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COVID-19 was an unprecedented period of time when socializing was dangerous, causing many businesses to close or experience financial hardship. About 5,000 NYC restaurants closed and nearly 140,000 food-related workers lost their jobs. Restaurants are an essential part of the culture, street life and economy of any city; New York as the capital of human activity, serves as an archetype for how all major cities might have handled the pandemic. An environment cultivated by chaos, necessity, and unpredictability led to the creation of Corona Shacks. I conducted a site visit in NYC to photograph and document the outdoor dining shacks in four different neighborhoods. I believe it is imperative to take responsibility for how a community interacts with a space, how it is activated and what it promotes. The sensations of the physical realm affect how the mind reacts to its surrounding environment.

The main questions of my research are: do these shacks serve a purpose if they disrupt the interaction between residents and public spaces? Is their acceptability influenced by broader socioeconomic and demographic factors? This is why I dismantled the schematic of the shack to its core components, because regardless of the area it is in, the shack will still be the shack. By taking inventory of the existing conditions of each shack, both qualitative and quantitative, I was able to do a preliminary analysis of material cost for each shack to create an approximate structural building cost for each region (not considering additional decorations). By reverse engineering the building process I sought to discover if these shacks are driven by utility or economy. Shared urban spaces require discussion, planning and action. Outdoor dining is a multifaceted topic that involves action from government agencies, community organizations, and the public.