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Abstract

This research will add to the current body of knowledge about the decline of small retail businesses on high streets over the past three decades by highlighting the dynamics of the major forces that are not only transforming high streets, but also shaping the urban experience of citizens in inner-city districts. As a result of the increasing vacancy of storefronts on main streets, new solutions must be developed to improve urban vitality and livability in downtown neighborhoods. It is a general trend that private companies are increasingly recognizing their importance to the well-being of society by developing corporate social responsibility strategies. To date, little research has been conducted on the emergence of the new urban typology *brand urbanism* and whether its impact has promoted sustainable change in urban areas. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the potential of brand urbanism as a strategic urban practice for revitalizing inner-city districts based on the circular reuse of spaces. As a research methodology, this work developed a typology of brand urbanism and its basic project types, two scenario workshops, and finally qualitative interviews. The in-depth analysis shows that some of the underlying examples of brand urbanism have helped cities revitalize certain areas and thus can be recognized as successful brand urbanism practices. However, the findings also show that the vast majority of global practices have failed to actively address the broader range of urban issues such as gender equality and public participation.

Keywords: Brand urbanism, decline of retail, high street, empty retail premises, urban circular reuse management.

Inhaltsangabe

Diese Forschungsarbeit hat zum Ziel, den derzeitigen Kenntnisstand über den Rückgang des stationären Einzelhandels auf den Einkaufsstraßen in den letzten drei Jahrzehnten zu erweitern. Hierbei werden zunächst die wesentlichen Faktoren für den Rückgang aufgezeigt, die zur Veränderung des inner-städtischen Lebens in den letzten 20 Jahren beigetragen haben. Der zunehmende Leerstands von Geschäften in Einkaufsstraßen stellt Städte weltweit vor große Herausforderungen, wobei Lösungen in naher Zukunft entwickeln werden müssen. In den letzten Jahren haben sich private Unternehmen zunehmend neu positioniert, mit dem Ziel, bewusst das Wohlergehen der Gesellschaft in den Vordergrund der eigenen Marketingstrategie zu stellen. Bislang wurde nur wenig darüber geforscht, wie die neue urbane Form *brand urbanism* entstanden ist und welche Auswirkungen diese langfristig auf Städte hat. Ziel dieser Untersuchung ist es daher, das Potenzial sowie die Risiken von *brand urbanism* zu erfassen, um sie gegebenenfalls als Strategie für die Revitalisierung von Innenstädten erfolgreich einzusetzen. Als Methodik wurden in dieser Arbeit drei qualitative Methoden entwickelt: Eine Typologie von *brand urbanism* sowie grundlegende Projekttypen wurden erfasst. Darüber hinaus wurden zwei Szenario-Workshops und qualitative Interviews entwickelt. Die Analyse zeigt, dass einige der untersuchten globalen Projekte, zur Revitalisierung von Stadtvierteln geführt haben. Die Ergebnisse zeigen jedoch auch, dass die überwiegende Mehrheit der globalen Projekte versäumt haben, das breite Spektrum städtischer Themen wie Gleichberechtigung und Diversität, bei der Umsetzung der zu integrieren.

Schlagwörter: Brand urbanism, Verfall des Einzelhandels, Einkaufsstraße, leere Einzelhandelsgeschäfte, Kreislaufwirtschaft als Strategie für urbane Räume.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine how inner-city high streets are changing across the world and the long-term impact this is having on local communities and high streets. In particular, this thesis looks at the decline of independent shops over the past 20 years and argues that this development is fundamentally due to four main factors. Firstly, substantial changes in consumer buying behavior which has caused customers to shift the way they think about brands, as well as the products they buy and the diminishing brand loyalty. Secondly, the increasing appearance of big box stores that are harming local communities and everyday life on pedestrian streets. Thirdly, the exponential growth of e-commerce, which has given customers access to products and brands without physically needing to be present in a store. Finally, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused high street stores to fully shut down, exacerbating the drastic increase in vacant spaces which will be a consequence felt by communities and cities for decades to come.

According to recent research conducted by PWC, more than 17.500 chain stores and other venues have closed across high streets, shopping centers and retail parks across Great Britain in 2020 (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2021). This constitutes an average rate of 48 closures a day. According to estimates from UBS, 100.000 brick-and-mortar U.S. retail stores will close by 2025. The retail research and advisory group Coresight forecasts 10.000 store closures in the U.S. alone in 2021. According to the German retail association, 50.000 retailers in Germany, one of every six, could go bankrupt within the next few years. (Härdle & Kreutzer, 2021). The current pandemic has evidently accelerated bankruptcies across various cities and towns, particularly affecting brick-and-mortar stores on ground floor level. These changes are becoming apparent in the townscape. Unprecedented levels of shop closures, job losses and empty stores are not only exacerbating the overall vacancy rate yet also affecting cities street diversity, vitality and viability (Baker & Wood, 2010).

In past years the media frequently named the increase of worldwide store closures and vacancies “the retail apocalypse” (Townsend et al., 2018). Also, numerous policy reports were published offering cities and local communities retail led regeneration solutions. For example, in August 2019, Prime Minister Boris Johnson promised to increase the Future High Streets Fund from the initial £675 million to £1 billion in order to support 100 British towns. Hereby the aim was “to improve transport and access into town centres, convert empty retail units into new homes and workplaces, and invest in vital infrastructure.” (*£1 Billion Future High Streets Fund Expanded to 50 More Areas*, 2019).

However, the Covid-19 pandemic quickly bared and intensified this issue of structural vacancy on a global level, accelerating the threat to the vitality of urban cores. The news magazine, *The Week* (2021) re-introduced the term “retail apocalypse” in August 2021, a term which appropriately highlights the lack of resilience thinking and sustainability in urban retail to successfully achieve short-term responses and long-term adaptation strategies. Times of global crisis and risks in urban areas prompt “a shift from the conservative mindset that maintain the status quo to perspectives that embrace change to enhance the overall performance of the system through a transformative adaptation” (Barata-Salgueiro & Guimarães, 2020, p. 6).

This thesis expands on existing high street revitalization efforts by presenting new concepts for empty or unused space utilization, envisioned by international thought leaders within their respective fields. This work explores the importance of innovative partnerships to generate an effective and long-lasting change on high streets by application of brand urbanism. Despite its growing importance as an urban phenomenon at a global level, few scholars have examined the emergence of brand urbanism practices and its implications on cities and towns. Even the term itself carries a broad definition, therefore, this work defines brand urbanism as corporate-driven urban projects, which can be understood as „purposive strategic relationships among independent entities“ such as brands and local authorities “that share compatible goals, strive for mutual benefit and acknowledge a high level of mutual interdependence“ (Wilson et al., 1994, p. 1506).

The aim of this work is to examine the reach of global brand urbanism practices into new arenas of inner-city revitalization approaches. Furthermore, this research looks at alternative spatial practices emerging from different forms of brand urbanism, which could be proposed for cities and applied as a response to vacant retail stores on high streets. This thesis does not intend to propose new solutions to the issue of shop vacancy rather seeks to reveal and recognize new perspectives on existing urban strategies. These approaches can be employed to restore the neighborhood’s vitality and create better space utilization.

1.1. Structure of the work

The analysis of this subject is structured into the following chapters: **The second chapter** introduces the research methods and approach. This thesis applies the exploratory approach and scenario planning method to investigate brand urbanism as an urban phenomenon. Furthermore, this chapter will provide the data collection and data analysis methods. **Chapter**

3 outlines the literature review, divided into three sections, within these identifying the gaps in knowledge on the topic. Section one provides a contextual diagnosis on the main factors of the decline of brick-and-mortar retail on high streets. Section two illustrates a variety of high street revitalization approaches, followed by an analysis of the state of the art on public-private partnerships in the revitalization context. Lastly, section three focuses on the 'new' emerging urban practice of 'brand urbanism'. This section will contextualize the origins and scarce existing theories of brand urbanism and its relation to place branding, followed by a description of the changes within the brand 'landscape' over the last years. **Chapter 4** presents a formed typology of brand urbanism project types. **Chapter 5** analyzes the findings of the data collected based on the scenario workshops and qualitative interviews. Finally, **chapter 6** concludes with the implications of the research and opens a new avenue for further research on this topic.

1.2. Research problem and question

The issue of the decline of small retail businesses on high streets is posing severe threats to local communities as „micro-scale locations encompass retail dynamics that most affect the experience of citizens“ (Kickert et al., 2020, p. 2). In the long-run empty street-level lots could contribute to further reduced footfall, which could impact local communities, surrounding businesses and the vitality of high streets, as “ground-floor spaces are crucial in maintaining the vibrancy of urban life.” (Ratti & Catella, 2021). Up until now, little research has been done on brand urbanism and whether its implications have fostered sustainable changes in urban areas. The purpose of this research is thus to explore the potential of brand urbanism as a strategic practice to revitalize inner-city districts. Hereby, the focus lies on spatial dynamics of retail at the micro-scale.

My research attempts to analyze: **to what extent have synergies between cities and brands evolved from global brand urbanism practices and how do these impact inner-city districts? More specifically, I aim to answer: in what ways do brand urbanism practices lead to the revitalization of high streets?**

1.3. Research aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to outline successful brand urbanism practices that can be employed as a strategy to restore neighborhood's vitality and create innovative space utilization. The aim of this research is to explore and outline various effective brand urbanism practices that succeeded in restoring neighborhood's vitality and enabled the creation of innovative space utilization.

To achieve this, this paper will:

- (1) **Highlight** the dynamics of major forces leading to the decline of small retail shops which shape the urban experience in inner-city districts.
- (2) **Define** the scientific research on brand urbanism in terms of definition, concept, types and programs.
- (3) **Map, categorize and evaluate** the brand urbanism practices which are relevant to my research aim.
- (4) **Propose alternative ways** for transforming empty storefronts in order to revitalize high streets in inner-city districts.

1.4. Operational definitions

In order to carry out this research, it is fundamental to provide an operational definition of some of the used concepts in my research question. In this thesis, the definition of urban revitalization is based on circular economy principles in the urban context which encompasses the re-use and regeneration of vacant spaces or abandoned properties (Partnership on Circular Economy and Sustainable Land Use, 2020). It is further entwined with the concepts of 'vitality' and 'viability': "Where viability refers to the capacity of a centre to sustain profitability and encourage investment, vitality refers to the level of activity in a centre, its 'busyness' or 'buzz.'" (Baker & Wood, 2010, p. 66). These concepts are central to "concerns about the decline of main streets" as the authors Backer and Wood explain in their work. According to Ravenscroft (2000, p. 2345), "the two measures (...) are interrelated, with the relative level of 'busyness' (vitality) seen as a significant component in new investment decisions (viability) and, concurrently, the continued development of new facilities (viability) generating an enhanced attraction for visitors (vitality). The underlying definitions will be taken up and defined in more detail in Chapter 3. It must be stated that all figures used in this thesis were developed myself.

2. Research methodology and approach

This chapter presents the research methodology of my thesis. The first section describes the research approach applied in this work, which consists of both the exploratory research approach and the scenario planning approach. The second section describes the data collection and data analysis methods. Finally, a brief reflection on the methods applied will be presented, which highlights findings and limits of my research methodology. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented challenges, some parts of the fieldwork had to be redesigned. Thus, all qualitative research methods were conducted remotely and virtually, mainly from Madrid. All in-depth and in person interviews, as well as the two scenario workshops, had to be shifted to online formats.

2.1. Research approach

In this section, I substantiate my choice of the used research approaches and methods, which combine different qualitative methods. The selection of a research approach is based on the nature of the issue being addressed. Thus, in this work I chose two different research approaches that help to answer my research question: exploratory research and scenario planning approach.

2.1.1. Exploratory research

Due to the lack of scientific data on my topic, this work has an explorative character. Exploratory research aims at investigating an existing phenomenon or problem that has not been addressed and investigated so far. This approach primarily enables the researcher to gain insight and knowledge about the existing problem (Stebbins, 2001). My work is exploratory for three different reasons. Firstly, my thesis seeks to investigate an existing issue without providing definitive results or offering a conclusive answer to my research question. Secondly, my thesis intends to explore my research question and does not seek to provide final and conclusive solutions to the explored issue. Thirdly, this work is an exploratory research because it may change the direction based on the collected data and resulting insights. There are three methods used in exploratory research: primary or secondary research and a combination of both types of research. This work is divided into primary research and secondary research, which will be explained in the following sections.

2.1.2. Scenario planning approach

The scenario planning approach is a “methodology that uses the inherent human capacity for imagining futures to better understand the present situation and to identify possibilities for new strategies.” (Ramírez & Wilkinson, 2016, p. 1). Herman Kahn, the founder of future studies and scenario planning, defines scenarios as “a set of hypothetical events set in the future constructed to clarify a possible chain of causal events as well as their decision points.” (Kahn & Wiener, 1967, p. 6). Furthermore, this approach is intended to develop a framework for anticipating potential future scenarios by involving a diverse group of participants. One key aspect of the scenario planning process is the effective learning among diverse participants while the process is not only about knowledge sharing but involves also “rehearsing the new actions and the interactions that arise in each future context (...).” (Ramírez & Wilkinson, 2016, p. 14). In a world in which the rapid and non-linear patterns of change are increasingly affecting social-ecological systems, scenario planning provides a “systematic tool for thinking creatively about possible complex and uncertain futures” (Nyaupane & Buzinde, 2017) and to identify key external drivers. It is important to note that there are two different approaches to scenario planning: a quantitative and qualitative approach. Whereas the former includes quantitative simulation modeling to quantify various scenarios, the latter

2.2. Data collection methods and data analysis methods

The underlying thesis is based on a set of three different qualitative research methods to cover and assess adequately the complexity and multidimensionality of the topic. Thus, applying a mixed qualitative methodological toolkit will help answer my research question, *in what ways do brand urbanism practices lead to the revitalization of inner-city districts by allocating new activities into empty retail spaces?* According to Jarratt (1996, p. 9), qualitative research methods “are more intrusive and less structured” than quantitative research methods. Qualitative research techniques are used to investigate a problem that is at a preliminary stage and thus appropriate when the nature of the research is exploratory and “the area of examination unfamiliar to the researcher.” Therefore, qualitative research uses methods “that are flexible and sensitive to social context.” (Hox & Boeije, 2005, p. 595)

2.2.1. Primary data collection

Primary research is gathered directly from the subject in order to explore a specific problem that requires an in-depth study. According to Hox & Boeije (2005, p. 593), “primary data are data that are collected for the specific research problem at hand, using procedures that fit the

research problem best.” According to Lowe & Zemliansky, (2011, p. 154), “the ultimate goal in conducting primary research is to learn about something new that can be confirmed by others (...).” The following chapter will explain the primary sources of data collected through the qualitative method approach chosen for my research, which include semi-structured interviews, scenario workshops, and a developed typology.

2.2.1.1. Typology of brand urbanism

The first method proposed in this paper is a typology of basic project types that I developed to map, analyze, and compare brand urbanism practices worldwide. The first method used consists of a typology of basic project types that I have developed to map, analyze, and compare brand urbanism practices worldwide. The goal of developing a typology is threefold. First, to map urban projects that can be defined as brand urbanism. Second, to categorize the selected practices based on commonalities in order to identify common types. Third, identify and evaluate practices for successful revitalization in terms of location and social and economic viability based on the theory outlined in Section 3.2. Typologies are proven and valuable analytical tools in political and social science, defined as an "organized system of types" (Collier et al., 2012, p. 217). According to Collier et al. (2012, p. 217), typologies “make crucial contributions to diverse analytic tasks: forming and refining concepts, drawing out underlying dimensions, creating categories for classification and measurement, and sorting cases.” Following the definition by Collier et al. (2012), this section uses the notion of conceptual typologies, also called descriptive typologies, which “explicate the meaning of a concept by mapping out its dimensions.” According to the authors, typologies are applied to introduce “conceptual and theoretical innovations, sometimes drawing together multiple lines of investigation or traditions of analysis” (Collier et al., 2012, p. 224). Thus, a typology can be considered to be a research strategy “because it reduces the universe of analysis of the phenomena, creating an intermediate level of analysis between the general population and individual cases (types, families or groups). (...)” (Molestina et al., 2020, p. 1).

Based on the previous outline of conceptual typologies, this section describes how the typology of brand urbanism will be constructed using a set of variables. The first step was to define the unit of analysis. Therefore, various spatial practices in cities and towns around the world that were either initiated, funded, operated, or implemented by a brand in collaboration with a city government were examined. To define Brand Urbanism projects, these aforementioned requirements were considered, and any other projects that did not meet these

criteria were removed or excluded from the analysis. The final unit of analysis is composed of 18 different projects that are considered to be brand urbanism projects. The entire typology is illustrated in the Annex 1. The subsequent classification of the projects was done in the next step.

The data of the selected cases in this thesis was gathered from multiple sources, including the collection of relevant documents, newspaper articles, reports, and interviews with key actors in the field of brand urbanism. All projects encompass a set of different components, characteristics, purposes, scales, and contexts. According to Foroughmand Araabi (2016, p.12), “a typology is generally considered successful if it is based on a method of classification that results in exhaustive and exclusive categories.” Thus, the process of developing this underlying typology required the creation of adequate characteristics that would enable a suitable classification of brand urbanism. Based on an in-depth investigation, eleven characteristics were developed in order to classify the selected practices. Part of the development process of identifying the most important characteristics was to include new ones and to adapt or exclude some of the earlier ones proposed in the draft typology at the beginning of this research. A typology organizes, systematizes, and classifies all possible cases “according to criteria that may be anticipated or that results from a natural grouping in a way that facilitates their study and understanding” (Molestina et al., 2020, p. 1). The characteristics developed are presented visually in the figure below.

Characteristics	Description
Project name	Official name of the project
Form	Form of urban intervention
Geographical area	Location(s) of the project
Scale and Size	Physical characteristic of the project
Brands	Corporations involved in the project
Sponsors	Person/Organization that funds the project
Objectives	Brands' purpose and objective of the project
Description	Core details on the project's concept and design
Time	Official implementation date of the project
Industry	Type of business industry
Type	Category of brand urbanism project

Figure 1 Preliminary list of brand urbanism characteristics

As Foroughmand Araabi (2016, p. 12) states, “the idea of typology is most helpful when some similarity exists between phenomena. However, typology does not just act to highlight similarities – it also shows the difference between types.” Hence, the second step was to develop a classification system that categorized all projects into overarching types based on common characteristics. This typology of brand urbanization practices consists of eleven project types distributed throughout the world. The selected cases are located in various geographical areas, are embedded in different urban governance structures, and were established in a different political and social context. Their implementation period ranges from the years 2015 to 2019.

The selected methodological strategy for identifying types of brand urbanization was achieved through a three-fold approach. First and foremost, this methodology enabled to identify common types of brand urbanism, and secondly, to evaluate and classify revitalization projects. In the first step, a detailed descriptive analysis helped to select and describe key variables that cover the main purpose, scope, and idea of the projects. These key variables helped define each type individually and to identify patterns of similarities or differences. The second step was to specifically search for other projects that would fit into the identified types and expand the existing project portfolio. Third, the types were characterized in order to propose a name for each type that would highlight the most significant elements.

In the context of this research, the project type can be defined as a basic element, as it helps to identify and recognize the variety and diversity of brand urbanism. Within this research, the project type can be defined as the root element because it helps to identify and recognize the variety and diversity of brand urbanism. Thus, based on the work carried out, the 11 basic project types of brand urbanism were identified and are presented in the finding part in chapter 5. “When typologies are properly developed and fully specified, they are complex theories that can be subjected to rigorous empirical testing (...) (Doty & Glick, 1994, p. 230). However, at this point it is important to note that further research of global practices would add to the body of the knowledge on brand urbanism but proved difficult due to the limited scope of this study.

2.2.1.2. Semi-structured Interviews

In order to properly answer the underlying question in this study, I used the methods of empirical social research. I conducted seven semi-structured interviews by means of a qualitative research method and data collection strategy. Qualitative semi-structured interviews are one of the most widely used methods of data collection within social sciences

and allow researchers “to explore subjective viewpoints and to gather in-depth accounts of people’s experiences” (Evans & Lewis, 2018, p. 2).

A total of six Interviews were carried out during the period from February 2021 to August 2021, including experts, academics, and practitioners, as seen in the figure below. Five interviews were conducted through video-call applications such as ‘Zoom’ and ‘Teams’ and one interview was conducted by e-mail in August. The selection of interview partners was based on a pool of mixed participants with the aim of representing a diverse and multi-faceted group. One of the interviewees, namely Rob shields took part in the first scenario workshop, whose contribution is predominantly presented in the workshop part, in Chapter 5.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Sector</i>
1	Carlo Ratti	MIT SENSEable City Lab	Architect & Director of MIT S.C.L.	academia
2	Jeognwon Gim	University of Alberta	Ph.D. student in Urban and Regional Planning	academia
3	Jereon Beekmans	PopUpCity	Founder & CEO	private sector
4	Jorick Beijer	Blossity	Urbanist, Director & Founder	private sector
5	Rene Vader	KPMG	Global Sector Head, Consumer & Retail	private sector
6	Phil Rob Shields	HM Tony hair, University of Alberta	Sociologist, Cultural theorist	academia

Figure 2. Sample of Interviewees

According to Bradford & Cullen (2012), a semi-structured interview should have a floating nature, which will be enabled through the partial pre-planning of the questions. According to Galletta (2016) and Kallio et al. (2016, p.4), one of the main advantages of the semi-structured interview method is that it “has been found to be successful in enabling reciprocity between the interviewer and participant”. Based on that approach, an interview guide was developed with four main themes Four main themes were defined in advance to be discussed with the chosen participants. The semi-structured interviews touched upon the following issues: (1) retail decline in inner city districts, (2) problem of vacancies of retail premises on high streets, (3) brand urbanism as a newly emerged spatial practice, and (4) city branding and its influence on the urban environment.

To ensure a floating and productive interview atmosphere, I developed open-ended questions during the conversation to allow for discussion. However, the list of predefined topics helped me navigate the interview. At the beginning of the interview, I introduced myself, then defined my research problem and research objective, and explained the research question. Finally, I informed the participant that the interview was being recorded.

During the interview transcription, different issues may occur as some of the recorded phrases might be difficult to understand acoustically and thus difficult to transcribe accurately. Therefore, practicing interview techniques before the actual interview takes place can help “to identify areas that require personal development before data collection” (Whiting, 2008, p. 3).

All online interviews were recorded as audio files using my iPhone and then saved to my personal device. For transcribing the interviews, I used the cloud-based software "Trint," which automatically transcribes audio recordings after they are uploaded to the platform. It takes about an hour to transcribe a one-hour file. The web-based toolkit facilitates the entire process through automatic transcription. However, many spelling errors were found after careful reading, so I had to edit and correct the transcribed document afterwards. All interviews were transcribed between June 1 and June 31.

Following the concept described by Evans & Lewis (2018), themes and patterns within semi-structured interviews can be identified through the process of thematic analysis, which begins at the stage of data collection, followed by the process of transcribing, reading and re-reading, analyzing, and interpreting. Thematic analysis is a “popular analytic method as it reflects its independence from any particular theoretical approach or epistemology persuasion” (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Evans & Lewis, 2018, p. 4). The thematic analysis starts with cross-examining the data and moving from the semantic level of analysis to the latent level. This process enables “to move from merely describing your data (and describing what people are saying) to examining how this might reflect underlying assumptions, ideas or meanings which exist for individuals or in wider society” (Evans & Lewis, 2018, p. 9). This process symbolizes “the process of theorizing with the data, as in “making sense of it.” (Evans & Lewis, 2018, p. 2). Based on this detailed process described by several authors, I identified my own themes and patterns within the interviews conducted, which are visualized in the figure below.

1 retail decline in inner city districts
2 vacancy problem of retail premises on high streets
3 brand urbanism as a newly emerged spatial practice
4 city branding and its influence on the urban environment

Figure 3. Identified themes of the interviews

The results of the interviews and the underlying thematic analysis are examined and presented in Chapter 6. It is important to keep in mind that the scope of this research allowed for only a limited number of interviewees, as there are few experts in the field of brand urbanism. It is also important to recognize that the phenomenon of brand urbanism requires further research due to the lack of existing literature.

2.2.1.3. The scenario workshop on the future of high streets

As explained earlier, the scenario planning approach defines a process of scenario building, which is “an important technique for identifying and better understanding the factors that shape the urban environment, and the ways in which they can act and react with each other” (Stojanovic et al., 2014, p. 83). It must be distinguished from most other future-oriented approaches because scenario planning “provides a qualitative description of how the present will evolve into the future rather than requiring numerical accuracy” (Stojanovic et al., 2014, p. 84). Ultimately, this approach was chosen specifically as a workshop approach and method for my thesis to identify, evaluate, and visualize collaborations between brands and cities, as well as future opportunities for the use of vacant retail storefronts in inner-city districts. In addition, by applying this approach, I intend to provide a platform for discussion on the implications of brand urbanism in the context of inner-city revitalization. Based on this approach, the two scenario workshops were organized. In summary, the scenario planning workshop is a participatory method that aims to stimulate discussions, evaluations, and insights about new forms of brand urbanism, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter 3.

The scenario planning approach is a common and popular strategic tool and procedure in the business world (Sarpong & Amoah, 2015). Only recently has the use of scenario techniques

in urban planning been increasingly emphasized (Stojanovic et al., 2014). One reason for this development is that "urban planners and decision makers lack an effective future-oriented approach that enables them to anticipate future changes, prepare effectively for their consequences, and deal with complexity" (Stojanovic et al., 2014, p. 81). Traditional planning approaches make it difficult to map, monitor, and coordinate complex dynamics in an urban context. This results in the obvious need for a "more imaginative and innovative approach to planning that promotes a shift in thinking and action about the future of cities (Stojanovic et al., 2014). One underlying reason for this development is that "urban planners and decision-makers lack an effective future-oriented approach allowing them to anticipate future transformations, effectively prepare for their consequences and deal with complexity" (Stojanovic et al., 2014, p. 81).

The scenario workshops were attended by various stakeholders including academia, citizens, the private sector, public agencies, and retail experts. The two online workshops were held separately on two different days under the same name: *Urban circular reuse: transforming vacant retail stores into spaces with new activities. Can brand urbanism help revitalize our High Streets?* The first workshop was held on Wednesday, May 26, and the second on Monday, May 31. Both workshops took place between 4pm and 6pm via Zoom, a cloud-based video conferencing service. The workshops were all recorded via Zoom as video and audio files. During the two-hour workshop, all participants used the online whiteboard tool MIRO as a collaborative work platform. At the beginning of the workshop, I provided a brief warm-up exercise to familiarize all participants with the basics of MIRO. All participants agreed to sign up for a free trial in advance so we could get started right away.

Prior to conducting the workshops, I developed a scenario workshop toolkit with the overall goal of guiding and supporting participants throughout the process. In my role as facilitator, I refrained from active participation and did not contribute to the outcome or content of the workshop deliverables. Because the workshops were conducted online, the layout of the workshop was critical. My role was to create a productive or helpful or positive workshop environment in which each participant was treated equally.

The underlying 3-step toolkit is based on the principles of the European Awareness Scenario Workshop Method (EASW), which was developed in 1994 by the European Commission's Innovation Program as a tool for participatory planning. The aim was to promote awareness of sustainable urban development based on the integration of different participants such as technology experts, policy makers, residents and employers. In addition, this methodology

allows participants to create future scenarios and "share experiences and knowledge about existing barriers and possible solutions to the central issue." (URBACT, 2011). The EASW serves as the methodological framework for my scenario workshop by adapting some of its key principles: 1) participant selection, 2) timeframe, and 3) best-case scenario development.

First, participants and stakeholders were selected and contacted by phone or email, starting as early as October 2020. My goal was to create different role groups that would reflect the complexity of this topic and ensure a balance between the different interests. Therefore, researchers, local authorities, practitioners, and retail experts who would participate in the workshops were asked to participate as equal experts with different focus and expertise.

In total, 17 participants were pre-selected and had confirmed their participation. Unfortunately, before the first workshop started, one participant cancelled at the last minute without further explanation. Before the second workshop began, four participants canceled last minute without giving any explanation. Therefore, I had to change the pre-defined role groups during the workshop itself. These sudden changes were challenging but also ultimately proved my flexibility and adaptability as a researcher.

The central element as a researcher in the scenario workshop approach is to enable a balanced and fluid dialogue "aiming at moderating the participants to develop their own visions related to a specific focus question and their specific area of interest, and through discussions enabling the participants to identify and develop suggestions on options to achieve their vision" (Gnaiger & Schroffenegger, 2003, p. 6). In the figure below, all participants are listed below the respective workshop day. The ones who ultimately did not participate are italicized.

I Workshop Participants

Scenario Workshop Participants	
Herbert Bartik (Deputy Head of Future Cities)	
Jorick Beijer (CEO Blossity)	
Jim Morrow (Research Associate, University of Alberta)	
Laeticia Lucy (Senior Consultant, Arup)	
Karen Shields (ACTM, Association of Town and City Management)	
Rob Shields (HM Tory Chair at University of Alberta and Professor, Founding Editor, Space and Culture)	

II Workshop Participants

Scenario Workshop || Participants

Ulrich Fries (Founder, Kreative Räume Wien)

Jeongwon Gim (Interdisciplinary PhD in Sociology and Urban and Regional Planning, University of Alberta, co-supervisor)

Tony Hernandez (Director & Eaton Chair in Retailing, Ryerson University)

Pradeep Sangapala (PhD Student, School of Urban and Regional Planning at University of Alberta)

Camilla Secchi (Municipality of Parma, Lead Partner and City Member of the Thriving Streets Network – URBACT Project)

Miriam Sode (Gehl Architects)

Davy Spitaels (Communication Coordinator, Toestand)

Ilaria Ughi (Municipality of Parma, Head of Operational Structure Theatre, Cinema and Cultural Initiatives)

René Vader (Global Head of Consumer & Retail, KPMG)

Bas van Heur (Professor of Urban Studies / Director of the Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research / Director of the Brussels Centre for Urban Studies)

Dr. Wolfgang Ziniel (Project Leader, KMU Forschung Austria)

Figure 4. Participants of scenario workshop I and II

The overall agenda was developed in April 2021. In the context of the scenario workshop method, all participants were supposed to go through a combination of different activities, which included “brainstorming, development of positive scenarios, presentations, development of actions or strategies in order to achieve a certain situation, dialogue and negotiations” (Gnaiger & Schroffenegger, 2003, p. 8). I emphasized the development and discussion of ‘best-case’ scenarios related to the focused question(s), which entail positive scenarios in contrast to ‘worst-case’ (negative) scenarios. Furthermore, the participants were meant to reflect their interests and future expectations. Therefore, I encouraged the participants to start a short discussion before working on the different tasks. However, I quickly noticed that my optimistic idea would affect the established timetable and thus complicate the whole workshop process. It was very challenging to intervene during the discussions because the spontaneously emerging issues and themes could very well be as crucial in bringing the process and my research forward as the outcome of the predefined tasks. Therefore, I intentionally tolerated a time lag. The first workshop had a smaller group of participants and thus played out differently in relation to the overall dynamic and speed of information processing. I therefore focused on modifying small steps to enhance the process and overall outcome of the second workshop. Specifically, the second workshop required less space for

individual discussions so that the goals set by the agenda could be better achieved. The figure below presents the agenda of the workshop with the different tasks and time objective. As illustrated in the agenda below, I divided the scenario workshop into five different sections. In particular, section III and IV applied the scenario planning approach by envisioning future scenarios related to brand urbanism and urban-reuse management.

SCENARIO WORKSHOP Agenda	
I	Intro: 16.00 - 16.15 pm
	Brief introduction of each participant
	Personal introduction
	Research rationale & method
	How to use MIRO
II	Brand urbanism: 16.15 - 16.45 pm
	Mind Map on brand urbanism
	SWOT on PPP (brand urbanism) in regard to conversion of empty spaces
III	Envisioning future scenarios: 16.45 - 17.15 pm
	Discussion on collaborations between brands and cities
	Reflecting and Co-creating
	5 minute-break
IV	Envisioning future scenarios : 17.20 - 17.50 pm
	Discussion on urban re-use management
	Reflecting and Co-creating
V	Feedback round: 17.50 - 18.00 pm

Figure 5. Scenario workshop agenda

2.2.2. Secondary research methods

As compared to primary data, which is collected firsthand, I also conducted secondary data as a research method for my thesis. According to the Accounting Professor Christopher Cowton (1998, p. 430), “Even if secondary data did not prompt a particular research endeavor, consulting secondary sources may be particularly useful in the early stages of research for generating sensible hypotheses or for other aspects of research development.” Thus, my secondary research method is composed of the use of already existing data. Specifically, I conducted a review of secondary literature, which includes information that has been collected by government departments, and non-government organizations, available in the form of (policy) reports or similar documents. Furthermore, I also used magazines, newspaper, books, journals, articles, and websites as secondary data. Especially for my research on brand urbanism, which is an underdeveloped topic in academic research, I had to extend my

research to articles and websites in the Dutch-speaking press as well as to reports and booklets such as the *Merkstedenbouw*, which was published in Dutch by the agency PopUpCity (PUC) in 2014, based in Amsterdam. It is the first extensive research conducted on brand urbanism, funded by the Creative Industries Fund NL. The interview with the Co-Founder of PopUpCity helped to substantiate my research by providing valuable insights on brand urbanism.

3. Theoretical framework

This research will expand the current body of knowledge on the retail decline on high streets in urban centers within the last three decades by first providing a contextual diagnosis about its main factors, drivers, and impacts. Second, it will focus on the current state of attempted urban strategies considered to be high street revitalization approaches. This research will specifically focus on a ‘new’ emerging approach called brand urbanism, which will be situated within a broader set of inner-city revitalization approaches as a form of public-private partnerships. In this way, alternative spatial practices will be explored throughout this research that can emerge from different types of brand urbanism as a response to the contemporary urban crisis of vacant retail stores on high streets. In recent years, a wide array of international literature has shown that a variety of cities in the Western Hemisphere are experiencing a “significant loss of street-level commercial activity in their urban cores.” (Kickert et al., 2020, p. 1). Several factors challenged independent retailers, traditional malls, and department stores, beginning with the extensive consequences of the 2008 financial crisis, the development of out-of-town malls, the rise of e-commerce, and not least, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to 2020, high-profile retailers already reported an accelerating development of urban store closures. What was once considered the decade of “the retail apocalypse” (Townsend et al., 2018) has now reached an inconceivable magnitude leading to a deluge of bankruptcies and closures that will fundamentally change socio-economic activities and dynamics in urban cores worldwide. The goal of this research is to examine the importance of innovative stakeholder partnerships. Eventually the outcome of the research could potentially provide practitioners and policymakers with relevant information.

3.1. An international Literature review on retail decline and urban change

The main objective is to provide an overview of the retail transformation in urban cores from an economic, social, and spatial perspective since the 1990s. This will allow a broader

understanding of *how* and *where* retail decline has impacted the urban retail landscape at its microscale, complementing the current body of knowledge on *what* the main drivers and factors behind the physical retail transformation are. More specifically, this thesis will analyze the importance of mixed street corridors, their complexity and local significance, focusing on the underexposed microlevel spatial dynamics of the retail decline. This section examines the problem of retail decline through the lens of local high streets (main streets) which are transferable to various cities and towns internationally (Carmona, 2015). The term 'high street' is first and foremost used in the United Kingdom as a metonym for the primary commercial street(s) that are typically considered "as a city center location and locus for shops and retailing" (Carmona, 2015, p. 1). The term 'main street', by contrast, is equivalently used in Ireland, Canada, and the United States. In this underlying thesis, the term 'high street' is used to encompass the variety of mixed retail streets in inner-city districts that are of high local significance. As various studies show, high streets are increasingly confronted with specific challenges to its "urban vitality and viability in the light of ongoing socio-economic change" (Griffiths et al., 2008, p. 1155). The authors of Griffith University, a "Cities Research Institute" based in Brisbane, Australia, define the term high street as a "complex and dynamic socio-spatial entity" that "carries cultural connotations of reassuringly small town or suburban neighborhoods characterized by social stability and enduring local identity." Furthermore, the authors claim that the high street's function is a commercial hub; "a place where near neighbors 'bump' into each other on their way to the post office, parents accompany children to the library and the elderly swap local gossip at the bus stop." According to the authors the concept of the high street is "associated with the presence of a wide variety of small local shops, ensuring easy pedestrian accessibility to everyday goods and services." (Griffiths et al., 2008, p. 1155).

As recent years have demonstrated, the initial character of traditional high streets has undergone profound changes due to economic, political, consumer behavioral and generational factors raising a global concern over what the future of local high streets will look like. A primary focus of this thesis lies in the increasing vacancy of retail storefronts, which has been exacerbated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis starting in 2020. In the 2000s, scholars such as Brown (1994) and Birkin et al. (2002), whose approach based on retailing research, emphasized this trend as one of the firsts on the comparatively neglected issue of micro-scale location. Within retail geography, the micro-scale placement of retail outlets and clusters, its streets and storefronts within planned shopping centers, and unplanned shopping districts was little represented compared to the vast literature "on retail location at the national,

regional and urban scales of analysis” (Brown, 1994, p. 543). But these micro-scale locations are important as they encompass “retail dynamics that most affect the experience of citizens.” Only in recent years, “a growing number of urban planning and design studies have focused on the spatial dynamics of retail at the micro-scale” (Kickert et al., 2020, p. 2).

3.1.1. Contextual diagnosis: factors, challenges, and trends

The recent changes of retailing take many forms, deriving from a series of developments, trends, and challenges. These changes are particularly reflected “by the fall in the number of shops, the decrease in the diversity of supply and the increase in shop vacancies” on high streets across various cities (Delage et al., 2020a, p. 2). Cultural and spatial differences in the national and regional transformation of retail must be taken into account, “yet significant international consistence exist in the spatial dynamics of retail change at the urban microscale of individual streets and storefronts.” (Kickert et al., 2020, p. 2). This section outlines some familiar general trends, challenges and a range of forces that have undermined the viability and vitality of high street retailing over recent decades. The structural changes can primarily be traced back to a variety of factors such as internal strategic decline and operational choices, demographic and labor market dynamics, consumer preferences, and, more recently the increasing online competition as a consequence of e-commerce (Delage et al., 2020a). With “new technology-driven innovations such as omni-channel retailing and ‘click and collect’ facilities” (Dolega & Lord, 2020, p. 1) traditional bricks-and-mortar retailing have been declining whilst online retail sales have been steadily growing. Thus, city governments, international organizations, and researchers have increasingly been concerned with the future of inner-city districts and their urban resilience which led the retail landscape in western economies “becoming a focus of government and public anxiety” (Dolega & Lord, 2020, p. 2). This chapter elaborates on four major recent factors that have impacted brick-and-mortar retailers: the chain store proliferation, the rise of e-commerce, the shift in consumer behavior and the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.1.1.1. The chain store proliferation

Since the 1990s, the small business landscape has definitely changed with the proliferation of chain stores and big-box retailers as they contribute far less to the local economy than independent brick-and-mortar stores. A number of studies such as a 2008 study from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and, a 2012 study by Layola University Chicago have investigated their impact on jobs, wages, poverty levels, and other businesses. The results of

these studies show that the increasing appearance of big box stores such as WalMart, have led to a loss of existing local businesses in surrounding areas as well as harmed communities by impoverishing cultural and diverse offerings on small-scale, pedestrian streets. Economists such as John Haltiwanger and Carlena Cochi Ficano argue that big-box stores harm economic development because “they offer low wages, which may actually drive down wages in all area retail because other stores must then lower their own labor costs to compete” which shows that they are not a “socially-optimal option”. (Freedman et al., 2016, p. 140). In contrast to chain stores, independent businesses strengthen local communities through their contribution to civic and cultural life as the urban ethnographer at London School of Economics Cities Suzanne Hall argues that small independent shops “often operate with a far more localised knowledge base and their legal and political representation at national and urban scales is limited.” (Hall, 2012, p. 112). Each city develops its own national urban dynamics. By taking a closer look, many of the cities set out in this section, contain a range of similarities and differences, which allow for theoretical replication. As a recent study by Delage et al., (2020) reveals, urban centers of small and medium-sized cities in Britain, Belgium, France, Japan, and the United States faced an increasing retail decline in the last decades. However, the pace and extent of decline varies widely from country to country. Especially small-scale and independent retail stores are affected. According to a recent study by the European Economic and Social Committee, small retailers are defined as traditional, small and independent shops, comparable to an enterprise with less than 50 staff members and a turnover or a balance sheet of less than € 10 million (Snijders & Graaf, 2019a). According to Delage et al. (2020), small independent shops have been replaced by a smaller number of larger companies. Belgium faced a total drop of 48 % of small businesses from 1947 to 2015. In 2014, these small businesses represented less than 49 % of the total retailing surface area, compared to more than 59 % in 2007 which shows that in “terms of shopping space, small businesses are now playing a minor role in retail activity (...)” (Delage et al., 2020, p. 2). According to Delage, hundred French municipalities lose one type of retail trade per year. This development has intensified since the 1970s. In the UK, urban cores lost 15.000 shops from 2000 to 2009 with a loss in shopping surface area of 14 % within cities. According to the New York Times, retailing in the United States has reached a tipping point in 2017, “indicating a permanent restructuring of retailing as a result of which traditional physical retailers may not recover” (Corkery, 2017; Helm et al., 2020, p. 1). Particularly exemplary for this development are some well-known streets in Manhattan’s West Village. They changed dramatically due to a large-scale transformation of new physical retail spaces. With the unprecedented luxury boom starting in 2001, the first Marc Jacobs store opened on Bleeker Street. As a consequence,

around 44 small neighborhood businesses on Western Bleecker Street disappeared and were replaced by upscale shopping mall chains as stated in a report by the New York State Senate (Hoylman, 2017). Strongly anchored mom-and-pop retail shops that have been operating for 25 years (Biography Bookstore) up to 44 years (Treasures and Trifles) had to close because of high-end retail stores (Hoylman, 2017). Consequently, exorbitantly high rents pushed more businesses out with an average increase of commercial rent by 34% between 2004 and 2014 (Hoylman, 2017).

3.1.1.2. The rise of e-commerce

The exponential growth of e-commerce is considered to be the main cause of decline in physical retail trade in recent years (Delage et al., 2020). The e-commerce's rapid expansion is hence the major cause of changes in the structure of traditional town centers and high streets (Delage et al., 2020). Over the past decades, the influential growth in online sales has incentivized various retailers to invest in technology-driven innovations and formats to increase customer engagement. Around 2000, the global retail landscape was completely transformed when Net-A-Porte launched the first high-end fashion online portal. Since then, the luxury e-commerce market has started to boom. One industry trend of the 2000s has been the polarization of store size. As Professor for Economic Zhiqi Chen states: "Increasingly mid-sized general merchandise retailers are squeezed out by large-scale retailers and small specialty stores." (Chen, 2003, p. 613). These pivotal trends featured the entry of new firms as they offered innovative business models, advanced technology and lower costs (Chen, 2003). As Heather Gramston, Head of womenswear at Browns states, "Multi-brand luxury e-commerce players significantly changed the retail landscape by offering a superior level of customer service." (Klerk, 2020, p. 6). Not only luxury brands but also other retailers recognized the opportunity to attract an entirely new set of customers by providing a unique customer experience that would replace physical retail stores. Today, companies such as Amazon or Alibaba have disrupted many conventional physical retail locations caused by its dominance in online shopping and expansion into fashion and grocery business (Dolega & Lord, 2020). One of the biggest flashpoints in retail history is the online retail platform Amazon, established in 1995 as an online bookseller. In 2020, Amazon reported a net income over of \$ 21.33 billion dollars and accounts to 49.1 % of all online retail spending in the U.S and 5 % of all retail sales (Coppola, 2021; Retail Reinvented, 2021). According to estimates in 2014, online shopping in the United Kingdom accounted for almost 11% of total expenditures, almost half of growth in retail spending between 2003 and 2010 (Delage et al., 2020; Portas, 2011; Wrigley & Lambiri, 2014). As a consequence, several British national chain stores closed their

physical stores and opened “click and collect points” or developed mobile applications (Delage et al., 2020; Singleton et al., 2016). In the United Kingdom, online sales now account for nearly one fifth of the country’s total retail sales (Statista, 2021). The Office for National Statistics reports that the proportion of British retail online expenses increased from 19.1% in April 2019 to 30.7% in April 2020 (OECD, 2020). Retail experts estimate that the growth of e-commerce will persist as “more Americans, notably millennials, come to perceive online shopping as the standard means of acquiring goods. The rise of e-commerce has reshaped labor, commodity flows, and global politics.” (Remus, 2021). Due to the pandemic, the shift towards e-commerce has accelerated and disrupted the current retail market. Most notably it affects the durable goods sector, where physical stores cannot add consumer experiential value or convenience (Helm et al., 2020). The pandemic has thus completely shattered the concept of customer experience and shifted physical experiences into the digital sphere.

3.1.1.3. Change in consumer behavior

Especially the growth of digital and mobile technologies has severely impacted the way we communicate, interact, and consume. This, in particular, has consequently impacted the “relationship between consumers and retailers of all sizes and types, in all locations and channels.” (*The Retail Experience Economy: The Behavioural Revolution*, 2017). Research from the last 20 years has shown that the power shift towards consumers is one of the main drivers for the retail environment changes: “Consumers have taken a dominant position through the adoption of e-commerce as the number of alternative suppliers has multiplied and the cost of comparison shopping across the globe grew insignificant.” (Helm et al., 2020, p. 2; McArthur et al., 2016). As a strategy shift, “many brick-and-mortar retailers started to invest in technology or new retail formats to revamp and enhance the in-store customer experience” (Helm et al., 2020, p. 6) thus increasing consumer engagement. As a consequence, enclosed malls were converted into open-air shopping areas “enabling ‘entertailing’, the addition of entertainment-oriented services in a retail context.” (Helm et al., 2020, p. 6; Rosenbaum et al., 2018). The concept of customer experience and customer engagement gained new momentum especially in the field of marketing as it increased the potential for brand performance, identification, loyalty, and customer relationship. Customer experience and customer engagement in the context of retailing enables a co-creation of the brand and improvement of the experience with the brand due to an interaction between service providers and customers. “Positive customer experience promotes the creation of connectedness between the store and the customers, which in turn enhances their engagement with the store.” (Mohd-Ramly & Omar, 2017, p. 4). In a wider context, a new economic offering since

the 2000s has profoundly impacted the retail industry “as consumers have undergone a transformational shift in what they value most.” (*The Retail Experience Economy: The Behavioural Revolution*, 2017). In a wider context, beginning in the 2000s, the new economic trend has profoundly impacted the change in attitudes towards experience consumption, embedded within today’s consumer and lifestyle based hedonistic society. The focus lies on emotional stimulation of experiences, promoting identity formation rather than on the product itself. “It is clear that successful retailers need to embrace the ideological shift from intrinsic value embedded in the product/service towards the experience and they must identify the right experience.” (*The Retail Experience Economy: The Behavioural Revolution*, 2017). Other underlying trends within consumer behaviorism is the rise of the convenience culture which shifts “consumer culture towards value and convenience culture” (Dolega & Lord, 2020, p. 2) by promoting leisure services and convenience goods retailers.

3.1.1.4. Covid-19 pandemic

One of the most disrupted and recent factors of the drastic decline and closure of small businesses is the coronavirus pandemic. In view of the global spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, starting in January 2020 in Wuhan, China, the collapse of the social, cultural, and economic activities has had unprecedented effects on humans and cities around the world. The impact of Covid-19 has gravely affected the global economy, leading to the financial distress of millions of individual households and retail businesses, indicating a new socio-economic crisis (Pantano et al., 2020). Since the outbreak of Covid-19, multiple studies have quantified the effect of the public health crisis and the economic depression specifically on the housing market, job loss, and the retail sector. The mitigation measures such as social distancing, curfews, and partial or full lockdowns have directly affected the supply, demand and daily operations of the retail sector (OECD, 2020). As a recent study by the Harvard Business Review shows, the pandemic has caused a significant and widespread industry shift towards e-commerce. Since the beginning of the pandemic Ernst & Young has been tracking these shifting trends using the EY Future Consumer Index and the EY embryonic platform. According to the EY Future Consumer Index, “sixty percent are currently visiting brick-and-mortar stores less than before the pandemic, and 43% shop more often online for products they would have previously bought in stores. One of the most significant effects of Covid-19 is the realization that, for many of us, geographical location has become less relevant — so long as there’s an internet connection. This flexibility allows more consumers to move away from urban centers; the latest Index data shows that 26% of respondents plan to live in less densely populated areas, up from 22% in April of 2020.” (Business Harvard Review, 2021).

The pandemic has ultimately accelerated the ongoing shift from brick-and-mortar to online retailing. According to a report by Nielsen, as OECD states, the market “share of e-commerce rapidly increased to almost 10% of total consumer goods sales during the confinement period, compared to less than 6% in 2019.” (OECD, 2020). In April 2020 sales of clothing retailers in the United States dropped by 89.3%, whereas in the EU sales of non-food products dropped by 23.8% (OECD, 2020). As recent studies have demonstrated, the crisis impacts “disproportionately brick-and-mortar and small firms, while online and large firms are more likely to survive” (OECD, 2020). Due to the crisis, retail’s local footprint in urban centers could further decrease and the ongoing consolidation in the sector could further amplify (OECD, 2020). According to OECD (2020), the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the retail sector is heterogeneous and plays out differently for each business. As a response and to strengthen their resilience, governments need to help retailers to overcome the three pandemic-induced shocks: demand shock, supply shock, and productivity shock (OECD, 2020).

3.1.2. Retail store vacancy and its influence on urban experience

Covid-19 has accelerated the decline of retail, and many once-thriving retailers are now struggling to survive. According to a recent report by RICS Economics (2020), vacancy rates across European markets increased drastically, in particular office and retail space. According to the German Retail Association (HDE), 50,000 retailers in Germany, or one in six, could go bankrupt in the next few years (Deutsche Welle, 2020). In France, the retail sector recorded its worst ever slump, with a net balance of minus 73% (RICS Economics, 2020, p. 9). In the first half of 2020, the UK recorded 12.5% vacancy in high streets and 8.8% vacancy in retail parks. As in the Guardian recently published, estimated 6 million small businesses in the UK supporting 16.6 million jobs are in a financially precarious position since the outbreak of the pandemic (Smithers, 2020). However, already prior to the pandemic, the decline of the retail trade has particularly impacted urban centers and high streets. Between 2008 and 2012, vacancies in town centers in Great Britain rose from 7% to 16%, a rate of one in six vacant stores in 2011 (Delage et al., 2020). Studies show that there is a correlation between commercial vitality of urban centers and their economic vitality, particularly to the “presence and availability of many jobs.” (Delage et al., 2020, p. 5). However, the problem of vacancy is not just an economic issue but is also significantly influencing street culture and citizens. High streets are important parts of the town center mix as they provide a “setting for shared experiences”, and a “focal point of local identity, community pride, and common heritage and value.” (Great Britain & Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, p. 3).

3.2. Revitalization approaches for small retailers in inner-city centers

As a response to the increasing and noticeable decline of high streets, downtown activities and traditional retail districts, governments around the world started to develop new policy interventions within urban planning (Kim & Jang, 2017). „Retail-led regeneration continued to be the major driver of town and city center development in the 1990s.“ (Parker et al., 2017). Countries such as Great Britain, the U.S, France, Italy, Japan and Korea introduced retail-led initiatives that would on the one hand benefit the urban retail sector and the urban environment and on the other hand potentially foster self-organized and bottom-up initiatives such as community-based organizations (Kim & Jang, 2017). “Empty, derelict and poorly maintained properties that degrade local environments have been a persistent concern” as the decline of retail adversely impacts the environment “on many levels, from the highly local to the global.” (Whysall, 2011, p. 5). The New York State Senator Bad Hoylman summarizes the detrimental impact as follows: “The proliferation of vacant storefronts and the loss in goods and services impact the livability of the community and appearance of the place.” (Hoylman, 2017, p. 2). As the Professor of Planning & Urban Design at UCL’s Bartlett School of Planning Matthew Carmona (2015, p. 6) states, the local high street „still represents the quintessential heart of the community, serving important roles as places of social contact and interaction for diverse segments of the society; particularly for those who are less mobile and for whom local shopping plays a vital role as a regular (and sometimes their only) source of social contact.” The Professor of Urban Planning at Ball State University Michael Burayidi (2018, p.13) stresses, revitalization “typically involves sprucing up and rebuilding blighted sites and refurbishing obsolete and dysfunctional buildings into new uses. Thus, bringing life back to a “downtown or neighborhood that is dead or faded in its importance.” (Burayidi et al., 2018, p. 13). According to Cherchi (2015) an important strategy for sustainable development is the reuse of spaces and buildings that have become obsolete. The challenge in rebuilding neighborhood retail streets lies in the complexity of restoring the neighborhood’s vitality and competitiveness. The process of rebuilding neighborhood retail streets is more difficult, lengthy and complicated than developing suburban shopping centers or reestablishing downtown shopping districts (Beyard et al., 2003). As already expressed by the activist and urbanist Jane Jacobs in 1961, prerequisite for a safe, active and successful street life in cities is its urban vitality, which requires street accessibility, mixed pattern of land use, small blocks, buildings of diverse ages and dense urban settings (Mouratidis & Poortinga, 2020). According to Jacobs, urban vitality is an integral part of the revitalization of urban areas (Kim, 2020). In

this context, urban vitality is viewed as a theoretical guideline for the revitalization of inner-city districts and can be defined as a “spatial quality arising from a variety of unique commercial and entertainment opportunities, and a dense socially heterogeneous pedestrian population.” (Mouratidis & Poortinga, 2020, p. 1). Already in 1984, Paul Maas suggests in his thesis published by the University of British Columbia that the vitality of a neighborhood is based on social, spatial, economic and experiential components, a “synergism of relatively dense urban locales that provide a range of economic and ‘gratuitous’ opportunities, and a dense and heterogeneous population in terms of street life.” (Mouratidis & Poortinga, 2020, p. 2). The town planner and urbanist Montgomery (1998) promotes a viable street life based on “pedestrian flows on the streets and the presence of small-scale business activities.” (Yue & Zhu, 2019, p. 1). It is important to note that the level of vitality is influenced by the different urban structure that each region entails. “Therefore, it is necessary to explore the relationship between city form and urban vitality to better understand how the built environment affects human activity.” (Yue & Zhu, 2019, p. 2). The next chapter examines how high streets can become more sustainable and diverse through a revitalization based on the restoration and rehabilitation of empty or abandoned retail stores.

3.2.1. Circular economy framework: circular re-use in urban settings

The underlying proposal for a suitable revitalization approach for inner-city districts is based on the principles of the circular economy which are defined as “production and consumption processes that require the minimum overall natural resource extraction and environmental impact by extending the use of materials and reducing the consumption and waste of materials and energy.” (Foster, 2020, p. 2). In 2020, a Handbook on ‘Sustainable and Circular re-use of spaces and buildings’ was published as a collaborative work between two Urban Agenda Partnerships, namely the Partnership on Circular Economy and Sustainable Land Use. This handbook serves cities as a guide to learn how to re-use abandoned and underused spaces and buildings. Over recent years, European regional policies were increasingly targeting land recycling, aiming at achieving zero net land take by 2050. Consequently, in 2015 the European Commission adopted the ‘Circular Economy Package’ which “includes proposals for revising the waste legislation in order to stimulate the transition to the circular paradigm” (Partnership on Circular Economy and Sustainable Land Use, 2020, p. 17). This vision of a ‘circular city’ introduces a systematic governance, addressing national, regional, and local administrations. Local municipalities are encouraged to “include urban circular re-use of abandoned or underused properties into their urban development policies and strategies.” (Partnership on Circular Economy and Sustainable Land Use, 2020, p. 17). The concept of circular re-use of

spaces and buildings can be defined as a new model aiming at “re-using vacant properties through transparent and inclusive participatory processes” (Partnership on Circular Economy and Sustainable Land Use, 2020, p. 12). participatory approach involves production activities and the collaboration of relevant stakeholders such as universities, enterprises, NGOs and citizens. In fact, this framework enables not only a great opportunity to reduce the negative environmental impacts but also “strengthen the social cohesion at an urban level” by pursuing an “inclusive and supportive community, based on the principle of sharing and creative re-use as a means to stimulate innovative driving forces for business activities.” (Partnership on Circular Economy and Sustainable Land Use, 2020, p. 19). This concept of urban circular re-use acts as a framework for this underlying research. It aims at targeting specific adaptive reuse strategies across the physical retail landscape as part of a revitalization approach.

3.2.2. Overview of different retail high street revitalization approaches

The background of policy implementation for retail-led urban regeneration varies depending on the respective government. Whereas “the U.K, the U.S and Japan have focused on economic growth for cultivating the revitalisation of the commercial district”, France and Italy “have focused on social prospects such as protecting small local businesses and ensuring diversity in small enterprises” (Kim & Jang, 2017, p. 37). This section aims at showcasing three national and international approaches as “forms of voluntary management” (Kim & Jang, 2017, p. 37) which support the development of adaptive strategies for retail-led urban revitalization. Three programs such as TCM in the U.K, BID in the U.S. and TMOs in Japan are based on different principles, characteristics, and practices and “differ in the clarity of purpose underlying their policies” (Yamashita, 2004, p. 472). All these programs are promoted and managed by private operators but authorized by the government. These underlying retail-led initiatives are important mechanism “to revitalise communities by creating jobs, promoting economic growth, and creating attractions to draw people to an area.” (Kim & Jang, 2017, p. 37). The U.K implemented improvement programs such as the Town Centre Management (TCM) to protect the vitality and viability of those town and city centers that faced increasing competition from off-centre retailing in suburbs (Yamashita, 2004). The development of TCM in the U.K started in the late 1980s as a pro-active initiative aimed at improving public resources, the standards of services, and the quality of town centers; ensuring that they are “desirable and attractive places” and „encouraging the coordination of partnerships between the private and public sectors.“ (Kim & Jang, 2017, p. 37). TCM specifically promotes and supports the cooperation between local authorities and local businesses by encouraging the latter to “participate actively in the marketing, promotion, and development of their town

centers.” (Yamashita, 2004, p. 471). Since then, over three hundred TCMs are operating nowadays in the UK. Starting in the 1990s as part of a welfare agenda in the United States, new government interventions in retailing were increasingly implemented in order to foster retail employment in deprived areas. In 1992, a successful town management approach has been implemented in the U.S namely as the Business Improvement District (BID), as independent, not-for-profit organizations, ranging in scale from “major” to “more limited organizations in small towns.” (p.471). BIDs are based on the provision of various services, on the promotion of districts and public improvements for well-manicured, clean, safe and friendly streets. “BID is formed when the majority of commercial property owners in a neighbourhood vote in favour of a package of taxes and expenditures on public goods that supplement specific districts instituted by local governments.” (Kim & Jang, 2017, p. 37). Critics of BID complain that it can have disproportionate impacts on less cohesive and less affluent social groups trapped within a system of privatized public service provisions. Thus, BIDs rather targets “the needs of affluent business persons and their customers” instead of supporting marginalized groups (Kim & Jang, 2017, p. 37). Around the same time in Japan, the Town Management Organization (TMO) started as one of the few local downtown revitalization organizations which were implemented by municipalities and incorporated public participation in urban development. Today, a total of 268 TMOs are operating in Japan. TMO provides high-quality amenities such as parking, offers different services such as security and coordinates tenant selection within downtown shopping districts. Their activities and various projects are funded by national and local governments based on subsidies and tax abatements.

3.2.3. Public-Private Partnership as an example of an inner-city district revitalization tool

In view of many examples of revitalization approaches, public authorities, retailers and business associations were not able to halt the high street decline by ensuring a more vibrant commercial environment in the inner-city center and generating new investments. Therefore, “a partnership approach to revitalization was needed due to the scale and complexity of the blight.” (Espinosa & Hernandez, 2016, p. 109). This new intervention of local-level public and private partnership “has been widely considered an intelligent tool for provoking both social and economic recovery of urban areas.” (Espinosa & Hernandez, 2016, p. 108). A variety of literature focus specifically on public-private partnerships for heritage conservation, whereas this section aims at outlining the importance of PPPs in retail revitalization in inner-city districts. As different studies have shown, there are concerns and skepticism about the use of PPP in

urban regeneration (Macdonald, 2011; Macdonald & Cheong, 2014). Hence, this section aims at providing evidence for the effective use of PPPs in inner-city revitalization processes, specifically for urban core areas. Public-private partnerships are characterized as the “cooperation that occurs between public and private sectors in working towards a shared objective through a mutually agreed upon division of labour and by committing resources and sharing the risks as well as the benefit.” (Marana et al., 2018, p. 40). The partnership between the public and private sector entails many challenges as they pursue often different interests. The aim of governments is usually to improve public life, to conserve built heritage and revitalize large-scale urban areas. One problem is that local authorities are often constrained by “limited or scarce resources, fragmented ownership and other limitations.” (Choenni, 2015, p. 10). According to Sunil Choenni at the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC), unlike governments, private entities are “mostly willing to improve their property, built heritage conservation and city appearance.” (Choenni, 2015, p. 10). The cooperation between the public and private sector found its peak especially in the late 1970s and 1980s when governments started to encourage private enterprises to solve public issues (Reuschke, 2001). This new urban governance resulted from the emergence of a new logic of city-building that started in the 1970s and became dominant in many parts of the world. This new paradigm of neoliberal urbanism is “subordinated to the dictates of capital, where urban powers attempt to position their cities in higher positions of the hierarchical global urban network in which competitiveness is the key.” (Vives Miró, 2011, p. 2). This fundamental shift is closely linked to the financialization of the market conditions and dynamics of a profit-oriented capitalist economy that impacts not only the spatial issues, but also society as a whole and everyday life. According to University of Santiago de Compostela (USC) researcher Sònia Vives-Miró, neoliberalism is a political system that advocates private property, the privatization of social resources, the flexibilization of regulatory frameworks that might hinder free market values, and the *supposed* withdrawal of State intervention.” (Vives Miró, 2011, p. 2). Consequently, a restructuring within urban public policy took place in many countries, promoting city entrepreneurship and public-private partnerships. Programs such as the Urban Carter Development Action Grant (UDAG) was launched in the U.S in 1977 to stimulate economic development in cities by leveraging private investment for local economic development (Ventriss, 2002). Especially under the Reagan Administration in the 1980s, joint public-private partnership ventures were boosting as a consequence of Reagan’s new urban policy approach. This whole development has its origin in a master plan announced in 1969 by the Nixon administration coined “New Federalism” that limited the power of federal programs and enhanced state and local government (Robins, 1980). As a response to the increasing

competition amongst cities, local governments applied new entrepreneurial approaches that would enable a greater level of private participation and generate investments into inner cities. According to Reuschke (2001, p. 7) there is a range of possible models of PPPs but not one general model or binding definition “since each development partnership has to be tailored to different local circumstances.” Pursuant to Darja Reuschke (2001, p. 7), Associate Professor in Human Geography, University of Southampton, there is a range of possible models of PPPs but not one universally valid model or binding definition “since each development partnership has to be tailored to different local circumstances.” According to Ana Espinosa Seguí, Professor of Human Geography at the university of Alicante and Tony Hernandez, Ph.D. at the Eaton Chair in Retailing, “PP-led urban commercial revitalization can be seen as an outcome of decades of retail dysfunction within the urban core of North American and European towns and cities.” (Cook, 2008; Espinosa & Hernandez, 2016, p. 109). Throughout the time, a variety of PPP formulas emerged which differ geographically, politically, and by its type of commercial cluster. (Espinosa & Hernandez, 2016). Furthermore, PPPs are characterized by different urban governance structures, ideological approaches of urban planners, levels of stakeholder engagement, project scopes and balance of public-private sector control (Espinosa & Hernandez, 2016).

A recent study published by the European Economic and Social Committee in 2019 represents different recommendations for European policy agenda on small retailers. Herby, three recommendations will be elaborated in the following, which are considered to be relevant with regard to this underlying research. (1) Providing accessible and concise digital learning tools for small retailers by developing cooperation between national stakeholders and existing national and EU organizations. (2) Strengthening public-private partnerships between local authorities, retailers, and civil society to improve the environment where retailers operate, and (3) Building partnerships between retailers with the support of the civil society that brings together small retailers and fosters the collaboration with local authorities (Snijders & Graaf, 2019). Based on the study, “guidance on public-private partnerships could be instrumental” (Snijders & Graaf, 2019b, p. 11) to effectively counter negative contextual and environmental forces that impact retailer’s performance in inner-city districts. Especially over the last decade, the interest in public-private partnerships (PPPs) increased as they proved to be “an effective tool for increasing critical infrastructure resilience.” (Marana et al., 2018, p. 2).

3.3. Brand urbanism as a revitalization approach

This chapter elaborates the emergence of a new urban typology in the contemporary context of city development. The goal of this research is to analyze the phenomenon of brand urbanism on an urban scale, which can be strategically implemented in the framework of public-private partnership between consumer brands and local city authorities to foster urban revitalization. The interest in public-private partnerships, as a cross-sectoral cooperation among different types of stakeholders augmented particularly over the last 20 years. In face of the “increasingly complex interconnections between critical Infrastructures (CIs) and society’s great dependence on functioning CIs” (Marana et al., 2018, p. 40), the ability “to prepare for, respond to and recover from unexpected events in the most effective manner” (Marana et al., 2018, p. 40) became increasingly important. Also, private companies recognized their importance in ensuring the well-being of society by designing “corporate social responsibility strategies that also contribute to increasing city resilience.” (Marana et al., 2018, p. 40; Marrion, 2013). Thus, the responsibility of providing resources and sharing responsibilities in terms of CI protection and enhancement of urban life has increasingly become a private concern, too. “Although public entities are the main actors in charge of protecting society, nowadays an increasing number of CIs are owned or operated by private companies.” (Boin & McConnell, 2007, p. 40). In recent years, a trend emerged towards a new strategy for consumer brands and cities to work together on urban solutions, defined as brand urbanism (*PUC × Brand Urbanism*, 2021). The Dutch online platform PopUpCity conducted extensive research on brand urbanism in the last couple of years and coined the term brand urbanism in 2014. PopUpCity defines its own work as follows: “We collaborate with public and private partners to research today’s urban challenges and the opportunities they create for governments, enterprises and citizens.” (*PUC × Brand Urbanism*, 2021). The Dutch online firm sees a growing engagement from the consumer brand side in realizing urban projects together with local governments who in turn provide brands an opportunity to demonstrate their “involvement in and responsibility for the city.” (*PUC × Brand Urbanism*, 2021). Between 2014 and 2016, Pop-Up City, together with Urban Jungle, has conducted extensive research on brand urbanism and examined how urban development can empower Dutch cities and brands. According to Rinske Brand, the founding partner of BRAND the Urban Agency, brand urbanism can be defined as a “collaboration between a city and a brand in which the brand (partly) launches or funds a project in exchange for visibility. Brands finance brand urbanism projects from their marketing budget, often substituting them for other forms of advertising.” (Brand, 2017). These practices take place primarily in Anglo-Saxon countries. According to

Brand (2017), brand urbanism provides an opportunity for brands to have a lasting and positive influence on the city and its local communities. Important groundwork for these partnerships is the creation of a “logical connection between the brand and the urban project” that enables a “well-executed urban rebuilding project” (Brand, 2017).

3.3.1. Contextual definition of the term ,brand‘

The modern term brand derives from Ancient Norse “brandr” which means to burn (Clifton, 2009). In the Anglo-Saxon period manufacturers and merchants inscribed their names on their livestock and wares to differentiate them from their competitors’ products and to assure a certain level of quality. After the agrarian, industrial and service economy, a new type of economy in western society emerged in the 1990s: the experience economy (Lorentzen, 2009). A new territory of designing and increasing customer emotions changed the concept of branding that would enable better differentiation and customer loyalty (Ferreira et al., 2013; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). The driver of this new trend in economic development entailed “people’s search for identity and involvement in an increasingly rich society.” (Lorentzen, 2009, p. 830). The two economists Joseph B. Pine and James H. Gilmore illustrates the progression of the economy as follows: “Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Places in the experience economy are being staged and consumed and therefore linked to the notion of “experiencescape” (Lorentzen & Hansen, 2013). In urban geography, a new trend emerged in the 1990s to address the impact of creative and cultural industries on urban development. This emerging field of cultural industries geography focuses "on the relationship between space, knowledge, and identity." (Flew, 2010, p. 1).

3.3.2. From place branding to brand urbanism

The design practice of place-making has been developed by the humanist geographer Eduard Relph in the 1970s (Aguila et al., 2019, p. 249). He views place-making as a process of “creating a place which occurs authentically and unselfconsciously in the interactions between people and physical environment.” (Aguila et al., 2019, p. 249). Geographical studies today are heavily influenced by his concept of defining space as “heterogeneous and infused with many different lived dimensions” (Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p. 2). As a consequence, we speak nowadays of “spatial modes as sacred space, gendered space, commodified space, and the like.” (Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p. 2). The sense of place and the formation of identity play a crucial role. The different identities within a city are embedded in the “experience, eye,

mind, and intention of the beholder as much as in the physical appearance of the city or landscape” (Relph, 1976, p. 45). Place identity influences the perception of the target audience in the same way previous perceptions impact the identity of a place internally and externally which “are often reinforced through city marketing images of urban landscapes.” (G. Evans, 2015, p. 3). This underling chapter has to be viewed within the field of critical urban toponym “which refers to a growing body of research that critically examines the politics of place naming practice.” (Rose-Redwood et al., 2019, p. 749). The extensive study of toponymic commodification is a relatively new area within geography, exploring the relevance of naming in the production of space and place (Rose-Redwood et al., 2019). Within the new form of neoliberal urban governance, the sense of town and cities have been “presented with the branding option as a response to the competitive-authentic city dialectic.” (G. Evans, 2015, p. 2). The process of commodification within neoliberalism has “extended into controversial new arenas of urban place-making that are reshaping the cultural landscapes of cities around the world.” (Rose-Redwood et al., 2019, p. 748). Reuben Rose-Redwood, Professor of Geography at the University of Victoria argues that one of the most significant transformations within the contemporary neoliberal context of the 21st century is due to the commercialization of urban place naming which will in long-term affect the toponymic landscape. Rose-Redwood & Alderman (2011, p. 3) conceptualize place-naming as “toponym-as-commodity” which is a “form of symbolic capital” that can “be converted into economic capital and exploited for its exchange value.” (Rose-Redwood et al., 2019, p. 749).

Especially during the 1990s, research was conducted on “how the naming of places, streets, and urban landmarks was implicated in political projects such as nation-building, state formation, and the spatialization of collective memory.” (Rose-Redwood et al., 2019, p. 749). Today, place-branding can be defined as an extension of marketing strategies. Over the last decade, the political economy of toponymic commodification has increasingly moved into the spotlight of many discussions and “become an integral part of the policy toolkit of neoliberal urbanism more generally.” (Rose-Redwood et al., 2019, p. 1). Nowadays, urban branding aims at “reimagining a city, to depend on place-based identities and understanding of a particular local culture.” (Rehan, 2014, p. 224). Underlying subject to the requirement of brand creation are “media-generated imagery; branding of urban projects; and branding of city life, historical buildings, signature architecture, and the overall form of the city.” (Rehan, 2014, p. 224). One theoretical framework that can be applied to critically reflect upon the commodification of naming is the form of capital developed by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in 1986. The process of commodification can be set against the transformation from “symbolic capital of a

place name directly into economic capital and, “conversely, how economic capital can literally be used to purchase symbolic capital in the form of toponymic recognition.” (Rose-Redwood et al., 2019, p. 752). More than ever before in history, cities have to act in an entrepreneurial manner in order to survive in an aggressively competitive, global economy (Rehan, 2014). Public authorities increasingly embrace the selling of naming rights to public places, such as buildings, metro stations or public spaces. Following the concept of Kavarstzis and Ashworth, place branding can be described based on three types: 1) Brand name is the name of a geographic location, 2) co-branding of a place and product, and 3) branding of a place per se. (Prilenska, 2012). Particularly, two branding strategies of cities have gained popularity in recent years, which is the “creative city” (second type) and the “experience city” (third type) (Prilenska, 2012). External investors, firms or individuals are choosing their location based on the image of the city. “However, it is not enough to create an attractive image, it is essential to make it well-known locally and internationally. Under these circumstances, city branding becomes an exceptionally important tool for image-building and image-communication.” (Prilenska, 2012, p. 12). Moreover, the recent shift towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) has particularly impacted the relationship between consumers and brands. Especially millennials and the following Generation Z value socially responsible companies that thrive for a better future by investing in improving the society, the environment, and the city. Millennials were raised in the boom times of the 1990s only to be confronted with economic crashes, and the September 11 attacks. For this reason, their story is “of innocence lost.” (Williams, 2015). A study by The Cone from 2008 highlights that 61% of millennials “feel personally responsible for making a difference in the world” and “believe that companies have a responsibility to join them in this effort.” (McGlone et al., 2011, p. 196). Other studies show that millennials are “prepared to reward or punish a company based on its commitment to social causes.” (McGlone et al., 2011, p. 196). Thus, millennials are consciously targeting pro-social and pro-environment brands that put effort in showcasing their local and global engagement. Furthermore, millennials aim at participating in volunteer work and initiatives that tackle urban issues. Generation Z and millennials share both the importance of thriving for a broader social meaning while their activism plays out differently. Companies began to see that their socially and environmentally conscious engagement would benefit as they impacted positively the consumer’s perception. As a consequence, brands increasingly incorporated CSR into their organizational strategy by investing in the creation of specially set up initiatives and projects that tackle social and urban issues (McGlone et al., 2011). By doing so, companies can add certain value to their products and services, fostering the formation of consumer identity by linking the individual consumer with the community of the brand. However, the spectrum of

corporate social responsibility goes beyond these initiatives (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019). Millennials would also like to see their brands to set socio-political statements by engaging in broader debates such as the recent #MeToo movement, fighting against discrimination and racism. A growing number of so-called B-companies such as the ice cream company Ben & Jerry are required by certification to take social responsibility into consideration and to follow accurately standards of social and environmental performance as well as legal accountability and public transparency (S. Kim, 2012). The B Corporation, as a new type of corporation is “purpose-driven and creates benefit for all stakeholders, not just shareholders.” This new type is embedded in an envisioned global economy “that uses business as a force for good” and accelerates “a global culture shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy.” (B. Corps, 2021). As the company B Corps claims on its website, the most challenging issues of today’s society cannot be solved by government and nonprofits alone and thus emphasize the importance of B Corp community leaders, working towards “reduced inequality, lower levels of poverty, a healthier environment, stronger communities and the creation of more high-quality jobs with dignity and purpose (B. Corps, 2021).

This shift led global companies to act upon these trends with initiatives ranging from renewable energy projects (Google), reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Coca-Cola), providing healthcare for women and children (Pfizer), donating pairs of shoes (TOM) or investing in environmental protection technology (BOSCH) (Digital Marketing Institute, 2019). As an overall trend, consumers are increasingly pursuing other, broader purposes in order for them to connect with the brand. While at the same time the need for consumers to particularly enter a physical store of a certain brand in order to identify with the product or service has decreased. At this point, it becomes possible to understand the relevance of the emergence of a new spatial practice and new type of public-private partnership such as brand urbanism which considers itself disconnected from marketing, seeking rather for a permanent change in the urban environment than a solely commercialization of its own brand (UTOPIES & JCDecaux, 2019). According to a recent study by UTOPIES and JCDecaux, “the world’s largest Out-of-Home advertising company”, the new phenomenon plays out in the relationship between “consumer-citizens who want brands to commit to the common good and to play a useful role, consistent with their core values” (UTOPIES & JCDecaux, 2019, p. 1) and the brands themselves. Brand urbanism can therefore be defined as a response to the growing consumer expectations, which include the wish for brands to proactively contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in cities, while at the same time “cultivating local presence and awareness.” (UTOPIES & JCDecaux, 2019, p. 1). From the developments described so

far, brand urbanism practices seek to launch or to finance temporary or permanent urban development projects. Despite its growing importance as an urban practice, few scholars have examined the emergence of brand urbanism practices as the term was only coined few years ago in 2014 by PopUpCity. The overarching aim is therefore to contribute to public-private partnership scholarship by examining how the processes of these different brand urbanism typologies and practices have extended into new arenas of inner-city revitalization approaches. Thus, this research focuses on the concept of brand urbanism and defines the most important objectives, types, and global practices.

4. Typology of global brand urbanism practices

This section focuses on the in-depth investigation of brand urbanism by presenting the findings of the developed typology. The final goal of this typology is to define and analyze the functioning and potential of brand urbanism in the context of inner-city revitalization upon which future research could be based. Until now, only few attempts were made to classify and analyze these urban practices. This typology can be considered as the first existing English typology on global brand urbanism practices which aims at identifying the scope of the brand urbanism landscape by looking into various practices. As the findings of this typology show, brand urbanism manifests itself in 18 different global projects. Due to the limited scope of this research, this section intends to highlight and analyze those projects with the most significant features in terms of aim, purpose, implication as well as in their impact on the community and the built environment in the respective geographical location. See below. These examples described are compared and set in relation to each other. The comparative analysis hereby serves three main goals as mentioned in chapter 2. Firstly, the comparison allows a broader understanding of the scope of brand urbanism and its implications on the urban environment. Secondly, the comparative analysis helps to classify the selected practices into different categories in order to define basic project types. Thirdly, the comparison forms the foundation for the subsequent analysis of the respective projects in regard to urban revitalization efforts.

The findings prove that the typology is broad and detailed enough to analyze and compare the diversity in today's field of brand urbanism, as it covers numerous projects in all different fields and sectors. The identified projects can be divided into cross-functional and cross-sectoral projects. In total, eight different industries of the 18 brand urbanism projects were determined: arts and culture industry; cloud computing & artificial intelligence; sportswear industry; service industry; retail industry; food and beverage industry; chemical industry; and

lighting industry. As the findings show, the sportswear industry occurred six times and the food and beverage industry five times. These are the two most-frequently representing industries as they comprise 11 projects out of 18. With regard to cross-sectoral projects, this typology represents 12 different forms of projects. identified as follows: basketball court; skatepark; community center, urban gym, bicycle parking facility, fitness hub, night bus, urban billboards, outdoor advertising, public roads, historic tower, urban color, outdoor swimming pool, outdoor lighting solutions, community projects and recreational spaces.

4.1. The basic project types of brand urbanism

In the following section, the characteristics of the identified project types will be highlighted and explained. The following matrix in Figure 6 provides an overview of the basic types of brand urbanism identified over the course of the study. In total 5 different categories were determined: social, cultural, environmental, infrastructural, and economical projects.

Project category	Brand urbanism type	Characteristics
Social projects	Artist collaboration	Creative-based projects in collaboration with (local) artist and culture producers who create, refurbish or repurpose dilapidated or unused public spaces, such as sport court fields or places of leisure in the city.
	Urban Housing	Projects that aim at enhancing the living environment of (less privileged) urban dwellers by implementing innovative and intelligent design tools that provide temporary or permanent housing solutions.
	Urban Safety	Projects that aim at enhancing safety and security in urban areas especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including women and children.
	Sport and Health	Projects that aim to promote and increase the community's access to sport by renovating or creating dilapidated sport fields, meeting places, often located in disadvantaged areas.
Cultural Projects	Local Heritage	Projects aiming at conserving and protecting cultural heritage sites in the city such as iconic landmarks and archeological sites.
Environmental Projects	Natural Resource Conservation and Environmental Sustainability	Projects that aim at enhancing the environment by investing in the conservation of biodiversity, restoration of the ecosystem and in solutions for climate-induced threats.

	Urban Revitalization	Projects aimed at reorganizing an existing city structure in a deprived or neglected neighborhood due to social, economic or political reasons by improving features of the urban environment.
Infrastructural Projects	Urban Mobility	Projects aim to improve or maintain the existing public-transportation infrastructure. Either through providing or funding urban mobility or by investing in soft or hard city infrastructure and services such as repairing roads.
	Urban Furniture	Projects that provide urban furniture, strategically inserted in urban areas for aesthetic reasons or to enhance features of the physical environment in its diversity or use for the neighborhood.
Economical Projects	Commercial Urban Advertisement	Brands that are placing outdoor advertisements in forms of billboards, business vehicles or transit advertising. These projects influence and shape public spaces in urban environments through certain activities.

Figure 6. Brand urbanism categories and types

As visualized in figure 6, the selected practices can be classified under 10 overarching types which comprise the key elements of brand urbanism. The 10 types differ significantly in terms of their aim, purpose, implication as well as in their impact on the community and the built environment in the respective geographical location. Based on the variety of the project types, each project type tends to shape, modify, or rebuild the built environment or existing infrastructure in the city in a distinctive way. Thus, each project impacts public space and the public sphere in different ways. In addition, for some of the selected projects, the local government plays a more or less limited supporting role in the development, promotion, and maintenance of the project. While some projects are almost exclusively managed and funded by the private sector, others are municipally owned.

In each of these two cases, different policy intervention and implementation processes are involved. Furthermore, each of the selected project is embedded in different governance and management structures which “encompasses a host of economic and social forces, institutions and relationships, formal and informal.” (Avis, 2016, p. 1). From an urban governance perspective, the effectiveness and potential of brand urbanism projects depend on a variety of factors such as local political processes, whether formal or informal, the availability of resources, and the ability of government to respond and adapt to local needs and priorities (Avis, 2016). Each of the projects faces different challenges at a local, regional, or national level. For example, inadequate institutional frameworks may impede effective urban governance, which in turn may negatively impact outcomes such as the success or

effectiveness of such projects. The following section highlights and explains the characteristics of the project types identified.

The first type of brand urbanism refers to *Artist Collaboration*, creative projects in collaboration with (local) artists and cultural practitioners. They aim to redesign, revitalize, and repurpose dilapidated urban spaces or destitute, vacant, or unused spaces. The primary purpose is to display generative or interactive artwork in public spaces in order to strengthen community engagement, social cohesion and enhance the physical characteristics of the neighborhood. New visual landmarks can anchor the community's collective identity and decrease stigma towards certain neighborhoods or communities.

Commercial Urban Advertisement, the second overarching type, addresses outdoor advertisement in forms of billboards, business vehicles or transit advertising. This type of project is primarily used for marketing purposes on the part of the brand to draw attention to a specific product or service in the urban context. In addition, however, these outdoor advertising projects also strive to influence and shape the public space through certain interactive activities, such as with citizens, which increases the physical diversity of the urban environment.

The third type refers to *Local Heritage* projects aiming at conserving, protecting, and maintaining art and cultural heritage sites and buildings in the city. By doing so, this type seeks to foster artistic creativity and intercultural dialogues between the city and its inhabitants.

The fourth project is *Natural Resource Conservation and Environmental Sustainability*. This type of project focuses on improving the environment by investing in the conservation of biodiversity and restoration of the ecosystem. In addition, this type of project seeks to generate and support solutions to reduce current environmental issues, thus helping the city to counteract climate-induced threats.

The fifth overarching type, Urban Mobility, aims to improve or maintain the existing public-transportation infrastructure in a specific urban area. These projects also seek to provide, fund, or operate different modes of transportation such as buses, trams, or subways in the respective town or city. This project type also aims at investing and supporting soft or hard city infrastructures and services. Hereby, hard infrastructures include the construction and maintenance of the physical fabric of cities such as utilities, buildings, or urban spaces. Soft infrastructures can be defined as institutional, community and personal infrastructures.

The sixth overarching type, *Sport and Health*, directs attention to the enhancement of physical and mental health in the city by increasing the community's access to sport and by supporting sport activities in the city. This, in turn, is achieved by renovating dilapidated sports fields or by creating and promoting new sports infrastructure and meeting places, which are often located in disadvantaged and economically weak neighborhoods.

The seventh type addresses *Urban Furniture*. These projects provide public, urban furniture that is strategically inserted in the urban landscape for aesthetic reasons or to enhance features of the physical environment in their diversity or use for the neighborhood.

The eighth type comprises *Urban Housing* projects that aim to improve the living situation of urban dwellers, especially less privileged citizens. This is achieved through the implementation of innovative and intelligent design tools that provide temporary or permanent housing solutions in urban areas.

The ninth type *Urban Revitalization* addresses projects dedicated to the reorganization, renewal, and revitalization of existing city structures, predominantly in deprived or neglected neighborhoods due to social, economic, or political circumstances. These projects can thus imply social, cultural, physical, and economic dimensions. The goal is to improve physical features and structures in urban areas and to enhance living conditions to foster urban vitality and protect urban identity and culture at the community level.

The last type, named *Urban Safety*, defines projects that seek to increase the safety of urban dwellers and create inclusive and resilient urban environments especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including women and children. This type particularly addresses issues such as violence, crime, and poverty.

4.2. Descriptive analysis and critical reflection on brand urbanism practices

On this basis, the next section describes and analyses some of the selected brand urbanism projects. In particular, I attach importance to examining the different project aims, planning approaches and partnership models, as well as highlighting their opportunities and difficulties. In the last past two decades, various brand urbanism projects have been realized on a global level. Some of them have been operating for a long time while others lasted only a short period of time because they were either time-limited or poorly maintained. As the findings reveal, there are projects that are primarily focusing on one location and thus on one specific local

target area, whereas others are ambitiously spread across several places in the city or even across a country. Especially in the latter case, the projects are intended to shape larger urban areas or regions. In the following part, the projects will be presented according to their project type.

4.2.1. Urban Mobility projects

An identified example of brand urbanism, as shown in the image above, is *Domino's Paving Pizza*, an urban project that took place across 50 different U.S. states. Domino's Pizza's mission is to pave bad roads across the country "with the goal of saving pizza from potential ruin by fixing potholes." (*Rapid City Receives Domino's Paving for Pizza' Grant*, 2018). In June 2017, Domino's launched its program by offering customers to nominate their town or city for a grant through the website www.pavingforpizza.com. The core idea was that „bad roads shouldn't happen to good pizza!" (Paving for Pizza, 2021). In total, Domino's received more than 137,000 nominations from 15,275 different zip codes in all 50 states. One of the nominated States is Rapid City, S.D. which was selected for the 'Paving for Pizza' grant worth \$5.000. To properly execute the project, the city had to estimate the number of potholes to be repaired and the time frame for completion. For the paving process, each nominated city received a box of Domino's assets with paving equipment (Frederick, 2018). Furthermore, the Rapid City provided a Pothole Hotline for citizens to report exact locations of potholes throughout the city. The City's Street Department crew recorded and processed the request within the same or next day. Due to the success of the initiative, the nomination period was extended until December 31, 2018. (Selasky, n.d.). Given this explanation, this particular program can be identified as an *Urban Infrastructure* project type that enhances local infrastructure by including customers and citizens into the decision, planning and implementation process, thereby acting to benefit the local community.

Another *Urban Infrastructure* type project is *Union Bikers First*, a mobile pop-up parking for eight bicycles in Amsterdam PC Hooftstraat, realized in 2019. This project is a collaboration between the Dutch bicycle brand UNION, the advertisement agency Natwerk and the city of Amsterdam, with the aim to promote and facilitate cycling in the city. Beyond its function as a bicycle shed on wheels, it aims to take up valuable space in the city by occupying space that is usually reserved for cars. The parking is located on high streets, in front of high-end retail stores. For this reason, UNION's campaign earned a lot of criticism, as shop owner complained about the sheds taking over too much space for customer's cars. The creative director Frank de Ruwe at Natwerk said: „Cycling is simply better for the world than

driving. Everyone agrees on that. So, this is just a good move. It's exactly what you want to get a big response. It's about opening up the discussion. If you had to choose between cars or bicycles, which side would you be on?" (Rogers, 2019). Compared to Domino's example, *Union Bikers First* is a small intervention in the public space, a form of temporary, movable street furniture. This urban prototype, as a tactical intervention is an example of brand urbanism which is a rather low-cost, temporary, and replicable practice. "They can also provide a useful tool for experimentation, offering not only a flexible and quick solution, but also an important bridge between the municipal authorities and the community." (Rossini, 2019, p. 321). Furthermore, this example questions "how inexpensive improvements can attract and retain public space users and positively shape the social character of the district." (Rossini, 2019, p. 310).

4.2.2. Sport & Health projects

A different case is the *New York Made: Stanton Street Courts*, two side-by-side basketball courts located in the Sara D. Roosevelt Park, in Manhattan's Lower East Side. This project was realized in 2016 as a Nike community project. It is based on a collaboration between the sportswear Nike, the Brooklyn-based artist Brian Donnelly – aka Kaw, the New York City Parks and the Recreation Department. This project was developed as part of a broader campaign called 'New York Made' in which "a series of community collaborations and interventions across the city" (Morby, 2016) took place. Kaws used bold lines, colorful shapes, and cartoon motifs, that reflect his signature as an artist who lived in this neighborhood in the 90s. This project is classified into two different types. First, *Artist collaboration* based on their creative collaboration with a local artist. Second, a *Sport and Health* type that promotes and facilitates access to basketball. Similar to this case, is the *Pigalle Duperré court*, a basketball court in the 9th district in Paris which was a collaborative work between Nike, the French design agency Ill Studio and the fashion designer Stéphane Ashpool who founded the streetwear label Pigalle. Both Nike projects positively contribute to the promotion and support of physical activity among residents by providing public sport and recreational infrastructure (Kostrzewska, 2017a). However, in the above cases, certain critical and relevant issues such as gender inequality and unsafety in public spaces are not addressed by neglecting the skills, needs and expectations of women. "In general, compared to men, women are less socialized in (outdoor) sports, experience more time constraints due to higher child care responsibilities and higher unsafety in public (green) spaces." (*SWUP-Guidelines-EN.Pdf*, n.d., p. 2).

As the design of the public spaces does not include childcare services at the venue or offer different sport activities beyond basketball, Nike did not succeed in tailoring urban interventions to a broader target group. In particular, new emerging spatial practices such as brand urbanism should seek to close the gender gap and increase diversity in public spaces by applying a cultural and gender sensitive planning approach that includes various sexes, belief systems, ethnicities, ages, backgrounds, attitudes, and values of different population types. These examples highlight the need for brands, as well as cities, to constantly reflect on and consider concrete barriers and motivations for women to actively use public spaces in light of their geographic and cultural context. Hence, *New York Made: Stanton Street Courts* and *Pigalle Duperré court* fail to represent girls and women equally in these two public spaces.

Converse's Noorderpark project in Amsterdam was built by CONS Project Amsterdam (Converse Europe) in collaboration with the local skate community, the local design studio Miktor & Molf and the city of Amsterdam. Similar projects by Converse have already been realized in New York, Lima, Buenos Aires, and London. This project was inaugurated in 2014 and is located at a former gas station called *De Zoner Tanker* (Pink Tanker) between a park and motorway. Since 2010, the Tanker has served as a community center, hosting cultural events such as performances, concerts, expositions and workshops ("The Tanker – Culture Showcase," 2021). Converse funded the project with 50.000 € seeking to invest in a public skatepark for locals as a broader international marketing strategy. This project faced fierce criticism for several reasons. Converse initially planned to cover the entire Pink Tanker with logos and banners, which was not in line with the principles of the organizers of the Pink Tanker. More so, Converse published a special magazine and shot a trailer video showing skaters wearing Converse shoes and thirdly, the project lacked predetermined and formerly agreed terms for the long-term maintenance and management of the skatepark, leading to its increasing urban decay. Converse project Noorderpark is an example of a poorly maintained and conceived urban project. Additionally, Converse uses brand urbanism as a vehicle to promote its own products and enhance its brand image, rather than adjusting to the local needs and preferences of the local community.

The Converse project's analysis provides a comprehensive picture of how some brands are using social engagement activities for their own marketing purposes. While some brands use their own products and services to enhance and improve cities and towns, others focus on solutions independent of their own products, services, and core competencies. Although they take different approaches, they all aim to improve infrastructures and urban conditions

for personal agendas. In some cases, brands support urban areas and communities with the intent to strongly advertise and promote their own products and services, or even change their public image, as in the case of Converse. Others focus less on changing public opinion on their brand but strive for continued development and support to maintain an image of accountability and reliability like Domino's.

La Dolce was realized in the deprived district of Valle de Chalco in México City in 2018. This project was a collaboration between the non-profit organization love.fútbol, the architecture firm All Architectura and the English Premier League Team Manchester City FC as its sponsor. Although this particular project was only realized in one location, love.fútbol has around 48 projects worldwide supporting citizens to “build, activate, and sustain their own recreational spaces.” (love.fútbol, 2021). *La Dolce* is a community center and open pavilion house with separate spaces for yoga, dancing, chess and boxing, a children recreational area and mixed-use football court.

A recognizable element is its blue color, a reference to the sponsor's branding. This collaborative project as all other love.fútbol projects, aims to reclaim “abandoned sports area”, integrating “the community into the design and building process (through volunteers)” and finally erecting “a landmark for the community.” (*“La Doce” Sports Ground and Pavilion in Valle de Chalco* / IAKS Worldwide, 2019). One relevant characteristic of the love.fútbol projects is the successful civic integration and inclusion such as the Mexican civil association Natlik. As IAKS, a leading global non-profit organization states, this project “is a coordinated effort and an alliance of designers, architects, artists, civil organisations and neighbours, who in a blend of ideas and social work contribute to a project that intercedes and tries to build community in a fractured social fabric.” (*“La Doce” Sports Ground and Pavilion in Valle de Chalco* / IAKS Worldwide, 2019). A distinctive feature of this brand urbanism practice is its design that enables the seepage of rainwater and thus replenishes the nearby historic Laguna de Xico. The design also includes solar energy to power the lighting along the court. The comprehensive evaluation of this project leads to its classification as a *Sport and Health* project type as well as *Urban Revitalization* project.

4.2.3. Urban Revitalization projects

A prime example is the *Let's Colour Project* initiated in 2011 by the Belgian brand AzkoNobel Paints. This global initiative was first launched in 2009 and continues to this day. In recent years, there has been a growing trend of “physical and social regeneration of urban spaces through participative creative and artistic initiatives.” (Boeri, 2017). This trend is exemplified

by AkzoNobel, which seeks to transform communities and underused urban locations by painting walls and facades together with colorful painting that they produce. Since its launch, the company has realized 2.200 community projects in 45 different countries together with around 11.000 volunteers (*Let's Colour / AkzoNobel*, 2021). The company donated 1.3 million liters of paint, especially to vulnerable communities in deprived or rundown areas. A meaningful powerful case of such an approach is the 2011 *Coleurs Carolo* project in the Belgian city Charleroi, labelled as the “ugliest city in the world” (*An Urban Safari in the Ugliest City in the World*, 2020). In this project “color was viewed as an opportunity to trigger a transformation and regeneration process aimed at affirming the need to build and enhance new forms of identity in the light of a strongly industrial past.” (Boeri, 2017, p. 646). The results of this global brand urbanism project demonstrate, “how in these interventions the color is intended as the product, the visual result, of a collective creative process that, actually, is the most important instrument of legitimacy of the interventions themselves and the true promoter of a social and cultural renewal.” (Boeri, 2017, p. 643). *Let's Colour* can be thus classified as an *Urban Revitalization* type.

4.2.4. Urban Furniture projects

The People for Smarter Cities program was launched by the tech company IBM in collaboration with the advertising and PR firm Ogilvy & Mather France in 2013. Throughout Paris, a series of billboards have been designed as street furniture that people can sit on, protect from rain, or use as a ramp for their luggage. These urban solutions are increasingly picked up by brands to tackle urban issues that city dwellers face. This joint effort aims to “stimulate people to think smarter about their urban environment” by implementing “useful elements for urban living” (De Boer, 2013). This project is an example of how brands focus on creative and functional outdoor solutions to improve comfort and practicality in everyday life with very little resources and is thus classified as an *Urban Furniture* type.

4.2.5. Urban Housing projects

One example of this type of project is the *Other Side Project*, which differs from the previous example in its target group identification. Whereas the earlier project intends to appeal to a wide target market, this project merely targets one particular social class, often located in deprived urban areas with poor infrastructure facilities and connectivity. *Other Side Project* was initiated and funded by the Retail Business HomePro and the Asian advertising agency BBDO Bangkok in 2013. This project includes a series of urban billboards that double as functional surfaces on Bangkok's streets in Thailand. The advertising signs were redesigned

and outfitted by HomePro with wallpaper and furnishings such as shelves, hangers, and lights for homeless people to use as shelter. “Rather than to the building macro scale, such actions can be oriented to those urban elements and signs, such as the urban furniture, that are more available to be read in a dynamic and widespread way, aimed at supporting the successive and multiple needs of the urban space.” (Boeri, 2017, p. 649). Although a temporary solution can offer opportunities for a more fundamental rethinking of urban issues, the questions remain about how effective these solutions are, as they fail to provide long-term liability and protection for residents in need. This practice is also an example of a Commercial Urban Advertisement type, which includes projects that place outdoor advertisement to influence and shape public spaces in a very direct way by using the city as a playground.

4.2.6. Urban Mobility projects

The case of *De Lijn Night Buses* showcases a brands’ effort and commitment to support a city by offering a service to the city independent from its own brand product. The Belgian brewery De Koninck initiated this project together with the municipality of the Belgian city Ghent and the public transportation company De Lijn in 2012. For cost reasons, the night buses between Ghent and Antwerp could not continue to operate. The costs were covered by the municipality and the brewery. In return, De Koninck branded the buses with outdoor advertising. This project is an example of how a brand supports the social good in the city by funding public transport and carrying out company-initiated marketing activities such as bus advertising campaigns.

4.2.7. Urban Safety projects

One example that specifically addresses local gender equality problems is the company *Halonix Safer City Project (Women Safety)* as part of *The Right Light Campaign* realized in New Delhi in 2014. This initiative is a joint collaboration between the biggest Indian lighting solutions company Halonix, the advertising agency Cheil Worldwide and the city of New Delhi. With many Indian cities facing an increase in crime and violence against women Halonix initiated this project by installing illuminated billboards in dark and unlit streets (Gutzmer, 2017). Particularly poorly lit and dark streets pose a danger to girls and women at night. The Thomas Reuters Foundation ranked India “as the most dangerous country in the world for women due to the high risk of sexual violence and being forced into slave labour” (Goldsmith & Beresford, 2018). To identify these dangerous places in the city, citizens could report dark and dangerous streets that would make them feel unsafe on *The Safer City Project* Facebook page. The demand from citizens to implement this project in other cities, its success and positive feedback encouraged Halonix to expand the project in seven more Indian cities

(HALONIX SAFER CITY PROJECT, 2020). This campaign shed light on the national issue regarding women's safety in public spaces (Gutzmer, 2017) and can thus be classified as an *Urban Safety* type. With this brand urbanism project, "the safety of women's body becomes the direct expression of the brands' social relevance." (Gutzmer, 2017, p. 70). *Halonix Safer City Project* is an example of how brand, social message, and real urban effect merge into one (Gutzmer, 2017). However, it remains unclear and thus worth to further investigate to what extent such powerful and effective campaigns can be implemented in cities as a long-term strategy and not as a marketing-driven, short-term project.

4.2.8. Natural Resource Conservation and Environmental Sustainability projects

The following example was initiated as part of a broader goal within the official corporate social responsibility program by the global soft drinks and snack brand PepsiCo, namely, *Positive Water Balance Project*. The brand seeks to strive for positive water balance by making "its plants in India replenish more water than consumed by 2015" (*PepsiCo Intensifies Positive Water Balance Effort at Plants - The Economic Times*, 2011). The multinational corporation claimed in 2010 that it had consumed 5.8 billion liters of water by its manufacturing facilities and thus seeks to become water positive. One example of this broader replenishment initiative is a deal between PepsiCo, Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI), signed in 2013 and funded PepsiCo. It is located in Abu Kataf valley, Amman, Jordan. By applying rainwater harvesting artificial recharge systems, PepsiCo aims at improving the access to water resources for locals and to increase the production of crops (*Replenishing Water*, 2017). Not only PepsiCo but also Coca-Cola "have often been accused of over-exploitation of water in India." (Vijayaraghavan, 2012). The aim was thus to replenish more than 10.1 billion liters of water. Annie Kishen, the India Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at PepsiCo argued that the "next goal is to achieve positive water balance around our plants located in water stressed geographies. We have made good progress towards this goal, and in 2010 we also achieved location specific positive water balance at three plant neighbourhoods (Aurangabad, Neelamangala and Panipat) through interventions such as check dams and ponds that have been created to improve water availability."

4.3. Discussion on the typology

As the research on the 18 practices has clearly shown, a partnership between a brand/corporation and a city can be a valuable instrument for three main reasons. Firstly, to strengthen and further develop the relationship between the public and private sector. Between cities and, in particular, those brands that are locally based, i.e. either known to

customers in the respective area or locally established. By fostering new and sustainable alliances with local authorities, cities can gain new and valuable insights into the needs and interests of the community itself. This allows cities to gain a broader understanding of the local context.

Secondly, to step up the participation by younger, eager generations in the development of urban projects that enable a closer cooperation in this area between innovative entrepreneurs and local, regional, and national institutions. Additionally, as the projects' research has shown, these synergies are often perceived by brands as an opportunity and tool for community engagement and integration. It can be assumed that this partnership model can encourage brands to take an active part in transforming urban areas, enhancing the city fabric, or thrive for a better brand reputation which they would not be able to fully achieve without the appropriate support by the local administration. Nevertheless, brands must prove that they are adding a meaningful quality to the local community that is not necessarily in their area of expertise.

Many of the brands identified have no particular experiences with urban development projects, as brands have only recently begun to recognize the urgency to expend their business into creating and shaping urban spaces. Their growing interest in causing positive change in cities is primarily to increase local presence and awareness or demonstrate social engagement. Regardless of the intrinsic motivations of brands, this trend can be seen as a chance for corporations "to progress on both economic and social frontiers." (Mahmood & Bashir, 2020, p. 2).

As the findings have shown, the stakeholders involved in brand urbanism are often confronted with several challenges and difficulties along the planning and construction phases. In some cases, the projects themselves cause problems due to inadequate communication and ineffective risk management, lack of accountability, or lack of shared goals. Specific issues identified include long-term maintenance and the setup of the project. In addition, some of the projects lack funding, long-term planning, and effective phased implementation.

Depending on the social, cultural, economic, and political context in which the projects occur different relations and synergies between brands, cities but also citizens were identified. Seen in the following examples, the various forms of relations that occur feature different principles, values, competencies, and responsibilities. In the long run, it can be expected that

the relationship between the stakeholders of an existing brand urbanism project or future project is likely to change over time. This is because relationship is shaped by external and internal factors that impact the overall dynamic. Today, our societies are increasingly characterized by fast-changing dynamics. As a result, brand urbanism projects will be even more challenged to adapt methods and approaches that allow for flexibility and robustness. Furthermore, the partnership is highly dependent on local conditions, the governance system, and the structure of the respective city or town in which policy settings are embedded.

Partnerships are essentially built on formal agreements reached between a private and public entity. Furthermore, as the typology results show, so-called well-executed and long-term brand urbanism partnerships are based on collaborative actions and efforts to bring about sustainable change in urban areas, as the example of *La Dolce* project in México City. This can be achieved in particular through long-term planning strategies, mutual trust, and goals as well as joint developments. In particular, successful partnerships in this context are those who show a strong commitment from each partner and have a strong bottom-up structure. This approach involves the engagement of local stakeholders and addresses problems of local interest. Bottom-up partnerships are locally-driven and therefore often coordinated from the local municipality or region itself, rather than policy driven (Koontz & Newig, 2014). These brand urbanism practices, with a coordinated effort to include not only design firms and (local) artists, but also provide civic participation and actively engage with civil society organizations, can be characterized as bottom-up. The partnership model of brand urbanism as defined by PopUpCity can thus be extended to another key stakeholder, civil society. As the findings demonstrate, there are a few brand urbanism practices which can be classified as revitalization projects.

While some help improve urban space through minimal surface actions such as painting facades, other revitalization projects build community and recreational spaces in disadvantaged and neglected neighborhoods, that are intended to have a lasting impact on communities. Although a few have proven sufficient to meet the needs of urban revitalization efforts, so far, the typology shows that the brands involved in these particular projects are exclusively multinational corporations engaged in international trade. Although multinational sportswear companies such as Nike and Adidas intend to provide infrastructure to promote sports and enhance social interaction in specific neighborhoods, they fail to investigate and provide crucial elements in public sport spaces, to improve the safety, equality, and participation of all genders. This argument raises the question, what alternative motives

multinational brands have in brand urbanism besides improving urban spaces or revitalizing particular neighborhoods.

Do their corporate incentives focus mainly on marketing their own products and services rather than providing more extensive solutions for a demographic beyond their own target consumers? This question stresses the need for a comprehensive examination what factors are driving the brands' decisions to invest in urban projects, and, moreover, what social, environmental, and economical criteria multinational firms should consider when planning and implementing brand urbanism project in conjunction with local authorities. The above conclusion highlights the importance for these partnerships to define early on crucial social and spatial determinants of "properly designed and physically activating public spaces" which should include "the diverse needs of different social groups, ensuring their participation in the design and construction process, aesthetic and interesting design, proximity to the place of residence, as well as accessibility to all age groups and the disabled." (Kostrzewska, 2017, p. 8).

In summary, this typology has both a retrospective and prospective function. On the one hand, the typology can be used to compare and learn from other practices not analyzed in this study. On the other hand, it can help expand the scarce existing literature on brand urbanism and can give incentives for further research to substantiate the results of this typology. As such, this typology can serve as a first step for future research to study the impact of brand urbanism on urban areas, its opportunities, and limitations. It is my hope that this typology will encourage scholars and practitioners to further develop the typology in terms of how the concept of brand urbanism can be effectively used and applied to urban transformation and revitalization with a particular focus on gender equality and civic engagement.

5. Findings and analysis of the workshops

This following chapter presents the findings of the two scenario workshops, carried out on May 26th and May 31st, as well as the findings of the qualitative interviews conducted between June and August 2021. The two scenario workshops were held under the overall topic '*Urban circular re-use: Transforming empty retail stores into spaces with the new activities. Can brand urbanism help to revitalize our high streets?*' The workshops had two objectives. The first objective was to investigate brand urbanism through the lenses of international thought leaders in their respective fields. The second aim was to envision new concepts for the use of vacant or underutilized spaces. Within their role groups, participants reflected, discussed, and

worked on different tasks during the workshops. However, due to time constraints in the second workshop, two tasks could not be processed, including the first and the last. Therefore, this chapter presents the first and last task of the first workshop separately and outlines the remaining tasks by summarizing and combining the results of both workshops.

5.1. Main criteria for successful brand urbanism projects

In the first task, the five participants were asked to discuss and identify the key criteria for successful brand urbanization projects. The results of the first task are shown in the figure below 7. In order to analyze all the responses, I clustered them under seven terms. These were determined as follows: *(social) values, timeline, partnership, locality, environment, social encounters, and scalability*.

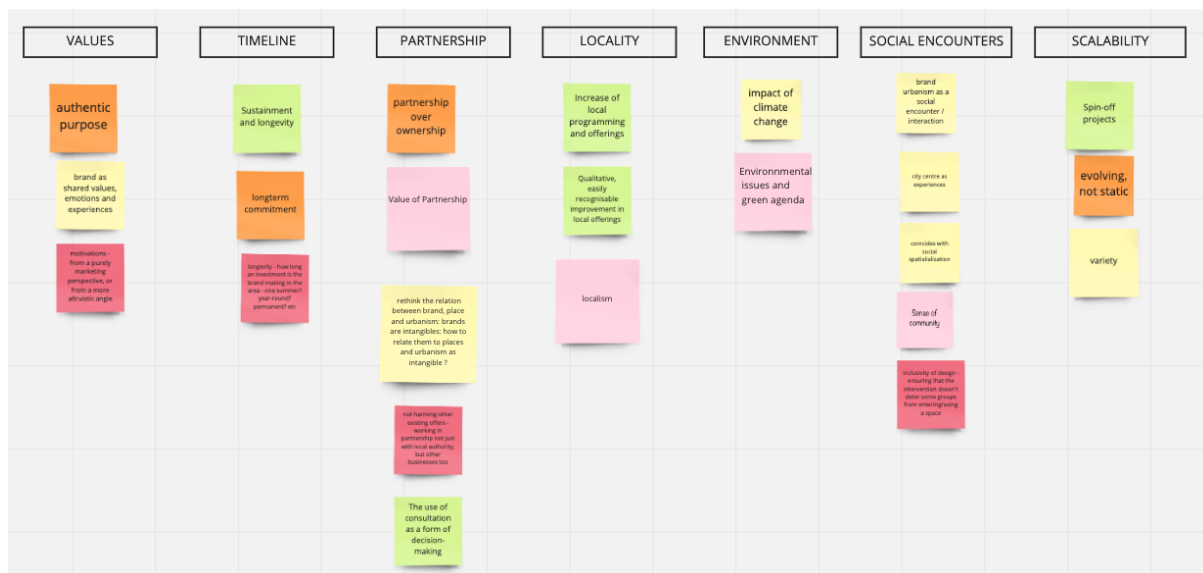


Figure 7. Criteria for successful brand urbanism

Three of the participants mentioned characteristics that I associated with *(social) values*. According to Participant 1, successful brand urbanism practices must have a clear and authentic purpose, which should be based on the core idea of "partnership over ownership." Thus, Participant 1 highlights the importance that brands should not impose projects on cities, but rather deciding and partnering with local communities in the realization of urban projects, thus pursuing values such as integrity, respect, and accountability. According to Participant 1, marketing is becoming increasingly purpose-driven and purpose labeled, which can be related to the concern expressed by Participant 3 that the initial motivation of brands is the key to long-term success. The question arises whether the motivation of brands is purely marketing

and brand oriented or more altruistic because they truly want to contribute to the common good. In addition, Participant 5 emphasized that brands should be based on shared values, emotions, and experiences.

Three of the participants pointed out that *time* is a key to the success of brand urbanism. In particular, long-term commitment and investment play an essential role in sustaining quality. Projects that aim to deliver sustainable, long-term benefits are more likely to succeed than so-called "feel-good" campaigns that are short-lived.

The third criterion cited by all participants was *partnership*, which underscores the importance of the relationship between all stakeholders involved. According to Participant 3, in order to successfully use brand urbanism to revitalize high streets, partnerships with local businesses and not only local authorities is relevant to prevent existing shops from disappearing. In addition, partnerships can be used for consultation as a form of participatory decision-making processes.

Another important criterion is *localism*, which can be understood as a political idea, policy and planning approach that aims to reflect and take into account the needs and preferences of local communities. The participant emphasized the importance of brands being aligned with public value. Brands have a high level of responsibility in these areas and often fail to take advantage of opportunities to contribute to the public good. Participants also cited local programming as key to success, which means adapting to the local context in strategic spatial planning.

In addition, the criterion *environment* could be identified. Participants 4 and 5 emphasized the importance of environmental aspects, including protective measures and management, through the application of a green agenda to drive the transition to a sustainable economy. The green agenda process, as they outlined, is based on a balanced triangular relationship between society, economy and nature.

The seventh criterion for the success of brand urbanism was mentioned by three participants: *social encounters*. Other topics discussed at length included the importance of ensuring a sense of community and creating policies and approaches that serve the entire local community. According to the participants, this can be achieved through inclusive design that aims to appeal to a diverse group in terms of skills, culture, gender, age, and nationality,

and to provide all groups with equal access to public space. In addition, the city center should serve as a space of lived experience where practices of brand urbanism facilitate social encounters and interactions. Thus, brand urbanism should enable the creation of public spaces that allow social relationships and social practices to emerge regardless of race, age, gender.

Finally, *scalability*, also mentioned as a criterion, indicating that successful brand urbanism depends on its project diversity, constant change, and continuous development. Brand urbanism should not be static but should constantly evolve and contribute to a long-term spin-off effect by positively impacting other communities and urban areas.

5.2. SWOT analysis in regard to the transformation of empty retail spaces

The approach adopted is characterized by a SWOT analysis, a strategic planning tool used to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a project or a company. The strengths and weaknesses relate to the internal environment, while the threats and opportunities relate to the external environment (Campisi et al., 2018). SWOT analysis can also serve as a "useful tool for evaluating continuous change" (Zhang et al., 2018, p. 4). To generate possible creative strategies when applying SWOTs, the following questions can be raised: "How can we use and exploit every strength? How can we improve every weakness? How can we exploit and benefit from every opportunity? How can we reduce each of the threats?" (Campisi et al., 2018, p. 3). The following analysis involved local authorities, researchers and practitioners. It provides not only a global and interdisciplinary view of brand urbanism, but also a comprehensive perspective on the actions that need to be taken to achieve the goals set in the previous task.

As mentioned above, all the SWOT factors gathered in both workshops were combined and finally evaluated. As a result, the below mentioned outcome was obtained. The opportunities, threats, strengths, and weaknesses are discussed in detail to deepen the understanding of brand urbanism and its impact on cities.

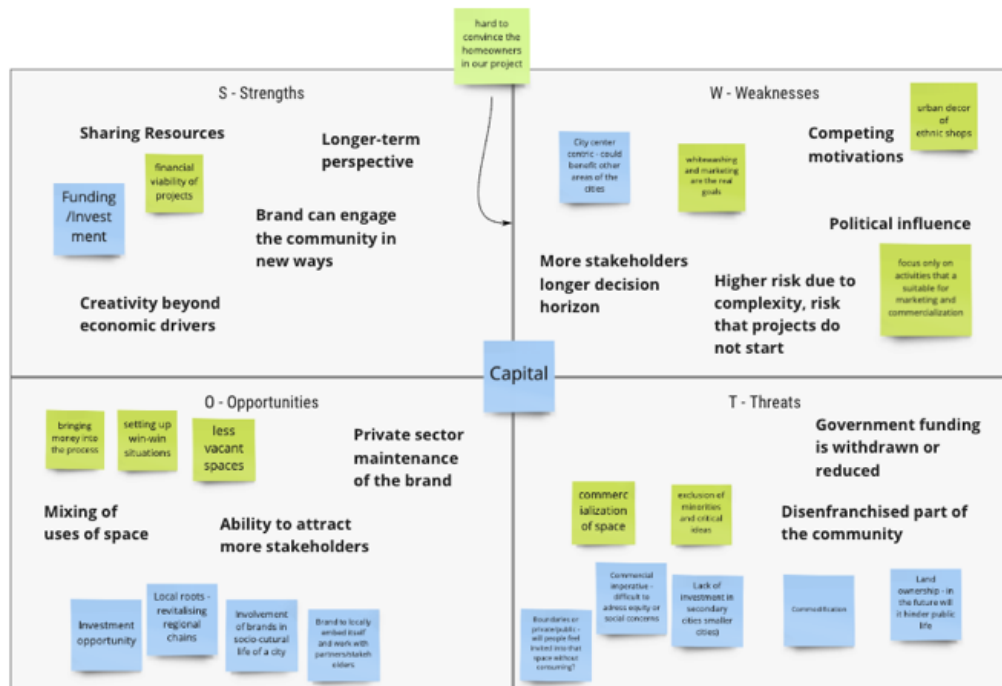


Figure 8. SWOT analysis of scenario workshop I

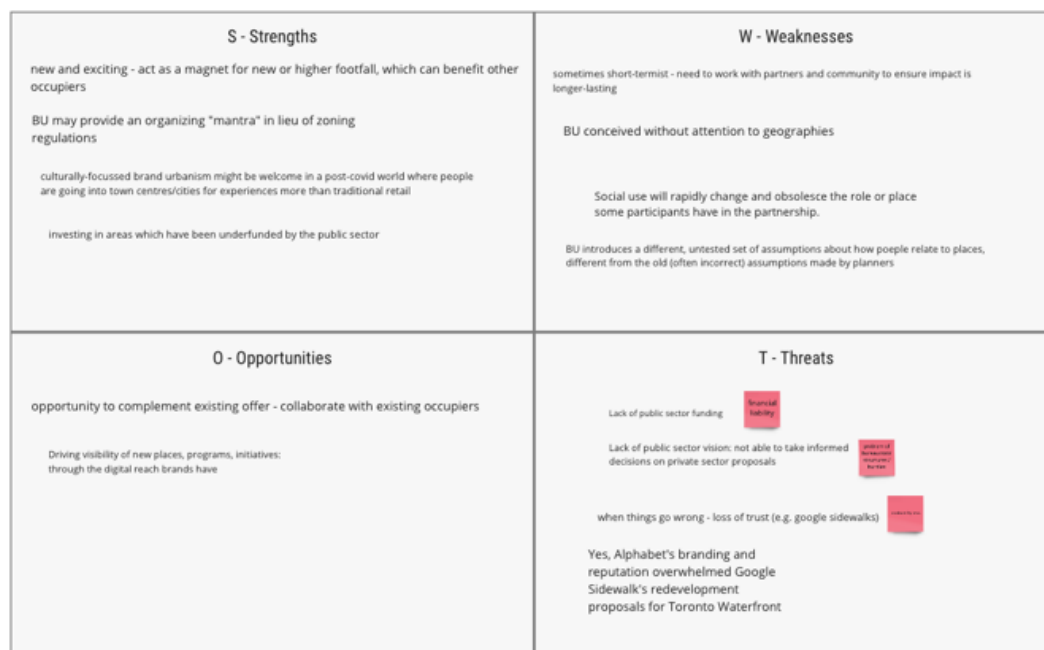


Figure 9. SWOT analysis of scenario workshop II

5.2.1. Strengths

As part of this analysis, one of the strengths identified was that brand urbanism can act as a magnet for new or increased foot traffic to main streets in the context of main street revitalization, which in turn can benefit other store owners. Thus, brand urbanism can be seen as a new and exciting practice that can generate a higher intensity of pedestrian activity on high streets, namely foot traffic, which can increase social interactions and activities and finally strengthen urban vitality. Furthermore, brand urbanism can serve as an alternative planning tool and solution to standard building and zoning regulations. More so, applying brand urbanism projects with a particular focus on art and culture might stimulate and support retailers in creating new storefront concepts, specifically in view of the Covid-19 pandemic that has left deep scars on high streets. Innovations in retail are closely linked to changes in design and aesthetics, raising questions about the nature of activities and the level of customer engagement in a store. Consumers are increasingly looking for experience-driven commerce in town and city centers rather than traditional approaches to retailing. In addition, brand urbanism projects can enhance neglected areas by investing in public spaces that are not adequately funded by the public sector. The revitalization of inner-city districts could also benefit other areas in the city and thus have strong, multiplier effect beyond the respective central area. More so, brand urbanism can provide a long-term perspective for urban areas. One of the strengths of these partnerships also lies in the concept of resource sharing, which can include knowledge, experts, materials, and funding. Sharing resources in partnerships can also distribute risks and benefits fairly. In addition, brand urbanism practices should not be primarily economically motivated, but rather encourage creativity and stimulate the exchange of ideas, which can be an empowering characteristic. Brand urbanism can also be an opportunity for brands to engage with the local community in new ways. Finally, financial viability was identified as a key factor in the long-term success and realization of the idea more broadly.

5.2.2. Weaknesses

One of the identified weaknesses of brand urbanism can be that brands ignore the complexity and individual circumstances of the local context. At this point, a lack of sensitivity and interest in the local context can lead to problems for local communities because the specific environment is not sufficiently considered. Using brand urbanism to transform empty retail spaces requires brands to fully engage with the local neighborhood, which allows a better understanding of the needs of the particular high street. Another problem is short-term action

plans, where immediacy is a key element of crisis thinking and short-term decision-making. This approach often fails to comprehensively address urban problems, which should be one of the central goals of the brands. In order to ensure a long-term impact on local communities and cities, brands need to work closely with partners and members of civil society. Despite the weaknesses mentioned earlier, brand urbanism also poses some risks due to its complex multi-level partnership, which can lead to significant delays in execution. In addition, brand urbanization projects have a longer decision-making horizon due to the large number of stakeholders and can complicate certain decision-making and implementation processes. Consequently, the co-decision process often hinders the efficiency and timely completion of the project. One aspect relates to the conflicting factors that shape a partnership and its success. For example, weakness can occur when brands do not know how to prevent motivational dilemmas, which can be perceived as a threat to other motivations. A motivation that competes with others can lead to internal conflict and harm the partnership and success of the brand urbanism practice. Another weakness mentioned is that brands are increasingly taking positions on political issues, including public statements on political and social developments. As they engage in political issues, they may also influence policy decisions and processes at the local, regional, or global level. The brands' political involvement is not always in favor of the good of citizens but is often linked to economic power and personal interests which raises the question of what the long-term effects of political campaigns are in regard to brand urbanism. Another point that was brought up is that brand urbanism should not merely serve as "urban decor" for aesthetic reasons but should actively promote store diversity and urban vitality. Also, brand urbanism should not only focus on activities that are suitable for marketing and commercialization purposes.

5.2.3. Opportunities

Brand urbanism can provide opportunities for existing, local high street retailers by working together to complement existing offerings through collaborative efforts. Local shopkeepers are involved in decision-making processes and help improve existing offerings, which can strengthen communities and cultural identity. In addition, successful brand urbanism practices can engage more stakeholders in the process mobilizing more practitioners to actively address the problem of increasing store closures and vacancies. In addition, creative and workable approaches and concepts to empty premises can decrease the vacancy rate on high streets and thus improve urban vitality. Furthermore, brand urbanism can be a long-term and attractive investment opportunity for private and institutional investors, as well as retail customers, to support the revitalization of high streets. It can also be a tailored investment

opportunity for investors with a focus on retail and sustainability. In this particular context, brand urbanism can support cities in bringing funds into the revitalization process, which depends on limited bureaucratic capacity and on limited public investment. By actively engaging brands in the revitalization process, relevant insights and experiences can be gained that can help in the search for mixed-use, flexible, and adaptable retail concepts. In addition, the involvement of brands in the socio-cultural life of a city can enable brands to enhance their reputation and create brand awareness among consumers. Brand urbanism can therefore not only revive and renew old or declining brands, but also seek to revitalize urban areas. Regional chains or stores facing extinction can also benefit from these partnerships by integrating in innovative ways. In addition, brand urbanism can give brands the opportunity to anchor themselves locally by working with local partners such as local authorities or other private companies. Brands that have not been successfully integrated into the local environment can thus explore new ways to better fit into the local culture and market. Brand urbanism can help brands develop strong local connections and strengthen a sense of ownership of a community area. Brand urbanism can create a win-win situation for all stakeholders involved.

5.2.4. Threats

There are many opportunities, but for each of these opportunities there is also a major challenge. One of the identified threats that brand urbanism projects may face is limited public sector funding. When government funding is cut or reduced, insufficient funds can impede or hinder the development of such projects. Secondary or smaller cities in particular often fail to invest because they do not receive sufficient attention or are not economically relevant. Without solid funding mechanisms, secondary cities often struggle with housing and infrastructure issues, resulting in fewer businesses attracted to them and fewer vibrant communities. Brand urbanism should therefore focus not only on economically thriving cities, but also on cities that need investment to improve services and infrastructure. In addition, privately led urban interventions can face a lack of vision from the public sector. This is due to the public sector's inability to make informed decisions on private sector proposals when things go wrong, and quick solutions are needed. When cities do not take a forward-looking approach, they hinder the successful functioning of brand urbanization projects. Another issue that has been raised is the risk of commercialization of urban space through brand urbanism and sponsorship programs that aim to finance and own relevant urban infrastructures and services. The direct involvement of brands can threaten public land through the commodification and privatization of public space. This raises questions about land ownership and how to prevent privately owned places from harming public life. One threat could be the

increasing commercialization of space through branding and advertising initiatives that can reshape the built environment and extend the commodity world into everyday life. Brands that seek to define public space simply as a marketing opportunity may threaten local communities. One related problem is that these projects pursue a strategic priority and commercial imperative to remain competitive, thus disregarding social equity and other social concerns. In addition, revitalization initiatives through brand urbanism raise questions about whether citizens feel equally invited to use these places, as the brand's reputation, image, or campaign may have an exclusionary or inclusionary character that targets only a particular socioeconomic group, thus excluding minorities or less privileged groups. It is also questionable whether a newly renovated or revitalized space would invite residents to use it freely without consumption. In addition, questions were raised about whether brand urbanism projects allow critical ideas to be expressed and included in the decision-making process. The extent to which cities are able to understand the social values and needs of their respective communities, since urban culture is changing so rapidly, is debated. Related to this issue is the problem of cities making assumptions about the future without fully involving local citizens. The basic idea of a partnership, then, is to talk to local residents to understand current local needs and aspirations for future generations.

5.3. Factors for a closer and more sustainable collaboration

The third task that the participants of both workshops had to solve was: *What are the major factors that will lead to a closer and more sustainable collaboration between cities and brands within the next few years?* To analyze the results, I conducted a stakeholder analysis, “a process of systematically gathering and analyzing qualitative information to determine whose interests should be taken into account when developing and/or implementing a policy or program.” (Schmeer, 1999, p. 4). In identifying the factors that lead to a closer and more sustainable partnership, three key stakeholders and their respective areas of interest and responsibility were identified. As the findings show, the three key stakeholders in brand urbanism are: (1) the public sector and government (cities), (2) the private sector (brands and companies) and (3) civil society (local residents and civic organizations). In addition, relevant areas of responsibility were identified, divided, and assigned to the respective key stakeholders. The findings clearly show that interaction between the different areas of responsibility of the respective stakeholders is necessary to ensure a sustainable partnership.

The main areas of responsibility of the **public sector** are defined as follows: 1) *policy framework*, 2) *functions* and 3) *professional development and training*.

The first item highlights the policy framework within which local authorities present their visions, provide services to their local communities, and ensure long term land use planning in the municipality. The first area highlights the importance of adopting a legal framework and system by local governments to ensure quality of life for local residents and provide services at the local level. In total, six different tasks were identified. First, local authorities need to pursue a clear, comprehensible political and policy framework in order to guarantee that the government is a trusted partner. Second, must be a political decision and thus recognized as an effective and necessary tool to advance the idea of brand urbanism. Third, local authorities need to adjust new regulations to allow sponsors such as brands to be involved. Fourth, the public sector needs to identify and approve the right brands and products that fit best the respective city and its local community. As part of an integrated approach, cities should select those partners that work to meet specific local needs. Fifth, local authorities and cities must ensure that branding takes place outside of the most popular public spaces. Local governments must establish legally binding agreements between landlords and tenants to ensure flexible leases, such as pop-up concepts that allow for flexible, short-term, and innovative uses of retail space to activate vacant spaces.

The second point highlights the functions of local authorities, which are mainly based on providing and maintaining vital services. To achieve this, participants stressed that the city must take a position as a mediator between different interests, thus bridging the gap between residents and the government. In addition, it is critical that there be different units and teams within local government for specific issues.

The third point relates to the importance of professional training and development programs aimed at helping mayors, councils, officials and elected representatives strengthen local governance, improve service delivery and build positive, collaborative relationships with brands. Participants stress the importance of capacity building and training offered to local governments to support their staff, such as marketing training and social media training. Finally, local governments should allow and incentivize PR firms to expand their scope to include planning departments, as their expertise can be valuable for cities to incorporate into brand urbanism implementation processes, such as managing media requests and campaigns, and helping to increase awareness and positive engagement on social media.

The main areas of responsibility of the **private sector (brands)** are defined as follows:

1) engagement with the community and 2) partnership.

The first point highlights the relevance for brands to actively engage with the local community and the local context, from a supply driven to demand driven approach. This can help brands to fully understand the local context, which varies widely by geographic and cultural background. In addition, it is critical that brands seek to bring significant benefits to citizens in their branding approaches. Finally, branding must connect at the local or neighborhood level, particularly in high street neighborhoods.

The second point refers to the value of partnership for brands as a key factor for sustainable and long-term partnerships in brand urbanism. Therefore, it is the responsibility of brands to take supportive actions and measures at local, regional and national levels to act in a socially and environmentally responsible way. Brands should not simply take a leading and dominating position that aims to monopolize public space, threatening to destroy cultural and natural assets. Therefore, brands must follow certain principles of inclusiveness, equality, and transparency when collaborating with other actors, as urban interventions by brands can interfere with public space and thus influence or even harm urban dynamics. Finally, brands must ensure that they build lasting relationships with multiple cities and agencies in a region by actively involving local, regional and national bodies.

Finally, civil society's main area of responsibility is based on the principle of public participation. This points to the importance of allowing community members to actively engage and be directly involved in the planning, decision-making, development, and implementation process. In particular, the findings underscore the critical role of local communities both on the ground and at the policy or governance level. In addition, civic organizations have a role to play in supporting residents' goals and improving communication between local governments and businesses by maintaining their position as bridge builders between the two. Finally, residents are often well entrenched in their neighborhoods, have strong ties to the local community, and identify strongly with their neighborhoods. In the context of reusing vacant space on main streets, this can be seen as an advantage for all stakeholders involved, as local residents are better able to convince local business owners to lease vacant space and thus counteract vacancy on main streets.

The evaluation of the stakeholder analysis showed that despite the differences in individual responsibilities, common actions, visions, and goals within this partnership model are a crucial element for closer and more sustainable collaboration. In total, six elements were identified and categorized in terms of common project management processes. The first critical step is to establish a clear, shared mission and transparent communication to avoid conflict and foster collaboration. In addition, brand urbanization projects should focus on inclusion and equity as common goals. In addition, the strategies used should take a clear approach to long-term impact and short-term success. Part of the vision is to implement so-called "high-value" urban projects through a qualitative assessment of community-based brand urbanization projects in light of the local context. Another aspect to be considered relevant in terms of successful project management is common interests in terms of the principle of co-creation and co-responsibility. In addition, the higher the level of connectedness, the stronger the commitment. Finally, all stakeholders involved should draw inspiration from projects in other cities.

Above and beyond this, the findings proved that *place* has to be viewed as an own entity in building a closer and more sustainable collaboration between all stakeholders involved. The participants underlined the importance of identifying areas in the city that would be suitable for applying brand urbanism such as high streets with lots of vacancies which are still central. The questions raised are whether "place" is a key link between big data and its economic applications and if brand is the link between retail products and consumer experience.

5.4. Envisioning future retail spaces and associated partners

As part of the underlying scenario approach, the final task of the workshop aims to identify specific uses for vacant retail spaces and associated partners that will contribute to a high quality of urban life by enriching the social fabric of the neighborhood. In this thesis, I present adaptive reuse as a catalyst for shopping street revitalization. As mentioned earlier, due to time constraints, this task was only carried out in the first workshop. The focus of this discussion was to present different ways in which vacant spaces can be reused or repurposed depending on the needs and priorities of the particular urban area and its social and economic context. Similar to the previous example, all the findings were clustered into different conversion types, highlighting similarities and differences in the use of retail space. Based on the participants' suggestions for concrete activities, I identified nine different conversion types

which will be presented below: (1) *office*, (2) *health and wellbeing*, (3) *education*, (4) *residential*, (5) *leisure*, (6) *culture*, (7) *mobility*, (8) *community*.

The first type of use refers to **office space**, which was mentioned three times, including the conversion into makerspaces, co-working spaces as well as offices for social enterprises, young entrepreneurs, and startups. This scenario would need to involve the following partners: local governments, property owners, flexible office operators, local business forums, and universities.

The second type of use refers to **health and wellbeing** and is mentioned only once. This type suggests health care spaces as public health services located in frequently used districts such as inner-city districts. By applying this type, the city can provide a more integrated care system aiming at improving people's health in urban areas.

The third conversion type is for **educational purpose** which was stated two times, as a learning space and as a library. The learning space could be either a micro-school or a start-up school, as small retail spaces are limited in space capacity. Associated partners would be local schools and property owners.

The fourth type of conversion refers to the construction of new buildings for private **residential purposes**, allowing downtown centers to expand their predominantly commercial uses by converting retail space into housing at reduced rents. This conversion could take the form of temporary or affordable housing, which would require detailed knowledge of building codes and laws. In this case, stakeholders such as local governments, property owners, and planners would be involved.

The fifth type of conversion relates to the **leisure** sector, e.g. conversion into event spaces. Evening and nighttime events, as well as sporting events, could attract visitors to downtowns during off-peak hours when high streets are less frequented. Key partners would be brand ambassadors, charities, and cultural institutions.

The sixth type of use refers to conversion to **cultural** uses such as museum pop-ups, artist galleries, craft and co-working spaces that promote creativity, fun and relaxation in downtown neighborhoods. These concepts could be realized through collaboration with nonprofit organizations, artists, local museums, and property owners.

The seventh type of conversion refers to in-store **mobility** uses such as bicycle parking which promotes bicycling in inner-city neighborhoods. Since many bicycles are stolen at night, these parking spaces would guarantee a safe space. Involved partners here are municipalities, property owners and bicycle companies. Associated partners herewith are local authorities, property owners and bicycle firms.

The last type of conversion refers to **community** spaces which were which were most frequently mentioned during the workshop. They can provide residents with safe, social spaces that should be equally accessible to all by targeting a diverse group, regardless of nationality, background, race, or age. Specific activities for community spaces can be developed in collaboration with new and previously unrepresented groups, such as newcomers, the elderly, youth, or immigrants. In this context, so-called 'white box' spaces, 'blank' spaces, 'nothing to lose' spaces and 'reactivating' space (meanwhile uses) were mentioned, highlighting the need for spaces of free expression, free practice of religion and thoughts in the city centers.

5.5. Discussion on the workshop

Based on the results of the workshop discussion, the basic requirements for determining the type of conversion are the physical constraints of the space, such as the internal and external fabric of a building and its location. Properties are classified into different use classes, which requires a more in-depth consideration of regional and national land use planning policies. As a result, not all conversion proposals can be accepted and therefore require a comprehensive and in-depth evaluation to examine whether each use type would result in the long-term revitalization of high streets. Part of the in-depth evaluation is to examine the factors influencing conversion between different use classes compared to new construction to better understand their risks and opportunities. When applying brand urbanism in this revitalization context, it is important not to apply a one-size-fits-all solution to vacant retail space. Rather, it is important for brands to understand the necessary requirements for revitalization from the perspective of governments or local agencies, as these are often more insightful and relevant to city and community conditions and requirements. As suggested in the workshop, an interesting approach to identifying specific activities in vacant spaces could be a "whole building lifecycle assessment," where stakeholders can learn why recycling or revitalizing existing retail facilities is in the best interest of the environment and society.

However, participants also expressed concerns about existing systems in commercial spaces, such as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, that would need to be either maintained, repaired, or replaced when retail space is converted. In addition, conversion between different use classes would require changes in insurance policies and property management practices. On the other hand, it was also emphasized that the advantage of converting inner-city center conversions is that they appeal to a broad segment of the population due to their central location and easy access to public transportation. Another advantage cited was that conversion could bring new store owners representing different ethnic and socioeconomic groups to increase the diversity of stores, as well as attract new customers and residents to the city center. In addition, such conversions can also encourage new cooperative forms of organization through an international competition of ideas that allows for the inclusion of different planning and design approaches, thus strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration in brand urbanism.

6. Other voices: complementing the workshops with qualitative interviews

The main interest of this thesis is to decipher and unlock the potential of brand urbanism in the revitalization of inner-city districts. Through the qualitative interviews, I was able to further substantiate the questions raised and discussed in the workshops. All transcribed interviews can be found in the Annex. However, in this following section, I am referring also to my notes taking during my interview with interviewee 6 as he did not give me formal consent to record. As outlined earlier, the findings of all interviews were divided into four main themes which will be further examined more closely.

6.1. Retail decline in inner city districts

René Vade (Interviewee 5) is Global Sector Head of Consumer & Retail at KPMG International, with around 20,000 employees in the sector working in more than 100 countries. According to Vade, the decline in high street retail over the last twenty years is due to the following three main factors, which are consistent with those identified in Chapter 3. First, to the trend of smaller stores moving out of the center to the outskirts, where they are being taken over by larger stores. Second, due to the rise of e-commerce and the emergence of click-and-collect services offered by retailers for online orders. This trend has been accelerated by the current pandemic. Third, due to changing consumer behavior, moving from weekly purchases

to more impulse purchases, which has ultimately also changed store formats. The change for consumers to buy daily on their means has also impacted how people value local proximity. Fourth, a key trend that the sector has faced within the last years is the steadily increase of experience shopping. Vader emphasizes on the importance of the local context which has an impact on the particular retail landscape. Different elements have to be considered when talking about retail decline depending on grocery or clothing stores. Interviewee 5 raised questions such as: *“Is brand urbanism rather commercially driven or planned driven. What is the role of the local government and who are the key stakeholders involved?”* According to Carlo Ratti (interviewee 1, 2021), director of the MIT Senseable City Lab states that small retailers on high streets were specifically impacted by large shopping malls and more recently by the rise of online retailing. These factors coincide with the highlighted four major factors elaborated in Chapter 3.

6.2. Problem of vacancies of retail premises on high streets

As the literature on vacancy on vacancy has shown, empty stores are affecting cities street diversity, vitality and viability (Baker & Wood, 2010). In the recent article published on the World Economic Forum in March 2021, Carlo Ratti and Manfredi shed light on the “ground floor problem” that poses critical challenges for local economic and social as well as cultural life. In this article, Ratti highlights the “historic role of the lower floors as an environment for meeting and civic dialogue. His point of view is reflected in the interview I conducted with him. He argues “if retail shops continue the trend to move away from the high streets, the social and cultural ramifications would be significant.” (Interviewee 1). In our interview, he refers again to the historic meaning: “Historically, streets and squares are where urban life unfolds. Sufficient commercial activities on the street level contribute to the vibrancy of our society. Cities such as Tokyo, Paris and Boston all bear their unique characteristics owing to their local retailers.” Interviewee 1 clearly emphasizes on the importance of high street vitality and highlights that a circular re-use approach can positively influence inner-city districts: „Some of the benefits and risks of transforming empty retail spaces include maintaining the dynamism of the city, and the potential exploitation for commercial ends. I will add that these spaces are ideal venues for experimentation. Since some of them might not be permanently occupied, there is a higher flexibility in testing different urban concepts and gauging the citizens’ reaction.”

6.3. Brand urbanism as a newly emerged spatial practice

The interview with Jeroen Beekmans (interviewee 3), co-founder of the Dutch agency PUC provides valuable data on brand urbanism. This agency specialized on urban transformation first coined this term in 2014. Based on the interview, brand is the “collaboration between the local government and the brands in which a spatial project is becoming realized that is partly financed or initiated by that brand.” (interviewee 3, 2021). He argues based on their extensive research on this phenomenon that “sometimes the initiative comes from the brand, sometimes it comes from the city itself and different situations and context in which these projects come about, maybe in a minute to give you some examples. But what we found was the absolute most important criteria for brand urbanism is that there has to be a shared set of values between what the city wants, the ambitions of the city and the ambitions of a brand. And I think this is the very most important criterion for a project to succeed or not.” In addition, he explains that few brand, especially their marketing managers which PUC once interviewed are looking for social engagement as a “sort of a non-financial thing.” However, this engagement should not only come from brands’ side but requires also “a certain engagement from the local government.” Interviewee 3 underlines the “common energy” as a shared values which is key to the project’s success. A very crucial point that he raised during the interview were the “big boundaries for thresholds” (interviewee 3, 2021). Therewith he refers to the issue of responsibility, long-term maintenance and legal agreement. One of the failed examples, also identified as such in Chapter 4, is the Converse project. “It was sponsored by Converse, the sneaker band. They sort of took over the place. That was a bit of a tension between the local government and commerce and in the end, they created a super nice skating track. This is interesting urban furniture, but it's not generic urban furniture. So, when something breaks and the question is, is converse going to pay for this or has the city of Amsterdam the responsibility to fix it? This is a very, very important criteria for projects to fail or succeed.” (Interviewee 3, 2021). It is also recognized that the relationship and collaboration between different stakeholder such as brands, cities, urban planners and architects are crucial as interviewee 5 outlines. He highlights the importance of citizens’ involvement in the process and thus supports my findings as explained in more detail in the previous chapter. Interviewee 5 also states that brands are looking for traffic. Thus, brand urbanism is only feasibly if it creates a win/win situation for all stakeholders involved. In this context, interviewee 1 suggests that “commercial brands can mobilize their resources to help the initiatives mentioned above settle in the neighborhood and forge a closer bond with the local community. Such partnership does not have to be exclusively financial.” In the article published on the World Economic Forum in

2021, interviewee 1 considers “co-working spaces, ‘fab-lab’ non-profit associations, youth entrepreneurship hubs, urban agriculture, volunteering centres” as opportunities which offer concrete solutions for street-level lots. (Ratti & Catella, 2021). In this context, he points out that brands can leverage “their communications channels to direct citizens of different demographics to the street level lots specializing in agriculture, youth entrepreneurship or other causes.” (Interviewee 1, 2021).

From the interview with interviewee 5 following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified which strongly align with the SWOT findings from the workshop. The strengths of brand urbanism are innovation and creative ideas. A weakness of brand urbanism is when practices are not "multicreative" and do not promote diversity. The power of a few brands taking over the urban centers of all major cities is a problem that brand urbanism can cause. This can be exemplified by small cities which usually all look the same because of "national heroes" like companies do shape and develop such towns. So, a weakness is when brands like Nike only invest in cities like Paris, London, and New York, ignoring small cities that tend to be more reliant on investment. One opportunity of brand urbanism may be to leverage available space by making city centers more attractive. A threat may be that brand urbanism is exclusive and thus leading to the fragmentation of society. In this interview, interviewee 6 raises relevant questions regarding the application of brand urbanism: Are city centers purely about commerce and money? How can you make these spaces inclusive? Is it purely for commercial benefit?

As Jeognwon Gim (Interviewee 2) states: “So, we need to come up with a strategy that city and consumer want. I can try to meet your need but there should be more exchange between city and consumer and corporations and arm’s length institution is someone who bridges these relationships, even dealing with the vacant sort of stores and retail buildings.”

As interviewee 3 suggests, brand urbanism can also be "relevant to temporary projects. So, for instance, running an art exhibition that stretches across different shopfronts, that could be very concrete ideas that could also be linked to a brand that cares about creativity or cultural expression or something like that.” The interviewee confirms that most of their identified projects are financial and sports companies. This underlines my findings that indicate that the majority of brands identified in the practices are from the sportswear industry. “Pepsico, Nike, Vodafone, but I mean sports companies, of course, I think the reason that sports companies

are especially engaged in this is that their brand values are about physical exercises that easily match with urban ambitions.” (Interview 3, 2020).

6.4. City branding and its influence on the urban environment

In one of the interviews, I raised the question whether the identity of a place in brand urbanism is directly linked with the brand itself? The interviewee 4 states: “No, it shouldn't. I would rather say it should not because brands also come and go, so I think it is also a risk. I mean, this might happen in like a corporate campus environment where you say the campus becomes public, but it's so strongly connected to one corporation that is inevitable. But in a city, for sure, no. Also, because, I mean, businesses are also very volatile and they come and go and go bankrupt now and then.” In this context, Interviewee 1 states that “sometimes brands want to do signature projects – think about Emirates’ cable car Air Line in London, the London Eye initially proposed by British Airways or similar interventions. Such approach should be used carefully, as it risks turning our cities into large-scale cabinets of curiosities.” Interviewee 4 points out that in the case of Nike’s creation of basketball courts, it is interesting to observe how developers and landlords react towards place branding “because the developers are very keen to get like a lot of Nike on the place, but Nike would rather do it very subtle, but so I think there's a value in the brands because it attracts people.” This argument can be linked with the findings of the workshop that indicate that brands clearly pursue their own agenda and often focus more on their brand awareness than on improving public good services. “In general, I think sometimes the partners are more interested in Logos than the corporations themselves might be.” (Interviewee 4, 2021). The most striking example of corporate sponsorship and ownership of public spaces and housing complexes is the example of Korea where multinational corporations such as Hyundai and Samsung are owning entire housing brands which they divide in so-called themes: “Hyundai has this like four themes, luxury theme, eco-friendly theme or family-oriented theme and technology theme.” (Interviewee 2). Arguably, multinational corporations predefine concepts of live by dominating not only public but also private life. Interviewee 5 explains that “nowadays local brands or really small brands struggle to survive basically because their tiny existence doesn't allow to be recognized by consumers easily, which means they have to go through corporations, for them to be able to reach to consumers once they do that, it's not necessarily a win-win” (Interviewee 2, 2021). As this interview has shown, brands dominate private and public life in Korea to a large extend. This ‘aggressive’ interference from brands in both spheres shapes the identity of citizens and their relationship with their local environment.

7. Concluding remarks

With this thesis, I have ventured into the relatively uncharted territory of brand urbanism and its impact on cities and communities. In doing so, I have attempted to critically examine and specify the extent of the increasing influence of corporate sponsorship in public spaces in order to objectively justify the application of brand urbanism to the revitalization of high streets and thus to provide a meaningful incentive. In retrospect, on closer reflection, my original enthusiasm about the possible advantages of brand urbanism proved naïve. Only on closer analysis did I realize how much companies instrumentalize this topic to maximize their profits and use it as a tool for brand awareness and reputation.

7.1. Summarizing findings

Despite the important theoretical debate on public-private partnerships in urban revitalization processes, there has been little empirical research on the benefits of brand urbanism, particularly with regard to downtown revitalization. As the results of this work have shown, brand urbanism presents a complex planning challenge and requires the involvement of wisely selected stakeholders, the inclusion of a variety of contextual factors, and most importantly, the participation of local residents and civil society organizations. The in-depth analysis revealed that some of the underlying examples of brand urbanism have helped cities revitalize specific areas, making a tangible contribution to providing public goods or improving the social environment. Brand urbanism projects that focus on the socio-economic context and thus interact at a very local level by truly engaging with the community can be seen as effective examples of urban revitalization.

However, this in-depth analysis also highlights the existing but increasingly growing demand for brands to express themselves in urban spaces to reinforce their corporate social responsibility beyond traditional advertising campaigns (Shearman, 2014). This raises the question, who benefits most from these practices of brand urbanism and whose interests and needs are overlooked or even neglected in the process. While global brands are constantly looking for alternative and innovative ways to cultivate their local, national, as well as global presence and awareness, they have increasingly recognized that the private sector is becoming more involved in social issues to proactively contribute to improving public life (Ayuso et al., 2014).

To answer the underlying research question *in what ways do brand urbanism practices lead to the revitalization of high streets*, two relevant sub-questions were raised in examining the 18 different global practices. On the one hand, the question of the extent to which these practices are intended to positively contribute to the revitalization or enhancement of neighborhoods or public spaces for a particular population group. On the other hand, the question was raised as to what critical and crucial cultural and socioeconomic aspects were left out of this context.

Although multinational corporations have the necessary recourses and infrastructures to actively counteract urban problems, the findings show that the vast majority of them have failed to actively tackle the broader spectrum of urban issues such as gender equality and public participation. Instead, it appears that some brands invest in projects primarily for the benefit of their organization.

7.2. Suggestions for future research

Finally, brand urbanism turns not only the physical and mental experience, but arguably, also the emotional attachment to space into a tool for brands to reach their target audiences on a very implicit and unconscious level. This argument raises two relevant questions which should be investigated in the context of future research: Do multinational corporations use their capital and power to influence and manipulate specific demographics into becoming consumers without being aware of it? What mechanisms and policies can be put in place to manage and better control multinational corporations' interference in the public sphere to align planning approaches with gender sensitivity, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability? My thesis provides valuable insights into brand urbanism that can be used by policymakers, urban planners, and brands to develop further revitalization strategies for declining high streets. In the face of increasing shop vacancies and structural changes in retail around the world, long lasting, sustainable, and innovative strategies for the circular reuse of vacant premises are highly required.

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Annex 1: Typology of brand urbanism practices

typology for brand urbanism practices

Project Name	Project Form	Geographical Area	Scale and Size	Brands	Sponsors	Objectives	Description	Date	Industry	Type
New York Made: Stanton Street Courts.	Basketball Court	Sara D. Roosevelt Park, Stanton Street Basketball Court, Lower East side, Manhattan, New York City	Expanding project, two side-by-side full basketball courts (app. 116 by 80 feet)	Brooklyn-based artist Brian Donnelly – aka Kaw, New York City Parks and Recreation Department	unknown	"(...) part of the wider 'new york made' project, celebrating the opening of Nike's new five storey SoHo store." (Designboom, 2018)	Creation of a basketball court in collaboration with a local artist	2016	Arts and Culture Industry	Artist Collaboration; Sport and Health
La Doce project	Basketball Court and Community Center	"La Doce lot" in Valle de Chalco, Mexico City	A mix use blue court (15m x 25m), administrative office, box arena, children recreational area, warehouse, facilities, area (968 sqm)	All Arquitectura, Love.fútbol, local artists, civil organizations, and neighbours	Football Club Manchester City	"Returning to the community a living space in one of the areas with the highest marginality and with one of the highest rates of violence at the outskirts of Mexico City." (Designboom, 2018)	Refurbishment of La Doce venue in collaboration with Love.fútbol, a non-profit organisation that restores and regenerates sports fields in marginalised areas of cities around the world.	2018	Sports-Wear Industry	Sport and Health; Urban Revitalization
Pigalle Duperré court	Basketball Court	Rue Duperré, Paris, France	Fifth iteration (redesign) in Paris, expansion to Mexico City (2019), and	Ill Studio, Stéphane Ashpool (Pigalle), Nike	Nike	"Through this new court, we wish to explore the relationship between sport, art and culture	Creating a multi-coloured basketball court between a row of buildings in	2009 - 2020	Arts and Culture Industry	Sport and Health; Artist Collaboration
			Beijing (2019)			and its emergence as a powerful socio-cultural indicator of a period in time." (Dezeen, 2017)	the 9th arrondissement.			
INTERSPORT Fitness Park	Urban Gym	Forstbaumschule Kiel, Germany	One location in Kiel	Intersport Deutschland, Puma, AOK NordWest, City of Kiel, Kompan of Kiel, Kompan	Intersport	"Fitness and training is a sustainable trend that we want to focus more on with the INTERSPORT fitness park" (Intersport, 2018)	Creation of urban gyms in the oldest park of Kiel	2018	Sports-Wear Industry	Sport and Health
ADIDAS open playground	Urban Gym	Treptower Park, Volkspark Wilmsdorf, Volkspark Friedrichshain, Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn Sportpark, Volkspark Wuhlheide, Berlin, Germany	5 different locations, each playground accounts 110 m2 and is fully equipped (pull-up bars, ladder, rung board, triple bars, step boxes or push-up bars)	Adidas	Adidas donated 1€ for every km people ran at the Adidas Runners City Night 2016 for the construction of the urban gym.	unknown	The community could decide in which neighborhood the next urban gyms were built	2017	Sports-Wear Industry	Sport and Health

Union Bikers First	Bicycle Parking Facility	PC Hooftstraat, Amsterdam, Netherlands	Mobile Pop-up stand for 8 bicycles	Union, Natwerk	unknown	"Cycling is simply better for the world than driving. Everyone agrees." (Weburbanist, 2019)	Mobile bike parking in the city center	2019	Sports-Wear Industry	Urban Mobility
Get Pumped	Fitness Hubs	No concrete location, not implemented yet	concept would be developed for three different types of gas station locations	Reebok International Ltd, Gensler	unknown	"We love to think about how the world can be healthier, improved, and more wellness-Minded. (...) Our two teams got to thinking, what are the ways we can revitalize old gas stations to something useful for communities?" (Archdaily)	Adaptive reuse of gas station and transformation into fitness hubs (the Network) and wellness centers (the Oasis), and community corners	2018	Sports-Wear Industry	Urban Revitalization
CONS Project Amsterdam	Skatepark	Noorderpark, Amsterdam, Netherlands	Skatepark next to a community center with events	Converse Europe, Design Studio Miktor & Molf and De Zoer Tanker, local skate community	50.000 €	unknown	Development or refurbishment of skateparks	2014	Sports-Wear Industry	Sport & Health, Artist Collaboration
De Lijn Night Buses	Night Buses	Ghent and Antwerp, Belgium	Night Buses throughout Antwerp and Ghent	De Koninck beer brewery, De Lijn, Municipal Government of Ghent	De Koninck	unknown	Providing public transportation at night for Ghent and Antwerp, payment system and schedules	2012	Food and Beverage Industry	Urban Mobility
People for Smarter Cities	Urban Billboards, Outdoor Advertising	Paris, France	Series of outdoor ads around Paris that double up as a bench, a shelter or a ramp.	IBM Global Business Services, Ogilvy & Mather France	IBM	"Smarter ideas for smarter people" (IBM)	Outdoor advertising turned into useful urban furniture	2013	Electronics, Technology Industry	Urban Furniture, Commercial Urban Advertisement
The Other Side Project	Urban Billboards	Bangkok, Thailand	Series of urban billboard in Bangkok's streets	HomePro, BBDO Bangkok	HomePro	"HomePro normally uses sign boards as its main media. So we redesign our muppies to give people better homes (...). Then after being used for commercials, people can bring them home. They become better home. The other side of despair is "Hope". " (kzyagency24, 2021)	One side of the board is printed with advertisement, other side is outfitted with a wallpaper and fixtures such as shelves, hangers, and lights which were used by homeless people as their shelter	2013	Retail Industry	Commercial Urban Advertisement, Urban Housing
Domino's Paving for Pizza	Public Roads	50 States in the US	137,000 nominations from 15,275 different zip codes in 50 States in the	Domino's Pizza, 50 US States	Domino's spent 5,000 \$ for road repairs in cities spanning 50	"Bad roads shouldn't happen to good pizza!" (Paving For Pizza, 2020)	Pothole-Pavement of roads across the US	2017	Food and Beverage Industry	Urban Mobility; Urban Revitalization

			US		American states, local authorities chose which roads to repair, more than 137,000 requests from cities around the US					
Sweet Auburn Water Tower (The Cities Project by Heineken)	Historic Tower	Sweet Auburn, Atlanta, US	100-foot-tall concrete water tower from 1909	National Trust for Historic Preservation, ABV Agency and Gallery, Heineken USA	Received funding through fundraising platform IndieGoGo	"Our vision: clean it up, paint a new interior mural that can be seen through its windows and doors, and add some finishing touches that will make it a shining piece of art the whole community can enjoy." (Kahn, 2014)	Historic preservation and reviving of the inside and outside of the old tower, local artists can paint a mural depicting the story of Atlanta. On the outside, the structure will be power-washed, and new cast iron windows and a door will be installed.	2017	Food and Beverage Industry	Public Art Project
Let's Colour Project		Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle-East & Africa, North America, South America, 45 countries	2,200 projects, 46,000 people trained & 11,000 volunteer	AzkoNobel Paints, Dulux, Euro RSCG London	donating 1.3 million liters of paint	"We believe that paint has the power to transform lives by uplifting communities, changing behaviour and making living spaces more	Transforming communities and underused urban locations by painting walls and facades with colorful painting	2009-2021	Chemical Industry	Urban Revitalization

						fun, liveable & enjoyable." (Duxe)				
+ POOL (The Cities Projects)	Swimming Pool	East River, New York City, US	Kids pool, sports pool, lap pool and lounge pool. 9,000 square foot, will accommodate up to 300 visitors at a time, with a proposed daily capacity of 1,800 visitors	Dong-Ping Wong and Oana Stanescu of Family New York, Archie Lee Coates IV, Jeffrey Franklin (PlayLab), IDEO, Heineken, New York City Skyline, Arup, McLaren Engineering, Sydney Opera House, New York's Second Avenue Subway, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (Columbia University), Persak & Wurmfield	City and state agencies, open-water swimmers, waterfront advocacy organizations, over 5,000 supporters who pledged money through Kickstarter, it is a fundraised, tax-exempt charitable organization	"(...) reclaim the river as a recreational resource for the city, while educating the public about issues affecting our water quality." (Pluspool, 2020)	Revitalization of the river by creating a self-filtering swimming pool with layers of filter membranes aimed at cleaning 600,000 gallons of river water every day.	2015	unknown	Natural Resource Conservation, Environmental Sustainability
Halonix Safer City Project (The Right Light Campaign)	Outdoor Lighting Solutions	Delhi, India	Bangalore, Chandigar, Jalandhar, Chennai, Lucknow, Trivandru, Ghaziabad	HALONIX, Cheil worldwide advertising agency, MEDIA SUPPLEMENTS New Delhi, EENAKSHI SACHDEV VARMA, New Delhi	Rs. 2,919.55 Crores (equals 33.20 €)	Powerful street lighting, social responsibility, safety and security for girls and women	Indoor and outdoor lighting solutions with Halonix billboards placed in poorly-lit urban areas	2014	Lighting Industry	Urban Safety

Positive Water Balance Project	Community Projects	Abu Kataf valley, Amman, Jordan	200,000 sqm, Similar projects implemented in India, Thailand and the Philippines	PepsiCo, Jordan Valley Authority (JVA), Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI)	170,000 €	"Whatever water we are using, we are replenishing it. Once we achieve the overall positive water balance nationally, we are looking at areas around our individual plants to see if we are managing our resources, that means if the community has sufficient water." (The Economic Times, 2011)	Collect rainwater to recharge underground water reserves for irrigation purposes	2013	Food and Beverage	Natural Resource Conservation, Environmental Sustainability
'Giving Life to the Night'	Community Spaces and Recreational Spaces	Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam	LED billboard powered by 2,475 recycled Red Bull cans	Red Bull, VMLY& R	unknown	Reviving poorly-lit and under-utilised recreational spaces for local communities	Make use of recycled cans that absorb and store energy from the sun to light up the night.	2018	Food, Soft Beverages, Alcohol & Tobacco	Urban Mobility

Annex 2: Qualitative Interviews – Transcript 1

Interview with Carlo Ratti on August 15, 2021

Lea Lewitan: What are the main drivers and factors that have led to the decline of brick-and-mortar retailers on high streets within the last 20 years?

Carlo Ratti: Retail has gone through massive transformations – like many other parts of our lives in the past 20 years. High street shops were first challenged by large shopping malls which gather multiple brands in one spot. More recently, the rise of online retailing has further challenged brick-and-mortar retailers.

Lea Lewitan: Why does the increasing vacancy rate of retail premises on high streets across the world pose a problem for cities and their local communities?

Carlo Ratti: Historically, streets and squares are where urban life unfolds. Sufficient commercial activities on the street level contribute to the vibrancy of our society. Cities such as Tokyo, Paris and Boston all bear their unique characteristics owing to their local retailers. Conversely, if retail shops continue the trend to move away from the high streets, the social and cultural ramifications would be significant.

Lea Lewitan: What concrete collaborations should be aimed for to improve current revitalization approaches in the context of high streets?

Carlo Ratti: In the context of the pandemic, many cities have allowed restaurants to set up tables outdoors, and the result is apparent: the streets are imbued with a sense of liveliness we had not seen for a long time. Moving forward, municipal government should prioritize measures like this – through loosening certain administrative restrictions or the provision of incentives – to repopulate the public space and speed up its recovery. In the long term, introducing new uses will also be important.

Lea Lewitan: Compared to the past, in which way did the role of private corporations change in de/revitalization cycles?

Carlo Ratti: Over the last couple of decades, we have seen an increase in private-public partnerships (PPPs.) As private companies participate in the development of the urban landscape on a higher level, they have also worked more closely in collaboration with a variety of organizations.

Lea Lewitan: what ways can brand urbanism (collaboration between brand and city) lead to the revitalization of inner-city districts?

Carlo Ratti: Sometimes brands want to do signature projects – think about Emirates' cable car Air Line in London, the London Eye initially proposed by British Airways or similar interventions. Such approach should be used carefully, as it risks turning our cities into

large-scale cabinets of curiosities. I am more interested in brands helping with traditional urban development. To give you an example, IKEA is one of the primary collaborators with C40's Reinventing Cities scheme. It participates in urban intervention in a macro (many cities are involved in the competition) and indirect way (the program focused on the solicitation of external ideas).

Lea Lewitan: What are the environmental, legal, social, and political criteria that one needs to take into consideration when applying brand urbanism projects in cities?

Carlo Ratti: The same criteria that would be used for any good urban project! Starting from impact on the community and environment. In terms of brand exposure, the projects should direct people's attention towards the brands involved, but maintain a certain balance between brand awareness and substance— it is not fair to dedicate shared urban spaces to an outright private marketing campaign.

Lea Lewitan: Do you know of any recent examples of successful brand urbanism practices related to the revitalization of high streets? If so, what can we learn from them?

Carlo Ratti: The bike rental scheme in London – first sponsored by Barclays and then by its banking counterpart Santander – has posed a significant influence on how people experience the city and can shop on high street. Micro-mobility devices provide citizens with a convenient alternative in commuting, making it easier for them to explore the streets while producing minimal air pollution.

Lea Lewitan: What criteria do you think we need to consider managing and leveraging the success of brand urbanism in revitalizing high streets?

Carlo Ratti: I believe the model of fifteen-minute city – championed by Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo and discussed in cities all over the world – would provide a healthy structure for the implementation of brand urbanism. It aims to equip every neighborhood with all the facilities and conveniences one needs in their everyday life. It better defines the neighborhoods' spatial scale and encourages people to spend more time exploring their surroundings. With a more engaged crowd to the high streets, the likelihood for brands to develop meaningful interventions would also increase.

Lea Lewitan: SWOT Analysis: What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of brand urbanism regarding the transformation of empty retail spaces in high streets?

Carlo Ratti: As discussed above, some of the benefits and risks of transforming empty retail spaces include maintaining the dynamism of the city, and the potential exploitation for commercial ends. I will add that these spaces are ideal venues for experimentation. Since some of them might not be permanently occupied, there is a higher flexibility in testing different urban concepts and gauging the citizens' reaction. At the same time, businesses and non-profits focusing on innovative ideas can also take advantage of the lowered rental costs to advance their endeavors.

Lea Lewitan: In your article published on the World Economic Forum, you consider Milan as a model for ground-floor renovations. Can you please specify what and how Milan achieved this?

Carlo Ratti: Milan was one of the first cities hit by Covid-19 – and hence had to start responding by applying a trial-and-error approach.

Lea Lewitan: In the same article, you consider “co-working spaces, 'fab-lab', non-profit associations, youth entrepreneurship hubs, urban agriculture and volunteering centres” as opportunities which offer concrete solutions for street-level lots. What specific role can (local) brands play in achieving this?

Carlo Ratti: Commercial brands can mobilize their resources to help the initiatives mentioned above settle in the neighborhood and forge a closer bond with the local community. Such partnership does not have to be exclusively financial. Many brands have established a good reputation and a core group of audience, while some are tied to a certain locality over decades. They can leverage their communications channels to direct citizens of different demographics to the street level lots specializing in agriculture, youth entrepreneurship or other causes.

Lea Lewitan: In which ways could empty retail spaces be (re)used? Please define concrete activities and related partners that would contribute to a high quality of urban life and enrich the social fabric of the neighborhood?

Carlo Ratti: Imagination au pouvoir! I am sure that you can do this exercise...

Just a comment from the government's perspective: more flexible zoning regulations, especially for temporary activities, can allow real estate assets to be quickly repurposed. Heavy taxes could also be imposed on vacant lots to incentivize occupancy.

Lea Lewitan: What are the major factors that will lead to a closer and more sustainable collaboration between cities and brands in the next five years?

Carlo Ratti: In relation to the aforementioned PPP, I would suggest companies take a step further to develop PPPP, private-public partnerships with 'people'. Citizens should be at the center of the show here!

Annex 3: Qualitative Interviews – Transcript 2

Interview with Jeongwon Gim on April 04, 2021

Jeongwon Gim [00:00:02] It's reusable in terms of sustainability and everything, so corporations and cities are kind of absorbing this trend and trying to make the mainstream again. So, it's kind of like a circle.

Lea Lewitan [00:00:20] Absolutely. So interesting. This example that you're talking about, this was an example in Korea?

Jeongwon Gim [00:00:32] Yeah. Yeah. In Korea, in one of those cities where I used to live. Yeah.

Lea Lewitan [00:00:39] And can you give me a little local context to understand, what is the footprint or what is the presence of these let's say big corporations, brands in these housing units or real estates?

Jeongwon Gim [00:01:00] Or the real estate situation in Korea?

Lea Lewitan [00:01:03] Yeah, like the connection with Hyundai for instance, or these global brands.

Jeongwon Gim [00:01:11] So Korea, to give you a context, Korea is a very heavy apartment populated country. So, 60 percent almost of consumers in Korea are people living in apartment complexes. So, especially corporations in Korea, one of those major companies, each company owns different housing brands. Names are usually in English. So, it could be green life or e-life. They have themes, so let's say Hyundai has this like four themes, luxury theme, eco-friendly theme or family-oriented theme and technology theme, too, which is coming with a modern sort of pixel-like design. So, each housing brand has each design and it's forcing people to believe what they think it's working. Like, eco-friendly design would use a lot of green color. So, there's a certainty of quality of mainstream sort of aesthetics and it's becoming really boring because everyone is producing the same style, but they're still trying to like claiming that they're unique. So, nowadays these branded apartment complexes are approaching government to think, well, we want to invest in, you know, local arts and culture scene. What do we do? And Korean government would be like, oh, well, we are kind of into cartoon industry these days and we want to support them. And then this corporation guys are like, well, I'm going to apply some cartoons with lots of green colors and bees and eco-friendly theme over our facade. How does that sound? So, let's say if you are building apartment complexes in fabric, industry city, which is known for like producing clothing and stuff, they would make a pixel facade that would resemble the Korean traditional fabrics. And it's sort of like a conversation between consumer, city and brands who control pretty much the whole housing market in Korea. Five or six companies just dominate everything. So, consumers have this, like irony, they feel the irony that, you know, mass housing for apartment appearance who really actually care about it other than over price and location

and amenities. But for some reason, we just can't help but buying those brand aesthetics, we don't really appreciate it every day. You see the same thing every day. There's no aesthetic surprises, it's fixed, but somehow you feel differentiated living in there. It's probably brand value involved there. But also, the idea of we care about local industry. We care about aesthetics and understanding different styles and stuff, although the visual reality doesn't really guarantee that.

Lea Lewitan [00:05:07] So, when you talk about, for instance, this dichotomy or relation between inside and outside, so very simply said, for instance, the theme of luxury. So, the entire facade would be designed in a very luxurious manner, right?

Jeongwon Gim [00:05:25] Yeah. Yeah. Like using lots of marble stones or something shiny, like a curtain wall, system facade. They claim to be expensive. I have no idea. But what I see is using cheaper materials and making it more luxurious. It may cause actually a lot of problems in living experience.

Lea Lewitan [00:05:56] And then, for instance, talking about this inside/ outside living. Can you choose where to live as a consumer? Can I choose to live in a luxury theme house or in an eco-friendly house?

Jeongwon Gim [00:06:15] Yeah. So, there are different housing brands and different locations. So, you can choose, and they have showrooms, too. We have different versions what you want and different locations. If you want eco-friendly, whatever themed apartment that one is in Seoul or wherever I am in. You can choose. And the way the housing market works in Korea is you buy before it's actually built. So, you buy the idea first with the branded aesthetics and everything and 3D dimension, the models and everything. And, when it's actually built, consumers are really frustrated because what's the actual difference from other models? We paid a lot and and it's kind of affecting people's life too, towards a more mobile nomad sort of lifestyle because just like changing clothing, branding clothing like, oh, today I feel like I'm going to wear something eco-friendly, lots of green colors. But after a few months, I would move to somewhere else. So, in my childhood, I've moved to pretty much like twenty places or something. Every year. And it's pretty easy. So, I lived in most of different themes.

Lea Lewitan [00:07:56] And you moved because for instance, at some point, your family or whoever decided said that the theme doesn't relate anymore to the lifestyle that you wanted to live in? What would you say are the main drivers for people to move to another theme?

Jeongwon Gim [00:08:19] It's a really good question. I have to think about it more, but my reflecting on my personal experience was more like my family lifestyle has changed. Plus, it's not trendy anymore in an apartment brand itself. So, we are not sure whether aesthetic really plays an important role in consumption decisions or housing brand is kind of dominating our decisions even over aesthetics. It doesn't really matter. So, let's say, esthetics doesn't matter anymore. The style doesn't matter anymore. Then, why do we keep moving to different things and why are we still changing? So, is it because we feel comfort in buying certain styles and let's say we understand this style of what is? So, is then housing

brand making sort of people to believe that this style is so unique? And are we just really oblivious of the reality? We just forget everything, that there are similar styles, and we start to believe that this is something different and we feel different.

Lea Lewitan [00:09:57] Super interesting. Would you say that the inside and outside relates? So, does the interior design of the apartments look similar to the design and themes of the facades, for instance luxurious or eco-friendly or is it just the outside?

Jeongwon Gim [00:10:27] Just the outside. And inside is everywhere pretty much the same. And it's even changing in the way to support the aesthetics. So, in some spaces, the lifestyle has changed, too. For example, like a loss of enclosed balcony is making people to get outside more, so they don't stay at home, because you don't enjoy sunroom anymore. It has disappeared and also laundry facilities, those kinds of things are being squeezed. So, people use their outdoor facilities like corner laundry room or something. There has been a lot of lifestyle changes too, because they want to make spaces for those decorations and, so identical inside, identical interior squeezed by in between brand aesthetics. That's what I think it's happening.

Lea Lewitan [00:11:48] Would you say that all these different housing units are branded by the corporations' name?

Jeongwon Gim [00:11:59] So, Hyundai for example has different housing names, not necessarily reminding of Hyundai because they want to create different images like an octopus. You want to have more options. This is a historical sort of stuff, but Samsung and all those large conglomerates in Korea used to be really ugly guys like a gang group in the old times that they forced people to work for themselves without paying much money. So, they have a sort of ugly history. And over time, they tried to rebuild their image as eco-friendly, we are considering trends. We are very ethical. They are reconstructing their history. And South Koreans have this love and hate relationship with conglomerates, too. So, you know, they rebuild our nation. So, the people are pretty patriotic about supporting Samsung for example who became really famous in global scene. And yet, they have done a lot of unethical and immoral stuff in their history. So, this is really a complicated situation. Now, these apartments are exported to Middle Eastern countries, Vietnam and China. They built in a similar style to Korean branded apartment complexes, but with local motives. So, they try to if they're built in Middle Eastern countries, somewhere in Arab Emirates or somewhere, they would try to absorb the local historical traditional pattern on top of the Korean models. And yeah, and Koreans are sort of producing the news report on those apartment exports as sort of Korean wave and architecture housing market like a K-pop thing. So, my interest is everywhere.

Lea Lewitan [00:14:37] I'm so grateful to have the chance to listen to all of this. It is really interesting. Obviously, this is a very local context. But also embedded in a global world where these local narratives and ideas are known globally by now but from an outside perspective, we don't know what is going on behind the scenes and what is the story behind these former local and nowadays global brands and how we perceive them from a European perspective as being super innovative and eco-friendly. Generally speaking, there has been

a massive change which I explain in my literature review, as the change of consumer behavior and how brands had to redefine themselves. And why this concept of brand urbanism has come to place because brands increasingly wanted to operate on the urban context and make a change. When we talk about massive, global players known for not being eco-friendly at all and who suddenly chose to invest in solar panels and establish subsidiaries that seek to be sustainable by increasing their corporate social responsibility. And that has in a way led to this idea of brands being suddenly more aware and interested in working together with cities because they need to change their reputation. Many brands have such a controversial reputation. Especially from a neoliberal city planning approach and how cities operate generally has changed since the 70s and 80s. Private companies and brands being much more present in cities. There is a lot of critique on the idea of brand urbanism. Therefore, I try to redefine this partnership and try to propose new approaches on how cities can work together with local brands. You know, there are also amazing examples of interesting, sustainable, local brands that are now increasingly growing on on a global scale. But they're simply not heard or not interesting for cities. So, this is just some examples to give you a little idea of what I try to emphasis on.

Jeongwon Gim [00:19:20] It's just a little sad for a countries like Korea and China where they had a history of authoritarian government, which had a tight sort of association with corporations and conglomerates in the past. And nowadays local brands or really small brands struggle to survive basically because their tiny existence doesn't allow to be recognized by consumers easily, which means they have to go through corporations, for them to be able to reach to consumers once they do that, it's not necessarily a win-win. It becomes pretty much dominated by corporations' ideas and sort of make their image better. But, you know, now that you talked about consumer behaviors and their, like, mindset, I thought nowadays consumers are pretty aware of local brand importance of local brands or ethical consumption and how corporations can have dirty history in their past. And at the same time, we still can't live without large brands. We can escape it. And I think it's because even though we know all about it and those are dominant sort of brands that are providing us comfort that we cannot escape, it's very difficult to escape. I read the article about "forgetting and remembering and the politicization of something". And it's about memory politics. So, people tend to forget about things and don't really remember things. They just forget. And this can be understood as the politicization of something like art museums or history museums for exaple to sort of reconnect. They romanticize what was there in the past in a very selective way. So, that projection makes audiences to forget about what really was before and really focus on another rebuild and selected reality and forget about the rest of the things. And we feel easy on that because we don't have to come up with or understand the whole reality. We only need to see the part. And that kind of gives us a sort of like a feeling of comfort. Even though we all know what is real and what is ethical and what is what it means to support local brands.

Lea Lewitan [00:22:43] connected to connect it to what you said about I mean, especially coming from Germany, Germany, like memory and history is like a major topic and also the way how to remember the past. And there are like also new ways of like how can we, like, shift the way we remember into a more physical experience and or even into a more digital experience. And we have to like to recreate the way we remember memories or remember

and because it's not very like it should be timeless and it's not very contemporary anymore. Or like it is obviously like a very interesting topic. I mean, every continent has a horrible history, which is obviously almost every country in the world. And it should be like concerned about how to keep up with, like, the idea of memory or remembering. And I think going back to the idea what you said about like these brands, corporations trying to cover their history and denying their own history. Also linked with the idea of what is actually transparent, what is known and what is not known. How do people know in Korea what their history is? Are people thought? Do people talk about this or not? And do brands get a second chance? Does the reputation always remain as it is or do brands with a new CEO or CFO have also the chance to rebrand themselves and make a change? And if so, how does the original story, the past get told? Openly? I mean, when you go back to German history, obviously almost every big company was involved and was even supporting the regime. So, I'm really inspired by your work and understanding of what the presence of brands are. What I'm asking myself. Do local authorities and governments have a saying or let's say a possibility to interrupt this logic or pattern of branded housing development or how do they act in that sort of constellation?

Jeongwon Gim [00:26:56] Of course. So, I think one of the sorts of small change that is recently happening sort of against the dominance of large brands, it's a very small challenge, but there has been a number of small sort of construction companies growing, and at the same time government asked certain cities to not use the brand names, to not put a logo on their apartment complexes. So, you never know which brand actually built which corporations. So, it's kind of removing those major dominance of, the logo and everything. And we just started pretty recently. So, I hope it gets to somewhere and especially during covid, the smaller companies were hit really hard by the financial difficulties and everything. So, I think there is kind of a worries that the housing market is going to be more dominated by corporations at the same time. But at the same time, other people might think through the crisis, it is really the point where we can make probably, you know, more local varieties and brands and more stylistic varieties, too, or either on the other side, like totally dominated by large corporations. So, we need to really navigate this point really well during covid. And also, like these apartment complexes are supporting like local market, farmer's market. So, they have a joint sort of relationship between, well, the consumers in the apartment complex want to post farmer's market and their apartment complexes. And that's not controlled by apartment brands. So, it's the automatic sort of like independent activities organized by consumers and living in the apartment complexes. So those little changes are happening.

Lea Lewitan [00:29:32] So, that means talking about public-private partnerships, they play a dominant role in Korean city planning or like in Korean city development.

Jeongwon Gim [00:29:49] Well, I would say most of things are dominated by government, intertwined with corporate ideas, and consumers are quite separate and then slowly they're kicking back by asking government that this is not working or something, so that they come up with a design solution and stuff. But when it's organized by big institutions, it always ends up being very rigid. So, still they try to figure the solutions to respect the different needs, small needs, different needs and their local needs and at the same time feeding those

corporations who are pushing and selling our names towards global themes. So, the government struggles hard to satisfy both.

Lea Lewitan [00:30:54] Of course. You named a view concrete corporation that are dominating the housing market for instance but do brands in Korea also dominate other sectors in the public realm?

Jeongwon Gim [00:31:52] Oh yes, they own electronics, they own the housing market, they own hotels. They do run a hotel business too; they do run chemistry industries. They do run grocery markets. And they included everything within the apartment complex. The apartment complex might have a department store which is built by some big companies such as Hudson's Bay company. So, this is a conglomerate that has all the legs into different industries and pick the little bits of everything and put them all together in an apartment complex, you know, offering prepackaged compact life living complex to consumers. So as consumers, if we go to get the apartments, we get everything, we get department stores, we get clothing brands and everything. So, we don't have to think about other alternatives. It just comes to me like a gift, a pure gift.

Lea Lewitan [00:33:10] Yes, absolutely. And you can choose which kind of gift you want. Either it is Samsung or Hyundai or any other company. So, it's not only those brands create and dominate the outside of a building, it's obviously the internal life that you get as well and the facilities and everything.

Jeongwon Gim [00:33:33] And basically what my mom told me when she was purchasing one of those apartments, it was like, I don't want to think about any other thing because my life is already complicated. So, I want something simple. I want something comprehensible. Which means even though she buys craft and ceramics from like Morocco when she goes there for little trips and stuff. But at the same time, her real life is really dominated by the idea for wanting simplicity like easy ways to achieve certain things and think about the future, investment too, like housing is an investment in Korea. So, if Samsung is doing well in another area, you might want to buy Samsung House to sell it with a premium, you know, more money on top with high selling values.

Lea Lewitan [00:34:34] Oh, yeah, I understand. So, the choice where to live is linked with the performance of the company.

Jeongwon Gim [00:34:48] Yeah. Performance of the company, the reputation, at the same time location and the lifestyle they're offering, which stage the consumers are in their individual life.

Lea Lewitan [00:35:07] And when did these like housing themes or corporations intervening in such a dominant dimension - almost impossible for us to imagine in Europe - when did this all start?

Jeongwon Gim [00:35:26] So it started from the modernization, beginning with the modernization in Korea. Corporations had a big role in there because they worked with

authoritarian government in the 60s or 70s. So, they like built apartment housings together to provide mass housings for a growing population and government wanted to build the buildings faster, as many as possible. And those corporations who were part of that are now global companies. The governments made a lot of excuses for them to be successful outside of Korea, too. So, they started with construction housing company and also at the same time, ship building industry, too, enacted as hotel business. So, it's all entrenched.

Lea Lewitan [00:36:25] So, there was never an opposing government or a leftist urban governance structure?

Speaker 3 [00:36:35] hmm.

Lea Lewitan [00:36:36] So, like, there was never an opposing movement? I'm sure there were grassroot movements but from an urban governance level, there had never been a real shift, right?

Jeongwon Gim [00:36:53] No, never been a shift against the dominance of corporations. And Koreans, there is a bloody history of democracy in Korea. So, there has been a lot of protest and everything. But there's no way inbetween like, consumers are really against a weak society. And Koreans are furious about somebody and very jealous too of somebody who is coming from corporate culture. And at the same time, the government is really tied to corporations. They constantly fight. So, if I go back home, there would be several kinds of protests too, every day it's happening, it's life.

[00:37:49] So there are counter movements, but there would never be an actual open window to change the regime or to like change corporations to operate on that level, right?

Jeongwon Gim [00:38:06] It just went too deep. Now, corporations are so established in every sector of Koreans that they have this love and hate relationship with corporations. They want to get out of it. But without Samsung refrigerator, without Samsung oven, you know, without Sony TV, you don't know what else you got really. And now people are realizing it more seriously, I think during Covid, because you're set with all these products and all brandscape while local businesses are disappearing one by one, it's very hard to survive. And people sort of started to really ask questions of like what other options do we really have. I want variety. But now we are deprived of variety because of Covid. So, they are kind of stuck and reflect more about the major mainstream culture in general and really think about the needs of locality and how do we really make a sustainable relationship there.

Lea Lewitan [00:39:28] It's so complex because Koreans are obviously like consuming local or locally embedded brands which are not local anymore because they operate on a scale that is impossible to imagine of. But even though you would like to promote consumers and citizens to consume local brands and to emphasis on the importance of local brands. Now, as you said, Koreans are trying to reach out to alternatives but are hardly accessible. Don't buy just local brands don't consume these local brands such as Samsung here, Hyundai here and so on, but rather look for alternatives that are maybe thousands of kilometers away, which are just not accessible right now.

Jeongwon Gim [00:40:37] So, my mom and dad always go for grocery shopping in one of the grocery markets branded by Hyundai. But now they started to consume products from local farmer's market, which weren't really popular before, but people started to look for it because at first my parents were like, well, there might not be many people, so it would be safer. But then nowadays people are like, oh, we're funding startups with all the brandscape that we have, the major ones, and we want something different. Well, and, you know, the whole brandscape weren't in the system where only differences were created. So, they're surviving because they're trying to create difference in the industry. It could be like branding difference or aesthetic difference or whatever. But now they're losing their difference and locality is gaining its popularity because they seem to present themselves as something different. It always bounces back. The question is always which way is creating difference?

Lea Lewitan [00:42:29] It's so true and absurd at the same time because the drivers behind this trend for locality are so different. This movement and awareness of producing locally and consuming local products from farmers nearby has become popular in many countries. Friends of mine started to do their groceries only once a week by buying from local farmers to stop supporting these big chains and make a systemic change. I observed this movement in Germany quite extensively. Also, do you know slow food? It is a movement that has become very popular since some years now and many people are referring to this idea by supporting it. But when I think of Korea and what you just described, I see completely different drivers behind that trend for locality because people not only want to start buying from local farmers and thrive for a more sustainable way of living but also want to consciously buy less from these global brands because they are dominating their lives in all kinds of ways. I assume that people want to differentiate themselves and don't want to be part of the whole system anymore.

Jeongwon Gim [00:44:16] It's very complicated.

Lea Lewitan [00:44:34] I hope I didn't get it wrong because I obviously just rely on what you described. I think, in a world that is completely dominated by these global/ local players, where everything is branded, where your entire identity is linked to a certain brand or corporation, you definitely want to make a change in doing the opposite. And the opposite is not reaching out to other global players because they're just simply not accessible. Right? They're simply just not represented so the only possible solution is to reach out to local brands. I think that is one big difference from the European context where people want to consume locally because of environmental reasons and because they increasingly eat vegan or vegetarian as well.

Jeongwon Gim [00:45:58] Yeah. Like vegetarian, you know, the vegan movement and all of this is a pretty serious job here and it's their life vision embedded in consuming vegan things. But in Korea, it's a very appearance driven country. It's a mass culture. So, which is quite relevant to Covid, and they've been using actually mass for a while. So, it's very much about how I am perceived by others, am I looking different? Am I looking rich, am I looking entertaining? So, it's very much about the style. It's very much about brand faces, which is also I think, why Korean consumers are very much into buying brand products, including

housing. It's about how I look outside. These things that people are trying to reflect on are aspects that are not relevant anymore because now you're trapped within your house, and you don't really go outside. Others may not see you. The outside is not important anymore. Women are not using lipstick when they're wearing masks. So, lipstick is not necessary anymore. So, your facade, the mask you are wearing makes you really look at your reality like, what am I really? Kind of self-destructive questions, which I think is relevant to consuming other alternatives, too which we weren't really able to pay attention to or get accessible, too. And technology in Korea is really helping in that country during this time because Korea has such a fast Internet, well developed country in terms of Internet and technology and the communication technologies. So, local businesses and local brands are using those channels to, you know, sell products and everything and which brandscape, I think, they make their presence with massive things in size and volume, it just gets really gigantic. Everything is so big and so dominating. But in Internet age, people make their presence pretty visibly, the local businesses, too. So, I think my parents are even got to know these farmer's market and everything through online and they're purchasing it through online, too. And it's growing. And local delivery systems, too. Not anymore like, you know, Amazon or anything. But some different and they do micromanagement. And people like it this way because through technology, local businesses can do a micro sort of approach to every consumer as in like commenting on your pictures or something that corporations wouldn't really do. So that's the difference they're making. And I think consumers are now like, oh, I want that micro service nowadays.

Lea Lewitan [00:49:41] That's so interesting. So, if I understood it right, it's not about changing the needs because people want different things. You still want to have your specific product, you still want to have your convenience, you still want to apply a simple approach to life, you still want to use technology, you still want to have a great access to all these things. But you're just shifting the supplier in that sense from a big corporation to a local brand that may be differently perceived as well. And like the connection is obviously a bit more private or like the communication between consumer and brand is different.

Jeongwon Gim [00:50:38] Yes. And it's that difference, I think, what drives people too, to consume more local stuff these days, combined with the Covid situation, which make people to sort of like care less about their appearance, basically you wear more. If you look at many of these clothing brands, they come up with those new sections like lounge wears, like something comfortable. So, it's more like we don't really care much about something that is not seen anymore. So, and we are pretty much in-house. And I don't want to care much about how I'm going to be understood and perceived by others. So, I may want something different. Micromanagement, micro private services, that was more customized for me as opposed to what we were getting from brandscapes, like branded products is more general care. So, I think that's why people tend to like in Korea, tend to tell me that this is the crisis that we can really re-direct ourselves towards more including local industry.

Lea Lewitan [00:52:13] I understand. So now, because of Covid, because of a general shift in values within society, which happens every decade, all these drivers and factors multiplied facilitated a bigger shift. Would you say that things will have a long-term effect? Will there be a bigger change in society? If I apply it to my research, I am not focusing on any particular

city, but I am looking at vacant retail stores and how brand urbanism can help revitalize empty retail stores in inner-city districts. Throughout the world, high streets are now facing a fall in traffic due to Covid but obviously due to other factors such as e-commerce, change within consumer behavior, economic changes, all these factors combined have an impact on retail storefront. So, I am particularly looking at how these empty spaces are impacting urban vitality, diversity, and the social fabric. It is proven that increased vacancies foster negative change in the urban context. The main idea in my workshop will be to analyze how these partnerships between cities and brands can be strengthened. Based on what you told me, brands are operating differently in different geographical contexts and also dominate city development on another scale compared to the European context. In the workshop, I hope to learn different examples from different cities and countries. How can existing partnerships be recreated? Because this is also a big problem that Korea is facing based on what you described. These partnerships are not sustainable at all. And if this is going to be our future, I'm wondering how freedom of choice and freedom of consumption can be maintained or even grow?

Jeongwon Gim [00:56:15] The city and brand work together really well and then most of their products brought by their sort of tight relationship was basically designed from a sort of God like eyes, you know, you are looking down at all the landscape and governments are like, oh, I want to make this city in a cartoon industry theme. Would you help me? And corporations are like, OK, I will design this district from this view. It is more organizers' perspective. But it was the workers' perspective, it not pedestrian something. It's not the respecting sort of experience or present practices of consumers. It was more like a guy looking down. So, I think their partnership was facilitating that god-like perspective. And one of the interesting projects going on these days, I'm always interested in art curation and everything. I used to work as a curator, too. And one of the interesting projects I find was working with a vacant space, it is like a store, like a commercial strip and Arts and Culture Foundation of the city would ask, you know, it is like a renting business, like Arts and Culture Foundation is renting business for like artists or art students who need spaces, it's not a residency, but like they sort of like do this business and they are sponsors like big corporations. Be it construction companies. It could be retail brands or something. They own that building and their vacancy. So, Arts and Culture Foundation agents like me, they would send these agents to these sponsors and ask, can we do this project? And we can sort of promote your brand in certain places. You know, when we sort of design posters and were sponsored by 'bla bla bla'. It's all about like sort of like a donation, but spatial donation and the whole point is to not decorate anything outside. It's like making it really blend in it, which means abstract space could also facilitate more variety and bright various activities within it. If it's themed in one certain thing, it's hard to like to accommodate different activities. So, it's like just blend spaces and we just totally rent it to different art students, and they can do, whatever they want. And it's sort of changing very often to facilitate spontaneity and sudden surprises. One day it would be a restaurant and the other day it would be a gallery. So, the whole point is to rotate it fast so that they don't make same scenes. So, the whole point is to move away from citizen brand partnerships but like, you know, prospected and moving towards sort of Walker's sort of perspective, which might facilitate spontaneous and unplanned and unofficial sort of activities happening in the vacant spaces. It's like a, you know, a renting business. But the idea was to facilitate spontaneity.

Lea Lewitan [01:00:36] So just to give me a little explanation again, so these like arts and culture foundations or institutions, let's say there is a vacant store or retail store, are all these stores owned by bigger brands?

Jeongwon Gim [01:00:58] Not necessarily. Sometimes it's just a rich man owning a building. For example, there was a bus exhibition, like a museum for children, so I asked for donation for Hyundai for their abandoned, old buses. So, I got them fixed by engineers and decorated them with art students. And I traveled throughout the country to do the museum. Once in a while I met corporations too, but also just reached out to individuals, too. And the point is to arm length institution agents really have to work hard to make a bridge between sort of corporation and public. And the whole point is not saying, hey, just donate money as if I'm taking some money out of their pockets, nobody really wants that. So, we need to come up with a strategy that city and consumer want. I can try to meet your need but there should be more exchange between city and consumer and corporations and arm's length institution is someone who bridges these relationships, even dealing with the vacant sort of stores and retail buildings.

Lea Lewitan [01:03:05] Really impressive and interesting projects. Do you have any pictures or links online? I would love to see the projects.

Jeongwon Gim [01:03:17] It is online, but I can show you some pictures, too. And I think a lot of my friends are running those curatorial empty spaces, too. I can ask them, it is kind of like a co-working space in the cafeteria, just like workshop space. Yes, but I can find photos and probably Instagram. It was on one of those architecture magazines. I guess now it's kind of en vogue that people try to do something out of vacant spaces.

Lea Lewitan [01:04:19] It's very interesting. Also, this whole concept of pop-up stores, pop up became a buzz word some years ago already. But this idea of like temporary use of space is not a new concept. From what I heard and read, especially in Vienna, there is a high percentage, especially now with Covid that a lot of retailers and shop owners had to close their shops. And there is obviously worldwide a drastic increase in vacancy. So, what retailers and shop owner do is offering this space to for instance Bubble T which got apparently super big in some cities in Europe and especially in Vienna. They are providing the space for these quite trendy brands and ideas like Bubble T, I don't know. And why? Because they know they make good revenues. They have their crowd and after a while they're moving out and another brand is moving in. Obviously, it's interesting to understand what kind of different concepts are behind. The main idea for the workshop is like bringing all these different experiences from different geographical context together, but re-create, let's say, innovative idea and innovative way of using these second stores, because this is a massive problem. And a lot of cities are increasingly facing this problem. Retail decline was a problem already prior to the pandemic but surely accelerated but to an extent where cities are really worried. So, I assume it is interesting not only for cities, but also for brands, consumers, and inhabitants to rethink empty space.

Jeongwon Gim [01:06:55] Yeah, yeah.

Lea Lewitan [01:07:48] Is there any publication on these different projects and collaborations that you were describing, like a map of different stakeholders such as the cultural arts institutions, cities and then you for example?

Jeongwon Gim [01:08:15] Oh, it's more my personal working experience. Yes, I read it somewhere written. Yeah. No, I can't really think of any reasonable source for that. Well, it was more about my working experience.

[01:08:36] And is there a chance I mean, you're very occupied, I'm sure, but if you have like 10 minutes, it can also be just bullet points of like these are the stakeholders. This is like the institutions or the different foundations that are usually like part of and this is kind of the organizational communication map. Like, it can really literally be five sentences. Not now, but. Oh, no, you don't need to do it now. But if you have time within the next days, it would be amazing.

Jeongwon Gim [01:09:14] Let me try to come up with something. This is just basic, like my reflection. So, I haven't really thought about it. I was very curious about what this workshop is about. Like, I just know that it's happening. That's the only thing I know. But this is about finding innovative ways of using vacant stores, right?

Lea Lewitan [01:09:42] Yes based on the idea of citizen/brand corporation as a revitalization tool. So, it is not only about inviting artists to refurbish this, but it is really about revitalizing vacant storefronts based on a new, innovative partnership between brands and cities.

Jeongwon Gim [01:10:27] Rob said I could sit in a workshop. What would be exactly my role?

Lea Lewitan [01:10:34] I would love you to be an active participant. There will be really different people from all over the world, people that are specialized on retail. The problem is that I need to figure out if I'll be able to organize it now or postpone it because one person canceled and is only able end of April. She's very interesting and works for the European Union. I would love her to be part because their organization did amazing work on vacant, abandoned spaces all over Europe. And they are working closely together with the European Union. I need to talk to Rob and all the participants to see if there is another date.

Jeongwon Gim [01:12:09] Sounds awesome.

[01:12:12] For me, it is very important to also have someone from the city council and government. So, I'm trying now to include someone from maybe Vienna and London. And it's more difficult to coordinate with city officials than with private people.

Jeongwon Gim [01:12:50] Sounds so interesting. This is my first time in a workshop. How does this work?

Lea Lewitan [01:12:54] Yes, of course. We will actually discuss future scenarios. So, there are different methods, but one method is to define what is going on in the retail landscape worldwide. Within the first stage, I want the team to map the current landscape within retail based on the observations of researchers, consultants and consumers who are just like walking down the high street who can tell what is actually happening on the ground. What are macro consumer trends. What can be first of all be defined based on what drives the trend and behavior, for instance, for retail decline. So why is retail decline happening? There are different factors that may be relevant in different geographical contexts. And then in the second part, we would interpret what these trends combined with the drivers could potentially mean for the future of retail. So, what is the current situation, what could potentially happen in the future? And then also what are other weak signals for the retail environment? So, what is actually one of the weakest problems for the retail environment. And the second part we would rather identify these weak signals and turn them into future scenarios, in actual future ideas. So, transform the weak signals into what if questions. So, what if this and this would happen in the future. So how could this future or like future retail environment actually work? Part of this would still be the framework of brand urbanism. So, brand urbanism as the umbrella idea, happening worldwide on a different scale, in different ways, with different stakeholders and in different time frames. There are so many different practices. From what you told me, I think these examples in Korea are also part of brand urbanism but differ from examples in European countries. So, this would also be part of creating an overview on how these different practices operate and combining them at the end by developing a kind of typology. So, building ideas will allow us to transform the future scenarios into tangible touch points for tangible ideas of reusing empty space.

Jeongwon Gim [01:17:14] OK. All right, if I sit in the workshop, somebody will present that we sort of comment on it?

Lea Lewitan [01:17:28] Yes. So, the idea is also to have a moderator. So not only me but having someone as well who's like moderating the entire workshop. And we would also split probably in different breakout rooms where these kinds of scenarios and also like drivers' trends, behaviors would be discussed and then going back together and then kind of like presenting what the outcomes were, discussing them. And based on on these results, we would move to the next step. Does it make sense?

Jeongwon Gim [01:18:10] Yeah, I would love to be part of the workshop.

Lea Lewitan [01:18:20] Yeah. Amazing. I'm so, so happy that we talked, and it is being so enriching and a really talk. I think I learned a lot from you.

Jeongwon Gim [01:18:33] I think pretty much everything was really inspiring. But yeah, it was really good to talk to you and I would like to be part of the workshop

Lea Lewitan [01:18:47] Thank you so much.

Jeongwon Gim [01:18:49] Yeah. Just let me know the schedule.

Lea Lewitan [01:18:52] Absolutely. Also, if you have anyone in mind from the public side, I mean, be it from Korea or be it from the US, from anywhere who is open, someone who's interested in this topic, someone who you would love to be also part of, someone who might be also interesting for your work. If there is anyone that you can think of, it would be amazing because I'm still lacking representatives from the public side, which is really relevant especially because it's a topic that is also interesting for cities.

Jeongwon Gim [01:19:34] OK, I will tell this information to my friend, sure.

Lea Lewitan [01:19:49] So we stay in touch and will definitely send you more information. Also, to Rob, of course, and for Jim, I think both were eager to participate.

Jeongwon Gim [01:20:05] Is Jim presenting in the workshop?

Lea Lewitan [01:20:12] Maybe it is interesting if he will be presenting on his projects on vacant and unused spaces and give a short introduction like what they have done as major projects. And then based on this introduction, we will dive into the workshop.

Jeongwon Gim [01:20:30] Yeah that might be interesting.

Lea Lewitan [01:20:34] OK, perfect. So, thank you so much.

Jeongwon Gim [01:20:38] Thank you for talking to me today, I had the same feeling.

Lea Lewitan [01:20:43] Perfect. Thank you for your time.

Jeongwon Gim [01:20:46] Thank you. Bye bye.

Annex 4: Qualitative Interviews – Transcript 3

Interview with Jeroen Beekmans, June 18, 2021

Jeroen Beekmans [00:00:00] But its housing market, I think there is not enough homes that are fit for the people who demand the homes, you know, so there's no social housing, there's a lot of owners occupied. And then the private rents, as in Germany, I think, is well developed, but not over here. It's a very small portion. But those people who earn too much for social housing, but to less to afford a mortgage and they're falling in between. So, that's the big problem, I think, in the Netherlands with housing. So, I think we have to make sure people can stream through the housing market a bit better. There is more streamlined process.

Lea Lewitan [00:00:43] Makes total sense that the very particular problem then maybe different to other countries. And I have one question before we start. May I record our conversation?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:00:55] Yeah, sure.

Lea Lewitan [00:00:56] It's amazing. Just going to do it with my phone and then

Jeroen Beekmans [00:01:00] we'll have enough interesting stuff to say.

Lea Lewitan [00:01:02] Oh, I'm sure. Actually, do you know Jorick Beijer from Amsterdam? I work with him since I think six months quite closely together and we're exchanging a lot on Brand Urbanism

Jeroen Beekmans [00:01:29] yeah, yeah, I know.

Lea Lewitan [00:01:34] He's the first who introduced me actually to Brand Urbanism. So, we never met in real life just on Zoom or Teams. But it's really thanks to him that I got introduced to the concept of Brand Urbanism. And he's also more or less the only one who could provide me with some working experiences and knowledge on Brand Urbanism based also on his work with Nike. I think you're the second one where I hope to like to extract some valuable information on Brand Urbanism because it is really hard to find literature on it.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:02:14] So, there's this, it's called Merkstedenbouw. Actually, it's good to know that we were the ones who coined the term Brand Urbanism because we were doing this research. This is Merkstedenbouw, it's basically the Dutch translation of it. And let's see if I can find it. I'm going to show you an article this one. I'm not sure if it's very useful to you, but this was the very first article we wrote about it. About the phenomenon, it was beginning of 2011, so it's more than 10 years ago already. In which we highlighted a few projects that were for us manifestations of urbanism. And then a few years later, we got the chance to do this research. It was funded by the Creative Industries Fund NL, and that we coined the term Brand Urbanism and it started to live its own life. So, I think it's nice that you came back to me with the term Brand Urbanism. And then, I mean, I will never claim that we were the first ones who saw it, but we were the ones who coined the term.

Lea Lewitan [00:03:42] That's one of my questions. Usually I'm a quiet spontaneous person, but I do have so many questions that I had to structure them a bit because of time pressure. So, I literally have nine questions but we will see how far we get. I really went through every

article on popucity, I think I read almost everything and every example because you almost don't find anything on Brand Urbanism. Still, it's crazy because the examples that you raised, I mean, they are some years old, right. Like almost maybe eight, nine years ago or nine years old.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:04:21] True. Yeah, yeah.

Lea Lewitan [00:04:23] It's interesting that there is still a lot to find on corporate urbanism which for me is something else, compared with your definition on Brand Urbanism with corporate urbanism. So, maybe I can just start with the first question which is a short introduction. Can you just briefly explain me a bit about your background and also your expertise?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:04:53] Yeah. So, I'm co-founder of popucity in short PUC. We are an agency based in Amsterdam, North Amsterdam, specialized in urban transformation processes. We are not architects. We are urban planners and human geographers. We work on spatial challenges for governments, for real estate companies, for housing associations. And also, we've worked in the past for brands, not really on communication or marketing project more content creation projects, for instance, car brand smart. But again, smart is also I mean, they're car brands, they want to engage around the topic of space and cities because they have a stake in this city's future, mobility and so on, as we are sort of in a bit of experience in this field. One of our big client is the city of Amsterdam. We are engaged in a lot of strategic placemaking projects across the city in which we developed their own blueprint for placemaking, and we got the chance now asked by the city to do this in different neighborhoods across Amsterdam, started in the southeast, now we are translating into the west and the southwest part of the city, that's one thing. We also do a lot of research on urban trends and spatial developments. So, Brand Urbanism was one of those research projects we've got enrolled in. But in the past year, we've also done research on the future of the housing markets becoming more flexible. What more, urban rooftops. I mean, we use our block. So, you've read the articles. We use a blog as I say, that these signals as building blocks for bigger and more in-depth research projects, and they are sometimes self-initiated, but also oftentimes sponsored, funded by other organizations. So, we are company with our feet on the ground, on the one hand. And on the other hand, doing a lot of research. So, we are very holistic in our approach and, but communication always plays a very strong part in it. Also, urban communication because we believe that cities nowadays change so fast that you have to develop new skill sets to change space. And we believe that changing perception of space is one of the big frontiers in urban development these days. I think by marketing a place in an interesting and right way changing perception of what people think about a place, you are also able to change a place and you don't even need to do large scale fixed demolishing, building stuff. So I think city development, place development as itself as a practice has become much more fluid in the past years. And I think we will continue to be becoming more fluid in the future. So that's what we are doing in this company.

Lea Lewitan [00:07:52] Yeah. The second question would have been what does popucity do specifically? But I think that's already said. Yeah, it's quite broad, especially because you're an interdisciplinary team, right? How many people work for popucity now?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:08:10] We skilled out our team a little bit as a result of Coronavirus, so now we are five. But it's going to easily grow again to seven, eight people. And for our project, for instance place making, our large-scale developments, large scale projects, we work in a network setting. So, this team for this project is about eight to 10 people, but only

three representatives from us. So, we work together with other designers and entrepreneurs based on the projects we are working on.

Lea Lewitan [00:08:43] And, yeah, the question you have already answered. But again, for the audio, who coined the term Brand Urbanism and when and how did it first emerged?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:08:57] Yeah. So back in the days, around 10 years ago, we brought out 10 urban trends every year because we thought it was fun and these trends were about anything we spotted in that year and then beginning of 2011, looking back at 2010, we discovered that more and more brands are, using marketing money to start or kick start projects or engage in projects that have an impact on the urban good, common good in cities. And we described the field as projects. And I think this article was called marketing is urbanism or urbanism is marketing. And we were playing with this thing urbanism is marketing and marketing is urbanism. And then we decided to do a more in-depth research project like this a few years later. I think this booklet was published; I think in 2014. By the way I have a bit more time than only 30 minutes, so no worries. This was 2016 this booklet. I think we started a more in-depth research in 2013, 14, something like that. We already had written a lot of articles and Brand Urbanism itself; I can look it up when we used this term for the first time on our website and they said it would be interesting to you.

Lea Lewitan [00:10:31] Yes, very interesting, because you'll be definitely my main focus in one of my empirical parts.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:10:41] 2012, I think, is I see here, at the beginning of 2012. So, one year after the first article we gave this term, we gave a name to the phenomenon.

Lea Lewitan [00:11:01] Maybe you said it already, but again, what made you aware of, or what was the process? You stumbled over one project and then you see, like a relation between brands and cities or kind of public-private partnerships? What was the journey of discovering brand urbanism?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:11:20] Yeah. We discovered a few projects. And I think one of the projects that we were intrigued by was the Barclays Cycle Superhighways in London back in the days. What we discovered was that Barclays wanted to sponsor this project in return for having the bikes in their brand colors and the cycle lanes as well, especially this specific type of blue. And we thought that is interesting. So, Barclays paid for something like a common good, you know, a system that everyone can use that adds value to the city, to mobility, to infrastructure. And this is what they want in return. And we believe because they were still interested in having their brand colors on it, we thought this is something different than just philanthropy, you know, or sponsorship with no strings attached. They wanted to have something in return, which means that it's more like a marketing project for them. And we thought, hey, it is interesting. This is actually also a marketing campaign for Barclays at the same time. And this was when we sort of started to develop this concept. And then I think we also stumbled upon a few projects initiated by Nike. I think they'd been pretty much the front runner in this field, sponsoring a lot of the social projects. But also, they did a bicycle high scheme in Portland, but also a lot of sports training centers. I think in Moscow they sponsored Nike Msk box in Gorky Park. So, we actually discovered a line of these projects, it is a collection of these projects in which every time, again, the same principles were became visible. And for many people, I think also the urban fields, they were just sponsored projects or, you know, just do they didn't really discover it was something different was going on here. And what brought us to doing more research on this? It was a question from the Creative Industries Anel. It was an open question, open call. We were getting out of the economic

crisis, and it was I think, it was still a crisis. And this crisis, of course, the entire construction and building business fell back to zero. But for many cities and municipalities, one of the main sources of income is land leasing, and that's selling to property developers. So, this source of income fell back. And this question was about can we find alternative source of income for cities to realize still services and goods and infrastructure facilities for citizens? But then with another stream of income and we pitched this to them, this idea of Brand Urbanism, hey there is a lot of projects going on here. We think that this is becoming a trend, something serious. We need to investigate it a bit more. That's how we sort of started. And of course, I think in a broader sense, we've seen in the past in the last decade already, that brands are much less about screaming their messages in your face in one way traffic. You know, I mean, we are living in a media society which, you know, there are figures about people getting one thousand commercial messages thrown at the plate every day. You have to do something different because consumers are also getting more critical about you. And this was, of course, a social I mean, you call it corporate social responsibility. And this is actually also coming out of it. But this is more of the marketing version of it. So, there is a few of these developments that brought us into this into this research project.

Lea Lewitan [00:15:25] And how would you, you elaborated already a bit, but like how would you define Brand Urbanism and what are maybe the main five or six main criteria for Brand Urbanism to define a project, Brand Urbanism and not tactical urbanism or corporate urbanism?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:15:44] Yeah. We have this definition, but this is the Dutch definition. I can try to translate it because, I mean, this is a serious research. So, we also spent some time on what the exact definition should be. We say: Brand urbanism is a collaboration between the local government and the brands in which a spatial project is becoming realized that is partly financed or initiated by that brand. The criterion? Yeah, yeah. We investigated over 30 projects of Brand Urbanism. I can send you the pdf of the booklet, by the way.

Lea Lewitan [00:16:34] That would be amazing.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:16:36] There are over 30 projects in here, also projects that have not been featured on popucity. We discovered a few things as criteria. But actually, one of our main conclusions, we of course, we also tried to find a framework for this. Is there a common way to do these type of projects? And one of the first things talking to all these initiators was that there was no common way. Sometimes the initiative comes from the brand, sometimes it comes from the city itself and different situations and context in which these projects come about, maybe in a minute to give you some examples. But what we found was the absolute most important criteria for brand urbanism is that there has to be a shared set of values between what the city wants, the ambitions of the city and the ambitions of a brand. And I think this is the very most important criterion for a project to succeed or not. To give you an example, maybe you've read about it. I think you did about this night lines, the night bus in Belgium. The budgets were cut, funding was cut for these night busses by the local governments. And then De Koninck, this beer brand, we interviewed them about this project, and they explained to us we are not a beer brand that wants to represent a certain tribe, you know, like we are only for the football fans. Or we are only for the Housewives, we are a brand for everyone. We want to be inclusive. They also are already engaged in sponsoring festivals or urban festivals. So, they wanted to have a festival. So, they were already having this inclusive character as part of their brand mission. And then at some points, the local government, they got the funding for the night bus as a result of the economic crisis. And they said, this is not okay, we are inclusive. So, I think people from outside Ghent and Antwerp, they also should have the right to go out in these cities and also travel back to their

hometown safely. So, we want to adopt the nightly public transports and make sure that everyone, everyone still enjoys the beers in a bar, not even our beers, it can also be other brands. But we want to make sure that, you know, everyone, will be getting home safely. So, I think here you see sort of shared values, you know, that they want to be inclusive. At the same time, this public transport company De Lijn they are also about, you know, making sure everyone can sit and can travel anywhere. So, I think there was a good match here. And I mean, I have made a few notes. What we also discovered is that, when you think of Brand Urbanism, its immediately about financial models, about money and then you get something in return or something that benefits the entire community. But we spoke to a few brands, marketing managers working at brands engaged in these projects. And many of them, they said to us, it's, you know, we are only paying, but we also want engagement. We want to be engaged and this also sort of a non-financial thing. But it also means that it's not only engagement from the brand, but they also require a certain engagement from the local government. So, as soon as the local government sees its financial transaction, then a project will fail because there has to be sort of a common energy and is maybe a bit different from the brand values. There should be sort of an energy to make it make it happen. And I mean, many local governments, they are sort of risk averse, right. They don't know how to deal with these types of projects. And this is one of the big boundaries for thresholds, for Brand Urbanism projects. And this engagement. It also extends into, for instance, making a good agreement about who will be responsible for the long-term maintenance of projects. So, for instance, here in North Amsterdam, there is a skateboarding track, it was sponsored by Converse, the sneaker band. They sort of took over the place. That was a bit of a tension between the local government and commerce and in the end, they created a super nice skating track. This is interesting urban furniture, but it's not generic urban furniture. So, when something breaks and the question is, is converse going to pay for this or has the city of Amsterdam the responsibility to fix it? This is a very, very important criteria for projects to fail or succeed. And you really see it, I am cycling and pass it every day. It's sort of deteriorating this skateboarding track. And then in the end, it just feels as a project. Another criterium that we discovered was in the first place, we thought Brand Urbanism is only for Triple-A cities, so. You know, it's pretty funny, a brand wants to do a project for the common good. But in the end, it's still marketing. So, it has to be the message when it would only stay within the city when a project is taking place, then for brands, it's still not very interesting. So, what we see with the most successful projects, they are also social media worthy. They are worth being shared. So, they also have a marketing exposure beyond those cities. And that is also one of the reasons why Triple-A cities are interesting to do things in like London and Berlin and New York, because, you know, you have a big stage to do it on. And it also automatically leads to more attention also online but on the other hands. For instance, this one in Charleroi, the painting..

Lea Lewitan [00:23:25] Yeah. With AkzoNobel

Jeroen Beekmans [00:23:28] Yeah. Charleroi was announced to be the most ugly city.

Lea Lewitan [00:23:35] I remember actually. It's really ugly.

[00:23:39] Ah you went there. Was the paint still on the buildings?

Lea Lewitan [00:23:42] Unfortunately we haven't seen it. We haven't seen this one. No. I mean we went for a field trip with the class because it's such an ugly city and a postindustrial city. But I interrupted you. This is a great example.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:23:57] Oh, Charleroi is not a Triple-A city, it's far from it. But here, there was momentum for Akzo to do something with this image of being an ugly city. And this in the end, let's to a campaign, a marketing campaign that became bigger. So, it was a project. I mean, I've never seen it. I've only seen the pictures of it, but I know about the project. So, it also has effects on a big, much bigger audience because the projects also, again, ambitions and values matched. And it's just a good project. And it's, of course, very. Yeah, it is very 'instagramable' even though there was no Instagram back in the days. So, that's also very important I think, that's the attention for projects has to extend beyond only the people passing by. So, in the end, it's a common good project, but marketing is still important for those brands.

Lea Lewitan [00:24:58] So, this criterion you said, so just to summarize it. You started with Triple-A cities, but how would you define this criterion? You mean that it has to reach a bigger audience?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:25:09] Yeah, yeah, it's hard to define what would have exposure and what not. It's. Yeah, let's see, if I can find something here. Oh, yeah. How could you put this, I know because you're doing research? So, you want to put it in a framework.

Lea Lewitan [00:25:44] [00:25:44] I'm developing this typology now for Brand Urbanism practices. And of course, it's important for me, based also on this interview with you as an expert on Brand Urbanism who coined this term to kind of pinpoint certain criteria. It's super interesting what you just said with Triple-A Cities. But Charleroi in that sense would be like a counterexample, right? And it was successful.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:26:43] Yeah, it was successful. Yeah. So, it's not necessary for a project to be rolled out in a triple A city, although I know that a brand like Nike, they have secret list of cities that are triple A or B and C categories. Paris and London and New York and Berlin, I think are in the top list and Amsterdam I think is one category below that. And this defines how much money they want to invest in these types of projects. But as I said, I think there are a lot of opportunities as well for the cities that are lesser known to be engaged in this. Although for Charleroi there was a unique situation. I think, you know, it was the ugliest city in the world. And there was this story. And I think the story is very, very important. It becomes more important for cities that are lesser known than Triple-A cities.

Lea Lewitan [00:27:47] Is one criterion of Brand Urbanism also linked to the idea of a certain networking perspective, like how a brand has to approach a city or that a city has to approach a brand?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:28:12] Yeah, projects come about in a whole lot of different settings. Actually, in our research we had the ambition to develop a toolkit to let these projects happen. In the end, it was harder than we expected because these projects there were multiple ways how this came about. But London has quite some experience with organizing Brand Urbanism projects. And, of course, it's Anglo-Saxon setting so they are more front runners in this regard. France for instance for the cycle superhighways. So, they organized competition. They said, we have this question. We want to realize this bicycle hire scheme and we're looking for brands that want to sponsor it. And this worked very, very successfully. And it was for instance in Dubai and in Madrid with metro lines, metro stations, it was being done even more bluntly. They just said, we have a metro station, and you can get its name by paying for it. This is maybe not even Brand Urbanism because there's no real engagement or common good in it. So, it's very, very commercial. London has developed more or less a toolkit for it and then questions which brands wants to step up and sees

potential in sponsoring, funding this ambition. Although, of course, it's about giving back as well. You know, as I said, it's not only about the financial transaction. There has to be some kind of magic in it. Also, as an organization, as a government, or in this case it was Transport for London TfL. They also have to commit to a project and give something back to corporations. But in the case of Charleroi, I think this was bottom-up from the brand itself. Also, these buildings, maybe few are municipal, but I've also seen housing blocks being painted. So, I think this was just more about the brand doing a campaign already. Finding a place, working with local companies and citizens, and starting it from the ground up, this is possible. And there's no single way that leads to Rome in this case.

Lea Lewitan [00:31:05] That's something that I also observed while developing this typology and scanning these examples that yet they differ a lot from each other and also in the way, also stakeholder wise, that would be another question. In many cases, they collaborated also with artists in many senses. So, it was like a mix of architecture firms or urban design firms, PR agencies and local artists. But on top of that, it has to be someone from a local authority. Right? I mean, Brand Urbanism is based on the idea of private sector working together with public sector, right?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:31:49] Yeah, but I think that urban designers or urban planners can play a bigger role in it and can maybe even take over the role of the public organization because most governments are also serving there, sounds a bit vague, but serving their own interests. As I said, there are people working there who are not really willing to try new things. They are very much protecting the common good, which is, of course, good. On the other hand, as a brand which also serves itself mostly, and I think therefore urban designers, that can be very, very interesting, as an intermediary role played in here. What we discovered was that most projects are done by PR media agencies, marketing agencies. And this is one of the pitfalls, I think, of course. Many projects went very well. But I think to be maybe even more balanced, it makes sense to put someone in between. And I think urban planners and urban designers are the most interesting, most relevant group that can play its role in it. Also referring again to the Converse Skatepark in Amsterdam. The marketing agency really took over and they still have a bad taste in their mouth, because they sort of let themselves be overwhelmed by this project and Converse and the marketing agency took over the place. And it's about exposing it so that was not a good idea. I think, if an urban designer would have been engaged in this project, it would have been more balanced between both interests.

Lea Lewitan [00:33:36] The agency to get it right, the agency that was involved in this project was collaborating with Converse?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:33:43] Yeah, Converse was their client.

Lea Lewitan [00:33:46] And what did they miss or what was the problem exactly?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:33:51] Yeah, I think Converse wanted too much, they wanted to shape the entire public space around as well. This is how it looks. So, it's actually a former gas station. In the forefront, this the skating track. They worked with local artists by the way.

Lea Lewitan [00:34:29] Interesting. And many of these basketball and sport facilities were collaborating with artist.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:34:40] True yeah. It was made during the opening. Converse wanted to take over the entire scene with banners and logos, and this was not so attractive for the

organization, the public organization that runs them, because it's a community center. This old gas station. And then Converse was not prepared to finance the long-term maintenance projects. They reserved some money to take it all away. So, when the city wants to get rid of it, Converse will break it out.

Lea Lewitan [00:35:26] But the maintenance itself, preparing things is not discussed or not financed. The Examples that you raised or that you explained, were the brands from the very first beginning onwards, committed in repairing and maintaining the spaces that they are involved in?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:35:53] No, not all of them. No, no.

Lea Lewitan [00:35:56] So it is an issue?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:35:58] It's certainly an issue. Yeah. And I think when you look at transport for London, I think they know how to do it. Also, for the bicycle hire scheme. They have a very good contract. And there were responsibilities and they agreed on a terms and also sponsorship terms, by the way, because the scheme itself has been taken over by Banco Santander and it's not a bank. You can ask yourself what's in it for them at the same time, it's less risky, you know, to take it over because it's already a successful project. I think they developed frameworks for this, and in the case of this Converse Skatepark, that was more a test or something or an experiment and nobody really thought it through. So, it depends. But long-term maintenance is one of the big issues.

Lea Lewitan [00:36:53] Very important for me to raise this issue. A question based on an interview that I read with you in The Guardian in 2014 "Beyond Billboard's. Brands turned to the city itself as a new creative canvas." You claimed that cities should avoid Facebook Urbanism. The actual claim is: "It is urbanism for the Internet which is made so it will go viral and be blogged about." You explained that "the urbanist activist tends to be cynical. Where brands are involved, they feel like their topic is being colonized by brands and it affects what they do." So, I assume it is about finding the right balance commercially, right? Maybe you can explain again what the issue of Facebook Urbanism would be or is.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:37:54] Yeah. It's always a question about how genuine a project is, how genuine is a brand and their ambitions and aspirations. I think there's a thin line between Brand Urbanism and guerrilla marketing. And so, I think guerrilla marketing became even before Brand Urbanism in which, like Levi's, I think, I also refer to Levi's.

Lea Lewitan [00:38:24] Yeah. Yeah. This particular example, I didn't find maybe you can also elaborate on this one. The link was not available anymore on google, unfortunately.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:38:29] Yeah. I think Levi's did a campaign and I think it was New York or something in which they just hung a lot of their trousers in trees all around city. You know, with the logos on it and stuff like that, and this doesn't make sense at all, right? It has nothing to do with common goods or something public. It's only putting your brands out there and using, actually colonizing the public sphere because they didn't get a permit for this. Colonizing it just by putting your stuff, your products in places that everyone uses. I think it's a very, very bad example that is even be called Brand Urbanism. But this campaign, it went viral on the Internet. Why? I have no clue. Some people found it interesting. But then they realized that this campaign was also made for the Internet. It was I mean, the very moment all these pants are hanging in the trees, you hire photographers, brands, you take some nice pictures of it, and you send out a press release and then you hope as many blogs and vlogs

and TikTok channels take it over. And this is what I was calling Facebook Urbanism. I think, when social media emerged, you saw a lot of urban projects they started to behave according to the algorithms or to the attention span of Facebook users or the social media users. So, all designers were constantly thinking, how can I brand this project to a big online audience instead of putting the local audience first? And also, this has to be balanced a lot. As I said, many Brand Urbanism projects also should have likability factor online and on social media. But it's always about the balance between those two, you know, social engagements on the one hand and marketing on the other hand,

Lea Lewitan [00:40:48] You just said liability of a brand?

Lea Lewitan [00:40:53] Likability.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:40:54] Yeah. Yeah. So how likable is your expression? How much free publicity can you get with it by doing something crazy?

Lea Lewitan [00:41:07] Just because I saw some examples and I wanted to know what the main differences between Tactical Urbanism and Brand Urbanism are. Can tactical urbanism also be Brand Urbanism and the other way around? Whereas the fine line?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:41:26] Yeah, I think Brand Urbanism I think those two are not they're not of the same. I mean, they're both urbanisms. But I think Brand Urbanism is much more of a model to get things done, as more of a framework. Tactical urbanism can be realized through Brand Urbanism. But, for instance, like a piece of infrastructure or a bicycle hire scheme can also be Brand Urbanism. So, yeah, maybe the project was sponsored by an airline, what was it again. They worked with projects for public spaces.

Lea Lewitan [00:42:19] I think this one I don't.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:42:20] It was done in a few cities, hard for the community. Was it American Airlines or Southwest Airlines? We organized a conference on this topic. And we invited a representative from Southwest. They worked with a project for public spaces that placemaking organization to revitalize community squares in a few cities in the US, Chicago, Baltimore, San Diego. And so, in this case, it's more of placemaking projects, but it can certainly be Brand Urbanism.

Lea Lewitan [00:43:02] Why is it more of placemaking? Because it's related to a specific public space?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:43:09] No, I think that the tactics they used to revitalize the space was more with local communities, more participatory planning process. So, in that case, it was placemaking. So, tactical urbanism and placemaking, to me there's also a thin line between those two. It's two sides of the same coin, actually.

Lea Lewitan [00:43:32] Yeah. So, but to wrap it up again, like tactical urbanism is from what I learned, is more a short term solution, in a more spontaneous way of making things better on the ground. Tactical urbanism is not linked to a kind of public private partnership, right?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:44:04] No, no, no. What we are doing for the city of Amsterdam can also be called tactical urbanism. It's a project funded by public money. I think to me, it's always fake these definitions. But to me, Tactical Urbanism is maybe a bit more design thinking and a bit less participatory urban development, which I like more. To me, engaging

local communities is something that's very important, but asking people who are not very interested in participating or sort of lost or lost their trust in the governments coming from a government perspective and asking, hey, what do you want to a neighbor with? In Amsterdam they tell us, come on, this has been asked five times again and five times in the past. And nothing has ever changed. Instead, what we do, we're looking, scouting people who are already there in the local neighborhoods that have initiatives that want to do something, and then we give them an extra push in the back by sponsoring them or making their projects become a reality, because you already have the energy, we already get the energy that's there. Yeah, we only have to use it and make it better.

Lea Lewitan [00:45:24] Three more question, would you consider concept of Brand Urbanism as like a classical form or example of a public-private partnership?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:45:36] No, no, not really in public-private partnerships, you could call it a public-private partnership. You can definitely do that. But public-private partnerships are more about urban development. So about the classical way of urbanism, so neighborhoods and buildings and those type of structures, while Brand Urbanism can be the layer that will be layered on top of that, so the infrastructure, the little initiatives on the square, painting a building. It's other than that. It is also different from, you know, these factory towns, I think, in Germany. You also have Bartu in Germany, the shoe brand.

Lea Lewitan [00:46:30] Yeah. Yeah.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:46:37] And also learned from Eindhoven, Philips the Electronics brands. They more or less created the city. They built, they built residential quarters for their workers. So, they a company that cared about the living environments of their workers. So, they decided to develop the neighborhoods that the workers would live in. So, that's Philips for instance in Eindhoven. And this is even different from public-private partnerships. You already see this happening again in Toronto with Google and Ikea is also trying to, you know, to be engaged in urbanism itself. But public-private partnerships. I think that's different from Brand Urbanism. It's more about urbanism itself.

Lea Lewitan [00:47:37] But interesting, because I develop a kind of narrative because the whole thesis is also about the decline of retail and how rand urbanism can be an answer for revitalizing empty spaces. So, I don't have the answer yet, but it will be also one of my last questions to you. But going back, I do frame Brand Urbanism as a part of public-private partnership. Would you consider that as like wrong or is it maybe a new developed form, but it does uses basic characteristics of public- private partnership where public and private sector collaborate?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:48:24] Yeah, I would not blame you for doing this. It's actually about, this definition question we have a lot of discussions about this in the office as well. Is it social, is it corporate, you could also say it's form of corporate social responsibility, or you could say it's a form of marketing, but it's also a form of public-private partnership? It's debatable. I think it's more of a fluid spectrum. So, yeah, I think when you would frame that way, I would not blame for it. I think put your arguments forward, I think that's totally fine. We wrote a bit about public-private partnership in this booklet.

Lea Lewitan [00:49:10] Yeah, that would be awesome.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:49:14] Let's see. I can maybe translate it for you.

Lea Lewitan [00:49:18] Thank you so much. Yeah. And I can just translate it right through Google.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:49:23] What we said it's not about PPP. It's not about in which companies and public organizations finance a project together to realize a high-quality city. In the case of banks in the business district of Amsterdam, that finance a new tunnel, on a highway because they are based there with their headquarters and benefit from the representative environment. The added value that this delivers, this type of projects, they earn it back, for instance, in the value of their own real estate. They're already based there. So, it's more of a real estate strategy, another marketing strategy. The same counts for car manufacturer Daewoo. They were engaged in mid 90s as one of the initiators of New Songdo City a new town in South Korea that was realized using an extensive PPP construction and is now known as one of the prime examples of a smart city. After the bankruptcy of Daewoo, the project was taken over by other private investors. So, I think what we tried to say here, I didn't write this text. We tried to say it's more real estate or real estate development oriented. That's the end point of it. But you can broaden, you say it's not only about real estate, it can also be about other urban services in the end.

Lea Lewitan [00:51:18] Sorry, so public-private partnerships are about real estate?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:51:23] That's how we define it.

Lea Lewitan [00:51:27] It is good for me to know. I could maybe emphasize that the usual form and also the development, emergence of public-private partnerships that started in the 70s, 80s were more linked to real estate development projects. But it's still this form of collaboration, which is obviously a big part of Brand Urbanism. What is interesting is that from the typology that I developed, based on a lot of popcity articles, but also desktop research, most of the examples that emerged were between 2012 and 2015 and then again, 2017/2018. Do you see any relation of what you explained before that out of this crisis, there was this need of like reimagining how cities approached problems in cities and maybe the emergence of Brand Urbanism was a response? But what about the last two or three years? Maybe I just I don't know about the most recent examples. But how come that most of the projects were between 12/15 and 17/18?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:52:58] Of course this research just ended in 2016. So, in our case, maybe that sort of explains why we featured less projects after that. I think it still exists as a phenomenon. At the same time, I believe that it hasn't grown into its own independent marketing technique, you know. It has not become a renowned way of marketing. It's still a sort of and I'm not saying it doesn't happen anymore or it will not grow, but what we expected was that cities that would become a medium in itself, in the past week, TV and Internet. Cities would also become a medium in the build environment. This prediction, I think, is not really come out because and I think it has to do with that these projects rely on unique circumstances instead of, oh, hey, I'm running a campaign for Coca-Cola. OK, that's one million on TV ads. That's two million on Facebook ads. This requires more thinking about this. It's more tailor-made. And I think this is a reason why they're still rare. But I think it will not mean that there is no future in this project because I simply believe there is. What also is important that in the same period in which Brand Urbanism emerged, there was this news coming out of, you know, more than half the world's population is now living in cities. It's becoming the age of the city. And I think this thinking has become a bit less in the past years. And due to a coronavirus, even more. Cities like Paris and Berlin, London, New York, even Amsterdam, where shrinking already before coronavirus. People are leaving the city. So, the question is, if cities are the stages for the future or are we going to much more hybrid

forms of living, which would divide our time between countryside and cities? So, cities are maybe losing their relevance a bit. I'm just elaborating on it a bit and thinking out loud. But I also believe that brands are also very opportunistic, right? So, I think now many brands are much more engaged with WOAK themes. So maybe a bit less with cities, although those two can also be hand in hand. But that's one of the things that we discovered a bit. But I think good partnerships, I think we write about it recently, Brand Urbanism. Let's see.

Lea Lewitan [00:55:56] One very recent article? Yes, please send it through the chat maybe ?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:56:09] This one, I think is also interesting. So, I'll send Substantivity. For instance, National Park City. It's of course, not a policy, it's more of a framing way because nothing will change to the city itself, but it was backed by Timberlands, this initiative. So, yeah, I think this is interesting. These are the last two projects I discovered. Maybe you've noticed that we are also writing less on our website at the moment.

Lea Lewitan [00:56:56] I did, yeah.

Jeroen Beekmans [00:56:58] There was other work to do. We also we are in a constant identity crisis in this company, so the blog will stay, but we will be talking more about our own projects and a bit less about other projects. Our research focus has become a bit less.

Lea Lewitan [00:57:19] Do you think that some sectors are especially involved? Because what I saw, is that it's a lot about Nike or Reebok, as this example of the transformation of gas stations in the future. A lot of sports companies are involved. Do you see the same kind of patter?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:57:43] Yeah, yeah, I think so too. I think a lot of financial companies and a lot of sports companies.

Lea Lewitan [00:57:52] Financial companies are like banks?

Jeroen Beekmans [00:57:56] Yeah, banks. Let's see if we can find more. Yeah. Pepsico, Nike, Vodafone, but I mean sports companies, of course, I think the reason that sports companies are especially engaged in this is that their brand values are moving exercises are easily matched with urban ambitions. So that's why.

Lea Lewitan [00:58:35] Mm hmm. And last question because I'm focusing on the revitalization of inner-city districts. And I have to like, show evidence that Brand Urbanism can be an answer or can support allocating new activities to empty retail space. So, it's very particular and I haven't seen any Brand Urbanism practice yet that is focusing specifically on the revitalization of city centers like inner-city centers. So, I do see that it's more linked to a specific public space, such as a basketball court or a public transportation, but not specifically on the vitality of a neighborhood, let's say. Or do you think that there is? Because what I was asking is like, imagine, you with your brand lose your store. You're maybe a local brand. And because of covid-19 or other factors, you lose your shop, and this shops gets empty. And that's something that a lot of cities face at the moment. I mean, more than 50.000 closures were estimated for London, but already like a month ago. I think now things are opening up. But a lot of cities do face this problem on a long-term base. And I wonder how, you know, we talk about big banks. We talk about global brands, but can also local brands that have maybe a super strong local embeddedness or a strong local community and quite known as a local brand, do you think that they could also be part of this trend?

Jeroen Beekmans [01:00:36] Yeah, I think they can especially with cities and not triple A cities. So, that also means that not only the city reputation skills are a bit less, but it can also be about the brands that are willing to do this project. So, I think local brands are definitely interesting to work with in those circumstances. Yeah. Have you been thinking about what type of revitalization it should be?

Lea Lewitan [01:01:15] I think that's where I am a bit stuck because it's part of my literature review to see what kind of revitalization approach I'm using because I need to see also what are like my main criteria for this kind of revitalization approach that I want to introduce and then how Brand Urbanism as a practice merge or match these like revitalization definitions. So no, do you have a particular approach or are you familiar with, like, revitalization tools, approaches, theories?

Jeroen Beekmans [01:01:54] Yeah, for like shopping streets and the decline of shopping? I think there is a lot of future in mixed use in hybrid concepts and I think working can be one of them, so. I think for a lot of businesses and shops, but it's also about restaurants and hotels. What's important for them in the coming years and also seen as a result of Covid is that one sided business models are hard to maintain in the near future. So, running only a shop is not enough anymore. And you also have to serve coffee. You have to maybe offer a few workspaces to locals and organize some events, those type of things, trying to mix these concepts would lead to more vibrant shopping streets. So, that's really from a real estate perspective, how you would use real estates. Are you looking specifically at those type of mixed use or more public space?

Lea Lewitan [01:03:05] No, it's literally about storefront retail space on the high street on eye level.

Jeroen Beekmans [01:03:31] I can also imagine that brand urbanism can also be of importance for temporary projects. So, for instance, running an art exhibition that stretches across different shopfronts, that could be very concrete ideas that could also be linked to a brand that cares about creativity or cultural expression or something like that. There are a lot of brands that care about this type of topics. But maybe be a match in here. Something like that. Mixed use concept they are very hard to you know, they are not really fundable by brands, I believe, it's more about how you operate real estate. Yeah, good question, it's hard. I have to think about it more.

Lea Lewitan [01:04:25] I don't want to steal your time, now we are talking over an hour. If you come across any Brand Urbanism example that did something related to revitalization of city centers that would be of utmost relevance for from my research to just like show some evidence that Brand Urbanism can also be related to revitalization.

Jeroen Beekmans [01:04:56] I'll check it out.

Lea Lewitan [01:04:57] Thank you so much. Hopefully we will keep in touch.

Jeroen Beekmans [01:05:04] Yeah. Yeah. I'm curious to see the final results.

[01:05:08] Yes. I will definitely send it over, but I will need some more weeks. But if I have any particular question, I may contact you again.

Jeroen Beekmans [01:05:19] Yeah of course. No problem. We have quite some conclusions in our publication. So maybe they are of use for your research. I'll get back to you by email with the link.

Lea Lewitan [01:05:40] Thank you. Have a great day. And thank you so much for your time.

Jeroen Beekmans [01:05:44] No worries. Thanks for talking. Nice to meet you.

Lea Lewitan [01:05:48] Thank you. You, too.

Jeroen Beekmans [01:05:49] Good luck. Bye bye.

Annex 5: Qualitative Interviews – Transcript 4

Interview with Jorick Beijer on May 12, 2021

Jorick Beijer [00:00:06] There's a lot of research done, I mean, from scholars, but I think in that sense, also globalization also has been driving also local like localization. At the same time, I think through becoming more globally became more local. So, in a way, this is more of a refinement of your theoretical framework, which is more next step sort of afterwards. I'm just trying to grasp where this fits your thesis.

Lea Lewitan [00:00:52] Based on the literature review and based on what I read, I will develop this hypothesis that will then be either confirmed or not throughout my empirical data that I'm collecting. So, based on the literature review and on the interviews that I had with you and some other experts, I assume the relevant question is how to include brands, because this is obviously the main goal should be like how can we rethink this cooperation between cities and brands? And but then also, what do brands need in order to get even to a point or to the importance of recreating space? So not every brand is maybe relevant. Not every brand has the asset or the expertise or also the knowledge or creativity to really reuse the space, to rethink the space, to like, create new concepts for empty spaces. So, my idea was to understand what is important as a brand in order to cooperate with a city, a brand that has no attachment, no connection with the city itself, why should they even be interested or even capable of changing things because they don't know what the needs of their community are. They don't know what people are looking for. They don't know the high streets because they're locally not embedded. So, it means that they don't interact with the city. So, these were like, you know, questions that I raised. And therefore, I developed this one hypothesis, which I think is important for this kind of cooperation, that a brand is locally embedded if we want to revitalize these high streets. It was just something that I wanted to know what you think of. And then also maybe something else based on your expertise that you would say is relevant for a brand as a kind of precondition to get even to the point to collaborate with the city.

Jorick Beijer [00:03:24] Yeah, I mean brands are businesses, and so in the end, there needs to be business. And what I see, every purpose story, I mean, has a business angle. So, with Nike when we think of active cities. I mean, that comes, of course, coming from a concern about physical inactivity. And if people don't do sports, they don't mean sportswear. And so that's I mean, that is and of course, that's purpose. And it has a addition. And there's a lot of benefits for the community, but there is also a business angle. So, I think that is always a precondition. It's sometimes hard to validate it and it might be more of a return on impact thing rather than a return-on-investment kind of thing. But the business angle is always going to be there because, I mean, businesses are not charities. They might spin it in different ways, but in the end, this is what it is, and I think it's fair because they also have shareholders, they also need to justify these kinds of expenses. And that is also a balance. There you see very clear that some brands are more progressive. It's more of a natural part of their business, almost. If you think of like Patagonia, for example. I mean, that's one of the brands that has completely revolved around sustainability, for example. So that is their DNA. But for others, it isn't. And they try to spin that narrative. But I would say, I mean, business is

always a driver. That being said, that, you see that there is a wider trend, of course, where brands now are becoming very aware of the fact that also their societal sort of image their form of sustainability and ESG becomes a super important component because they see that the consumer in the end is, I mean, you have the investor behind the company and you have the consumer. And the investor, I mean, decides through buying stocks. The consumer decides whether they like a brand or not through buying stuff, I mean, furniture or barrel shoes. And so, but you see now that the consumer is becoming more dominant, I would say, in the last five years, that is a change in a way. And I think that brands are becoming much more conscious of that fact that they need to do more to engage with community, to engage with the consumer beyond just pleasing the shareholder. I'll stop here.

Lea Lewitan [00:06:46] I mean, that's so interesting what you're saying, because based on my literature review, this is for me one of the most striking or most important arguments in order to introduce the importance of brand urbanism. We have to understand that there has been a general shift between the consumer and brand relationship, what the consumers want nowadays is something else then 20 years ago or 10 or even five maybe. So, there is a general tendency towards a more socially responsible brand. So, it is about a brand, that you want to identify with, a brand that you support in its core values. And this is something that has changed the relationship between not only consumers and brands, but I think also cities and brands, because if a relationship between consumer and brands changes, depending on how, but then the needs of consumers are different, and a city has to adapt as well at a certain point.

Jorick Beijer [00:08:31] Well, I mean yeah, that consumer is becoming more critical and more conscious. Consumer lives increasingly in cities, and that's where brands also try to approach this consumer in a place where they think they can make impact. And I mean, the whole thing around TV commercials, and that is also a bit of a best era, if you can sort of picture my word of mouth is and build trust with that consumer at a place that matters. I mean, then you are in good spot, but let's be authentic. I think that is, of course, the difficulty. How do you do that sort of place, branding that in a way that it doesn't feel like sort of a seasonal campaign, like a one off, but that is real and long term.

Lea Lewitan [00:09:45] What is for you placemaking?

Jorick Beijer [00:09:52] Yeah, I think this word has been used and misused of course for years, and so it's a bit of a broad definition. For me it always has to do with driving footfall and building an image of a certain place. And so, I mean, you do that. Nozette Kings Cross anymore but do that at a place that doesn't have a story, that doesn't have natural footfall and try to activate it, and you try to build, to try to layer that narrative, which is, by the way, not a top down exercise, but it's a sort of evolving bottom up thing. The Oakland position paper deals a bit with this. How you build a brand for a place.

Lea Lewitan [00:10:49] A brand for a place means?

Jorick Beijer [00:10:59] Well, places and identity. Yeah, and the identity, of course. And everyone, I mean people all create their own story in their mind. I mean, so the neuroscience

in that sense of cities is fascinating because you and I experience place in different ways based on our own experience, best experiences, our own feelings. There are backgrounds. But you can also influence that perception and you can also tell that story active or less active. I think places not necessarily means be marketed but you can develop narratives for a certain area, and you do that, of course. I mean, there's is also a commercial angle when real estate developers do that to make a place more attractive, more recognizable, more interesting. And that is where then also that relation between corporates, for example, and these places also matter, because if you want to develop a new shopping street, for example, or you want to have, what they call it, want to signature leases, because they define the character of a place as they see a lot of these place making, place branding agencies that say that they're good at developing these strategies.

Lea Lewitan [00:12:33] Yeah. So, would you say placemaking is a relevant concept in the discourse of brand urbanism?

Jorick Bejier [00:12:43] Yeah, yeah, I mean, I think these two are strong, are strongly connected. Yeah.

Lea Lewitan [00:12:53] And would you say that a specific place in a city that was created through a brand urbanism practice let's say through this kind of cooperation is always in its place identity undoubtedly linked with the brand itself?

Jorick Bejier [00:13:24] No, no, no, I don't think so. I mean, no, it shouldn't. I would rather say it should not because otherwise, because brands also come and go, so I think it is also a risk. I mean, this might happen in like a corporate campus environment where you say the campus becomes public, but it's so strongly connected to one corporation that is inevitable. But in a city, for sure, no. Also, because, I mean, businesses also very volatile and they come and go and go bankrupt now and then.

Lea Lewitan [00:14:04] But like a practice such as Nike with its basketball court in Moscow or in Paris. To what extent can a place be still, in a way independent from its initiator? Like a Nike sport basketball court will always be linked in a way to the brand itself, or to the company, no? Or would you say that their practices are so independent from the brand itself because they don't I mean, basketball courts, sport, Nike, it's so obvious that it in a sense this particular Brand Urbanism project has to do with sport and it's very fancy or funny. There is a handwriting. You know, you would recognize the brand.

Jorick Bejier [00:15:00] Sure, like a signature.

Lea Lewitan [00:15:01] Yes signature, sorry, signature of Nike. What do you think? Maybe it's another hypothesis that might be interesting for me. Is it relevant for these practices to have a signature? You understand, for these successful practices?

Jorick Bejier [00:15:23] Yeah, it's an interesting question. If you think of Moscow, for example. Yeah, that whole thing in Gorky Park. It's called Moscow Box and MSK Box. And so, there's no Nike in the name. But the place, I mean, clearly has a couple of swooshes.

And so, it's clearly Nike signs. When we now have discussions with landlords and developers, I always have to tell them to sort of back off with a Nike sign, because the developers are very keen to get like a lot of Nike on the place, but Nike would rather do it very subtle, but so I think there's a value in the brands because it attracts people. But I'm not saying that every brand is interested in putting their logo on every spot in the city. And so, I think in that sense it's very different from case to case. In general, I think sometimes the partners are more interested in Logos than the corporations themselves might be. But it's important there's an activation, because if you think of a basketball court, with or without the swoosh, it is hard to Jordan sign. It is just more interesting for teenagers with the Jordan sign on it, apart from the fact that this drives anything for Nike. So I mean, it is a complicated discussion, I have that every week. Yeah. We would rather keep it

Lea Lewitan [00:17:04] Who are the people who are against or critical? How would you describe them? Who are these people? What are they're fighting for, what are they're standing for?

Jorick Beijer [00:17:14] which people?

Lea Lewitan [00:17:14] I mean people that would be against that?

Jorick Beijer [00:17:20] Yeah but it's more the internal people within the company. Yeah. I mean, look, let's support it but we don't need to put our name on it super big and but then the others, the externals they want to have that. Because it's also a risk, from a corporation point of view, here you have your name and your logo and to many of these kinds of installations. It is also a reputational risk if it's not being used or it gets torn down and there's no upkeep and it's three or four years later, as a business you also need to manage your reputation. I mean, there is a lot of reputational risk with these kinds of things. Yeah. On the other hand, but then the flip side, if you don't connect it to a brand in any way, you could wonder why a brand should do it after all.

Lea Lewitan [00:18:19] Please explain it again.

Jorick Beijer [00:18:21] If you would with no means put your name on any of these things, but maybe still pay for them while there's no signing. Why would you do that then? Because then maybe you need to be a big charity fund.

Lea Lewitan [00:18:39] Exactly. It's so interesting because people that would be against it are the people that would probably fight against the neoliberal approach of city development where cities are run in business style based on an entrepreneurial strategy and an increasing privatization of social resources. The private sector has gained more impacts on cities which has also led to new urban strategies such as gentrification policies that have driven cities towards more success in the global market. So, how can these corporations, let's say from the perspective of local authorities or governments that actively approach and engage with a brand, how should that be helpful for not only a certain type of class, but for everyone? Is it an equal concept? Can brand urbanism really cater for everyone? Maybe these are very ideological questions, but these are some critical perspectives that I also want

to include in my thesis. I was just wondering what you think, but we had these talks already. But maybe you have different experience with people that would you encounter who would oppose your ideas or would be like critical about project A, B, C, D, E.

Jorick Beijer [00:20:30] Yeah, I mean we spoke about this before, it happens. I mean, sometimes it's people that work for city governments or just citizens and that hear about it and find it strange. I mean, for me, it's always the fascination, if the brand wouldn't do it, what would you have then?

Lea Lewitan [00:20:53] Exactly. Where the people within Nike or within any other company that you were working with who were not aligned with this idea, as in like, why should we cooperate?

Jorick Beijer [00:21:11] No, Nike, not so much. Because I mean, they love crazy ideas, big ideas. I think with Siemens, for example, there were some more people that were doubting. And it was even on their own campus kind of thing. I mean, it is not so much that they were against this, but they would just be skeptical maybe about that.

Lea Lewitan [00:21:36] It's so interesting. So, you have even within one company, obviously different opinions about how important is it? Is it important? Should we cooperate? Should we invest in that idea? Good to have that in mind, and I think you need to leave, no?

Jorick Beijer [00:22:07] Yeah. Do you have anything else?

Lea Lewitan [00:22:09] Um, no. just for the workshop, but that's fine. It was more again a kind of questioning session. But it's important for me. Because all these questions regarding this on-the-field-experience of brand urbanism is you and there is no one else that I'm investigating at the moment.

Jorick Beijer [00:22:36] My pleasure.

Lea Lewitan [00:22:36] It's just so relevant to also for me to include limitations, good and bad things and things that I am maybe not aware of. So, thank you so much.

Jorick Beijer [00:22:57] Yeah sure. No, happy, any time. For the workshop, I've just blocked these two afternoons.

Lea Lewitan [00:23:04] Amazing. Three already confirmed and it will work out, positive thinking.

Jorick Beijer [00:23:17] Awesome! I am looking forward.

Lea Lewitan [00:23:19] I will definitely get back to you before and also send some information, so that people can prepare without a big effort but just to know what's going in the workshop.

Annex 6: Qualitative Interviews – Notes 5

Conclusion of the Interview with René Vade, June 10, 2021

Decline of retail: different factors (consumer behavior change, e-commerce, experience economy (more critical, what exactly more related to a general change in economy?))

Development of smaller shops moving out of the centers to the big shops (different from countries)

Online shopping, smaller shops going back to the center struggle with the big box centers (Click and collect)

Consumer behavior: ignoring Covid: two trends

- 1) Weekly shopping (drive out) to more impulse shopping
- 2) Shopping behavior, daily shopping, formats were moving to smaller formats, (weekly shopping different to daily shopping), proximity, from big boxes to local proximity, (different by country)

Difference in analysis of grocery shopping and cloths shopping, different elements, split the trends, consumer, luxury shopping, different meaning than 10 years ago, fashion shopping, trend of different online/vs offline shopping, trend of experience shopping (key trend), experience shopping was not there 20 years ago (shopping experience, certain malls are very attractive some are less attractive, different experience such as cinema, shopping, leisure)

Observation: municipality are stepping in more than in the past (last 10 or 20 years)

A more active policy with cities and councils, more actively involved on city planning and giving preference of different types of shops (trend analysis in the 80s, all centers looked the same, on purpose driven by municipalities influencing more what type of shop is allowed in the city center to make the city center more attractive, more shopping center were pulled out first trend when all shops, more a combination of :in the past was purely commercial driving, today more planed driven, what is the role of the local government? Who are the key stakeholders involved in these types of xx?

Strengths: innovation, creative ideas

Weakness: diversity, power of few brands that take over the city centers, small scale,

Opportunities: inside city centers more attractive, attractiveness of lifestyle

Threat: inclusiveness, split in society, city center purely about commerce and money? Do you ask people to spend money on using the basketball court or not? How do you keep it inclusive and not only for commercial benefit? Inner city becomes empty (!)

Guiding principles: As an outcome of my thesis: what could be the guiding principles for urban city leadership?

If Nike knocks on the door: what are the perquisites of this partnerships? What are the guidelines to make a successful partnership? Elements such a making it inclusive, circular etc.

You need to have the governance right, ESG (environment, social and governance)

With the guidelines, you give governance structure on what would be the guiding principles for cities government. Need to be circular

Nike example, preserve construction in cities (as one of the elements): Keep the buildings in place, effective use of buildings, you don't replace the buildings, if they want to participate they need to keep existing construction sites, historic buildings

Lea: In which ways could empty retail spaces be (re)used? Can you define concrete activities and associated partners that would contribute to a high quality of urban life and enrich the social fabric of the neighbourhood?

René: All about collaboration between urban planners, architects, make it a combination of working, living, experiencing/entertaining, combination of cafes, restaurants, attractive economy, working spaces, working spaces and living spaces

How can brands interact with the community?

Brands are looking for traffic: Needs to be a win/win situation for brands

Difference between grocery shopping or fashion or sport brands

Different dynamics and shopping behavior surround it

Concrete activities in empty retail spaces:

UK Report: couples of ideas

Trends: dark kitchens, stores – do you want this in cities? City council who needs to have an active role: What is the best use of these spaces? Combination of urban planners

Right combination of living, working and freedom

Especially driven by covid-19 (angle): living, working and freedom will be mixed

Local shops will be more attractive: Where do I pick up my lunch? Different habits and patterns of people are changing → interesting from an urban planner perspective

Empty offices outside the city, all interacts with the city

Does it mean for the retail spaces close to the city are moving back to the city? Different movements and dynamics

In what way has the relationship between brands and consumers changed and how does this influence high streets?

Latest report: consumer behaviour → technology, trust, purpose (ESG) and local

Not only generation Z, entire population interacts with the brands in a digital way

Buying local means less ecological footprint

Price is the key (!)

I prefer bio but it is more expensive, what is the price that I am willing to pay for it (up to 5% not more), well-off people don't look on price but majority of people look at price as the first selection criteria

Other studies: 6 drivers of purchase decisions → experience, value (number 1 criteria)– How to people perceive the value? Very subjective

Lea: Four consumer brands: One is: Erosion of trust → Companies must promote a sense of purpose, meeting the safety needs of customers and employees first, while also sharing their commitment to environmental and social policies.

Channel diagnostic: whether you buy inside or outside the shop (online/offline)

Looking at amazon: consumer commerce company, serve us (human beings) from birth until death, the move from producers, distributor service, shipping it to the retail and they buy it in a shop

R: Value chain: retail ship it to the consumer, consumer commerce, how do you interact with the consumer (digital and physical)

Comparative perspective: Triangle

Brands sitting between retail and e-commerce company (report kpmg "future of retail")

L: How important is the local embeddedness of brands in order to collaborate with the city?

How can local brands (smaller brands) cooperate with cities in revitalizing, reimagining or re-using empty spaces?

R: Any local brand can do it! What is the main purpose? Does the brand attract traffic or does the environment attract traffic? Always the question!

Do you always need a big brand to create traffic?

It is about a strong collaboration between architects, city council, planners etc. then it is possible. It is about the attractiveness of the shopping experience. It is about the composition (!)

What is the role of the brand in developing that attractive environment? Creating the traffic or creating the xx ?

Not convinced that you need a big brand

Key driver: In what way is the brands capable of developing traffic?

Traffic = form of diversity, fluctuality and movement of goods and people in the high street

To define: What is the role of the brand?

→ Leveraging the footprint, creating traffic, financial

If you have a successful brand it is probably easier to get other retailers there

Question: Who is the attractive? We have to get away from the Nike example, it can be a cloth retailer etc.

Composition of what you try to achieve is important ?

You have to look for customer journey: Why are people buying? Customer profiling: What kind of customer is buying?

City council has to take the lead in bringing these forces together, don't let Nike take the lead otherwise you have the wrong outcome

COMPLEXITY: safety is one element

The core is: creating attractive living environment, how can you bring safety back to the city center, also at night?

Creating attractive city center, ensuring safety, high streets were awful to walk at night, it is all about living experience and how to improve them

→ That's why you need to have ownership and has to stay with the city council

Out of my study: We need to have guiding principles (what do you want to achieve? What is the purpose? Livable cities?

Thinking of Jane Jacobs: What is the problem of vacancies? Why do we need to counteract street level storefronts? The more we have vacant stores, the more problems we have in cities? Why is retail decline a problem? Why are vacant stores a problem for the livability for cities?

Annex 7: Qualitative Interviews – Transcript 6

Interview with Rob Shields on February 22, 2021

Rob Shields [00:00:05] Driving and, yeah, they hope to stay there as much anyway, so there's the dynamic there, but that means that city centers are more or less dead, and the shopping malls have been closed for many months. And interior urban spaces, Montreal or Toronto are closed for many months. They still have foreign investors from China and Hong Kong buying anything they can find and as much of it over the telephone in order to get money out of Asia, Russia, for example. So, this also drives some of the, you know, whatever. So, it's hard to know exactly what the trend is. But logic would say that having to work in a high rise building with where you take an elevator to the 80th floor with other people, and then you're sealed in, you know, with air, that doesn't change very much. So, that this kind is not a good scenario in times of pandemic. And it won't be very desirable for your generation, I would think. You know, who's grown up if you go up with the pandemic then you think, well, why would I do that? Why would I put my employees there and why would I put my office there? Maybe I could go to North America, maybe I can go to suburbia and people park on the strip mall model. People Park their car in front of my office. You know, why would I or, you know, I have a campus or something like that. So, again, these are kind of stereotypical planning models and solutions, but it means that for North American cities, there will be a lot of sprawls, anyway. So, attached to this is the problem of transportation systems, which lost their right, most of their riders, 50 percent of the riders or 70 percent of their riders. So, city governments are in financial trouble because of the cost of busses and subway trains, and it reverses all of the gains of green urbanism and stuff, trying to get more public transport, for example, just erased. But they say that will come back. So, you know, there two sides, so it's hard to know exactly what the situation is. So, do you have anybody who's talking about North America or do you have anybody else from North America?

Lea Lewitan [00:03:24] So, the only person who I have from America is Stefan Weiler, from the Colorado University. He's a professor of economics and director of the regional economic development Institute.

Rob Shields [00:03:50] Yeah, yeah. You spoke to Jim? Who's been at the Wirth Institute as a postdoctoral researcher, he's a researcher, you know, kind of stuck in it because, well, he has an appointment and I think in the states now, but he can't go there, and he worked anyway. So, it's very, very weird. And he came from Colorado, so he might know Stefan. And he worked for Arup in London while he was doing his doctorate in Eichstätt.

Lea Lewitan [00:04:50] Yes, exactly. No, we had a very interesting and very inspiring talk because we found out that he knew my mother from an exhibition in Munich, what a small world.

Rob Shields [00:05:01] Yeah, Jim knows everybody. Anyway, the idea of brand urbanism is interesting. I don't know. Are you working at all on cities as their home brands? Copenhagen would be very interesting for that because Copenhagen itself became a kind of brand.

Lea Lewitan [00:05:45] Actually it's more about from place branding to brand urbanism. So, this trajectory that happened in recent years and there is a big change that happened due also to the way brands are operating today, also with, of course, the digitalization, but also with this change of purpose towards more sustainable development or more sustainable behavior or like a general change of habits within brands, how they operate. So, based on very interesting talks that I had also with Jorick, who is an expert in that field, just explained why brand urbanism is different also to just normal public-private partnerships. And what I'm trying to do is just elaborating on this difference and also trying to understand why there is also from brand side this interest. Let's keep it open if it's like a holistic approach or more like a very selfish interest, but like engaging with cities and trying to have an impact also on the built environment itself and on public spaces.

Rob Shields [00:07:27] Can you give me an example?

Lea Lewitan [00:07:29] Of course. Many, I can share with you one interesting example, I think also would be interesting for the workshop. It's just a very interesting file. OK, sending it now.

Rob Shields [00:08:00] Does it send through the chat?

Lea Lewitan [00:08:17] Uniqlo is named on this particular publication. I mean there is a lot to criticize, but it's always this challenge to view both sides. But for instance, Lululemon, it's a Canadian yoga brand that you may know or also Decathlon, a French sport retailer or pizza, which is like a fast-food company operating in different cities, five different cities with 30 restaurants. And then also different examples are either like operating more on mobility issues, like providing an entire city with bikes, for instance, sponsoring the bikes. So, urban mobility or let's say providing sports facilities. Nike, for instance, with the different basketball courts in cities such as Paris or Moscow, also the Nike bike town with the different bikes that were provided. So various examples.

Rob Shields [00:09:45] So, those examples of brand urbanism are a little bit diffuse in that they seem to engage the kind of local community but don't engage the identity of the city itself. So, they're providing services through their facilities for example.

Lea Lewitan [00:10:15] Exactly. It's less branding, it's less the branding of the city itself. So, this is the main difference. Let's say Guggenheim in Bilbao, as a landmark of a city, branding the city itself. So, I assume that this is the change that has happened. I don't know yet if it's rather away from these ownerships, let's say corporate ownership, but rather like corporate sponsorship.

Rob Shields [00:11:06] Yes, got it. There's a North American brand that might fit that, and I have a terrible time remembering the name of this particular thing. So, it's just down the street. It's good earth or wholefood. I think it's Wholefood Market, it's owned by Amazon.

Lea Lewitan [00:11:44] Owned by Amazon? That's crazy.

Rob Shields [00:11:45] Yeah. So, it's called Whole Foods Market and it's a chain of organic grocery stores.

Lea Lewitan [00:11:59] I know the company.

Rob Shields [00:12:01] So I don't know if they have any in Europe. Do they?

Lea Lewitan [00:12:10] I know it from Los Angeles when I when lived there for a while.

Rob Shields [00:12:15] OK, when did you live there?

Lea Lewitan [00:12:19] Some years ago, 2013. I did like a summer business course at UCLA.

Rob Shields [00:12:25] OK, that's interesting. It's food store but it has a community space and health activities tends to kind of presented itself as friendly to the community, something like that. So, it's providing some kind of privatized services in relation to the things they sell to the community around it. OK, that's useful to get this. So, I don't know if you're interested to you know, I'd recommend Jim as a person to talk about the idea of pop-ups and though it isn't exactly brand urbanism. But you know, Jim might have some thoughts on that. Our research project was to produce a kind of, well, we had a workshop, and we have some international examples, but also a little booklet which you might have seen on the spaceandculture.com website.

Lea Lewitan [00:14:03] I mean, that was the reason why I reached out to you, because I was very impressed by this work.

Rob Shields [00:14:11] Thank you. That's good. Anyway, so Jim's been kind of spearheading that and maybe developing that into a further publication, more like an academic book. But the idea is to take empty spaces and to give them a purpose related to the community. The problem in city centers will be morphology and especially central business districts where nobody is living. It's the problem of what do you do with the 80th floor of an office tower when people are afraid of elevators? I don't know if you've ever been to Brazil, but some tropical countries are people are afraid of contagion and you have a very strong class divide. So, people want their own elevator. They want to have a servant who goes in a different elevator. And there's this sense of, well, you know, they're coming from the dirty streets or the dirty neighborhoods. And I am a professional and I want, you know, my personal elevator anyway. So, their apartment, architecture of their residential buildings is very tall and thin. So, they would have two apartments on each floor and a number of elevators. So, the idea would be you share your elevator with, you know, obviously one

neighbor and your apartment are the half of a floor. So, it goes from side to side, which means you can open the windows and the air goes through in the tropics. Design, tradition, but also it means you have this one elevator lobby, you have one elevator door, you know, one apartment this way, one apartment that way. And then you have a service elevator for staff and maybe you only have two or three elevators. And so, you share with maybe, you know, 20 households. That's it. You have this kind of elevator snobbery.

Lea Lewitan [00:16:34] I have never heard of it.

Rob Shields [00:16:38] You know, you have a very extremely class divided society like Brazil, you would find the same thing in Colombia, Peru. But I think, you know, maybe that's the future. Maybe that's what people will demand. But how do you do that in an office tower in Frankfurt. Anyway, so very interesting question. Anyway, so Jim knows more about the empty retail space. I don't know if you want two people. What I can talk about or simply listen, maybe I don't know what you prefer is, is I know about retail development in North America, 1990s, early 1980s onward, so kind of mega shopping malls, which are now kind of well, you have them in Europe, but the kind of shopping malls that combine leisure and commute functions and shopping in an interior space. And by leisure, I mean like swimming pools, libraries, but also roller coasters, wave pools, this kind of thing. So, these are the first one was in Edmonton, actually. So, it's invented in the West Edmonton Mall. This is a kind of specialization, as well. The ideas wide traveled to Paris because we will build a copy of the Eiffel Tower inside our shopping mall. So, specialization of the world. And I'm quite interested in that sort of theoretical world view, I guess the theories of that.

Lea Lewitan [00:18:47] I'm going to forget and please go on, because it's so interesting for me also for my literature review, if you have any publication or one of your own publication or authors that you may refer to for my literature review, I would be more than happy if you could share something.

Rob Shields [00:19:09] Yeah. Have you seen a book called Places on the Margin, which is on place identity? It could be read as a critique and refutation of place branding. I don't believe that place branding works.

Lea Lewitan [00:19:32] Yeah, I am also very critical.

Rob Shields [00:19:34] So, I believe that places have their own intrinsic place identity and it's related to how they are taken up socially. It's a social identity and it's related to other places. So, if you have heaven, then somewhere else, you must have heaven. And it's a system for instance. This idea to change the identity of place based on branding is impossible without changing the network of difference of other places, you have to change the other urban identities. They shift, it's a relational structure, so it's a structure of difference. And that structure of difference with practices, you know, discourses and kind of lived place is a specialization. So, that serious specialization is in a book called Places on the Margin. And the West Edmonton Mall article is in an article called the "West Edmonton Mall". It's called "Social Specialization and the Built Environment. The case of the West Edmonton Mall". It's somewhat out of date, but you get an idea of how completely crazy they

were because they were the world's largest shopping mall as a family project, just as a kind of idea. And you created almost a city and it worked and took off. And it was famous for quite a while. And then it was copied, literally, copied exactly as on a smaller scale in various other cities. And then they built a new one in Minneapolis, which is even bigger. They adjusted this balance, this mix between retail and leisure. So, West Mall was 50/50 percent, new ones were 25 percent leisure and 75 percent retail because they realized, you know, you have a shopping mall, Lululemon, and then you have a zoo in front of it or an aquarium with submarines takes a huge amount of space. But I mean, they were completely over the top, like a kind of, you know, with flamingos and performing Penguins and all kinds of really interesting things, like there's a replica of the Santa Maria, Christopher Columbus' ship, so there's these colonial gestures, gestures around indigeneity, racism. It's just a really, mad environment and it's toned down now, but anyway, it was built in the early 80s, 82 to 84, 80, 1982, 82, 84. Yeah, kind of interesting for this kind of interior shopping mall spaces. And that reproduce the Arcade's European arcades.

Lea Lewitan [00:23:25] So, this kind of retail, let's say, shopping malls with this 50/50 percent leisure and retail, I mean, the general evolution or establishment of malls, they go way more back in time, right? I mean, they originate from around the nineteen hundred, no?

Rob Shields [00:23:53] 1850s. And you have big ones like Galleria Vittoria Emanuela of Victoria Emanuele in Milan that would be an example. While you're in Madrid, you should walk around and and look at the passage, the Arcades. There's a very good history book by Gaist, German Gaist. Anyway, on Arcades on the history of Arcades up to 1935, which is the Berlin Arcade, Friedrichstrasse, which was destroyed in the in the Second World War, I guess. Anyway, that was the last big one in Europe until Gateshead in Newcastle in late 1980s or early 1990s. And then you have a boom of these suburban malls like around Paris or any city shopping malls also in south of Paris, there just indoor shopping centers. So, this is kind of anti-place urbanism but the West Edmonton Mall rebranded Edmonton, rebranded the city where it is located. It rebranded the city as a consumer destination. So anyway, that's interesting. I'm also interested in brands and brands as intangible property. What is a brand? I don't know if you studied brands at all. It's a non-economic decision-making feature or whatever. In other words, you buy the shoe not because it's cheap and not because it performs well, people buy it because it's a Nike shoe. So, and the brand, it's a virtuality. So, it's an intangible like goodwill. It's intangible or virtual as a thing. So again, the example of Nike is, it's not the shoe. So, it's not material, it's not the probability of the performance. You know, you can't jump higher. So, it's not probable or a real possibility. It's ideal possibility of the ideal possible, such as a discourse like the slogan "Just Do It", or a narrative about the shoe or about Nike is something else. What's Nike? And, you know, the brand, the closest you can come is this kind of a logo, the swoosh. And it's just this intangible thing that makes the brand detachable from the object and then you put it on a hat or a shirt, whatever. So, brands are detachable from objects, from material objects. They built an ideal. Not real and actual. Does it make any sense? So, their being, their fitness, to be a bit philosophical, it's maybe useful to think about what a brand is, because then it leads to the question, why to attach this to a material thing like a city?

Lea Lewitan [00:28:19] It's very, very interesting as the emergence of brands as we know today, where entire youth movements or entire groups identify with one brand, is quite recent. For me it is interesting to understand, because I don't know yet how that has changed in regard of the appearance of the term brand urbanism. There has been a shift, I guess, in the way brands can operate and also reach out to people today because of social media, because of the way of communication today or mass media. But mass media, I mean, mass media has existed for many, many years. But I mean, the media that we're using today. What you have asked also about city branding. It's not about giving branding a place, but like how can brands that have such an impact on entire groups, on entire cities as they cater for a city for instance, consumers identifying with this particular local brand. How can these brands have also an impact on the built environment, but not landmarks, not as a giving identification but more a holistic view?

Rob Shields [00:30:17] Yeah, so a critical response would be how is it different from a company town in the US and European example would be the British town called Port Sunlight, which was made by sunlight.

Lea Lewitan [00:30:45] Or Wolfsburg in Germany.

Rob Shields [00:30:48] Yeah, there must be examples that are, you know, in Germany or places like that. And of course, in North America, it's typically mining or resource extraction towns.

Lea Lewitan [00:31:05] Also in Copenhagen, I forgot no name but the big local Danish brewing company they built an entire urban development area.

Rob Shields [00:31:46] So, did you study Henry Lefebvre? Was that useful his divisions between practice, discourse, lived space?

Lea Lewitan [00:32:07] I'm thinking also in what way it may be important for me to engage as well with Lefebvre? Let's say I was stuck a bit with the question of, like, how a special political economy can help understand capitalism also through ordering of state space, public space? I also stumbled over Walter Benjamin.

Rob Shields [00:33:16] Benjamin wrote about Arcades.

Lea Lewitan [00:33:17] Yes, we studied in Copenhagen, especially his childhood in Berlin.

Rob Shields [00:33:26] Right. Did you read *Passagen-Werk*? Which is about cities.

Lea Lewitan [00:33:26] No.

Rob Shields [00:33:34] *Passagen-Werk* or Arcades Project. It is in German and French

Lea Lewitan [00:33:51] In what way would you think would it be relevant or necessary to refer to the Lefebvre?

Rob Shields [00:34:00] That the Lefebvre is moving to understand the city as a field of fields in which you know in which it is a social object. So, this the connection between social approaches and urban theory, urban planning and so on comes from Lefebvre. So, he's the kind of origin point in the 19th, actually in the 1960s. And he extends the idea of what it is to be at home in the world, to dwell in the world from a kind of poetic idea which you have in Heidegger or kind of phenomenological idea of being in the environment to a political idea that it is a kind of essential for humans to make a kind of a community space and be in a relationship with other people. And so, he turns to the community environment, the urban into a political stake in this politics ultimately is about the world you live in and people more and more live in cities. And his view is that it's not just about bricks and mortar, but we live in a headspace, a kind of what I call a specialization. So that world of distance and difference is integral to our, you know, our political outlook and the way we treat other people. So, we're not only racists in how we treat people, but we see them as coming from a place. And so this kind of geography, conceptual geography, is integral to our actions, to the kind of our belief systems and to the way we live. So, yes, those kind of then he has this quiet, quite odd three part dialectic with practice's discourses and lived space. And people have floundered a great deal saying what lived space is. But it's perhaps in a way better to modify the third, you know his ideal sort of lived space and just say places are lived, is lived space. So, space is kind of abstract and life remains too abstract because his book production of space "production de l'espace" into that space is a kind of history, is laid out. And he says each mode of production has its own mode of space. Or think of it as spacing, it's round. It's not spaces around. So, think of it as spacing, placing these things here and those other activities over there. And we don't want them to come together because, oh, that would be a taboo. So, he has a history which precedes by mode of production Marxist kind of political economic base. But, you know, I think it's a bit easier to just imagine that there are people's practices there. Their habitus in like Bourdieu, they're kind of discursive formations, à la Foucault, that discourses, and then their kind of everyday lived, kind of integrated, not abstract space. And that's place. So, when you dump all the theory and you think, what is that thing? This kind of is "place vécue" or he has different names as well for it, that is even more confusing. But at the end of the day, if you think about it, this place, that's a place like a meaningful place like home, saying that it's an integrating thing. So, in a critique of the Lefebvre, as I mentioned, is that he really stays too abstract to operationalize it easy. Easily, though, they've tried through this idea of the right to the city, for example. It's been most important. And the other critique would be that, you know, he doesn't really seem to understand, he doesn't have a good grasp of a feminist approach to place home or space for cities to kind of. So, he has no idea. So, and it is very obvious. So, I wrote a book about that called "Lefebvre, Love and Struggle", his life is being spontaneous and everything. And so, you know, and being in love all the time and spontaneous.

Lea Lewitan [00:39:47] He's not a family man.

Rob Shields [00:39:49] No, he's a party all the time. That's Lefebvre. But that's what his suggestion is to be in a kind of completely at one with your environment and your place and to be fully alive at every moment or as much as possible. But I think that there are many more tame and more well-grounded versions of that which understand living fully in a place.

And a lot of that is from indigenous knowledge in North America. So, they would have to so-called we can decolonize Lefebvre turn to indigenous knowledge. And there you see discourse practice place. And anyway, so could be useful to have the idea from the little diagram I said which is that, why do virtual brands want to engage with concrete material objects like cities? And the answer is it's not. It's engaging with another virtuality called community or the urban or something like that. So that the link is literally brand urbanism, not brand cities and they're really not engaging with individual people, though they are customers, but they're engaging with the community, or they think they are. And it's a kind of an untutored, untheorized thing. You can use this diagram to make sense of what's going on. Are we talking about objects? Are we talking about some kind of risk calculation like probability? Are we talking a story, a discourse or is something that's like a thing, but it's not a thing? So that's an intangible which is central to surveillance capitalism and contemporary media. So, that could be useful to pose as a question at least. And also place is virtual also because its place is virtual. It's not a material object. It's a social object. So, it could be useful.

Lea Lewitan [00:42:30] Yes, very inspiring. Thank you for sharing this, because the relation between brand and urbanism, it's so interesting to see also how people refer to it. If I introduce this concept to people that have not been familiar with it so far, because it's always linked just to a city branding.

Rob Shields [00:42:58] Yes. You mean like place branding, similar to place marketing?

Lea Lewitan [00:43:02] But I do see that there is something else evolving, or at least there is a potential that may evolve that should be grasped. I mean the potential of these practices, I think especially because of Covid and especially the way brands, particularly brands, have gained so much more importance. But then also some have lost, I think, also so much importance within the last year due to Covid.

Rob Shields [00:43:51] What's an example that lost?

Lea Lewitan [00:43:54] An example that lost is I mean, maybe some airplane companies.

Rob Shields [00:44:13] Yeah, I'm just thinking in relation to place marketing, maybe sports teams that have big stadia and maybe they are kind of the historical pioneers of the kind of branding that you're talking about would be the athletics clubs around football that have many, many small clubs. And, you know, what you see in kind of event is just the top of the whole pyramid. But they are combining place, marketing, services, brand and so fans. And maybe there's something that could be usefully learned from their historical practices now in relation to influencers, social media influencers. And I know the word in French, "tribut". So, you know, market niches or brand followers or sports fans like people who are members of a team. I was thinking of these kind of football clubs where you can play and you're not just a fan, but you can be a member of a team.

Lea Lewitan [00:45:45] Yeah. Where did you get this diagram from?

Rob Shields [00:45:54] Yes, I can send you a book or a text virtuality, OK. I don't like the way that book is laid out, but there's a book is a very simple introduction, and I could try to send it. There is a summary in an Italian journal online. So, those were a few of the things brands as virtualities, retail places, retail malls, mega shopping malls and place identity that's possibly going on. Just to say one more thing is that I'm co-investor in a small shopping mall and we're working, actually deploying some of these ideas. And in Canada, it's a multi-ethnic country. And so, the shopping mall is located in part of Edmonton called Little Italy. And, you know, I guess one of the major partners, obviously, is a grocery store called the Italian Center, which is really just a food store. But the park across the street is named after the founder of this food store. And so, it's a kind of an ethnic branded area. And I don't know if that's relevant. That's the Italian. But there's a German one as well, and there's French. So, it's many different ethnicities, languages. They all have their churches and community halls and so on. So, because of retail facilities in that space center, deep in this kind of identity. So, I mean, our biggest problem has been what to do with the old espresso bar, with the old well, it was not a family friendly bar, so how to and it drove people away. So, you know, how do you make this into a community place where it became just a possession of a very, very small group of men anyway?

Lea Lewitan [00:48:55] So, yeah, maybe interesting. Very interesting. And please tell me again, what is the name of the of this area?

Rob Shields [00:49:05] It's called Little Italy or Italian Little Italy in Edmonton. So, the project is under name the Piazza Edmonton CDC.

Lea Lewitan [00:50:46] And the book that you mentioned is called Virtuality?

Rob Shields [00:50:51] No there's an article named virtualities and I'll send that, and the book is "Places on the Margin." And the book is for case studies of kind of imagined places, two of which are tourism destinations. So, the first chapter is theory, so maybe that's useful. I'll email you the article.

Lea Lewitan [00:51:33] Wonderful, perfect. Yeah, especially what you said about brands obviously as these intangible properties. I really need to get a bit more into also elaborating this definition of brand to better understand it in relation to urbanism.

Rob Shields [00:51:53] It's easy to remember in relation to the Nike shoe. You could look up Celia Lurie if you want to find a source in English. She writes a little bit about brands. I can't say exactly where, but probably you can find an article about branding.

Lea Lewitan [00:52:14] Thank you so much.

Rob Shields [00:52:16] She's in London and. When is your workshop going to take place?

Lea Lewitan [00:52:35] So end of March. I haven't set an exact day, but not before the end of March. So, end of March or first week of April. I'm now trying to reach out also to municipalities and artists, retailers or retailer associations. So, it should definitely be a multi-

stakeholder approach or at least, I try to have important representatives on board. So, citizens, academia, private sector, public sector retailers. So, this is where I am now. And as I said, it's not only Europe.

Rob Shields [00:53:42] It's a bit difficult to separate the hype from the kind of good practice in this area.

Lea Lewitan [00:53:53] What do you mean exactly?

Rob Shields [00:53:56] Because the consultants who are successful, they really need to generate a lot of buzz, a lot of media coverage. And so, they really marketing all the time. Do you consider also alphabet labs?

Lea Lewitan [00:54:21] Well I don't know them.

Rob Shields [00:54:24] Sidewalk labs

Lea Lewitan [00:54:26] Of course. I reached out to them actually and requested but I haven't heard back from them yet.

Rob Shields [00:54:36] It failed. So, they closed. But you could find a lot of material about Toronto. Of course, their model was to not just provide services but to have as intensive as possible surveillance and digital information gathering about the people who used their area, which was the waterfront of Toronto, would be like the Port of Barcelona or a large port area. So, this failed because of criticism of the of the privacy concerns. And finally, they canceled it probably based on, you know, just not good for kind of brand discussions before Google especially. But I think that you would find that it's like a kind of an open discussion among a lot of public and privacy experts about the relationship between private enterprise cities and digital space, digital channels, or layers, if you want. Mm hmm. It's interesting, but you don't get that level of surveillance except maybe in Disneyland or casinos or some parts of some cities. So, City of London is very heavily kind of guarded. Mostly it's visual surveillance, but now digital and I don't know where else in Europe they would have that because of European Union laws for privacy.

Lea Lewitan [00:56:51] But you mean that in relation to or the surveillance topic of surveillance in relation to?

Rob Shields [00:57:01] Yeah. Because Sidewalk Labs proposed to redevelop a large area, 100, 200 hectares, to make a new urban area living, and working that had experimental 5G surveillance or 5G, you know, always on, you know, so Siri or Google always on that kind of thing. You know, phones always tracked and mobility, you know, mobile electric vehicles, but always tracked. And so, it becomes a kind of information gathering platform for alphabet Google, for marketing, because they know everything about the people who live there. This privacy concerns about that and information on who owns data, blew up into a huge debate and eventually Alphabet says we're leaving, we're not doing this. And so, I don't know the current status, but you could see that as a similar thing where they're making Alphabet or

Google into a Google neighborhood or Google city, but it's not everything labeled Google or Alphabet, it's just all the services there have this super high speed 5G support and everything else is like a kind of a Euro Disney, people live in full time. So, this would be an extreme case and I think there's a lot to be learned from that.

Lea Lewitan [00:59:03] Yeah, very interesting.

Rob Shields [00:59:06] They canceled it in about one year ago or perhaps or just before covid. So, by one year or 14 months ago. So that would be very interesting.

Lea Lewitan [00:59:19] Thank you so much. Very, very interesting,

Rob Shields [00:59:22] Because you could make these, like snapshot case studies to really ground what you're talking about. It avoids a lot of theoretical discussion about virtuality.

Lea Lewitan [00:59:44] I need to see how to use it as a as an example. But thank you very much for referring to it.

Rob Shields [00:59:58] Let me know what is useful for me, and I'll do my best to participate.

Lea Lewitan [01:00:03] I really hope that you participate. It's just so valuable and I think especially with this link between brands and your knowledge about brands and then also the understanding of the retail, evolution and change within this industry. I will definitely send you more details on the workshop itself, and I need to work also on the outline and detailed steps and how I will divide the different participants. And I mean, there is a lot to do. But I think overall it's about combining the results from let's say, this typology and the understanding of these different practices and of course, critically rethink these collaborations. I mean, it's always good to rethink it from a very critical perspective. Not too critical, but of course. So, there should be enough space to have different opinions and different views on this.

Rob Shields [01:01:29] Yeah, if you're interested, afterwards, you could write a 300- or 400-word post. Yes. I'd like to send you that address. Space and culture.com, if you're interested. It's our website linked to the journal called Space and Culture, Academic Journal. That's the website and we do our book reviews on space and culture and book reviews online. It's not placed in the paper journal. So, we also put short posts, interesting things, kind of ideas, sometimes just images with a long caption. I'm just in the process of trying to hire an editor for this.

Lea Lewitan [01:02:19] A great, great website. I went on the website some days ago and went over it a bit. That's very kind of you. Thank you so much. It would be not now, right? It would be after?

Rob Shields [01:02:31] No, when you are done and think you want someone to see it.

Lea Lewitan [01:02:32] Wonderful. I would love to, thank you so much. I think the outcome might be very interesting. And, for me, I mean, I need to check, but it would be also interesting to have you and Jim on board. You both have different, for me, especially from my project, very valuable perspectives, or expertise. And the idea of turning vacant spaces into multipurpose spaces or how to like reuse space is, of course, one of the main topics. And it should be one part at least of the workshop itself, reimagining these spaces. So, I need to check, but it would be amazing to have both of you on board. Thank you so much for your time and everything that you shared with me and whatever you come across, a paper or something, a book that you think might be interesting, please sent it through. Thank you so much for your time.

Rob Shields [01:06:42] OK, take care! Thank you.

Lea Lewitan [01:06:44] You, too. Thank you. Bye bye.