

# LUISS



Department of Business and Management

Master of Management

Chair of City Branding and Tourism

**The importance of brand communication in a city context. An explorative analysis with reference to Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Hamburg.**

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*Oltre la paura,  
oltre ogni inizio e ogni fine,  
c'è la forza di ricominciare.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The increasing interconnectedness of the global market and the phenomenon of globalisation have led cities to compete in an attempt to differentiate themselves. As a result, government representatives, policymakers, and several commercial and non-commercial stakeholders are getting increasingly convinced that a strong and cohesive city brand can support the economic growth of their city. It involves the development and improvement of the city and its community, aiming to make it desirable and attractive for tourists, businesses, and residents alike. As a result, there is now worldwide competition between cities and a growing interest in the idea of city branding. Only during the late '80s place branding started to gain visibility with the launch of slogans like "*I love New York*" and "*Glasgow's miles better*". Later, other cities such as Seattle, Las Vegas, and Hong Kong developed their own brands to respond to the increase in competitiveness. Since then, the concept of city and place branding has started to develop, proving that, just as products and services, also cities and places can be promoted through branding strategies.

The central objective of this master's thesis is to investigate the modes of communication applicable to the city brand. This concept has recently been studied from a scientific point of view. The city brand notion was created in the nineteenth century with the intention of commercializing urban areas; however, it has since developed into a more complex cutting-edge concept that incorporates, among other disciplines, marketing, design, urban planning, and tourism, even though this line of research is only a few decades old. Looking at the scientific production reported on this topic between 1987 and 2021, one can see an exponential increase in the latter, revealing an increased interest on the part of the scientific community. Moreover, one prominent issue of the place brand literature is the shortage of empirical research that reaches beyond singular case studies to validate place brand theories. For this reason, this thesis aims to investigate specifically how the city brand is communicated through the application of the theoretical framework to three different case studies and their subsequent comparison. The cases under analysis are the cities of Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Hamburg and their DMOs, amsterdam&partners, Wonderful Copenhagen, and Hamburg Marketing GmbH, respectively. It is hoped that this document will provide food for thought on

methodological and strategic choices in the near future for those interested/employed in the field. Furthermore, the increase of critical awareness on the topic can have multiple repercussions on the strategies adopted and the greater involvement of urban planners and policymakers at the city level.

The study has been divided into three main sections. The first chapter aims to provide a theoretical review of the place brand concept. Starting from a general analysis of the brand concept, we will move on to analyse its application at the level of places and, more specifically, of cities. Furthermore, this section will present the Kavartzis model, a framework that has been conceptualised for over a decade to simplify and make successful the communication of city brands. The second chapter will instead focus on providing a comprehensive overview of the research design and methodology applied. This will be an experimental research based on the study of three different case studies that will be analysed in order to investigate the communication methodologies used and the applicability of the framework of Kavartzis. Finally, the second chapter will conclude with a brief overview of the case studies in analysis in historical, political, and economic terms. The third chapter will focus on the qualitative analysis of the data collected. In particular, data from official websites, online archives, blogs, databases, press releases, articles, books, related websites, social media, city rankings, statistics, and Google Trends have been used. Furthermore, to increase the validity of the study, primary data were collected through one-to-one interviews with people involved in city brand communication in relation to the three different cities chosen: Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Hamburg. All the information gathered then led to an in-depth study of the identity and image of the city and of the three sections of the Kavartzis model: primary communication, secondary communication, and tertiary communication. This cross-case study made it possible to compare the different communication techniques used by cities that have worked for decades to make their city brand one of the most important and thriving in the world.

# PART I. A THEORETICAL REVIEW OF THE PLACE BRAND CONCEPT

## 1.1. Brand and Branding – An In-Depth Look

Brand and branding are key components of the modern business world. A brand is a set of elements that represent a company, product, service, or place, while branding is the strategic process of defining and creating a brand.

Etymologically speaking, “*Brand*” is a term that dates to Old Norse (the Old North Germanic language from which the modern Scandinavian languages are derived) and referred to a burning piece of wood. The term was not used as a verb until at least late Middle English. From then on it began to mean “*to burn*”, and in its evolution it then acquired the meaning of “*to brand with a hot iron, leaving a mark*”, just as was done with cattle to identify the owner in case of theft. From here we approach the English meaning of “*brand*” of “*stigma*” or “*trademark*”. This concept began to assume greater importance in management in the mid-1980s due to the phenomenon of globalization and increased competition<sup>1</sup>.

The concept of a brand is very controversial and has been subject to constant reviewing over time. One of the earliest definitions was given in 1960 by the American Marketing Association<sup>2</sup>, identifying a brand as: “*A name, term, design, symbol, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from competitors*”. However, from a practical point of view, many managers refer to a brand as something more than just a logo or a name. It has become clear that it represents a critical element in the company-consumers relationship thanks to its ability to generate awareness, prominence, and reputation in the marketplace. Hence it is possible to distinguish between the industry’s conceptualization of a “*Brand*”, with a capital letter, and the AMA definition of a “*brand*” with a lowercase letter.

Thus, in order to manage the company’s reputation and expose the brand, a branding process became necessary. “*Branding goes beyond how your customers see you. It is the*

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<sup>1</sup> (Järvisalo, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> (American Marketing Association, 1960)



*process of defining a point of difference and organizational culture and communicating them internally and externally*<sup>3</sup>. The birth of the branding concept can be traced back about 200 years when Josiah Wedgwood realized that engraving his name on potteries and giving them names associated with English nobility would have made them more desirable. Hence, he strengthened the idea that one product is more valuable than a nameless one since the former is linked to a recognizable name and a promise of authenticity. It was then in the 1930s that Neil McElroy, head of Procter & Gamble's promotion department, created an organizational structure that could assign teams of people to manage specific marketing strategies for certain brands: the "*P&G brand management system*". Finally, from the mid-1990s, branding began to be applied not only to products but also to retailers, leading to the emergence of names such as Victoria's Secret and Bath & Body Works<sup>4</sup>. Since then, the notion of branding has been gaining increasing importance due to its decision-making role. The former is central in every decision-making situation and can explain its application in multiple categories: products, services, retail stores, people, organizations, and places.

Specifically, the turning point came when organizations realized that - to differentiate themselves from the growing number of competitors - promoting the brands of their products, services or stores was no longer sufficient. Hence, the application of branding techniques was also used in the corporate sphere. Aaker<sup>5</sup> defines a corporate brand as "*a brand that represents an organization and reflects its heritage, values, culture, people, and strategy*". This shift from product brands to corporate brands is supposed to be first identified by King<sup>6</sup> in 1991, but only after 1995, several studies about the topic were published. While these two terms may overlap in some respects, they are different entities, each with its purpose, goals, and strategies. Product brands are focused on selling specific products. They represent the individual products and services that make up a company's portfolio. These brands attract customers by showcasing the features and benefits of the products, as well as the values, culture, and mission of the company. On the other hand,

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<sup>3</sup> (Mearns, 2007)

<sup>4</sup> (Winfield-Pfefferkorn, 2005)

<sup>5</sup> (Aaker D. A., 2004)

<sup>6</sup> (King, 1991)

corporate brands refer to the overall image and identity of the business. They are concerned with how the company is perceived by its customers and the public, so their main goal is to create a unified message that helps to connect all the different products offered by the company.

Specifically, Hatch and Schultz<sup>7</sup> identified six main differences between the concepts of product brands and corporate brands. First and foremost, the organization becomes the primary focus of the branding campaign rather than the product. Indeed, the corporate brand has a broader scope that makes it possible to add economic value to the variety of products and services provided by the company. Secondly, the managerial responsibility constitutes another difference. While product brands are managed by the middle management marketing function, corporate brands have a more strategic perspective that belongs to the executive office. The third difference focuses on those subjects that the company is trying to attract. From the product brands' point of view, the main target is customers or consumers, differently the corporate brands relate to multiple stakeholders due to their contribution to the corporate image formation. The fourth contrast refers to the responsibility of the branding effort. While the branding of products is usually handled by the marketing department, corporate branding requires more sophisticated practices that involve the whole organization. This complexity is partially explained by the need for a balance between the corporate image, the organizational culture, and the strategic vision. Thus, the integrated efforts of multiple organizational departments are required. Another difference refers to the temporal dimension. Indeed, product brands are short-term oriented due to their constant need to update and refresh themselves. On the other side, corporate brands are symbols of the company's identity, heritage, and mission. In other words, they are present both in the past and in the future. Finally, corporate branding plays a strategic role in the positioning of the business in the marketplace as well as in the development of internal structures that support the corporate brand's meaning. Differently, product brands have a lower reach compared to corporate brands since their importance is mainly related to a functional perspective<sup>8</sup>. In the end, it is possible to define corporate branding as *“a systematically planned and implemented process of creating and*

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<sup>7</sup> (Hatch & Schultz, 2003)

<sup>8</sup> (Hatch & Schultz, 2003)

*maintaining a favourable image and consequently a favourable reputation for the company as a whole by sending signals to all stakeholders and by managing behaviour, communication, and symbolism*<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, companies are interested in the creation of strong brands, able to create added value and represent explicit firms' assets. Power brands are strictly related to the concepts of brand equity, brand image, and brand identity.

### ***1.1.1. Brand Equity***

Brand equity was initially defined by Farquhar in 1989 as *“the added value with which a given brand endows a product”*<sup>10</sup>. This value can be explained as the rational and emotional evaluation of brands. On the one side, the rational evaluation assigns a value to the brand and serves as a method to estimate the brand's value from a numerical and financial point of view. On the other side, the emotional evaluation relates to how consumers value a brand and the reasons they are more likely to select it over competing options. In essence, this implies that a high level of brand's market value is determined by consumer satisfaction toward a brand and by the value they obtain from buying it. To further explain this concept, Aaker coined one of the most used definitions: *“Brand equity is a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol, which add or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers”*<sup>11</sup>. The main assets can be grouped into five general categories that give rise to a brand's equity: (a) brand loyalty, (b) brand awareness, (c) perceived quality, (d) brand associations, and (e) enterprise brand assets such as patents, established channel relationship, and trademarks. Brand loyalty refers to those customers who are devoted to the brand and will not accept an alternative. Brand awareness is related to the extent to which consumers can identify the quality or image of a brand under different conditions. The perceived quality reflects the degree of goodness and goodwill that the customers feel toward the brand. Consequently, it is considered a powerful driver of consumer satisfaction and financial performance. Brand associations are all the connections, responses, and feelings that occur in customers' minds when thinking of a brand. Lastly,

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<sup>9</sup> (Einwiller & Will, 2002)

<sup>10</sup> (Farquhar, 1989)

<sup>11</sup> (Aaker D. , *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*, 1991)

enterprise assets are intended as all the assets capable of protecting the brands and enforcing their rights, such as intellectual properties.

Keller approached brand equity from a consumer behaviour perspective and introduced a model known as Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE). Keller's model states that a brand has good customer-based brand equity if consumers respond favourably to its merchandise and advertising strategies when the brand is mentioned as compared to when it is not. Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer has a high degree of awareness of the brand, is familiar with it, and has strong, positive, and distinctive brand associations in their minds<sup>12</sup>. According to the CBBE, to build a strong and powerful brand four sequential steps must be followed. Particularly, each step represents a question that customers invariably ask about brands, in an explicit or implicit way. The first question relates to the importance of ensuring that a certain product category or need is associated by the customer with the brand (identity) – Who are you? The second one is strictly connected with the concept of meaning and the need to establish a brand's meaning in the customer's mind by creating positive brand associations – What are you? The third question emphasizes the demand for consumer responses about brand identification and meaning – What about you? The last one is strictly linked to the need of transforming the responses into an engaged, passionate, and devoted relationship between the brand and the customers – What about you and me? These are the four steps that need to be taken to build strong brands: from identity to meaning to responses to relationships.

Consequently, it is possible to establish a pyramidal structure that can provide significant brand equity only if brands are able to reach the top<sup>13</sup>. This structure is called Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid and it is made up of six brand building blocks: brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, brand judgments, brand feelings, and brand resonance. The *first one* is related to the awareness of the brands. *Brand performance* is connected with the satisfaction of functional needs. On the other side, *brand imagery* relates to the satisfaction of psychological needs. *Brand judgments* have a central focus on the customers' opinions derived from performance and imagery. *Brand*

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<sup>12</sup> (Keller K. , 2002)

<sup>13</sup> (Keller K. L., 2003)

*feelings* are strictly linked to the customers' reactions and emotional responses to the brand. Lastly, *brand resonance* corresponds to the level of identification of customers with a brand. Specifically, each one of the previously seen steps correspond to one or more building block(s) as can be graphically seen in Figure 1.

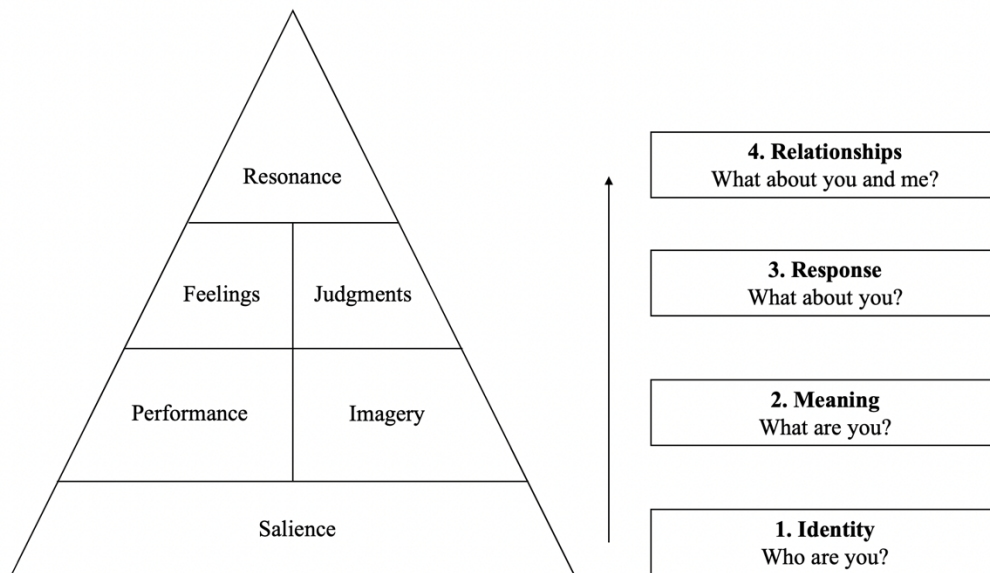


Figure 1 - CBBE Pyramid (Keller K., 2002)

This model aims to track the brand equity building process and provide a measurement of the success of the brand building efforts.

As far as measurement is concerned, brand equity is a strategically crucial component of a brand, but it is extremely difficult to quantify. Indeed, there is no universally accepted way to measure it. The most used methodologies are provided by four big consulting firms: BrandZ, Interbrand, Brand Finance, and BAV. While the first three measure the brand and present every year a list of top global brands, the last one is a tool that does not generate a list of global brands, but it can be used by brands to evaluate their equity<sup>14</sup>. Specifically, it is possible to identify some differences in the four measures:

- BrandZ: it uses Millward Brown's database that holds data from more than 2 million consumers and professionals across 31 countries, comparing more than 23000 brands<sup>15</sup>. BrandZ valuation is able to separate the value generated by the brand alone in the customers' minds, removing all the other elements.

<sup>14</sup> (Mogaji, 2021)

<sup>15</sup> (Farris, Pfeifer, Bendle, & Reibstein, 2016)

The brand value is calculated by multiplying the financial value of the brand by the brand's contribution. The financial value represents the part of economic value that can be attributed to the brand, while the brand contribution quantifies the brand's ability to predispose customers to choose a specific brand.

- **Interbrand:** this methodology can provide a meaningful analysis of the brand, a more in-depth explanation of how the brand is contributing to business growth, and a road map with all the future achievements. In this case, there are three main components used to measure the brand value: the analysis of the financial performance of the products and services provided by the brand, the brand's competitive strength, and the role of the brand in the purchase decision journey.
- **Brand Finance:** to better understand the value of brands, Brand Finance carries out unique market research in ten industries across 29 markets with a sample size of more than 50,000 adults. The methodology used is the Royalty Relief, which assesses the price a business is willing to pay to license its brand as if it did not already own it. By using verified third-party transactions, tax authorities, and court rulings, Brand Finance determines brand values. Additionally, the valuation, which establishes the fair market worth of brands, can be carried out using publicly accessible financial data.
- **BAV (Brand Asset Valuator):** BAV measures a wide range of brand attributes and metrics that generate financial and market success, and it does so in a way that uniquely captures the essential dimensions that drive brand momentum, advocacy, and financial success in the marketplace. The BAV measurement is based on four pillars that represent essential elements of brand health. These are: differentiation (the capacity to draw interest), relevance (the appropriateness and meaningfulness of the brand to consumers), esteem (a way to assess how well-liked a brand is and how well it keeps its promises), and knowledge (the level of knowledge consumers possess about a brand). These pillars are represented in the Cartesian plan according to two

dimensions: stature and strength. The two dimensions depict how the four pillars interact with one another.

### ***1.1.2. Brand Identity***

Brand identity refers to the visual and verbal elements that distinguish a company or product from others. It encompasses the company's name, logo, tagline, colour palette, typography, imagery, messaging, and overall look and feels. Through brand identity, a company seeks to identify itself and aims to communicate its individuality and distinctiveness to consumers and other stakeholders<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, according to Aaker<sup>17</sup> it is “*a unique set of associations that the brand’s developer seeks to create or maintain. These associations represent the value of the brand and the promises that are given to consumers by members of the organization*”. A strong brand identity helps to differentiate a brand from competitors, establish brand recognition and brand recall, and communicate the brand’s values, purpose, and personality to the target audience. To create it, it is important to understand the target audience, their values, and the message the brand wants to communicate. This information is used to guide the design process and ensure that the visual and verbal elements of the brand identity are aligned with the brand's overall message and purpose. The brand identity should also be consistent across all customer touchpoints, including packaging, advertising, website, and customer service<sup>18</sup>.

A company's brand identity is an important factor in building and maintaining customer loyalty. A well-designed brand identity can evoke emotions, create a sense of trust and reliability, and communicate the brand's uniqueness to the target audience. It helps to build a positive brand image and create a strong emotional connection with the target audience, which can be crucial in today's highly competitive market<sup>19</sup>. Additionally, it is not only important for customer perception, but it can also impact the bottom line: an increase in customer loyalty can lead to increased sales and customer

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<sup>16</sup> (Marguiles, 1977)

<sup>17</sup> (Aaker D. , 1996)

<sup>18</sup> (Nandan, 2005)

<sup>19</sup> (Abedi & Azma , 2019)

retention. Given the increasing importance of brand identity various authors have tried to identify a method of defining it<sup>20</sup>.

### 1.1.2.1. Brand Identity Prism

To provide a more holistic representation of the brand, Kapferer in 1992<sup>21</sup> proposed a model called the “*Brand Identity Prism*”. The latter distinguishes among recipient-sender sides, and internalization-externalization ones. The prism illustrates six aspects of brand identity that express the intangible and tangible characteristics of the brand: physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image. According to the model, the synthesis of each of these elements is what leads to the success of a brand and endows it with a special authority, legitimacy, and set of values. On the one side, physique, personality, and culture constitute the intended identity, namely how the brand wants to be perceived. On the other side relationship, reflection, and self-image reflect the perceived identity, namely how the brand is perceived.

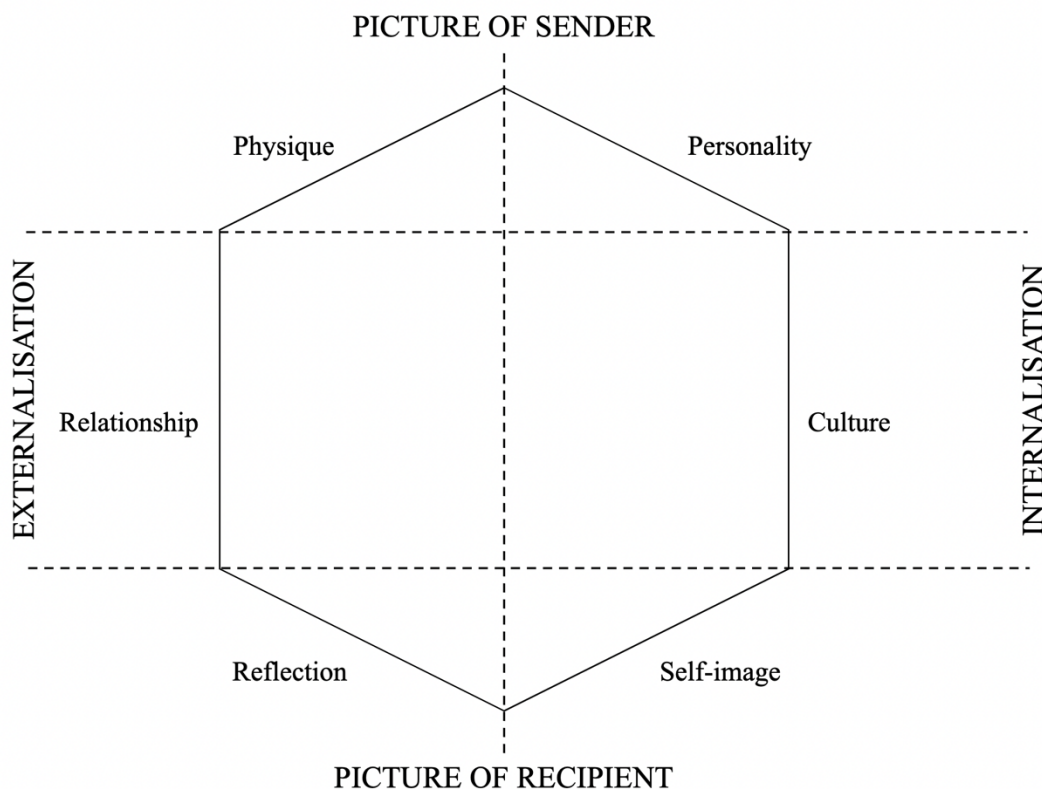


Figure 2 - Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer, 1992)

<sup>20</sup> (Florek & Janiszewska, 2013)

<sup>21</sup> (Kapferer J. N., 1992)



The six facets of the prism can be described as: (1) Physique – an exterior tangible facet of a brand through which it is expressed to the outside. Also known as the brand artifacts or brand manifestation. (2) Personality – an internal intangible facet. It is the set of human characteristics that can be associated with the brand. There are five big dimensions of brand personality: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. The higher these five dimensions, the stronger the brand personality. (3) Culture – an internal intangible facet that represents the brand’s values and intrinsic DNA. (4) Self-image – an external intangible facet reflecting consumers' perception of themselves when consuming the brand. (5) Reflection – an external intangible facet that constitutes how society perceives customers when they consume the brand. (6) Relationship – an exterior facet related to the brand’s interactions with customers.

#### *1.1.2.2. Brand DNA*

This model was conceptualized by Carol Chapman and Suzanne Tulien in 2010<sup>22</sup>. They assumed that a brand is similar to a living organism that breathes, moves, and adapts to its environment. A brand's roots and environment-specific components and traits make up its fundamental genetic structure. The genetic code for the brand's growth, development, and overall evolution is known as the brand DNA. According to the authors, this concept is based on four main elements that represent the brand: values, style, differentiation, and standards.

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<sup>22</sup> (Chapman & Tulien , 2010)

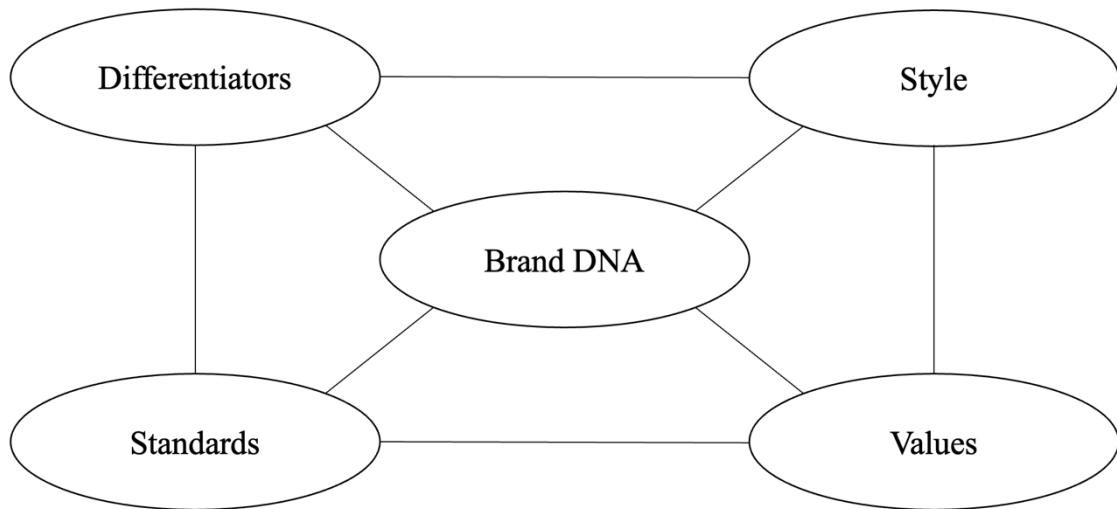


Figure 3 - Brand DNA (Chapman & Tulien, 2010)

(1) Values are the guiding principles that convey a brand's fundamental philosophy. All brand activities, including internal and external organization decisions and actions, are guided by these values. (2) Brand style is related to brand personality and describes how goods and services are presented and delivered. Relationships with customers, employees, and vendors should be described and should be in line with brand style. (3) Differentiators are the special and distinct qualities that strengthen the brand for the company and its clients. The ability of a brand to differentiate itself from the competition can be a huge source of competitive advantage. (4) Finally, brand standards represent the degree of performance excellence throughout the organizational levels, both internal and external. Employees, clients, procedures, and finances are the four fundamental components considered in standards. This element is considered the most tangible and measurable of the Brand DNA model. When a brand is defined concerning the four categories mentioned above, it is feasible to validate its DNA<sup>23</sup>.

### 1.1.2.3. Brand Code

The Brand Code model was invented by Thomas Gad<sup>24</sup>. It is similar to the Brand DNA since it considers a brand as a living organism. However, this model has been gaining support thanks to its ability to define the brand and its future positioning. Thus,

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<sup>23</sup> (Florek & Janiszewska, 2013)

<sup>24</sup> (Gad, 2001)

the code represents the basis of the organization and the most significant tool for making decisions. These decisions must be made taking into account six fundamental areas that define brand identity: mission, vision, values, product/benefit, positioning, and styling.

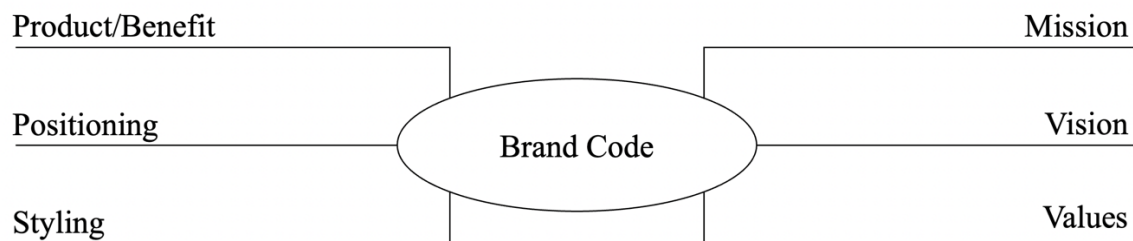


Figure 4 - Brand Code (Gad, 2001)

(1) Mission emphasizes the brand's social responsibility and the advantages it provides to the wider public. (2) The brand's future is defined by its vision, which suggests potential development paths that will guarantee the brand's unique position in the market and in the minds of its target audience. Because of its vision, a brand pays attention to both ongoing activities and activities that will help it achieve its desired position in the future. (3) Values contribute to brand identity in the long-term and serve as a crucial audience identification indicator. Indeed, they help a brand become trustworthy and consumer friendly. (4) The product/benefit element is strictly connected to the product's attributes. This facet refers to the offer that a business makes to its clients and the advantages that they receive from whatever the company provides. (5) Positioning entails identifying a brand in relation to its rivals and defining ways to differentiate it from them. (6) Finally, the personality or character of the brand is expressed through the styling element. No matter if the brand is a corporation, a product, or a service, the styling constitutes the image, attitude, behaviour, and personal look of the brand.

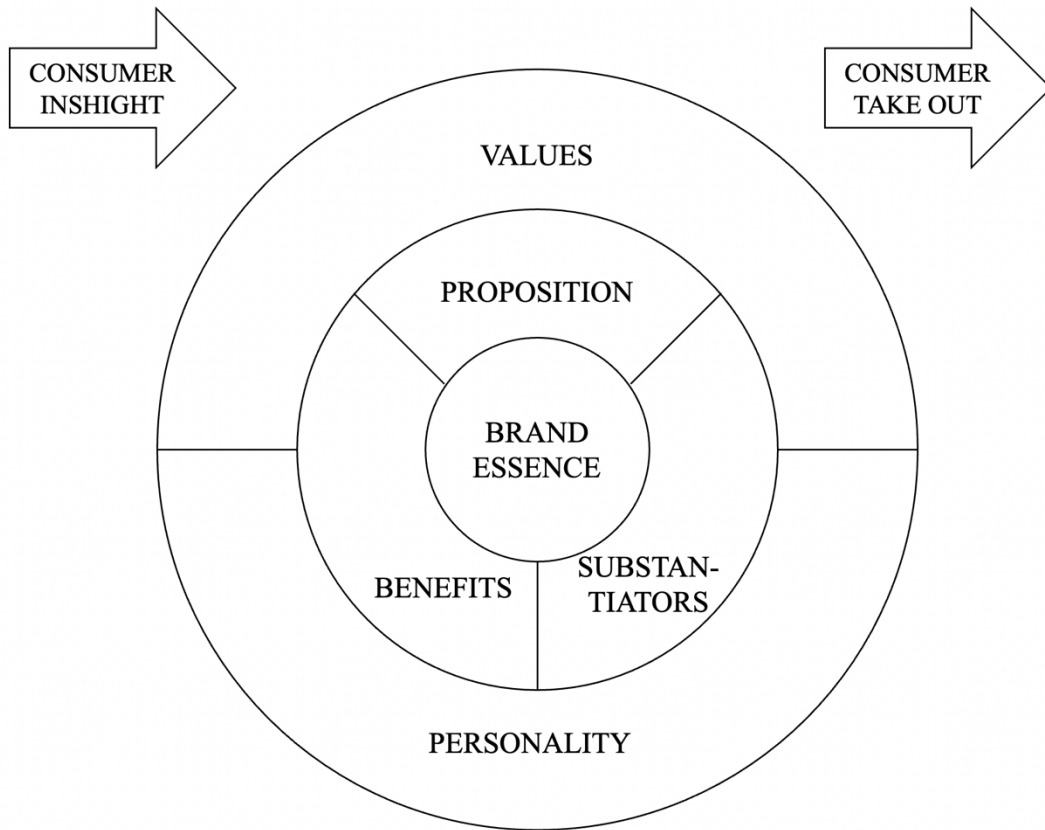
#### 1.1.2.4. The Bull's Eye

This framework enables brands to reach the centre of the target group and communicate the brand essence<sup>25</sup>. In other words, this model gathers and examines consumer perceptions of a brand, identifies its unique selling proposition, demonstrates how the claim can be supported, and condenses everything into the essence of the brand.

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<sup>25</sup> (Company internal documents, 2007)

The “*Bull's Eye*” framework identifies six essential components that create a brand's identity: values, personality, benefits, substantiation, proposition, and brand essence.



*Figure 5 - The Bull's Eye (Company internal documents, 2007)*

A deeper analysis of these components can highlight their characteristics:

1. The brand's values: the principles on which a company is founded. They represent the main landmarks of the brand.
2. Brand personality: is the combination of human traits associated with the brand.
3. Benefits: both functional and emotional.
4. Substantiation: what supports the credibility of the benefits.
5. Proposition: also known as a brand statement, it is a statement made about the business that highlights the advantages that consumers can gain by utilizing the that specific brand.
6. Brand essence: is the attribute or set of intangible attributes that a consumer associates with a specific brand, making it different and unique from a competitor company or any other brand.

### ***1.1.3. Brand Image***

Brand image is the perception that consumers have of a particular brand. Kotler<sup>26</sup> defined brand image as “*the set of beliefs held about a particular brand*”. Specifically, according to Kapferer<sup>27</sup> brand image is only related to the receiver’s side, considering that it shows how the general public interprets the brand's numerous messages transmitted from the sender’s side (i.e., brand identity). These signals can be created through various elements such as the brand’s logo, products, advertisements, customer service, and other interactions between the brand and the consumer<sup>28</sup>. Starting from these signals, consumers develop various associations with the brand. Based on these associations, they form the brand image. In other words, the brand image can be seen as a unique bundle of associations within the minds of the target audience.

Keller<sup>29</sup> identified three key components of brand associations, namely attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Attributes can be distinguished into specific and abstract. The former refers to the colour, weight, or size of the products, while the latter takes into account brand personality *attributes* such as “*durable*”, “*rugged*”, and “*youthful*”. Additionally, attributes could be divided into those that are and are not related to products. Non-product-related attributes include packaging, user imagery, and usage imagery, whereas product-related attributes are specific to the sort of product and service. *Benefits* refer to how the consumer feels their needs are being met. Functional, symbolic, and experiential are the three categories of fundamental consumer needs that Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis<sup>30</sup> have identified. Functional needs drive the search for solutions to address consumption-related issues that are created externally. On the other side, symbolic needs are strictly related to ego-identification and can be satisfied by a product that responds to the internally created demand for self-image. Lastly, experiential needs refer to the sensory satisfaction that the products generate. *Attitudes* represent the last component of

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<sup>26</sup> (Kotler P. , 1988)

<sup>27</sup> (Kapferer J. , 1997)

<sup>28</sup> (Järvisalo, 2012)

<sup>29</sup> (Keller K. , 1993)

<sup>30</sup> (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986)

brand associations. Schiffman and Kanuk<sup>31</sup> defined an attitude as “*a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way with respect to a given object*”. Additionally, they provide a model according to which brand attitudes consist of three different components: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive component relates to the customer’s factual knowledge about a brand; the affective component refers to feelings and emotions about it; whereas the conative component comprises the intention to execute a specific action regarding a brand, such as purchasing<sup>32</sup>.

The development of strong brand associations is closely linked to the process of creating and maintaining a strong brand image. To make it possible, companies require an in-depth understanding of the consumer. They need to know what their target audience values are, what motivates their purchasing decisions, and what emotions they associate with the brand. Based on this understanding, businesses can develop a brand strategy that will help them to create a consistent brand image and communicate the right message to their target audience. From this communication perspective, it is clear the difference between brand image and brand identity, while identity comes from the company or source, the image comes from the consumer or receiver. Thus, the consumer “*unpacks*” or “*unwraps*” the brand message in the form of brand image after it has been “*packed*” or “*wrapped*” in terms of brand identity. Brand image, however, may end up being completely different from the intended identity because perception can affect how something is perceived. It's possible for the brand identity to be unclear or to be completely unintended. It is known as “*the perception gap*”. By guaranteeing that the target audience recognizes the brand identity, relates to it, and understands what is presented, perception gaps must be avoided<sup>33</sup>.

## **1.2. Introduction to Place Branding**

Over the last decades, the promotion, marketing, and/or branding of places have become even more important policies. Particularly, the application of marketing

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<sup>31</sup> (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000)

<sup>32</sup> (Nandan, 2005)

<sup>33</sup> (Järvisalo, 2012)

techniques associated with the tourism market goes back to the 1970s, when public administrators began to apply managerial forms of governance<sup>34</sup>. However, only during the late '80s place branding started to gain visibility with the launch of slogans like “*I love New York*” and “*Glasgow’s miles better*”. Later, other cities such as Seattle, Las Vegas, and Hong Kong developed their own brands to respond to the increase in competitiveness. Zenker and Braun in 2010<sup>35</sup> defined a place brand as “*a network of associations in the place consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design*”. Thus, it is possible to assess that place branding practices aim to manage this set of associations in order to conceptualize the place as a brand.

Just as products and services, also cities and places can be promoted through branding strategies. Indeed, an in-depth analysis of the literature suggests that there are some characteristics shared by both place brands management and corporate brands management. Firstly, both have multiple touchpoints with which they can communicate with the various stakeholders. Secondly, as far as stakeholders are concerned, both have to interact with different stakeholders which can have potentially conflicting objectives. Thirdly, both must manage and communicate simultaneously with several customer segments. Fourthly, both have the role of adding value across multiple activities through the audience’s endorsement<sup>36</sup>.

However, cities have some specific characteristics that can be used to distinguish the geographical location and create specific brand images. These features may include places’ natural resources, culture, and heritage. Some distinctions can also be made in the area of place brand analysis, in terms of tools to support urban policies and addressable target groups. These differences must be underlined in order to better understand the area of analysis on which the thesis will focus.

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<sup>34</sup> (Hankinson, *Managing destination brands: establishing a theoretical foundation*, 2009)

<sup>35</sup> (Zenker & Braun, 2010)

<sup>36</sup> (Hankinson, 2009)

### ***1.2.1. Place Promotion, Place Marketing, and Place Branding***

As far as places are concerned, tourists, businesses, and visitors can benefit from improvements that can be done through some tools able to support urban policies. Specifically, these are: promotion, marketing, and branding<sup>37</sup>. The increasing competitiveness between different cities worldwide has caused the development of these policies. Additionally, the urban governments' transition from a managerial to an entrepreneurial mindset<sup>38</sup>; the priority on competitiveness<sup>39</sup>; the increased pressure on local governments<sup>40</sup>; and the concept of a rising worldwide network of cities<sup>41</sup>, are challenges that have led to the adoption of new tools to support urban policies.

Their widespread dissemination created a great deal of confusion regarding their impact at the local level, their meaning, and their implications, as their definitions often overlapped<sup>37</sup>. This lack of conceptual clarity brought to the creation of a theoretical framework, able to make clear the main guidelines in terms of driver, approach, task, mandate, budget, results, and primary domain. Generally, can be stated that these concepts differ due to the focus of their practices. Notably, place promotion relates to the generation of a favourable communication; place marketing is connected with the balance between supply and demand; while place branding has a central focus on place identity and the importance of creating, sustaining, and shaping it.

*Place promotion's* purpose can be identified as “*generating attention for what a place has to offer to certain target audiences in the expectation that this will increase demand*”<sup>42</sup>. Also looking at the AIDA model, an increase in the customers' *Attention* might give birth to a certain *Interest*, that is likely to lead to a *Desired*, which can result in an *Action*. The picture depicted shows a one-directional process, in which *Attention* is the main focus. Consequently, the relationship between *Attention* and *Action* is a hierarchical one, which can explain why place promotion is highly supported by both

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<sup>37</sup> (Boisen M. , Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018)

<sup>38</sup> (Harvey, 1989)

<sup>39</sup> (Jessop, 2002)

<sup>40</sup> (Brenner, 2004)

<sup>41</sup> (Beaverstock & Taylor, 1999)

<sup>42</sup> (Boisen M. , Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018)



private and public stakeholders. Indeed, this tool has to do with the development and creation of messages able to reach the target groups and increase their understanding of the place offers. Theoretically, this can develop an intention and then a desire to become a tourist, a resident, or a business investor of that place. Thus, some characteristics of place promotion can be highlighted. Firstly, it is *supply-driven* with a marketing communication characterized by a traditional approach *sender-to-receiver*. Additionally, its task is to leverage the *attention* of the previously identified *target groups* thanks to a *coordinated promotion* of the place. Subsequently, it is possible to state that the place promotion's goal is to *gain the attention of the audience*, and the latter can be measured considering the level of *cognitive domain of knowledge* obtained.

*Place Marketing* is the process of boosting interest in the products and services offered in a defined location. However, it is difficult to identify a clear definition as the concepts of place marketing and place promotion often overlap. With a deeper analysis of the literature, it is possible to define place promotion as an important part of place marketing. The latter is thus a much broader concept that includes some elements unrelated to the former. Specifically, Hubbard and Hall<sup>43</sup> included “*physical redevelopment*”, “*public art and civic statuary*”, “*mega-events*”, “*cultural regeneration*” and “*public-private partnerships*” as part of place marketing; Ashworth and Voogd<sup>44</sup> incorporated “*spatial-functional measures*”, “*organizational measures*” and even “*financial measures*” in the concept of place marketing; finally, Kotler, Haider, and Rein<sup>45</sup> inserted “*infrastructure*”, “*basic services*” and “*attractions*” in the place marketing definition<sup>46</sup>. More recently Hospers<sup>47</sup> defined it as “*the long-term process and/or policy instrument consisting of different, yet interrelated activities aimed at keeping and attracting different target groups to a certain city*”.

As such, place marketing necessitates having significant influence over product creation in order to adjust and improve the place itself to better suit the needs of the

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<sup>43</sup> (Hubbard & Hall, 1998)

<sup>44</sup> (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990)

<sup>45</sup> (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993)

<sup>46</sup> (Boisen M. , Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018)

<sup>47</sup> (Hospers, 2009)

carefully selected target markets. This involves more public and private stakeholders' cooperation than place promotion, each with their own unique set of incentives and interests, and each with their own preferences in terms of which target groups they would desire the place to be tailored toward. Furthermore, differently from place promotion, place marketing can be considered one of the most significant tools in the transformation from a supply-side to a *demand-side* perspective to urban development, with a customer-centric view. It exemplifies an *outside-in approach* that puts the needs of chosen target groups first. The task is to *manage target groups' demand and supply* in specific *market segments*. Therefore, the associated mandate should cover both marketing communication (place promotion) and a specific level of market influence over the creation of appealing and unique *product-market combinations*. When members of the intended target groups *choose* to use the product-market combinations of the place rather than the product-market combinations of other places, place marketing has succeeded in its goal. Therefore, the outcomes of such efforts should be examined and evaluated primarily within the *conative* realm of behaviour <sup>46</sup>.

*Place Branding*. The branding of places (and in particular of cities) has grown in importance among city officials with the creation of city brand rankings like the Anholt-GMI City Brands Index or the Saffron European City Brand Barometer<sup>48</sup>. Some academics favour the idea of place branding as a tool for place marketing, while others favour the idea of place marketing as a tool for place branding. Despite their differences, the two schools of thinking appear to concur that a place brand is: “[...] *a network of associations in the consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place and its stakeholders. These associations differ in their influence within the network and in importance for the place consumers' attitude and behaviour*”<sup>49</sup>. The ideas of identity and image are crucial to place branding. Indeed, according to Boisen, Terlouw, and Van Gorp <sup>50</sup> “*the identity of a place is sought identified, extracted, and orchestrated to further load the place brand with positive associations. Ultimately, the goal of such practices is to improve the image of the place*”. Identity in this context refers

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<sup>48</sup> (Zenker & Martin, 2011)

<sup>49</sup> (Zenker & Braun, 2017)

<sup>50</sup> (Boisen, Terlouw, & Van Gorp, 2011)

to a conglomeration of several ways of identification rather than to everything that the location is. When a place's identity is recognized, it takes on a promise and an expectation, in other words: an image. The way a location is regarded can be characterized by its image. A good image exists when certain associations are viewed favourably in a given context, but a strong image arises when the majority of people have similar associations<sup>51</sup>.

Therefore, attracting attention is necessary for place branding. In other words, the purpose of place promotion serves as the foundation for place branding, proving that it would be pointless to not see place promotion as an instrument of place branding. Looking at place promotion from the standpoint of place branding the objective of the former evolves: it is now more important to transform attention into awareness that enhances the location's reputation rather than only drawing attention to its offerings. In contrast to place marketing, place branding involves a different kind of influence on the location's actual growth. Place branding is less concerned with the particular product-market combinations of the place and more with the why and how something is done in terms of purpose and meaning. Place branding is *identity-driven*, as opposed to place marketing and promotion. It stands for an *inside-out* approach that aims to communicate particular values and stories about the location in question. *Reputation management*, or maintaining and/or enhancing the place's reputation, is the task at hand. The related mandate is one of *image orchestration*, emphasizing the ability to affect both coordinated promotion (place promotion) and the creation of product-market combinations (place marketing), in order to be able to influence people's *perceptions of and associations* with the relevant location. When individuals hold a positive *reputation* of the location for long periods, place branding has succeeded. Therefore, the outcomes of place branding should largely be monitored and evaluated within the *affective* domain of attitude<sup>51</sup>.

This repositioning contributes to dispelling the ambiguity around these concepts and offers principles for the creation, institutionalization, and application of specific policies. The classification improves conceptual clarity in the structure of the interconnections between concepts and the tasks, mandates, and intended results that go along with them.

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<sup>51</sup> (Boisen M. , Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018)

	<b>Place Promotion</b>	<b>Place Marketing</b>	<b>Place Branding</b>
<i>Driver</i>	Supply-driven	Deman-driven	Identity-driven
<i>Approach</i>	Sender to receiver	Outside-in (Needs)	Inside-out (Relevance)
<i>Task</i>	To communicate offerings	To manage supply and demand	To manage reputation
<i>Mandate</i>	Coordinated promotion	Product-market combinations	Image orchestration
<i>Budget</i>	Target audiences	Target market segments	Perception and association
<i>Results</i>	Attention	Choice	Reputation
<i>Primary domani</i>	Cognitive (Knowledge)	Conative (Behaviour)	Affective (Attitude)

Figure 6 - Differences between place promotion, place marketing, and place branding according to Boisen, Terlouw, Groot, and Couwenberg (2018)

### ***1.2.2. Destination Branding VS. Place Branding and City Branding***

Another distinction useful to fully understand the concepts that will be analysed later in this thesis is the difference between destination branding and place branding. These two concepts are related but distinct concepts in the fields of marketing and tourism. However, this distinction has been problematic for a long time due to the lack of a clear framework. Recently a greater understanding of the two concepts has been possible. Indeed, destination branding is used to create an appealing and memorable image of a destination, while place branding goes beyond traditional marketing tools and focuses on the development and improvement of a place and its community.

*Destination branding.* When the practice of branding a place is used in the context of tourism, the latter is known as destination branding, which is typically charged to a DMO (destination marketing/management organization). In 1998, at the Travel and Tourism Research Association’s Annual Conference, the concept of branding applied to the context of tourism destinations began to acquire visibility and were presented several cases of destination branding, including those for Canada, Oregon, New Orleans, and Hawaii, among others. In the same circumstance Ritchie and Ritchie<sup>52</sup> defined destination branding as “*a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience*”. The conventional features of destination brands are covered in the first section of the

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<sup>52</sup> (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998)

definition; while the second section emphasizes the role of destination branding, in communicating a promise of a memorable and unique experience.

Subsequently, a deeper analysis of the concept of destination branding was made, leading to a reformulation of its definition. Thus, Blain, Levy, and Ritchie<sup>53</sup> stated that: *“Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination: that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination: that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice”*. This definition is particularly important as it identifies the target group that destination branding strategies address: visitors. These branding techniques, therefore, have the task of identifying the strengths, values, and unique characteristics of the destination and communicating them to potential visitors. However, one decade later some academics have expanded the concept of destination branding into a more comprehensive strategy for drawing in and keeping locals as well as tourists. Indeed, residents play a significant role in destination brand building and, consequently, in the experiences of tourists. Residents who are pleased can serve as place ambassadors<sup>54</sup>. This aspect of residents' involvement in place branding resonates strongly with two general marketing ideas: first, the idea that the customer is a co-creator of value; and second, the idea of *“living the brand”*, which supports the need to turn citizens into brand champions<sup>55</sup>. Consequently, destination branding affects both tourists and locals, hence failing to include both target audiences can reduce the effectiveness of any branding approach.

*Place branding* has been previously defined as “[...] a network of associations in the consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place and its stakeholders. These associations differ in their influence within the network and in

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<sup>53</sup> (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005)

<sup>54</sup> (Zenker, Braun, & Petersen, 2017)

<sup>55</sup> (Braun, Kavaratzis, & Zenker, 2013)

*importance for the place consumers' attitude and behaviour*"<sup>56</sup>. If the objective of branding is to add value to an organization, a product, or a service, similarly the objective of place branding is to add value to a particular place. Thus, by developing and expressing a positive place identity aimed at appealing to various target market segments, place branding can help one location stand out from others in a competitive environment. Additionally, place branding can be used to identify the appropriate segments and, consequently, to broaden, amend, enhance, revive, improve, or contextualize perceived images<sup>57</sup>. In other words, place branding can indirectly attract more tourists, residents, and businesses and investments by influencing how the place in question is perceived. As a result, government representatives, policymakers, and several commercial and non-commercial stakeholders are getting more and more convinced that a strong and cohesive place brand can support the economic growth of their city, region, or nation<sup>58</sup>. It involves the development and improvement of a place and its community, with the ultimate goal of making it desirable and attractive for tourists, businesses, and residents alike. Thus, place branding refers to the broad branding of locations for multiple target groups whereas destination branding targets mainly tourists and partially residents. Therefore, destination branding could be viewed as a branch that composes the family tree of place branding<sup>59</sup>.

At the same time, it is important to underline that places can be characterized by different geographical levels. In other words, places are part of a geographical hierarchy where a city may be referred to as a "*place*" inside a region, and the region itself may be considered a place in its own right if the spatial context is focused on a region. Otherwise, from a higher geographical level, the region may be defined as a part of a wider territory such as the state. Similarly, a city is made up of several areas and locations. The fabric of the city is made up of neighbourhoods, parks, squares, buildings, landmarks, infrastructure, and other elements. As a result, the city is an amalgamation of all the other locations and spaces that fall under its bounds. Graphically, the most basic representation of a place is a "*dot*". Imagine zooming in on this dot. The level of detail grows, and the

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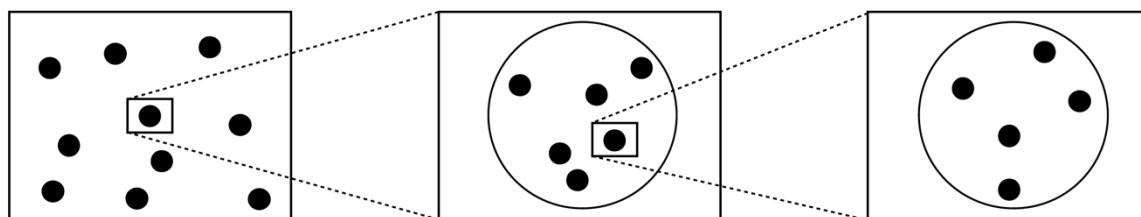
<sup>56</sup> (Zenker & Braun, 2017)

<sup>57</sup> (Skinner, 2021)

<sup>58</sup> (Boisen, Terlouw, & Van Gorp, 2011)

<sup>59</sup> (Zenker, Braun, & Petersen, 2017)

dot develops into a spatial container, a complicated assemblage of various pieces. This spatial container represents a location where it is possible to distinguish other places<sup>59</sup> (Figure 7).



*Figure 7 - Graphical explanation of the concept of spatial layering (Boisen, Terlouw, & Van Gorp, 2011)*

Therefore, from this analysis, it is possible to state that these brands are closely interconnected and able to influence one another. Furthermore, it emerges the possibility of applying place branding practices to cities, regions, and nations as well. These considerations gave rise to the concept of city branding that attempts to create emotional, psychological, and mental associations with the city<sup>60</sup>. Additionally, likewise previously highlighted for place branding, also the cities aim to brand themselves to target audiences like investors, visitors, and residents. City branding became extremely important to survive in the competitive environment and identify the right development strategy to adopt. This examination has been useful in improving conceptual clarity between similar concepts and identifying the main notions that will be developed in this thesis, particularly the one of place branding and its application to cities.

### **1.3. Characteristics of place brands and the bond with place complexity**

Place branding can be considered one of the best-known applications of branding in relation to the public sector. The associations and the perceptions that are formed by the various target groups are the foundations of the city brand. However, considering that these perceptions and associations can vary, given the different customer groups, the city brand cannot be treated as an asset fully manageable by city marketers. This challenge partially explains the strict relation between the concept of place branding and

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<sup>60</sup> (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009)

complexity. Place complexity is defined by Zenker & Petersen<sup>61</sup> “as (a) a quantitative measure and (b) a construct with different qualities”. In terms of quantity, they refer to the set of elements included, while in terms of qualities they refer to the degree of entropy and stakeholders’ ambiguity. Branding is usually understood as a reduction process, in which an attempt is made to reduce the real product features to define the brand identity. Differently place branding is about the identification of the right amount of complexity that should be managed. For this reason, the influence of a higher degree of complexity on place identification has been analysed to show how it can reduce the spill-over effect<sup>62</sup>, the dissonance, and increase the possibility of self-differentiation. Otherwise, a lower degree of complexity can lead to a “one size fits all” place brand communication<sup>63</sup>, where the brand is equally communicated to the different target groups. This strategy would probably fail due to the different degrees of place knowledge of the target groups. In order to succeed in addressing different target groups a strong customer focus is needed, followed by a differentiated brand architecture able to match one target group with a city sub-brand. Thus, a branded house approach, with a city umbrella brand, should be developed by cities. This strategy is called City Branded House Strategy and is characterized by a focus on target group-specific sub-brand to better respond to the needs and wants of target audiences<sup>64</sup>. Its adoption can be explained by the characteristic of cities of being simultaneously a destination for tourists that visit it, a place for residents and workers that live in it, and a place of opportunity for investors that want to invest in it. The adoption is subordinated to a deeper understanding of what the city brand is and what the perceptions of the different targets are. Due to the high degree of complexity of places, the City Branded House Strategy is an effective tool for city marketers, especially when there is a wide heterogeneity within the target groups.

The multidimensionality and complexity of place brands lead place marketers to deal also with other challenges. Firstly, it must be noted that when it comes to physical place brand communication, the real physical place cannot be managed by city marketing

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<sup>61</sup> (Zenker & Petersen, 2014)

<sup>62</sup> The spillover effect refers to a positive or a negative social, economic, or political impact that happens in one context due to something else that occurred in a seemingly unrelated context.

<sup>63</sup> (Zenker & Braun, 2017)



professionals; instead, it is under the control of urban planners and other urban policymakers, or the place stakeholders themselves. These professions have various responsibilities, therefore for them, the perception of the city is typically not a primary concern. As a result, city marketers are committed at promoting the importance to include city branding considerations in planning decisions. Also, they are committed at raising awareness about how planners and urban policymakers' decisions may impact the perceptions of (possible) place customers<sup>64</sup>.

Secondly, the management of place brands and place products is handled by a complex organization of both private and public sector stakeholders. Therefore, the branding of a place is a coordinated process, characterized by multiple purposes and multiple stakeholders. These may lead to tensions caused by conflicting goals. In order to successfully brand cities, parties must come to an agreement. The success of places depends on the public and private sectors working together, thus collaboration is essential<sup>64</sup>.

Thirdly, the high numbers of stakeholders slow down numerous stages of the brand management process and require more time for internal communication and decision-making. Indeed, public sector funding-related decisions are frequently postponed, while private sector actors move more quickly. This can cause frustration on the one hand and a rush on the other<sup>65</sup>.

Lastly, there are many political problems that have an impact on place marketers in the public sector. Indeed, place marketers must balance a variety of regional and local interests and support an identity that is acceptable to all its constituents. Additionally, the politics and branding initiatives also affect the citizens who are living in a branded place. It is critical for place marketers to keep in mind that locals contribute to a city's atmosphere. Thus, a place brand strictly depends on its community<sup>66</sup>. This analysis highlighted the difficulties encountered by city marketers in communicating place brand image and place brand identity.

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<sup>64</sup> (Moilanen, 2015)

<sup>65</sup> (Anholt S. , 2008)

<sup>66</sup> (Moilanen, 2015)

### ***1.3.1. Place Brand Image***

The improvement of the place brand's image is the clearest way to measure the success of place branding. According to Anholt<sup>67</sup>, places have images just like products and businesses do, and place images are crucial for (possible) place customers during the decision-making process<sup>68</sup>. Most often, individuals think about cities in terms of their characteristics, promise, or story. Anholt<sup>69</sup> also stated “*Paris is romance, Milan is style, New York is energy, Washington is power, Tokyo is modernity, Barcelona is culture, Rio is fun. These are the brands of cities, and they are inextricably tied to the histories and destinies of all these places*”. How locals, tourists, and companies react to a place is determined by its image. In contrast to the essential functional and symbolic linkages that define mainstream brand pictures, place images primarily consisted of functional and experience associations. As a result, a place's image is made up of all of the beliefs, ideas, and experiences that individuals have about it, and different people may have very different perceptions of the same area<sup>70</sup>. Cities don't have a single, unambiguous message to convey. The perception of a city might depend on a variety of characteristics that are typically unintentional. Several cities have an image based on concerns and facts that have little to do with development, such as historical occurrences.

People's perceptions of a place are influenced by a variety of “*image formation agents*”. Of course, people's personal experiences—also known as organic agents—are the most significant agents that shape their views, followed by word-of-mouth about the experiences of peers, friends, family, or other networked contacts (social agents). Lastly, the mainstream media provides additional significant sources of knowledge. Strictly related to the mainstream media are the different tools that place image marketers can use to effectively manage and implement the image of a place. Those are: slogans, positions, visual symbols, events and deeds, as well as traditions, festivals, and culture.

1. Theoretically, brand *slogans* support brand identity, which strengthens product awareness and image through positive associations, brand recall, and

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<sup>67</sup> (Anholt S. , 2008)

<sup>68</sup> (Braun, Eshuis, & Klijn, 2014)

<sup>69</sup> (Anholt S. , 2006)

<sup>70</sup> (Hankinson, 2014)

brand recognition. A slogan is a succinct, all-encompassing statement that captures the place's greater goal.

2. Another tactic is place image positioning, in which a place positions itself as the best location at a regional, national, or worldwide level for a particular activity. For example, the city of Stuttgart is known as the European “*cradle of the automobile*”. The “*country of origin effect*” also forges an image of a brand in the minds of consumers. The country-of-origin impact attracts customers and adds value to exports from a particular region or nation. German engineering is a perfect case. Germany is seen as being pragmatic and technological. Bosch, Siemens, Porsche, AEG, BMW, and Mercedes are just a few of the brands that help create and maintain this image<sup>71</sup>.
3. Several locations make use of visual symbols that are easily remembered by visitors and connected to certain locations. For example, New York has the Statue of Liberty, Beijing the Great Wall of China, and Sydney the Opera House. When used consistently, these symbols can be seen on business correspondence, brochures, billboards, movies, prints, and a variety of other materials.
4. According to Kotler, Asplund, Rein, and Haider<sup>72</sup>, events and deeds can also be used to express images. Cities can experience enduring historical events that define their precise location. Indeed, a single incident might leave a place with a memorable brand for centuries. Otherwise, several cities have grown in popularity as a result of the unusual division of the city district caused by war and politics in the past. The most fitting example is Berlin and the Berlin wall which become a fundamental part of the city’s history.
5. Lastly, several cities are well known for their traditions, festivals, and culture. are the enhancement of the city's reputation, brand building, and the attraction of new tourists, residents, and investors. Indeed, an event's global fame has a significant role in the reputation, awareness, and brand of the city. For instance, Oktoberfest is a well-known event that attracts millions of tourists

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<sup>71</sup> (Anholt S. , 2007)

<sup>72</sup> (Kotler, Asplund, Rein, & Haider, 1999)

and investors and is crucial to Munich's reputation. The Olympic Games are another excellent illustration of how even a single event can significantly affect a place brand.

### ***1.3.2. Place Brand Identity***

It is generally accepted in the literature that place brand managers produce the place brand identity, which reflects the essence of what a place is, namely the spirit of places. This distinguishes place brand identity from place brand image. The former is communicated to recipients through an inside-out approach, and they will form their own opinions and perceptions about the place brand image through an outside-in approach<sup>73</sup>. However, the term “*place identity*” has long been used in a variety of ways in the place branding literature, sometimes as a picture of a place, sometimes as an objective reality as opposed to an image of a place, and sometimes in conjunction with tradition. Indeed, more than a decade ago Mayes<sup>74</sup> argued that place identities derive “*from the intrinsic features and history of a given place and a shared (personalized) relationship to these elements*”. He also specified that place branding “*while acknowledging the richness of place identity, [still] rests on the assumption that it is the practice or art of distilling the essence of the place*” and that its goal is to elucidate “*what a specific place is and also the identity it wants to project*”<sup>75</sup>. This conceptualization of place identity turns out to be static and closely linked to the ability of branding to communicate place identity. According to this perspective, identity is the result of a decision-making process, where someone can define a place's identity, break it down into its components, then reconstruct it into a framework that can be handled and effectively communicated. This static perspective on identity inevitably has an impact on how branding is perceived and implemented. This approach - almost theoretically - reduces branding to a promotional tool with a focus on visual techniques that could help people understand the place's identity. This is all too common in modern place branding practices, where the entire branding process is constrained to the creation of innovative logos and attractive slogans.

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<sup>73</sup> (Skinner, 2021)

<sup>74</sup> (Mayes, 2008)

<sup>75</sup> (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

Based on this conception, place branding focuses on communicating the place brand in order to reinforce its identity through media and messages with the aim of convincing recipients that these messages are true<sup>75</sup>.

The limited understanding of branding has been challenged by environmental psychologists and cultural geographers<sup>76</sup>, according to who places, and place identities are characterized by a dynamic nature. This dynamic approach is based on the conception of places and place brands as “*continuously produced and reproduced in interaction with their surroundings*”<sup>77</sup>. Likewise, also Hatch and Schultz<sup>78</sup> in 2002 argued that the combination of internal and external viewpoints constitutes identity and on the basis of this concept they created their “*The dynamics of organizational identity*” model. The model is based on the interaction between three elements: culture, identity, and image. This interaction is the core of the model and around it, four sub-processes are articulated: expressing, impressing, mirroring, and reflecting (Figure 8).

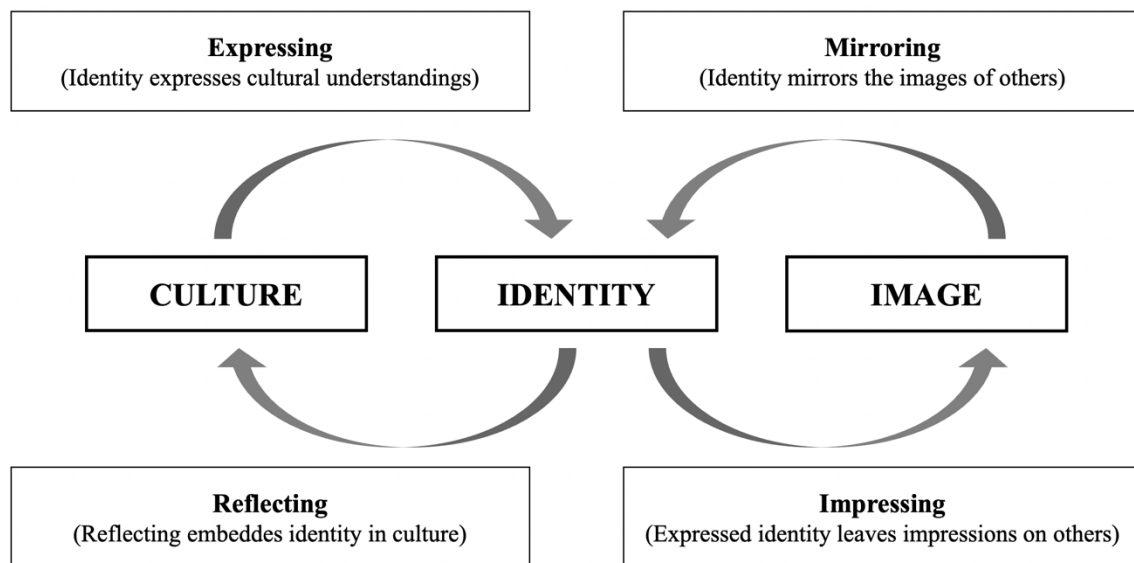


Figure 8 – “The dynamics of organizational identity” model (Hatch & Schultz, 2002)

According to Hatch and Schultz<sup>79</sup> “*culture is the context of internal definitions of identity*”, while “*image is the site of external definitions of identity*” and “*how these two definitions influence each other is the process of identity*”. Therefore, a preliminary

<sup>76</sup> E.g., (Knez, 2005); (Kalandides, 2011); (Agnew, 1987)

<sup>77</sup> (Gustafson, 2001)

<sup>78</sup> (Hatch & Schultz, 2002)

analysis of the concept of place culture is necessary to fully understand how the model works. According to Kunzmann<sup>79</sup>, the definition of culture that is most widely used is that of a “*particular system of art, thought, and customs of a society*”, or “*the arts, customs, beliefs, and all other products of human thought made by a people at a particular time*” When referring to “*culture*” in urban planning and place branding literature, are comprehended the arts, architecture, design, history, heritage, relevant events, and cultural infrastructure. For the sake of clarity, place culture is understood in the model as a way of life, that is lived and formed by the local population, giving the background for the internal notions of place identity.

After this literature review, it is possible to analyse the existing links between culture, identity, and image, identified within Hatch and Schultz's model<sup>80</sup>. In their vision, identity is a dynamic concept arising from the continuous conversation with culture and image. This continuous interaction is possible due to the presence of the four sub-processes previously identified. Particularly, the first connection represents the expressing process, in which how culture “*makes itself known through identity claims*”. The second connection refers to the impressing process, in which “*expressed identity leaves impressions on others*”. The third connection is the mirroring process, which is how “*identity mimics the images of others*”. Lastly, the reflecting process, through which “*identity is embedded in cultural understandings*”, is the fourth connection<sup>81</sup>. Since the process is not linear and repeats itself, no one can ever fully comprehend what identity is. Thus, distinctions emerge from the dominant and static approach to place branding. Firstly, this model conceptualizes identity as a dialectical process between inside and outside and not as an internal or external characteristic representing “*how we see ourselves*”. Secondly, it becomes clear that identity is not the result of the process, but the process itself. Only by identifying branding as a concept linked to and involved in all four sub-processes is it possible to understand its connection to identity, its nature, and its potential.

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<sup>79</sup> (Kunzmann, 2004)

<sup>80</sup> (Hatch & Schultz, 2002)

<sup>81</sup> (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

The dynamicity of place identity was also taken into consideration by Florek and Janiszewska<sup>82</sup> in order to identify within the literature the most appropriate method and determinants for defining place brand identity. The authors started with the analysis of the four methods for defining brand identity pointed out in the first paragraph of this thesis: the Brand Identity Prism, the Brand DNA, the Brand Code, and the Bull's Eye. Based on these methods, they investigated which of them would be most suitable for the application in terms of place brands, given their characteristics. Firstly, the *Brand Prism* method developed by Kapferer<sup>83</sup> in 1992 works well for several consumer goods companies, while its applicability to place branding is limited. The main drawback of the approach is that it is synthetic and concentrates on clearly defined brand areas, which are distinct from one another. The variety of target groups and the complexity of the place product make it difficult for place brands to utilize Brand Prism as a tool for creating a distinctive brand identity. The approach may only be appropriate in relation to tiny territorial areas that are concentrated on a single, clearly distinct group (such as inhabitants). Looking at the *Brand DNA* method<sup>84</sup>, it seems to be suitable in the context of a place brand identity due to its reference to a living organism. The specific qualities of the place product can be taken into consideration as each of the described aspects is developed in detail. The approach, however, does not take into account the importance of understanding the customer (in this case the various place's target groups). Additionally, practice demonstrates that those in charge of place management lack the expertise necessary for brand management. Because of this, incorporating consumer insights from various target groups seems to be a key component of the place brand identity. Going on with the *Brand Code*<sup>85</sup> technique, it includes two extra components that are crucial from the perspective of place brand management: the brand's social role and its vision. Indeed, both factors are particularly important since local authorities heavily rely on the brand's performance social component, and on the future effects of actions on place development. Nonetheless, similarly to Brand DNA, it does not consider consumer insight, which is

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<sup>82</sup> (Florek & Janiszewska, 2013)

<sup>83</sup> (Kapferer J. N., 1992)

<sup>84</sup> (Chapman & Tulien , 2010)

<sup>85</sup> (Gad, 2001)

crucial for place brands and should reflect the requirements and values of various target groups. Lastly, the *Bull's Eye*<sup>86</sup> method is the most advanced way of developing a brand identity among the ways that have been provided. Given the local authorities' limited brand management experience, this approach appears to encompass the fundamental components of identity in the most all-encompassing manner. In addition, a greater knowledge of the essence of brand identity from the perspective of the target audience is also made possible by supplementing the process with elements linked to consumer insight and takeout<sup>84</sup>. The examination is crucial in the identification of the best-suited model in a place branding context, and it will be used in the following chapters of this thesis.

## **1.4. Strategies for place brand communication**

Following an in-depth analysis of the concept of place branding and city branding, the difficulty of city marketers in managing multiple stakeholders and target groups becomes evident. Thus, there is an increased awareness that every encounter with the city takes place through images and perceptions derived from “*inside*” and “*outside*”. Consequently, everything a city is made up of, everything that happens in a city, and everything that a city does, send messages about the city's image. Bearing this in mind, Kavaratzis<sup>87</sup> devised a framework to help, simplify and make successful the communication of city brands.

### ***1.4.1. The place brand communication model presented by Kavaratzis***

Mihalis Kavaratzis in 2004<sup>88</sup> proposed a model that explains how brand communication occurs through the selection and suitable handling of many factors that have both functional and symbolic significance. According to the framework, the communication of a place image falls into three different categories: Primary (architecture, infrastructure, and other real place offerings, but also the city's behaviour), Secondary (PR, advertising, logos, etc.), and Tertiary (word of mouth) (Figure 9).

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<sup>86</sup> (Company internal documents, 2007)

<sup>87</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2004); (Kavaratzis, 2008)

<sup>88</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2004)



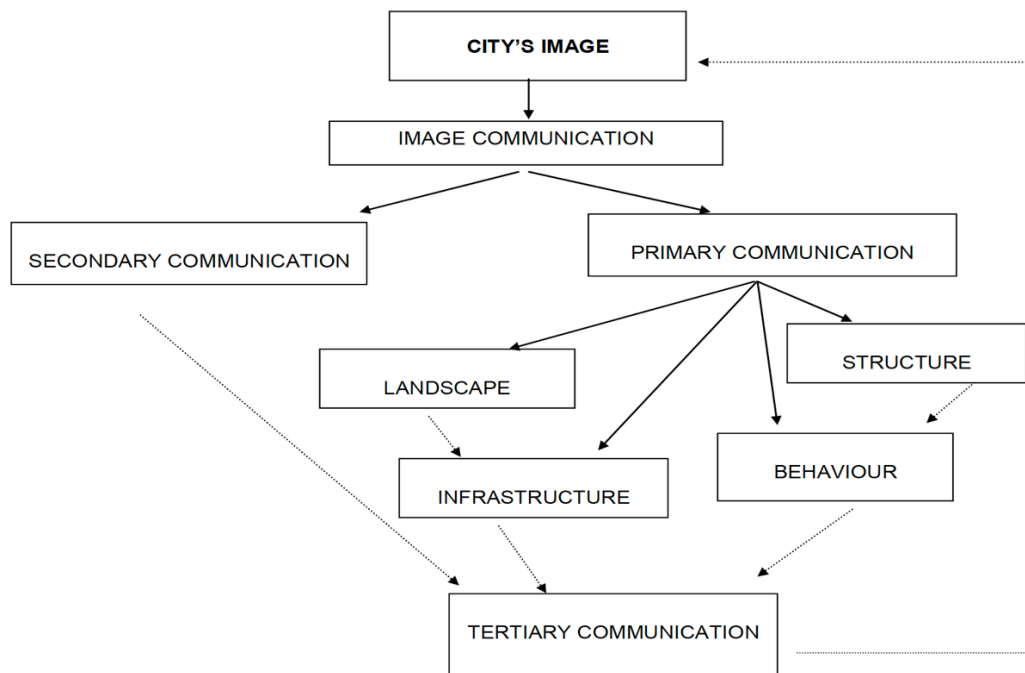


Figure 9 - The place brand communication model by Kavaratzis (2004; 2008)

**Primary communication** relates to how actions taken by a city affect communication when that is not their primary objective. It is broken down into four major intervention areas: Infrastructure Projects, Landscape Strategies, Organizational and Administrative Structure, and City’s Behaviour. Firstly, “*Infrastructure Projects*” are initiatives designed to build, enhance, or give to the numerous types of metropolitan infrastructure a unique identity. On the one hand, infrastructure projects are concerned with increasing the city's accessibility to diverse audiences (e.g., inhabitants' access to the high streets, tourists' access to significant sites, or the presence of a sufficiently sizable airport). On the other hand, it relates to the availability and sufficiency of various facilities, including cultural centres and meeting spaces. Secondly, the term “*Landscape Strategies*” refers to a range of activities and choices that are important to city planning, architecture, green spaces, and other public areas in general. This topic also encompasses heritage planning and the rising trend of using public art. Thirdly, when talking about “*Organizational and Administrative Structure*”, Kavaratzis relates to how effectively the city's governance structure works and how it might be improved. The construction of Public-Private Partnerships, community development networks, and public involvement in decision-making are the category's most crucial components. This includes the way the marketing and branding effort is structured. Finally, the “*City's Behaviour*” refers to things like the

leaders' vision for the city, the chosen strategy, or the financial incentives the city offers to different stakeholders. The type of services offered by the city and how well they are offered, as well as the quantity and variety of events (such as festivals and other cultural, sporting, or recreational activities) organized locally, are two important factors<sup>89</sup>.

**Secondary communication** refers to the formal and intentional communication of information that most frequently occurs through well-known marketing techniques such as outdoor and indoor advertising, graphic design, public relations, the usage of a slogan, etc. It is very similar to what is meant by Promotion in the traditional marketing mix<sup>90</sup>, and up to the last decade, the latter has been the marketing element that cities have adopted most readily. The secondary communication must be in perfect harmony with the primary communication components, and with the reality of the city as experienced by the various city groups. Otherwise, it can be frequently confused with the entire branding effort in the practice of city marketing. The content of this category builds on the city's communication skills. Indeed, according to Grabow and Hollbach-Grömig<sup>91</sup> “*the communicative competence of a city is key factor and vital requirement for all phases of successful urban marketing*”. Thus, the city's communicative competency is at the same time a goal and an outcome of the city branding process<sup>92</sup>.

**Tertiary communication** relates to word-of-mouth (WOM), strengthened by media coverage and a wide variety of city users. Since it is a method of communication that is largely out of place marketers' control, a broken line connects it to the rest. The purpose of the entire branding process and the other two manageable forms of image communication is to stimulate and support effective tertiary communication. Thus, in Figure 10 it is possible to summarize the most controllable types of city brand communication that should support and enhance the city's WOM<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2008); (Kavaratzis, 2004)

<sup>90</sup> (McCarthy, 1960)

<sup>91</sup> (Grabow & Hollbach-Grömig, 1998)

<sup>92</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2008); (Kavaratzis, 2004)

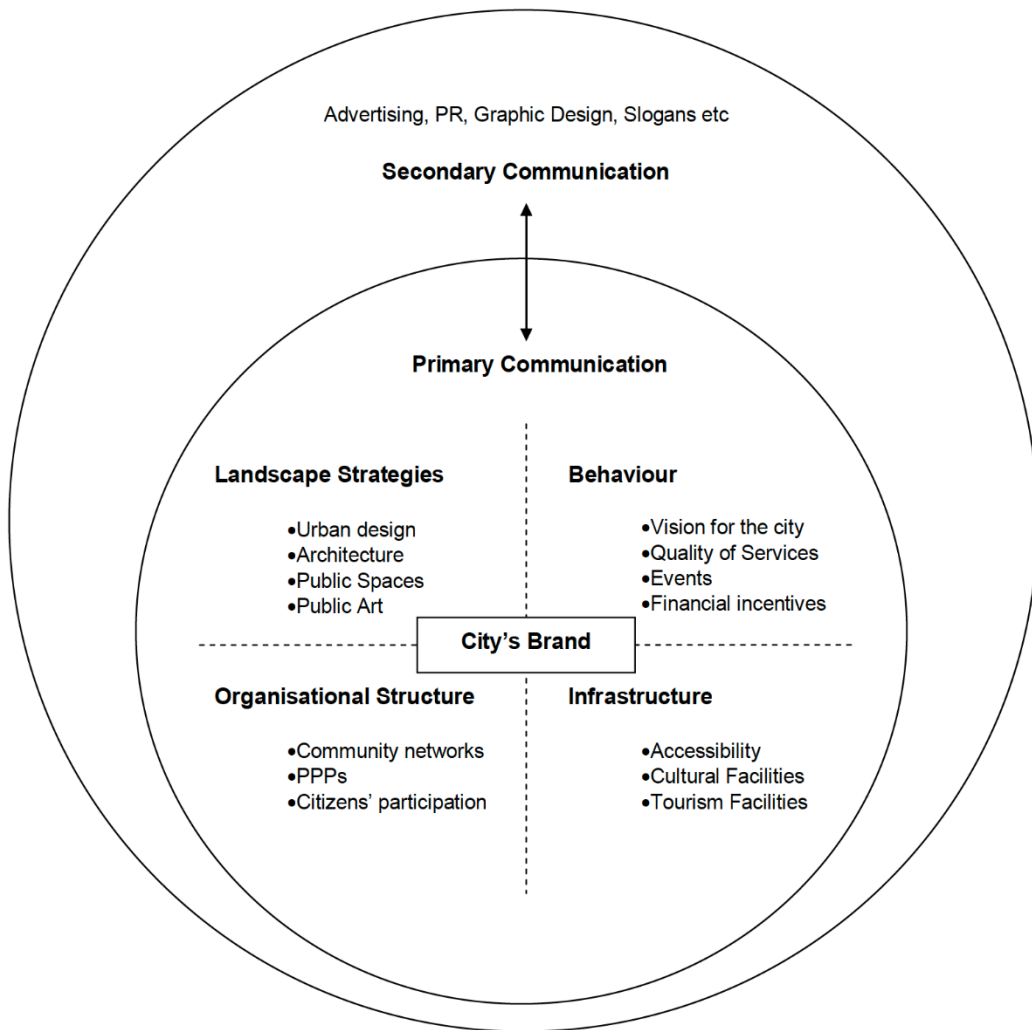


Figure 10 - Controllable city brand communication categories (Kavaratzis, 2004; 2008)

## PART II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The central objective of this master's thesis is to investigate the modes of communication applicable to the city brand. This concept has recently been studied from a scientific point of view. The city brand notion was created in the nineteenth century with the intention of commercializing urban areas; however, it has since developed into a more complex cutting-edge concept that incorporates, among other disciplines, marketing, design, urban planning, and tourism, even though this line of research is only a few decades old<sup>93</sup>. Looking at the scientific production reported this topic between 1987 and 2021, it is possible to see that until 2010 the number of relevant papers is 115. Then from 2009 to 2020 the number increases considerably, with 559 publications related to city branding in total, of which 75 in 2020 alone<sup>94</sup>. The upward tendency may be a sign of the scientific community's interest in this subject. Specifically, the focus of this research is on understanding how cities may be able to effectively communicate the brand based on the framework proposed by Kavaratzis<sup>95</sup>. Strictly related to the focus of the thesis is the formulation of the research question. Namely:

*“How cities’ brands can be effectively communicated? In addition, can the framework provided by Kavaratzis be applied?”*

Nowadays, all major cities have their own brand and communication, but only those who actually succeed in communicating it are able to become a stable and lasting brand. The answer to this research question may be relevant in that it will help in developing a communication strategy that can be used globally by the various cities that want to do branding. In addition, a good analysis of communication patterns can facilitate the identification of indicators and best practices that can monitor and manage efficient communication. communication.

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<sup>93</sup> (Oguztimur & Akturan, 2015)

<sup>94</sup> (Duque Oliva, Sánchez-Torres, & Sanabria Niño, 2022)

<sup>95</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2004); (Kavaratzis, 2008)

## 2.1. The Research Method

The research method used is qualitative in nature. It entails gathering, analysing, and interpreting information that cannot be quantitatively understood. In other words, qualitative research can be defined as “*an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions on inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports details of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting*”<sup>96</sup>. In essence, it is a matter of expressing the qualities of a given object of investigation in the form of textual information through, for the most part, unstructured survey instruments. The main purpose of qualitative research is to provide a complete and detailed description of the research hypothesis, which is usually more exploratory in nature. The objective of exploratory research is to clarify the nature of a problem, gain a greater understanding of a situation and provide insights for future investigations. Through exploratory research, the researcher becomes more familiar with the problem and the market and is generally able to formulate hypotheses and conjectures about it. The research data is treated qualitatively, and the research process is flexible and unstructured.

Considering that within this thesis, it will be necessary to analyse multiple samples mainly characterized by non-quantifiable phenomena, a qualitative type of research is the most suitable. Furthermore, considering that the research method chosen is qualitative and that the research process is very flexible, exploratory research appears to be the most suitable option, capable of investigating the situation under analysis in detail. In particular, data analysis will employ a multiple case study analysis in order to increase the validity of the findings and provide a better and more accurate result. Indeed, with this methodology, it is possible to draw analogies, identify patterns, and emphasize distinctions between the different cases.

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<sup>96</sup> (Creswell , 1998)

## 2.2. A Multiple Case Study Analysis

### 2.2.1. Case Study Selection

In order to identify the three case studies to be analysed, European cities that have sought to create or regenerate a strong city brand over the last two decades were sought out. To this requirement was added the need to find three cities that corresponded with each of the three different branding techniques outlined by Kavaratzis and Ashworth in 2005<sup>97</sup>. Indeed, according to the authors, there are three different techniques that urban planners use to brand places. Namely, personality branding, flagship construction, and events branding. The first technique refers to cities and places that connect themselves with a specific personality with the use of logos and slogans and the association of the place brand with famous personality. The flagship construction technique - due to its high weighted value in terms of adaptability, sustainability, and the encouragement of local development - is the most recommended place branding strategy. In this case, the focus of the branding process is on the construction of famous spaces and iconic structures, on the revitalization of urban spaces, and on the preservation of culturally significant structures. Lastly, the events branding technique is directly related to the emerging trend of promoting cultural components through local events. Indeed, this strategy has been integrated into the branding practices of many cities, staging unique events, promoting culture and creativity, and attracting different target groups to the city<sup>98</sup>.

Based on the characteristics identified above, three case studies were chosen to be analysed to investigate the communication methodologies used and the applicability of the framework of Kavaratzis<sup>99</sup>. The letters are Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen. Specifically, city brand development started in Hamburg after the city competed to host the Olympic Games in 2004. But only after a comprehensive market survey Hamburg was able to adopt its first strategic marketing plan in 2013. Therefore, it can be considered a recently born brand, especially if compared with the city of Amsterdam and Copenhagen. Indeed, both cities already enjoyed established city brands but during the

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<sup>97</sup> (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005)

<sup>98</sup> (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005); (Nagaynay & Lee, 2020)

<sup>99</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2004)

early 2000s realised the need for rebranding to generate an even stronger brand and increase their competitive advantage.

Additionally, each of these three cities is branded according to one of the three different techniques outlined by Kavaratzis and Ashworth and previously analysed. In particular, the personality branding technique is applied to the City of Amsterdam, known for its culture, inventiveness, and long history in the trade. Furthermore, this city has managed to create its own brand personality with the use of the famous slogan “*I Amsterdam*” and the strong association with famous personalities such as Van Gogh and his Sunflowers. The flagship construction technique is the one adopted by Hamburg, which is an exemplary case of multiple flagship projects at various stages of planning and development. Some examples are the Elbphilharmonie (the new concert hall) and the International Architectural Fair (or IBA -Internationale Bau-Ausstellung) built to regenerate an area of the city<sup>100</sup>. The last technique, the events branding technique, is applied by the city of Copenhagen, known as the design capital and the world's most bike-friendly city. To promote the city's culture and image, many events are held annually or occasionally, such as the 3 Days of design and the Tour de France Grand Départ 2022 respectively.

### ***2.2.2. Case Study Approach***

In the following section will be described the guidelines that will form the basis of this research. Specifically, the study of the three cases will begin with a first step to investigate and market city brands. Namely, the analysis of each city brand image and city brand identity. These two variables are of extreme importance in identifying the essence of a place and the associations that are formed in the minds of consumers in relation to the location taken into consideration. More specifically, the study of city brand identity will be carried out through the best-suited model in a place branding context. Thus, the Bull's Eye<sup>101</sup> method will be applied to encompass the fundamental components of identity concerning city brands. Instead, with regard to the analysis of the city brand image, the brand vision and strategy will be analysed, followed by secondary data able to

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<sup>100</sup> (Zenker & Beckmann , 2013)

<sup>101</sup> (Company internal documents, 2007)

provide a comprehensive analysis and a context (collected through journals, magazines, official websites, related websites, social media, etc.).

The second step of this research will concern the analysis of primary communication. The latter, as previously analysed, is composed of four major intervention areas: Infrastructure Projects, Landscape Strategies, Organizational and Administrative Structure, and City's Behaviour<sup>102</sup>. For the purposes of the primary communication analysis, the main attributes related to each of the major intervention areas will be identified, and subsequently, they will be investigated in relation to each case study.

The third step will be the study of secondary communication with reference to the cities of Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Copenhagen. Secondary communication is an important tool to support primary communication through the use of promotional activities such as logos, slogans, advertising, graphic design, and public relations<sup>103</sup>. In this case, on the basis of the activities just mentioned, an analysis of the marketing activities carried out with reference to each city brand will be made.

Lastly, the fourth step concerned the analysis of tertiary communication. The latter brings up word-of-mouth, which is boosted by the internet, the media, and participants' involvement. However, the main characteristic is that it is not directly managed by marketers and therefore must be supported and controlled through primary and secondary communication. In this phase of the research, a quantitative measurement will be used to try to analyse WOM's outcome through the investigation and comparison of some common terms related to the three different city brands.

The research design will be fully explained in the following section, however, here it is important to highlight that through this analysis methodology, it will be possible to deduce the degree of completeness of the primary, secondary, and tertiary communication for each city brand. Furthermore, it will be possible to make a final comparison between the three different case studies based on the attributes identified. Based on the guidelines described so far, it is possible to define a fixed structure that will be applied to each case study in order to make the analysis of the three city brands under analysis as homogeneous as possible. Because of this, the cases will be treated in the following order:

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<sup>102</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2004)

<sup>103</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2004)



1. Identity and image of the city
2. Primary communication
3. Secondary communication
4. Tertiary communication

In each section, a deeper analysis will be conducted. However, to make possible a future comparison (cross-case study) an investigation of specific indicators and information is needed.

### **2.3. Data Collection**

As previously highlighted, in order to answer the research question, this study strives to have a deeper understanding of the secondary data coming from official websites, online archives, blogs, databases, press releases, articles, books, related websites, social media, city rankings, statistics, and Google analytics. In addition, the collection of primary data through one-to-one interviews is needed. These efforts culminated in a database full of sources that can be useful for determining the key characteristics and guaranteeing data triangulation.

#### ***2.3.1. Google Trends***

Since tertiary communication refers to word of mouth strengthened by the internet and media, a quantitative measurement can be done. It will be possible thanks to the use of Google Trends, a Google tool that provides insight into when and how often a particular word is searched on Google and makes possible comparisons between different words. In particular, the use of this tool aims to investigate the outcomes that primary and secondary communication can have on the word of mouth concerning the city brand and the three different city target groups (residents (and potential residents), visitors, as well as businesses and investors). Thus, the following terms would be investigated and compared since 2004 (the year from which the data was analysed by Google Trends):

- Name of the city
- Name of the DMO's website
- Visit + name of the city
- Business + name of the city
- Live in + name of the city

### 2.3.2. Interviews

The research process started with the identification of people who work or have worked in contact with DMOs in Amsterdam, Hamburg and Copenhagen: Amsterdam&partners, Hamburg Marketing GmbH and Wonderful Copenhagen. In particular, the three people identified had to have a working position in the area of city brand communication. Once the guidelines were defined, the interested parties were identified and contacted to arrange a video call interview. The details of the interviews are defined more specifically in Table 1.

City	Interviewee	Job Position	Company	Date
Copenhagen	Giuseppe Liverino	Senior press & PR manager for Wonderful Copenhagen	Wonderful Copenhagen	05/04/23
Hamburg	Sebastian Zenker	Professor of City Branding and collaborator of Hamburg Marketing GmbH	CBS	16/04/23
Amsterdam	Eleonora Mol	Corporate Communication for amsterdam&partners	amsterdam & partners	03/04/23

*Table 1 - Interviews details*

The questionnaire is semi-structured and was created personally. In particular, this questionnaire was designed in a semi-structure manner to grant the respondent more choice and freedom of argumentation. The use of open questions allows the respondent to give his or her personal opinion and the interviewer to gain more insights into the case under analysis and ask additional questions. There are 12 questions pre-determined, and they are as follows:

1. Where do you work and what do you do?
2. How long have you been working there?
3. Can you tell me in general what X (the DMO) is about?
4. What is the marketing strategy used by X (the DMO)?
5. To whom is the communication directed?
6. How would you describe the X (the city) brand's core identity?
7. What is the image of the city to be communicated? Is it the same for all target groups or is it differentiated?
8. What are the communication channels used?
9. In your opinion, do the public investments made in terms of new infrastructure, new public spaces, events and partnerships with private individuals have an impact on the city brand?
10. If yes, what role does X (the DMO) play in communicating these (e.g., the construction of a new infrastructure; the creation of new public spaces; a new city event or the creation of a new partnership with a local company) to the target audience?
11. In this case, can you explain more specifically which actors are involved in the communication of the X (the city) brand? (e.g., municipality, X, etc.) What synergies are created between them?
12. How is co-ordination with these actors about the communication of the city brand image?

Through these questions, it is possible to obtain crucial information for the analysis of the first three building blocks relating to city brand image and identity, primary communication, and secondary communication. Each question investigates a precise section of analysis. Specifically, questions 1 and 2 are introductory questions useful for putting the interviewee at ease and obtaining more personal information. Questions 3, 5, 6, and 7 are useful for a comprehensive analysis of the city's characteristics, target groups, identity, and image. Questions 4 and 8 are aimed at acquiring more information about secondary communication and the marketing techniques used. Finally, questions from 9 to 12 aim to analyse the modes of primary communication and the actors involved in it. The order of the questions does not reflect the order of analysis of the three building

blocks but was decided in order to make the interview as fluid and coherent as possible. Moreover, thanks to the semi-structured character of the interview, it is possible to add questions if the answer was not clear or if the researcher wants to go deeper into the topic.

## 2.4. Data Analysis and Comparison

In this paragraph, the methods of analysing the collected data as explained above are presented in more detail. The analysis will be comparative (cross-case analysis). Firstly, it is necessary to define the components of the four sections mentioned above: Identity and image of the city, Primary communication; Secondary communication; and Tertiary communication. Based on the knowledge of the literature acquired in the previous chapter and the framework proposed by Kavaratzis<sup>104</sup>, it is possible to construct a matrix with the main components of each section. The matrix assesses whether and how a certain component is present in the city, but more crucially, what impact it has on city branding.

Specifically, the components of the “*Image and identity block*” are vision and strategy fit, completeness of the Bull’s Eye model, and identity and image fit. Instead, the main components of the “*Primary communication block*” are public spaces, architecture, urban design, events, financial incentives, public-private partnerships, citizen participation, cultural facilities, and infrastructure facilities. The components of the “*Secondary communication block*” are logos and slogans, and other marketing strategies and tools. Lastly, the “*Tertiary communication block*” is composed of the analysis of the terms based on word of mouth. These terms will be investigated through the use of the Google Trends tool since 2004 (the first year available for analysis) from a global perspective. The chosen phrases/words will be: name of the city, name of the DMO's website, visit + name of the city, business + name of the city, and live in + name of the city. The objective of the first two attributes is to analyse in general the city brand and the DMO that manages it, while each of the other three phrases refers to a specific target group to investigate the efficiency and support of primary and secondary communication in relation to WOM generation. Accordingly, each case study will be analysed based on the structure presented to collect all the data necessary to complete the following matrix (Table 2).

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<sup>104</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2004); (Kavaratzis, 2008)

	<b>Amsterdam</b>	<b>Copenhagen</b>	<b>Hamburg</b>
<b>Image and identity block</b>			
Vision and strategy fit			
Completeness of Bull's Eye model			
Identity and image fit			
<b>Primary communication block</b>			
Infrastructure facilities			
Cultural facilities			
Urban design			
Public spaces			
Architecture			
PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships)			
Citizens participation			
Financial incentives			
Events			
<b>Secondary communication block</b>			
Logos and slogans			
Other marketing strategies and tools			
<b>Tertiary communication block</b>			
Name of the city			
Name of the DMO's website			
Visit + name of the city			
Business + name of the city			
Live in + name of the city			

*Table 2 - Key blocks for case study comparison*

As already mentioned, the four blocks refer to the framework described in Chapter One. In fact, each component corresponds to a fundamental attribute of the city branding strategy and for the purposes of the analysis, the characteristics of each city will be presented. The ultimate aim is to understand how the city brand is communicated and whether the Kavaratzis framework is actually adopted for city brand communication.

Before proceeding with the case analysis, however, it is necessary to make an overview in order to better understand and describe the context in which the studied cities operate.

## 2.5. Case description

### 2.5.1. Amsterdam

The city originated near the natural dam of the Amstel River, the Dam, in the late 12th century. Thus, was born Amstel on the Dam, hence the name Amsterdam. Amsterdam is the capital of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, located within the northern province of Holland. Territorially speaking, the metropolitan area is marked by the presence of numerous folders that constitute large portions of seawater artificially dried out. Because of this interweaving of canals, it is also called the Venice of the North. Indeed, over 90 “*islands*” make up the inner city's canal network, while the municipality as a whole has about 1,300 bridges and viaducts<sup>105</sup>. The Dutch capital is not only popular for pleasure travel; thousands of business travelers from all over the world come here each year. About 4.5% of Amsterdam's economy is derived from tourism. The number of jobs in the tourism industry in Amsterdam has climbed by nearly 33% since 2007, reaching 61.000, roughly 11% of all occupations in the city. However, the Dutch leisure and corporate tourism sector was badly impacted in 2020 by the worldwide coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). In fact, while in the years before the pandemic the number of Amsterdam visitors was around 20 million, with global travel restrictions there has been a sharp decline in the number of incoming tourists, with an estimated total of just 7 million visitors in 2020<sup>106</sup>. With the lifting of travel restrictions, the number of tourists to the Netherlands since the pandemic has steadily increased. According to data released by Statistics Netherlands, more than 14.6 million tourists spent time in hotels and other short-term lodgings in the third quarter of 2022, a 15% rise over the same period last year<sup>107</sup>. In addition, according to the Amsterdam Research and Statistics Unit, the city will probably host more than 20 million visitors in 2023. These are important numbers that suggest the importance of tourism to the city and the relevance that the brand and its communication have.

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<sup>105</sup> (Wintle, Werkman, & Vincent, 2023)

<sup>106</sup> (Statista Research Department, 2023)

<sup>107</sup> (Statistics Netherlands, 2022)

### 2.5.1.1. History and Politics

The city developed definitively from the 13th century when it began to assume a major role in European affairs. An absolute protagonist during the War of Independence, Amsterdam lived long through the years considered by history experts as those under “*Spanish rule*”. Despite the enemy attacks, barbarism, and numerous anguish it has had to endure since the early sixteenth century, the metropolitan city has shown that it has always cherished an identity of its own, made up essentially of faith, culture, and a deep interest in advancing the concept of an advanced civilization. In the following centuries, the city centre also became a protagonist in industrial terms, counting on important commercial development. Following the economic boom after World War II, Amsterdam was completely turned around for the better and increasingly became the seat of a major cultural renewal that was affecting countless areas of Europe. Indeed, the population was over 800,000 after World War II, dropped until the middle of the 1980s, and has since then generally increased. Current increases are the result of both an influx of immigrants and a consistent excess of births over deaths. Native Dutch constitute around half of the population, Surinamese origins make up about a tenth, and there are sizable Moroccan and Turkish minorities. Immigrants have lived in Amsterdam since the 16th century but more recently, many have come from the former Dutch empire (Suriname, Indonesia, and the islands of the former Netherlands Antilles). Additional people have arrived as “*guest laborers*”, particularly from Morocco and Turkey, as well as employees of international corporations and students from wealthy nations. In addition, numerous new immigrants arrived during the 1990s seeking asylum. Currently, considerably over one-third of Amsterdam's population is made up of non-European minorities (including almost two-thirds of those under the age of 19), and the city actively promotes integration through social orientation and language study<sup>108</sup>. The policy of “*open borders*” is the basis of the city's and the nation's prosperity, and the city of Amsterdam's marketing campaign “*180amsterdammers*”, also confirms it. Indeed, the city has chosen to advertise itself by focusing on the 180 different nationalities that inhabit it. Citizens of different nationalities have thus been the faces of advertisements and exhibitions, becoming ambassadors for

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<sup>108</sup> (Wintle, Werkman, & Vincent, 2023)

the city. In addition, the city is historically known as one of the most tolerant cities in the world for legalizing and regulating prostitution and soft drugs, which have long been associated with the city's image.

#### *2.5.1.2. Economy*

Like most contemporary cities, Amsterdam is mostly a service economy, with manufacturing employing just around one-tenth of its workforce. The dominating service sector's business services segment, which includes consultancy, information and medical technology, and telecommunications, is the most active and rapidly growing. International trade and transportation have been the city's constant lifeblood for the past seven centuries; they jointly account for around one-fifth of employment. Together, banking and insurance have contributed roughly one-eighth of all jobs in Amsterdam, while the health, cultural, and social services sector employs around one-sixth of all workers. Around one-tenth of all jobs are in the tourist industry, which is another significant component of the city's economy. Indeed, all forms of tourism are significant and expand economic activity. A lot of people go to the city for work or to attend conferences, especially at the sizable RAI Exhibition and Convention Centre. Moreover, due to its accessibility, cultural diversity, cosmopolitan vibe, and human scale, Amsterdam is a widely sought-after site for international business. At least one-fifth of all Japanese and American investments in Europe have come to the Netherlands, with a large portion of these investments concentrated in Amsterdam. The city is a significant financial hub as well, albeit one that is not as significant as London or Frankfurt. The European Options Exchange, the Dutch division of the Euronext Securities Exchange, all major Dutch banks, as well as 60 international institutions, have offices in the city<sup>109</sup>.

#### *2.5.2. Copenhagen*

The city of Copenhagen, in Danish København, is the capital and most populous city in Denmark. In fact, out of a total population of 5,781,190, as many as 613,288 live in Copenhagen. In ancient times, Copenhagen was the main embarkation point used by Vikings who set out to explore Europe and North Africa. The city is located in the eastern

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<sup>109</sup> (Wintle, Werkman, & Vincent, 2023)



part of the country, near the Øresund Strait that separates Denmark from Sweden. The city began as a small fishing village where, soon, fishing became the most flourishing activity. Indeed, København means the “*Merchants' Harbour*”, and as time went on, trade flows made it one of the most active and important ports. Today the city is a modern cultural and economic centre, home to Denmark's oldest university, the Royal National Library, and a dynamic centre of business and science. UNESCO calls it the happiest city on earth, an assessment made both by the usual high standards in social, health, educational, administrative, and political services but also by the optimistic mentality of the inhabitants. In addition, Copenhagen boasts numerous worldwide awards recognizing its standard of living, its taste for design, and its ecological commitment to the environment. In 2008, it was declared the city with the best quality of life in the world, and two years later it was awarded the “*Best Design City*”. In 2013, Copenhagen was also elected European Green Capital, adding another title to its extensive list of accolades. Thanks in part to these recognitions Copenhagen is the Danish city that draws the most visitors from abroad. Up to 12.8 million foreign visitors come to Denmark annually, and during the past ten years, overnight visitors to the country's capital, Copenhagen, have increased by 88 percent. It rose to the 47th spot among the most populous cities in the world in 2021. Tourist spending from abroad amounted to DKK 38.9 billion in 2015, or 3.5% of all Danish exports. By gross value added, tourism directly contributed 1.7% to the Danish economy. The contribution, when derived effects are taken into account, was 3.2% (DKK 56.6 billion). The Capital Region generates 41% of the nation's overall tourism revenue, while Copenhagen contributes 24% of that amount<sup>110</sup>. These numbers are indicative of the relevance of the Copenhagen city brand and the communication that is done from a tourism perspective. Therefore, the analysis of Copenhagen's brand is crucial for the purpose of this research.

#### *2.5.2.1. History and Politics*

One of the world's oldest kingdoms is found in Denmark, which has been a kingdom since the Viking era. The Faroe Islands and Greenland, as well as Denmark, are currently served by the historic office and constitutional institution of the Kingdom of Denmark.

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<sup>110</sup> (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018)

Nowadays, the 52<sup>nd</sup> ruler of Denmark is Queen Margrethe II, whose main residence is the Amalienborg Castle in Copenhagen. In practice, the Queen reigns but does not govern. She names the new government following a national election and adopts new legislation approved by the Danish parliament but stays out of matters of state even though the monarch of Denmark has official executive responsibility over the Government of Denmark. From a European point of view, the Nordic dimension has traditionally been a key element in Danish foreign policy. Together with Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, the country is a member of the Nordic Council, an interparliamentary body established in the aftermath of World War II, for which Copenhagen houses the headquarters. An instrument for establishing cooperation agreements and common foreign policy objectives, the Council has greatly scaled down its activities in recent years, because of the fact that many of its functions have over time come to overlap with those of the European Union and the European Economic Area.

From a social point of view, Copenhagen has a long tradition of guaranteeing and protecting civil and political rights. Moreover, the defence of freedom of the press and expression was, in 2005, at the centre of the controversy over the publication of satirical cartoons of Muhammad, which triggered a series of diplomatic incidents for Copenhagen. In terms of civil rights, it is the city that celebrated the first legally recognized same-sex marriage, in 1989, making Denmark the first country in the world to recognize same-sex civil unions. At the same time, however, following the election victory of the center-right coalition led by Anders Fogh Rasmussen in 2001, one of the strictest immigration regulations in the European space was introduced. In particular, severe restrictions were introduced on family reunification, the reception of asylum seekers, and the granting of visas to religious figures. These stringent policies were then applied again in 2015 to counter the refugee crisis that affected the whole of Europe. In response to this large influx of people, the Danish government decided to make legislative changes, fearing that the crisis would hurt the country's welfare state. The state attempted to limit the number of asylum seekers to protect the country's identity. One of the first steps was to launch an advertising campaign reporting the new restrictions on asylum seekers, explaining that

the Danish government had reduced the funds allocated to refugees by 50%<sup>111</sup>. At the same time, rail and motorway connections with Germany were closed, even though Denmark is part of the Schengen zone<sup>112</sup>. Although human rights are an integral part of the country's DNA, its small size leads it to see refugees as a threat to its national culture<sup>113</sup>. Government decisions have strongly challenged reputation and image, representing a challenge for city marketing and branding. While Denmark's image and values have always coincided with welcome, good welfare services, and support in integration processes, the radical changes in urban policies in correspondence with the migration crisis have brought about a change in the brand of the country and consequently of its capital, Copenhagen.

#### *2.5.2.2. Economy*

Copenhagen is one of the political, economic cultural, financial, and banking centres of Scandinavia and Europe. The majority of Denmark's manufacturing industry was centred on Copenhagen and the neighbouring areas for most of the 20th century. However, by 2000, the city's economy was dominated by trade, banking, governmental and private services, and education. Several arterial routes bring traffic across the harbour bridges and toward the city centre. For commuters, there are electric railroads (S-baner) and a system of city bus lines. In 1972, the final streetcars vanished. Copenhagen's completely automated subway system saw the start of development in the late 1990s, and the first line opened in 2002. The Øresund Link, a tunnel-and-bridge system linking Copenhagen and Malmö (Sweden) was inaugurated in 2000. Additionally, it facilitates collaboration and regional expansion on both sides of The Sound and serves Copenhagen Airport in Kastrup. Thanks to the opening of the Øresund Bridge Copenhagen became one of the top locations for international conferences and congresses, with more than 22,000 hotel beds available between Malmö and Copenhagen. In fact, on the outskirts of the city is the Bella Center, Scandinavia's largest conference facility, internationally renowned for hosting international trade fairs and other events. Additionally, there are

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<sup>111</sup> (Hila & Andersen, 2020)

<sup>112</sup> (The Guardian, 2015)

<sup>113</sup> (Mahoney, 2017)

several institutions of higher education in Copenhagen. They include the University of Copenhagen, the Royal Danish Academy of Music, the Engineering Academy of Denmark, the Technical University of Denmark, and the Copenhagen School of Economics and Business Administration<sup>114</sup>.

### **2.5.3. Hamburg**

The Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg is a city-state. Indeed, through the radical transformations it has undergone, today Germany is a Bundesrepublik, a federal republic composed of partially autonomous states including Hamburg, a northern European metropolis. The city, with over 1,700,000 inhabitants, is the second most populous in Germany after Berlin. Its port is the most important in the entire country and one of the largest in the world. It is located on the Elbe River, around which the city has prospered over the centuries, and which brings commercial vessels from all over the world into the Hamburg harbor, to such an extent that it is known as Deutschlands Tor zur Welt, “*Germany's gateway to the world*”. Nowadays, Hamburg remains a center of world trade, making it a wealthy and welcoming city and one of the most culturally vibrant cities in Germany. In addition, Hamburg is the greenest city in Germany, green spaces and waterways can be found everywhere, in fact, it was awarded “*European City of the Environment*” in 2011. From the tourism point of view, the latest tourism report for the city of Hamburg showed 14.7 million overnight stays by tourists, or a 95 percent increase from the previous year. In fact, in 2021 Hamburg recorded about 3.3 million overnight guests for a total of 7.6 million overnight stays, a figure up about 10 percent from 2020, but down 51 percent from the number of overnight stays in 2019, which was 15.4 million. This increase is a good sign for both the tourism industry and urban society. The percentage of overnight stays by visitors from other countries has increased and is now close to 80%. The majority of visitors are from Denmark (372,800 overnight stays), followed by Switzerland (305,600), Austria (263,600), and the Netherlands (212,809)<sup>115</sup>. This strong upswing indicates a growing interest in the city of Hamburg, which has been gaining international prominence over the years. This explains the desire to analyze

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<sup>114</sup> (Britannica, 2023)

<sup>115</sup> (Hamburg News, 2022)

through this research the added value brought with brand communication by the city of Hamburg.

### *2.5.3.1. History and Politics*

Hamburg's strong growth in maritime trade is due to the city's central location on the main trade routes on the North Sea and the Baltic Sea and its membership in the Hanseatic League, a trade union of merchants operating in a specific area. The Hanseatic League progressively fell apart around the end of the Middle Ages. After that, Hamburg made its own path and, by 1550, has become the most important city in Germany from an economic point of view. Afterward, a stock exchange, the Hamburg Bank, and a convoy system for shipping was inaugurated in 1558, 1619, and 1662, respectively. Hamburg entered the 20th century determined to maintain and strengthen its position, however, the outbreak of World War I and World War II brought Hamburg's international trade collapse. When the war ended in 1945, only the most strenuous efforts could supply the elementary needs for Hamburg's survival. In the 20th century, Hamburg was keen to keep and enhance its position, but the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars led to the collapse of Hamburg's international trade. Only the most arduous efforts could meet Hamburg's basic survival needs after the end of the war in 1945. With German reunification in 1990 and especially following the entry of some Eastern European countries into the European Union in 2004, a season of great economic growth began for Hamburg and its port once again became one of the largest in Europe in terms of the volume of goods passing through it.

Hamburg has always been open and generally welcoming to other cultures as a significant international port and a key member of the Hanseatic League. A significant element of Hamburg's contemporary personality can be traced back to its historical openness to the world, notably its enthusiasm for the British Empire and the trading opportunities that came along with it. This has largely influenced the multiculturalism that characterizes the city. Indeed, Hamburg is arguably the second-most culturally varied city in Germany after Berlin, but it is mostly characterized by assimilation, dilution, and integration into the current Hamburg culture<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>116</sup> (McIntosh & Thomsen, 2023)

### 2.5.3.2. *Economy*

Economically, Hamburg is one of the largest ports in the world: its shipping lines connect it with all the major seaports on the planet. In size, with an area of over 100 km<sup>2</sup>, it is the largest in Europe and the seventh largest in the world for the loading and unloading of container ships. It is a key hub for the trade and transport network of north-eastern Europe, in particular with the Baltic area, as well as having a dense network of river, rail, and motorway communication. Hamburg revised its land-sea boundary in recent decades. The HafenCity, the largest urban rehabilitation project of its sort in Europe, has revitalized a sizable portion of Hamburg's historic port district. Around 15,000 people will live there and 45,000 people will work there when development is finished at the end of the decade. The renowned concert hall Elbphilharmonie is also located there. The City of Hamburg prioritizes the welfare of its residents in addition to high-level urban development initiatives, promoting accessible housing and transportation, inclusive education, and social inclusion. It is regarded as one of the liveliest cities in all of Europe. Furthermore, Hamburg is one of Germany's most active financial centers, home to large banking and insurance institutions, but it is also considered the German capital of the multimedia industry: the three largest publishing groups (Bauer, Gruner & Jahr and Springer), the Deutsche Presse-Agentur, the most important advertising agencies, television, radio, and film production companies are based here<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>117</sup> (Eurocities, s.d.)

## Part III. CASE ANALYSIS

### 3.1. Amsterdam

The city of Amsterdam is branded through the local DMO Amsterdam&Partners. It is a public-private foundation created to manage the city's reputation, in line with the framework identified by Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, and Couwenberg and previously introduced<sup>118</sup>. Amsterdam Partners, Amsterdam Toerisme & Congres Bureau, and Amsterdam Uitburo came together to form this organization. It was born under the name of Amsterdam Marketing, and it became Amsterdam&Partners in March 2019. Their mission is to “*contribute to the liveability, attractiveness, and prosperity of a sustainable and inclusive Amsterdam Metropolitan Area by building a better reputation and effectively guiding residents, businesses, and visitors*”<sup>119</sup>. Furthermore, the work done by Amsterdam&Partners goes beyond simply promoting the city brand to international visitors. The main tasks of this DMO are four: (1) enhance and boost the city of Amsterdam's reputation; (2) allocate residents and visitors throughout the areas, facilities, and cultural offerings of the greater Amsterdam area; (3) promote Amsterdam as a sustainable and creative conference city by enticing, hosting, and keeping conferences that enhance the local economy; (4) distribute information and data to the key stakeholders. Moreover, as emerged from the interview with Eleonora Mol, the main activities carried out by Amsterdam&Partners are numerous and in addition to those mentioned above: “*(1) give inhabitants access to a lot of nice cultural activities in the region like the Uitmarkt, the Uitkrant. 24H, the cultural agenda on iamsterdam.nl, etc. (2) be an active network with hundreds of companies, organizations, and settings from the metropolitan Amsterdam, which strengthen each other*”<sup>120</sup>. Indeed, the Amsterdam brand is shaped by its network composed of more than 800 stakeholders and partners, including governmental agencies, cultural institutions, corporate organizations, universities, and research institutes. The latter are offered packages and benefits that are appropriate for both small businesses and large organizations:

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<sup>118</sup> (Boisen M. , Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018)

<sup>119</sup> (Amsterdam&Partners, About amsterdam&partners, 2023)

<sup>120</sup> (Mol, 2023)

- Association with the I Amsterdam brand.
- Increased visibility of the organization through photos, videos, and a link to the website, placed on the official amsterdam&partners profile.
- Announcement of the partnership in the corporate newsletter, which has a readership of more than 3,000.
- Invitation to the yearly networking event.
- Personal summary of visitor insights; statistics and trends.
- A discount on purchases of media, magazines, and merchandising from Amsterdam&Partners.
- The chance to take part in local, national, and international press events.
- Possibility to discover and showcase the city's hospitality offerings.

With the help of the several partnerships that amsterdam&partners has managed to create, the organization is now able to generate value the city's brand and for the main target groups identified.

### ***3.1.1. Identity and image of the city***

#### *3.1.1.1. Amsterdam Identity*

Amsterdam and Holland in general are not only characterized by windmills, wooden shoes, and tulips. Society is made of tolerant and flexible people, especially Amsterdam has a vibrant and varied cultural scene. Particularly, the Bull's Eye method<sup>121</sup> must be applied to further understand which is Amsterdam's brand identity.

*Values:* the spirit of commerce, creative spirit, and innovation are Amsterdam's three guiding principles, as also reported during the interview with Eleonora Mol<sup>122</sup>. International brands are moving to this approachable and inviting worldwide epicentre of innovative thinking, which has been the city's strength for centuries and is still the growth engine of the current generation. Indeed, the latest data shows that in 2021 In 2021, the Amsterdam Area welcomed 133 foreign businesses that produced more than 4,000 new jobs<sup>123</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> (Company internal documents, 2007)

<sup>122</sup> (Mol, 2023)

<sup>123</sup> (Amsterdam&Partners, 2022)



*Personality:* The most interesting facet of Amsterdam is its personality. Amsterdam is known for its tolerance, liberal politics, and diverse cultures, all of which can be seen in both its past and present. Everything is distinctive and fascinating, including canals, buildings, language, cuisine, art, nightlife, works by Van Gogh, etc. Amsterdam personality traits can be associated with different types of people that ride bicycles around, produce cheese, grow tulips, celebrate their life along the canals, and brew beer.

*Benefits:* Amsterdam has all the benefits of a big city, including a multicultural and tolerant populace, vibrant nightlife, a first-rate transportation system, and international cuisine. At the same time, however, it is small, accessible, and traffic-free thanks to its vast canal system, giving it a laid-back atmosphere that anyone can enjoy. It is a continuously developing city with a good economic system where people can permanently establish themselves and create their businesses.

*Substantiators:* these benefits are closely linked to the historical origins of the city. Amsterdam has been the economic heart of the nation for centuries. Additionally, a long tradition of innovation exists there. It was also the location of the first publicly traded corporation when the world's first stock market was established here in 1602. The high standard of living in the area draws people from every part of the world. In 2023, it held the top spot for life quality.

*Proposition:* the brand of Amsterdam's proposition is to build a better reputation and successfully lead locals, businesses, and tourists to improve Amsterdam's liveability, desirability, and wealth in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

*Brand essence:* Amsterdam is easily associated with a set of intangible attributes that make it different and unique. First of all, as previously highlighted is a business city, characterized by a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a developed economic system. Secondly, its essence is strictly related to sustainability. In fact, throughout the world, Amsterdam is one of the cities with the best environmental practices. and the Green Cities Index's total ranking places it in fifth place. Thirdly, Amsterdam is also known as the "city of canals" or little Venice for the peculiarities and extent of its channels. Finally, the Amsterdam brand is strictly related to creativity and innovation. The city's excellent standard of living and relaxed atmosphere draws talent from all over the world, fostering ambition and creativity.

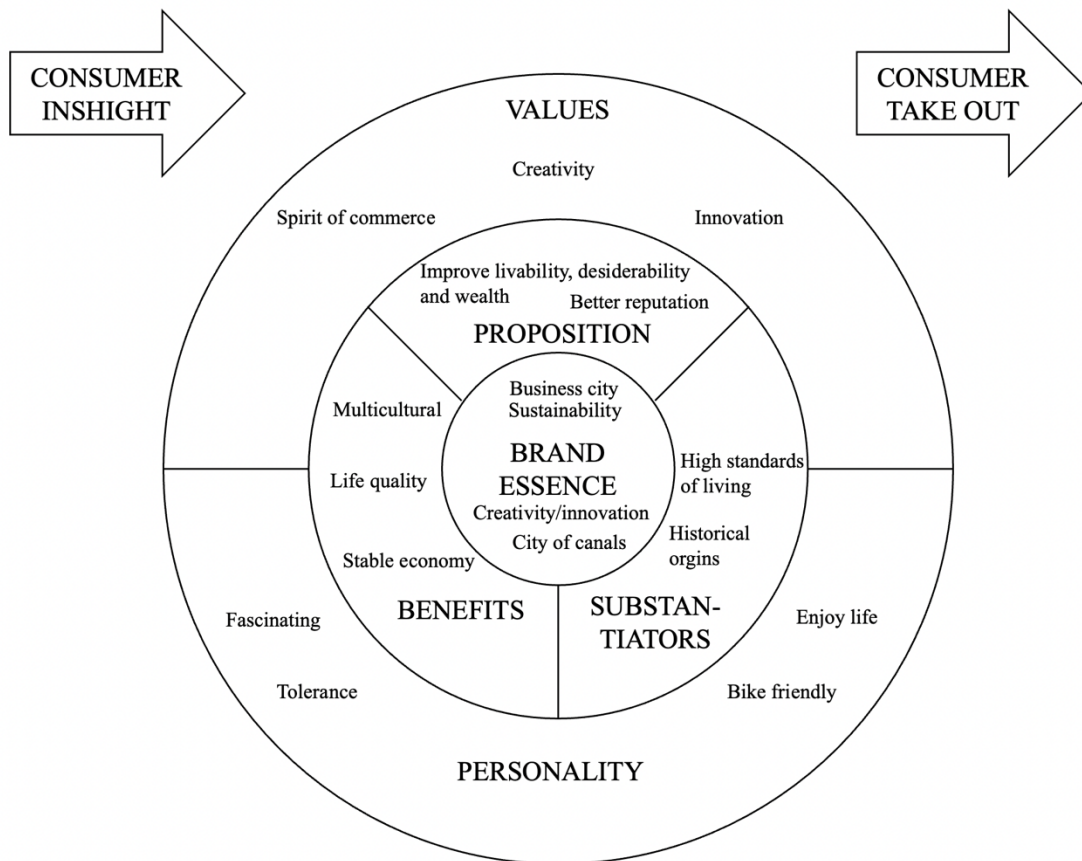


Figure 11 - The Bull's Eye method applied to the city of Amsterdam

### 3.1.1.2. Amsterdam Brand Image

How locals, tourists, and companies react to a place is determined by its image. In contrast to the essential functional and symbolic linkages that define mainstream brand pictures, place images primarily consisted of functional and experience associations. The associations that are formed in people's minds may be unintentional, but they may also be the result of the branding strategies used. Therefore, before going on to specifically define the image of the city of Amsterdam, it is useful to identify the vision and strategy of Amsterdam&Partners.

According to the DMO, their vision is to “*Make Amsterdam an even better place to live, work and visit*”<sup>124</sup>. This is perfectly in line with the strategy presented on the official website and presented by Eleonora Mol, head of corporate communication for amsterdam&partners. The branding strategy adopted by the DMO focuses mainly on

<sup>124</sup> (Amsterdam&Partners, 2023)

three target groups: residents, visitors, and businesses. The former is a fundamental part and parcel of the city's culture. For amsterdam&partners, residents must be an integral part of the brand; they are constantly encouraged to discover new, lesser-known areas of the city. They are reached through various communication channels both online and offline, presenting everything the city has to offer. Additionally, according to Eleonora Mol: *“We believe it is important that cities and city marketing organizations include residents as a target group. You cannot make a city stronger by boosting tourism alone, especially when more tourism can threaten the quality of life for residents”*<sup>125</sup>. As far as the visitors are concerned, they are a key part of the brand of Amsterdam, characterizing the city with its strong internationality. At the same time, however, over the years there have been problems with over tourism that has impacted the quality of life in Amsterdam. Therefore, the DMO works to create tourism that adds value to the city without creating disturbances. In particular, the type of visitors on whom we focus our branding activities are tourists who come for cultural or conference purposes. Several communication channels are identified for visitors, both online and offline. Firstly, on the 'I amsterdam' website and social channels we present the city and all the activities it has to offer. In addition, the I amsterdam City Card has been and is made available to tourists, which allows access to many city's museums and various attractions. Finally, there are offline channels such as the I amsterdam Store, which is located at Amsterdam Central Station and where it is possible to ask for information, buy the I amsterdam City Card and buy objects and souvenirs with the city's brand. Finally, the third target group is businesses. The objective here is to foster the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area's development and support companies in their post-Covid recovery. To do this, amsterdam&partners focuses on acquiring new talent, supporting companies, and organizing conferences that generate value for the region. The DMO works closely with other actors, specifically amsterdam inbusiness (AIB) to generate value from the effective distribution of talent, companies, and conferences<sup>126</sup>. *“These three target groups together form and create the soul of the*

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<sup>125</sup> (Mol, 2023)

<sup>126</sup> (Amsterdam&Partners, 2023)

*city, and cities should always look for a good balance in these three groups and their interests*”<sup>127</sup>.

The careful identification of these three target groups is closely linked to their strategy of improving Amsterdam's reputation and managing the phenomenon of over tourism. There has been a 15% increase in visitor counts and a 94% increase in visitor days since 2011. For this reason, the DMO stopped promoting Amsterdam as a destination brand and started to influence the behaviour of different target groups by trying to direct them to less-known places in the metropolitan area. That's why they changed our name from Amsterdam marketing into Amsterdam&partners as it better reflects what they are doing. Furthermore, in terms of enhancing the city's reputation, the current branding strategy associated with the city of Amsterdam originated in response to the image formed in the late 1960s, based on a culture of sexual liberalism and indulgence in drugs<sup>128</sup>. Consequently, tourism in the city has since then been associated with parties, fun, drugs, and commercial sex. The creation of negative associations with the city's brand necessitated certain measures to manage the city's problems and communicate a more positive brand image. Some of these initiatives were illustrated during the interview. Firstly, one of the main initiatives was to brand the Amsterdam area as a whole, rather than focusing on city icons and directing visitors to other regions. Another initiative was to generate an image of the city that is different from the one associated with its famous red-light district. The DMO thus sought to promote a city rich in museums, theatres, parks, nature, architecture, music, fashion, restaurants, festivals, sports, and more. In addition, they focused on the qualitative aspect of Amsterdam rather than the quantitative. In addition, with the slogan “*Visit Amsterdam, see Holland*” (an area including Haarlem, Zaandam, Edam, Lelystad, and the beaches), efforts were made to encourage regular visitors to visit other cities, such as Leiden, The Hague, and Rotterdam, thus spreading the number of tourists and supporting other destinations. Finally, a very important initiative involved the launch of campaigns to influence the misbehaviour of specific groups of visitors, with the threat of fines for those caught breaking the rules. Making one of Amsterdam's main rules: Enjoy&Respect. Specifically, the latest campaign launched

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<sup>127</sup> (Mol, 2023)

<sup>128</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2008)

by the municipality of Amsterdam is a digital campaign aimed at British men between the ages of 18 and 35, although the initiative may soon be extended to visitors from other parts of the EU or from the Netherlands itself. The video launched by the Amsterdam authorities reads: “*Come to Amsterdam for a messy night? Stay away*”. This “*Stay Away*” campaign is yet another attempt by the city to improve its reputation and ward off so-called party tourists who generate confusion and problems within the city<sup>129</sup>. Furthermore, by the middle of May, it will be unlawful to smoke marijuana in public in the Red-Light District, and certain days will see earlier closing times for pubs, restaurants, and sex workers' clubs.

This series of initiatives and the rebranding strategy has helped to generate an image of the city that is more characterized by positive associations such as innovation, culture, freedom, and tolerance. However, according to research conducted by the municipality of Amsterdam<sup>130</sup> the most common association made with Amsterdam is “*the city of canals*”, followed by “*the city of sex, soft drugs, rock 'n roll*” and “*that of a meeting place*”, “*the city of events*”, “*artistic city*”, and “*the city of people*”. From this, it can be deduced that although the image of Amsterdam as a liberal, cultural, bike-friendly, creative, and innovative city is established and improved, negative associations are still present in people's minds that do not correspond with the identity of the city and the image that the DMO wants to convey.

### **3.1.2. Primary Communication**

As illustrated above, primary communication consists of four major intervention areas: Infrastructure Projects, Landscape Strategies, Organizational and Administrative Structure, and City's Behaviour<sup>131</sup>. Consequently, it is necessary to go and analyse each area concerning the city of Amsterdam in order to understand how actions taken by the city or the business community can affect communication. Indeed, in the case of Amsterdam, the close link between amsterdam&partners, the municipality, and the business community emerged during the interview with Eleonora Mol. While the DMO

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<sup>129</sup> (Holligan, 2023)

<sup>130</sup> (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2011)

<sup>131</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2004)

is responsible for the reputation and branding of the city and the region, the municipality has four main tasks<sup>132</sup>:

1. Licensor, as it is the owner of the Amsterdam brand and licenses it to amsterdam&partners through a periodic contract.
2. Co-decision-maker because the municipality has an important role in defining the strategy of Amsterdam&Partners. Indeed, this is defined in agreement with the presidency of the General Council, the vice-presidency of the General Council, and the Executive Council of Amsterdam Partners.
3. Policy developer and implementer, as the city government is responsible for several substantive policy areas that have a major impact on Amsterdam's profile.
4. Communicator on behalf of the Amsterdam brand as the mayor represents the national and international face of Amsterdam consequently it is clear that the Alderman for Economic Affairs and the President of the Executive Committee work daily regarding contacts with the press and the like.

On the other hand, the business community is involved in the generation of the city's brand, especially in terms of large multinational and national companies based in the Amsterdam region. In fact, many companies from sectors such as business services, real estate, hotels, conference centres, and publishing contribute content, reviews, and consultancy, as well as providing an annual contribution and a one-off impulse for brand building.

### *3.1.2.1. Infrastructure Projects*

In terms of infrastructure projects, Amsterdam is a city that is strongly in the vanguard. Public-private collaboration, the primary role given to information and data, and the focus on the environment and sustainability are the three paths chosen by the city to create new development possibilities. At the infrastructural level, the new projects created for the city are closely linked to technology and sustainability. Firstly, the Green Agenda 2015-2018 was introduced by the municipal council of Amsterdam in 2015<sup>133</sup>. A

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<sup>132</sup> (Mol, 2023)

<sup>133</sup> (Gemeente Amsterdam,, 2020)

greater emphasis was being placed on preserving the remaining inner-city green spaces in the densely crowded city of Amsterdam. Gardens, roadside plants, parkland, embankments, and urban street greenery also started to emerge. Renovations are being made to city parks, and more focus is being given to boosting the greenery in the neighbourhoods through the development of pocket parks, facade gardens, community vegetable gardens, and green roofs. These kinds of greenery also show how crucial it is for citizens to contribute to the city's biodiversity. The municipality of Amsterdam was instructed by a coalition agreement to make the city a more desirable location to live, work, and visit. Consequently, 20 million euros, approximately twice the amount invested in previous years, have been invested in green projects. Amsterdam's Green Agenda 2015-2018 prioritizes four themes to address the aforementioned issues: urban parks, neighbourhood greenery, climate and biodiversity, and connections and accessibility. In December 2020 the city of Amsterdam shared its new Urban Vision 2050 on Green Infrastructures. The project aims to achieve “*a liveable city for people, plants, and animals*”<sup>134</sup>. The public realm is becoming more crowded with more people and activities as a result of the urban issues of densification, new housing projects, changing mobility, and renewable energy. At the same time, residents of Amsterdam are becoming more eager to have access to high-quality green places nearby. This initiative seeks to maximize the use of currently available green spaces while increasing the quantity of green infrastructure everywhere possible. Another example of green infrastructure can be considered the renovation project of the Amsterdam ArenA, also known as Johan Cruijff ArenA. Project ArenA will see the redevelopment of the stadium to improve its safety and environmental impact. Indeed, in order to demonstrate its adherence to the principles of the so-called circular economy: recycling, reuse, and reduce, the city decided to use recycled car batteries as a back-up system for stadium lighting<sup>135</sup>. The Port of Amsterdam, in cooperation with other organisations such as Eneco, Luminext, Citytec, Windchallenge, and Sunfloat decided to implement a street lighting system powered by solar and wind energy. When a cyclist is close by, he or she can use the GeoLight app on their smartphone to independently turn the lighting up to 100%. This will make the streets

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<sup>134</sup> (City of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Green Infrastructure Vision 2050, 2020)

<sup>135</sup> (Johan Cruijff ArenA, 2022)

more welcoming, especially for people travelling by bicycle, and energy wastage can be avoided as the lighting system will automatically switch off if there is no activity<sup>136</sup>. Even though these infrastructure projects are indicative of a cutting-edge and innovative city, in line with the storytelling that is done of the city's brand, they are not given undue prominence in the communication by amsterdam&partners.

The city of Amsterdam not only offers infrastructural innovations, but also numerous cultural facilities. In fact, Amsterdam is the Dutch capital of culture, which is a strong economic driver. Although the city is mainly associated with the figure of Van Gogh and his museum, in the past ten years, significant funds have been invested in the city's cultural infrastructure, creating, or renovating renowned locations including the Eye Film Institute, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, and the Rijksmuseum. The development of brand-new, important venues is perceived as continuing a long-standing tradition that “*connects the old with the modern*” and reflects the diversity of the city<sup>137</sup>. Moreover, this development and the growing importance given to culture are closely linked to the issues of over-tourism and reputation management described above. Thus, it is vital to give the emerging outer urban districts an emphasis on arts, culture, and creativity. One potential response is the new Plan of the Arts 2021-2024<sup>138</sup>, which seeks to establish new cultural epicentres in the north, south-east, and west of Amsterdam. In particular, the development of the plan had been supported by URBACT, an EU program that encourages towns to work together to address common problems with sustainable solutions. The municipality of Amsterdam collaborated on the creation of this plan with the ACCESS network of local stakeholders. The latter group includes representatives from associations and other NGOs, artists, cultural producers, colleagues from the municipality, and amsterdam&partners. With this plan, the city wants to invest in and develop the peripheral districts of Nieuw-West, Noord, and Zuidoost by creating new cultural centres. In particular, the research centre of the city of Amsterdam noted a close correlation between the quality of life in different areas of the city and the presence of cultural infrastructure.

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<sup>136</sup> (Bravo, 2019)

<sup>137</sup> (I amsterdam, 2022)

<sup>138</sup> (City of Amsterdam, 2021)



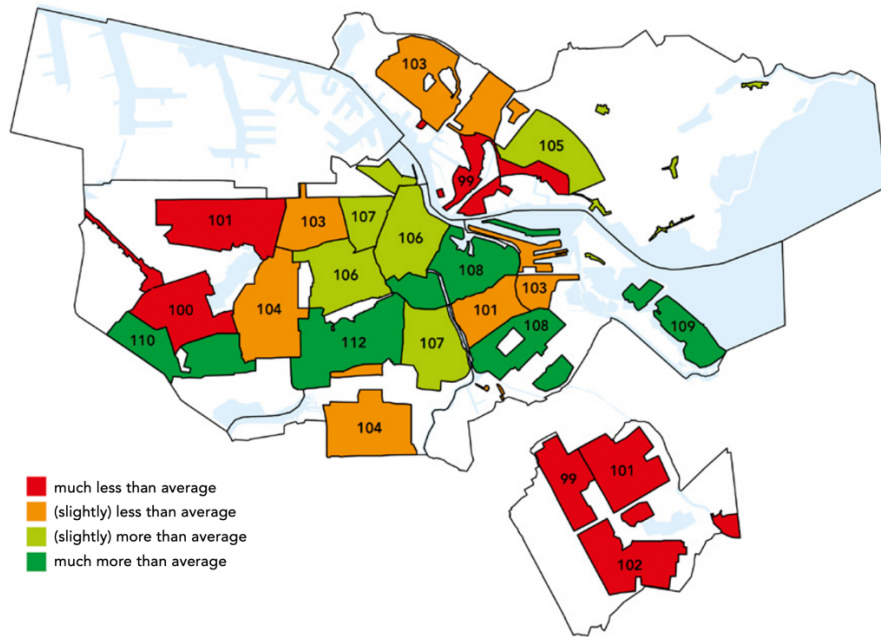


Figure 12 - Quality of life in different areas of Amsterdam (City of Amsterdam, 2021)

These are mainly located in the city centre, namely in areas where the quality of life is highest.

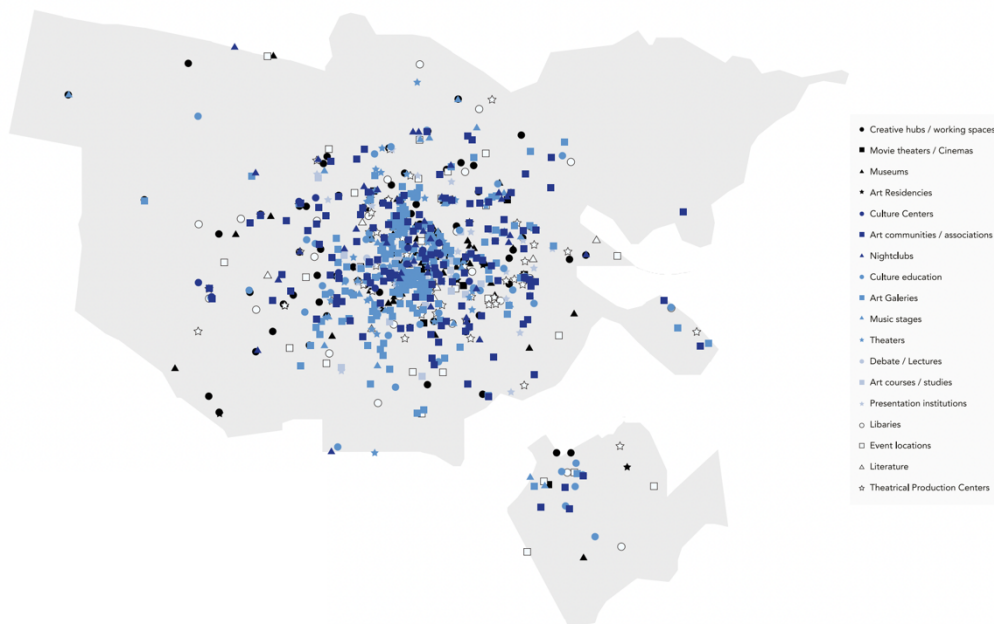


Figure 13 - Cultural infrastructures in different areas of Amsterdam (City of Amsterdam, 2021)

Consequently, the ultimate objective of this plan is “*Make culture accessible to everyone, and everyone part of the culture*”<sup>139</sup>. In conclusion, the communication of this

<sup>139</sup> (City of Amsterdam, 2021)

information can be analysed. Indeed, these initiatives are reported on the website of the municipality of Amsterdam and on the official website of amsterdam&partners. However, the communication that is made of these initiatives is not central to the city's narrative and is not given too much depth on the communication channels used.

### 3.1.2.2. *Landscape Strategies*

This section of primary communication is mainly concerned with the analysis of three factors: public spaces, urban design, and architecture. Nowadays, Amsterdam is a heavily populated urban area with a population of over 800,000 people. It is recognized for its ancient architecture, tiny canal side streets, the large network of bicycle lanes, canals, and bridges, as well as its numerous small parks and open public green spaces. It is frequently praised for having a history of multiculturalism, social tolerance, the provision of fundamental requirements, and the promotion of individual freedoms. It is also seen as “*a progressive and central hub in the European knowledge economy*” and as an international city<sup>140</sup>. As a result, moving to Amsterdam has grown to be a popular choice for newcomers from all over the world. The Amsterdam City Council created the Structural Vision Amsterdam 2040 master plan as a potential means of future expansion in the twenty-first century because of the restricted space for development and the city's anticipated growth in the following decades. Intending to densify neighbourhoods and increasing the effective use of space, the plan combines urban design and neighbourhood redevelopment techniques with intelligent technology solutions and progressive advances in transportation and mobility. Parts of the post-industrial riverside in the Noord and Zuidas districts, as well as along the IJ Waterway, are included in this development vision and are candidates for combined residential/commercial construction. Subsequently, in June 2021, the city council replaced Vision 2040 with the Comprehensive Vision Amsterdam 2050<sup>141</sup>. The basic principles are the same but five strategic choices are identified more specifically:

- Polycentric development through (1) the growth of Noord, Zuidoost, and Nieuw-West, (2) the development of station districts, the growth of the metro

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<sup>140</sup> (Gilderbloom, Hanka, & Lasley, 2009)

<sup>141</sup> (City of Amsterdam, 2022)

network, and high-quality public transportation, and (3) the regional allocation of services and career opportunities provided by the city.

- Growth within limits, in terms of sustainable district growth. This would be possible through the improvement of sustainability in neighbourhoods and the Port of the city, and the creation of space for the construction of 150,000 new homes in complete neighbourhoods.
- Rigorous greening, a project that focuses on developing green public spaces, park construction (such as Hondsrugpark, Oeverlanden, Gaasperdakpark, and NDSM-Oost), and green corridors and paths through nature.
- Sustainable and healthy mobility. Attempts are being made to make the city as bike-friendly and sustainable as possible, making the busy traffic streets building-lined, grassy avenues.
- Making the city together. This is the last of five initiatives, the objective of which is to set a broad direction and leave room for initiative. It seeks to give more centrality to the inhabitants of Amsterdam, ensure equal (digital) access to data during the planning process, and give more potential for residential collectives and cooperatives<sup>142</sup>.

This analysis mainly concerns the management of public spaces and urban design initiatives. From a communicative point of view, the urban design initiatives are not widely communicated by the DMO, but as they are mainly addressed to the target group of residents, they are extensively explained on the website of the municipality of Amsterdam, where the Comprehensive Vision Amsterdam 2050 is presented. Likewise, the desire to improve the city's public spaces is not the focus of the city's communication, but at the same time represents a part of the city's identity in terms of creativity, innovation, participation, and greening.

Turning to the architectural side, the city of Amsterdam is most well-known for its canals and lovely gabled facades, but it also has very distinctive architecture. Dutch architect Berlage's creations, cutting-edge new projects in the business district The Zuidas, and the neighbourhood of Eastern Docklands make up the fascinating

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<sup>142</sup> (City of Amsterdam, 2022)

architectural mix of Amsterdam, which also includes 17th century canals that have been given UNESCO status. Amsterdam is not characterized by a single dominating architectural style; rather, the blending of several forms over the years has created one of the world's most distinctive and interesting skylines. This architecture characterized by canals and a mix of different styles is the basis of the city's image. In this case, the city's communication and the resulting associations are closely linked to the type of architecture in Amsterdam, which is, therefore, an important recognition and reputational factor.

### *3.1.2.3. Organizational and Administrative Structure*

In this area of analysis, it is important to look at PPPs, i.e., public-private partnerships, and the involvement of citizens in the development of new projects. In the case of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Smart City programme, established in the early 2000s, is a good example of an initiative organized and financed by a public-private mix. Funding comes from public and private partners, and the PA is a partner in governance and operation. Together with Alliander, and KPN, the City of Amsterdam has been at the forefront of supporting the Amsterdam Smart City programme, not only in financial terms but also in terms of collaboration and results orientation. The starting point of the collaboration in Amsterdam Smart City is that the funding partners have committed themselves to long-term goals, related to the problems facing the Amsterdam metropolitan area and the opportunities that are and will be available. Amsterdam Smart City starts with the deployment of new infrastructure, enabling all kinds of new products and services: Smart Energy Networks, Fiber to the Home, and Open Data. The Amsterdam Innovation Motor (AIM), a public non-profit organization, is developing the programme on behalf of all founding partners, with two main objectives: to facilitate bottom-up innovation and to converge the investments that will be supported in the coming years. This has resulted in over 30 pilot projects in recent years and a collaboration with 72 partners. The partners themselves have tested numerous products and services, which were then brought to market by the companies that developed them. Since 2006, several projects have been active on the sustainability front, both environmental and occupational, on improving mobility and the use of public spaces. One example above all. The Amsterdam Street lighting service, in cooperation with Philips, has seen an unprecedented reduction in costs and emissions thanks to the switch to LED

technology. Consequently, it can be said that Amsterdam represents a vanguard in terms of PPPs, especially related to city innovation. The Amsterdam Smart City model is very simple: at the centre are three founding partners, all of whom have long-term economic interests (infrastructure to be used) and a joint ambition to solve societal problems. Through the Amsterdam Smart City programme, they collaborate with others: strategic partners in certain thematic domains (companies such as Philips, Cisco, IBM, Accenture) and with small and medium-sized enterprises on the individual project level. In this way, there is a differentiation between partners with long-term objectives (infrastructure partners), medium-term objectives (strategic partners), and short-term objectives such as small and medium-sized enterprises. The involvement of the public administration is essential: it produces 'trust', open data, long-term commitment, policies, and leadership. The Amsterdam Smart City programme and the partnerships on which it is based have set an example for cities all over Europe and therefore a major communication campaign was carried out by amsterdam&partners, the municipality, and national and international newspapers to create a further positive association with the city brand in terms of innovation, smart-city, and sustainability.

Regarding citizen participation, the goal of the local government of Amsterdam is to improve the involvement of citizens in decision-making. Indeed, according to the municipality: *“Amsterdammers make the city. As the city government, we stand shoulder to shoulder with residents and societal partners, instead of face to face. Together we will tackle the challenges we are facing. As the city government, we will remove barriers and support people in their efforts to shape their own living environment”*<sup>143</sup>. In terms of participatory budgeting, the city allocated €500,000 for community projects under one initiative. After then, people had the chance to post project proposals on a public website. Before going to a final vote, the proposals that received the highest support had their viability assessed. 5,507 people cast votes for the ideas they thought should pass and 15 projects in total were chosen for execution. Citizens can actively create the neighbourhood they wish to live in by participating in these projects. Also, the Amsterdam Smart City programme has created an open innovation platform, in which

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<sup>143</sup> (City of Amsterdam, 2018)

businesses, educational institutions, governmental agencies, and engaged citizens interact and work together to create the cities and regions of the future. In this way, there is a two-way exchange of information, ideas, and projects that citizens can join or propose.<sup>144</sup> This series of initiatives and projects help to create positive communication towards the target group of residents. Likewise, however, this spirit of sharing and participation is not effectively communicated by the municipality and the DMO and consequently does not contribute to creating positive associations in the minds of other target groups.

#### *3.1.2.4. City's Behaviour*

The latter area of the primary communication block is analysed by investigating the city's behaviour in terms of financial incentives offered by the municipality or government and event organization. Starting from the study of financial incentives related to the city of Amsterdam there are financial tools provided by the government on a national level, incentives at the municipal, regional, and European levels, and subsidies that are frequently connected to a particular area, subject, or industry. Indeed, a variety of public sector financing resources are available to companies seeking funding in the Amsterdam area, in addition to private sector alternatives like investments and loans. The government actively encourages the establishment of new companies in the nation. This turns out to be in line with the image of the city seen as a hub of innovation and open to multiculturalism and internationality. Specifically, the Dutch government sees sustainability and innovation as key priorities, and consequently support for businesses regarding renewable energy and environmental preservation is critical<sup>145</sup>. Consequently:

- The Sustainable Energy Transition Subsidy Scheme is aimed at businesses and organizations in the built environment, electricity, transportation, and industry sectors that use CO<sub>2</sub>-reducing technologies or produce sustainable energy.
- The R&D tax credit provides reimbursement for R&D expenditures. Other subsidies go toward projects in the circular economy, sustainable shipping, and even health improvements.

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<sup>144</sup> (Amsterdam Smart City, 2023)

<sup>145</sup> (Amsterdam&partners, 2023)

- On a national level, there are numerous other subsidies accessible, including incentives for activities like investment in developing markets.
- Through the Regional Development Agencies (ROMs), businesses in the Netherlands can also seek support on a regional level and have access to EU-wide subsidies.
- Finally, a variety of other funding possibilities are available to entrepreneurs and start-ups.

The Dutch national government uses a variety of financial tools, including the SME credit guarantee scheme for small- to medium-sized businesses. This means that the Ministry of Economic Affairs serves as the government's guarantor for a bank loan when a company lacks sufficient collateral. To be qualified, a company must be based in the Netherlands and have fewer than 250 employees. The Growth Facility Scheme, which provides a guarantee to investors that provide venture capital to small- to medium-sized businesses, is an additional choice. Proof-of-concept finance is another option available to start-ups and SMEs who have an original product or service. Lastly, the Innovation Credit Scheme is another option for creative businesses that have outgrown this incentive. Also, from a fiscal point of view, the business environment remains stable in the Netherlands. Due to several bilateral tax agreements, businesses avoid paying taxes twice and frequently have their withholding taxes on profits, interest, and royalties lowered or eliminated. The Netherlands has consistently supported a stable, open tax structure that is adaptable enough to foresee the quickly changing needs of global economic flows. This is due to the country's open economy. In addition, highly skilled migrants who work abroad may be eligible for the 30% ruling, which permits companies to pay 30% of their employees' salaries tax-free. These elements make the nation a sound, dependable option for companies looking for a foundation for their worldwide commercial operations, especially when taken along with the vast range of financial incentives and a predictable environment<sup>146</sup>. From the perspective of tax incentives, one cannot refer directly to the city of Amsterdam but must look at the nation. In any case, the Amsterdam DMO and municipality working closely with the government and the minister of economic affairs,

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<sup>146</sup> (Amsterdam&partners, 2023)

transparently communicate tax initiatives and national subsidies making the positive associations with the city brand image even stronger in terms of business development, focus on sustainability, and innovation hub. This is possible due to the concept of spatial layering, according to which the two brands (nation and city) brands are closely interconnected and able to influence one another<sup>147</sup>.

As far as event organization is concerned, in Amsterdam, there are festivals or artistic events almost regularly. The Dutch take great effort to preserve the long-standing traditions of many of these festivals and events in Amsterdam. However, because many of these traditional Dutch celebrations are conducted with an English-speaking audience in mind, they are also very enjoyable for tourists. Amsterdam hosts more than 300 festivals annually, responding to all interests and personalities. No matter the season, there are numerous, powerful, and varied events to choose from. The King's Birthday in spring is the most significant occasion for the Dutch. It typically lasts for two days and includes a street festival and a free market. The entire Old Town is closed to vehicular traffic on that day due to the large number of young people who travel to Amsterdam from all over the globe for these celebrations. Frequently, a significant artistic event occurs at the close of May, the Holland Festival. The goal of this occasion is to combine low and developed cultures. It showcases novel and noteworthy pieces of art in the visual, performing, and opera arts. The Grachtenfestival is the most important event that takes place in the summer. It includes live music performances at city canals and in Amsterdam's Old City. A variety of classical music performances are presented over the course of ten days on various stages. Amsterdam comes alive with artistic events after each summer. There are numerous concerts, film festivals, book, and antique markets, as well as museum activities. The IDFA is among the most significant autumnal occasions. This festival is an international one for documentaries, and it typically starts in the middle of November. Museum Night, which always takes place in November, is another engaging event. Every museum and gallery opens its doors to guests during that night, and for this occasion, they frequently have a unique exhibition or performance planned. This occasion launched a trend of Museum Nights, which are now happening in most of

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<sup>147</sup> (Boisen, Terlouw, & Van Gorp, 2011)



the continent's main cities. In November, the Christmas season kicks off with the arrival of Saint Nicholas, Christmas markets along the canals, and themed events that are able to attract people of all ages from all over the world<sup>148</sup>. These events are just some of the major ones that take place in the city of Amsterdam and are generally organized by the municipality. However, associations or even private individuals can organize events, festivals, or concerts by notifying the municipality and if necessary, applying for a specific permit. This procedure is very short and presented clearly and transparently on the official website of the municipality of Amsterdam<sup>149</sup>. In organizing events, however, the DMO also plays a key role. Amsterdam&partners in addition to communicating and showcasing via social media and website all the events held in the city also handles the organization of meetings and conventions with the support of the Amsterdam Convention Bureau. The latter is the official event planner for organizations hosting international meetings and events. Specifically, its work consists of searching for hotels and venues, helping organizations with the bidding process, creating visibility for the event with marketing and promotional materials, and connecting the event organizer with local partners and service providers. An entire section of the I amsterdam website is devoted to this activity given the economic and image benefits for the city<sup>150</sup>. The assiduous communication that is made of city events and the work done by the Amsterdam Convention Bureau confirms the importance that is given to the organization of festivals and events, which contribute to generating an image of the city of Amsterdam that is closely linked to events, meetings, and arts. In this case, collaboration between the DMO and actors such as the municipality and the Amsterdam Convention Bureau is important as they are able to influence each other and cooperate for good transmission of the city brand image, as also emphasized during the interview with Eleonora Mol: “*We believe that together we can make the difference*”<sup>151</sup>.

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<sup>148</sup> (I amsterdam, 2023)

<sup>149</sup> (City of Amsterdam, 2023)

<sup>150</sup> (I amsterdam, 2023)

<sup>151</sup> (Mol, 2023)

### ***3.1.3. Secondary Communication***

Secondary communication analysis relates to an in-depth investigation of the formal and intentional communication of information that most frequently occurs through well-known marketing techniques. This section will focus on logos, slogans, and other marketing strategies and tools used by the Amsterdam city brand. “*I Amsterdam*” is one of the first cases of city branding in Europe and today one of the most enduring. The city re-branding project was launched in 2004. Amsterdam has always been the leading international economic centre, rich in culture and innovation. However, in recent years the city has increasingly entered into competition with other more attractive cities in terms of tourism and commerce.

Two main themes serve as the foundation for Amsterdam's reputation as a tourist destination. Urban planning from the early modern era predominates in the first. It is a representation of a prosperous “*Golden Age*” trading city that is made up of densely clustered buildings along a canal in a Vermeer townscape. The second is the city's widely held perception, which was created in the late 1960s and is associated mainly with its open and tolerant nature. This obscures the more attractive aspects of the city, whose image is at odds with what the Netherlands wishes to convey abroad. The issue with this composite image was that it was so effective at becoming well-known and established that it made change complicated and largely fossilized Amsterdam within an evolving world. This condition was evident by the 1970s as Amsterdam's tourism became more and more linked to extremely cheap drinks, commercial sex, and easily accessible drugs. For this reason, it was essential for Amsterdam to reinvent itself by implementing a re-branding strategy to update its image and achieve a distinctive position compared to its competitors.

The re-branding campaign designed to reposition the city in the world sought to address several needs. First of all, the objective was to change the global perception of the city, as well as to secure a major competitive advantage that would create a sharp contrast with other European and world cities. Indeed, the aim is that Amsterdam should draw a wider variety of tourists rather than merely young people who come in droves to view the Red-Light District's renowned shop windows and legally use marijuana there. A second objective was to nurture the capital's inhabitants' sense of belonging and attract

potential tourists from all over the world. The target group was therefore residents, tourists, and businesses. Regarding the first objective, several measures were mentioned during the interview with Eleonora Mol aimed at eliminating the negative associations that had come about with the city's brand<sup>152</sup>. Although this has already been outlined previously it is worth mentioning the DMO's desire to promote a city full of museums, theatres, parks, nature, architecture, music, fashion, restaurants, festivals, sports, and more, and the launch of campaigns to highlight one of Amsterdam's main rules: Enjoy & Respect. In contrast, as for the second objective of the re-branding campaign, an attempt was made to create a sense of belonging among people through the creation of the city's logo and slogan: "*I Amsterdam*". It is a naming made up of two simple words that nevertheless manage to express the key values and dimensions of the capital city, but more importantly, allow everyone to relate to the city. From a visual point of view "*I am*" is highlighted in red: the city thus foregrounds residents, tourists, and businesses, celebrating their diversity and subjectivity, fully involving them in its marketing project. It thus celebrates the person as an individual, seeking to increase his or her sense of belonging to Amsterdam through a unique but semantically open slogan. The goal was to create a clear, short, and powerful slogan that nevertheless could carry important meaning. The slogan then became an urban sculpture almost three meters high and with a total length of 26 meters installed in the central Museumplein area. In a short time, such sculpture has become a true icon and one of the logos of the city. Thousands of tourists a day lined up to have their portrait taken in front of the giant letters to take a souvenir photo of their trip to the capital<sup>153</sup>. The *I Amsterdam* logo was then also affixed to numerous items, including city passes, boat tickets, and city maps.

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<sup>152</sup> (Mol, 2023)

<sup>153</sup> (Kavaratzis, 2008)



*Figure 14 - Logo and slogan of the Amsterdam city brand*

Despite its success and drawing tens of thousands of visitors each month, in 2018 Dutch authorities decided to remove the sculpture. According to the statement, the inscription “*I Amsterdam*” had become a symbol of mass tourism and an ode to individualism. This was at odds with a city that by nature describes itself as supportive, tolerant, and a promoter of diversity. It was therefore intended to show that Amsterdam was not just a product to be marketed. Although no longer placed in the large museum square, the sculpture continues to be installed in other places in the metropolis. It is, in fact, possible to find it in different areas of Amsterdam: at Lake Sloterplass, in the western part of the city; in the arrivals area of Schipol Airport; at events and celebrations, where the inscription is continually repeated as an icon of the capital. This decision to counter the phenomenon of over tourism turns out to be perfectly in line with the strategy previously analysed. In fact, this turns out to be one of the main problems of the city of Amsterdam, and the idea of placing the city's logo in more isolated places is a direct reference to the DMO's desire to also promote places that are lesser known in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area<sup>154</sup>.

In addition, unparalleled chances to connect with people in Amsterdam are provided by amsterdam&partners. Their channels and the I amsterdam brand provide a wide range

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<sup>154</sup> (Amsterdam&Partners, 2023)

of possibilities for coordinated, targeted communication. The DMO makes use of several communication channels, the national and international press, the official website, the live chat on iamsterdam.com, social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and the I Amsterdam Store, through which it provides offline information to visitors<sup>155</sup>. In this way, it is possible to keep the different target groups up to date on all the news related to the city of Amsterdam, while at the same time enhancing the reputation of the brand. In addition, the extensive partner network enables them to gain wide visibility and offer partnerships and advertising services to local and international businesses<sup>156</sup>.

#### ***3.1.4. Tertiary Communication***

The tertiary section is the final stage. This refers to word-of-mouth, which is supported by media, internet, and rival messages. Although it cannot be controlled by marketers, it indirectly concentrates on the promoting aspect. Indeed, tertiary communication is strictly related to the efficiency of primary and secondary one. Thus, it is important to examine how some city brand-related search terms are used globally through the Google Trends tool<sup>157</sup>.

It is important to specify that the first year from which Google trends data are available is 2004, which in the case of Amsterdam coincides with the year of the launch of the new re-branding strategy. Starting with the search for the city's name, it is possible to note the strong media impact that the campaign had. It is precisely in 2004 that there are peaks in searches for the word “*Amsterdam*”. From then on, the trend initially appears to be decreasing and then stabilizes from 2008 to early 2020. Interestingly, there is a sharp decline in the trend in 2020, coinciding with the onset of COVID-19 and lockdown periods. It is only in late 2021 and early 2022 that the trend returns to an upward trend suggesting that the return to normalcy and the recovery of tourism in the city of Amsterdam was aided by the branding techniques implemented by amsterdam&partners.

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<sup>155</sup> (Mol, 2023)

<sup>156</sup> (Amsterdam&Partners, 2023)

<sup>157</sup> (Google Trends, 2023)



Figure 15 - The term "Amsterdam" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The second term to be searched is the name of the DMO's website, in this case, “*I amsterdam*”. It is surprising to note a steadily increasing trend with a sharp decrease only relative to the 2020-2021 period, which can most likely be attributed to COVID-19. This demonstrates the growing importance that the DMO is gaining and is also indicative of increased public interest in the news, services, and information that is constantly being offered by it.

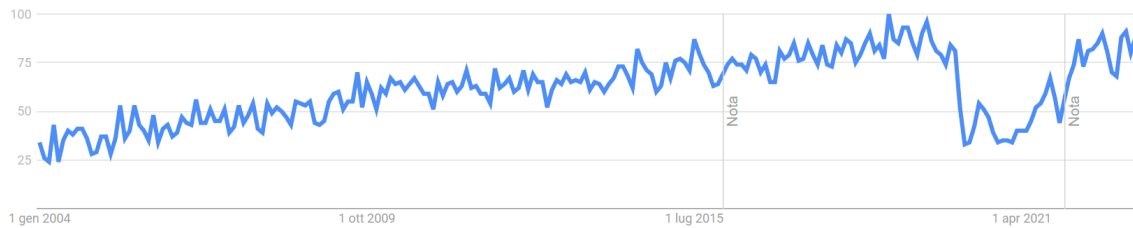


Figure 16 - The term "I amsterdam" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The following three terms will refer to the three target groups: tourists, businesses, and residents. Consequently, the first term to be analysed will be “*Visit Amsterdam*”. The latter refers to tourists and the WOM generated by them. Looking at the data it is possible to see from 2006 onwards a steady growth in the use of this term. As in the previous cases, it is possible to see a sharp decline in the period 2020-2021 while from 2022 there is a strong growth, higher even than the pre-pandemic years, and based on the forecast there will be a strong increase in searches related to this term in 2023 as well. This search is also intrinsically linked to the willingness of tourists to visit the city, which as we can see is steadily increasing over time. This is an indication of a good marketing strategy adopted by the city, but it is not possible to say whether the increase in the desire to visit the city is related to the improvement of brand reputation.



Figure 17- The term "Visit Amsterdam" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The fourth term to be analysed refers to the target group of businesses. Accordingly, by searching for the words “*Business Amsterdam*” it is possible to see an almost constant trend with a slight decrease related to the period 2020-2021 but in general very stable. This is related to the good economic condition that has characterized the city for decades now, making it a perfect place for new investment and business development given the city's strong level of innovation.



Figure 18 - The term "Business Amsterdam" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The last term to be analysed is “*Live in Amsterdam*”. Here it is necessary to analyse the last target, namely, residents and potential residents. Even though in the early years there are strong upward peaks and strong downward peaks, from 2009 onward it is possible to see a steadily decreasing trend. Despite this, 2016 saw a sharp spike in interest due to the city's nomination as “*European Capital of Innovation*”<sup>158</sup>. Moreover, during the period of the pandemic, there is no strong decrease in searches, but it is possible to say that from 2022 there is a slightly increasing trend. In this case, the reasons may be many, a different perception of the city, a change in the population's outlook on life, or macroeconomic changes that provide incentives to move to cities with a better quality of life and able to guarantee economic subsidies and tax breaks.

<sup>158</sup> (European Commission, 2016)



Figure 19 - The term "Live in Amsterdam" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends



### 3.2. Copenhagen

The city of Copenhagen is branded through the local DOM Wonderful Copenhagen. It is the capital region's official tourism organization and has the purpose of not-for-profit development and promotion of business and leisure tourism to benefit common interests<sup>159</sup>. Wonderful Copenhagen, as the DMO of the Greater Copenhagen metropolitan region, is responsible for regional tourist growth, the monitoring of activities, and the management of two cross-national tourism development entities: Dansk Storbyturisme and MeetDenmark. Consequently, we can say that Wonderful Copenhagen's sphere of influence is not only limited to the capital region but also has national responsibilities related to the creation of networks and programs such as the Cruise Network. In addition, Wonderful Copenhagen runs the proprietary brand VisitCopenhagen, which is responsible for the website and social channels for tourist communication. Through its four business divisions—Convention, Cruise, Development, and Communication—Wonderful Copenhagen promotes and grows tourism in the Greater Copenhagen area.

1. **Convention.** In close cooperation with our partners, Wonderful Copenhagen submits bids for over 100 association conferences each year. Copenhagen is a top MICE destination, hosting major congresses as well as international sporting and cultural events. Together with Copenhagen City and Sport Event Denmark, Wonderful Copenhagen promotes large events with an emphasis on both attracting cultural and sporting events.
2. **Cruise.** As with the other Danish towns, Copenhagen is one of the most well-liked cruise destinations in Northern Europe. The consortium managed by CruiseCopenhagen brings together all of the Danish cruise destinations and operators, and the company also held the network Cruise Baltic, which brings together 30 sites in the Baltic Sea.
3. **Development.** Through knowledge-based programs, Wonderful Copenhagen continually works with both public and commercial partners to strategically improve the destination. To do this, the Development unit generates new

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<sup>159</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)

partnerships and collaborations that bring together travel agencies, local citizens, governmental organizations, institutes of higher learning, DMOs, etc.

4. Communication. Department of Communications of Wonderful Copenhagen promotes the Danish city, draws attention to its major narratives abroad, and aids in the destination's balanced growth<sup>160</sup>.

### ***3.2.1. Identity and image of the city***

#### *3.2.1.1. Copenhagen Identity*

The identity of the city of Copenhagen is not only associated with its status as the happiest city in the world. With so many start-up businesses, Copenhagen seems to be a hotbed of chances for them. Furthermore, openness, liberty, and tolerance are frequently thought of and connected with Danish society. However, to better understand its complex identity it is important to apply the Bull's Eye method<sup>161</sup>.

*Values:* in 2021 the City of Copenhagen revealed its business strategy for the following three years (2021-2023). According to this strategy sustainability, inclusion, and internationalisation are the three main values that represent the identity of the city of Copenhagen. During an interview with former mayor Lars Weiss, the core values and goals associated with the city emerged: *“With the new business strategy, we create continued growth, up to 5,000 new jobs and help Copenhagen’s business start well on top of the corona crisis. All with a focus on a continued CO2 reduction, so we can meet our climate goals”*<sup>162</sup>.

*Personality:* One of the characteristics of Copenhagen is the city's personality. Indeed, it is considered as an open-minded, colourful, and creative city. However, one of the main personality traits is the so-called being *“Hygge”*. This is a noun and an adjective used in the Danish language that expresses a sense of carefreeness, happiness, and at the same time a cosy atmosphere. This art of living well is at the heart of the personality of the entire Danish society, but it is particularly enhanced by the atmosphere of the city of Copenhagen.

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<sup>160</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)

<sup>161</sup> (Company internal documents, 2007)

<sup>162</sup> (City of Copenhagen, 2023)

*Benefits:* Copenhagen is a city with many advantages. It has evolved into one of the happiest and healthiest cities in the world thanks to a decades-long dedication to creating a human-scale city. Its excellent quality of life and work-life balance are internationally renowned. In addition, it offers a good culinary tradition, a stable economic system, an excellent transport network, state support, and a high level of healthcare.

*Substantiators:* More than just having innovative ideals, Copenhagen is regarded highly. Instead, it is based on the principles of good governance. The strength of Copenhagen's municipal administration contributes to the city's capacity to make long-term strategic decisions. Educated personnel with in-depth technical knowledge improves the public sector's capacity. Additionally, cooperation between political parties, governmental tiers, and societal segments is regular and consistent.

*Proposition:* The major goal of the city brand is to establish a distinct brand identity for Copenhagen that reflects its contemporary and cutting-edge architecture, biker-friendly surroundings, and comfortable small-town atmosphere. These brand characteristics would make it possible to differentiate itself from the other Scandinavian metropolitans.

*Brand essence:* In summary, the city's brand essence can be associated with several characteristics. Copenhagen is a large city with a hometown atmosphere. It has a lot of green space, is small, safe, and efficient, and has a renowned cycling culture. Finally, many associations are made in terms of lifestyles. Indeed, Copenhagen is known for its high cost of living. In 2020, the Economist Intelligence Unit stated that the city ranks ninth in terms of cost of living<sup>163</sup>. Despite this, Copenhagen's identity is closely linked to its excellent quality of life and the efficiency of the public services provided.

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<sup>163</sup> (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2020)

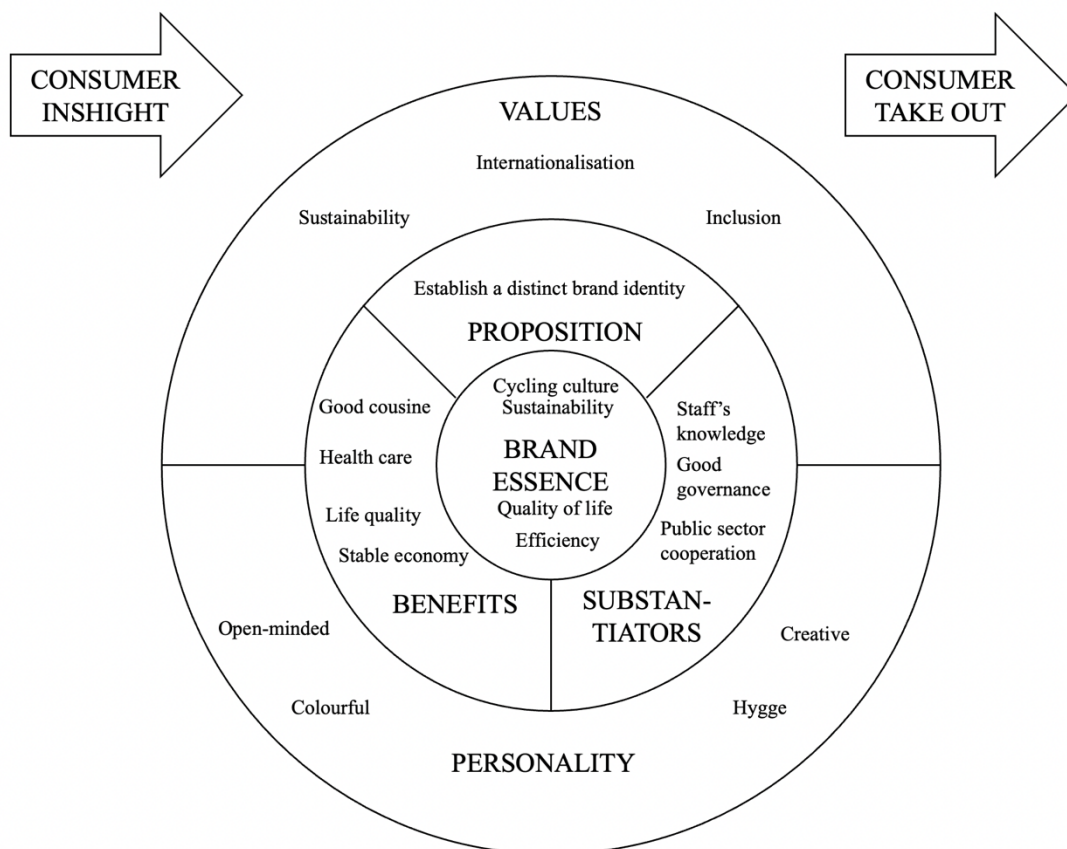


Figure 20 - The Bull's Eye method applied to the city of Copenhagen

### 3.2.1.2. Copenhagen Brand Image

The image of Copenhagen city brand is closely linked to the associations that are created voluntarily or involuntarily in people's minds. Voluntary associations are those that Wonderful Copenhagen (WOCO) can create. That is why it is useful to go and analyse its vision and strategy. The case of Copenhagen is a very special one in that vision, strategy, and image are closely linked. Specifically, the vision proposed by Wonderful Copenhagen is in brief “*Localhood for everyone*”. This sentence can be explained by analysing the strategy that WOCO launched in 2020, called “*End of Tourism as We Know It, Towards A New Beginning of Localhood*”<sup>164</sup>. Through this strategy, an attempt is made to put all people at the centre of the city. Wonderful Copenhagen is an organization driven by individuals with a strong professional desire to provide the finest

<sup>164</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2020)

outcomes for and via their partners. The residents are their destination's biggest draw. Indeed, according to WOCO, the human connection to a place is made through the locals and the feeling of temporarily or permanently belonging to a community. Greater Copenhagen, one of the world's most liveable cities and regions, has an outstanding pull-on for tourists, especially when they're looking for a transient sense of local identity. It may seem logical that a place's viability is related to its inhabitants. It is up to the locals to provide an authentic experience of a liveable destination, and the liveability of the place itself depends on how effectively people-based growth is supported and on how properly locals interact with tourists in a way that at the very least maintains balance and, at the very best, enhances the liveability of the locals. In addition to seeking to increase tourist numbers, Wonderful Copenhagen also sees the need to grow from a people-based viewpoint to increase the value of tourists to society as a whole on a human scale. This vision of tourism and citizenship is closely linked to the notion that residents are brand ambassadors for the city. This idea was presented and theorised by Zenker, Braun, and Petersen in 2017 but was then used in the strategy of the city of Copenhagen<sup>165</sup>. Interviews conducted by the city's DMO revealed how inhabitants recognise their value added to the city's brand and the improvement of its internationalisation. Furthermore, 46% stated that they feel a responsibility to give visitors an enjoyable experience<sup>166</sup>. Starting from the elaboration of this strategy, Wonderful Copenhagen has identified storytelling consisting of five stories that collectively capture the city's cultural characteristics and are an integral part of the collective imaginary:

1. Design and architecture. The city is known internationally as the “*city of design*”. In addition to innovation in terms of design, Copenhagen offers fantastic architecture thanks to its canals, modern buildings, and old streets.
2. Gastronomy. It is in Copenhagen that the New Nordic Cuisine was born. Over the years, the city became home to a highly internationalised cuisine that is still able to offer the flavours of its homeland. Thanks to its culinary sophistication, it is in Copenhagen that some of the best and most famous restaurants in the world can be found.

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<sup>165</sup> (Zenker, Braun, & Petersen, 2017)

<sup>166</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2020)

3. Sustainability. Sustainability is one of the city's main goals. That is why Copenhagen has the ambition to become the world's first carbon-neutral city by 2025. In addition, efficient waste management, a cycling culture, and efficient transport help to create the image of a green city.
4. A pocket-sized fairy tale. Copenhagen's history and culture are also closely linked to the presence of one of the world's oldest monarchies. This gives the city a fairy-tale atmosphere, thanks also to the presence of historical buildings and castles belonging to the royal family.
5. Tolerance and diversity. Finally, Copenhagen is a tolerant city that is open to people and love in all forms. This also makes it a safe city to live in for all kinds of people.

After analysing the Localhood strategy used, it can be stated that there is no single city brand, as the DMO operates through multiple themes (architecture, design, gastronomy, sustainability, history and monarchy, and art). This characteristic also emerged from the interview with Giuseppe Liverino, who stated that: “*we have created multiple sub-brands, each with its own story and its own storytelling that you can adapt according to the target group*”<sup>167</sup>. Giuseppe explained that the brand told and communicated geographically can be different. For example, in Italy or Spain, it is of great impact to tell the story of the city of Copenhagen as the “*capital of design, architecture, bicycle, and gastronomy*”. The same strategy cannot be applied in Sweden, for example, as it is a neighbouring region and very similar in terms of gastronomy, architecture, and lifestyle. This means that for each market WOCO aims to create a puzzle of the strongest themes so the image of the city changes from market to market. Furthermore, the strategy covers not only different markets but also different types of travellers. For example, if the target audience is businesspeople and the goal is to attract a congress to Copenhagen, the stories are the same, but different themes are used with congress guests, such as the compactness of the city, the convenience of public transport, the connections to the city centre. Thus, communication for guests’ congress changes, as does communication for cruise passengers<sup>168</sup>. In summary, we can say that the image on

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<sup>167</sup> (Liverino, Interview Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)

<sup>168</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2020)

a general level is linked to the five themes on which the Localhood strategy is based, which are then adapted according to use. It is, therefore, a very flexible model characterised, however, by a high level of complexity in the communication of the city's brand image. Thus, this high complexity makes it difficult to incorporate the positive associations created in people's minds into the brand identity.

### ***3.2.2. Primary Communication***

As also seen above before proceeding with the key areas related to primary communication, it is necessary to understand what links are created between the DMO, in this case Wonderful Copenhagen, and the various actors in the city. As emerged during the interview with Giuseppe Liverino<sup>169</sup> the WOCO's communication is closely linked to politics, so they create partnerships with the Ministry of Industry and Trade. They also reach out to the Copenhagen City Council with whom Wonderful Copenhagen has a close dialogue daily and with whom the strategy must go hand in hand. The highest authority in Copenhagen is the Copenhagen City Council, formed by 55 members elected every four-years. The specifications for each committee's responsibilities are established by the City Council, which is chaired by the mayor. The Lord Mayor sets the agenda for City Council sessions, hosts them, and serves as the meeting's chair. Except for discussing sensitive topics, the sessions are open to the public and the media. However, for a municipal decision to be communicated and generate a positive image, it must be in line with the image the DMO wants to give of the city brand.

At the same time, Copenhagen's brand communication is not only done in close cooperation with the municipality but also with other actors such as the convention bureau, or the hotels. When an investment or anything else that Wonderful Copenhagen considers to be in line with the city's image and identity is made, they approach the actor directly, telling them how the DMO would like to communicate the investment and trying to create a collaboration that may or may not be remunerated. It may also happen the other way around, i.e., that actors contact directly WOCO to try to publicize an event,

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<sup>169</sup> (Liverino, Interview Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)

investment, initiative, or other. In that case, Wonderful Copenhagen may choose to accept and create content if the initiative is considered in line with the desired image<sup>170</sup>.

### *3.2.2.1. Infrastructure Projects*

Copenhagen is a very innovative city with many infrastructure projects under simultaneous development. For example, many projects are aimed at countering the problem of frequent cloudbursts in the city. Given the potential for up to a 40% increase in rain volume and a 55% rise in the probability of regular downpours, the Copenhagen City Council in 2012 prepared a Storm Surge Management Plan, consisting of the implementation of 300 projects over the next 20 years. Specifically, the capital of Denmark intends to expand its blue and green infrastructure. Parks as well as other green spaces will collect rainfall for storage and controlled seepage, while water conveyance avenues will divert extra water away from flooded areas. Parks, as well as other green spaces, will collect rainfall for storage and controlled seepage while water-transporting boulevards will divert extra water away from flooded areas. In addition to retaining and draining water and shielding the entire city from rains, the projects that combine sewer-based solutions and green surfaces furthermore present a strong commercial case since they are expected to generate benefits totalling \$767 million. In addition, the benefits that it is possible to bring are of different kinds<sup>171</sup>:

- **Social Benefits:** The city's sustainable design offers recreational possibilities and stress-relieving activities, which sustains a high standard of living for Copenhagen citizens.
- **Economic Benefits:** The Cloudburst Management Plan will help Copenhagen minimize the estimated \$3 billion in damage caused by flooding and severe rainfall over the next 100 years.
- **Environmental Benefits:** The city's ecological infrastructure serves a variety of purposes, including circulation of air and shade production, which help Copenhagen consume less energy for cooling buildings.

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<sup>170</sup> (Liverino, Interview Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)

<sup>171</sup> (C40, 2015)



- Health Advantages - Copenhagen's noise and air quality issues will be remedied and reduced as part of the Cloudburst Management Plan<sup>172</sup>.

In addition, as previously analysed, Copenhagen is a very sustainability-conscious city. This is also reflected within its infrastructure projects and in the plans established by the city council. As early as 2009, the city has been undergoing the “*Green Transport Policy*”. This policy had been implemented nationwide with the aim of maximizing the country's efforts in reducing emissions from public transportation. Moreover, it was determined to begin a long-term planning project to analyse projected large-scale infrastructure needs and highlight the most important strategic alternatives for expanding Danish infrastructure after 2020. Analysing specifically Copenhagen, in 2012 the city adopted the CPH 2025 Climate Plane, which set a long-term goal of being the first carbon-free capital by 2025, with a target of a 20% decrease in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from 2005 levels by 2015<sup>173</sup>. This is precisely why the municipality of Copenhagen is developing numerous green initiatives and innovative projects. These projects cover various facets of city life. For example, Copenhagen Harbour's reconstruction has produced aesthetically pleasing metropolitan districts with improved local business environments, revenue production, and employment creation. Furthermore, in terms of infrastructure the UN regional offices in Copenhagen, developed by 3XN, are one of Denmark's most environmentally friendly buildings. Among other innovations, it makes use of rooftop solar panels, a toilet water recycling system, and a seawater conditioning system. In 2012, the structure received both the European Commission GreenBuilding Award and the highest LEED accreditation. Finally, it is important to note that these projects can upgrade and make city spaces efficient while contributing to the development of city sociality. For example, leisure places are built on rooftops. Creating spaces that can be utilized all day, makes better use of space without the need for additional structures and enhances the neighbourhood. Examples include CopenHill, a ski slope, hiking trail, bar, and meeting place on top of an industrial power plant; Konditaget Lüders, a children's play area and gym on top of a multi-story car park; and Østergro, Copenhagen's first urban

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<sup>172</sup> (C40, 2015)

<sup>173</sup> (City of Copenhagen, 2022)

farm, which is located above an old car sales office<sup>174</sup>. The infrastructure projects in question and the initiatives taken by the municipality are extensively presented on the Wonderful Copenhagen and municipal website. This can be explained as these types of initiatives that drive innovation and sustainability in the city are closely linked to the communicated brand image.

Nevertheless, the city of Copenhagen also offers numerous cultural facilities. The city is characterised by aquariums, libraries, museums, castles, and opera houses that, by fusing historical design with modern architecture, spark culture in many ways while encouraging a sense of citizenship and belonging among people. In the Danish capital, facilities devoted to the arts and creativity are essential because they offer a secure setting for musicians and artists to exhibit their work, promote social interaction, and bring in tourists and wealth. In the end, they play a critical role in creating an atmosphere that is ever-changing, diversified, and liveable<sup>175</sup>. Through its design, the Royal Danish Opera aims to forward this goal. The striking, dramatic arena is one of the biggest structures in the city and is located on the waterfront of Holmen Island. The Opera contributes to the dynamic and inspiring urban space in Holmen, along with other cultural structures in the region, bringing theatrical performances closer to locals. This tendency to adapt cultural infrastructures to the society that uses them makes it increasingly necessary to use flexible infrastructures that are able to adapt to the needs of the residents. This is crucial when handling cultural events, which might include everything from athletic events and art exhibits to concerts and festivals of films. For instance, the Royal Arena may change to accommodate various events. The skyscraper, which is in Copenhagen's Ørestad neighbourhood, simultaneously draws local and foreign audiences for concerts and international athletic events. The project, in contrast to conventional arenas, is situated inside a bustling urban neighbourhood with a high density of residents. Therefore, it was vital to implement people-centred initiatives in order to ensure peaceful coexistence: to provide new opportunities to individuals who live and work nearby, to provide tiny squares and public areas, and to create a friendly environment that fits in with the area's culture. In this way, the venue supports culture and fosters the development of the entire

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<sup>174</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2022)

<sup>175</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)

community. Finally, in terms of cultural facilities, it is important in the case of Copenhagen to emphasise libraries and the so-called “*Danish culture houses*”. In the case of libraries, these give people access to knowledge and a place to meet, network, and take part in leisure activities. They play a crucial role in Copenhagen's urban structure and act as centres of interpersonal, intellectual, and cultural life, adding to the city's distinct attractiveness. For instance, The Royal Library, often known as “*The Black Diamond*,” is one of the most notable features of the city's waterfront<sup>176</sup>. Similarly, the Danish culture houses are neighbourhood gathering places designed to give inhabitants opportunities<sup>177</sup> to get to know one another, form relationships, and develop their local community as a whole. An example is the Tingbjerg Library and Culture House, a brand-new symbol and urban driver that intends to support the healthy growth of Tingbjerg while serving as a key piece of Danish modernist architecture. At the communication level, the cultural facilities offered by the city are aimed at all three target groups of the city: residents, tourists, and businesses. Indeed, wide visibility is given to these projects on official websites, social channels, and in the national press, leading to full cooperation between municipalities and DMOs.

#### 3.2.2.2. *Landscape Strategies*

Many landscape architects and planners hold Copenhagen in high regard for its innovative efforts in sustainability as well as its leading-edge public spaces, urban design, and architecture. The city's urban development underwent a new acceleration in 1992 with the Ørestad Act, created by the municipality to overcome a phase of heavy economic recession. It consisted of the transformation from an industrial-type economy to one based on the tertiary sector, developed around a dense network of services. The construction of the Øresund bridge succeeded in attracting commuters from the Swedish city of Malmö and effectively creating a new district that functions as a counterpoint to the old city centre. This development complied with the “*Five fingers plan*”, a municipally approved plan that called for the city to grow radially from the centre along five axes (green corridors) that structured urban development from then on. To make the plan effective,

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<sup>176</sup> (Montjoy, 2023)

<sup>177</sup> (City of Copenhagen, 2021)

the implementation of a road system based mainly on electric railway lines capable of connecting “*the five fingers*” to the city centre was important. In the early 2000s, after the primary infrastructure, the construction of a series of buildings was begun with the aim of creating a vibrant building fabric characterized by typological and functional variety. Many of these have been built, while others are nearing completion under the program, which calls for completion by 2025. The same year indicated the completion of the zero-emission plan, based not only on sustainable transportation and mobility but also on the preservation and enhancement of green spaces. Garden infrastructure, parks, little parks and areas, athletic courts, and cemeteries are examples of green spaces. Also included are freshwater lakes and rivers that are surrounded by vegetation. All of the locations on the map are accessible to the public but may not be owned or managed by the city. About 2260 hectares of publicly accessible green space within the municipal boundary have been recognized, among which 200 hectares are bodies of water and aquatic regions. In addition, the metropolitan area of Copenhagen has 14.7 km of open waterways and 92 km of shoreline. Approximately 25% of the total area of the city is made up of green space<sup>178</sup>.



Figure 21 - Green spaces distribution in Copenhagen (European Commission, 2012)

<sup>178</sup> (European Commission, 2012)

In urban living, public spaces are essential. They serve as places where people may interact with one another, where different cultures and social communities can meet, and where both planned and unplanned social encounters can take place. In addition to parks and squares, Copenhagen has the unique distinction of having a vast and integrated network of bicycle lanes on its streets. Cities with efficient public spaces are more creative, healthier, and inclusive, allowing people of all socioeconomic backgrounds to take advantage of the possibilities that cities have to offer. Copenhagen's waterfront is one instance; it has undergone a cleansing process and is now swimmable. Aquatic activities, urban beaches, and floating structures—all of which are very well-liked by both locals and visitors—have been constructed as a result, giving the locals new leisure and habitation alternatives. Two examples of distinctive buildings with good architecture that add new urban amenities to their surroundings are Kalvebod Waves and Copenhagen Harbour Bath<sup>179</sup>. In Copenhagen's metropolitan neighbourhoods, town squares have also developed a high level of importance, generating spaces for socialization and leisure time. Israels Plads Square is a good example of the changes the city has gone through. In the 1950s, the area was transformed from a bustling open-air market to a car park. In order to preserve the automobiles beneath and create a sizable urban playground and activity space above, the new square, constructed in 2014, is elevated above the current street level. Superkilen is another well-known urban attraction. The plaza, which is situated in one of Denmark's most culturally as well as socially diverse areas, adopts an original design strategy by incorporating elements from several cultures through various artifacts, materials, and colours. Copenhagen serves as proof to the rest of the world that urban public spaces may be designed practically in big cities without the need for extensive green space or sophisticated road systems<sup>180</sup>. Looking at the communication of these areas and initiatives, it is possible to see a similar approach to public spaces and urban design. In fact, the formers are widely communicated and publicized as they contribute to the city's image in terms of community and sustainability. Likewise, as far as urban design is concerned, even if it is not directly part of the sub-brands considered in the

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<sup>179</sup> (European Commission, 2012)

<sup>180</sup> (Souza, 2022)

Localhood strategy, it is indirectly related to it. Indeed, communication of urban design initiatives occurs indirectly when it concerns issues that are important to the Copenhagen brand, such as the development of a common space or the improvement of a bike lane.

Looking instead at the architecture that characterizes Copenhagen, it is important to remember that for more than 600 years, Copenhagen served as the capital of the Danish Kingdom, and numerous Danish Kings built stunning constructions all across the city. Along with a large number of brand-new modern structures, Copenhagen is home to a mix of Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, and Neoclassical buildings. This is only one of several factors that led to Copenhagen being selected as the 2023 UNESCO-UIA World Capital of Architecture and the site of the next UIA World Congress of Architects. Additionally, some of the biggest names on the world architectural scene are based in Copenhagen. Probably the most well-known in recent years is Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), but there are many others worth mentioning as well, including Cobe, Henning Larsen Architects, 3XN, and many more<sup>181</sup>. For this reason, Copenhagen turns out to be a popular destination for contemporary architecture enthusiasts, a city rich in architectural and landscape attractions that are the result of sustainable interventions that combine cutting-edge Nordic design with bold urban planning related to the definition of increasingly public and interconnected spaces. From the Amager Bakke-CopenHill waste-to-energy plant, which perhaps embodies most of all the strong drive for the future that the city experiences, through the urban park in Nørrebro, continuing to Christiansholm and the cultural centre designed to celebrate the city's relationship with water. Moving within the new neighbourhoods, it is peculiar to come across architectural works hidden by urban-scale buildings. This is the case with the residential complex of Fælled Kvarter, built behind 3XN's Royal Arena to a design by Studio ONV in the terminal part of Ørestad; or the small housing development of Frikvarteret in Nordhavn, which, set back from Jaja Architects and Portland Towers' multi-story parking lot, draws a microcosm of two-story patio houses and three-story staggered houses. These buildings fit within the harbour context by leaning against the surviving masonry of the old warehouses, creating an unexpected atmosphere compared to the urban context in which one finds oneself<sup>182</sup>.

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<sup>181</sup> (Liverino, 2022)

<sup>182</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2022); (Liverino, 2022)

From a communication perspective, architecture turns out to be a key topic for the Copenhagen brand. Especially following the nomination as World Capital of Architecture 2023. For this reason, there is a strong communication push in relation to architecture with numerous dedicated articles, a strong presence on official websites, and dedicated press materials and images. This suggests a certain consistency in brand communication, as Giuseppe Liverino also stated during the interview “*When an investment is made or anything else that Wonderful Copenhagen considers to be in line with the city's image and identity, we approach the actor directly, telling them how we would like to communicate the investment and trying to create a collaboration that may or may not be remunerated*”<sup>183</sup>.



Figure 22 - Portland Towers, Ørestad, and Amager Bakke-CopenHill respectively

### 3.2.2.3. Organizational and Administrative Structure

Copenhagen is a city that has placed public-private partnerships at the centre of its system, with a significant “*leading*” role played by the state, but with increasing space left to private initiatives and citizens. With a typically Ecological Modernisation perspective, in which the active participation of the city's various economic and social actors is given great importance, Copenhagen has also chosen to place public-private partnerships at the centre of its approach to eco-innovation and “*sustainable employment*”. The administration works with companies, universities, and various organisations, through dedicated forums to develop and implement green growth. In total, the municipal administration and the local energy company have invested 185 million euros to boost the latter. This is a green response, not only to the ever-increasing demand for housing and space but also to the related economic, industrial, and tertiary activities. Hence the encouragement of eco-partnerships between the public and private sectors and

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<sup>183</sup> (Liverino, 2023)

the creation of entire neighbourhoods, and green laboratories, for local and international companies<sup>184</sup>. Another example of a PPP is that realised by the CPH City & Port Development Corporation in Copenhagen. This is a privately managed public corporation that revitalised the entire city by financing a large-scale infrastructure plan, increasing the commercial viability of public land and buildings. The overall infrastructure of the new urban regions held by CPH City & Port Development is established through collaboration with prominent construction firms. This includes building roads, waterways, public spaces, parking lots, and pipes for water and sewerage. As a development business, CPH City & Port Development is going to transfer control and upkeep of the infrastructure to the City of Copenhagen and the homeowner associations once the neighbourhoods have been fully developed<sup>185</sup>. Wonderful Copenhagen is also involved in numerous public-private partnerships. Indeed, through several networks and development programs, the DMO connects an extensive list of players within the tourism industry. More than 400 governmental and corporate partners work together with the organization to promote tourism in the Greater Copenhagen region. In particular, thanks to new alliances and collaborations, the “*Development*” business division brings together travel agencies, local citizens, governmental agencies, institutes of higher learning, and external DMOs<sup>186</sup>. Consequently, it can be observed that not only PPPs are at the core of the policy adopted by the city of Copenhagen, but they are also fundamental to the DMO to communicate the city's brand.

Turning instead to the analysis of citizen participation, it is important to emphasise its importance in a city like Copenhagen. Indeed, the administration is aware of the impossibility of pursuing the defined economic, democratic, and sustainable goals without the active participation of citizens. A prominent example of citizens participation is the long-term citizens' jury implemented by the city of Copenhagen. The project, announced in February 2023 and known as Kbenhavnering, is a pilot project with a duration of two years in which a mini public will let 36 citizens randomly chosen to share suggestions, thoughts, and proposals for the future of the city. According to Mayor Sophie

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<sup>184</sup> (Beretta, 2015)

<sup>185</sup> (State of Green, s.d.)

<sup>186</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)



Hæstorp Andersen: “*More Copenhageners need to be involved in the development of our city. They are the ones who live there, they are the ones who know it, they are the ones who love it. I am very much looking forward to hearing ideas and recommendations on what we should focus on in the future if we want to develop a city for all*”<sup>187</sup>. The City Council debates and responds to the suggestions made by the citizens' jury once they are shown to the general public. The Kbenhavnerting's mission is to improve communication and collaboration between Copenhagen residents and the City of Copenhagen about the redevelopment of the city<sup>188</sup>. Despite the citizen participation initiatives that have been established in recent years in the city of Copenhagen, the city is still far from achieving constant and active participation. Furthermore, even though the initiatives set up so far are not very numerous, there is a lack of communication between them and the different target groups, especially residents. This contrasts with the “*Localhood*” strategy adopted by Wonderful Copenhagen and downplays the role of citizens as brand ambassadors of the city.

#### 3.2.2.4. City's Behaviour

To analyse the last area of primary communication it is necessary to investigate the main characteristics of the city's behaviour, i.e., the financial incentives for the Greater Copenhagen region and the events organised. Starting with the incentives granted by the city of Copenhagen and the Danish government more generally, it is important to focus on the incentives at the business level. Denmark's competitive tax climate is just one of the many factors that make it the finest country in which to conduct business. Business expenses for entrepreneurs are generally minimal; Denmark distinguishes out among European nations for having one of the lowest worker costs and social security rates. Additionally, at 22%, the corporate tax rate is far lower than it is in the majority of European nations. Furthermore, Denmark is the only Scandinavian nation that has not implemented double taxes. As a result, Danish businesses that establish subsidiaries abroad won't have to pay additional taxes. Many tax incentives exist in Denmark that can be deducted from certain capital expenses. Capital expenditures made to support R&D

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<sup>187</sup> (Bürgerrat, 2023)

<sup>188</sup> (Bürgerrat, 2023)

may be promptly written off under current Danish law. The taxpayer can alternatively opt for tax depreciation, which is a second option. Its term is the current fiscal year and the subsequent four years, and it will be implemented utilizing the straight-line approach. Additionally, any expenses made for an examination of raw materials may be deducted. The cost of acquiring patents and know-how may be fully deductible by the Company or may be expensed over the following seven years on a straight-line basis. A 130% tax credit for R&D expenses, the absence of capital duties, and a net wealth tax are only a few of the other advantages<sup>189</sup>. Additionally, Denmark welcomes international entrepreneurs, and this is also demonstrated by the level and type of assistance provided to them. Institutions in the public and business sectors help investors of non-Danish ancestry. Danish incubators, investment funds, and research institutions also support international business owners. The Start-up Denmark program is the main initiative devoted to aiding those who intend to conduct business in Denmark. The Danish Ministry of Employment and the Ministry of Business are in charge of running it. Its principal objective is to open up the Danish market to foreign business owners and assist them in the early phases of business development. The goal of the Start-up Denmark program is to entice international businesspeople to Denmark who could support job creation, economic growth, and a worldwide start-up network. Foreign business owners who are talented, knowledgeable, and determined to build their companies help Denmark become more competitive and generate new employment. After an entrepreneur's application is approved, they will be able to rely on help from the Danish government for two years as part of Start-up Denmark to relocate to Denmark and operate their firm. It is feasible to extend the program for an additional three years. All businesses with significant development potential and potential global market reach are eligible to participate in the Start-up Denmark project<sup>190</sup>. As far as the Greater Copenhagen region is concerned, the Copenhagen Capacity organisation is specifically involved in supporting business activities on a local but also international level, by coming into contact with new foreign entrepreneurs. The services offered include business start-up assistance, land and property search, talent acquisition, partnership search & matchmaking, and business

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<sup>189</sup> (Copenhagen Capacity, 2022)

<sup>190</sup> (Start up Denmark, 2023)

development<sup>191</sup>. The incentives proposed by the government do not only concern companies but also individuals. There are numerous plans aimed at residents or potential residents. For example, as part of the environmental goals pursued by the city, incentives have been implemented to increase the spread of alternative fuel infrastructure and vehicles. This legislation divides zero-emission and low-emission vehicles. In the first case, there are reductions in registration tax and taxable value, as well as a payment of only 40 per cent of the registration tax. In the second case, there are also smaller reductions in registration tax and taxable value and a payment of 50 per cent of the registration tax<sup>192</sup>. Another target group to which these incentives refer is students. In fact, Danes over the age of 18 can access the incentives provided by the 'SU', the acronym for the State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme, run by the Danish Agency for Higher Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation. Young people who enrol in a course after high school receive grants monthly, with a “*bonus*” of 12 months of coverage beyond the planned date of completion of their studies. The average amount ranges from the equivalent of around EUR 350 per month for children who stayed at home with their parents to peaks of more than EUR 700-750 for those who moved out after the age of 18. Not counting extras and complementary measures: from 'student loans', repayable with a variable interest rate within 15 years, to additional monthly payments reserved for new parents (6 more instalments) and new mothers (12). An accumulation of benefits for more than 300,000 young people, for an annual investment of DKK 11 billion (EUR 1.5 billion). Almost 1% of the national GDP<sup>193</sup>. Regarding the city's behaviour related to financial incentives, it must be emphasised that, despite the presence of numerous initiatives and plans to support the city's most important plans, these are only communicated through the official websites of the organisations involved. This means that all the communication that can be done by e.g., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark on the national level and by the municipality and Wonderful Copenhagen on the city level is missing. Instead, more

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<sup>191</sup> (Copenhagen Capacity, 2022)

<sup>192</sup> (European Alternative Fuels Observatory, 2022)

<sup>193</sup> (Magnani, 2014)

communication about the proposed incentives at regional and national level towards businesses and residents could benefit the Copenhagen city brand.

Regarding the events organised by the city, we have already mentioned the branding technique used in the case of the city of Copenhagen: the events branding technique. The Danish capital is indeed a vibrant city with hundreds of events organised annually thanks to the collaboration between the municipality, the DMO, and the Copenhagen Convention Bureau. Like other major capitals, Copenhagen hosts annual events such as Copenhagen Fashion Week in February and August and Copenhagen Pride in August. However, there are also many different kinds of events that characterise the city of Copenhagen. One of these is the 3 Days of Design, a three-day festival with more than 270 exhibitors, created to discover a comprehensive range of the greatest design firms in the nation. This event is one of the most important for the capital city and is closely linked to the city's image as a “*city of design*”, as stated in WOCO's Localhood strategy. During the winter, the Copenhagen Light Festival takes place, an outdoor event where one can find dozens of light installations that make the city but also the surrounding areas shine. Moreover, it is a sustainable event, powered by green energy, in line with the city's sustainable goals. There are also numerous musical events such as the Copenhagen Jazz Festival, the Roskilde Festival, or Distorsion. In particular, the latter is organised between May and June along the city streets. It is one of the largest street parties organised in the world, lasting five days, where artists of all kinds perform in the city's street parties or clubs. Then there are the events organised during the Christmas period. In the city of Copenhagen, it is a magical time when everything is decorated with a Christmas theme. On 13 December, there is the Santa Lucia parade in Kayaks, in which hundreds of kayaks paddle through the city's canals singing Christmas carols decorated with Christmas lights and decorations. For the period from 1 to 25 December, there is a daily lighting of the lights at Hotel d'Angleterre in the city centre. It is a giant-sized advent calendar that opens a box with a light show every day<sup>194</sup>. Furthermore, having been named World Capital of Architecture 2023, the city has more than 300 events planned this year, many of which will be centred around the Danish Architecture Centre housed in the BLOX building in

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<sup>194</sup> (Visit Copenhagen, 2023)

the heart of the city. We can say that the vibrant tradition of events characterises the city of Copenhagen, being able to attract all kinds of target groups. Moreover, given the importance these events have in terms of image, branding, and economic return, great attention is paid to their communication. Indeed, a large section of the DMO website is entirely dedicated to the events and all related updates, in addition to the large space dedicated to them on official social media. Moreover, the Wonderful Copenhagen website offers direct access to the official website of the Copenhagen Convention Bureau.

### ***3.2.3. Secondary Communication***

An in-depth examination of the formal and intentional information transmission that most usually takes place via well-known marketing strategies is referred to as secondary communication analysis. The emphasis of this section will be on the logos, slogans, and other marketing strategies and tools employed by the Copenhagen city brand. As for the city's logo, the Little Mermaid has always been the symbol of the city of Copenhagen. A statue along the city's canals was initially dedicated to it. The Little Mermaid was designed at the behest of Carl Jacobsen, son of the founder of Danish beer Carlsberg, who wished to pay homage to the city of Copenhagen with a unique sculpture. The artist selected to shape the design was Danish sculptor Edvard Eriksen. Jacobsen's idea was to pay tribute to the writer Hans Christian Andersen and his masterpiece, the tale of the Little Mermaid. The Little Mermaid has since become a symbol of the city used and has also been represented in the Wonderful Copenhagen logo.



*Figure 23 - Official Logo Wonderful Copenhagen (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)*

The city's slogan also turns out to be closely related to the figure of writer Hans Christian Andersen. In fact, in 1952 during the setting of the musical Hans Christian Andersen, Danny Kaye sang “*Wonderful, wonderful, Copenhagen*”. The refrain of the

song, which has since become the melodic representation of Copenhagen, was adopted by WOCO as the city's official slogan “*Wonderful Copenhagen*”.

Looking at the strategy adopted for the city branding goal, Wonderful Copenhagen market Copenhagen and the Greater Copenhagen Region with a focus on three main targets that can also be deduced from the structure of the site: residents, tourists, and businesses. By enticing suitable media, branding, and marketing initiatives are carried out on Western and Chinese SoMe platforms<sup>195</sup>. The channels used strictly depend on whom the communication is targeted. For example, the international press and the press portal [wonderfulcopenhagen.com/press](http://wonderfulcopenhagen.com/press) are used to dialogue with outside journalists. Then for the consumer, the main channels are the official websites [wonderfulcopenhagen.com](http://wonderfulcopenhagen.com) [visitcopenhagen.com](http://visitcopenhagen.com), Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts, and a newsletter targeted at tourists and Danes, which is called Copenhagen Unfolded and which uncovers a few of Copenhagen's secrets and tips. Then there are other channels, for example, the official website of the convention bureau and the cruise website. Lastly, for corporate communication, LinkedIn is the main channel, targeted at the world of Danish politics or the world of the Danish service industry. There, the DMO tries to illustrate its main achievements so that the country would understand precisely the value generated by WOCO for Denmark<sup>196</sup>. Moreover, during the interview with Giuseppe Liverino, it emerged how the strategy of Wonderful Copenhagen, at the moment, is being reworked but the new strategy is not yet public. That is why as of now they still rely on the old Localhood strategy partly described above. As mentioned above, this strategy is based on five key stories: (1) Design and architecture, (2) Gastronomy, (3) Sustainability, (4) A pocket-sized fairy tale, and (5) Tolerance and diversity. In addition, Localhood consists of 5 strategic coordinates that have made it possible to use this strategy for a long time:

1. Shareability is king. It is based on the relevance of connectivity between people. In fact, to this day thanks to social networks everything is always connected. Therefore, Wonderful Copenhagen must be able to add shareable value.

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<sup>195</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2023)

<sup>196</sup> (Liverino, 2023)

2. Once attracted, twice valued. It involves analysing visitors' consumption patterns, identifying weaknesses, and eliminating them to increase consumer satisfaction and create value.
3. Tomorrow's business today. This sub-strategy is based on the need for long-term investment to ensure the city's attractiveness to growing markets, including the Asian region.
4. Co-innovation at heart. As has also been possible to observe above, Wonderful Copenhagen's partner network continues to be a valuable asset. The latter is based on the need for agility and innovation in order to ensure efficient network management.
5. People-based growth. The last sub-strategy fully expresses the Localhood strategy. Indeed, it highlights the need to attract more visitors but from a growth perspective that has people at its base.

It is through these strategic coordinates that the Copenhagen DMO has been able to create a different way of experiencing tourism<sup>197</sup>. Indeed, Wonderful Copenhagen has been, one of the first tourist boards in the world to focus on the problems of tourist overcrowding while not suffering from it. Copenhagen does not have problems with over tourism but looking at the examples of Barcelona, Venice, Amsterdam and the DMO decided to try to prevent it. As also Giuseppe Liverino said: *“In order to prevent this, we came up with the Localhood strategy, which is based on promoting not so much tourist Copenhagen but the Copenhagen lifestyle and therefore the local realities and trying to do this with a seasonal adjustment approach”*<sup>198</sup>. In other words, this strategy has set the goal of promoting January, February, and the darker months in Copenhagen, where nothing happens, to make tourists understand why they must come to Copenhagen in those months. In addition to seasonal adjustment, this strategy has also given a direction in terms of decentralising tourism, thanks to the 10x project, which aims to create insights able to develop a sustainable tourism industry in Copenhagen by 2030<sup>199</sup>. Among other things, representatives of local communities were interviewed in all districts of

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<sup>197</sup> (Wonderful Copenhagen, 2020)

<sup>198</sup> (Liverino, 2023)

<sup>199</sup> (10xCopenhagen, 2020)

Copenhagen to find out how they feel about tourists. This is very important so that the Localhood strategy can be implemented, and tourists feel welcome in the city's atmosphere. The study data revealed that in 99% of the cases residents appreciate tourists, while in the neighbourhood where the Nyhavn Canal is, there was a critical eye toward tourism. This issue and the Localhood strategy influenced WOCO's content communication strategy. They stopped promoting Nyhavn five years ago, they removed all images of Nyhavn from the website and social media and they have created agreements with foreign newspapers whereby their articles will not include photos of Nyhavn. Likewise, many activities and attractions away from the city centre have been promoted in order to make the entire Greater Copenhagen region stand out. In summary, it is possible to say that the main elements of the Localhood strategy are deseasonalisation and decentralisation<sup>200</sup>.

### 3.2.4. Tertiary Communication

Going to analyse the word-of-mouth related to the city brand of Copenhagen<sup>201</sup> we first go to study the trend related to the city name. Here it is possible to see that the word "Copenhagen" over time has a fairly linear trend. However, it is easy to notice the peak recorded in December 2009. The latter is probably related to the UN Climate Change Conference that was held in Copenhagen at the Bella Center and saw more than 40,000 people apply for the Conference accreditation. Moreover, even in the case of Copenhagen, it is possible to note a decrease in public interest in the city in conjunction with the COVID-19 pandemic. Thereafter, a positive trend was re-established, which saw an increase in interest in the city.



Figure 24 - The term "Copenhagen" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

<sup>200</sup> (Liverino, 2023)

<sup>201</sup> (Google Trends, 2023)



As for the second term to be analysed, the latter refers to Copenhagen's slogan and at the same time to the name of the city's official DMO, i.e., “*Wonderful Copenhagen*”. A steadily decreasing trend can be seen here. Despite strong fluctuations in the early 2000s, there has been a decrease in the search for Wonderful Copenhagen since 2008. This may be because it is not a term that has become particularly important at the level of city branding. For this reason, the official site of the DMO is primarily researched by users indirectly through the use of other designations.

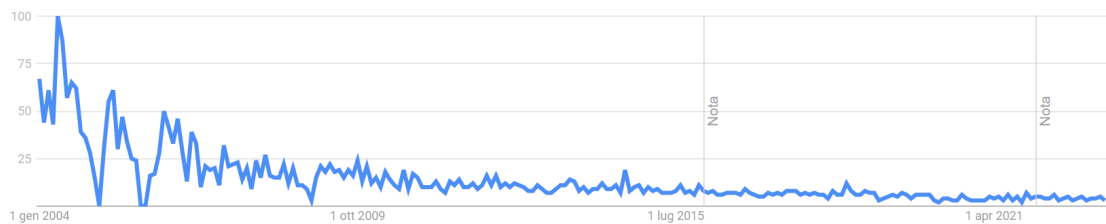


Figure 25 - The term "Wonderful Copenhagen" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The following term will refer to more specific terms related to the three different target groups: residents, tourists, and businesses. In particular, the first term to be analysed attempts to go and investigate the behaviour and WOM generated by the target group of tourists. In this case, a steadily increasing trend can be seen. Despite strong fluctuations in the early 2000s, a slightly but steadily increasing trend has been established since 2007, interrupted only by the advent of the pandemic, following which the trend has been re-established. This positive trend is closely linked to tourists' willingness to visit the city and is therefore indicative of a good destination marketing and branding strategy.



Figure 26 - The term "Visit Copenhagen" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The fourth term to be analysed refers to the target group of businesses. Accordingly, by searching for the words “*Business Copenhagen*”, it is possible to observe a slightly decreasing trend from 2009 onward. Nevertheless, following the pandemic from COVID-

19, a slight increase can be seen, also related to new reforms in favour of Danish and foreign businesses and start-ups. In summary, the stability of the Danish economy, tax advantages, and programs launched for new businesses in the city of Copenhagen may be some of the potential reasons why the Copenhagen business has been in the news.



Figure 27 - The term "Business Copenhagen" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The last term to be analysed under tertiary communication refers to the target group of residents. The results show that despite initial peaks, the willingness to move to and reside in the city of Copenhagen has been constant over time. Even during the pandemic years, there is no sharp decrease as in the case of the previously analysed terms. This result may be related to a good level of brand reputation, the presence of economic subsidies, and a high quality of life in the city of Copenhagen.

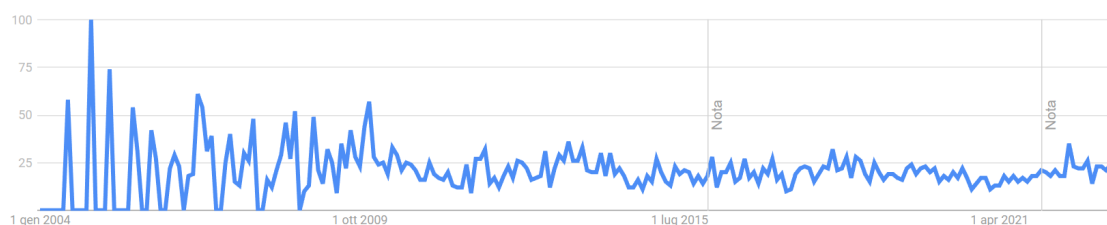


Figure 28 - The term "Live in Copenhagen" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

### 3.3. Hamburg

The city of Hamburg is branded by the local DMO: Hamburg Marketing GmbH (HMG). It is in charge of managing the marketing activities of the city of Hamburg, including providing support for the implementation of branding activities of new city-related projects. In addition, the DMO is responsible for ensuring a consistent and coherent city brand and increasing its visibility. Indeed, its mission is “*Raising and expanding Hamburg’s attractiveness*”<sup>202</sup>. It is a holding company for the marketing of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, that brings together under its umbrella the Hamburg Marketing GmbH, the Hamburg Tourismus GmbH, the Hamburg Convention Bureau, and the Hamburg Invest GmbH<sup>203</sup>.

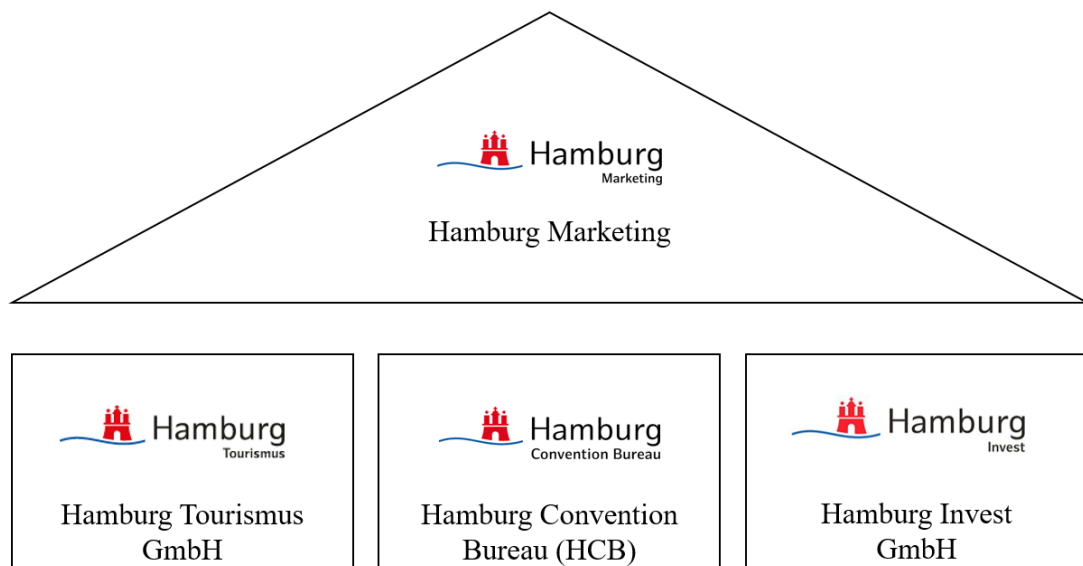


Figure 29 - Structure of the Hamburg Marketing Holding (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2023)

Specifically, each subsidiary has clearly delineated tasks and responsibilities:

- Hamburg Marketing. The Hamburg brand is created, promoted, and coordinated by Hamburg Marketing GmbH. The HMG links the efforts of other parties engaged in Hamburg-related marketing and seeks to strongly advertise the advantageous geographic characteristics of the Hamburg Metropolitan Region. To provide an integrated look for all Hamburg

<sup>202</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2023)

<sup>203</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2023); (Zenker S. , 2023)

communications, the HMG is in charge of the brand's communication patterns and offers all municipal partners a common communication template. The brand service also contains in-depth image content, video footage, and writings that highlight Hamburg's primary brand components.

- Hamburg Tourismus GmbH. Hamburg is promoted as a vacation destination in Germany and worldwide by the Hamburg Tourismus GmbH. Its primary responsibility is to coordinate the growth of tourist infrastructures, products, and services. The HHT offers visitors the most complete options for the time they spend in Hamburg. Additionally, it provides its partners with a shared platform for marketing their travel-related services and goods through high-coverage brochures and online platforms like the event archive and the Hamburg Tourismus application. The HHT works with local, national, and worldwide marketing organizations (including the German National Tourist Board), the travel sector, and the Hamburg tourism industry to establish new synergies. The region's tourism offerings are made more diverse, well-liked, and successful by the Hamburg Tourismus GmbH. Furthermore, the HHT promotes the Hamburg Metropolitan place's future growth as a cosmopolitan, liveable place and helps to raise the quality of life. In other words, the HHT constantly assesses the appeal, variety, scope, and calibre of its offerings.
- Hamburg Convention Bureau. The Hamburg Convention Bureau assists the meetings sector as a knowledgeable partner. It concentrates on promoting Hamburg as a meetings and convention venue, particularly globally. The HCB finds appropriate event locations in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region and makes pertinent relationships with partners, advertisers, and media professionals. The qualified staff combines strong local knowledge with a wide range of skills and a good network - from business conferences to significant public events. The HCB also organizes its own events and carries out a variety of communication strategies. By conducting market analysis, benchmarking, and market tracking, the HCB establishes the framework for strategically enhancing Hamburg as a place and maximizing its already present potential.

- Hamburg Invest. The Hamburg Invest acts as a focal point of contact for the larger business community, in particular for SMEs and craft firms, and assists companies concerning the implementation of reorganizing and investment projects. Additionally, the Hamburg Invest offers direction through Hamburg's administrative framework. It facilitates communication between key players and takes part in the promotion of Hamburg as a business site. Additionally, it systematically advances the objectives of global businesses, trade networks, and associations. Lastly, an affiliate of Hamburg Invest, the Hamburg Invest Service GmbH, arranges joint promotional booths for Hamburg's economic stakeholders at significant international trade shows<sup>204</sup>.

It is then possible to observe the components of the organization and how they are able to generate value for the target groups. In terms of target groups, from the official website it is possible to identify three main target groups: tourists, residents, and companies and investors. Furthermore, as emerged during the interview with Sebastian Zenker: *“in this case, communication is diversified. Although there are themes to suit all users, some topics are very specific and addressed to a precise target group”*<sup>205</sup>.

### ***3.3.1. Identity and image of the city***

#### *3.3.1.1. Hamburg Identity*

After competing to host the Olympic Games in 2004 but losing, Hamburg began actively establishing its brand. Political leaders took the initiative to establish the city's brand because they believed that improved coordination of marketing efforts with other partners interested in promoting the city and exploitation of Hamburg's strong features were necessary. The process of developing a brand began with an awareness of the need to make investments in its growth and to offer unified administration for the city brand of Hamburg. The major goal is to raise Hamburg's profile on a national and worldwide level and to raise awareness of the benefits of its location. The creation of a brand also led to

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<sup>204</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2023)

<sup>205</sup> (Zenker S. , 2023)

the need to create a brand identity. It is possible to analyse it specifically through the application of the Bull's Eye method<sup>206</sup>.

*Values:* in the case of the city of Hamburg, it is possible to identify some key values such as entrepreneurial spirit and open-mindedness. However, it is important to note that these values are only inferred but not clearly defined by the city. This can lead to confusion and a gap in the definition of the city's identity.

*Personality:* the city of Hamburg, thanks to its Hanseatic heritage, defines itself as a free city, in terms of religion, lifestyle, culture, political or sexual orientation<sup>207</sup>. This is certainly one of the main traits that characterize the city. In addition, it is a continuously developing city, which has a strong connection with the water and its harbour having based its development for years on maritime trade. Finally, Hamburg's personality is characterized by a vibrant culture pervaded by change due to the presence of multiple nationalities inhabiting it.

*Benefits:* Hamburg is a highly internationalised city due to its port but also due to its proximity to major European cities. In addition, it has an excellent public transport system operating 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Its proximity to the sea is also indicative of a high quality of life, in addition to the pleasant environment and the stable economic system.

*Substantiators:* these benefits are first and foremost linked to the historical characteristics of the city, which, thanks to the advantageous location of the port and its long history of independence as a city-state, was able to develop into a powerful economic and commercial centre. With the greatest GDP in the nation and earnings that are around 12% more than the national average, Hamburg is the wealthiest city in Germany. In addition, Hamburg has been one of the most environmentally friendly cities in Germany for more than a century. The “*Grünes Netz*” plan aims to eliminate cars almost completely by 2043, combining the existing large green areas with cycle paths, pedestrian paths, public gardens, and parks<sup>208</sup>.

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<sup>206</sup> (Company internal documents, 2007)

<sup>207</sup> (Hamburg.com, 2022)

<sup>208</sup> (Marro, 2021)

*Proposition:* the Hamburg city brand proposes to raise and expand Hamburg’s attractiveness. This is possible through the full development of the brand and the use of successful communication. Furthermore, the aim is to generate an image and identity of Hamburg that is consistent with the city itself and able to generate interest in Germany and abroad<sup>209</sup>.

*Brand essence:* in summary, it is possible to define Hamburg as a city rich in history and culture but at the same time constantly changing and ready to absorb the characteristics of its citizens. The city's brand is also closely linked to its high quality of life and excellent economic situation. Thanks to the presence of the port and the network of canals Hamburg is also known as “*the city at the waterfront*” or “*Gateway to the World*”. This is related to the importance of maritime trade and port activities, which provide more than 156,000 jobs <sup>210</sup>.

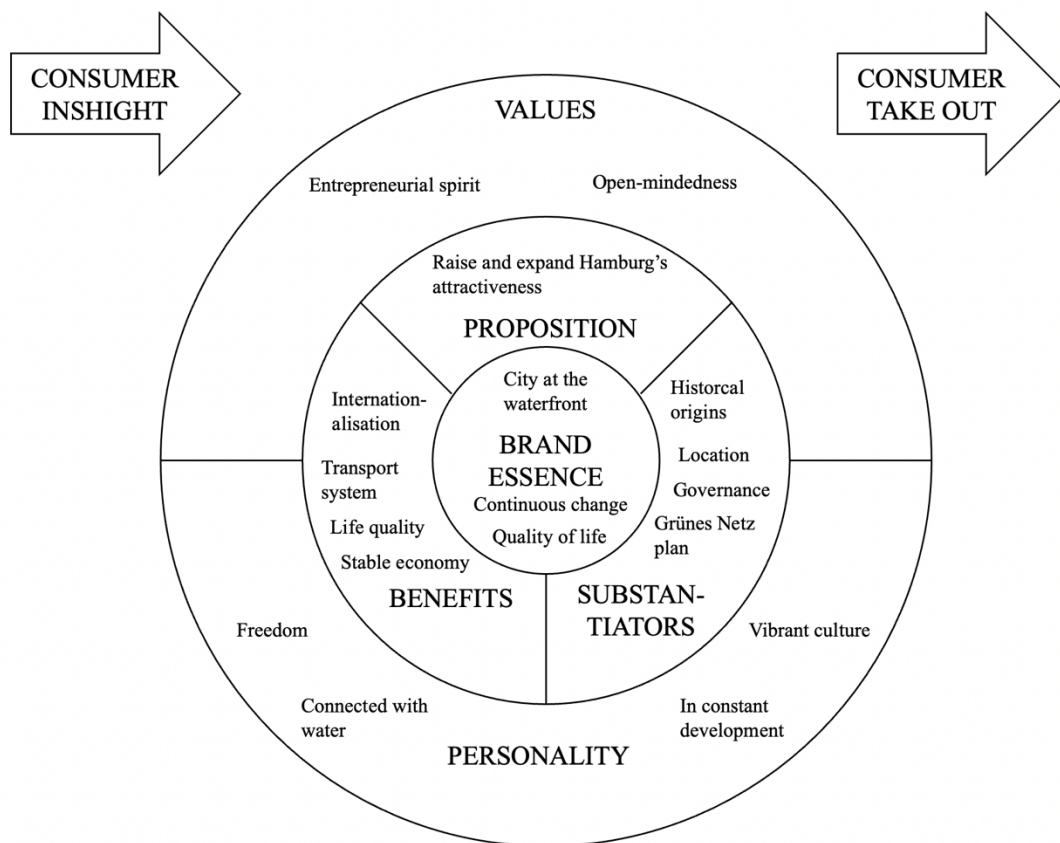


Figure 30 - The Bull's Eye method applied to the city of Hamburg

<sup>209</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2023)

<sup>210</sup> (Zenker & Beckmann, 2013)

### 3.3.1.2. Hamburg Brand Image

Hamburg's city brand image is closely linked to the associations that are formed in people's minds. These are strictly related to the vision and the branding strategies adopted by the local DMO. According to Hamburg Marketing GmbH, their vision is to “*Increase value added and the quality of life in Hamburg*”<sup>211</sup>. This, even if very general, is related to the strategy implemented by HMG toward the city brand. Indeed, the strategy & brand management section seeks to prominently position Hamburg as a brand based on predetermined target markets. All initiatives are geared toward promoting, strengthening, and growing the Hamburg Metropolitan Region's reputation and, by extension, the Hamburg brand on a local, national, and international scale. Based on the HMG's strategic directives, the brand management group coordinates and links the efforts of all parties involved in marketing Hamburg. Additionally, the team creates communication materials, helps partners and stakeholders engaged in marketing the Hamburg Metropolitan Region, and applies suitable communication patterns when executing Hamburg-related communication. As a result of the activities undertaken, to date, Hamburg can be seen as a brand, around which numerous associations are formed. The perceptions of individuals were initially studied with a market survey dating back to 2004. Later, in 2015, further measurements were made to define a brand communication strategy that was consistent with the image people had of the city of Hamburg. The most recent survey covered a composite sample of 4,800 individuals, 1,200 companies operating in the Hamburg region, and additional individuals from international target markets<sup>212</sup>. The conclusions of the research served as the foundation for creating the Hamburg brand's success modules. The following 12 modules serve as the strategic cornerstones for all marketing initiatives pertaining to Hamburg:

1. City of the waterfront: The influence of water on the Hamburg brand is significant. There, Hamburg's most notable assets are still its harbour, HafenCity, Speicherstadt, and St. Pauli Fischmarkt.

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<sup>211</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2023)

<sup>212</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2018)



2. Hamburg Metropolitan Region: Many individuals believe that the Hamburg region also adds to Hamburg's appeal as a city. The great quality of life (which combines urban life, nature, and water), the Hanseatic legacy of the area, and the North and Baltic Seas are all noteworthy cross-cutting characteristics.
3. Public festivals and events: the city is also well known for the festivals and events held in Hamburg. Among these, it is important to name the Hamburg DOM funfair and the harbour anniversary.
4. Shopping hub: The target group related to Scandinavian countries recognizes the city of Hamburg as a major shopping hub with a variety of shopping opportunities.
5. City of sport: Private persons claim that Hamburg distinguishes itself not only for the wide variety of elite sporting events it hosts but also for the city's appealing options for residents to actively engage in outdoor fitness themselves.
6. Attractive cultural landscape: Hamburg is a city with a vibrant cultural scene, appreciated especially by residents and tourists. The cultural scene is largely characterized by major live performances, particularly musicals.
7. Reeperbahn: The city is also associated with reeperbahn entertainment, especially in the minds of tourists. However, residents also value high-quality shows, concerts, live theatre, and other forms of entertainment. These are likewise well-liked and valued by companies.
8. Liveable city: Hamburg's inhabitants consider it to be a very liveable city. The city's high standard of living conditions, financial strength, cityscape, air quality, greenery, as well as entertainment and food options, are considered.
9. Vibrant nightlife: Hamburg's night scene is also gaining prominence thanks to countless clubs, bars, and quirky neighbourhoods such as St. Pauli and St. Georg.
10. Attractive business environment: The association of the city brand with Hamburg's business environment is very strong. This link primarily relates to the structural and political-economic circumstances, the abundance of local businesses, the labour supply, and the research environment of the city.

11. International trading hub: This is one of the most relevant associations that is formed towards the port of Hamburg, due to its central role in international trade and especially with the Baltic Sea region and China.
12. Growth and sustainability: Businesses choose Hamburg because it is a vibrant city with thriving media and creative industries, as well as a business-friendly atmosphere that emphasizes sustainability and the environment<sup>213</sup>.

These twelve modules fully represent the image of the city and people's perceptions, and based on them the marketing, communication, and reputation management strategies to be put in place were defined. In this case, we can say that the positive associations present in people's minds are numerous. On the one hand, this indicates a lack of clarity about the city's identity and focus, and on the other hand, it indicates a high number of opportunities that the city's brand can leverage to increase the added value of Hamburg. Moreover, as emerged during the interview with Sebastian Zenker, the DMO of Hamburg last year wanted to do another marketing research to see what the strengths are and to understand what to focus on. Unfortunately, the results of the study have not yet been made public but will be towards the end of the summer. The research was done in recent years because they invested and built the huge Elbphilharmonie with the aim of focusing more on the cultural aspect of the city and promoting it internationally. This continuous search for information is mainly related to the fact that Hamburg Marketing is very data-driven, so it is important to analyse the target audience's perception of the brand to see what works, what the strengths are, and why people find it attractive. Then marketing activities and brand image are created based on this<sup>214</sup>. This also suggests the close relationship between image and identity. In fact, the strategy implemented by the DMO, consists in investigating positive associations relating to the city of Hamburg and on the basis of these defining and strengthening the brand identity.

### ***3.3.2. Primary Communication***

To try to analyse as comprehensively as possible the primary communication implemented by Hamburg Marketing GmbH, it is necessary to study the links that are

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<sup>213</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2018)

<sup>214</sup> (Zenker S. , 2023)

created between the DMO and the various actors that are part of the cityscape. Indeed, the case of the Hamburg DMO is characterized not only by internal ties within the holding company but by numerous cooperations. Specifically, HMG is responsible for coordinating the stakeholders and public authorities involved in the marketing activities developed at the regional level. Measures include collaborations with other local governments or private companies, such as those in the commercial location marketing or cultural marketing fields and are intended to strengthen and advertise the place both domestically and abroad. Hamburg has more than five million residents, innumerable businesses, a wide range of leisure and cultural offerings, and several other advantages that make it hard for one corporation to promote the city. Only strong actors who are working together to make it work may complete this endeavour. The HMG has partnered with 20 districts of administration and municipalities in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region. To effectively advertise the Hamburg Region, one of the most powerful regions in Germany and Europe, they are crucial strategic partners. This metropolitan area, which spans a total area of 28,500 square kilometres and includes the four federal states of Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, and Schleswig-Holstein, is extremely appealing to both domestic and international firms for its robust economic prospects<sup>215</sup>. In particular, the public authorities involved in the communication of Hamburg Marketing GmbH are numerous. First, the Hamburg Municipality, is fundamental in managing relations with residents and businesses. Second, close cooperation has arisen with the Ministry of Economy, Transport, and Innovation, which is responsible for promoting developing sectors, transport infrastructure, and research and development clusters in the region. These two main bodies are joined by other public authorities such as Hamburg Management, responsible for elevating Hamburg's reputation as a retail trade location on a global scale, and HafenCity Hamburg GmbH, in charge of overseeing activities and projects related to the largest downtown development area: HafenCity<sup>216</sup>. All the actors operating under the brand of the city of Hamburg and responsible for its reputation actively cooperate to generate communication that is consistent with the intended image of the city. As emerged during the interview, the

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<sup>215</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, s.d.)

<sup>216</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, s.d.)

system created by Hamburg Marketing and its subsidiaries is highly interconnected and full of synergies. Moreover, according to Sebastian Zenker “*they also work in constant connection with the entire political part of the city, with ministries, the German government, and the Hamburg municipality. In fact, when major investments that improve the brand are made in the city, these are communicated to the DMO, which then proceeds with marketing and communication campaigns*”<sup>217</sup>. In the early 2000s, the mayor emphasised the need to run the city as if it were a business. Hence, with several specialised units, including a specialised marketing unit. So far, in Hamburg more than in other cities, public authorities are very open to letting professionals and marketing experts manage the city's communication<sup>218</sup>.

### *3.3.2.1. Infrastructure Projects*

Hamburg is a city that has been implementing considerable development plans in the fields of infrastructure, construction, and urban development in recent decades. Some of these plans concern the construction and redevelopment of new neighbourhoods and districts. The most significant examples are the Science City Bahrenfeld and the Hafencity. The Science City Bahrenfeld is a new neighbourhood in Hamburg, still under construction, that seeks to combine modern living, innovations, research, and commerce. The project was unveiled in 2019 and depicts a City of Science, where different areas converge into an overall space that includes the DESY accelerator facility, significant portions of the University of Hamburg, prominent research institutions, a hub for innovation and technology, and a thriving mixed-use area with a residential concentration. The world's top science cities have long prioritized having attractive, accessible, and flexible public areas. Indeed, a city's open spaces greatly influence its reputation and appeal to both current and potential residents. A thriving campus and city are facilitated by knowledge exchange, a high standard of living, networking possibilities, and the accessibility and distance of the neighbouring districts. These are the basic features based on which the construction of the Science City is taking place<sup>219</sup>.

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<sup>217</sup> (Zenker S. , 2023)

<sup>218</sup> (Zenker S. , 2023)

<sup>219</sup> (Science City, 2021)



Figure 31 - Map of the Science City Bahrenfeld (Science City, 2021)

HafenCity is another flagship project. It is an urban planning experiment, the main intent of which was to expand the city, redevelop inaccessible and little-used areas, and shift the axis of the city centre toward the river. The result is a place on a human scale, featuring some iconic buildings such as the Elbphilharmonie. The HafenCity plan strengthens an adaptive strategy, particularly considering climate change and how it affects the use and aesthetics of the urban waterfront. All while keeping in mind the rich UNESCO-listed Speicherstadt heritage, which shapes the new city district's aesthetic appeal and, along with the presence of waterways, contributes to HafenCity's marine identity and all-around allure. Historical port facilities are restored and preserved by custom architectural interventions, preserving historic harbours next to the water to support urban life as inviting public spaces<sup>220</sup>. Additional infrastructure projects have affected city mobility, such as the construction of the U5 train line, able to link the city centre and crucial infrastructure with the north-eastern and north-western neighbourhoods. The U5 will be Hamburg's first entirely automated mode of public transportation. This is meant to be a huge relief for the congested bus lines and main

<sup>220</sup> (HafenCity, 2021)

roadways in Hamburg<sup>221</sup>. Another example is the Hamburger Deckel, the construction began in 2014 to literally put a lid on the A7 highway. The roofing project intends to offer greater space for parks, recreation areas, and allotment gardens while also protecting nearby residents from noise. There will be a lot of greener places available once this big infrastructural project is completed, providing a nearly constant greenway<sup>222</sup>. These are just some of the projects that the Hamburg metropolitan region is pursuing. In terms of communicating them to the different target groups, this one is peculiar, as all major and significant infrastructure projects are presented on the municipality's website with a specially dedicated section. In addition, major projects, such as HafenCity and Science City Bahrenfeld but also others not previously mentioned such as Grasbrook and Billebogen have their own websites where more detailed communication takes place. At the same time, however, they are all subsidiaries of HafenCity Hamburg GmbH. HafenCity Hamburg GmbH is a company founded in 1995 for development management that operates through a close network of partners including Hamburg Marketing and in particular Hamburg Invest<sup>223</sup>. This means that communication is done on a large scale, using synergies and collaborations capable of shaping the desired city brand identity. Furthermore, the extensive communication that is done contributes to the creation of the city's image in terms of liveability and growth.

The Hamburg Metropolitan Region (HMR) is also undergoing strong development in terms of cultural infrastructure. In addition to world-renowned cultural assets, such as the Elbphilharmonie and the Speicherstadt (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the HMR is home to various natural resources and recreational amenities, including five UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. The latter may safeguard parks as well as other natural areas, advance scientific inquiry, protect biodiversity, and prevent climate change. Along with several galleries and 45 theatres, Hamburg also has about 60 museums and exhibition spaces<sup>224</sup>. This historical presence of cultural facilities in the Hamburg area has influenced the development of new neighbourhoods under construction, such as the HafenCity, in

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<sup>221</sup> (Hamburg Official Web Site, 2021)

<sup>222</sup> (Hamburg Official Web Site, 2021)

<sup>223</sup> (HafenCity, 2023)

<sup>224</sup> (OECD, 2019)

which to date cultural appropriation has become a key feature. Indeed, for a long time, the use of the area as a port area made it difficult for social and cultural coexistence to occur. The surrounding area has been undergoing a protracted transition into a new creative and cultural district since 2011. After the initial group of users, stakeholders from a wide range of industries have since joined and consequently the district was populated by jewellers, co-working spaces, advertising agencies, etc. From a cultural point of view, the construction of the Elbphilharmonie, a concert space with two auditoriums, a hotel, flats, restaurants, and facilities for musical training, was of great importance. However, HafenCity is also distinguished by lesser-known cultural sites, including places like the International Maritime Museum Hamburg, the planned Digital Art, and the Oberhafen. The latter is a collection of structures that serve as railroad depots and is part of a sizable ongoing harbour redevelopment project. The substantial transformation began in 2010 with the updating of the HafenCity Masterplan, when it was decided to pursue artistic and cultural industries while simultaneously creating new space for school and sports clubs rather than continuing with the initially planned commercial focus. A self-governing artistic community gave rise to its occupation by performers and artists. What was initially supposed to be a temporary arrangement, became a beneficial coexistence that lasted for many years. Its focal point is the Fabrique building, a popular location for anyone looking to exhibit and produce their own art. Since then, there has been a growth in creative activity, which has resulted in a change in city policy that promotes including cultural infrastructure in the development proposals for HafenCity. This legitimization brought to light Oberhafen's potential as a destination for cultural travellers, creatives, and students at the HafenCity University, which is focused on art and architectural education<sup>225</sup>. Finally, regarding cultural facilities, it is important to emphasise the commitment of cultural institutions to the environment. Indeed, in the city of Hamburg, a pilot project was launched for 11 museums, whose motto is “*Eleven to zero – Hamburg museums take action*”<sup>226</sup>. A collection of cultural organizations in the Hanseatic City called Eleven to Zero have begun the arduous process of becoming carbon neutral. With the assistance of the Hamburg Authority for Culture and Media, the initiative got

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<sup>225</sup> (HafenCity, 2020)

<sup>226</sup> (Stiftung Historische Museen Hamburg, 2023)

underway in the summer of 2022. The chosen museums decided to calculate their environmental impact and determine the main sources as their first step. Taking 2019 as the base year, the budget estimates the combined emissions of all 11 companies at 8.422,66 tonnes per year. Thus, smart thermostats and LED lights have become popular among these cultural institutions, allowing for precise temperature control and lower energy costs<sup>227</sup>. Communication concerning cultural infrastructures and related projects is differentiated between the various entities collaborating in the constitution of Hamburg's city brand. Specifically, the communication generated by the institutional authorities and Hamburg Tourismus is very general and mainly addressed to the target group of tourists. At the same time, the communication related to the HafenCity district is very diverse and specific and able to reach residents, businesses, and tourists. This diversified and fragmented communication reflects a largely fragmented tourism sector in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region with a variety of brands promoting various areas of the region.

### 3.3.2.2. *Landscape Strategies*

Hamburg is continually transforming its urban environment to make it a greener, more welcoming place to live. Hamburg is expanding, and both Germans and foreigners are drawn to the Elbe riverbank. Around 2 million people are projected to be living there by 2030, and 50,000 of those people will be new households looking for accommodation. Hamburg faces difficulty from this population expansion, but it also has a huge opportunity: based on this theory, the Department of Urban Development and Housing plays a role in the further growth of the city. Based on the information gathered, the city of Hamburg decided to set targets in terms of urban development<sup>228</sup>:

1. *More city in the city*. The creation of new homes, new public spaces, streets, and social structures, as well as the mixed-use of various development models, will raise the standard of living and revitalize areas. Urbanity is produced by geographical, socioeconomic, cultural, and economic density as well as by physical proximity between residences and workplaces, recreational and

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<sup>227</sup> (Stiftung Historische Museen Hamburg, 2023)

<sup>228</sup> (Hamburg Official Web Site, s.d.)



- educational services. Importantly, these are the elements that contribute to the vitality of these mixed-income neighbourhoods and their diverse, appealing urban spaces, where everything is easily accessible and environmentally friendly. This situation is intended to be expanded via the “*More City in the City*” approach. Increased densification and reorganization in the “*urbanization zone*” not only provide the opportunity to moderately increase population in an area that has already developed spontaneously and has been provided by infrastructure, but also present the chance to develop more vibrant, interesting neighbourhoods.
2. *The inclusive city.* Finding suitable and affordable housing in a community with a high quality of life and having access to open education for everyone are the benchmarks for inclusive urban development. In addition, public spaces and their development are crucial for creating an inclusive city with a good quality of life. The importance of public places that locals utilize daily increases as a city gets smaller, and their design must adapt to new notions about how they should be used. Public spaces, which are seen as a stage for urban life and serve to convey the identity and culture of the city, are becoming more and more popular places for people to enjoy their time. Because they are a crucial component of a democratic urban culture, public spaces in Hamburg will be preserved for accessibility and sensory value. The city will encourage the thoughtful maintenance of public areas, provide safety and accessibility for people with disabilities, and make sure that everything is kept clean and well-kept. High-quality public spaces are advantageous to everyone. In the future, it is intended that both private and public investors will collaborate to establish synergies to accomplish this. The creation of Business Improvement Districts (BID) to promote commercial activity and Housing Improvement Districts (HID) to improve residential areas are two examples of model programs that demonstrate how the community may be involved in the design of public space continually.
  3. *Green and environment-friendly city.* With a focus on sustainability, efforts to provide urban green areas as well as environment and climate protection will be preserved and expanded. Social and economic responsibilities shall be balanced with ecological growth. The amount of historic cultural landscapes Hamburg has so near to its highly populated city is incomparable to any other European

metropolis. The needs of striking a healthy balance between the fast growth of the constructed city and high-quality natural landscapes are still target for future development. In the case of populated open spaces, a particular difficulty is balancing the needs of individuals, urban ecologists, and those who desire a beautiful environment.

4. *Urban development in the business metropolis.* Hamburg is famous for its industrial hub, its transit system, and its harbour in the heart of the city. Research and development are also expected to expand side by side in the same place, in addition to expanding production and services. In the increasingly interconnected world of the twenty-first century, Hamburg is a well-known representative of the northern German economic region, and it is primarily the city's business community that establishes and maintains the city's worldwide connections. It is crucial to take advantage of the potential presented by a changing economy and a multicultural urban society in order to strengthen Hamburg's position at the centre of such a metropolitan area. Increasing commuter traffic indicates that the region's employment and educational prospects are also growing more significant to Hamburg residents. On the other hand, the presence of an assortment of skilled and unskilled labour throughout the region is what supports the business establishment and development success as well as the city's stable and diverse economy<sup>229</sup>.

In this urban development perspective, it is necessary to emphasise how effective and direct communication is to the final target audience, the residents. Furthermore, the presence on the official website of a special section on urban development and current projects demonstrates the importance given to urban development, which is now an important part of the city brand. Public spaces are included in urban development and represent one of the four key objectives. Their importance is also evident given the extensive communication in terms of future projects on the site of the municipality and the Hamburg DMO.

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<sup>229</sup> (Hamburg Municipality, s.d.)

For more than a thousand years, Hamburg has been a hub of culture. The city has consistently influenced the development and cross-cultural contact, from its medieval origins as a castle that separated the River Alster and the River Elbe to its current status as one of Europe's key transportation centres. Architecturally, Hamburg's historical characteristics have contributed to a mix of classical Romanesque art, Art Nouveau style, and highly modern buildings. Hamburg, a city internationally renowned for its innovative urban planning, has been meticulously constructed with careful consideration for its waterfront. With the help of disruptive cultural initiatives, the city is currently reimagining its urban fabric. The resulting designs investigate novel concepts in urbanism and public space, moving beyond the city's notable churches and opulent residences. Significant examples of this change are the flagship projects carried out by the city, which are able to communicate the desired image of the city by creating positive associations, in terms of cultural and architectural offerings, or continuous urban development<sup>230</sup>. Among these, of particular importance is the International Architectural Fair (also known as IBA or Internationale Bau-Ausstellung), a hybrid attempt that combines architectural changes with cultural activities. The IBA Hamburg was founded in 2007 on the initiative of the municipality and involving public partners and private investors. The aim is to show, through the realisation of buildings and infrastructures, a concrete vision of living in the future, with the ambition of recovering and redeveloping Wilhelmsburg, the island on the Elbe River located in a peripheral area south of Hamburg<sup>231</sup>. Another urbanist experiment symbolising this architectural change can be found in the HafenCity district: the Elbphilharmonie. It is one of the largest halls in the world, with high-level and technologically advanced acoustics. The design concept, by Herzog & De Meuron, was developed on the banks of the Elbe River. The glass part, in fact, resembles the jagged waves of the water's surface and rests on an old warehouse. The Elbphilharmonie Project is part of an even larger redevelopment project, that of the HafenCity. It represents, with its area of 155 hectares, one of the largest redevelopments in Hamburg's urban history. The neighboring old warehouse area of Speicherstadt and HafenCity's contemporary buildings stand in stark contrast to one another. The area has its own distinct character

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<sup>230</sup> (Zenker & Beckmann , 2013)

<sup>231</sup> (Zenker & Beckmann , 2013)

due to the abundance of water and greenery. The Mediterranean style has transformed the former industrial areas, converting them into new urban spaces with streets, squares, and parks that have a direct connection to the water. These new urban spaces feature a complex landscape focused on human dimensions and the close relationship between people and water<sup>232</sup>. The architecture of the city is a topic that is largely dealt with at the level of the individual city district, and which aims to differentiate one area from another. At the same time, however, the architectural mix that characterises the city is not part of the 12 modules that make up Hamburg's brand image. For this reason, the city's structural features are not strongly communicated by the local authorities.

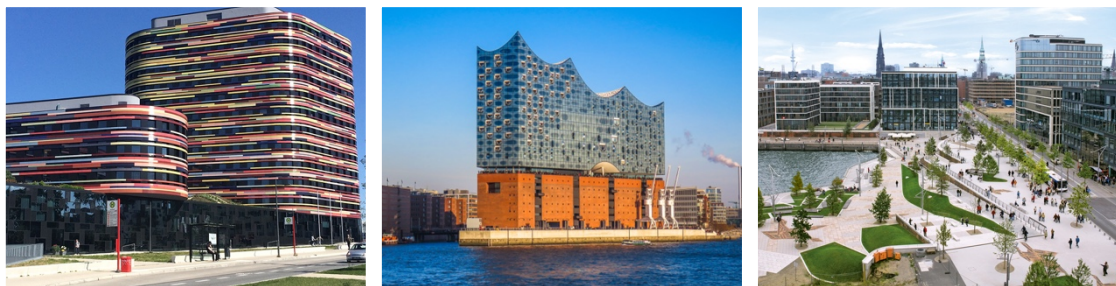


Figure 32 - IBA Hamburg, Elbphilharmonie, and HafenCity respectively

### 3.3.2.3. Organizational and Administrative Structure

In Germany, there has been a noticeable increase in public-private partnerships for the creation and management of public infrastructures and services<sup>233</sup>. Specifically, the federal association Bundesverband Public Private Partnership (BPPP), was founded in Hamburg in 2003. Its purpose is to offer a forum for debating the execution of PPP projects. As a result, its main goal is to create PPP concepts that can help reduce Hamburg's innovation deficits and improvement delays. This necessitates universally embraced standards for all PPP-relevant industries<sup>234</sup>. An example of successful public-private partnership can be considered Hamburg Airport. To operate the airport in Hamburg, public agencies and the private sector developed institutionalized PPPs in the form of joint ventures. The Hamburg Aviation cluster was established in 2011 as a PPP to enhance the city's aviation sector's potential for growth. They pay special attention to

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<sup>232</sup> (HafenCity, s.d.)

<sup>233</sup> (Friesecke, 2006)

<sup>234</sup> (Bundesverband Public Private Partnership, 2023)

research and development projects. The JV was created between the City of Hamburg, which holds 51% of the shares, and Hamburg Airport Partners (formed by Aer Rianta International and Hochtief Airport GmbH), which holds the remaining 49%<sup>235</sup>. Another great example of an award-winning private-public partnership is the Elbphilharmonie. The partnership involved the city of Hamburg and the construction group Hochtief. It is a particularly controversial case as the construction costs first presented in 2005 required a public contribution of EUR 77 million. Later, when the building was completed in 2016, the costs incurred by the public sector amounted to 789 million, making the Elbphilharmonie the 12<sup>th</sup> most expensive building in the world, more than 90 per cent of which was paid for by taxpayers<sup>236</sup>. Despite the strong increase of public-private partnerships in Germany and in the city of Hamburg these do not fit into the modules identified by the city's DMO. Consequently, even if these projects are very important in a regional perspective, the corresponding communication by public authorities (municipality, Hamburg Marketing GmbH, Hamburg Invest, etc.) is practically absent.

Looking at citizen participation in the city of Hamburg, it is important to note the importance given to it by the city. In fact, as early as 2015, the elected government's election programme listed the following among its objectives: develop new digital participation techniques, increase public involvement in projects and themes related to housing, infrastructure, and the environment, and work to create inclusive participation procedures. As a result, more than 100 participation processes organized by ministries, districts, government agencies, and public corporations have taken place since 2015. Consequently, what was an exception ten years ago is now common practice in urban, transportation, and environmental planning<sup>237</sup>. Furthermore, in the case of the city of Hamburg, has been established the “*Town of Hamburg Department of Community Development*”, whose purpose is to solicit residents' participation in city initiatives. The department is also responsible for drawing up a Comprehensive Plan that is able to present the community's goals and objectives, together with a vision statement, over the following

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<sup>235</sup> (Hamburg Aviation, s.d.)

<sup>236</sup> (Wigger, 2017)

<sup>237</sup> (Lieven, 2019)

15 years<sup>238</sup>. In terms of citizen participation, in 2017 the city of Hamburg developed an R&D project, the DIPAS (Digital Participation System), whose aim was to create an integrated, media-free digital system for citizen participation in urban development and design. With DIPAS, people can access digital maps, aerial photos, plans, 3D models, and geodata from their homes, and mobile devices and provide feedback on planning projects that are exactly placed. Citizens can send online comments, questions, ideas, and complaints on the city's plans using this geodata-based tool. The HCU City Science Lab, the state office for geoinformation and surveying, and the authority for urban development and housing collaborated to develop DIPAS. The program is open source and was released as a “*public code*” in 2021 for usage by further communities, academic institutions, and research centres<sup>239</sup>. In this case, communication on city participation is mainly addressed to the target group of residents and potential residents as it helps to create the image of a city in which each citizen is free to give his or her opinion and contribute to creating a better city. Specifically, the various programmes carried out are communicated by the municipality and the Department of Urban Development and Housing via the website, press releases and reports. However, it is important to note that this topic is not part of the communication made by Hamburg Marketing.

#### 3.3.2.4. *City's Behaviour*

The last area of analysis of primary communication requires the investigation of two fundamental characteristics of the Hamburg Metropolitan Region: financial incentives and organised events. Starting with the former, the financial incentives in the Hamburg region are to a large extent related to state incentives in Germany. In particular, these incentives are aimed at the two main target groups: businesses (actual or potential) and residents (actual or potential). Indeed, with billions of euros being pumped into programs that support research, innovation, and investment, Germany provides a fruitful environment for the entrepreneur. Everybody who wants to launch a business has access to a wide range of grants, loans, and financial incentives. Entrepreneurs from Germany

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<sup>238</sup> (Hamburg Community Development, 2022)

<sup>239</sup> (Hamburg Official Website, 2021)

and abroad are both invited for requests for financial assistance. Public funding for German companies can be divided into four main areas<sup>240</sup>:

1. Direct grants. Direct grants are non-repayable cash payments made to new companies in Germany to support them with start-up costs, advance R&D, or the creation of the workers' task force. In particular, the GRW is a significant investment program dedicated to fostering regional economic growth and employment creation. For up to 40% of the costs incurred during the establishment phase, it pays subsidies to companies in both the service and manufacturing sectors.
2. Public loans. German business owners can also take advantage of government-funded programs offered by development banks, which provide loans having low-interest rates. Public loans can be divided into two main types: (1) Public loans made nationally. German and international business owners can choose from a variety of financing alternatives available through the KfW, the federal government's development bank. Up to 25 million euros can be borrowed under the Entrepreneur Loan program to cover 100% of qualified expenses. (2) Federal state public loans. Each federal state has a development bank that offers loans to small and medium-sized businesses up to 10 million euros in addition to the loans provided by the KfW.
3. Public guarantees. The German government has implemented a program called public guarantees to entice commercial banks to lend loans to businesses. Banks that provide public guarantees operate as guarantors for borrowers who lack adequate collateral for loans. Up to 80% of the total amount of the loan, often up to 1,25 million euros, can be covered by public guarantees during a fifteen-year term. The annual fee is paid by the borrower for the duration of the loan in proportion to the outstanding balance.
4. Equity capital. In Germany, new enterprises can get equity funding from a variety of public sources at both the national and local levels. The prize money is

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<sup>240</sup> (PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries, 2022)

significant, in 2016, venture capitalists spent more than €934 million in new German-based businesses<sup>241</sup>.

There are also financial incentives promoted by the German government concerning residents and potential residents. Specifically, residents and workers in Germany have tax deductions including travel expenses to their place of work, work equipment, professional fees, etc. In addition, during the COVID-19 period (years 2020, 2021, and 2022), deductions were introduced for individuals who worked remotely, amounting to five euros for each day worked from home. As a result, the total amount is capped at €600 per year of employment, and the maximum number of days that can be deducted is 120. In addition, foreign nationals moving to Germany can enjoy a double taxation treaty (DTT). Germany has DTTs in place with nearly 90 nations, including the majority of industrialized nations, which are applicable to income taxes. By progressively exempting foreign income, double taxation can be avoided<sup>242</sup>. Furthermore, there are child benefits. Families who meet the requirements will be given a monthly child benefit for dependent children, which may vary depending on factors like residency status, the children's ages, and even social security status. This works out to be €219 for each of the first two kids, €225 for the third kid, and €250 for the fourth and every subsequent kid. When determining the taxable income, the aforementioned benefits and bonus payments are subtracted from any potential tax savings from the 4,194 euro lump sum child allowance deduction for each parent. On a regional level, there are more targeted incentives carried out by the city of Hamburg. A significant example is the Green Roof Strategy. Given the city's strong commitment to sustainability, the Green Roof Strategy aims to build green roofs in the metropolitan area, covering a total area of 100 hectares. Up to the end of 2024, the Hamburg Ministry for Environment and Energy is funding the installation of green roofs with €3 million. Owners of buildings may qualify for subsidies to pay up to 60% of the cost of installation. Additional advantages include lower energy costs due to improved building insulation, longer green roof lifespans that result in lower maintenance costs, and a 50% decrease in rainwater fees due to the green roofs' ability to retain

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<sup>241</sup> (PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries, 2022)

<sup>242</sup> (PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries, 2022)



rainwater<sup>243</sup>. After analysing the financial incentives related to the city of Hamburg, it is necessary to analyse the resulting communication. Specifically, in the city of Hamburg, information on the available state financial incentives is easily accessible on the official websites of the government but also of the municipality of Hamburg, thus giving an idea of what the benefits of living in Germany are. On the other hand, when looking at incentives related to the city of Hamburg, these are easily found on the municipality's website, where in-depth information and press releases are provided. In this case, the communication is not the responsibility of the DMO, but this is not surprising as in the case of Hamburg we have seen how all actors are perfectly coordinated and their tasks well diversified and divided.

As far as the organisation of events is concerned, this is a strong growth sector for the city of Hamburg and contributes to job creation. One of the main expanding segments is business events. MICE visitors contributed more than 706.5 million euros worth of potential monetary gross value to Hamburg<sup>244</sup>. Hamburg's MICE industry makes financial contributions, but it also improves the city's business climate, applied research output, and leisure offerings. The "*Hamburg Convention Bureau*" is the business partner for planning MICE events and is promoting the city as a well-known business tourist destination. Hamburg has hosted several events of the highest calibre, for example, the Rotary International Convention 2019, which brought more than 26,000 guests from 170 nations to Hamburg. It is one example of a convention that was visible throughout the world. Another great success was the Lions Clubs International Convention in 2013, which had approximately 23,000 attendees from all over the world. Moreover, Hamburg is a city that has hosted outstanding congresses and conferences, particularly in the scientific sphere. Among these, there is the 22nd Euretina Congress with an audience of 6,600 attendees, and the ITS World Congress 2021 with about 13,000 participants<sup>245</sup>. In addition to business events, Hamburg is a vibrant city, where it is possible to attend different types of events. Among the most important ones, the Hamburger Dom, also known simply as Dom, is the oldest fair in Europe: the first records of a market in the

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<sup>243</sup> (Hamburg Official Web Site, s.d.)

<sup>244</sup> (Hamburg Convention Bureau, 2017)

<sup>245</sup> (Hamburg Convention Bureau, 2022)

premises of the city's main church date back to the 14th century, when the city authorities granted the Hamburg merchants a covered space in which to display their products in bad weather. The Fair takes place three times a year: in March, the Spring Fair, Frühlingsdom, which ends with the Hamburg Marathon; in July, the Summer Fair, Sommerdom; and finally, between November and December, the Winter Fair, Winterdom. More than a fair, the Hamburg Dom is a true folk festival of fun and sharing<sup>246</sup>. Another historical event is the Hafengeburtstag Hamburg. It is a festival created to celebrate the anniversary of Hamburg Harbour, which will be 834 years old in 2023. The festival features regattas, antique and sports boat parades, stands with typical food and shows for family entertainment, tellers, outdoor activities, parachuting and hot-air balloon rides<sup>247</sup>. Analysing the main Hamburg events, it can be observed that communication in this respect is very broad and comes from all kinds of local authorities. Firstly, the municipality's website takes care of this, promoting the attractiveness of the city's events. Secondly, communication comes from the Hamburg Tourism website when it comes to events open to the public and attracting tourists from all over the world, and from the Hamburg Convention Bureau website when the events in question are business events. Furthermore, the events linked to and promoted by the city are in line with Hamburg's image in terms of “*City of the waterfront*”, “*Public festivals and events*”, and “*International trading hub*”.

### ***3.3.3. Secondary Communication***

The analysis of the marketing strategies used by the city of Hamburg is the main focus of the secondary communication. Specifically, the city of Hamburg differs from the case studies seen previously. The logo used is the city's oldest coat of arms, in use since 1241. On it is depicted a fortress with three towers and a cross on the central tower, probably indicating one of the city's churches. The town's resolve to defend itself was expressed by the towers, the defensive walls, and the barred gate. The two side towers' so-called Mariensterne (Mary Stars) memorialize Hamburg's former status as an

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<sup>246</sup> (Hamburg Tourismus, 2023)

<sup>247</sup> (Hamburg Tourismus, 2023)

archdiocese<sup>248</sup>. The symbol on Hamburg's shield of arms has undergone numerous changes over the years without altering the coat of arms' overall appearance. What is special about this logo is that it was then used by the city's main players: the municipality, Hamburg marketing, and all its subsidiaries, the airport, the city flag, etc.


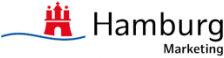


			
Symbol of Hamburg	Logo of Hamburg Marketing GmbH	Logo of municipality's official website	Hamburg's flag

Figure 33 - Different uses of Hamburg's logo

Although it is easy to observe the efforts made to graphically standardise the city logo, the same cannot be said about the slogan. In fact, it is not possible to identify a true logo concerning the Hamburg city brand. The closest thing to a slogan with which the inhabitants of Hamburg recognise themselves is the motto inscribed on the city hall: *“Libertatem quam peperere maiores digne studeat servare posterita”*, that translated means: *“May the future world be worthy to receive the freedom won by our forbears”*<sup>249</sup>. Although the slogan is not a fundamental tool for a marketing strategy, its absence makes it less likely for the brand to be noticed and remembered<sup>250</sup>. For this reason, the choice implemented by the city of Hamburg, and more specifically by its DMO, is very unusual.

Looking more specifically at the marketing strategy used by Hamburg Marketing, it must be borne in mind that the Hamburg brand, compared to those analysed so far, is relatively new, as is marketing strategy. *“One city, one brand”* was the claim of the Hamburg branding process in the 2000s. The process started with extensive market surveys from 2004 to 2009 to identify the positive perceptions associated with the city of Hamburg. The results formed the basis for the development of the twelve successful modules analysed above. Subsequently, an ad hoc company was set up to coordinate and implement the entire process on a trans-institutional level: Hamburg Marketing GmbH.

<sup>248</sup> (Hamburg.com, 2022)

<sup>249</sup> (Hamburg.com, 2022)

<sup>250</sup> (Govers, 2013)

The latter was founded in 2004 and aimed to create synergies between the city's different actors. Initially, HMG was designed to have a duration of three years, but since 2007 it has extended its territory to 14 districts and has become a key body for the city of Hamburg<sup>251</sup>. In 2014, as part of the new strategic marketing plan 2013-2018, a follow-up survey was conducted covering the Hamburg metropolitan region to attract entrepreneurs, residents, and tourists. The ultimate goal of all strategies applied by the Hamburg DMO is to generate a unified brand image that facilitates communication. Indeed, design standards are used in all communications by the different subsidiaries and corporations related to Hamburg Marketing GmbH. Moreover, different marketing techniques and communication channels are used<sup>252</sup>. For example, they have a very well-structured website as it is very well integrated between the different subunits that are part of Hamburg Marketing. Social media are also used a lot. They often have different pages for the different units, also based on the target. For example, on LinkedIn there is both the Hamburg Marketing page and the Hamburg Invest page, the business and investor-oriented unit. In addition, they have a press page and also a podcast where the latest news about the city are communicated<sup>253</sup>. Overall, the Hamburg city brand can be considered a successful example. Indeed, the city has experienced the second-highest rise in tourists after Berlin since 2001, according to federal city rankings, with a 143,3% increase. Three years sooner than anticipated, the Hanseatic city had positioned itself among the top ten German cities by 2012. As a result, the tourism industry in Hamburg ranks as one of the most significant economic sectors, both in terms of job creation and revenue. It constitutes one of the largest employers in the city, right behind the waterfront<sup>254</sup>. Social media's impact in this situation makes it even simpler for cities to establish a marketing platform and connect with a wide range of social groups, including young people and senior citizens. Due to new forms of mobility, an international and multicultural profile is crucial because the Hamburg metropolitan area competes directly with more than 300 cities around the world. As a result, the objective is to increase the city's visibility and appeal,

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<sup>251</sup> (Green, 2019)

<sup>252</sup> (Järvisalo, 2012)

<sup>253</sup> (Zenker S. , 2023)

<sup>254</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2020)

creating offers that are specially customized to the relevant target groups. According to Hamburg Marketing GmbH, attention should be paid to either future residents who will provide the necessary talent and labour force or visitors who can generate significant revenue<sup>255</sup>. In this framework, a practical multi-level strategy plan has been developed, presenting a Marketing Image 2030, based on the two focus points: Quality of Life and Economic Dynamism. Local politics, the HMG, and connected partners are implementing and controlling this plan. The first aspect is about the living content aspect. In this framework they also want to focus *“on the city at the waterfront, on the food and gastronomy, and on the city as a music centre, indeed they have a lot of musicals, the music industry is pretty well developed”*<sup>256</sup>. In addition, Hamburg also began several redevelopment initiatives, such as the HafenCity, to draw in the main global players<sup>257</sup>. HafenCity is an urban product that fits into the cultural, artistic, and architectural language typical of this new century of the new Hamburg brand, but with its own specificities: management transparency, active participation, openness to change, and above all public ownership of land. The second aspect relates to the strength of economics and of local companies. Indeed, *“they stress the aspect of innovation because they have a lot of clusters on tech industry, media, and also the university are some of the best universities in Germany in terms of talents attraction”*<sup>258</sup>.

#### **3.3.4. Tertiary Communication**

Considering that tertiary communication is mainly about word of mouth related to the Hamburg city brand, again Google Trends must be used <sup>259</sup>. The first term to be analysed is the name of the city itself, *“Hamburg”*. In this case, there is a downward trend, in contrast to the city's achievements and increases in terms of new businesses, residents, and tourists. In particular, there is a downward peak about 2020, but as already pointed out this is easily attributable to the presence of COVID-19.

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<sup>255</sup> (Hamburg Marketing GmbH, 2020)

<sup>256</sup> (Zenker S. , 2023)

<sup>257</sup> (Green, 2019)

<sup>258</sup> (Zenker S. , 2023)

<sup>259</sup> (Google Trends, 2023)



Figure 34 - The term "Hamburg" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The second term to be analysed refers mainly to the relevance of the DMO's website: "Hamburg Marketing GmbH". In this case, it can be noted that the Hamburg DMO was created in 2004, the same year from which the analysis begins. Although in the beginning, it is possible to notice a strong interest in relation to this organisation, in the following years the trend is declining until it stabilises at not very high values. This low WOM could also be related to the complexity of the Hamburg brand. In fact, being a holding company, there are many subsidiaries below the Hamburg brand. Furthermore, in line with the implemented strategy, there is a strong uniformity among all organisations that are part of Hamburg Marketing. This can lead to confusion about the identification of the umbrella brand.



Figure 35 - The term "Hamburg Marketing GmbH" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The third term to be analysed refers to the target group of tourists, in order to investigate their behaviour and interest in the city of Hamburg. In this case, it is possible to notice a trend that, despite the normal seasonal fluctuations, is steadily increasing. In fact, despite the decrease in searches during the pandemic period, the term was searched for increasingly. This also reflects market data on the tourism industry. In fact, the number of visitors has increased steadily since 2001, peaking at around 7.6 million in 2019, and then rising again in 2022 with around 6.82 million people visiting Hamburg<sup>260</sup>.

<sup>260</sup> (Statista Research Department, 2023)



Figure 36 - The term "Visit Hamburg" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The penultimate term to be analysed, “*Business Hamburg*” refers to the target group of businesses and investors. Analysing the trend, it is possible to see a fairly constant trend over time, although some peaks can be seen in 2008, 2009 and 2015. Furthermore, it is possible to notice a decrease with regard to 2020 and 2021, followed by a slightly increasing trend concerning 2022. This can be seen as the result of tax incentives related to the opening of new businesses in the Hamburg region.

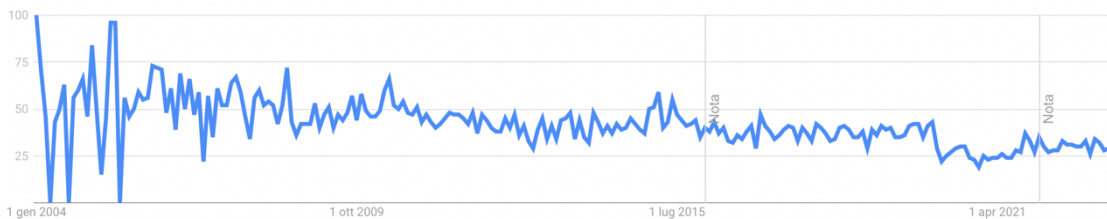


Figure 37 - The term "Business Hamburg" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

The last term to be analysed in relation to tertiary communication is “*Live in Hamburg*”. The trend that can be observed is mostly constant, with not too high values. Here it must be remembered that tertiary communication reflects the results of primary and secondary communication. Consequently, the marketing strategy for 2030, with Hamburg's quality of life as one of the main factors, must be implemented in order to give Hamburg's brand more momentum towards the target group of residents.



Figure 38 - The term "Live in Hamburg" from 2004 according to the data from Google Trends

### 3.4. Comparison of Case Studies

The cross-case comparison will be examined in this section. The central pillar of this study is supported by combining all the findings, including interviews and research data. The case studies provide an outline of the components that were covered in the previous part. This suggests that the elements were used as a basis for a study on city branding communication. The components of the research include:

- Identity and image of the city;
- Primary communication;
- Secondary communication;
- Tertiary communication

A comparative analysis can provide a clear overview of the communication patterns of the cities under study, their strengths and weaknesses, and the actual applicability of the Kavaratzis model.

Starting with the “*Identity and image of the city*”, it is already possible to note how, despite their geographical proximity, each city has characteristics that distinguish it from the others. Specifically, in terms of the fit between vision and strategy, it is possible to see how it is evident in the case of Amsterdam and Copenhagen. Specifically, Wonderful Copenhagen has a precise vision (“*Localhood for everyone*”) and a strategy (“*End of Tourism as We Know It, Towards A New Beginning of Localhood*”) built “*Ad Hoc*” on it. Also, in the case of Amsterdam, the vision of amsterdam&partners (“*Make Amsterdam an even better place to live, work and visit*”) is in line with the branding strategy used and aimed at the city's main target groups. Looking instead at the city of Hamburg, it is evident how the vision proposed by Hamburg Marketing to “*Increase value added and the quality of life in Hamburg*”, can be highly generalised and does not take into account the second pillar of the branding strategy, which concerns the will to increase the “*Economic Dynamism*”. In terms of the completeness of the Bull's Eye model, it was found to be easily applicable to the case of Amsterdam. Indeed, the city can communicate its brand identity directly and clearly. The same cannot be said for Copenhagen and Hamburg. Indeed, in the former case, Copenhagen's brand proposition is not easily identifiable and lacks some of the fundamental components, such as participation and the importance of residents as brand ambassadors. In contrast, in the case of Hamburg, what is not readily



identifiable are the city's values. This can generate confusing brand communication and a city identity gap. Finally, the last aspect to be analysed in relation to this block is the fit between identity and image. In this area, the cities of Amsterdam and Copenhagen do not present a close fit between identity and image. In the case of Amsterdam, there are several elements common to the city's identity and image, such as multiculturalism, tolerance, the presence of art, and canals. At the same time, negative associations related to the city in terms of sexual liberalism and indulgence in drugs are a relevant part of the image, which, however, does not fit the characteristics of the brand identity that amsterdam&partners would like to communicate. As far as Copenhagen is concerned, on the other hand, negative associations are not present. However, some positive associations in people's imagination, such as “*A pocket-sized fairy tale*”, are not perfectly embedded in the brand identity. The situation is the opposite to the case of Amsterdam. In this scenario, more effort would be needed on the part of Wonderful Copenhagen to incorporate and develop these characteristics into the city brand. Finally, the case of Hamburg is unique in that the identity created around the city brand is closely linked to people's image and perceptions. Consequently, with market research carried out by Hamburg Marketing, the perceived image of the city was identified, and based on this, the brand identity was created. In this case, therefore, the fit is very tight.

	Amsterdam	Copenhagen	Hamburg
<b>Image and identity block</b>			
Vision and strategy fit	The vision of amsterdam&partners is in line with the strategy used. In fact, three target groups are targeted in both cases: visitors, residents, and businesses and both have the goal of making Amsterdam a liveable and better city.	In this case, the vision and strategy of the city brand come together. Specifically, the actions undertaken by the Localhood strategy are specifically aimed at achieving the vision "Localhood for everyone".	HMG's vision, while very general, is related to the strategy implemented by HMG toward the city brand. Indeed, all initiatives are geared toward promoting, strengthening, and growing the Hamburg Metropolitan Region's reputation and its quality of life. However, it does not take into account the second focus of HMG's strategy: the "Economic Dynamism".
Completeness of Bull's Eye model	The Bull's Eye model is complete in that the different components relating to the Amsterdam brand and leading to the definition of brand essence are easily identifiable	The Bull's Eye model can be considered complete, considering the ease with which its components can be identified. At the same time, however, the proposition of the city brand is not easy to understand and is not extremely in line with the other elements.	In this case, the brand essence, benefits, substantiators and personality are easy to identify and understand. Likewise, however, the brand values of the city of Hamburg are only deducible but not clearly communicated.
Identity and image fit	Brand image and brand identity appear to be in slight disagreement. Although there are common elements related to e.g. culture, art, tolerance, canals, etc., there are still points of mismatch. The city's image is still closely linked to negative associations that are not identifiable in the identity that the DMO has built over time.	The image on a general level is linked to the five themes on which the localhood strategy is based, which are then adapted according to use. It is therefore a very flexible model characterised, however, by a high level of complexity in the communication of the city brand image. Thus, this high complexity makes it difficult to incorporate the positive associations created in people's minds into the brand identity.	Brand image and brand identity seem to be quite closely aligned. This is due to the strategy implemented by the DMO, which consists in investigating positive associations relating to the city of Hamburg and on the basis of these defining and strengthening the brand identity.

Table 3 - Image and identity block

The second block under analysis refers to the “*Primary communication*”, namely the actions that the city has made to develop its image and identity. In this case, it is necessary to analyse the operations carried out by the city and the resulting communication. The

first section to be analysed concerns *infrastructure projects* aimed at increasing the city's accessibility to different audiences and making different types of facilities available. With regard to the implementation of these projects, all three cities can be considered great examples of innovation. What distinguishes them is the communication made by the local DMO and the municipality. In fact, while the cases of Copenhagen and Hamburg show strong communication in line with the brand image and identity, the case of Amsterdam shows how, although these infrastructures may be in line with the brand, they are not given too much prominence. Starting from the analysis of Amsterdam, numerous infrastructure projects and cultural facilities can be identified. Examples are the innovations related to the Urban Vision 2050 or the Plans of the Arts 2021-2024, the ArenA, the Rijksmuseum, or the modernisation of the Harbour. Despite the numerous investments made by the city municipality, the media resonance is low, and the related news are mainly reported on the website of the municipality and in the local press. Little importance is given to them by *amsterdam&partners*. The case of the city of Copenhagen is different. Here, the main infrastructures reflect the city's identity in terms of design and sustainability. Examples include the Ørestad neighbourhood, the Black Diamond, the infrastructure related to the Storm Surge Management Plan, and the Harbour's reconstruction. In this case, the fit between the infrastructure and the city's identity generates a strong and coherent communication aimed at creating positive associations in people's minds. Even more evident is the case of Hamburg, which has made infrastructure and flagship projects some of its main features. The most prominent example is the Elbphilharmonie, which has become a landmark of the city. It is joined by HafenCity, Science City Bahrenfeld, and Hamburger Deckel. Here, innovation and sustainability have become a focal point of Hamburg, also thanks to the communication that is done of the city's brand. The communication is extremely distinctive and highly differentiated. Each of Hamburg Marketing's sub-units communicates differently and to its own target group. Accordingly, cultural facilities are part of the marketing strategy of Hamburg Tourism, while infrastructure projects are communicated by Hamburg Invest. In addition, the DMO works closely with HafenCity Hamburg GmbH, which is also responsible for managing the city's major projects and communicating their added value.

The second section to be analysed concerns the landscape strategies, namely a range of activities and choices that are important to city planning, such as urban design, public

spaces, and architecture. In this case, it can be noted that, unlike Copenhagen, the cities of Amsterdam and Hamburg do not have unified and coherent communication in relation to these three main topics. In fact, the city of Amsterdam has almost no communication in terms of urban design. Despite the great effort made by the municipality to develop and implement the Comprehensive Vision Amsterdam 2050, the resulting initiatives are mainly communicated through the municipality's reports but are not integrated into the city's brand, nor are they given visibility through the channels of amsterdam&partners. The approach in relation to public spaces and architecture is different. These two topics contribute to the city's reputation and generate positive associations in terms of quality of life. Consequently, they are part of the marketing strategy pursued by the DMO, even if they are not an essential focus. Differently, as far as the city of Hamburg is concerned, there is strong communication related to urban development and public spaces, although mainly addressed to the target group of residents. Architecturally, the city is characterised by a mix of classical Romanesque art, Art Nouveau style, and highly modern buildings. This lack of cohesion generates confusion in the collective imagination that does not make architecture one of the city's twelve topics. Hamburg Marketing, being very focused on the 12 modules that represent the image and identity of the city, does not pay attention to the architectural component of the city, nor does it seem willing to make it an integral part of the Hamburg brand. The last analysis refers to the city of Copenhagen. In this case, it is possible to notice strong compactness in the communication related to landscape strategies. In fact, directly or indirectly, the three topics are a fundamental part of the Localhood strategy. Public spaces and urban design initiatives are strictly related to the sustainability and design modules, thanks to initiatives related to the implementation of biking lanes, green spaces, and distinctive urban attractions. Furthermore, following the nomination as World Capital of Architecture 2023, architecture has become a fundamental part of brand communication, with numerous dedicated articles, a strong presence on official websites, and dedicated press materials and images.

The third section to be analysed concerns the *organizational and administrative structures*. In this area of research, it is important to look at PPPs, i.e., public-private partnerships, and the involvement of citizens in the development of new projects. From the communication point of view, it is interesting to note an almost absence of communication in relation to citizen participation in all the cities analysed. This absence

can be explained by citizen participation only concerns the target group of residents and is also not easily associated with the brand focal points of the three cities. Nevertheless, good citizen participation can enhance the reputation of a brand in terms of quality of life and the spirit of sharing. Consequently, all initiatives, such as the Amsterdam Smart City program, the Kbenhavnerting, and the DIPAS, should be focal points for the marketing strategy adopted by the three respective DMOs in relation to the target group of residents. Instead, the study of Public-Private Partnerships revealed how these projects, according to the Amsterdam and Copenhagen DMOs, are able to generate positive associations in terms of innovation, smart cities, and sustainability. Consequently, PPPs such as the Amsterdam Smart City programme, the Amsterdam Street lighting service, and the CPH City & Port Development Corporation are a central focus for the communication of amsterdam&partners and Wonderful Copenhagen. Indeed, several communication campaigns were carried out by the DMOs, the two different municipalities, and national and international newspapers. The case of Hamburg Marketing, on the other hand, is different, as it shows a lack of communication in relation to organizational and administrative structures. Public-private partnerships in the city of Hamburg have increased strongly in recent years, for example, with the federal association Bundesverband Public Private Partnership, the Hamburg Airport, and the Elbphilharmonie. Despite the importance of these projects, their communication can mainly be attributed to the municipality.

The last section of the primary communication concerns the city's behaviour in terms of financial incentives offered by the municipality or government and event organisation. A peculiar situation can be observed here. In fact, all three city DMOs have highly developed marketing plans in terms of event organisation and communication. These, in fact, in all three cases, turn out to be a fundamental element of the city brand. All cities have a Convention Bureau associated with the DMO, which confirms the importance given to events and festivals. It is possible to notice a very similar strategy among the various cities. Firstly, there are two types of communication that are implemented by the three DMOs and that implemented by the three Convention Bureaus. The former is aimed purely at tourists and partly also at residents, with large sections of the DMOs' websites and social media entirely dedicated to the events and all related updates. The second is mainly addressed to companies and investors through business events and conferences.

The communication concerning financial incentives is different. In this case, the Amsterdam DMO and municipality working closely with the government and the minister of economic affairs, communicate tax initiatives and national subsidies. This transparent communication contributes to the creation of positive associations with the Amsterdam brand in terms of business development, focus on sustainability, and innovation hub. Moreover, it is a communication strictly directed at local and foreign businesses and potential investors. In contrast, the Wonderful Copenhagen and Hamburg Marketing DMOs do not have communication focused on financial incentives promoted by the municipality and government. In both cases, the cities and countries are characterised by strong business and individual incentives that generate a dynamic business environment and a high quality of life. This absence can be explained by the fact that these incentives are mainly state incentives and therefore do not concern the city specifically. Nevertheless, we have seen in the course of this research how, through the concept of spatial layering, a positive association relating to a larger geographical area can be translated to a lower level. Consequently, this type of communication should be implemented, demonstrating the added value of the city to the target groups of businesses and residents.

	<b>Primary communication block</b>			
Infrastructure Projects	Infrastructure facilities	Despite the fact that these infrastructure projects are indicative of a cutting-edge and innovative city, in line with the storytelling that is done of the city's brand, they are not given undue prominence in the communication by amsterdam&partners.	The infrastructure projects in question and the initiatives taken by the municipality are extensively presented on the Wonderful Copenhagen and municipal website. This can be explained as these types of initiatives that drive innovation and sustainability in the city are closely linked to the communicated brand image.	This means that communication is done on a large scale, using synergies and collaborations capable of shaping the desired city brand identity. Furthermore, the extensive communication that is done contributes to the creation of the city's image in terms of liveability and growth.
	Cultural facilities	These initiatives are reported on the website of the municipality of Amsterdam and on the official website of amsterdam&partners. However, the communication that is made of these initiatives is not central to the city's narrative and is not given too much depth on the communication channels used.	At the communication level, the cultural facilities offered by the city are aimed at all three target groups of the city: residents, tourists, and businesses. In fact, wide visibility is given to these projects on official websites, social channels, and in the national press, leading to full cooperation between municipalities and DMOs.	Communication concerning cultural infrastructures and related projects is differentiated between the various entities collaborating in the constitution of Hamburg's city brand. Specifically, the communication generated by the institutional authorities and Hamburg Tourismus is very general and mainly addressed to the target group of tourists. At the same time, the communication related to the HafenCity district is very diverse and specific and able to reach residents, businesses, and tourists. This diversified and fragmented communication reflects a largely fragmented tourism sector in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region with a variety of brands promoting various areas of the region.
Landscape Strategies	Urban design	From a communicative point of view the urban design initiatives are not widely communicated by the DMO, but as they are mainly addressed to the target group of residents, they are extensively explained on the website of the municipality of Amsterdam, where the Comprehensive Vision Amsterdam 2050 is presented.	Even if it is not directly part of the sub-brands considered in the Localhood strategy, urban design is indirectly related to it. Indeed, communication of urban design initiatives occurs indirectly when it concerns issues that are important to the Copenhagen brand, such as the development of a common space or the improvement of a bike lane.	In this urban development perspective, it is necessary to emphasise how effective and direct communication is to the final target audience, the residents. Furthermore, the presence on the official website of a special section on urban development and current projects demonstrates the importance given to urban development and the creation of flagship projects, which are now an important part of the city brand.
	Public spaces	This desire to improve the city's public spaces is not the focus of the city's communication, but at the same time represents a part of the city's identity in terms of creativity, innovation, participation, and greening.	Likewise urban design, public spaces are widely communicated and publicized as they contribute to the city's image in terms of community and sustainability.	Public spaces are included in urban development and represent one of the four key objectives. Their importance is also evident given the extensive communication in terms of future projects on the site of the municipality and the Hamburg DMO.
	Architecture	In this case, the city's communication and the resulting associations are closely linked to the type of architecture in Amsterdam, which is therefore an important recognition and reputational factor.	From a communication perspective, architecture turns out to be a key topic for the Copenhagen brand. Especially following the nomination as World Capital of Architecture 2023. For this reason, there is a strong communication push in relation to architecture with numerous dedicated	The architecture of the city is a topic that is largely dealt with at the level of the individual city district, and which aims to differentiate one area from another. At the same time, however, the architectural mix that characterises the city is not part of the 12 modules that make up Hamburg's brand image. For this reason, the city's structural features are not strongly communicated by the local authorities.
Organizational and Administrative Structure	PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships)	The Amsterdam Smart City programme and the partnerships on which it is based have set an example for cities all over Europe and therefore a major communication campaign was carried out by amsterdam&partners, the municipality, and national and international newspapers to create a further positive association with the city brand in terms of innovation, smart-city, and sustainability.	Not only PPPs are at the core of the policy adopted by the city of Copenhagen, but they are also fundamental to the DMO for the purpose of communicating the city's brand.	Despite the strong increase of public private partnerships in Germany and in the city of Hamburg these do not fit into the modules identified by the city's DMO. Consequently, despite the regional importance of these projects, the corresponding communication by public authorities (municipality, Hamburg Marketing GmbH, Hamburg Invest, etc.) is practically absent.
	Citizens participation	This series of initiatives and projects helps to create positive communication towards the target group of residents. Likewise, however, this spirit of sharing and participation is not effectively communicated by the municipality and the DMO and consequently does not contribute to creating positive associations in the minds of other target groups.	Despite the citizen participation initiatives that have been established in recent years in the city of Copenhagen, the city is still far from achieving constant and active participation. Furthermore, even though the initiatives set up so far are not very numerous, there is a lack of communication between them and the different target groups, especially residents. This contrasts with the "Localhood" strategy adopted by Wonderful Copenhagen and downplays the role of citizens as brand ambassadors of the city.	In this case, communication on city participation is mainly addressed to the target group of residents and potential residents as it helps to create the image of a city in which each individual citizen is free to give his or her opinion and contribute to creating a better city. Specifically, the various programmes carried out are communicated by the municipality and the Department of Urban Development and Housing via the website, press releases and reports. However, it is important to note that this topic is not part of the communication made by Hamburg Marketing
City's Behaviour	Financial Incentives	In any case, the Amsterdam DMO and municipality working closely with the government and the minister of economic affairs, transparently communicate tax initiatives and national subsidies making the positive associations with the city brand image even stronger in terms of business development, focus on sustainability, and innovation hub. This is possible due to the concept of spatial layering, according to which the two brands (nation and city) brands are closely interconnected and able to influence one another.	Despite the presence of numerous initiatives and plans to support the city's most important plans, these are only communicated through the official websites of the organisations involved. This means that all the communication that can be done by e.g., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark on the national level and by the municipality and Wonderful Copenhagen on the city level is missing. Instead, more communication about the proposed incentives at regional and national level towards businesses and residents could benefit the Copenhagen city brand.	Communication on the available state financial incentives is easily accessible on the official websites of the government but also of the municipality of Hamburg, thus giving an idea of what the benefits of living in Germany are. On the other hand, when looking at incentives related to the city of Hamburg, these are easily found on the municipality's website, where in-depth information and press releases are provided. In this case, the communication is not the responsibility of the DMO, but this is not surprising as in the case of Hamburg we have seen how all actors are perfectly coordinated and their tasks well diversified and divided.
	Events	The assiduous communication that is made of city events and the work done by the Amsterdam Convention Bureau confirms the importance that is given to the organization of festivals and events, which contribute to generating an image of the city of Amsterdam that is closely linked to events, meetings, and arts. In this case, collaboration between the DMO and actors such as the municipality and the Amsterdam Convention Bureau is important as they are able to influence each other and cooperate for the purpose of good transmission of the city brand image	The vibrant tradition of events characterises the city of Copenhagen, being able to attract all kinds of target groups. Moreover, given the importance these events have in terms of image, branding, and economic return, great attention is paid to their communication. In fact, a large section of the DMO website is entirely dedicated to the events and all related updates, in addition to the large space dedicated to them on official social media. Moreover, the Wonderful Copenhagen website offers direct access to the official website of the Copenhagen Convention Bureau.	Communication in this respect is very broad and comes from all kinds of local authorities. Firstly, the municipality's website takes care of this, promoting the attractiveness of the city's events. Secondly, communication comes from the Hamburg Tourism website when it comes to events open to the public and attracting tourists from all over the world, and from the Hamburg Convention Bureau website when the events in question are business events. Furthermore, the events linked to and promoted by the city are in line with Hamburg's image in terms of "City of the waterfront", "Public festivals and events", and "International trading hub".

Table 4 - Primary communication block

The third block to be analysed is “*Secondary communication*”. The latter contains information on the marketing techniques, strategies, and tools implemented by the respective DMOs. Looking at secondary communication, it is worth noting that the DMOs of Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Hamburg have been working on building the city's brand for years through established marketing strategies. Therefore, it is possible through an in-depth analysis to observe the similarities and differences. First of all, in terms of the tools used, it is necessary to focus specifically on the use of slogans and logos, as it is possible to notice differences in their application. The city of Amsterdam, for example, created a simple and impactful slogan, “*I Amsterdam*” which over time also became the city's logo. In this case, therefore, the logo and slogan overlap with each other. Another special case is that of Hamburg, which had a single logo applied to the city's main public authorities, including the municipality, Hamburg Marketing, and all its subsidiaries, the airport, and the various ministries. Despite this graphic unity, there is a lack of a slogan attributable to the city. Finally, Copenhagen is a very traditional case where, based on the historical origins of the city, a slogan, “*Wonderful Copenhagen*”, and a logo, Hans Christian Andersen's Little Mermaid, have been defined. Other observations can be made in relation to the marketing strategy and techniques used for the three case studies. First of all, it can be noted that the target audiences are generally the same for all cities, i.e., residents, businesses, and visitors. Nevertheless, some strategies, such as Amsterdam and Hamburg, do not have a strong focus on the target group of residents, which is central to Copenhagen's Localhood strategy. Furthermore, it should be noted that the strategies are also differentiated on the basis of the city's objectives. For example, in the case of Amsterdam, the rebranding of the city and the following strategy aimed to eliminate negative associations, decrease over-tourism and create a sense of belonging. Instead, WOCO's strategy is based on promoting not so much the touristic Copenhagen but the Copenhagen lifestyle and trying to do this with a seasonal adjustment and decentralisation approach. The ultimate goal is to prevent over-tourism and promote the local realities. Finally, Hamburg Marketing's strategy deviates even further from these two examples. In fact, this aims to create a unified image of the local authorities and emphasize the quality of life and the economic dynamism of Hamburg. In conclusion, we can say that although very general characteristics can be found in common, each brand has a strategy tailored to the different objectives of the city and region.

Secondary communication block	Amsterdam	Copenhagen	Hamburg
Logos and slogans	An attempt was made to create a sense of belonging among people through the creation of the city's logo and slogan: "I Amsterdam". The goal was to create a clear, short, and powerful slogan that nevertheless could carry important meaning. The slogan then became an urban sculpture and consequently one of the logos of the city.	The Little Mermaid has always been the symbol of the city of Copenhagen thanks to Hans Christian Andersen. Then it has been represented in the Wonderful Copenhagen logo. Similarly, also the slogan "Wonderful Copenhagen" is inspired by Hans Christian Andersen.	The logo used is the city's oldest coat of arms. On it is depicted a fortress with three towers. What is special about this logo is that it was then used by the city's main players: the municipality, Hamburg marketing and all its subsidiaries, the airport, the city flag, etc. Although it is easy to observe the efforts made to graphically standardise the city logo, the same cannot be said about the slogan. In fact, it is not possible to identify a true logo in relation to the Hamburg city brand.
Other marketing strategies and tools	The city re-branding project was launched in 2004 to improve the city's reputation, reposition it, and fight against the phenomenon of over tourism. This was possible thanks to the numerous communication channels used and the extensive partner network that the DMO was able to build.	The strategy used is the Localhood strategy, based on five core stories. The idea is to be the "end of tourism as we know it", focusing on people. The strategy is mainly based on two elements: deseasonalisation and decentralisation.	According to HMG, attention should be paid to either future residents who will provide the necessary talent and labor force or visitors who can generate significant revenue. Thus, a multi-level strategy plan has been developed, presenting a Marketing Image 2030, based on the two focus points: Economic Dynamism and Quality of Life.

Table 5 - Secondary communication block

The last block to be analysed is that relating to “*Tertiary communication*”. The latter refers to the word-of-mouth resulting from primary and secondary communication and is measured through the analysis of Google Trends results from 2004 to the present<sup>261</sup>. The first term analysed is the name of the cities studied. The best results are associated with the city of Amsterdam, which generated a slightly increasing WOM in the years from 2009 onwards, excluding the period related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, in the case of Copenhagen, values can be seen increasing over time, thanks to the branding efforts carried out by the DMO and constant city investments. The only exception is the city of Hamburg, which despite its growing importance in Europe and worldwide, generates a decreasing search trend over time. The second term refers instead to the name of the DMO's website. Here, for both Wonderful Copenhagen and Hamburg Marketing, a decreasing trend can be seen from 2008 onwards, with a very low search interest over the last ten years. As hypothesised above, this can be explained by the fact that DMOs' websites are usually reached indirectly through searches concerning the city of reference. This is different in the case of *amsterdam&partners*, whose site is called “*I Amsterdam*”. As discussed above, “*I Amsterdam*” represents the slogan and the name of the city. In addition, the term has gained increasing visibility due to the sculptures scattered around the Amsterdam region, which have become tourist attractions. The third term analyses the behaviour and willingness to visit the city on the basis of searches made by users. One can see the highest results in terms of WOM in relation to the city and region of

<sup>261</sup> (Google Trends, 2023)



Amsterdam. Tourists recorded in the pre-pandemic are, on average, 18 million per year, with steady growth over time, reaching a record 21.7 million in 2019. Even in the post-pandemic, there is a steady increase in tourism in the Dutch capital. This shows how the data are in line with research trends. In contrast, in the cases of Copenhagen and Hamburg, the research trends do not reflect the true trend of the data. In fact, although there are increases in the number of tourists in the two cities, the resulting WOM is almost constant over time. This may be related to the difficulty in predicting the behaviour of potential tourists on the basis of searches alone. The fourth term under analysis refers to the business segment and tries to capture interest in the economic aspects related to the city. In this case, there is a constant trend and frequency of searches due to the economic prosperity of the three cities and their centrality in business at the European level. The last term of analysis refers to the target group of residents. In this case, a higher search frequency can be noted with regard to the city of Amsterdam. However, in all three cases, there are slightly decreasing trends over time. As also reported above, this may be related to the difficulty in predicting the behaviour of potential residents by using Google Trends.

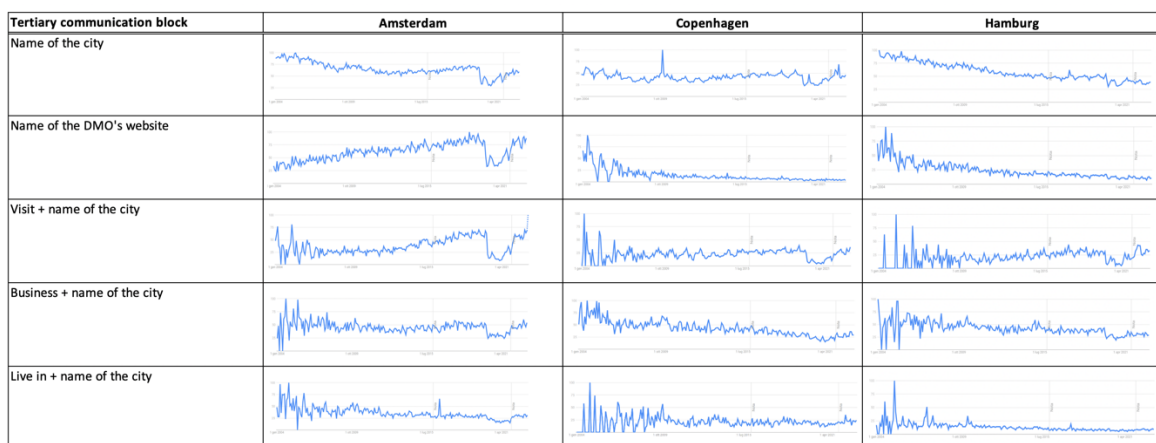


Table 6 - Tertiary communication block.

The three cases analysed so far are examples of strong city brands that have evolved over time and acquired great importance at a European and global level. Nevertheless, a synthetic and schematic study of the characteristics of each city brand can help to understand the features and aspects that could be deepened and developed. The comparison is derived from a sum up of the main outcomes related to the four building

blocks. In this way, it is possible to evaluate possible best practices to be implemented and the effects these may have in terms of tertiary communication.

**Legend**






























-  Present
-  Not fully present
-  Absent

Image and Identity			
OUTCOMES	AMSTERDAM	COPENHAGEN	HAMBURG
Vision and strategy fit			
Completeness of Bull's Eye model			
Identity and image fit			

Primary communication			
OUTCOMES	AMSTERDAM	COPENHAGEN	HAMBURG
Infrastructure facilities			
Cultural facilities			
Urban design			
Public spaces			
Architecture			
PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships)			
Citizens participation			
Financial Incentives			
Events			

Secondary communication			
OUTCOMES	AMSTERDAM	COPENHAGEN	HAMBURG
Logos and slogans	✓	✓	!
Other marketing strategies and tools	✓	✓	✓

Tertiary Communication

OUTCOMES

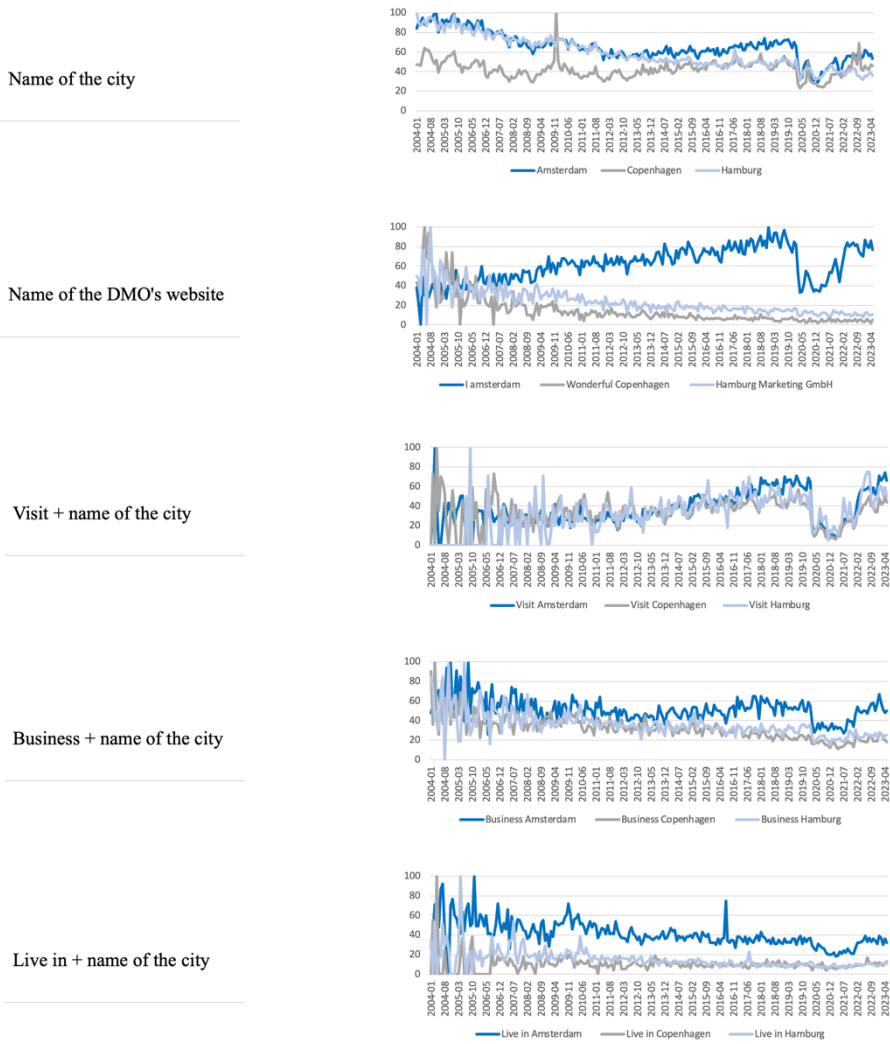


Table 7 - Comparisons between the three different case studies based on the previously analysed building blocks.

This comparison suggests that the three cities under analysis have a well-developed and competitive city branding strategy, but some brand-related improvements can be made. In particular, an increased focus on city participation and financial incentives promoted by the state, the region, and the city could result in numerous benefits for city

branding in terms of brand associations, WOM, number of new residents, and number of new businesses. At the same time, the suggested implementations must develop in a manner consistent with the city's brand communication. The solution is to introduce a new key to the projects already in place in the different cities, adapting them to the political, economic, and social realities that characterise Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Hamburg. Furthermore, economic investments in terms of brand revaluation and promotion could generate a more complete and competitive vision of the city brand.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this work, it can be observed that, to date, the concept of city marketing has given way to the new phenomenon of city branding. Whereas previously, city marketing focused purely on applicable marketing strategies, today, the city branding adopted by the main DMOs focuses on a much broader approach that also takes into account the development of the city in terms of brand image, investments, infrastructures, projects, etc. Specifically, this thesis focused on how the city brand as a whole could be communicated by the relevant DMO. In order to answer the research question in the first chapter, it was necessary to review the literature in terms of branding and place/city branding in order to study the state of the literature, highlight notions relevant to the analysis and identify a standard model that could be applied to any case study: the Kavaratzis model. This model was able to identify a framework that could simplify and make the communication of city brands efficient, and on the basis of this, the analysis was carried out. In the second chapter, after having identified the model to be applied, it was necessary to specifically define the research methodology. In this context, it was decided to use a multiple case study analysis with a very flexible research process in order to increase the validity and accuracy of the results. The identification of the three cities under analysis was based on two requirements: 1) European cities that have sought to create or regenerate a strong city brand over the last two decades; 2) three cities that corresponded with each of the three different branding techniques outlined by Kavaratzis and Ashworth in 2005, namely, personality branding, flagship construction, and events branding. Based on these guidelines, the three case studies of Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Hamburg were identified and subsequently analysed through the application of the Kavaratzis model. Specifically, in the third chapter, each city was investigated according to a standard structure divided into the identity and image of the city, primary communication, secondary communication, and tertiary communication. The collection of secondary data was done through official websites, online archives, blogs, databases, press releases, articles, books, related websites, social media, city rankings, statistics, and the Google Trends tool. Additionally, primary data were collected through one-to-one interviews with professionals who work or have worked in contact with the three DMOs: amsterdam&partners, Wonderful Copenhagen, and Hamburg Marketing.

The outcome of the analysis has given evidence that, although the model identified by Kavaratzis in 2004 is an excellent starting point, today, in light of this more comprehensive conception of the city brand, this model needs modifications and more flexibility in its application. In fact, it can be seen that some topics are not dealt with by the different DMOs. For example, the architecture of the city of Hamburg is a topic that is largely dealt with at the level of the individual city district and aims to differentiate one area from another. At the same time, however, the architectural mix that characterises the city is not part of the 12 modules that make up Hamburg's brand image. For this reason, the city's structural features are not strongly communicated by the local authorities. Another example can be the citizen participation section in Copenhagen. Despite the citizen participation initiatives that have been established in recent years in the city of Copenhagen, the city is still far from achieving constant and active participation. Furthermore, even though the initiatives set up so far are not very numerous, there is a lack of communication between them and the different target groups, especially residents. This contrasts with the “*Localhood*” strategy adopted by Wonderful Copenhagen and downplays the role of citizens as brand ambassadors of the city. Finally, in the case of the city of Amsterdam, one of the uncommunicated topics is infrastructure projects. Indeed, despite the fact that these infrastructure projects are indicative of a cutting-edge and innovative city, in line with the storytelling that is done of the city's brand, they are not given undue prominence in the communication by amsterdam&partners. This difficulty in fully applying the Kavaratzis model can also be explained in light of the “*Image and identity block*”. On the basis of this section, we can observe that each city has different shortcomings in terms of branding, which have to be filled through an ad hoc and diversified branding strategy. In conclusion, several observations can be made. Firstly, it is necessary to establish a body (the DMO) with the task of implementing city branding. Furthermore, for city branding to be communicated effectively, collaboration with political and administrative entities is necessary. Indeed, the branding process applied to cities, as deduced from the secondary data and interviews, is closely linked to public policy and ideology. Secondly, it is inferred that city brand communication by the various DMOs cannot be standardised but, on the contrary, must be strongly customised according to the needs of each individual city brand. Consequently, it is necessary that the topics communicated, and the methods of communication are in line with the modules on which each individual city focuses. Lastly, research has shown that, to have national and international relevance, a city brand must have three characteristics: 1) it must be a complex city brand, composed of closely

related subsidiaries or organisations that are able to reach the different target groups the city addresses; 2) a city brand must have broadly diversified communication, both in terms of the communication tools used and the target groups addressed; 3) full awareness and knowledge of the city brand are necessary on the part of the DMO to be able to define a strategy consistent with the city's identity and image.

#### **4.1. Implications and limitations**

This research first contributed to the expansion of the literature through the comprehensive application of the Kavartzis model to three different case studies. Subsequently, the dissertation outlined the difficulty for DMOs in using such a standardised model for the purpose of city brand communication. Moreover, the study investigated the implications of a comprehensive branding strategy in terms of word-of-mouth, highlighting the importance of coherent primary and secondary communication. Furthermore, it was noted how certain topics can be integrated into the communication of various cities. An example could be the public-private partnerships developed in the city of Hamburg. In fact, despite the regional importance of these projects, the corresponding communication by public authorities is quite absent. The integration by Hamburg Marketing of more communication regarding PPPs could benefit Hamburg's brand in terms of a dynamic economy and could create positive associations related to the innovation of these projects. Similarly, the city of Copenhagen could benefit from the expansion of its communication regarding financial incentives on a regional and national level towards businesses and residents. These are just some of the implementations that could be made by the various DMOs to strengthen the city brand and indirectly create positive associations with the main modules of each city. Further studies will be necessary to develop more defined analyses, which can delve into individual topics and possible implementations in terms of communication and best practices.

This thesis also has limitations. Firstly, the use of the rigid Kavartzis model may not have made it possible to analyse certain critical and characteristic aspects of each individual city brand. This would require the development and subsequent application of more flexible models capable of simplifying the communication of DMOs. Moreover, the use of the Google Trends tool as a predictor of WOM may be reductive and not actually representative of the tertiary communication generated in relation to the city brand. In

addition, more interviews could be conducted with the heads of the individual divisions of each DMO in order to analyse multiple points of view and obtain a more precise and timely analysis. Finally, the research can be extended to cities outside Europe to analyse additional variables that can impact the way city brands communicate, such as geographical origin.



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## **APPENDIX**

### **Appendix A – Amsterdam&partners interview**

R = Researcher

I = Interviewee

**R:** Good morning, Eleonora, how are you?

**I:** Fine thanks

**R:** Ok, first of all thank you for your time, I know that you don't have so much time so if it is ok for you, we can start with the interview

**I:** Yes, it is perfect for me

**R:** Ok perfect, first of all where do you work and what do you do?

**I:** Currently I work as corporate communications at Amsterdam&partners. I have also previously worked in the communications area, but in this case my work is closely related to the management and communication of the Amsterdam city brand.

**R:** And how long have you been working there?

**I:** I have been working for about six months at Amsterdam&partners

**R:** Can you tell me in general what Amsterdam&partners is about?

**I:** As an organization we, Amsterdam&partners, are committed to retain the balance in the city, by means of targeted marketing activities, at which scatter through place and time is central. Our work goes further than just promoting Amsterdam at international visitors. We are among other things responsible for:

1. Making sure that visitors also visit other neighbourhoods and the metropolitan. Indeed, we are the guide for the metropolitan.
2. Giving inhabitants access to a lot of nice cultural activities in the region like the Uitmarkt, the Uitkrant. 24H, the cultural agenda on iamsterdam.nl, etc.
3. Positioning Amsterdam as the ideal establishment and investment location by international companies and investors.
4. Seducing renowned congresses to come to Amsterdam.
5. Being a platform with extensive research data about Amsterdam and the metropolitan

6. Being an active network with hundreds of companies, organizations, and settlements from the metropolitan Amsterdam, which strengthen each other.

**R:** Thank you for the answer, very explicative, and what is the marketing strategy used by Amsterdam&partners?

**I:** We stopped promoting Amsterdam as a destination brand several years ago. We do not talk about city marketing anymore, but about improving the reputation of Amsterdam and influencing the behaviour by guiding different target groups to less well-known places. Our focus is on the residents, visitors and companies remain welcome. The challenge here is finding the right balances between these groups. That's why we changed our name from Amsterdam marketing into Amsterdam&partners as it better reflects what we are doing.

**R:** And to whom is the communication directed?

**I:** We focus on three major groups: residents, businesses, and visitors. We believe it is important that cities and city marketing organizations include residents as a target group. You cannot make a city stronger by boosting tourism alone, especially when more tourism can threaten the quality of life for residents. These three target groups together form and create the soul of the city, and cities should always look for a good balance in these three groups and their interests.

**R:** How would you describe the Amsterdam brand's core identity?

**I:** Amsterdam made the decision to stand out by combining its three key values—creativity, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit—as the foundation for its identity. Additionally, the identity of the city is strictly related to its to other positive factors such as bicycles, Van Gogh, flowers, multiculturalism, tolerance, and stuff like that.

**R:** Wow, very interesting, and what is the image of the city to be communicated? Is it the same for all target groups or is it differentiated?

**I:** All the activities carried out ensure that the metropolitan of Amsterdam is and will remain an attractive place to visit, invest in, work, congress and above all to stay and live, also in the coming years. I amsterdam is the motto of the city and her inhabitants. De strongest asset of Amsterdam is the diversity of the people who visit and live here. Important to notice is that our organization works, creates, and develops the motto of I amsterdam. And obviously we specifically differentiate the communication in relation to the single target group as I also previously said. At the same time in the past years, we have some trouble because negative associations with the city's brand have arisen.

Consequently, we undertook some measures to manage the city's issues and communicate the brand image.

**R:** Can I ask you to give me some examples of the measures taken?

**I:** Of course, communicate the brand core identity by presenting for example:

- Amsterdam Area as a whole, rather than focusing on the city's icons. Guiding visitors to other regions. Promoting a neighbourhood campaign presenting unknown places in well-known areas and little-known neighbourhoods to broaden visitor experience in the city and the Amsterdam Area.
- A different image of Amsterdam, revealing that it is so much more than its famed Red-Light District. It promotes a city full of museums, theatres, parks, nature, architecture, music, fashion, restaurants, festivals, sports and more. Also, we focus on the qualitative of Amsterdam instead of the quantitative.
- The city itself under the slogan 'Visit Amsterdam, see Holland' (an area including Haarlem, Zaandam, Edam, Lelystad, and the beaches), encouraging repeat visitors to see other cities, such as Leiden, The Hague and Rotterdam, thereby spreading tourist numbers while supporting other destinations.
- The launch of campaigns to influence bad behaviour stemming from specific groups of visitors, with the threat of fines for those caught flouting its rules. One of Amsterdam main rule is: Enjoy&Respect.

**R:** What are the communication channels used?

**I:** We use many different communication channels, the national and international press, the official website, and social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. We also provide offline information to our visitors in the I Amsterdam Store.

**R:** In your opinion, do the public investments made in terms of new infrastructure, new public spaces, events, and partnerships with private individuals have an impact on the city brand?

**I:** Absolutely, I personally think that any change whether it is an investment, new spaces, events, or anything else can impact the associations that people have with the city brand. That is precisely why our task is to communicate these changes in the best possible way so that they are in line with the city brand.

**R:** And specifically, what role does Amsterdam&partners play in communicating these (e.g., the construction of a new infrastructure; the creation of new public spaces; a new city event or the creation of a new partnership with a local company) to the target audience?

**I:** We can say that we at Amsterdam&partners are told about the initiatives of the municipality or the business community and together with them we decide on the best way to communicate the news and the most suitable media. Furthermore, in consultation with the municipality, Amsterdam&partners has also drawn up a covenant in which Amsterdam&partners makes agreements on cooperation with various large organizations.

**R:** In this case, can you explain more specifically which actors are involved in the communication of the Amsterdam brand? (e.g., municipality, Amsterdam Convention Bureau, Amsterdam inbusiness, etc.) What synergies are created between them?

**I:** We work closely with the municipality. As an organization, we are responsible for the reputation, branding, and marketing of the city and region. The City of Amsterdam and regional municipalities are responsible for the city/region and its tourism product. The municipality has 4 tasks:

1. Licensor: as the owner of the Amsterdam brand, the municipality of Amsterdam is the licensor to Amsterdam Partners. This is formalized in a license agreement, which has to be maintained periodically.
2. Co-decision-maker: through its chairmanship of the General Board and vice-chairmanship of the General and Executive Boards of Amsterdam Partners, the municipality has an important say in the strategy of Amsterdam Partners. The Mayor and the Alderman for Economic Affairs should make optimum use of their position as members of the Board for the benefit of the Amsterdam region.
3. Policy developer and implementer: the city government is responsible for a number of substantive policy areas that have a major impact on Amsterdam's profile.
4. Communicator on behalf of the Amsterdam brand: the mayor is the national and international face of Amsterdam; in Amsterdam and the region it is clear that the Alderman for Economic Affairs and the Chairman of the Executive Committee work to achieve this on a daily basis. This is also evident from the way in which they will speak about Amsterdam's city marketing in the media. The Chairman of

the DB and Alderman EZ are in intensive contact about press contacts and suchlike.

The business community is involved in the persons of large multinational and national companies based in the Amsterdam region. In addition, a large number of companies from sectors such as business services, the lawyer's office, real estate, hotels, conference centers and publishing contribute substantially. These companies all contribute. They contribute content, will review and advise, in addition to making an annual contribution and a one-off impulse to establish the brand.

**R:** Ok, last question I swear, how is co-ordination with these actors about the communication of the city brand image?

**I:** We, Amsterdam&partners, work together with the government closely to address the issues others might experience. Amsterdam&partners is a semi-public independent organization focused on the city's reputation management, while the city council of Amsterdam is responsible for legislation and regulations. We believe that together we can make the difference.

**R:** Ok, thank you very much for your time. I really appreciated it and what you said will be very useful for my thesis.

**I:** You're welcome. Contact me if you need further information.

**R:** Thank you, bye bye

**I:** Bye

## **Appendix B – Wonderful Copenhagen interview**

R = Researcher

I = Interviewee

**R:** Good evening, Giuseppe, how are you?

**I:** Fine thanks

**R:** Ok, if it's ok for you we can start from the beginning, where do you work and what do you do specifically?

**I:** I work at the tourist board of the city of Copenhagen, I've been there for 10 years and I'm the press officer for the city of Copenhagen for the tourist destination part. So not for the municipality part but for everything related to travel. Also, I work a lot with all kinds of media so lifestyle media or news or whatever, not just travel media.

**R:** And how long have you been working there?

**I:** Eh...I've been there for 10 years

**R:** Perfect, so let's say you work for Wonderful Copenhagen, and you deal with the press, but in general can you tell me what Wonderful Copenhagen is about?

**I:** Yes gladly. So Wonderful Copenhagen is the tourist board of the Danish capital, and our job is to attract international guests to Copenhagen. That's kind of our bottom line. Then more specifically, it is important to attract foreign tourists, whether they are individual tourists, cruise tourists, or congress tourists. Let's say we have a lot of facets, my work is aimed at the end user, so a person like yourself who might read an article about Copenhagen in the national newspaper or the Financial Times and be inspired to come here.

**R:** Ok perfect let's say talking to you who work directly in-house is very useful for me also to understand what is the marketing strategy you use can you tell me more?

**I:** We have several strategies, we have a conference strategy, a content strategy, a strategy for the promotion of, etc. In short, there are many. In particular, the Wonderful Copenhagen strategy, at the moment, is being reworked so the new strategy is not yet public. For now, what we are relying on is our last strategy published I think 5 years ago now called localhood, which had as a slogan the end of tourism as we know it, let's say.

To briefly summarise, we were one of the first tourist boards in the world to focus on the problems of tourist overcrowding while not suffering from it. Copenhagen does not have problems with tourist overcrowding but we looked at the examples of Barcelona, Venice, Amsterdam and decided to try to prevent it. In order to prevent this, we came up with this strategy which is based on promoting not so much tourist Copenhagen but the Copenhagen lifestyle and therefore the local realities and trying to do this with a seasonal adjustment approach. So, in terms of marketing, press, PR, and communication, this strategy has given us the goal of promoting January, February, or in any case the darker months in Copenhagen, where nothing happens in Copenhagen, where it is dark and where it is perhaps less interesting for a tourist to come. So, we have worked a lot to try from a communication point of view to take the tourist, the reader, by the hand and make them understand why you have to come to Copenhagen in those months. In addition to seasonal adjustment, this strategy has also given us a direction in terms of decentralising tourism. If you go to our website, we have conducted a study called 10 x where among other things we also interviewed representatives of local communities in all districts of Copenhagen to find out how they feel about tourists. This is very important because with the localhood strategy we introduced a new target for wonderful Copenhagen, the people of Copenhagen. The interesting thing for me is that we are a tourist board that doesn't look at commercial targets. For example, we don't have targets like: "we must have 100,000 conference guests", but targets more related to soft values, like the feeling of the locals to preserve the atmosphere of the city. Also, because people come to Copenhagen not so much for the tourist attractions but for the lifestyle here that is talked about all over the world, so we want to make sure that tourists are welcome and that they experience this atmosphere when they come here. That's why we conducted this study and found that in 99% of the cases they said they liked tourists a lot, while in the neighbourhood where the Nyhavn Canal is, there was a critical eye towards tourism.

**R:** Excuse me, could you explain more precisely how you intervened?

**I:** Yes, of course. There is a residents' committee that has expressed great concern about the risk of tourist overcrowding even though Copenhagen is not a city suffering from overcrowding. This issue and our always localhood strategy then influenced our content communication strategy. In fact, we stopped promoting Nyhavn altogether five years ago. It may sound trivial but to make a comparison it would be like saying Venice stops



promoting its canals or Florence stops promoting Ponte Vecchio or the David. So, on our site we have removed all images of Nyhavn, all journalists who come to Copenhagen come on the condition that they do not include Nyhavn in their articles. For example, when an editorial team publishes a picture of Nyhavn after conducting a press trip in cooperation with us, we contact them to try to show them that there are other images to use besides Nyhavn and make them understand why they should not use this to protect the community. Let's say that deseasonalisation and decentralisation are some of the core elements of localhood and we are now working on the new strategy.

**R:** What you said, however, leads me to the next question. Specifically, towards whom is your communication directed.

**I:** Eh...we can say that we have three main targets that can also be deduced from the structure of the site: residents, tourists and businesses, then we have many stakeholders. To be clear, there are the Danish stakeholders, which we can define as the corporate stakeholders, which can be from Copenhagen Airport to the body that manages the service industry in Copenhagen, which brings together hotels, transport, etc., and then all the hotel chains down to the small hotels. Another very important stakeholder, for example, are the airlines. We cooperate a lot with overseas airlines, and we try to help the airlines by trying to create routes between Copenhagen and key markets for us. To give a trivial example, through our communication we have been working for 7 years on creating an air route between Copenhagen and India because there are clearly business interests between Denmark and India. What we do is create all the marketing material for the airline. That is, if you open a route to Copenhagen you will know for sure that you will have an investment from our side in everything that is the marketing of the Copenhagen destination, so we help you fill the seats on the plane with our communication and we also give you the contacts to be able to do marketing of India in Copenhagen. So, we give support of a more professional nature and not simply economic. Similarly, there are also other important stakeholders such as cruises, conference organizers and international meeting organizers, etc.

**R:** OK so my next question is: how would you describe the city brand's core identity?

**I:** So, let's say that our thinking at Wonderful Copenhagen is that the city identity has to fit with the brand image that is communicated. This fit is the basis of every good city brand so for us these two things come together.

**R:** OK then, I have to ask you what is the image that you want to communicate of Copenhagen and above all, is the image the same for all the different target groups or is it differentiated on the basis of what the target group is?

**I:** OK so the image is important to specify that we don't have one brand we have many, as is also explained in the localhood strategy and we work on these themes through a storytelling framework. These themes are for example architecture, design, gastronomy, sustainability, history and monarchy, and art. This means that we have practically created sub-brands, each with its own story and its own storytelling that you can adapt according to the target group. Let me give you an example: in Italy we are going strong as the capital of design, architecture, and gastronomy. We are also going strong as a bicycle capital the same thing I can't say about Sweden. For example, when we do promotions in Sweden, if we go and talk about our architecture, we go to a smaller target than Italy. This is because in Italy or Spain there is this idea of super modern architecture in Copenhagen, but in Sweden they have very similar architecture so we will not be able to capture a wide target audience. This means that for each market we create a puzzle of the strongest themes so the image and identity of the city changes from market to market. Actually, an interesting thing about the localhood strategy is that we no longer talk about demographic markets but about traveller type. So, there is for example the young individual traveller, there it is not necessarily different whether he is Indian or Italian. So, we can say that we try more to work on people and the story of the city changes depending on the target. For example, if your target audience is businesspeople and the goal is to attract a congress to Copenhagen the stories are the same but with the congress guest you use different themes such as the compactness of the city, the convenience of public transport, the connections to the city centre. So, the communication for congress guests changes as much as it does for cruise passengers. To summarise, we can say that the image at a general level is the one with the five themes I mentioned, which are then adapted according to use. It is therefore a very flexible model.

**R:** Very clear, thank you. Also, I wanted to ask you what communication channels you use at Wonderful Copenhagen.

**I:** OK then, as always, it depends on the target audience, but to give you an example, in my work the communication channels we clearly use are the international press and the press portal [wonderfulcopenaghen.com/press](http://wonderfulcopenaghen.com/press) where we publish a whole series of ideas

for journalists to facilitate their work. Then for the consumer, we have [visitcopenhagen.com](http://visitcopenhagen.com), our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and a newsletter targeted at tourists and Danes. This is something that was introduced during Covid. Before we never did any marketing of Copenhagen to the Danes, but clearly during Covid, it became a necessity, so the newsletter was born, which is called Copenhagen Unfolded and which uncovers a few of Copenhagen's secrets and little tips. Then we have other channels, for example, the official website of our convention bureau and the cruise website. Lastly, for corporate communication, LinkedIn is our channel, so if you search for Wonderful Copenhagen, you will only find communication in Danish on LinkedIn because it is targeted at the world of Danish politics or the world of the Danish service industry where we try to illustrate what our achievements are so that the country understands precisely that we generate value for Denmark.

**R:** In your opinion, do the public investments made in terms of new infrastructure, new public spaces, events, and partnerships with private individuals have an impact on the city brand?

**I:** Absolutely, I would have to say that our communication is closely linked to politics because our work is also closely related to politics, so we do partnerships with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and we also reach out to the Copenhagen City Council with whom we have a close dialogue and with whom our strategy must go hand in hand. Consequently, for an investment to be communicated and generate a positive image, it must be in line with the image we want to give of the city brand.

**R:** Ok, and what role does Wonderful Copenhagen play in communicating these investments such as a new infrastructure, a new public space, etc. to the target audience?

**I:** So, it's important to emphasize that we don't depend on the municipality of Copenhagen, we collaborate with the municipality of Copenhagen, so I'll give you an example: if the municipality of Copenhagen creates a new play area for children and this story has no potential from an international point of view, we are not obliged to use this story to promote the area because we would be communicating something that is not useful for promoting the area and therefore using public funds to promote something that has no value for the end user and that will not attract tourism. Instead, if the municipality does something that has potential from an international point of view, we are the first to want to take advantage of it to raise the city's image, for example, the Tour de France was

one of the events we used the most in the history of Wonderful Copenhagen to promote Copenhagen. But be careful what we did was not to promote the grand Depart, we did a communication aimed at raising the image of Copenhagen as the best bicycle capital city in the world. We then made an agreement with the municipality where we said: 'this story has a lot of potential to position the tourist destination Copenhagen internationally as a bike-friendly city, so we want to do this' The municipality said: 'ok fine, we want to be positioned internationally as a bike-friendly city so it's fine with us' and from there a collaboration was born that was good for both parties. This is to say that we collaborate with the municipality where it makes sense for branding purposes.

**R:** OK, and in this case can you explain more specifically which actors are involved in the communication of the Copenhagen brand? What synergies are created between them?

**I:** I can also tell you that maybe an interesting thing for you to know is that we work very differently. For example, the convention bureau works with paying partners i.e., hotels, venues, and service providers who pay to be promoted. This is not the case for our work with the final tourist. In that case, we have maximum editorial freedom i.e., the stories we believe in are promoted over and above any party. So, for example, if the Scandic hotel chain is a partner of our cruise network or the Convention Bureau, we who do communication with the end tourist have no obligation to them. This is because the Scandic hotel will get its results from the convention bureau or the cruise passengers who do their work and promote it. In contrast, if I were to promote facilities that pay me to be promoted, I would then denature the Copenhagen brand for the end user. So, in my opinion it is very smart to leave the brand communication as accessible as possible for the end user and instead give it a more commercial character where there is business to be done, i.e., congresses or cruises.

**R:** And how is coordination with these actors about the communication of the city image?

**I:** As I told you before, our communication comes about due to the investments made by our stakeholders, whether it be the municipality, the convention bureau, or the hotels. So when an investment is made or anything else that Wonderful Copenhagen considers to be in line with the city's image and identity, we approach the actor directly, telling them how we would like to communicate the investment and trying to create a collaboration that may or may not be remunerated. It may also happen the other way around, i.e., that actors, after having made an investment, an event, or other, come to us to try to publicize it. In

that case, we only accept what we consider to be in line with our image. Let's say that this is how we interface with these actors in most cases.

**R:** Ok, thank you very much for your time. What you said will be very useful for my thesis.

**I:** You're welcome, for me was a pleasure to share more about Wonderful Copenhagen.

**R:** Thank you, and enjoy your day

**I:** Bye

## **Appendix C – Hamburg Marketing GmbH interview**

**R:** Good morning Professor, thank you very much for your availability.

**I:** Good morning, no problem. Is a pleasure.

**R:** To begin with, I wanted to ask you some questions that I ask all interviewees to get to know each other better

**I:** Yeah, of course!

**R:** Where do you work and what do you do?

**I:** I'm professor at Copenhagen Business in marketing and place branding and tourism.

**R:** Ok and how long have you been working there?

**I:** For nine years and a half. And I also work as a consultant in place branding for fifteen years now.

**R:** And which are your bounds with Hamburg, Hamburg's DMO and Hamburg city branding?

**I:** I did my PhD on city branding in the university of Hamburg and use Hamburg as a research casa for a lot of papers and I also, during last fifteen year I worked a couple of times with Hamburg DMO as a consultant and help them to set the strategy or to select right advertising or market research to analyse the brand or to create a marketing campaign for them.

**R:** Can you tell me in general what Hamburg Marketing GmbH is about?

**I:** Of course, it is the official Hamburg's DMO. Hamburg marketing has a very holistic setting that is kind of unique. The DMO is currently divided in areas but about marketing there is only one marketing agency that has some sub-units such as Invest, Convention Bureau and Turismus. In other words, their marketing strategy is focused on both the touristic aspect and also on attracting companies and talents. So, they mainly have three different tasks: to increase the perceived attractiveness of the place; to make Hamburg more well known internationally, and to create a network for companies.

**R:** And what is the marketing strategy used by the Hamburg DMO?

**I:** The last strategy was born in 2018/2019 with a marketing plan with a duration of 5 years, so until 2024. Last year they also had a new measurement for the brand perception. The results will be presented in summer. So in the marketing strategy they say: "we are aiming to be perceived as a place with" a high quality of living, in this framework they

also want to focus more on the city at the waterfront, on the food and gastronomy, and on the city as a music centre, indeed they have a lot of musicals, the music industry is pretty well developed. So that is about the living content aspect. The second aspect is the strength of economics and the strength of the companies. They stress the aspect of innovation because they have a lot of clusters on tech industry, media, and also the university are some of the best universities in Germany in terms of talents attraction.

**R:** To whom is the communication directed?

**I:** Based on the strategy used so far, there are three main target groups: tourists, companies and investors, and city residents. And of course, in this case, communication is diversified. Although there are themes to suit all users the topics are very specific and addressed to a precise target group

**R:** And how would you describe the Hamburg brand's core identity?

**I:** The base of the brand identity was settled in 2009 or something like that, when they did a brand analysis to figure out the Hamburg strategy. There they have this level brand building block that represents the core identity and, in this case, also the brand image because they settled the identity based on the people's perception. For example, the city at the waterfront work for tourists, companies and residents. Other traits only work for the industry. So, they have these building block that targeted different groups. Last years they wanted to do another marketing research to see what our strengths are and understand on what they should focus. I don't think that they will be totally different from previous because perceptions don't change as fast. They made it in these years because they invest and built the huge Elbphilharmonie with the aim of focusing more on the cultural aspect of the city and promoting it internationally. I also assume that in the new brand identity they will define the brand identity stressing out also this cultural aspect. However, I don't really know because the Hamburg marketing is very data driven, so they are measuring brand perception of the target audience to see what works, what are the strengths, why people find it attractive and then they create marketing activities on these strengths. Is not about I want to be perceives as.. but is more about brand knowledge and perceptions.

**R:** OK so you already anticipated my question about the city's image and how to communicate it to different target groups.

**I:** Yes, indeed I would have answered you the same because Hamburg is very particular as a DMO, and brand image and identity are strongly linked.

**R:** And what about the communication channels used?

**I:** I must say that the communication of the Hamburg DMO is quite traditional. In the sense that very classic communication channels are also used of the other city DMOs. For example, they have a very well-structured website as it is very well integrated between the different subunits that are part of Hamburg Marketing. Social media are also used a lot. They often have different pages for the different units, also based on the target. For example, on LinkedIn there is both the Hamburg Marketing page and the Hamburg Invest page, the business and investor-oriented unit. In addition, they have a press page and also a podcast where the latest news about the city is communicated.

**R:** Ok, thank you very much, now moving on to another building block I wanted to ask you if, in your opinion, the public investments made in terms for example of new infrastructure, new public spaces, or events have an impact on the city brand?

**I:** Yeah, for sure. I mean you can see it in Hamburg very clearly. Hamburg developed largely the Hamburg city in the last ten years. They tried to host the Olympic games in the 2024. They wanted to reshape the harbour centre because they have this strong focus on building on the waterside. They wanted to build a new harbour city, with building on the other side of the river and after the Olympic Games redevelop the area on the water by creating a water district. So, this is a very strong focus on physically reshaping the city because the city is growing in one of the strongest and largest city in Germany. Even during corona while other cities are losing Hamburg tried to attract people into the city. They always had this need for change and building new living quarters. They had a lot of investment in the city centre, creating a highly developed area in terms of real estate. An example was the Elbphilharmonie that was billions and billions of euros spent there. This has become a landmark signature building and they used that in the communication. All cities, especially in Germany right now are focusing on infrastructure, such as public transports. They built this new metro lines and also biking lanes. Five years ago, they tried to copy the early content of Copenhagen with the five fingers biking lane.

**R:** Do you know what role does Hamburg DMO play in communicating these investments to the target audience (e.g., the construction of a new infrastructure; the creation of new public spaces; a new city event or the creation of a new partnership with a local company)?



**I:** They put a lot of effort in communication to convince residents in using the new infrastructures built. They also made political decisions that changed the communication of the city in terms of the city at the waterfront or of transportation infrastructures. This changed the face of the city, and the city marketing was pretty good in adapting the communication over the harbour city, the Elbphilharmonie, the biking lanes and so on. The marketing campaign was done by the Hamburg Marketing GmbH. As some units of the governments must communicate these changes (like the ministry of traffic, the ministry of economy) they contact the Hamburg marketing in order to share this perception of high living quality.

**R:** In this case, do you know which actors are involved in the communication of the Hamburg city brand? (e.g., municipality, convention bureau, various ministries, etc.) What synergies are created between them?

**I:** When Hamburg Marketing was born in 2004, in the first three years the only goal was to identify 17 different units in the city that communicated to Hamburg Marketing. They tried to merge them into a one big holding with a strong focus on having different units working under the same big unit. Because of the different goals of each unit, they are strongly connected and exchange constantly information about city development and marketing campaigns. They have a very good connect system that is very efficient in communication. They also work in constant connection with the entire political part of the city, with ministries, the German government, and the Hamburg municipality. In fact, as I told you before, when major investments are made in the city that improve the brand, these are communicated to the DMO, which then proceeds with marketing and communication campaigns.

**R:** Ok the last question is: how is co-ordination with these actors about the communication of the city brand image?

**I:** They put a lot on emphasis on communication. From the first years they try to integrate the different stakeholders in their communication. And of course, I mean, is also about politics. With the Olympic bid they want to politically insert the sport into the city perception but, since it wasn't a strength yet, fights started between the DMO and the municipality. On the general level they are very well integrated and also the different public units know that Hamburg Marketing exist, and they are calling them whether they are communications that make sense for the city brand. I was a very long way, all started

in 2000 or 2001, something like that, when the mayor said: “we should run the city like a company so with different units that are specialized in some stuff, with the marketing unit specialized in marketing and so on”. Now in Hamburg people are more open than in other cities to let professionals and marketeers do their job.

**R:** Thank you very much for the insights that you gave me. Your answers will be really helpful.

**I:** Was a pleasure and don't hesitate to contact me if you need more information.

**R:** Thank you, enjoy your day

**I:** Thank you, bye!