

Wag the dog... Decision-makers' thoughts on produced city images¹

Topi Antti Äikäs

Department of Geography, University of Oulu

Abstract

This overview article seeks some interpretations of the local decision-maker's thoughts on city images. The aim of the argumentation is to show the transparent idea of image-making campaigns, which are usually driven by municipality officers whose own ideas on images are muddled by local identities and objectives like a booming local economy and tourism etc. As shown in the case of the in-depth interviews made among town planners, architects, managers and marketing people (hereafter: decision-makers), the basic starting point for place promotion is trivialized by commercial slogans. Based on the interpretation of research material from two Finnish cities, one could make justified questions on the meaning of local identity, image-making agendas, sense of community and the role of place in the image consumption. The article will focus on the question "why does a dog wag its tail?" *i.e.* the main interest is paid to the ideas and aims of image-makers and their ways of thinking. The article works through two-level interpretation of image-making. First, the theoretical aspects of image-making are analyzed from the viewpoint of contemporary cultural geography and urban studies. Second, the relationship of "theories" and "usage of images" is viewed through a single question of the research interviews. The results show that the discourse on images is only beginning in the public sector, and the future seems open.

Introduction

The end of 20th century witnessed that the concept of image has been taken under a serious re-thinking process in both social and cultural geography and cross-disciplinary urban studies. Contemporary discussions on images show that city images are actually produced, and city authorities' are actively "building" or "making" new images for their cities (see Kearns &

Philo 1993). Construction of images can be interpreted as a conscious promotion activity and the forms of the image are calculated very carefully. As Andersson (1997) has emphasized, the development policy of urban areas is one of the main challenges for the contemporary society. However, the place marketing, utilization of symbolism and commercial use of the landscape have their traditions. In recent studies, researchers have aroused well-argued, theory-based

¹The first version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of AAG, New Orleans March 7, 2003.

and applied aspects on modern discourses of images, and especially to image-making and place marketing (e.g. Urry 1990; Kotler et al. 1993; Short 1996).

Images hold a significant role in environmental-perceptual and political-economic traditions in human and cultural geography (Tani 2001). Phillips (1993: 180) has mentioned that a concept image in human geography has a certain double meaning. According to him, all the research sources (like maps, photos, other visual descriptions and texts) that produce images have had an essential role in material collection and introducing the results of the study. On the other hand, the active production of images can be seen as a disreputable business of false impressions and disguised truths. According to Phillips (1993: 181), all the interpretations of images stress their position as a primary representation of the post-modern world view, which, at the same time, has both a heretic and revolutionary content in the present society.

In contemporary cultural geography, however, the question of language and concepts has become more important than ever. This is also noted in the study of images. As mentioned in numerous papers on images, David Harvey's arguments in his *Postmodernity*-book, from 1989, has been taken as a starting point for the re-conceptualization and re-interpretation of the image. Harvey (1989: 98), while analyzing postmodern architecture and urban design, states that "[F]iction, fragmentation, collage, and eclecticism, all suffused ephemerality and chaos, are, perhaps, the themes that dominate in today's practices of architecture and urban design." Thus, it can be argued that the most important and relevant question is situated behind Harvey's criticism: how the deliberately produced urban

images, in both the constructed and analyzed sense, illuminate the current situation of urban development and planning? This kind of thinking seems to continue in numerous writings on critical analysis of urban image (e.g. Kearns and Philo 1993). On the other hand, Short (1996: 414) has ended up with slightly different conclusion. He writes: "The city is more than just a physical entity, more than a place where people live and work. The city is a place symbolic of many things [...] a work of imagination, a metaphor, a symbol." Therefore, urban images – produced or mentally comprehended – include both critical and inspiring aspects for the detailed research work.

The aim of this paper is to interpret local decision-makers' ideas on image-making. These groups are comprehended as responsible actors in contemporary "Urban Imagineering" in order to find out the specific lines of policies in local image-making proceedings (see Short 1999). The actual argumentation is twofold. On the one hand, the paper shows the meaning of images in contemporary urban and regional competition; on the other hand, the discussions of image makers' views are seen in both the critical-analytic and empirical light. Even though the case studies are located in Finland, they represent the contemporary situation in image-making and argumentation in Western and Northern Europe as well. The overall questions is to evaluate critically how does the new city image construct new places and landscapes, and, simultaneously, to analyze the starting-points of the local image-making campaigns in two diverse cities. By making two, relatively different sorts of questions, it is possible to discuss how the 'image-landscapes' promote urban areas to certain groups of in-

vestors, work force and tourism, for instance (Short et al. 1993; Gold and Ward 1994; Gartner 1997).

Challenge of images: cases and questions

The article contains four sections. After the introduction of arguments and case studies, the role of produced and marketed images is discussed in a more theoretical sense. The aim of the next chapter is therefore to lighten up the recent developments in culturally and socially informed urban studies that are focused on the questions of image-making. The main attention is paid to the starting-points of image campaigns and to the processes of image-making, which take place in the urban landscape. The aim is not, however, to present an overwhelming and ever-lasting theory on urban images, but, instead, to argue for the significance of knowledge on image-making processes. At the end of second section, the actual research objects will be presented.

In the third section, the theoretical approach is turned into an empirical one. This section presents the ideas of decision-makers, town planners, architects, managers and marketing people on image-making and place promotion. The material was collected by in-depth interviews and transcribed for concluding interpretation. (This part of the research material represents only a small part of the total sum of the research material in the project mentioned.) This section also turns the discussion to critical analysis of images. However, as analyzes of the material will show, there are some cultural and political challenges to urban development in terms of comprehending of image-making among the cities.

These challenges are directed to the discussion of the final chapter. Here the theoretical and empirical aspects are put together. The synthesis of image-making processes and the consequences of image production are examined as modern feature of locally promoted urban development. It is clear, as Boyle (1999), for instance, has stated that locally based city competition is always a reflection of the wider contest for economic and social benefits.

The interviews were made among 21 decision-makers in two Finnish cities, Turku (10 interviews) and Oulu (11 interviews). The duration of the in-depth interviews was from forty-five minutes to one and a half hours. The structure of interviews was divided into three parts. First, the questions were restricted to the formation of image in the examined cities. In the second part, the interest was turned to the visible dimensions of “the image”. Finally, the question of produced images was linked to the wider debate of urban planning and the aspects of improvement of the attained image. In short, the themes of the interviews may be described by the following groups of questions:

- How is the image formed, and what kind of information it is communicating?
- Is the produced image able to be placed in the physical environment, or is it just a product of imagery?
- How the cities of the case studies are extending their image, and how the new “image-landscapes” should be comprehended in the context of city competition?

However, the most interesting question of the interviews was placed at the end, and therefore kind of outside the interviewing structure. This question was: "How you would define the concept 'produced image'?" During the interviews, and especially in the interpretation of the transcribed material, it turned out that this minor (and innocent) question revealed major answers about decision makers' ideas on image-making, and identifying the whole discourse of images. Thus, it was worth detailed evaluation and opened a thorough possibility to take a closer look at decision makers' and planners understanding about image(s) (in general), image production and the role of images in urban development and promotion. The inquiry is focused on the problem of image-making in a critical sense, and the basic interest is targeted to the premises of image-making; how cities are really producing images, on what basis, and, finally, how the concept of image is defined. In short, the question "why does a dog wag its tail?" seems to be most relevant in contemporary urban policy and images.

Both of the cities in the project are so called 'boom-towns' in today's Finland – even though the starting point of "booming" differs significantly between the cities. The city of Turku is known as the oldest city in Finland. It was founded in 1229, and the history of the city is an indelible part of the urbanization of Finland. Located in southwest coast of Finland, the city of Turku has had natural ties to Sweden, Germany and the Baltic states. The current position of Turku is based on its international history and educational traditions. During the urbanization process from the Second World War to the 1970s' the character of Turku changed dramatically: due to rapid building processes large areas of historical urban spaces were destroyed. As Jauhiainen (1995: 294-298) has

reported, 40 % of the built-up areas of the inner city area were re-built in six years (1957-1963), which, in international perspective, too, indicates relative strong functions in urban re-development. The modernization of the Finnish urban system continued intensively during the 1970's. At that time the population of Turku increased from 155 100 to 159 000, and the last wooden houses were bulldozed in the name of the urban renewal process in inner city areas (excluding areas of Port Arthur and Lonttinen).

Today, however, the situation is the exact opposite to that: as consequence of the rise of historical and traditional values in urban planning and promotion, Turku has improved its historical and heritage-based image by several acts. In addition, the city has taken, quite rightly so, the Middle Ages as its main marketing theme. – This is the contrast, which makes Turku as an interesting object of the critical and culturally informed urban geography.

The second case study, the city of Oulu, illustrates a totally different approach to the produced city image. The city of Oulu – as mentioned in many local reports and adverts – represents a locally based know-how centre in the field of information-communication technology (ICT). Without eulogy, it must be mentioned that the oldest technology centre of Nordic countries and first stock exchange listed technology centre in the world, "Technopolis Plc.", is actually founded in Oulu, and the University of Oulu and several other R&D-institutions in the technical and electronic industry have successfully promoted Oulu's image as "The City of High Tech" during the last twenty years.

At the beginning of the 1980's, when the city-owned company Technopolis was first funded, the city suffered the relatively normal re-structuration process of smokestack indus-

tries. The forbearing development of the local electronic industries and R&D-strengths has brought a prize: today, “OuluRegion” is comprehended as a textbook example of the production of local image and identity building in the contemporary world. For instance, the institution-like journal “Wired” listed the Oulu region as the top of 28 high tech places in the world at the beginning of 2002. During the last five years, the image (practically speaking: ‘the reputation’) of the city has aroused wider international interest. The main focus of the promoting practices is directed to the relatively narrow representations of the northern high tech city with a strong commitment to high quality in urban planning and construction. This has also caused some problems in order to improve the technological image in a more cultural direction. The latest example of the rhetoric on the industrial and expert-like nature of Oulu’s future image was launched at the end of 2001: the city council of Oulu declared the new vision for the year 2011. According to it, Oulu and its region will be “the centre of expertise and industrial development in Northern Europe”. “Oulu will be”, the vision continues, “a successful, attractive and economically stable city”. The vision represents the common will of the political and the official establishment, and aims to promote the city as a nationally and internationally known agent, which is acknowledged for its skills in co-operation.

In sum, both of the case studies illustrate the current discourses of image-making in Finland, and in Europe, too. On the one hand, the new image is tied up with the local practices in urban planning and development of the urban space. In this case, the new image of heritage and local traditions is directed to audiences of both local residents and external investors, which are attracted to place economic and social contributions in

their business. – This process is stated in the case of Turku. On the other hand, the rhetoric forms of image campaigns underline, evidently, the changed role of the relation of the local economy and industrial development. In this case, the image may be approached as a “tool of boosterism” that is based on local strengths but acts in global markets. In addition, the globally targeted image does not assimilate with the concrete environment (like in previous case) but rather in conceptual expectations of political-economic discourses and promises. This composition of aspects enables one to argue that the question of image-making and image promotion turns out to be relatively important in terms of both wider urban policy and detailed acts of urban renewal campaigns.

Urban landscape and the produced image

Before leaping to the analyzed and interpreted interview materials, it is reasonable to discuss what the images have to do with the urban environment, and especially urban landscapes? In the context of landscape and image studies, there are more than a few research papers and books that all analyze and interpret the relations of city, urbanism, images and landscapes (e.g. Domosh 1992; Domosh 1996; Gold and Ward 1994; Goss 1997; Young and Lever 1997; Ward 1998; Boyle 1999). In the context of the present article, it is possible to argue that the meaning of images conceptualizes both the empirical and theoretical aspects of the research of landscape in the urban context. First, the physical and the environmental dimensions of cities create images that we all hold in our minds (cf. Gartner 1997: 180). These images can be characterized as fea-

tures that are, almost automatically, linked to a certain city and its marketing. From the viewpoint of critical image studies, these features are tied to the urban structure, historical buildings and various forms that maintain the permanence of the local urban culture (Short 1996: 390-395). If this is the case, the landscape is represented as an imaginative picture of the city, and, urban landscape and the image become involved in the same sense; perhaps the examples of the world cities like New York, London and Paris are most evident in this case.

Second, the meaning of landscape may be comprehended in a two-way sense. "The landscape" indicates the concrete idea of the daily (urban) experience, and at the same time, it refers to the theoretical understanding about the lived environment, society and culture (Ley 1988; Duncan and Ley 1993). These idealizations direct to a conceptual argumentation in which the urban landscape cannot be defined only as a indicator of the visual environment. Instead of this, as has been proved in many studies, it reflects more abstract meanings of the socially constructed and culturally experienced environment in which the social and cultural mechanisms of signification are defined as the central characteristic of the research (e.g. Cosgrove 1990; Olwig 1996; Raivo 1999).

In the latter case, the production of images has a clear connection to categorizing and placing the city in its own place. Based on its conceptual sense, the urban landscape may be comprehended as a stage where the produced images (and marketing campaigns, too) take place. As illustrated in Table 1, the elements of the produced image require careful profiling of the city's industrial structure, built environment, landscape, renewal projects, and, perhaps most-

ly, its status in the contemporary urban hierarchy system. The mental image, for its part, is closely connected to the actual landscape and the forms of its experience. Elements of mental image are therefore interpreted as reflections of the intentions which the image is aimed to produce. Mental images can also be defined as both starting-points of image campaigns and a consequence of those campaigns. According to this kind of conceptualization, it is possible to argue that the urban landscape may be regarded as a key in the analyzing of not only images and their aims, but also developments of the urban entity that is run by a certain category of civil servants and politicians.

Decision-maker's ideas on images

The material analyzed offers a possibility to follow the ideas which municipality level decision-makers have (table 2). The analysis of the interview material shows, very clearly, that there are great differences in the opinions about mental or produced images, on how they value the affects of the image, and, in particular, in the basic thinking about the images. Those differences were quite accepted: the image, as a concept, is not easy to deal with. However, the significance of the answers can be read from "between the lines". The results of the interviews point out that in the field of city marketing and city planning people actually do not have any obvious distinction between the mental and produced images on the conceptual level, or they have not analyzed the consequences of image-making campaigns thoroughly.

From the methodological point of view, the interviews followed the basic research strategies of qualitative analysis of the

Table 1. Analytic disparity of the produced and mental images: the keywords and concepts. Columns of “Produced image” and “Mental image” summarize the two-dimensional analysis of the concept ‘image’. (Adopted from Karvonen 1999: 52.)

| Produced image | Mental image |
|---|--|
| Sender | Receiver |
| Active | Passive |
| Supply | Demand |
| Presentation | Interpretation |
| Artistic | Psychological |
| Organization | The public |
| Constructed | Adopted |
| Representation | Understanding |
| Management | Reputation |
| <i>"An abstract construction to improve city's reputation."</i> | <i>"Visible attributes that are reflected from the landscape."</i> |

collected data. The idea of interviews was to understand how individuals experience and make sense of their contribution to urban images (see Valentine 1997: 111). In the sense of criticism of in-depth interviews, it may be asked how the single answers produce objective information concerning the question. However, in this case, the aim was to find conceptual lines in image thinking and not to produce the final truth of the image-making premises.

The coded interview material enabled making three kind of typologies that categorize the decision-makers’ thinking on images in a wider sense. All the categories were interpreted further in a more thematic sense. (In the interpretation of answers, it has to be

noted, there is no relevance to analyze the individual answerer on the personal level – this notion also defends the individual rights of the persons interviewed.) It can be recognized that the individual answers did actually contain several disagreements and confusions when the interviewee was speaking about his or her definition of images. In other words, the interviewed persons did not have one clear idea about the image and its influences on the urban environment, and – to be more critical – the interviewed persons did not have a clear idea what they meant by produced and mental images. For instance, in the first part of the answering sentence, one could mean something about mental images, but in the end, he or she could

Table 2. Summary of the question: "how you would define the concept 'image'?" Categories indicate the decision-makers' thoughts on images in general and on image-making in the urban context in both case studies of the project. (N.B.: More than one mention is possible in each interview.)

Categories: Image as...

1) ... mental construction

2) ... mental production

3) ... 'pure' production

Case of Turku:

- The outsiders' views and thoughts about the city

- Image is reality which city can affect

- City image is wider than business image

- Individual's self makes a mental picture of the city

- Picture from certain place

- "Feelings in the air"

- Individual's own experiences makes the frame of interpretation

- Produced mental image that is based on facts

- Based on certain processes of local development, and its understanding

- "Only" a mental picture that is based on facts

- Something which can be contributed

- Wider scene than simple cross-section of processes

- Primary mental image

- Self portrait

- Deliberately consumed production

- The others image

- Based on facts but also shared images which are results of negative or positive propaganda

- Interactive

Case of Oulu:

- Image is common reality

- Image is successful if indicated from landscape

- Wanted image

- Image as a picture of certain phenomena that is tied to certain place

- Interactive

- Self-producing process ('saying' or phrase)

- Perception, experience, feeling

- Facts are part of image signalling

- Building an image is a consistent process

- The first association of ideas

- The first association of ideas, which enables the make brands

- Conscious choices direct to finding right image edges

- Shallow, no-actual, learned

- Strong self portrait

- Image is based on controlled publicity

- External, the others idea of us

- The relationship between mental and produced image is like "the line in the water"

- Synonym for mental picture

- Image is in "viewer's eyes"

fluently speak about produced images. This confused style of discourse entitles drawing up some negative conclusions about the conceptual and reasonable thinking of decision-makers.

Image as mental construction

In the first category, the concept of image was comprehended as a ‘mental construction’ in its most traditional way (cf. Lynch 1960; Gold 1980). The answers given outline the meaning of the image as an outsider’s view of the city, and minimize the active role of the image campaigns that cities are carrying out (or are going to do). In this case, the image is seen as a factor that could not be influenced by any means. However, the answers show that conceptual image is based on the authentic situation of the city and reflects the city’s position in the contemporary urban competition.

In order to take a closer look at this category, the answers were mainly short and unexplained. The most common definitions were like “the primary image” or “at the first sight” of the things that city represents. Also the objectivity and reality of the images was pointed out several times during the interviews. However, in most cases in this category, the image was defined as an outsider’s view about the city, and it is possible to argue that this kind of thinking separates the reality from the false images in a relatively explicit way. According to these commentators, the city has not enough strength to contribute its image from the inside of the city’s own actions. On the other hand, the answers point out very clearly that the image is principally an individual aspect to be experienced rather than a collective or public feature (see fig. 1.).

Analyzed by the research objects, the city authorities of Turku emphasized more the role of individual experience than in the case of Oulu. From the point of view of Oulu, the mentally constructed image was more like a collective or a learned idea about the city of Oulu. The difference between these views may be explained by the different development steps of these two cities. Also their current position in the Finnish and Nordic urban network is evaluated in a different light. While Oulu is recognized widely as “the image city of Finland and even Northern Europe”, Turku still – in spite of giant steps of its developments in bio- and other high technologies – “adheres to its historical expressions and conflicts in the built environment from the 1960s.”

Image as mental production

In the second category, the idea of images moves towards more conceptual thinking. At this point, the answers dealt with images more creatively and the concept was seen as a mental ‘production’ rather than mental construction. Also the answers were more philosophic, so to say, than in the previous category.

Image was considered as a background idea for marketing and promotional aspects of the cities. Thus, it makes a distinct separation from the earlier ideas: the image of the city indicates the role of place marketing and image campaigns as an active part of urban planning, for instance, but at the same time, the answers state the meaning of outsiders’ views in image consumption. In this case, the produced image may be defined as a reality-based mental picture that has several dimensions caused by individual acts made by the city itself or corresponding organizations.



Figure 1. The example of the typical outsiders' view of the city image. The cathedrals, churches, statues and public buildings all together produce the visible frames of the mentally constructed image. Picture from Turku, showing the statue of Swedish governor Per Brahe (founder of the University of Turku, among other things) and the Cathedral of Turku (founded in the year 1300 in its current location). Photo by the author.

The answers given indicate that, as a meta-concept, the image may be divided into two parts, in which one becomes a general idea of the subject based on “the reality”, and another becomes a “represent-

tation of the outsiders” of that subject. Hence, the concept of image may be comprehended as a reality-based vision or an idea which refers to both the publicly constructed imagination of the city and the

psychologically independent process that produces the image in one's mind.

In this category, the decision-makers made it clear that the city image could or can be deliberately 'produced', but it cannot be artificial or fake. The image was compared to the self-portrait of the city. If this is the case, the concept of image approaches the concept of communal identity. One specific reference to the problem of demarcation of mental and produced images can be best illustrated by the following fragment from the interviews in the case of Oulu:

Question: I'd like to ask about the image...what is, in your opinion, the relationship between produced and mental image?

Answer: Well...How I could explain it? Because it is like a 'line in the water' and 'dim line', so I wonder myself sometimes that 'what is a produced and what is a mental image?' If the mental image is, like... Let's say like I feel it is, so it is more like...so I know how to explain them like terms or so...

Q: that is not really the point...

A: ... so it is like... The mental image appeals to feelings and senses, association of ideas of sudden and your personal and inner world. And produced image include more rational elements...

Q: ... Planning, active production?

A: Yes, yes, and that will be experienced, so I think that is really the difference with these two.

Q: So, please correct me if I'm wrong, the produced image precedes the mental image... and cities 'make' produced images to carry out certain and wanted mental images in the heads of someone else.

A: Yeah, and it is... That's the way it is.

Image as pure production

In the final category, the image comprehended as 'pure production'. The image is targeted here for the use of city and regional marketing and the formation of produced image is generated only by marketing actions and campaigns (Young & Lever 1997; Boyle 1999). Thus, the image focused on two issues. First, mental the image was simply seen as a result of the city's activity in terms of image-making. The image-making was defined as conscious and operational policy that could be linked to wider development goals of the city. In this sense, the urban development may be analyzed as a background of the policy-making, which directs activities in the actual image-making. Second, produced images cannot be compared between two individual cities. Each image campaign is taken for granted in each city. In this sense, the image works as locally perceived feelings on the progress of regionally important processes, for instance. At the same time, however, the produced image was argued as larger than the normal 'business image'. This view was articulated by the idea that the city image does not affect only the images of the city *per se*, but also satisfaction with living conditions, entrepreneurship and industry, and common welfare.

Decision-makers reminded frequently that an intentionally produced image is exposed to positive or negative publicity. According to interviewees, the publicity can be turned in the desired direction. In general, the image was analyzed as a self-producing process that has clearly to produce both better urban planning and culture, for instance. The answers in the third category were speculative. For instance, some of the interviewees argued that an "image is

something like feelings in the air” that gives an explanation for the positive developments of local or regional processes. From the viewpoint of accurate research is this: how these “feelings” can be measured, or how the developments of the local or regional processes should be evaluated from the “sense of feelings”?

However, this problem may be passed over by interpretation where the formation of the “pure image” is a kind of result of good local relations between industrial life and administration, and they establish a positive development atmosphere together. For instance, in the case of Oulu, the image was conceptualized rather securely to the business or corporate image: the city of Oulu, as an administrative organization, was interpreted as a business-like corporation where the image-making is close to managerial actions. The same idea was also represented the other way around: the companies operating from Oulu or the OuluRegion, have better image making possibilities than companies from other regions in northern Finland. It is worth mentioning that this is not only the case in the ICT, but it has a wider influence, too. The Oulu-based companies are also a part of the local image. Many sub-contractors of Nokia, for instance, stress their Oulu-related roots in their campaigns. By doing so, they point out their importance for the local and regional economy and research and development activities. This idea of manifold meaning of images is pointed out in figure 2.

According to the research material analyzed, when the image is conceptualized as “pure production” it is also perceptive for publicity (public relations) and communication (media). Especially, presence in the media was evaluated as a relatively important aspect of the city image. The inform-

ants also argued that the publicity can be directed by the city authorities. In this argumentation, the image was seen as a sum of actions where a product-like image is a kind of self-controlling process that generates only positive interpretations of the city. In the more skeptical sense, the image could be defined as “a mantra” which the city authorities say again and again to convince themselves – and their nearest colleagues. However, when this “mantra of image-making” is built in deep enough on the organizational level, it finally turns to the benefit of concrete urban planning and the built environment, but also a generating force for urban culture and its new forms, too (Short 1996; Boyle 1999). During the interviews the informants find themselves in more discursive discourses, and the answers were, as in the first category, relatively far from the actual and concrete level of image formation.

Conclusions: whose images, whose thoughts?

It is clear that urban images are here to stay. They have arisen as one of the most complex and interesting subject matters in urban and cultural geography during the 1990's. Most of the studies have paid attention to the question of the features of the contemporary city and what are the forces, both political-economic and cultural, behind that process. Certainly, it can be argued, that the concept and purposes of the produced image is one of them. The so-called urban competition is part of everyday life for both city authorities and urban geographers, too.

Cities are, in all countries in the western world, engines of their region. This is also the case in the Finnish context and in the



Figure 2. The image as “pure production”. At the end of the 1990’s the authorities of the Oulu region (including the city of Oulu and a few surrounding smaller municipalities) started a campaign “OuluRegion – First of All” to soften the so-called techno image of Oulu. With this collage of cultural, environmental and leisure pictures, the sense of image is to be widening “the cold and stern image of the technology city Oulu.” (Source: Oulu Regional Business Agency.)

cases presented above. Since the position of the cities is highly emphasized, they are – or at least there is a risk that they will be – producing an untraditional tradition for the use of urban or regional marketing and promotion. Its aim is clear: the language used is mentioned to convince and please the outsiders’ (potential newcomers, investors and policy-makers) views that the city

or the region is competitive and its economic situation and social structure are on a solid base. In the contemporary urban research this kind of “new image language” is analyzed in terms of the produced urban images and ways of image-making. From the view point of urban geography, this approach can be well analyzed through the urban landscape and its transformation

from “traditional” to “image-landscape”. It is most interesting to follow the process of image-making which takes place in the real urban situation. Therefore, the landscape may be comprehended as a stage where different acts of image campaigns are played out.

The material analyzed shows that there is no categorical truth on urban images, whatever they are intentionally produced or mentally experienced. However, from the point of view of theoretical observations and empirical analyses, it is possible to outline a definition of image in this context, in these specific cases. Thus, the produced images steer – in a very concrete way – the outsiders’ formation of mental images of the cities. The city authorities, as shown in cases, depended upon their own realizations of definitions, differences and influences about the images. It is only up to one’s own thinking how the city, whether it is Turku or Oulu or something else, puts effort on conscious image-making. It is also up to individuals inside the organization how the process of image-making is comprehended in certain places. When this is the case, not only in Finland, but also in other countries in Western and Northern Europe, it seems that it is very hard to achieve positive results just making images rather than defining, analyzing and updating them in a certain social, political and economic situation. This, for its part, preconceives that city authorities and decision-makers’ realize their role and position in the whole process of “making” and “forming” the images: for whom the image is made of? What kind of values it contains? How the locals (people and industry) are responding to the produced image?

To answer the question presented at the beginning: the dog wags its tail because a

dog is smarter than its tail. According to the empirical evidence of this article, it seems that is not a case among decision-makers in case studies. This is a lesson (not only for the researcher but also for city authorities): “If the tail were smarter, the tail would wag the dog.” The same happens with the produced city images: the city shouldn’t look like its image but vice versa.

References:

- Andersson, H. (1997) Kulttuuri ja paikan politiikka kaupunkiudistuksessa. In T. Haarni & M. Karvinen & H. Koskela & S. Tani (eds), *Tila, paikka ja maisema. Tutkimusretkiä uuteen maantieteeseen*, Vastapaino, Tampere.
- Boyle, M. (1999) Growth machines and propaganda projects: a review of readings of the role of civic boosterism in the politics of local economic development. In A. E. G. Jonas & D. Wilson (eds), *The Urban Growth Machine. Critical Perspectives, Two Decades Later*, State University of New York Press, Albany.
- Cosgrove, D. (1990) ... Then we take Berlin: cultural geography 1989–90. *Progress in Human Geography* 14, 560–568.
- Cresswell, T. (1996) *In Place/Out of Place. Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Domosh, M. (1992) Urban imagery. *Urban Geography* 13, 475–480.
- Domosh, M. (1996) *Invented Cities. The Creation of Landscape on Nineteenth-Century New York & Boston*. Yale University Press, New Haven & London.
- Duncan, J. & D. Ley (eds) (1993) *Place / Culture / Representation*. Routledge, London.
- Gartner, W. C. (1997) Image and sustainable tourism systems. In S. Wahab & J. J. Pigram (eds), *Tourism, development and growth. The challenge of sustainability*, Routledge, London.

- Gold, J. R. & S. V. Ward (eds) (1994) *Place Promotion. The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions*. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.
- Gold, J. R. (1980) *An Introduction to Behavioral Geography*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Goss, J. (1997) Representing and re-presenting the contemporary city. *Progress Report. Urban Geography* 18, 180–188.
- Gregory, D. (1994) *Geographical Imaginations*. Blackwell, Cambridge, MASS.
- Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity. An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Jauhainen, J. S. (1995) Kaupunkisuunnittelu, kaupunkiudistus ja kaupunkipoliittikka. Kolme eurooppalaista esimerkkiä. Turun yliopiston maantieteen laitoksen julkaisuja, n:o 146.
- Karvonen, E. (1999) Elämää mielikuva-yhteiskunnassa. Imago ja maine menestystekijöinä myöhäismodernissa maailmassa. Gaudeamus/Oy Yliopisto- kustannus University Press Finland, Helsinki.
- Kearns, G. & C. Philo (eds) (1993) *Selling Places. The City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present*. Pergamon Press, Oxford.
- Kotler, P. & D. H. Haider & I. Rein (1993) *Marketing Places. Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States, and Nations*. Free Press, New York.
- Ley, D. (1988) From urban structure to urban landscape. *Urban Geography* 9, 98–105.
- Lynch, K. (1960) *Image of the City*. The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge.
- Olwig, K. R. (1996) Recovering the substantive nature of landscape. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86, 630–653.
- Phillips, R. S. (1993) The language of images in geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 17, 180–194.
- Pile, S. (1996) *The Body and the City. Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity and Space*. London, Routledge.
- Raivo, P. J. (1999) Politics of memory: historical battlefields and sense of place. *Nordia Geographical Publications* 27, 61–68.
- Shields, R. (1991) *Places on the Margin. Alternative Geographies of Modernity*. Routledge, London.
- Shields, R. (1999) *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle. Spatial Dialectics*. Routledge, London.
- Short, J. R. (1996) *The Urban Order. An Introduction to Cities, Culture and Power*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Short, J. R. (1999) Urban imagineers: boosterism and the representation of the cities. In A. E. G. Jonas & D. Wilson (eds), *The Urban Growth Machine. Critical Perspectives, Two Decades Later*, State University of New York Press, Albany.
- Short, J. R. & L. M. Benton & W. B. Luce & J. Walton (1993) Reconstructing the image of an industrial city. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, 207–224.
- Soja, E. W. (1989) *Postmodern Geographies. The Reassertation of Space in Critical Social Theory*. Verso, London.
- Tani, S. (2001) Subjective, shared, sudden or planned? Place images revisited. *Nordisk Samhällgeografisk Tidskrift* 32, 105–128.
- Urry, J. (1990) *The Tourist Gaze. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. Sage, London.
- Valentine, G. (1997) Tell me about...: using interviews as a research methodology. In R. Flowerdew & R. D. Martin (eds), *Methods in Human Geography. A Guide for Students Doing Research Project*, Addison Wesley Longman Ltd., Harlow.
- Vuolteenaho, J. (2001) Työn lopun kaupunki. Arjen maantiede, työttömyys ja kulttuurinen muutos. *Nordia Geographical Publications* 30:3.
- Ward, S. V. (1998) *Selling places. The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities 1850–2000*. E. & F. N. Spon, London.
- Young, C. & J. Lever (1997) Place promotion, economic location and the consumption of city images. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 88, 332–341.

