Materiality, identity and social positioning: The case of the Elbphilharmonie

TOBIAS HEUER

Magdalene College University of Cambridge

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that the work in this dissertation is my own. It includes nothing that is the outcome of collaborative work, except as specified below. All sources of information are acknowledged and referenced in the text and bibliography.

Papers 1, 2 and 3 were co-authored by Professor Jochen Runde (who is the second author in each case). We published Paper 2 in a *Special Issue* in the November 2021 edition of the *European Planning Journal*. Paper 1 was revised with the help of Professor Paul Tracey.

The dissertation has not previously been submitted to any university for any degree or other qualification and does not exceed the maximum length stipulated by the Cambridge Judge Business School.

Tobias Heuer

Magdalene College

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If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.
Antoine de St-Exupéry

My desire to embark on an academic journey was deeply rooted in my personal upbringing. However, I quickly came to the realization that setting sail required a ship. This dissertation constitutes that ship and building it turned out to be a demanding endeavor. The vessel required careful construction, which could be achieved only with the immense support I received from the academic community, most notably my supervisor.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Jochen Runde, whose excellence, diligence and patience evoked my admiration for him as an academic, teacher and ally. He liked to joke about my "mindset," "ability to recover from setbacks," and "always keeping a smile on my face." What we achieved together was grounded in you showing me your passion for academic work in an "apprenticeship" guided by our golden rule of constructing a ship—"step by step."

I also thank my second supervisor, Paul Tracey, for sparking my interest in the materiality-organizational identity relationship and for always maintaining a birds-eye view on my progress. The scholarly community at Cambridge made my journey unique and enriched my life as a whole. I would particularly like to thank Thomas Roulet, Tony Lawson, Niklas Lindlbauer, and Jan Lodge, among many others, who supported me in uncountable ways. Their academic advice provided more than motivation, because it allowed me to flourish within the academic community. I would also like to express my gratitude to the roughly 170 interviewees who generously shared their time and enabled me to collect the empirical material I needed for this project—the ship would never have been constructed without it.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea that led to the three papers that comprise this thesis was sparked during an organizational identity class, which was part of my M.Phil. in Innovation, Strategy and Organization (ISO). Professor Paul Tracey made us aware that there was a shortage of empirical studies of how materiality affects organizations and their identities. I accordingly decided to devote my first-year presentation, my report for the Ph.D., and my first paper in this thesis to the subject of how materiality affects organizational identity.

Much of the management literature on materiality is interwoven with research on technology. My interest in the two began during an earlier master's degree at the University of St Andrews. My dissertation there was on the "theorization of technology as a research stream of practice in academic research." While the term "technology" is commonly used to refer to humanmade material artefacts, I covered the main interpretations of technology in the management literature: (1) technology as artefact, technical substrate and tool; (2) technology as a proxy; (3) technology as a behavioral rule; (4) technology as an organizational context and organizational model; (5) and technology as agency. My principal focus was on the opposing cases of technology as an object (e.g., technology as an inanimate artefact without intrinsic agency, but used by a human agent) or as a subject (e.g., technology as agency, where it is a nonhuman agent operating by itself).[1] This theorization was informed by prominent accounts of technology in the management literature that had been published since the 1950s. Technology research in management studies had been object-oriented and structural during the 1960s (Woodward, 1965; Thompson, 1967; Perrow, 1970), but became more subject-oriented and constructivist during the 1980s (Barley, 1986; Orlikowski, 1992; Leonardi & Barley, 2010). It subsequently took the "practice turn" (Orlikowski, 2000) triggered by the work of authors such as Giddens (1984), Bourdieu (1977, 1990), Pickering (1995), and Schatzki et al. (2001). Practice theory became a popular analytical lens (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013: 3), leading to a practice "bandwagon" (Corradi et al., 2010; Nicolini, 2013) under the influence of the physicist-turned-philosopher Karen Barad (2003),[2] and ultimately morphed into work on what

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[1] In terms of this view, technology is a nonhuman agent when it works independently of human agents; for example, computer programs that use artificial intelligence to "learn" and automate certain procedures and processes.

[2] Karen Barad's work is deeply influenced by Niels Bohr (1928, 1935) and the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics. According to the "principle of complementarity," objects have complementary properties allowing us to only measure some but not all of the object's properties at a given time:

> The very nature of the quantum theory thus forces us to regard the space-time co-ordination and the claim of causality, the union of which characterises the classical theories, as complementary but exclusive

came to be called "sociomateriality" (Orlikowski, 2007, 2010; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008, 2015a, 2015b).[3]

Object- and subject-oriented technology research reflected an implicit ontology sometimes referred to as "Kantian subject-object dualism," in which the users of technology (the subject) are separate from the technology used (the object). The humancentric perspective (Boudreau et al., 2005; Orlikowski, 2007) that followed the technocentric perspective moved from a focus on causality proceeding from object to subject (e.g., technological-objectivist or materialistic determinism) to a focus on causality proceeding from subject to object (e.g., subjectivist or idealistic voluntarism) (see Leonardi & Barley, 2008). However, as represented by practice theory and, later, sociomateriality, the humancentric perspective witnessed a decisive move away from Kantian dualism, which was considered "a limiting dualism" (Orlikowski, 2007: 1437), towards a performative, co-constitutive and relational ontology. An important feature of this ontology is the idea that subject and object are fundamentally inseparable and that the boundaries between the two are merely contingent "agential cuts" decided on and reproduced within the intersubjective practices of (communities of) human observers. This position, sometimes referred to as "agential realism", has become influential as a proposed solution to the one-sided causality often reflected in object-oriented and subject-oriented work. However, it has also been criticized for lacking explanatory power and "practical utility value" (Leonardi, 2013: 74) for its conflation (Mutch, 2013) of subject and object, which obscures the causal relations between them; and for the implausibility of the interpenetration thesis, an extreme version of a commitment to the inseparability of subject and objects, and the accompanying opposition to the idea that technological objects might have intrinsic features (Faulkner & Runde, 2012).

I devoted one of my essays for a course on technology during my M.Phil. studies in ISO to these developments, in which I compared sociomateriality's agential realism with

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> features of the description, symbolising the idealisation of observation and definition respectively. Just as the relativity theory has taught us that the convenience of distinguishing sharply between space and time rests solely on the smallness of the velocities ordinarily met with compared to the velocity of light, we learn from the quantum theory that the appropriateness of our usual causal space-time description depends entirely upon the small value of the quantum of action as compared to the actions involved in ordinary sense perceptions. Indeed, in the description of atomic phenomena, the quantum postulate presents us with the task of developing a "complementarity" theory the consistency of which can be judged only by weighing the possibilities of definition and observation. (Bohr, 1928: 580)

For a criticisms of the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics of Bohr (1928, 1935) and Barad's use of it see Schrödinger (1935) and Pinch (2011) respectively.

[3] Two further prominent streams of research on the materiality of technology are actor-network theory (Latour, 1996; 2005) and the technology as affordance perspective (Faraj et al., 2011; Leonardi, 2011; Leonardi et al., 2012; Faraj & Azad, 2013; Fayard & Weeks, 2014).

critical realism (Faulkner & Runde, 2009, 2013). Critical realist researchers have "affinities with Kant's philosophy" (Archer, 1998: ix.), for example, because it continued to adhere to the Kantian dualism, which differentiates between subjects and objects and, by not conflating the two, makes it possible to show how changes in one of the two might affect the other.

I used my M.Phil. dissertation to study technological unemployment in the legal profession, in particular how technological change and digitalization might affect a trained white-collar workforce. My objective was to move beyond the object, subject and practice phases described above, and to incorporate ongoing work on using the term "technology" in its adjectival form to highlight it as a force affecting other phenomena, such as when people speak of technological unemployment, technological monopoly, or technological environment. I saw, and continue to see, room for an ontology of technology that focuses on the prepositional relationships between subjects and objects (in which a preposition such as "in", "from", "out of" is a word or group of words used before a noun or pronoun to show place, position, time and so on).

These plans ended during the first year of my Ph.D., when I came across a case that was to become the empirical site for the present thesis. Paul Tracey had advised me to look for an organization moving buildings, where a change in premises might reveal and illuminate ways in which the material aspects of a building affect an organization and vice versa. At first, I had in mind firms such as Facebook or Google attempting to materialize a (projected) organizational identity in their plans for a new headquarters, or Goldman Sachs attempting to use its new campus in London to signal a shift in identity from investment bank to technology company. However, I was then presented with the opportunity of an orchestra moving into a new concert hall: the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra (NDR EO) was about to move into the Elbphilharmonie building in Hamburg. I decided to use this case in an attempt to extend the work done by Glynn (2000) on organizational identity. The orchestra, previously the NDR Symphony Orchestra (SO), had already been renamed the NDR EO by then, and other adaptations were anticipated in the near future.

I visited the orchestra for a two-week period during its rehearsals for the grand opening of the Elbphilharmonie and was able to conduct my first 10 interviews. This was followed by a further 10 interviews in the two weeks following the opening of the building. This second period of empirical data-collection was overshadowed by some negative press (for example, in *Welt*, 2017) in which it was claimed that the building was too big, advanced, and complex for a second-rate radio orchestra.

With costs ultimately mounting to €866 million, the Elbphilharmonie is the most expensive building ever constructed in Germany and the most expensive concert hall in the world. Since the high cost of the building had made it the target of considerable criticism, Hamburg's then mayor, Olaf Scholz approved a €10 million promotion budget and enlisted *Hamburg Marketing*, a public marketing agency, and *Jung von Matt*, a private marketing agency that had also worked on the international campaign promoting the Elbphilharmonie, to turn around the public's perception. This campaign had the objectives of: "#1 positioning of the Elbphilharmonie as a world-leading concert hall, #2 strengthening Hamburg's global perception as a modern and innovative cultural metropolis, and #3 transformation of rejection and skepticism into real affection" (*Hamburg Ahoi Stories*, 2018: 1).

There was nevertheless concern about the orchestra not being able to match the lofty standards of the building, both amongst the musicians and the management of the Elbphilharmonie, and the city and its citizens. I conducted another 20 interviews after the dust had settled a year later. After having spoken to individuals within the organization, it became clear to me that people from outside the organization had a vested interest and relevant opinions about the building and its new occupant. I accordingly started interviewing journalists and other individuals from communities within the wider European cultural domain.

THEORY

The question that remained was which theoretical lens to use for the paper I started out with, examining the impact of materiality on the organizational identity of the NDR EO. My first-year presentation made me aware of a recent chapter by Watkiss and Glynn (2016) in the *Oxford Organizational Identity Handbook* (2016) that summarized research on the subject of materiality in the organizational identity literature. The authors called for empirical research on the interrelationships between three forms of materiality (organizational product, artifact, and practice) and three mechanisms (categorization, symbolization, and performative repertoire) that might affect an organization's identity. After completing the first 20 interviews, I spent a year working on social positioning theory (SPT) (see Faulkner et al., 2017; Lawson, T., 2019, 2020) with Professor Jochen Runde, my supervisor for the Ph.D. While Tony Lawson had applied SPT to the nature of gender (Lawson, T., 2007), money (Lawson, T., 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019), and the firm (Lawson, T., 2015a, 2015b, 2019), Clive Lawson, Phil Faulkner, and Jochen Runde had applied it to technology (Lawson, C., 2007, 2008, 2017) and digital objects (Faulkner & Runde, 2013, 2019) in general, as well as particular technological objects such as vinyl record players (Faulkner & Runde, 2009) and dishwashers (Cardinale & Runde, 2018). However, the theory had yet to be applied to a large technological object such as a building. Jochen Runde advised me to attend the meetings of the Cambridge Social Ontology Group (CSOG), a multidisciplinary group of academics, from which much of the theory had originally emanated (see Lawson, T., 2019; 2020). These meetings enabled me to deepen my theoretical knowledge and strengthen my ontological understanding of critical realism and SPT. After a year of working on social positioning with Jochen Runde, we narrowed the work I had done to a 10-page statement of the theory and applied it to all three of the papers that comprise this PhD thesis.

Social positioning theory and critical realism are ontological in orientation, and it would be useful to begin with a sketch of the basic ontology.

According to SPT, then, the world comprises of assemblies or totalities, which are structured systems made up of relationally-organized components that are themselves totalities. These components may be human or nonhuman. Totalities that include only human components, such as an orchestra or the citizenry of a city, are called *communities*. Totalities that are comprised entirely of nonhuman components are called *objects*. Many objects occur naturally and do not require the involvement of humans, such as the entities we might recognize as seashells, Mount Everest, or a passing asteroid. However, many objects do depend on the existence and activities of human beings, a large category of which are *human artefacts*. Such objects are a subset of the category of *technological objects*, whereby a technological object is any human artefact or naturally occurring object that has been appropriated in some way that is used by humans to further their interests. Note that many technological objects do not have a physical or material existence, such as (nonmaterial) computer applications, algorithms, and syntactic objects more generally (Faulkner & Runde, 2013, 2019).

In addition to these entities, the ontology of social positioning also includes social positions, social rules and social relations. These things exist in a manner that differs from material and nonmaterial objects, and it is assumed that they do so by being constantly drawn on and reproduced in human practices.

SPT relies on the interplay between totalities, social relations, and social positions. *Social positions* are defined as a status assigned to an entity by some community, which confers a *social identity* on that entity within that community. By “social identity,” I mean the kind of thing an entity is taken to be—indeed is—within the community concerned, whether that entity be human or nonhuman. The idea that individuals occupy social positions is a familiar and, I hope, uncontroversial idea. Less familiar, perhaps, is the idea that many objects occupy social positions too, and that their position-occupancy confers their social identities in much the same way it does for humans (Faulkner & Runde, 2013; Lawson, T., 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2016). Thus, a technological object such as a musical score, violin, or conductor's podium, and where it is in virtue of being assigned a particular status, acquires the identity associated with that status and is that kind of thing within that community. Like humans, but on a lesser scale, nonhumans, and objects in particular, might occupy multiple social positions. This is illustrated, for example, by the device known as a gramophone also being positioned and serving as a musical instrument (Faulkner & Runde, 2009), or the device usually understood as a dishwasher being positioned and also serving as a sous-vide cooker (Cardinale & Runde, 2018).

There are seven key features of SPT that should be noted:

1. Social positions are constituted, in part, by internal relations in which one or more of the relata are co-constituted by that relation. Internal relations arise between human-occupied social positions (e.g., orchestral conductor and orchestral musician), between positions occupied by humans on the one hand and objects on the other (e.g., violinist and violin), and between positions occupied by objects alone (e.g., violin and violin string). In each case the relata in each pair are mutually constitutive. There would be no orchestral conductor without orchestral musicians and vice versa, no violinists without violins and vice versa, and no violins without violin strings and vice versa.
2. Social positions have attendant rights and responsibilities that govern the performance and what is generally expected of their occupants. Thus, the person who occupies the position of conductor has the right to expect certain things from the members of the orchestra, and the responsibility to set the interpretation of the music and sound of the orchestra. There are three things to note about this:
    a. While these rights and responsibilities are borne by whoever is occupying the position of conductor for as long as they do so, they are associated with the position rather than any particular individual. When a conductor is replaced, they typically lose the associated rights and responsibilities, which then transfer to the new occupant of that position.
    b. The rights and responsibilities associated with a position are matched by interlocking rights and responsibilities associated with other positions. Thus, the right of the conductor to set the tempo at which a particular composition is

played is matched by the responsibility of each of the musicians to follow that tempo.

c. The rights and responsibilities associated with particular positions often reflect power relations, which can be vertical or horizontal. Such power relations are explicitly visible in the formalized hierarchical structure of any organization, and implicitly in the hidden rules and the unofficial codes of conduct of any organization (see Bowers & Prato, 2018). Vertical relations between positions imply heterogeneity, and differences in power and authority. Thus, members of the orchestra are lower in the hierarchy and are expected to accept the authority of the conductor. Horizontal relations between positions imply homogeneity, sharedness and equality. The position of orchestra musician is a horizontal relation because all the individuals occupying this position play an instrument in an orchestra. Similarly, individuals occupying the position of conductor are all in a position to conduct an orchestra, and are in this respect horizontally related.

3. Positioned nonhumans do not bear rights and responsibilities in virtue of their positioning in the same way that positioned human occupants of social positions do. However, there are, of course, often rights, responsibilities, and so on involved in the use of technological objects, such as who in an organization may use a particular device or ensuring that safety procedures are followed when using a mechanical device that could cause injury. While these rights and responsibilities emanate from the social position occupied by the object concerned, it is incumbent on the human actors that are using or otherwise involved in the use of the objects concerned to behave in accordance with them. This is not something that the objects themselves can do.

4. Socially-positioned entities, whether human or nonhuman, have system functions. Each position within a totality is characterized by an expectation that the occupant of that position will contribute to the performance of the totality in certain ways. Thus, just as whoever occupies the position of conductor is expected to conduct the performance of an orchestra, so whatever occupies the position of violin bow is expected to facilitate the movement of violin strings. We call this the *system function* associated with a position. This feature of social positions has an important bearing on positioning, because in assigning an entity to a particular position the goal is, in general, to achieve a sufficiently close fit between the intrinsic capacities of that entity and the

requirements of the system function associated with that position. When an entity's capacities are well suited to fulfilling the system function, the positioning is more likely to endure. Where the match is a poor one, however, the positioning is unlikely to continue for long. Most objects, of course, are designed and manufactured with the position they are to occupy in mind, such that they possess capacities tailored to the specific system functions they are intended to serve.

5. The totality in which some entity is socially positioned as a component need not coincide with the community in which the relevant social position exists, nor indeed with the community responsible for positioning any particular entity as a component of that totality. This is most easily seen in the case of technological objects, where, for example, it is not the totality itself (e.g., the violin) that is responsible for the social positions occupied by its components (e.g., fingerboard, bridge, tuner) or for putting the particular entities that comprise its components into those positions. However, the same might be true of the components of communities. For example, the community that includes the social position of principal conductor is much wider than any single orchestra, and the community responsible for filling the position of principal conductor in any particular case—an appointments committee perhaps—might be different from the community—the orchestra—of which the principal conductor is a component.
6. Social positions exist independently of, and usually prior to, the individual entities that go on to occupy them. All this begs the question of the mode of being of social positions, that is, the manner in which they exist. The answer, in our view, is that they, as well as the relations in which they stand and the social identities they inform, exist and are sustained (to the extent that they are) by being continuously enacted or performed and thereby reproduced in the practices associated with those positions (Bhaskar 1979, 1986, 1989; Lawson, T., 1997, 2003). Thus, the social position of the conductor's baton, for example, as well as its relations to other positions and its associated social identity, exists and endures through the practices of conducting an orchestra, the way the musicians interpret and respond to the way the conductor wields it, and so on. The reproduction of social structure along these lines, as we see it, goes a long way to explaining the relative stability of much of the social world over time, despite social positions, identities, and relations effectively being constantly in the making.

7. Social positions and their constellations might nevertheless also be transformed through human practices. Moreover, social positions can atrophy over time (e.g., the positions of a human calculator and slide rule once the electronic calculator took hold), mutate (e.g., the position of camera as digital photography became widespread), and new ones emerge (e.g., the positions of drone-racing pilot and racing drone once drones started to become ubiquitous). They might also endure without being occupied (e.g., a vacant specialist chair in a university department), and then possibly even prior to having ever being occupied (e.g., where a new position for a human occupant is created but not yet filled, or when people already have a good idea of the nature of a new product before it has been prototyped).

From the point of view of the projects pursued in the papers that follow, the principal benefits of SPT are:

1. SPT can accommodate that, while individual technological objects are always social insofar as they presuppose the existence and activities of human actors, they nevertheless have an independent existence and intrinsic structure (once they have been manufactured or otherwise come into existence) that is ontologically distinct from the social conditions in which they emerged and are used.
2. SPT nevertheless has the resources to address the social, relational, context dependent and sometimes fluid nature of the identity and system function of positioned humans, communities, and objects, but without going so far as to imagine that the human and nonhuman interpenetrate.
3. SPT throws light on system-related aspects of social positioning, especially with regard to how the social positioning of entities entails their being placed in specific relationships with other socially-positioned entities, in broader totalities.
4. SPT is consistent with a much wider view of agency than those of some competing positions (e.g., sociomateriality and agential realism which locate agency in "sociomaterial practices" that merge subject and object into one entity, and are described as inseparable, relational, performative, intersubjective, and co-constitutive). In this dissertation, I proceed on the basis that "in very general terms, an agent is a being with the capacity to act, and 'agency' denotes the exercise or manifestation of this capacity" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020: 1). Nonhumans can be agents too in this conception, and where human agency might be intentional or unintentional (e.g., when a human action has unintended or unanticipated consequences). This

provides room for physical causal relations (e.g., between positioned entities such as a technological object and its user), as well as nonphysical causal relations between different kinds of thing (e.g., between an entity and its social positioning, between a social position and its associated system functions, or between social positions themselves). In addition, it provides room for departing from uni-directional causal models, be they from object to subject (e.g., object-centric determinism) or from subject to object (e.g., human-centric voluntarism). As will become evident later in this thesis, many of the causal relations examined are in way two-way (e.g., a technological object at once affecting and being affected by its user).

5. SPT draws attention to positioning, de- and repositioning processes, and the communities involved in this. It enables us to determine the past, current and future status of an entity by examining the social positions it might occupy at a given time. For identity scholars, this might facilitate a hybrid method of examining both the group identities proposed in social identity theory (SIDT) and the role identities featured in identity theory (IDT), as well as other forms of identity, such as personal, situational, or collective identities, as long as they stem from the social position an individual occupies. However, it is important to note that, while SPT can throw light on how the social identities of positioned entities flow from their social positioning, it makes no claim that social positioning exhausts all aspects of the identity of human individuals (which might depend also on a host of other things, including their biographies, abilities, attitudes, and physical attributes). It is for this reason that I have tried to stick to the language of the position or positions someone or something occupies, as *contributing* to their identity.

THE PAPERS IN THIS DISSERTATION

The papers in this dissertation are studies of totalities such as the NDR EO, the citizenry of Hamburg, the French fashion house Chanel, and the Elbphilharmonie concert hall itself. Each of these totalities is a component of larger totalities, such as the NDR EO being part of the Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) organization or the Elbphilharmonie concert hall being part of the object that is the larger Elbphilharmonie complex. All such totalities comprise individuals and (technological) objects. The theory enabled me to address the relationships between the totalities via the social positions they occupy, and the attendant social identities, system functions, rights and responsibilities.

However, the PhD Viva and the examiner's report made me aware that using social positioning theory (SPT)—an established theory—was unsuitable to be used in the first paper in this dissertation, because my methodology was guided by a grounded theory building approach and I have accordingly adapted and largely rewritten this paper over the last six months. The paper responds to Watkiss and Glynn's (2016) call for empirical work on how differing forms of forms of materiality might affect organizational identity and takes into account that organizational identity change needs to be studied in more contexts with a focus on how it changes (Gioia et al., 2013). I use the case of the NDR orchestra's relocation to the Elbphilharmonie to explore how moving into a new building may trigger organizational identity change. Various aspects of the two organizational identity pillars of "who we are" and "what we do" are explored, focusing specifically on how a relocation leads to the need to redetermine who the organization is and what is does.

I find that the relocation triggered a new set of identity dynamics between the pillars that cause mismatches and introduce "where we are" as a third pillar for organizational identity. The organization uses two forms of identity work to address the symbolic and practice mismatches between the pillars, which I term as symbolic-material alignment and practice-material alignment. I also show that the relocation led to positive and negative effects, most notably motivation and anxiety amongst its members, which it attempts to balance to achieve an overall positive outcome: an improved organizational performance. Nevertheless, I show that a positive overall outcome is not a given result of a relocation, as anxiety can prevail over the motivation. As a result, I am able to show the importance of carefully managing relocations to secure improved organizational performance and to unlock the potential a relocation can bring.

Note that my study interprets the "where we are" pillar in a narrow sense of being restricted to the building an organization occupies and a place change to a more central location within a city. But there are of course others senses of "where we are". For example, while the relocation to a new building within a city changes the symbolic and material conditions of the organization in one way, it does not change its location in a wider regional sense. Thus, I suggest future research is necessary where other forms of relocation are examined, for example a relocation to a new city, region or country. I also suggest that future research is necessary to study cases in which organizations have outgrown their premises and have changed the organizational identity pillars of "who we are" and "what we do" in advance of a relocation, and the identity dynamics have caused mismatches with their current "where we are" to an extent that a relocation is without an alternative, for example in a startup context.

The interviews conducted for the first paper sparked various questions about the social positioning processes in which the Elbphilharmonie building was involved, and how these might reflect on the identity of the citizens of Hamburg and the city as a whole. The second paper, recently published in the journal *European Planning Studies*, addresses these questions. While some of the data from the qualitative interviews was helpful for developing the research question, I collected a second data set from individuals involved in the social positioning processes of the building. These included people who had worked on the marketing campaign for positioning the building, for example those from Hamburg Marketing and Jung von Matt, the cultural senator and some journalists. The interviews revealed some remarkable perspectives on how the positioning of the building unfolded over time and might have affected the identity of the city and its citizens. I further learned how, over and above its geographical location at the heart of the city, the buildings (e.g., Johns shipyard, Kaiserspeicher A, Kaispeicher A, and Elbphilharmonie) and their associated system functions, reflected the core identity of the city over time (e.g., shipyard and shipbuilding, warehouse and trade, concert hall and culture). This data was blended with secondary material gleaned from the popular press.

The key finding of the paper is what I call “the Hamburg effect” as distinct from the well-established Bilbao effect. Whereas the Bilbao effect is an example of how an instance of star architecture can increase the attractiveness of a city for national and international tourism (as reflected in the statistics on the origin of visitors to the Guggenheim museum), the Hamburg effect is an example of how star architecture can increase the attractiveness of particular activities for regional and local citizens (more than 80% of the audiences attending the concerts at the Elbphilharmonie are from the Hamburg area):

> Inquiries from external organizers for concert dates in both halls of the Elbphilharmonie rose to a record high. In contrast to the large hall, which was already busy in the previous season, the number of events in the small hall rose from 254 in 2017/18 to over 300. The Laeiszhalle also experienced a noticeable increase in concerts and visitors. This development is particularly gratifying because it shows that the music city of Hamburg is also growing beyond the Elbphilharmonie. Overall, the number of concert goers in Hamburg's concert halls has thus continued to increase. With around 1.25 million guests, the city now has more than three times as many concertgoers as in the 2015/16 season, the last season before the opening of the Elbphilharmonie. This extremely gratifying development is due above all to the enthusiasm of thousands of new music lovers from Hamburg and the metropolitan region, for whom attending concerts has become an integral part of their everyday lives. We are particularly happy that the Elbphilharmonie has reached the center of society in our city in this way. (Elbphilharmonie (2020): Elbphilharmonie Annual Report, 2018/19: 4)

When looking for the topic for a third paper, I came across a prominent example of the Elbphilharmonie and the main concert hall serving system functions other than those they had been designed for: as a venue for the Paris-Hamburg Chanel *M'étiers d'Art* show 2017 that exploited both the prestige and beauty of the building and the imagery associated with the city and its maritime history. The collection was inspired by male, professional and maritime themes, repositioning clothes formerly associated with harbor or trading activity as women's fashion items. As the presentation of fashion items is an instance of product positioning, this required me to become familiar with the marketing and strategy literature on product positioning (the two are often grouped under the heading of strategic positioning, and with the marketing literature often overlapping with brand positioning and the strategy literature often overlapping with firm positioning). I realized that these two sets of literature had become quite siloed and lacked a coherent overarching theoretical framework that was able to accommodate product, brand and firm positioning in a unified way. I accordingly decided to attempt to use SPT towards this end, and to use the fashion show as an illustrative case of the interrelationships involved.

As the subjects of firm, product and brand positioning are discussed in a variety of diverse literatures, it took some time to find common themes and align them with my theoretical framework. What helped was to increase the scope of this paper and the timeframe of how fashion shows changed over time. The challenge here was that I was unable to gain access to Chanel itself and wasn't granted a single interview with anyone at the firm who had been involved with the event. However, I did speak to professionals in the beauty, fashion and luxury domain, as well as to fashion models and journalists with insider knowledge. The dataset was strengthened with information gleaned from books, as well as numerous secondary interviews granted to various publications. The resultant dataset enabled me to gain a wider perspective and to develop a theoretical framework that made it possible to harmonize some of the strategy and marketing literature, and to show how the fashion shows of the major fashion houses, at least in many cases, have morphed from being product positioning platforms aimed mostly at local audiences to becoming communication tools in the form of in-person content creation platforms to be amplified online for a global audience. The show in Hamburg exemplified how a firm might be able to harness the positioning of a prestigious building, and how the interrelationships between firm, product, and brand positioning can be exploited.

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CHALLENGING "WHO WE ARE" BY CHANGING "WHERE WE ARE:" NAVIGATING ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY CRISIS IN TIMES OF RELOCATION

ABSTRACT

This in-depth qualitative study focuses on the role of materiality for organizational identity change and, more specifically, how place change leads to organizational identity change. Using the case of an orchestra moving into a new concert hall, it explores how the relocation into the Elbphilharmonie triggered organizational identity change for the NDR Symphony Orchestra as it became the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. My analysis shows that relocations can force organizational members to redetermine their organizational identity pillars of "who we are" and "what we do." It also suggests that "where we are" constitutes a third pillar of organizational identity. Specifically, a relocation causes a new set of identity dynamics that lead to mismatches within the three pillars. The symbolic and practice mismatches can lead to identity challenges, the resolution of which requires organizations to engage in two forms of identity work: symbolic-material alignment and practice-material alignment. I show that a relocation can have both positive and negative psychological effects for organizational members, but that may affect the overall performance of the organization in different ways.

INTRODUCTION

> We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us. (Winston Churchill in a speech on rebuilding the destroyed House of Commons, 28 October 1943, UK Parliament, 2021: 1)

Organizational identity scholars have shown an ongoing interest in the factors that determine organizational identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, 2010; Pratt et al., 2016), including that of cultural institutions (Glynn, 2000). These scholars have studied organizational identity formation (Oliver & Vough, 2019), maintenance (Ravasi & Philips, 2011), and change (Gioia et al., 2013) and have suggested that organizational identity change needs to be studied in more contexts (Gioia et al., 2013) and lacks empirical studies that examine the role of materiality (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016).

This is not intended to suggest that the role of materiality for organizational identity has been neglected altogether. Previous work has shown a general interest in the relationship between organizational identity and materiality (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016) and that materiality can play a crucial role in determining organizational identity formation and maintenance (Kaplan, 2011), for example, in the form of products (Ravasi & Phillips, 2011; Schultz & Hernes, 2013; Evans, 2015), dress codes (Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997, 2006; Thompson & Willmott, 2016), and office decoration (Hatch, 1990; Elsbach, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; Elsbach & Pratt, 2007), as well as spaces (Dale & Burrell, 2008), places (Rodner et al., 2019) and architecture more generally (Berti et al., 2018).

While there are larger forms of materiality, in most cases, buildings are one of the larger forms of materiality that impinge on organizational life. Organizational identity is shaped by the organizations' members' everyday interactions and—at least before the COVID pandemic—most of the employees' everyday interactions occurred in buildings. Thus, some scholars have studied the role of buildings (Czarniawska, 2009; Delacour & Leca, 2011; Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011, 2015; de Vaujany & Vaast, 2014; Schultz & Hernes, 2013; Siebert et al., 2017; Berti et al., 2018), and we know, anecdotally, that materiality has relevant implications: the materiality involved in organizational life impacts organizational identity maintenance (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016) as a stabilizing factor, for example, by serving as an "aesthetic marker" (Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011: 504), "strong material anchor" (Monteiro & Nicolini, 2014: 4), or "stabilizing artefact" (Czarniawska, 2009: 431). Materiality also impacts organizational identity formation as a determining factor, for example, through buildings being an "identity-ordering," "identity-inscribing," and "identity-informing" place (Berti et al., 2018: 168-169).

Although some organizational identity theorists have acknowledged the central role that materiality plays in the formation and maintenance of organizational identity (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016), scholars in the field have overlooked buildings as a source of organizational identity change. Buildings are not only the location of most employees' everyday interactions occur but also shape their interactions. The aforementioned studies have shown how buildings stabilize organizational identities but there is as yet little research on how a relocation into a new building can destabilize the collective self-understanding of an organization. We thus have much to learn about how place changes lead to organizational identity changes—how a relocation can bring a new symbolic and material environment for the everyday interactions of employees. Moving from one building to another forces instability and produces fluidity for the self-understanding of the organizational members during the interim period. Indeed, the implications of organizational relocations for organizational identity change have yet to be studied in depth; if buildings are a "powerful mode of control" (Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011: 503) for organizational identities, then relocations are place changes that replace the established mode of control with a new one, which could destabilize established organizational identities and force organizations to redetermine their identity. The question remains how exactly employees adapt the two pillars of organizational identity, their collective mental constructs of "who we are" and their practices of "what we do," when facing a new "where we are" upon moving into new premises.

In this article, therefore, I seek to answer the following research questions: *What are the effects of relocations and how do place changes trigger organizational identity change? What are the types of identity work organizations engage in to address these effects? How can managers ensure that the outcome of a relocation is positive?* The organization I examine through an in-depth qualitative case study is an orchestra relocating from one concert hall into another: the NDR Symphony Orchestra—which formerly used the Laeiszhalle concert hall and the Rolf-Liebermann Studio—relocating into the newly constructed Elbphilharmonie concert hall, thereby changing its organizational identity by becoming the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra (NDR EO). Based on primary and secondary interview data obtained from musicians, orchestra and concert hall managers, journalists, professors, acousticians, an architect, and managers associated with organizations that have relocated, as well as numerous articles, books, podcasts, documentaries, and observations of rehearsals and concerts, my data analysis leads me to re-iterate the importance of buildings for organizations and shows that relocations can force organizational members to collectively redetermine "who they are" and "what they do."

Specifically, my analysis suggests that the relocation into a new concert hall led to a new set of identity dynamics that posed an identity challenge; eventually, they caused an identity crisis for the orchestra because the NDR EO faced mismatches between the identity pillars of "who we are," "what we do," and "where we will be." Notably, the symbolic and practice mismatches led to the orchestra engaging in two forms of identity work: symbolic-material and practice-material alignment. Solving the mismatches and reworking their identity had positive and negative effects for the organization, as it was motivated by the new building, but it also provoked anxiety because of the high standards the building confronted them with.

In examining the interrelationships between the building and the organization involved, I make a main- and three sub-contributions, which I further discuss in my discussion section.

My main contribution is to develop a new model of organizational identity management which shows how to respond to place changes that shock established collective understandings of "who we are" and "what we do" as an organization.

First, while buildings stabilize, shape, and can even control organizational identities, relocations destabilize the identity pillars of "who we are" and "what we do" by triggering a new set of identity dynamics through the third identity pillar of "where we are." Replacing an established pillar of "where we are" with a new "where we will be" destabilizes the formerly tailored and harmonized interrelationships.

Second, place changes destabilize organizational identities by setting into motion a new set of identity dynamics which can cause symbolic and practice mismatches between the organizational identity pillars. Organizations can respond to these mismatches by engaging in two forms of identity work through two new forms of identity work: symbolic-material and practice-material alignment.

Finally, relocations into improved facilities do not necessarily lead to solely positive outcomes for the organizations involved. Managers of relocating organizations must carefully balance the positive and negative effects of moving into new premises, as both motivation and anxiety are necessary to achieve a positive outcome. While a relocation can unlock potential improvements in organizational performance, it can also cause a downward spiral of anxiety, thus overwhelming the motivational effect that can accompany a relocation. Managers must prevent the latter effect by facilitating the alignment process to solve the mismatches a relocation causes. This means that they should align the symbolism of the organization to the new building and support their employees while they change their practices until all necessary adaptation processes have been facilitated, and a renewed match with the organizational identity pillars is ensured.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Organizational identity change

Organizational identities are typically characterized as employees' central, enduring, and distinctive (CED; Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006) understandings of their organization. Organizational identities are defined as collective mental constructs, which employees use to determine "who they are" (Gioia et al., 2010: 4) and "what they do" (Nag et al., 2007: 843) as an organization (Gioia & Hamilton, 2016). As a result, everyday interactions form, maintain, and change how employees assess what is CED about their organization.

Organizational identity formation—defined as the "co-evolution of claims and understandings" of an organization (Gioia et al., 2013: 160)—is relevant because creating collective mental constructs allows employees to understand who they are and what they do as an organization. Organizational identity maintenance—defined as the continuous renewal and affirmation of the employees' shared mental constructs of what they as a firm are or do "through everyday interactions and continuity of practices" (Gioia et al., 2013: 166)—is a way for employees to stabilize their collective view of what an organization is and does.

The discontinuity of employees' everyday interactions can lead to the instability of their collective mental constructs and cause organizational identity change. The change of organizational identity—defined as the adaptation of the employees' collective mental construct of what they as a firm are or do—is, therefore, a central process for employees to react to significant adjustments in their daily interactions. This means that employees can change their understanding of what their organization is or does.

However, while the processes through which organizational identities are changed require "more empirical work" (Gioia et al., 2013: 184), there has been some attention to this phenomenon, and organizational identity scholars have presented relevant findings. Nag et al. have studied strategic changes in a research and development technology company and found that, for example, a "strategic transformation is, almost by definition, so significant that it often entails a change to an organization's identity" (2007: 838). This raises the question of organizational identity changes being the *antecedent* or *consequence* of any major organizational transformation. Interestingly, organizational identity changes can be the *a posteriori* result of a strategic organizational transformation, but such adaptations can also be triggered *a priori* by their anticipation; for example, when "the members of an organization come to understand how proposed changes will affect their day-to-day lives" (Nag et al., 2007: 840), employees began adapting their organizational identity in advance.

While the aforementioned work poses the "*when*" question and concerns the timing of organizational identity change, both the questions of *"who"* is responsible for organizational identity change and "*how*" "enduring" organizational identities are have also received careful attention from scholars in the field. Generally, such work tends to take either a social actor or social constructionist perspective (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Gioia & Patvardhan, 2012; Pratt et al., 2016; Gioia & Hamilton, 2016) and, while agreeing that the questions of "who we are" and "what we do" are determined within the organization (Gioia & Hamilton, 2016: 26), the two perspectives diverge on whether organizational identities are, as described above, employees' identity understandings or the identity claims of an organization's management (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013). The former locates the process of organizational identity change in the "group of individuals" and the latter in "individuals" (Hatch & Schultz, 2010: 4). Further, although there is debate on the temporal stability of the "*what,*" specifically whether collective mental constructs of organizations tend to be stable and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006) or adaptive and fluid (Gioia et al., 2000), "[t]hat debate has effectively been resolved by a now substantial body of work that affirms that identity often changes over relatively short time horizons, albeit perhaps in subtle ways" (Gioia et al., 2013: 126).

Taken together, this body of work suggests that questions regarding "when," "who," and "what" appear to have been resolved by the field of organizational identity scholars. As a result, "quite simply, we need more research across a wider range of contexts. Is identity difficult to change? Yes, it is. Does it change? Yes, it does. But how?“ (Gioia et al., 2013: 184). To address the more specific sub-question of "*how"* organizational identities can change, it is necessary to consider that, in the case of the identity of individuals, citizens, or nationalities, where they are located matters. In general, location matters because identities are locational; they relate us to spaces, places, and thus to specific forms of materiality, be it our homes, offices, cities, or countries, not least because these forms of materiality determine our everyday interactions and practices. Moving into a new home, office, city, or country involves significant effects on everyday interactions, which in turn affect collective identities.

However, we not only need more research on "how" collective identities change more generally, but also, more specifically, "how" organizational identities may change through an organization's associated materiality, for example, by determining where an organization is located ("*where*"). If an office and its location are relevant for identity formation and maintenance, then relocating into a new building (e.g., office, premise, factory, etc.) constitutes a significant and strategic transformation for an organization that may trigger organizational identity change. Building on the findings described above, my aim in this paper is to examine *how* a particular kind of organizational event in a special context—a relocation changing the materiality (i.e., location, space, place) associated with an organization—can also change its organizational identity. Further, I focus solely on one aspect, which I refer to as the "where," and propose it as a third pillar of organizational identity. I now turn to the materiality literature within organizational identity research.

The role of materiality for organizational identity change

Organizational identity research has accumulated rapidly (Corley et al., 2006), with a particular emphasis on the social structures and social constructions of organizational identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2010), through "intangible factors, especially language, rhetoric, and symbolization" (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016: 317). Organizational identity scholars tended to focus on individuals or groups of individuals creating individual claims or collective mental constructs and intra- and intersubjective means, such as communication, relations, cognitions, perceptions, emotions, and experiences (Howard-Grenville et al., 2013; Ludwig et al., 2014; Moufahim et al., 2015).

Insightful as the above contributions undoubtedly are, they theorize identity as a social structure or social construction by default in organizational identity publications that predominantly focus on human actors (e.g., owners, boards of directors, stakeholders, CEOs, communities, and teams), social levels (e.g., individual, functional, professional, collective, organizational, and cross-level), individual social aspects (e.g., gender, level of self-interest, narcissism, narrative, and threats), and social positions (e.g., relation, reconstruction, contagion, socialization, and narratives; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Brown, 2006; Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Czarniawska-Joerges, 2010; Ashforth et al., 2011; Schultz & Hernes, 2013; Galvin et al., 2015).

However, by focusing so much on human actors, organizational identity scholars risk overlooking the impact of nonhuman actors such as buildings, of how elements of the nonhuman and non-agentic world—especially the world of material (tangible) and non-material (non-tangible) objects—might affect the identities of individual human actors or groups and thus of organizations as a whole. This neglect represents a general shortcoming in management and organization studies (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008) and is therefore not restricted to organizational identity research (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016). The neglect is serious, in my view, because of how deeply materiality is involved in organizational life, for example as buildings can be central for employees day-to-day activities, provide enduring means for employees organizational identification, and be as distinctive as the organizations that are housed in them. I therefore agree with the sentiment that "empirical work is required to examine the specific conditions under which different aspects of materiality are brought to bear on different conceptualizations or elements of organizational identity" (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016: 329).

Some scholars have acknowledged the role of materiality in organizational identity (e.g., Hatch, 1990; Elsbach, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; Elsbach & Pratt, 2007; Dale & Burrell, 2008; Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011; Schultz & Hernes, 2013; Berti et al., 2018; Rodner et al., 2019), and Watkiss and Glynn (2016) have provided a literature review that connects these scattered exceptions and constitutes a first attempt to build a coherent theoretical framework to study the causal relationship between materiality and organizational identity. They describe the many forms in which materiality can be present in organizational life:

> Inviting a consideration of materiality, this includes what we (as an organization) produce, how we (as an organization) encode our values and who we are, and how we (as an organization) deliver our products and services to our customers. Thus, organizational products are material, values are encoded in organizational artifacts, and market activities that are consequential to the organization involve material practices. (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016: 320)

Although the potential influence of materiality in general and buildings in particular on organizational identity remains understudied (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016), some pioneering studies suggest potential routes for this influence. Useful studies on buildings have been conducted on, for example, the London School of Economics (Czarniawska, 2009), the Paris

Salon art exhibition (Delacour & Leca, 2011), Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem (Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011, 2015), Paris Dauphine University (de Vaujany & Vaast, 2014), the LEGO group museum (Schultz & Hernes, 2013), the Parliament House in Edinburgh (Siebert et al., 2017), and the University of Technology Sydney Business School (Berti et al., 2018). Here, Henri Lefebvre's (1991) *Production of Space*, Wanda Orlikowski and Susan Scott's concept of sociomateriality (Orlikowski, 2007, 2010; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008), as well as the idea of identity, spatial, and institutional work (Watson, 2008; Monteiro & Nicolini, 2014; Kreiner & Murphy, 2016; Suddaby et al., 2016; Kyratsis et al., 2017; Rodner et al., 2019) have made some inroads as theoretical tools.

First, it has been shown that buildings' aesthetics may affect organizational identity, as revealed in Wasserman and Frenkel's (2011) study of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs building. This study was informed by Lefebvre's (1991) theoretical categories for the analysis of space: conceived space, perceived space, and lived space. Wasserman and Frenkel demonstrate the contested nature of organizational aesthetics and show how aesthetics can enrich, regulate, and control "organization-based identities" (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011: 1).

Second, the architecture of buildings can affect organizations and their identity. Berti et al. (2018) have applied Orlikowski's (2007) concept of sociomateriality and some elements of Lefebvre's theory of space in their study of how the Frank Gehry-designed University of Technology Sydney Business School became the site in which "actors have re-inscribed alternative functions and meanings." They argue that the building is an "identity-ordering," "identity-inscribing," and "identity-informing" place (Berti et al., 2018: 168-169). Similarly, de Vaujany and Vaast (2014) have demonstrated the mutuality of space and organizational legitimacy by utilizing Orlikowski's sociomaterial lens in a study of Paris Dauphine University.

"[M]atter matters" (Carlile et al., 2014: 1) and "[m]aterials matter" (Leatherbarrow, 2009: 69) because "objects serve as 'evolving material representations of emerging collective interpretations' that helped organizational members gain a better sense of who they were and what they did" (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016: 324). Moreover, the literature has shown that identity is linked to materiality because "the discourses that evolve around material and aesthetic artifacts are part of the process through which actors position themselves within a broader social context" (Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011: 503).

While previous work has suggested that materiality can support processes of identity formation or maintenance, these studies have not addressed how a relocation—an organization moving into a new building—could affect employees' everyday interactions and thus cause organizational identity change. The aforementioned studies focus on the enduring nature of buildings and how these contribute to stabilizing organizations and their identities. Relocations can disrupt organizations and their identities, all the more so where there are significant differences between a new location and the old one. Thus, to advance the "material turn" (Boxenbaum *et al.*, 2018: 597) in organizational identity research, I examine a relocation of an organization and how it affects the organization's identity. In particular, my study is motivated by the following research questions: *What are the effects of relocations and how do they trigger organizational identity change? What are the types of identity work organizations engage in to address these effects? How can managers ensure that the outcome of a relocation is positive?*

METHODS

A grounded, interpretive approach was adopted for this study. This approach was considered best suited to gaining an understanding of how the building affected the organization, especially with respect to deriving community-level perspectives on the building and how it affected the identity of the organization.

Data Collection

I collected data between December 2016 and December 2019. The initial data collection phase was timely because it coincided with the orchestra moving into the new building, preparing for its opening concert, and the appearance of the first reviews. Data was acquired from multiple sources.

Written, audio, and video sources. I collected such sources throughout the four-year research process. Written sources included online and offline popular press articles, online blog entries, orchestra season and anniversary leaflets, concert programs, PowerPoint presentations, press-clipping books, and nonfiction books. Audio sources consisted of podcasts, and video sources were published on websites such as YouTube and Der Spiegel or found in the NDR media library. I reviewed 390 popular press online and offline articles, 72 popular press interviews (Table 1) and 10 books. I listened to three podcasts and watched 35 videos, with a focus on documentaries. Although much of the information gleaned was not directly relevant to our research questions, it provided helpful and often highly up-to-date background information. The timestamp of the online articles and nonfiction books enabled me to reflect on the temporal shifts in collective sensemaking, as part of our attempt to explain how the building and its positioning affect the identity of the orchestra and "who the NDR EO is," "what the NDR EO does," and "where the NDR EO is," as well as "who the NDR SO used to be," "what the NDR SO used to do," and "where the NDR SO use to be."

Interviews and observations. Seventy semi-structured interviews were conducted in English or German. I engaged in interviews with four stakeholder groups: actors with the focal organization, the NDR EO (musicians, management); actors in the Elbphilharmonie and other concert houses (musicians, choir, management); individuals who planned the architecture and its acoustics and who were responsible for its access to public funds and marketing campaigns (sound architect, senior architect, senior employee, senator); and actors with discursive roles (journalist, professor) or experts from Allianz SE and Axel Springer SE who oversaw organizational relocation projects at their own organizations.

The interviewees were asked about their perceptions and opinions regarding the image of concert halls in general and the Elbphilharmonie in particular. Where necessary, they were asked to contrast the Elbphilharmonie with other concert halls, such as the Philharmonie in Berlin, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, the Musikverein in Vienna, and the Gasteig in Munich. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder after consent was granted. The identities of the interviewees are purposely kept anonymous. All of the interviews lasted between 30 and 120 minutes. It was not possible to secure interviews with some individuals whose views would have been relevant, not least the current and the past mayors of Hamburg and representatives of the construction company. However, many of these people gave multiple interviews to other sources, which I studied in depth (Table 1). Table 2 consists of a summary of the communities the interviewees came from and their roles:

TABLE 1

Interview Data Obtained from Other Sources

Organization	Position of Interviewee (Number of interviews, speeches or presentations)	Source (Year of publication)
Achtung, Axel Springer SE, Hochtief Group SE, Westin Grand Hotel in the Elbphilharmonie	CEO (3), general manager (2)	Abendblatt (2016), PR Report Camp (2017), NDR (2017), Tophotel (2019), AHGZ (2019)
Dancer	Ballerina (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2016)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, BR Symphonie Orchestra	Orchestra musician (7)	Berliner Philharmoniker (2017)
Baritone, Harpist, Operatic tenor, Pianist, Violinist, Pop Rapper	Soloist musician (6)	Elbphilharmonie (2016, 2018, 2019), (Zeit 2016), Channel Aid (2018)
NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra conductor, Individual conductor	Conductor (7)	Spiegel (2017), Welt (2018), NDR (2019, 2017), Hamburger Abendblatt (2019), Elbphilharmonie (2019); NDR (2019), Zeit (2019)
Elbphilharmonie	General management (5)	dbate (2017), NDR (2017), Hannoversche Allgemeine (2017), Abendblatt (2018), SWR (2019)
Mayor of Hamburg (former), German Chancellor, Senator and head of the Hamburg Authority for Culture and Media	Politician (12)	Mopo (2018), NDR (2017a, 2017b), Deutschlandfunk (2018), Abendblatt (2017, 2016), FAZ (2019), Washington Post (2017), Zeit, (2017a, 2017b), SHZ (2017), Oxmox (2018)
Hamburg Tourismus	City tourism executive (1)	Zeit (2016)
Harbor worker	Harbor worker (1)	NDR (2016)
Herzog & de Meuron	Architect (15)	Abendblatt (2017, 2016), NDR (2016), Spiegel (2018, 2016a, 2016b), Das Magazin (2015), Places (2012), Harvard GSD (2017); Abendblatt (2017, 2016), NDR (2016), Spiegel 2016b); Abendblatt (2017), Deutschlandfunk (2017)
Jung von Matt	Marketing executives (2)	PR Report Camp (2017); Medienforum (2017)
Media artist	Media artist (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2019)
Nagata Acoustics	Acoustician (3)	Abendblatt (2019), Spiegel (2016), Blogs Getty (2017)
NZZ	Journalist (1)	NDR (2019)
Property developer	Property Developer (2)	NDR (2016), Hamburger Abendblatt (2016)
University of Hamburg	Professor (1)	NDR (2019)

TABLE 2
Interview Data

Organization	Position of Interviewee (Number of Interviews)	Type of Participant Observation (Total number of observations)
NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra	Musician (40); management (2); conductor (1)	Attended concert (3); attended rehearsal (10)
NDR Choir	Singer (1)	Attended rehearsal (2)
Elbphilharmonie	Management (3)	Attended talk (1)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Copenhagen Phil Orchestra, BR Symphony Orchestra	Musician (4); management (4)	Attended concert (2); attended rehearsal (3)
Nagata Acoustics	Sound architect (1)	
Herzog and de Meuron	Senior architect (1)	
Hamburg Department of Culture and Media	Senior employee (2); senator (1)	
Jung von Matt AG	Senior employee (1)	
University of Hamburg, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar	Professor (3)	
Das Abendblatt, Die Welt, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zeitverlag Gerd Bucerius GmbH & Co. KG	Journalist (4)	
Allianz SE, Axel Springer SE	Senior employee (2)	

Data Analysis

My qualitative analysis is consistent with Gioia's four-step process for grounded theory-building (Gioia et al., 2013; Gephart, 2004; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; for an example, see Dacin et al., 2010) and Tracy's (2010) eight "big-tent" criteria for qualitative research.

In the *first step* of the analysis, the recordings were transcribed from audio files into digital transcripts. This was done immediately following each interview, after which the transcripts were coded into first-order codes. The interview transcripts and other data sources were then re-read several times to find further codes. All digital passages were critically examined to ensure the meaning had not changed during the coding process. Every effort was made to remain alert to emerging thematic patterns throughout the process. The interviews conducted in German were not translated into English, save for the most relevant quotes.

The *second step* of the analysis involved reviewing all of the interview transcripts with a view to finding first-order categories across sources. The work proceeded in three stages. First, a matrix table was constructed to summarize and group relevant statements from interview transcripts pertaining to image, identity, symbolism and practices, as well as adaptation, motivation, and anxiety. Second, the research diary was examined in conjunction with notes on the data gleaned from the various other sources mentioned above. Third, “triangulation” (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Creswell, 2007, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) was used across all data sources to account for differing viewpoints. The interview data was triangulated with the secondary written, audio, and video sources.

In the *third step* of the analysis, second-order themes were derived from the aggregate theoretical dimensions to populate my matrix on the basis of processes of approximation, crafting, and constant iteration. These were combined into aggregate theoretical dimensions.

In the *fourth step*, two additional techniques were used to help ensure the trustworthiness of the data. First, findings (e.g., interview transcripts, first-order codes, first-order categories, second-order themes, and aggregate theoretical dimensions) were discussed with academic colleagues with no prior knowledge of the research, as well as experts on the theory, to improve the clarity of my work. Second, member checks were performed (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Nag et al., 2007) by presenting emerging findings and the theoretical reasoning relating to a subset of 10 interviewees. These ongoing tests of the coded data structure were used to check the “ability of interviewees to recognize their experiences in the research findings” (Krefting, 1991: 219).

Finally, this paper follows the aim to account for organizational identity change, specifically the fluidity that organizational identity has over time. Thus, a process model was chosen useful and I used the integrative model of process theorizing styles as guidance to develop a “strong” process model with parallel and recursive elements (see Cloutier & Langley, 2020).

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The NDR Symphony Orchestra (NDR SO)

Many German orchestras are radio orchestras affiliated with local broadcasters. The two most distinguished are the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (BR SO) and the Northern German Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra (NDR SO). The latter was modelled on the British Broadcasting Corporation Symphony Orchestra (BBC SO) and founded in 1945 as the Northwest German Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra (NWDR SO) by the British High Commission authorities in Hamburg. The orchestra formed part of the broader cultural reconstruction effort after the Second World War; its first concert was a violin concerto by the formerly forbidden German Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and it featured the US-born Jewish soloist Yehudi Menuhin (*NDR*, 2015). The orchestra remained in Hamburg after the NWDR was split into the North German Broadcasting (NDR) and West German Broadcasting (WDR) in 1955 and was renamed the NDR Symphony Orchestra (NDR SO) in

1956. The renaming was intended to highlight its close relationship with the local broadcaster NDR.

FIGURE 1
The NDR SO in 2015 & 2016

Since its foundation in 1945 and throughout the 1950s, the orchestra has been most famous for its core classical and romantic repertoire, as well as for a focus on contemporary music. As part of the NDR, the orchestra recorded music for radio listeners and contemporary music for the archives. However, it also performed live and maintained a concert repertoire. The quality of its live performances has always been high (*All Music*, 2018: 1); the orchestra has won prizes for best live performance in Japan (2000), the Johannes-Brahms Medal of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (1998), and a Grammy for best classical compendium (2014). It also maintains its long-standing tradition of "major tours to England (1951), the U.S.S.R. (1961), and the U.S. (1963)" (*AllMusic*, 2018:1) and has toured Europe, North and South America, and Asia over the past decade (*NDR*, 2019: 1).

The Rolf-Liebermann Studio and Laeiszhalle

Most top-ranking orchestras around the world are associated with the concert halls in which they are based. Although musicians often refer to such bases as their "home," and the public describes an orchestra "making its home" in a concert hall, the official term is "residence." Thus, for example, orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony (CSO), and Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) reside in, respectively, the Berliner Philharmonie, the Wiener Musikverein, the Chicago Orchestra Hall, and the Boston Symphony Hall. The luxury of having a home is not a shared feature, as many orchestras lack a fixed location. In particular, radio orchestras are usually not associated with a specific concert hall. In the case of the NWDR SO and later the NDR SO, for example, the orchestra did not have a concert hall it could reside in from 1945–2017; it was "homeless."

Nevertheless, the NWDR SO had a studio on the grounds of the local broadcaster it could use to store instruments, rehearse, play mini-concerts, and fulfill its function of recording music, with a focus on contemporary work. The offices are located in a different illustrious building in close proximity. In fact, the NWDR SO moved into a former Jewish temple, which was named after the German-Jewish composer and long-serving head of the NDR music department Rolf Liebermann; it is now the Rolf-Liebermann Studio. The NWDR SO first rented and then bought the building, which it turned into a concert hall, from the Jewish Trust Corporation in 1953 (*NDR*, 2013). The temple was available as a studio for the orchestra because the Nazi terror regime had greatly reduced the famous Jewish community in Hamburg through forced migration and committing genocide in the Holocaust.

Hamburg had two main concert halls, notably the Laeiszhalle (1908–present) and the Conventgarten (1854–1943). As the latter was destroyed during the Second World War, all three Hamburg-based orchestras used and shared the Laeiszhalle as a concert venue, including the NDR SO, from 1945 onwards. The Laeiszhalle, formerly known as the Musikhalle, is a baroque music temple that resonated well with the city's "conservatism, timidity, and parsimony," as well as its "long and rich musical history" (*AllMusic*, 2018: 1). Since the NDR SO had to share it with two other orchestras, the Laeiszhalle was neither its residence nor its artistic home. The musicians we interviewed reported that not being associated with a concert hall created various logistical issues, such as moving instruments from one location to another, and it also meant the two spaces came with a changing acoustical setup; finally, the NDR SO was unable to call the concert hall a true home, and it could not draw on the status commonly associated with a concert hall. This meant that half of all rehearsals had to take place at the Rolf-Liebermann Studio, and relocating as well as changing the acoustical setup in preparation for each concert became an integral part of the orchestra's established routines.[4]

FIGURE 2
The Rolf-Liebermann Studio

[4] In general, the NDR SO rehearses four times before each concert. The musicians reported in the interviews that for each concert in the Laeiszhalle, two rehearsals took place in the Laeiszhalle and two rehearsals in the Rolf-Liebermann studio.

FIGURE 3
The Laeiszhalle

The Elbphilharmonie

The city of Hamburg is using the HafenCity project to redevelop and urbanize the neighborhood in the former harbor area. The Elbphilharmonie is located in this former port area on the site of an abandoned quayside warehouse called the Kaispeicher, which was originally designed by Werner Kallmorgen and completed in 1963.[5] The Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron designed the new building, assisted by the international acoustical consultancy Nagata Acoustics, which was represented by its renowned chief acoustician Yasuhisa Toyota.[6] The construction process was fraught, with costs escalating from a projected €241 million in 2007 to a final total of €866 million—making it the most expensive building ever built in Germany and one of the most expensive concert halls ever constructed—and overruns led to the 2016 completion of the project a full six years later than originally planned. The Elbphilharmonie became controversial and perhaps even stigmatized because its construction was marred by massive deadline and budgetary overruns. It was, therefore, routinely criticized as "an indefensible waste of public money" (*The New Yorker*, 2017: 1).

A turn-around marketing campaign managed to de-stigmatize and strategically reposition the building. Notably, the city of Hamburg paid €10 million to the advertising agency Jung von Matt to run the building's international opening campaign. The campaign had the following strategic communication objectives: "#1 Positioning the Elbphilharmonie as world-leading concert hall; #2 Strengthening Hamburg's global perception as a modern and innovative cultural metropolis; #3 Transformation of rejection and skepticism into real

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[5] The building incorporates the facade of the former warehouse in a way that makes the older building look like a plinth for the new one.

[6] Yasuhisa Toyota is, with Russell Johnson and Harold Marshall, one of the world's most famous acousticians. Prior to the Elbphilharmonie (2017), he was responsible for the acoustics in the Philharmonie de Paris (2015), the Seat of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra (NOSPR) Katowice (2014), Helsinki Music Centre (2008), Danish Radio Concert Hall Copenhagen (2008), Bard College Performing Arts Center New York (2003), and Walt Disney Concert Hall Los Angeles (2003) (*Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 2017c).

affection" (*Hamburg Ahoi*, 2018: 1). The high-status image of the building lost its formerly negative connotation and became largely positive; its reputation improved dramatically upon its completion, leading to a change in the general public's perception—moving from "construction disaster to public magnet" (*Musik Heute*, 2018: 1), "problem child to architectural miracle" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2016), and "laughingstock to noble highlight" for which "all cost is forgotten" (*Welt*, 2017a: 1)—and it went on to be chosen as one of the *Time's* Greatest Places 2018 (*Time*, 2018: 1). The building became a key landmark and the icon of Hamburg, associated with terms such as "volcanic crater," "castle," "cover girl," "architectural vision," "cultural flagship," "once-in-a-century project," and "German Statue of Liberty" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2017a, 2017b; *The New Yorker*, 2017; *The Guardian*, 2016).

The Elbphilharmonie building is actually a complex that includes an open plaza, a viewing platform, a restaurant, a hotel, apartments, parking, and two concert halls. The main concert hall has a capacity of 2,100 and represents a departure from the "shoebox style" of the Laeiszhalle towards the "vineyard style" of the Berliner Philharmonie (1963).[7] The auditorium, clad in a white skin consisting of more than 10,000 ivory acoustic panels, has distinctive acoustics and has been likened to a bright cave (*Wired*, 2017). While the architecture has generally been acclaimed, there is debate about the quality of the concert hall, with the media posing questions about whether the sound experience in the main concert hall depends on the acoustics, the chosen repertoire, or the quality of the principal conductor and orchestras (see *Welt*, 2019; *Los Angeles Times*, 2017; *Süddeutsche Zei*tung, 2017c, 2017d).

FIGURE 4
The Elbphilharmonie

[7] The Berlin Philharmonie, designed by Hans Scharoun and completed in 1963, was the first vineyard-style concert hall. The design is now the dominant style for concert halls around the world, and Scharoun himself heavily influenced the work both of acoustician Toyota and architect Gehry. The difference between the vineyard and shoebox styles is that the vineyard style comes with a terraced seating arrangement around the stage, whereas the shoebox style has the orchestra is in front of the audience and is surrounded by three walls (Getty – *The Iris*, 2017).

FINDINGS

Prior to my extensive qualitative field research, my understanding of the orchestra was based on popular press articles and conversations with friends, family, and citizens from Hamburg. I suspected that the orchestra was at an exciting moment of its history because of the unique opportunity to move into a new concert hall. It was thus natural to consider exploring the impact of the Elbphilharmonie building *per se* on the orchestra's identity.

However, the etymological roots of the term "orchestra," the relative ranks of orchestras, and the concept of orchestras residing in concert halls were foreign to me, and I had no prior knowledge of the organizational identity of the orchestra in question. Through the analysis of the primary and secondary data, the time spent with the orchestra, and the observations noted in my research diary, a complex and nuanced picture emerged. Indeed, none of the interviewees described these nuances completely. While it was natural to expect that the new concert hall would have positive effects on the orchestra's image and identity, I found that, counterintuitively, relocating to the Elbphilharmonie had negative effects, as well. In fact, the relocation ("where we are") triggered a new set of identity dynamics and caused a misalignment with the organization's self-perception ("who we are") and practices ("what we do"). Specifically, the organization faced an identity challenge and, eventually, an identity crisis through symbolic and practice-based mismatches. Resolving those mismatches required the organization to redetermine "who we are" and "what we do." The adaptation was instantiated through forms of identity work, notably symbolic-material alignment and practice-material alignment. The identity work allowed the NDR SO to *become* the NDR EO and thus resulted in organizational identity change.

First, the relocation into the Elbphilharmonie meant that the radio orchestra became a residence orchestra and, therefore, a member of the residence orchestra group. The Elbphilharmonie and the group of residence orchestras have an extremely high-status image, and when external stakeholders such as the audience and journalists suggested symbolic mismatches between resident, residence, and other group members, a new set of identity dynamics for the organization was triggered. The relocation thus led to a symbolic mismatch, and resolving it required identity work, such as renaming the NDR SO as the NDR EO, which I have summarized in the section on symbolic-material alignment.

Second, the practice mismatch depended on the materiality of the new location. The Elbphilharmonie changed the material environment and work conditions of the organization because its "vineyard"-style concert hall is a manifestation of an acoustic ideal that differs from the "shoebox"-style acoustics of the Laeiszhalle, with which the orchestra was familiar. Given the unforgiving and demanding acoustics of the Elbphilharmonie, NDR EO musicians face a concert hall that requires practices that are both flawless and precise. The NDR EO musicians had to re-evaluate the quality of their performances; they identified a practice mismatch and started to resolve it by actively working on changing their practices. I have summarized this form of identity work as practice-material alignment.

Finally, while the social recognition, status increase, improved working conditions and beautiful aesthetics of the concert hall motivated the musicians, the public expectations, ongoing comparisons, and demanding acoustics led to anxiety, and the musicians questioned their self-perception ("who we are") and the quality of their practices ("what we do"). Therefore, a relocation can come with positive and negative effects that may lead to an overall positive or negative outcome. In the case of the NDR EO, the motivational effects prevailed over the musicians' anxiety and improved the overall performance of the organization as an outcome. Figure 5 summarizes my data structure, and Table 3 provides some additional data to support the second-order themes. I describe my findings in more depth below.

FIGURE 5
Data Structure

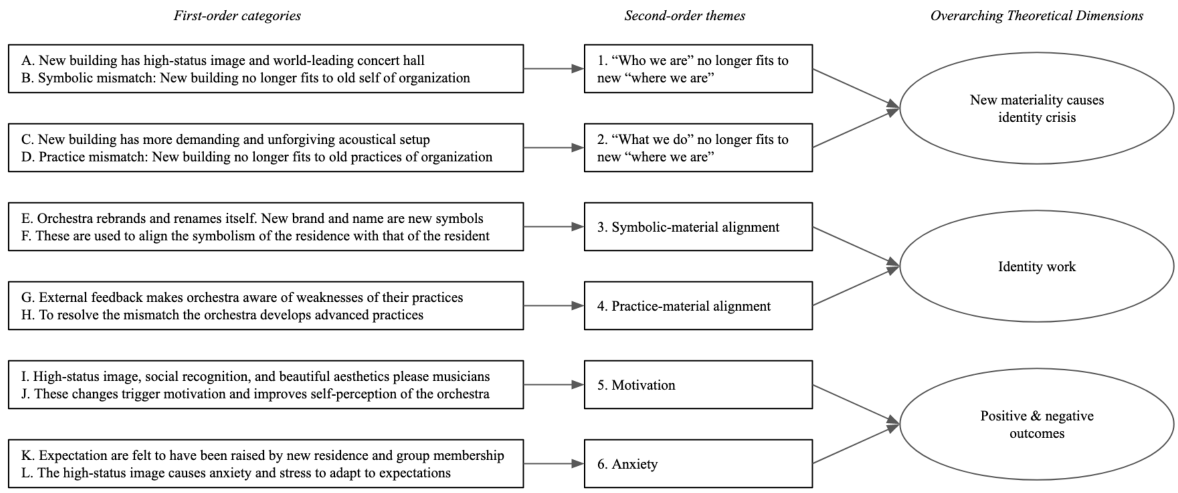


TABLE 3
Additional Supporting Data for each Second-Order Theme

1. "Who we are" no longer matches "where we are"	In addition, the identity of the Elbphilharmonie as an event location and that of its resident orchestra are mutually reinforcing. Because, as the major music metropolises Vienna, Berlin and Amsterdam prove time and again, the most famous performance venues for classical music get their aura and supra-regional radiance from the orchestra located there. Conversely, the most important orchestras only become what they are when they have their own hall. (Elbphilharmonie, 2019: 1)
	Well, that was a lot earlier, that was 2010/11/12, in this shoot, so I do not know when that was, maybe 2012, when it was clear that we were going to be the resident orchestra, so that's where the whole orchestra got quasi re-set up. And, for example, so what does it mean to reposition, but, for example, it has become aware that the prerequisites, the whole task, would change because we are in a different limelight than we did earlier. Here, we somehow measure ourselves every day with all the world-class orchestras that exist, everyone wants to play here somehow and they go in and out and we made ourselves aware of that and then thought about what we can somehow optimize. (interview with NDR EO musician)
2. "What we do" no longer matches "where we are"	Yes, in the Laeiszhalle the acoustics were very different, [...], all [instrumental] voices were not as clear to hear as here [Elbphilharmonie], everything was more mixed, and the Laeiszhalle also had warmer acoustics. Here [Elbphilharmonie] you can hear each voice very clearly and the whole mixes not as good, the acoustics are a bit colder, you have to be a little bit more careful. (interview with NDR EO musician)
	So the hall is very demanding, the audience can notice more accurately, if you play wrong, as in the Laeiszhalle. That would especially spur me now, if I were an orchestra musician, to play correctly. (interview with management of the Elbphilharmonie)
3. Symbolic-material alignment	It is certainly true that the orchestra influences the building and that the orchestra naturally also has an external impact, but the orchestra is by no means the only one. So it is probably a different perception of the orchestra, for which the move to the Elbphilharmonie was of course totally decisive, also with regards to the renaming, which I found really very brave because they renamed themselves to the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra before the opening, so everything could have been a disaster, and then they would have had this mortgage [of the concert hall association], so that was a bull move, but they won. (interview with the Elbphilharmonie management)
	The identity of the Elbphilharmonie as a venue will also be strengthened by its association with its innovative orchestra. The most famous performance venues for classical music also receive aura and supraregional radiance from the resident orchestra - and conversely, the big orchestras only become what they are with their own auditorium. Examples in major music metropolises, in Berlin, Vienna or Amsterdam, have repeatedly shown this (Thomas Hengelbrock, former conductor of the NDR EO, in the 2016/2017 leaflet program).
4. Practice-material alignment	[W]e as, in the group and as an orchestra, we've talked about the acoustics very often and what we have to do to make it sound more beautiful, because in the beginning it was a shock here, the first rehearsals, the first months too, because in Laeiszhalle everything had automatically warmed up a lot and much rounder. Everything got better and we had a different way to play. And here the orchestra has just changed its style. (interview with NDR EO musician)
	We thought about the critizism and what can actually improve. And what we found is, so, because we had to have, and certainly needed a year, and are not yet at the end of the flagpole to optimize this hall, for ourselves. That this hall sounds optimal and that we can use it optimally. (interview with NDR EO musician)
5. Motivation	Absolutely, so I really see it as at home for the orchestra as well as home for my profession, my artistic profession, which is that of being an orchestra musician. Even if you sometimes play chamber music, even if you perform here and there and sometimes get to know other ensembles, in other cities, it is simply the center and the center of your own artistic profession and now that my profession has this home here and that is something I'm really looking forward to. (interview with NDR EO musician)
	You had to realize that first. Of course, in our case, that was not the case, of course, that we were in a competition that we won to go to this room. But we have, so to speak, acted as we have always played and now we do not really qualify, but it has been a bit for us as feeling as if we have got a gift, a gift where we did not in the beginning really knew to fill. Because until then, of course, the Elbphilharmonie had been planned for a long time and we always have it as a question mark, we wondered what it would be like if someday we did our concerts there too, but we did not expect it, that we can also do our rehearsals here. Of course that changed with the announcement that we would become a residency orchestra, and that we first had to fill in mentally, how it would even develop and fill up, and then we actually started a long process as an orchestra, as it were the task that we have there and the new situation that we will have to fill. That is, we founded a proper academy, we prepared for it, we did coaching for the orchestra, and all sorts of things, and prepared and fulfilled that, that task. And then one day when it was time, there it was, we will probably come to later, but because the hall, which is so special that we, as a residence orchestra first had to learn to handle it at all. (interview with NDR EO musician)
6. Anxiety	The orchestra has become better known, thereby - but with many implications with regards to the expectations of quality.(interview with an NDR EO musician)
	But we also took that to heart, I have to say. So we have this criticism we have already considered, what is there and maybe there is something to it, that is now only against the hall, against us, I do not know, we are not a world class orchestra. (interview with NDR EO musician)

New materiality causes identity crisis

For the NDR SO, the relocation to the Elbphilharmonie meant an association with an unusually high-status image, and the world-leading concert hall confronted the musicians with unknown yet sophisticated and demanding acoustics. The relocation posed the question of whether the organization was a match for the building's demands. When the musicians discovered that the new home ("where we are") no longer seemed to match their self-perception ("who we are") and practices ("what we do"), the relocation created an identity challenge and eventually caused an identity crisis for the organization.

"Who we are" no longer matched the new "where we are." The image of the Elbphilharmonie can be inferred from its location in the geographic center of the city at the entrance of the former harbor. The building constitutes the centerpiece of the harbor re-urbanization as part of the "HafenCity," a prestige project of strategic importance for the city. The price of €866 million lends weight to its status and is manifested through thousands of public press articles and millions of annual visitors, which led to the Elbphilharmonie becoming the symbol of Hamburg. The building's noteworthiness from an architectural point of view is the result not only of the reputation of the architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron, but, as the following quotations suggest, of its architecture, which further underlines the high-status image enjoyed by the Elbphilharmonie:

> We had Herzog & de Meuron walking their top list [of peer architects] through the house. They had invited 200 top architects from all over the world. […] the architecture popes. Most of them really went out here with their mouths open and said they had never seen anything like that, and at that time, the opinion was really that […] this is the first relevant building of the 21st century, and only [the] Sydney [Opera House] plays on this level. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2019 interview with the general management of the Elbphilharmonie)

> The Elbphilharmonie itself, as a building, now viewed from the outside, is a sensation, without question. This is a phenomenal building, and, let me put it this way, it gave the German concert hall scene an incredible push, despite the negative history of the building. […] And when you talk about concert halls in Germany today, you always see comparisons of the Elbphilharmonie, to the old opera in Sydney, so to speak, the Elbphilharmonie has become a synonym [and symbol], for Hamburg, for Germany, for Europe and beyond. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2018 interview with the general management of the Leipzig Gewandhaus)

When the public radio broadcaster NDR signed the contract in 2007 on behalf of its orchestra, the NDR SO did not anticipate that the building's completion would be postponed several times, which led to the musicians having to wait a decade between signing the contract and the opening of the concert hall (*Hamburger Abendblatt*, 2007; *Welt*, 2007):

> 'We have prepared the musicians for this day for almost ten years.' (Translated from German by the author; from an interview of Achim Dobschall in *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 2016: 1)

The building was finally completed in 2016, and a turn-around campaign managed to overcome the public resentment of the building, thus "positioning the Elbphilharmonie as world-leading concert hall" (*Hamburg Ahoi*, 2018:1). When I started collecting data in 2017, the orchestra had just relocated into the Elbphilharmonie, and the musicians expected positive effects on their external perception, for example, through the prestigious building transferring its high-status image to the orchestra. Therefore, the scope of the research question shifted from exploring the impact of the Elbphilharmonie building *per se* on the orchestra's identity to more specifically how the high-status image of the new location ("where we are") would affect the orchestra and match its identity ("who we are"). The relationship between concert hall and orchestra is known to have mutually reinforcing effects in general, but also in this particular case, which is illustrated in the following quotations:

> Conversely, the most important orchestras only become what they are with their own hall. (Taken from a press statement of the Elbphilharmonie)

> In addition, the identity of the Elbphilharmonie as a venue and that of its resident orchestra are mutually reinforcing. (Taken from a press statement of the Elbphilharmonie)

Intuitively, and as expected, this data set illustrates a case in which a building was relevant for an organization because it served as a necessary means for organizational members' identification, helped them redetermine who they are, and fulfilled various functions, most notably a source of stability by providing a home:

> Buildings bear history, harbor memories, and provide a home. For the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, the Laeiszhalle was just that for over 70 years: home. Opened in 1908 as the Hamburg Music Hall, located on Johannes-Brahms-Platz: the orchestra filled this hall with music for decades—from its founding in 1945 to 2017, when it moved to a new landmark in Hamburg as the residence orchestra of the Elbphilharmonie. (A statement made by the narrator in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020c)

As is common for most other radio orchestras, the NDR SO was not associated with a concert hall and had no residence from 1945–2016. It was therefore not considered a residence orchestra. As the statement above indicates, most of the orchestra's concerts took place in the Laeiszhalle, and while some orchestra musicians claimed this hall was their former "artistic home," most interviewees suggested that the organization was "homeless" before moving into the Elbphilharmonie. This sentiment stems from the issue of the NDR SO sharing the Laeiszhalle with the other two Hamburg-based orchestras and commuting between the Rolf-Liebermann Studio and Laeiszhalle.

Moving into the Elbphilharmonie in January 2017 not only resolved the problem of being "homeless" and ended the constant commute, but it also furnished the orchestra with the high-status image of the building and the prestigious membership in the group of residence orchestras. As a result, the relocation stirred excitement about the orchestra's image and brought forms of exclusivity; for example, the orchestra can now choose and book concert dates in advance, before all other orchestras, or make itself at home in the concert hall by extensively using the backstage area.

FIGURE 6

The NDR EO inside the Elbphilharmonie

However, the building posed an identity challenge through a symbolic mismatch between the image and regional radiance the building enjoyed and the identity the organization cultivated, as the musicians felt that "who we are" no longer matched the new "where we will be." As a result, the orchestra was offered an opportunity to redetermine "who it was" as an organization. One element of this challenge concerns a legal issue, as the orchestra does not own its home and concert hall; it signed a contract that ensures its high-status image residency for 10 years (i.e., 2017–2027); the orchestra can only remain the orchestra in residence and keep the high-status image, exclusive rights to use the building, and prestigious group membership if the contract is extended.

Nevertheless, the contract between the NDR and the City of Hamburg changed the status of the radio orchestra by making the NDR SO the "future orchestra in residence" of the Elbphilharmonie before it became the "official orchestra in residence" in January 2017. *Forbes* (2017: 1) noted that Alan Gilbert, the incoming chief conductor of the orchestra, would "be hosting in the world's newest, fanciest, probably most impressive concert hall," and the orchestra thus immediately achieved a prominence it had never had before. However, after relocating into the building, the orchestra not only gained new rights, but also new responsibilities. While the building serves as a symbol for the city, the orchestra serves as a symbol for the building, by personifying and embodying it, for example. In representing the Elbphilharmonie, the musicians realized that the €866 million in public money had given the orchestra a representative and motivating residence, but also, the musicians faced a great responsibility: They felt indebted to the public and responsible for defending "an indefensible waste of public money" (*The New Yorker*, 2017: 1).

> Its new home, the Elbphilharmonie, makes the NDR ensemble a top dog in prestige, but is it also the best? [...] Demands on the NDR orchestra have increased significantly. [...] The top dog in Hamburg is currently the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, which a few months ago adopted a new name above the waves of the Elbe. As early as 2007, the NDR and the city signed a contract that gave the radio orchestra the status of resident orchestra for a period of ten years after its opening (at the time, it was thought it would not be long ...). The job [of being the residence orchestra] comes with many rights in programming, but also many obligations in performance production for the new concert hall, to be paid with an annual sum "well below a million euros and fairly negotiated"—at least that was what the then NDR director Jobst Plog revealed. […] Spiderman says, "With great power comes great responsibility." For chief conductor Thomas Hengelbrock, now more than ever before, this means that he has to deliver and improve the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra—already in the solid midfield at the national level—so much that it does justice to the international awareness of the Elbphilharmonie—and can keep up with it. The Berlin Philharmonic [Orchestra] was already one of the best orchestras in the world when Hans Scharoun built a revolutionarily good vineyard-style concert hall for them near Potsdamer Platz [in Berlin]. (Translated from German by the author; Joachim Mischke writing for the *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 2017c: 72-73)

This quotation summarizes the identity challenge the building posed and that the orchestra faced: A symbolic mismatch between concert hall and orchestra. The article also refers to another example of a residence orchestra moving into a new residence, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Most first-tier orchestras are located in world-leading concert halls, and when the NDR signed the residency contract in 2007, the Elbphilharmonie became the "home" into which the NDR SO would relocate. The author of the article poses the question of whether the symbolism of the future residence orchestra matched the residence it would occupy; it did not. The more the Elbphilharmonie became exposed and known around the world, the more it became the icon, key landmark, and symbol "for Hamburg, for Germany, for Europe and beyond" (Translated from German by the author; from a 2018 interview with the general management of the Leipzig Gewandhaus). This caused a symbolic mismatch for an orchestra that had long seen itself as a public state broadcaster for all of Northern Germany. It was neither ready to function as the embodiment of the building nor, by virtue of residing in its key landmark, as the symbolic personification of the city of Hamburg, Germany, or Europe. This also led to contradictory statements by members of the NDR and the NDR EO, notably, whether the NDR EO served as a link between the concert hall and Hamburg, Northern Germany, or beyond:

> In the Elbphilharmonie, the musicians want to […] act as a link between the spectacular new concert hall, the NDR, and the Hamburgers. (Translated from German by the author; *NDR*, 2016: 1)

> Our identity goes beyond the concert hall. The orchestra is much more than what a single building can represent—even if it's as grand as this one. We are Hamburg's orchestra for the people of this city. (Alan Gilbert, chief conductor of the NDR EO, in an interview in 2018)

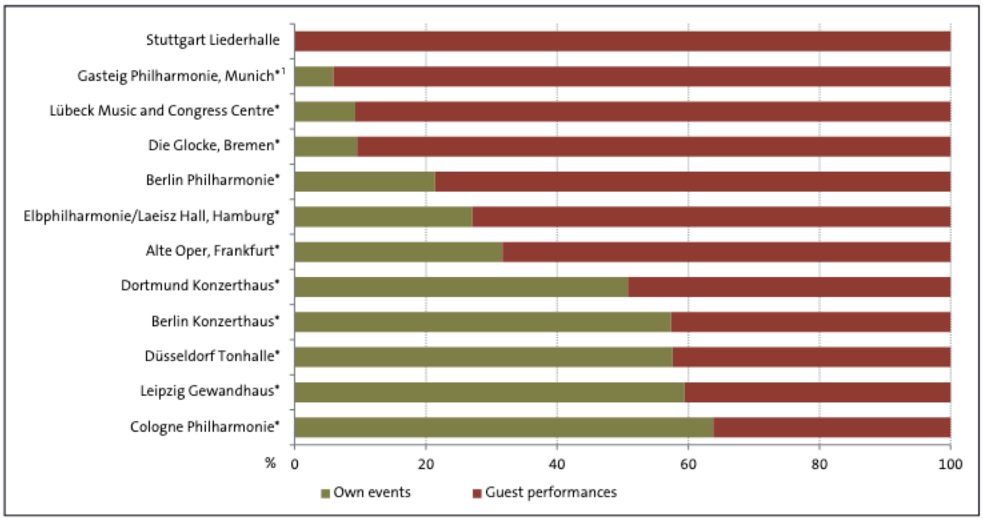
> The residence of the orchestra in the Elbphilharmonie is of great cultural and political relevance for the NDR: The fact that the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra has been part of the new concert hall from the very beginning signals the dawn of a new era. In addition, the connection between the Elbphilharmonie and the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester strengthens the NDR's cultural commitment. We see ourselves as sponsors and donors of culture—as an engine in the north German concert life and far beyond. What is particularly important to me: We want to inspire as many people as possible for classical music and show that music connects. (Joachim Knuth, program director of the NDR, in an interview for *Kulturport*, 2016)

A second source for the symbolic mismatch stems from the comparison of the NDR EO with the concert hall, and that of its guest performers. The NDR SO was an established radio orchestra and, after the Munich-based BR SO, arguably the second-best of its kind in Germany.

> And since the 2016-17 season the former North German Radio Symphony Orchestra, now rechristened the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, even bears the name of its new venue. The crucial thing for such concert halls is, however, that the resident ensemble, despite its many special rights and privileges, does not exclusively determine the concert programme. (MIZ, 2019: 280)

The quote above refers to the Elbphilharmonie management being distinct from the NDR EO management, and the former having and using the right of inviting guests to the Elbphilharmonie. In each season, roughly two-thirds of all concerts are performed by visiting orchestras and other guest performances (Figure 7). The NDR EO did not belong to the august group of world-class residence orchestras, such as the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which reside in world-leading concert halls: the Musikverein in Vienna, the Philharmonie in Berlin, and the Symphony Center in Chicago. However, it was these world-class resident orchestras that now frequented the Elbphilharmonie: The Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed the third concert there, and the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras followed closely thereafter. In 2020, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra even played all nine Beethoven Symphonies in the Elbphilharmonie. Today, nearly all world-leading orchestras have visited and performed in the Elbphilharmonie at a rate that is unprecedented in Hamburg and its former main concert hall, the Laeiszhalle.

FIGURE 7
Own and guest performances at concert hall (2016/2017)[8]



Note: This table is based on a survey of members of the German Concert Hall Conference (Deutsche Konzerthauskonferenz) for the 2016-17 season as well as information from other concert halls. It is limited entirely to musical and concert events and excludes educational projects, congresses, symposia, trade fairs, ballet and theatre events. Owing to missing or incomplete information, no figures could be given for the Essen Philharmonie or Baden-Baden Festival Hall, nor for the Dresden Kulturpalast, which only reopened in 2017.

* Member of the German Concert Hall Conference.
[1] Own events, including exhibitions.

Source: Compiled by the German Music Information Centre from information supplied by the German Concert Hall Conference and other concert halls.

The following statements elaborate on the orchestra entering the spotlight, the increasing competition, and the effects on the local classical music audience:

> I think that the city of Hamburg has very clearly changed as a musical center with the Elbphilharmonie, and it used to be a place where orchestras were very happy to come, but it now has become a place, really, that orchestras have to come to. [Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the conductor Alan Gilbert in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020b)

> Ever since 2017, since the opening of the Elbphilharmonie, we've been in the spotlight even more. And we have to face the competition whether we like it or not. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the timpanist Stephan Cürlis in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020b)

Thus, the radio orchestra needed to do "justice to the international awareness of the Elbphilharmonie," and while the orchestra experienced public excitement and previously unknown levels of public attention, the building posed the challenge of how to bridge external perceptions, notably the building's international prestige and world-leading, high-status image,

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[8] (MIZ, 2019: 290)

with the organization's national-midfield, medium-status image and its organizational identity as a local broadcasting radio orchestra for northern Germany. The question was how to live up to the new symbolic standard, how to meet the demands of the public expectations, how to face the increased competition, and how to do justice to the new organizational group membership as well as the standard of such a concert hall and new, world-leading residence.

"What we do no" longer matches the new "where we are." The Berlin Philharmonic (2017: 1) stated that, "[w]ithout doubt, the opening of the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg was one of the outstanding events in the world of music this season." The opening night was widely regarded as a success, a "storming debut for [a] hall of wonders" (*The Guardian*, 2017: 1), for which the orchestra played "a mélange of compositions from the renaissance to the present" (*Daily Mail*, 2017: 1) and "revealed itself as a first-rate group, possessing a radiantly confident brass section and strings capable of producing a toffee-rich tone" (*The New York Times*, 2017: 1).

The image excitement triggered by the concert hall vanished once the hangover set in after the opening night. Public attention increasingly moved from the high-status image of the building as such to its main feature: the concert hall. While the concert hall was acclaimed as a "sound wonder," "concert temple," and, as mentioned above, "world-leading," it was examined in practice through the concerts that took place there. The high expectations of the concert hall's acoustics were increasingly the subject of public discussion, and some journalists started to question whether the practices of the resident orchestra were as "world-leading" as the concert hall and the "world-class" orchestras that performed there at an unprecedented rate. Hence, while the high-status image and positive acclaim led to considerable excitement and motivation for the NDR EO musicians prior to the opening of the new residence, counterintuitively, what began as an identity challenge became an identity crisis because some music critics argued that the orchestra lacked the quality usually associated with resident orchestras and that its practices failed to meet expectations (*Welt*, 2017b, 2017c, 2019; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2017c):

> The acoustics of the new hall are indeed excellent: the compact round shape, which brings the 2,100 spectators together almost like a family, enables a direct and less-distant sound thanks to the proximity to the orchestra. […] But next to the direct sound, the sound unfolds less in the room than one is used to. The acoustics are dependent on variables such as repertoire, number of members, or audience. Even [the former chief conductor of the NDR EO] Thomas Hengelbrock was apparently astonished that the fully attended hall sounded drier than in rehearsals in front of a limited audience. (Translated from German by the author; Luzerner Zeitung, 2017: 1)

> And the acoustic aesthetics? We were finally able to check them for six months and got really sharp ears in the process. Because this hall, which conveys every error and every discrepancy, taught us how to compare. That is a nice educational achievement—but with an unfortunate result for Hamburg. It turned out that the residence orchestra—the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra—is not as good as desired. And that it doesn't—by itself—catch up with the world's elite by moving into the superb concert hall. The often-bloodless playing, the working against each other of the instrument groups, the booming volume of the brass—the early music specialist and chamber music conductor Thomas Hengelbrock, who was brought in [as chief conductor] in 2011, has not remedied these deficiencies. This was known to long-term subscribers from the Laeiszhalle that [the orchestra] had previously been used; they had come to terms with it. But with the Elbphilharmonie, demands increased; the grace period was over. (Translated from German by the author; *TAZ*, 2017: 1)

A devastating, crushing critique (*Welt*, 2017a) by *Welt* journalist Manuel Brug questioned the quality of the concert hall, and then, after the concerts of the Hamburg Philharmonic State Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra marked historic successes in the hall's second and third concerts, the journalist implicitly questioned the quality of its resident: the NDR EO, as well as its practices (*Welt*, 2017b):

> Dear Hamburgians, unfortunately, world-class works differently. [Referring to the opening concert of the NDR EO in the Elbphilharmonie] (Translated from German by the author; *Welt*, 2017a: 1)

> Finally, we hear world-class! Without a tour routine and, by the way, without a rehearsal! [Referring to the third concert by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra] (Translated from German by the author; *Welt*, 2017b: 1)

I experienced first-hand how the media reviewed the collective musical performances of the NDR EO and began questioning and eventually criticizing the underlying quality of their practices, which caused sleepless nights, leaving the musicians in self-doubt and an identity crisis:

> I do not know; we are not a world-class orchestra. (Translated from German by the author; interview with an NDR EO musician)

Apparently, the new concert hall not only led to a symbolic mismatch between "where we are" and "who we are," but it also led the musicians to question "what we do." They began to understand that the success of the concert hall and the image-transfer were connected to their concerts, and they realized that their fate was inextricably linked with that of the concert hall. The musicians expressed that the quality of their practices had to be world class to live up to the world-leading standard and demanding acoustical qualities of their new residence. Thus, the research question shifted from exploring the impact of the Elbphilharmonie's high-status image *per se* on the orchestra's identity to include how the challenging acoustics led to a practice mismatch and how the new residence ("where we are") would affect the orchestra and its practices ("what we do").

The quality of the orchestra's practices is closely tied to the acoustic ideal that the old and new concert halls manifested. In general, the function of the Elbphilharmonie concert hall is straightforward because it enables those present to experience music. The acoustics of the concert hall, however, raise the question of how it enables and constrains concerts. Buildings are a powerful mode of shaping or even controlling practices, and my analysis shows that the concert hall's architecture constitutes a new mode of control for the orchestra through its acoustics enforcing a coercion that require changes of the orchestra's practices: the vineyard-style concert hall is a manifestation of advanced and demanding acoustics— "the world's first 'acoustically perfect' concert hall" (*Consequence of Sound*, 2017: 1) is in this case, "designed by algorithms" (*Wired*, 2017: 1)—and its unforgiving acoustic enables a new acoustic experience of music that requires demanding, flawless practices from musicians. Overall, the concert hall's materiality enforces a new way of performing and demands changes in the practices of all artists who practice here, not least its new resident.

In summary, the NDR EO was an orchestra in the solid midfield of German radio orchestras and moved into a world-leading concert hall frequented by world-class orchestras. What I termed "where we are" appears to have significant consequences for the musicians, notably their need to redetermine "who they are" and "what they do" in response to a symbolic and practice mismatch. The organizational identity changes that the building triggered are complex, as outlined in the following section on identity work.

Managing the organization's identity crisis through symbolic and material identity work

Relocating into a new residence triggered a new set of identity dynamics, which led the orchestra to discover mismatches between their core organizational identity pillars. The orchestra used identity work, and more specifically, symbolic-material and practice-material alignment, to resolve the symbolic and practice-based mismatches it faced and become the residence orchestra such a world-leading residence required.

Symbolic-material alignment. By relocating into a new residence, the NDR SO knew that changes were necessary in response to the high-status image of its new residence and of the organizations to which the orchestra was increasingly compared. The NDR SO had to overcome the status incongruity between the orchestra and its future location: It needed to redetermine "who they were" to claim the high-status image and become part of a world-leading group of residence orchestras.

In fact, it was necessary to coordinate the organizational identity of the NDR SO with the image of the concert hall to become recognizable as a residence orchestra, to symbolize the identification with the concert hall and thus to resolve the symbolic mismatch before the building could become part of the orchestra's identity. The orchestra initiated the organizational identity changes both before and after it moved into the Elbphilharmonie by engaging in identity work; I summarize this as "symbolic-material alignment."

Given that an organization's name is a symbol of "who we are as an organization," many residence orchestras are named after their residence. The NDR SO's name failed to reflect its new organizational identity. In light of the new era in a prestigious, high-ranking, and world-leading concert hall, the name of the orchestra was deemed unsuitable, and to enjoy the prestige, attention, and high status of a world-leading concert hall that the building promised, the orchestra needed to resolve the symbolic mismatch. Here, the orchestra worked on its symbolism to match the image of its new concert hall when it decided that its name no longer explained the strategic, profound, and deep-rooted role identity change from being a radio orchestra to having a residence and being a resident orchestra. This sentiment won over a more careful approach of postponing the organizational renaming until the building was completed and officially opened and its acoustics had been tested; the delays in the opening dates and budget overruns of the Elbphilharmonie, led to a prevailing uncertainty about the public opinion of the building and acoustical quality of the buildings' main feature, the concert hall (see *Welt*, 2017d; *Deutschlandfunk Kultur*, 2019, *The Sunday Times*, 2019). Nevertheless, in 2016, nine years after signing the contract and one year before the Elbphilharmonie opened, the NDR SO was renamed the NDR EO (*NDR*, 2016):

> With the change of the name of our orchestra, we would like to express our attachment to the NDR and the Elbphilharmonie as the resident orchestra of the Elbphilharmonie. We look forward to the first rehearsal in the great hall and the opening of the house in one year with great anticipation. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2016 interview with Achim Dobschall, general manager of the NDR EO)

The renaming included the relaunch of the orchestra's branding, which resembled and incorporated the orchestra's future residence (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8
OLD NDR SO LOGO AND NEW NDR EO LOGO

NDR
Elbphilharmonie
Orchester

NDR SINFONIEORCHESTER

The rebranding effort included the change of the orchestra's logo, acronym, and all marketing materials well before moving into the building; it also started using the building in images and videos. The following statement from the design agency responsible for the orchestra's rebranding efforts captures the symbolic alignment of the orchestra to the world-leading status of its new residence:

> As the orchestra in residence in Germany's new, sensational cultural flagship, it places particularly high demands on branding. Factor has developed a multi-faceted, fluid brand-concept with which the orchestra stands out from the mass of cultural communication while remaining constantly recognizable and self-assured—just like the Elbphilharmonie itself. [...] The new concept aligns [the NDR EO] with the group of major world-leading orchestras and optimally underlines the residence status of the orchestra and the NDR's commitment to culture. (Daniel Sorge, head of design at Factor Design GmbH & Co KG)

The orchestra used the renaming to emphasize its close relationship with the new concert hall and to reinforce its symbolic relationship to it (Elbphilharmonie, 2016; Factor Partners, 2016); it became recognizable as and identifiable with the Elbphilharmonie because this is what made it the "resident NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra" (*The Economist*, 2017: 1).[9] The quotation above also shows that the organization used the renaming effort to emphasize

[9] A close relationship between a concert hall and orchestra is not uncommon. There is a known name symbiosis for established first-class orchestras, as with the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, where the orchestra is not only named after its concert hall, but Concertgebouw is also the Dutch term for "concert hall." Etymologically, the relationship goes even further, as the word "orchestra" originally referred to a place and location in a concert hall rather than a group of musicians. In fact, orchestra "is a Greek word" which "was revived by Renaissance humanists to designate the area in the theatre between the stage and audience" (Spitzer & Zaslaw, 2004: 15), and "[d]ictionaries were slow to acknowledge the new usage of orchestra as designating people rather than places" (Spitzer & Zaslaw, 2004: 17).

its new membership in the group of world-leading residence orchestras. Resolving the symbolic mismatch and relocating into the new building, therefore, marked a new era for the organization, enabled its organizational identity change, and allowed it to redetermine “who they are,” which is expressed in the following interview statements:

> That’s true. We’re the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra now; before that, we were the NDR Symphony Orchestra. I also feel the Elbphilharmonie to be a big step. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the double bassist Volker Donandt in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020b)

> A quantum leap. This marks the beginning of a new time, really: before the opening of the concert hall and after. There couldn’t have been a bigger change. […] It’s the venue and the surroundings. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the timpanist Stephan Cürlis in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020b)

Additionally, resolving the symbolic mismatch emphasized the building’s relationship to the orchestra’s identity:

> It has also become part of the orchestra's identity. The building itself has so many different meanings. It is a concert hall with its own acoustics, a place to enjoy music. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the conductor Alan Gilbert in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, 2020)

> There is a hope [...] that I would like to formulate, that we as an orchestra, once in the hall here in the city, want to establish part of its identity. On the other hand, the hall also represents a kind of identity for us. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2018 interview with a member of the NDR EO)

As Alan Gilbert, the new chief conductor who replaced Thomas Hengelbrock, indicates, the Elbphilharmonie became part of the organizational identity of the NDR EO. This interrelationship is not limited to the association between the orchestra and the building’s status; by using the concert hall as its namesake, the orchestra hoped to grow into a world-class organization itself. Renaming the organization, therefore, led to a mutual dependency and was decisive for the organization, as the following interview statement elaborates:

> It is certainly true that the orchestra influences the building and that the orchestra naturally also has an external impact, but they are by no means the only ones. So it is probably a different perception of the orchestra, for which the move to the Elbphilharmonie was of course totally decisive—for the renaming, too, which I found really very brave because they renamed themselves the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra before the opening, so everything could have been a disaster. Then they would have had this mortgage, so that was a bull move, but they won. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a representative of the Elbphilharmonie management)

The symbolic-material alignment continued well beyond early 2017, and the focus of working on "who we are" shifted to the organization's key personnel.[10] Here, the orchestra worked on its symbolism by highlighting the high-status image of organizations from which it hired new employees.[11] For example, it hired Alan Gilbert as new chief conductor from the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and Sonja Epping as new orchestra manager from the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. In my interviews and in various press releases and articles, the NDR, the management of the Elbphilharmonie, and various journalists emphasized the status and quality of these strategic hires:

> The orchestra put it [the blame and responsibility] on the conductor [Thomas Hengelbrock] and suddenly presented a new one in June: Alan Gilbert, who recently failed with his modernist program with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and left there in strife is due to come in 2019. In Hamburg, he made occasional guest appearances and was moderately acclaimed. Now, he was staged as a figure of light and stepped out of the scenes at the press conference like a hero, while Hengelbrock, the man who had been handed over, was rehearsing next door. (Translated from German by the author; *TAZ*, 2017: 1)

The following two quotations illustrate the aforementioned mutual fertilization between building and organization, notably, how the building allowed the organization to make strategic hires of sufficient quality for it to resolve the symbolic mismatch and become a world-class organization to match the world-leading building in which it resided:

> The building is so famous, and because they get better conductors through the building, that is a cycle that reinforces itself. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a representative of the Elbphilharmonie management)

> Alan Gilbert, the new chief conductor of the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra—he should fulfil the eternal hope of making Hamburg a city of music on a world scale and finally leading the orchestra into the top class. One of his predecessors, Christoph von Dohnányi, smugly classified it a few years ago, when it was still the NDR Symphony Orchestra Hamburg, as an ensemble of class "One B." So now, it [the orchestra] shall become the sounding symbol of the "Elphie." (Translated from German by the author; from an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2019: 1)

[10] It is relatively simple to answer "who the NDR EO is" when it comes to employees. At the time of writing this paper, the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra had 113 permanent employees; apart from the musicians, it also included an artist in residence, a principal conductor, a first guest conductor, a general artistic manager, orchestral equipment staff, editorial staff, and the wider management staff (*NDR*, 2019).

[11] The interviewees also indicated that the new concert hall could help attract further key talent, not only through its own orchestra academy—which the orchestra revamped to improve its ability to attract young talent and train its own future musicians—but also through auditions for open positions.

Signing the contract in 2007 and relocating to the Elbphilharmonie in 2017 meant that the NDR SO needed to use symbolic-material alignment to *become* the NDR EO, which meant both achieving a symbolic symbiosis with its concert hall and working on being an accepted member of the group of residence orchestras. However, the new set of organizational identity dynamics the relocation caused led the orchestra to struggle with more than just the symbolic mismatch elaborated on above:

> The NDR program director took his merry time with his speech, and droned on, deeply involved and understandably excited, before notably likening the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra (as the orchestra has since been rechristened) to Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw Orchestras as two examples (and presumably models) of orchestras that have entered into a symbiosis with their halls—in name and practice. Those are great examples to strive after, even if the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra is still a long way from having either that kind of relationship with its hall or, for that matter, the general, consistent orchestral quality of these two superb orchestral bodies. (*Forbes*, 2017: 1)

> From my point of view, the orchestra itself is there, and the orchestra itself forms a sound that naturally includes a hall, because this symbiosis of orchestra and their own house creates this very typical sound, so to speak. We have been in this house now for three decades, and we have further developed our typical sound here. If we were still or if we still had the second Gewandhaus, then we would have developed our own sound there, like the Vienna Philharmonic in the Musikverein, for example, with its very own setup. The double basses are in the back, and you don't play there in the American way of sitting, which has formed over many years and then gives it its very own sound. The NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra will also have to find their position in this house. And the NDR also invests a lot in its orchestra, not only in terms of budget. Alan Gilbert is coming as the new chief conductor […]. In this sense, the NDR will of course try to bring its orchestra on par with the top orchestras. Through a wise choice of repertoire, a little more money rather than too little—I don't know the numbers—it may look completely different, but I would suspect it that way. Otherwise, an investment makes no sense, and the NDR Orchestra will focus on adapting itself to this space in a way. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a member of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Management)

Practice-material alignment. The second pillar of organizational identity is "what we do as an organization," and over centuries orchestras developed distinctive practices to become recognizable and identifiable:

> Once upon a time there were no orchestras. In the second half of the seventeenth century, at the courts of kings, princes, and cardinals, instrumentalists began to organize into ensembles that combined strings, winds, and continuo instruments and that put several players on each of the string parts. Over the course of the eighteenth century these ensembles developed distinctive repertoires, distinctive performative practices, distinct personnel, and their own administrative structures, until by the 1790s and early 1800s the orchestra had become

> recognizable as the institution that, with changes, still exists in concert halls and opera houses in many parts of the world. (Spitzer & Zaslaw, 2004: v)

The fact that the audience and journalists can now compare the NDR EO to world-leading orchestras is unusual; the NDR EO and its practices used to be compared to the other two Hamburg-based orchestras, but not to the global orchestral elite. As the following quotation shows, the increased competition forces the orchestra to work to improve its overall performance to match that of its competitors and live up to the quality standard set by its new residence:

> It is unclear why the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra resides in this glass colossus and not the competing Hamburg Philharmonic State Orchestra. In any case, it cannot be explained by performance deficits because the Philharmonic is far more solid and homogeneous than the NDR musicians. For example, the orchestra under Kent Nagano played Arnold Schönberg's "Gurrelieder" with commitment and cooperation. Strange, however, that the musicians—at the same time Hamburg's opera orchestra—drowned out all the soloists, who sank into their seats, exhausted, after their parts. Nonetheless, the Philharmonic State Orchestra remains a technically more predictable ensemble than their colleagues from the NDR. Even Angela Merkel asked Nagano [chief conductor of the Philharmonic State Orchestra] and not Hengelbrock [former chief conductor of the NDR EO] to the G20 participants' concert on July 7th. Nagano, who was appointed general music director of the Bavarian State Opera in 2013 for being mediocre, is not a superstar, either. But the standards are shifting. (Translated from German by the author; *TAZ*, 2017: 1)

> This is perhaps the most important place in the world for music. The fact that we are the resident orchestra is not only a huge honor, but also a great responsibility. We are, of course, being compared to the great orchestras in the world. It's very exciting because it forces us to get the best out of ourselves. But it also shows us how we are playing at that level. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the conductor Alan Gilbert in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020a)

Relocating into the new concert hall meant a change in the acoustical conditions for the NDR EO, and the building required a new set of distinctive practices. The relocation led to a mismatch between the practices that the orchestra had developed, which were tailored to the acoustical conditions of the Laeiszhalle and which were unsuitable for the acoustical conditions of the Elbphilharmonie. To become recognizable and resolve this practice mismatch, the practices of the NDR EO had to be adapted to the different and more demanding acoustical conditions of the new concert hall.

The architectural layout of any concert hall largely determines its acoustical conditions. While the Laeiszhalle has a shoebox-style layout, the Elbphilharmonie features a vineyard-style layout. The Laeiszhalle has a confrontational setup: the audience faces a stage that is open on one side, while the other three sides of the stages are closed with walls, whose vibrations lead to an acoustical setup that supports the sound of the musicians performing on stage. In the Elbphilharmonie, the audience is seated around the stage, which is in the center of the concert hall and is open on all sides. These acoustical conditions affect the sound production of the musicians, as well as the audience's sound experience:

> [T]he essential difference is whether the audience is in front of the stage, just as most music was composed, at least until the 20th century, or where a considerable part is also sitting next to and behind the stage. One can rightly say this is not how Brahms imagined it; he did not compose for them behind the stage, and that's why it sounds different there, and that's why singers who are in the front of the stage are do not sound as good in the back. So, the vineyard has a few disadvantages, but 70% of the concert halls that are built are vineyard halls because they have many advantages. Because they are more central, because you are in the middle of the action, so everyone sitting in the hall is much closer to the stage. The Wiener Musikverein is relatively narrow, quite high, and very long, which means the cheap seats up in the back, second tier, gallery, down there in front, you'd see people waving and see people sitting there, but you are so far away from the orchestra that you can never make out individual players. That works much better here, of course—all 2,000 guests sit no more than 30 meters from the conductor, experience what is happening much more directly, feel the sweat, the energy, see what is going on, and sit so close that, on the one hand, they don't hear the sound as it is intended because they hear the horns much louder, i.e., the double basses, because they sit behind the horns and not in front of the orchestra, but they still have so much fun because you can see what is going on in the orchestra, because you can look the conductor in the face—that completely compensates. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a representative of the Elbphilharmonie management)

While the Laeiszhalle's shoebox layout offers a warm, forgiving, and, in comparison, less demanding acoustical conditions, the Elbphilharmonie's vineyard layout has cold, unforgiving, and demanding acoustics:

> In the Laeiszhalle, the acoustics were very different—all the voices were not as clear as here [Elbphilharmonie], everything was more mixed, and yes, basically warmer acoustics. And, for example, here you can hear each voice very clearly, and the whole sound does not mix as well. The sound is a bit colder due to the acoustics, so you have to be a little bit more careful. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a member of the NDR EO)

> The [Elbphilharmonie] concert hall: relentless—every inaccuracy is noticeable. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the narrator in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020a)

> The sound here is unique! I have played in many large halls, in the Suntory Hall, in Los Angeles, or in the Concertgebouw. The large halls, some of which were also made by Toyota. […] First, playing on stage is a different feeling, but much more than a spectator. In every seat where you sit, the orchestra is so transparent,

> and to be heard in the same way is unbelievable. (Translated from German by the author; NDR EO cellist Sebastian Gaede quoted in an article for *Deutschlandfunk*, 2017])

"Where we as an organization are" affects "what we as an organization do" and the NDR SO had developed a set of distinctive and recognizable practices in the Laeiszhalle that proved unsuitable for the new and more challenging acoustical setup of the Elbphilharmonie concert hall:

> What it does to the audience now, I would say that the audience gets a desire for more; people discover, oh wow, that can sound so great—well, the Laeiszhalle has certainly covered up a lot because of the specific acoustics, which are now very transparently open, and you can perceive, aha, when a guest orchestra like the Berlin Philharmonic, or the Vienna Philharmonic, or the London Symphony with Simon Rattle, that is on a different level entirely than when the local radio orchestra is playing. Let me put it this way: the awareness of quality is getting stronger. It's a challenge for the orchestra, but at the same time, it is a chance to develop further. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with the management of the ticketing agency Goette)

> So, the hall is very demanding. The audience notices errors more easily than in the Laeiszhalle. That would especially spur me on now, if I were an orchestra musician, to play correctly. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a representative of the Elbphilharmonie management)

> On the one hand, they are forced by the acoustics to improve their performance culture and the quality of the performances because you hear so much more precisely what is happening on stage, and you notice that very clearly because of the individual awareness, not only of the acoustics. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a representative of the Elbphilharmonie management)

The above quotations show how various groups discussed both the quality of the acoustics and of the orchestra's sound.

> [W]e—as in the group and as an orchestra—we've talked about the acoustics often, and what we have to do to make it sound more beautiful because, in the beginning, it was a shock here, during the first rehearsals, during the first months, too, because in the Laeiszhalle, everything had automatically warmed up a lot and was much rounder. Everything got better, and we had a different way of playing. And here [in the Elbphilharmonie], the orchestra has just changed its style. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a member of the NDR EO)

> I think, on the one hand, it allows the orchestra to move closer together and develop a very good team spirit and, on the other hand, it is again—well, how should I put it? An impetus to work on perfection, not that you don't always have that. But, over time, it is difficult to always be perfect, and if you don't keep on doing it again and again and don't always get these pushes from outside, the whole thing becomes a little more comfortable, or it can get a little more comfortable.

> And phases like the one right now, that is a brilliant lesson for everyone, that is, in any case, it also helps the whole orchestra in terms of quality. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a member of the NDR EO)

The musicians realized that they faced a mismatch between the acoustics and the ways they were used to hearing, coordinating, and performing on stage. Thus, relocating into the new residence meant that the orchestra had to adapt its distinctive practices to the materiality of the concert hall in various ways. Adjusting to the more challenging environment required improving the precision of each musician, for example, by reducing the number of individual mistakes, shouldering more responsibility, and becoming more aware of the collective sound. The identity work also included discussing the acoustics, having assistants walk around the stage during rehearsals to test the listening experience from all angles and seat groups, as well as making "[t]housands of small adaptations" (representative of the NDR EO management in an interview). As the quotations above indicate, the new acoustical conditions necessitated this change, not least because other residence orchestras could perform well in such demanding acoustics and because of the local audience's increasing ability to assess quality.

The orchestra needed to develop distinctive practices close to perfection to match the acoustically perfect conditions in the Elbphilharmonie. The NDR EO readjusted to new stage dimensions by testing and adapting different configurations, which led to the instrument groups being repositioned multiple times. Furthermore, the height of the wooden podiums was reduced over time from what Yasuhisa Toyota originally prescribed; at the new lower level, the instrument groups could better hear and see each other and the audience (the disadvantage was ultimately that audience noise became more audible onstage and sometimes distracted the musicians during performances). The musicians aimed to make fewer mistakes and perform in a more nuanced way. However, the acoustical conditions were perceived to be both restricting and enabling, and their effects were considered pleasing, but also exhausting and stressful for the musicians:

> It is clearer and more open but does not forgive mistakes. But it enables you to play an incredibly nuanced game and always gives you feedback—a very pleasant performance experience. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the double bassist Volker Donandt in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020)

> It's difficult to play here because everything can be heard. You have to concentrate a lot. So that is exhausting because you always have to be awake. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the violinist Katrin Scheitzbach in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020)

> So, in itself, a mutual fertilization arises at the moment, and we can, of course, also grow in this space. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2018 interview with a member of the NDR EO)

However, other concert halls have demanding acoustical conditions for orchestras because of their imperfections, but they still lead to organizations improving their performance:

> The Philharmony became my musical home. So many wonderful things happened there, all the recordings, the concerts, the incomparable ensemble. I also love the Berlin audience, I always experience it as very spontaneous. That's why I play so often in Berlin, maybe even too often. There have been many attempts to copy the hall—the Disney Hall in Los Angeles was modelled on the Philharmonie—but the original, with the unique acoustics, is in Berlin. The hall is inextricably linked with the orchestra and will always be my benchmark, wherever I play. Conversely, to be fair, it must be said that it can also be positive for an orchestra if the hall has catastrophic acoustics, as was the case, for example, in the old Concert Hall in Philadelphia. The orchestra there is world famous for its particularly beautiful, rich string sound. When I played there a few years ago, I was horrified by the acoustics there; it was dry like an opera house. In order to fight against it, the ensemble has acquired a gaming aesthetic that is absolutely monstrous. But: is it fun to play in such a sarcophagus? A great gift for both musicians and the audience, when you can experience music in a perfect environment like the Berlin Philharmony. There is nothing that can be improved. (Translated from German by the author, a statement made Anne-Sophie Mutter in *Du: die Zeitschrift der Kultur*: 2017).

To summarize, the relocation led to a mutual fertilization between orchestra and concert hall, but the residence orchestra status and the acoustical setup also forced the orchestra to redetermine “who it is” and “what it does,” thus improving its overall performance and changing its identity.

Positive and negative outcomes

Although the identity work initiatives successfully bridged the organizational identity mismatches, relocating into the new building also had more general positive and negative outcomes; notably, the building caused motivation and anxiety among organizational members.

Motivation. The orchestra was largely excited when I started the data collection two weeks before the opening of the concert hall in January 2017. The musicians reported that they had tears in their eyes when they first visited the concert hall in late 2016 and started rehearsing. The general excitement culminated during the first rehearsal:

> There were colleagues who had tears in their eyes after the first set of notes played—from happiness. We couldn't believe it. I just turned around and shouted into the hall: “Bravo, Mr. Toyota!” He was sitting behind us, and I think he was the most nervous, the most excited. We went through the hall beforehand, and he was really, very, very, very excited, very nervous. You must not forget: The

Elbphilharmonie is by far the most expensive building that has ever been built for music. The costs got completely out of hand. And it is not least due to the high standards that the architects and also Mr. Toyota have registered here. There was already a lot of pressure on those responsible. So, he was very happy. For the first few days, he just ran around and shouted: “I'm so happy!” (Translated from German by the author; former NDR EO conductor Thomas Hengelbrock quoted in an article for *Deutschlandfunk,* 2017: 1)

The excitement triggered various motivational effects for the orchestra, which increased their individual happiness and made them work harder on their sound and practices.

No, I think the external aspects play a very minor role, but the level and self-confidence of the individual musicians is, I think, large enough to be relatively independent of it. But the sound experience definitely plays a very important role in this room, the completely different sound experience. The inner claim was certainly already there for many but was often stifled by the fact that you simply couldn't perceive changes [in the Laeiszhalle], i.e., you could play differently, but not be sure whether that was even noticed by the fellow musicians or the audience. It's really different here, and to the extent that this kind of motivation is that you are curious and interested in designing and consciously perceiving things, being here really encourages and strengthens that. If motivation is not there at all, I think it won't emerge here either, but I've never seen a colleague here who isn't also committed, in his own way. We're very different, of course, but when talking and working together, I find them all very committed and interested. But I think that the biggest role was the room […], this room not only sounds so interesting, it is also aesthetically beautiful, and at least for me, that is something that appeals to me a lot when I go into a room I like to be in, which is simply aesthetically pleasing to me, and then I can play differently than in a room that I reject aesthetically, that I find ugly, or repulsive, or at least that doesn’t say anything to me. And that is, I think, a very big advantage that this room offers here. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a member of the NDR EO before the move)

Although some musicians described the Laeiszhalle in retrospect as the orchestra’s home, it was never their residence, and some of the musicians also denied that it served as their home. The move to the Elbphilharmonie was therefore motivating, as it ended the stressful movements of a “homeless” orchestra and brought a practical advantage: the orchestra no longer had to constantly change concert halls:

The orchestra was given a luxury property to use: The time of residing in the difficult, almost antique backstage areas of the Laeiszhalle is now over, as is the constant commuting between the Rolf Liebermann studio on the NDR site, the Rothenbaumchaussee, and the concert hall on Johannes-Brahms-Platz. In the Elbphilharmonie, the NDR orchestra enjoys six-star comfort behind the stage. (Translated from German by the author; Joachim Mischke writing for the *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 2017c: 72-73)

Until now, the orchestra has played in the Laeiszhalle but rehearsed in the Rolf Liebermann Studio of the NDR in Harvestehude. Constant shuttling back and forth and the laborious transport of the instruments (“three truckloads”) weren't

> even the main problem. "These are two buildings with really very different acoustics," explains Dobschall with a pained expression. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview of Achim Dobschall in *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 2016: 1)

> [Performing in the Laeiszhalle meant] constant change. It was a move, [and] also little things, changing wardrobe in the hallway, or having one rehearsal in the [concert] hall, and one in the [NDR] studio, or three rehearsals in the studio, then again rehearsals in the hall, or going to Lübeck for recordings because the acoustics in the Laeiszhalle were not good enough for today's standards. It's always been like jumping back and forth, sort of making the best of it, because of the absence of the ideal. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a member of the NDR EO before the move)

The quotations refer to the hall in which the orchestra gave concerts versus the hall in which it had rehearsed in preparation for those concerts. Commuting between venues was stressful for the musicians and harmful for the orchestra's ability to develop a set of distinctive practices. If the two halls were identical, there would have been a stable acoustic structure, which would enable the orchestra's sound to develop a certain stability by adapting to the acoustic conditions. Previously, the NDR EO did not have such a match, as the concert venue was not available as their rehearsal room. The musicians were excited about finally being able to work with stable acoustics and rehearse in conditions similar to those of their concerts. The orchestra also hoped to develop its own sound, which the musicians usually referred to as their "sound identity" in interviews. For decades, the NDR SO was constrained in developing its distinct practices and a recognizable sound identity because they had to move buildings for every concert and commuted between the Laeiszhalle concert hall and the Rolf-Liebermann Studio for their rehearsals. By relocating to the Elbphilharmonie, the NDR EO could make its practices distinct and recognizable and forge a sound identity there. This was also motivating for the orchestra, as the interviews show how the new concert hall made it possible to work on this aspect of its identity:

> The musicians will rehearse almost every day in the Elbphilharmonie—and perform almost as often. In the first half of the year, we are playing about 70 concerts. … This is the first time that we can rehearse in the same room in which we perform. We can now build a sound identity. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2018 interview with Achim Dobschall, general manager of the NDR EO)

> In the Elbphilharmonie, the musicians want to develop their sound identity. (Translated from German by the author; from NDR, 2016: 1)

The possibility of a "home advantage" is another motivating aspect of the new concert hall. The NDR EO developed such an advantage by being able to fully appreciate the acoustic conditions of the concert hall before optimally adapting its sound to the conditions there; they came to know and understand those conditions:

> We always have the advantage of being able to rehearse here, so it is a hall that we will eventually know very well. We can then use this advantage to increase our quality, our artistic quality, and grow in cooperation with the hall. [...] [T]hen, in other halls of the world, we will be able to show what is possible with our orchestra. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2018 interview with a member of the NDR EO)

For example, at a Vivaldi concert, the orchestra could experiment with different positions for the distant trumpets. Such an adjustment would not be available to a visiting orchestra, not least because of the limited rehearsal time. The musicians also noted that the new "home" significantly increased the quantity of subscribers and thus rejuvenated the "home audience." The musicians reported that they found it motivating to perform in front of such an audience in an always sold-out concert hall. Moments of unexpected recognition also supported this motivating effect of the new home. For example, spouses, friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues were more interested in the musicians' work and the orchestra they worked for; they expressed this interest by asking the musicians questions about the concert hall, especially when it was not yet open to the general public and when the orchestra had begun rehearsing there exclusively in the autumn and winter of 2016. This social recognition noticeably increased the status of the job of an NDR EO orchestral musician and motivated them in the long term:

> It is the hope that comes with this motivation, which feels a little bit like being carried on wings. This air, this public attention, all this encouragement in the media, this great attention, is like wind under your wings on which you can then float to new heights. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2018 interview with a member of the NDR EO)

In addition to the increased recognition from friends and family, new attention also came from the wider media. Internationally, there were 53,992 press items about the Elbphilharmonie between February 2016 and May 2017. The articles made almost 26 billion contacts across the globe, half of which were made during the opening month of January 2017, and these often featured the orchestra (Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, 2017). The musicians found themselves located in a relevant concert hall and prominent residence that prompted global media interest. This is motivating because it also proved the relevance of their work in the new concert hall. That relevance and the perceived recognition of their work increased the orchestra's self-confidence because it reportedly led to the perception that "who we are" and "what we do" are relevant:

> When all the musicians arrive here in the morning and are happy—and I experience that a lot—then you sit down here again, have a coffee before the rehearsal, and the colleagues say: "Have a look at this! That is indescribable!" If you go to the rehearsal here in the morning with so many positive impressions, of course it has an impact! (Translated from German by the author; NDR EO cellist Katharina Kühl quoted in an article for *Deutschlandfunk.* 2017: 1)

> I think the NDR will also get a strong boost from this building, it is a great feeling, no matter what you play, the house is always full. That does something to you, that motivates you, too—you have fantastic rehearsal rooms in the backstage area, also with a view of the Elbe, so I laughed for the first time when I saw the rooms. Nobody comes to practice here—people just come and look at the harbor or count the ships. These are simply phenomenal working conditions, and they simply influence and motivate you, too, and if you then get a framework, in the repertoire, with a conductor, with better soloists—because the employer says, no, we consciously invest, too—then, I think, an orchestra will develop, but that doesn't happen overnight. But that is, I think, a step that takes more than a few years, then you will see results from it, too. But, from my perspective, the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra will have made a significant leap forward in three, four, five years. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a representative of the Leipzig Gewandhaus management)

> At the moment, it motivates. That can be clearly felt. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2017 interview with a member of the NDR EO)

> But also, the presentation, which is just a lot more of being completely exposed, most of them—I'm not saying all of them, now—have more self-confidence and feel more responsible for the whole thing and for the success of the concert. That's what the orchestra has to offer. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a representative of the Elbphilharmonie management)

Anxiety. Largely unexpectedly and counterintuitively, the new concert hall put the orchestra under a considerable amount of stress. The musicians were constantly aware of the cost and the negative image attached to the building as it overran its budget, and the orchestra felt the public pressure of proving the acoustic qualities of the concert hall.

> It challenges and, yes—you just feel a greater responsibility. You want to do it well, especially well, when you realize how much the focus is on you. It is a requirement, really. (Translated from German by the author; from a 2017 interview with a member of the NDR EO)

As a result, the musicians felt the responsibility of demonstrating that the public spending was worth the end result and was not an "an indefensible waste of public money" (*The New Yorker*, 2017: 1). Additionally, the orchestra is faced with the uncertainty of whether the 10-year contract will be extended and whether it will keep its status as residence orchestra, especially, as indicated in the following quotation, journalists questioned their residence and whether it was deserved:

> It is unclear why the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra resides in this glass colossus and not the competing Hamburg Philharmonic State Orchestra. (Translated from German by the author; *TAZ*, 2017: 1)

While the NDR EO remains a radio orchestra, it is now also a *resident* orchestra, which means that harmonizing its symbolism; adapting to challenging acoustical conditions; and facing additional tasks, more responsibility, and a heavier workload are obvious sources of stress. Feeling indebted to taxpayers, being compared to world-leading orchestras, and facing expectations of higher quality are perhaps less obvious sources of collective stress, which increase through the feeling of being exposed on stage and put in the public limelight. This anxiety is not limited to the NDR EO musicians, as all musicians feel exposed in the vineyard-style concert hall:

> One of the most sensational halls that has been built on this planet! You can really play very softly here, and, yes, sometimes it even scares me, I have to say: the sound here is so precise and so crystal clear. (Translated from German by the author; violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaya quoted in the book by Peter Hundert - *Backstage Elbphilharmonie*, 2019)

The acoustics of the Elbphilharmonie are more unforgiving than what musicians were accustomed to in the Laeiszhalle, and the Elbphilharmonie made the orchestra's deficiencies more audible than before. The NDR EO musicians according ran a very public risk of not doing justice to their new residence.

> The operating costs for a concert hall are relatively low. It often only takes a resourceful and well-connected director, but not necessarily a first-class orchestra. Hamburg is the best example of this. In the Elbphilharmonie, only the city's two middle-class orchestras appear, and their deficits become even more audible due to the difficult acoustics. (Translated from German by the author; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2017: 1)

Thus, a surprising element of the NDR EO relocating into the Elbphilharmonie is that it entailed a negative effect, most notably, that the new building caused stress, posed an identity challenge that became an identity crisis, and led to anxiety among the musicians. The underlying symbolic and practice-based mismatch affected the musicians deeply. Musicians reported sleepless nights and appeared to be in shock in the days following opening night.

> But we also took that to heart, I have to say. So, we have this criticism we have already taken it into account, what it refers to and what can be learned from it, and maybe there is something, a criticism against the hall, against us. (Translated from German by the author; interview an NDR EO musician)

Nevertheless, motivation prevailed over anxiety, and the musicians used the feedback to work on and improve their practices. However, other orchestras have shown how time-consuming this process is; as the quotations below suggest, it may take up to a decade for the NDR EO to adapt its practices to the acoustical conditions of its new material surroundings. It may also require the general audience to adapt their listening habits to the new acoustics of the Elbphilharmonie and the sound identity of the NDR EO. Other orchestras relocating into new concert halls have needed approximately a decade to adapt to their new material environment; one example to which interviewees referred on various occasions is the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra moving into the Berlin Philharmony in 1963. This example shows that the process of an orchestra adapting to and becoming familiar with a new concert hall takes longer than is commonly expected. Similarly, the management of the ticketing agency Goette described how the adaptation process of the NDR EO's practices to the Elbphilharmonie's acoustical conditions will take time—a sentiment and prediction various interviewees shared:

> This is a great opportunity for the orchestras to develop. But this is a process that certainly takes a long time, so it's nothing that happens overnight, so an orchestra needs to develop in a new hall. I think the greatest development is going through the NDR, which is completely reinventing itself, and now with the new chief conductor, it will also reach another level. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with the management of the ticketing agency Goette)

> The NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra is only just on the way to becoming a top ensemble—not at the beginning, but it still has a long way to go. (Translated from German by the author; *NOZ*, 2017: 1)

> You could say that the question is, I mean, the path is not yet finished, the path is still going up. It is not the case that they [the NDR EO] are on top of the hill yet. (Translated from German by the author; interview with Elbphilharmonie management)

> But that is exactly where we are at—the very beginning. The orchestra must prove and see how this identity will be found in the future and what will ultimately be attached to it. Of course, we hope that it can be attached to an increase in artistic competence, but I think it's hard to predict at the moment. You have to let something grow and develop and then, in retrospect, you will see what will stick and be noticed. (Translated from German by the author; from an interview with a member of the NDR EO)

> This kind of balancing between group consciousness and individual expression takes time. If you want to build a common identity, you cannot do it in a week. That's a real challenge. (Alan Gilbert, chief conductor of the NDR EO, in an interview in 2018)

Revised and matching organizational identity. When the orchestra celebrated its 75th birthday in 2020, the NDR EO had officially resided in the Elbphilharmonie for almost four years:

> In January 2021, the move to the Elbphilharmonie was just four years ago. Compared to the history of the orchestra, it was an incredibly short period of time—and yet it felt like an eternity. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020c)

Meanwhile, the NDR EO has adapted both its symbolism and its practices to the new location. As the NDR EO became familiar with the acoustics, for example, it became more adept at exploiting the acoustic qualities of the concert hall, as the following quotation explains:

> Alan Gilbert is moving in the opposite direction; he always did so, and he is someone who is very capable in directing the sound in the larger apparatus and this was immediately noticeable in his first projects, that the orchestra is moving in the right direction with him, and by now this element [and obstacle] of the acoustics is no longer a topic in the orchestra anymore. (Translated from German by the author; interview with the NDR EO management).

When I started my data collection, the NDR EO musicians stated that they hoped to grow in the new building. Interestingly, even after a short time in the more demanding acoustical conditions of the Elbphilharmonie, they could identify significant and recognizable changes in their distinct practices and hear improvements in the overall performance of the orchestra when performing in the Laeiszhalle again:

> In September, we played Haydn with Gilbert [in the Laeiszhalle]. I got there for the first rehearsal, and it was like 10 years ago. It's unbelievable to come back here again. This is really a 180-degree turn from the Elbphilharmonie. I noticed how our orchestral sound has changed. We have become much more compact in terms of sound. In the Elbphilharmonie, you really have to pay attention to every nuance! And here, you have a bit of goodwill from the room. (Translated from German by the author; a statement made by the oboist Paulus van der Merwe in a documentary on the 75th birthday of the *NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra*, 2020c)

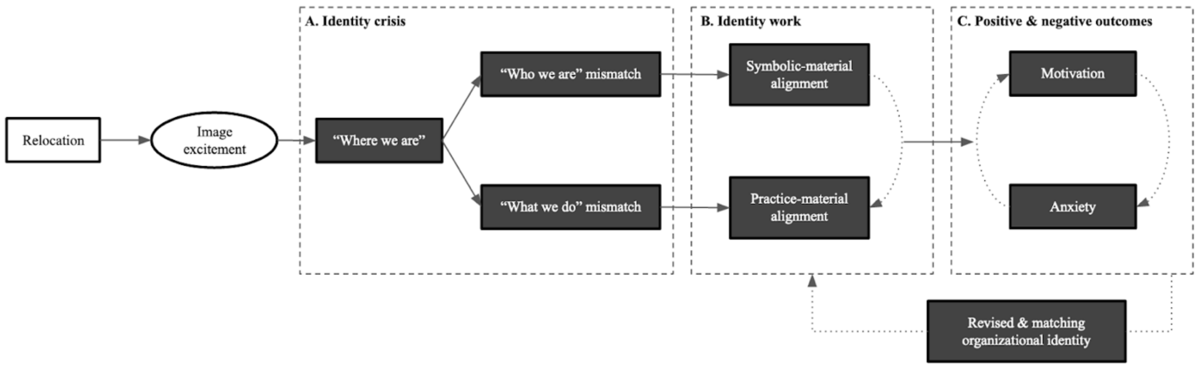
Consequently, the NDR EO received more favorable reviews (see *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 2017a, 2017b, 2019, 2021; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2019; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2019), although not universally favorable ones (see *Süddeutsche Zei*tung, 2017c, 2017d). The various improvements through identity work noted above played an important role here, in addition to the motivational influences overcoming the anxiety, which enhanced the orchestra’s ability to work on the new set of identity dynamics, resolve the mismatches, and stabilize the outcomes of the organizational identity change of becoming a residence orchestra and the NDR SO has become the NDR EO.

Managing Identity in Relocating Organizations: A Model

The data structure of managing identity in relocating organizations (Figure 5) summarizes my findings and provides a synopsis of the effects of a relocation for organizational identity. It indicates the kinds of mismatches within the organizational identity pillars and the forms of identity work the organization engaged in to resolve mismatches, enact the new organizational identity, and respond to the outcomes of the relocation. This section translates these findings into a comprehensive process model of managing identity in relocating organizations. The model (Figure 10) is intended to make the temporal order of the identified elements comprehensible.

FIGURE 10

Managing Identity in Relocating Organizations: A Model



My model starts with a relocation that causes external image excitement and triggers an organizational response, which, for some organizations, may constitute an organizational identity challenge or an identity crisis by initiating a new set of organizational identity dynamics. The two mismatches are the result of organizations' symbolic and practice-based repertoire matching their material surroundings and being tailored to the former location. After a relocation, the repertoire may no longer match the requirements of the new location. Further, the degree of image excitement, the severity of the identity challenge, and the magnitude of the identity responses depends on the extent to which the new location differs from the previous one.

The organizational identity crisis then leads to organizations engaging in new types of identity work to address the mismatches that the new set of dynamics has caused. The identity work types are temporal because, while the anticipation of moving into a new building triggers *a priori* changes to the collective understanding of "who we are," the building's completion and subsequent organizational relocation additionally cause *a posteriori* changes to "what we as an organization do." Buildings affect organizational identities through their coercive powers that go beyond affecting the organizational members' everyday interactions and practices after a relocation: a building affects both the physical and mental space of employees by shaping their practices and self-understanding, which is why organizations may choose to start adapting themselves even in anticipation of a relocation that is deemed significant.

Finally, organizations need to manage the outcomes of these new types of identity work. Depending on the requirements of the building, the outcomes of a relocation and the identity work that follows can be positive or negative. The outcomes initiate a mutually reinforcing, cyclical relationship with various phases. This is because a relocation sets into motion not only a new set of identity dynamics that requires identity work, but the identity work that follows organizational relocations also causes the positive and negative effects of motivation and anxiety. Here, organizations need to find a "sweet spot" between the two to achieve a revised organizational identity that matches its new location. The management of a relocating organization should keep in mind that the new building has the potential to trigger an upward spiral and improve its performance. However, mismanaging the outcomes of a relocation can have fatal consequences, as failing to hit the sweet spot between motivation and anxiety could cause a downward spiral for an organization's performance, where anxiety overwhelms motivation, leading to a predominantly negative outcome.

DISCUSSION

Organizational identity research has made some inroads into studying the role of materiality (e.g., Hatch, 1990, Elsbach, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; Elsbach & Pratt, 2007; Dale & Burrell, 2008; Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011; Schultz & Hernes, 2013; Watkiss & Glynn, 2016; Berti et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the emphasis in organizational identity research is by default on the human and the social, as organizational identity concerns the collective mental constructs of organizational members, leading to some neglect of materiality in general, and, where materiality is brought into the equation (e.g., Watkiss & Glynn, 2016), it often specifically concentrates on how forms of materiality affect organizational identity formation and maintenance.

My research was motivated by the "material turn" (Boxenbaum et al., 2018: 597) in organizational identity research to show "how" (Gioia et al., 2013: 184) materiality can lead to changes in organizational identity. More specifically, the aim of my research was to discern the effects of relocations on organizational identity and what types of organizational identity work organizations engage in to address these effects. To do this, my inductive study examined a relocation and its role in organizational identity. Here, I have shown that the new building has effects beyond the organization merely changing "where it is" located. Rather, I contribute the finding that relocating an organization can constitute an event of such strategic importance that it triggers an organizational identity change. This allows me to make three distinct theoretical contributions to organizational identity research, which I discuss in this section. I also explain this study's boundary conditions and propose directions for future research.

Contributions to Organizational Identity Theory

A new set of organizational identity dynamics. Buildings serve as an "aesthetic marker" (Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011: 504), "strong material anchor" (Monteiro & Nicolini, 2014: 4), and "stabilizing artefact" (Czarniawska, 2009: 431) for organizations and their identities. Buildings are, therefore, a "powerful mode of control" (Wassermann & Frenkel, 2011: 503) for employees' everyday interactions and practices, and thus, they determine organizational identity formation and maintenance.

However, employees adapting to a new building can trigger organizational identity change by precipitating a new set of organizational identity dynamics. The two pillars of organizational identity are usually described as "who we are" (e.g., Gioia et al., 2010: 4) and "what we do" (Nag et al., 2007: 843); these pillars are formed, maintained, and changed through the everyday interactions and practices of organizational members. With the approach adopted in this paper, I emphasize the materiality associated with the location of organizations, and, specifically, show how a relocation affects the two pillars of organizational identity. If the location of an organization is relevant, for example, through its ability to stabilize and control the everyday interactions and practices of organizational members, then relocations have the potential to lead to a new mode of control that prompts changes in everyday interactions and a discontinuity of practices. These changes can in turn generate new dynamics that destabilize both pillars of organizational identity. Given the inner workings of the new set of organizational identity dynamics a relocation triggers, I believe my findings show that "where we are" constitutes a third, but usually overlooked, pillar of organizational identity.

Buildings influence the symbolism of the work done on behalf of their occupant organizations and determine where most of the work, everyday interactions, and practices take place. A relocation removes the former marker, anchor, and source of stability from the employees' identity. Hence, a relocation not only provides an organization with a new building but can also come with new symbolism and a new, powerful mode of controlling employees' everyday interactions. Thus, a relocation triggers instability and promotes change for an organization and its self-understanding because, if identities are marked, anchored, and stabilized through the spaces of specific locations, then relocations disrupt the shared understanding of "who we are" and "what we do" as organizations. Further, in the case considered here, the changes began even with the mental anticipation of the symbolic and physical changes thought to accompany the relocation ("where we will be"). During the period of transition from the old to the new building, relocations can destabilize organizational identities, most notably by employees redetermining a set of claims and attributes that Whetten (2006) would describe as CED. This is especially true when organizations find themselves in a new building that differs significantly from the former home and where they need to perform a considerable amount of identity work to make themselves at home. I do not intend to suggest that a building in a new location cannot eventually provide a new source of stability or that its space cannot provide a mode of control for organizations' identity; I do suggest, however, that it takes time for employees to adapt and become accustomed to their new material environment. More poetically, after setting sail from an old location, anchoring in a new location means that an organization needs time to settle in by making itself at home in the new building.

Organizational identity change is one form of adaptation during the phase of instability and results from a relocation that triggers dynamics and causes mismatches between the three pillars of any collective and shared self-understanding. A relocation can, therefore, constitute a serious disruption of organizational identity, potentially even triggering an identity crisis, because, if a building improves the symbolism attached to an organization or employees' everyday interactions and practices, the relocation in fact challenges that organization's former self-understanding and discontinues its practices. The resulting mismatches in the three organizational identity pillars not only affect the way employees work and determine a new shared sense of who they are, but they may even be traumatic. Such a trauma can, for example, be created through the aforementioned new set of organizational identity dynamics, leading to a serious identity crisis, where the new "where we are" fundamentally no longer matches "who we were" and "what we did," causing symbolic and practical mismatches that the organization must address.

New types of identity work. Given that buildings are "identity-ordering," "identity-inscribing," and "identity-informing" places (Berti et al., 2018: 168-169), relocations to new buildings are comparable to overwriting a recording. Specifically, a relocation re-orders, re-inscribes, and re-informs an organization's identity; changing "where we are" makes it necessary to redetermine "who we are" and "what we do" as an organization.

To address the effects of a relocation, notably any emerging symbolic and practice-based mismatches between "where we are," "who we are," and "what we do," an organization needs to engage in new types of organizational identity work. I have identified two new mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive types of identity work, which I term symbolic-material alignment and practice-material alignment. Similar to other research on strategic change, such as a major shift in research and development (see Nag et al., 2007), a relocation can cause organizational identity change in advance. Thus, the initiation of identity work does not necessarily begin after the relocation has taken place; it can begin in anticipation of moving buildings, and organizational members enact identity work before, during, and after relocations.

Symbolic-material alignment is the first form of identity work organizational members engage in to address the symbolic mismatches between the identity pillars of "where we are" and "who we were." In this case, organizational members had a self-understanding that was tailored to and matched "where we used to be," notably, the symbolism of their former building. Organizations need to initiate a new discourse to solve the mismatch between the symbolic system of the organization and the symbolic system of the new building. The new discourse is an adjustment of making the organization feel at home, which means embracing the symbolism of the new building.

Practice-material alignment is the second form of identity work organizational members employ to address practice-based mismatches caused by the new set of identity dynamics a relocation triggers, specifically between the identity pillars of "where we are" and "what we did." Organizational members had developed a set of practices tailored to their everyday interactions and activities in their former building. A relocation to a new building reconfigures the mode of control and fosters a new form of coercion for an organization. All relocations, therefore, affect employees' everyday interactions and practices, and the more drastically the new building differs from the former one, the more such an alignment becomes necessary and must be solved by aligning practices with the conditions set by the new material environment.

While some organizations may find it more difficult to engage in symbolic-material alignment, others may struggle with the practice-material alignment. This depends on the results of the new set of identity dynamics and the severity of the mismatches organizations are confronted with and must address. In the case under study here, for example, it was fairly simple for the orchestra to change "who we are" by working on the symbolic-material alignment and postulating a new name and brand. The organization, however, did not expect the long duration or the difficult, time-consuming work the practice-material alignment required, notably changing the sound-production practices and adapting "what we do" to the new location. Nevertheless, living up to the premier status of the concert hall may take several rounds of identity work, and other organizations may also need years to adjust to their new location before truly feeling that they have made themselves at home.

To summarize, relocations to new buildings can help organizational members redetermine who they are and gain a new sense of what they ought to be doing; the former building is a manifestation, anchor, or marker of who the organization used to be and what it used to do. The two forms of identity work allow organizations to solve the mismatches the new set of identity dynamics a relocation triggers and thus change the identity pillar of "who we are" and "what we do" to match the new "where we are." As a result, I agree that "matter matters" (Carlile et al., 2014: 1) and "[m]aterials matter" (Leatherbarrow, 2009: 69), and I suggest that materiality matters for organizational identity change. It is not only the case that "objects serve as 'evolving material representations of emerging collective interpretations' that helped organizational members gain a better sense of who they were and what they did" (Watkiss & Glynn, 2016: 324); in addition, the dis-association from an object and the association with a new object meant changing the material representation of an organization, which triggered changes for organizational members who also had to re-determine who they were and what they did. Thus, relocations into new buildings help organizational members gain a new sense and redetermine who they ought to become and what they ought to be doing.

Managing the effects of an identity crisis. The identity crisis caused by a relocation can lead to both positive and negative effects, and one usually dominates the other. In fact, such an identity crisis changes organizational identity, as it can either improve or deteriorate an organization's self-understanding and practices. This is why an organization's management must pay attention not only to the relocation itself, but also to the effects of the subsequent identity crisis, which must be carefully managed. This is not to suggest that every relocation leads to a severe identity crisis, as the magnitude of the crisis and its effects depend on the identity dynamics, which are determined by the difference between the organization's new and old locations. This difference is manifested in the two locations' powerful modes of control and coercion.

Research in other fields has suggested that, for example, "buildings and cities can affect our mood and well-being and that specialized cells in the hippocampal region of our brains are attuned to the geometry and arrangement of the spaces we inhabit" (BBC, 2017: 1). This is intuitive, as, from non-work-related settings, we know that the positive effect of moving into a larger, more luxurious home can be motivating and cause excitement, while the negative effect of moving into a smaller, more austere home tends to be demotivating and cause feelings of anxiety, stress, and self-doubt (Foye, 2017). One could argue that "our perception of mental spaces walks in parallel to our perception of physical spaces" (Rattner, 2019) and that, in general, this also holds true for organizations, where higher-status offices are motivating and improve employees' subjective well-being, and, through their effects on collective self-understanding and practices, relocations can lead to positive effects on organizational identity.

Interestingly, the cause-and-effect relationship of mental and physical spaces is more complex, and my research addresses the complexity by showing that, counterintuitively, relocating to a new, more luxurious building can have not only positive, but also negative outcomes, for example, the effect of triggering motivation *and* anxiety. Employees project themselves onto the buildings in which organizations are located and compare themselves and their practices to their new organizational home, to their former organizational home, and to the buildings of comparable organizations. Moving into a lavish new building thus has a motivating effect, but, as the third part of my process model indicates, a new building also comes with a set of expectations and modes of control, which can be symbolic or practical. The organizational members may ask themselves if they are worthy of the new premises and whether they can perform at the level its high standards set and at the level of the coercive mode of control the building sets physically, as well as the mental expectations set by the image excitement of external stakeholders. In serious cases, employees can even develop a sense of anxiety if they are or feel they are unable to fulfil the expectations that accompany their new location.

Managers, therefore, need to rethink the influence of buildings on employees' mood more generally; managing the effects of a relocation means navigating the organization through the interplay of positive and negative effects, which can, for example, trigger motivation and anxiety. While managers should aim at an overall positive outcome with a relocation, this does not mean that they should try to block or prevent anxiety in advance because, like imposter syndrome in individuals, anxiety can actually propel change and is necessary to improve performances. The management of an organization should create a mental space that allows fear; therefore, it is important to consider that a relocation leads to a critical intersection, notably, an interaction between the forces of motivation and anxiety, and that the desire to improve must be combined with the anxiety of feeling compelled to move forward and to meet expectations. If the intersection is managed well, a relocation has the power to achieve a positive cycle in which the two forces reinforce each other.

However, the management of any organization needs to keep both forces in a very careful balance in order to foster psychological safety and create a safe mental space for these fears to preserve employees' mental stability. This is because relocations can easily have the opposite effect, resulting in a negative cycle of self-doubt that reduces motivation and can eventually kill the organization. Organizations may face the issue of anxiety overwhelming motivation, and the relocation could thus ultimately be a disaster. To summarize, our perception of mental spaces is not necessarily parallel to our perception of physical spaces, as relocations to new buildings can lead to more than motivation or anxiety; with a cyclical reinforcement of both positive and negative outcomes, a relocation to an improved location may improve or worsen an organization's performance.

Boundary conditions. I elaborated on the importance of concert halls serving as residences for orchestras, but buildings (e.g., concert halls, opera houses) also play a pivotal role for other creative industry organizations and their members. Further, the case holds some generalizable truth for all kinds of organizations associated with buildings, as buildings are comparable to a set of clothing for individuals: they need to fit. Clothes undergo annual fashion cycles and express our sense of "who we are" and "what we do," as well as match the size of our body and the location, situation, and circumstances we find ourselves in; the same is true of buildings for organizations.

Organizations can physically outgrow their premises if they have too many employees or dramatically decrease their workforce in a downward shift. Buildings ("where we are") need to match the everyday interactions and practices of employees ("what we do") and their self-understanding ("who we are"). As organizations must constantly change, so too must their buildings. Organizations constantly adapt buildings to their needs and identities, and while buildings tend to be more stable than our wardrobes, each mismatch between "where we are," "who we are," and "what we do" causes change. This is visible, for example, in the long run for financial organizations, which formerly had marble-clad buildings, signalling trust and stability, before moving into glass-clad towers that competed in height. Today, financial organizations have changed to campus-like buildings to emulate a trend initiated by tech firms; they aim to show that they can compete with young, innovative financial-technology ("FinTech") firms (e.g., the new Goldman Sachs headquarters in London). My findings not only hold true and are transferable to white-collar work in office buildings or blue-collar work in industrial sites, but most likely for all types of work and collars associated with buildings more generally. What is relevant is buildings' coercive power, as buildings force organizations to align by changing the everyday interactions and practices of their employees. Further, relocations cause the aforementioned identity dynamics, although these may be less extreme than in the case I studied.

This has to do with the ability "where we are" being able to cover various aspects (i.e., space, place, location) and that each relocation can lead to more drastic or only nuanced organizational identity changes. The NDR SO has become the NDR EO by integrating the concert hall into its organizational identity and working on its symbolic and practice repertoire. However, this does not mean that the orchestra's new and revised identity is identical to the new residence. While the orchestra relocated to a more central spot within the city, it is still based in the same major port and river city in North Germany, often described as culturally rich. Thus, while the orchestra indeed moved buildings and changed its location within the city, it did not relocate to a new city or region, and the effects on its identity have less to do with the geographical location than the nature of the new building itself.

The recent COVID pandemic has shown that, while work can be done from home, some employees have realized that the coercive power of working in offices was less constraining and more enabling than working in their home offices because offices shape our everyday activities and practices, often in a positive way. However, a 2021 case concerning Apple employees—who wrote an open letter to the company after it changed its home office rules to have employees spend three working days in the offices—also illustrates that employees can perceive working from home in a positive light. Organizations reacted by giving funds to employees to adapt their work-from-home environments, often with budgets for furniture (e.g., chairs, tables), hardware (e.g., screens, laptops), or software (e.g., investments in Zoom). Nevertheless, given the restricted access to the buildings in which organizations reside, workforces had first-hand experience of the positive and negative outcomes of working in these environments.

Finally, while relocations may cause an upward or a downward spiral, other mismatches and changes are possible within the three identity pillars, and my research does not account for these. Relocating to a new building can constitute a success or a disaster; it remains unknown what would have happened to the NDR EO if the Elbphilharmonie had been a failure. This may indicate that, although buildings can become assets for organizations, they can also become liabilities. Hence, my study could not show the de-motivation effects and the resulting relaxation and feeling of being at ease for the musicians; this could have occurred if the Elbphilharmonie had easier and less demanding acoustics than the Laeiszhalle. While this could have made the musicians more confident—if not even overconfident in the short run—it would not have initiated the process of the orchestra working on itself and becoming better by improving practices and the overall quality of their performances. Potentially, it could even have led to worse performances.

Avenues for Future Research

My study of organizational relocation raises a relevant avenue for future research. I stressed the role of buildings as a form of materiality that are a factor of organizational identity change. I understand, however, that buildings are crucial markers, anchors, and stabilizing artefacts for organizations and their identities. Changing these sources of stability can cause instability for organizational members' self-perception. Indeed, organizational identity scholars have stressed the importance of buildings informing, inscribing, and ordering the identity of organizations. Changing the anchor of organizational identity stability can affect its formation and maintenance, and it encourages—if not forces—an organization to rethink "who we are" and "what we do."

First, future research should examine how organizations may change their shared construction of who they are or their everyday interactions and practices to the extent that the organization requires a new building. Potentially, the organizational identity pillars would trigger a different set of identity dynamics, for example, by occurring in a different temporal order than my study suggests. These would require different forms of identity work to align the kind of mismatches that the organization faces, especially if the relocation needs to relocate but is obligated to stay its building. This would mean that, rather than the relocation triggering the dynamics, they are caused by mismatches between the self-understanding and the location or by employees' everyday interactions and practices outgrowing their premises.

Second, I only use "where we are" in a specific sense, notably with respect to the building in which an organization is located and a geographical place change to a more central location within a city. There are many place-related senses of "where we are," and future research could examine a geographical place change within a region, country or continent, because a more drastic geographical place change could play differently into the identity of the relocating and place-changing organization.

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THE ELBPHILHARMONIE AND THE HAMBURG EFFECT: ON THE SOCIAL POSITIONING, IDENTITIES AND SYSTEM FUNCTIONS OF A BUILDING AND A CITY[12]

Tobias Heuer and Jochen Runde[*]

Judge Business School, University of Cambridge

Drawing on social positioning theory, we examine how the identity of the city of Hamburg has been affected by the identity and system functions of its recently completed Elbphilharmonie building. We explore the social positioning and identity formation processes involved, and argue that, rather than having a "Bilbao Effect" as is often claimed, the Elbphilharmonie project is in fact having a distinct "Hamburg Effect" of its own.

Keywords: Identity, materiality, social positioning, system functions, qualitative study.

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[12] Please note that I am using the personal of pronoun of "we" in the second paper to match the version which was peer-reviewed and then published in the European Journal of Planning Studies.

[*] Corresponding author j.runde@jbs.cam.ac.uk, ORCID: 0000-0001-9596-5144. We are grateful to Philip Kennicott, Ascan Mergenthaler, two anonymous referees, the editors of this *Special Issue*, seminar participants at the Cambridge Judge Business School, and participants at the 2018 CJBS Winter Doctoral Conference and the 2019 European Group for Organizational Studies Colloquium, for comments on an earlier version of this paper. Funding from the Cambridge Political Economy Society Trust is gratefully acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

Our aim in this paper is to examine how an iconic building can be used to influence the identity of a city. We focus on the new Elbphilharmonie building in Hamburg which, since its opening in 2017, is widely regarded as having had a perceptible effect on how the city is seen both by its own citizens and in the wider national and international community.

We begin by introducing social positioning theory (SPT), a broad socio-ontological theory of the constitution of society (Lawson 2019, 2021), which we draw on here for what it tells us about social identity. One of the advantages of SPT in this capacity is that it readily extends to the social identity of communities and nonhumans as well as that of humans (a feature we hope other researchers may find useful in fields such as urban studies). The theory is followed by sections on our empirical site and the methods employed. We then put the theory to work in a section on the social positioning and identity formation processes that occurred in the Elbphilharmonie project. Finally, we provide a brief comparison with the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, identify what we call a Hamburg Effect as distinct from the well-known Bilbao Effect, and conclude with some implications.

SOCIAL POSITIONING THEORY

The literature on identity in social psychology and the other social sciences is restricted largely to the identity of humans rather than that of nonhumans or communities. This is true also of disciplines like urban studies and geography, which have seen accounts of things like urban (Cheshmehzangi, 2015), regional (Zimmerbauer, 2011) and city (e.g., Proshansky, 1978) identity. Since we need a theory of identity that extends also to nonhumans and communities, we now provide a brief summary of SPT (Lawson, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2021; Faulkner & Runde, 2013, 2019) which generalizes in this way. The resulting account has affinities with role identity theory in social psychology (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Burke, 2004) in its emphasis on social structure and social positions. However, and in addition to being extendable to nonhumans and communities too, it places more emphasis on various system-related aspects of social identity.

The starting assumption is that the world is constituted by *totalities*. By totalities we mean systems that (1) are continuants with a lifespan and (2) are made up of relationally-organized entities—each of them totalities in their own right—that serve as components of the wider system.

We will focus on two types of totality. The first, which we will call *communities*, is those that include humans among their components. Families, orchestras and cities are all examples of communities. Thus, an orchestra comprises a relationally organized assembly of entities that include the humans who serve as conductor, violinist and so on. Note that references to communities like organizations or cities are often mean to extend to their nonhuman components (such as where reference to an orchestra extends also to its instruments, residence, and so on, or reference to a city extends also to its buildings and other infrastructure).

The second type of totality we consider, which we will call *objects*, is those made up exclusively of nonhuman components. Many objects arise naturally, free from human involvement, such as the entities we recognize as a seashell or an acorn. Other objects, however, depend on human involvement, a large number of which are *technological objects*, that is, objects constructed to extend human capabilities, such as the entities we know as violins, podiums and concert halls. The components of any object are all objects in their own right (Faulkner & Runde, 2013, 2019), such as the totality that is a concert hall comprising the relationally organized technological objects that include its seats, stage and so on.

Social positions, social identities and system functions

To develop our identity framework, we need to explain the interplay between totalities, social relations and social positions. We define a *social position* as a slot occupied by an entity by some community, which confers a *social identity* on that entity within that community. By "identity", in what follows, we mean the kind of thing a human or nonhuman entity is taken to be within the community concerned.

Take the case of members of an orchestra, people who occupy artistic positions such as violinist or conductor, or administrative positions such as executive director or program manager. These positions are more than an employment title formalized by a contract; they are also an attribution that furnishes their occupants with a corresponding identity—violinist, executive director and so on—within the community that is the orchestra, and indeed within the wider community of which the orchestra itself is a component. Each position within a totality carries a general expectation that its occupants will contribute to the performance of the totality in certain ways. This contribution, role or use, is the *system function* associated with the position concerned. Social positions and totalities are closely linked, then, in that social positions locate their occupants as components of larger totalities.

The key properties of social positions, for our purposes below, are as follows. The first is that once they have come into being, they exist independently of, and usually prior to, the individuals who enter and occupy them. Following Bhaskar (1989), Giddens (1984) and Lawson (2003), we proceed on the basis that this existence is sustained in social positions continuously being reproduced in the ongoing practices associated with them. The reproduction of social positions—and indeed social structure generally—on these lines, we believe, goes a long way toward explaining the relative stability of the social world over time.

The second property is that social positions are the locus of all manner of rights and responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities, many of which relate to system functions, guide the practices associated with the position concerned and interlock with the rights and responsibilities associated with other positions (e.g., the concertmaster's right to decide on bowings for the first violins being matched by the first violins' responsibility to follow them). Third, social positions are highly internally related, that is, embedded in relations in which one or more of the relata are co-constituted by that relation. Relations of this kind are ubiquitous in the social world, for example, between the social positions of student and teacher, or orchestral conductor and orchestral musician, where each of the relata presupposes the other.

Fourth, social positions and their constellations are not necessarily immutable and may be transformed through changing human practices. Social positions, and so the identities associated with them, may atrophy, mutate, and new ones emerge (perhaps developing in tandem with position-occupants assuming or acquiring particular functions in some system). They may also endure without being occupied (e.g., a vacant guest conductor slot), and then possibly even prior to having ever being occupied (e.g., a new position for artistic director created but not yet filled). In these cases, of course, the social positions concerned have to be sustained in the practices of members of the community concerned who are not occupants of those positions.

Fifth, employment-related positions are only one of many forms of social positioning, and people generally occupy many social positions concurrently, each of them contributing aspects of their identity. In this way, someone who occupies the social position of, and therefore is, a conductor could at the same time occupy the social positions of, and so be, a skydiver or lay priest. People do, of course, move into and out of positions over time. Thus, someone might vacate the position of visiting conductor to move into the position of permanent conductor of an orchestra or vacate the position of conductor of one orchestra to move into the position of conductor of another orchestra, and so on.

Our final point has to do with the distinction between someone's identity and what makes them individual or unique. We are principally concerned with the former in this paper, with what things are in the communities in which they arise. In terms of SPT, someone's identity in this sense flows from their social positioning, where continued occupancy of a social position generally depends on their having the characteristics required for membership, and where, once an occupant, each member shares that status and is therefore the same in this regard. The question of what makes someone unique is a different one, and one potential source of such uniqueness is the particular combination of social positions they may occupy. It is for this reason that we speak of the positions that people occupy as contributing to their identity rather than exhausting it. But the particular set of social positions that someone occupies certainly doesn't exhaust what makes them an individual, and here, depending on the criteria adopted, individual background, family influences, personal traits and predispositions, etc., may be relevant too.

Positioned objects and communities

The idea that humans occupy social positions is a familiar and, we hope, uncontroversial idea. Less familiar, perhaps, is the idea that many objects occupy social positions too, and that their position-occupancy confers an identity and system function in much the same way it does for humans (Faulkner & Runde, 2013, 2019). This is the generalization of SPT mentioned above. Examples of social positions for technological objects include violin, podium and concert hall, and where it is in virtue of the relevant entities being assigned to these positions that they acquire the associated identity and so become that kind of thing within the community or communities concerned. That technological objects do occupy social positions in this way can be seen in that, like humans, they may occupy more than one. A good example here is the gramophone turntable, traditionally positioned as a playback device, but also socially positioned as—and so being and having the system functions of—a musical instrument (Faulkner & Runde, 2009).

Communities are socially positioned too. Recall that communities are totalities that include humans among their socially positioned and relationally organized components. The city of Hamburg, for example, is one such totality, occupying the social positions and therefore having the identity of Hanseatic League city, port city and perhaps, more recently, *Musikstadt*. As before, these positions also entail the relevant system function(s), such as a port city providing a facility for protecting, loading and unloading ships.

Most of the features of human-occupied social positions enumerated above carried over to those occupied by objects and communities. The main exception is that objects are inanimate and therefore cannot have practices, rights and responsibilities in virtue of their social positioning. Nevertheless, the social positions occupied by technological objects do entail all manner of practices and, often, rights and responsibilities, enacted and sustained in the activities of human actors in the communities in which they arise. The question of whether socially positioned communities can have practices, rights and responsibilities is more complicated. Limited companies, for example, as legal persons can be seen as having responsibilities in their own right. But this issue is beyond the scope of this paper. What matters for our purposes is that the social positioning of cities contributes to their social identity, and that this identity and attendant system functions are enacted and sustained in and though the activities of their citizens and those in the larger communities in which they arise.

EMPIRICAL SITE

Hamburg and Großer Grasbrook

With a population of 1.8m citizens, Hamburg is the ninth most populous city in the EU and the second largest in Germany. Located on the Elbe river which provides access to the North-Sea, the identity of the city is rooted in its 1,200-year maritime history and the economic significance of its port. Hamburg's harbor, originally located on the northern bank of the river but now on the southern bank, played a vital role in the city becoming a trading center. The northern bank, home to a defunct old port called Speicherstadt, is now the site of HafenCity, currently the largest inner-city redevelopment project in Europe. The western part of HafenCity projects onto Großer Grasbrook, an island adjacent to the northern bank. The Elbphilharmonie is located on the western tip of this island.

The wider site has a rich history that can be told as a story of changing system functions. Early records show that from 1100 to 1737 it was simply a meadow outside the first city wall, used mostly for grazing cows, as well as serving as an execution site between 1359 and 1624. Großer Grasbrook itself was originally part of a larger island that was divided into Kleiner and Großer Grasbrook by way of a trench called Neuer Graben completed in 1549. This trench was subsequently enlarged between 1568 and 1604 to redirect the Elbe river flow. When the city wall at the city's southern flank was extended between 1616 and 1625, the northern parts of Großer Grasbrook, hitherto outside the city wall, became partially integrated into the city as the site of extensive ramparts designed to protect the two city wall gates. A wooden bridge crossing the Elbe and spanning the island was constructed in 1813.

The island has also been home to various industrial activities and associated buildings. In 1737 the Senate chose it as the site for the shipyards required to meet the increasing demand for merchant ships in the face of burgeoning trade. Indeed, the second major construction on the tip of Großer Grasbrook was the Johns shipyard or "Werft" (1737-1860), and people today still refer to the "Johnsian Corner" of the island. In 1861 the Senate decided to expand the port significantly on the basis of plans drawn by the city's hydraulic engineering director Johannes

Dalmann. As part of this project, the resident shipbuilding companies were relocated to a new site across the river onto the Kleiner Grasbrook. This relocation was driven in part by the need to make space for warehouses for the harbor's bulk cargo trade, which led to the island being transformed into a harbor with a basin called Grasbrookhafen (1866-), along with a gasworks (1844-1976) and warehouses (1875-2007).

The Elbphilharmonie occupies the site of the former warehouse Kaispeicher A on the Johnsian corner. This warehouse had two versions, the first built in 1875 under the oversight of Johannes Dalmann. After sustaining severe damage during World War II, the surviving tower was demolished in 1963 and a new warehouse designed by Werner Kallmorgen was erected between 1963 and 1966. The warehouse quickly became outdated, however, when its columngrid, designed for the storage of cocoa and coffee beans arriving by ship as break bulk cargo, proved too narrow for modern forklift trucks. In addition, containerization decreased the demand for warehouse storage and the Hamburg Port Authority consequently abandoned the building in 2001, leaving it to fall into decay.

The building

The Senate was still considering what to do with the warehouse as late as 2003. One of the possibilities under consideration was an office tower project called MediaCityPort, to be constructed on the site of the building. However, the Austrian art-historian Jana Marko and Hamburg architect and developer Alexander Gérard, wanting to avoid the historic building becoming a "victim of modern office architecture" (Twickel, 2016), came up with the alternative of a concert hall. Working together with the Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron, already famous for designing the London Tate Modern Museum, they proposed a wave-shaped concert hall on top of the abandoned building in June 2003. While easily convincing the public of their vision, it took 6 months to overcome the reservations of a skeptical Senate—helped in the end by the HafenCity project presenting an ideal opportunity for a signature building at a key location.

The building was designed by Herzog & de Meuron Basel, collaborating with Yasuhisa Toyota of Nagata Acoustics on the design of the concert hall. Construction was undertaken by Hochtief AG and endured epic setbacks, scandals and delays. Projected in 2007 to be completed by 2010 at a cost of €241m, the building was eventually completed at the end of 2016 at €886m, one of the most expensive concert halls ever built globally.

The building is 110m high, includes a 37m public viewing platform and three concert halls. The complex also houses a hotel, a restaurant, a World of Instruments and a wide-ranging music education program based in the Kaistudios, parking facilities, and 45 apartments. The main concert hall is the centerpiece of the building and in the "vineyard" style with the audience surrounding the orchestra rather than the traditional "shoebox" style. The hall has a capacity of 2,100 and features a "white skin" of 10,000 algorithmically designed high density gypsum fiber acoustic plates designed to provide one of the best sound experiences in the world.

METHODS, SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

Our empirical work was conducted using a grounded, interpretive approach. We felt that this approach was best suited to deriving community perspectives on the building and its effect on the identity of Hamburg.

Data was acquired from multiple sources. Written, audio and video materials were collected over a period of four years. While most of this material first appeared between 2001-2019, some of it, including old city maps and original documents, was much older. Written sources included popular press articles, press interviews, blog entries, concert hall leaflets and non-fiction books. We reviewed 390 popular press articles, both online and offline, 72 popular press interviews and 10 books. Audio sources included three podcasts and 35 video sources, most of them documentaries.

Interviews, all conducted by the first author, were held with 50 representatives of a variety of organizations and communities (Table 1).

Table 1
Primary Interviews

Organization	Position of Interviewee (Number of Interviews)	Type of Participant Observation (Total number of observations)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	Management (1)	Attended concert (1); attended rehearsal (1)
BR Symphony Orchestra	Management (2)	
Composers Quarter Hamburg	Director (1)	
Das Abendblatt	Journalist (1)	
Die Welt	Journalist (1)	
Elbphilharmonie	Management (3)	Attended talk (1)
Elbphilharmonie Audience	Concert guests (11)	
HafenCity University Hamburg	Senior lecturer (1); research associate (1)	
Hamburg Department of Culture and Media	Senator (1); senior employee (2)	
Hamburg Marketing GmbH	Former management (1); senior employee (3)	Case presentation (1)
Handelskammer Hamburg	Senior employee (1)	
Hélène Binet Architecture Photography	Junior employee (1)	
Herzog & de Meuron	Senior partner (1)	
Jung von Matt AG	Senior employee (1)	Case presentation (1)
Konzertdirektion Dr. Rudolf Goette GmbH	Management (1)	
Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra	Management (1)	Attended concert (1)
Nagata Acoustics	Senior architect (1)	
NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra	Management (2); conductor (1)	Attended concert (3); attended rehearsal (10)
Neue Zürcher Zeitung	Journalist (2)	

Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival	Management (1)
Spiegel-Verlag Rudolf Augstein GmbH & Co. KG	Journalist (1)
The New York Times	Journalist (1)
The Washington Post	Journalist (1)
University of Hamburg	Professor (2)
University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna	Professor (1)
University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar	Professor (1)
Zeitverlag Gerd Bucerius GmbH & Co. KG	Journalist (1)

We also gathered and reviewed published interviews with various people involved in the Elbphilharmonie project who we wanted, but were unable, to gain direct access to (Table 2).

Table 2
Primary Interviews

Organizations	Position of Interviewee (Number of interviews, speeches or presentations)	Source (Year of publication)
Achtung	Mirko Kaminski (1)	PR Report Camp (2017)
Artist	Laurie Anderson (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2019)
Axel Springer SE	Mathias Döpfner (1)	NDR (2017)
Ballerina	Jin Xing (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2016)
Baritone	Thomqw Hampson (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2016)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	Daniel Stabrawa (1)	Berliner Philharmoniker (2017)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	Raphael Haeger (1)	Berliner Philharmoniker (2017)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	Walter Seyfarth (1)	Berliner Philharmoniker (2017)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	Matthew Hunter (1)	Berliner Philharmoniker (2017)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	Knut Weber (1)	Berliner Philharmoniker (2017)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	Fergus McWilliam (1)	Berliner Philharmoniker (2017)
BR Symphony Orchestra	Christian Loferer (1)	
Conductor	Yannick Nezet-Seguin (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2019)
Conductor	Andris Nelsons (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2019)
Conductor	Magnus Lindberg (1)	NDR (2019)
Conductor	Ingo Metzmacher (1)	Spiegel (2017)
Elbphilharmonie	Christoph Lieben-Seutter (4)	dbate (2017), NDR (2017), Hannoversche Allgemeine (2017), SWR (2019)
Elbphilharmonie	Jochen Margedant (1)	Abendblatt (2018)
Former mayor of Hamburg	Ole von Beust (2)	Mopo (2018), NDR (2017)
Former mayor of Hamburg	Olaf Scholz (3)	Deutschlandfunk (2018), Abendblatt (2017, 2016)
Senator and head of the Hamburg Authority for Culture and Media (former)	Karin von Welck (1)	Zeit (2017)
German Chancellor	Angela Merkel (1)	NDR (2017)
Hamburg Tourismus	Michael Otremba (1)	Zeit (2016)
Harbor worker	Horst Röschen (1)	NDR (2016)
Harpist	Anaïs Gaudemard (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2019)
Herzog & de Meuron	Jacques Herzog (9)	Abendblatt (2017, 2016), NDR (2016), Spiegel (2018, 2016a, 2016b), Das Magazin (2015), Places (2012), Harvard GSD (2017)
Herzog & de Meuron	Pierre de Meuron (3)	Abendblatt (2017, 2016), NDR (2016), Spiegel 2016b)
Herzog & de Meuron	Ascan Mergenthaler (2)	Abendblatt (2017),
Herzog & de Meuron	Benjamin Koren (1)	Deutschlandfunk (2017)
Hochtief Group	Marcelino Fernández Verdes (1)	Abendblatt (2016)
Jung von Matt	Joachim Kurtlepel (1)	PR Report Camp (2017)
Jung von Matt	Niels Böse (1)	Medienforum (2017)
Media artist	Robert Seidel (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2019)
Musician	Cro (1)	Channel Aid (2018)
Nagata Acoustics	Yasuhisa Toyota (3)	Abendblatt (2019), Spiegel (2016), Blogs Getty (2017)
NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra	Alan Gilbert (3)	Welt (2018), NDR (2019, 2017)
NZZ	Florian Zinnecker (1)	NDR (2019)
Operatic tenor	Jonas Kaufmann (1)	Hamburger Abendblatt (2019)
Pianist	Igor Levit (1)	Zeit (2019)
Property developer	Alexander Gérard (1)	NDR (2016), Hamburger Abendblatt (2016)
Property developer	Jana Marko (1)	Hamburger Abendblatt (2016)
Senator and head of the Hamburg Authority for Culture and Media	Carsten Brosda (5)	FAZ (2019), Washington Post (2017), Zeit, (2017), SHZ (2017), Oxmox (2018)
University of Hamburg	Prof. Dr. Friedrich Geiger (1)	NDR (2019)
Violinist	Clara Jumi Kang (1)	Elbphilharmonie (2018)
Westin Grand Hotel in the Elbphilharmonie	Madeleine Marx (2)	Tophotel (2019), AHGZ (2019)

The data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, the interviews were transcribed from audio files into digital transcripts, before being reviewed in the second stage to isolate common themes. A large table was used to summarize and group relevant statements from the interviews, especially those pertaining to identities and system functions. The third stage consisted of a "triangulation" procedure (Creswell & Miller, 2000) to check for consistency between interview data, data gleaned from other sources and our research diary. Finally, "member checks" were carried out by presenting emerging findings to a subset of five interviewees.

THE BUILDING AND THE CITY: IDENTITIES AND SYSTEM FUNCTIONS

We began above with the idea that the world is constituted in part by totalities including communities and technological objects. The totalities at the center of the present paper are the community represented by the city of Hamburg and the technological object that is the Elbphilharmonie building. We have already described the history of Großer Grasbrook in terms of shifting system functions, in response to the changing needs of the city and its various subcommunities at different points in time. Some of these subcommunities have disappeared, such as the city guards and executioners of former times. Others have moved away, such as the shipbuilders and, more recently, the longshoremen now located on the opposite bank of the river. The Elbphilharmonie has brought new communities to the island, and new relationships between the building, the city and its many subcommunities. The process has seen the repositioning of parts of the building it replaced, the new building being constructed and socially positioned in ways that have conferred it with multiple identities and system functions, and, we believe, the new building affecting the social positioning and identity of the city as a whole.

The repositioning and identity change we have in mind concerns the repurposing of the site and shell of the former warehouse as the site and facade of the base of the new building. Of course, many may still think of these as the warehouse walls they once were, even if it is clear their system function has changed. And there are perhaps more vivid examples of this kind of repositioning, in which the fabric of the original building remains in the repurposed version to a much greater degree than in the present case (e.g., the Tate Modern in London formerly a power station and the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art in Cape Town formerly a grain silo). Nevertheless, something similar occurred, a repositioning of (parts of) the older building, with a corresponding shift in their social identity and system functions. What unites all three cases is their maintaining visual continuity with the historical fabric of the city, amplified in the present case by the maritime overtones of the "glassy wave" (Keller, 2017: 1) sweeping across the top of the new building.

The multiple identities and system functions refer to the fact that, while commonly thought of as a concert hall, the Elbphilharmonie is actually a complex with many other amenities. With respect to its system function as a venue for live music, there are in fact three concert halls with more specific system functions of their own—the main hall designed for orchestral and larger performances, the second for recitals, chamber music and jazz concerts, and the third "Kaistudio" designed for contemporary and experimental music performances and to serve as a rehearsal hall for ensembles and choirs. However, the building's music-related system functions extend much further, such as housing a resident orchestra, serving as a site for live recordings and music education, and perhaps even, taking its height into account, providing a visual metaphor for the cultural significance of music. Then there are the many other components of the building, the apartments, hotel, parking facilities, and so on, all with identities and system functions in their own right. A noteworthy example here is the elevated viewing platform or "plaza", which provides a public space that the architects regard as one of the key features of the building—and which has turned out to be one of the main drivers of its success in attracting visitors to the building.[13]

The key feature of the building for our purposes in this paper, however, is that it was designed and positioned to serve the overarching system function of furnishing Hamburg with a particular identity:

> The Elbphilharmonie will become the city's magnet. If it is to have a status like the Sydney Opera House, Hamburg will be the focus of international interest. So, it's about the psychological effect. When you think of Sydney, you think of this fantastic opera. The building—not the program. This building gives the Australian port city a face, an identity. Hamburg is hoping for such an effect … (Pierre de Meuron quoted in *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 2006, translated from German by the first author)

> The Elbphilharmonie will become an identity builder not only by virtue of the building itself, but also through its role as a locus of perceiving the city, and as a public space. (Bruns-Berentelg, 2014: 11)

More specifically, the building was part of an explicit effort to socially position and thereby make Hamburg a city of music:

> Making Hamburg the city of music and strengthening the city's creative and economic identity is … a central aspect of the overall concept for the city of

[13] We are grateful to Ascan Mergenthaler of Herzog & de Meuron for this point.

> music, which we present with this point of view. The point of view deliberately focuses on the music industry and less on sociocultural topics in the field of music. The total of 13 recommendations and measures that we propose … are intended to help strengthen existing strengths and tap new potential, so that it becomes clear worldwide: Hamburg is a city of music! (Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, 2014, translated from German by the first author)

This city-identity building aspect of the Elbphilharmonie project, however, turns out to have been less about creating a new identity for Hamburg than about reclaiming and amplifying an existing one. For, although always subordinate to its identity as a port city, the city already had a proud history as a center for music (Rauhe, 2010).

> … Hamburg was once a city of music. Hamburg was the sleeping beauty, with tradition, also with the opera. And Gustav Mahler was general music director here, and Liebermann in the great opera times, the founding of the NDR symphony orchestra back then. So, Hamburg was a city of music, for centuries. But somehow after the Second World War or in the last three or four decades it was in a waking sleep … I don't know why or how that happened, but it happened. And Hamburg was wakened from its slumber by the opening of the Philharmonie. So yes, it used to be a music city, but you actually didn't really feel that five or ten or fifteen years ago. And that's all there again. (Burkhard Glashoff, managing director of Dr. Rudolf Goette Konzertdirektion Hamburg in a 2019 interview, translated from German by the first author)

None of this would have been possible without the participation of Hamburgians themselves—partly directly as concertgoers or interested visitors to the building, but more widely via the wider population recognizing that it had acquired something special on its doorstep—even if at least part of the impetus came from international acclaim the building was receiving:

> The Elbphilharmonie has brought Hamburg anew on the world map. The Hamburg people are proud when suddenly *The New York Times* raves about their city. (*Westfälische Nachrichten*, 2017: 1, translated from German by the first author)
>
> … the Elbphilharmonie has brought about a change in the urban mentality due to the stronger external perception and for the cultural relevance of the reporting. (Senator and head of the Hamburg Authority for Culture and Media Carsten Brosda in a 2019 interview, translated from German by the first author)

It is difficult to quantify the extent to which Hamburg has indeed become a city of music and the Elbphilharmonie's contribution to this. While city identities are real enough, as can clearly be seen from the various effects they have, they are also inescapably nebulous things. But it is undeniable that the building's opening received considerable attention and was widely lauded in ways that recognized its impact on the identity of the city, as a "symbol of cultural identity" (Grund, 2017: 1), "cultural landmark" (Herzog & de Meuron, 2017: 1), and so on. And there is no shortage of informed commentators who regard it as having significantly affected the city and its self-confidence, how the city and its citizens see themselves, and how the city is seen in the wider world.

> [T]hat's how big and self-confident the Elbphilharmonie stands at the port of Hamburg - a new landmark of the city and, moreover, of European culture with worldwide radiance: urbi et orbi. (Knöfel & Kronsbein, 2017, *Der Spiegel*, translated from German by the first author)

> Over eleven million visitors to the Elbphilharmonie since the opening and concerts that have been sold out evening after evening have shown the city the cultural powers it contains and which ultimately underly its self-confidence. (Senator and head of the Hamburg Authority for Culture and Media Carsten Brosda in an op-ed for *Der Tagesspiegel*, 2019, translated from German by the first author).

> … the Elbphilharmonie had become so deeply rooted in the city's self-confidence that after just one year it had become an integral part of the city's history and city-identity. (Architect Alexander Gérard interviewed for *Stern* by Baum & Creutz, 2018, translated from German by the first author)

> … the concert hall is enormously important for the future of the city and the identity of the Hamburgians. (Former mayor Ole von Beust in an op-ed for *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 2018, translated from German by the first author)

> [T]he building, as an already proven tourist draw, is likely to return Hamburg's investment and then some over time. (As the Broad has proved, a building that turns out to be an Instagram star is these days worth its weight in gold.) Hamburg, the second largest city in Germany, had never before taken full advantage of its rich musical history as the city where Brahms was born and where Handel and Mahler, among several other composers, lived and worked. (Hawthorne, 2017, *Los Angeles Times*)

> The Hamburg skyline is still defined by the steeples of its old churches, but its expanding map is secular. The Philharmonic now anchors one end of the city's ambitious urban development, literally and figuratively elevating the role of music and culture to something sacred in a port city whose raison d'être has always been commerce. (Giovannini, 2017, *The New York Times*)

HAMBURG AND THE BILBAO EFFECT

The Elbphilharmonie is often compared with the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (GMB). Designed by Frank Gehry and completed in 1997, the GMB was a deliberate attempt to counter the economic and social decline of a city by using an innovative and architecturally provocative building on an attractive site close to the center to attract cultural tourism. "It was to be 'a driver of economic renewal', an 'agent of economic development' that would appeal to a 'universal audience', create a 'positive image' and 'reinforce self-esteem'" (GMB director Juan

Ignacio Vidarte quoted by Moore, 2017). While the GMB is certainly not the first iconic building to house a cultural institution, it is often portrayed as the first case of starchitecture deliberately deployed to "help turn a city around" (*The Economist*, 2018).

With more than 20 million predominantly foreign visitors since its opening, the GMB has been highly successful in its intended system function of attracting tourists. This success, much discussed in both the popular media and in academic accounts, has been dubbed the "Bilbao Effect" (Plaza & Haarich, 2015; Alaily-Mattar et al., 2018; Alaily-Mattar et al., 2019), "Guggenheim Effect" (Plaza et al., 2009) or "Gehry syndrome" (Kennicott, 2002, Rybczynski, 2002). A number of the world's post-industrial cities have sought to replicate this effect with signature buildings of their own, although mostly with disappointing results (Franklin, 2016: 80; Plaza & Haarich, 2015). The apparent success of the Elbhilharmonie has accordingly been seen in places as potentially restoring the promise of the Bilbao Effect:

> Two decades after a Frank Gehry-designed outpost of the Guggenheim Museum opened in Bilbao, Spain, the idea that a building can transform a city, or a cultural institution, isn't held in high repute anymore. Debt and disillusion have made the "Bilbao effect" seem a hollow promise of a different age. Here it is, back again, and it's imperative to know why it is working. Why this building? What about its design, its location and the implicit social messages embedded in its architecture have made it so successful? (Kennicott, 2017, *The Washington Post*).

It is natural to compare the GMB and Elbphilharmonie and, at least on the surface, there are many commonalities. Both are located in port cities on former shipbuilding sites, were designed by star architects, and coincided with larger urban regeneration efforts involving other signature construction projects.[14] Both were conceived with an eye to their impact on the identity and international profile of their cities, in addition to any intended economic impact. And both have been highly successful in attracting visitors—the Elbphilharmonie for its part already attracting 2.6m concert attendees and 12m plaza visitors by 2019 (Mischke, 2019a, 2019b)—and international attention both in their own right and for their respective cities.

But there are also many differences, and there are two in particular we want to mention here. The first has to do with the economic circumstances and accordingly the motivations of the two cities. In the case of Bilbao, the GMB was explicitly designed to help turn around an industrial city in decline and afflicted by Basque separatist terrorism. In contrast, Hamburg,

[14] These included a metro system designed by Norman Foster and footbridge and an airport terminal designed by Santiago Calatrava in Bilbao, and the HafenCity project already described in Hamburg.

though experiencing a gradual fall in port activity,[15] remained one of the richest cities in Europe with a still growing population.[16] While the Elbphilharmonie did become the centerpiece of the HafenCity project in visual and cultural terms, we have seen that it emerged in the context of debates about what to do with the defunct Kaispeicher, rather than being conceived in the first instance as the spearhead of the economic regeneration of a city. Further, whereas the GMB was a new addition to the infrastructure of a city with no prior tradition in contemporary art (Plaza et al., 2009), the Elbphilharmonie is often seen as complementing the *Laeiszhalle*, part of an already existing infrastructure of concert venues in a city, as we have already seen, with a long tradition as a center for music.[17]

The second difference is that while both buildings are temples of high culture, one is a contemporary art museum whereas the other is a concert venue.[18] This difference matters for what it implies about attendance patterns:

> … a concert hall works differently in programming than, say, a museum, where I might have special exhibitions every three months, every six months, every nine months when I can rotate the display, but with an otherwise fixed presentation through the standing collection … whereas I can experience something different every evening in the Elbphilharmonie. (Senator and head of the Hamburg Authority for Culture and Media Carsten Brosda in a 2019 interview, translated from German by the first author)

In general, major concert halls are better placed to rely on local demand than are major museums, simply because many concert attendees attend multiple concerts over the course of a season in a way not matched by museums. At the Elbphilharmonie, approximately 50% of ticket sales are represented by subscription tickets and therefore sold almost exclusively to people from Hamburg and immediately surrounding areas, with many of the remaining "free" tickets also sold to locals (many of whom already hold subscription tickets).[19] These numbers are reflected in visitor statistics. For example, whereas between 60–70% of visitors to the GMB since 2005 have been foreign, foreign attendance at the Elbphilharmonie's main hall has yet to

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[15] While Hamburg's port remains the third largest in Europe in terms of containers in 20ft equivalent units (TEUs) handled, this number fell by nearly 9% from 9 737 110 to 8 730 000 TEUs between 2008 and 2018 (AAPA, 2020).
[16] Bilbao's population was 431,520 in 1980 and fell to 350 478 in 2005 before steadying at around its current level of 349 633 (2020) (*World Population Review*, 2020). The corresponding numbers for Hamburg are 1 645 095, 1 743 625 and 1 845 229 (June 2020) (*Statistisches Amt für Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein*, 2020).
[17] The *Laeiszhalle* has an audience capacity of 2025 and was the largest and most modern concert hall in Germany when it first opened in 1908 to replace the former *Conventgarten* as the city's premier concert venue. The *Conventgarten*, which originally opened in 1853 with an audience capacity of 1100 (later 1500), was destroyed in the Allied bombings of Hamburg during World War II.
[18] The buildings also differ significantly in other ways, not least in terms of cost and in that, unlike the GMB, the Elbphilharmonie incorporates parts of a historic building and is a complex with a variety of system functions.
[19] Burkhard Glashoff, managing director of Dr. Rudolf Goette Konzertdirektion Hamburg, from a 2019 interview.

exceed 6% (Table 3). While the larger complex has surely enhanced the interest and visual appeal of an already an attractive tourist destination, therefore, the provision of a world-class concert hall that most would regard as one the building's principal system functions, has up to this point been almost purely about serving the local and, to some extent, national population.

TABLE 3
Visitors to the GMB and Elbphilharmonie main concert hall attendees*

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

Place of origin of visitors	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bizkaia	12%	7%	7%	7%	6%	4%	7%	11%	11%	12%	9%	10%	11%	11%	9%	19%	7%	7%	26%
Araba	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Gipuzkoa	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Madrid	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%	7%
Catalonia	9%	10%	9%	10%	11%	9%	7%	8%	8%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	8%
Rest of Spain	15%	16%	13%	15%	14%	13%	13%	13%	12%	13%	13%	13%	14%	14%	14%	10%	12%	13%	16%
Foreign	54%	59%	63%	60%	60%	67%	66%	60%	62%	62%	64%	65%	64%	63%	66%	62%	71%	69%	39%

Elbphilharmonie

Place of origin of visitors	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Hamburg**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70%	60%	55%	54%	57%
Northern Germany***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13%	13%	13%	14%	13%
Rest of Germany	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15%	24%	27%	27%	26%
Foreign	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3%	4%	5%	6%	4%
Origin unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

* Data for GMB drawn from Dept. of Communications Guggenheim Bilbao. Data for Elbphilharmonie provided by Elbphilharmonie box office.

** Postcodes DE20, DE21, DE22

*** Postcodes DE16, DE17, DE18, DE19, DE23, DE24, DE25, DE26, DE27, DE28, DE29

The Hamburg experience thus diverges from Bilbao's—a Hamburg rather than Bilbao effect—with respect to the nature of the two buildings, their identities and how these emerged and developed, and how these in turn went on to affect the identities of their respective cities. The GMB, socially positioned as an international museum of contemporary art, is widely regarded as having succeeded in lending Bilbao a new social identity as an art destination and thereby in its intended system function of tourist magnet. The social positioning of the Elbphilharmonie, in contrast, has been more about regenerating a pre-existing city identity long overshadowed by the image of Hamburg as a port and trading center. International attention and acclaim for the two buildings appears to have been an important driver in both cases, albeit in different ways. The shift in Bilbao's city-identity represents a radical departure from its industrial past and was aimed especially at attracting the attention of, and visitors from, the international community. The shift in Hamburg's city-identity represents more by way of a restoration of and continuity with older traditions in the city and, while no doubt helped by the positive reception the building received internationally, was, and will likely continue to be, heavily dependent on the direct participation of its citizens.

CONCLUSION

We said in the introduction that a subsidiary aim of this paper was to introduce SPT to urban studies. While the theory has already been applied to the identity of technological objects (e.g., Faulkner & Runde, 2009, 2013, 2109), it had yet to be applied to a large-scale object such as a building. The Elbphilharmonie, important an interesting in its own right, was also an interesting illustrative case for this purpose, for the elements of repositioning and identity change involved, for having a larger and more diverse set of system functions than most other technological objects, and for the ways in which its own social positioning, may have affected the social positioning and identity of the city as a whole. In this last respect, the theory helped reveal different ways in which the Hamburg experience is distinct from that associated with the GMB with which it is often compared.

We close with two observations, one for researchers and one for management practitioners. The first is to say that we hope that this paper might stimulate further applications of SPT to buildings, perhaps in ways that might connect with status theory (Delmestri & Greenwood, 2016), categorization theory (Vergne & Wry, 2014), space and place theory (Goonewardena, 2008) or the literature on the role the physical environment plays for organizations (Elsbach & Pratt, 2007). What SPT has the potential to add, here, apart from providing a general framework that encompasses communities and nonhuman objects as well as humans, is the light it throws on the role of social positioning in the relational organization of totalities, such as buildings themselves or the communities in which they are situated. Understanding the social identities and system functions of any entity, be it human or nonhuman, is in our view unlikely to get very far without reference, even if only implicitly, to the larger systems of which they are (socially positioned) components.

Our second observation concerns the Hamburg Effect and, in particular, sustaining the identities and system functions of the Elbphilharmonie on which it depends. Recall that, according to SPT, social positions and social positionings—and by extension the attendant social identities and system functions—are sustained via being reproduced in the ongoing practices of the people who occupy them. Recall also that the theory reminds us of the point made immediately above, that totalities are ensembles of relationally organized (socially positioned) entities with system functions contributing to the totalities of which they are components. Since these system functions are often complementary, it follows that, for any entity to maintain its current positioning, the recurring human practices that underpin the social positioning, social identities and system functions of its components will generally have to be mutually reinforcing, or at the very least consistent with each other.

We have argued that the Elbphilharmonie building has multiple identities and system functions, and we have focused in particular on its social positions and corresponding identities as a venue for world-class musical performances and as a beacon for Hamburg as a city of culture and music in particular. The two associated system functions (and indeed the social identities that correspond to them) are interlocking and mutually dependent, the second depending especially on the first being served successfully: any threat to the standing of the Elbphilharmonie as a venue for world-class musical performances is at once a threat to the building as a beacon for Hamburg as a city of music and center of culture. It follows that recent criticisms of the main concert hall as "mediocre" by major figures in the music world—even if isolated and perhaps premature in light of that it can take many years for the acoustics of a new concert hall to develop and performers and audiences to adjust to it—are a serious matter:

> This hall does not help … As for my next concert engagements in Hamburg, I do not want to say, "never again." But I can well imagine giving the next recital in the Laeiszhalle. It's wonderful there. (Jonas Kaufmann interviewed by Joachim Mischke, 2019c, *Hamburger Abendblatt*, translated from German by the first author; see Lebrecht, 2019)
>
> Hamburg's spectacular concert hall … has been rocked by criticism from a leading conductor that its acoustics are mediocre. Riccardo Muti, 77, director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and former head of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London said he planned to boycott the venue and that he had removed the Elbphilharmonie hall from his tours with the Chicago Symphony and the Vienna Philharmonic. "It's a mediocre hall." (Crossland, 2019, *The Times*)

The positive reception enjoyed by the Elbphilharmonie in the wake of its opening owes much to an early €10 million marketing campaign under then Hamburg mayor Olaf Scholz, to turn around what had up to then been a mostly negative public perception of the project. This campaign largely succeeded in its aim of establishing the building as a "top 10 concert hall, a concert hall for everyone, and a symbol of Hamburg" (translated from German by the first author; campaign presentation of Hamburg Marketing GmbH). Our closing point, however, is not the obvious one that the status of the building thus achieved is something that requires constant maintenance, attention to media relations and initiatives such as the annual music city fund (Hamburg, 2020), but that these activities always need to be conducted with an eye to the dependencies between the various social identities and system functions involved. There would be no point in using the building as focal point for promoting the city as *Musikstadt* (Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, 2014) or, more generically, as *Kulturstadt* (Glässgen et al., 2011) if the view that the main concert hall is indeed of inferior quality gained wider currency. The very prominence of the building would then be positively damaging and render current tussles over whether marketing budgets should be devoted to promoting it as a venue for classical music, as the Elbphilharmonie management would prefer, or as a platform for promoting tourism, as Hamburg Marketing GmbH is proposing, quite trivial by comparison. Just as the shift to containerization threatened and eventually eroded the Kaispeicher's social positioning and system function as a warehouse, so a decline in the reputation of its main concert hall would threaten the Elbphilharmonie's social positioning, identity and system function as beacon of Hamburg as a city of music and culture.

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CHANEL AND THE ELBPHILHARMONIE: ON THE SOCIAL POSITIONING OF A FIRM, ITS PRODUCTS AND BRAND

ABSTRACT

Conceptualizations of strategic positioning in the prevailing strategy and marketing literature tend to be compartmentalized into firm, product and brand positionings. This paper explores these conceptualizations from the perspective of a more general theory of social positioning (SPT), focusing on how each one can be harnessed to reinforce the other two. The empirical site is a recent Chanel fashion show held inside the new Elbphilharmonie building in Hamburg, which I use to demonstrate key interrelationships and co-dependencies between firm, product and brand positioning, and how various other socially-positioned entities not directly connected with a firm can be deployed to enhance the image of that firm, its products and its brand. I conclude that strategic positioning should be understood as a threefold endeavor, the success of which depends on harmonizing the interrelationships between firm, product, and brand positioning.

Keywords: Strategic positioning, social positioning, positioning theory, qualitative study.

INTRODUCTION

The positioning literature is sometimes criticized for being vague on the question of exactly what strategic positioning is (Urde & Koch 2013, 2014). Arriving at an answer to this question is made all the more difficult by the fact that this literature is at once highly diverse and siloed, with researchers tending to concentrate on only one of firm positioning (Porter, 2008; Vergne & Wry, 2014), product positioning (Löffler & Decker, 2012; Belboula et al., 2019), or brand positioning (Aaker, 2012; Panda et al., 2018).

However, there is little in the way of a general theory of positioning that is able to encompass and provide a basis for exploring the potential interrelationships between these three forms of positioning. In this article, therefore, I seek to answer the following research questions: *What is strategic positioning? What are the relationships of these three forms of positioning? How can managers ensure harmonizing the positioning on the firm, product and brand level?*

There is something to be learned from transcending these silos and demarcations, and in thinking about how the different kinds of positioning relate. My aim is to take a step in this direction by deploying a general theory of positioning able to accommodate and reveal some of the interrelationships and co-dependencies between firm, product and brand positioning. This is an important exercise because firms are more likely to succeed in their firm, product, and brand positioning efforts if they proceed in a way that is holistic, consistent, and pays attention to how each of the three can be used to reinforce the others. At the same time, I will attempt to reveal how such positionings might be enhanced by harnessing connections with related, and themselves socially positioned, entities.

I explore these issues with reference to the specific case of a Chanel *Métiers d'Art* fashion show held in the new Elbphilharmonie building in Hamburg in 2017. This show was striking for how it put the concert hall to a temporary new use and exploited various aspects of its positioning, many of them relating to its history and geographical location, as well as to that of the participants involved. My empirical data was gathered by means of semi-structured interviews and secondary interviews with stakeholders in the European fashion domain between 2019-2020, as well as non-participant fieldwork in museums, exhibitions and fashion-stores. Additional materials, including documentaries, books, programs, excerpts, reports, and firm presentations were also reviewed.

I begin with an overview of the strategy and marketing literature on positioning that is dominated by contributions that tend to separate and focus individually on firm, product, or brand positioning. In accordance with the aim of capturing wider ontological distinctions and demonstrating the various interrelationships and co-dependencies involved, I then lay out the theory of social positioning I will use (Runde et al., 2009; Cardinale & Runde, 2018; Faulkner & Runde, 2009, 2013, 2019; Lawson, T., 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019). This section is followed by a description of the Chanel *Métiers d'Art* show mentioned above, and a methods section in which I describe my data sources and analysis. I put the theory to work in my findings section, in which I examine the social positioning processes involved in the fashion show and how each harnessed various elements of the venue, its location, and the participants. I close with some of the implications of this study for strategy and marketing theory, focusing on the benefits of SPT in helping reveal interconnections between differing forms of positioning.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Positioning

Marketing agencies were already invoking the concept of positioning during the interwar period (Schwarzkopf, 2008), albeit in a way largely indistinguishable from what would now be called market segmentation and product differentiation (Maggard, 1976). The increasing saturation of markets in the 1950s, with product attributes having become too similar and consumers being overwhelmed by increasing amounts of information, led to market segmentation losing its power and product differentiation running out of steam (Ries & Trout, 2001). New communication approaches were deemed necessary, and positioning was proposed as a possible means of "getting heard in our overcommunicated society" by "looking for positions, or holes, in the marketplace" (Ries & Trout, 2001: 2-3). Positioning thus came to be positioned in its own right as a "powerful tool for creating and maintaining real differentiation in the marketplace" (Kotler, 2011: x),

Explicit conceptualizations of positioning first appeared in the work of marketing professionals during the "positioning era" (Ries & Trout (2001/1972) of the 1960s. David Ogilvy, Jack Trout, and Al Ries—all practitioners—laid the groundwork for the study of positioning, and brand positioning in particular, in management studies (Ogilvy, 2004/1963, 2008/1983; Trout, 1969; Ries, 1974; Trout & Ries, 1972a, 1972b, 1972c; Ries & Trout, 1988, 1981).[20] The concept was then refined by management scholars in the fields of strategy and marketing,[21] which led to the now familiar demarcations between differing kinds of positioning, for example, between operational and strategic positioning (Ellson, 2004), marketing and strategic positioning (Lasserre, 2012; Zhao et al., 2015; Panda et al., 2018), and internal and external positioning (Maggard, 1976).

As rich as the foregoing literature is, however, it is often unclear exactly what positioning is. This problem is compounded by authors often failing to define the term and using it both as a noun and a verb. Urde and Koch (2014) provide a useful exception:

> The roots of the Latin-derived noun *position* lie in the study of logic and philosophy. To *posit* is to assert a proposition or thesis for affirmation. The position of an object is its spatial location, or its proper/appropriate place in a context. Grammatically, *positioning* can be either a noun or a verb. It is used as a verb to describe the process and signify an activity. For example, in sea navigation, a position (noun) is defined two-dimensionally with the help of latitude and longitude. To arrive at an intended position, the navigator sets a course and compensates for currents, wind, and waves. In a regatta, the skipper will also need to consider the competing yachts' changing positions *vis-a`-vis* the positioning (verb) of their own yacht. In parallel, a brand's intended position in the marketplace must be defined (which differs from its actual position). In positioning the brand, external elements such as trends, new technologies, and changing customer behavior must be considered. In competition, brand managers must also compensate for competing brands' changing positions in positioning their own brand. (Urde & Koch, 2014: 479-480)

[20] While some accounts credit Ries and Trout with coining (e.g., van Gelder, 2003) or introducing (e.g., Jowitt & Lury, 2012) the term, others credit David Ogilvy with formalizing a term that advertising agencies such as Ogilvy and Mather had already been using in practice in the 1950s and 1960s (Cano, 2003; Schwarzkopf, 2008). The key publications that seem to have established the term "positioning" in management studies are Trout (1969), Ries and Trout (1981) and Ogilvy (1983).

[21] Research, segmentation, targeting and positioning are widely regarded as "important steps to precede the four Ps" (Kotler in Ries & Trout 2002: ix) (product, price, place, promotion). Positioning will typically be a part of any marketing strategy, as for example in the segmentation-targeting-positioning framework (STP) (Dibb, 1991; Moutinho, 2000; Kotler, 2000).

Understood as a noun, Urde and Koch seem to be proposing something like the commonsense interpretation of a *position* as a unique location relative to selected dimensions of some more or less well-defined space. These dimensions might be locational (e.g., latitude and longitude), temporal (e.g., time of day or year), or indeed any of the familiar dimensions used to define firm, product or brand positionings in the marketplace.[22] The *positioning* of any X can then be understood as the relevant position or positions an X occupies in some relevant space. Understood as a verb, as Urde and Koch point out, *positioning* some X refers to the act or activity of locating an X in some position in some relevant space. Repositioning X would then mean the act or activity of relocating X in some alternative position.

While all positions are relative to the (selected dimensions of the) space they are located in, positions are interpreted as mental constructs in many of the founding contributions. For example, Trout describes positions as "mental device[s] used by consumers to simplify information inputs and store new information in a logical place" (Trout, 1969), and Ries and Trout speak of a "window in space" (Ries & Trout, 2001: 19) of the prospect's mind. In terms of this last view, positioning might be used by the prospect (e.g., consumer, customer or client) to construct mental mind-maps and by professionals in firms as a means of "mapping the prospect's mind" (Ries & Trout, 2001: 160). Prospect's minds taken as a whole comprise a community "mind" that constitutes the marketplace. Strategic positioning is then about finding a window or location in the mental space of that community.

> How do you find an open position in the prospect's mind? (Ries & Trout, 2001: 54); Like the memory bank of a computer, the mind has a slot or position for each bit of information it has chosen to retain (Ries & Trout, 2001: 29); Along Madison Avenue, these are called positioning slogans. And the advertising people who write them spend their time and research money looking for positions, or holes in the marketplace. (Ries & Trout, 2001: 3)

The distinction between internal and external positioning (Maggard, 1976) is useful here for highlighting the intended positioning developed within a firm and the current positioning decided by consumers,[23] and between those responsible for analyzing the current position and

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[22] In his book *Marketing Management*, Philip Kotler refers to the concepts of "product-positioning map" and "brand-positioning map" (Kotler, 2002: 164), to which might be added an analogous "firm-positioning map." Firm-positioning maps often have more specific names and focus on particular dimensions and dynamics, such as profit maps (Postrel, 2018), the Ansoff matrix (Ansoff, 1957), or market segmentation and export decision matrices (Tan et al., 2007).

[23] Internal positioning occurs within a firm, for example, in the form of the positions individuals occupy or the positioning of internal strategy documents (Godart et al., 2015; Maggard, 1976; Cullwick, 1975; Trout & Ries, 1972a). External positioning occurs outside the firm, for example, through the position a product or brand occupies in the mind of the target market (Kotler, 2002; Ries & Trout, 1981; Maggard, 1976).

the future (target) positioning of the entity in question, and those who constitute its target audience.

Firm positioning. For the purposes of this paper I adopt Chandler's definition of the firm as a "legal, contracting, transacting entity [that] has been in the past the instrument in capitalist economies for carrying out the processes of production and distribution, of increasing (or hampering) productivity, economic growth, and transformation" (Chandler, 1992: 99).[24] Firm positioning is predominantly studied in the strategy literature, may be conducted by the firm itself or by third parties, and is typically concerned with locating the firm relative to its competitors within some market. There are many dimensions in respect of which a firm might be positioned, including product categories, which in combination might provide an indicator of a firm's absolute market share, market growth (Henderson, 1970), and degree of diversification (Penrose, 2013).

> If you are going to advertise disposable diapers, fabric softeners, cleansers, toothpaste, soap or dishwashing liquids, you are going to find yourself up against Procter & Gamble. They have a market share of at least 40 percent in all these categories, plus powerful positions in shampoo, cake mix, coffee, anti-perspirants, and home permanents. (Ogilvy, 2019: 155)

The identification of new markets and new product categories, or gaps in existing markets and product categories, precedes the process of moving the firm entity into those market or product category positions. As a consequence, the managerial question is to find gaps or opportunities in a marketplace, choose a location, and then determine a degree of distinctiveness to differentiate a firm from its competition (Zhao et al., 2017). Firm positioning is not only about one firm being positioned, but also about the positionings of its competitors and how many of these positionings should be taken into account. However, according to Henderson (1976) there is only a handful of firms whose strategic positioning matters to customers within a market.

Product positioning. By products, I mean the goods and services that firms develop, produce, advertise, and distribute.[25] While the literature on firm and brand positioning is quite siloed, product positioning tends to be discussed in both the strategy and the marketing

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[24] There are as many definitions as there are theories of the firm. Prominent theories of the firm in management research include transaction cost theory (Coarse, 1937)), managerial theory (Williamson, 1964; Marris, 1964; Baumol, 1962, 1952) and contract theory (Grossman & Hart, 1986; Hart & Moore, 1990; Hart, 1995) emanating from economics, and the behavioral theory of the firm (Cyert and March, 1963) emanating from management.

[25] While Daye (2007) treats service and service positioning as a distinct unit of analysis, I treat the scattered work on service positioning (e.g., Wan et al., 2020; Skaggs and Youndt, 2004; Shostack, 1987) as part of product positioning.

literature where it is sometimes presented as overlapping with either firm or brand positioning (Kotler, 2002, Löffler & Decker, 2012). Nevertheless, there appears to be an order or a kind of hierarchy, because product positioning is understood as something that comes after firm positioning:

> Once a company has carefully segmented the market, chosen its target customers, identified their needs, and determined its market positioning, it is better able to develop new products. (Kotler, 2002: 328)

Furthermore, product positioning is also understood as something that comes before brand positioning.

> Positioning can affect the product. Volvo's conscious decision to build safety features into its product set up a hugely successful "safety" position for the Volvo brand. (Kotler, 2011: ix)

Product positioning is often referred to in the same breath as product differentiation, which is in turn achieved with reference to a product's inherent qualities and how these relate to its value propositions and its ability to solve problems for consumers. Positioning in this sense is sometimes referred to as "real repositioning" (Kotler, 2002: 100) in cases in which the real (physical) composition of a product is changed by adapting or modifying one or more of its inherent qualities.

Brand positioning. By a brand I mean "a set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to create awareness and identity, and to build the reputation of a product, service, person, place, or organization" (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015: 1). Brand positioning tends to be discussed in the marketing literature (Urde and Koch, 2014), and often as something interconnected with product positioning, sometimes to the extent that the brand becomes synonymous with the positioned product, as in the case of Coca Cola or Aspirin (Ries and Trout, 2001). However, brand positioning is also sometimes contrasted with product positioning insofar as it involves "cosmetic changes" in respect of the name, price, or packaging of a product, rather than altering the product itself" (Ries and Trout, 2011: 2). Thus, while product positioning is usually interpreted as being about the product's *inherent qualities*, brand positioning tends to be about the *perceived qualities* of a brand attached to a product: "You concentrate on the perceptions of the prospect, not the reality of the product" (Ries and Trout, 2001: 8). In many ways, therefore, brand positioning centers around consumer perceptions, symbolic value, and the manipulation thereof.

However, what is missing is a general theory of positioning that is able to explain what (strategic) positioning is, as well as shed light on the similarities of these three forms of positioning and how they are interrelated. My article is, therefore, guided by the following research questions: *What is strategic positioning? What are the relationships of these three forms of positioning? How can managers ensure harmonizing the positioning on the firm, product and brand level?*

SOCIAL POSITIONING THEORY

I noted in the introduction to this paper that the literature on strategic positioning has been criticized for being vague on what exactly strategic positioning is. Neither scholars nor practitioners have been able to settle on a definition of the term. Writing nearly 45 years ago, Maggard (1976: 66) complains that the concept of position "is still difficult to define and involves a variety of different interpretations." More recently, the concept has been described as "lacking a holistic view" (Urde and Koch, 2013: 354), in need of "a theoretical overview [...] which the literature currently lacks" (Urde and Koch, 2014: 478), "no longer fit for purpose" (Jowitt and Lury, 2012: 96), and potentially being in need of repositioning (Jowitt and Lury, 2012: 97).

The problems these authors have in mind seem to stem from a variety of causes, including a failure to define the positioned entity and the concept of position and positioning, a failure to differentiate between a positioned entity and its positioning, and through the use of positioning as noun or as verb. Furthermore, the relevant literature is often fragmented by being split between research fields (e.g., strategy and marketing) and compartmentalized into separate streams of research on firm, product and brand positioning, thereby mitigating against a careful examination of potential interrelationships and co-dependencies across silos.

To address these problems, I will now outline a general theory of social positioning in which firm, brand, and product positioning, and the interrelationships between them, can be accommodated. SPT will guide the analysis in the remainder of this paper.

Totalities. My starting assumption is that firms, products and brands, as well as buildings and fashion shows, are all instances of the myriad totalities that comprise much of social reality. By "social reality," I mean everything that depends on human activities. By "totalities," I mean relatively enduring systems of relationally-organized entities—totalities in their own right—in which the social identity and what I will call the system functions of the latter depends on their social positioning as components of the larger systems of which they form part of (Faulkner and Runde, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2019; Lawson, T., 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019).

There are two basic types of totality. The first type is those made up exclusively of inanimate entities or what I will call "nonhuman objects." Many such objects occur naturally without human intervention, such as the entities I recognize as the moon, a seashell or the leaf of a tree. However, many others are the products of human intervention. Many of these are, in turn, what I will call "technological objects," that is objects whose capacities are harnessed to extend human capabilities. Handbags, sewing machines, and buildings are all examples of technological objects. All of them comprise relationally-organized components that are themselves technological objects, such as the totality that is a handbag consisting of a handle, strap, gussets, and so on, or the totality that is a building comprising walls, windows, doors, and so on.

The second type of totality, which I will call "communities," comprise both human and nonhuman components. Examples of communities include firms, where reference to the organization is intended to extend to its outlets and other equipment or infrastructure, as well as to its employees.

Social positions, identities, and system functions. The idea of social positioning is fundamental to the framework. A social position is a status assigned to an entity by some community that confers a social identity on, and one or more system functions to, that entity within that community and perhaps wider communities. I will consider these two attributes in a moment. Let me first reiterate the point that there is a close link between social positions and totalities, which is that social positions serve to locate their occupants as components of larger totalities. It is for this reason that I refer to totalities as ensembles of relationally-organized entities; that is, the components can only act as such if each one is correctly related to other components and the system as a whole.

By "social identity" I mean the kind of thing an entity is generally taken to be within the community or communities concerned. Take the case of the individuals present at the fashion show. Some might occupy positions of full-time employment such as creative director, product manager or brand manager. Others might occupy freelance positions such as catwalk model, musician or face of the brand. Yet others might be invited attendees, perhaps also occupying positions not relating specifically to the firm or the show, such as *Vogue* fashion editor, Netflix actor or Instagram influencer. All of these positions represent more than a title, perhaps an employment title formalized by (a full-time or a freelance) contract; they also represent a status attribution conferred by the organization or other communities that furnish the position occupant with the relevant identity—namely being a creative director, catwalk model, or influencer—within the community of a firm, model agencies, or social media platforms, and perhaps also wider communities of which the firm is itself a component. Social positions typically exist independently of, and usually prior to, any individual occupant, which therefore applies also to the identities they inform. Following authors such as Bhaskar (1979, 1989), Giddens (1984), and Lawson, T. (1997, 2003, 2019), I take the view that the mode of this social existence lies in social positions, as well as the relations in which they stand and the identities they inform, being continuously enacted and thereby reproduced—and also sometimes transformed—in the practices they guide and shape.

Employment-related statuses are only one kind of social position; people generally occupy many social positions concurrently, each of them contributing to aspects of their identity. Thus, in addition to occupying the social position of creative director of a firm, an individual might also occupy the social positions of, and therefore be, a photographer, a filmmaker or a publisher. People might, of course, move into and out of positions over time. Thus, someone might vacate the position of creative director, enabling someone else to move into that position.

In addition to conferring social identities, social positions also carry with them an expectation that their occupant will contribute to the performance of the relevant totality in certain ways, which I call their "system functions." The principal system functions of a creative director of a fashion house, for example, might be to represent and perhaps even personify and "embody" the firm, to design new fashion collections, and to act as a vehicle for communicating new fashion collections. Social positions bear rights and responsibilities that govern what is generally expected of their occupants, and which interlock with the rights and responsibilities associated with other positions. For example, the creative director's responsibility to conceive and design new collections for a fashion label is typically accompanied by the right to choose the fabrics, determine cuts, and so on, and these rights are matched by the manufacturers' responsibility to use those fabrics, execute those cuts, and so on.

Positioned objects and communities. That humans occupy social positions is a familiar and I hope uncontroversial idea. Less familiar, perhaps, is that this idea extends to the nonhuman realm: that many objects occupy social positions too, and this occupancy confers social identities on those objects in much the same way it does for humans (Faulkner and Runde, 2010, 2013, 2019; Lawson T., 2012, 2015, 2016, 2019). Examples of positions for technological objects include concert hall, sewing machine, and evening dress, and it is in virtue of being assigned the relevant status that an object acquires the identity associated with that status and so is that kind of thing within that community. Of course, things can also move into and out of positions.

Positioned technological objects have system functions just like positioned humans, such as a handbag, which is used to carry other objects, and so on. Of course, positioned nonhumans do not bear rights and responsibilities in virtue of their positioning in the same way that positioned humans do. Nevertheless, there are typically rights and responsibilities involved also in the use of positioned technological objects, such as the right of someone using a car to have other motorists maintain a reasonable distance from them on a highway, and the associated responsibility to do the same in return. While these rights and responsibilities are associated with the social position occupied by the object concerned, in this case a car, it is incumbent on the human actors who use or are otherwise involved in the use of that object to behave in accordance with the responsibilities associated with them. This is not something that objects themselves can do.

Communities can be positioned too. Recall that communities are totalities that include humans among their socially-positioned and relationally organized-components. Thus, the firm Chanel, for example, is an entity that occupies the social position of fashion house (among others, that might include multinational, privately-held company and so on). As before, these positions contribute to the identity of the firm and also to informing its various system functions in wider communities, such as designing, manufacturing, marketing, and selling women's fashions. Many of the rights and responsibilities emanating from these positions will issue in a derived way, similar to the case of the objects just discussed above. However, communities can sometimes be said to enjoy rights and responsibilities in their own right, such as companies that simultaneously enjoy the rights of limited liability and bear all manner of legal responsibilities to their shareholders, and possibly to other stakeholders.

Finally, I will proceed on the basis that brands can be positioned too. This could be more contentious, even though people in marketing speak regularly and quite naturally of "positioning a brand." The complexity here lies in exactly what kind of thing a brand is, that is, exactly what is being socially positioned. However, recall that I follow Sammut-Bonnici (2015: 1) in defining a brand as a "a set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to create awareness and identity, and to build the reputation of a product, service, person, place, or organization." On this interpretation, a brand is a totality in the sense outlined above—a structured continuant with relationally-ordered components, logos, insignias, slogans, and so on—and therefore can indeed be socially positioned in the sense described above.

Summary. The guiding idea that informs what follows is that of totalities consisting of relationally-organized entities, totalities in their own right that serve as components of the larger totality in virtue of their social positioning. There are two final observations that need to be made in this connection before I move on. The first is to note the extent to which social positions are constituted by internal relations; that is, relations in which one or more of the relata are constituted by their relation to others, such as fashion designer and fashionista (social relation between human-occupied social positions); catwalk model and catwalk (social relation between human-occupied and nonhuman-occupied social positions); and design sketch of a dress and the finished dress (social relation between nonhuman-occupied social positions). The relata in each pair are mutually constitutive, each presupposing the other. The second observation is to note that the term "social positioning" can be used in two ways, either to refer to the process of assigning an entity to a social position (verb) or the occupancy of a social position by an entity (noun). Which of the two I mean, in the discussion below, will hopefully be clear from the context.

EMPIRICAL CONTEXT

Chanel

Originally founded by Gabrielle Bonheur "Coco" Chanel in 1913, Chanel S.A. is a major French fashion house with 310 stores operating in 110 countries, with a global headcount of approximately 20.000 employees, and revenues of USD$11 billion in 2018. The firm is owned by Alain and Gerard Wertheimer, the grandsons of venture capitalist Pierre Wertheimer, who originally invested in a perfume joint venture with Gabrielle Chanel and Théophile Bader in 1924. Coco Chanel, who had fled to Switzerland in 1945 after being interrogated for collaborating with the Nazi occupation forces in France, went on to sell her "Coco Chanel" name rights to Wertheimer in 1947. This took many by surprise, because she had previously filed multiple lawsuits seeking to increase her shares in the perfume joint venture in the 1920s and 1930s and, in the 1940s, had attempted to use Nazi "Aryanization" laws forcing Jewish business owners to give up their business to reclaim this part of her former business (*The Fashion Law*, 2019: 1).

One of the distinguishing features of the firm is the status and high profile enjoyed by its designers. Chanel has had three prominent designers or "artistic directors" over the course of its history, Gabrielle Chanel (1909-1971) herself, Karl Lagerfeld (1983-2019) and, since February 2019, Virginie Viard (*Bloomberg*, 2019). The relevance of the artistic directors for Chanel is illustrated by the effect that their deaths had on the firm, first when Coco Chanel died in January 1971:

> Chanel was old hat. It was only Parisian doctors' wives who still wore it. Nobody wanted it, it was hopeless. (Karl Lagerfeld, former creative director of Chanel quoted in *The Telegraph*, 2019: 1)

After years of struggle between 1971 and 1983, the company went on to witness a renaissance under Karl Lagerfeld, who managed to find a balance between harnessing the heritage of Chanel and inventing its future. Lagerfeld succeeded in rejuvenating the brand and turning Chanel into one of the most influential fashion brands globally. His passing in February 2019 was therefore widely regarded as constituting the "[b]iggest challenge since the loss of its founder" (*Bloomberg*, 2019: 1):

> The fashion business that Alain Wertheimer took over in 1974 amounted to one boutique on the Rue Cambon, plus working couture ateliers, stagnant perfume sales of Chanel No 5, and a system of overexposed perfume distributors in the USA. Alain Wertheimer moved swiftly to reinstate the aura of exclusivity to Chanel Perfumes by dramatically reducing the number of US stockists and taking Chanel No 5 out of every corner drugstore around the country. (Drake, 2006: 301)

> Chanel would cease to exist without Karl Lagerfeld: Lagerfeld entered the Chanel's headquarters in 1983 and basically saved the brand as a fashion house, thus making Alain Wertheimer's hiring decision one of the most brilliant in modern fashion history (*Vintage Voyage*, 2019: 1).

The *firm* was positioned by operating in one market (i.e., France) and in one product category (i.e., fashion). The strategic firm positioning changed over time and the firm is today positioned as a diversified multinational operating in 110 markets (countries) and active in the following product categories: "(i) fashion, (ii) fragrances and beauty, and (iii) watches and fine jewelry" (*Chanel* 2018: 9).

Product positioning is determined by the value propositions of quality, price and availability. All Chanel products are luxury goods positioned by exclusivity and quality, most notably price exclusivity and premium quality (i.e., handcrafted or tailor-made quality). The products are also positioned by quantity and availability, with a high quantity and availability of cosmetics and fragrances, and a low quantity and availability of handbags and other fashion items (e.g., long lead times for some fashion items, some items being available only in Chanel stores).

With respect to *brand positioning*, Chanel is a single brand firm[26] that sells its products under an overarching brand whose positioning draws on strong links to the personas of its founder, Coco Chanel, and succeeding creative directors. Fragrances aside, the brand is targeted at women, with an emphasis on the value propositions of timelessness, elegance, class, simplicity, and modernity.[27] The perceived benefits are quality, luxury, and symbolic value.

The changes in Chanel's firm positioning implied by its moving into new markets and product categories has affected its product and brand positionings. These effects have had a knock-on effect on the system function of its fashion shows, which I will come back to in more detail below.

Elbphilharmonie

The Elbphilharmonie is located in Hamburg, which is home to a population of 1.8 million inhabitants. It is the second largest city in Germany and the 12th largest in Europe. The city hosts the largest port in Germany, as measured by containers in 20ft equivalent units (TEU) transported through the port, and is also the 3rd largest in Europe.

The identity of Hamburg is deeply entwined with its 1,200-year maritime history, trade legacy, and the economic significance of its port. Due to its location some way inland on a major river in the north of Germany, the city is often referred to as the gateway to the world. However, in contrast to some other European port cities that have witnessed growth in TEU volumes such as Rotterdam (from 10,783,825 in 2008 to 14,512,661 in 2018) and Antwerp (from 8,662,891 in 2008 to 11,100,000 in 2018), Hamburg's has decreased from 9,737,110 in 2008 to 8,730,000 in 2018. This decline has contributed to the recent repurposing of former harbor areas and to the city's desire to reposition itself (Lloyds, 2020, AAPA, 2020).

The Elbphilharmonie building is a newly-constructed cultural complex prominently located at the entry point to Hamburg's former harbor area, which has been rechristened as

[26] This is in contrast to a conglomerate such as LVMH SE, which has various brands competing in differing product categories. Chanel does, however, use sub-brands for specific products, for example, fragrances such as "Chanel Nº 5," "Chanel Coco Mademoiselle," "Chanel Gabrielle," and "Chanel Coco."

[27] "Brand purpose: The House of CHANEL was founded by a unique, powerful, atypically feminine soul who was propelled by her very core. By determining her world, she influenced the world, fundamentally changing perceptions of Style for everyone. I embrace the epic modernity of our rich heritage and fulfill its vision by serving today's self-powered woman who creates her destiny. Our DNA is in everything I make, and elevating women, treasuring their complexities and facets, is in our DNA. Our repertoire spans the extremes that allow a woman to find and express her essence, and thus offer her the invaluable experience of a liberating transformation, whether with a dash of lipstick, a spritz of perfume or a total look.

> "From its inception, our House has been a seminal force in shaping the codes of fashion. By drawing on the potency of paradox, and reconceiving it in surprising, harmonious, resonant design elements, we have forged for ourselves the enduring aura of singular magnetism" (*Chanel*, 2018: 7).

“HafenCity.” Designed by the Swiss architects Jacques Herzog & Pierre de Meuron, the complex occupies the site and incorporates the red brick façade of Kaispeicher A, a former warehouse that fell into disuse during the 1980s with the demise of break-bulk cargo driven by containerization. Construction of the new building began in 2007 and was completed in 2016. The official opening was in in February 2017.

While the Elbphilharmonie is best known for its main concert hall, it also houses a smaller concert hall, a visitor platform, parking facilities, a restaurant, and a hotel. The main concert hall can accommodate an audience of 2,100 and has a pole marquee design in the vineyard, rather than the more traditional shoebox, style. While the concert hall is used predominantly for classical music performances, it has also hosted other genres, including jazz, pop and electronic acts. In addition to this, it has served as a venue for literature readings, comedy performances, election polling, and the fashion show considered in this paper. The organizers of such events tend to be drawn by the architecture of the building as much as the acoustics of the concert hall.

The exterior of the building was designed to symbolize Hamburg’s maritime history. Surrounded by docks, harbor basins, a vintage fleet of former merchant ships, and an abandoned crane, the maritime theme is echoed in the glass architecture of the building itself, which is often described as having a wave-like character and a sail-like roof. This has led to the building being referred to in terms of maritime metaphors such as “glass galleon” (*The Guardian*, 2016), “culture tanker” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2016), “flagship” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2016), “supertanker” (Chicago Tribune, 2017), “cruise ship” (*Classical Music*, 2017), “avant-garde ocean-liner, or “ferry” (*Frankfurter AllgemeineZeitung*, 2017).

METHODS

Since the empirical part of this study concerns how perspectives on and perceptions of the Elbphilharmonie influenced the fashion show, I adopted a grounded, interpretive approach.

Data Collection

Data was collected between June 2019 and January 2020, after the fashion show had taken place (on December 6, 2017). The data was acquired from multiple sources.

Written, audio and video sources were collected from June 2019 onwards. The written sources were online and offline popular press articles, online blog entries, PowerPoint presentations, press-clipping books, and nonfiction books. The audio sources were podcasts and the video sources were those published on websites such as *YouTube* or *Netflix*. I reviewed 150 popular press online and offline articles, and 74 secondary interviews **(Table 5)** that were published in books, magazines, the popular press, or podcasts. I also read five books (Drake, 2007; Mears, 2011; Cénac & Delhomme, 2019; Bacqué, 2019, Maskell, 2019), listened to three podcasts, watched 13 videos, with a focus on documentaries, and three movies, with a focus on the life of Coco Chanel. Although much of the information gleaned was not directly relevant to the research objectives of this paper, it provided helpful and often highly up-to-date background information.

Interviews. Fifty semi-structured interviews in English and German were conducted with representatives of a variety of communities. These included experts on firm positioning (McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group & Company and Accenture Plc.), brand positioning (Ogilvy & Mather, Jung von Matt Group), the press (Vice), model agencies (Next Management, Silent Models NY, Core Management), academics (University of Cambridge, Harvard University), fashion retailers (Braun Hamburg GmbH & Co. KG, Carl Viehoff GmbH & Co. KG, Zalando SE), and firms in the luxury market (LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE, Christian Dior SE, Cie Financière Richemont SA, Chanel S.A.S.). Moreover, various experts from Google LLC and Palantir Technologies Inc. working on communicating the strategic positioning of their firms were interviewed.

It was not possible to secure interviews with some individuals whose views would have been relevant, not least the current and the past creative directors of Chanel. However, many of these people have granted multiple interviews to various sources. These were studied in depth **(Table 1)**. **Table 2** contains a summary of the communities the interviewees came from and their roles.

The interviewees were asked about their perceptions and opinions regarding fashion shows in general and the Chanel show in the Elbphilharmonie in particular. Where necessary, they were asked to contrast Chanel with other luxury fashion companies, such as Dior, Louis Vuitton, Prada or Gucci. The interviews lasted between 30 and 120 minutes, and were all recorded with a voice recorder after consent had been granted. The interviews were purposely kept anonymous.

TABLE 1
Interview data obtained from other sources

Organizations	Type of Interviewee (Number of interviews, speeches and presentations)	Type of Participant Observation (Total number of observations)
Business of Fashion	Imran Amed	Business of Fashion (2018)
Chanel	André Lemarié (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Aska Yamashita (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Aurélie Duclos (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Bruno Denis (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Bruno Pavlovsky (6)	Business of Fashion (2012), Fashion Network (2019), Vogue (2019), Métier Class by Chanel (2019), Savoir Flair (2019), Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Christine Allix (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Claire Bairros (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Claire Monceau (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Clive Brown (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Eric Pfrunder (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Flore Vladaj (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Frédéric Mermet (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Hubert Barrère (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Jean-Philippe Burucoa (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Karl Lagerfeld (25)	Zeit (2014, 2017), Spiegel (1997), i-D (2019); Netflix (2019), Realitism (2007), SuzyMenkesVogue (2017), Vogue (2017, 2019a, 2019b), T-Online (2017), LitCologne (2012), British Fashion Council (2015), Métier Class by Chanel (2019), DW (2018), BBC (2019), ZDF (2009, 2012), MDR (2004), Euronews (2016), CBC (2015), RBB (1975), WWD (2013), Karl Lagerfeld (2013), Chanel (2017a, 2017b, 2018), Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Laura Arguelles (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Laurence Dacade (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Maria Messner (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Marion Manceau (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Marion Monier (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Nadine Dufat (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Rosemarie Eliot (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Stefan Lubrina (1)	Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel	Virginie Viard (6)	Crash (2020), Vogue (2019, 2020), Female Magazine (2019), The Telegraph (2019), Éditions de La Martinière (2019)
Chanel (face of the brand) & actor	Kristen Stewart (2)	WWD (2017a, 2017b), Harpers Bazaar (2020)
Fashion consultant	Amanda Harlech (3)	Welt (2017), CFDA (2019), Métier Class by Chanel (2019)
FAZ	Alfons Kaiser (1)	Steidl (2019)
Joop	Wolfgang Joop (1)	Zeit (2019)
McKinsey	Achim Berg (1)	Business of Fashion (2018)
Musician	Pharrell (1)	Métier Class by Chanel (2019)
Vogue	Alexandra Shulman (1)	BBC (2019)
Vogue	Anna Wintour (3)	Women in the World (2019), Bunte (2019), Vogue (2019)
Vogue	Christiane Arp (2)	Vogue (2019c), DW (2017), GoldenesQuartier (2015), Welt (2015)

TABLE 2
Interview Data

Organization	Type of Interviewee (Number of Interviews)	Type of Participant Observation (Total number of observations)
Accenture Plc.	Management (1); senior employee (1)	
AirBnB Inc.	Senior employee (1)	
Boston Consulting Group Digital Venutres	Senior employee (1)	
Boston Consulting Group	Senior employee (2); junior employee (3)	
Boston University	Associate Professor (1)	
Braun Hamburg GmbH & Co. KG	Management (1)	
Carl Viehoff GmbH & Co. KG	Senior employee (1)	
Chanel S.A.S.		Attended talk (2)
Christian Dior SE	Senior employee (1); junior employee (1)	
Core Management	Model (1)	
Elbphilharmonie	Management (2)	Attended talk (1)
Google LLC	Senior employee (1)	
Hamburg	Senior employee (2); senator (1)	
Hamburg Marketing GmbH	Former management (1); senior employee (2)	Case presentation (1)
Hans Barlach Museum	Management (1)	Attended exhibition (1)
Harvard Business School	PhD student (1)	
Icon Magazine	Journalist (1)	
IMM Model Agency	Model (1)	
Independent (no agency)	Model (1)	
Johannes Keppler University Linz	Professor (1)	
Jung von Matt AG	Junior employee (1)	
LVMH	Former employee (1)	
McKinsey & Company	Senior employee (3); junior employee (1)	
Montblanc International GmbH	Senior employee (1)	
Next Management	Model (1); former model (1)	
Ogilvy & Mather	Senior employee (2); former senior employee (1)	
Palantir Technologies Inc.	Junior employee (1); brand strategist (1)	
Silent Models NY	Model (1)	
Storymachine GmbH	Senior employee (1)	
Tesa SE	Senior employee (1)	
University of Cambridge	Postdoc (1)	
Vice	Journalist (1)	
Zalando SE	Senior employee (1)	

Data Analysis

All of the recordings were transcribed from audio files into digital transcripts immediately after each interview. The transcripts and other data sources were then re-read several times and coded. All the digital passages were critically examined to ensure the meaning had not changed during the coding process, and every effort was made to remain alert to emerging thematic patterns throughout the process. The interviews that had been conducted in German were not translated into English, although the individual quotes used were translated by the current author.

All of the interview transcripts were reviewed, and relevant statements drawn from them, especially those pertaining to materiality, identity, and system functions, were assembled and grouped together on a matrix table. The research diary was examined in conjunction with notes on the data gleaned from the other sources mentioned above (popular press, non-fiction books, videos, blogs, and podcasts), and the interview data was triangulated with the secondary written, audio, and video sources.

To further ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the interview transcripts and the findings drawn from them were discussed with academic colleagues with no prior knowledge of the research, as well as experts on the theory. Member checks were carried out (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Nag et al., 2007) by presenting emerging findings and theoretical reasoning to a subset of five interviewees.

FINDINGS

Two themes are developed in this section. The first concerns how Chanel developed fashion shows that moved beyond being a mere product positioning instrument to using them predominantly to influence the positioning of the firm and the brand. Here, I differentiate between fashion shows in the early period that were staged by Coco Chanel (1913-1939; 1954-1971) and those in the modern period staged by Karl Lagerfeld (1983-2019) and Virginie Viard (2019 to today).

The second theme concerns Chanel's harnessing of third-party entities, both human and nonhuman, to enhance its firm, product and brand positioning in its 2017 Paris-Hamburg *Métier's d'Art* show. Here, I will focus on how the social positioning of the entities a fashion show comprises were mobilized to influence the perception and reception of the fashion collection.

Chanel fashion shows in the early period (1910s-1970s)

Chanel Mode was originally positioned as a one-market (France) and one-product category firm (morphing from the fashion sub-category of millinery and then to fashion in general) between 1913 and 1921.[28] This changed with the introduction of Coco Chanel's eponymous

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[28] Although Coco Chanel had opened her first millinery atelier in 1909 at Boulevard Malsherbes 160 and her first millinery shop in 1910 at Rue Cambon 21 in Paris, the firm Chanel was only founded only in 1913 (by 1915 the business also included a sportswear boutique that had opened in Deauville in 1913 and a fashion boutique in Biarritz that had opened in 1915).

fragrance *Chanel No. 5* in 1921, and, in 1924, subsequently led her to partner with Pierre and Paul Wertheimer in establishing a separate firm called *Societé des Perfumes Chanel* to manage production, marketing, and distribution of the perfume. The joint venture was a success and expanded to markets beyond France, with *Chanel No. 5* subsequently becoming an international bestseller and market leader in the United States. Up to 1954, Chanel entered further product categories under the umbrella of the two firms. The company introduced a cosmetics line in 1924 and a skincare line in 1927.[29] This diversification and the internationalization that accompanied it affected the positioning of the two firms, and the image of the fashion business was successfully leveraged to promote the image of the fragrances and, later, cosmetics and skincare (*International Funding Universe*, 2020: 1):

> Coco Chanel's fashion lines succeeded in their own right and had the net effect of boosting the perfume's image […] In 1980, Alain Wertheimer stepped up efforts in Chanel's U.S. fashion operations. Attempts to parlay the Chanel fashion division into a profit center and promotional device for Chanel's fragrances succeeded. (*International Funding Universe*, 2020: 1)

Chanel Mode leveraged the symbolic value of the quality associated with its fashion products to create an overarching brand that would also be to the benefit of *Perfumes Chanel*. This approach brought Chanel products, such as its perfumes into the range of a customer base that would often not be able to afford a Chanel outfit. Using (fashion) brands in this way became standard in the industry, with Pierre Cardin and Yves Saint Laurent also starting to sign licensing deals for products such as sunglasses, cigarettes, cosmetics, and perfumes (Drake, 2012: 148).

Pierre Wertheimer and Coco Chanel institutionalized this informal interrelationship when in 1954, they signed a contract combining the two firms, with *Perfumes Chanel* securing the name rights "for all products that bore it, not just perfumes" (*International Funding Universe*, 2020: 1). The effect was to strengthen the interrelations between product categories.

I am now in a position to consider the "intimate salon shows" (*The Guardian*, 2018: 1) that characterized the initial period of Chanel's history. These shows were originally staged in Coco Chanel's fashion boutique at rue Cambon 31, which also served as her atelier and showroom. Coco Chanel herself used to sit on the glass staircase of her boutique, watching the models dismount the stairs using the staircase and shop floor as a catwalk to present the most recent product collections.

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[29] All the dates are taken from a timeline on Chanel's corporate website (Chanel, 2020).

The shows were primarily aimed at generating demand for the garments among wealthy Parisiennes, with representatives of this community actually being present at the show. Photographers were banned "with designers suspecting they were spies" (*The Guardian*, 2018: 1) and the models holding numbered boards while wearing the outfits, so that prospective buyers could make a note of any item of particular interest. The purpose of the shows was primarily to serve as local product positioning platforms, with a regional focus targeting an audience of primarily local customers.

This mode of show, using the shop floor as catwalk and key customers attending, continued well after Coco Chanel's death in 1971. When Chanel launched its ready-to-wear label in 1978, for example, the audience still consisted mainly of local customers, specifically Parisian housewives from upper-middle- to upper-class backgrounds. Nevertheless, despite their strong regional focus, Chanel's collections and fashion shows did attract some international attention between 1913-1939 and after Coco Chanel had returned to Paris in 1954, most notably in the United States *Vogue* (1916) and *Life Magazine* (1955). This international exposure directly benefitted the firm's perfume product category too, furthering both its brand recognizability and competitive positioning in the market.

Chanel fashion shows in the modern period (1980's-today)

Chanel's product range diversification was supported by increased marketing efforts and a thorough internationalization of the boutique network. The firm opened more than 40 Chanel boutiques worldwide during the 1980s (International Funding Universe, 2020: 1), increased the number of its high fashion boutiques from three (1915) to 310 (2019), spread across its markets. The key markets are described in Chanel's *Report to Society* as being the Americas, Asia and Europe (*Chanel*, 2018: 9). In 2018, the company set up its "global office" in London (*BBC*: 2018: 1). The firm had thus become a multi-market, multi-product category firm and a global player in the international fashion market.

These changes in Chanel's firm positioning affected the system function of the fashion shows. While the original shows were designed to serve as a product positioning platform, latterly with intended positive side-effects for its other product categories, these side-effects have since become the principal *raison d'etre* of Chanel's major fashion shows.

Chanel currently presents six fashion collections each year (*WWD*, 2019): spring couture, fall ready-to-wear, resort, fall couture, spring ready-to-wear, and pre-fall (*Vogue*, 2020: 1). These are subdivided into high end (i.e., haute couture) and ready-to-wear (i.e., prêt-à-porter) fashion collections with all six collections having their own fashion shows. The spring-summer and autumn-winter shows feature a high-end and a ready-to-wear collection each, and form part of the bi-annual Paris Fashion Show that was inaugurated in 1973. The resort and pre-fall shows are scheduled off-season, which means that they do not form part of a wider fashion event. Five collections—spring (ready-to-wear and couture), fall (ready-to-wear and couture) and resort—are presented annually in Paris.

The shows have shifted from having a narrow focus on the fashion itself to accumulating symbolic value, most notably through images used to boost the brand across categories and then amplified via digital media. Lagerfeld understood the importance of still and video images of each show and, in a departure from prior practice, made sure that photographers were located in places that permitted them to capture the key image for each look during the show. The images are relevant, because they combine the model, the look, the venue and, in some cases, also the audience,[30] and help to convey the exclusive experience of a show to an international audience, both customers and non-customers alike. The fashion thus becomes just one element in a broad body of still images, videos, and interviews that comprise the content that is created during and after each show. In short, the modern fashion shows as staged by Chanel have become an offline content-creation platform for online amplification.

The quest to be heard in a data-saturated society in which communication is increasingly digitized, demands increasingly arresting images to gain the attention of prospective customers. Chanel has accordingly moved to increasingly sophisticated and complex artistic settings for its shows,[31] and budgets have grown to accommodate this. Examples here include presenting a cruise collection in the Grand Palais next to what looked like The Titanic ship, and sets that feature a ski-village, a rocket launch station, a beach and a supermarket. The aim is to create an unexpected and unique experience in each case, elevating the fashion show to portray a story with emotion and complexity beyond the backdrop and history of the fashion collection presented. Lagerfeld thus turned the catwalk into a theatre stage and succeeded in turning "high fashion from a niche interest into blockbuster entertainment" (*The Guardian*, 2019: 1):

> Today, fashion shows are a multimillion-dollar global business. […] Once upon a time, though, things were a lot humbler. The intimate salon shows of Chanel in the 1950s bear no resemblance to Karl Lagerfeld's fully-stocked supermarket in the vast Grand Palais in 2014. The main change is scale—along with location, set

[30] Celebrity attendees form a crucial part of the shows to market the brand by appearing in photographs and videos, and for their storytelling in interviews for magazines and videos.
[31] Lagerfeld first introduced the raised catwalk in his first ready-to-wear show in 1982, well before he moved the shows to larger venues such as the Grand Palais in Paris.

> production, and budget. […] The clothes are almost an irrelevance. (*The Guardian*, 2018: 1, emphasis added)

The most prominent of the Chanel shows, the one I concentrate on in this paper, is its annual pre-fall handcraft French *Métiers d'Art* celebration. This show is a new kind of show, the most recent on the firm's calendar and scheduled for the beginning of December each year. Chanel started the *Métiers d'Art* shows in 2002 and has staged 18 to date, 17 of which were overseen by Karl Lagerfeld and one by Virginie Viard. Only five shows have been hosted in Paris and 13 shows elsewhere, making it a notable departure from the brand's historical bias towards Paris.[32] These shows provided a powerful vehicle for Lagerfeld to further institutionalize Chanel's international presence and brand in both its existing and still emerging markets.

I concentrate on the Métiers d'Art show because it constitutes a new kind of fashion show that exemplifies how such events can be internationalized. The show reaches out to key markets, establishes new customer bases, and cements existing strongholds in line with Chanel's changed firm positioning, which I will concentrate on and discuss in more depth below, using the example of the 2017 Hamburg *Métiers d'Art show*.

Third-party entities in the 2017 Hamburg *Métiers d'Art* show

One of the characteristic features of the *Métier's d'Art* shows is that they tend to be held away from Paris at foreign venues. This feature provides the unique opportunity for the designs of the items shown and the shows themselves to draw on local characteristics using what I call "third party" entities. These are socially positioned humans or nonhumans that have no intrinsic connection to a firm, but which might be harnessed by that firm in service of its own positioning activities. In this section I will show how Chanel did this in the case of 2017 Paris-Hamburg *Métier's d'Art* show.

The responsibility of selecting the city in which a *Métier's d'Art* show is to be held falls on the creative director of Chanel:

> The designer always chooses different locations for the presentation of the Métiers d'Art collection. In the past, these were often places that had a special meaning for Coco Chanel, such as Salzburg, Dallas or Rome. This place [Hamburg] has a special

[32] Thus far, Chanel's Métiers d'Art shows have been held in Paris (2002, 2003), Tokyo (2004), New York (2005), Monte-Carlo (2006), London (2007), Moscow (2008), Shanghai (2009), Paris (2010), Bombay (2011), Edinburgh (2012), Dallas (2013), Salzburg (2014), Rome (2015), Paris (2016), Hamburg (2017), New York (2018), and Paris (2019). Some of these shows were replicated in another city during the same year. For example, the Dallas show was reproduced in Tokyo in 2014 (Vogue, 2017) and the Hamburg show in Moscow in 2018 (Chanel, 2018).

> meaning for Lagerfeld. [Translated from German by the current author] (*Die Welt*, 2017: 1)

The "special meaning" in the present case arose from Lagerfeld having been born in Hamburg in 1933 and spending the first 19 years of his life there before emigrating to Paris in 1952. While he struggled with his German origins and preferred to think of himself as a global rather than a German citizen, he remained conscious of his Hamburgian roots and was known to describe himself as a Hanseat. However, he had long claimed that hosting a fashion show in the city of his birth just for the sake of it was impossible because Hamburg lacked a suitable venue. This all changed with the construction of the Elbphilharmonie and the idea that this heralded a repositioning of Hamburg as the "culture capital" of Germany:

> The idea with the Elbphilharmonie came when I saw the thing for the first time," he said. "When I saw the construction site and the plans. [Translated from German by the current author] (Lagerfeld in an interview with *T-Online*, 2017).

> Herzog & de Meuron are the best architects in the world now that my friend Zaha Hadid has died. For me, that is the reason for which we are now going to Hamburg with our *Métiers d'Art* show. The Elbphilharmonie is not reminiscent of a building from before. It is the cathedral of our century. There was a title page from the magazine "*Der Spiegel*" with the Elbphilharmonie. It said: "Hamburg, the new capital of Germany." Then I thought: "You stupid guy, you are from that town! We are going there." [Translated from German by the current author] (statement by Karl Lagerfeld in an interview with *Vogue*, 2017: 1)

Lagerfeld was thus able to make a case for hosting a show in Hamburg on the basis of an authentic relationship between his own personal background and the city. The show was widely perceived as a homecoming: "It was so moving tonight, more than usual, I thought, to see Karl back here in the city [in which] he was born" (Lily-Rose Depp quoted in *The New York Times*, 2017: 1).

The Elbphilharmonie building is an example of a third-party entity in the present case, the "cathedral of our century" that would provide a sufficiently prominent and arresting visual platform for the show. At the same time, it held the attraction that, in contrast to venues such as the Grand Palais in Paris, it had never been used to stage a fashion show before and was therefore "pure" in the sense of having no prior association with other fashion brands.

There are many more obvious ways that the building and its positioning resonated with the positioning of the Chanel brand: its global profile; having been designed by star architects; its world-class, landmark and iconic status; its cultural power, artistic excellence, extravagance and craftsmanship; its unconventionality, and so on:

> So, there was no better or more spectacular setting than the new Elbphilharmonie. Both Chanel and the Philharmonie stand for extravagance and craftsmanship, and are proof that you can look beyond conventional conventions—and sometimes you have to [Translated from German by the current author] (*Journelles*, 2017: 1).

However, there were also more numerous more subtle associations. As noted above, the Elbphilharmonie and its site are strongly emblematic of Hamburg's history as a port and "gateway to the world" (many interviewees mentioned this gateway as a "revolving door," a recurring idea in statements by Lagerfeld's friends and local citizens).

> The invitation for last week's Chanel show in Hamburg, Germany, featured an original sketch by designer Karl Lagerfeld of the port city's iconic gates. "The Gateway to the World," as Hamburg has been known for centuries. Now, they open onto the futuristic-looking Elbphilharmonie, the city's new concert hall, which was designed by contemporary starchitecture firm Herzog & de Meuron and opened to much fanfare last year. According to the designer, who was born here and raised in Hamburg before moving to Paris and launching one of the most iconic fashion careers ever, it was a symbolic gesture of the city's blending of the old and the new. "Before, Hamburg was lacking some cultural power. Now, suddenly, it's become the culture capital of Germany," he said, citing especially the Elbphilharmonie's trapezoid shape and roof that surfs up from the harbor like the top of a wave. "This place is booked every night, every day. Everyone wants to see this place, which I must say is stunning." Lagerfeld adds that he knows everyone thinks Berlin is Germany's creative epicenter, but those in the know head to Hamburg. (*Conde Nast Traveller*, 2017: 1)

Another connotation of the building and, as we will see, in his appropriation of clothing associated with the city, was the way that it blended the old and the new, and trade and culture. The former is represented by the prominent location of the building at the former entry point to the harbor and its incorporation of the façade of the historical Kaispeicher A building, thereby retaining the symbols of the former system function of the old building. The Elbphilharmonie thus merges notions of trade with high culture through its location's symbolic value, because it encapsulates the notion of seafaring.

The building also juxtaposes upper- and working-class connotations, sometimes referred to as "white" and "red" Hamburg. Red Hamburg refers to the red bricks common in working-class houses and harbor warehouses, and is reflected in the red bricks of the old warehouse. White Hamburg refers to the white mansions in "Blankenese" and on the "Elbchaussee," which are populated by the "upper class" concertgoers, and is reflected in the superstructure of the building as a place of high culture. This perception clashes in some ways with the notion of the concert hall being an inclusive house-for-all paid for with taxpayers' money, in addition to some noteworthy donations from wealthy families. In other words, the Elbphilharmonie can be interpreted as an appropriation of the working-class history of the harbor to serve the needs of an upper-class looking for a cultural institution with international acclaim. This pattern shares some similarities with the way Lagerfeld turned the maritime fashion items to a global luxury brand's design codes in a fashion collection and, thereby, appropriated a professional working-class fashion theme to inform an exclusive luxury fashion event with fashion items for a wealthy international "upper-class" audience.

The wider city, and the harbor in particular, were also a source of inspiration for the fashion collection. This was nothing new: Lagerfeld's shows outside Paris were often inspired by the host cities and, while always remaining true to Chanel's house codes,[33] the collections shown were often adapted to "pay tribute" to those cities (*Vogue*, 2017: 1). These adaptations might reflect the fashion tradition of the region, the history of the city, or the architecture or history of the venue, and so on. For example, the 2018 New York *Métier's d'Art* show took its inspiration from Egyptian artifacts on display at the Museum of Modern Art, at which the show took place.

Hamburg does not have a history as fashion city in the way that Paris, Milan, London, and New York do. Instead, its identity had always been bound up with its being a port and a trade center. Here Lagerfeld drew inspiration from the courtesans and the music played in the bars and red-light district of the Reeperbahn, as well as the red brick buildings, containers, and the weather in the harbor area. Thus, reference was also made to maritime music, such as the Hans Albers' shanty *La Paloma* which encapsulates much of the harbor's *zeitgeist*, courtesans' footwear worn on the Reeperbahn, and the misty conditions and heavy fog that the weather in Hamburg is known for. The result of the fashion entity's crafting process was the Chanel *Métier's d'Art* collection, which comprised 89 looks and numerous items for each look.

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[33] Chanel's fashion house codes consist of a number of recognizable design rules that have remained stable and become iconic over time, such as the use of particular fabrics, a high wearability, recognizable signs of the brand paired with high artisan craftmanship and tailoring ("camellias, tweeds, layers of chain-link necklaces and pearls, and highly wearable suiting" (*Elle*, 2019: 1)). Chanel clothing is often referred to as a protective gear for women, or fashionable armor. Reinforcing the codes serves to reaffirming the legacy of Coco Chanel, a system function of the fashion show that also (re-)connects her professional identity to the brand identity of Chanel. In fact, Virginie Viard, the new artistic director at Chanel, used her first *Métiers d'Art* show in Paris in 2019, to emphasize an alignment with the traditions of the firm by offering designs and fabrication associations that reaffirmed Coco Chanel's posthumous legacy as a creative icon.

> Chanel's *Métiers d'Art* 2020 Collection Reinforces Coco's House Codes—Chanel presented its *Métiers d'Art* collection in Paris on Wednesday. For her first high-craft outing for the *maison*, creative director Virginie Viard leaned heavily on the house codes—camellias, tweeds, layers of chain-link necklaces and pearls, and highly wearable suiting. Titled, "31 Rue Cambon," the address of Chanel's legendary Parisian store, the collection was a safe return to the brand's hallmarks, especially after previous outings that saw Karl Lagerfeld looking to Egypt and Hamburg for inspiration. The show's set, co-designed by Sofia Coppola, was made to evoke Coco Chanel's private apartment. (*Elle*, 2019: 1)

My final example of Lagerfeld's use of third-party entities lies in his appropriation, reimagining and repositioning as women's apparel, various garments that were traditional to Hamburg and a strong reflection of its maritime history.[34] Many of these garments were originally designed to be worn at sea or for heavy harbor work, and made of various weatherproof fabrics. Examples include the "Troyer," a blue woolen sailing jumper, the "Colani," a double-breasted marine pea coat featuring round golden buttons with engraved anchors, as well as the "Prince-Heinrich" and the "Elbe-Sailor" hats (sometimes referred to as "Beatles" caps because they were worn by the group during their time in Hamburg). In appropriating and repositioning these designs, Lagerfeld gave new life to garments that were disappearing along with the gradual disappearance of the communities that used them, which had already fallen into disuse and could only be seen in maritime museums, or which younger generations simply perceived as uncool and unfashionable to wear.

> With this collection, Karl Lagerfeld speaks about a look and an attitude, inspired by the merchant navy crew wardrobe that he disrupts with the modernism of Chanel. While the spirit of Gabrielle Chanel—she who borrowed the striped sailor top and pea coat from men—is never far away, Karl Lagerfeld enlarged this vocabulary of masculine/feminine by multiplying the details and reinventing the codes of the House to create a unique, daring, confident, and ultra-feminine attitude. (*Velvet Magazine*, 2018: 1)

> Lagerfeld also re-interpreted striped shirts, wide-legged trousers, and pea coats, which Coco Chanel herself had already borrowed from a sailor's wardrobe nearly a century ago (*Vanity Fair*, 2017: 1).

> "So much of the spirit and energy of this city was clearly woven into the clothes, the emotions were buoyed by the music too, and this space," she said, waving at the hall's white-vaulted dome and gleaming organ pipes, arrayed like a waterfall on one wall." (Lily-Rose Depp quoted in *The New York Times*, 2017: 1)

DISCUSSION

Strategic positioning research has provided useful insights into how managers can position their firms, products and brands (e.g., Maggard, 1976; Ries & Trout, 2001; Porter, 2008; Aaker, 2012; Löffler & Decker, 2012; Vergne & Wry, 2014; Panda et al., 2018; Belboula et al., 2019). Nevertheless, their focus is either on firm, product or brand positioning, which leads to a siloed literature addressing the concerns of either strategy or marketing scholars and practitioners. Thus, while the field agrees on what entities can be strategically positioned, there are few

[34] The maritime accessories these clothes were presented with, such as pipes, sea-sacks, and backpacks, reflect a similar appropriation.

definitions of what strategic positioning is (for exceptions see Urde & Koch, 2013, 2014) and, as a result of the literature being siloed, none that is applicable to all three entities.

Further, while the reviewed literature makes explicit reference to the relationship between firm and product positioning *or* product and brand positioning (Ries & Trout, 2001; Kotler, 2002, Löffler & Decker, 2012), there is no mentioning of a potential relationship between all three entities, even though their interconnection could be relevant to both the strategy and marketing field. The aforementioned literature could, nevertheless, imply the potential of product positioning serving as the link to interrelate all three entities.

My research was originally motivated to only address how managers were using a product positioning event to harness and exploit the positioning of a third-party location (i.e., the maritime positioning of the Elbphilharmonie); But the research question shifted after examining how fashion shows had been adapted in the last century and, when I discovered the research gap in the strategic positioning literature. Hence, my research was motivated by the relevance of strategic positioning for managers gaining a comprehensive understanding of all three entities and their respective positioning. More specifically, the aim was to offer ontological clarity what strategic positioning is and what the interrelationships between firm, product, and brand positioning are.

To do this, my study examines the evolvement of a product positioning event of a specific firm over time. My research not only provides an example of how the interrelationships can be harmonized, for example by Chanel managers adapting the product positioning event of fashion shows through *storytelling, localization, digitalization* and *internationalization*; But how they did so as a result of the requirements that resulted from changes in Chanel's firm positioning and that fashion shows needed to be increasingly used for the purpose of international brand positioning. Thus, product positioning can, indeed, serve as a link between firm and brand positioning. My findings allow me to make three distinct theoretical contributions to strategic positioning research, which I will elaborate on in the following subsections.

Contributions to Strategic Positioning Theory

What is strategic positioning. While the literature on managing strategic positioning and the question of how much firms should differentiate themselves from their competitors (Zhao et al., 2017) or their products from those of their competitors (Barlow et al., 2019) is growing, it continues to suffer from a lack of definitions of (Maggard, 1976; Ogilvy, 2019) and a coherent overall framework for the analysis of strategic positionings (Urde & Koch, 2013, 2014) and the social positions that firms, products, and brands occupy in the marketplace. The theory put forward in this paper goes some way towards filling this gap by providing a definition and theory of social positioning general enough to accommodate firm, product and brand positioning.

One of the virtues of SPT is that it highlights the relational nature of social positions and, accordingly, the highly relational and often co-constitutive nature of the independent existence of the positioned entities and whatever intrinsic properties they might have. This allows me to offer a definition which can be applied to all three entities: firms, products, and brands. Using the ontological distinction between the position an entity can occupy, and the entity itself, I define social positions as social constructions and mental constructs, a positioning (noun) as a status an entity can occupy, and positioning (verb) as the act and process of attributing a status to an entity. Firms, products, and brands are such entities and are positioned when they occupy a status, notably a social position. They can occupy multiple positions simultaneously, and to move into and out of the social positions they occupy. I want to give three examples to illustrate what strategic positioning of firms, products and brands is.

With respect to firms, the positioning provides the basis for understanding the strategic questions of the markets and product categories a firm operates in. A firm, as an entity, is positioned when it is associated to the status of operating in a market (i.e., regions, countries) or entering a product category (i.e., fashion).

> 2018 has been a successful year for Chanel, with strong growth across all product lines and regions. (a statement taken from Chanel's 2018 annual financial report)

While, the markets a firm can enter are bounded by a relatively stable and firm set of regions and countries (with exceptions such as the USSR collapsing into 15 countries), product categories are less stable. Thus, a firm may choose to construct new social positions, for example, by creating new product categories (e.g., software as a service SaasS, for example, by Amazon launching the Amazon AWS cloud service). In the case of Chanel, most of the markets (e.g., China, USA, Italy, etc.) and product categories (e.g., fashion, perfume, watches, etc.) were already created before the firm chose to enter them—it neither created new social positions for markets nor product categories.

With respect to products, the positioning provides the basis for answering the strategic question of their identity and "what they are," in virtue of the social positions it occupies, and, more specifically, "what functional or intrinsic value it offers." A product is an entity which depends on managers or designers choosing their intrinsic properties and features, as well as their prices. Such entities are positioned when these properties and features become recognized and a status is attributed to the entities concerned (e.g., an entity being a garment or a pair of sunglasses, etc.). The products' features and properties need to resemble the specific social positions they are associated with (e.g., tailor-made high quality jacket, luxury watch etc.) because if there are mismatches, for example when products positioned as high-quality items are being identified as not to having the appropriate intrinsic properties and value (e.g., luxury watches identified as fake), the product may lose the social position it formerly occupied.

Finally, the positioning of a brand provides a source of answers to the strategic question of "what it stands for" and "what symbolic value it offers." A brand, as an entity, is positioned when managers determine and communicate the symbolic value (e.g., social status, emotions, etc.) that the brand is associated with, for example, through often expensive marketing and communication campaigns. The brand's positioning informs customers about its identity in virtue of the position it occupies, notably by a brand occupying the position of the *status* it offers, and the *emotion* it evokes in the prospective customer's mind.

The relationships of the three forms of positioning. One of the crucial features of social positioning is the importance of internal relations between social positions. This is true also for the positioning of firms, and their products and brands and this aspect of the theory is particularly useful in helping reveal the interrelationships between their social positionings. The relationships between firm, product, and brand positioning are reflected in the on-going adaptation processes of managers choosing to reposition the entities they control. In some cases, the product positioning does not allow a firm to reposition (verb) and to expand into new markets, for example, when Wal-Mart was choosing to change its firm positioning and, entered the German market, which was unsuccessful due its product positioning mismatching customer's expectation of value-for-money. However, some firms are able to overcome challenges determined by their positionings and are able to reposition by entering new product categories, for example when Nokia was successful in entering the cell-phone market, it had to adapts its firm, product, and brand positioning. Finally, there are examples of firms evolving their firm positioning, for example Zalando which was an e-commerce platform for shoes, before becoming an e-commerce platform for fashion, and eventually, repositioned itself as tech-company, with knock-on effects on its product and brand positioning. *Chanel Mode* is another useful example here: Once it changed its firm positioning by entering new markets and new product categories, this had knock-on effects on both its product and brand positioning. Various product lines had to be designed, launched and managed, and the brand's image had to be infused and repositioned to account for the product categories and markets that the firm had entered. However, given that the firm has entered so many markets and product categories, its brand positioning became increasingly relevant to infuse value to all product categories, most notably cosmetics and perfume.

> The main change is scale—along with location, set production, and budget. […] The clothes are almost an irrelevance. (*The Guardian*, 2018: 1, emphasis added)

> Every Chanel show at which I had the opportunity to be present for had felt like more than a showing of garments; every single time it tells a story. It's not just the clothes; it's the environment, the sound of it, the way its configured, everything. (Kristen Stewart in an interview for Chanel, 2017)

As shown above and as illustrated in the two quotes, the repositioning of the firm led to a shift in the system function of Chanel fashion shows, expanding their function from being a communication tool solely for the product positioning of new fashion collections to increasingly becoming a communication tool to enhance the symbolic value of the firm's overarching brand (and thereby promote all of the products in its various product categories). Whereas its fashion shows were formerly product positioning platforms for presenting new collections to primarily local or regional audiences, they are now—and this is true of its Métier's d'Art shows in particular—a communication vehicle at scale for transporting the fashion show experience to a global audience, and to, hereby, support the positioning of its overarching brand.

The case of Chanel's 2017 Paris-Hamburg Métier's d'Art fashion show discussed above demonstrated well how Chanel used the presentation of a locally inspired and adapted product collection to infuse its brand with symbolic value in the German market. It also accounts for the interrelationships between firm, product, and brand positionings, for example, as it shows how product positioning serves as an evolving link between the changes in the firm positioning and the importance of a localized brand event and an digitized and internationalized communication effort for the markets the firm operates in.

How managers can ensure harmonizing the positioning on the firm, product and brand level. Managers may want to examine the interrelationships between firm, product and brand positionings, for example, to anticipate how one entity being repositioned could affect the other two entities, to identify mismatches when repositioning one entity, and to then (re-)harmonize the strategic positioning of all three entities.

In the case of Chanel, the fashion shows illustrate the evolving and mutually reinforcing relationship of the three entities and their positionings, for example, as the changes made in the firm positioning required changes of the product and brand positioning. Chanel's firm, product and brand positioning evolved since Coco Chanel started operating her first millinery fashion boutique and hosted the first fashion shows in her fashion salon in Paris. Fashion shows are product positioning events whose history shows how they eventually became unable to account for the internationalization of the firm. Thus, the fashion shows needed to be adapted and scaled by the firm's management over time. To give an example of how Chanel chose to adapt its product positioning, the key features of the modern shows need to be discussed: To ensure harmonizing the positioning of the firm, product and brand Chanel chose to employ *storytelling, localization, digitalization* and *internationalization* efforts. These efforts shall just serve as illustrative examples, as other managers will need to make other changes to their product positioning to harmonize their positionings across entities. I will comment briefly on each in turn.

*Storytelling***.** Generally, all six annual fashion shows are communication tools that tell a story, open a new chapter to a "fantasy kingdom" (Drake, 2006: 335), and infuse symbolic value by creating images with memorable content for the Chanel brand. Hosting a fashion show in Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie enabled Chanel to connect its fashion to a building—notably a place and space rich in symbolism and meaning. The city itself provided the maritime fashion theme. The building provided a highly visible, dramatic and aesthetically pleasing backdrop for the show that, located on the site of a prominent former merchant warehouse at the gateway to a port city, further reinforced the maritime theme. The storytelling element is crucial for infusing the brand with value in the markets the firm had chosen to enter and have a platform for a live experience of the products for a local audience.

Localization. An important feature of Métier's d'Art shows is the way that they draw on local influences through the incorporation of third-party entities. As I have just discussed this feature in detail in the preceding section, I will say no more about it here.

Digitization. In contrast to the highly exclusive and exclusively in-person experience of Chanel's early-period fashion shows, its modern shows are now also (if not mostly) for the excluded community, a non-attending online audience. The shows have thus become offline content creation platforms for online amplification designed to infuse and (re-)affirm the symbolic value proposition and premium benefit of the brand. Considerable resources are devoted to digitizing and curating the content of each fashion show, especially in the form of still images and videos. This content is then disseminated with the strategic use of social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube to promote the Chanel brand and, with it, its clothing lines and its other (and perhaps more affordable) lines in other product categories.

Internationalization. Finally, the digitization of Chanel's fashion shows underpins the internationalization of the firm by offering to a global audience some access to an experience that would formerly have been limited to a much smaller audience. While attending one of these shows once required an invitation and travelling to Paris for those not already based there, today, every customer is able to attend a fashion show digitally. The internationalized outlook of Chanel's firm positioning, as it entered new markets and product categories, required the internationalization of what was its main product positioning tool. The digitization of its fashion shows held in Paris and elsewhere was crucial to this effort succeeding, leavened by the localized flavor of the Métier's d'Art shows inspired by their locations and venues across the world.

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