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The Sixth Material
Information as the Par Exellence Factor in Order to Transform Society Pulse into Architecture

Information is increasingly becoming an integral part of architecture and urban environment. According to Antonino Saggio «it is information, above all, that is becoming an essential component of the new architecture and the new urban environment»[1]. This is realized in a variety of ways. Firstly, information acts as a communicative tool, which architecture employs to interact with its users. It allows for buildings to tell a narrative story and thereby educate, entertain or advertise. Secondly, it prompts architects into developing buildings and spaces that are «conscious of the changes in the operational and social framework caused by information's technology and capable of expressing this revolution»[2]. Finally, and most importantly for the purpose of this analysis, information becomes a production infrastructure.

The present thesis further explores this complex relationship between information and architecture. It argues that information can be considered architecture's new construction material. The sixth building material after wood, stone, concrete, steel and glass is the information. Information – actually its collection, classification, diffusion, transmission and above all formalization and operationalization – is the driving force behind the change that we witness nowadays.

This thesis is organized in two different but complementary parts: the first part (written by Marianna Milioni) deals with the core theoretical question, namely how we can conceptualize the identification and collection of the information. It distinguishes the apparent from the implicit information. The apparent information is in essence the basis of traditional architectural theory, the reading of the existing (like soil, topography etc.), which actually has changed through globalization and shifts in geopolitics. The implicit information is the not seen but felt kind of information, the unforeseen one,

which is gathered through qualitative participation. We maintain that information could be enriched through the involuntary, unasked, of even unforeseeable information.

Nowadays society is multifaceted, incessantly changeable and therefore full of dormant energy that needs to be extracted. This thesis aims to discover the dormant information that participants may have, allowing them to realise their right to express themselves. It is this acknowledgement that directs to provoking a direct participation and measuring all the subversive consequences that this implies.

It is in this area, that this thesis aspires to contribute. In particular, it focuses on the implicit and involuntary information, which participants, as already argued, not even know to possess. It is recognised that our consideration rests on the assumption that the implicit information although not known is indeed there. However, we maintain that this does not necessarily represent a limitation to our analysis, because even its absence would be a finding in itself.

References:
[1] Gausa, M., Guallart, V., Müller, W., Soriano, f., Porras, F., Morales, J., (2003), The Metapolis Dictionary of Advanced Architecture – city, technology and society in the information age, Actar, Barcelona, p.343.
[2] Ibid.