

Towards an analysis of Place Branding in territorial transformation

*La place du marketing territorial
dans le processus de transformation territoriale*

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ABSTRACT

While place branding practices occupy a growing space among territorial communities, the theoretical foundations too often remain hidden deep in the shadows of trade or academic reviews. This contribution returns to the definition of place branding to highlight its impact on the process of territorial transformation. Activity theory is then mobilised to establish an analysis grid that can be

used by the stakeholders in charge of place branding initiatives. The example of the “Principality of Laàs” illustrates this implementation.

Key-words

Place marketing, place branding, territorial development, territorial transformation

RÉSUMÉ

Alors que les pratiques de marketing territorial occupent une place croissante au sein des collectivités territoriales, les fondements théoriques restent trop souvent en retrait des publications, qu'elles soient de nature académique ou pratique. Cette contribution revient sur la définition du marketing territorial afin de mettre en lumière le processus de transformation qu'il opère. Ensuite, la théorie des activités est

mobilisée pour construire une grille d'analyse utilisable par les acteurs en charge des démarches de marketing territorial.

Mots-clés

Marketing territorial, branding territorial, développement territorial, transformation territoriale

INTRODUCTION

“I Love NY”, a place brand launched in 1977 (Maynadier 2009), serves both as an example as well as a starting point in our reflection on place branding. Place branding practised by regional authorities has now been experiencing radical growth since its objectives were reoriented, reconsidered in depth, to the point that it now features in the organisational charts of these organisations. Some authors even talk of an “invasion” of private and public life by *branding* (Van Ham 2002). Additionally, since the end of the 1990s, academic research focused initially on the variables of operational marketing have had a vocation that is increasingly interested in the process of transformation targeted by recent place-branding initiatives. As Vuignier indicates (2016), there is a “conceptual vagueness, divergent definitions and weak theoretical foundations” around place branding and its implementation. It seems essential today to place this field of practice on more robust foundations in order to make it a legitimate subject of academic research. Thus, after having defined place branding and circumscribed its areas of application in the light of recent research (Part 1), we present activity theory as a theoretical foundation making it possible to assess the transformation of a location brought about by place branding (Part 2). Finally, we put forward a tool for assessing this transformation: the *Cube d’Evaluation et d’Analyse de la Transformation Territoriale* (CEATT, the Territorial Transformation Evaluation and Analysis Cube). This summarises the impact of a marketing initiative on the territory studied using a multidimensional evaluation (Part 3).

1. PLACE BRANDING:

the shift from an empirical approach
to a scientifically-based concept

Although the brand created for the city of New York in the 1970s served as a pioneer, academic research into place branding has only begun to take shape over the past three decades. After having revisited the confusion that frequently characterises the definitions devoted to place branding, we will clarify our concept of this approach, established on the basis of existing, multidisciplinary literature. Finally, we will insist on the necessary transformational logic that integrates place branding today, both from an academic point of view as well as an operational one. Indeed, assessing a place-branding initiative consists in measuring the changes experienced by the territory in the short, medium and long term under the impetus of this voluntary, collective process carrying predetermined targets.

1.1. Place branding: a “cacophony”?

This term borrowed from Giovanardi and al. (2013) accurately reflects the impression commonly felt by researchers in the field of place branding. The feeling of scientific imprecision, if not disorder, is explained by three major components: semantic difficulty, the lack of any robust conceptual framework and an extreme variety of cases studied.

In the typically-French context of place branding, the association of the terms “place” and “branding” generates scepticism among many authors and practitioners. Indeed, making a territory--albeit specific--an object of marketing practice refers to the idea that a good, which is by nature collective and co-built, could be marketed for the benefit of a small number of stakeholders. The use of the term “place branding” often comes with notions of attractiveness, hospitality and competitiveness, for the purposes of further clarifying which meaning to choose for such an approach.

In English texts, despite the conventional distinctions between *branding* and *marketing*, the words “place marketing” (Gertner 2011; 2011 b) and “place branding” (Skinner, 2008) are now used to refer to the approach of territorial marketing. Nevertheless, as Vuignier

reports (2016) in his meticulous synthesis work, the term “place branding” has gradually replaced those of “place marketing” in the titles of academic articles devoted to the field between 2005 and 2015. Does this concern a simple semantic change or rather a profound change of research subject, from marketing to simply branding? Presumably, it is a bit of both. With regard to semantics, the concept of branding has become more widely used because, within the English meaning of the term, it covers a broader concept than simply brand strategy. In addition, in light of the scientific subject, a large number of works are primarily focused on issues related to branding (Braun 2008; Kavaratzis and Asworth 2005) more than those related to marketing. It must be noted that in this desire find meaning, the notion of territory is absent from semantic debate. Does “Place” not evoke any specificity, nor raise any ambiguity? It would appear rather that the definition of territory does not form a consensus among researchers, that it is culturally nuanced even while this concept constitutes a real contribution to understanding what place branding is. This is why we will come back to this definition, based on the work of geographers, in order to understand the relevance of place as an object for evaluation.

Several literature reviews (Gertner 2011; Lucarelli and Berg 2011; Lucarelli and Brorström 2013; Chan and Marafa 2013; Andersson 2014, Chamard *and al.* 2014; Oguztimur Akturan and 2015; Acharya and Rahman 2016) have been conducted, arriving at genuine conceptual confusion within the scientific domain of place branding. In 2016, Vuignier continued this same quest with a systematic review of 1172 English articles on the subject. His remarkable contribution - thanks to its exhaustiveness - also highlights the need to conceptually clarify what place branding is, both from a scientific and empirical point of view. The main themes studied by researchers in place branding revolve around the image of territories, identity, the effects of the place brand, the role of stakeholders, social networks and events (Vuignier, 2016). What is lacking in the heart of the approach to place branding is clearly a conceptual basis that usually exists in marketing research.

These latest studies seem to be well characterised by the extreme diversity of approaches (fields of study) as

far as giving the impression of a collection of individual cases or even “anecdotes” and calling for an integrated theory to be brought to light (Vuignier, 2016). The qualitative methodologies used, most often case studies, do not allow for the external validation of the results obtained. A succession of clinical cases carried out on territories of various scales (district, town, department, region, country etc.) increases the perception of the lack of a conceptual framework, but also that of semantic confusion, the realities described being so diverse.

1.2. Place branding: the confluence between two paradigms

Obviously, place branding must still delineate the contours of its areas of application. It does not really say what it is, what it is used for, and how it can be practised in a methodical manner to generate real territorial transformation. To sum up, and with a view to deepening our understanding of the meaning that needs to be attributed to place branding, we identify two recurring terms in literature: place branding and place marketing.

“Place branding refers to. the development of brands for geographical locations such as regions, cities or communities, usually with the aim to trigger positive associations and distinguish the place from other places” (Eshuis and Klijn, 2012)¹. They continue: “Place brands are symbolic constructs meant to add meaning or value to places. Brands are signs that identify places, and evoke associations that imbue places with cultural meaning.” (Braun 2008, p.43).

As we have discussed previously, the term “place” does not seem to be the subject of debate. Indeed, since the first English texts on place branding (Kotler, 1993), the dominant paradigm has been that of traditional marketing, integrating place as an object of application among others things. In this context, the task of place branding is to adapt the tools of mass-consumption marketing to a particular sphere, that of “cities, states and nations” (Kotler, 1993). This translation of place branding seems reductive in the light of the complexity of this field of application of marketing that place constitutes.

¹ Translation proposed by the authors “Place branding refers to the development of brands for geographical locations, such as regions, cities or communities, usually with the aim of triggering positive associations and distinguishing the place from others.”

The etymological origin of the concept of “terre” (French for land - *Terra* from which we get *territorium*), confers a physical reality to what we call “territory”. Beyond this basic meaning, territory is defined by three complementary dimensions (Laganier, Villalba and Zuindeau, 2002): physical (natural properties, urban networks), organizational (social and institutional players), and identity (name, heritage, history, collective representations). Thus, the notion of territory is polysemous and multidimensional.

It also appears that territory is an object in perpetual motion, shaped by its users and beneficiaries. “Territory is a human work. It is an appropriate space [...]: proper to one’s self and proper to something” said Brunet (1991). For Di Méo (1996) Territory is “an economic, ideological and political (therefore social) appropriation of space by groups who give themselves a particular representation of themselves, of their history.”

In a dynamic and historic take on the concept of territory, Pourtier (2005) connects human groups with space to develop the evolution that accompanies the taking into account of territory. This concept seems quite relevant in light of community territories which are created beyond the physical and natural territories traditionally considered. The territory interacts with a multitude of partners, with neighbouring or distant territories, in order to enrich and be part of an eco-system that it deems beneficial to its own development. Thus, Zardet and Noguera (2013) consider that “in management, the notion of territory is a perimeter of life, production or consumption, representing a certain geographical, social, economic and cultural cohesion. It is a space experienced by individual and collective, public, private and associative stakeholders characterised by multiple statuses and with a wide range of issues and different rationales. These local stakeholders [...] intend to develop multi-partner cooperation and to create synergies aimed at implementing projects that will develop the territory”.

In the dominant paradigm in France, territory is seen as a common good co-created by different players and users of the place. Territory is therefore defined as a complex system (Moine, 2006), involving a sub-system of mental representations, a sub-system of stakeholders and a spatial sub-system. Territory is therefore both the object and the subject of development.

A blend of the English concept of marketing-branding and a French paradigm of territory, place branding can be represented by a pendulum going from left to right, sometimes positioned on the branding/marketing side, sometimes towards the opposite “territory” side. Thus, in the priorities that are given, focussed more on highlighting a place’s assets, or on the understanding of what territory is precisely, the point of equilibrium is rarely achieved given that it is dependent on those that run this initiative undertaken.

1.3. Place branding: beyond a method, an accelerated transformation process

Territory, wherever it is in the world, does not stop evolving. It experiences natural and physical transformations such as changes provoked by public powers. This shift is produced with or without place branding. Then why take an interest in this practice if the point of it cannot be demonstrated? Why advocate its usefulness while certain territories, however developed, would not be concerned by it?

Even if there were any counter-examples such as the case of Montpellier (Rozembourg 2000) and Rennes (Houllier-Guibert, 2008), place-branding initiatives emerge in a context of vulnerability felt by the stakeholders. Thus, the sub-systems of territory, stakeholders, spaces and mental representations are affected by a degradation that justifies the implementation of corrective action, built on policy. The examples of industrial redevelopment that lead to defining a policy of place branding are numerous: Detroit, in the United States, or Lens and Saint-Etienne in France are emblematic.

Place branding could therefore be defined as an iterative and steered process of accelerated transformation of the territory aiming to increase the appeal and hospitality of the place with a view to pursuing harmonious territorial development in the eyes of all stakeholders. To achieve implementation, the cycle below describes the approach to be followed.

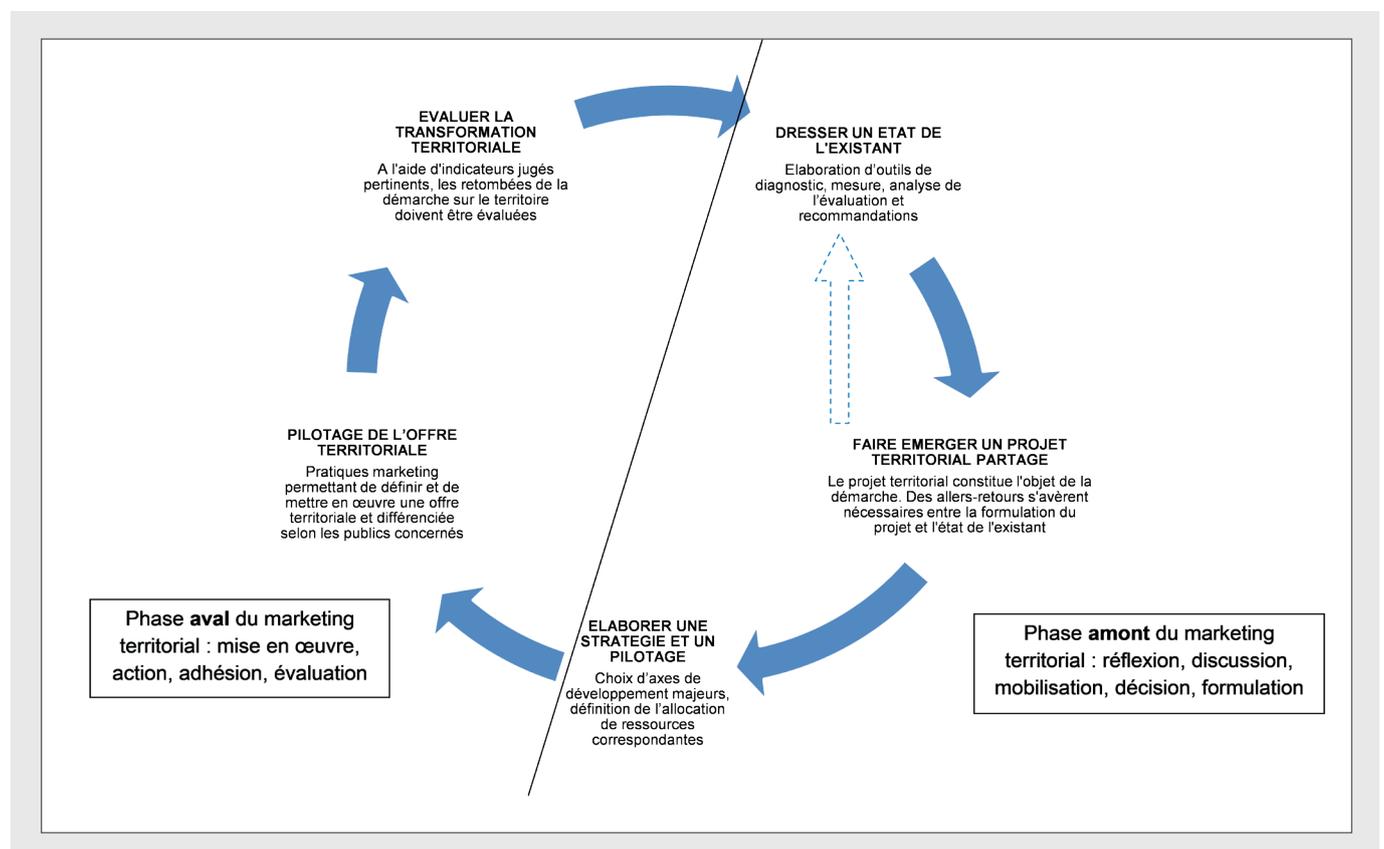
Place branding incorporates several characteristics that make it a transformation process, on the one hand, and complex on the other. This process has several specific features linked to the diversity of stakeholders involved, to the non-mercantile nature of certain exchanges, to

the complexity of that which forms a territory or even to the necessary but delicate involvement of the population in the initiative undertaken. Consequently, the place-branding initiative requires that you take into account these elements in order to structure it. Several authors have been keen to draw up a methodology for place-branding initiatives. Thus, Houllier-Guibert (2012) offers a 3-stage progression: the analytical phase, then the strategic phase and finally the operational phase. Rochette (2012) and Pecqueur (2005) focus on the notion of resources in order to analyse the trajectory of the territories studied from the angle of varying volumes of these resources, their nature and how they are organised. In order to complete these initiatives, we propose a two-phase, five-stage progression.

The first phase, referred to as upstream, is composed of all the stages that precede, strictly speaking, implementation of the place branding. In our context, it is particularly long and often fastidious but it plays an essential role in the overall process because all fundamental decisions, often irreversible, will be made during this phase.

More precisely, three stages follow on from each other: taking stock of what already exists, developing a shared project and elaborating a territorial strategy with steering in place.

The territory existed well before the marketing initiative is undertaken. It is therefore necessary to establish a diagnostic, to list everything that forms the territory experienced. From this status report, and thanks to the analysis to which it is subject, a shared project will arise. Indeed, the elements collected must be shared with the territory's public to be validated, contradicted, pondered or excluded. During this stage, frequent back-and-forths take place and a virtuous cycle of status reports and shared plans takes shape until you reach a stable position and a consensus emerges. At this stage, the shared project brings together all the facets of the territory and involves abstract or general elements. This is why drawing up a territorial strategy results in turning the shared project into a decision, determining the type of steering as well as the priorities and resource allocation in the most relevant way possible taking into account the project's constraints.



Schema 1 - The approach to place branding: an iterative and steered process

Source: Chamard and ali., 2014

At this stage one formerly describes the direction of the territorial strategy to be put in place in the downstream phase. This downstream phase is therefore a time for reflection, discussion, mobilisation, decision-making and formulation.

The second phase, referred to as downstream, leads to steering the implementation of the place branding project. It consists in stating the territorial offer and evaluating the resulting territorial transformation. The territorial offer includes everything that the territory and its stakeholders are offering to the receiving public in terms of goods and services. The vocation of the initiative undertaken being to increase the appeal and hospitality of the territory, it is necessary to regularly evaluate such a project. Implementation, action, adherence and evaluation appear to be the key words in this downstream phase.

Territory is therefore never a fixed space, the object of a passing marketing campaign, but a dynamic social system which, as a subject, conditions any attempt at place branding. Furthermore, the success of an initiative is not found in the marketing campaign carried out but in the nature and amplitude of the territorial transformation brought about. The proof of this transformation cannot always be observed directly, and requires that several evaluation metrics be put in place on several levels. This is what we propose to develop by mobilising activity theory, similar at certain points to Moine's (2006) systemic approach while integrating the transformation process as an analysis tool.

2. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK for analysing territorial transformation: activity theory

As we have indicated previously, place branding works are characterised by a succession of case studies and by considerable heterogeneity among these. Consequently, it seems appropriate to use to mobilise activity theory (Vugoski, 1985 ; Engeström, 1987) in order to take in to account the context and the collective interaction omnipresent in the implementation and analysis of place-branding initiatives.

2.1. The pertinence of activity theory for analysing complex systems

Activity theory takes a particular interest in complex cooperation systems. Territory, as described by Moine (2006) corresponds precisely to this concept. In this work, Moine argues for the need to analyse "territories of life" in order to understand the complexity of their historical construction around the social, political and psychological dimensions. He affirms that territory is first and foremost a process of appropriation, conditioned by the nature of a geographical space, by a system of representation of this space and by a system of stakeholders who act within this space.

Activity theory has been defined as being a "...multi-disciplinary framework for studying how individuals intentionally transform society..." (Roth et al 2012). The objective sought is to define the activity of collective transformation under the impetus of different territory stakeholders. The works of Vygotsky (1978) popularised by Engeström (2007), offer a multi-disciplinary perspective for analysing diverse human practices as a development process in which individuals and society are interdependent. Also called cultural-historical activity theory, this conceptual framework suggests that transformation relies on three major principles: individuals act collectively through practices, and communicate socially through their actions; individuals invent, utilise and assimilate different technologies to learn and communicate; community is central both to the process of transformation and the connotation of meaning.

When analysing territorial transformation, two essential aspects need to be considered. Firstly, the analytical framework takes into account the fact that public policies, particularly economic, rely on existing technologies. The term "technology" here in the broad sense means using all tools (artefacts) that facilitate the appropriation, organisation and transformation of the social space. These tools gradually influence the interactions between stakeholders and their territory, they are modified over time with the accumulation of experience. These interactions are by nature multi-dimensional as they gradually modify the territory and perceptions of the territory.

Furthermore, the economic and social development of the territory cannot be considered as an objective observation, but rather as the result of a given research

methodology (Engström *and al.* 1999). It is the same for territorial development, which is subjective both in its perceived reality and the way it is gauged. Far from being the promotion of a situation analysis or a photograph of a given space, a territorial initiative is above all “a moment in which territory stakeholders are given the means to act”. A place-branding campaign is therefore a “trial-run” for multiple system stakeholders. (Lardon and Pivoteau, 2005). An evaluation of this announced transformation, accelerated by the place branding initiative, is justifiably expected.

Although activity theory is promising for analysing the territorial transformation process, no operational tools have resulted from it. Consequently, the territorial decision-maker, although convinced by the contribution of this new conceptual framework, may feel powerless faced with the scale of the task, that of evaluating the impact of place branding in its proper context. This is why we propose to create an analysis grid founded on the contributions of the existing literature discussed above, and on the foundations provided by activity theory. Our objective is to develop an evaluation tool able to take into account the territorial transformation experienced when implementing a place-branding initiative.

2.2. Evaluation challenges in place branding

Constructing an analysis and evaluation grid for a place-branding initiative is both a major challenge for the practitioner but also an empirical challenge for taking into account the complexity of the object studied, the territory. Several authors have discussed the precautions to take when it comes to evaluating a territorial project.

To begin with, as highlighted by Burghard (2012), the success of any place-branding project presupposed a strategic plan in which the scale, finality and means of the project are clearly identified.

Furthermore, the operational goals of place branding must be elaborated according to the political, economic and historic context of each community. The project’s vision, expectations and mission in the eyes

of the project owner deserve to be clearly defined and communicated. Finally, each project objective can be qualified as specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound². Pride’s (2008) work on the key performance indicators for Visit Wales are a rare example of a project in which the evaluation criteria were established when the initiative was drawn up.

A third observation appeared in the difficulty experienced in determining the nature of project evaluation in place branding. The objective of territorial transformation must be explicit and measurable. The place-branding initiative can be designed to influence user opinions, to confer pride in belonging, or to encourage investment in infrastructure. Evidence of success can be captured on an individual or community level, or from the opinions of targets outside the project. The success or failure of the project can be measured in terms of effectiveness (cost-benefit analysis), efficiency (quality of the relationships between the community and its users) and innovation (putting into place new user scenarios). Groves and Go (2009) insist on the necessity of distinguishing between the production, results and impact of place-branding projects.

The external political and administrative factors for the project must also be taken into account. The division of the territory into communes, communities, departments or other geographical areas only rarely corresponds to socio-economic regions targeted by the marketing initiative. Political visions, agendas and events impact on the perceived value and influence of each campaign. Faced with the competitive and often conflicting nature of electoral mandates, the question of intellectual property when it comes to brand may amplify or compromise its relevance and longevity. In support of a study into the content of the promotion of the region of Romagna, Lucarelli and Giovanardi (2014) thereby demonstrate how different political players influence the process of establishing a brand through their adoption, the contestation and the negotiation of each project. Indeed, behind the projects to create place brands is an underlying issue of the legitimacy of the multiple players involved.

The budgetary timeframe also affects the chances of a place-branding initiative succeeding. Although the impact of a project is measured by the change in attitudes

² In an educational approach, the authors use the acronym SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

and behaviours of the different project stakeholders, the budgetary deadlines of the public service are often in conflict with the time required to see these changes. Boisen (2015) notes that a large number of factors affecting the overall perception of a community are often not manageable by the communities themselves. Belloso (2011) adds that the time needed to conduct a change-management policy is unfortunately not compatible with the public funding process.

For all these reasons, the impact of place branding on the economic and social development of a community remains difficult to measure. The causality between the resources implemented by the project and the economic and societal outcomes is conditioned by the context, administration and political vision of the community over time. The link between consumers' subjective perspective of the brand and objective performance indicators are difficult to establish. Comparisons of projects over time and between communities require the development of new conceptual frameworks and metrics external to the projects.

To face these various challenges, basing ourselves on activity theory, we propose constructing a tool to evaluate and analyse territorial transformation.

3. RESULTS:

construction of the Cube d'Evaluation et d'Analyse de la Transformation Territoriale (CEATT, territorial transformation evaluation and analysis cube)

Despite the quantity of contributions over recent years dealing with place branding, there are few analyses of the role that these projects have played in transforming public communities and their socio-economic environment. This omission is even more remarkable when we consider that these approaches are often undertaken with an explicit objective: to support and accelerate the transformation of the target community. Firstly, we present a new tool for evaluating territorial transformation before we identify its uses with the help of an example: the Principality of Laàs.

3.1. Evaluation dimensions in place branding

There are two key questions to ask when it comes to evaluating place branding: on which dimensions must one base territorial transformation? And what indicators are relevant to measuring the amplitude of this transformation?

There are four dimensions in territorial transformation: the territory itself, infrastructure, representations in respect of the territory and the practices observed within the territory.

The first aspect of transformation assessed is the territory itself, considered as common property co-built by different stakeholders and users of the location. The territory, considered as the object of the transformation, brings together its natural features and physical contours.

Infrastructure includes platforms which create close relationships between service providers and consumers. The notion of infrastructure developed on a territory to transform it refers to both the physical structures such as roads, schools or factories, as well as facilities providing for dematerialised uses, such as the development of optical fibre, for example. Place branding can facilitate the creation of new infrastructure: roads, health, education, IT etc. which brings consumers and producers of territorial resources even closer together. That is why a good number of place-branding initiatives include the creation of a community of ambassadors, the main purpose of which is to make known what territorial resources are available: local products, available infrastructure, accessible expertise, land available for investment etc.

The notion of representations covers the different forms of community engagement on the territory. To a certain extent, users share common perceptions in relation to how the territory is represented. This state of mind affects their involvement in the decision-making process and their actions promote or hinder certain forms of political action. On this third dimension, place branding can transform the individual and collective perceptions of the role that citizens play in local politics, the economy and society. Thus, one of the positive impacts observed in place branding initiatives remains the increase in the sense of adoption of a place or even the

emergence of genuine pride in belonging. After having highlighted the strengths of the place, a place-branding initiative can change mental representations related to the territory and encourage people to become strong ambassadors.

Finally, practices refer to the activities that characterise social and economic production in a given territory. They represent the areas in which the territory is perceived as unique or specific, with distinctive strengths. These territorial practices determine standards and local practices, the source of added value and a measure of how much it contributes to the community. The impact of place branding is recognised here by the degree of innovation in local means of production or in the reshaping of its productive strengths. The case of the Louvre Lens³ offers a good illustration of the ability of a territorial project to bring regeneration beyond its scope of immediate action. Adopting the creation of a museum as a starting point, numerous additional activities were then developed around gastronomy, design or carnivals.

The four dimensions of territorial transformation having been discussed, literature puts forward four approaches to assessing territorial marketing: key performance indicators, competitive Intelligence (benchmarking), the opinion with respect to the territory and real-time monitoring.

It is possible to assess the impact of a territorial marketing initiative, with or without the creation of a territorial brand, thanks to the development of key performance indicators. A key performance indicator is a measurable value which shows at which point a campaign reaches its objectives. The crucial question relates to the relevance of the indicators that you choose in order to build a tool suited to very diverse situations, both owing to their context as well as to the stakeholders involved, and to take into account the territorial transformation adopted.

In his work for Visit Wales, Pride (2008) proposed measuring the key factors of success: recognition of the region and of the initiative, the emotional closeness of the target population, its commitment to visiting the place, its response to the marketing approach,

marketing efficiency and marketing value. Although it is true that these metrics demonstrate correlations rather than the causal links between the place branding and the attractiveness of the region, the key performance indicators nevertheless constitute a basis for assessing its impact. Dauphine (2017) stresses that the project leads should systematically define their objectives, implement the necessary resources, and then assess whether these objectives have been achieved. According to the Brand Place Observer, the most well-known references include identification of the brand, its recognition by the target audience, and its attractiveness to the users and the international public.

Competitive Intelligence (benchmarking) constitutes a second means of evaluation. Intelligence techniques involve observing and analysing the marketing practices used and the performance achieved by other communities. Rather than relying solely on a project's internal metrics, competitive intelligence allow you to take into account both the best practices of other communities but also the macro-economic influences of national or even international events. In the case of place branding, benchmarking involves assessing the impact of the initiatives on societal or economic objectives. Today, place-branding professionals have sufficient insight into certain experiments conducted in France and abroad to take advantage of competitive intelligence. For example, each year the Place Marketing Forum presents numerous cases of place branding, constituting an observatory of the most advanced practices currently in place across the globe.

The analysis of opinion vis-a-vis the territory provides a third approach to evaluation. The analysis of sentiment refers to the process of identifying and categorising opinions in order to detect and analyse how different stakeholders respond to a territory. Thus, interviews, surveys and social media studies can be used to better understand how the target audience understands, appreciates and evaluates the results of a place branding initiative over time. Grand and Nehru (2014) use this approach in their analysis of people's perceptions of the city of Bologna brand through the Web. In their contribution conclusion, they suggest that sentiment analysis demonstrates the diversity of perceptions of a place branding campaign, and the need to integrate a

³ The aim of the project Auteur du Louvre Lens (ALL, Around the Louvre Lens) is to offer territories surrounding the museum a real strategy for developing tourism over 10-15 years. The objective is to make these territories a new national and international tourist destination.

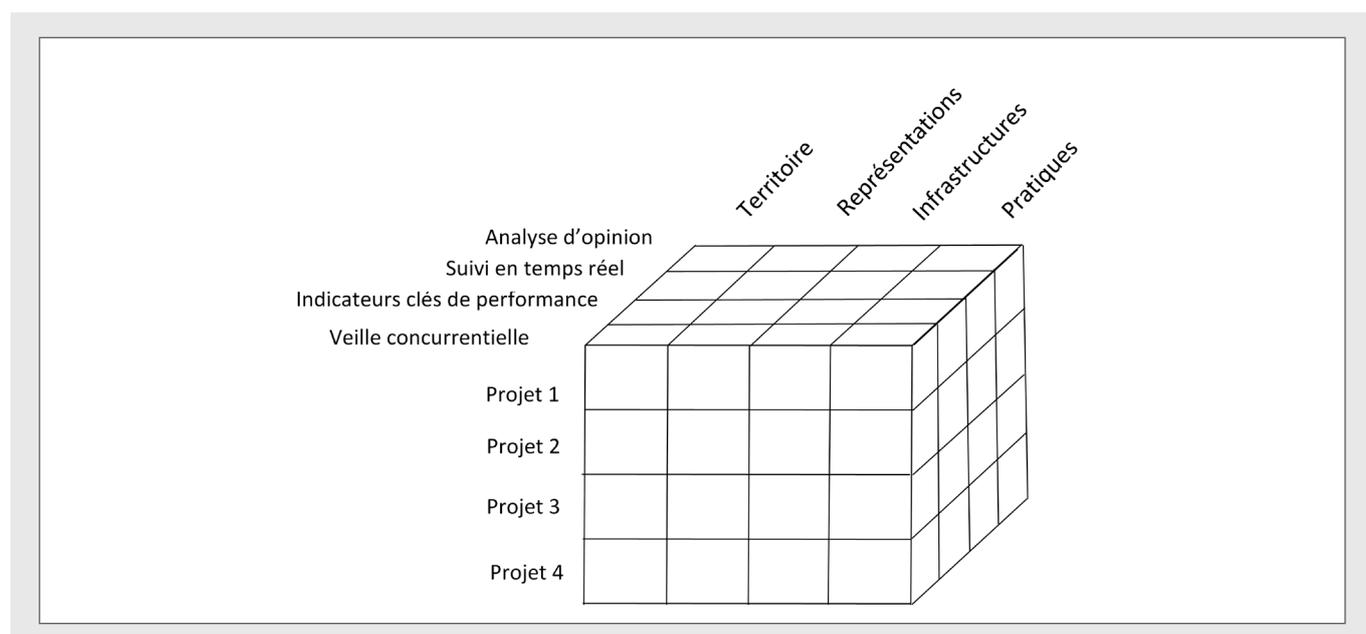
range of approaches both during implementation and evaluation.

Finally, real-time monitoring (tracking) offers a complementary approach to evaluation in order to detect the behaviour of users (Levin, 2011). This tracking involves the use of data sets that are aggregated and analysed throughout the project. The widespread availability of data analysis techniques provides communities with an abundance of quantitative and qualitative data on the motivations, objectives and actions of their target audiences. Implementation of multi-channel strategies using a combination of websites, mobile applications and social media offers the possibility of structuring and influencing the perceptions of users of the territory. Gerken and Martin (2011) suggest that the monitoring of key data can help place branding specialists understand the context and complexity of concepts such as customer capital and consumer satisfaction. It is the same for the place capital, as defined by Chandon et al (2013). Even if real-time data is necessarily imperfect, the results can be adjusted and corrected when more reliable data become available.

We can thereby summarise these four dimensions of territorial transformation and these four approaches to evaluation in the form of a matrix. When a marketing campaign is launched, it is therefore necessary evaluate each project, and then analyse each project in relation

to the four levels of evaluation: territory, representations, infrastructure and practices. Then, each of these four objects will be evaluated according to one of the four approaches listed above: competitive intelligence, key performance indicators, tracking, and opinion analysis.

This matrix provides an evaluation grid that allows any stakeholder involved in a place-branding initiative to analyse a territory’s observable transformation. This cube offers a complete evaluation of territorial transformation, each constituent brick corresponding to a dimension of the territory evaluated according to one of the terms presented. Indeed, in this configuration, we find that all projects give rise to an evaluation for the four dimensions of territory and according to all of the evaluation terms. Although this situation seems ideal, it should be clarified that only in exceptional cases does it reflect the reality experienced by place branding professionals. The CEATT is developed gradually over the course of a marketing campaign, as and when the projects emerge and they are carried out to completion. The bricks will therefore be assembled throughout the initiative in order to achieve the most complete cube possible. We show you how to use this tool in the following part.



Schema 2 – The Cube devaluation et analytics de la Transformation Territorial (CEATT, Territorial Transformation Evaluation and Analysis Cube)

3.2. Using the CEATT

The CEATT is developed in three stages. Firstly, the projects that form a place-branding initiative are listed in order to be evaluated within the framework of measuring territorial transformation. Then, the dimensions of the territory likely to be modified by the project are identified. Finally, the evaluation methods are chosen in the light of their relevance vis-a-vis the nature of the project undertaken. This process is intended as a longitudinal follow-up. The Cube's configuration will therefore evolve over time because projects will be aggregated (or will be stopped), the dimensions of the territory will change or evaluation indicators will be added. *In fine*, the CEATT synthesizes all the territorial-transformation evaluations to facilitate analysis of this change.

Based on four points of analysis of territorial transformation and the four evaluation approaches, we can apply this analysis grid to any type of territory.

Below we present an example of how to use this tool based on a particularly original and ambitious case of place branding: the creation of a principality within of a commune in Southwest France.

In 2011, the village of Laàs, with 130 inhabitants, chose to become a principality⁴. The central objective is to revive and boost the region, with the desire to limit the rural exodus of small villages with ageing populations, to encourage the creation of jobs through new projects, to become a tourist destination in its own right by increasing its ability to welcome and accommodate visitors and to increase places of interest, to strengthen local identity based on its resources: architecture, nature, terroir, quality craftsmanship and local produce, and to bring together all territory stakeholders by becoming a supportive structure. It is a long-term project. To do this, creating a principality is a territorial-transformation experiment that allows us to test the CEATT.

From 2014, the newly-created association with a board of directors has played the role of steering committee for the place-branding initiative. We have accompanied this initiative since the start, which is why we're able to offer a summary of this project's progress, particularly in terms of evaluating the territorial transformation.

Table 1 pulls together the dimensions of territory used to evaluate the territorial transformation of Laàs as well as examples of relevant indicators to measure this change. Table 2 contains certain data already recorded within the framework of the Principality of Laàs' initiative. Some boxes in the table are still empty because the project is still ongoing and the evaluation will continue throughout the year 2018.

Like numerous place-branding initiatives, the Principality of Laàs collates the different projects presented in the first column entitled "projects evaluated". Firstly, this is about establishing a list according to the dimension of the territory that they will affect. For example, Laàs has been changed by two initiatives: the creation of a principality voted by the town council and the establishment of customs cabins positioned at the entrances to the village. The infrastructure dimension is also evaluated on the basis of two projects: the choice to entrust management of the château and its 12-hectare park to a public-service delegate and the addition of 35 stars in the village's main street, the Laàs Vegas Boulevard, featuring well-known singers that participated in the principality's annual singing festival. Territory representations are conveyed by two means: a network of ambassadors present in 15 countries around the world, holding principality passports. These two vectors, ambassadors and passports, present the values and strengths of the territory in their area of influence. Finally, as regards the practices, an investor's purchase of a beret factory in the village and the organisation of the "Les transhumances musicales" music festival in Laàs are two projects that will form a basis for evaluating the territorial transformation.

Once the projects are identified, the four evaluation dimensions can be scrutinised in order to determine the most relevant way to take account of the territorial transformation experienced. For example, we follow the number of events organised within the château, the number of visitors and the growth in income longitudinally, and we collect the opinions of visitors using a guestbook made available at the château exit and on a mobile app. All this information is reported in a single matrix in order to gradually form the CEATT.

⁴ The legal form first chosen for the principality was a non-profit association (under the law of 1901), the statutes of which were published in the official journal in 2014. It enables them to federate stakeholders working together for to revitalise the territory.

Evaluation dimensions Evaluation objects	Projects evaluated	Competitive intelligence	Key performance indicators	Real-time tracking	Opinion analysis
Territory	Creation of the Principality	Monitoring of similar initiatives	Mentions in the press	Demographic data	Constituent survey
	Setting up of customs	Tourist trends	Number of visitors	Popularity/rejection among the population	Visitor surveys
Representations	Ambassador nominations	Comparison with similar initiatives	Number of ambassadors	Social media mentions	Interviews with the ambassadors
	Creation of passports	Comparison with similar initiatives	Number of passports purchased	Follow-up on the number of requests	Survey of passport holders
Infrastructure	Château placed under governance	Number of visitors	Number of events	Château income	Guestbook
	The 35 stars of the Laàs Vegas Boulevard	Monitoring of similar initiatives	Mentions in the press	Number of participants	Guestbook
Practices	Beret manufacturing	Market share	Economic activity	Activity recognition	Interview with entrepreneurs
		Monitoring of similar initiatives	Number of tickets purchased	Social media mentions	Analysis of regional press

Table 1 – The CEATT applied to the case of the Principality of Laàs

For a better readability, our results are presented in the form of tables. These will be transformed into three-dimensional figures in the shape of a cube.

Thus, concerning the transformation of the village of Laàs into a principality within the context of a place-branding initiative, each dimension is evaluated at regular intervals in order to monitor both the evolution of the project and the scope of the territorial transformation. Each project, each “activity”, to summarise the basic unit of Vygotski’s theory (1985), is integrated into a collective work, often referred to as

a territory project territorial marketers. According to the magnitude of the place-branding initiative conducted, it will sometimes be impossible to have all the evaluation elements at first. It will therefore be appropriate to gradually bring together all of these dimensions in order to develop a comprehensive evaluation, allowing for a more relevant analysis of the territorial transformation studied.

Evaluation dimensions	Projects evaluated	Competitive intelligence	Key performance indicators	Real-time tracking	Opinion analysis
Territory	Creation of the Principality	Monitoring of similar initiatives: Andorra, Monaco, Doubs, Australia	Mentions in the press: Le Petit Journal by Canal +; L'Express of 12/09/2014; Ouest-France of 24/06/2016; BFMTV...	E-mail requests for information relating to property on the territory	Constituent survey
	Setting up of customs		The number of participants in visits to the Principality including going through customs: 1580 visitors (in 2017)		
Representations	Ambassador nominations		Number of ambassadors: 22 in 15 countries of the world		Interviews with the ambassadors
	Creation of passports		Number of citizens: 95 of the 120 inhabitants of the commune of Laàs + 50 outside of the commune of Laàs		Passports offered to the residents of Laàs
Infrastructure	Château placed under governance	The expertise of the delegate, a manager of other fun châteaux in France	Number of visitors: 2016: 10 500 2017: 15 600	Château income: 2017: €50K 2018 target: €100K	Guestbook
	The 35 stars of the Laàs Vegas Boulevard				
Practices	Beret manufacturing	Monitoring of other market players offering French or foreign manufacturing.	Economic activity: hiring of three people since 2014	Recognition of the activity: constant increase in the activity	
	"Les transhumances musicales" musical festival	Monitoring of similar initiatives	Number of tickets purchased: 2017: 15,000 tickets purchased	Social Media mentions: increase in awareness of the festival,	Interviews with the festival participants.

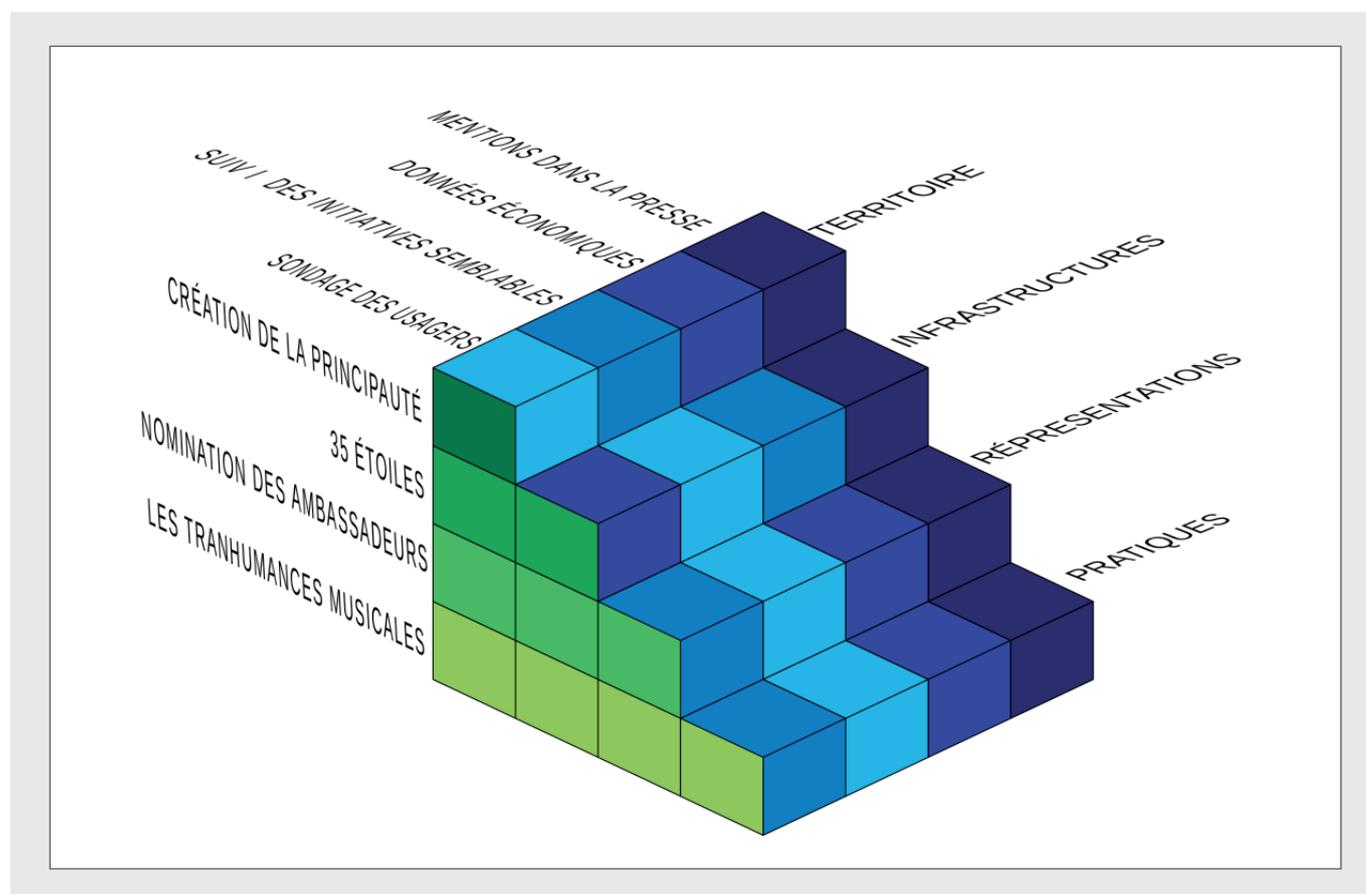
Table 2 – Evaluation of territorial transformation of the Principality of Laàs

For a better readability, our results are presented in the form of tables.

These can be transformed into three-dimensional figures in the shape of a cube, consistent with the CEATT.

The last stage--more analytical than descriptive--characterises the territorial transformation recorded. Depending on the degree of completeness of the information obtained, it is possible to determine what dimensions of the territory are most impacted by the projects included in the place-branding initiative. In the light of the original objectives, the CEATT helps to identify possible gaps in the transformation measured during or at the end of the project. At this stage of the Principality of Laàs project, barely three years after its launch, the “territory” dimension was the first affected chronologically. The significant media coverage has largely contributed to transforming the territory experienced, but also people’s perception of it. Today, the dimensions “infrastructure” and “practices” are the most emblematic of territorial transformation since the results, and in particular the key performance indicators reveal a revitalization of activity within the scope of the Principality. The dimension “representations” has not yet registered any real change as a result of the projects launched, but is a long-term initiative which will not bear fruit until later.

These kinds of matrices therefore provide a threefold contribution. First of all, this tool lets one clarify the specific features of a territory and its context. The integration of all of these elements provides a comprehensive and in-depth view of the particular territory under observations. The CEATT also allows the stakeholder to follow developments longitudinally. Indeed, place-branding initiatives being generally heavy to implement, only medium and long-term evaluations that facilitate the understanding of territorial transformation. Finally, the comparative use of this matrix between several territorial communities reveals the main areas of competition or of complementarity between territories.



Schema 3 – The CEATT applied to the case of the Principality of Laàs

The evaluation preferences of each project lead are shown according to the intensity of the colour blue.

CONCLUSION

Place-branding initiatives are now ubiquitous within territorial communities. They have been accompanied by a rise in power of the steering, analysis and evaluation functions. We have developed the CEATT, a tool to help these operations so that policy makers can understand, in the most comprehensive manner possible, the territorial transformations brought about by the implementation of place-branding initiative. The matrix presented helps one adopt a holistic view, which is necessary to identifying the dynamics of the complex system that constitutes a territory. The CEATT allows the observer to elucidate the territory as a (dynamic) subject which conditions place branding projects. It helps to provide a better appreciation of the representativeness of the brand, its objectives, appropriate metrics, policy issues and budget. Finally, it allows for a comparative analysis of the impact of projects in a target region, or through a set of territories.

The potential applications of CEATT are numerous for two main reasons. Based on activity theory, this tool would firstly make it possible to obtain convincing results when faced with various fields of application. Secondly, professionals engaged in ambitious initiatives need to be able to rely on analysis and evaluation tools suited to this specific area of expertise which is place branding. Could the number and variety of uses of the CEATT help to increase the effectiveness of the place-branding initiatives conducted?

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