



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

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Master of Science in Architecture Construction City

*Abstract*

## **EAT (in) THE CITY.**

**The relationship between architecture and forms of food consumption, socialization processes that influence the transformation of urban space.**

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“At certain times of the day, sidewalks became places to eat, they lead the domestic atmosphere towards the street, and with this contrast, we think about something similar to seeing the house moved to the street.” (Xavier Monteys, 2018)

Disciplines related to architecture have investigated the relationship between food and human life, instead urban design began recently to research on what links the spatial organization of cities and food activities. Artists and photographers have narrated the structural changes to places and home, the challenge today is to understand the mechanisms that trigger these changes, to plan the use of space through the design of social activities related to food.

Urban space is not something pre-existing, but it emerges, it is produced in a “performative” way, thanks to the activities (even ephemeral, and sometimes informal and spontaneous) that take place in it. Recent studies have focused on how agriculture has evolved and adapted to the new needs of the globalized world or how a city is fed according to processes unknown to us, but have we ever wondered why food has always shaped our cities and our way of life? What are the processes that trigger a physical transformation linked to a social and food ritual?

Do traditional or innovative forms of consumption and food culture, in modern cities, influence the use and the design of spaces? If we look at architecture from another point of view, with the food, is it possible to design a “recipe” to re-analyse a place? From these reflections starts this research that tries to understand how social aggregation, linked to food, influence the design of space and the configuration of architectural elements that define a place. Cities, like people, are what they eat. Cities are not only made of bricks and cement, but they are also inhabited by people, and they function according to a complex system of relationships often hidden from our eyes.

The nutrition of people is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that influences the city in a structural way, not only conditioning its rhythm, but also shaping the urban form. Food, seen in these terms, becomes a tool to give shape and importance to a space, becomes a point of attraction for the city and a meeting place for a community. Every day the food arrives on our plates as if by magic, and we rarely stop to wonder how it got there, considering that every day a city like London produces enough food for 30 million inhabitants, the processes that allow it are unimaginable for us, Nurturing cities requires a gigantic effort that probably has the greatest social and physical impact on the planet than anything else we do.

Architecture must take care of every aspect of human life; therefore, it is necessary to look away from architecture understood in the classical sense, the architect must design space according to how people inhabit in it, without excluding them from the project. Food is the reason of many of our actions and for an architect must be evident the spatial dimension that follows, so I will try to analyse the architectural design of the places with this key to reading.

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