

The principles of campus development: a morphological and functional genealogy. What kind of knowledge can we use from an historical analysis for the design of a new campus in Saclay?

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The principles of campus development: a morphological and functional genealogy. What type of knowledge can we use from an historical analysis for the design of a new campus in Saclay?

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Abstract

This proposal is part of the thesis, which is looking at the Campus Paris-Saclay (France) project. The aim is to analyse the conception of the new campus being part of the implementation of a nation wide public policy which main purpose is to give France a higher education and research system of excellence, at the world's best level, in order to

allow to national visibility and competitiveness. A series of reforms have been introduced crossing several dynamics: the implementation of structures to evaluate and finance research, groups to stimulate the scientific cooperation, the development of a territorial policy, a system of competitive bidding and the promotion of cooperation between public research and the economic world. The thesis project consists of the analysis of the concept of the Saclay model and its implementation. How does this model of territorial organization come to life, is justified and contributes to national public policy?

The starting point of the research is to question what involves the notion of campus by looking at the hypothesis that a historical approach can create knowledge about the link between an ideological context, planning principles, functions, spatial organizations, and geographical establishment. In this paper, we will try to define the campus by looking at its different forms.

Therefore, we propose to focus on the principles of campuses development through a historical analysis in order to establish a morphological and functional genealogy of this object. The aim is to confront the origins and the evolutions of the campuses to the conception of the campus in Saclay and to try to represent the relationship between the different models and the new campus in construction.

The analysis starts at the end of the eighteenth century when the term “campus” seemed to appear at the New Jersey College -later Princeton College. It looks at two particular reforms periods of the higher education system; the nineteenth century and the sixties. Looking at the examples of the University of Virginia, (Turner, 1984), the model of « University community » (Olmsted, 1997), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Mitchell, 2007) or the campus of Konstanz in Germany (Muthesius, 2000), we observe that the campus is related to a specific ideology which influences the principles of conception. The functions are the result of these context and principles and we distinguish

two morphological variables; the spatial organization and the geographical establishment. The analysis of the principles reveals that the priority of the first campuses was to build and organize a community or to bring together several communities and create a social link between them. Traditionally, the campus is a defined outfit outside the city. Sometimes it is linked to its social, geographical and economical environment and sometimes it lives as a microcosm. We also observe that the choice of planning tools – master plan, sociogram – is the result of the development principles and influence the shape of spatial organization.

The idea is to use this genealogy as a comparative tool to discuss how the design of a new campus could depend, on one hand, on the channelling of ideas about the campus and the conditions of reception of these ideas, and on the other hand, on both specific ideology and territorial context. What are the organizational stakes and the shape responses to build a new community? How the history and the accumulation of stratum of a given territory do have an impact on the conception of a new campus? What kind of knowledge can we use from the past several models to question the management of the new project?

The final aim is to test out the case of the new campus in Saclay looking at management (project), sociology (organization theory) and town planning literature.

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