

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture (Urban and Territorial Design)
Honors theses

Living the Territory of Infrastructures. *La région Parisienne*

by Irene Vigna

Tutor: Gustavo Ambrosini

Co-tutors: Chiara Lucchini, Massimo Crotti, Panos Mantziaras

For over ten years the future of the Paris region has been in the arena of global competition between cities and the focus of a debate on the issues of urban planning and policy concerning the management of the territory. The image of the French capital has been open to question from a physical, functional and cultural points of view. Paris, full of a renewed critical and creative spirit, aims at acquiring a metropolitan dimension on the trail of the present *Ile de France* territory networks. Such a project is represented by a strongly recognizable image: *le Grand Pari(s)*. The beginning of this challenge can be traced back to September 2007, when the then-president of the French Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, at the inauguration of the *Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine* in Paris launched the idea of a new city of the XXI century, giving the architects the opportunity to play a leading role in shaping the city's future. Indeed, the *Grand Pari(s)* challenge has been drawing international attention thanks to the high-quality, creative proposals submitted by ten teams of architects directly chosen by the government in 2009.



Grand Paris and her network with the seven strategic poles

Considering the need to provide a structure forming the support for the future metropolis, the period that follows the architects consultation sees the transport question taking priority. The core of *Grand Paris* thus becomes the design and construction of its transportation network, namely, first of all, a light railway line connecting the hubs of the so-called "*Seconde Couronne*" area of Paris.

The future shape of the *Plateau de Saclay* hub plays an important part in this context. The *Plateau*, located 20 Kms south of Paris between two densely populated valleys, besides being one of the most fertile lands in the whole of France is designed to be a cluster for high profile universities, hosting large technical faculties and research centres. The area evenly combines fields with university campuses, farmhouses with warehouses, and attracts farmers, workers, employees, students and researchers. It enjoys the reputation of being an excellent scientific and technologic cluster and was a centre of great interest under the *Sarkozy* government, whose policy foresaw a reshaping of the whole area including the building of new university campuses and research centres connected by the *Grand Paris Express*, the new light railway line.



The relationship between *Paris* and the *Plateau de Saclay* in the *Ile de France* territory – conceptual representation

The project proposed in this thesis, carried out in Turin and Paris, focuses on designing the future of the *Plateau*, moving from the territorial to the architectural scale. Taking into account the particular features of the area, the masterplan for the southern part of the *Plateau* aims to give a structure to the territory, to connect his local network with the metropolitan system and inserting the whole new settlement into an urban and landscape plan, respecting the ecological balance between rural and built-up areas. Moreover, the project deals with the open question of the transit of the new light railway on the *Plateau* by proposing a detailed plan/section study of its layout and a solution for the intermodal station area arrangement. The complexity of the project leads up to a preliminary multidisciplinary research work, especially enquiring the physical relationship between the morphology of the built-up areas and the spaces of mobility, considered for their morpho-genetic strength given by the spatial rhythm of hubs and segment and by the sensory experience of the lands crossed by the railway.



Masterplan of the new urban settlement in the southern area of the *Plateau*

For further information, e-mail:
Irene Vigna: irish-86@hotmail.it