Kinshasa – Brazzaville, The cultural landscape of the mirrors cities on the Congo River

Kinshasa and Brazzaville, located on the Pool Malebo's[1] amphitheater shore, have the highest proximity in the world between two capital cities. During the colonial period, this unique situation has been a "mutual influence" in determining the urban identities of the two cities that remain competitors with intermingled destinies which has been described as "mirrors cities" by the historian Charles-Didier Gondola[2]. Is this concept of 'mirror cities', shaped from the historical analysis of socio-cultural aspects and the development of political history (of the cities), a good key in understanding within the long-term span approach. How can we better understand the natural and cultural aspects of urban landscapes and the architecture of the Pool Malebo's sites, a strategic hub at the Congo River' for offloading and the starting point for land routes towards the Atlantic Ocean and the outer world[3]? Could it be possible nowadays to get out of singular monographs written in parallel that is strongly influenced with colonial pasts in order to start writing a history of cities going beyond national frameworks, proposing a more globalized and a comparative analysis throughout the African continent, based on a long term span approach? How can we create the basis for common and simultaneous perspectives, for both shores, in a way that would embrace the three major periods of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history, through physical evidences or traces? Will the recognition and the appropriation of the Congo River's cultural landscape be a new story that would open the notions of shared, local and/or universal heritage?

The pre-colonial Pool: traces of Prehistoric occupation

During the thirties, drainage works, earthworks and material extraction, due to increased development in the capital cities, have led to archaeological discoveries. Early excavations have led to the discovery of numerous remains from the lithic industry (characterized by scrapers, drills, blades, arrow points…) for which the cutting manufacture dating from Paleolithic period to the Mesolithic period; the most ancient remains on each river bank could date to more than 70.000 years. The Congolese basin, provided to be an attractive environment for the settlement of the first human groups. Over the first millennium B.C., the population abandoned their nomadic way of living, and decided to settle[4].

Between 500 and 1000 B.C, the Bantu population from Niger and Benue established themselves along the Congo River, and towards the central basin and the bordering territory. The archeological remains found after excavations have confirmed the usage of metal and ceramics by this civilization. The Pool is a border area on the boundary, between the Kongo land and an another linguistic area, that belongs to the B family of the Bantu languages, which extends to the North, from Gabon to the Kasaï province. While the people of the higher level imposed their language, the people

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[1] In the 1970s, the former Stanly-Pool has been called Pool Malebo by the Zairean authorities

[2] Charles-Didier Gondola, *Villes miroirs. Migrations et identités urbaines à Brazzaville et Kinshasa. 1930-1970.* Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997, p .13-20

[3] Concerning the reading of both urban areas mentioned in this article, reference is made to two inventories of architecture and urban spaces made in Brazzaville by 1995-1996 and in Kinshasa in 2009-2010.Bernard Toulier, *Brazzaville-la-Verte. Congo,* Brazzaville/Nantes, 1996 ; Bernard Toulier, JoahnLagae, Marc Gemoets, *Kinshasa. Architecture et paysageurbains*, Paris, Somogy, 2010 and website : *www.wikinshasa.org.*

[4] Jan Vansina, « L'histoire de l'Afrique centrale dans la perspective du temps long », Jean-Luc vellut (dir.), *La mémoire du Congo. Le temps colonial.* Tervuren/Gand, Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale/ Ed. Snoeck, 2005, p.23-27.

from the Kongo coastal area – whose kingdom was at its peak in the 15[th]century – had introduced their money, called *nzimbu*, made of small shells, that was replaced by 'teke' copper strip, called *ngele*, from the 18[th]century.

The Bateke villages of Pool were at the centre of large trading zones: the North-South and East-West, and served as storage areas for trade between forest and river areas, supplying with fisheries, livestock, and also ivory and slaves. The coastal zone in Atlantic, carried fabrics, guns, finely worked metals through caravan routes, also included European manufactured products like faïences or stonewares, along with glass pearls or mirrors, alcohol… The African societies of Pool were already in contact with Europeans several centuries before colonization.

In 1655, the Italian capuchin missionary, Jérôme de Montesarchio provided the first description of the Pool where more than two hundred pirogues were sailing: "This Congobela is a wide urban area on the Zaïre shore. Initially, it was established on a large island, located at the center of the river whose place is more like a sea than a river. But afterwards, due to the wars, they separated, some settling on one bank, the others on the opposite one[5]".

From the 1880s, the commercial hub of Congo, that was already declining, located on the Pool on both sides of the River, was coveted by Henry Morton Stanley and Pierre Savorgnan of Brazza, and there was a rivalry between them. The whole population was dispersed in the many villages around the River. The estimated number of population could have been between 10.000 and 20.000 inhabitants at the end of the 19thcentury. The authority was divided between the different "kings" who each reigned on a village or hamlet that was surrounded around their territory. Among the most important were, Ngaliema, the chief of Kintambo, and on the right-bank, Makoko, the chief of Mbe. The traces of these villages, are the large quadrangular huts of wattle made of raphia, covered by semicircular roofs, gathered around a circular place, visible in the pictures of the early 20[th]century. Today, these are still identified by the presence of baobabs (former village of Kinshasa), chiefs tombs (MflumuNvula, nearby Funa river, Kinshasa; near the former naval dockyard Chacona, Brazzaville)[6], or just by the commemorative steles located on *non aedificandi* areas, that are increasingly endangered or destroyed (M'Foa, Brazzaville).

How can we build today the parallel histories for the pre-colonial period of central Africa without a network of local archaeologists? The earthworks carried out recently on the major construction sites of both the capital cities, did not include any archaeological monitoring nor did it enable the recording of the necessary traces and data to write the history of that period.

Setting the urban colonial space and emergence of cities-capitals. 1880 – 1934

The organization of pre-colonial urban space was used as a framework for the colonial exploitation system which reorganized, strengthened and developed the urban space to answer its own needs and to address the national metropolitan competitive interests, according to the Africa dividing carried out in France and ratified with the Berlin conference (1884-1885). Numerous and

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[5] Olivier de Bouveignes, « Jérôme de Montessarchio et la découverte du Stanley-Pool », in *Zaïre,* II, 1948, p.989-1013.
[6] Léon de Saint Moulin, « Les anciens villages des environs de Kinshasa », in *Etudes d'histoire africaine,* II, 1971, p.83-119*.*

often fictionalized parallel readings have been initiated usually without leading to consider the oldest remnants left by Europeans and native people in the multicultural and multiethnic cities.

Late 1879, while acknowledging Stanley's discoveries, Brazza left on behalf of the International African Association's[7] French committee, with the support of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, in order to "occupy the closest place from the Atlantic, where the Congo River can be sailed". He met with the king Makoko the following year, signed a treaty and put the French flag in front of the king's hut, in N'Couma. Before leaving, he laid the foundation for N'tamo settlement on the right-bank, supervised by the sergeant Malamine, on a territory granted by the king Makoko and named four years later as "Brazzaville" by the geography Society. This territory comprises four Batéké villages: M'Foa (near the city hall), M'Bama (on Bacongo's promontory), Impila (near Yoro's fishing port) and Okil (behind Poto-Poto). On the other side of the river, Stanley signed a treaty in 1881 with the chief Ngaliema and "founded" the first Belgian colonial station, the Stanley-Pool station, on the Kitambo[8] village site including its port.

These bridgeheads, held by Europeans, drew the former indigenous trade and accelerated the economic decline of the Batéké villages whose populations were driven bit by bit into inlands. They were used as relays for inland and upstream river's exploration and exploitation, and they were linked downstream by two "caravan routes" whose courses are occasionally still visible through urban land plots, to the trading stations of two Atlantic ports located at the North and South side of the river estuary, Loango[9] and Matadi.

Besides the raw materials coveted by Europe, the porters 'head transported also prefabricated and assemblage materials on the opposite direction, in particular from metallurgical industry, required for the transportation and housing of the first European pioneers and carried by boats: spare parts steamers for river sailing, like the A.I.A. built by the Mediterranean forge and shipyard Society (Le Havre) (1880-1882) on behalf of the Belgians, bungalows with steamer and spare parts manufactured in England, built for Baptists missionaries around 1880 on the English Point (léopoldville), sheet metal tiles used for the first diocese cover in Brazzaville (1888 – 1892 ?) or cast iron posts used for underpinning or verandas of the first colonial houses in Kintambo district (léopoldville), or reserved for administration in the Plateau district (Brazzaville). A study on manufacturing places, transportation modes and the implementation of metal architectures from European industrial revolutions, in Belgian Congo and on the whole E.F.A. is still to be written.

In their early years, the two colonial stations had shown similarities in urban development on both banks, organized with a polynuclear layout whose European functional urban centres corresponded to the different powers settled. In Brazzaville, the different operating centers were divided by ravines where small rivers flew to meet the main river and the Europeans implantations settled in upper parts, considered to be healthier than the river's sides. From 1884, the first

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[7] The International African Association (Association InternationaleAfricaine, A.I.A.), was created in 1876 by the Belgian King, whose mission was to "explore unknown areas in Africa, facilitate the routes opening that would make the civilisation enters inside the African continent, and to search for efficient ways for the elimination of slave trade". The same association sent back Stanley in 1879 at the mouth of the River Congo to found commercial stations along the river banks.

[8] http://www.brazza.culture.fr/fr/missions/leopoldville.htm. Date accessed: 15/08/2012

9 Roger Frey, « Brazzaville. Capitale de l'Afrique Equatoriale française », Encyclopédie mensuelle d'Outre-Mer, 48-49, august-setember 1954, p.36

European habitations settled in the Plateau district, on a small village site with 17 preexisting huts. Charles de Chavannes built the first hut for the administration, with a peripheral veranda and wood structure with in filled spaces made of plaited palm in plait raffia and vegetal "thatching" for the four sides' of the roof which techniques were partly coming from Batéké huts[10].Twenty years later, the whole district was given to the administration and the chief commissioner's "residence" was built in 1903 to further host in 1908 the "palace" for the general governor of the colony who would become two years later the general governor of the Equatorial French Africa (E.F.A.). At the beginning of the XXe century, the district had an properly ordered layout that served administrative public services buildings and the government officers' huts, all built with material from the brickyard located below near the river and a small landing, and was equipped with an embryonic water supply system, public lighting and even a phone connection with Léopoldville. The hill of Eaglet district, granted in 1887 to the catholic mission of the Holy Spirit Fathers, shown a similar organization, with the cathedral and the diocese in central position from which started crow-foot's roads connected to the other strategic points of the colonial station, opened on parks and plantations and respectively leading to the house of Sisters of Cluny, Port-Léon and the Mission brickyard. Inside the land grant, under the watch of the Fathers, a "Christian village", known as Small-Wedding and Great-Wedding village – comparable to the "freedom villages" in Libreville or Freetown – was built for former slaves and free men. The army settled these two urban centers in the Tchad plateau: the E.F.A. headquarters, built in 1913, reproduced the colonial typology used by the building officers from engineering, the military executives' houses were inspired by civilian houses with verandas and the circular huts of the indigenous guards, made up with Senegalese skirmishers, which are built from the Senegalese tradition. Finally the trading posts of major companies have spread over the river banks to facilitate merchandises' storage and transshipments, which would get partly to Belgian storehouses and to those belonging to the same company[11], on the left-bank served by the railway connecting Léopoldville to Matadi since 1898.

During the 1900s, African people had been subject to discriminating and segregationist measures and were housed apart from the European districts in the new indigenous villages of Bacongo[12] and Dakar, then from 1911 of Poto-Poto with subdivisions squared by orthogonal paths delimitating a grid made of small quadrangular blocks including 32 land plots. The indigenous residents were brought together according to ethnicity criteria[13] and controlled by a"capita", captain in charge of maintaining order liaising with police camp officers[14].

Starting from 1912, indigenous towns, structured on the same principles inspired by contemporary towns of Brazzaville, has been established on the South of the European city, in West-

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[10] Eugène Guernier (dir.), *Afrique Equatoriale Française,* Paris, Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime, 1950, p.60. Reproduction of Charles de Chavannes's drawing showing « The first house inBrazzaville » signed and dated from the 30th of september 1884. See also http://www.brazza.culture.fr/fr/missions/brazzaville_1.htm. Date accessed: 15/08/2012.

[11] The *NieuweAfrikaanseHandelsVennootschap (N.A.H.V.),* Dutch company runned by Anton Gresshoff owned storehouses on each side of the River served by a massive flotilla of streamers.

[12]Bacongo was founded « …in 1909 on the M'Bama village's place, widened by a defectors area and by porters from low-Congo (Freedom village)".Rogey Frey, « Brazzaville. Capitale de l'Afrique Equatoriale Française *»,* in *Encyclopédie mensuelle d'Outre-Mer*, août-septembre 1954, n°48-49, p.95.

[13] In poto-Poto, see city plan made with iron wire and ceramic around 1950, inside the collective house, whose street names declines countless ethnicities.

[14] Charles-Didier Gondola, *op.cit.,* p.87-90.

Léo and East-Léo, and separated by the military camp of the public Force. By 1922, factories and companies in Léopoldville (Belgian Congo Oil Trade – H.C.B.-, National River Transport of Congo – SONATRA- or Congo Railways Company – C.C.F.C) must built themselves in order to provide housing to their employees and helped in building their houses[15]. In 1930, the first experimental and standard huts with hard structure appeared in the indigenous towns of Mpila in Brazzaville, in the "district of the Sixths"[16] or for the railwaymen quarters of the Ocean-Congo Railway Company (C.F.C.O.), laid according to a clever geometrical layout over a square plan[17]. Three years later, in East-Léo, 27 dwellings were built with permanent material, financed by the Special Fund for advance granted to indigenous people[18].

On both side of the River, the segregationist system went with a circulation ban for indigenous people in the European district by night[19]. On the left-bank side, the Belgian colonial station presented a less separated, heterogeneous, ordered and administrative view and more lively, modern and industrious, but equally polynuclear and segregationist, which leant upon the three State pillar, major companies and missions upon which education and instruction were relying. From the 1900s and 1910s, the city core swung towards the new port close to the rail station which attracted public services, banks and main hotels for travelers, as well as missionaries like the fathers of the Sheut congregation. These settled in their wide land grant in 1903 and built, within 1910 and 1920, a cathedral and a presbytery, scholar purveyors and buildings, according to a similar and contemporary system than the one implemented by the Fathers of the Holy Spirit on the opposite bank. In 1921, the port left the initial urban core to settle in East-Léo: the two entities were connected by rails, coming into the city, according to the industrial city principle; a Belgian innovation never been taken up in French territories.

In 1923, the decision to transfer the administrative capital from Boma to Léopoldville implied the building of a new administrative area in Kalima district, located in between the two urban centers of East-Léo and West-Léo, facilitating the urban continuum of the European area. This last was then "a vast dusty flatland where quite all over were constructions between which passed unfinished avenues"[20]. This change of scale enabled the implementation of a real urban composition project focused on a radial perspective worthy of the colonial capital-city, with its indigenous towns separated by a neutral area, for which the references were displayed at the international Congress on colonial city planning in Paris in 1931, and etched an achievement in occidental knowledge for colonial urban planning[21].

From 1930, Léopoldville's neutral zone which has illustrated the segregationist colonial system, started being implemented with the creation of the Fernand-de-Bock park. The

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[15] Charles-Didier Gondola, *op.cit.,* p.85.

[16] Charles-Didier Gondola, *op.cit.,* p.113.

[17] Jacqueline Poinsot, Alain Sinou, JaroslavSternadel, *Les villes d'Afrique noire. Politiques et opérations d'urbanisme et d'habitat entre 1650 et 1960.* Paris, Ministère de la coopération et du développement / La Documentation française, 1989, p.142-143. To be compared with the Freedom village plan in Bamako (1890). *Ibid,* p.94-95.

[18] Charles-Didier Gondola, *op.cit.,* p.113.

[19] Jacqueline Poinsot, Alain Sinou, JaroslavSternadel, *op. cit.,* p.83.

[20] Roger de Chatelux [« CHALUX »], *Un an au Congo. Les grandes enquêtes de la « Nation Belge »,* Bruxelles, 1925.

[21] Jean Royer, *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux.* Congress report for the colonial exhibition in 1931, Paris, 1932-1935, 2 t.

implementation of this cordon sanitaire has been carried within the following year: indigenous land plots were evacuated for the creation of this neutral zone of 2 to 300 meters wide, for which unemployed persons were sent to work on market gardening.

These racial segregation projects were relatively similar to those designed since 1929 in Brazzaville, integrated in its first urban planning, and presented in 1931 by the general Governor Antonetti. The latter planned to unify the European area by allotting the Catholic Mission land plots for construction, and by redesigning the road network in the Flatlands district, while linking the various zones inhabited by Europeans with a wide avenue of 2 km long and 40 m large aiming at connecting the new rail station to the "civic center" in the Governor's palace[22]. This urban plan had been quite similar to the one implemented in Léopoldville, with the settlement of the European area long corridor wedged between black towns and the river bank. According to the instructions given for urban planning in the E.F.A. cities, Brazzaville's planning had kept "resolutely away" from European areas the two "indigenous towns" of Bacongo and Poto-Poto –also named "African towns" or "African districts"- and the railroad had also been used as a frontier[23]. Indeed, in 1934 the Congo-Ocean railway[24], linking Pointe-Noire to Brazzaville, has finally reached the capital city, so 36 years after the Belgian counterpart railway Matadi-Léopoldville, ending the capital of E.F.A. isolation and reliance on the Belgian Congo capital, whose population was already twice more[25]. A new river port was built in 1932 in M'Pila, connected to the railway terminus, with a sloping dock to unload shipments, adapted to low-water seasons and flood waters.

Buildings structures were also inspired by the equivalent architectural designs implemented in Europe whose construction in tropical regions presented a clear parallel as, for an example, the concept of garden cities going across both capitals and which deserves a shared analysis. In the same way, from the 1930s to the beginning of the 1950s, Europeans' housing, for civilian and militaries, equipped with the latest innovations in climatic architecture, have been decked with regional highlights as the usual practice within metropolitan holidays areas: Flemish-like pediments and gable with redan on facades for Léopoldville, false wood sections and neobasque assymetrical roofs for Brazzaville-the–green[26] (as in Pointe-Noire with a neo-norman railway station) and for collective use, basements made of local materials in opus incertum and with visible joints. Some exceptional residences in Léopoldville, like the vice-governor's or the OTROCO general manager's, resembled to great holiday residences with modern hybrid style. At the same time, trade and public buildings, in particular those dedicated for education and health, symbols of economic resurgence and progress, diverged from neo-classic style in use and firmly chose the modern style tinted with art deco style like in Brazzaville's central post office (1931) or in Léopoldville's Queen Elisabeth hospital (1928-1934). A shared and comparative approach of the translation of these styles and patterns would be

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[22] Ernest Spanner, « Brazzaville », Jean Royer, dir, *L'urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux,* t.1, 1932, p.160

[23] Jean Royer, *op.cit.*, t.I, p.158-159.

[24] Blandine Sibille et Tuan Tran Minh, *Congo-Océan. De Brazzaville à Pointe-Noire. 1973-1934.* Paris, Ed. Frison-Roche, 2010, 142 p.

[25] In 1930, the population in Brazzaville and Léopoldville was respectively 17.000 and 34.700 habitants, for an almost 1 to 2 ratio.

[26] The architect G. Crételle, employed by the architecture department of the General Inspection for Public Works of the E.F.A., would build many constructions in this neo-basque style between the 1930s and the 1950s. The origins of this architectural style could be related to the high presence of officials from the Bordeaux region.

highly instructive and would throw a new light on architectural influences between the two capital cities and the place of modernization through the colonial territories history.

The opening towards modernity and the impossible control of urbanization. 1934 – 1960

In Brazzaville, the coming of the Congo-Ocean railway and the dynamism of the general governor François-Joseph Reste have created the conditions for architecture and urban planning renewal in the E.F.A. capital, considered as a "cinderella colony" for a long time and abandoned by the metropole. From 1935-1936, the recent department for architecture created within the general inspection for public works of the E.F.A. proposed a new urban planning for Brazzaville which adapted the roads network for automobiles in the European district, enhanced urban space with public squares and gardens settlement decorated with pergolas, installed elegant cement fences along publics roads, created view points from the Cornice road and settled forestry reserves and botanical gardens. Simultaneously, the architect Jacques Bouvet, head of the architecture department, created numerous administrative buildings for social use (schools, clinics,…) within the indigenous towns of Bacongo and Poto-Poto, experimented the creation of a model-city with hard huts in Mafouta and built few prestigious military constructions in the modern style. The parallel history of the two public works departments is still to be written in order to define the place of engineers and architects, the implementation of new programs and modes of construction.

The coming of the general De Gaulle, landing on the small airfield in the captain Gaulard's camp, on the 24th of October 1940, was a turning point in the two capitals' history, both of them "united" and contributing to the war effort in their own ways. Brazzaville, at that time capital of the E.F.A., was promoted as capital of the Free France and brought into the spotlights. In November 1940, Félix Eboué, who has been appointed as E.F.A. general governor, launched a dazzling campaign of prestigious works in order to raise the city on international scale, despite of the lack of financial resources and the considerable delay behind the other capital. Hired in the public works department in March of 1941, the young architect Roger Lelièvre (=R.L., alias Erell) tackled the difficult task to conceive emblematic buildings and monuments necessary for the Gaullist action. De Gaulle could not be hosted in the old governor's palace, out-dated and obsolete. A new palace, located outside of the European perimeter, on the outskirts of the indigenous towns of Bacongo, which was "for short-stay guests" but rapidly called "the hut of De Gaulle", with a refined modern classicism, inspired from the Parisian palace of Chaillot (1937), has been built shortly before the coming of the general, in September of 1942. A military school had to be build hastily to train officers and non-commissioned officers sent towards the Bangui city and Tchad, and –mostly for the propaganda- forestages and gathering spaces had to be created from which the crowd would come to listen to great speeches and be witnesses of the Brazzaville conference (1944) relayed by the new radio station of Radio-Brazzaville broadcasting over the five continents[27] : monuments in Savorgnan-de-Brazza, Marchandand Sainte-Anne stadium…[28]The new indigenous politic of the E.F.A. – initiated by the

[27] Charles-Didier Gondola, *op.cit.,*p.236. To be compared with the private radio station of Congolia in léopoldville which broadcasted programs for indigenous people from 1942 and the small neighbourhoods' radio stations which multiplied later. Bernard Toulier, Johan Lagae, Marc Gemoets, *op. cit.*, p.94-95.
[28]Robert Ageron, Bernard Toulier et al*., De Gaulle, l'homme de Brazzaville.* Paris, Ed. Mazarin, 1996, 125 p.

general governor Felix Eboué since 1940[29], based on the support to local elite, the equal integration for the indigenous population through "assimilation" and the development of social structures – would has been implemented by Erell at the entrance of the indigenous town of Poto-Poto with the building of a "collective house", of a protestant temple and of the Sainte-Anne basilica/velodrome stadium[30]. This vast catholic complex coupled with the largest stadium in the E.F.A. was probably partly inspired from the first indigenous church of Saint-Pierre and the adjacent amazing velodrome stadium of Queen-Astrid, built ten years earlier in Léopoldville, and moreover from the park Général-Ermens of contemporary sports, built in 1942-1943. The places for sport practising and leisure, which were widely spread and shared by the population of indigenous towns in both capitals, incited and supervised by the colonial power, carried strong identity culture[31].

Léopoldville's building program has shown less intensity but it has provided more directly a large part of the economical war effort. In 1941, the city was exporting large amounts of food products (sugar, bier, dried vegetables, floury products) and textiles for the E.F.A. and the A.O.F. deprived of supplies from the metropole, and its mining industries (tin, cobalt, tungsten, rubber…) runned at full capacity to answer to the Allies' requests.

After the war, both capitals launched large-scale building and urban development campaigns through the implementation of ten-year plans for economical and social development[32] and of specific economic and financial organizations[33]. In 1945, the gap between the populations of the two capitals widened and increased from 1 to 3 for Léopoldville[34]. Ten years later, the investments, sharply risen, had led to a significant population growth: a further increase of 3,6% in the Belgian Congo capital when the E.F.A. capital had only increased of 1,9%[35].

In the E.F.A., the investments program provided the creation and the development of infrastructures, the construction of administrative and social facilities and the implementation of master plans and urban developments[36]. In Brazzaville, the change in the living conditions, planned through Jean-Yves Normand's master plan (1949-1951), was most noticeable within the white city

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[29] Félix Eboué, *La nouvelle politique indigène pour l'Afrique Equatoriale Française.* Paris, Office francais d'édition, 1945 [1er éd. Brazzaville, 1941].

[30] http://www.ambafrance-cg.org/Inauguration-officielle-de-la basilique-Sainte-Anne du Congo. Date accessed :15/08/2012. The stadium was inaugurated in 1946. See also the parallal social and political conceptions between Sainte-Anne designer, R.P. Charles Lecomte (1912-1985), president of the Advanced Circle, and the Father Raphaêl de la Kéthulle (1890-1856), in Léopoldville, strong proponent of sports and stadium builder. Charles-Didier Gondola, *op.cit.,* p.205-208.

[31] Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and society in colonial Brazzaville,* Cambridge University Press, 1995 [trad. française, Karthala, 2006].

32 « Plan décennal pour le développement de l'A.E.F » (1947-1956) and « Plan décennal pour le développement économique et social du Congo belge » (1949-1959).

[33] French « Fonds d'investissement pour le développement économique et social (FIDES) »and « Caisse de coopération économique de la France d'Outre-Mer (C.C.F.O.M.) ».

[34] Charles-Didier Gondola, *op.cit.,* p.189. Nombre d'adultes, Brazzaville : 28.000 : Léopoldville : 71.000.

[35] Jean-Luc Piermay, *Citadins et quête du sol dans les villes d'Afrique centrale.* L'Harmattan, 1993, p.69.

[36] Olivier Christin et Armelle Filliat, « Destin des villes de pouvoir. L'urbanisme dans les anciens territoires de l'A.E.F. », in Maurice Culot et Jean-Marie Thiveaud *(dir.) Architectures françaises Outre-Mer,* Paris, Mardaga/IFA, 1992, p.258-271 / Jean-Jacques Youlou et Scholastique Dianzinga, « Une capitale dans l'histoire », in Robert-Edmond Ziavoula (dir.), *Brazzaville, une ville à reconstruire,* Paris, Karthala, p.25-32.

which concentrated the innovations from the climatic architecture[37], being supplied by collective transports and a new hydroelectric plant, and being sanitized by a water treatment plant. The accesses to the capital were fully rebuilt: the new "imperial" aerodrome of Maya-Maya, new river port and new rail station. In less than 7 years, two urban plannings had attempted to channel this "Gold rush". Public facilities replaced out-dated and too small structures that were previously created: city hall, general hospital, Pasteur institute and private clinics, courthouse, high school, technical institute and secondary school, Central-Africa Study Institute,... The State effort was supported by banks settling in luxurious buildings... The accommodation capacities and the creation of new services (cinemas, restaurants, dancing halls), for a population almost doubled over ten years[38], had been amazingly increased : new state-of-the-art hotels, like the Relais Aériens[39], sumptuous villas - see for illustration the villa of the General Director from the Caisse Centrale of Overseas France villa - innovative buildings like the metal and aluminium"Tropical House"[40], and apartments' buildings among which were the duplex apartments building belonging to the General Company for Transports in Africa, the Air France "housing unit"[41] inspired by Le Corbusier's work as well as the La Paternelle building, and Léopoldville's first skyscraper of the FORESCOM later replicated in Brazzaville.

While the construction economy has decreased in Brazzaville from 1954, two years before Leopoldville, the overall achievements within this short period of wide urban crawl would deserve a deepen comparative assessment on the circulation of entrepreneurs and architects between the two capitals[42], the place of Congolese people in the processes of designing and building, the introduction of public project management contracting procedures, the apparition and the implementation of new building materials and the application of climate processes, and would also include stylistic analysis... In African population housing, the African Cities Office (O.C.A.), which succeeded in 1952 to the indigenous towns Office founded in 1949, identified solutions to tackle the apparition of slums in Belgian Congo, which were fully comparable to the search for standard and manufactured components in architecture. The 13.814 inhabitations edified on nine planned districts in Léopoldville from 1952 to 1958 by the O.C.A. had shown a far greater production scale than the housing subdivisions built by the S.I.A.E.F. in Brazzaville representing less than 700 houses for the same period of time. These measures for African housing could not eradicate self-building that spread over 5200 ha and more in 1960 in Léopoldville, an equivalent area than the former indigenous towns'

[37] Tristan Guilloux, « Le climat dans l'architecture moderne : regards sur le patrimoine colonial de Brazzaville », Marc Pabois et Bernard Toulier, *Architecture et patrimoine colonial. L'expériencefrançaise,* Paris, INP, 2005, p.70-85.

[38] From 1947 to 1952, the European population had increased sixfold

[39] For the overall realisations of Henri-Jean Calsat, cf. architectural in the GenevaUniversity (Switzerland), http://www.unige.ch/archives/architecture/fonds/archivesdiverses/calsat.html. Date accessed: 16/08/2012.

[40] Bernard Toulier, *op.cit.,* p.9, 36. TOUCHALEAUME Eric, *Jean Prouvé : Les maisons tropicales.* Cat. expo. Paris, Galerie 54, 2006. GUILLOUX Tristan, « The Maison "Tropique": a modernist icon or the ultimate colonial bungalow? », Fabrications, 18/2, 2008, p.6-25. CINQUALBRE Olivier, *Jean Prouvé : La Maisontropicale/The Tropical House*, Paris, Editions du Centre Pompidou, 2009. see also the 8 experimental houses with concrete vaults and double-wall of léopoldville, whose patented design is similar to those implemented in Thies (Senegalà).

[41] The comparison between the iconic Air France building in Brazzaville and the Sabena buildings in Léopoldville, symbols of the "new Congo", also inspired by Le Corbusier's inhabitation unit (Claude Laurens, 1952-1954).

[42] Roger Erell was familiar with the architects of Léopoldville and worked together with the Belgian architect René Wolff like his confrere Jean-Yves Normand also did (an information kindly given by Johan Lagae)

total surface[43]. During independence time, 400.000 people were living in Léopoldville, four times more than in the neighbouring capital. More than 90% of the population was living in black towns in both capitals. Brazzaville had then a 24 km² area, three times more extended than in 1946 due to a spectacular growth that has never be reached[44].

Outline for comparative history of the two post-colonial capitals. 1960-2010

For the postcolonial period, architectural landmarks and studies on urban landscape have not progressed sufficiently to establish relevant comparative assessments relying for a large part on a contemporary history analysis[45].

During the 1970s, the regimes in both capitals aimed at taking control over urban planning and public procurement. The French know-how for urban planning and the Pont-et-Chaussées engineers were yet still present and carried missions for urban development through the Urban Planning and Habitat Department (S.M.U.H.). On their own or in collaboration with the researchers of Overseas Scientific and Technical Research Office (O.R.S.T.O.M.), they worked on urban studies, urban atlas and master plans, frequently outside of operational projects and unable to contain urban dynamics with precarious infrastructures and intractable problems (soil erosion…) [46]. Major procurements were mostly carried out through architecture with international style like Olivier-Clément Cacoub's work, involved in many African capitals and working for President Mobutu. In Brazzaville, petrol incomes founded buildings with curtain-wall façade and colored glass windows for many banks and ministries, whose construction managers and contractors gave low credit to an alternative climatic architecture. To face the great towers in Kinshasa, like the SOZACOM tower (1969-1977) searching a formal architectural language more contextual and Kinshasa's people pride, Brazzaville would "reply" with another sculptural building, the Nabemba round tower of thirty storeys high, with a truncated pyramid lid, used for the headquarters of Elf-Congo and ministries (1990). On both sides of the Congo River, national stadiums were built with the Chinese support following worldwide-spread models. Nowadays China is still present in both capitals and carries or funds large scaled infrastructures and estate development projects. Other foreigners investors, like the Emirates of Dubai, are taking part of the competition and are planning to create a futuristic city for businesses and holidays called "RiverCity" on a large "insulated ghetto"[47].

The next urban city, in Brazzaville[48] like in Kinshasa, won't turn its back on the River, but will be design to take advantage of the panorama from the shores. Will this new modernity, based on international standards, be concerned with the preservation of the "authenticity" and the specificities of the cultural, natural and constructed urban landscapes, palimpsests and identities

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[43] Charles-Didier Gondola, *op.cit.,* p.177-184. Carte des réalisations de l'O.C.A. à Léopoldville en 1957.

[44] Axel Bonnardel et Guillaume Gambaro, *Le patrimoine de Brazzaville. Comprendre la stratification historique d'une ville par l'implantation de son patrimoine architectural.* Mémoire de master 1 de géographie, Université de Provence Aix-Marseille I, 2009, p.52.

[45] Pour Brazzaville, Elisabeth Dorier-Apprill, Abel Kouvouanna, Christophe Apprill, *Vivre à Brazzaville,* Paris, Karthala, p.30-55.

[46] For Kinshasa, researchheaded by Jean Floriot of the Bureau d'études d'aménagement et d'urbanisme (BEAU), also René de Maximy and Marc Pain works (1984). See complete bibliography in annex. About self-building in Kinshasa, Patrick Canel, Philippe Delis, Christian Girard, *Construire la villeafricaine. Chroniques d'un citadin promoteur*, Paris, Karthala/ACCT, 1990.

[47] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoyzqlViw44. Date accessed: 16/08/2012.

[48] http://www.keldi-architectes.com/aub-aménagement-urbain-de-brazzaville. Date accessed: 16/08/2012.

patchwork, as well as the Society of Posers and Elegant People (SAPE) and Congolese rumba, with shared heritage on both side of the River[49]? Local memories have been patiently recorded and collected over decades despite conflicts and inactions. The collection of traces and memories has contributed in both capitals to the slow building of social ties, solidarities and productive international trading between both Congos and countries of the North and South, allowing a new unified reading of the "BraKin[50]" as the foundation of a new heritage for the Congo River[51].

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(Translated from French by Julie Gassien)

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[49]Elikia M'Bokolo, « Le patrimoine urbain, un outil de développement pour l'Afrique », *Villes africaines et patrimoines,* actes du colloque UNESCO, Yaoundé, 4/12/2003. Bernard Toulier, « Architecture coloniale, identités culturelles et patrimoine en Afrique noire francophone », Jean-Yves Andrieux, *Patrimoine. Sources et paradoxes de l'identité ?* Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011, p.117-142. Pour un parallèle entre Brazzaville et Dakar, les deux capitales coloniales de l'A.E.F. et de l'A.O.F. HamadyBocoum, « Dakar, un patrimoine en devenir », *Les villes africaines et leurs patrimoines,* Paris, Musée du quai Branly, séminaire 11 octobre 2011, p.193-208.

[50]WimCuyvers (dir.), Brakin. Brazzaville -Kinshasa. *Visualizing the Visible*, 2006.

[51]http://fleuves-et-patrimoines.fr/. Date accessed: 21/08/2012. The website, launched on the 15th of March 2012, is provided within the UNESCO program « Rivers and Heritage » in order to support the process of Rivers' cultural-recovery and network existing experiences in cultural enhancement and awareness, especially those suggested by World Heritage Sites.