Revitalizing Torrione Fodesta into a Creative Milieu for Piacenza

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Abstract - *The research aims "To attract the Creative class to Piacenza" by proposing the implementation of the creative city concept through provision of a creative milieu that can host as well as promote and in future produce creativity. The paper gives an overview of the chosen site, Torrione Fodesta in terms of its significance, condition appraisal and its potential to be a creative milieu, and proposes an appropriate activity cluster dictated by the context, present needs of the city and aspirations of its citizens. It then proposes up gradation and reuse strategies for the existing structures and also introduction of new hard and soft infrastructure as required by the proposed functions. Finally, it gives an insight into extending the creative aura across the city, unfolding new possibilities of the immediate and far context by employing the strategies of urban acupuncture and tactical urbanism in a way that motivates creative class to engage in the process thus making the whole process socially and economically sustainable.*

Key Words: **Creative milieu, Creative City, Adaptive reuse, Urban acupuncture, Tactical urbanism**

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the human capital theory has emerged as a powerful theory for city and regional growth which presents people as the driving force and central factor for this economic development. The proponents of this theory argue that the key to regional growth lies in endowments of highly educated and productive individuals who are drawn to places that are inclusive and diverse rather than its location on major transportation routes or its abundance in natural resources which are traditionally believed to encourage setting up of firms there. This is also supported by the studies of national growth that find a clear connection between the economic success of nations and their human capital, measured by the level of education, stating that the cities would be economically unfeasible without the productivity effects associated with human capital.

However the Creative Capital theory, as distinct from the human capital theory identifies the creative class as the type of human capital suggesting that regional growth comes from the 3 T's of economic development *Technology, Talent,* and *Tolerance*, and to spur innovation and economic growth a region must emphasize all three. It emphasizes that creativity and the members of the Creative Class take root in places that possess all the three critical interdependent factors, *e*ach of which is necessary, but by itself insufficient. The distinguishing characteristic of the Creative Class is that it engages in creative problem solving and work to create meaningful new forms or designs that are readily transferable and broadly useful, drawing on complex bodies of knowledge in seeking innovative solutions. The theory also postulates that living in an open and diverse environment stimulates the creative class to be even more productive and their clustering around one another drives up inventiveness of such creative centers.

The idea of Creative City was proposed by Charles Landry in the late 1980s as a concept to encourage open-mindedness and imagination with an assumption that ordinary people can make the extraordinary happen if given the chance. This idea advocates the need for a culture of creativity to be embedded within how the urban stakeholders operate. It suggests that by encouraging creativity and legitimizing the use of imagination within the public, private and community spheres, the ideas bank of possibilities and potential solutions to any urban problem or opportunity would be broadened. This would create divergent, broad-ranging thinking that generates multiple options, which afterwards, need to be aligned to convergent thinking thus narrowing down possibilities from which urban innovations could then emerge once they have passed through the reality checker. In its original formulation, the 'Creative City' notion focused strongly on the potential of the cultural industries as it seemed that cities needed to concentrate on what made them unique and special.

According to the trends that are indicative of the new geography of creativity, the Creative Class is moving away from traditional corporate communities to Creative Cities characterized by high concentrations of the Creative Class and creative economic outcomes, in the form of innovations and high-tech industry growth. They also show strong signs of overall regional vitality, such as increase in regional

employment and population. They also provide the opportunity to creative class to validate their identities as creative people and an integrated eco-system abundant with high-quality experiences, open to diversity, where all forms of creativity can take root and flourish. They are therefore preferred by the creative class for living, attracting new companies which in many cases are started by them and thus thrive.

In light of the above facts, Piacenza being home to lots of foreigners including students engaged in various creative disciplines, is a validation of it being tolerant and open to diversity. Also due to its geographical positioning, rich architectural and cultural heritage as well as its adjacency to Milan, Piacenza has a great potential of being an socio-economic as well as a creative centre, attracting human capital in general and creative class in specific from the surrounding areas provided it gets equipped appropriately to host them. Already housing the creativity magnets like Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and Politecnico di Milano that attract the talent from across the world, there is still a huge scope of expanding the creative aspect of the city.

The city of Piacenza is strategically located at major crossroads, at the intersection of Route between Bologna and Milan, and between Brescia and Tortona and also at the confluence of the Trebbia and Po rivers, and thus enjoys the status of the capital of eponymous province. The historic city of Piacenza was founded as Roman military colony in 218 BC and during the course of history has been plundered and ruled by various dynasties. The old city of Piacenza was surrounded by a 6.500 meter long fortification wall most of which has been lost to the vagaries of time, invasions and lack of maintenance. The characteristic feature of this 15 meter high fortification surrounded by a moat full of water, were the nine towers called "bastioni" or "torrioni", projecting out of the of the fortification wall with the purpose to defend the city from invasive attacks. Situated in north east part of the city near the historic centre at the intersection of Via Nino Bixio, Viale Sant 'Ambrogio and via X Giugno, ''Torrione Fodesta'' is one of such ancient towers, dating back to the mid-19th century, that was partly demolished by the Austrian army in 1850[1] . Although the structure is mostly intact, it however portrays a completely neglected, untidy and obscene picture both inside and outside. Presently owned by the State, the 3000 m² complex comprises of the two storeyed main tower and three other single storeyed rectilinear buildings planned around a rectangular central courtyard. The curved tower also encloses a semicircular open space towards the existing railway tracks separated from it by a roughly 75 m wide strip of land traversed by an elevated road. The existing hard infrastructure is thus flexible enough allowing expansion into to the open areas within and behind.

Figure -1: Torrione Fodesta with surrounding context [1]

Torrione Fodesta has been lately in the news for its intolerable situation that the people of Piacenza who now see it as an eyesore want to denounce publicly and also has been giving a tough time to the municipality and other concerned authorities. The signs of illegal bivouacs by the homeless are evident even though the town has sealed all the fenestrations and gates. Abusers who settle, steal the electricity which also has caused an outbreak of fire due to short circuit in March 2014 damaging some parts of the building [2]. Torrione Fodesta has also been causing problems of hygiene and public health and bothering the citizens as it is a breeding ground for rats, mosquitoes and other insects that circulate undisturbed in the neighboring areas as far as the Margherita gardens and even Piazza Cavalli [3]. The driveway separating the site from the viaduct makes the scenario even more obscene by creating a strip of land overtaken by weeds and strewn with signs of an intense prostitution activity consumed in the shadow of the old building that once stood guard to the city.

Figure -2: Walling of fenestration of Torrione Fodesta [4]

The research thus proposes the implement the concept of creative city in Piacenza by means of revitalizing the historically and culturally significant yet abandoned Torrione Fodesta into an event cluster that provides hard and soft infrastructure to foster creativity. It also suggests methods to extend this creative aura across the city thus attracting the creative class to it. It proposes this by ingeniously orchestrating the tangible (hard) as well as intangible (soft) asset base with the aim of pulling attention of creative class to the Piacenza, creating a richness of association and recognition in order to create conditions that can generate downstream impacts.

2.METHODOLOGY

This research has been carried out by first studying the concept of the creative city through various reliable literature resources in the form of books, lectures and videos related to the topic. This was then followed by choosing an abandoned site within Piacenza. The criteria for such selection were that the site in addition of holding a significance for the people and the city, had to have the potential of being transformed into a creative milieu.

Torrione Fodesta which in its current state paints the picture of a highly degraded and abandoned site in the city, was thus chosen as the site to be transformed into a creative milieu owing to its historic significance, location and existing condition. Studies were then carried out for the condition appraisal of the structure both on and off site and the data was collected in the form of pictures and basic measure drawings of the complex. This gave an idea of the existing built volumes that could be reused as hard infrastructure along with the proposed ones.

The literature studies also pointed out that the concerned authorities have time and again carried out the disinfestations in the area, maintenance of the green, walling of the fenestrations and welding of the entrances, as a response to counter the repeated incidents of illegal building invasion and problems of public health that the area is causing.

These structural transformations in the original building were marked so that they could be reversed to revive the historic structure to its former glory and also to provide an insight into the new transformations that would be carried out for the adaptive reuse of the complex into a creative milieu. An event cluster was identified as the most suitable milieu for the site based on the present aspirations of the people, context and existing site conditions. This was then followed by proposing soft infrastructure in and around the complex to suit the implementation of the proposed cluster that would promote and stimulate creativity as well as provide a space that would attract the creative people. Finally in order to radiate the creative energy of the proposed milieu across the city, strategies of urban acupuncture and tactical Urbanism were incorporated by identifying strategic locations across the city as acupuncture points and proposing new public spaces, transformation of grey into green spaces, pop-up activities and mobile activities respectively. At each step of the process, the ideas were presented in seminars at Politecnico di Milano to a panel comprising of design professionals from diverse fields and social backgrounds and the feedbacks were then incorporated into the following steps thus enhancing the whole idea of implementation of the creative milieu in Piacenza. The final proposal was prepared in the form of site zoning depicting new functions and image collages and visualizations of various areas of the site after the proposed transformations which were then presented along with the existing images of the same spaces to make the idea clear to the audience.

3.RESULTS

The complex of Torrione Fodesta in its current state is an abandoned and inaccessible area lacking any function indoors or outdoors[5]. The site is ideal and qualifies on every front to be transformed into a creative milieu. Located on the periphery of the old city of Piacenza it is easily accessible by public and private transport as well as by bicycle and walking since its nestled within a well knit network of roads, bus routes and bicycle tracks. The site is at a mere 15 minutes walking distance from the Piacenza train station, thus making it by far accessible to visitors from other cities as well. Such location of the site ensures that it can't be overlooked by anyone, irrespective if one passes by it by any means of transport. It's one of the first structures from the old city that one can spot while arriving by a train on from its North-West. Also being located almost at the edge of Piazzale Milano it can be easily spotted from Via Nino Bixio, Viale Sant 'Ambrogio and via X Giugno from the South and South-East as well as the elevated bridge of Via Diete di Roncaglia again on its North-West.

The complex comprises of a two storeyed curved Torrione Fodesta along with three other single storeyed linear structures planned around a roughly trapezoidal open court. The curved building instead, shapes a perfectly semicircular open space to its North which further is separated from a roughly 2000 m^2 wasteland by an approximately 7 feet high boundary wall. The existing main entrance to the complex is from Via XXI Aprile on East along with a small gate and also from another small entrance is from the South. All the structures are mostly plastered except the main tower which is in exposed brick with windows opening onto the road.

The Complex stands quite isolated, having around 400 meter long linear parking to its South-West, 80 meter wide wasteland traversed by a bridge with train tracks defining its edge to its North-West, some commercial buildings around 25 meters away towards North-East and is separated from the closest neighborhood to its South-East by roads and parking's spreading over a width of around 60 meters.

Figure -3: Plan of Torrione Fodesta complex showing access, building distribution and dimensions and its relation to the context (Source: Author)

The green pockets within the building complex along with the open space towards the North-West create possibilities of using them as multifunctional spill over spaces by expanding into them thus promoting various outdoor activities in continuation to proposed indoor functions. Also being strategically located between the two existing green belts of Via Cardinale Maculani and Viale pubblico Passeggio, Torrione Fodesta acts as a missing link between the two existing public parks and thus has a potential to reactivate the whole edge of the city into a bustling interactive space.

Figure -4: Torrione Fodesta as a connecting link between the two existing green belts of Via Cardinale Maculani and Viale pubblico Passeggio (Source: Author)

The initial idea was to propose a production cluster in the site where artisans and craft persons would be able to research, develop, produce as well as display and sell their products. The indoor space would have provided for Research and Development labs and studios while the outdoor spaces could have been used for workshops and exhibitions. Although this strategy seemed appropriate for Torrione Fodesta, however it greatly underutilized its immediate and far context. Thus the site was finally decided to house an event cluster which could host events of varying scales thus fully utilizing the potential of the site as well as its context. The event cluster is proposed in the form of a first of its kind experimental music club where the artists can experiment and rehearse on new music forms like electro music which combines music with visual arts and also perform to diverse audiences. The venue would also offer opportunities to rent recording and visual art studios to produce new compositions. This type of cluster also can attract creative class form a much more diverse background as compared to the previous one including various artists, local, national and international bands, famous DJ's, and also people who enjoy music. In order to make the creative milieu socially and economically sustainable, some ancillary activities are also proposed. These include, venues for hosting private parties, graduation ceremonies, bar, biergarten, discotech, pool tables, karaoke rooms, card rooms in addition to administrative spaces that ensure that the venue is bustling throughout the day and night generating money from rents, entry fees and tickets.
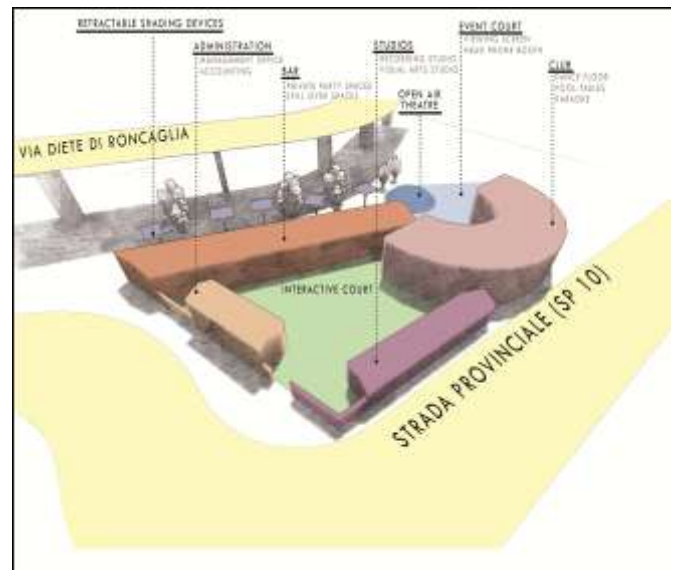

Figure -5: Proposed site programming for the Event Cluster (Source: Author)

The design strategies identified for the implementation of the idea are dictated by the historic character and structural restrictions of the buildings. Thus the approach involves major use soft interventions and avoids using hard interventions as much as possible especially within the complex.

The complex already being rich in hard infrastructure in the form of 4 buildings calls for some minor changes in the existing along with the proposal of some new hard infrastructure to suit the proposed functions. The alterations in the existing hard infrastructure majorly comprise the removal and reversal of the additions and changes that have been made to the structure by the concerned authorities as well as its illegal intruders. These comprise of removal of the various temporary structures and boundary wall which would open up the complex towards the North-East thus providing a huge spill over space for concerts and other events. This would also instill new life into the abandoned and shady wasteland. The fenestrations of the buildings that have been walled by the authorities to seize illegal intrusion are also to be restored and equipped with modern energy efficient and acoustic window panels. A part of the floor has to be cut to provide for a double height space for indoor concerts and parties. Also the roofs of the buildings have to be repaired to prevent water peculation into the interior spaces and the existing trees on the site have to be pruned.

The proposed hard infrastructure comprises majorly of an open air theatre and some retractable shading devices in the open space towards the bridge in addition to some public conveniences. These would be inviting to the creative class and stimulate socialization and interaction.

edifices rather than competing with them. The prime focus is to create a stimulating ambiance and sensations that would be inviting and appealing to creative class. This has been achieved by covering the central courtyard as well as a part of the open land behind with a colorful translucent shading device which generates an interplay of colorful light and patterns in the space under. This space has been dedicated to various unique sculptures, installations and instruments that involve user participation to produce different musical compositions. Also putting up a small stage to define a space for on street performances on the Via XXI Aprile in the North-West and painting the pedestrian paths and crossings around the site in bright hues help distinguish the area as being pedestrian dominated.

Figure -6: Visualization showing proposed Open air theatre and existing boundary wall to be demolished to open up the site from behind allowing for large events. (Source: Author)

However revitalization of the site into a creative milieu requires careful and well thought of blending of tangible and intangible aspects of design. The intangible aspects comprising the soft infrastructure majorly involve use of bright colors and lights which contrast with the monotonous building facade further enhance the appeal of the historic

Figure -7: Visualizations showing the creative ambience of the interior courtyard during night and day before and after the proposed transformations (Source: Author)

Figure -8: Visualization showing the platform put by Via XXI Aprile to define a space for on street performances (Source: Author)

Figure -9: Visualization showing the creative ambience under the bridge behind the complex during the night before and after the proposed transformations (Source: Author)

Once the creative milieu is in place, the next step of the research focuses on disseminating the creative vibes that the proposed milieu generates into the far context of the city thus reactivating it into a creative centre. To achieve this as well as to balance the top down planning of the previous approaches focusing on hard infrastructure, the strategies of urban acupuncture and tactical urbanism have been incorporated. These strategies that primarily focus on soft infrastructure, exempt the enormous financial needs as required in the previous approach and yet extend the creative sphere of influence across the city.

The concept of Tactical Urbanism was defined by the Brazilian architect Jaime Lerner as "a therapy to recover the energy of the city". To extend the idea of the creative city across Piacenza, this scheme involves the citizen participation by addressing their everyday needs and behavior patterns with creative and easily affordable design solutions. To achieve this the approach focuses on "factor four" which advocates getting maximum results with the minimum resources or doubling the wealth while halving the resources. To implement this approach the strategic locations of Piazzale Genova, Piazza Cavalli, Piacenza Train Station, and four Bus stations along Viale Risorgimento and route SP10 have been identified.

Piazzale Genova at the intersection of pedestrian dominated Corso Vittorio Emanuele II and Viale Pubblico Passeggio is located at the southern gate of the city, opposite to the North Gate, Torrione Fodesta. It is the main entrance from southern suburbs to the old city and also has the highest density of eduactaional institutions in the city. Thus this accupuncture point targets the young students opening them to the possibilities and future prospects of being part of the creative industry. The design intervention involves "Luminotherapie" with installation of several seesaws fitted with LED's and speakers. Once used by the public, the light intensity and sounds change as the plank moves up and down emitting tones resulting in various musical harmonies creating a dynamic ambiance. The acupuncture point at Piazza Cavalli, the cultural core of Piacenza with a high footfall will target most of the citizens especially the youngsters providing them with opportunities to express themselves and explore and stimulate the creativity within them. Piacenza Train Station, 15 minutes walk from Torrione Fodesta and having an annual foot fall of 5 million on the other hand is a strategic point to enlighten the visitors of the creative side of the city and probably also guide the creative people that come from other parts of Italy and Europe. The identified bus stops that lie on the routes passing from Torrione Fodesta similarly express and reflect the creative energy of the proposed milieu through bus lanes colored in bright hues as well as by being wrapped in bright colored ropes similar to that of Torrione Fodesta as a way to encourage people and reinforce the general idea of the creative city. Also the replacement of regular pedestrian lights with LED lights can on these routes generates a

creative ambiance as an extension of the creative milieu during the night.

All these acupuncture points at very busy and pedestrian dominated sites in Piacenza forming a ring around the city introduced with small and punctual interventions basically implement the public space up gradation thus synergizing with each other to generate a creative belt around the city. They thus connect the proposed creative milieu to the creative circuit, extending the creative energy of the creative milieu to the rest of the city
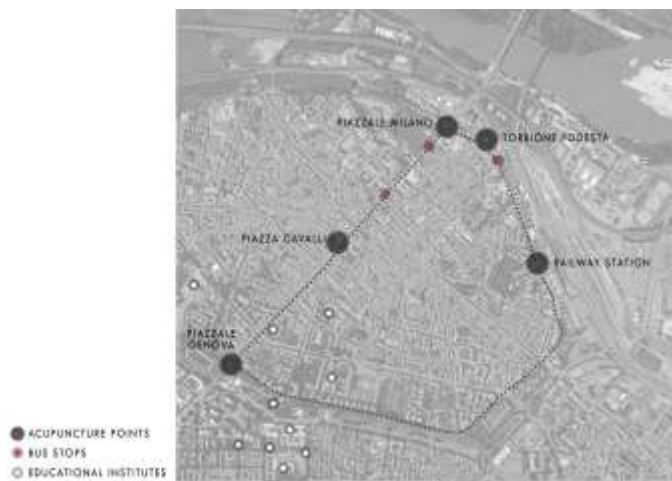

Figure -10: Map showing the identified acupuncture points generating a creative ring (Source: Author)

The second strategy of Tactical Urbanism having its roots in US focuses on short term actions that generate long term changes. The proposed interventions are bottom-up, small scale, ephemeral and inexpensive that test new concepts for creative city before implementing them as real urban projects. To implement the idea of the creative city across Piacenza, this scheme involves the four main fields of action that aim to generate an urban paradigm that changes positively the general notion of Piacenza as a static city into a creative city.

First is the conquest of new public spaces which has been achieved by introduction of Musical Playground under the bridge behind the site as well as some parts of the linear parking to the South-East. These public spaces equipped with interactive music instruments like guitars, xylophones, pianos, drums etc. creating opportunities to discover, experience and generate unique sounds and rhythms. Another unique feature of such spaces is are the wind driven rotating prisms covered with colored reflective glasses that create dynamic lit ambiance during the day and night, encouraging people to involve and thus interact with each other.

Second scheme involving the conquest of green over grey is implemented by de paving and reclaiming a part of the underutilized parking area to the North-West of the site into

a musical garden where all the sounds of nature are reproduced by nature itself or by visitors by interacting with the bamboo wind chimes and water streams etc. placed there.

Third are the pop-up activities generated by placing multifunctional and flexible modular kiosks promoting temporary use of state land for providing young community especially students a space for working, socializing and relaxing. Such $1m^2$, wi-fi enabled kiosks that can be easily transported, joined and/or rotated according user necessity, placed temporarily near educational institutions like Politecnico di Milano and Universita Catolica, in parks and public spaces like Pubblico Passeggio, Giardini Margherita and Piazza Cavalli that people usually visit, respond to the lack of such spaces for studying and working individually or in groups. Such initiatives can be supported by Schools, Universities as well as the City council and accessed by using the key cards provided by any competent authority. These kiosks can also be leased to young people who can't afford to pay for rent but have creative entrepreneurship ideas.

Forth are the mobile activities that have been introduced in the form of Bar crawling, Music Carts and Beer Carts circulating around the city providing mobile social space for the creative class to interact and explore the city at the same time. For the bar crawling, various famous establishments across the city are connected in a circuit involving both locals and non-locals thus providing opportunities of meeting new people and breaking age barriers. The Beer carts and music carts that go around a similar circuit connecting various important cultural sites of the city, on the other hand are mobile physical interpretations that literally carry the socio-cultural and functional essence of the creative milieu and extend it across the city.
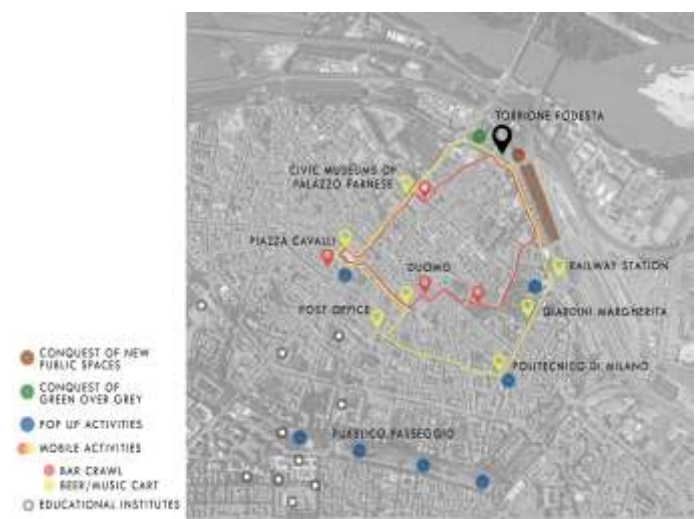

Figure -11: Map showing the locations of areas and circuits identified for Tactical Urbanism (Source: Author)

With all these infrastructure and strategies in synergy the spirit of curiosity is encouraged from which innovations flow. The result of these processes can be innovation in terms of an end product, a service, a new technology, a technique and procedure, a process, an implementation mechanism, a problem redefinition or new professional attitudes, redefining Piacenza as a creative city with Torrione Fodesta as its creative core. Within such city, creativity will be the new currency that is more sophisticated and powerful than financial capital, which is one-dimensional and narrow. This creativity shall also help to evolve and develop the culture and identity because the innovations that it generates will shape what a Piacenza becomes.

Figure -12: Visualization of the complex with proposed hard and soft infrastructures (Source: Author)

4.CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the current global dynamic, the research reassesses and rethinks the role and positioning of Piacenza regionally, nationally and globally. It rethinks the opportunities and problems with ingenuity by reviewing the city's identity, assets, distinctiveness and aspirations. It rethinks Piacenza as a city that encourages people to work with their imagination going well beyond the urban engineering paradigm which focuses largely on hard infrastructures. Instead, it proposes a combination of both hard and soft infrastructures

shifting focus and encouraging physical developments and place making that foster communication, between creative people.

In spite of being home to a significant number of foreigners including students engaged in various creative disciplines, who majorly comprise the talent pool, the city is presently lacking spaces where this creative class can interact and socialize. Also it is missing spaces that are well equipped to host events of varying scales and magnitudes that could attract the creative class from the surrounding areas like Milan that are having an extreme high concentration of creative people.

Thus, the research proposes an intervention that revitalizes the historically important and abandoned Torrione Fodesta into a creative milieu that would foster creativity and stimulate the creative class to think, plan and act with imagination and ride the wave of change so that the city can move up the value chain capturing the centrality and become a creative centre. This transformation of the site which then is transmitted to the context has been achieved by proposing a major event cluster at Torrione Fodesta that would be well equipped to attract and host creative class from within the city as well as around by providing diverse recreational and interactive spaces along with opportunities for the creative people in & around Piacenza to socialize, evolve & validate their identities as creative people. These are the functions that go in hand along with the main function of hosting events of different scales made possible by exploring the flexibility offered by the open spaces surrounding the complex.

Owing to its location on the city periphery away from residential area as well as its ease of accessibility, the event cluster seems to be the most appropriate choice among creative clusters since it responds to the current needs of the city as well as its future aspirations of being a creative centre. This choice is also supported by the scope of expansion that the site offers into the linear green belts of Viale Pubblico Passeggio and Via Cardinale Maculani that run along the historic periphery walls thus making the hosting of extensively elaborate events possible too.

This proposal also revitalizes the historically significant Torrione Fodesta, reviving its former glory & essence it once held for the city. This has been achieved by adaptive reuse of the elegant structure into an experimental music club thus instilling new life into it. This Revitalization of Torrione Fodesta would be more than welcome by the people as in addition to reviving the importance of this historic monument, it would also cater to the problems of illegal intrusion as well as menace of rats, mosquitoes and other insects that it has lately been infamous for. Similarly it would be a relief to the concerned authorities as well who have been having a tough time dealing with the situation.

The choice of the site as well as the cluster is also supported by the fact that Torrione Fodesta being one of the main gates to the city held a much significant psychological importance over other towers since it was the place where people visiting the city felt greeted and welcome. Presently also, it is one of the first structures of the old city that can be seen when one arrives to Piacenza by train. Revitalizing it into a creative milieu by carefully orchestrating the existing static hard infrastructure with the dynamic soft infrastructure that could be perceived by far would also revive that former psychological significance of the structure by making it a place where visitors to the city can enjoy and feel invited.

4.1 Difficulties

However implementation of the proposed revitalization would be faced with difficulties on various fronts. First and foremost, Torrione Fodesta being a monument, can't be tampered with beyond limits. While dealing with the structure, the approach followed has to be extremely sensitive so as to preserve it and protect it from damages caused by people and environmental agents without making it lose its character and grandeur. Also since the structure is quite old, it will present enormous restrictions in terms of structural changes done to it in order to fit in the new functions. Thus a critical balance has to be achieved between the restrictions posed by the structure and the new functions that require structural changes. The structural changes that would be unavoidable will have to be reversible and evident in accordance to the concepts of architectural conservation.

In addition, the fact that the building has been tampered with time and again at the hands of the illegal intruders as well as the authorities[6] , highlights the extreme complexity that it incorporates in different layers of time and distinguishing the changes to be kept from the ones to be discarded would be a herculean task. Thus the project will include a lot of restoration and conservation works before the implementation of creative milieu actually could start. This also raises the question of sources of funding and need for sponsors since the above mentioned tasks require initial detailed surveys of the structure, followed by preparation of measure drawings and then the adaptive reuse proposals preparing and executing which is much more of an expensive affair as compared to the other conventional projects.

Figure -13: Picture showing the unsightly changes made to the historic Torrione Fodesta over the years of its abandonment (Source: Author)

Although the type of cluster has been well thought about, however the residents of the immediate neighbourhood might pose objections since at first the idea seems to hamper the silence that prevails in the surrounding areas of Torrione Fodesta. The owners of various bars and clubs in Piacenza might also raise objections since the proposed event cluster would potentially reduce their business and thus have to be taken into consideration and somehow involved in the project as important stakeholders. This process if carried out intuitively can also create opportunities of getting sponsorship from various stakeholders by promising them temporary spaces during major events.
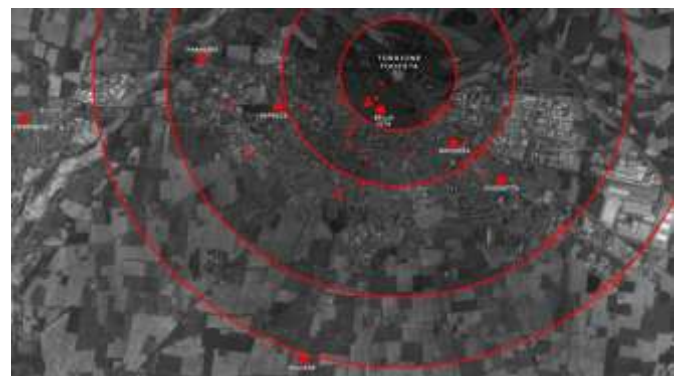

Figure -14: Map showing the location and distance of various bars and night clubs in Piacenza with reference to proposed experimental music club at Torrione Fodesta (Source: Author)

4.2 Challenges for Piacenza

The idea of implementing the concepts of creative city in Piacenza which is just 50 minutes far from Milan, can pose challenges for the city as it will have to compete with Milan, an already existing and established creative centre with a high concentration of creative class. However if the broader vision sees this venture as a symbiosis rather than a competition between the two cities, it could potentially conceive a much more positive environment that could have a far greater sphere of influence. This is more likely to attract the highly skilled and flexible labour force from across the world that the Creative City needs. In this process, strong communication linkages would be established internally in the city and with the external world. This could then helps develop an overall culture of entrepreneurship.

Also Piacenza being a small city is not very much exposed and used to the openness that creative city should offer. In spite of being home to a significant number of foreigners, the native older generation living in Piacenza seems to be very

sceptical towards foreigners and international culture in stark contrast to the young generation living in the city which is quite positive and welcoming to the diversity. The contrasting ideologies which could be justified by the generation gap and exposure to such open environments is evident in the daily lifestyle and socialization patterns of the people. While the youngsters are easy to interact with, the elderly can be with a great difficulty just convinced to be talked to.

Finally comes the language barrier which is very much evident in Piacenza compared to Milan or other creative centres where people generally can speak English. In Piacenza one still finds it very difficult to communicate with the locals who generally don't speak English and also hesitate even if they know the language. This scenario could make the whole atmosphere seem rather uninviting for the creative class who would want to be in Piacenza

5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Since the focus of this research is limited to the creation of a creative milieu in the form of an event cluster that would generate and then radiate its creative vibes across the city and also act as a magnet attracting creative class from within Piacenza as well as around, It majorly focuses on the Torrione Fodesta only. However the idea of implementation of the extremely vast concept of creative city and creative milieu, is merely touched by this proposed transformation. In order to actually make Piacenza into a creative city, the social, cultural, and economic responses of this pilot project have to be studied and repeated after necessary and constant improvisations at other such abandoned locations across the city that have the potential of being a creative milieu. Similar to one of the already identified circuits associated to the proposed creative milieu in the research, the other creative milieu can also get associated to some circuits. Many of such creative milieu along with their circuits which might overlap or intersect each other, can then perform in a synergy generating a creative network in and around the city thus regenerating it into a creative centre. This elaborate network of creative milieu can then eventually be organized into major events like biennale etc. that would be famous world over and extended into the green linear belts running along the city periphery walls as and when required giving them a cultural flavour. It thus sparks acknowledging the importance of being sensitive to culture and balances global orientation and local authenticity.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Hakim Ali Reza is an architect with a keen interest in vernacular architecture and crafts. Having worked at offices like Min2 Bouw-Kunst Netherlands, INTACH Kashmir, Craft Development Institute Srinagar & Center for green Mobility, he has an experience in architectural, interior, conservation, and urban design as well as transport planning.

Hira Khan completed her Bachelors' in architecture from Aligarh Muslim University in the year 2017. After graduation she worked as an architect on projects of varied scales. She believes that as a designer, she has an opportunity to evoke change through interpretation of human interaction with the natural and built environment.

Parv Trivedi is an architect graduated from APIED, Sardar Patel University Gujarat. Currently pursuing masters in Sustainable Architecture and Landscape Design at Politecnico di Milano, conservation of environment and utilization of green alternatives are his prime focus areas.

Federico Sassi is an architect graduated from Politecnico di Milano. Currently pursuing masters in Sustainable architecture and Landscape Design, his core area of interest is sustainable practices in modern architecture and exploring the interaction between the natural and the built.

Joseph Karimpanal is an architect based in India. Having worked at Mindspace architects Bangalore, he has a wide range of architectural and interior projects to his credit, many of which have also been published in various journals.