Extract ETHZ-internal research proposal

Emerging Corporate Urbanism in Europe
Developing responsive urban design strategies within Brandhubs

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Content

2.2. Goals

2.2.1. Problem statement

The proposed research examines <u>a novel, hybrid urban typology</u> resulting from corporate conglomerates or "Brandhubs" in the contemporary experience society. It investigates the recent appearances of this phenomenon in Europe with regard to its contemporary counterparts proliferating primarily in North America and the Far East. In the light of the current restructuring of cities to experiential spaces of shopping, recreation and cultural events, the focus is on the latent potential of this typology for responsive urban design that creatively integrates sociocultural values with commercial aspects to the benefit of both the public and the corporate realm.

Global players have come to incorporate <u>the Brandhub</u> to promote their identity as a popular institution. Brandhubs, as referred to in this study, are comprehensive urban mixed-used environments that aim to mediate the corporate identities to a broad audience in an experiential social space. Designed by signature architects, they are a veritable reification of the consumer commodity itself. In addition to hosting traditional retail, office and housing facilities, they are highly pervaded by entertainment, culture and other complementing event components, together forming a hub of experiences entirely organized around the given brand and its sub-brand identities. The closest precedent of this kind of development is the flagship promotional store such as the worldwide Niketowns (Nike 2003) or one-of-a-kind Prada Epicenters (Koolhaas 2001b; Herzog 2004). These examples, however, are only relevant on a purely architectural, if not solely interior design scale. Instead, the goal of this research is to analyze this phenomenon at an urban scale, where Brandhubs are strategically implemented at planning and governmental levels in the framework of public-private partnerships to foster urban development. With projects such as Universal CityWalk in Hollywood/ Orlando/ Osaka, Daimler City in Berlin, Disney's Times Square Development in New York, Sony Centers in San Francisco/ Berlin/ Tokyo, Migros WESTside in Berne, VW ErlebnisWelt in Wolfsburg, Adidas World of Sports in Herzogenaurach, and potentially the distributed Prada Universe, the implication of Brandhubs in the development of both the city and the corporation becomes evident.

These projects form their own context in a kind of urban spatialization of brands. They turn global or orient themselves outward and formulate culturally self-contained places by substituting local peculiarities with brand spaces. In this respect, Brandhubs are artificially created spaces that at first seem to generate a homogeneity that is displacing the variety of local places and cultures (cf. Sorkin 1992; Roost 2000; Klein 2001; Becker 2001). In this way, they also tend towards the production of *The Generic City* or *Junkspace*, as keenly labeled by Rem Koolhaas (1995 and 2001a), and thus apparently become exchangeable or undistinguishable from one another. However a closer look reveals the contrary. As originally immaterial and non-spatial entities, brands benefit strongly from cultural differences and the distinctive aura of a carefully chosen urban location. In return, the location can substantially gain meaning through the realization of Brandhubs. As Times Square gained its new image as a family-friendly entertainment destination through the presence of Disney, the Disney myth is strengthened by the history of Times Square as a legendary amusement mile (cf. Roost 2000; Sagalyn 2001; Klingmann 2003). Similarly, the Potsdamer Platz is now strongly connected with the identities of Daimler and Sony, who in turn can benefit from the atmosphere of the place, which offers another level of experiential quality (cf. Sewing 2000; Lehrer 2002; Klingmann 2003). This symbiotic relationship is achieved through the hybridization of two fundamental different entities: a global, placeless brand becomes connected to a specific place with its own unique history and culture. While brands clearly have the potential to augment and draw their energy from existing peculiarities of place, culture and tradition as well as other aesthetic and ethic meanings from diverse origins, how profound and inclusive is this relationship and how is it expressed in the urban design of and around the Brandhub? Moreover, does this urban spatialization of identities also reveal new urban design strategies and new urban structures and forms?

The Brandhub phenomenon reveals that urban design is closely connected to current branding strategies. According to Mark Gottdiener (2001: 73), the Brandhub has become a "symbolic space that connotes something other than its principal function – the realization of capital through the stimulation of consumer desires and the promotion of sales." On the other hand, it can be argued that through the involvement of big corporations in urban development, cities can be revitalized and acquire a new identity. (cf. Klingmann 2003) As <u>public-private ventures</u>, Brandhubs not only entail advantages for the corporation, but also for the city. While corporations search for new possibilities to achieve profit, cities hope to improve urban districts through increased tax revenues, the marketing of residential projects and the creation of jobs. In this respect, they together try to create an attractive urban destination. As programmatic hybrids combining multifaceted ways of consumption with certain fictional and social experiences, Brandhubs provide formerly decaying or forgotten areas a new identity and encourage urban revitalization of the surrounding area. While some utilize the rather economic-driven entertainment mall to generate identity and urbanity, like Daimler City, Disney's Times Square or Universal CityWalks, others such as Migros WESTside, Sony Centers or the VW ErlebnisWelt draw on more sophisticated culture-oriented marketing strategies. These strategies dictate specific urban design impacts, where culturalized or even 'anti-marketing' strategies encourage a typology in which the counter- or subculture becomes a new branded urban experience itself (cf. Borries 2004). In short, Brandhubs provide a new cultural dimension to what would otherwise be ordinary commercial spaces and the creation of social spaces in conjunction with economic growth is a prerequisite for urban revitalization. The utilization of consumption as driving-force for urban regeneration has been proven to be very successful, since it stimulates physical, economic and sociocultural development (cf. Sagalyn 1989; Hannigan 1998; Wall 2003). However, Brandhubs hardly constitute true urban situations, since they remain unaffected in large part by the particulars of the urban social context. Still they have the potential to contribute to the advantage of the city, providing

possibilities for landmark character and a temporary sense of belonging by offering access to highly differentiated and experiential places. While Brandhubs clearly create <u>instant urban identity and regeneration</u>, their long-term contribution to the city and real life expectancy remain questionable, especially since they are based heavily on the ephemeral, the event, the experience. Are they simply the next evolutionary step from the entertainment mall and will be replaced in the short term or can they become deeply rooted in the city? Ultimately, do they have the potential to become catalysts for responsive urban design that facilitates robust social experiences and sound urban development? If so, what can we expect as outcomes or impacts, and what does this kind of development look like?

In the stream of the rapidly alternating marketing cycles and functional patterns as well as rising public concerns about the commercialization of everything, there is a <u>need for a differentiated set of urban strategies</u> that challenge the spatial and temporal forces of brand-culture. This research will first profoundly examine the Brandhub phenomenon and then, based on the findings, construct methodologies and instruments to <u>develop responsive urban design strategies</u> within this emerging typology.

2.2.2. Hypotheses, milestones and expected output

This research is built around the hypothesis that **responsive urban design** requires the creative integration of seemingly divergent urban forces, which are represented by the stakeholders involved in the development process. These include the corporation as the main visionary and developer as well as the public, which is represented by the public authorities and advocates such as the local community, opposing citizen's groups or nonprofit organizations. While the main objective of the corporation is undoubtedly the search to maximize profit, the public's aim is to foster local development as well as to satisfy the citizen's growing demand for meaningful experiences and social responsibility.

Brandhubs are a true showcase of how corporate and public values can come together. In most cases, it can be shown that there is a clear profit gained from not only considering functional and commercial aspects, but also the 'local ethos' and sociocultural values of the project's context. This benefits both the public and corporation, chiefly because the integration into the city and the provision of added amenities adds significantly to the longevity of the Brandhub, and therefore its sustainability.

In this regard, this study hypothesizes that in order to be successful Brandhubs have to provide a responsive, <u>highly differentiated urban design</u>. The responsiveness within this urban design is chiefly influenced by three major hypothetical factors. First, authentic and meaningful urban identities that mediate both the brand culture and regional peculiarities in a way that they respond to public concerns, enabling more and more of the population to identify with the project. Second, a unique mix of uses composed in an appropriate form that mirrors the urban identities by condensing global and local as well as diverse hybrid spaces so as to make the Brandhub viable both in an economic and sociocultural manner. And third, a close integration within the city that complements and enriches instead of displacing or destroying the project's immediate context.

In order to examine how these responsive urban factors are inherent in and shape Brandhubs, this research proposes a **five-phase examination method**. First, it will provide a comprehensive understanding of the <u>origins, production conditions and characteristics of the Brandhub typology</u>. Second, it will examine <u>a series of case studies</u> of this emerging typology in the European context with the aim of establishing a critical understanding of Brandhubs strengths and weaknesses for responsive urban design. The nature of the mutual relationship between the physical built environment and dynamic social forces of an urban matrix will be defined. Within this matrix, individual urban factors affecting Brandhubs can be detected and evaluated. Thirdly, this research will conduct <u>a cross-case evaluation</u> to extract the most important urban factors that have to be fulfilled in order to foster the responsiveness within the Brandhub typology. Based on this assessment, <u>an action-oriented catalogue of measures and instruments</u> will be proposed in a fourth phase. Their aim is to be used as tools for guiding Brandhub developments and helping produce responsive urban design strategies as a basis for robust and lasting urban development. Finally, the findings of the research will be documented and extensively disseminated at international conferences, symposia, journals and online discussion platforms with the objective of contributing to the <u>transfer of knowledge</u> and of receiving valuable feedback for the study's refinement.

With its mixture of empirical and practice-oriented studies and its focus on urban design strategies in relation to economical and sociocultural aspects, this research will become a tissue of urban values in its own right, a compendium of resources and examples, a manifold <u>brand-knowledge hub</u>. By weaving formerly separate areas of knowledge together, this research tries to bridge disciplinary boundaries in order to get to the heart of a complex and sophisticated contemporary urban design and development.

2.3. Rationale and state of research

The rationale for the proposed study and the state of research consists of three parts. First, the emergence of the Brandhub as a new urban typology in the contemporary experience society is illuminated. Second, exemplary Brandhubs are presented that show the 'global' urban phenomenon and its local development in the German and Swiss context. Third, positions on the subject will be reviewed to point out the already detected problems and potentials of Brandhubs. Finally, the relevance and the limits of previous and ongoing research are highlighted in relation to the intents of this study.

2.3.1. Brandhubs in the experience society

Brand-name corporations increasingly participate in the current restructuring of our globalized cities from monotonous industrial or service centers to multifaceted spaces of experience. As key visionaries and development partners of cities, contributing to every aspect of planning, marketing and operation, they fuel new corporate landmarks, here labeled as Brandhubs. Given the rapid expansion of a neoliberal market rationale, their main intention is to differentiate themselves from other corporations, increase brand equity, and thus to sustain growth in a fiercely competitive world. The development of the Brandhub also represents the change from a pure service to an experience-oriented economy, in which the commercialization of culture and the culturalization of the economy are of particular importance (cf. Harvey 1989; Jameson 1991; Zukin 1995). According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), in this new economic area "every business is a stage" and companies must design compelling and engaging events.

In the shaping of Brandhubs, corporations therefore utilize the concept of the themed urban entertainment destination (UED). By offering a complementary mix of entertainment, dining, and retail – the "trinity of synergy" – within a highly branded and pedestrian-friendly environment, an UED aims to attract visitors across a variety of markets (cf. Beyard et al. 2001: 28). In order that the brands themselves can become such an urban destination, Brandhubs not only integrate traditional corporate offices, housing and amenities for their employees, but also consumption- und cultural-oriented UED components for the entire public. Together this modular mix of urban offers forms an experiential epicenter of activities, all themed around the given corporate brand or sub-brand identities.

Groundbreaking US examples are the Universal CityWalk in Hollywood, Disney's Times Square Development in New York, and Sony's Metreon in San Francisco. The intention of global players to construct such large-scale urban projects is to mediate their identity in a pleasing setting so as to trigger lasting sympathies. As Otto Riewoldt (2002: 8) in his book *Brandscaping* asserts "Behind the brand-building efforts there lies the conviction that the glamour and power of the brand are the key weapons in the battle for target groups and customers" or as Naomi Klein (2001: 21) in her seminal *No logo* critically pinpoints "The products that will flourish in the future will be the ones not presented as commodities but as concepts: the brand as culture, as experience, as lifestyle." In this context, David Bosshart (1997: 44) speaks about the "emotionalization" and "de-materialization of consumption," meaning that customers don't buy material commodities anymore, but themes, messages, symbols, cults and events.

For this reason, corporations in their promotional strategies have come to incorporate the public event to create their identity as a popular institution. In order to expose their brand identities to a broad audience, they either annex public spaces or make their private spaces public. With such semi-public Brandhubs, they try to construct an enjoyable atmosphere that generates high-emotional value and allows for a characteristic encounter with the brand. As mediators of identity, Brandhubs become communicators of a specific culture or lifestyle be it mobility, wellness, knowledge acquisition, constant self-regeneration, environmental-consciousness or all at once.

In addition to these experiential branding efforts, mega-corporations increasingly utilize multimedia strategies, in particular the concept of cross-promotion. Hitherto this practice, in which one media product advertises one or several other products, was primarily employed in the media industry (cf. Bosshart 1997: 86; Beyard et al. 1998: 16 and 2001: 23; Herrmann 1999). In the construction of Brandhubs such synergistic effects are used for the first time on an urban scale with the aim of further increasing brand visibility and market penetration, signifying the creation of multi-brand monopolies. This phenomenon can be illustrated with Disney's Times Square Development,[1] which was keenly shaped by Robert A.M. Stern Architects: The Disney Store on 42nd street advertises with billboards for Disney movies. The New Amsterdam Theater shows the Disney-Musical "The Lion King" next to a theme restaurant of the sports channel ESPN, which also belongs to Disney. A studio of the subsidiary company ABC broadcasts the television show "Good morning America" in front of Disney's entertainment center at Times Square (cf. Sassen and Roost 1999: 143). With these entertainment offers and backed by hardliners from politics and police, the Disney Corporation managed to transform Times Square from a notorious red-light district into a family-friendly urban destination, and not into a monotonous office cluster as originally planned. In doing so, Disney set new dimensions for the future restructuring of cities (cf. Roost 2000; Sagalyn 2001).

In large part, the model for this urban regeneration and cross-promotion project is architect Jon Jerde's 1993 pedestrian promenade Universal CityWalk, a prototypical retail entertainment destination that gains popularity and generates profit by forming a synergetic link between Universal Studios, the homonymous theme park, Universal City

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[1] This project is part of the 42nd Street Redevelopment project in New York City – a large-scale public-private partnership project, which started in 1981 between the urban authorities of New York City, the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC) and multiple private developers, among which the Disney Corporation was the driving force and investor.

Cinemas, and the headquarters of Universal Creative. With its shops, restaurants, nightclubs, theaters, offices, classrooms and ever-new urban performances, Universal CityWalk is an extension of the existing entertainment venues of Universal City (cf. Jerde Partnership 2003b; Universal Studios 2003). As approved in a 1995 report by the Urban Land Institute: "The economic synergy of the project is evident … Since CityWalk's opening, patronage at the Universal City Cinemas is up 60 percent, and the studio tour is up 15 percent. Similarly, when the amphitheater has a good concert night, CityWalk's facilities are filled to capacity." (Fader 1995: 18-23)
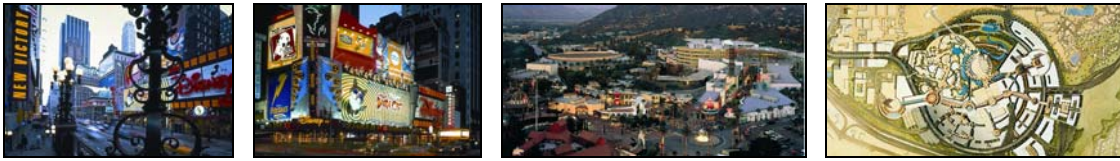
Disney's Times Square Development: *New York 1999. Photo credit: Peter Aaron / Esto.*

Universal CityWalk*: Jon Jerde, Hollywood, Los Angeles 1993. Photo credit: Jerde Partnership.*

Having also successful predecessors in Japan, like the Sony showroom in Tokyo's Ginza or the Sony Tower in Osaka, Sony's Metreon,[2] cross-promotes Sony's consumer electronics and media products in a similar yet more subversive manner. Designed by the local-based women architects Simon Martin-Vegue Winkelstein Moris, it is characterized by a soft high-tech look, mirroring Sony's technology-oriented and culturally-innovative image. To that effect the building is clad with a glas and aluminium façade and furnished with an immense number of metallic elements in the interior, culminating in the concrete walls in which shredded computer pieces are intermixed. Already its spectacular entrance gives us a glimpse of the show inside. It features massive wings displaying information on Metreon. In the interior, Sony's flat panel televisions scattered throughout announce the next movies that will be shown in one of its 15 movies theaters or show art from the Museum of Modern Art. The Sony Style Store presents Sony's latest electronic gadgets next to Sony's DVDs. The PlayStation Store features a "game tender," who fetches any game you like on one of the 30 game stations. The Airtight Garage, a cave adventure zone for techno-entertainment, includes socially interactive games exclusively developed for it. All these Sony components mixed with other shopping venues, meeting spaces, restaurants, museums and events feed off one other, creating a particular synergy. As Metreon (1999) writes: "It is the latest trend towards event spaces where guests can eat, meet and play all in one great location."
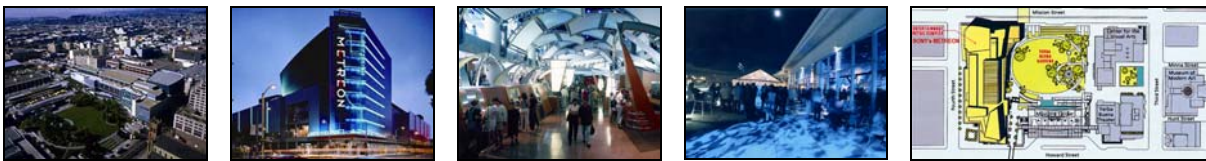
Sony's Metreon *designed by Simon Martin-Vegue Winkelstein Moris, San Francisco 1999. Photo credit: SMWM.*

All three mentioned US examples are based on the consumer-oriented retail and entertainment market. However, with their standardized lowbrow offers directed towards the broad popular mass, Disney and Universal utilize the entertainment mall as an urban generator, in which the key measure for success is income per square foot. In contrast, Sony's Metreon deploys more cultural-oriented marketing strategies, which are driven more by promotional goals than direct retail profit. By integrating extensions of independently run businesses and institutions found elsewhere within San Francisco, Metreon tries to create a more sophisticated environment that integrates the local culture. Moreover, by branding most of its products under different labels, ranging from the PlayStation via the Airtight Garage to the Metreon complex, Sony consciously hides its global brand name. In this way, Sony propagates a multi- or even anti-brand culture as described by Paul Kunkel (1999) in "Digital Dreams". These subversive branding tactics can sooner be linked to Sony's interest in the relatively large youth market than it can to any form of ethical consciousness about monopolies.

With such projects that transform the brand into a physical urban attraction, the implication of these developments in the regeneration of the city becomes evident. As urban destinations, these corporate conglomerates mirror all facets of everyday urban life. Once the corporate branding strategy leaves the confines of the traditional office block or single cell retail shop to incorporate entire districts or neighborhoods, the urban architectural problems increase in complexity and the socioeconomic aspects begin to implicate many other actors than the corporation and the individual property owner in question. In the US, where the Brandhub is meanwhile an established model, the public sector is involved on an almost 'equal' footing with the corporate developer from the inception; the project emerges through their partnership. This practice is a direct result of the declining fiscal resources of city governments, who have shifted their responsibility for providing public facilities to the private sector. Consequentially, city governments are becoming increasingly dependent on private initiatives, philanthropy, or outright exactions for public constructions that would have been built by the city in earlier times. While this new form of urban development first evolved in the US, it is rapidly becoming an accepted model in Europe. Moreover, while commenced by the entertainment industry their promotional strategies are increasingly adopted or even advanced by other consumer-oriented industries such as automotive, fashion, grocery and sports. A great part of this research will be dedicated to the careful analysis of the conditions in which this phenomenon occurs in the European context, and in specific, with an analysis of German and Swiss Brandhubs in contrast and in comparison to their predecessors in the US.

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[2] Metreon comes from a combination of the words metropolis and "eon", a greek word for gathering place. The Metreon complex was realized by Sony Development as the last part of the redevelopment project Yerba Buena Gardens. It is located in the South of Market Street area in San Francisco and sits across the Museum of Modern Art and on top of the Marriott Hotel (cf. Brunner Foundation 1999).

2.3.2. Brandhubs in Germany and Switzerland

For now, three cases in the German and Swiss context have been chosen to exemplify the Brandhub phenomenon: the Sony Center Berlin, VW ErlebnisWelt in Wolfsburg, and Migros WESTside in Berne. These Brandhubs will become part of an in-depth development of case studies, which will be centered on two major perspectives. From the viewpoint of the corporation, the main question is how the Brandhub is implemented as a promotional instrument or specifically, how it is shaped to mediate the brand identities as memorable experiences as well as how multimedia strategies such as cross-promotion are incorporated to increase brand equity and market coverage. From the perspective of the public, the major question is to what extent does the propagated brand identities, which are assumed to be economically, environmentally, and socioculturally responsible, manifest themselves in the Brandhub development.

2.3.2.1. The Sony Center in Berlin

The Sony Center Berlin, designed by Helmut Jahn as part of the Potsdamer/ Leipziger Platz development initiated by the Berlin government in 1991, is a clear example of a Brandhub that not only utilizes the public event, but also the principle of cross-promotion: first by tangibly rendering Sony's dual structure as both a consumer goods and media producer, and second by creating a new competence center for the European entertainment industry (cf. Sony Berlin GmbH 2003).

Sony Center Berlin designed by Murphy/Jahn, Berlin 1992-2000

At first glance, the Sony Center with its vast glass curtain-wall facade appears as a closed and monotonous corporate building. However, a closer look reveals that the complex in fact is broken down into individual buildings of heterogeneous qualities, framing a surprisingly open, nearly public plaza. This spectacular forum, which is used as a 'public' gathering place, is surrounded by shops, cafés and restaurants. Like at Metreon, these urban amenities are pervaded by Sony facilities: the Sony Style Store, Professional Center and multiplex cinemas. The main difference to Metreon is that the Sony Center Berlin is not just geared towards techno nerds, but to a wide audience ranging from film enthusiasts to sport fans. In the forum, under the floating 'umbrella roof', a variety of spectacular professional and cultural events take place: product launches, fashion shows, premieres, live TV coverages like World Championships, and even real sports events such as pole vault competitions. In addition, other complementing culture providers are integrated in the center. Examples are zoon.com, an interactive lounge by VW, and the film center that comprises the German Film and Television Academy, the Arsenal repertory cinema, and diverse media archives. The Sony Center also houses residences and features a historic monument the banqueting halls of the former Grand Hotel Esplanade, which was removed from its original location and implanted into the new building. Today, it simultaneously serves as both restaurant and museum. All these urban offers are encircled by Sony's corporate headquarters: The Sony Center Berlin also houses residences and corporate workplaces as its own headquarters: Sony Corporation Europe, Sony Music Entertainment Germany, and Columbia Tristar. Other companies, in particular from the entertainment industry, could also be attracted such as Fuji TV or the HSG Film and Video Production.
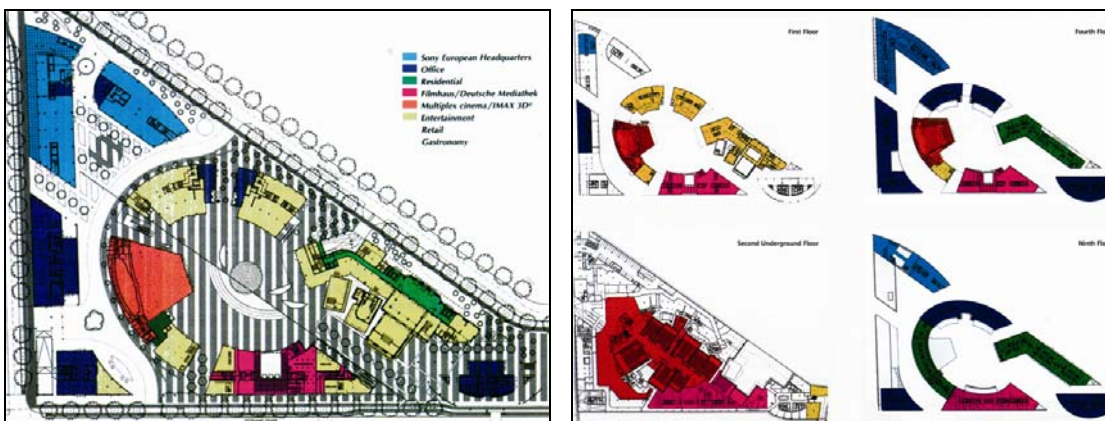
Ground plans Sony Center Berlin
Urban offers: *Sony's European Headquarters, Professional Center (light blue), offices (dark blue), Esplanade residences (green), Filmhaus (pink), Sony's multiplex cinema and IMAX 3D, entertainment (yellow) as well as gastronomy and retail (white).*
Size: *27000 sqm lot, 137.000 GFS.* **Costs:** *770 Mio Euro.* **Visitors:** *approx. 70 Mio year. Photo credit: Murphy/Jahn.*

With such companies and institutions as tenants and as the host of the international film festival Berlin, Sony tries to conquer the German movie and TV market. In this way, the Sony Center not only generates an urban destination, but also fosters a new market for the entertainment industry. By subversively merging Sony's flagships with urban entertainment and culture, the Sony Center Berlin co-brands both Sony's electronic and media productions. Moreover, by propagating an

event culture and by transforming semi-public space into brand space, the Sony Center tries to raise the identification with the brand to a lifestyle experience.

2.3.2.2. VW Autostadt and ErlebnisWelt in Wolfsburg

In 2000, the VW Autostadt of the Volkswagen Group, which also derives its branding strategies from the entertainment industry, opened. The complex is a corporate visiting park located in the immediate vicinity of the VW headquarters and main production plant in Wolfsburg. Master planned by Henn Architekten, it is an exemplary case on how the concept of themed entertainment environments can be directly translated to the world of the automobile (cf. Autostadt GmbH 2003).

VW Autostadt designed by Henn Architekten, Wolfsburg 1996-2000. Photo credit: Autostadt GmbH.

The VW Autostadt is part of the ErlebnisWelt, an urban regeneration project put forth by the Wolfsburg AG, a 50/50 private-public partnership between the VW AG and the city of Wolfsburg that aims to foster economic and sociocultural impulses for the future development of the city. Next to the Autostadt, the ErlebnisWelt comprises a network of six distinctive zones: discovery and entertainment, sport and recreation, shopping and experience, art and culture, fun and fantasy as well as tradition and modernity that pervade the entire city. The Autostadt, in conjunction with the ErlebnisWelt, is an innovative example on how a monotonous industrial city can be transformed into a multi-cultural Brandhub offering state of the art services and leisure amenities (cf. Wolfsburg AG 2003)

Plan VW ErlebnisWelt by the Wolfsburg AG, Wolfsburg 1996-2012

(1) Autostadt. (2) Discovery and Entertainment: science, designer, and orientation center, entertainment facilities. (3) Sport and Recreation: family resort, fitness and wellness center, popular and extreme sports facilities, stadium and arena. (4) Shopping, Experience and Variety: lifestyle shopping center, consumer goods showcase, school and university, offices for companies and organizations. (5) Art, Culture and Life Awareness: center for art, technology and communication, network world bar, children's world, garden of senses, congress park, etc. (6) Fun and Fantasy. (7) Tradition and Modernity. Photo credit: Wolfsburg AG.

The VW Autostadt is a corporate communication center embedded in a synthetic landscape, in which visitors are invited to embark on a journey of discovery to the multifaceted world of the automobile. It is a thematic service park that features a piazza-style reception forum, an auto museum, an elaborate auto delivery center, a Ritz-Carlton hotel, theaters, stores, and above all the car towers as landmark of the Autostadt as well as distinctive auto-pavilions for each brand of the VW Group. With the juxtaposition of these cult-pavilions, the VW Group can cross-promote its various brands including Audi, Bentley, Lamborghini, Seat and Skoda. Moreover, by animating these attractions with diverse installations that fuse art, entertainment, learning and branding, Volkswagen tries to communicate four major values: quality, security, environmental consciousness and social competence. Thus, the Autostadt not only worships the company's brands, but also its intriguing history and its influence on world culture: from the "People's Car" via the "Love Bug" to the "automobility" of the future. The Autostadt quotes signs and terms of the bourgeois city, it refers to forum and piazza, stages spaces for the collective and the individual. Paradoxically, the Autostadt like the Daimler City substitute the urban public spaces, which were destroyed by the automobile society.

Plan VW Autostadt

Urban offers: forum with info booth and exhibition, auto delivery (KundenCenter), car towers (AutoTürme), Ritz-Carlton hotel, auto museum (Zeithaus), auto- pavilions for each brand of the VW Group.
Size: 25000 sqm lot, 137.000 GFS.
Costs: 450 Mio Euros.
Visitors: 4.4 Mio year (2.4 Mio guests).
Photo credit: Autostadt GmbH.

With this staging, the VW concern expects to increase the value of its products and to differentiate themselves from other car companies. The intention is not simply to convince the customer to buy his or her car directly from the firm, but rather to generate long-term brand loyalty. This strategy is based on the belief that by connecting the brand-name with a physical place, the customer will identify more strongly with the brand, enhancing its emotional relationship with the corporation. In short, the Autostadt materializes the fetishistic relationship Germans have with their car.

2.3.2.3. Migros WESTside in Berne

Developed by Switzerland's largest retail organization Migros, WESTside will become a super-regional urban entertainment destination. As announced on its website, the Brandhub will blend shopping, working, living, pleasure, and recreation in an "all-in-one experience for all sorts of people, no matter what their tastes and interests are." (Neue Brünnen AG 2003) Scheduled to be open in 2006 on the western edge of the city of Berne, WESTside is an exemplary case for

questioning the typical typology of an urban entertainment center. By condensing city and landscape, outstanding urban design and commerce, high and low culture, consumption and relaxation, Migros's goal with WESTside is to set new dimensions for urban development.

Migros WESTside designed by Daniel Libeskind, Berne-Brünnen 1995-2006. Photo credit: Neue Brünnen AG.

WESTside is part of West Berne's most important urban extension area: the "Brünnen Development Plan" elaborated by the city of Berne. (Stadt Bern 2003) Originally, this plan was comprised of a single residential area. However, with the initiative of Migros to build a "shopping and leisure paradise" adjacent to the planned residential area, the mono-functional scheme turned into a holistic and financially feasible vision that is currently realized by the Neue Brünnen AG with Migros Aare as the majority shareholder. Next to the WESTside complex that is hoped to generate 800 jobs, the plan also incorporates residential accommodations for 2,600 people, ample green zones, and convenient interchange possibilities for public transport and the motorway.

  With Daniel Libeskind as the architect, WESTside is also a very ambitious architectural project. According to Libeskind, the conglomerate will become a dynamic place that challenges the border between consuming, acting and 'just being'. In this manner, WESTside consists of various fluidly interconnected parts: (i) a shopping mall with specialist shops of all sorts, (ii) fitness and wellness zone including an adventure pool and a climbing wall, (iii) mediaplex cinema, (iv) superstore park with a do-it-yourself and garden center, and (iv) senior residences as well as a hotel and convention wing for business people and tourists alike. These complexes will be connected by a public piazza and an alley in the interior. In addition, they will be highly pervaded with dining places ranging from self-service facilities to ethnic gourmet restaurants, discovery and cultural offerings, supervised playgrounds as well as diverse other leisure areas.

Plan Migros WESTside

Urban offers: *shopping mall; fitness and wellness zone; mediaplex; superstore park; hotel and senior residences. These complexes are fluidly connected by a public piazza and alley in the interior.*
Size: *81.662 sqm lot, 190.000 sqm GFS.*
Costs: *Approx. 500 Mio CHF (WESTside) plus approx. 380 Mio CHF (IG-Brünnen).*
Visitors: *3.5 Mio expected per year.*
Photo credit: Daniel Libeskind.

Within these multi-cultural spaces, which are targeted towards a broad audience and will be open 365 days a year, Migros will be able to stage and cross-promote its various businesses and institutions, including retail, leisure and travel, gastronomy, sport and wellness, culture and education and last but not least banking. Migros contributes substantially to the quality of life in Switzerland and seeks to further its image as a widely accepted, responsible, consumer- and environment-friendly company. To what extent Migros materializes this image within WESTside will be measured according to the expected outcome. Since WESTside is not yet completed, this study will also consider other projects of the Migros group that foster urban development.

2.3.3. The Brandhub as urban promotional instrument: resistance or participation?

As shown above, Brandhubs are utilized by brand-name corporations and entrepreneurial cities as promotional instruments. By merging formerly separated typologies such as for working, living, shopping, entertainment, culture, education, and recreation around the given brand identities, the Brandhub constitutes a new hybrid typology. As highly branded urban epicenter, it embodies commercial strategies that integrate economic (formerly private) aspects with sociocultural (formerly public) values into novel private-public spaces. While the US-American predecessors are still rather economic-driven, the European Brandhubs tend to draw on more sophisticated culture-oriented marketing strategies. These diverse branding strategies dictate specific urban forms, where 'culturalized' or even 'anti-marketing' strategies encourage a typology that hides the ubiquitous brand name. In this way, they have a direct impact on the urban development. On the one hand, they encourage urban revitalization and bring forth an increased interest for urban design and potentially a heightened attention for its quality and sustainability. On the other hand, questions arouse on how urban design should interact with this intricate integration into commercial operations. Should urban design resist these Branding strategies or should it embrace them? The prevailing opinions move between two divergent positions.

2.3.3.1. Disneyfication = homogenization and loss of public space?

The first resisting position scorns such brandscapes and emphasizes their negative impacts on the urban realm. By likening them to Disneyland, this viewpoint argues that they infiltrate the city with mediocrity, commercialism and mass culture. For example Michael Sorkin's (1992) collection of essays entitled *Variations on a Theme Park* illustrates how the Disney

theme parks have become insidious models for today's apparently disturbingly branded and simulated environments. In this and other publications, critics such as M. Christine Boyer, Margaret Crawford, Mike Davis, and Edward Soja demonstrate how this pervasive "Disneyfication" destroys the variety of historic places and produces a bland artificial homogeneity. As an extension to Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*, this position further claims that the public realm increasingly has been replaced by hyperreal worlds – predominantly as spaces of commodification.

While many critics object to the homogeneity of hyperreal or disneyfied spaces, the presented Brandhubs indicate that their generic nature increasingly becomes outflanked by the rise of non-replicable and rather original experiences that draw their energy from local culture and/or high-quality design with real materials and honest intentions (cf. Bosshart 1997; Reiff 1998; Harvey 2001; Christiaanse 2001; Borries 2004). One major reason for this is that authenticity, history and locality have become commodities themselves. In recent decades, the intensified competition put forth by the globalization of the markets has forced both cities and corporations to differentiate themselves from their competitors. To become more distinctive, they increasingly produce unique commodities by appropriating local peculiarities as well as aesthetic and ethical meanings of diverse origins from which they can extract economic benefit. As David Harvey (2001: 10-13) confirms, the forces of globalization in a sort of contradictory manner lead to "the valuation of uniqueness, authenticity, particularity, originality and all manner of other dimensions to social life that are inconsistent with the homogeneity presupposed by commodity production" or Disneyfication. That means, if corporations and cities are not to totally destroy the uniqueness that is the basis for sustaining growth in an otherwise fiercely competitive world, then they "must support a form of differentiation and allow for divergent and to some degree uncontrollable local cultural developments that can be antagonistic to their own smooth functioning." In this regard, they should even integrate subversive cultural practices precisely because this is one way to be authentic, creative, and unique.

The impact of such commodified environments has also been substantially criticized in the light of an increasing privatization and the related loss of public space. They have been termed as "dual cities" (cf. Mollenkopf and Castells 1991) or "control centers" (cf. Deleuze 1990; Sassen 1991/2000), which tend to be carefully secured to tailor to consumers and social elites while excluding undesirables and thus enforce the already existing social and spatial polarization within our postindustrial landscape. As for example Frank Roost (2000) in *The Disneyfication of cities*, most critics conclude that brandscapes are scarcely suitable to solve the problems of our cities since the exclusion of specific levels of the population as well as demarcation of losers from the economic development is an essential component of their marketing success. These critics rightly point out that Brandhubs try to meet the consumption and entertainment desires of the increasing percentage of the population that is willing to spend their disposable income to take part in urban – albeit commercially-driven – activities. Even Brandhubs, which provide rather cultural and gratis offers are driven by insidiously commercial considerations, namely to generate lasting brand loyalty. However, the key motivation of brand-name corporations to develop Brandhubs to create their identity as a widely respected institution require them to navigate "highly public ethical and social concerns … Increasing numbers of large corporations thus find themselves caught between two seemingly contradictory goals: satisfying the investors's expectations for progressive earnings growth as well as the consumer's growing demand for social responsibility." (Cogman and Oppenheim 2002) For this reason, big-name corporations more and more go beyond the mainstream and brand-obsessed shoppers as their target groups. Instead they have come to incorporate the subculture, undesirables and even their opponents such as anti-globalization campaigners or environmental activists in their corporate-wide branding strategies, as asserted by leading consumer researchers[3] and illuminated by Naomi Klein (2001: 115). For example, one of Sony's main target groups in the creation of Brandhubs is the "Reactors … [who] are born on the street, or wish they were … are subversive, rebellious, suspicious of power and authority, have no taste in the conventional sense and favor honest contradiction." (Kunkel 1999: 140)

For sure, this exploitation of the local milieu and subculture for export and the benefit of others – the social elite, tourists and suburban day-trippers – can be seen as even more insidious than the evident disneyfication or privatization of it. However, by utilizing multicultural branding strategies and by trading on unique qualities and experiences, Brandhubs open up new spaces within which more sustainable alternatives can be conceived and implemented. These are spaces that go beyond the totally branded city such as for example *The Activated City*, which was envisioned by Friedrich von Borries (2004) in the frame of his dissertation on branded urban interventions. In this city urban experiences are not only prescribed by brands, but also created by all sorts of actors, even the users themselves.

2.3.3.2. Corporate urbanism = urban stimulation and regeneration?

This second affirmative position is represented by the public-private venture between brand-name corporations and public authorities, who support them in the development of the Brandhubs. Public-private partnerships projects have become a praised form for corporate urbanism, because they entail advantages for both the corporation and the city.[4] For the

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[3] In the battle for customers, forward-thinking corporations have come to adopt variations on the theme of diversity and tolerance in all of its forms (cultural, political, sexual, racial, social) as the defining idea for Generation X. More recently, they also consider the lucrative demographics of the Generation Y, which are environmentally conscious, feel collective responsibility, and are interested in a company's morality. Confer Yankelovich (2003), http://www.yankelovich.com or Bensley and Whitney (2001), http://jbresearchco.com/GenY.html.

[4] The emergence of public-private partnership projects is mainly seen as a consequence of the profound structural changes, which have affected Western cities since the 1970's: The significant growth of service and leisure industries, globalization, privatization, deregulation as well as the related de-industrialization and the declining power of the nation-state to control transnational forces. These tendencies are perceived as the main causes of an intense interurban competition, which puts increased pressure on cities. As a response, urban governments have increasingly shifted their endeavors from a reactive, regulative planning approach towards proactive strategies of urban development and employment growth. In the North American context, these proactive strategies have been termed as "urban entrepreneurialism," which is in stark contrast to the "managerialism" of the welfare state of the previous decades (Harvey 1989a: 3-17 and 1989b). Hence, urban governments have turned to new sources to foster the prosperity of their city (cf. Noller et al. 1994; Ronneberger et al. 1999; Becker 2001). Similar to the corporate developers, they utilize consumption-driven strategies of urban stimulation. By

corporation, public-private partnership projects purvey incentives such as the provision of cheap land in central locations, financing aid, tax abatements, eased planning regulations, and above all access to local peculiarities. For the entrepreneurial city, they entail economic impulses, job creation, increased tax revenues as well as direct investments for public needs. This sort of 'getting and spending' as well as the common interest to create an attractive image and destination for meeting both the desires of experience-seeking consumers and cultural-conscious citizens is what bind the city and the corporate developer together (cf. Sagalyn 1989). As part of their common marketing efforts, they praise Brandhubs for their popularity and immediately improving the local situation (cf. Neue Brünnen AG 2003/ Stadt Bern 2003; Wolfsburg AG 2003/ Stadt Wolfsburg 2001; Sony Berlin GmbH 2003). Moreover, they claim that their impetuses serve the entire population, including the 'poor' who incidentally turn out to be some of the most avid consumers.

While Brandhubs clearly create instant urban regeneration, their long-term contribution to the city and real life expectancy remain questionable, especially since they are based heavily on the ephemeral, the event, the experience. Are they simply the next evolutionary step from the entertainment mall to be replaced when the experience-seeking consumers migrate to newer "in-places" or can they become deeply rooted in the city? Will Brandhubs be the next *Junkspace* in which public urban space itself is rapidly being transformed into a consumer commodity or do they constitute a promising model for responsive urban design that creatively combines commerce and culture?

2.3.3.3. Responsive urban design = differentiation!

The first negative position detects the core of the problem, but for the discipline of urban design it hardly provides differentiated strategies for the exposure with commercial realities. In the contemporary experience society, where the spheres of culture, economy, politics and society merge, neither architecture as pure art or 'public gift' nor fully commercialized architectures seem viable. As mediators between private and public values, architects and planners cannot elude the forces of the brand-culture. On the contrary, acknowledging their importance would be the first step in changing them. This is not only confirmed by commercial urban designers such as Jon Jerde, but more recently also by renowned architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Frank Gehry, Herzog & de Meuron und Daniel Libeskind. They all try to comprehend the commercial mechanisms and production conditions of corporate urbanism and to develop adequate design strategies for it. They assign urban design an operative role within the economic and political power game, whereby the principles of branding and a globalized experience economy are appropriated in a proactive, yet critical manner. If urban design is instrumentalized as spectacle and as a means to an end for corporate profit maximization and/or if it also provides socioculturally robust spaces, has to be examined. The goal is not to affirm the prevailing strategies and space productions of a gross commodification. On the contrary, these have to be revealed in depth in order to develop more sustainable alternatives. This requires differentiated design strategies and instruments, which creatively integrate economic and functional parameters with critical social and cultural aspects.

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selling a new or repackaged image of their city, they try to attract investors, tourists, qualified workforce, and new taxpayers. This sort of urban entrepreneurialism can be characterized as a shift from a supply-oriented to a flexible demand-oriented approach of urban governance and planning.

Meanwhile, public-private partnership projects have been widely researched but from limited viewpoints. Research conducted from the viewpoint of the city has been primarily documented in the context of urban policy, focusing on the change of urban governance and planning practice (cf. Brenner and Theodore 2002). Research conducted from the viewpoint of the real estate industry is mainly centered on the profitability of these projects, and whether or not they have successfully responded to a market demand, the return on investments, etc. What has not been researched is the motivation of brand-name corporations such as Migros, Sony or Volkswagen, whose core business is not real estate development, to participate in these public-private partnerships projects. Brandhubs as the outcome of these novel partnerships take on a character of their own, which is evidently different than the meanwhile established partnerships and real estate deals in which profits are generated from "a combination of rents and leases, percentages of sales, land appreciation, tax write-downs and concessions." (Hannigan 1998: 103) Economic profit is no longer determined primarily through use and land value, but by branding and the provision of experiences – strategies which are brought in by the brand-name corporations. Besides the theoretical constructs of Fredric Jameson (1991) and Harvey (2001) as well as Pine's and Gilmore's (1999) and Sagalyn's (2001) practice-oriented approach to capture this new relationship between architecture, culture and commerce, there is scarcely anything published on the economic aspects of Brandhub developments that goes beyond the numbers of visitors per day or the traditional cost-benefit analyses, which do not include brand and sociocultural added value. The reason for this might be that the research is conducted by the corporations themselves and thus limited in their outlook.

2.4. Detailed research concept and plan

As stated in section 2.2., the main goal of this study is to examine the potential of the Brandhub typology for responsive, differentiated urban design that creatively integrates sociocultural values with economic and functional aspects from which both the public and corporate realm can profit. To achieve this central goal, this research proposes a <u>five-phase examination method</u> organized as work packages (WP 1 - 5) with anticipated results and milestones (M 1 - 5):

WP 1) Background research – the evolution of the Brandhub typology:
    Provision of a comprehensive understanding of the origins, production conditions and characteristics of the Brandhub typology.
    Detection of key factors of Brandhubs success, which will be considered in the case studies.
M1: Report on background research

WP 2) Case studies of selected Brandhubs in the European context:
    Development of holistic and emphatic case understandings (level 1).
    Definition of an urban matrix to extract the factors relevant for responsive Brandhub developments and to understand their interplay (level 2).
    Sub-investigations: assessment of the responsiveness of individual urban factors (level 3).
M2: Reports of the individual case analyses

WP 3) Comparison of the individual case study results:
    Cross-case assessment of the hypothetical-influencing urban factors (level 3: proof/ disproof of individual hypotheses).
    Cross-case evaluation of the urban matrices (level 2: verify the most important urban factors that have to be fulfilled in order to foster the responsiveness of Brandhubs).
    Interpretation of the case study results as a whole (level 1: show the general strengths and weaknesses of Brandhubs for responsive, differentiated urban design).
M3: Report on cross-case assessment

WP 4) Methodology for responsive urban design:
    Construction of a general net of positive, responsive urban factors (level 2, 3).
    Development of methods and tools for creating responsive design strategies within Brandhubs (level 1, all previous findings).
M4: Report on responsive urban methodology

WP 5) Documentation, knowledge transfer and refinement:
    Documentation of research results and review with case stakeholders, case experts and scientific advisors.
    Dissemination at international conferences, symposia, journals and online discussion platforms.
    Revision and reports in iterative refinement cycles according to received feedback.
M5: Final report on research results and dissertation

2.4.1. Background research: evolution of the Brandhub typology (WP 1)

The emergence of the Brandhub as a new urban typology will be examined in both its historical and contemporary as well as global and local context. The goal of this broad survey is, on the one hand, to investigate the evolution of corporate urbanism and its contemporary manifestation in the form of the Brandhub typology. On the other hand, functioning schemes and key factors that make Brandhubs successful will be determined. These success factors will be analyzed in the case studies and highly considered in the development of a responsive urban methodology. This background will be mainly conducted through <u>observations</u> as well as <u>scientific literature and data reviews</u>, in which also the authors introduced in the rationale will become incorporated. It is split into the following four subtasks:

2.4.1.1. Comparison of the Brandhub typology with its main corporate predecessors

Compare contemporary Brandhubs with its major corporate predecessors, dating back to the Renaissance period, and the conditions in which they evolved in order to determine similarities and differences (cf. Höger 2004):
    <u>Corporate identity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance</u>: e.g. Medici and Fugger developments.
    <u>Corporate identity architecture and company towns in the Industrial Age</u>: e.g. Feldschlösschen Brewery, AEG areal Berlin, Höchst areal Frankfurt, Fiat Lingotto plant Turin, Krupp-Stadt Essen, Siemenstadt Berlin, and Stadt des KdF-Wagens (today Wolfsburg).
    <u>Corporate towers in the service society</u>: e.g. Chrysler Building New York and AT&T Building New York, BMW 'Vierzylinder' building Munich, X-Seed 4000, Burj Al Arab.
    <u>Corporate theme parks and urban entertainment destinations in the 'society of the spectacle'</u>: e.g. Casino Resort Las Vegas, Disney developments (Disney Worlds, Celebration, Disney Cruise Line), Horton Plaza San Diego, Canal City Hakata, The Samsung Experience in Seoul.

2.4.1.2. Emergence of the Brandhub as a new urban typology in the experience society

Correlate the emergence of the Brandhub phenomenon to contemporary forces, and characterize it accordingly:

The expansion of a neoliberal market rationality is seen as the main cause of an intensified competition that forces both corporations as well as cities to differentiate themselves. (cf. Noller et al. 1994; Ronneberger et al. 1999; Harvey 2001; Brenner and Theodore 2002) → The Brandhub as a differentiation tool for both brand-name corporations and entrepreneurial cities to stay competitive in a highly neoliberal market.

The rise of an "experience economy" (Pine and Gilmore 1999), in which the commercialization of culture and the culturalization of the economy is of particular importance. (cf. Jameson 1991; Zukin 1995; Harvey 2001) → The Brandhub as an experiential epicenter of highly interactive activities meeting the demands of the "experience society" (Schulze 1992).

The hybridization of formerly separated typologies such as for work, living, shopping, dining, entertainment, culture, education or recreation. For example, theme stores (shoppertainment or entertailing), dinner theaters (eatertainment), gastro-museums (eaterculture), science parks (edutainment) and retreat centers. → The Brandhub as new hybrid typology that merges commercial (formerly private) and sociocultural (formerly public) typologies into novel spaces.

The proliferation of large-scale entertainment destinations, which have a modular mix of uses, provide life around the clock and are highly branded and themed. (cf. Gottdiener 1997; Beyard et al. 1998 and 2001; Hannigan 1998; Steinecke 2000; Stadtbauwelt 2000; Wall 2003) → The Brandhub as a comprehensive urban mixed-use environment that attracts both experience-seeking customers and cultural-conscious citizens.

The establishment of public-private partnerships to realize these large-scale urban mixed-use environments (cf. Frieden and Sagalyn 1989; Ronneberger et al. 1999) and the entry of brand-name corporations as key development partners in bringing in novel resources vital to the success of the project such as distribution channels, branded products or services, new marketing strategies as well as risk reduction strategies such as vertical integration and customer research. (cf. Hannigan 1998) → The Brandhub as private-public venture between brand-name corporations and entrepreneurial cities.

The apotheosis of flagship architectures, which are designed by star architects and are veritable reifications of the consumer commodity themselves, like the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. (cf. Riewoldt 2002; Archithese 2003) → The Brandhub as urban signature architecture that mediates the corporate and/ or city identities in a commodified environment.

The implementation of new marketing tools such as experiential spatial branding (cf. Pine and Gilmore 1999; Mikunda 2002) and multimedia marketing or crossover branding (cf. Herrmann 1999). → The Brandhub as public event and promotional instrument that mediates the localized corporate identities in an experiential public brand space to generate lasting brand loyalty and trigger synergies among integrated activities to achieve higher levels of brand visibility.

The growing criticism against the increasing commodification of the urban public realm or 'brandalism' (cf. Sorkin 1992; Roost 2000; Klein 2001; Becker 2001) and the rising demand for meaningful experiences and corporate social responsibility (cf. Bosshart 1997; Cogman and Oppenheim 2002; Borries 2004). → The Brandhub as melting pot and urban catalyst, stimulating local development and providing novel spaces within which more sustainable urban cultures can evolve.

2.4.1.3. Demarcation of Brandhubs from other contemporary corporate conglomerates

Demarcate the Brandhub typology from other contemporary corporate conglomerates in order to extract characterization criteria:

Corporate image centers and flagship outlets, which are realized as a pure private venture and thus are not strategically implemented to foster urban development in the framework of public-private partnerships: e.g. Vitra Centers in Weil am Rhein and Birsfelden, Audi Ingolstadt, BMW Welt Munich, Ford's eco-friendly River Rouge plant in Dearborn, and worldwide Niketowns.

Business-to-Business (B2B) centers or clusters, which are targeted at business partners and not towards end consumers. Thus they neither sell nor brand to the public. Particularly projects developed by companies, which are not active in consumer industries: e.g. Novartis Campus Basel, Swiss Re Center Rüschlikon, and Stanford Research Park (Silicon Valley).

Recycled industrial brownfields or urban development projects initiated by large corporations in joint business with the city for recycling desolate industrial areas and then selling them to others. These projects incorporate the public event, but not for proactively branding the corporation: e.g. ABB Areal in Baden and Zürich North, Maag and Sulzer-Escher Wyss Areal in Zürich West, Sulzer Areal in Winterthur or the Weststadt (formerly Krupp-Stadt) in Essen.

2.4.1.4. Relationship of the investigated Brandhubs to their worldwide counterparts

Relate the selected cases to their worldwide counterparts in order to illuminate the global urban phenomenon and its specific local manifestation in the German and Swiss context, including the latest tendencies:

Germany: Promenaden Hauptbahnhof Leipzig, Stuttgart 21, Adidas World of Sports in Herzogenaurach, Hugo Boss Town Metzingen, Porsche Center Leipzig, and the planned Mercedez Benz culture and event mile in Stuttgart.

France: Euralille, Bugatti Automobiles S.A.A. Château St. Jean in Molsheim.

Japan: Toyota City, Universal CityWalk in Osaka, Odaiba district in Tokyo as Mega-Brandhub with Sony's Mediage, Toyota City Mega Web, Fuji Television Building, and Sega's Joypolis.

Mexico: Omnilife's JVC Center, the Jorge Vergara Carbrera cultural, convention, and business center in Guadalajara.

Netherlands: Almere City Center, and Amsterdam Science Park.

Switzerland: Unique Airport, envisioned Hardturm Stadium and ETH Science City in Zürich.

USA: Universal CityWalk in Hollywood and Orlando, Disney's Times Square Development in New York, Sony's Metreon in San Francisco, MIT University Park in Cambridge MA, and the planned World of Coca Cola in Atlanta.

Distributed: The Prada Universe including the Prada Epicenters in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Tokyo, the Prada headquarter USA in New York, and the Prada Le Cure production center and outlet in Terranuova, Arezzo.

2.4.2. Case studies in the European context (WP 2)

A certain critical number of European case studies that exemplify the Brandhub typology will be examined in-depth. For the moment, three cases have been chosen: (1) Sony Center Berlin, (2) Migros WESTside in Berne, and (3) VW ErlebnisWelt in Wolfsburg. In using the case study method, this research aims to provide for an analysis of diverse information, factors and contingencies that are only evident in real-life experiences – the tangible with facts and the intangible with descriptions and observations. Only the comparison and contrast of different examples can lead to a critical understanding of the problems and potentials of the Brandhub typology for responsive or sustainable urban design.

For its scientific legitimation, this work refers to the extensive scholarly literature on case study methods as well as their wide application in research projects that are dedicated to real, complex, often ill-defined, and socially relevant problems. From a socio-scientific perspective, such highly contextualized research methods are described as a new type of science that allows for novel ways of interaction between theory and practice. In *The new production of knowledge* (Gibbons et al. 1994) and *Re-thinking science* (Nowotny et al. 2001) this type of science is defined as Mode 2. This mode doesn't replace the traditional disciplinary research (Mode 1), but complements it by drawing on a broader socioeconomic context and by being more sensitive to social accountability and reflexivity. In the line with this Mode-2 science, the aim of this study is to generate practice relevant knowledge that is useful for the urban design practice, city governments, global brand industry and society in general.

For the conception of the case analyses, this research primarily draws upon Roland Scholz's and Olaf Tietje's (2002) *Embedded Case Study Methods*, which have been tested in several cases on sustainable urban planning and development (cf. ETH-UNS Case Study Bureau 2003). Similar to these cases, this study tries to integrally analyze the interplay between environmental, economical, and social issues in order to foster sustainable urban development as intended in the UN-Habitat Agenda (1996). However unlike the UNS cases, which are conducted from an environmental science perspective and tend to focus on ecological issues, this study concentrates on the built environment: its meaning, form, functioning and reciprocal interrelationship with socioeconomic aspects. Thus the emphasis is on aesthetic and cultural sustainability (cf. Harvard Design School 2003b), something which is usually ignored in environmental studies.

On the one hand, this study transfers the different types of knowledge integration as detected by Scholz and Tietje (2002: 40) to responsive corporate urbanism: (i) integration of knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. urban design, economics, sociology and cultural studies), (ii) knowledge from different stakeholders (e.g. the corporation, the public and urban designers), and (iii) different qualities of knowledge (e.g. analytical and intuitive, quantitative and qualitative). On the other hand, it adopts Scholz's and Tietje's three level system (2002: 30) to efficiently structure the case analyses and to trigger different qualities of knowledge: understanding (level 1), conceptualizing (level 2), and explaining (level 3). Congruent with this knowledge system, the case study method of this research is split in three levels.

To conduct the case studies according to these levels, two types of data are utilized and processed. The first is data from existing bodies of scientific knowledge such as disciplinary assertions and theories. The second is data from the cases themselves such as surveys, documents, measurements, expertise and so on. The relevant material required for the case analyses will be collected from diverse sources, including: (i) site visits, own experiences and observations; (ii) publications in scientific books, journals, newspapers, the Internet, etc; (iii) archival records and documents mainly from the key stakeholders involved in the Brandhub development, such as case descriptions and discussions, drawings and images, locational reports and statistics as well as zoning, framework, master and realization plans; and (iv) questionnaires and interviews both open-ended and structured with the key persons responsible for the development of the project, case experts as well as economic and sociocultural critics.

2.4.2.1. The cases at large: holistic and empathic case understandings (level 1)

On this level, the goal is to develop a comprehensive and empathic understanding of each of the individual Brandhub developments, their unique qualities, deficiencies, potentials and limits:

Solid anamnesis and status quo of the case: the history of the initiation, design, planning, realization and marketing process as well as the general vision and goals of the project.

Key stakeholders, their roles and goals: (i) the corporation and their partners: real estate developers and urban designers as well as (ii) the public: municipal and state authorities, advocates, users and customers such residents, visitors, employees, and tenants.

Organization and leadership of the project based on planning, legal and realization instruments and in relation to the form of the public-private partnership (e.g. informal agreements, a project work group or even a project company among the corporation and the city).

Overall urban design and architecture: master and building plans; project elements; urban structure, density and identity; accessibility, traffic and parking concept; relationship to overall urban development plan and the context.

Maintenance, operations and security as well as financing and economic considerations.

Based on these holistic analyses, the essential hypothetical urban factors that have to be fulfilled to make the Brandhub typology responsive are elaborated and then correlated on the next level.

2.4.2.2. Conceptual view on the cases: organization of urban design factors via an urban matrix (level 2)

On the second level, the focus is on a conceptual model of the real cases – a multi-perspective framework based on the methods of knowledge and data integration. Thus the viewpoint changes from the holistic perspective of the first level to a system view. This view is used as a vehicle for extracting the urban factors relevant for responsive Brandhub design. It helps to produce more valid case understandings and contributes to the conceptualization of the cases. To organize the individual urban factors and to understand their interplay, an urban matrix will be constructed (see Fig. 1). Along the horizontal dimension, this matrix captures the mutual relationship between the physical built environment and the dynamic socioeconomic factors. On the one side, the underlying forces represented by the key stakeholders – the private corporation as well as the public authorities and advocates – exert influence on the urban form and its functioning. On the other side, the resulting urban design and architecture implicates consequences for the private and public realm. Along the vertical dimension are the key urban factors affecting Brandhub developments.

This matrix will be utilized as a critical framework to help articulate the conflicts and contradictions inherent in Brandhub developments. Based on the crossdisciplinary thinking of "The Condition of Postmodernity" (Harvey 1989b), "Postmodernism" (Jameson 1991) or "Landscapes of Power" (Zukin 1991), this matrix will help to reveal the interrelationship of the architecture, culture and economy not as "a one-way street but [as] a continuous reciprocal interaction and feedback loop" (Jameson 1991: xv). These writings have substantially analyzed the built environment as a mirror of the contemporary material culture, dissected either as part of the "cultural logic of late capitalism" (Jameson 1991), the "global commodification of culture" (Harvey 2001) or the "circuits of cultural capital" (Zukin 1991). However, this interpretation of the urban form as an outcome of cultural, economic and political processes is just one explanation, albeit an important one. It is a very general, macro-level perspective that does neither examine how specific modifications in urban form are produced nor inform us about the practice in creating these changes. If the theoretical perspectives on postmodern urbanism provide a top-down view, this study aims to offer a bottom-up perspective, which discloses this inside process on the formation of Brandhubs. This analysis will not just focus on the urban designers' visions but also how that vision is formed and how the projects are developed and eventually packaged in collaboration with the corporate developer and the other stakeholders involved in the development process.
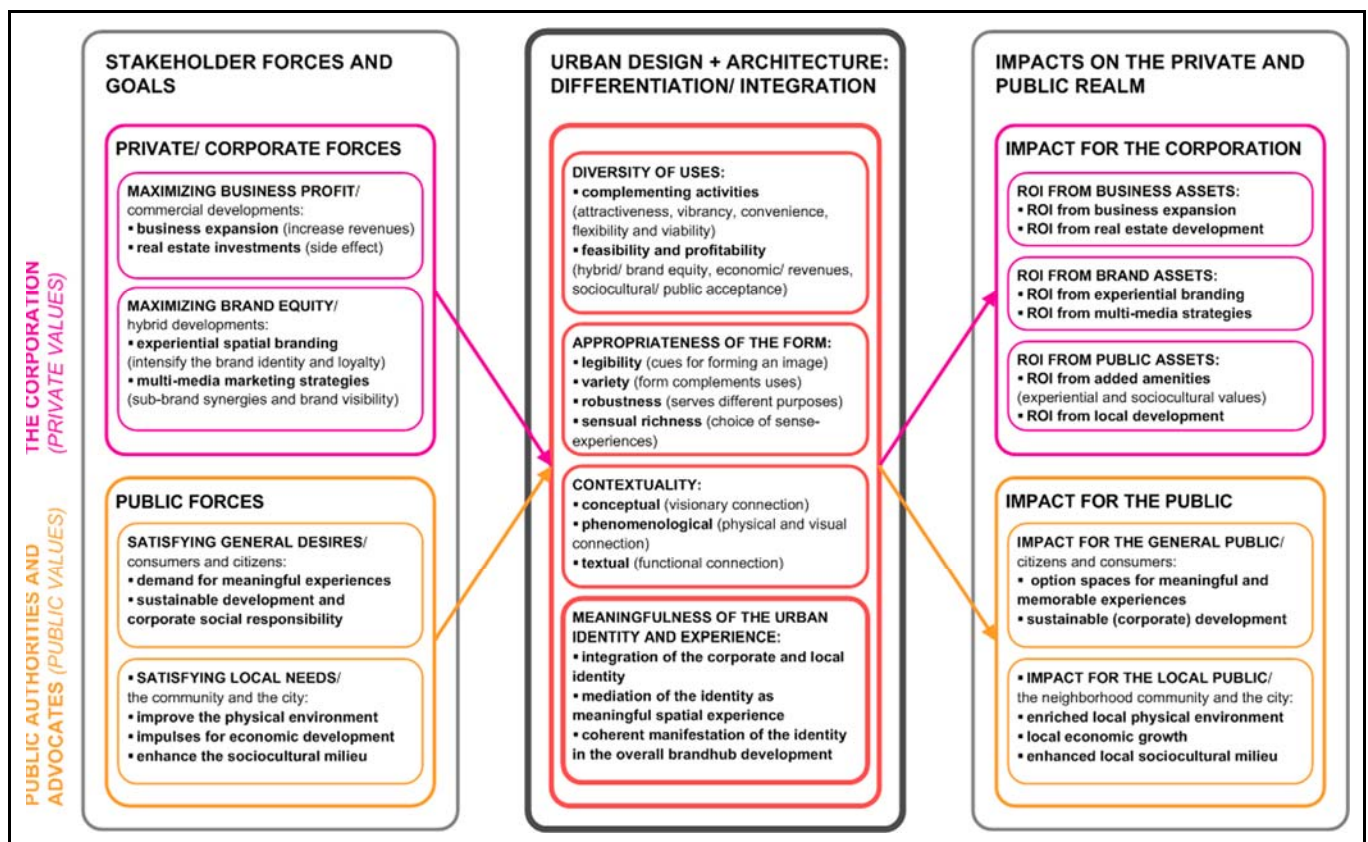

Fig. 1: The urban matrix as multi-perspective framework for the case analyses.

2.4.2.3. Disciplinary sub-investigations: assessment of individual urban design factors (level 3)

On the third level are data and results from disciplinary sub-investigations based on the urban matrix. Here, the individual urban factors relevant in the Brandhub developments are examined. The intention is to detect how hypothetical influential factors are implemented in the cases and to evaluate if they have a stimulating, ambivalent, or inhibiting effect for responsive urban design. Both quantitative factors through the evaluation of existing data, and qualitative ones through interpretations and descriptions will be taken into account. These data-level analyses are organized in sub-investigations

according to the requirements of the urban matrix, whereby the focus is on the urban design and architecture in relation to the stakeholder forces and goals and their potential impact on the private and public realm.

2.4.2.3.1. Stakeholder forces and goals

First, the forces that exert influence on the urban form will be analyzed, primarily, the motivations and goals of the key stakeholders involved in the Brandhub development: (i) the corporation as the main developer and visionary as well as (ii) the public, which is represented by the city authorities as cooperative facilitator and as supportive provider of incentives and possibly by public advocacy such as the local community, activist organizations or nonprofit groups.

In general, the main goal of a **corporation** is to maximize profit in order to satisfy its investors' or shareholders' expectations for progressive earnings growth. Concerning Brandhubs, this study assumes that this implies two major interests: the maximization of business profit and maximization of brand equity. The former is based on commercial developments as business expansion both in size and field (e.g. new corporate branches) and negligibly as financial investments in real estate (e.g. renting or selling the spaces to other users). Commercial developments are dependent on the market demand and aim to increase a corporation's market share, market penetration, and thus its revenue. The latter utilizes hybrid developments – a mixture of commercial and sociocultural components – as vehicles to intensify the consumer's perception of, experience with and relationship to the corporate brand. Hybrid developments are dependent on the corporate umbrella brand and its sub-brands. They encompass two novel promotional instruments. First, experiential spatial branding to create a strong physical presence of the corporate brand by mediating its identities in an experiential social space for meeting the consumers' desires, and thus increasing brand awareness, brand preference and brand loyalty. Second, multimedia marketing strategies, in particular the concept of cross-promotion, trigger synergies among different sub-brands or products of a corporation and achieve higher levels of brand visibility through multimodal penetration. Generally, hybrid developments are very cost-intensive, resulting in low or no direct, yet high indirect economic profits. Thus, in order to maximize profit, the challenge of corporations in the development of Brandhubs is to achieve the best mixture of commercial and hybrid components.

From the perspective of the **public authorities and advocates**, this study assumes that the main interest in the development of Brandhubs is the attraction of private investments to satisfy general public desires and to promote local development. The former addresses the demands of both experience-seeking consumers and sociocultural conscious citizens. It includes the desire for option spaces that allow for meaningful experiences as well as the request for sustainable development that is based on corporate social responsibility. The latter refers to the satisfaction of the surrounding neighborhood community and/ or city residents, who are directly affected by the Brandhub development. It encompasses (i) the improvement of the local physical environment (e.g. vitalization of fallow or decaying urban centers or quarters, also as an antidote to urban sprawl), (ii) impetuses for local economic development (e.g. promotion of local businesses and institutions), and (iii) enhancement of the local sociocultural milieu (e.g. augmentation of local peculiarities as well as equal participation of the community and transgressive cultural producers). The main challenge for the public authorities in the development of Brandhubs is to go beyond acting as legal facilitator by employing strategies for wresting design, financial and sociocultural benefits from the corporation (e.g. design requirements; exactions for the provision of urban amenities such as open space and public facilities; linkage fees for art complexes, affordable housing, day-care centers or other social services; tying corporate revenues to profits for maintaining these spaces and services; reserving space and providing operating funds for the local community to develop their own institutions; making locals a first source employee tool). For the public advocates as well as cultural producers, the challenge is to gain concessions and to integrate their values into the Brandhub development in a way that the forces of culture and society, including the subculture and antagonistic movements (e.g. public pressure through advocacy campaigns), can counterbalance or enrich those of the corporation and city.

2.4.2.3.2. The urban design and architecture (differentiation)

With regard to the stakeholder forces and goals, this study hypothesizes that in order to be successful Brandhubs have to respond to the aforementioned private and public values within a highly differentiated and condensed urban design. Differentiation and condensation are the driving force behind responsive corporate urban design. Differentiation of the Brandhub is critical for its responsiveness towards both economic and sociocultural values and thus for its distinctiveness, attractiveness, robustness and competitiveness. Condensation is important for combining divergent or contradictory interests and parts of the Brandhub development into a compact, high-value compound. Taking this into account, the responsiveness of Brandhub's urban design will be assessed on the basis of four major hypothetical-influencing factors: (1) diversity of uses, (2) appropriateness of the form, (3) contextuality, and (4) meaningfulness of the urban identities and experiences. For each of these hypothetical influential factors, which are interrelated, criteria are defined in order to evaluate their responsiveness.

Influencing factor 1: diversity of the mixture and composition of uses

Hypothesis 1: Brandhubs are only successful if they provide its users with a highly differentiated place, enriching their opportunities by maximizing the degree of options available to them. Diversity, particularly diversity of uses, is therefore a key factor for increasing choices. Because different uses, forms and people provide a rich experiential mix, different users interpret the place in different ways: it takes on diverse meanings and allows for varied experiences. Diversity of use is therefore the key to diversity as a whole. A highly diverse mixture of uses, commercial and sociocultural, global and local, private and public as well as hybrid spaces has a positive impact on the responsiveness of the Brandhub. A unique mixture of uses is also important to demarcate the project from potential competitors.

Criterion 1.1. – The degree of diversity according to activities (in %): Brandhubs mix and match an array of diverse components in various configurations around an open space (see Fig. 2), allowing for a variety of activities. High diversity and an extremely condensed composition of these activities is vital for the Brandhub's vibrancy (e.g. multiple attractions, sociability, life around the clock as well as optimal visitor frequency during the day and week), convenience (e.g. multiple choices and proximity), flexibility (e.g. adaptability and unique responsiveness to market conditions), and viability (e.g. market dominance through differentiation, multi-anchoring or cross-promotion between offers).

Criterion 1.2. – The degree of interaction or synergy between activities (in %): Diversity is not achieved purely by arbitrarily shuffling a mix of uses in a project. To work well, the uses should support each other. Some uses seem incompatible because of factors like noise or traffic generation or because people see them as different in status. Moreover, some activities such as primary or constant uses act like magnets, attracting people to the site at frequent intervals. Concentration of residential and work places are primary uses: nearly everyone has to go home and work at frequent intervals. Also established stores, alternating events, and certain entertainment facilities such as movie theaters attract people at frequent intervals. In contrast, secondary uses are enterprises which themselves lack the pulling-power to attract people, but which live off the people drawn to the place by its primary uses. Synergy among integrated activities also allows companies to amortize marketing expenses across multiple sub-brands or products, achieve higher levels of consumer awareness and insulate the corporation from economic downturns in particular business areas.
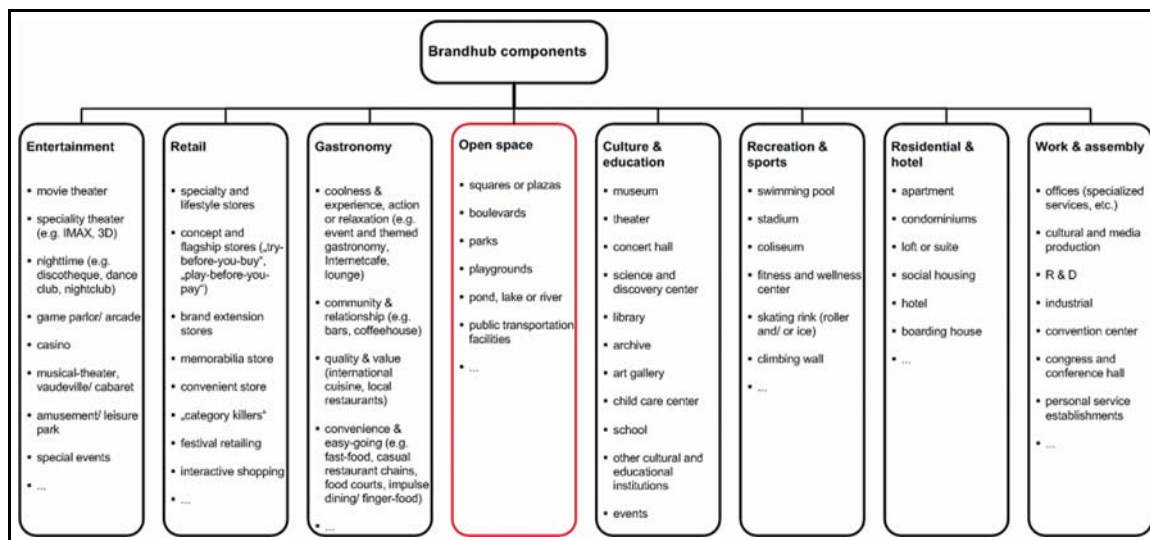

Fig. 2: Mixture and composition of uses according to complementing activities.

Criterion 1.3. – The degree of diversity according to feasibility and profitability (in %): A Brandhub's mixture of uses arouses particularly strong interest amongst those with power over the development, because it is both the basis of economic performance and a key concern of planning control. Thus, the diversity of uses requires feasibility at the economic and political level. A radical mixture of commercial, hybrid and sociocultural developments is decisive for the responsiveness of the Brandhub. Commercial facilities account for direct economic revenues. Hybrid developments, highly experiential and branded spaces with their pleasing atmosphere and emotional try-before-you-buy offerings trigger lasting sympathies and contribute to the generation of brand equity and public acceptance. Sociocultural developments meet the local needs and thus contribute to the social robustness and longevity of the Brandhub.
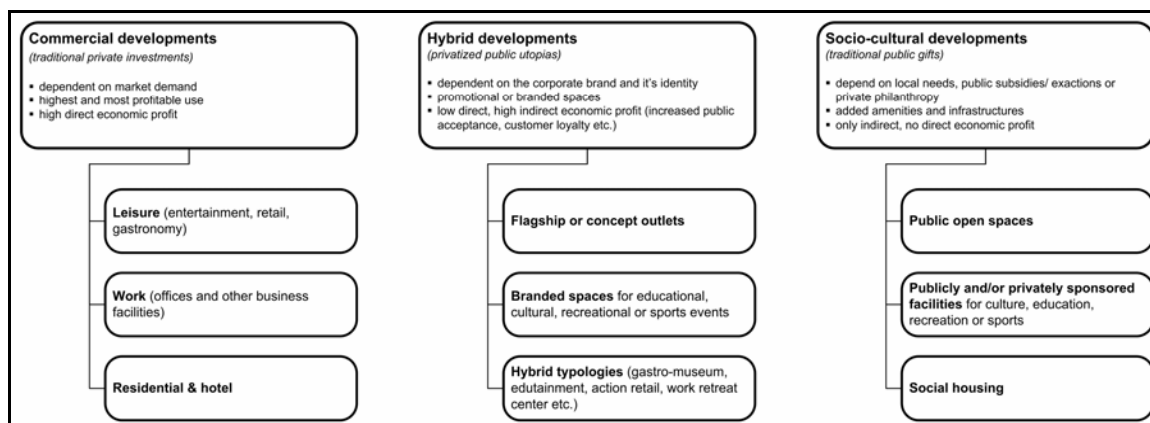

Fig. 3: Mixture and composition of uses according to feasibility and profitability.

Influencing factor 2: appropriateness of the urban form

Hypothesis 2: The appearance of the Brandhub strongly affects the interpretations people have of it. This means that people interpret places as having meanings, and when these meanings help to make the users aware of the diversity of

choices offered to them, the form of the Brandhub is appropriate or responsive. The interpretations the users give to the Brandhub are influenced by three major qualities: (i) its legibility, (ii) variety and robustness, (iii) and sensual richness or experience.

Criterion 2.1. – Legibility: Diversity of choice is only valuable when people can grasp the options available to them. Thus the degree of choice offered by a Brandhub depends partly on its legibility, or how easily the users can understand its organization. Legibility is supported when the awareness of the physical form and of the patterns of uses complement one another. The point of legibility is that the users are able to form an image to help them orient themselves in a certain place (cf. Lynch 1960). A Brandhub is legible when its different elements are differentiated from another, in particular when the different volumes and spaces have differing spatial qualities such as size, material, texture, rhythm, etc.

Criterion 2.2. – Variety and Robustness: These qualities are concerned with the ways in which the Brandhub is used. To support them, the appearance of the Brandhub should help facilitate the coexistence of a variety of uses and events, by making its image seem appropriate as a setting for each of the uses concerned. Brandhubs, which can be used for many different purposes, offer their users more choice than those whose design limits them to a single fixed use. Brandhubs which offer such a physical flexibility are robust: their spatial and constructional organization is adaptable for the widest possible range of likely activities as well as future uses, both in the short and the long term.

Criterion 2.3. – Richness: Both visual and non-visual richness is defined by the choice or variety of sense-experiences that users can enjoy. For most people, sight is the dominant sense. But richness is not a purely visual matter. Next to the sense of sight (visual experience), other senses have implications on the responsiveness of the Brandhub: the sense of motion (kinetic experience marked by different possibilities for moving through the Brandhub), the sense of smell (olfactory experience), the sense of hearing (aural experience), and the sense of touch (tangible experience, the richness of the surface texture). A Brandhub is rich when it offers sensory choice to its users, including a range of options for different sense-experiences on different occasions.

Influencing factor 3: contextuality

Hypothesis 3: Contextuality refers to a conceptual, phenomenological and textual connection with the *Genius Loci* (cf. Norberg-Schulz 1979), the existing urban fabric, encompassing both topological and architectonic components. An adequate connection in form of a continuity or change both in space and time enriches the project's context, instead of isolating, displacing or exploiting it. The more intense and sensitive the interconnectedness is, the higher the contextuality, thus increasing the responsiveness of the Brandhub. Concerning Brandhubs, contextuality is important on two scales: the immediate local surrounding and the city or region as a whole.

Criterion 3.1. – Conceptual integration: A visionary or imaginary connection based on abstract or generic ideas, possibly referring to the history of the site, the local culture and social milieu.

Criterion 3.2. – Phenomenological integration: A physical and visual connection regarding the urban character and structure (e.g. pattern, orientation, rhythm), atmosphere (e.g. material substance, form, surface and color), and accessibility (e.g. inclusive vs. exclusive, open vs. closed, number of direct links to the system of private and public transportation).

Criterion 3.3. – Textual integration: A functional connection considering the content such as complementing urban places, businesses and cultures through which gaps in the urban fabric can be closed.

Influencing factor 4: meaningfulness of the urban identities and experiences

Hypothesis 4: The identity and sub-identities of a Brandhub are its distinguishing character or personality of the Brandhub. They are the messages and meanings expressed by the different media or signifiers of the Brandhub – its activity pattern, its form and its contextuality. The identities of the Brandhub and the experiences or sensations they allow within the users signify how meaningful the Brandhub can be for its users. A Brandhub is responsive when it communicates both the corporate as well as the local identities to provide varied possibilities for identification. Therefore Brandhubs should strongly reflect the relationship between the private realm of corporate ownership and the public domain of the city.

Criterion 4.1. – Integration of the corporate and local identities: A sensible integration of the corporate identity (its culture, mission and vision) and the local identity (its uniqueness and peculiarities) within the Brandhub makes it responsive. It generates a sense of place and a special character that is reliable.

Criterion 4.2. – Mediation of the 'brand' identities as meaningful experiences: The mediation of the Brandhub's identities to allow for meaningful experiences, which respond to public and sociocultural concerns, triggers positive emotions or "good vibes" and increases the identification of the population with the project – inhabitants, tourists and business people alike. Original and trustful experiences also increase the market penetration, the diversity of user groups and the frequency of repetitive visits.

Criterion 4.3. – Manifestation of the identities in the overall Brandhub development: The brand identities should not only be highly visible, experiential and meaningful, but also manifest itself in the overall Brandhub development. They should be integrated coherently within all the different parts of the Brandhub.

2.4.2.3.3. Impacts on the private and public realm

This study assumes that the creation of such a responsive urban environment has added benefits for both the corporation and the public. The examination of this assumption would be important to assess the overall responsiveness or sustainability of Brandhub developments. To do this in-depth would require both a profound economic and sociological study. However, since the focus of this research is on responsive urban design, it will only consider the impacts of Brandhubs in this area.

Impacts for the corporation

For the corporation and its partners, the development of responsive Brandhubs involves added expenditures that should only be viewed as an essential cost of being business, but rather as an investment that offers lasting economic bonuses. The provision of hybrid brand components and sociocultural amenities as well as the integration with the local context increases brand equity and public acceptance, and therefore adds significantly to the sustainability of the Brandhub. In return, this generates progressive earnings growth. This increased economic profit could potentially be measured with cost-benefit analyses methods, in specifically with the return on investment (ROI) ratio.

Impact 1.1. – ROI from business assets (direct revenues): ROI from business assets consists of ROI from business expansion (profit from increased revenues, market share, and market penetration) plus ROI from real estate development (profit from real estate sales or rental income as a side effect).

Impact 1.2. – ROI from brand assets (brand equity): ROI from brand assets consists of ROI from experiential branding (increased brand equity: brand awareness plus brand quality plus brand loyalty minus brand liabilities) plus ROI from multimedia strategies such as cross-promotion (increased sub-brand synergies and visibility).

Impact 1.3. – ROI from public assets: ROI from public assets consists of ROI from added amenities such as experiential and sociocultural components (increased satisfaction of the general public desires) plus ROI from local improvements (increased acceptance by the local population).

Impact for the public realm

This study assumes that responsive Brandhubs yield economic and functional benefits as well as experiential and sociocultural values that satisfy general public desires and local needs.

Impact 2.1. – Impact for the general public: For experience-seeking consumers and responsible citizens, responsive Brandhubs provide novel urban spaces that offer a wide choice of meaningful experiences and open possibilities for the evolvement of more sustainable urban alternatives, cultures and identities.

Impact 2.2. – Impact for the local public: For the neighborhood community and the city, responsive Brandhubs constitute valuable contributions to their local development as well as to their quality of life and well-being. They provide (i) an enriched physical environment (e.g. a new or improved urban quarter), (ii) economic growth and viability both directly (e.g. job creation, increased tax revenues and purchasing power through attraction of new businesses, tourists, consumers and inhabitants) and indirectly (e.g. new attracted developments in surrounding areas, increase in property values, household incomes and employment opportunities), and (iii) an enhanced sociocultural milieu (e.g. new public spaces and facilities, availability of affordable housing, preservation of historic and cultural resources, evolution of local cultures and identities).

2.4.3. Cross-case assessment (WP 3)

After the completion of the individual case analyses, the results will be compared in both a quantitative and qualitative manner. First, the sub-investigations on the individual hypothetical-influencing urban factors will be assessed to prove or disprove if they are responsive (level 3). Second, the urban matrices will be evaluated to verify the most important factors that have to be fulfilled in order to foster the responsiveness within the Brandhubs typology and to show the interplay (level 2). The focus is to verify the significance of the individual urban factors relative to each other. And third, the case study results will be interpreted as a whole with the aim to understand the general strengths and weaknesses of Brandhubs for responsive, differentiated urban design (level 1).

2.4.4. Development of a responsive urban methodology (WP 4)

Based on the cross-case assessment, a methodology for responsive corporate design will be developed. In form of an inductive approach split into three steps, general assumptions will be derived from the specific case study results. First, a general net of positive urban factors will be constructed by productively combining the responsive urban factors extracted from level 2 and 3 of the case analyses. And third under consideration of all previous findings (level 1, 2, 3 and WP 1), a scientifically-supported, action-oriented a catalogue of instruments and measures will be determined, which aims to be used as a tool-box for productively dealing with Brandhubs as well as for developing and utilizing responsive urban design strategies as a basis for robust and lasting urban development. This catalogue of means will mainly consist of urban design measures. If required, it will also consider branding, socioeconomic, legal and management related issues. The resulting methodologies and tools will allow urban designers in conjunction with corporate developers, public authorities and advocates to generate responsive Brandhubs by optimizing existing resources. New forms of responsive project development will enable the local community, potential users, responsible citizens and cultural producers to be active and equal participants. By creating viable public spaces, operative social and cultural venues as well as a basis for long-term economic growth, both global and local structures will be enriched.

2.4.5. Documentation and knowledge transfer (WP 5)

Finally, the findings of this research will be regularly documented and discussed with the case stakeholders, case experts and scientific advisors. They will also be presented to the public and the scientific community at international conferences and symposia held by leading organizations and universities.

The results will also be published in major journals and the final report as dissertation in book form. Moreover, the findings will be extensively exploited by a crossdisciplinary and transnational online platform. The aim of dissemination is to contribute to the transfer of knowledge and to receive valuable feedback from experts and laymen for the study's refinement in iterative cycles.

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2.7. Significance of the project to the ETH

Research on contemporary urbanism is of crucial importance to the recently founded Institute of Urban Design and Network of City and Landscape (NSL). The Institute of Urban Design aims to develop and impart knowledge of basic principles and methods of urban design under consideration of the experience acquired from both the history of urban planning and contemporary practice. It is specifically devoted to the development of relevant, problem-oriented strategies, which in opposition to the generally sectorial-oriented and short-term visions in today's practice will promote integral and sustainable solutions for urban problems. As an example, the investigation of corporate urbanism and its contemporary manifestation in the Brandhub typology will contribute to these goals. The development of a responsive urban methodology will also add to the goals of the Network of City and Landscape (2003), namely the creation of "foundations for a sustainable as well as culturally and aesthetically appropriate shaping of our environment."

This research will not only supply empirical studies of corporate urbanism, but also an action-oriented catalogue of instruments and measures. This catalogue of means will help to guide Brandhub developments and produce innovative design strategies for a sustainable urban future. Through the utilization and optimization of these resources, it will allow urban designers to function as equal partners next to the private and public stakeholders in generating responsive urban developments. In addition, this catalogue will be designed so that it can be applied in similar urban typologies as in the current planning of the ETH Science City, and even be transferred to other fields where new forms of responsive urban design are required.

Up to the present, novel interactions between branding and urbanism have hardly been researched and has only recently become the topic of international colloquia and studies at leading universities, including the TU Berlin (Frank Roost), Harvard University (Margaret Crawford), UDK Berlin (Anna Klingmann, Werner Sewing), TU Karlsruhe (Alex Wall), Columbia University (Lynne B. Sagalyn), TU Dresden (Gunter Henn), and our own Institute of Urban Design at ETH, indicating its relevance. This project provides a valuable contribution these investigations, in particular with its focus on differentiated urban design strategies. The results of this scientifically supported, practice-oriented project will be useful for people in the urban design practice, in academia, and hopefully to society more general.

The study will also be highly fruitful for further research as well as for diverse teaching purposes in the urban field. For example, the results of the case analyses can be used in seminars on urban design strategies and instruments as in our own seminar at the ETH. The overall responsive methodology can also be applied in a design studio setting as exemplified in the Harvard studio model (Harvard Design School 2003). In this model, a given group of students, or more specifically their professor, is solicited by a developer and/or a planning official with a real problem for which they are seeking a creative solution. The design studio is dedicated to this problem and benefits not only from the complexity of a real situation, but also from sponsored travels and having their work on the subject published in a book form, such as the case with the China studios or those in Bilbao, which Kerstin Höger became acquainted with during her studies at Harvard. The developer or planning body likewise benefits from having 10 to 20 students work on as many potential solutions to their problem, and both parties benefit from the exchange between the academic world and the commercial and/or political world. This bridging of the critical and creative world of academia with the corporate world is also a potential pedagogical model for the ETH and other European schools, certainly in the light of the changes European cities and universities are currently facing.

Finally, the proposed project provides an important link between current social issues, namely the discussion of the effects of globalization, privatization and commodification on the urban landscape and society with central topics of the current urban-architectural discourse. As one result of these contemporary forces, it will particularly question the aggressive expansion of corporate branding as a stand-in for public funds, ranging from public events and infrastructures to entire neighborhoods and cities, even to schools and universities, as our culture's most tangible embodiment of public space and collective responsibility, and "maybe as the one place left where young people can see genuine public life being lived." (Klein 2001: 105) By developing a win-win methodology for private-public development projects from which both the corporate and public realm can exponentially benefit, this research project will contribute to the achievement of a reasonable equilibrium between corporate profits and public well-being.