

Model: City Branding Communication Model

Type of model: Brand model (process model)
 Author(s): Michail Kavaratzis
 Domain: City branding

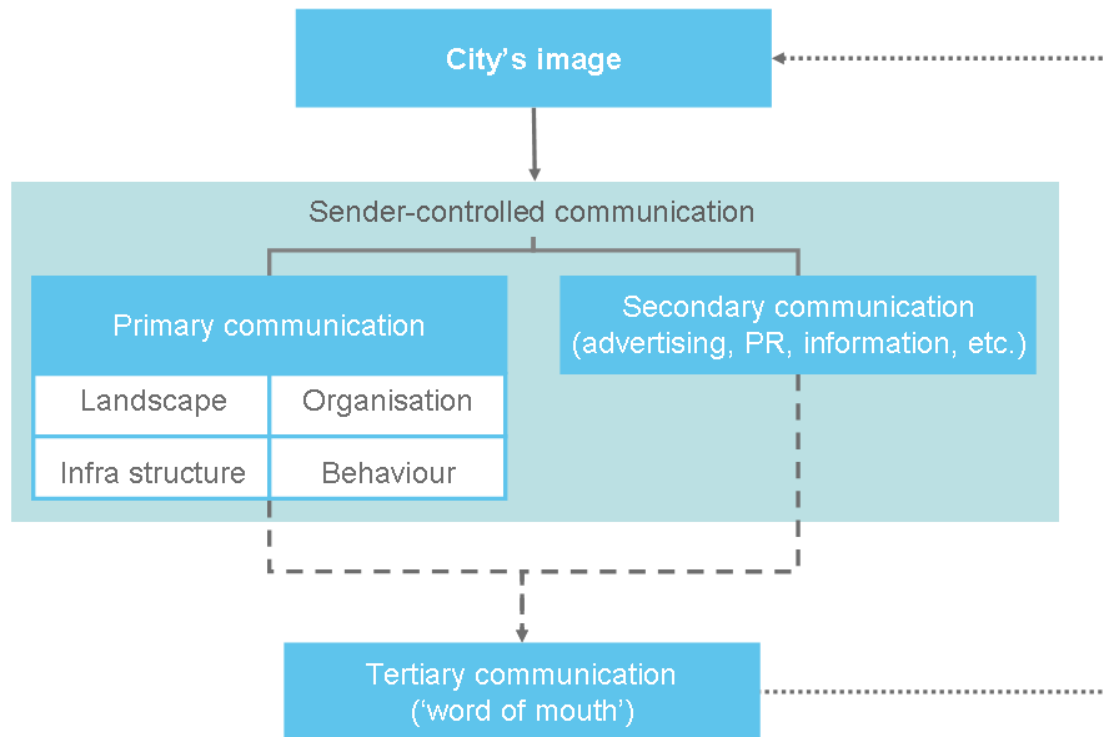


Figure 1: Kavaratzis' *City Branding Communication Model*.

In his City Branding Communication Model, Michail Kavaratzis summarizes those forms of communication that drive the image of a city. The primary target group this model focuses on is made up of the inhabitants of the city in question, with a view to bettering their quality of life. What stands out about this model is that the city's image is both the starting point and the end point. That is in itself a logical premise, because a city will always already have an image, whether marketing is being used to build that image or not. Kavaratzis identifies three forms - or sources - of communication: primary, secondary and tertiary communication.

In the following we will further outline these three sources of communication that determine a city's image:

1. Primary communication: this concerns the communicative effects of actions taken by a city. Kavaratzis discerns four types of actions with a communicative effect:

- a. Landscape: this includes urban design, architectural features, and outside public spaces in a city. Art in outside public spaces can also be considered part of cityscaping, and have a strong communicative effect.
 - b. Infrastructure: this concerns a city's accessibility (roads and public transport), but also whether it has certain facilities (such as cultural centres, conference facilities, etc.).
 - c. Organisation (including administrative structure): the way in which city authorities involve inhabitants in the decision-making process and enters into public-private partnerships affects people's and companies' opinion of the city in question. And also the way in which the authorities shape city marketing and branding efforts falls into this category.
 - d. Behaviour: this includes services available in the city (for its inhabitants, tourists, etc.), the number and type of events that are organised, but also the way in which city authorities try to get stakeholders to invest in the city (this can include incentives such as subsidies or free public transport).
2. Secondary communication: this concerns official communication issued by city authorities (i.e. intentional), communication in the form of advertising, PR, design etc. This form of communication is often likened to *branding*, but all three forms of communication from this model are relevant for branding, not just this one. Secondary communication is not solely about content, but also about the question whether city authorities have sufficient communicative capability.
 3. Tertiary communication: this form of communication relates to the word-of-mouth advertising that is mostly stirred up by the media and communication by competing cities.

Primary and secondary communication seek to stir up positive tertiary communication. The latter is hugely important according to Kavaratzis; in city branding, a city's inhabitants not only constitute the most important target group, they are also that city's most influential *city marketers*.

Kavaratzis' model shows that urban design and development are decisive factors in a city's imaging. This implies that such activities should (partly) be driven by the people in charge of city branding (as is the case for fast-moving consumer goods, where the brand is supposed to drive new product development).

Reference(s)

Kavaratzis, M. (2004), From city marketing to city branding: towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands. *Place Branding*, vol.1, no.1, p.58–73. *

Kavaratzis, M. (2008), From city marketing to city branding: an interdisciplinary analysis with reference to Amsterdam, Budapest and Athens. Dissertation Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. *

* : available in the EURIB library.