This is a repository copy of *Architectures of informal empire*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/224002/

Version: Accepted Version

Article:

El Chami, Y. orcid.org/0000-0002-0055-3639 and Honarmand Ebrahimi, S. (2025) Architectures of informal empire. Architectural Theory Review, 28 (3). pp. 335-345. ISSN 1326-4826

https://doi.org/10.1080/13264826.2024.2452693

© 2025 The Authors. Except as otherwise noted, this author-accepted version of a journal article published in Architectural Theory Review is made available via the University of Sheffield Research Publications and Copyright Policy under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. To view a copy of this licence, visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Reuse
This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence. This licence allows you to distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon the work, even commercially, as long as you credit the authors for the original work. More information and the full terms of the licence here: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

Takedown
If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

Architectural Theory Review **28, no. 3 (2024)**
Special Issue: Architectures of Informal Empire

Yasmina El Chami*, University of Sheffield
Sara Honarmand Ebrahimi, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna
Email: y.el.chami@sheffield.ac.uk

Keywords:
imperialism; informal empire; colonial/postcolonial architecture; architectural historiography; imperial history

Introduction: Architectures of Informal Empire

Writing in 2013 about recent developments in the subfield of colonial/postcolonial architecture and urbanism, Kathleen James-Chakraborty saw four promising openings: "the comparative study of the architecture of empire, the recognition of the periphery as the location of innovation, the analysis of architecture as the locus of cultural memory, and the study of the way in which the fabric of European and English-speaking cities is changing in response to the arrival of immigrants from the rest of the world."[1] From the outset, James-Chakraborty's piece equated the postcolonial in architecture with the study of "non-western" architecture. The study of colonial architecture, or of architecture in postcolonial contexts, seemed to be primarily a question about modernism and modernity, first analysed through questions of style, and later through an emphasis on the social processes through which space is produced.[2] James-Chakraborty's survey provided an important overview of the concerns of some of the earliest and most foundational work in what is now a major subfield of architectural history. Foremost among the concerns of this early scholarship was the question of knowledge or, rather, architectural knowledge and its association with modernism and modernity as a more-than-European phenomenon. This was necessarily linked with discourse analysis and the cultural and epistemological perspectives that Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) had opened up, which underpinned the emergence of this line of enquiry in architectural history.[3] As Sibel Bozdogan summarised it in 1999, the challenge in studying the architecture of imperialism/colonialism was one of binaries: "How to make architecture less Eurocentric and more cross-cultural without either naturalizing the cultural difference of

‘others’ or essentializing these differences into incommensurable categories? [And] how does one talk about the politics of architecture without reducing architecture to politics?”[4]

Already a decade ago, the field had moved towards the “periphery as the location of innovation,” although the other three directions identified by James-Chakraborty—comparative study, cultural memory and immigration—remained less developed.[5] This was a large effort, sustained not only in architectural history but also across the field of history more broadly, giving rise to various new subfields from the global to the transnational. In architectural history, the attempt to counter the primacy of Eurocentric knowledge resulted in a growing number of studies attempting to reclaim knowledge at the peripheries without necessarily questioning what counts as knowledge or tracing the messy interactions and undoing the directionalities that were presumed to flow seamlessly from West to East.[6] Yet as highlighted by Mark Crinson, such efforts to locate “alternative modernisms” or “indigenous modernities” often left undisturbed the monolithic construction of (European) modernism as a coherent movement.[7] One could also argue that such perspectives did not question the foundational premises of the relationship between imperialism/colonialism and “modernity”: the notion that modernism and modernisation were signs of “progress” and therefore unequivocally “good,” positive developments. As argued by Frederick Cooper in his foundational critique of postcolonial concepts, critiques of modernity in fact keep it “on an intellectual pedestal [...] and make it more difficult to talk about salient issues in altogether different terms.”[8] As Cooper states: “The colonial question is not the modernity question, even if issues of modernity arise within colonial history.”[9] In other words, constraining the analysis of empire and colonialism to the question of modernity means foregoing the multiple other conditions, processes, and experiences that emerged in parallel with, or as a consequence of, imperialism.

While notions of “connected” or “crossed histories” continue to sustain questions of architectural knowledge in recent scholarship, these remain more prevalent in the study of European imperialism than in North American or more transnational explorations, where other concerns have emerged.[10] In US scholarship (and to a limited extent beyond it), recent questions have turned towards race as one of the most urgent categories through which to re-evaluate not only the United States’ settler-colonial history, but also its overseas activities, as well as the more familiar histories of European empire, colonialism, and slavery across the globe.[11] Questions of networks of expertise and flows of material and capital have also gained increasing attention, challenging the primacy of aesthetics and built form in their analysis.[12] These have been particularly important in the growing studies on the architecture

of development, especially in postcolonial nations and after World War Two. Although these studies often retain an interest in modern architecture, examining the intersection of modernism with "local" traditions and climates, and therefore returning to "critical regionalism" in its various guises, their sustained concern with the economic, technical, and political networks involved in such projects has allowed this scholarship to broaden the subjects and methods of architectural history.[13] The interest in materials, "technics," and the production of architecture has also begun to influence recent postcolonial architectural histories,[14] echoing what G.A. Bremner formulated in 2016 as "an architecture-centred 'material history' of empire."[15] Such approaches have also developed alongside perspectives drawn from environmental history which have opened up new ways to analyse the postcolonial built environment through air, climate, disease, fire, and other non-human categories.[16] This dislodgement of the architect and architectural knowledge as dominant actors within architectural history is perhaps one of the most compelling developments in recent scholarship, and it is one of the lines of inquiry pursued in this special issue, as we elaborate further below.

Our second line of inquiry relates to the growing recognition that the relationship between imperialism and architecture was never simply a matter of the head. This idea, which has generated significant scholarship over the last decade,[17] is not merely concerned with the "intimacies" of empire. Rather, by emphasising the elusiveness of reason and rationality and questioning "the ready distinction between sentiment and political rationality,"[18] it encourages us to consider how the architecture of imperial governance "was embedded in the management of affective states and in the technologies of affective control."[19] In fact, sentiments and emotions were forms of "world making;"[20] a discursive density around their management, civilisation, and cultivation impacted imperial practitioners' architectural decisions. While the call for papers for this special issue of *Architectural Theory Review* highlighted our aims to encourage such perspectives as these, this territory remains open for further development in architectural history. Nevertheless, the special issue addresses the importance of considering how imperial or colonial built environments regulated not only intimacies between coloniser and colonised but also defined what counted as "appropriate" or "civilised" forms of intimacy. Since women played a key role in this process, a focus on intimacies also help us question the historiography of imperial architecture as a "masculine" project and present a fuller picture of the intersections of race, gender, and imperialism.[21] It is also within these intimacies that crucial nuances regarding local experiences or alternative

histories can be recovered. Rather than focusing on official records and or formal drawings and plans, what Swati Chattopadhyay calls the "small spaces of empire," may appear as important sites of contestation and experience in this way, helping us to understand better local peoples' ways of being in the world, or their bodiliness.[22] This necessitates a renewed attention to archival "silences" coupled with a willingness to read across various "genres and cultures" and to take seriously varied epistemological traditions as legitimate methods of historical production.[23] It also mandates "patience," a willingness to understand them within "the social and historical context of its owners" through interdisciplinary methodologies.[24]

Building on these departures and developments, in this issue we suggest that an analysis of the built environment as an amalgam of varied forces, processes, and perspectives might be a fruitful way to re-examine the intersection of architecture and imperialism, without reducing architecture either to politics or to an apolitical aesthetics. Emphasising the broader networks, processes, and narratives within which architecture exists—connected and entangled as they may be—allows us to resituate architecture as a multifaceted endeavour within which the architect plays a relatively discrete role. While architecture retains some discursive and disciplinary agency, this is necessarily relational, operating within and alongside multiple other concerns—political, economic, practical—that may or may not align completely with one another. Still, it is only by trying to understand these relationships and the broader systems in which they function that makes them possible, that we can understand how architecture participates in and advances imperialism as a multiple political, social, cultural, and spatial project. By asking about the architecture of imperialism, rather than about imperial architecture, what we foreground here is not the architect or architecture's disciplinary knowledge, but rather how architecture operates as a frame or apparatus for specific politics, ideologies, experiences or narratives that may or may not interfere with architecture's disciplinary specificity.

While the directions outlined above have helped to expand the methods and concerns of architectural history, the efforts to develop the study of empire and its legacies have nevertheless remained broadly limited to geographies and areas that were formally colonised or to the study of formal empires and colonial state actors. Almost three decades since Crinson introduced the history of "informal" imperialism into architectural history, areas that were not considered formally colonised, such as the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, or the Far East, remain marginal in studies of imperial or colonial architecture and urbanism.[25] Yet in those geographies, where neither colonisation nor decolonisation

trajectories were clear, and which were typically sites of contest between informal and inter-imperial agents, the projects of private, non-state actors often led to extensive economic, material, and spatial configurations with reverberations that continue to be felt today. While the questions and concerns outlined above are important in "colonial" situations, "informal" situations are more complicated because the messiness and multiplicity of actors, hierarchies and power dynamics involved makes it harder to disentangle them from one another in the present and often made it harder to develop a unitary anti- or de-colonial project in the past. In such contexts, misalignments and frictions between state and non-state actors, to mention only one factor, have often been read as impediments to colonialism and imperial ambition. Inter-imperial contestation has been seen as a cancelling-out or watering-down of imperial outcomes. Yet examining the built environment counters such analysis. In the built environment, an abundance of imperial claims results in larger and more significant spatial outcomes, as opposed to a reduction.[26] If the interest is in understanding how imperial power operates, then we must look at colonialism not as its inevitable outcome but as the high point of a longer process of influence which may not have been imperial at the outset, and which may have coexisted alongside multiple other trajectories that were thwarted along the way or remained incomplete.[27] Rather than continue viewing political categories as passive backgrounds for architectural research, this special issue has prompted its authors to consider how political designations and categories might be challenged if we start with the built environment as a lens into imperial intentions, processes, and dynamics. What comes beyond postcolonialism, not only in instances of formal colonisation, but in the interstices of empire, or in the spaces and sites where colonial powers did not operate unilaterally or alone? Expanding on the categories of "imperial" and "colonial," this issue returns to "informal imperialism" as a capacious concept that enables historians to account for pre-colonial, post-colonial, and un-colonial situations in all their messiness and contingency.

The concept of informal imperialism was first elaborated in John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson's 1953 article, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," and outlines a means of exploring imperial situations beyond formal binaries.[28] In the sense first articulated by Gallagher and Robinson, informal empire was an argument about the *economics* of imperialism, highlighting the need for the economic imperatives of the British Empire to be understood as inseparable from and instrumental to the politics of imperialism. As they argued, examining only the "formal empire" was to retain a myopic focus only on an iceberg's "parts above the water-line."[29] To understand British imperial policy, one had to examine together both instances where economic supremacy had necessitated political intervention and those where

costly and complicated colonial intervention could be avoided. Gallagher and Robinson emphasised that imperial ambition was not purely political for politics' sake; rather, economic imperatives were themselves imperial, and only by understanding this intrinsic link could the multiple situations and forms of influence established by the British throughout the world—from strategic transport nodes in Africa and the Middle East to the actual sites of extraction—be understood as part of a single expansionist imperium, a single mindset and project.[30] This, of course, was limited to an analysis of the British Empire, which has dominated the field of imperial history since its inception. Although Gallagher and Robinson's argument was never completely accepted and was debated extensively, there is something useful not only in the formulation but also in its original development by the two historians—the idea that "formal empire" was often simply the most visible part of a much larger "informal empire," and that imperialism operates in degrees rather than in clear distinctions and binaries.[31]

Our first aim in revisiting "informal imperialism" through architecture and its histories is to expand the concept's initial remit beyond the economics of empire, and to argue that the cultural, social, or aesthetic concerns of empire were similarly always intrinsically entangled with its political and economic imperatives. To explore this means to begin from the lens of imperialism rather than that of architecture. In other words, expanding our understanding of how architecture, as a singular materialisation of overlapping concerns, was a driver for political ambition does not mean that we are interested in examining more histories of architecture in a colonial or postcolonial context; rather, we are interested in asking whether it is possible to speak of an architecture of imperialism, where imperialism is understood as a political project, or a set of political ambitions, regardless of whether these are supported by a formal colonial state. The aim is to consider how broadening the limits of what can be considered imperial renders more visible the unequal relationships of extraction, dependence, violence, or co-optation imperialism invariably engenders. Beyond serving as a symbol of established colonial power and facilitating its administrative protocols, how was architecture instrumental to imperial ambitions and their legacies? And can architecture precede and play a role in formalising otherwise informal arrangements of power?[32]

Our second aim in revisiting the concept of informal empire is to return to the question of marginalised voices, archival absences, and the affective experiences of empire. Understanding as informal that which is marginal, minor, or outside the dominant frame of formal power allows us to explore an expanded assemblage of actors, voices, and

perspectives that are not usually accepted within the formal study of empire. This means questioning not only whose voices are foregrounded and whose experiences are valid, but also how architecture can simultaneously embody multiple realities and experiences, and ultimately, perhaps also retain the possibility for emancipatory futures.[33]

Three ways to interpret the "informal" emerge from the articles gathered here. The first understands the "informal" as the informal arrangements of power of non-state actors in a non-formally colonised space, including questions of how foreign actors co-opt local actors or establish unequal relationships that can be disguised as benevolent or productive. The second interpretation relates closely to such processes as these but highlights the ways in which private enterprises and actors often co-opted, emulated or aligned with "formal" imperial policies or showcased imperial ambitions before or after formal colonial structures were in place. Both these interpretations question the continuities and differences between "formal" and "informal" empire and open up new ways to question imperial legacies in the present. The third and final interpretation takes "informal" as an emancipatory category through which to tell alternative or anti-hegemonic narratives and stories of empire. This highlights the need to recognise that there are not simply alternative histories of architecture and empire, but rather that architecture exits, shapes, and is experienced through multiple realities at once, and hence, its histories can contain and should account for such multiplicities, especially when we begin to think about potential (emancipatory) futures. These three interpretations are brought to the fore through varied scales of analysis, examining not only buildings but also infrastructures, landscapes, materials, people, and narratives, highlighting the multiplicity of actors and factors that collectively shape our environment.

Maura Lucking, for instance, looks at debt at financing, or "the rise of debt," as a covert mechanism of territorial, economic, and cultural control in the ostensibly "philanthropic" projects of the Women's National Indian Association. Examining the model cottage, a self-help homebuilding project for Native peoples, she shows how the (white) women of the WNIA enforced a "gendered biopolitics" around housing that reinforced both their own status and the existing unequal racial hierarchies. Although these women were not "state architects," Lucking foregrounds their "soft" power as a forceful proxy and symbol of the tutelary governance that characterised native dispossession and US settler colonialism in Indian Country. Moving from the Indian Country in the now-expansive United States to the infrastructure of US financial and commercial expansion in Central America, Natalia Solano-Meza, Gustavo Alemán-Calero and Valeria Ramirez-Muñoz examine how the relationship

between the United Fruit Company (UFCo) and the Costa Rican state created territorial changes in the production zones as well as Limon's cityscape, highlighting the "informal" role of UFCo and the subordinate agency of the Costa Rican elites. Vyta Pivo argues that patenting and manufacturing cement were forms of informal imperial technology through which Thomas Edison and other US firms established unequal "intellectual control," reducing their Global South counterparts to "disposable labourers." The spread and instrumentalisation of cement technology in sites such as US industrial outposts of Fordlandia and Belterra further helped in turning indigenous people into subjects of US economic power. These processes, as Pivo demonstrates, were not value neutral. They were instead motivated by US racial politics and carried political investments.

The "Bedouin problem" in Margaret Freeman's article is another example of the way in which indigenous people were treated as a spatial problem, here by the British in the mandatory territories of Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan. Freeman traces the continuities between British colonial "desert policy" and the Iraq Petroleum Company's consolidation of these spatial and political apparatuses, designed to control the nomadic Bedouin tribespeople, the primary inhabitants of the Mandates' desert zones. She shows how Britain's "informal" measures, including the use of police forces and the architectural annexation and restriction of water resources, were made formal not through the actions of a state but through the IPC, a commercial actor in the postcolonial period, asking us to re-examine the temporalities of colonial and postcolonial as well as the boundaries of formal and informal. The limits of formal and informal are also tested in Eun-Jeong Kim's article, which turns to the US's housing interventions in South Korea after the 1950s Korean War. Kim looks at Arirang Housing in Itaewon and Han River Hills Housing in Hannam-dong, built for US aid workers. These housing projects exemplify US imperial power through land expropriation, resource monopolisation, displacement of local communities, and legal and financial imposition. But their implementation, as she shows, was the result of a complex co-option with local elites, with broader consequences on construction practices in Korea.

Writing from the present, Hélène Frichot examines the minor, informal, stories of a plantation house and grounds on the Seychelles archipelago. Drawing on feminist autotheory, field philosophy, oral histories, and her own family's archive, Frichot weaves her personal story of the site with the spatial memories of the Seychellois workers who maintained it, asking provocative questions about the emancipatory potential of such stories and sites. Finally, Savia Palate and Panayiota Pyla introduce the concept of "residual imperialism" to highlight the continuities and legacies of British imperialism in Cyprus. Examining the

Salamis Bay Hotel, the biggest hotel constructed in Cyprus in the 1970s, Palate and Pyla show how imperialism took new forms after the end of British rule in Cyprus in its intersections with tourism, local politics and the construction of identitarian narratives before and after 1974. They trace the varied discursive constructions and narratives that articulated the status of the hotel throughout its continued existence, arguing that these fraught dynamics illustrate the residual imperialism that is retained at the heart of the Cypriot conflict.

Read together, the articles demonstrate the importance of adopting a wider framework for advancing a plural and multilayered understanding of the architecture of empire and its legacies. Before turning to our contributions, some final observations about the collected essays and the response to this issue's themes are important to make. As highlighted by several historians of imperialism in the past, the study of empire in English-language academia remains largely a history of the British Empire, even though our call was explicitly aiming for histories beyond those of formal empires. A growing interest in US empire is also evident, and articles examining US activities—whether through lenses of settler colonialism, corporate or economic colonialism, or military colonialism—make up over half of the pieces included in this issue, as well as a substantial proportion of the second forthcoming special issue on this theme. Although this issue was motivated by our own work on missionaries, albeit from divergent approaches, the cultural and affective dimensions of imperialism remain less dominant, as seen here, than those aspects often viewed as more closely linked with empire—economics, trade, infrastructure. This comes with implications for which geographies are ultimately studied and understood within the broader scholarship on empire. While the essays collected here showcase a diverse and wider reach than those considered formal colonies, including areas of Central and South America, the Eastern Mediterranean, East Asia, and the Indian Ocean, this is far from a comprehensive catalogue of "informal" imperialism, but rather an initial attempt at expanding our understanding of the pervasiveness and endurance of empire in the built environment. In recent years, postcolonial perspectives have given way to decolonial approaches, and to the question of coloniality, first articulated by Latin American theorists as pertaining to early modern empires in the Americas.[34] Coloniality implies a connected system of knowledge and power that needs to be rethought entirely if one is seriously committed to a just and decolonial future. Coloniality is also another lens through which to consider the situations discussed in this special issue, and particularly in the set of essays that will be published in the second part of this collection in 2025, and which examine broadly the question of imperial legacies. Within the growing and fraught discussions about reparations and reparative actions,[35] it has become increasingly

clear that there remain large gaps in our understanding of the myriad ways in which architecture and its attendant practices participate in and continue to uphold unequal systems of knowledge and power. We hope that the essays in this issue, and the next, constitute a step forward in this direction.

Notes

[1] Kathleen James-Chakraborty, "Beyond Postcolonialism: New Directions for the History of Nonwestern Architecture," *Frontiers of Architectural Research* 3 (2014): 1–9.

[2] James-Chakraborty, "Beyond Postcolonialism," 4.

[3] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[4] Sibel Bozdogan, "Architectural History in Professional Education: Reflections on Postcolonial Challenges to the Modern Survey," *Journal of Architectural Education* 52, no. 4 (1999): 207–15.

[5] This is still the case today, with some exceptions. On the comparative study of empire, See Yasmina El Chami's doctoral dissertation (and forthcoming book), "The Project of the City in Nineteenth Century Lebanon: Missionary Competition and Collective Colonialism in Beirut, 1820–1914" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2022). Anthony King's pioneering studies often focused on the relationship between the metropole and the colonies—see, for instance, Antthony King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World Economy* (London: Routledge, 1990). For a more recent example see Sheila Crane, *Mediterranean Crossroads: Marseille and Modern Architecture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[6] For an overview of the work done in this direction, consider the review essay of Vandana Baweja, "Beyond Alternative Modernities," *ABE Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe* 9–10 (2016), doi.org/10.4000/abe.10943. See also Ayala Levin, "Beyond Global vs. Local: Tipping the Scales of Architectural Historiography," *ABE Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe* 8 (2015), doi.org/10.4000/abe.10869.

[7] Mark Crinson, "Imperial Modernism," in *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire*, ed., G. A. Bremner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 198–236 (201).

[8] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 115–20.

[9] Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 116.

[10] These build on Sanjay Subramanyam's articulation of the concept. See the recent collection of his ideas in Sanjay Subramanyam, *Connected History: Essays and Arguments* (London: Verso, 2022). See also Tom Avermaete and Cathelijne Nuijsink, "Architectural Contact Zones: Another Way to Write Global Histories of the Post-War Period?," *Architectural Theory Review* 25, no. 3 (2021): 350–61; and the recent special issue in this journal edited by Eunice Seng and Jiat-Hwee Chang, "Cosmopolitanism's Others: Forgotten Histories of Transnational Architectural Practice," *Architectural Theory Review* 26, no. 3 (2022).

[11] See, for instance, Mabel O. Wilson, Charles L. Davis, and Irene Cheng, eds., *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020); Ginger Nolan, *Savage Mind to Savage Machine: Racial Science and Twentieth-Century Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021), and the two-part *JSAH* roundtable "Constructing Race and Architecture, 1400–1800," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 80 no. 3 (2021): 258–79; and no. 4 (2021): 385–415, resp.

[12] For an early overview of these developments see G.A. Bremner, Johan Lagae, and Mercedes Volait, "Intersecting Interests: Developments in Networks and Flows of Information and Expertise in Architectural History," *Fabrications* 26, no. 2 (2016): 227–45; and the recent special issue of *ATR*, edited by Jasper Ludewig and Maren Koehler, "Terms and Conditions: Financialized Space," *Architectural Theory Review* 26, no. 1 (2022). While these collections do not exclusively focus on colonial or imperial conditions, several of their essays show that it is almost impossible to consider these themes without addressing questions of imperialism.

[13] See, for instance, Aggregate Collaborative, *Architecture in Development: Systems and the Emergence of the Global South* (London: Routledge, 2022); Iain Jackson, Ewan Harrison, Michele Tenzon, Rixt Woudstra, and Claire Tunstall, *Architecture, Empire, and Trade: The United Africa Company* (London: Bloomsbury, 2025); Ayala Levin, *Architecture and Development: Israeli Construction in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Settler Colonial Imagination, 1958–1973* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022); and the *ABE* double

issue edited by Sebastiaan Loosen, Erik Sigge and Helena Mattsson, "Architecture in the Foreign Aid-funded Knowledge Economy," *ABE Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe* 21-22 (2023), doi.org/10.4000/abe.13954.

[14] In addition to the above, consider the articles by Will Davis, Cameron Macdonell, and Yasmina El Chami in the special issue edited by Laila Seewang and Irina Davidovici, "Timber Constructed: Towards an Alternative Material History," *Architectural Theory Review* 25, no. 2 (2021); the recent special issue edited by Monika Motylińska, Maria Ignacia Jiedes Olivares, Paul Sprute, and Robby Fivez, "Material Constraints," *ABE Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe* 23 (2024); and Aggregate Collaborative's collection edited by Meredith TenHoor and Jessica Varner, "Toxics," https://we-aggregate.org/project/toxics

[15] G.A. Bremner, "Introduction: Architecture, Urbanism, and British Imperial Studies," in *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire*, ed. G.A. Bremner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1-17.

[16] An early example of this is Jiat-Hwee Chang, *A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture: Colonial Networks, Nature and Technoscience* (London: Routledge, 2016). More recent examples include the special issue edited by Chang and Daniel J. Ryan, "Entanglements of Architecture and Comfort beyond the Temperate Zone," *ABE Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe* 17 (2020), doi.org/10.4000/abe.7853; and Chris Cowell, *Form Follows Fever: Malaria and the Construction of Hong Kong, 1841–1849* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2024).

[17] This is inspired by Sara Ahmed's work on cultural politics of emotions and "emotional turn" in humanities and social sciences. For example, see Jane Lydon, *Imperial Emotions: The Politics of Empathy across the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Kristine Alexander, "Emotions," in *A Cultural History of Youth in the Age of Empire*, ed. David M. Pomfret (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 99–116; Claire McLisky, Daniel Midena, and Karen Vallgårda, eds, *Emotions and Christian Missions: Historical* Perspectives (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[18] Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

[19] Ann Laura Stoler, "Affective States," in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, eds, David Nugent and Joan Vincent (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

[20] Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 2.

[21] This was linked to ideas about their caring and maternal instincts. See for instance Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, and Women, 1870–1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996). For a broader investigation of feminism and imperialism see for instance, Carolyn J. Eicher, *Feminism's Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022).

[22] For an early discussion on this topic, see Swati Chattopadhyay, "Blurring Boundaries: The Limits of 'White Town' in Colonial Calcutta," *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians* 59, no. 2 (2000): 154–79; Swati Chattopadhyay, *Small Spaces: Recasting the Architecture of Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023).

[23] Sujit Sivasundaram, "Sciences and the Global: On Methods, Questions, and Theory," *Isis* 101, no. 1 (2010), 146. On the imperial dynamics of archives see, for instance, Aisha Ariella Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019); Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); and Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). For a discussion regarding what counts as "pertinent" and matters of access in relation to global histories, see the roundtable article edited by Sara Honarmand Ebrahimi and Ismay Milford, "Roundtable: The Archives of Global History in a Time of International Immobility," *Historical Journal* 95, no. 270 (2022): 586–97.

[24] Histories of the body as well as emerging discussions in histories of emotions and experiences, especially their formulation of bio-cultural historicity might prove useful in this endeavour. See Rob Boddice, "The Ddeveloping Bbrain as Hhistorical Aartifact," *Developmental Psychology* 55, no. 9 (2019):1994–97. See also Jeremy Trevelyan Burman, "History from Within: Contextualizing the New Neurohistory and Seeking Its Methods," *History of Psychology* 15, no. 1 (2012): 84–99; Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[25] With the exception of studies on the Ottoman Empire, although these rarely examine these regions from the perspective of European imperialism. Consider, in this respect, Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996). Some of the foundational studies on the Ottoman Empire include Zeynep Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French-Ottoman Encounters,* 1830–1914 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); and, more recently, Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840–1880* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press for Architecture, 2014). For a recent example of a study on European imperialism in the Ottoman Empire see Peter H. Christensen, *Germany and the Ottoman Railways: Art, Empire, and Infrastructure* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017).

[26] For more on this line of argument see El Chami, "The Project of the City," 18; and Yasmina El Chami, "A Mutual Project: Architecture and the Imperial Foundations of American Missionaries in Nineteenth-Century Beirut," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 83, no. 4 (2024): 481–504.

[27] Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 16–18.
[28] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review* 6, no. 1 (1953): 1–15.
[29] Gallagher and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," 1.
[30] Gallagher and Robinson, "Imperialism of Free Trade," 7–14.
[31] For the debates surrounding Gallagher and Robinson's concept see the review article by Benard Attard, "Informal Empire: The Origin and Significance of a Key Term," *Modern Intellectual History* 20, no. 4 (2023): 1219–50. See also Ann Laura Stoler, "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty," *Public Culture* 18, no. 1 (2006): 125–46.
[32] Yasmina El Chami, "A Jesuit-Lyonnais Project in Nineteenth-Century Beirut: Multiplicities of the Local and Global at the Université Saint-Joseph," *ABE Journal: Architecture Beyond Europe* 19 (2021), doi.org/10.4000/abe.12690.
[33] For an example of such an approach, see Kenny Cuppers and Prita Meier, "Infrastructure between Statehood and Selfhood: The Trans-African Highway," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 79, no. 1 (2020): 61–81.
[34] See for instance Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).
[35] See the recent issue of *JAE* edited by V. Mitch McEwen, Cruz Garcia, and Nathalie Frankowski, "Reparations!" *Journal of Architectural Education* 77, no. 1 (2023); and Saloojee's critique in Ozayr Saloojee, Brandi T. Summers, Nicholas Anthony Brown, et al., "Field Notes on Repair: 3," *Places Journal* (November 2024), https://placesjournal.org/article/field-notes-on-repair-3/