



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

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COURSE OF  
Architecture Construction City

*Abstract*

**K-SPACE: the assimilation of the otherness as a key for the  
creation of an identity space**

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In a city like Seoul, the processes of urbanization and modernization have led to the creation of an extremely fascinating environment. Here many dichotomies came to life, old and new, order and chaos, speed and stillness. These extreme situations and the integration of different cultures have generated a hybrid identity within South Korean society, where it's difficult to find a common thread. The exceptional density, the policy of erasure and the unending growth bring life to a social condition in which a continuous struggle takes place between being lost in the city and losing the city altogether. This process is due to a discontinuity in South Korean history. This term refers to the corruption by other cultures, whose acceptance has brought out the question of cultural identity, in this case considered as excessively heterogeneous and sometimes unrecognizable. But what are the elements that define the identity of a place? And why do we feel the need to define it? Aren't the acceptance and the elaboration of the otherness a form of identity?

Retracing the different steps, the dissertation attempts to clarify the South Korean timeline and the architectural forms generated in the contemporary era. This in order to design a reuse project that seeks to merge the characteristics of two typical spaces, which belong to two different moments of South Korean reality. Following this order, the first part focuses its attention on historical events, starting from Japanese colonialism, and the consequences that these have had on Korean urban planning and architecture, until the 80s. Then there's an attempt to analyze the question of cultural identity, which has shown after the influence of other cultures within society, also explaining how certain choices depended on specific economic and social situations of the Country. Afterwards, a study on the spaces formed following the sudden growth of the population of Seoul, until the 90s, and how these are an exclusive Korean response to the lack of public spaces. Finally, the last part is an introduction to the context of the project area and an analysis of the type of the building taken into account. In this way, it can provide a basis for understanding the strategy adopted to include the past with the present, trying to use a Korean concept of space. The project is a praise to this culture, that through the concept of resilience has succeeded in incorporating otherness to produce a final result, that can be defined as part of its identity.



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