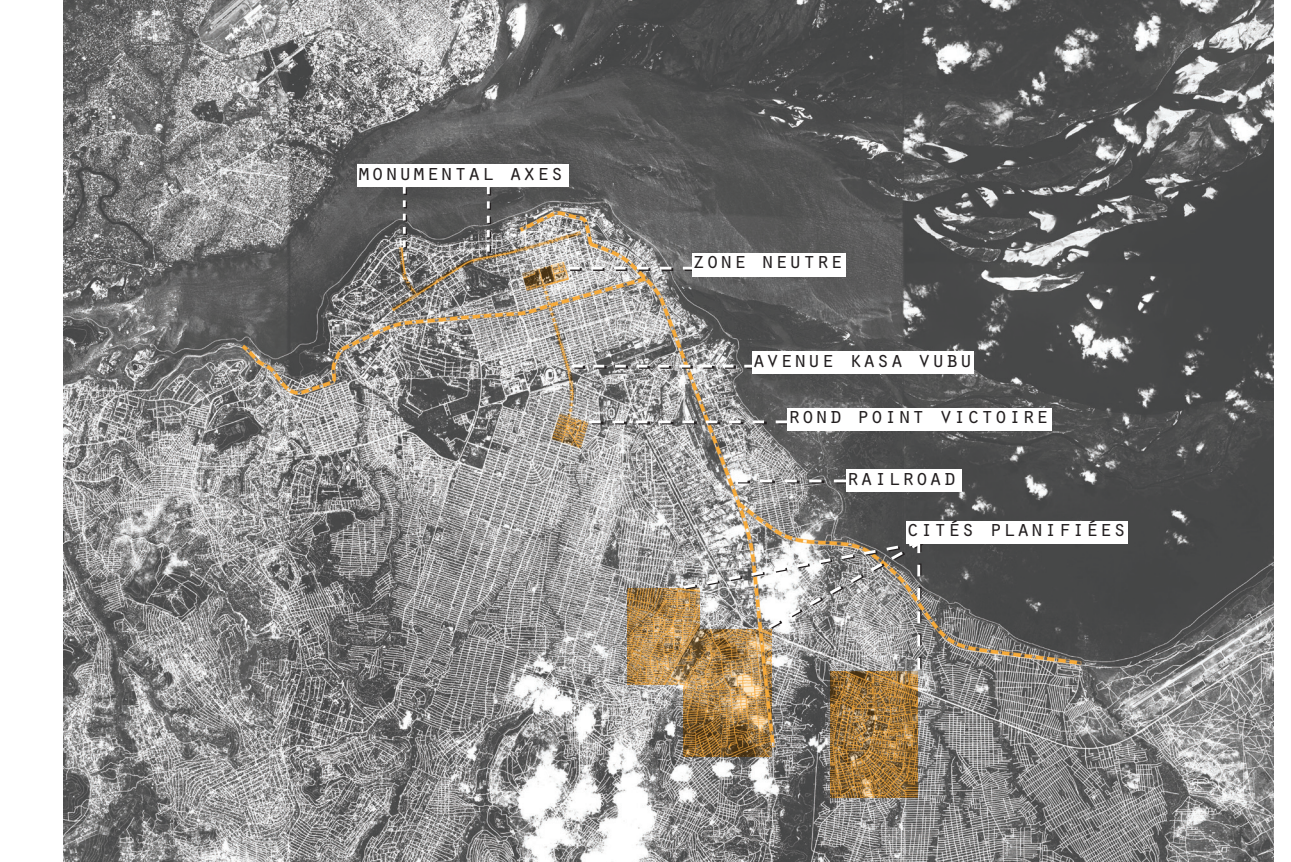




Our research on architecture and planning in the Democratic Republic of the Congo ties in with an emerging interdisciplinary attention for the African city. Focusing on the physical fabric and urban form of Congolese cities, we aim to understand how these urban centers were shaped and how they evolved over time. Particular attention is given to discrepancies between urban planning as a tool for projecting the future of the city and the effects of implemented urban policies on the ground. As such, we can unravel the agencies at work over time in the production of these urban spaces.

The research presented here focuses on Kinshasa, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly known as *Leopoldville*. We read its current urban landscape as a patchwork and a palimpsest. Patchwork because despite the development of –sometimes elaborate– urban surveys and visionary master plans, planning and building in colonial as well as postcolonial Kinshasa has been very much underscored by pragmatism, short term policies and *bricolage*. Palimpsest because the existing urban territory is composed of constitutive layers that overlap, melt into one another but sometimes are also conflictual, producing spatial ruptures as well as continuities over time.

To highlight these ruptures and continuities, we focus on six urban elements that have been structuring the growth of Kinshasa's urban landscape: the railroad, the monumental axes, the "zone neutre", the Avenue Kasa Vubu, the cités planifiées, and Rond Point Victoire. For each of these elements, a cartography is developed, presenting its role in Kinshasa's urban development from colonial to post-independence times. The work presented here is a fine-tuned version of research produced during a seminar held at the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning of Ghent University in spring 2010.



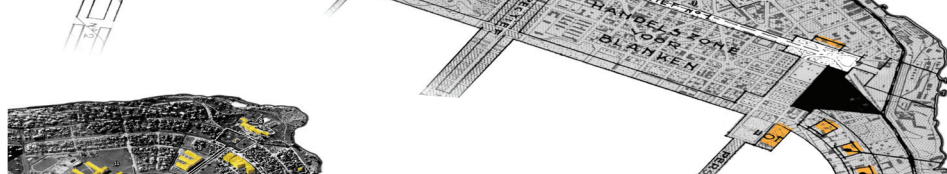
Monumental axes



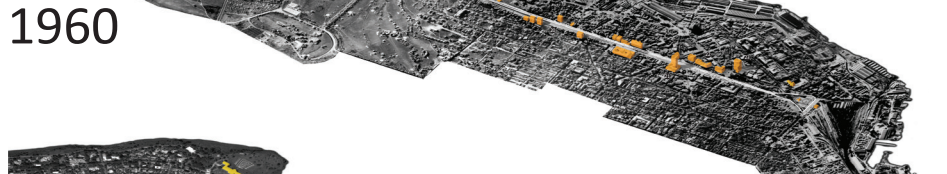
1940



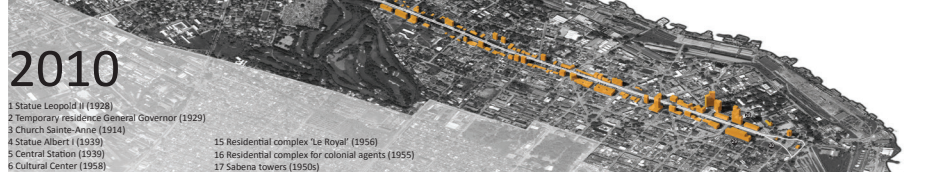
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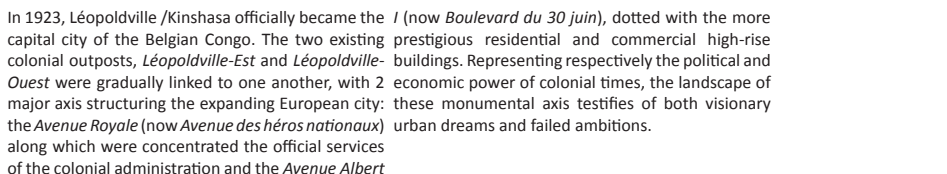
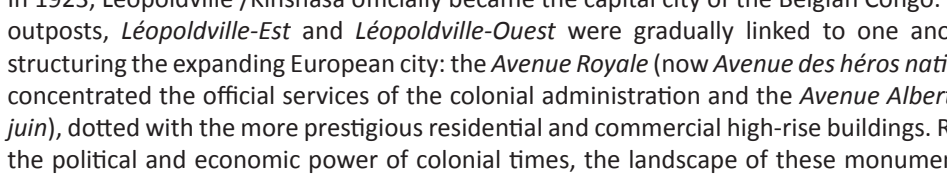
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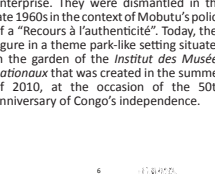
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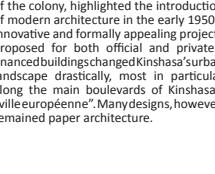
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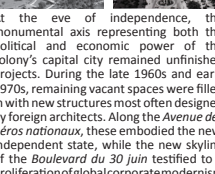
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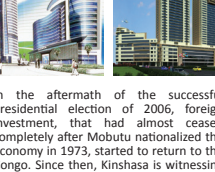
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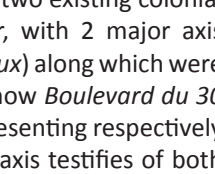
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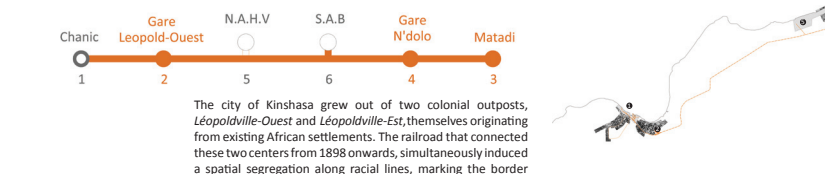
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1960



Railroad



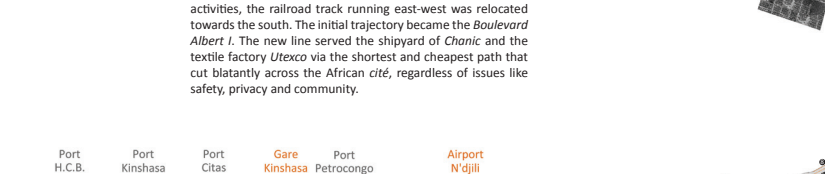
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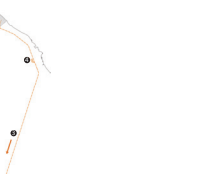
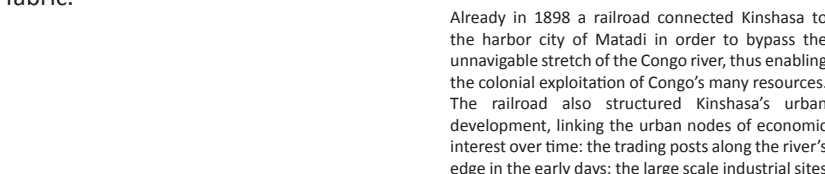
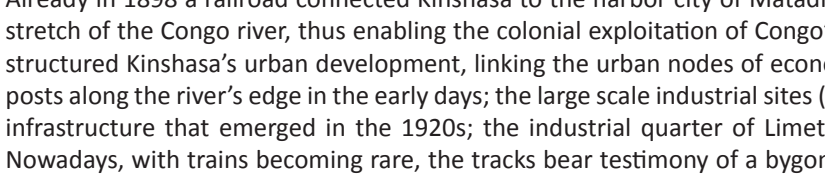
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1960



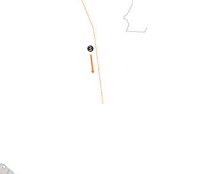
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1940



1950



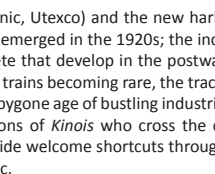
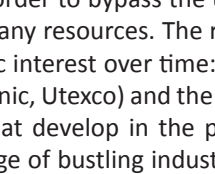
1960



1960



1960



"Zone neutre"



1940



1950



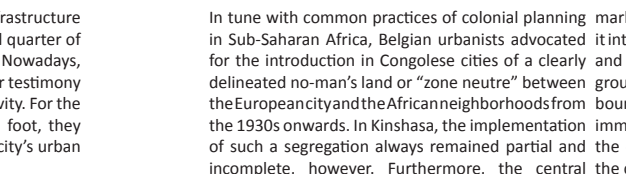
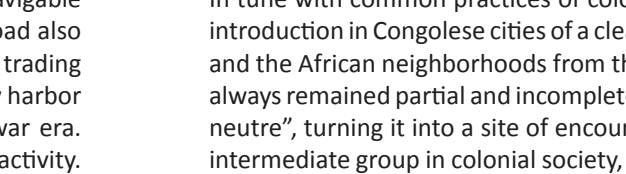
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1960



1960



1940



1950



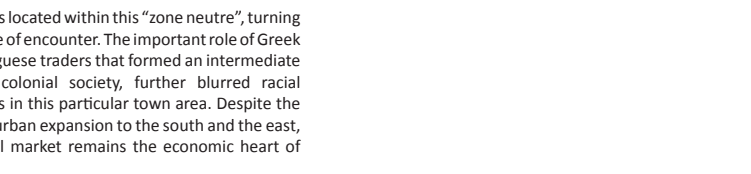
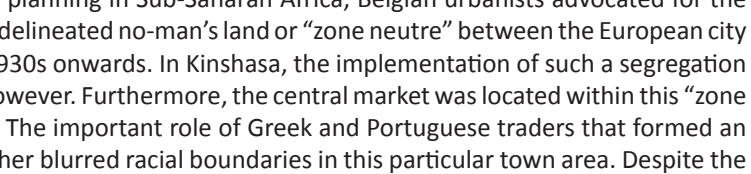
1960



1960



1960



Avenue Kasa-Vubu



1940



1950



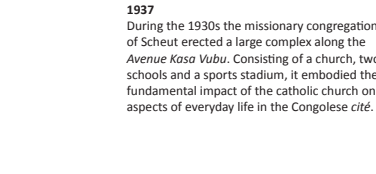
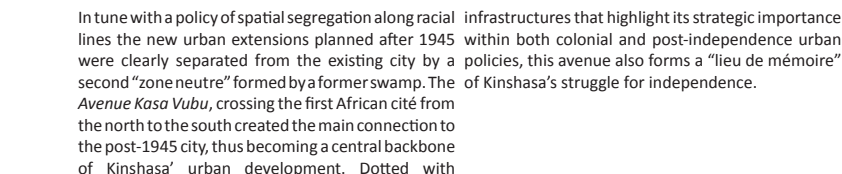
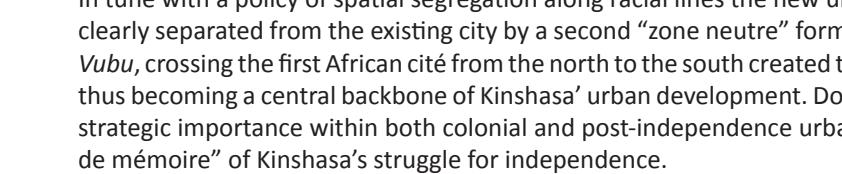
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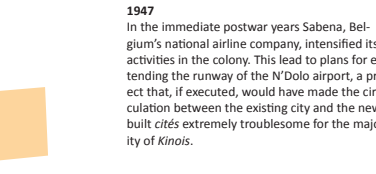
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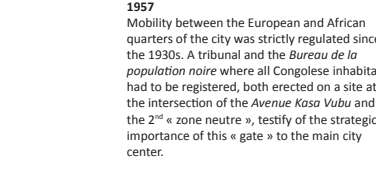
1960



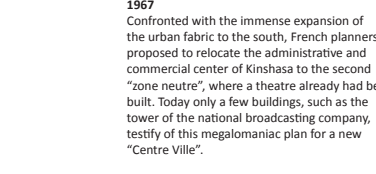
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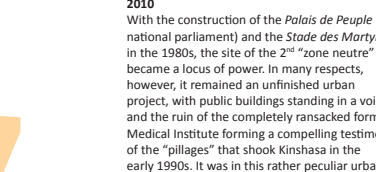
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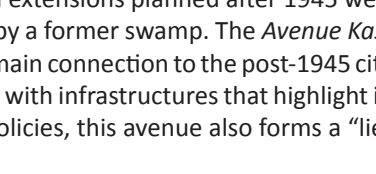
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1960



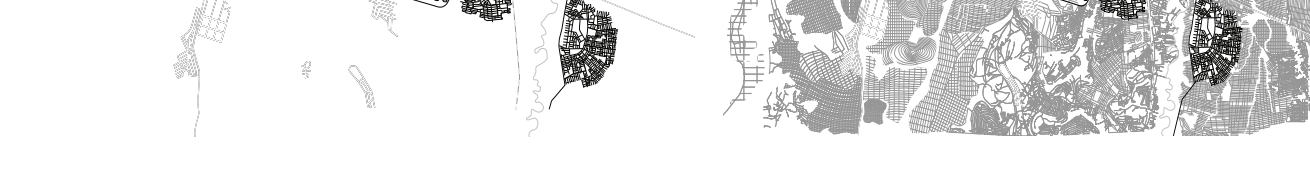
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"Cités planifiées"



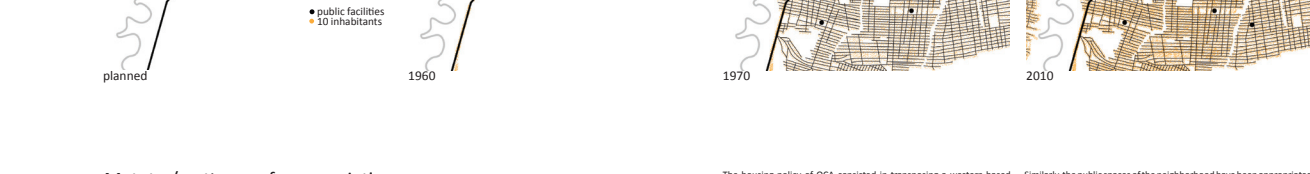
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1950



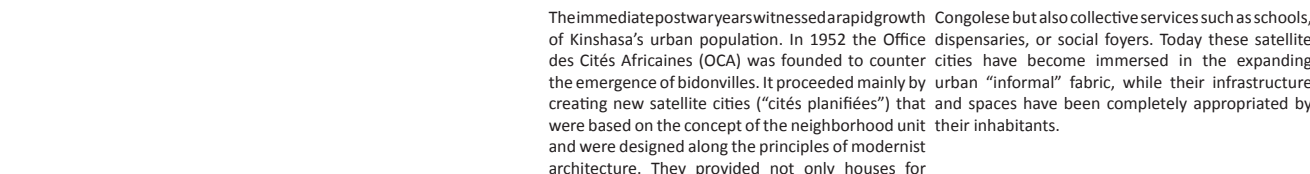
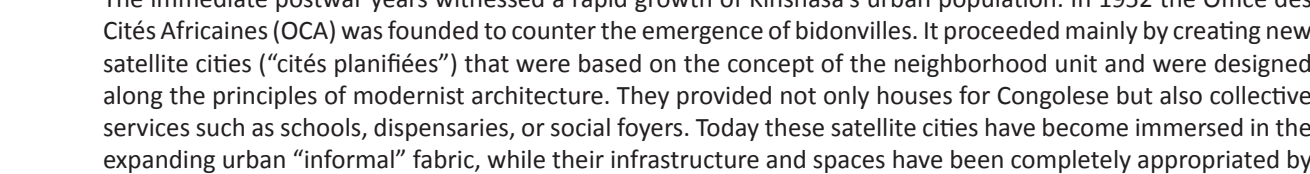
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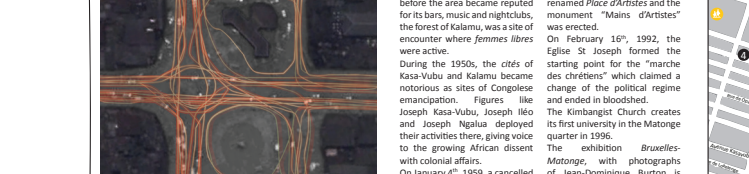
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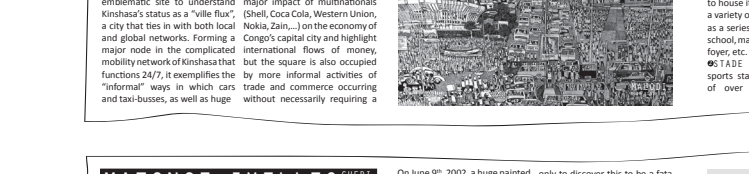
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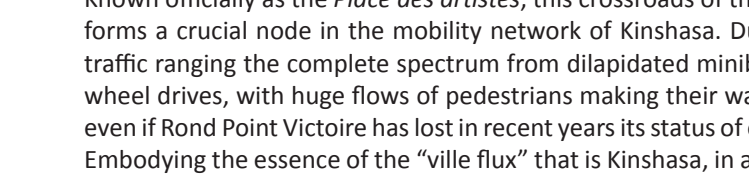
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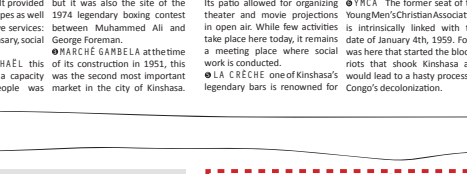
Rond Point Victoire



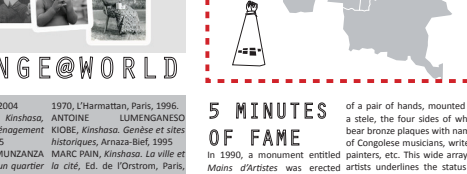
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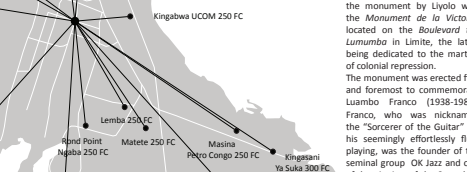
1950



1960



1960



1960

