Redefining the Identity of Finiq:
A Systemic Approach to Urban Resilience and Sustainable Development

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Abstract- *This paper will discuss the challenges and potential of the Municipality of Finiq, a region in southern Albania rich in natural, historical, and cultural features; at the same time, however, facing severe degradation and loss of identity. Drawing inspiration from the myth of the Phoeniciae, this study introduces the concept 'Re-Invention,' which symbolizes the desire of this municipality to reconstruct itself by way of transformation. This would be described as an interrelated population decline, isolation, and a lack of spatial hierarchy that characterizes the Finiq community and its surrounding settlements. Amongst these, the key problems identified are the abandonment of residential structures and poor quality public spaces, which are contributing to an unstructured spatial configuration of this area. In this paper, a methodology for revitalizing these public spaces is presented by re-identifying and amplifying the hidden identity of Finiq Municipality. It includes an approach based on the integration of local traditions, realizing immediate needs of the community in which one lives, so as to create a new sense of place and cohesion. This research delivers a framework for sustainable development that may contrast the continuous decline of recovering at least part of the historical and cultural importance of the area by unveiling its hidden identity.*

Keywords: *city identity, public spaces, sustainable development*

Introduction - The concept of "Re-Framing" is purposefully highlighted in this study, drawing on the symbolism of the Phoenix, the mythical bird after which the municipality of Phoeniciae is named. Much like the Phoenix rising from its ashes, Phoeniciae aspires to a transformative reconstruction, seeking to renew itself from its current state of degradation and numerous challenges. It is the challenges deeply rooted within social structure and spatial configuration of the municipality mirroring those which Finiq community faces in its fights for decline, isolation, and dying identity. The largest town and a traditionally administrative hub is Finiq. Nevertheless, the town could not escape the effects of previous emigration, with many residential structures remaining abandoned and unfinished, which can be seen clearly in most of those that were built between 1990 and 2000. The villages has been very much reduced over the last two decades, a fact which is, to a larger degree, contributing to a landscape of half-finished and structurally degraded buildings-a problem shared widely in many countries of the Balkans.

Another critical issue in the surrounding settlements of Finiq is the complete lack of quality and identity in public spaces. The fact has created a spatial hierarchy in a completely disorganized way, without considering the possibility of an ordered structure of community. These challenges need the identification of space that will be able to form public realms and create spatial identity based on local tradition. Their functional character could be determined, variously, by immediate empirically pre-ordinated needs, which range from local markets for handicraft products to areas for parking and other functions that emerge. Despite these many challenges, the Municipality of Finiq also possesses great potential which, combined, would make it unique. Finiq, set in Southern Albania along the Ionian coast, with a rich natural, historical, and gastronomic heritage. The ancient settlements of Finiq and Butrint, the religious buildings of Dhrovjan, witness the resistance of time to a once-great history, while nowadays the area undergoes day-by-day degradation due to lack of maintenance. This paper seeks to explore these interconnected issues and potentials, with the aim of proposing strategies for the sustainable revitalization of this historically and culturally significant region in a territorial scale. This paper also outlines the methodology employed to approach the revitalization of public spaces within this municipality. By re-identifying and uncovering the area's hidden identity, the study provides a framework for transforming these spaces, integrating local traditions, and addressing the challenges of degradation and disorganization. This methodology, aims to contribute to a sustainable strategy for the renewal of Finiq and its surrounding settlements, fostering a re-invented identity that resonates with the community's rich historical and cultural heritage.

Re-identifying the hidden layers of an absent city

In the era of globalization, urban populations have increasingly with rapid and a pace of urban changes, driven by external forces that erode local identities and introduce inappropriate concepts into local contexts. This phenomenon raises critical questions about the preservation of a place's identity amidst the pressures of homogenization. The process of identity formation, which is inherently social, relies on the interplay of similarity and difference, articulated through narratives shaped by perspective. This dynamic situation defines significant challenges: How can a place maintain its unique identity over time while undergoing necessary changes? How can it retain its distinctiveness while also integrating into a broader group of similar places?

Madanipour (2013) addresses these concerns by advocating for what he terms the "democratic management of change," a process that involves democratic control over the content, and representation of change. He offers a kind of approach that he describes as "dynamic multiplicity," where, over time, this allows adding more voices or layers to enrich a continuous identity. According to Madanipour, the purposeful inclusion of many views is an antidote to the hurts of globalization on local identities, meaning places evolve but do not lose their distinctive character.

The debate surrounding the loss of identity in the age of globalization is great. With the globe's towns, urban villages, and neighborhoods increasingly looking like one another, fears regarding the growth of "clone cities" have increased. In reaction to such fears, the concept of local identity regained has come to the fore as a form of resistance against stronger external influences. According to Madanipour, the purposeful inclusion of many views is an

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| INFRASTRUKTURA DHE SHERBIMET | SISTEMI MJEDISOR | PEIZAZHI & TRASHËGIMIA | VENDBANIME & HAPËSIRAT PUBLIKE |

Fig 1 / Matrix of the analysis
source / Sadmira Malaj ,Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj (2024)j

antidote to the hurts of globalization on local identities, meaning places evolve but do not lose their distinctive character. The debate surrounding the loss of iden- tity in the age of globalization is great. With the globe's towns, urban villages, and neighborhoods increasingly look- ing like one another, fears regarding the growth of "clone cities" have increased. In reac- tion to such fears, the concept of local identity regained has come to the fore as a form of resistance against stronger exter- nal influences. According to Madanipour, identity is crucial for a place's political and cultural life, and that identity needs to be taken as something more important than just visual diversity. He even asks whether the notion of place identity is stronger in this respect, and could provide an insight into the way places are capable of oppos- ing homogenization.

On the other hand, Szejnfeld (2017) con- nects the modern city's crisis to the un- even expansion of urban fabric and the development of social institu- tions that contribute to urban anonym- ity. He de- scribes this process as a result of migra- tion factors-people relocate to central cities, forming a disjunctive urban growth. This kind of growth, so usual for the ma- jority of contemporary cities, pro- duces anonymous spaces-signified by an inabil- ity to identify or be identified with defi- nite spaces. Such spaces exist in physical reality and can appear in virtual forms, too, which aggravates the state of dis- organization and fragmentation typi- cal for urban contexts. Szejnfeld's analy- sis highlights the fact that the instances of modern urban growth are character- ized by unpredictable expansion and the wearing away of the traditional urban structure. Complementing this argument, Kevin Lynch has brought up the concept of the "readability" of the city. According to Lynch, readability was to be understood as the facility with which various parts of the city could be made distinguishable and then organized into an understandable whole. In the contemporary metropolis, however, this readability has been largely

compromised. In consequence, the legibil- ity of urban space is reduced. Contributing in this way to the erosion of the form of the city, leaving aside the sprawl towards the suburban fringe. Meanwhile in "The Spirit of Cities," Bell and de-Shalit (2013) revisit the traditional notion that each city

Landscape as a crucial component of a city identity - Therefore, it is the rela- tionship between people, society, and the environment that forms the very basis of cultural land- scapes, which at the same time are also a reflection and product of social evolution. Cultural landscapes are the outcome of natural forces working in conjunction with successive phases of social, economic, and cultural change. It is these elements interacting that will yield the physical- symbolic environment wherein lie the op- eration, development, and transformation of human societies. According to UNESCO (2008), cultural landscapes should be ex- amined not only for their natural charac- teristics but also for the relationships be- tween human-made objects and nature. The importance of landscape to a city's identity has been explored by scholars across various fields, with each contrib- uting to the broader lines on urban form and public life. Rich- ard Sennett's The Fall of Public Man(1977) introduces the no- tion that urban land- scapes are the set- ting for public life, which is fundamental to the social fabric of a city. He argues that the contempo- rary turn toward private life has entailed erosion of public space with a result of fragmented urban experience and, con- sequently, undermined collective identity. Privatization of public spaces, once serv- ing diverse social activities, un- dermines the civic role of an urban landscape. On the other hand, Rem Koolhaas, in Deliri- ous New York (1978), carries out a criti- cal study of how modern cities, in their ever-increasing phase of urbanization, are plagued by fragmentary and discontinu- ous spaces that hide coherence in urban identity. In contrast to these critiques, Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities (1972) is

fraught with a more poetic vision of how the cityscapes come into being through the inhabitants' desires, fears, and mem- ories. For Calvino, the identity of the city is not something fixed but is a vital and ever-changing narration of its subjective experience by its actual inhabitants. His thoughts underline the human dimension that shapes urban landscapes because cities have particular stories that contrib- ute to what they are. This makes city land- scapes vessels of the collective memory and a carrier of cultural significance that is harnessed, negotiated, and contested in the continuous acts and perceptions of their inhabitants.

The theoretical discourse on landscape and urbanism continues to evolve, partic- ularly with the development of landscape urbanism as a concept. Charles Waldheim (2016) and James Corner (1999) have been instrumental in reframing the role of landscape in urban planning. They ar- gue that landscape should be viewed as the primary medium for urbanism in the 21st century, moving beyond traditional urban planning frameworks that often treat nature and the built environment as separate entities. In this regard, landscape urbanism promotes the idea of cities as dynamic, ecological systems where land- scape informs both the form and func- tion of urban spaces. Corner's notion of "landscape as urbanism" emphasizes that by integrating natural and human-made systems, cities can be developed in a way that enhances sustainability, aesthetic value, and social cohesion. This paradigm shift underscores the critical role of land- scape in defining the identity of cities and communities.

The theoretical framework is very relevant in the case of cities like Finiq, whose land- scape has played a prime role in shaping the urban identity of the city. The histori- cal development itself, since its very be- ginning as a fortified settlement in the 3rd century BC to its development under the Roman influence, indicates an intrinsic relationship between the urban form and the landscape in general. With the acropo-

lis fortified, the agricultural terraces, and the natural settings, the identity of the city gradually started to take shape. Re- cent archaeological research, among them Lepore 2016, has brought to light that the landscape of Finiq was articulated by both territorial divisions and agricultural prac- tices, reflecting the harmonious relation- ship between an urban settlement and its natural surroundings. The agricultural landscapes, water-managing systems, and patterns of settlement were all inter- dependent; they provided an integrated urban identity created within the land- scape. This interdependence underlines the need to understand cultural and spa- tial continuity of the region throughout dif- ferent historical periods. In this sense, the landscape is not a passive element but an active agency in shaping the identi- ty and functionality of the urban environ- ment. One of the central challenges in re- defin- ing the identity of Finiq, as explored in this study, is the contemporary reality of shrinking populations, fragmented ur- ban spaces, and economic isolation. These challenges are not unique to Finiq but are symptomatic of broader trends affecting small towns and rural areas across Eu- rope. The landscape, however, remains a resilient aspect of the city's identity that can redefine these hidden layers of iden- tity. By focusing on the potential of the landscape to create a sense of place, so- cial cohesion, and economic revitalization, therefore, our role is to help restore Finiq's identity as a living city rather than an "ab- sent" one.

In this perspective, spatial analysis and urban morphology are the tools for rede- fining Finiq's identity. Through the analy- sis of the five main systems, the spatial patterns - urban form and landscape structures - that might comprise some hidden layers of the identity of the city are to be revealed and brought to light, which probably have been overlooked or used in rather insufficient ways so far. This cov- ers the recognition of the historical value of the landscape, the identification of ma- jor public spaces that could be revitalized,

and the proposition of new strategies for reconnecting fractured parts of the town. It is by understanding the morphology of the city that we propose interventions sensitive to the existing urban fabric while fostering social and economic revitalization in three main phases.

Furthermore, the matrix-based methodology employed in this study, which cross-cuts five territorial systems with three main challenges (identity, isolation, and shrinkage), is essential in uncovering the hidden potential of Finiq's landscape, and lead to a sustainable concept of the main square of Finiq Municipality. By analyzing the city through these lenses, we aim to develop holistic strategies that address both the physical and social dimensions of the urban landscape. This integrated ap- proach is critical for redefining the identity of Finiq, as it ensures that urban interven- tions are informed by a deep understand- ing of the city's historical and cultural landscape.

In the final analysis, the landscape is more than a backdrop for urban development; the landscape forms part of the identity of a city. The above study has illustrated that spatial analysis both of Phoinike's landscape and its urban morphology has challenges and opportunities for revitalizing the city's identity. Strategies can be developed that respect the historic continuity of a region while fostering new forms of social and economic engagement by recognizing the primacy of landscape in shaping urban form. This approach is necessary to redefine the identity of cities like Finiq, where the landscape has been and will remain crucial to the life of the town.

Methodology

The methodology for this study is grounded in a comprehensive literature review, which informed the development of a matrix framework. This matrix provides the analysis of various combinations of factors to uncover the hidden layers of the Finiq context. Through this structured approach, the study identifies and redefines these underlying elements and uses them to propose new scenarios for the main public space within the Municipality of Finiq.

The matrix, as illustrated in the fig. 01, or-ganizes the analysis on a territorial scale by focusing on five primary systems. These systems are cross-referenced with three key transformative changes occurring in the region: "Identity," "Isolation," and "Shrinking." Each of these changes is examined through the lens of four essential pillars: infrastructure and services, en-
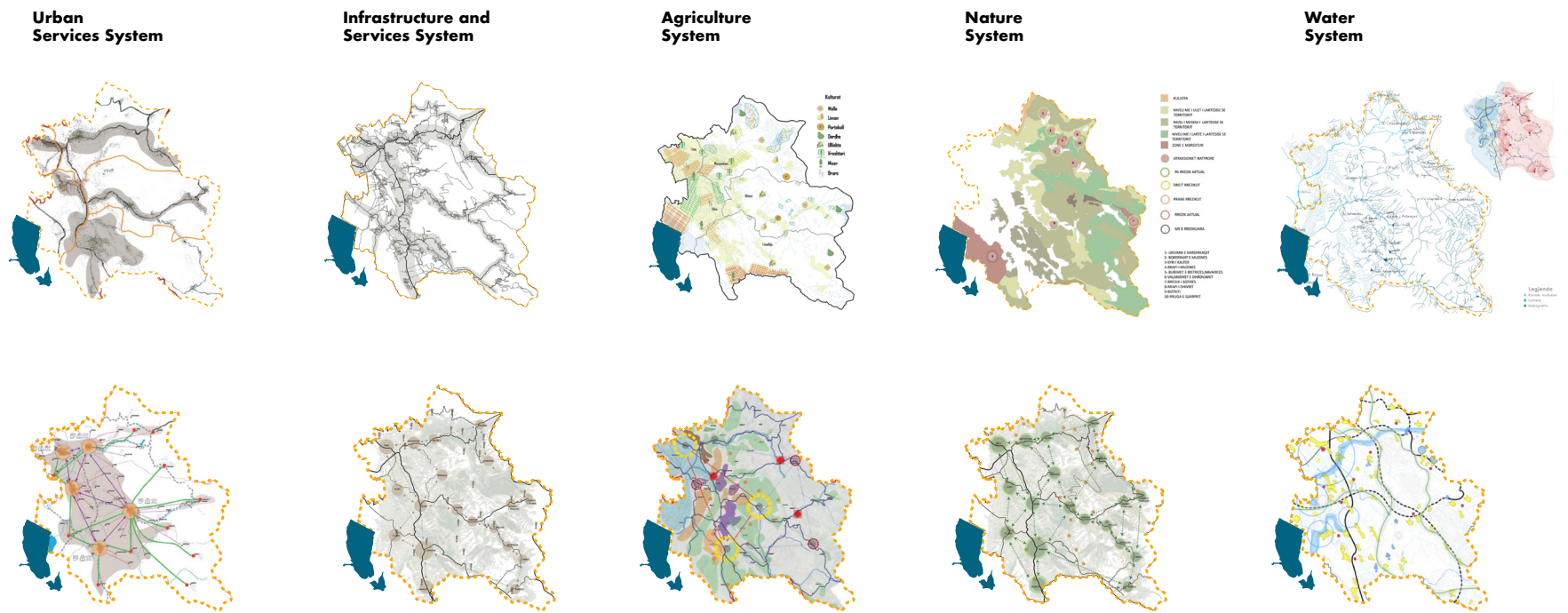

Urban Services System	Infrastructure and Services System	Agriculture System	Nature System	Water System

Fig2 / Territorial Analysis
source / Students of third year - Architecture 2023-2024

vironmental systems, landscape and heritage, and settlements and public spaces. This methodological framework explores of how these dynamics interact to shape the urban and territorial identity of Finiq, ultimately guiding the formulation of strategic interventions for urban regeneration.

Re-framing the identity of an absent city / Finiq Case study

The concept of re-framing the identity of an "absent city" is deeply interconnected with the challenges posed by modern urbanization, globalization, and the erosion of local identities. The case study of Finiq serves as an example of how these challenges manifest in a specific context, while also reflecting broader urban phenomena. Finiq's distinctive urban identity emerges from a detailed examination of its spatial and morphological characteristics. The town's layout, marked by a strip-like morphology and scattered public spaces, reveals an elusive urban fabric.

The study highlights several sponta- neIn Finiq, with so many empty spaces and irregular building aggregations, the main potential square of the Municipality needs to be taken into consideration. This is usually diffuse and scattered, without clear definition and organization, and it often happens that this area is peripheral with respect to the more establish set- ting zones. Its presence would point to the fact that the city's urban development happened in an organic way, without a comprehensive overarching plan. While this organic growth created some degree of fragmentation, it also presents an opportunity for integrating such gaps and

disconnected spaces into a more cohesive and functional urban environment. The urban system in Finiq is fragmented and irregular in terms of settlement pattern, with isolated or unfinished buildings and underdeveloped public spaces.

The main street represents the town's central axis, where the building configurations are more ordered; the further away, the more spontaneous and fragmented the settlements become. This makes the urban texture discontinuous, and, combined with the lack of public space with cohesive character, raises barriers for the inhabitants' social engagement in interacting with each other. An example would be the lack of a defined town square, underlining problems of isolation and allowing fewer chances for public gatherings. One of the major urban challenges that Finiq faces is to rethink its built environment in a manner that responds to these issues of fragmentation, besides strengthening connections among public spaces and to the wider urban landscape toward a more integrated community identity.

While the infrastructure system as shown in the fig. 02 in Finiq is characterized by an imbalance between its main road and potentially ring-road systems. The main road acts as the central axis for vehicular movement, while the underutilized ring-road has the potential to relieve traffic and enhance connectivity. However, Finiq's infrastructure faces significant challenges related to fragmentation and underdevelopment. This will lead to isolation within the settlement due to limited access to service and inadequately maintained public infrastructure, a lack of efficient

transport. On the other hand, this strategic diversion of traffic may be a factor in providing a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere along the major roads. Without vehicle traffic, these main streets can become dynamic public space that may host markets, seating, and other community activities. This proposal, therefore, tries to apply the principle of limited access at certain times of the day for the main street of Finiq in order to free some time for more social activities within the community. The approach followed is taken from Christopher Alexander, A Pattern Language, 1977, which maintains that infrastructure should be flexible and adaptable. In short, Finiq's morphological and infrastructure analysis underlines the most relevant opportunities for the enhancement of the town's functionality and its integration with natural and agricultural systems. Using those aspects through system analysis will reinforce the urban identity of Finiq by creating a more connected, sustainable, and vivid community.

Regarding Finiq's agricultural system, which has historically been a key aspect of the local economy, but it is currently facing challenges related to moderniza- tion, land use, and sustainability. Much of the agricultural land surrounding the town is underutilized, and traditional farm- ing practices are being abandoned as the population declines and the younger generation migrates to urban centers. There is great potential for renovating the farming system through the promotion of local products, for example, by means of the traditional foods festival/market, and by the inclusion of the agricultural spac- es

into tourist initiatives. Local markets and farm-to-table businesses can rein- force both the farm economy and the at- tractiveness of the town for tourists. It is also worth mentioning that preservation, in light of sustainability and ecotourism, may bring about new chances for innova- tive economic development that will not burn the cultural heritage of the region. This could go hand-in-hand with the nat- ural environment of Finiq being one of its biggest assets, which has great sceneries, visual corridors, and biodiversity, bringing large potential both for ecological preservation and tourism development. It is situated in a location endowed with natural resources, forests, and the archaeological site of Finiq. But in the urban context, it is very weakly represented, only by a few green spaces or public parks. On the other hand, nature could be conserved and integrated into the city in a more systematic

way to further add value to the identity of the town by creating areas for recreation, relaxation, and ecotourism. Pathways that connect natural features with the built environment, as shown in fig. 04, such as hiking trails or viewpoints, could allow both residents and tourists alike to better access the natural beauty of Finiq, while preserving biodiversity and natural habitat. Adding to this, as in other rural areas, the water system also faces re- lated issues of access, management, and sustainability. Water resources, both for residential use and agriculture, are critical but often underutilized or mismanaged. Irrigation systems for agriculture need modernization, and the availability of clean, accessible water for households is essential for improving the quality of life. Given Finiq's terrain and environmental conditions, water conservation and man- agement strategies should be a priority. Rain-

water harvesting, sustainable irriga- tion practices, and improving the town's water infrastructure could address the current gaps in water availability.

Creative Re-imagination
Re-framing Finiq's identity involves creatively linking these disparate elements to form a more cohesive urban narrative. By integrating the gaps and irregular spaces into a unified urban design, it is possible to enhance the town's functionality and aesthetics. This process may involve several strategies:

Connecting Disconnected Spaces: Identifying and creating linkages between isolated and fragmented spaces can create a sense of continuity and cohesion within the town. This includes designing pedestrian pathways, creating new public spaces, and improving connectivity between

key areas.

Reimagining Public Spaces: The development of innovative public spaces that reflect the town's unique character can help to anchor and enhance the town's identity. For instance, transforming empty spaces into community gathering spots, like the ones close to the school, or cultural venues can add a meaning to the town's urban landscape.

Leveraging Existing Structures: Utilizing the existing building typologies and urban features can contribute to the town's revitalization. For example, repurposing unfinished or underutilized buildings for public functions or creating new architectural elements that align with the town's character can integrate the town's historical and contemporary elements, adding some public or semi-public function to it. By focusing on these strategies, Finiq can transform its hidden potential into a more
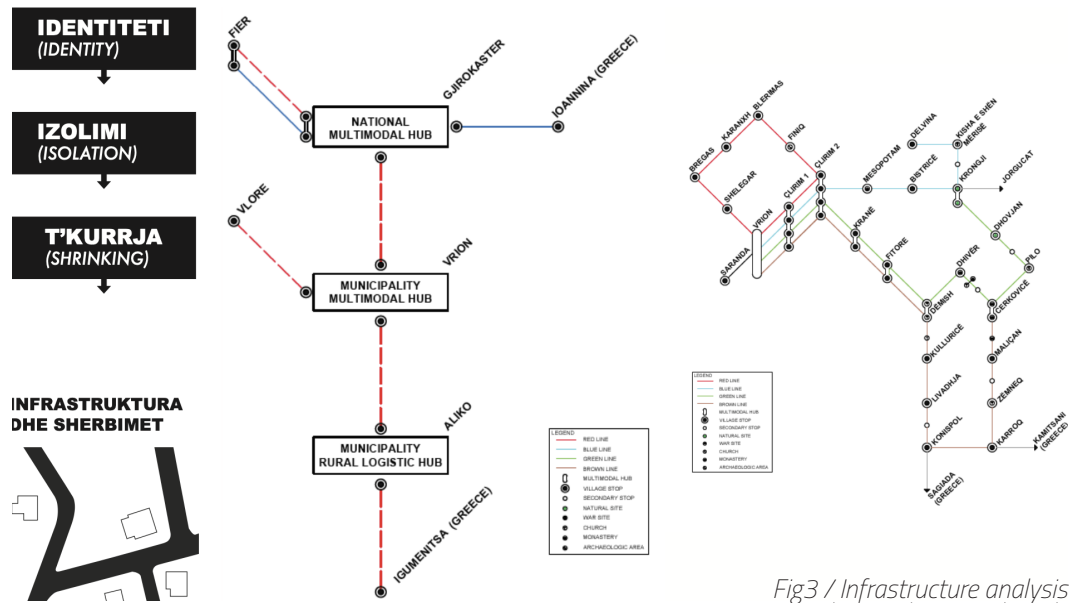
Fig3 / Infrastructure analysis
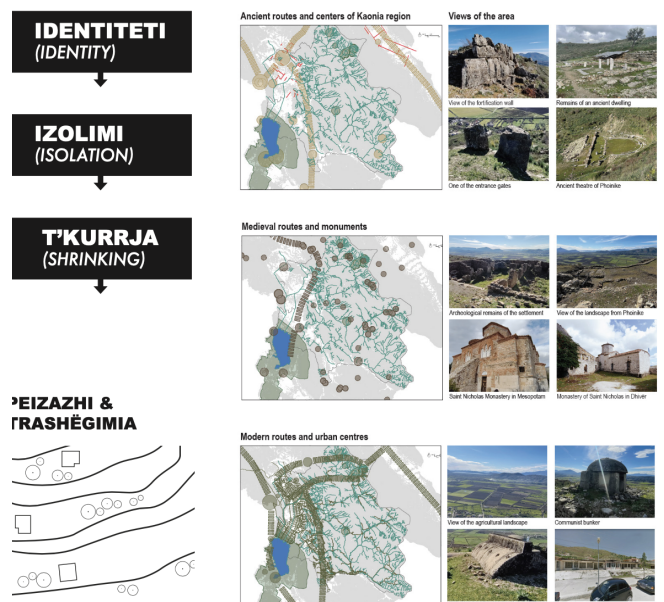source / PhD Students 38th cycle

Fig4 / Landscape analysis
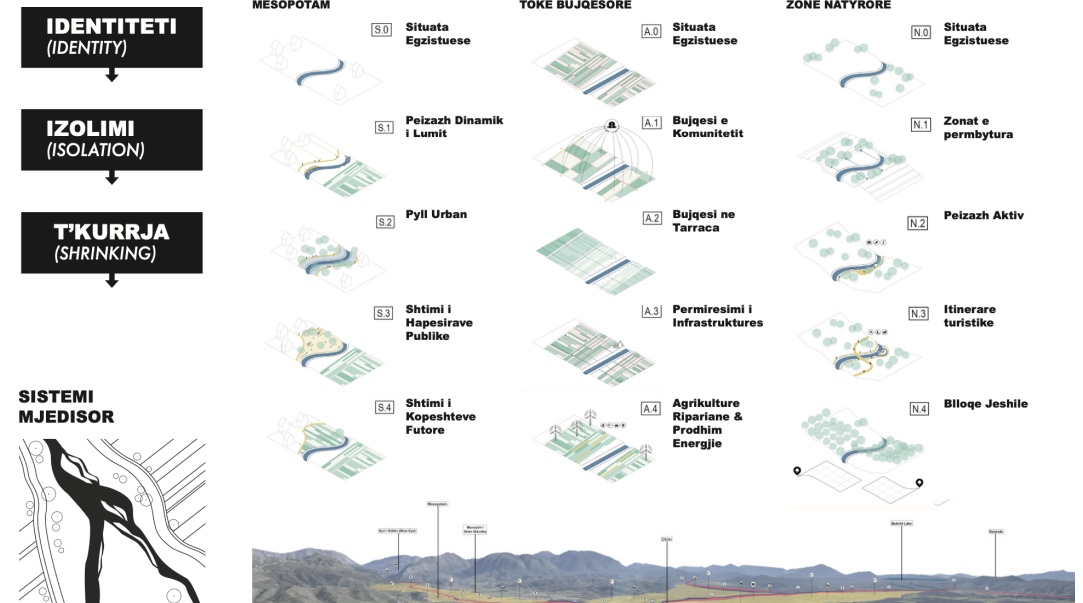source / PhD Students 38th cycle

Fig5 / Environmental analysis
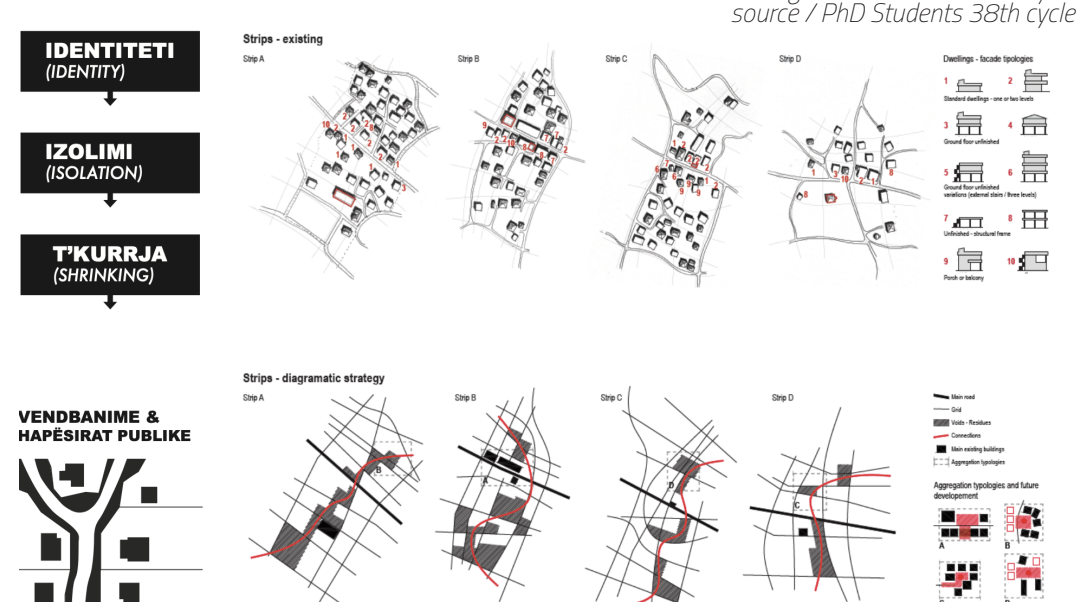source / PhD Students 38th cycle

Fig6 / Settlements analysis
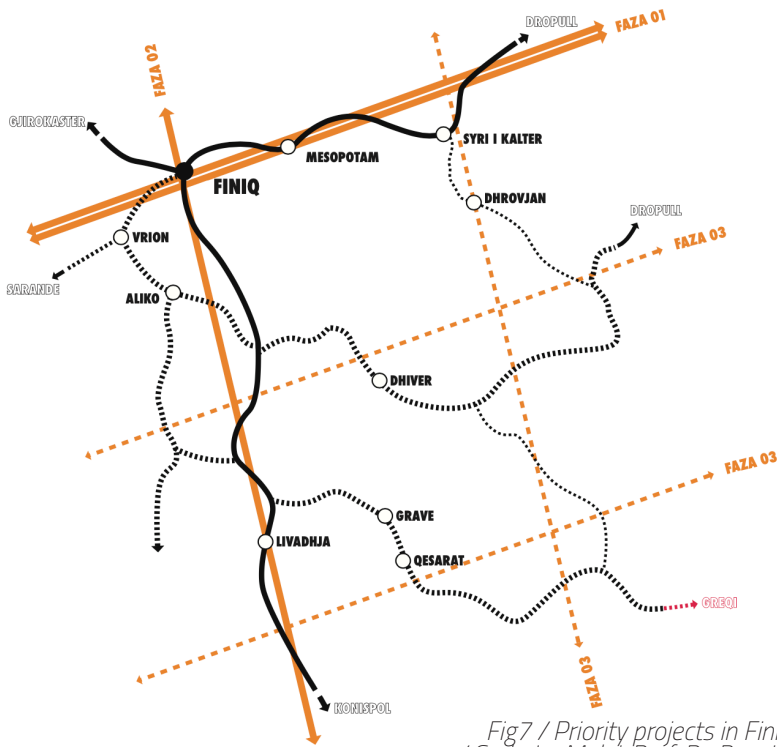source / PhD Students 38th cycle

Fig7 / Priority projects in Finiq Municipality
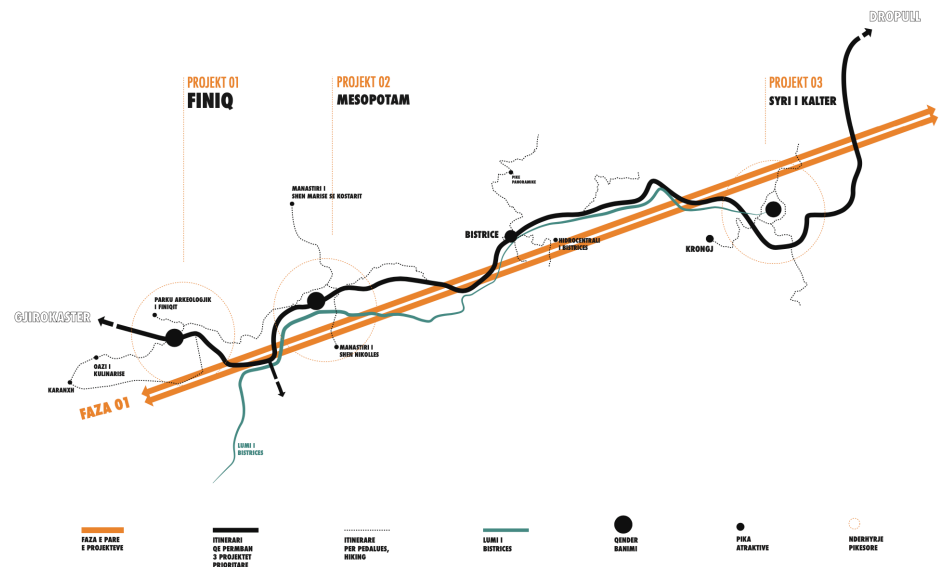source / Sadmira Malaj, Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj, (2024)j

Fig8 / First itinerary, with pilot projects in Finiq Municipality
source / Sadmira Malaj , Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj, (2024)j

visible and integrated urban identity. This approach not only enhances the town's physical environment but also contributes to its cultural and social dynamics, making Finiq a more cohesive community.

The "Hidden Layers" Concept of defining the identity

The concept of the "hidden layer" or "hidden spirit" in current urban theory seems to be an important one. It is a useful lens with which to review how redefinition strategies of the urban identity are carried out in cities that, due either to rapid change, shifting history, or neglect, have lost their entities. The "hidden layers" approach assumes that those challenges-always thought of as weaknesses of cities-can actually be used as opportunities toward the revealing of potential within the spatial, social, and cultural dimensions of the town. This thought is taken up by influential urban thinkers like Rem Koolhaas and Richard Sennett. In Delirious New York (1994), Koolhaas discusses the invisible yet formative forces within the shaping of the city. He claims that cities are more than their visible structures and systems but also are defined by what is not built, forgotten, or ignored. As Koolhaas himself believes, underused spaces and neglected landscapes have the "invisible" keys to the realization and transformation of urban identity. The "hidden layers" of the city can thus be seen as some sort of urban subconscious, where neglect may carry the potentials for innovation and transformation. In Finiq, this "hidden layers" framework needs to be applied to a town

whose physical layout is characterised by fragmented public space, irregular aggregations of buildings, and voids created in a seemingly spontaneous manner.

These are fragmented and underused spaces that are not dysfunctions but opportunities of reimagining the urban structure of the town. For instance, a fragmented public square or an unfinished building can, with this paradigm, host new uses and functions that contribute to the regeneration and redefinition of the identity of Finiq. The transformation of such spaces can activate new levels of meaning within the urban environment, allowing a reordering of the town sensitive to its historical and cultural context, yet resolving its present challenges.

Richard Sennett's work also plays a crucial role in understanding the hidden dimensions of urban identity. Sennett (1977), explores the idea that cities are not merely physical environments; they are also social and cultural constructs shaped by the interactions that occur within them. Sennett says, "Public spaces are the arenas for human interaction wherein the identity of the city is negotiated and performed." According to him, the decline in public life has reduced the shared sense of urban identity as cities turn in upon themselves in privatized pieces. In this light, the unexploited dimensions of urban spaces-the "hidden" places where public life could still occur-constitute a vital resource for rethinking and reclaiming urban identity.

Thus, in the case of Finiq, this approach presumes that the spontaneously empty spaces and the irregular building patterns
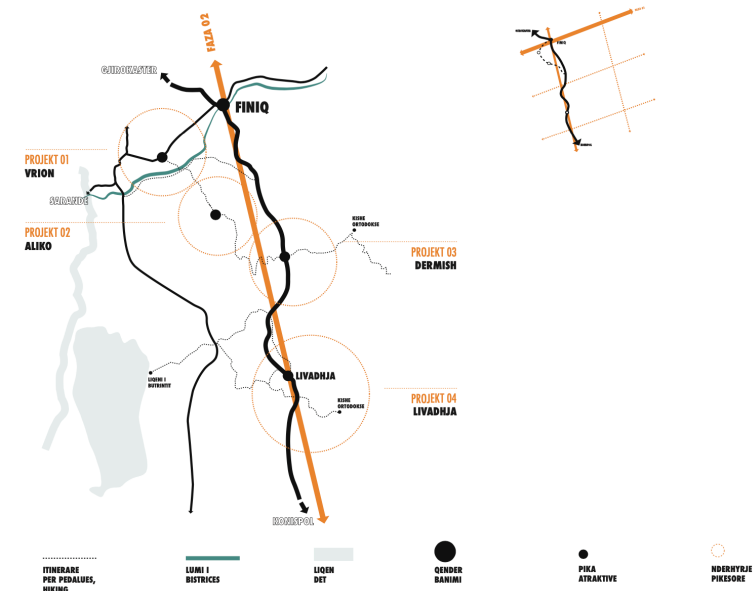

Fig9 / Second itinerary, with pilot projects in Finiq Municipality
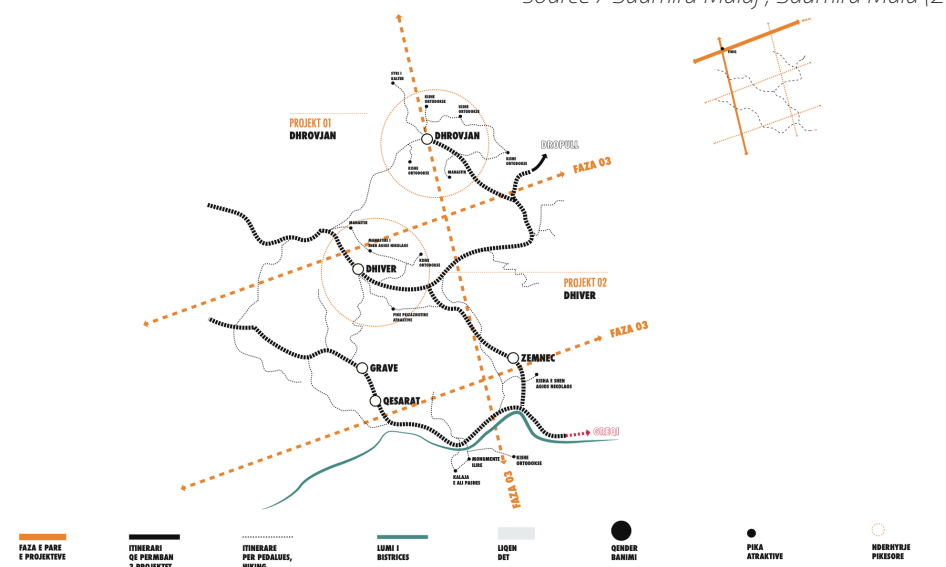source / Sadmira Malaj , Sadmira Mala (2024)j

Fig10 / Third itinerary, with pilot projects in Finiq Municipality
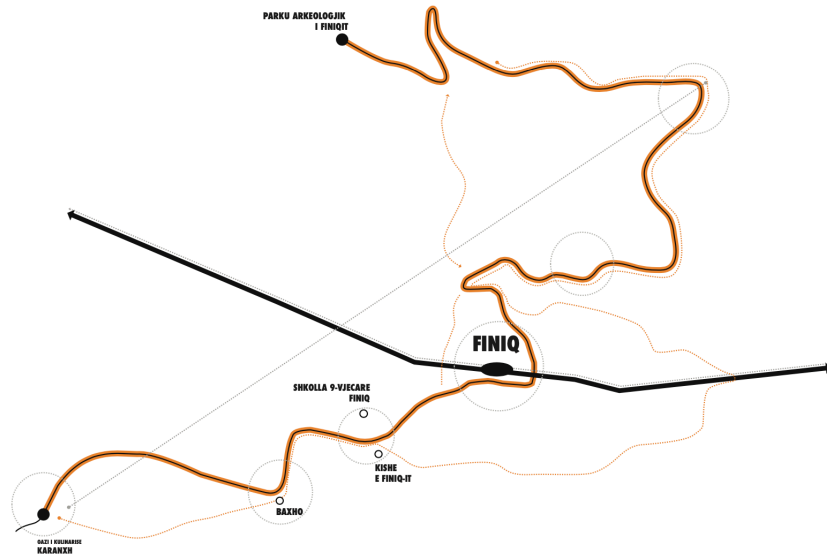source / Sadmira Malaj, Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj, (2024)j

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Fig11 / Priority projects in Finiq Municipality
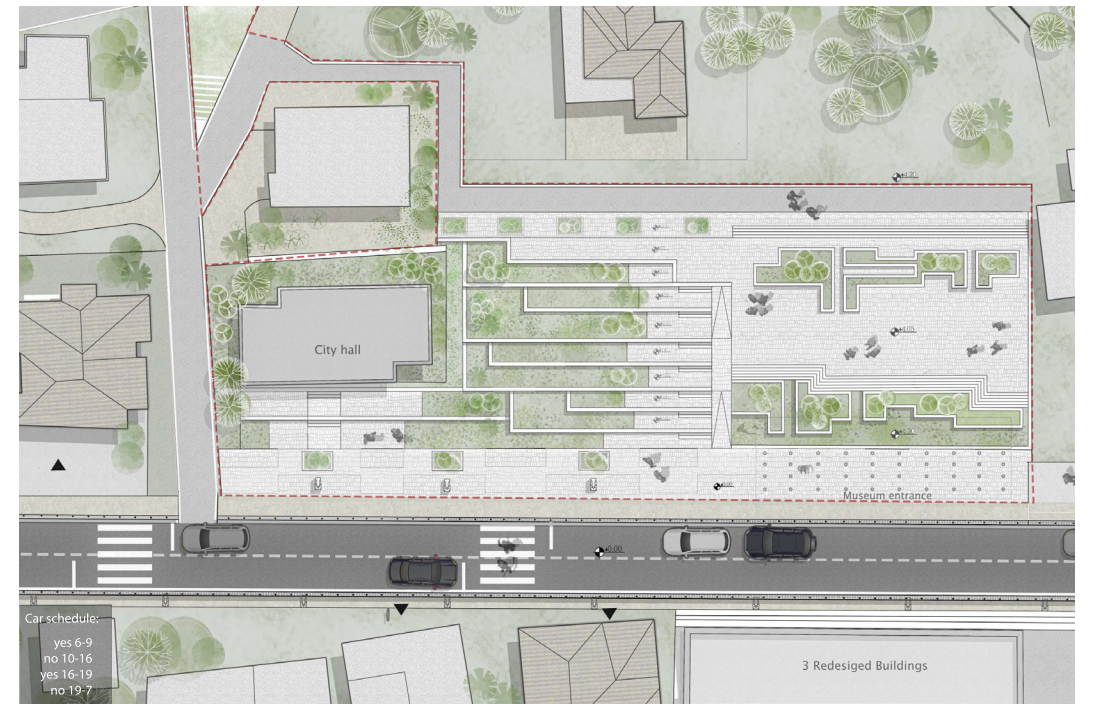source / Sadmira Malaj , Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj, (2024)j

of the town are not only signs of neglect or destruction, but the raw material for the reconstruction of a new public life and, by extension, a new urban identity. The urban fabric of Finiq is fragmented, with isolated public spaces and irregular building forms. It can be seen as representative of the historical and socio-political transformations which have reshaped this town. The challenge would lie in reweaving these fragments into a coherent urban tapestry supportive of public interaction and social cohesion. The "hidden layers" concept also vibrates in tandem with the greater aims of spatial analysis and urban morphology, as the latter researches the physical form of cities, including the space patterns generated within them throughout time. Spatial analysis in Finiq, mapping how the fragmented public spaces, irregular building patterns, and unutilized land pose challenges and opportunities for urban regeneration.

Besides, urban morphology is the study of the form, structure, and pattern of cities; it is also a useful tool in uncovering the obscured layers of a city's identity.

An urban morphologist may detect, by analyzing the historic evolution of the built environment of Finiq, its street patterns, building typologies, and open spaces, those persistent structures that shaped the development of this town over time. It is such an analysis that will reveal the "genetic code" of the town-the patterns lurking behind the continuous influence of its spatial organization and social life-while

the town develops. In the case of Finiq, such a morphological understanding will help guide future development in a manner sensitive to both the town's historical identity and contemporary challenges.

In this regard, the "hidden layers" of Finiq's urban form can be seen as both a reflection of the town's history and a resource for its future. This approach requires not only physical interventions, such as the creation of new public spaces or the repurposing of unfinished buildings, but also a broader cultural and social re-engagement with the town's hidden history and identity. Moreover, the concept of hidden layers is not limited to the physical aspects of the town; it also applies to the social and cultural dimensions of urban life. Finiq's identity is shaped not only by its built environment but also by the experiences, memories, and practices of its residents. Uncovering the hidden layers of Finiq's social and cultural life, those elements of the town's identity that may have been forgotten or marginalized over time, can play a critical role in redefining its future.

Landscape
The morphological analysis of Finiq's terrain reveals significant opportunities to enhance the town's aesthetic and functional qualities. The terrain's natural topography offers a range of potential viewpoints and visual corridors, which can be harnessed to accentuate the town's scenic value and improve its connection to the surrounding landscape.

Fig12 / Finiq Main Square, Masterplan
source / Ola Llazo (2024)

By identifying these characteristics, the town's design can integrate these features into its urban fabric. These interventions also lead to an enriched scenic experience and a more pronounced feeling of place and identity for the residents and visitors. The nature system analysis involves investigation into the interaction between Finiq's natural landscape and the built environment. The natural conditions of the landscape allow for an important inclusion of the topography and possible view points of the landscape into the town design. Such itineraries could be from the center of Finiq to the old city on the hill. The integration could develop more aesthetic appeal in the town, while allowing its residents better access to areas of greenery and natural views. It might include aspects of how to incorporate natural landscapes into urban planning, such as preserving and highlighting key features and incorporating them into the town's public space and recreational areas in the main square and in the way it is linked to other potential spots.

Fragmentation and Isolation
Finiq's urban layout presents significant challenges related to the fragmentation of public spaces and the isolation of various parts of the town. The previous analysis highlighted how the town's irregular building patterns and disconnected public areas create barriers to cohesion and social interaction. These challenges are enhanced more by the isolation of certain neighborhoods and the lack of functional connections between different parts of
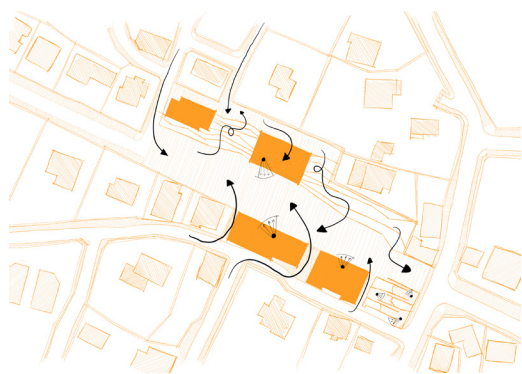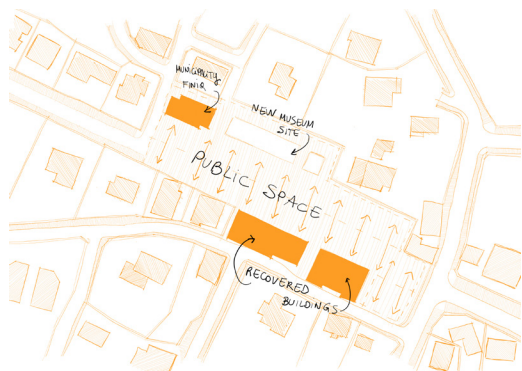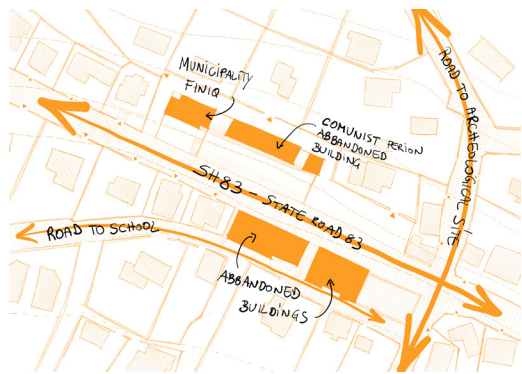
the town.
Reframing the Identity of an Absent City
The proposed strategy also ties into the broader goal of redefining the identity of Finiq, as discussed in earlier chapters. By addressing the fragmented nature of the town's public spaces and enhancing urban connectivity, the town can begin to reshape its identity from an "absent" city, into a vibrant and cohesive urban environment.
Creating a network of well-connected, high-quality public spaces not only improves the physical layout of the town but also fosters a stronger sense of community and belonging among residents. This transformation aligns with the broader objective of reimagining Finiq's urban identity in a way that reflects its historical context, natural features, and the aspirations of its community.
Reconnecting fragmented Areas
In order to identify these issues, the study advocates for increasing "urban porosity" by enhancing intermediate spaces and providing continuity between significant public areas. Urban porosity refers to the degree to which different parts of a town are interconnected and accessible, allowing for a more organic movement and interaction within the urban environment. By reinforcing the linkage among these fragmented spaces, a town will be in a position to provide more continuous and integrated urban fabric. The methodology of this linkage involves achieving the hitherto unlinked sections through networks of routes and public spaces, hence responding to the issues about fragmen-

tation and isolation raised in earlier chapters. This forms the premise from which the principles of generating wholesome and accessible space from underutilized or disconnected space will enhance the functional image of the town.

For instance, creating pedestrian pathways that connect key public spaces, such as markets, schools, and community centers, can encourage greater social interaction and community engagement. These connections help bridge gaps between different parts of the town, making it easier for residents to navigate and interact with their environment. Therefore, as shown in the picture where the concept of the project is developed, is highlighted the importance linkage between these fragmented spaces, and finding an order to connect them. Adding there, the importance of the morphology of the terrain, which is quite dynamic, in different levels. These aspects became the core of the concept, which represents the hidden layers of the identity Finiq. The main Square of the Municipality, are developed through some terraces, in order to interconnect all the fragmented spaces, and provide a more organic space communication.

The Role of Well-Designed Public Spaces

This concept of enhancing urban porosity is supported by the work of Jan Gehl (2010), who emphasizes the importance of well-designed public spaces in fostering social interaction and building community.

By applying Gehl's principles, Finiq can focus on creating public spaces that are inviting, functional, and conducive to social activities. This includes designing spaces that encourage spontaneous interactions, provide amenities for various activities, and integrate seamlessly with the town's existing urban fabric. Based on these principles, on the main square, we proposed to revitalize the unfinished buildings, by adding more functions, to enhance the interactivity, and providing and a museum in the center, which the exterior and the terrace of the building is part of the square.

Analyzing Finiq's Current Building Typologies

Finiq's architectural landscape is characterized by unique building typologies, including "unfinished volumes" and spontaneous aggregations. Many buildings in Finiq remain incomplete or in a state of flux, with elements such as partially constructed floors or facades awaiting finalization, specifically the ones alone the main street of the town. This characteristic presents both a challenge and an opportunity for urban regeneration. These incomplete structures often feature areas that are either planned for future use or remain vacant due to economic or practical reasons. For instance, ground floors or upper levels that are not yet built out could be repurposed for public or semi-public uses, such as community centers, small markets, or local gathering spots. This approach is in line with the work of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, who explored how adaptable and incomplete buildings can enrich the urban fabric by providing spaces that evolve with the community's needs (Venturi & Brown, 1972). This is integrated to the building in front of the museum, which only the ground floor has improvised some eco-
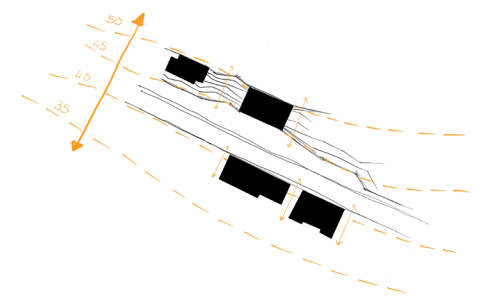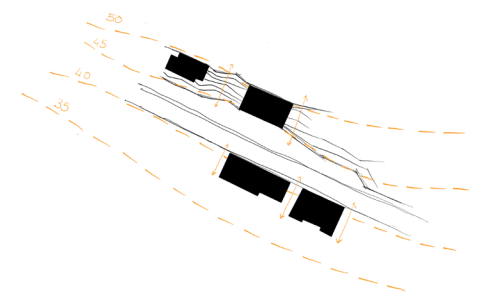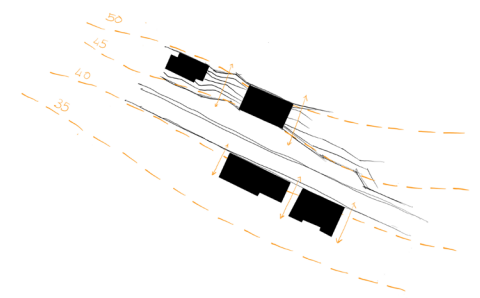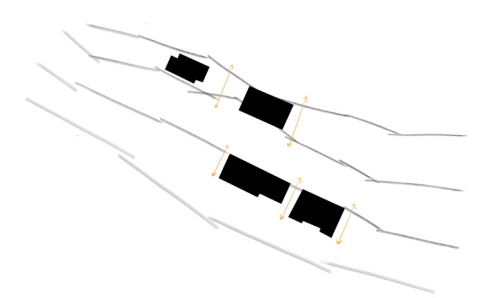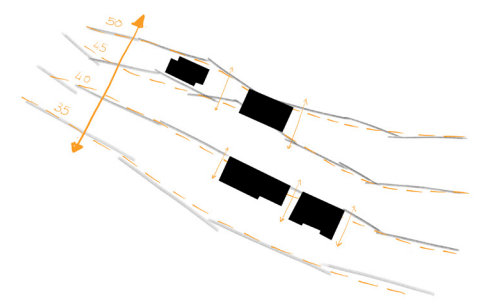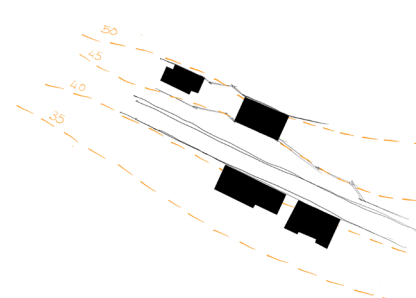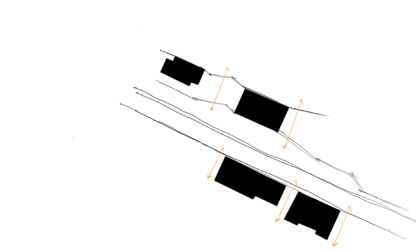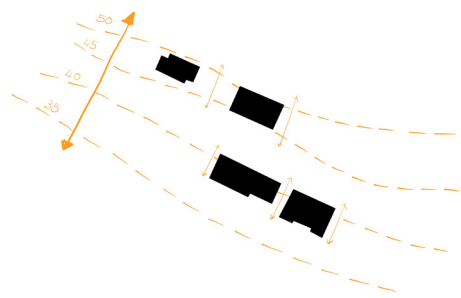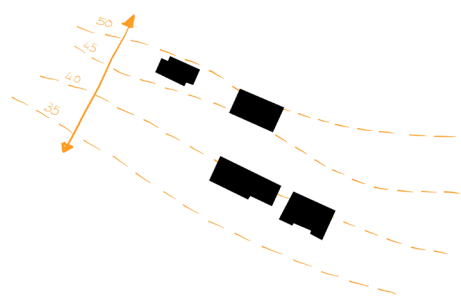
Fig13 / Finiq Main Square, Masterplan concept
Concept by: Sadmira Malaj, Dejvi Dauti,
Drawing by: Dejvi Dauti (2024)

nomic function, but the rest of the building stands just as a structure. In our proposal, these buildings are added different functions per modules, where some still stay open, just as their identity stands.

Urban-Scale Interventions

On a larger scale, the development of new pedestrian paths and improvements to the ring-road are essential for creating a more connected and accessible urban environment in the context of Finiq. By enhancing these infrastructure elements, Finiq can improve connectivity between different parts of the town and integrate previously isolated areas into a cohesive urban fabric. This strategy reflects the broader goals of urban regeneration discussed by Tiesdell et al. (1996), emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach that considers both physical and social dimensions of urban renewal. To address the fragmented and underutilized public spaces identified in the previous sections, a key strategy involves transforming significant areas into vibrant community hubs. For instance, the abandoned building next to the town hall offers an opportunity to create a new public square. This transformation aligns with the principles discussed by Tiesdell et al. (1996), who emphasize the importance of integrating physical improvements with social revitalization. By creating a lively and accessible public space, this intervention can foster community interaction and provide a central gathering point for residents.

Discussion - The methodology presented in this study offers a structured and holistic approach to reframing the identity of Finiq, a town whose hidden urban character has been shaped by fragmented development and socio-economic challenges. By examining the urban system through the lens of key systems—urban, infrastructure, agriculture, nature, and water—this framework provides a nuanced understanding of how these elements interact, and how they have contributed to Finiq's current state of "absence" or underdevelopment. The integration of this systemic analysis with the three primary changes in the region—identity, isolation, and shrinking—helps unravel the complexities surrounding the town's fragmented urban environment and disconnected public spaces. In Finiq, the fragmentation of public spaces, the informal and incomplete building typologies, and the underutilized infrastructure reveal an absence of coherence in urban form and function. By systematically addressing these issues, this approach seeks to foster "urban porosity" and a stronger connection between public spaces, aligning with the theoretical principles of Gehl (2010) and Alexander (1977) on flexible, adaptive, and socially interactive urban environments.

Furthermore, the integration of Finiq's natural landscape and heritage into the urban fabric is crucial to reshaping its identity. If properly leveraged, these natural and historical assets can anchor new development strategies and enhance the town's appeal for residents and tourists. The regeneration strategies, such as repurposing empty or unfinished spaces, enhancing pedestrian routes, and making infrastructural adjustments, are aligned with both local needs and broader regional transformation goals. These interventions mirror the principles of Venturi and Brown (1972), who advocate for adaptable, incomplete urban forms that offer flexibility in shaping the future of a town.
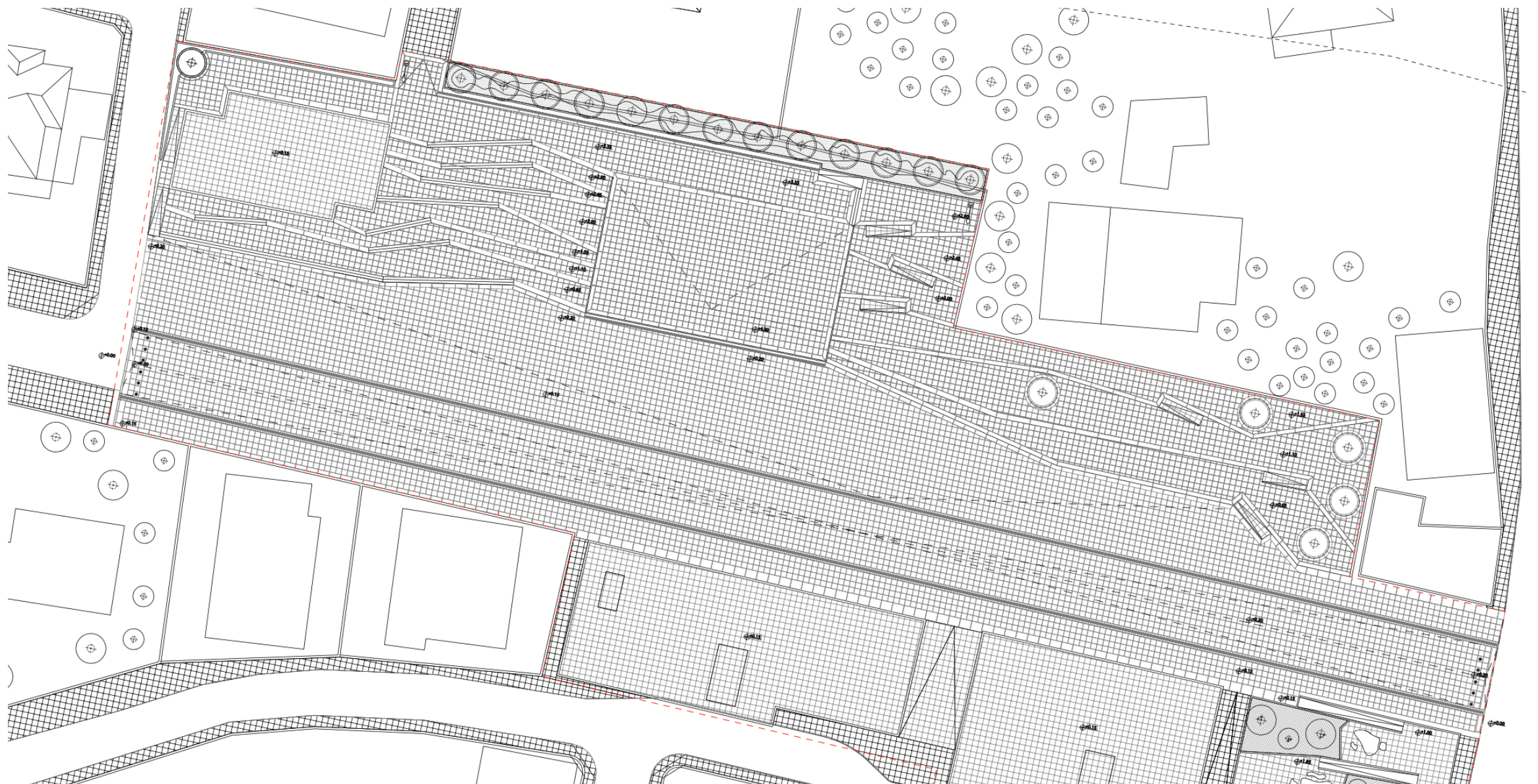
Conclusion

Fig13 / Finiq Main Square, Detailed Masterplan
Concept by: Sadmira Malaj, Dejvi Dauti
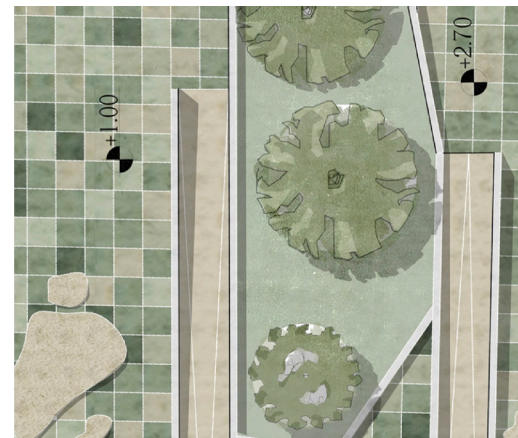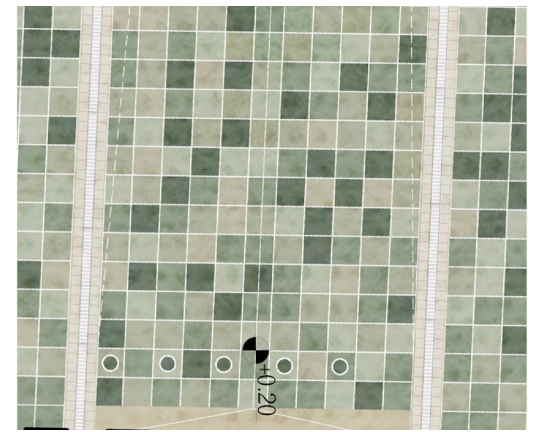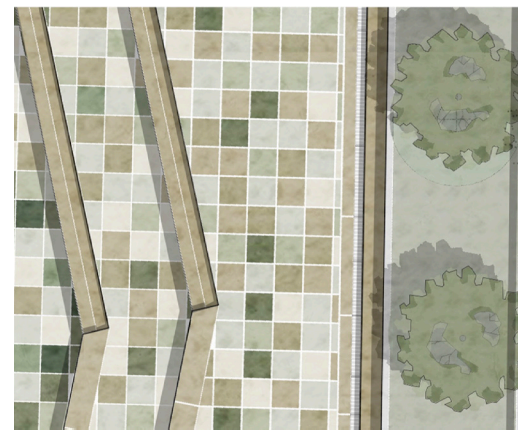*Drawing by: Dejvi Dauti (2024)*

Fig 14 / Finiq Main Square, Detailed Masterplan-
Concept by: Sadmira Malaj, Dejvi Dauti, Megi Sinani, Avril Lleshi
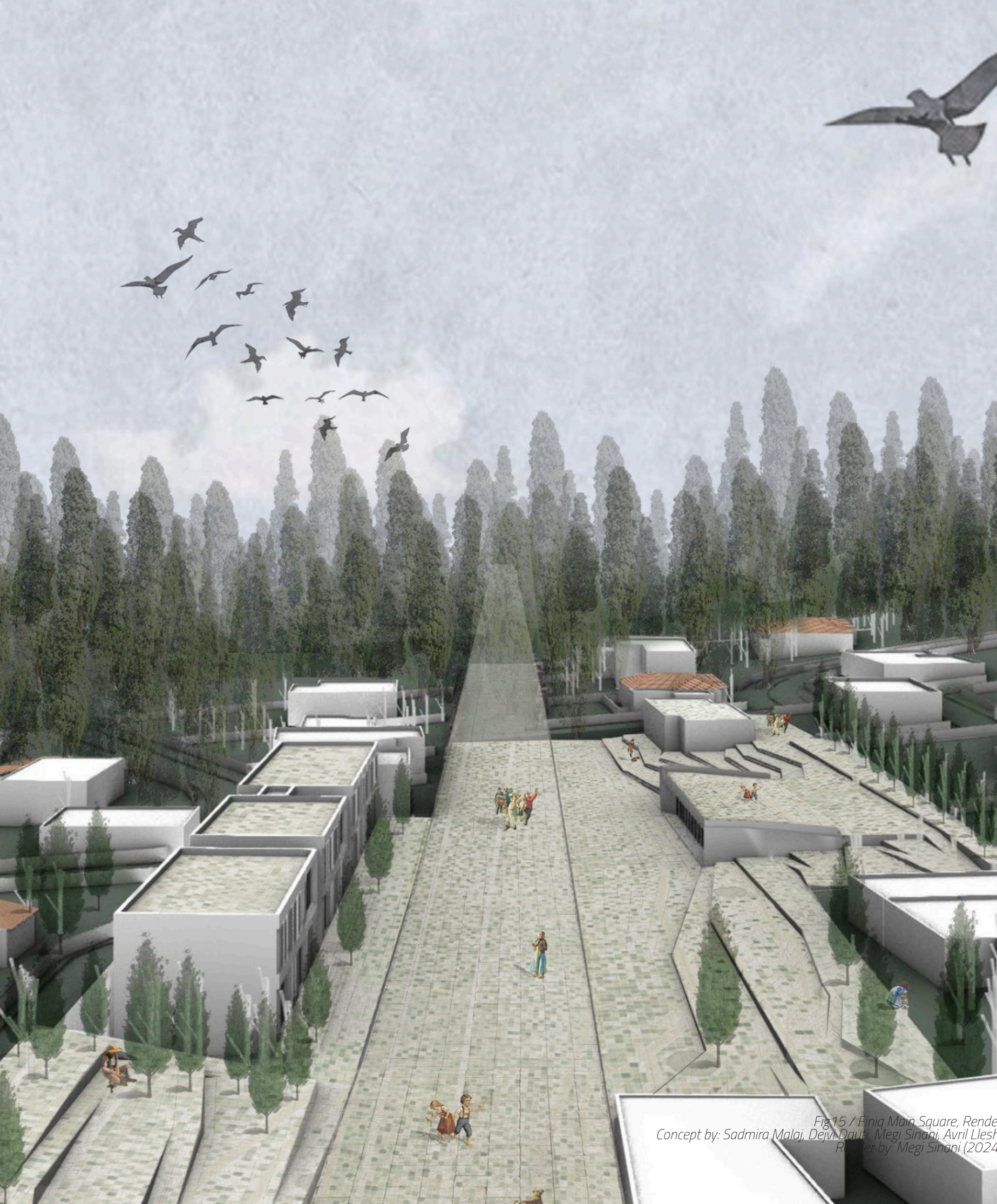*Designed by - Dejvi Dauti (2024)*

The methodology outlined in this study offers a critical pathway to redefining the identity of an absent city like Finiq. The systems-based analysis of the town's urban, natural, agricultural, and infrastructural systems provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the challenges of isolation, shrinking populations, and fragmented urban spaces. By systematically linking these factors with strategies for urban regeneration, the study identifies opportunities to reconnect the town's fragmented spaces, adapt unfinished structures for public use, and reimagine the role of public spaces and infrastructure in boosting social cohesion and economic growth.

Additionally, to this methodology is vital for establishing a sustainable and resilient urban environment in Finiq. Not only provides practical solutions but also provides a deeper understanding of how the town's identity can be reshaped to address its historical, geographical, and socio-economic contexts. As Finiq moves toward redefining its urban form, this methodology serves as a guide for policymakers, urban planners, and local communities to collaboratively reframe its identity, ensuring that it reflects the potential of the town and its residents. Ultimately, the study's approach to urban regeneration highlights the need for flexible, context-driven strategies that integrate heritage, infrastructure, and public space into a cohesive urban identity, offering a model for other towns facing similar challenges of isolation.
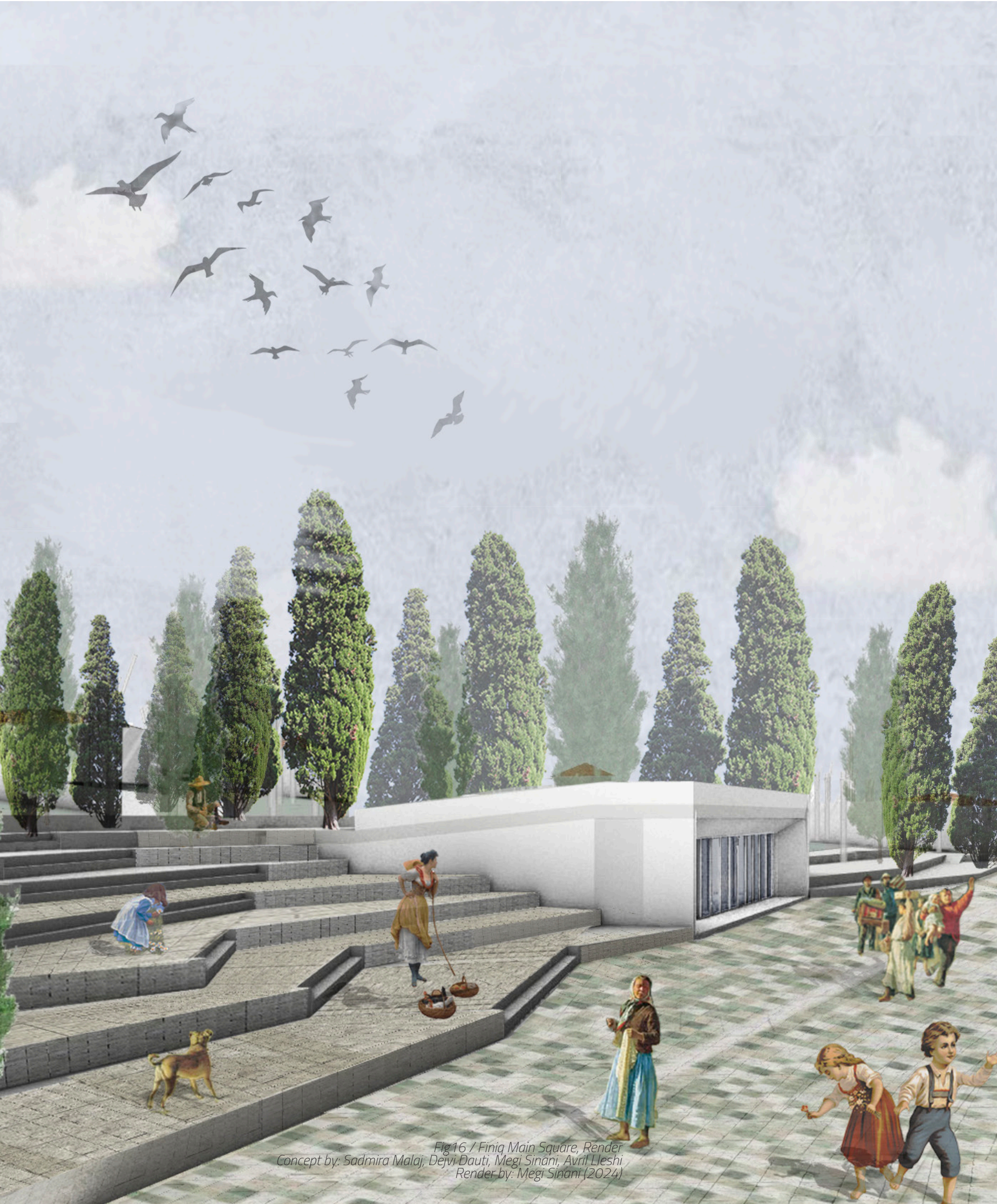
Fig15 / Finiq Main Square, Render
Concept by: Sadmira Malaj, Dejvi Dauti, Megi Sinani, Avril Lleshi
Render by: Megi Sinani (2024)

Fig 16 / Finiq Main Square, Render
Concept by: Sadmira Malaj, Dejvi Dauti, Megi Sinani, Avril Lleshi
Render by: Megi Sinani (2024)

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