemic injustice in the United States.

The film's legacy in Black Panther history remains in its continuing influence, connections to other anti-colonial struggles, and contemporary

relevance to social justice movements. Here are some of the aspects of its legacy on the Panthers:

- **Continuing Influence of the Film on the Black Panthers and Other Movements:**

The Black Panthers' tactics and strategies were heavily influenced by *The Battle of Algiers* as they sought to challenge racial oppression and systemic injustice in the United States. The film's influence extends beyond the Black Panthers to other social justice movements in the US and worldwide. *The Battle of Algiers* has been considered to be an inspiration for plenty of resistance movements, including the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and Mexico's Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) (Said, 2000). The depiction of resistance to repressive systems and the fight for independence in the film continues to have relevance with current activists and organizers who draw inspiration from its themes and messages.

- **Connections between the Black Panthers and other anti-colonial struggles:**

The Black Panthers recognized the interconnectedness of several movements for self-determination and empowerment and needed to build solidarity with oppressed peoples worldwide. They were stimulated by anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles such as the Algerian War of Independence, the Cuban Revolution, and the Vietnamese resistance to American intervention.

My generation became conscious during a period of profound world turmoil when the Vietnam War and countless insurgencies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America challenged the control of the resources of the world by the capitalist powers ... When we looked at our situation, when

we saw violence, bad housing, unemployment, rotten education, unfair treatment in the courts, as well as direct attacks from the police, our response was to defend ourselves. We became part of that assault against the capitalist powers. (Cleaver, 1999, n.p).

The internationalist stance of the Panthers fostered solidarity among numerous social groups and contributed to a wider push for social change in areas such as racial equality, gender equality, and economic justice (Joseph, 2006).

The Black Panthers built direct connections with other anti-colonial groups, sending delegations to Africa, North Vietnam, and Cuba to meet with revolutionary leaders and learn from their experiences.

Imperialism must expand or die and even as the pigs escalate their military and political offensive, they have lost their grip increasingly throughout this world, despite their wolf tickets because the peoples of Cuba, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Libya, Angola, Tanzania, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Grenada and other lands have put their heads and hearts together, to devise no nonsense methods to drive the Americans out (Balagoon, 2001, p. 44).

These connections reinforced the Panthers' resolve and provided them with helpful insights and strategies for their own struggle in the United States.

2.5.1 Contemporary Relevance of "The Battle of Algiers" to Social Justice Movements

The relevance of *The Battle of Algiers* remains to several contemporary social justice movements. The police's brutality highlighted the importance of transparency and accountability in law enforcement, which resonates with present-day efforts to solve social issues and address systemic racial

discrimination in the criminal justice system (Nelson, 2011). The film displays the significance of grassroots organizing and community mobilization. This trait is found in many current social movements, for example, Black Lives Matter. Such an approach prioritizes collective action to seek to build power and effect change (Taylor, 2016).

Furthermore, *The Battle of Algiers* serves as an unforgettable reminder of oppressed peoples' perseverance and determination in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The depiction of the Algerian war in the film is an inspiring example of the power of collective action and the potential for transformative social change, encouraging current activists and organizers to continue their battle for justice and equality. Cinema can easily alter politics, society, and culture. Peter Matthews, in his essay "The Battle of Algiers: Bombs and Boomerangs" said the true heirs of *The Battle of Algiers* have been numberless filmmakers from Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Senegal, Mali, Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine, and Algeria itself—inspired by Pontecorvo's supreme empathy to tell their own stories of nationalist striving. Still, history moves on, and world cinema reflects market forces in an increasingly smooth, prettified style. The hour is more than ripe for *The Battle of Algiers* to renew its fire. (2011)

To summarize, *The Battle of Algiers* left an indelible mark on Black Panther history and continues to inspire social justice movements today. The representation of anti-colonial struggle, resistance to oppressive forces, and self-determination in the film resonated with the Black Panthers and inspired later movements. The film's roots in previous anti-colonial battles, as well as its current relevance to social justice movements, demonstrate its ongoing influence and the potential of cinema to manipulate political discourse and inspire revolutionary change.

2.6 Conclusion

The Black Panthers have had undeniably changed the American society. Their willingness to carry the torch of Black liberation from Marcus Garvey has influenced not only the African-American in the United States, but the whole world. The 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers* captured the revolutionary spirit of the Algerian independence struggle and broadcast it to audiences worldwide. The Black Panther Party was deeply influenced by the aesthetics, philosophies, and tactics in Pontecorvo's film. To them, it was The Battle of Oakland. The Panthers emulated the Algerian revolutionaries in dress, language, and action, using the film as a model for their activism and vision of black liberation. They were inspired by the authenticity of the Algerian struggle and the power of a small united community against a colossal colonial entity. The political drama piece left a lasting legacy on radical political movements that continues today.

General Conclusion

The Algerian revolution and the 1966 political film *The Battle of Algiers* profoundly impacted radical anti-colonial and black freedom movements worldwide. By portraying the Algerian struggle against French colonial rule, the film brought global attention to the Algerian independence fight and influenced political activists. Algeria gained independence in a time that witnessed heavily the rise of the movements of independencies, and a revolutionary time in cinema. Both contributed to several anti-colonial and liberation movements. No group was more inspired than the Black Panther Party.

Formed the same year as the film's release, the Black Panthers emulated the Algerians in appearance, language, and militant tactics. They saw parallels between their struggle against racial oppression in America and Algeria's fight against French colonialism. The film validated Black Panther's visions of armed resistance and propelled their revolutionary politics. *The Battle of Algiers* provided a model of activism that shaped the Panthers' identity.

By dividing the dissertation into two chapters, a historical context and analysis chapter, the study laid the groundwork by setting the historical context of the Algerian Revolution, the rise of Black Movement in America, and the power of political cinema. The subsequent analysis chapter delves into the influence of *The Battle of Algiers* on the Black Panthers, discussing and analyzing the element of the film that resonated with the members of the Black Panthers.

More broadly, the Algerian revolution and Pontecorvo's film exemplified the changing geopolitics of the postwar period. Anti-colonial movements contested Western imperialism across the globe, while political cinema offered a means to broadcast these struggles. *The Battle of Algiers* embodied the political and aesthetic radicalism of the 1960s, influencing liberation movements from Algiers to Oakland. Its impact spanned continents and

decades, leaving a lasting legacy of revolutionary change. The film remains a model for determined activism against oppressive forces.

The film graphically depicted violence yet showed the Algerians' resolve, humanity, and justification for their cause, making their struggle accessible and inspiring. Other anti-colonial movements also drew parallels with Algeria's struggle.

Though controversial due to its depiction of violence, many argue the context is colonial liberation, not religious extremism. Pontecorvo created a universally relatable story of determined individuals using any means necessary to overthrow oppression. While made in 1966, the themes remain relevant today for those struggling against unjust authority.

The film somewhat anathematizes both parties, however, its philosophy of freedom, from colonialist, imperialist, and unjust powers, cannot be ignored. Pontecorvo's masterpiece remains among the most influential films ever, its social and political lens gaining interpretive power over time. Though some aspects are controversial, the film's positive message prevails.

In conclusion, this dissertation's goal was to prove that *The Battle of Algiers* shaped the Black Panthers identity, ideology and activism, cementing its place in both film history and the Black freedom struggle. Several aspects and elements of the film analysis are missing to the disqualification to discuss it on a deeper level, however, in capturing the Algerian revolution on film, Pontecorvo influenced the revolution itself. The spirit of Algeria's fight and *The Battle of Algiers* lives on in modern protest movements. The film remains a model for activism against injustice.

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ملخص:

الهدف من هذا البحث هو معالجة وتحليل تأثير فيلم معركة الجزائر (1966)، من إخراج جيلو بونتيكورفو على الحركة السوداء في أمريكا خلال الستينيات. يدرس البحث أيضا كيف شكل وأثر الفيلم على أيديولوجية وأهداف منظمة الفهود السود، ومساهمته في العديد من الحركات الاجتماعية والسياسية الحديثة.

Summary:

The objective of this work to address is and analyze the impact of film *The battle of Algiers* (1966), directed by Gillo Pontecorvo on the Black Movement in America during the 1960s. It is also about studying how the film shaped the ideology and goals of the Black Panthers, contributing to many modern social and political movements.

Résumé :

L'objectif de ce travail est d'aborder et d'atténuer l'impact du film *La bataille d'Alger* (1966), réalisé par Gillo Pontecorvo sur le Black Movement en Amérique dans les années 1960. Il examine également la façon dont le film a façonné l'idéologie et les objectifs des Black Panthers, contribuant à de nombreux mouvements sociaux et politiques modernes.