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COURSE OF ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCTION CITY

Abstract

BIG URBAN/SOCIAL DATA

**The semiotic approach to the analysis of social media data:
a methodological basis for the definition of project
guidelines**

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Thinking city a media complex, rather than just as an architectural one, allows to open the horizon to a new social experience based on relationships and new technologies. These new media, as part of our everyday life, have an important role in the urban context, triggering a singular mechanism among them, man and space.

Sharing photos, videos and thoughts on the Internet has become a simple (and sometimes spontaneous) gesture. This habit creates an invisible layer of digital information extracted exactly from the physical space surrounding. Can this huge amount of information (generally defined Big Data) become useful for the architectural design? Certainly data collection is not a novelty in architecture and in urban planning, but the use of this kind of information in the urban field can represent now an interesting theme to explore.

Social media represent an important source of information, and with reference to our society, it is difficult to ignore the crucial role and influence of social networks in the “liquid geography” of the Web and also what concern with the relationship between people and what and who surround them. Studying by the means of data extraction from virtual platforms provides different advantages, for example with reference to costs, velocity and richness of details. In fact it is possible to collect information for an exceptional number of individuals in a way that before looked impossible, simplifying the analysis of complex social and cultural phenomena.

With this research I chose to collect free accessible data from different sections of the principal social networking services like Facebook and Twitter, adding also information from Google Maps.

The scope is to give a methodological basis to improve the project, especially from the social point of view. For this reason the subject chosen is Turin’s Cavallerizza Reale. Because it established a particular relationship with population, gained most press attention, was object of public debate and everyday establishes an active exchange with citizens that leave traces of it on the different social media.

The first purpose of this work is to reconstruct the socio-cultural meaning that some places of the city (in particular the Cavallerizza) can have on the Internet. For this reason a semiotic approach to the analysis of the extracted data is necessary, it is combined with an automatic analysis (also with the help of Artificial Intelligence). Semiotic tools were useful to translate individual declarations (tweets, posts, reviews...) in information that have a value for a community, thanks to the detection of shared collective cultural models, from which it was possible to build the vision of the place from citizen’s point of view. This allows to associate values (the fundamentals of significance of the place) to the different spaces of the Cavallerizza Reale, a way to obtain an instrument to compare the different masterplans realized for the place, but also a way to present a device able to suggest guidelines for the project and the management too.