

TURKU, A CULTURAL CITY?

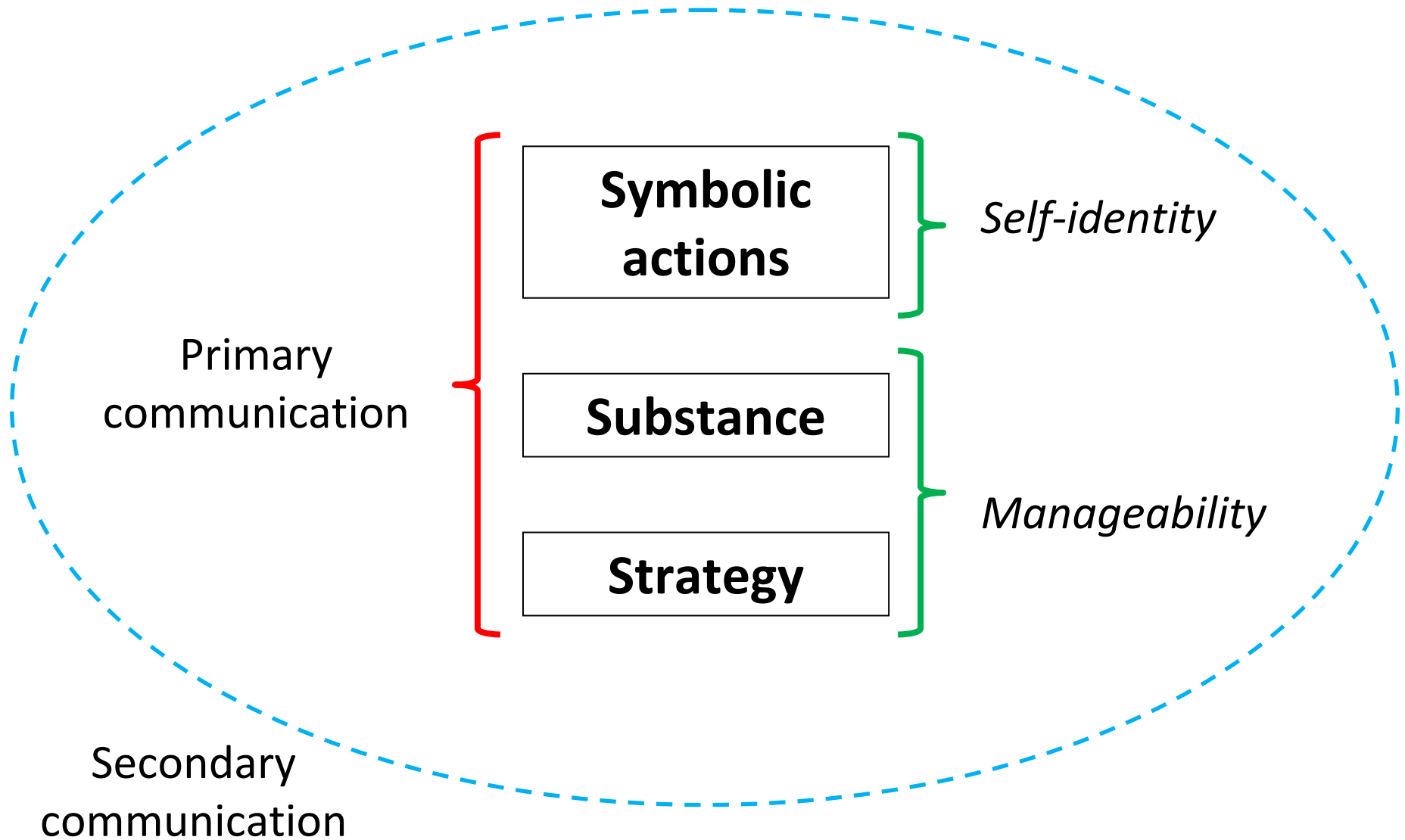
Challenges and possibilities of
cultural city brand construction



CONSTRUCTION OF A CITY BRAND – A PERSPECTIVE TO URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- Escalation of economic and cultural globalisation:
 - > Strengthened competition between cities for finite resources
 - > Pronounced significance of **Reputation**
- Reputation -> **Attractiveness**; ought to promote:
 - Comprehension of place's physical and social characteristics as (essentially) manageable entities
 - Ambition to maintain a certain kind of self-identity
- *Relative attractiveness* -> **brand equity**

ENHANCING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF A CITY



CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL CITY BRAND

- Certain kind of megatrend; diffused through the western societies
- Often connected to the urban regeneration processes following the structural changes of economy
 - Primary ambitions: promotion of new industries; persuasion of inhabitants, labour and visitors
- Supporting visions:
 - The economic potential of creative and cultural industries
 - "Creative class"; its significance for regional prosperity

CULTURAL CITY BRAND CONSTRUCTION – CHALLENGES...

- ...related to the objectives:
 - Observation of local population
 - Observation of cultural producers
- ...related to the motives underlying the objectives:
 - A firm belief in the economic potential of creative and cultural industries: is it justified?
 - Are the motives of brand construction in line with the professional motives of cultural producers?
 - The multitude of cultural cities: is it possible (anymore) to stand out from the rest?



Turku Åbo

STOP

SEIS STOP
RAJAVYÖHYKE
GRÄNSZON
GRENZZONE
FRONTIER ZONE
ПОГРАНИЧНАЯ ЗОНА

THE CULTURAL CITY OF TURKU

- 29 semistructured individual interviews during the summer and autumn:
 - Chief municipal officials
 - Leaders of the:
 - City government
 - City council
 - Political groups
 - Representatives of the:
 - Municipal Cultural Sector
 - Turku 2011 Foundation
 - Turku Region Development Centre
- *Analysis still in progress*; the preliminary results are fairly conflicting

RESPONDENTS' IMPRESSIONS ON THE REPUTATION OF (THE CULTURAL CITY OF) TURKU

- + The cradle of Finnish culture
- + The European Capital of Culture 2011
- + The wide-ranging dissemination of culture
- + Educational possibilities (Arts Academy at Turku University of Applied Sciences)

- Weak success in the competition between cities
- "The disease of Turku"
- Problems encountered by the cultural sector on the threshold of the year 2011

AMBITIONS RELATED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL CITY BRAND

- **Strategy-wise:**
 - Needs related to the development of (i) Turku's attractiveness and (ii) creative and cultural industries have been acknowledged in several documents produced by the city organisation
 - However, Turku has a specific strategy *neither* for cultural city brand construction *nor* for the development of creative and cultural industries
- **Substance-wise:**
 - The idea of brand construction has not diffused through the entire city organisation
 - Deficiencies in the implementation of strategic references
- **Symbolic actions:**
 - European Capital of Culture 2011

AMBITIONS RELATED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL CITY BRAND

- *The most essential possibility:*
 - Along with the ECoC project, new networks and practices underpinning the strategic construction of cultural city brand take shape
 - > Collaboration between the city organization and cultural producers becomes more effective
 - > Ideas on future symbolic actions
- *The most essential threat:*
 - ECoC project remains as an occasional symbolic action
 - Positive effects fade out bit by bit