

**II INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
'AFRICAN URBAN PLANNING'
Lisbon, September 2017**

Title (paper)	Consuming Kinshasa: Private developers and their city-building projects during the colonial and post-colonial era.
Select the theme of the conference	Theme 2 - Learning from African Urban Planning (Urban Fantasies, fantasy plans, urban megaprojects and the role of private developers in shaping African cities)
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Abstract (summarize the problem and objective of your paper and refer the method, results, conclusions, future research directions, etc.; length: 200-250 words)	<p>The contemporary urban landscape of Kinshasa is scattered with numerous billboards presenting shiny 3D-renders of <i>urban megaprojects</i>, often flanked by city-advertising slogans that promise a bright, global and modern future for the city, to its inhabitants. While these – mostly privately developed – <i>utopias</i> are often understood as a contemporary phenomenon, we can trace back their genealogy to both colonial and post-colonial city-building projects.</p> <p>Through a profound analysis of the <i>Galleries Albert 1er</i> – a high-rise building developed by a Belgian real-estate tycoon in 1952 – I aim to reveal how already during the 1950's the inner-city was greatly shaped by private investors. The project, comprising shops, offices and housing, forwarded a bright future for Léopoldville but mainly provided a racially segregated 'urban' environment to an exclusively white public.</p> <p>The paper will then discuss how there is a remarkable echo in this respect with some large-scale urban schemes developed during the Mobutu-era. The most prominent, the <i>Kin-Center</i> – a huge shopping center with a variety of urban functions, developed by a French real-estate group in 1974 – promised to turn the city into a new</p>

	<p>global metropole, but was rather a <i>city-lite</i>, exclusively accessible to a wealthy public.</p> <p>By focussing on these shopping center cases, the paper puts an often ignored built production on the table, that is to a large extent defined by private investors and their market driven logics. Understanding these principles could however be of great use when assessing the modern-day megaprojects that start to redraw the skyline of Kinshasa.</p>
Key-words (4 – 5 words)	City-building; Private Developers; Kinshasa; DR Congo; Shopping Centers

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