EDITORIAL

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Managing the image of territories with territorial marketing: the emergence of a French-speaking place branding?

The theme of the first thematic issue of the GMP review is "Managing the image of territories with territorial marketing: the emergence of a French-speaking place branding?". It proposes articles whose angle of study is the public management, with a new expression: "approach of place marketing" (demarche de marketing territorial) and not simply "place marketing". The term "démarche" legitimizes an expression that has long aroused the mistrust of territorial actors. With the idea of "approach", a collective process exists, becoming a strategic objective. Place marketing is now used more to mobilize the actors than to differentiate the territory, which the content of the texts of this issue confirms. Thus, the strategic dimension of place marketing, for a long time confined to an operational dimension, is gaining momentum that asserts its place in the field of management of public affairs.

Our editorial highlights four points that describe the content of this issue.

First, a semantic point. In a footnote to his article, R. Vuignier highlighted that C. Rochette uses the expression "Marque Territoire" but he decides to use the expression "marque territoriale" considered more frequent. It is important to clarify the difference between the two terms, which will make it easier to read this issue about expressions that are not yet stabilized.

Indeed, we observe a difficulty to formulate this new object which takes several expressions, that of "marque territoriale" seeming to prevail.

But we prefer the expression "marque Territoire", in that it uses the same syntax as the famous "marque Produit". "marque territoriale", for its part, must be accepted as a wider meaning that includes any spatial dimension within the mark. Thus, *Produit en Bretagne*, *A l'aise Breizh,* the *savon de Marseille*, or the perfum *Paris* of Saint-Laurent are "marques territoriales" but which are removed from the public management. Of a smaller number, the "marques Territoire" are restricted to public branding by the actors of a territory, of the space in which they live; they are most often worn by public actors. However, all the texts of this issue, whether with the example of a rural French region (Zumbo-Lebrument), a Swiss canton (Vuignier), rural intercommunities (Brown) or a village which is positioned as a principality (Chamard and Schlenker), are confined to the branding of local communities. It is therefore better to treat "marque Territoire", but the authors did not do.

Secondly, the color of the case studies is interesting in that it moves away from the usual urban case studies. Rural spaces are in the spotlight and no city-branding is treated here, the "marques Territoire"

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being currently in a phase of diffusion towards other territories than the metropolises. The examples in J. Brun's rural literature review are based on the terroir, specifically wine for the two cases studied. If the *très-Beaujolais Club* of Shanghai can allow to install this drink in the vast Chinese market, the brand takes then a other dimension and would exceed the stakes of public management. The second example of the text by J. brun shows that the intercommunal level is not the right one. The scale of "Pays de la Loi Voynet" is not mentioned here but it is probably the relevant mesh for this type of place branding that federates and organizes rural local development governance. R. Vuignier shows, as others have done, that the *territorial optimum* is not relevant, as the local configurations of actors diverge. Rather, it deals with the question of the effect that is subtly handled to bring out more interesting and complex issues in public management.

Third, the question of the generalizable tool is addressed, which place marketing needs. Place branding approaches are difficult to implement, and according to C. Chamard and L. Schlenker, a mid-term and long-term evaluation can really capture territorial transformation. The matrix they invent leads to identifying the main areas of competition or complementarity between territories, but it is difficult to benchmark. In terms of tools, if all the texts are concerned with the inhabitant of the territory, it is precisely the angle of study of C. Zumbo-Lebrument. It proposes a stakeholder involvement scale that can serve many other fields of study. These two articles focus on the tools of evaluation of the place branding and allow not to be limited to ways of manufacturing but also to tend towards the question of the performance. For example, C. Chamard and L. Schlenker developed indicators to demonstrate how promotional actions are achieving their goals. The authors identify four dimensions on which the transformation is possible via place marketing: the Place, the Platform, the People and the practices, without daring to make the direct comparison with the 4P corporate marketing.

Finally, the call for papers raised the question of the emergence of a French-speaking branding place. This is the expression «place marketing approach» which gives an answer but in a limited way since only the object of the "marque Territoire" was addressed. Indeed, the articles in this issue are based on the current phenomenon of place branding while the call for text proposed a broader approach to place marketing. Perhaps urban development, mega events, various labels,

territorialized service offers, find it more difficult to find an echo in public management, where the brand would be a more legitimate object in management science? To try to answer the initial question, we observe the power of place marketing to reinforced territorial desirability through the diffusion of controlled images. This desirability already existed before and was supported by territorial communication, urban regeneration projects and major events. This desirability becomes the base of mobilization of local actors and territorial identity acting as a lever of action. These moments previously related to external factors (obtaining a major event, a global or national label), or generated according to rare urban cycles which allow urban redevelopment; become, with the brand, attempts at human involvement that are more easily controlled locally. The "marque Territoire" relies only on the local will. Therefore, the place branding becomes usable when a general mobilization is put in place. Then, the public management, through a territorial governance, tries to control the multiple symbolic productions but make no mistake, the images of the territories are essentially elusive. This is another subject.