A Comparative Approach to Managerial Practices of Territorial Regional Brands

Une approche comparative des pratiques managériales de la Marque Territoriale Régionale

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ABSTRACT

The following paper explores a concept still young in its development and as yet little studied in marketing literature, the « Marque Regionale Territoriale » (MTR). Developing regional territorial branding has become one of the main actions of place differentiation and promotion undertaken by local government in their public development policies. The goal of this research is first to study the construction process and implementation of the local brand (MTR) and see whether there exist a differential effect depending territories. The authors propose to provide some kind of response through a qualitative and comparative research conducted with regional authorities of the regional branding. The aim of this research study is to contribute and enhance reflection on the regional brand in order to stimulate further the curiosity of policy makers as well as demonstrate the managerial interests implied by its implementation.

Key-words

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent article s'intéresse à un concept encore jeune dans son développement et peu étudié dans la littérature marketing à ce jour, la Marque Territoriale Régionale (MTR). Parmi les actions engagées par les collectivités territoriales, la création d'une marque région devient l'un des principaux leviers de différenciation et de promotion au service du développement du territoire. L'objectif de ce papier consiste, tout d'abord, à étudier le processus de construction et la mise en œuvre d'une MTR pour ensuite tenter de voir s'il existe un effet différentiel de ces pratiques managériales selon les territoires considérés. Les auteurs proposent d'apporter des éléments de réponse au travers des recherches documentaires et scientifiques mais aussi par le biais d'une étude qualitative comparative menée auprès de six responsables de MTR. La volonté affichée ici est de faire progresser la réflexion sur la MTR de façon à susciter davantage la curiosité des responsables territoriaux et de démontrer les intérêts managériaux liés à sa mise en place..

Mots clés

Marque territoriale, Marque région, Marque collective, Territoire, Image région

INTRODUCTION

Faced with increased competition among territories, countries, cities and urban areas, regions are now instituting veritable branding policies in order to spread the visibility of territorial values and promote their identity in a sustained effort to augment their attractiveness. According to the Institut National de la Propriété Industrielle, no fewer than 3000 brand names were registered by territorial communities in the space of ten years[1].

Decentralization of powers has helped to strengthen the role of territorial communities in public action and given rise to systems of territorial management at the regional level. Applying methods borrowed from entrepreneurial circles, this new form of governance has led to the development of strategic actions to position territories on international markets and draw attention to their distinctive features, which can increase attractiveness in today's competitive dynamics (Bouinot, 2002).

Among the actions considered by these communities, the creation of a territorial brand is one of primary tools for leveraging greater attractiveness in favour of regional development. This territorial marketing approach supposes having a shared approach that is recognizable and understood by those it targets. Branding is a strategy that cities began adopting a number of years ago by creating, developing and strengthening their own brands designed to promote and raise the profile of their territories (OnlyLyon, So Toulouse, Je veux Metz, etc.). In this dynamics, broader territories, such as départements and regions, have also adopted territorial brands in order to support strategies increasing their attractiveness.

Many works have pointed out the usefulness and success of city brands (Margot-Duclot, 2011; Maynadier, 2009; Mommass, 2004), but as soon as a brand is extended to cover a larger territory, in particular in the case of regions, the situation becomes more complex. Yet, regions, such as Brittany, Alsace, the Limousin and Auvergne, have established their own brands as one step towards raising the overall allure of a territory to support local sectors and activities.

In this context, given the increase in regional brands but also with regard to the newness of this approach and relatively few studies done in this area, it seems to us to be important to analyze the managerial practices and objectives employed by these territories to develop global brands that we will refer to here as "territorial regional brands" (TRBs).

While in the case of some territorial regions, such as that of Auvergne, the point of departure was to embody a new model of territorial development with a clear

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[1] *Business&Marchés,* January 31, 2011.

desire to improve the territory's image (Rochette, 2012), what about other brands? Many regions have adopted a process for obtaining the right to use the brand, which covers all sectors of activities, and is designed to raise the profile of local products. In this case, the question arises of how to attribute the brand to the territory's stakeholders.

In reality, managerial practices in regions today are diverse, evolving and complex, both with respect to the planning phase of TRB construction and as TRBs are developed. The present paper investigates the different effect of these practices in accordance with the regions studied.

Beginning with reflection on TRBs as tools for increasing regions' attractiveness and a qualitative comparative study of six territories that have developed their own regional brands, we will try to shed light on the managerial practices employed with respect to TRBs. Next, we will seek to identify considerations for professionals in the sector seeking to use TRBs to increase the attractiveness of their territories.

To this end, we have triangulated the data by placing in parallel analyses of documents, studies of sites and qualitative research, as shown in Box 1.

In parallel with academic research, an exploratory documentary study on territorial brands was first carried out.

Research on internal documents (commercial documents, visits of institutional sites, etc.) and external documents (press releases, articles, etc.) were also undertaken to assess the approaches of TRBs created in territories (in particular at the national level).

Second, a qualitative study, the methodology of which will be described later, was conducted with six people responsible for TRBs (Bretagne, Imagin'Alsace, Auvergne Nouveau Monde, Sud-Ouest France, Sud France and Limousin).

Box 1 – General Methodology

1. TERRITORIAL REGIONAL BRANDS:
a tool for increasing a territory's attractiveness

In a context of extreme competition among territories at the European, and even global, level, regions now have to be able to differentiate themselves from others and draw attention to their advantages (Hatem, 2007, Ingallina, 2007, Chamard *et al.*, 2013). Beyond the desire to be different, there can be a wide range of complementary reasons leading a region to create its own brand:

- to protect and promote local products or a destination,
- to represent the territory to the outside,
- to create a brand shared by a set of public and private stakeholders around common values representative of the territory's identity,
- as part of a sophisticated strategy and, as such, constituting an intangible resource for value creation for the territory (Rochette, 2012) in order to deal with competition (Chanoux and Serval, 2011),
- to improve and enhance the region's image.

For some regions, the place name thus becomes a key element in marketing the attractiveness of the territory (Boyer and Cardy, 2011) when it is associated with the brand, but use of the place name is not systematic, as with Languedoc Roussillon and its "Sud de France" brand and the Aquitaine and Midi Pyrénées regions united under the single banner "Sud-Ouest France".

Like Kapferer (2011A), and without going back over the concept of brand, which has been the subject of many different studies (Merunka, 2002; Ferrandi, Merunka, Valette-Florence, 2003; Kessous and Roux, 2010; Bonnal, 2011; etc.), we note that territorial brands, thus, *a fortiori*, TRBs, have certain special features that make the concept complex (Rochette, 2012). TRBs are multidimensional, involve many different stakeholders, target many different things, and do not have a single body or person in charge of steering (Bonnal, 2011). They are parts of overall approaches and give territories added value in terms of attractiveness.

1.1. An "umbrella" brand representing a regional territory

Like all territorial brands, TRBs are signs generating recognition and differentiation, and they can function like both product and corporate brands (Maynadier, 2009). Such a brand has to support and enhance the attractiveness of local products, but also create strong ties with public and private players in the regional territory to which it refers. However, as Rochette (2012) pointed out, a territorial brand is different from a product brand on many levels (Table 1).

Territorial brands are developed on the basis of something that exists, in other words, what is offered, which means that thought on the marketing does not begin with demand, but with the most distinctive, value-creating offer. A territorial brand and thus *a fortiori* a TRB is constructed based on the identification of the location's principal features and values, and it is linked with the territory's identity, which is used to support its positioning strategy.

The identity of the territory, which we have already evoked, is probably the key concept in the management of territorial brands (Kapferer, 2011A; Ingallina, 2007; Chamard 2014). It can be defined as the set of features

that make a territory unique, that make it different from others. A territory has "an identity that is much deeper and limiting than a commercial brand" (Kapferer, 2011A [our translation]), which makes the process of developing TRBs more complicated. While it is possible to change the colour, taste or shape of a product, it is much more difficult to modify the elements constituting the identity of a region (Rochette, 2012). Meyronin (2012) speaks of a territory's "DNA record" [our translation], which is based on all of its characteristics, among which he distinguishes spatial dimensions (morphology, climate, geographical location, etc.) from temporal dimensions (history, heritage, culture, industry, socio-economic dynamics, etc.).

TRBs are linked with physical spaces that combine wide ranges of offers in terms of products, tourism, economic activities, industries and competitiveness centres, capacities for innovation through research centres, training, schools and universities, as well as quality of life, culture and lifestyle (Rochette, 2012). They convey symbols, meaning and signs (Chanoux and Serval, 2011) and rely on a past to build the future. They express visions, values, a societal plan, worlds and different approaches to the art of living that are all intangible elements that can leverage symbolism to greatly increase the attractiveness of a territory (Kapferer, 2011B).

PRODUCT BRAND	TERRITORIAL BRAND
Identification Guarantee Augmentation of product's attractiveness	Political strategy to increase support for the actions of elected officials Increase visibility (and readability?) of a territory Create consistency across the products and services offered
Creation of an identity	Exploitation of an identity
Homogenous offer	Heterogeneous offer
Limited targets (brand/segment and/or target)	Very broad targets
Exclusive brand	Encompassing brand
Can be sold	Cannot be sold or yielded
The product can be adapted	The product is set, fixed

Table 1 – The principal special features of territorial brands compared with product brands
Source: Rochette (2012)

TRBs often support local companies and their products, which rely on positioning in which precedence is given to quality and authenticity (Camus, 2003).

One of the conditions for the success of TRBs is that they be "embodied in the offer and multiplied to infinity along two lines, sectoral and geographical, but in all cases with a clear ambition to segment from the top" (Kapferer, 2011A [our translation]).

Territorial regional brands must be part of a collective strategy and act as an umbrella for the efforts of the whole community (Kapferer, 2011A). In this sense, considered as an "umbrella" brand (Figure 1), a TRB can include product certification labels (AOC, red label, IGP, Organic, etc.), "made in"[2] labels, destination brands, regional brands developed by regional SMEs/SOHOs and even collective regional brands[3].

The construction of a TRB resonates with the tangible and intangible resources of the regional territory, but it must also federate the regional stakeholders who contribute to enhancing the territory and its image.

1.2. An encompassing, federating approach for an umbrella brand intimately related to the identity of a territory

Most often initiated by one or more institutional stakeholders, TRBs do not result from strategies determined by a single stakeholder, but emerge out of the convergence of numerous actions by different public and private stakeholders, such as public and parapublic governance bodies (development agencies, tourism bureaus, competitiveness clusters), associations, agrifood
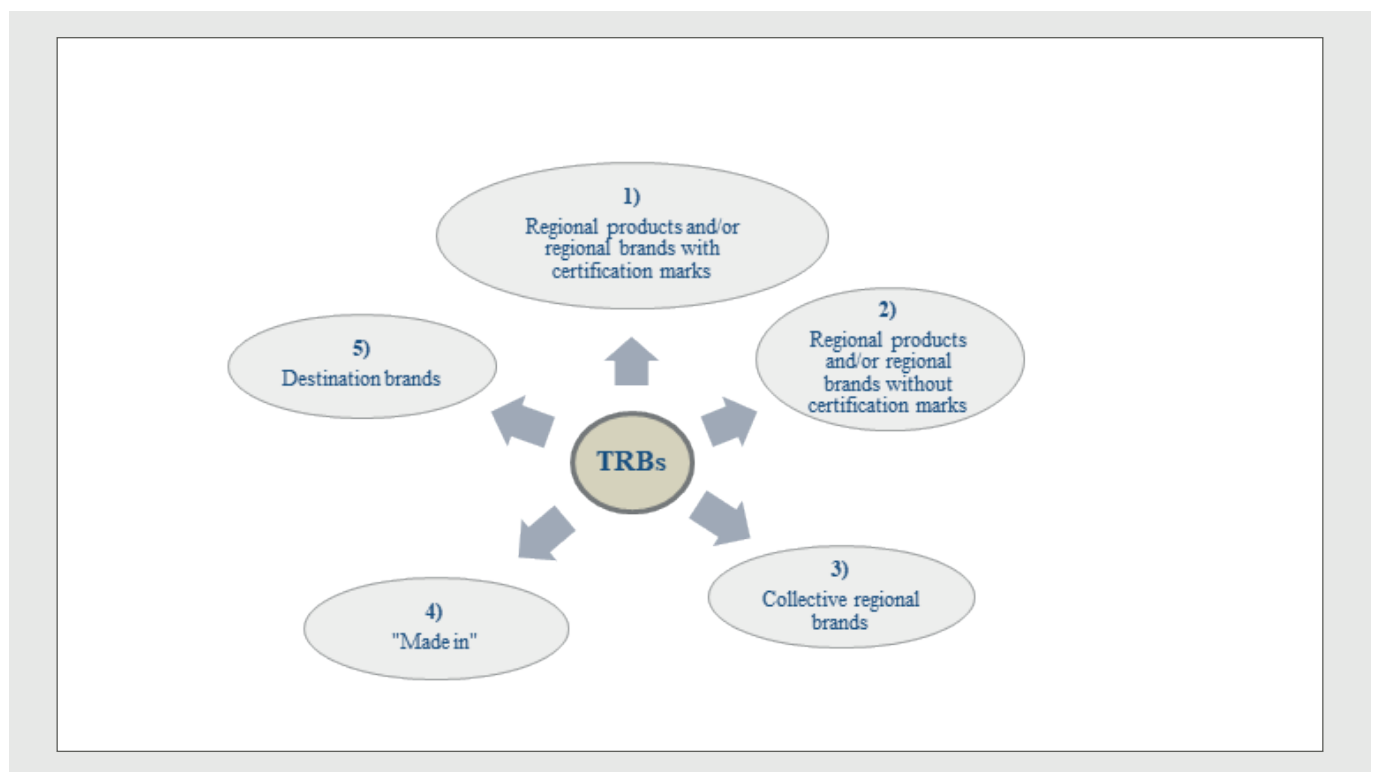

Figure 1 – TRBs: "Umbrella" brands – possible forms of integration

2 "Made in" (% of added value produced in the region) and TRB are related notions, but quite distinct in the sense that a territorial brand refers symbolically to a country, city or region even if it is "not made or invented there" (Kapferer, 2011A and 2013 [our translation]). At this time, there are a growing number of initiatives promoting "made in" products, placing the accent on the origin of the raw materials, the know-how of the locality, the place of production, etc.

3 This approach is generally initiated by agricultural associations, and regional groups and councils. The development of regional collective brands allows regional companies to expand outside of their territories by sliding from regional to national references, or even to the international level. Examples include Bravo l'Auvergne, Sud de France, Les Saveurs en Or, and Produits en Bretagne. The last brand in that list has over 2700 references (including 2400 in the food sector). Products integrated into the collective regional brand can display the associated logo.

companies, tourism firms, the construction industry, etc. These stakeholders have to "be persuaded that they share a future, of which at least part depends on the territory" (Meyronin, 2012 [our translation]). This is a process of co-construction that generates the contours of a shared vision expressed through the TRB: a shared brand that brings together, around similar values, a set of institutional and private stakeholders located in the territory (Rochette, 2012). According to Kapferer (2011B), the strength of a territorial brand can be measured by the ties that it creates among all of the partners through which it lives (inhabitants, companies, politicians, governments, etc.). As with the Valais brand[4], the stakeholders that embody the values conveyed by the TRB can become ambassadors for the brand, symbols of a development model for the territory.

Based on a shared set of referents that characterize the territory, a TRB is considered a "platform", "a brand undertaking" (Chamard, 2014 [our translation]) that translates a shared vision, commitments made by private and public stakeholders. Those stakeholders claim their feeling of belonging to a region in the same way that consumers, through their purchases, express their regional sentiments (Dion, Remy, Sitz, 2010), their feeling of belonging to a regional culture (Aurier, Fort, 2005; Robert-Demontrond, Bourgeard Delfosse, 2008), and the products then appear as cultural capital that is a source of pride shared in the context of a community.

This leads to questions about what a brand is designed to express and to identification of the attributes, competencies and values that are the common core of a TRB. In order to construct such a brand platform, regions generally call on a consulting firm that does research on the territory's identity: semiological studies, creation of panels of the territory's stakeholders (focus groups), identification of unconscious relationships with the territory, etc., to produce a portrait of the identity on which the territory will base the values of its brand. Such studies on identity highlight the most striking elements and those that are most meaningful to the community. The TRB will then spearhead a number of private and public actions, and form a platform conveying the values of excellence of the territory, values which will become concrete in a brand code. Much more than a logo or a graphic charter, a brand code offers a veritable brand

range to member entities. The Alsace region was the first to offer its members the most complete shared brand code. A very pedagogical "Guide de marque Alsace"[5] [Guide to the Alsace Brand"] shows the emblematic signs and the aspects of the territory that the brand covers, along with examples of possible applications for stakeholders in the region. In this way, each can select the graphical and lexical elements that are useful for their communications, and personalize them in the ways most appropriate to their strategies. By using the brand code, the partners make a commitment to communicate in ways consistent with the five brand value pairings (intensity and pleasure; excellence and pioneering work; humanism and world citizenship; balance and creation of ties; optimism and pragmatism) and to convey a shared vision of the territory.

A TRB thus unites, in a creative process, the identity and image of the territory with that of the stakeholders-users, thereby creating new ties and new competencies (Rochette, 2012). The key to success thus relies greatly on the number of partners that, in the end, display the brand.

Regions have notably differentiating elements owing to their histories, culture and other foundations for identity (Chamard *et al.*, 2013), which support the construction of their brands and will then have an impact on the territory's image.

1.3. Image of a territory and regional brand strategy

The impact of a territory's image on its ability to attract investments and individuals (tourists, residents, etc.) is often mentioned, but it is conceded that it is complex for a place to change that image (Chamard *et al.*, 2013). The difficulty stems from the wide ranges of stakeholders who take part in spreading the territory's image and the complexity of the territory "product" as we have seen above. A number of authors have studied the image of a territory, even envisaging "new brand management for nations, cities and regions" (Anholt, 2007 [our translation]). A territory's image brings together all of the beliefs, ideals and impressions that people have about the area, a simplification of a very wide range of associations

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4 [http://www.valais-community.ch/fr/contenus/la-marque-valais-0-16]
5 [http://www.marque-alsace.fr/]

(Kotler, Haider, Rein, 1993). According to Chamard *et al.* (2013), the image is composed of affective characteristics (what is felt), evaluative features (the positive or negative assessment of the territory) and associations with behaviour (tourism, residence, investment, etc.) regarding the territory. Taking inspiration from the central core theory (Abric, 1994; Michel, 2004), the authors evoke the concept of territorial capital defined in the context of a region "as a differential effect of knowledge of a living space on users' responses to what the territory offers, as established by stakeholders under the impetus of the territorial community's elected officials". That immaterial capital can be evaluated in particular by identifying the associations that can be central or peripheral to a region (Michel, 2004; Boo, Buser and Baloglu, 2009). Chamard *et al.* (2013) come up with a typology of that divides the 22 regions of mainland France[6] into five groups: regions with strong territorial capital, regions with draw but with low-profile territorial capital, regions with draw but with focussed territorial capital, regions with territorial capital that remains to be developed and finally regions with territorial capital that has not yet been created. This typology enables decision-makers in local communities to gain a better grasp of their territory's assets and weaknesses, and thus to adopt more efficient policies for increasing attractiveness and improving hospitality.

According to Mommass (2004) brands not only distinguish one place from another and specify them on the basis of their characteristics, but also define the type of region with which we want to identify. In fact, a brand can influence a territory's image (Chamard *et al.*, 2013) when it is based on attractive, credible, sustainable positioning founded on the communication of shared values and distinctive features that make sense to stakeholders in the territory. However, the interplay of territorial stakeholders, such as in Brittany, can lead to consensus decisions that make differentiation in the marketing sense a delicate operation (Houillier-Guibert, 2012). "When identity issues are concerned, the image proposals are prudent" (Houillier-Guibert, 2012, p.46 [our translation]).

Lastly, let us note that while some regions have very strong historical, cultural, economic and gastronomical anchoring that enriches their territorial capital, others, in contrast, suffer from the lack of an image or from a negative image, and will seek to improve it, in particular by creating a territorial regional brand.

Today, no matter what the image of the territory, seeking attractiveness is a major stake for regions that want to increase their draw and distinguish themselves by defending a collective ambition embodied by a territorial brand that carries meaning and values for stakeholders in the territory. The regions have taken different complex steps both to construct brands and to implement them. It is thus useful to do a comparative analysis of these territories' stakes and ambitions.

2. AN EXPLORATORY COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRBS

In parallel with our review of the literature, this study will employ a comparative approach to examine the managerial practices associated with TRBs.

2.1. Methodology

To date, around 10 TRBs have been created and are active in France. After having been contacted by email and/or telephone, six regions agreed to meet with us[7] (Table 2).

Those in charge of TRBs were also interviewed. The series of interviews ended in March 2015[8]. The methodological dimensions concerning the study are set out in Table 3.

The interviews were dense with information, rich in data and very instructive as to the implementation, management and promotion of territorial regional brands.

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6 The study was conducted on the basis of data gathered from 1600 people in collaboration with the IFOP and the ARF (Association des Régions de France).

7 Other interviews will soon complement the present qualitative study.

8 Note that prior to the six interviews, the qualitative guide was pre-tested on two TRBs: the Le Valais TRB and the Pays Basque TRB. Those two TRBs were not included in our study because Le Valais is a Swiss brand and Pays Basque has not yet been made official.

BRAND Sud de France	Duration of interview	⇨ 35 minutes
	Site	⇨ [http://www.sud-de-france.com/fr/la-marque]
	Approach	⇨ **Launched in 2006**, agrifood sector
	Data	⇨ 2 200 members, 1 100 enterprises, 2 800 products
BRAND Bretagne	Duration of interview	⇨ 1 hour, 5 minutes
	Site	⇨ [http://www.marque-bretagne.fr]
	Approach	⇨ **Launched in 2011**, multisector
	Data	⇨ 541 partners
BRAND Auvergne Nouveau monde	Duration of interview	⇨ 2 hours, 15 minutes
	Site	⇨ [http://www.auvergne-nouveau-monde.fr/marque]
	Approach	⇨ **Launched in 2011**, multisector
	Data	⇨ 500 members
BRAND Limousin	Duration of interview	⇨ 30 minutes
	Site	⇨ [http://www.marquelimousin.fr/]
	Approach	⇨ Initiated in 2010, **launched in 2012,** multisector
	Data	⇨ 378 members, 120 ambassadors, 40% of members from the Limoges metropolitan area
MARQUE Sud Ouest France	Duration of interview	⇨ 35 minutes
	Site	⇨ [http://sudouestfrance.fr/]
	Approach	⇨ **Launched in 2012**, agrifood sector ⇨ Linking of two regions – Aquitaine and Midi Pyrénées
	Data	⇨ 300 members, 250 food business partners from the Maison Sud Ouest project in China
BRAND ImaginAlsace	Duration of interview	⇨ 45 minutes
	Site	⇨ [http://www.marque-alsace.fr]
	Approach	⇨ Initiated in 2011, **launched in 2014,** multisector
	Data	⇨ 2 000 partners

Table 2 – French TRBs that participated in the study

Sample and Data-Gathering Method

⇨ 6 people in charge of TRBs were interviewed (Table 2)
⇨ Guided interviews
⇨ Average duration of the interview: 45 minutes

Architecture of the Interview Guide

⇨ **Introduction: Presentation of the interviewee**
  ✓ History and function
  ✓ Definition of the TRB

⇨ **Part 1: TRB plan**
  ✓ Image of the region
  ✓ Creation and history of the TRB
  ✓ Integration of the TRB into the territory's regional development plan
  ✓ Objectives of the TRB
  ✓ Tensions linked with the creation and launch of the TRB

⇨ **Part 2: Gouvernance et Steering de la MTR**
  ✓ Who led and is leading the TRB?
  ✓ The TRB plan and how it is assisted by expert consulting firms
  ✓ Implementation and members of the steering committee
  ✓ The committee's responsibilities

⇨ **Part 3: Positioning and tools (brand platform)**
  ✓ Message conveyed and target
  ✓ Implementation of a participatory approach
  ✓ Tools for building and structuring the TRB
  ✓ Competition or complementarity with other TRBs

⇨ **Part 4: Architecture of the TRB**
  ✓ Sectors concerned
  ✓ TRB and labelling
  ✓ TRB and label of excellence
  ✓ Characteristics of TRB ambassadors
  ✓ Procedure for membership in the TRB
  ✓ Differential links between the TRB and other brands (collective, destination, "made in", etc. brands) in the territory
  ✓ TRB and shared brands
  ✓ Impact of redefinitions of the regions on the TRB

⇨ **Part 5: Advice**
  ✓ Advice for regions seeking to embark upon the creation of a TRB
  ✓ Principal steps required for the successful launch of a TRB
  ✓ Principal difficulties encountered
  ✓ Crucial points to focus on and stumbling blocks to be avoided
  ✓ Specific recommendations

Processing Method

⇨ Principal of triangulation of data to improve the internal validity of the study (scientific writings, observation and interviews)
⇨ Lexical textual analysis
⇨ After complete transcription of the interviews, processing and analysis of the data (by hand and using NVivo 10 software)

Table 3 – Methodological dimensions related to the qualitative study

Following our analysis of the interviews and their importation under NVivo, we discovered a number of nodes of correlation that will be the subjects of the present analysis.

2.2. TRB construction process

The various stakeholders we interviewed explained their visions of their territorial regional brands (Figure 2). Their visions were consistent with the notions mentioned above, that is, the idea that a territorial brand is shared and has to federate the stakeholders and promote a territory by reflecting its values, identity and image, while highlighting local structures.

Figure 2 – Key words associated
with territorial regional brands (TRBs)

Study of the discourse of the interviewees also showed that approaches to constructing TRBs have shared characteristics, but are also different, depending on the region in question.

2.2.1. The objectives of TRBs

In the planning phase, in the cases of most of the regions studied, namely, Alsace, Auvergne, Brittany and the Limousin, the interviewees said that territory's attractiveness was the priority. Given the highly competitive context, those regions were well aware of the importance of differentiating themselves. This is in line with the research done by Hatem (2007), Ingallina (2007) and Chamard (2014). The goal of a TRB is to attract investors, companies, students, inhabitants, etc. Consistent with the work by Bouinot (2002) and by Chanoux and Serval (2011), those in charge of TRBs said that they had to show that their territories had attractive distinctive features. It was therefore necessary to be extremely persuasive to appeal to the various partners and convince them to move to the territory.

Some TRBs, such as Auvergne Nouveau Monde, Bretagne and Limousin, also face problems of image and reputation. In Brittany, the regional brand is designed to "promote and strengthen Brittany's image". Auvergne and the Limousin, seek to show that their areas have their own advantages, despite having a low profile in public opinion. For Auvergne, "the point of departure was an IPSOS study on how people not from the Auvergne viewed the Auvergne; it hurt and acted as a catalyst... there is a GAP between the perceived value and the real value... this led to the idea of a territorial brand to erase prejudices and the only way to do that is to work on our image and reputation" [our translation].

In parallel with the problem of image and reputation, the Alsace brand noted that its goal expressed a desire to raise its profile and recognisability: "the idea is that if everyone from Alsace speaks with a single voice, we will raise our visibility and make ourselves more recognizable beyond the borders of Alsace, on the national and international stage" [our translation].

These notions of image, reputation, visibility and recognisability clearly all refer to the desire to strengthen the territory's attractiveness.

Other regions, such as Languedoc-Roussillon and Aquitaine/Midi Pyrénées, take a different approach, seeking first and foremost to defend and raise awareness of the value of local products with their respective brands, Sud de France and Sud-Ouest France. Some even think in terms of market share within a specific

sector (the Sud de France brand). In this case, the approach is no longer global (Chamard, 2014), but tends to be more like a product brand. For these regions, the primary goal is to create brands that describe an offer of products and services so as to optimize their value in the eyes of French and foreign consumers. The brand thus becomes an emblem, the flag bearer of stakeholders employing the approach at events (salons, promotional actions for exports), as with Sud-Ouest France. It can also be displayed on certified products so as to facilitate their verification and raise their value in the eyes of consumers (the Sud de France brand).

Faced with this desire to identify the things they offer, some regions want their brand to be part of a labelling approach, or even a guarantee of excellence, such as in the case of Sud de France, which carries an image of excellence even though some of the regional enterprises with upmarket positioning are not showcased by this brand. "Our approach tends toward excellence. We want to remain an open brand and not an elite brand, but our approach tends toward excellence, in the same way as the organic and innovation approaches" [our translation].

On the contrary, Auvergne does not want to adopt a labelling approach because it considers that it does not have the legitimacy to do so. It also does not want to adopt a business excellence approach. The objective of the Auvergne Nouveau Monde brand is above all to testify to belonging to the area, in the image of militant consumers attached to their region and expressing regional feelings (Dion, Remy, Sitz, 2010) or strong roots in the region (Robert-Demontrond, 2008).

The Limousin and Alsace brands are developing a network of excellence and also company certification.

2.2.2. Participatory approach and portrait of the identity

TRBs have created strong links between cooperation and the success of the approach. They bring various actions into play, mobilize various tools and institute participatory approaches. They know that this method is the key to loyalty to the brand. Cooperation meetings during (and very often after) the creation phase are held to foster adoption of the approach by stakeholders in the territory (round tables, conferences and theme-based workshops in the case of the Bretagne brand). Thus, in the case of the Bretagne brand: "There was little tension during the launch in 2011 because in Paris in 2007 there had been the BreizhTouch event ("Brittany as you have never seen it" [our translation]) and the work began in 2010 with the launch scheduled for 2011. Everything was done gradually... We really made sure we would mobilize the stakeholders, so there was a very long consultation phase. We involved some 4700 people in that study phase" [our translation].

In the TRB construction phase, the regions generally draw up portraits of the territory. Stakeholders all insisted on the need to identify the salient features of their territories to communicate about them in an optimal manner. This vision is consistent with research on the identity of the territory as the point of departure for TRB management (Kapferer, 2011A; Ingallina, 2007; Meyronin, 2012; Chamard, 2014).

Such portraits of the territory are generally entrusted to research firms that also assist the regions in other areas, such as publication of the graphic charter (Auvergne Nouveau Monde brand) and in later phases of establishing the brand (Limousin brand).

While these missions can sometimes be performed in-house, all informants referred to the need to employ research firms to gain greater legitimacy. However, some criticized the fact that use of these tools can result in relatively similar outcomes from one region to the next. "We all have the same tools... at the same time, it is not surprising because one predominating research firm draws up relatively similar portraits of the identities" (Auvergne Nouveau Monde brand [our translation]).

2.2.3. Target and message

In accordance with the territory's predefined objectives and salient features, the TRB will adopt specific positioning and raise awareness of different targets.

In line with the research done by Mommass (2004), stakeholders specify that they wish to convey a message expressing the desire to make the territory more dynamic. The region wants to be identified with a life plan (this is consistent with the work done by Kapferer, 2011B) that individuals, enterprises and economic partners will consider adopting: "You have to show that it is a

region where it is good to live, study, work…" (Auvergne Nouveau Monde brand [our translation]).

"Let's have the courage to affirm who we are. Let's regain pride in our territory and celebrate the excellence of our know-how. Let's change the way we look at what we are" (Limousin brand [our translation]).

Although some regions have chosen to address a very broad audience, such as in the case of Auvergne, they all identify very specific targets for their actions.

Therefore, action has to be taken with respect to endogenous targets in order to involve them in the success of the undertaking (Limousin, Sud-Ouest France, Alsace brands). The inhabitants, companies, universities, etc. are all dimensions that need to be persuaded in order to make the brand more living and dynamic. Moreover, in the case of Alsace, companies have become the primary targets of the brand.

Yet, exogenous targets are not overlooked. The goal is to raise the awareness of tourists, economic partners, students and all newcomers who might want to move to, and live and work in the region.

Endogenous targets are approached to persuade them to become promoters of the brand and to raise awareness of the territory in order to attract exogenous targets and draw them in to move to, visit or invest in the area.

2.3. Implementation of a shared brand

2.3.1. Ambassadors

Ambassadors provide essential leverage for raising awareness of and constructing a shared brand, as much research has noted (Meyronin, 2010; Kapferer, 2011A; Bonnal, 2011; Rochette, 2012; Chamard, 2014; etc.).

Depending on the region, there are more or less points of reference: companies actively carrying the TRB, innovative enterprises, networks of outside stakeholders attached to their territory and who will spread the message (Alsace brand), volunteers, members, people living in the territory (Sud de France brand). Beyond the number of ambassadors, it is their involvement in and enthusiasm for the territory that will be the key to the TRB's success and power to attract.

"Some ambassadors will be referred to more often than others, for example, because they are more active. However, we are also very attentive to giving visibility to certain enterprises in sectors that are a little more unexpected… such as companies in the naval sector, where innovation is very important and such codes were very little used… Today, for them, the Bretagne brand carries an identity (reference to the flag through its logo) and at the same time, thanks to that sector, the Bretagne brand displays a kind of modernity" (Bretagne brand [our translation]).

2.3.2. Gouvernance et Steering

Like the prior phase, the steering of TRBs is largely subject to the establishment of steering committee (in charge of policies and strategic decisions concerning the brand). Auvergne, which functions more in the form of a general assembly, considers that "those in charge of governance are the stakeholders in the territory" [our translation]. Such committees can also take the form of bodies, such as in the case of the Bretagne brand, which has chosen to create a body with one committee in charge of fostering attractiveness and another committee in charge of the brand. The former has a strong strategic role with a mission to federate the stakeholders and promote the territory. The latter's role is to "approve requests from candidates to become partners in the brand" (Bretagne brand [our translation]).

In the case of the Limousin, the steering committee's role is "validation of membership requests, shared action plans, carriage of the brand in their respective sectors" (Limousin brand).

Each governance structure determines its criteria for TRB membership according to more or less selective criteria:

- Little or not selective: the Alsace, Auvergne Nouveau Monde and Limousin brands
- Moderately selective: the Bretagne brand
- Very selective, close to a brand label: the Sud-Ouest France brand, and, to a lesser degree, the Sud de France brand.

2.3.3. Pedagogical tools

The use of pedagogical tools is necessary for the smooth functioning of TRBs and facilitates members' use of the brand. Clearly, the brand code predominates and is based on the portrait of the territory.

In the case of Brittany, there is free access to the brand code (colour chart, advice), but obtaining a licence to use the Bretagne brand gives the right to use the logo on communications material (and the licence is subject to submitting an application).

Support for implementation of the brand and, more generally, structures linked with the support must be established in the territory. "For tourism professionals who want to become involved in the implementation, there is a day of training (a brand code workshop). The entire mechanism is presented to them so that they can enhance their communications and so that they can reflect on when it is necessary for their positioning, what is offered in particular to help them progress" (Bretagne brand [our translation]).

The brand code is generally implemented by a consulting firm in accordance with the values that have been identified. The approach is similar across the various regions and the brand code is simply transposed to the specific situation of each one.

In parallel, other classical tools are brought into play, such as marketing plans and budget tracking, but also more innovative tools in the case of the Auvergne Nouveau Monde and Limousin brands (collaborative tools, community creation, newsletter, social networks, etc.)

3. DISCUSSION

The present exploratory research complements the literature on territorial brands and sheds light, through a comparative approach, on the managerial practices of regional brands.

The findings of this study merit discussion because they identify elements of reflection that are relevant to territorial communities.

3.1. The omnipresence of regional communities in approaches adopted by TRBs

To begin with, there is a very close relationship between the implementation of a TRB and its community. TRBs are essentially managed by their regions (Limousin brand, Sud de France brand). The linking sometimes goes through associations (Auvergne Nouveau Monde brand, Sud-Ouest France brand) or through an economic agency (Bretagne brand), but no matter what the veritable, official carrier of the TRB, the region always provides specific resources for territorial regional brands in the form of subsidies or staff (one or two full-time officials).

The region's predominance in the governance of TRBs can pose problems of neutrality and in fact lead to a risk of disengagement by some regional stakeholders in their TRB. It is probably necessary to turn towards another economic model less dependent on public players, such as the approach taken by Barcelona, where the brand is around 80% privately financed.

Moreover, implementation of a TRB requires "the adoption of a marketing strategy, implementation of new practices and the use of new tools with which the communities are not familiar" (Rochette, 2012 [our translation]). As we have seen, the creation and development of a TRB involves, for example, skills in terms of image studies and web communications tool design. How can these new skills be integrated into communities? By training employees or by creating jobs? Are communities today able to react swiftly enough and do they have the financial means to take on this new responsibility?

In addition, "the public service culture of communities can be an obstacle to the acquisition of new skills"

(Rochette, 2012 [our translation]). The governance of a TRB is not always obvious. "Mercantile logic is thus limited when political stakes have to be taken into account, which is inherent to territories" (Houllier-Guibert, 2012 [our translation])

3.2. The primordial role of appropriation

A TRB cannot be shared unless stakeholders adopt it. For that, it has to be evocative, both for local people and for those from outside the territory, and it has to federate the stakeholders in the territory. The TRB has to bring participation into play, despite the possible obstacles related to this type of action (Sintomer and De Maillard, 2007).

This participatory approach (before and after) has to be based on "a real territorial plan channelling the dynamics of constant construction ensuring the adoption of past, present and future social values and expectations" (Zumbo-Lebrument, 2015 [our translation]).

In reality, consultation, the number and choice of ambassadors, but also the governance[9] and steering, can all be keys to successful development of a TRB.

The stakeholders therefore have to be integrated into the procedure through which a TRB is constructed and implemented. They adhere to the values conveyed by the TRB and form a "corporate community" in which the players are perceived more as partners than as targets (Gregory, 2007). The players may be institutional, municipal, economic or hybrid (Maynadier, 2009). They contribute to the co-production of the TRB, but have different degrees of involvement and responsibility (participation in the construction, shouldering of the role of ambassador, involvement in the steering committee, involvement in governance, etc.).

The Bretagne brand is a relatively good illustration of this participatory, interactive approach to creating the brand (focus group, blog, questionnaires, etc.).

Between 2008 and 2011, a multitude of players (associations, stakeholders in Brittany's economy and tourism industry, stakeholders in Brittany based outside of the area, inhabitants, students, etc.) were thus involved in the Bretagne brand (Houillier-Guibert, 2012).

3.3. TRBs: a concept that is still vague

The whole challenge lies in managing the development of a TRB that is not a product brand (Rochette, 2012, Kapferer, 2011A) and that has to find a good compromise between flexibility and rigor in its admission criteria. When there are a number of different collective labels and brands in a single region, then different sets of specifications have to be taken into account in approaches to certification. This can result in increased complexity in the implementation of a TRB, and a feeling of confusion or even reluctance on the part of some local stakeholders. In the case of Aquitaine, "since the Aquitaine landscape is already overloaded with brands and similar tools,"[10] problems of the separations and connections between local quality labels and the TRB have arisen. This is not to speak of the fact that for the consumer the profusion of logos, labels and other appellations can make it confusing to determine what attitude and behaviour to adopt (Dufeu, Ferrandi, Gabriel, Le Gail-Ely, 2014; Jongmans, Jolibert, Irwin, 2014).

Moreover, beyond the problem of having a number of labels referring to a single territory, there is also the question of the objectives of TRBs and their relevance. The present study identifies two distinct priority objectives:

- Make the region more attractive (Imagin'Alsace, Auvergne Nouveau Monde, Bretagne, Limousin)
- Make regional products more attractive (Sud de France, Sud-Ouest France)

The very essence of TRBs can then be discussed when the priority is to make local products more attractive. In such a case, a TRB is a regional collective brand that can seem like a brand serving a one or more sectors of activity. Can we therefore speak of a transversal

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[9] Note that the governance of a TRB is performed by stakeholders who share common values and an analogous vision but, as in the case of a city brand, a TRB can also be based on the sharing of strategic interests (Maynadier, 2015).

[10] Meyric S. (2012), "La mode des marques territoriales ne passera pas par l'Aquitaine", at [http://www.aqui.fr/] [our translation].,

shared brand when its purpose is essentially to support certain regional industries? Vigilance is required with respect to this type of TRB because there is a risk of creating a brand for only some of the stakeholders in the territory, thereby bringing into question the very concept of a TRB (Bouinot, 2002; Chanoux and Serval, 2011; Kapferer, 2011 A and B; Rochette, 2012; Chamard, 2014).

Two distinct approaches can therefore be identified: a global approach that is characteristic of TRBs and a "sectoral" approach, which is closer to that of a "supra" regional collective brand.

3.4. The territorial image as an element for differentiating managerial practices?

Given the interviews we conducted and on the basis of the statements of those in charge of TRBs, we find that the regions associated with the TRBs that we studied have different concerns about their region's image. It seems that some regions involved in the creation of a TRB, such as Languedoc Roussillon, Aquitaine and Midi Pyrénées, do not have any special image problems. Others, such as Alsace, Brittany, Auvergne and the Limousin, referred to more or less strong concerns about their image.

		OBJECTIVES	SELECTION CRITERIA	TARGET	MESSAGE
STRONG IMAGE POTENTIAL	**Sud de France**	Protect/defend local products	Demanding	National and local levels; export	South, sun, friendliness, quality, modernity, innovation.
	Sud-Ouest France	Protect/defend local products. Raise awareness and increase the attractiveness of Sud-Ouest products for export	Demanding		The key words are authenticity, quality, art of living...
MEDIUM IMAGE POTENTIAL	**Alsace**	Put Alsace on the map, increase recognisability. Improve reputation. Be more attractive	Flexible	Enterprises	Feeling of pride, of belonging, under the slogan: "On a tous l'Alsace à cœur" ("We've all got Alsace in our hearts"). In the future, communications will have to be oriented more towards excellence and innovation
	Bretagne	Strengthen the image. Improve reputation	Medium	Students. Tourists	The idea is that enterprises can create ties with their territories
	Auvergne Nouveau monde	Improve the image. Become attractive	Flexible	Students; investors; newcomers + the general public (outside Auvergne)	A region where it is good to live, study, work, etc.
WEAK IMAGE POTENTIAL	Limousin	Change the perceived image, which is negative. Strengthen attractiveness	Flexible	Students; economic partners; tourists; newcomers; stakeholders in the area	Change our attitudes to ourselves.

Table 4 – Special features of the TRB construction process in accordance with interviewees' concerns about the image

At this stage, the following grouping of TRBs in terms of our informants' perceptions of the image of their region can be proposed:

- Little concern about the region's image: Sud de France and Sud-Ouest France brands;
- Medium concern about the region's image: Alsace, Bretagne, Auvergne Nouveau Monde brands;
- Strong concern about the region's image: Limousin brand[11].

The qualitative study reveals that TRBs where the territory does not have a strong image problem seek more to protect, increase the attractiveness of and promote local products, whereas the primary goal of those with a weak or problematic image is to work on the image to strengthen the attractiveness of the territory (Table 4). The way objectives are oriented will obviously influence the positioning and targets of the different TRBs. Those seeking to enhance the way local products are perceived want to entice customers so as to export products: their efforts to increase their attractiveness have mainly exogenous targets (newcomers, investors, economic partners, students, tourists, etc.) and then, to a lesser degree, endogenous

targets so as to strengthen the feeling of belonging to the territory and to have enthusiastic ambassadors that convey a positive vision of the territory. The remarks by the stakeholders we questioned are consistent with the vision of Dion, Rémy and Sitz (2010), specifying the feeling of belonging to a region as a source of leverage in marketing actions. Thus, the more ambassadors are involved and work towards making their region better known, the more beneficial the TRB's resonance will be.

Dion *et al.* (2010) identify seven fundamental points regarding regional belonging that need to be developed when an organization seeks to use such belonging as leverage in marketing (Table 5). This can be transposed into the terms of territorial regional brands with respect to the information gathered during the interviews. For example, one of the things that Dion *et al.* (2010) point out is that it is necessary to favour the experience of belonging to a community. TRBs meet this recommendation by establishing collaborative tools in the framework of a broad participatory approach (especially in the case of TRBs where there is strong concern for the image). For example, Auvergne Nouveau Monde is inventive and constantly engages in participatory operations:

REGIONAL BELONGING (Dion *et al.*, 2010)	ACTIONS IDENTIFIED WITHIN TRBS
Create a narrative around the brand based on ideas about the region	Development of a distinctive portrait of the territory
Immerse the consumer in a regional atmosphere	Events (arts and crafts, cultural events) carried by the TRB and used as experience-based worlds of discovery
Highlight the regional culture	Creation of tools and a brand code adapted to the special aspects of the territory
Favour regional exhibits	Promote the symbols and emblems of the regional territory
Take a position as an alternative to globalization	Support local structures and/or products
Promote the experience of membership in the community	Collaborative tools
Place priority on regional solidarity	Ambassadors, participatory approach, collective governance

Table 5 – Regional belonging and actions associated with TRBs

[11] Consistent with the work by Chamard *et al.* (2013), the Limousin is one of the regions lacking in territorial capital (where such capital remains to be created), in other words, it is rarely visited, brings few associations to mind and inspires a negative attitude.

- Auvergne Nouveau Monde Tour: a tour to recruit new members; "one day, one département", etc.,
- Establishment of new themes, conferences with stakeholders to expand the network and create ties through social events,
- Launch of *Pépites du Nouveau Monde:* a friendly evening conference with five people who tell their life stories. The pépites are co-organized with the pioneers, the committee of which meets monthly. The pioneers are always involved in the activity,
- Student pioneers who launch guerilla distribution operations,

- Social networks (Twitter, Facebook), newsletter, improvement of the website, creation of a social network with our pioneers,
- Creation of a social television channel with a video component, a tunnel with different levels.

Regarding these various elements of reflection, in Figure 3, we attempt to summarize the links between the TRB's concern for the region's image and objectives, and the managerial practices employed.
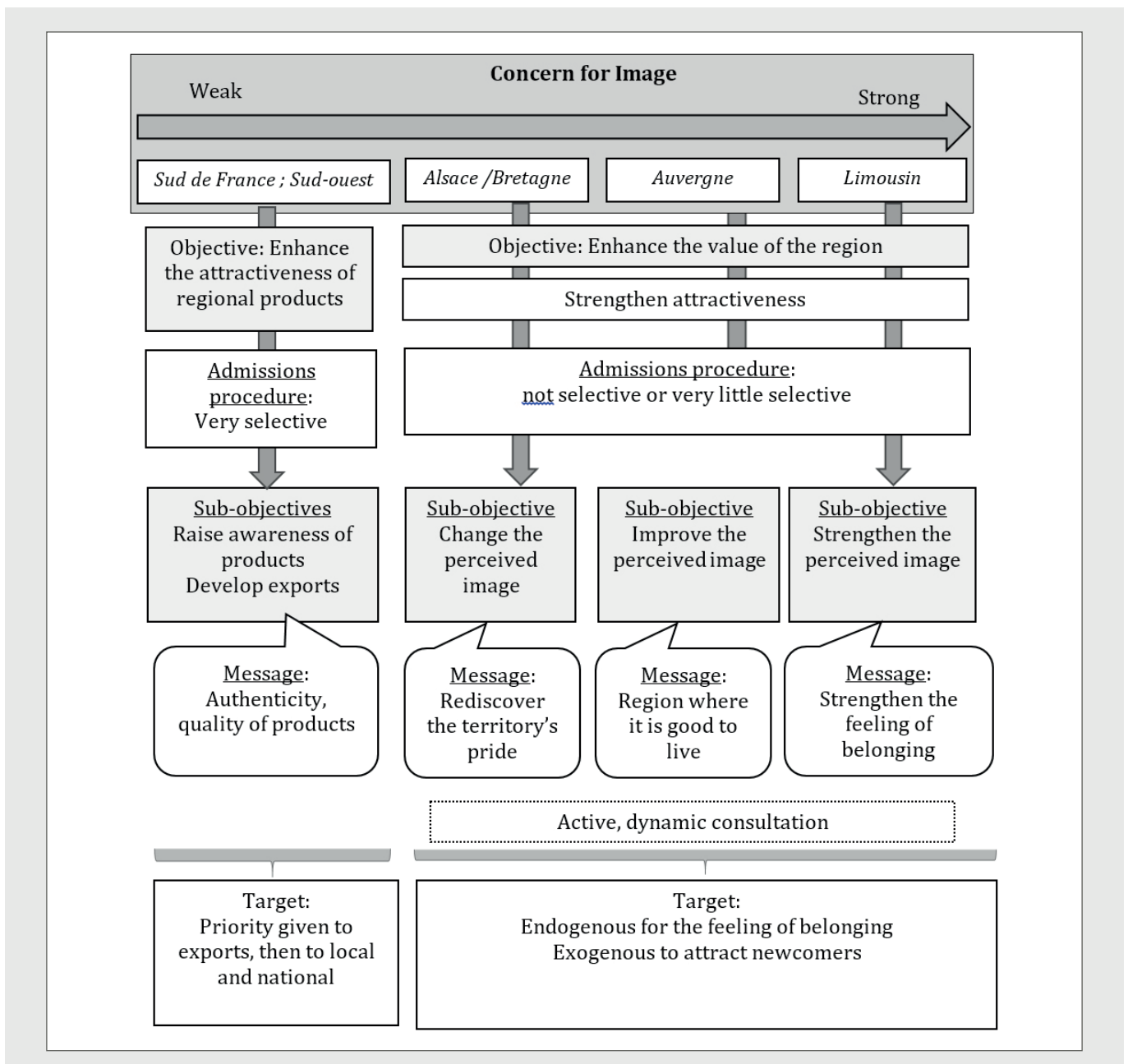

Figure 3 – Links between concern for the region's image and the approach associated with the TRB

CONCLUSION

Within regions, territorial branding raises strong interest, and TRBs offer perspectives that are relevant to territories seeking to launch into the venture. However, while TRBs are now integrated into the managerial practices of many territorial communities, we have to note that little research has been done on the concept. Yet, it deserves special attention because it has the potential to add value to what is offered (Bonnal, 2011) and is designed to go beyond a passive label or certification of origin (Kapferer, 2011B).

Through academic and documentary research, and qualitative interviews, the present article has sought to gain an understanding of a general approach to constructing and implementing TRBs by identifying the possible differential impact of the territory's image on such practices.

Through its empirical comparative approach, this exploratory work provides keys to reading and gaining better knowledge of the steps taken by territories for local communities wishing to launch their own brands and for stakeholders already invested in a TRB and involved in breathing life into it on a day-to-day basis.

This study raises many more questions.

The relation between the practices studied and the image of the territory should be studied in greater detail and discussed with regard to research on territorial images.

Other investigations linked with the identity of a region and the launch of a TRB could also be envisaged. Do all regions have interest in launching a TRB? Does the ambition of establishing a TRB as a means of creating territorial coherence prove more relevant in regions where identity is strong and very marked? In the case of regions seeking an identity and image, does not the process of creating a TRB consist in reproducing the same marketing techniques in every region, and thus forging a kind of meaningless, asepticized language that waters down the very idea of regional distinctiveness? What kind of brand-based feeling of belonging is patched together by consulting firms?

Another continuation of this study would be to take the feedback from the TRBs studied during our exploratory research, and try to analyse the factors that are keys to success and could be used to prepare a guide to best practices.

The question of the performance of TRBs also arises: How can the efficiency of a TRB be measured? What indicators should be taken into consideration?

Note also that is would be useful to conduct a study with respect to the ambassadors so as to identify the selection criteria, as well as their roles, involvement, etc. in accordance with the different TRBs.

Lastly, research on the consequences of the territorial reform on the efficiency of these TRBs could also be useful. What is the future of TRBs in the framework of the French territorial reform? Does not the merger of départements and regions risk shaking the very foundations of some TRBs? Could we envision future TRBs for the new territories? What would then be the pertinence of the latter in terms of identity, image and shared values? For example, the merger of Auvergne Rhône-Alpes could require rethinking the Auvergne Nouveau Monde brand around three scenarios, the choice of which will depend on the stakeholders: change the name and create a new, substitute brand; restructure the nominal identity by adding a new brand; or keep existing brands with targeted fields of action and redefine the contours of sectoral action (Rochette, Zumbo-Lebrumment, Féniès, 2015)

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