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L'EFFICACITÉ DE LA MARQUE TERRITOIRE

PERCEPTIONS D'UNE MARQUE RÉGION PAR LES HABITANTS, LES MANAGERS ET LES TOURISTES

PLACE BRAND EFFICIENCY

RESIDENT, MANAGER AND TOURIST PERCEPTIONS OF THE REGION BRAND

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ABSTRACT

In the globalized world, Nowhere, Place, is directly competing against Powerful, World, to attract residents, tourists and talent, as well as firms and investments, whether the place is a meta-region, a country, a region, a city or other locations. Whilst places and destinations around the world have been proclaiming their qualities for a long time (e.g. 'What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas'), mainly to create awareness or maintain preference, those marketing communications campaigns are short-term and don't contribute to unifying the place offerings (e.g. the campaigns don't take into account that Vegas is a city located in Nevada, and that Nevada is a state in the United States). To compete in such cutthroat environments, public authorities and place agencies have started to recognize the value of adopting branding techniques by way of practising place branding. Place branding adapts several tools developed in the field of commercial branding to contribute to place development and establish image-building strategies that render places more attractive to identified markets. However, a place is a 'particular product' that is multi-faceted, within which converges a multitude of diverse stakeholders with competing visions and expectations. The success of a place brand therefore depends on stakeholder management. As such, this doctoral work endeavours to adapt mainstream marketing concepts to the context of place branding, taking into account the views of three groups of stakeholders to enhance place brand efficiency. I address these research questions in a French region-branding context, according to three sub-questions that summarize the chapters of this thesis. First, what is the advertising legitimacy of a place brand as perceived by the residents? Does it influence place-branding efficiency? The results confirm that advertising legitimacy mediates the relationship between exposure to an advertisement and its efficiency. The place brand is more legitimate when advertisements target firms, residents or tourists than when they promote local products through co-branding. My co-author and I highlight a new expression of democratic legitimacy: a process adapted to hybrid (public–private) organizations. Second, to what extent do place brand managers use community marketing strategies to operationalize the integrated marketing communications (IMC) role of the place brand? A developed typology of French 'integrated' region brands distinguishes between 'communal region brands' and 'IMC-orientated region brands'. Then, results show two categories of 'communal region brands': to the pretext of IMC, one region brand community rests on terminal values whilst the other is based on instrumental values. Third, to what extent does the region brand image constitute a relevant vehicle for promoting a destination integral to the nation brand image, as perceived by international tourists? Results show that the representational and functional dimensions of a destination brand impact differently implicit attractiveness and intentions to visit. International tourists also perceive the region and the nation brand images as congruent overall, which contributes positively to their intentions to visit the region. From a theoretical point of view, this research highlights the importance of adopting a multi-stakeholder approach to understanding place branding. Doing so contributes to the development of empirical evidence in the domain, by studying the understudied region branding form. This dissertation also highlights similarities with commercial branding and reinforces the external validity of three classic marketing concepts. The methodological implications of this work come from the different methodological approaches (i.e. measurement tools and methods), developed to meet the specificities and

stakes associated with the main stakeholders of a place brand. In addition, this approach reinforces the internal validity of the present research and contributes to ruling out the existence of a declarative bias. The managerial contributions of this thesis are connected with the methodological implications, inasmuch as it provides place brand managers with diverse analysis grids that will enable them to take into account the specificities and stakes associated with the main stakeholders of the place brand, and also involve stakeholders in the place-branding process. Finally, I demonstrate the need for an IMC approach that is per se—for example, through the use of an overall brand positioning that covers shared elements between stakeholders so that they all relate to the place brand, or through the adoption of a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to place branding. This approach also should be able to extend to other place scales, by leveraging the image of a higher-order place.

Keywords: Place branding, place marketing, region, destination, stakeholders, advertising legitimacy, brand community, brand dimensions, representationality, functionality, congruence, integrated marketing communications

RÉSUMÉ

Dans un contexte de mondialisation, la concurrence accrue entre les territoires, dont l'objectif premier est de capter des habitants, des touristes et des entreprises, exacerbe les enjeux liés à leur attractivité. Afin de se différencier dans un tel environnement concurrentiel, les collectivités territoriales et leurs agences de développement adoptent des approches de marketing territorial et commencent à mettre en place des techniques de marquage (dites *place branding*). Le *place branding* reprend plusieurs outils issus du domaine de la marque commerciale de manière à contribuer au développement du territoire et à son attractivité. Toutefois, le territoire est un « produit particulier » qui regroupe diverses parties prenantes dont les visions et les attentes vis-à-vis du territoire peuvent diverger. Le succès d'une marque territoire reposera alors en partie sur la gestion de ces parties prenantes. Dès lors, ce travail doctoral entreprend d'adapter au contexte du *place branding* des concepts de marketing, en considérant les perceptions de trois groupes de parties prenantes, en vue d'améliorer l'efficacité de la marque territoire. Cette problématique de recherche est abordée selon trois questions de recherche dans le contexte français du marquage d'une région : (1) Quelle est la légitimité publicitaire d'une marque territoire, telle que perçue par ses habitants ? Influence-t-elle l'efficacité des actions de *place branding* ? Les résultats montrent que la légitimité publicitaire est un médiateur de la relation entre l'exposition à une annonce et son efficacité. Également, la marque territoire est perçue comme étant plus légitime dans une publicité ciblant les entreprises, les habitants ou les touristes que dans la promotion de produits locaux par le biais du *co-branding*. En outre, une nouvelle expression de la légitimité démocratique est mise en évidence, laquelle est adaptée aux organisations hybrides (publiques–privées). (2) Dans quelle mesure les gestionnaires de marques territoires ont recours à des stratégies de marketing communautaire afin d'implémenter une communication marketing intégrée (CMI) ? Une typologie est dressée à la suite d'une analyse de contenu des sites internet des marques régions françaises à vocation « intégrées » ; cette dernière propose de distinguer les « marques régions communautaires » des « marques régions 'intégrées' ». Des entretiens individuels approfondis auprès des représentants des « marques régions communautaires » apportent par la suite des précisions sur la nature de ces communautés, fondées sur des valeurs instrumentales pour l'une et terminales pour l'autre. (3) Dans quelle mesure l'image de la marque région constitue-t-elle un vecteur pertinent de la promotion d'une destination, complémentaire à celle de la marque pays, auprès des touristes internationaux ? Les résultats montrent que les dimensions représentationnelle et fonctionnelle de la marque destination influencent différemment l'attractivité implicite et les intentions de visiter. Les touristes internationaux perçoivent également les images des marques région et pays comme étant globalement congruentes, ce qui contribue positivement à leurs intentions de visiter la région. D'un point de vue théorique, cette recherche doctorale souligne l'importance d'adopter une approche parties prenantes à la compréhension de la marque territoire. Ce faisant, ce travail contribue à développer des preuves empiriques dans le domaine, notamment à l'échelle de la région qui est sous-représentée dans la littérature. Cette thèse met en évidence les similitudes entre la marque territoire et la marque commerciale, et renforce ainsi la validité externe de trois concepts issus du marketing classique. Les implications méthodologiques de ce travail proviennent des différentes approches méthodologiques qui ont été développées et mobilisées

(càd., instruments de mesure et méthodes de collecte) de manière à s'adapter aux spécificités et aux enjeux des principales parties prenantes d'une marque territoire. Ces éléments renforcent par ailleurs la validité interne de la présente recherche et contribuent à exclure l'existence d'un biais déclaratif. Les contributions managériales de cette thèse sont liées à ses implications méthodologiques dans la mesure où diverses grilles d'analyse sont proposées aux gestionnaires de marques territoires. Ces outils prennent en compte les spécificités et les enjeux associés aux principales parties prenantes de la marque, et visent à les impliquer dans les initiatives de *place branding*. Enfin, la mise en place d'une approche de communication marketing intégrée est conseillée. Premièrement, il est proposé que cette approche soit appliquée entre les différents acteurs du territoire ; par exemple, (a) en utilisant un positionnement global qui couvre des éléments partagés entre les parties prenantes, ou (b) en recourant à une approche de *place branding* ascendante plutôt que descendante. Les résultats montrent ainsi que l'intégration des habitants dans la démarche de *place branding* est un véritable enjeu qui nécessite une approche distincte de celle préconisée traditionnellement en marketing. Deuxièmement, l'approche de communication marketing intégrée devrait s'appliquer entre les différents niveaux de territoires de façon à tirer parti de l'image du territoire d'ordre supérieur.

Mots-clés : Marketing territorial, *place branding*, *place marketing*, région, destination, parties prenantes, légitimité publicitaire, communauté de marque, dimensions de marque, dimension représentationnelle, dimension fonctionnelle, congruence, communication marketing intégrée

À mes parents, Sylvie et Michel.

À Gabie, qui nous a quittés.

À ma famille.

« S'il n'avait pas cru aux rêves qui se répètent, il n'aurait pas rencontré […] 'La liste est bien longue, c'est vrai ; mais le chemin était jalonné par les signes, et je ne pouvais pas me tromper' […]

'En vérité, la vie est généreuse pour celui qui vit sa Légende Personnelle', pensa-t-il. »

Paulo Coelho, L'Alchimiste.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables xix
List of Figures xxi
List of Appendices xxiii

Introduction 27

Chapter 1. Region Brand Legitimacy 45
Abstract 45
Résumé 47
1.1. Introduction 49
1.2. Theoretical framework 52
1.2.1. Role of residents in place branding 52
1.2.2. Legitimacy of marketing activities 53
1.3. Research context 55
1.4. Hypotheses development: Exploratory study 57
1.4.1. Method 57
1.4.2. Results 58
1.4.3. Discussion 63
1.5. Conceptual model and hypotheses 64
1.6. Method 66
1.6.1. Experimental device 66
1.6.2. Sampling 66
1.6.3. Measures 68
1.7. Analysis and results 68
1.7.1. Advertising legitimacy: From cause-related marketing to place branding 68
1.7.2. Place-branding legitimacy: Contingent on type of place promotion 70
1.7.3. The mediating role of advertising legitimacy 71
1.8. Discussion and conclusions 73
1.8.1. Contributions 73
1.8.2. Limitations and future research 76
1.9. Bibliography of Chapter 1 79
1.10. List of Tables 85
1.11. List of Figures 85
1.12. List of Appendices 85

Chapter 2. Region Brand Communities 89
Abstract 89
Résumé 91
2.1. Introduction 93
2.2. Theoretical framework 94
2.2.1. Place branding: An integrated marketing communications approach 94
2.2.2. Brand community: From mainstream marketing to place branding 95
2.3. Content analysis of web sites: A typology of French region brands 97
2.3.1. Method 97
2.3.2. Results 98
2.3.3. Discussion 103
2.4. Exploratory study: Instrumental versus terminal value brand communities 107
2.4.1. Method 107
2.4.2. Results 109
2.5. Discussion and conclusions 119
2.5.1. Contributions 119
2.5.2. Limitations and further research 123
2.6. Bibliography of Chapter 2 125
2.7. List of Tables 128
2.8. List of Figures 128
2.9. List of Appendices 128

Chapter 3. Revisiting the Destination Brand Box Model 131
Abstract 131
Résumé 133
3.1. Introduction 135
3.2. Theoretical framework 137
3.2.1. Destination marketing and branding 137
3.2.2. Brand dimensions: Representational and functional values 140
3.3. Part 1: Destination brand dimensions and impact on behavioural intentions towards the destination—Implicit and explicit assessments 140
3.3.1. Hypotheses development 141
3.3.2. Study 1: Destination brand dimensions and destination attractiveness 141
3.3.3. Study 2: Effects of destination brand dimensions on intentions to visit a destination 150
3.4. Part 2: Destination brand dimensions—Perceived congruence between region and nation brands 157

3.4.1. Theoretical framework 158
3.4.2. Hypothesis development 161
3.4.3. Method 163
3.4.4. Analysis and results 165
3.5. Discussion and conclusions 167
3.5.1. Contributions 169
3.5.2. Limitations and further research 173
3.6. Bibliography of Chapter 3 175
3.7. List of Tables 184
3.8. List of Figures 184
3.9. List of Appendices 184

Conclusion 187

References 201

Appendices of Chapter 1 221
Appendices of Chapter 2 241
Appendices of Chapter 3 245

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

Table 0.1: Data collection and analysis methods. 41
Table 0.2: Comprehensive overview. 42

CHAPTER 1

Table 1.1: Hierarchical tree node structure. 59
Table 1.2: Shared references between advertising legitimacy dimensions. 60
Table 1.3: Sample characteristics – 'place promotion' and 'local product promotion'. 67
Table 1.4: Place-branding legitimacy – A three-dimensional measure. 69
Table 1.5: Pearson correlations of advertising legitimacy dimensions. 70
Table 1.6: Place-branding legitimacy – A one-dimensional measure. 71
Table 1.7: Effects of manipulated advertisements on advertising legitimacy depending on type of place promotion. 71
Table 1.8: Scale of measurement for behavioural intentions in favour of the region. 72
Table 1.9: Mediating role of advertising legitimacy in the relationship between manipulated ads and behavioural intentions towards the region. 73

CHAPTER 2

Table 2.1: Observation grid: Creation of the French region brands. 100
Table 2.2: Observation grid: Overview of French region brand communities. 101
Table 2.3: Typology of the French 'integrated' region brands. 105
Table 2.4: Sample characteristics. 108
Table 2.5: Hierarchical tree node structure. 109
Table 2.6: Categories of Communal region brands. 119

CHAPTER 3

Table 3.1: IAT with word stimuli script for each test. 145
Table 3.2: Sample characteristics of Study 1. 147
Table 3.3: Effects of nation's and region's destination brand dimensions on attractiveness, depending on response times. 148
Table 3.4: Sample characteristics of Study 2. 152
Table 3.5: Destination brand, measurement scale. 153

Table 3.6: Pearson correlations of destination brand dimensions. 154
Table 3.7: Relationship between destination brand dimensions and intentions to visit. 155
Table 3.8: Differences between destination brands' effects of functional dimensions on intentions to visit. 156
Table 3.9: Sample characteristics of Study 3. 164
Table 3.10: Reliability and validity of the study's constructs. 166
Table 3.11: Pearson correlations of congruence variables. 166
Table 3.12: Implicit and explicit assessments of international tourists' attitudes towards destinations. 168

CONCLUSION

Table 0.3: Main results of Chapter 1. 188
Table 0.4: Main results of Chapter 2. 189
Table 0.5: Main results of Chapter 3. 190
Table 0.6: Link between the results and the efficiency of the place-branding practice. 191
Table 0.7: Main contributions of the dissertation, shared amongst the chapters. 193
Table 0.8: Limitations and further research. 197

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Figure 0.1: Positioning this doctoral work within the marketing discipline. 30
Figure 0.2: Structure of the doctoral dissertation. 39

CHAPTER 1

Figure 1.1: Representational and functional brand attributes of ANM. 57

CHAPTER 2

Figure 2.1: Perceptions of brand communities by place brand managers. 117

CHAPTER 3

Figure 3.1: Impact of the region brand's dimensions on attractiveness of the region..... 149
Figure 3.2: Impact of the nation brand's dimensions on attractiveness of the country. 150
Figure 3.3: Synthesis of the results of Study 2. 157

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1

A.1: Semi-directive interview guide for the focus group sessions. 223

A.2: Sample characteristics of Focus Groups No. 1 and No. 2. 225

A.3: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 1). 226

A.4: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 2). 227

A.5: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Firms). 228

A.6: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Tourists). 229

A.7: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Local products)..... 230

A.8: 'Auvergne Your New World' ad presenting '30 reasons to love Auvergne'. 231

A.9: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting tourists..... 232

A.10: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting (new) residents. 233

A.11: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting firms. 234

A.12: Local product promotion (Volvic) – Fictitious advertisement promoting local products..... 235

A.13: Local product promotion (Cristaline) – Fictitious advertisement promoting local products. 236

A.14: Questionnaire administered to residents. 237

CHAPTER 2

A.15: Semi-directive interview guide. 243

CHAPTER 3

A.16: The IAT test in the tourism research domain. 247

A.17: Sequence of Trial Blocks in the 'Nation versus Region' Implicit Association Tests (IATs). 249

A.18: Questionnaire of Study 2 (Part 1) administered to tourists..... 252

A.19: Questionnaire of Study 3 (Part 2) administered to tourists..... 255

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In a globalized world, wherein the flows of people, products and investments are fast-paced, the attractiveness of places becomes a crucial issue. Indeed, public managers seek to attract three main targets: residents, tourists and firms (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993). The competition to attract these target groups has become fiercer with globalization. Residents are less anchored to their place of origin and may feel inclined to leave their place to go live somewhere else—domestic or abroad. As for tourists, they tend to travel more often. Goods and services flow at a lower cost, which allows firms to set up easily abroad or target international markets through exporting, whilst investments circulate more freely.

This cutthroat environment leads, amongst other things, to places trying to differentiate themselves from their competitors, notably by gaining a competitive advantage. Porter (1980) advances, through four generic strategies, that firms can differentiate themselves from their competitors either by costs or by image to establish a competitive advantage. Whilst some places use the cost strategy route with tax dumping activities—such as Apple, which through tax exemption by Ireland set the whole of Europe to rumbling (Lachkar, 2016)—others use place branding, which fits into the logic of differentiation based on image (Kavaratzis, 2004).

Place branding is a worldwide, practice-driven phenomenon that consists of developing and promoting an attractive and hospitable place to draw in residents, tourists and firms, as well as talent and investments (Kotler et al., 1993). Place branding activities involve different spatial levels: (1) meta-regions (e.g. Andersson, 2007; Dinnie, Melewar, Seidenfuss, & Musa, 2010), such as the Nordic countries that build a brand to strengthen the Nordic region's international visibility and attractiveness ('Branding and positioning of the Nordic Region' project; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2015); (2) countries (e.g. Dinnie, 2008), such as 'Brand South Africa' or 'Brand Switzerland'; (3) regions (e.g. Chamard, Liquet, & Mengi, 2013; Houllier-Guibert, 2012; Ikuta, Yukawa, & Hamasaki, 2007), such as the French 'Auvergne Your New World' region brand launched by Auvergne; (4) cities (e.g. Kavaratzis, 2004), such as the 'I Amsterdam' city brand in the Netherlands; and (5) neighbourhoods (e.g. Bennett & Savani, 2003; Johansson & Cornebise, 2010; Martin, 2005), such as the English city of Leicester, which started to revitalize its city centre in 2001 through the regeneration of the run-down St. Georges South area, a former textile and shoe pivot, now rebranded 'Cultural Quarter' or CQart. Thus, place-branding activities can take many forms that can correspond to the place scale (e.g. nation brand, region brand or city brand) but also can describe the end

goal (Hankinson, 2010a), as is the case with destination brands that target tourists (e.g. 'Rendez-vous en France', 'Savoie-Mont-Blanc', 'So Toulouse').

High economic stakes rest on place branding's hypothetical shoulders, as the race to host a big sporting event such as the Olympic Games exemplifies (e.g. Los Angeles' 'LA24' bid versus Paris' 'Paris 2024' bid), or as the creation of Brand USA shows, which aims to promote the United States, including its different states and other destinations, in international markets. As such, countries, regions, cities and destinations invest massively in place marketing and branding activities. Consider, for example, the 2016 budget of Aderly, the Lyon Area Economic Development Agency, which was €6.853 million, of which €2.172 million was allocated to the 'OnlyLyon' city brand, which sought to build the international reputation of the city (Lyon Area Economic Development Agency, 2016, p. 44). Therefore, 31.7% of the budget was specifically devoted to developing the attractiveness of the city for an international audience. Similarly, in 2012, the discovery of the remains of King Richard III in Leicester served as a springboard for its rebranding as a 'historic city' and an economic boost for the city, with an impact on the local economy of as much of £59 million as of 2015 (Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, 2016, p. 32). Leicester certainly gained instant worldwide visibility, especially on the day of the re-interment of King Richard at Leicester Cathedral in March 2015, but the marketing and branding of the new city attributes reflect its long-term strategic plan to attract visitors and engage citizens in a continuous dialogue with the place, instilling civic pride and a sense of ownership, ultimately strengthening the overall city experience.

0.1. Positioning of the dissertation in the place-branding domain

Place branding is a key part of public administration, as well as an extension of the place management and place marketing domains (Kavaratzis, 2005; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008).

Place marketing is 'the coordinated use of marketing tools supported by a shared customer-oriented philosophy, for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging urban offerings that have value for the [place]'s customers and the [place]'s community at large' (Braun, 2008, p. 43). Its aim is to 'maximize the efficient social and economic functioning of the area concerned, in accordance with whatever wider goals have been established' (Ashworth & Voogd, 1988, p. 68). Therefore, economic performance is as important as social end-goals, such as the identification and satisfaction of all place consumers, including potential target groups, with the place.

Place marketing emerged following three developments in the mainstream marketing domain that facilitated the transfer of marketing knowledge from the traditional field of commercial marketing to places (Ashworth & Voogd, 1988): non-profit marketing, social marketing and image marketing. These concepts encouraged practitioners to use mainstream marketing techniques (mainly marketing communications) in the context of places and their management, recognizing they could serve collective interests. Then, coupled with the emergence of the new marketing approaches, a second trend compelled the origin of place marketing: In the late 1980s and early 1990s, several urban policy and planning challenges (e.g. need for place regeneration) encouraged place managers to envision place governance in a more entrepreneurial way, which naturally led to the use of marketing techniques by places (Kavaratzis, 2005).

Place marketing is 'the deliberate creation of place identities or sense of place' (Iversen & Hem, 2008, p. 606). The implementation of place marketing is contingent on the place's image formulation and promotion (Kavaratzis, 2004; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005); for example, at the simplest level, the stakeholder groups build perceptual impressions and images of the place. The place's image is the source of the place brand, and this idea was the starting point of the shift in the debate on place marketing in the direction of place branding (Kavaratzis, 2004).

The 'current episode of place marketing development' (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008 cited in Kavaratzis, 2012, p. 7) emerged in the early 2000s (Papadopoulos, 2004) and was facilitated by the integration of mainstream marketing concepts, particularly product branding and corporate branding. The two-fold purpose of place branding is to attract external stakeholders and enhance the sense of place for internal stakeholders by promoting a single consistent image, through the use of an integrated marketing communications (IMC) approach (for a review, see Kitchen, Brignell, Li, & Jones, 2004). The place brand is considered as a whole, contributing to the development of the place through the branding of the entire area (Ikuta et al., 2007). As such, the new conceptualization moves away from branding as a sole marketing tool (usually purely promotional), towards branding encompassing all marketing initiatives. Branding then becomes a way to implement integrated place marketing (Kavaratzis, 2004). There is no consensus on the definition of this new paradigm, but place branding seeks to contribute to place development and establish image-building strategies that render places more attractive to identified markets.

Building on extant literature, and especially on Hankinson's (2010a, p. 302, Figure 1) work, I position place branding at the crossroads between non-profit marketing and

mainstream commercial marketing, which notably includes product branding and corporate branding (Figure 0.1). Prior literature emphasizes place branding's holistic and cross-disciplinary nature (Anholt, 2004 cited in Kerr, 2006, p. 278; Hankinson, 2010b; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005), in which the domains of urban policy, tourism, marketing—notably product branding and corporate branding—converge and deepen (Hankinson, 2010a), resulting in a 'richer and more useful theory' (Hankinson, 2007 cited in Hankinson, 2010a, p. 301). However, place branding—born and grown in practice—remains an emerging domain characterized by weak theoretical foundations and a lack of empirical evidence (Vuignier, 2016), especially when it comes to the region level (Ikuta et al., 2007).

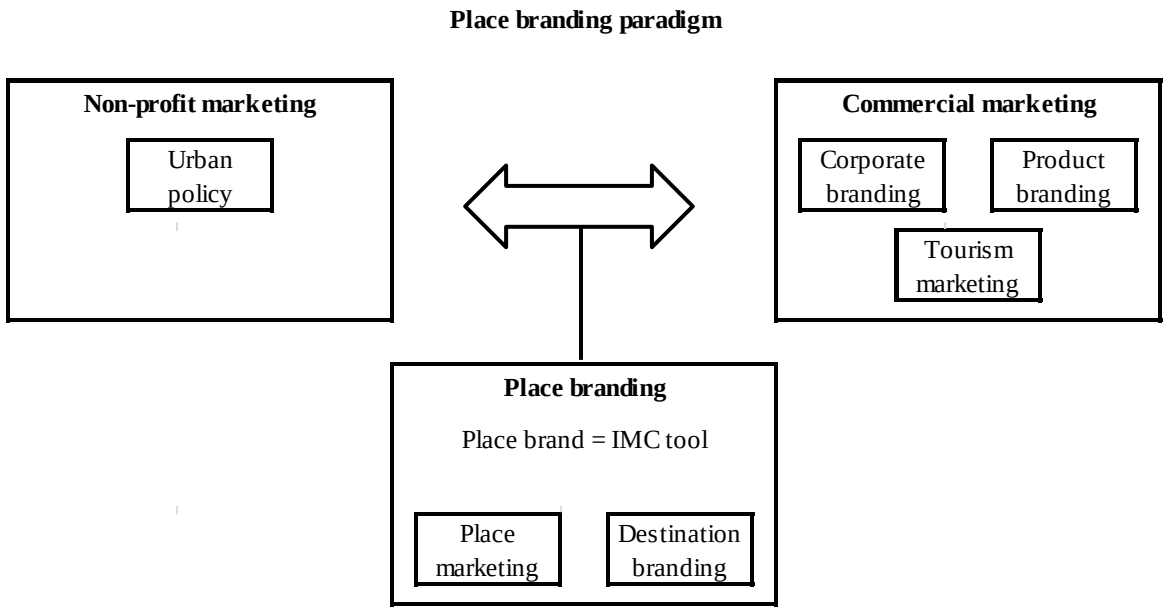


Figure 0.1: Positioning this doctoral work within the marketing discipline.

Keller's (1993) conceptualization of the brand image of commercial brands led place branding researchers to view a place brand as 'a network of associations in the consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design' (Braun & Zenker, 2010, p. 5). Thus, techniques developed for commercial brands may contribute to place-branding issues (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Kotler et al., 1993), especially corporate-level marketing concepts such as corporate branding, given that place brand managers recognize the peculiarities of the 'place product' (Hankinson, 2007, 2010b), which make the practice of place branding more complex than in the context of traditional branding (Hankinson, 2010a; Kavaratzis, 2009). One of the critical distinctions that the place-branding process entails is the multitude of diverse stakeholder groups, whose

interests are often competing, such that place brand managers must use an IMC approach. This point legitimizes, in part, the choice to employ stakeholder theory in this thesis.

0.2. Place branding and stakeholder theory

Stakeholder management is an important issue for the success of the place-branding process (Hankinson, 2004, 2010a; Kotler et al., 1993), to the extent that it includes both public and private actors, because place-branding initiatives are supported by the development of networks that mix public and private actors. Public-sector agencies (e.g. local council, tourism board, economic development agency, revitalization agency, cultural agency) seek to coordinate their efforts and collaborate with private-sector organizations (e.g. chamber of commerce, local firms). Unlike commercial brands, place brands are not owned or controlled by one organization but are implemented by a hybrid (public–private) organization in which diverse stakeholders are supposed to collaborate to encourage the economic development of the place, including residents who ought to be encouraged to participate in the place-branding process because they are integral to the place (Braun, Kavaratzis, & Zenker, 2013). External stakeholders, such as tourists, are also vital for the development of the place to the extent that 'the organization is dependent [on them] for its continued survival' (Freeman & Reed, 1983, p. 91). Furthermore, according to Stylidis, Sit, and Biran (2014b, p. 1), tourists 'generate the livelihood and stimulate other economic activities for a tourist place'.

As stated by Kavaratzis (2005, p. 334), 'places are very complex and varied brands, serving varied aims and targeting varied groups and individuals at the same time', which explains in part why place brand managers have less control over their brands (Morgan & Pritchard, 1999) and the consumer experience (Hankinson, 2004) than their counterparts in commercial marketing. Stakeholders also have divergent visions and expectations with regard to the place brand (Merrilees, Miller, & Herington, 2012; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013); for example, two or more stakeholders can consume the same place offering for different purposes (Hankinson, 2004). Place brand managers thus must manage and align a place brand—that is, a bundle of different products that are often overlapping—across different stakeholders (Hankinson, 2007). The efficiency of the place brand depends on the stakeholders being considered.

The rationale of this dissertation draws on stakeholder theory, at the origin of which is the observation that firms must concern themselves with the rights and needs of the actors that make up their environment to achieve the strategic objectives that will ensure their sustainability (Freeman, 1984), motivating the shift that started in the domain of strategic

management, from a shareholder vision of the firm looking for profit maximization, towards a stakeholder perspective in which the firm is conscious of its environment and recognizes the importance of the relationships with and between its stakeholders—individuals or groups. Therefore, actors other than shareholders can influence the various organizational performance goals of the firm, and the firm has social responsibilities towards the actors that take part in its organization. The performance of a firm goes beyond financial goals.

Since Freeman's (1984) landmark text, stakeholder theory has become widely accepted, stretching across the social sciences: With the review of 885 definitions of the stakeholder theory and stakeholder concept (from which emerged 593 different definitions), Miles (2017) showed that its breadth of interpretations and applications is vast, going 'from business ethics and corporate social responsibility to strategic management, corporate governance and finance' (Miles, 2017, p. 437), and even politics (Mullenbach-Servayre, 2007, p. 111). This view explains why stakeholder theory often is conceptualized in a narrow managerial sense as an analytical tool of the firm's environment, with the purpose of identifying the links between stakeholder management and organizational performance on the one hand (i.e. instrumental approach[1]), whereas on the other hand, authors adopt a broader perspective, with an ethical vision, according to which the firm must take into account the interests of all its stakeholders, perceived as an objective and not just a tool for organizational performance—that is, a normative approach (Donaldson & Preston, 1995); for a review, see Gond and Mercier (2006) or Miles (2017).

The different conceptualizations of stakeholder theory indicate a theory that is not unified but constituted of a multitude (Gond & Mercier, 2006). Consequently, prior literature also offers different views about who or what a stakeholder is. For example, Freeman and Reed (1983, p. 91) suggest two perspectives for the term stakeholder: Broadly defined, a stakeholder is '[a]ny identifiable group or individual who can affect the achievement of an organization's objectives or who is affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives'.[2] A narrow perspective instead defines a stakeholder as '[a]ny identifiable group or individual on which the organization is dependent for its continued survival'. Also adopting a dichotomous definition, Savage, Nix, Whitehead, and Blair (1991, p. 62) differentiate *primary stakeholders* 'who have formal, official, or contractual relationships and

[1] We omit the descriptive/empirical approach of Donaldson and Preston (1995), whose purpose is to describe actual behaviour, to the extent that we believe it is inherent to the instrumental approach. The instrumental approach looks at the cause–effect linkage and is therefore prescriptive and hypothetical (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Collecting data and studying practice would be essential to this approach.

[2] The wide sense of a stakeholder includes the firm's competitors.

have a direct and necessary economic impact upon the organization', from *secondary stakeholders* who 'are diverse and include those who are not directly engaged in the organization's economic activities but are able to exert influence or are affected by the organization'. Clarkson (1995) distinguishes *primary* (*voluntary) stakeholders* who agree to be exposed to the risks inherent in their relationships with the firm from *secondary (involuntary) stakeholders* who are at risk unknowingly due to their association with a firm. In a similar manner, Mahoney (1994, p. 217) defines *active stakeholders* as those 'who are positively and voluntarily involved in the company and are committed to it in some way, […] and whose interests are to be identified as relating to some sort of reciprocity with the company and some return to them on the part of the company for what they do in regard to the company', and *passive stakeholders* as those 'whose stake does not depend on their being positively and voluntarily involved in the company's activities, but only on their interests or rights not being harmed by the company's activities'.

The role of researchers, therefore, is to discuss the boundaries that delineate the definitions emanating from the multi-contextual applications (Miles, 2017), so that researchers who share a similar theoretical position are inclined towards a particular conceptualization, and so that practitioners can take the appropriate managerial decisions, according to stakeholders. To that end, Miles (2017) provides an overview of stakeholder theory definitions and the stakeholder concept and draws a classification that clarifies the boundary conditions for stakeholder identification. On the basis of a sorting matrix that consists of four categories (managerial perceived determinants/relationship attributes, and stakeholder perceived determinants/relationship attributes), she suggests four genres of stakeholder definitions[3]: A *collaborator* is recognized by his or her ability to cooperate with the firm whilst having no interest in actively influencing the firm; an *influencer* is capable of actively influencing the firm; a *recipient* is passively impacted by a firm's actions; and a *claimant* has a claim/stake that she or he actively pursues but no power to ensure that the firm takes care of the claim. The categories evolve on an instrumental–normative continuum of stakeholder theory, wherein *collaborators* and *influencers* are close to the instrumental extreme, whereas *recipients* and *claimants* are set on the edge of the normative approach. Miles shows that the different genres of stakeholder theory and concept can overlap; she invokes eleven possible combinations.

[3] Miles argues that there must be a stakeholder–organizational relationship for an individual or a group of individuals to be a stakeholder; for example, hackers are not stakeholders, in the sense that they have no relationship with the firms they are hacking, even though they influence the activities of those firms.

Based on Kotler et al.'s (1993, p. 18) observation that 'place marketing [or branding] succeeds when stakeholders such as citizens, workers, and business firms derive satisfaction from their community, and when visitors, new businesses, and investors find their expectations met', stakeholders would be *recipients*. Place managers might form a *planning group* so that there is 'collaboration between the public and private sector and [the *planning group* answers] the need to involve all stakeholders in shaping a place's future' (Kotler et al., 1993, p. 18). In this instance, stakeholders are collaborators, as backed up by a currently emerging concept of place branding (Kavaratzis, 2012) that adopts a stakeholder view with co-creation at its core (Warnaby, 2009). The place brand becomes a dynamic object that is socially constructed by place stakeholders (Aitken & Campelo, 2011), using multiple dialogues that place brand managers 'initiate, facilitate, and stimulate' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013, p. 82) so that the place brand inclines towards reflecting a common vision shared by stakeholders (Anholt, 2007; Aronczyk, 2008).

The primary challenges of a place brand are to be accepted by its stakeholders and to reflect their expectations, so that a dialogue can ensue and the place brand can fully embrace its collective nature. In this work, my co-author and I use a hybrid stakeholder theory (Jones & Wicks, 1999) that embraces performance objectives (i.e. instrumental approach) as well as ethical objectives (i.e. normative approach); notably, we show that the perceived legitimacy of the promotional actions of a place brand has a positive impact on the behavioural intentions of the resident stakeholders. Therefore, we are not positioned at the extremes of the instrumental–normative continuum of the stakeholder theory of Miles (2017) but somewhere along it.

For this thesis, we adopt a combinatory definition of the place brand's stakeholders that occurs at the intersection of three genres: an *influencer–collaborator–recipient* definition. Residents should be encouraged to play the roles (Braun et al., 2013) of integral parts of the place brand, ambassadors and citizens/voters. Residents are targets of the place brand, but they are also integral to the place product; at the simplest level, they enrich the place brand by residing in it. The involvement of residents in the place brand–building process may be weakened by their own barriers (e.g. lack of brand awareness/knowledge, lack of brand identification, disapproval of local government actions, and cynical attitudes towards involvement; Insch & Stuart, 2015) and depends on the degree to which place brand managers are able and willing to empower them. Thus, this practice invokes legitimacy concerns because it does not meet the criterion of democratic legitimacy by providing a means for a vote or parliamentary representativeness (Luhmann, 2001). Tourists, for their part, are

passively impacted by the place-branding initiatives but collaborate with the place brand to the extent that the representations of the place in their minds impact (favourably or unfavourably) place brand efficiency, as their actions do; for example, tourists shape a destination's image virally on social media (Kislali, 2017). At last, place brand managers—besides being actively involved in the place-branding strategy—are also residents and tourists of the place, as well as possible representatives of public or private organizations (see Chapter 2); internal stakeholders are multi-faceted.

To conclude, in this doctoral work, I further the idea that the place brand is an IMC tool that encourages effective relationships between the brand and stakeholders, to the extent that each stakeholder has a relationship with the place brand and the relationships between the stakeholders lie in the place brand, which ensures a consistent and coherent place image.

0.3. Research question

The emergence of place brands in marketing research and the complexity that results when multiple place scales are involved has called to question their efficiency, especially since local authorities invest a lot of money in the development and maintenance of these branding strategies. Therefore, it is necessary to know whether the place brands fulfil the objectives of attractiveness that are assigned to them.

As stated previously, efficiency depends on the stakeholders being considered. Whereas in mainstream marketing, the efficiency of branding is evaluated through the perceptions of the targeted consumers, that of place branding is not as simple to measure. Analysing the perceptions of individuals whom the place aims to attract is a first approach, but it is not enough in a context in which the branded place itself includes individuals whose mobilization is necessary for the success of the place-branding approach (the approach may explicitly include it). Thus, investigating the efficiency of a place-branding action requires an approach from the point of view of the different stakeholders who are supposed to be part of the phenomenon. We thus propose to distinguish the perceptions of place branding amongst the residents of the place, the place brand managers and the tourists, in accordance with the following research question:

What steps can be taken to enhance the efficiency of place brands whilst integrating different stakeholders' perspectives through the adaptation of classic marketing concepts?

The issue of place branding's perceived efficiency differs depending on the stakeholder who is considered; that is why we distinguish three sub-questions that correspond to the three chapters of this doctoral work:

(1) The perception of the place residents, whilst underrepresented in place-branding literature, questions the approach of branding a place in which they are an integral part, and over which they feel a sense of ownership. *To what extent is this approach perceived as legitimate by residents?* This first outlook is fundamental; it determines the efficiency of the place-branding action as a whole. Residents are the first spokespersons of the brand, and if they do not concur with the approach and become its first detractors, its efficiency is diminished.

(2) The perception of the managers—which has little to do with traditional approaches to branding—becomes salient when it comes to place branding, insofar as it determines the strategic choices made amongst the many other options available to place brand managers. In particular, *how managers will be inspired by traditional marketing practices* should be decisive in explaining the efficiency of the approach as a whole. Our work focuses on how place brand managers use traditional brand community strategies to be efficient.

(3) The perception of tourists—the most studied targets in the field of place branding—is crucial for places where the tourism industry represents a significant part of the economy. International tourists especially represent a lucrative segment; however, these targets are usually more aware of and familiar with a country overall than its lower-level places, such as regions. As such, the study of the interrelations amongst different place scales is likely to determine the efficiency of the practice of place branding at the lower level. Our research investigates *the extent to which leveraging the image of the place at the higher level impacts on the attractiveness of the place at a lower level*.

Consequently, this doctoral work focuses on two target-specific pillars of Ikuta et al. (2007): 'Human resources and residents' (Chapters 1 and 2) and 'tourism and exchange' (Chapter 3).

0.4. Research context: French region-branding

To answer the research questions, this thesis focuses on the French region-branding context, which is characterized by governmental drives to strengthen the economic weight of the regions and consulting firms and local authorities that grant recognition to a place-branding process that contributes to the development of the entire area, with stakeholder involvement.

French regions have been at the heart of heated social debates since January 2014, when the French government engaged in territorial reform to redraw regional boundaries and responsibilities. Effective on 1 January 2016, the reform fundamentally changed the regional landscape, reducing the number of French regions[4] from 22 to 13 'super-regions' and presenting new challenges to French public management.

Place branding is one of the many tools used by public management to develop places economically and socially. In the French context, the first consulting firm to specialize in place branding started in 2003. It answered the place-branding proposals and bids of most French local authorities looking for the creation of a place brand. However, it used a standardized method, which called into question the very essence of place branding, in that branding initiatives seek to differentiate the identity of the place and guarantee competitive advantages that reinforce the uniqueness of the place's offerings. The issue for French place brand managers was then, and remains, to dodge commodification. In addition, the consulting firm did not stress the importance of involving stakeholders—such as residents—in the place-branding process. Recognizing these two limitations, the consulting firm and French place brand managers underwent a turning point in their branding strategies, as is attested, for example, by the annual Place Marketing Forum, which gathers practitioners and researchers to discuss exemplary place marketing initiatives. This dissertation seeks to support consulting firms and local authorities further in their endeavours.

0.5. Structure of the dissertation

This doctoral work revolves around three complementary chapters, aimed at answering the central research question (Figure 0.2). In **Chapter 1**, my co-author and I evaluate the legitimacy of place-branding promotional activities as perceived by residents in the context of region branding. We question whether the advertising legitimacy scale developed in the context of cause-related marketing can also apply to place branding. First, we undertake an exploratory qualitative study with two semi-structured focus groups; this study is intended to gather residents' attitudes towards their region brand and its promotional actions, so we can analyse whether residents have legitimacy concerns about this practice. Second, we carry out a quantitative study in the form of a survey, wherein we manipulate the promoted pillars of region branding (local product promotion versus place promotion) to study the mediating effect of advertising legitimacy on the relationship between the type of place promotion and

[4] This concerns metropolitan France.

behavioural intentions towards the region. Thereby, we confirm that residents' support of place-branding initiatives is not self-evident, whereas prior literature suggests they are one of place branding's most important groups of stakeholders (Braun et al., 2013), whose role in 'living the brand' (Aronczyk, 2008) is a determinant of the success of the place-branding strategy. Notably, we propose a participatory grid that may help place brand managers select the promotional actions that would unite the residents of the promoted place. In that sense, we empirically confirm previous studies supporting the integration of residents in the place brand–building process (e.g. Aronczyk, 2008; Braun et al., 2013; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). Thus, a strategic tool developed for commercial brands may contribute to place-branding strategies (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009; Hankinson, 2007, 2010b; Klijn, Eshuis, & Braun, 2012; Trueman, Klemm, & Giroud, 2004).

In **Chapter 2**, we understand the extent by which place brand managers use community marketing strategies to operationalize the IMC role of their brand. First, we undertake a content analysis of web sites to describe all French 'integrated' region brands, according to two observation grids that relate to the origin of the region brand approach as well as the region brands themselves. We conclude with a typology that distinguishes between 'communal region brands' and 'IMC-orientated region brands'. Second, we conduct in-depth interviews amongst the place brand managers of the 'communal region brands' to gather their insights on the extent to which community branding arguments are used as springboards for implementing the IMC role of the region brand. Results show that, in an IMC context, one region brand community rests on terminal values, whereas the other is based on instrumental values.

In **Chapter 3**, we first carry out two Implicit Association Tests (IATs) and one survey to analyse and compare two destination brand images (nation versus region) with regard to the influence of their representational and functional attributes on international tourists' behavioural intentions towards the destination. In so doing, we extend the Destination Brand Box Model (Caldwell & Freire, 2004) to encompass explicit and implicit measures. Then, we conduct a survey to investigate the interaction of the nation and region brand images according to their brand dimensions and the extent to which it affects international tourists' behavioural intentions towards the region. Thus, we integrate the concept of congruence between one place brand and its extension, declined geographically, to place branding. We propose a multi-method approach to investigate place branding, using explicit and implicit measures, that deepens the Destination Brand Box Model and helps exclude the threat of a declarative bias. Answering the call for a study of the interaction of several levels of places

(Syssner, 2010), we suggest an approach that allows nation and region brands to draw on each other's brand images to build their reputational capital and attract target groups, advocating for an IMC approach between different place scales.

We start the **Conclusion** recalling the main results of our work, and clearly stating their links with the efficiency of the place-branding initiatives. Then, we discuss the contributions that jointly ensue from the three chapters of this thesis, including the theoretical, methodological and managerial implications; I also underline the degree of consistency between the results of the chapters. At last, I note some limitations and directions for further research.

Figure 0.2 summaries the structure of the different chapters in this dissertation.

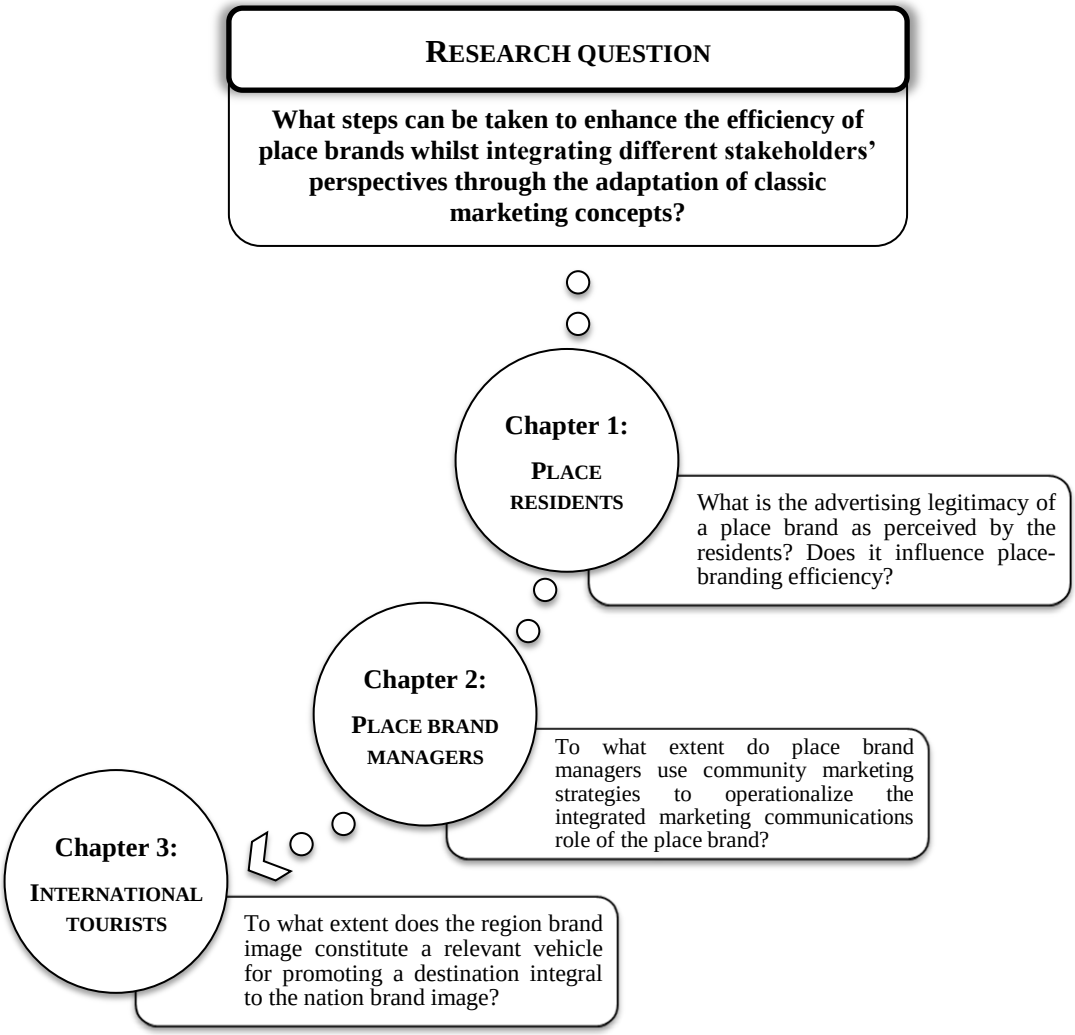


Figure 0.2: Structure of the doctoral dissertation.

0.6. Interpretivist approach at the origin of the data collection and analysis methods

The epistemological position of the researcher influences his or her scientific approach and the investigation methods that he or she undertakes (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). In the existing and dominant epistemological (post-)positivist–constructivist continuum, this doctoral dissertation fits with a more consensual, interpretivist approach. The interpretive researcher mainly wants to understand the social reality (i.e. object under focus) through an interpretation of the actors' perceptions of the reality that they create (Perret & Séville, 2007). Ultimately, the researcher needs to understand how this reality is socially constructed—built in specific contexts, born from the interactions between actors, acquiring stability through a consensus within a social group (Perret & Séville, 2007).

The aim of this doctoral work is clearly aligned with this view, insofar as I am interested not in an objective reality but rather in a contextual, subjective reality that place consumers seize to guide their intentions and behaviours. For example, my approach assumes the brand is a social phenomenon, inasmuch as it exists only in people's minds (i.e. social, mental representation), as defined by Pitcher (1985) and Braun and Zenker (2010).

In line with this epistemological position and considering the complex and fairly unexplored nature of our research object, this doctoral research started with an abductive approach, using an iterative process between the collected data and the literature. We aimed to highlight specific issues and define the research questions. Then, a deductive approach helped describe and explain the predictive power of the concepts in Chapters 1 and 3; Chapter 2 is more conducive to an inductive approach.

This work accordingly combines qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis and reporting methods. To answer the main research question, each chapter combines several methods of data collection and analysis, which reinforces internal validity (Table 0.1). Chapter 1 uses a mixed-method approach; Chapter 2 is a multi-method study, which uses several qualitative methods; and Chapter 3 is a multi-method study that collects multiple types of quantitative data to study tourists' perceptions of the 'destination brand image reality'.

Table 0.1: Data collection and analysis methods.

Method	*Chapter 1*		*Chapter 2*	*Chapter 3*
Nature	Qualitative	Quantitative	Qualitative	Quantitative
Data collection method	Focus groups	Questionnaires	- Content analysis of web sites - Interviews	- Implicit Association Tests (IATs) - Questionnaires
Population	Place residents	Place residents	Place brand managers	International tourists
Sample	20 individuals	750 individuals	- 3 region brands - 20 individuals	- 51 individuals - 141 individuals - 59 individuals
Field of investigation	Region brand (Auvergne)	Region brand (Auvergne)	- French 'integrated' region brands - Region brands (Alsace & Auvergne)	Destination brands (Auvergne & France)
Data analysis method	Thematic analysis	- Factorial analysis - ANOVA - Regression analysis	- Observation grids - Thematic analysis	- ANOVAs - Factorial analyses - Regression analyses
Software solution	NVivo10	SPSS 20	NVivo10	- Inquisit 3 - SPSS 20

0.7. Focus on different forms of a place brand depending on the stakeholder

A place brand has a multitude of stakeholders for whom the stakes of promoting a place by a brand differ; therefore, stakeholders represent both communication targets and internal sources that participate in defining the meaning of the place brand. Each group of stakeholders creates specific challenges for the place brand, so we adapt different marketing concepts to the context of place branding, enabling us to apprehend the notion of brand differently (Table 0.2). Whereas Chapter 2 considers both the brand and brand image concepts, Chapters 1 and 3 reflect solely on the brand image. The residents are both part of the place brand and a target of marketing communication campaigns that aim to retain this target group. Contrary to residents and place brand managers, tourists are not necessarily aware of the brand created to promote the place (such as a region), nor are they usually familiar with the place, but they still develop an image of the destination.

Table 0.2 summarizes the concepts used to consider the research question about how to enhance place brand efficiency through the adaptation of mainstream marketing concepts targeted at a diverse audience. In this sense, the thesis is grounded in the place branding domain and deeply rooted in the field of marketing research. In contrast with studies of the organizational processes behind the implementation of the place brand, or those that analyse

the image perceptions of a sole stakeholder, our interests lie in perceptions of the place brand by multiple stakeholders and the resulting impact on the efficiency of the place brand.

Table 0.2: Comprehensive overview.

	Efficiency	*Region brand*	*Place consumers*
Chapter 1	Advertising legitimacy Explicit attitude towards place	Brand image	Place residents
Chapter 2	Integration level	Brand Brand image	Place brand managers
Chapter 3	Implicit attitude towards destination Explicit attitude towards destination Congruence	Brand image	International tourists (non-visitors)

CHAPTER 1.

REGION BRAND LEGITIMACY

TOWARDS A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH INVOLVING RESIDENTS OF A PLACE

CHAPTER 1. REGION BRAND LEGITIMACY

TOWARDS A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH INVOLVING RESIDENTS OF A PLACE

ABSTRACT

Places have started to adapt commercial branding tactics. But how do stakeholders perceive such practices? Drawing on survey data from French residents, we analyse the advertising legitimacy of a place brand and its influence on the effectiveness of marketing communications in the context of region branding. The results confirm that advertising legitimacy mediates the relationship between exposure to an advertisement and its efficiency. The place brand is more legitimate when advertisements target firms, residents or tourists than when they promote local products through co-branding. We highlight a new expression of democratic legitimacy: a process adapted to hybrid (public–private) organizations.

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RÉSUMÉ

Les territoires ont commencé à adapter des techniques développées dans le domaine commercial ; mais comment les parties prenantes perçoivent-elles ces pratiques ? Nous nous appuyons sur une étude empirique réalisée auprès des habitants pour analyser la légitimité publicitaire d'une marque territoire et son influence sur l'efficacité de la communication marketing dans le contexte du marquage d'une région française. Les analyses statistiques confirment que la légitimité publicitaire est un médiateur de la relation entre l'exposition à une annonce et son efficacité. Les résultats montrent également que la marque territoire est perçue comme étant plus légitime dans une publicité ciblant les entreprises, les habitants ou les touristes que dans la promotion de produits locaux par le biais du *co-branding*. Au travers de cette recherche, nous mettons en évidence une nouvelle expression de la légitimité démocratique, laquelle est adaptée aux organisations hybrides (publiques–privées).

1.1. Introduction

The vast expansion of networks that comprise both public and private actors issues challenges to the legitimacy of public policy making (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). Although such networks can help resolve problems and enhance democratic participation, they also create conflicts and might reduce the transparency of public governance. For example, networks support actions designed to promote the attractiveness of a place, such that place-branding efforts include both public and private actors (e.g. The Amsterdam Marketing Foundation promotes the well-known 'I Amsterdam' city brand). However, this practice invokes legitimacy concerns, because it does not meet the criterion of democratic legitimacy by providing a means for a vote or parliamentary representativeness (Luhmann, 2001). We therefore investigate the legitimacy of place-branding actions, as perceived by residents of that place.

Place branding is a key part of public administration, as well as an extension of the place management and place marketing domains (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008). It entails input and contributions from various research fields (Lucarelli & Berg, 2011), including sociology (e.g. Aitken & Campelo, 2011; Campelo, Aitken, Thyne, & Gnoth, 2014), politics (e.g. Olins, 1999; van Ham, 2001, 2008) and geography (e.g. Ashworth & Voogd, 1988; Giovanardi, 2014; Page & Hardyman, 1996). This popular, interdisciplinary field largely emerged in the early 2000s, following a purposeful shift away from a sole focus on the country-of-origin effect (Papadopoulos, 2004) and has rapidly gained momentum (Gertner, 2011). Furthermore, it involves practitioners at all scales (nations, regions, cities and other locations). Just like businesses, places need a competitive advantage to differentiate themselves from others (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

The public sector has increasingly drawn inspiration from commercial marketing practices and applied them to fields such as political marketing and place marketing (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012). The practice of place branding adapts several tactics developed in the field of commercial branding (Kotler & Gertner, 2002) to contribute to place development (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005) and establish image-building strategies that render places more attractive to identified markets (Kavaratzis, 2004).

Although there is no consensus on a definition of this 'current episode of place marketing development' (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2008 cited in Kavaratzis, 2012, p. 7), researchers agree places are distinctive products (Hankinson, 2007). Authors emphasize the holistic and cross-disciplinary nature of place branding, in which urban policy, tourism, marketing domains, corporate branding and service branding converge (Anholt, 2004 cited in

Kerr, 2006, p. 278; Hankinson, 2010b; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). This concept results in a 'richer and more useful theory' (Hankinson, 2007 cited in Hankinson, 2010a, p. 301).

Research has compared the practices of commercial (corporate) branding and place branding but rarely examined resident reactions to such practices (e.g. Braun et al., 2013; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). Yet branding a place is a commercial practice, undertaken for a concept that includes residents as an integral part (Braun et al., 2013). Thus, residents might question the legitimacy of this approach. Does commercial-style branding of a public place make sense for the residents of a place? What are the limits of the comparison between a brand and a place? We address these questions by studying the advertising legitimacy of a place-branding strategy as perceived by residents, in the context of a region brand. We focus on the following research questions: What is the advertising legitimacy of a place brand as perceived by the residents? Does it influence place-branding efficiency?

In the field of societal marketing, the concept of advertising legitimacy is used to explain resistance to a persuasion attempt. 'Societal communication legitimacy' is defined as a judgement grounded on three cues (Capelli & Sabadie, 2005): source of the advertisement (advertiser), content of the advertisement (advocated cause), and creative executional cues of the communication (advertising tactics). It assesses whether a target audience perceives that an advertiser has the right to defend a cause and whether the cause truly benefits from its advertising campaign. According to this concept, the consumer acts as a citizen when judging an advertisement, placing higher value on the advertisement's support of social causes than on personal utility. We propose this concept of advertising legitimacy should be applied to the field of place branding for two reasons. First, places can be regarded as social causes because they benefit all actors in a given place. Second, residents of a place will perceive a place-branding strategy as citizens, rather than consumers, because they are part of the advertised place.

In his theoretical framework on city branding, Kavaratzis (2004) highlights three types of image communication: primary communication (effects of the city's actions where communication is not the main priority), secondary communication (traditional marketing communications) and tertiary communication (word-of-mouth; the consequence of two controllable communication types that directly impact the place image). Although place brand managers control the first two types, the third depends entirely on stakeholders' roles as good or bad place brand representatives. Thus, it is essential to understand stakeholders' opinions and perceptions of place brands (Zenker & Beckmann, 2013).

Region branding is one of the four dimensions of place branding (other forms are nation branding, city branding and destination branding; Hankinson, 2010a). The purpose of region branding is to both attract external stakeholders and enhance the sense of place of internal stakeholders by promoting a single consistent image, through the use of an integrated marketing communications approach (IMC; for a review, see Kitchen et al., 2004). A region-branding strategy that draws on IMC principles demands an appropriate degree of inter-organizational coordination across public regional agencies and collaborations with private organizations (Dinnie et al., 2010). The region is considered as a whole, contributing to the development of the place through the branding of the entire area (Ikuta et al., 2007). A region brand has a multitude of selected target groups and stakeholders, or 'supporting pillars' (Ikuta et al., 2007): 'promotion of investment and industry', 'human resources and residence', 'tourism and exchange' and 'increased sales of local products'. Ikuta et al. (2007) extend Aaker's (2004) concepts of 'branded house' and 'house of brands' to build a conceptual diagram of region branding; the goal is to achieve results for the supporting pillars by branding the entire region (the master brand). This study emphasizes the 'human resources and residence' pillar of the region master brand.

This paper concludes by drawing out a sixfold contribution to theory and practice, introducing an advertising legitimacy scale to the public administration and place-branding domains, thus providing a method to evaluate the legitimacy of place brands and offering criteria that can be used by practitioners to choose promotional actions that unite the residents of the place. First, we highlight similarities between commercial branding and place branding in the context of a region brand which has lacked attention (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). Second, we empirically confirm previous studies supporting the integration of residents in the place brand–building process. Third, our results show that place brand managers who want residents' approval should focus on place promotion rather than local product promotion. Fourth, we provide place-branding organizations with a participatory approach that can serve as both a strategic tool to guide the scope of the place brand and an implementation or control tool that public managers use to assess place-branding actions. Fifth, public administration literature advocates that public managers should be in tune with the citizens who elect them (Arnstein, 1969). We extend prior public administration work by considering legitimacy concerns when a public action is implemented by a hybrid (public–private) organization. Sixth, taking an IMC view on the practice of place branding, we suggest that place brand managers should build a place brand positioning that is grounded on the common elements amongst stakeholders so that it serves the interest of all stakeholders.

The article proceeds as follows: in Section 1.2, we review literature on stakeholder involvement in place branding and legitimacy theory to highlight aspects of place-branding legitimacy. In Section 1.3, we describe the research context, namely the French region of Auvergne. In Sections 1.4 and 1.5, we propose a conceptual model and advance our hypotheses. We describe our method in Section 1.6 and present main findings in Section 1.7. Finally, we discuss implications, study limitations and future research directions in Section 1.8.

1.2. Theoretical framework

1.2.1. Role of residents in place branding

There is a vast array of literature on place marketing activities that target external audiences, particularly tourists (e.g. Hankinson, 2005; Hanna & Rowley, 2008; Pike, 2002). Focus is slowly shifting towards a 'service-dominant logic' (Warnaby, 2009) that centres on the importance of internal audiences (i.e. place residents) who are not only targets of place-branding activities, but also co-creators.

A new concept of place branding is emerging (Kavaratzis, 2012) that adopts a stakeholder view, with co-creation at its core (Warnaby, 2009). Place brand becomes a dynamic object that is socially constructed by place stakeholders (Aitken & Campelo, 2011), using multiple dialogues that place brand managers 'initiate, facilitate, and stimulate' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013, p. 82). Klijn, Eshuis and Braun's (2012) study of Dutch city marketing professionals shows stakeholder involvement in place-branding strategy positively impacts perceived brand clarity and capacity to attract target groups. In their study of the City of Hamburg, Zenker and Beckmann (2013) reveal that the targets of place-branding activities (resident groups versus non-residents) express different perceptions of the place brand. Therefore, place brand managers need to adapt their marketing communications to appeal to each target group's salient associations. Zenker and Beckmann (2013) also conclude that a lack of place brand communications directed towards residents results in their poor identification with the place brand. Yet residents have a particular and unique role in the place-branding process, as both targets and ambassadors of their place brand (Aronczyk, 2008). Residents thus should identify with the place brand and function in the three roles identified by Braun et al. (2013): integrated parts of the place brand, ambassadors and citizens/voters. That is, a place brand must first and foremost resonate with the residents, such that it empowers them to participate in the branding process through a built sense of ownership (Aitken & Campelo, 2011; Kavaratzis, 2012).

To be successful, a place brand should reflect a common vision shared by stakeholders (Anholt, 2007; Aronczyk, 2008). However, there are remaining questions about stakeholders' opinions of the implementation of a brand for a public good (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012; Houllier-Guibert, 2012). Although researchers in the place-branding field have raised ethical and legitimacy concerns on this matter (e.g. Anholt, 2010; Aronczyk, 2008; Dinnie, 2008; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013), there has been little empirical study of the legitimacy concept (e.g. Eshuis & Edwards, 2013). In this paper, we explore legitimacy processes of place-branding activities in the context of region branding.

1.2.2. Legitimacy of marketing activities

Marketing activities implemented to undertake place branding are part of the public realm. In that sense, they must be grounded in a democratic process. However, the development of networks that mix public and private actors to support place-branding initiatives creates a challenge to the democratic legitimacy of the associated place-branding actions. Place-branding initiatives are marketing activities inspired by commercial branding strategies. When places are driven to use for-profit marketing tools to promote their images, it might create ambivalence amongst residents, similar to the scepticism expressed in reaction to the growing number of firms engaging in activities that support a social cause. There are notable parallels between this investigation of the legitimacy of place branding and commercial branding studies that focus on the legitimacy of cause-related advertising.

Advertising legitimacy, as perceived by the consumer, has been studied in the field of cause-related marketing (Capelli & Sabadie, 2005, 2006). For a given social behaviour (e.g. social advertising), legitimacy theory simultaneously considers underlying goals (increasing brand image or helping a social cause) and means (e.g. attention-getting tactics). The legitimacy concept implies the means used to reach organizational goals, as well as the goals themselves, are in line with certain purposes and needs recognized by society.

Both Parsons (1964) and Durkheim (1986) emphasize the need for congruence between individual, organizational and social system values to legitimize the activities of an organization. In a democracy, when citizen consumers accept the power of a corporation, they recognize its necessity to the common good. Thus, we suggest that when a place is promoted as a commercial brand, the place's residents will accept such promotion if they believe it serves the common good.

The legitimacy concept roughly parallels Weber's (1978) discussion of legitimate authority. Weber distinguishes consequential legitimacy, based on the pursuit of particular

goals, from procedural legitimacy, based on the fulfilment of the rules of proper behaviour. Moreover, according to the concept of persuasion modelling, audiences judge three components in an ad (Capelli & Sabadie, 2005, 2006): the advertiser (via its reputation and credibility), the claim (the cause in the case of company advertising with a social dimension) and the advertising tactics (such as guilt, sex, fear, irony). This results in three types of advertising legitimacy that impact consumer attitudes towards the brands: intent legitimacy, tactics legitimacy and practice legitimacy.

Intent legitimacy relates to the attribution made by the target concerning the question, 'Why this ad?' Consumers may attribute two types of motives when a company advocates for a cause (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006): other-centred motives (value-driven and stakeholder driven) and self-centred motives (egoistic and strategic). These motives are evaluated positively when they serve the common good of the society (value-driven motives) or the entire company (strategic motives). They are evaluated negatively when they profit specific people (egoistic or stakeholder-driven motives). Similarly, in the field of place branding, we suggest that when targets are exposed to an ad for a place (nation, region, city), they potentially question the purpose of the elected decider at the origin of this practice, asking, 'Are they advocating the good of the place (nation, region, city) or seeking to be re-elected?' Thus, we posit that intent legitimacy helps explain attitudes towards place-branding strategies.

Consumers make attributions about tactics legitimacy when exposed to ads that advocate for a social cause. They use two dimensions to assess an advertiser's overall competency in persuasiveness: perceived effectiveness and perceived appropriateness of the persuasion tactics (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Consumer judgements of perceived effectiveness relate to whether the advertiser's actions seem likely to produce psychological effects that strongly affect behaviours in favour of the advocated cause. Consumer judgements of perceived appropriateness pertain to whether the advertiser's tactics seem to be moral or acceptable in accordance with social norms (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Legitimacy is based on the evaluation of techniques and procedures (Scott & Meyer, 1991). Therefore, it is necessary to understand to what extent the communication strategy chosen by the advertiser is perceived as serving the cause. Consumers are led to think about why the advertiser has created the ad in a particular fashion. In the case of place branding, we propose that tactics legitimacy refers to the capacity of advertising campaign to serve national, regional or city interests.

Practice legitimacy relates to the congruence between the advertiser and perceived attention-getting tactics, with regard to the past history of practices used by the advertiser.

Consumers perceive a persuasion attempt based on all messages delivered on the same topic; past experiences with the advertising becomes part of the process of attribution (Friestad & Wright, 1994). The very idea of judging the legitimacy of an advertisement implies a comparison between the advertisement and the norms accepted by a given society. These norms develop over time and evolve with advertising practices. This concept is consistent with Dowling and Pfeffer (1975), who assert that legitimacy stems from congruence between the organization and its cultural environment. It therefore seems necessary to appraise an advertisement's legitimacy by considering the firm's past actions and, more generally, the communications habits of all corporations on a given topic. Because place branding is a recently developed field, we suggest that practice legitimacy is not strong for these kinds of practices. Creation and advertising of a place brand is not yet common; thus, we argue that the practice of place branding is not yet legitimate in the sense of advertising legitimacy discussed here.

1.3. Research context

Since January 2014, the French government has engaged in territorial reform to redraw regional boundaries and responsibilities as of 1 January 2016. As a consequence, French regions have been in the limelight; whether at family outings, business meetings or political debates, they are at the heart of heated social debates. France consists of twenty-two regions, each one competing against the others to attract investments, firms, business visitors, talents, tourists and (new) residents. On 25 November 2014, the National Assembly approved a new map reducing the number of French regions from twenty-two to thirteen 'super-regions'. This reform will fundamentally change the regional landscape, and present new challenges to French public management. Place branding is one of the many tools used by public management to develop places economically and socially. In the last 10 years, French local authorities have registered more than 3,000 brands (region-, city- and local product brands; Stassi, 2011).

A region brand extends beyond the promotion of tourism, to function like a master brand, drawing on the principles of IMC. It is not just a destination brand or a brand to promote industry; this master brand encompasses all domains associated with a region-branding strategy (the 'supporting pillars' of Ikuta et al. (2007)). France's public administration envisions region branding as a combination of several activities, undertaken to promote a consistent image of the place according to IMC campaigns. Public-sector agencies (e.g. Regional Council, Regional Tourism Board, Regional Economic Development Agency,

Regional Revitalization Agency, Regional Cultural Agency) thus seek to coordinate their efforts and collaborate with private-sector organizations (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, local firms).

Auvergne, located at the centre of France, has four departments[5]: the Allier in the north, the central Puy-de-Dôme and the Cantal and Haute-Loire in the south. Residents of Auvergne share a strong place attachment for their region. Visual symbols of Auvergne include its volcanic park (the Puy-de-Dôme volcano is considered 'the rallying landmark site'), the ensuing mineral springs and hydrotherapy, typical villages and Clermont-Ferrand (Auvergne Tourism Board, 2011). Local products associated with the region are cheese platters, mineral water, tires and cutlery (Auvergne Tourism Board, 2011). Auvergne is perceived by external stakeholders as amongst the top French regions (Chamard et al., 2013). Even though it is one of the most visited regions that elicit the richest and mostly positive associations, the region remains misunderstood (Auvergne Tourism Board, 2011). Auvergne has a strong place identity (Auvergne Tourism Board, 2011) and image (Chamard et al., 2013) but suffers from several clichés (e.g. cold, rural, traditional, isolated, backwards) that hinder its economic development. This troubled brand image, coupled with competition from other places (known as the 'French place-branding race' initiated by Brittany, the first French region to create a region brand; Houllier-Guibert, 2012), prompted regional councillors of Auvergne to call in 2009 for place-branding proposals and bids that would use a repositioning strategy to build a sustainable region brand. A consulting firm developed a branding strategy based on the identity of Auvergne, drawing on both the representational/symbolic and the functional/physical attributes of the region. As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the logo of the brand associates physical aspects of the region (volcanoes) and several symbols (colours and signs) with name recall, to achieve the region brand's positioning. The 'Auvergne Your New World' brand ('Auvergne Nouveau Monde', ANM) launched in 2011. The brand is now the responsibility of the ANM association,[6] with the financial support of regional officials. The practice reflected toponymic commodification (Medway & Warnaby, 2014), which consists of branding the Auvergne region using the place name. That is, the place brand juxtaposes the toponym ('Auvergne') with a baseline ('Your New World') in an attempt to resonate with internal stakeholders and convey the new brand positioning and values. However, residents did not participate in the place-branding process; this lack of citizen participation raises

[5] Equivalent to a UK county.

[6] The ANM association is a hybrid (public–private) organization, whose board is composed of representatives from the Regional Council and Regional Development Agencies (economics, culture, tourism, new populations), as well as firms, associations, regional authorities and institutions (e.g. universities, Regional Chamber of Commerce).

concerns about the legitimacy of the organization's actions, especially because residents of Auvergne strongly identify with their region (Auvergne Tourism Board, 2011). We thus analyse how they perceived the application of marketing practices to a public good.

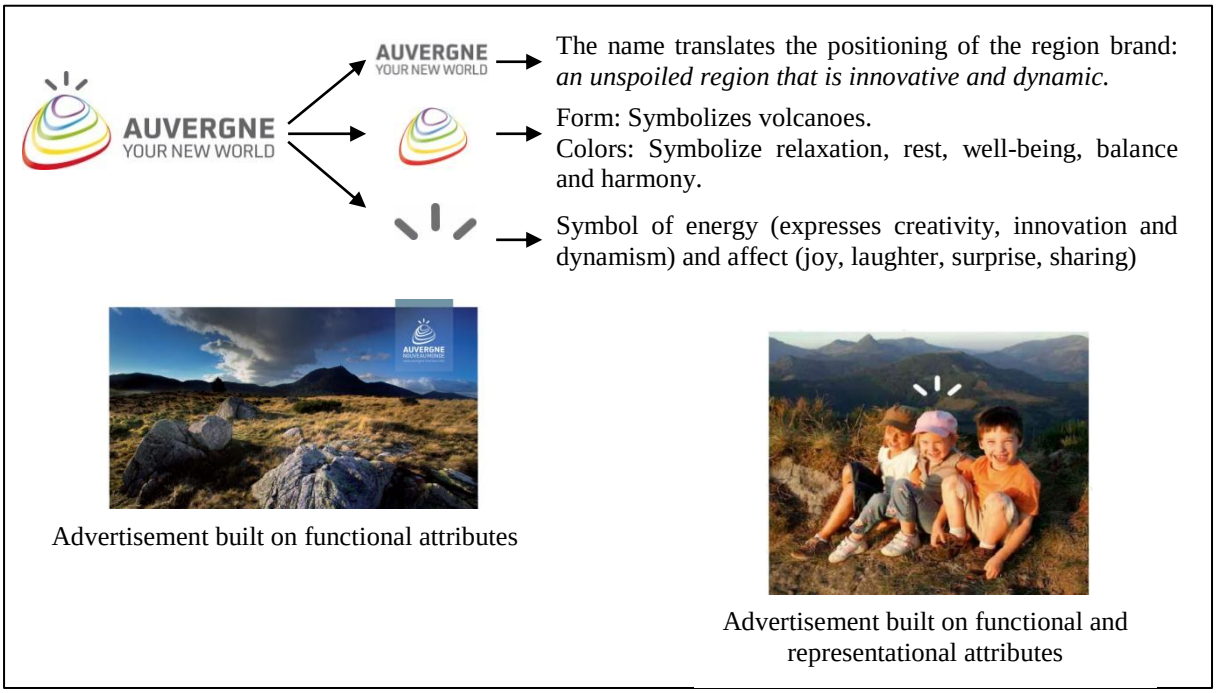


Figure 1.1: Representational and functional brand attributes of ANM.

1.4. Hypotheses development: Exploratory study

Our conceptual model is built on an exploratory study that shows place-branding activities raise concerns about advertising legitimacy in the context of region branding. We carried out an exploratory study to understand how the residents of a region perceive the practice of place branding and whether they have legitimacy concerns about it. Our study focused on the residents of the French region of Auvergne.

1.4.1. Method

We conducted two semi-structured focus group sessions at Clermont University (Appendix A.1), in which participants were asked to (a) discuss the Auvergne region (both before and after the presentation of the region brand), (b) indicate their familiarity with the brand, 'Auvergne Your New World', and identify the associations it triggered in their minds and (c) describe their attitudes to such a marketing practice, thereby answering implicit questions such as 'Why does the region use this ad?' (intent legitimacy); 'To what extent does the advertising campaign serve the regional interest?' (tactics legitimacy); and 'Is it coherent for

the Auvergne region to launch a place brand considering its past image and communications techniques?' (practice legitimacy).

Each focus group lasted approximately two hours. Focus Group No. 1 (F1) gathered ten Auvergne residents born in the region; Focus Group No. 2 (F2) consisted of ten Auvergne residents born outside Auvergne (Appendix A.2). We used projected tests (Appendix A.3) and images (the ANM brand logo and three fictitious ads displaying the logo in the contexts of industry, tourism, and local product promotion; Appendices A.4–A.7) to enrich the discussion. Ensuing discussions were recorded on both audio and video, and subsequently transcribed. Two researchers familiar with the place-branding and legitimacy domains used the qualitative data analysis software program NVivo10 to code all focus group data and analyse the content; this approach enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings (Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Marteau, 1997). Cohen's *kappa* coefficients were K = 92.74 per cent (Focus Group No. 1) and K = 91.97 per cent (Focus Group No. 2), suggesting the coder agreement is acceptable (Neuendorf, 2002).

1.4.2. Results

Both focus groups provided similar results: participants raised legitimacy concerns about the region brand's promotional actions. Participants in F1 had never heard of the brand 'Auvergne Your New World'; two participants in F2 had heard of the brand name, but had no idea of what it entailed:

> *I've seen things about ANM… now if you ask me what the brand is about, I am unable to define it. Then again, I am also unable to put a logo on it. So I know the name, but I have no specific idea about what it is about. (R1, F2)*

We adopted a deductive (aka. theoretical) coding approach that was grounded on our literature review on place branding and legitimacy theory, theoretical framework on place-branding legitimacy and interview guide. Both coders narrowed their coding on the participants' judgements of the place brand itself, irrespective of evaluations made on (a) the Auvergne region as a whole, (b) general beliefs (e.g. 'Development, if need be, is useful and good provided that it is under control.'; R7, F1), and (c) the content of the fictitious ads that was irrelevant to the place brand (e.g. evaluations of the ad's font, such as its lack of people).

This approach led to 431 nodes[7] (F1: 242 references versus F2: 189 references), grouped into three thematic codes: intent, practice and tactics legitimacies (Table 1.1). Therefore, residents questioned the three dimensions of advertising legitimacy in the context of a region brand. Participants expressed themselves the most (250 references) on matters associated with the techniques and procedures they perceived to be behind the marketing communications of the region brand (aka. tactics legitimacy); this could be related to the fact residents were not involved in the creation of the place brand. Interestingly, participants succinctly questioned the tactics legitimacy of place brand managers' actions in relation to attracting tourists; the mention was brief (eight references) and generally positive. This result may pertain to participants perceiving region-branding actions as more relevant to attract this target group or to the fact destination marketing has been practised for a long time by destination marketing organizations (DMO), place consumers getting used to this type of place marketing actions. Consistent with our reasoning, practice legitimacy elicited the least references, certainly because the place-branding practice is in its infancy in France.

Table 1.1: Hierarchical tree node structure.

Nodes	*References*	
	Focus Group No. 1	*Focus Group No. 2*
Intent legitimacy		
A place brand to attract firms	9	10
A place brand to attract new residents	0	1
A place brand to attract talents	1	0
A place brand to attract tourists	9	6
A place brand to promote local products	13	4
Perceptions of residents as to the impacts a place brand may have on them and their lives	35	19
Untargeted place brand and actions, by whom, what purposes (e.g. image and development)	11	24
Practice legitimacy	32	7
Tactics legitimacy		
Capacity of ANM campaign to promote local products	22	15
Capacity of ANM campaign to serve the interests of firms	4	15
Capacity of ANM campaign to serve the interests of residents	30	6
Capacity of ANM campaign to serve the interests of tourists	2	6
Gap between place brand positioning and place reality	18	17
Opinions of residents on the place brand's logo	56	59

Our qualitative data also emphasized the relationship between the dimensions of advertising legitimacy, such that intent and tactics legitimacies share more references than practice legitimacy and the other dimensions (Table 1.2). Tactics and practice legitimacies

[7] A node that was coded by only one coder amounted for one reference. A node that was coded by both coders was equivalent to one reference as well.

have nineteen common references from which emerge four ideas; the main idea consists of twelve verbatim quotations.

Table 1.2: Shared references between advertising legitimacy dimensions.

Advertising legitimacy dimensions	*Shared references*	*Verbatim quotations*
Tactics and intent legitimacies	24	I think it [the region brand and its name] is a matter of generations. Personally, I certainly could [identify myself with the ANM region brand]. (R9, F1) I see it [the region brand] more as wishful thinking in the ambition to restore the image of Auvergne and give a good opinion. (R4, F2)
Tactics and practice legitimacies	19	It [the region brand] makes me think of something launched by the Regional Council. (R9, F1)
Intent, tactics and practice legitimacies	3	[The brand name] is a bit much. 'Auvergne Your New World', compared with all the prejudices I have about the region, and those I could live, ANM doesn't really match with Auvergne. Again, I don't know their intentions and objectives. It's too marketing for me. (R7, F2) Actually, I find this idea of transforming a place or a region into a mere product kind of hard to grasp… all that stuff gives us the impression that they are dispossessing it from us, and that they are making a product out of it and then a brand, and after that they sell it to others. I do not know if [the branding approach] will cause problems, or even if it went well in [another French region]. (R1, F1)

1.4.2.1. Intent legitimacy

Participants questioned the intention of ANM's advertising campaign to serve regional interests. Residents of Auvergne who had been born in the region were defiant towards the region's branding approach. They noted that they saw the region more as a destination that they want to keep to themselves and feared attracting too many (unwanted) tourists and organizations. They also worried that the efforts might backfire if ANM fails, such that Auvergne would become a no-man's land. They expressed concern that ANM would strip them of their identity:

> *A region like ours with strong roots, people might see it as[…]won't it break with what we people are? (R1, F1)*

1.4.2.2. Intent and tactics legitimacies

It appears that intent and tactics legitimacies are intertwined. Participants linked the expected results of region branding with their evaluation of the techniques and procedures perceived to be behind the marketing communications.

> *If they launch 'Auvergne Your New World' and after that there is nothing, we will look like idiots. Then I wonder if the advertising campaign is not going to make useless noise instead of enhancing what already exists. (R10, F1)*

Participants expressed themselves on the logo of the ANM brand (Table 1.1), particularly to decry its poor execution and give improvement ideas for a better impact on residents and external stakeholders. Participants felt competent to evaluate the logo of the region brand and committed to model it on the values of Auvergne and its residents. In that sense, they questioned the legitimacy of the Auvergne region branding. However, Auvergne is a special cultural case: place brand managers took actions to re-position its image from a traditional place to a dynamic one without empowering residents in the place-branding process. Therefore, this particular result is contextual; it was not included in the conceptual model since it was not reproducible.

The ANM brand and logo triggered few positive associations, and they were poorly understood by the participants, who struggled to define the targets of the region brand. Even after they viewed the ANM logo and the fictitious ads, they were unclear about whether it was a destination brand, a brand targeted to residents and investors or a brand intended to promote local products. They regarded the scope of the branding to be too broad and indicated that it needed to adapt its communications and visual triggers (logo, slogans) to specific targets. They felt that the brand was more suitable for tourism than for promoting local products.

Yet ANM communications are not specifically targeted to residents of Auvergne, which might explain, at least partly, why the region brand is viewed with such caution by the twenty residents who contributed to our exploratory study. Two quotes highlight this point:

> *People should perceive [the region brand], but we need to feel it too. It needs to work on both sides. We should recognize ourselves [in the region brand]. If we see each other in the brand, we could sell things and help in making others perceive them. (R4, F1)*

> *First, we would have to accept [the ANM brand] in order for others to accept it too. Otherwise, if people come and say 'I have something ANM', [I'd answer], 'I do not care, for I have a Puy-de-Dôme thing, for I have something from ASM' [the*

> *Auvergne rugby union club]: things that we actually own. Then, we will not know what these guys are talking about and they will think 'Who are those idiots?' So there will be a gap and it won't work. (R9, F1)*

As these quotes illustrate, the communication to residents is insufficient. In line with recent literature on the importance of stakeholder involvement in the place-branding process, our participants expressed the need for (and their willingness to enter into) a continuous dialogue with place brand managers to build a genuine, successful place brand that they could fully embrace, in their role as brand ambassadors.

The interviewees also understood that Auvergne wants to distinguish itself from other French regions to be more attractive, but they questioned whether the ANM brand and Auvergne were telling the same story. Rather, the participants perceived a gap between the ANM brand positioning and the reality of the place, as well as between their own needs and the place brand's objectives. In the case of Auvergne and the ANM brand, the brand's substance seemed vague, with a mismatch between the core identity and reality. Most participants were sceptical about the brand's 'New World' promise:

> [The brand name] is a bit much. 'Auvergne Your New World', compared with all the prejudices I have about the region, and those I could live, ANM doesn't really match with Auvergne. Again, I don't know their intentions and objectives. (R7, F2)

The notion of co-branding also was hard for them to comprehend in a place-branding context:

> *I think it needs a bit of legitimacy. First the logo is not very well-known. To associate it with Volvic, which is a fairly well-known brand, it does not incite me as a consumer to buy Volvic products just because there is the 'New World' logo. If the logo were removed, I already am motivated to buy Volvic products. (R5, F2)*

> *If it is a brand that targets companies that want to be promoted and to be part of a place, I may say, why not. It'd still be a bit hard for companies to do so, because if there is a brand, there is necessarily a marketing communications approach. It'd still be difficult for them to juxtapose what they do with Auvergne and the ANM place brand. It's going to be hard, because the company would have to communicate about itself, what it does, [its link with] the terminology used in the ANM brand and, if it is a global brand, how to use it. (R1, F2)*

1.4.2.3. Practice legitimacy

Participants cited examples of French place brands and expressed concerns about their implementation and success, but this discussion was the first time they had heard about creating a brand for the Auvergne region.

> *I do not know if [the branding approach] will cause problems, or even if it went well in [another French region]. (R1, F1)*

Participants perceived the marketing practice as a mere commercial approach, made to appear as if it originated from the region:

> *I think it [the ANM region brand] is very institutional, because you look at what they have done for Auvergne Cola, that is something not at all from Auvergne, so to sell it, they tried to make a difference by adding a few words in the Auvergne dialect[…]Actually, I find this idea of transforming a place or a region into a mere product kind of hard to grasp… all that stuff gives us the impression that they are dispossessing it from us, and that they are making a product out of it and then a brand, and after that they sell it to others. (R1, F1)*

> *It [the ANM region brand] is too marketing for me. (R7, F2)*

1.4.3. Discussion

Our results confirm 'place boosterism' (Ward, 1998) has been practised for a long time, but place branding is still a new practice that place brand managers 'little understand or apply effectively' (Hankinson, 2001, p. 127). The ANM brand suffers from problematic toponymic commodification (Medway & Warnaby, 2014). Also, our exploratory study confirms residents should be, and want to be, included in the place-branding process.

It is essential for a place to differentiate itself through unique brand identity (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Rainisto, 2003) to create added value for place consumers. However, brand identity and brand (re)positioning are not sufficient to make a place brand. Brand image, or how the brand is perceived, is also necessary (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). The body of literature on place branding clearly expresses how 'living the brand' (Aronczyk, 2008) is critical for a brand to exist.

In light of the exploratory study's results, we conclude region branding raises legitimacy questions from the residents of the place. Who is at the origin of this initiative?; Why did they choose this brand promise?; Why didn't they keep the regional authority's logo

instead of creating a new one?; What is the purpose of this approach?; Will our region stay ours after the launch and eventual success of the brand? More specifically, the findings question the three dimensions of advertising legitimacy: intent legitimacy ('[The ANM brand was launched] to give Auvergne a new image'; R7, F1), tactics legitimacy ('[ANM's communication] lacks Auvergne. It appears modern, but it lacks Auvergne'; R1, F1) and practice legitimacy ('[the ANM region brand] is too marketing for me'; R7, F2).

Notably, neither the cost of creating and maintaining the region brand nor the political side of this approach were mentioned, perhaps because the participants were too concerned by the potential loss of their regional identity to raise these practical questions. Instead, participants focused on problems pertaining to the toponymic commodification (Medway & Warnaby, 2014) of Auvergne, such as ANM's origin, promise, marketing objectives, perceived effectiveness, and perceived appropriateness of the persuasion tactics, as well as the eventual loss of regional identity and conflicts of interests (e.g. human, material and natural resources).

1.5. Conceptual model and hypotheses

Our first exploratory study showed place branding raises questions about the three dimensions of advertising legitimacy in the context of region branding. Therefore, we propose that the advertising legitimacy scale developed in the field of cause-related marketing also applies to place branding.

Place branding can have several purposes. Our research investigates the advertising legitimacy of each pillar of region branding, including 'promotion of investment and industry', 'human resources and residence', 'tourism and exchange' and 'increased sales of local products' (Ikuta et al., 2007). Amongst these four pillars, we distinguish two groups: place promotion, which promotes the place to various targets (firms, residents and tourists; Kotler et al., 1993) and local product promotion, which aims to increase the sales of products with a 'made in' claim.

On the one hand, place promotion is highly developed and well practised (Ward, 1998). Places around the world, such as regions, have been claiming their qualities for a long time. Such persuasion attempts sometimes encounter resident resistance issues. For instance, the Nebraska Tourism Commission came up in 2014 with a new marketing campaign to promote the state of Nebraska, NE (USA) to visitors through the slogan 'Visit Nebraska. Visit Nice'. The state has changed its slogan numerous times (more than 10) since the 1960s, but Nebraskans never got rid of one enduring slogan dating from 1971: 'Nebraska… The Good

Life'. It was strongly defended by residents who wanted the slogan to still be part of the new marketing campaign (Hammel, 2014).

On the other hand, promoting products through a region brand is new to the French context. The core idea is that local product promotion enhances the attractiveness of the region, and the attractiveness of the region enhances that of local products. This win–win relationship between the attractiveness of products and that of places naturally exists in places that provide products with strong, clearly visible ties to the place (e.g. product names that use the toponym, such as Parma ham or Dijon mustard), but it is not as obvious for place branding in general. Region brands seek to encourage stakeholders to collaborate to reach a common goal that serves their own interests: the promotion of the region. Public and private organizations work together to encourage the economic development of the place—and particularly to attract or keep talent and investors. This partnership might materialize through the use of co-branding to promote local products. For example, a firm and a place brand organization might launch a marketing communications campaign together so that their marketing efforts work in synergy, and each can benefit from greater exposure. Although the practice of co-branding (e.g. associating product brands with region brands) may be a well-known strategy for marketers, it is not so obvious for place consumers, as demonstrated by our focus groups. For some residents of a given place, using the name of the place to promote its products duplicates commercial activities, and leads to questions about the role of public authorities.

Consequently, our first hypothesis addresses the legitimacy of place branding according to the promotional purpose.

H_1: Place promotion is more legitimate than local product promotion.

Legitimacy judgement is regarded as a belief about the brand. The more positive this belief (i.e. the more legitimate the place-branding approach is perceived to be), the greater the behavioural intentions should be towards the brand or promoted behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Previous studies on perceived advertising legitimacy (Capelli & Sabadie, 2005, 2006) have focused on the impact of advertising legitimacy on consumer behavioural intentions towards the brand. They stress the direct and positive impact of legitimacy on favourable behaviours and affective attitudes towards the advertised brand. Moreover, in line with the persuasion knowledge model of Friestad and Wright (1994), we support the proposition that perceived advertising legitimacy is a condition for an ad to convince its audience to adopt a claimed behaviour. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H_2: Advertising legitimacy mediates the link between the type of place promotion (place promotion versus local product promotion) and residents' favourable behavioural intentions towards their place.

1.6. Method

We carried out a quantitative study to address our research hypotheses. We implemented an experimental design manipulating the promoted pillars of region branding. Five cases were distinguished: place promotion for three targets (firms–residents–tourists) and local product promotion for two kinds of brands (brand associated very closely to the region–brand not associated with a given place).

1.6.1. Experimental device

We used ads in our research because we specifically question whether the advertising legitimacy scale developed in the context of cause-related marketing can also apply to the Auvergne region and its residents.

To check ecological validity, we used an actual ANM ad that was generic and displayed thirty facts about the region (Appendix A.8). We also created a series of fictitious images, targeted to firms, residents, or tourists, or encouraging local product promotion (Appendices A.9–A.13). To reduce halo effect, we created two images for local product promotion, using two French water companies, Volvic, well known as an Auvergne company with sources inside the region's volcanoes, and Cristaline, a company that markets multiple waters around the world. We chose water companies because the ANM brand is based on functional attributes such as water.

To counter possible biases, we controlled several elements of the fictitious images; the background, font and ANM logo (colour, size) were the same for each ad. In accordance with feedback from focus groups, we chose a background that depicted activity, vastness, green space, volcanoes and water.

1.6.2. Sampling

Questionnaires were administered face-to-face to 750 Auvergne residents. The study criterion required that respondents be residents of Auvergne (whether or not they were born in the region). We ensured the representative nature of the sample by using the quota method (gender, age, department of residence). Regional statistics were drawn from a study conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (2012).

A total of 48.3 per cent of the respondents were male. The mean age was of 46.1 years (15–86 years). All respondents resided in the Auvergne region: 23.6 per cent in Allier, 12.1 per cent in Cantal, 16.2 per cent in Haute-Loire and 48.1 per cent in Puy-de-Dôme. On average, respondents had been living in the Auvergne region for 31.4 years.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts (Appendix A.14). The three dimensions of advertising legitimacy were tested on an actual ANM ad (no specific targets, promoting '30 reasons to love Auvergne'). Next, we assessed advertising legitimacy as a unidimensional concept for each pillar of region branding, using the fictitious ads (Table 1.3), whilst simultaneously assessing residents' behavioural intentions towards the region brand's promoted behaviour.

Items and images were submitted to a randomization, resulting in five sets of questionnaires with one image shared throughout all sets of questionnaires (real ad), and two images assigned randomly to the respondents (fictitious ads). Data were processed using the SPSS statistical software package.

Table 1.3: Sample characteristics – 'place promotion' and 'local product promotion'.

Characteristics	*Place promotion*			*Local product promotion*		*Statistics of the Auvergne region*
	Promotion of industry	Promotion towards residents	Promotion of tourism	Volvic (Auvergne water brand)	Cristaline (French water brand)	
Sample size	299	295	292	297	298	-
Age (years)						
[15-25[	16.0	16.7	16.7	17.0	17.0	13.3
[25-35[	12.0	12.3	13.3	13.0	12.0	12.7
[35-45[	17.7	16.7	15.3	15.7	18.0	15.4
[45-55[	14.3	16.0	15.0	15.3	15.3	16.6
[55-65[	17.0	15.6	17.0	16.7	15.7	17.2
[65-86]	23.0	22.7	22.7	22.3	22.0	24.8
Average time spent in the region (years)	33.5	30.0	30.6	31.2	31.3	-
Gender (%)						
Female	52.3	51.7	51.0	51.7	52.0	52.0
Male	47.7	48.3	49.0	48.3	48.0	48.0
Department of residence (%)						
Allier	23.7	23.1	24.1	24.0	23.3	25.6
Cantal	12.0	12.0	12.4	12.3	12.0	11.2
Haute-Loire	16.0	16.1	16.1	16.3	16.3	16.3
Puy-de-Dôme	48.3	48.8	47.5	47.3	48.3	46.9

1.6.3. Measures

First, we adapted the measures of advertising legitimacy (Capelli & Sabadie, 2006). We assessed advertising legitimacy as a three-dimensional concept on a 7-point Osgood scale (Table 1.4). We also adopted a shorter unidimensional measure of advertising legitimacy (Table 1.6), using a 5-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree; 5: strongly agree), to compare the five ads used in our experiment.

Second, behavioural intentions towards the region brand were assessed using three items on a 5-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree; 5: strongly agree; Table 1.8). The first item related to word-of-mouth intent. The second item related to the intent to stay in the region. The third item depended on the given purpose of each randomized ad.

1.7. Analysis and results

First, we tested the three-dimensional conceptualization of place-branding legitimacy using a factorial analysis. Second, we led an ANOVA to identify any significant differences in terms of legitimacy amongst the five groups of manipulated advertisements regarding region-branding activities. Third, we proceeded with a regression analysis to investigate the contribution of legitimacy to behavioural intentions towards the region after exposure to the advertising campaign.

1.7.1. Advertising legitimacy: From cause-related marketing to place branding

We proceeded to an exploratory factorial analysis with principal components analysis (PCA) using an Oblimin rotation (Table 1.4). Using both the scree test criteria and eigenvalue superior than one, we confirmed that the three dimensions of the advertising legitimacy model associated with cause-related marketing also apply to place branding in the context of a region. Results showed the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was above .50 (.768) with a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .001$). We checked each scale's reliability using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha > .70$). To address the potential for common method variance (CMV), we used Harman's single-factor test, which led to a PCA with items related to advertising legitimacy and behavioural intentions (variance explained by the single factor = 28 per cent < 50 per cent).

The first dimension, tactics legitimacy, explained 38.042 per cent of the variance. This shows that the main dimension of region-branding legitimacy relates to the perceived effectiveness of the campaign. The factor captured three items.

The second dimension regrouped all three items of intent legitimacy and accounted for 19.578 per cent of the variance. This result shows that when residents are exposed to the message, they perceive the advertiser's purpose in ordering the region-branding campaign.

The third dimension described practice legitimacy and explained 13.178 per cent of the variance. We deleted two items due to their weak quality of representation: 'Those who paid for this ad use marketing tools well' and 'Those who paid for this ad typically use marketing'. These two items are similar in the sense that they both relate clearly to marketing practice. It thus seems that respondents had difficulties understanding how marketing applies to public policies. The final factor consisted of two items: 'I'm surprised we should advertise a region' and 'Those who paid for this ad have been taking action for the Auvergne region for a long time'. When practice legitimacy is applied to place branding, it seems to deal mainly with place consumers' habit of being exposed to place-branding practices over time.

Table 1.4: Place-branding legitimacy – A three-dimensional measure.

Construct	*Cronbach's alpha*	*Communalities*	*Factor loadings*
Advertising legitimacy variable: Three-dimensional concept			
Tactics legitimacy *(Variance extracted: 38.042%)*	.852		
- This ad is relevant.		.799	.873
- This ad is informative.		.750	.848
- This ad is effective.		.720	.828
Intent legitimacy *(Variance extracted: 19.578%)*	.808		
- Those who paid for this ad take the opportunity to improve their image.		.734	.859
- Those who paid for this ad only seek to serve their interests.		.693	.814
- Those who paid for this ad just want to be noticed.		.714	.794
Practice legitimacy *(Variance extracted: 13.178%)*			
- I'm surprised we should advertise a region.		.661	.763
- Those who paid for this ad have been taking action for the Auvergne region for a long time.		.593	–.690

We conclude that the advertising legitimacy concept developed for cause-related marketing applies to place branding. The same dimensions of advertising legitimacy are emphasized in the context of the 'Auvergne Your New World' region brand. We show that residents question the legitimacy of the actions adopted by public managers.

We grounded our analysis in extant literature on advertising legitimacy. The dimensionality of the concept and the associated measurement scale originate from seminal work by Weber (1978). Our paper confirmed this same dimensionality: intent, tactics, and practice legitimacies are dimensions of the same concept. Consequently, we assume that those dimensions correlate; this correlation in turn indicates that they relate to the same concept.

Statistically, we find support for this view using an Oblimin rotation, and this choice implies a correlation between dimensions. The correlation matrix (Table 1.5) reflects the three dimensions of advertising legitimacy. As it shows, tactics and intent legitimacies are significantly linked (r = -.349, p < .01), in that they represent two different dimensions of the same concept, and the links between practice legitimacy and the two other dimensions—tactics legitimacy (r = -.059, p < .05), intent legitimacy (r = .094, p < .01)—are significant but small.

Table 1.5: Pearson correlations of advertising legitimacy dimensions.

	Tactics legitimacy	*Intent legitimacy*	*Practice legitimacy*
Tactics legitimacy	1		
Intent legitimacy	–.349**	1	
Practice legitimacy	–.059*	.094**	1

** Correlation significant at the .01 level. * Correlation significant at the .05 level.

1.7.2. Place-branding legitimacy: Contingent on type of place promotion

In a second step, we assessed advertising legitimacy after exposure to the manipulated advertisements via a global dimension to simplify questionnaire administration. First, the PCA results showed the 5-item scale captured the advertising legitimacy concept (Table 1.6). Results showed the KMO value was above .50 (.853) with a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity (p < .001). The factor explained 65.820 per cent of the variance (α = .869). We confirmed that the one-dimensional advertising legitimacy concept applies to place branding when the place is the region.

Second, we proceeded to a one-way ANOVA to compare the effects of the manipulated advertisements on the advertising legitimacy concept, depending on the given purpose of the advertising campaign. We then compared the advertising legitimacy means for the five fictitious ads (Table 1.7).

We found a significant effect of the manipulated advertisements on advertising legitimacy for the two conditions (place promotion versus local product promotion) [F(1, 1,479) = 38.518, p < .001]. We found region branding is significantly more legitimate for place promotion than for regional product promotion ($M_{\text{place promotion}}$ = 3.69 > $M_{\text{local product promotion}}$ = 3.47; p < .001).

More precisely, we found a significant effect of the manipulated advertisements on advertising legitimacy for the five conditions (firms, residents, tourists, Volvic, and Cristaline) [F(4, 1,476) = 11.458, p < .001]. *Post-hoc* comparisons using the Bonferroni test

indicated the mean scores for the firms condition (M_{firms} = 3.69 > M_{Volvic} = 3.40; p < .001), residents condition ($M_{residents}$ = 3.73 > M_{Volvic} = 3.40; p < .001), and tourists condition ($M_{tourists}$ = 3.66 > M_{Volvic} = 3.40; p < .001) were significantly higher than the Volvic condition. The mean scores for the firms and tourists conditions were higher than the Cristaline condition but the differences were not significant (p > .05). The mean score for the residents condition was significantly higher than the Cristaline condition ($M_{residents}$ = 3.73 > $M_{Cristaline}$ = 3.54; p < .01).

These results suggest the advertising legitimacy of the region brand was higher when presented in an advertisement targeting firms, residents or tourists, than when it was associated with one of the two water brands. This effect was significant for the Volvic brand (headquartered in the Auvergne region) and not systematic for the Cristaline brand, although it ranked as expected. We found that region branding is significantly more legitimate for place promotion than for regional product promotion. These results validate H_1.

Table 1.6: Place-branding legitimacy – A one-dimensional measure.

Construct	*Cronbach's alpha*	*Communalities*	*Factor loadings*
Advertising legitimacy variable: One-dimensional concept			
Advertising legitimacy *(Variance extracted: 65.820%)*	.869		
- Logical		.725	.851
- Coherent		.727	.853
- Normal		.707	.841
- Acceptable		.610	.781
- Moral		.522	.722

Table 1.7: Effects of manipulated advertisements on advertising legitimacy depending on type of place promotion.

	Manipulated advertisements	*Advertising legitimacy means*
ANM logo associated with water brands	Volvic (mineral water brand from Auvergne)	3.40^{frt}
	Cristaline (French mineral water brand)	3.54^{r}
ANM logo promoting place	Firms	3.69^{v}
	Residents	3.73^{vc}
	Tourists	3.66^{v}

Letters in italics indicate a significant difference (p < .01) with the Bonferroni test.
v = Volvic; c = Cristaline; f = firms; r = residents; t = tourists.

1.7.3. The mediating role of advertising legitimacy

Factorial analysis (Table 1.8) allowed us to use an overall score of behavioural intentions towards the region (α = .77) as the dependent variable for testing H_2 regarding the mediating

effect of advertising legitimacy on the relationship between the type of place promotion (local product promotion = 0, place promotion = 1) and favourable behavioural intentions towards the region. Therefore, we implemented the procedure suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004), using the PROCESS macro (version 2.13, released 26 September 2014) for SPSS (model 4; Hayes, 2013). Results are detailed in Table 1.9.

On the one hand, we confirm H_1 using the aggregate score of advertising legitimacy: the direct effect of the type of place promotion on advertising legitimacy is significantly positive (.2306, $p < .001$). On the other hand, our results validate H_2 by emphasizing an indirect-only mediation (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010) of advertising legitimacy on the relationship between the type of place promotion and behavioural intentions. Results show the mean indirect effect from the bootstrap analysis is positive and significant ($\beta = .0995$), with $p < .05$ [.0662; .1358]. The direct effect ($\beta = -.0777$) is not significant ($p > .05$).

In that sense, our findings show that the more the presence of the ANM logo is perceived to be legitimate, the more it implies the favourable behaviour presented in the message. Moreover, the superiority of place promotion over local product promotion in terms of behavioural intentions in favour of the region depends on the perceived advertising legitimacy. Consequently, residents assess public actions along the three dimensions of advertising legitimacy, and their judgements have impacts on their behavioural intentions in response to messages from public managers. Our findings illustrate that the acceptance of the region-branding process by the residents is therefore crucial for the success of this strategy.

Table 1.8: Scale of measurement for behavioural intentions in favour of the region.

Construct	*Cronbach's alpha*	*Communalities*	*Factor loadings*
Behavioural intentions in favour of the region			
Behavioural intentions *(Variance extracted: 69.46%)*	.77		
- If the opportunity arises, I will speak positively of the Auvergne region.		.710	.843
- If possible, I will keep living in Auvergne.		.683	.831
- The given purpose of each randomized ads[a]		.690	.827

[a]The third item is a score of all the following items: 'This ad makes firms want to set themselves up in the Auvergne region', 'This ad makes me want to keep living in the Auvergne region', 'This ad makes me want to visit the Auvergne region', 'This ad makes me want to buy Volvic water', and 'This ad makes me want to buy Cristaline water'.

Table 1.9: Mediating role of advertising legitimacy in the relationship between manipulated ads and behavioural intentions towards the region.

Effects	*Coeff.*	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Direct effect				
Manipulated ads → Behavioural intentions	−.0777	.0418	−1.8559	.0637
Mediated effects				
Manipulated ads → Advertising legitimacy	.2306	.0374	6.1710	.0000
Advertising legitimacy → Behavioural intentions	.4315	.0291	14.8137	.0000

1.8. Discussion and conclusions

We investigated the advertising legitimacy of a place brand in the context of region branding by addressing the following research questions: What is the advertising legitimacy of a place brand as perceived by the residents? How does it impact behavioural intentions towards the place?

1.8.1. Contributions

The contribution of our study to the extant literature and practice is sixfold.

1.8.1.1. Bridging commercial branding and place branding

Our research contributes to the field of place branding. Few quantitative studies have been carried out to enrich place-branding literature (e.g. Gertner, 2011); there has been a particular lack of focus at the regional level (Ikuta et al., 2007). We highlight similarities between commercial branding and place branding in duplicating the concept of advertising legitimacy in the field of place branding. By doing so, we illustrate this concept is robust in terms of dimensionality and predictive validity across the two research fields. Thus, a strategic tool developed for commercial brands may contribute to place-branding strategy (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009; Hankinson, 2007, 2010b; Klijn et al., 2012; Trueman et al., 2004).

1.8.1.2. The importance of residents in place-branding literature

We focused on the residents of a place as they are one of place branding's most important groups of stakeholders (e.g. Braun et al., 2013); their role of 'living the brand' (Aronczyk, 2008) is a determinant of the success of place-branding strategy.

Our results answer the call for a better understanding of stakeholders' roles (Hanna & Rowley, 2008; Kavaratzis, 2012) by confirming that a region brand is perceived by place

residents as being more legitimate when it targets firms, residents, or tourists than when it promotes local products. We also confirm advertising legitimacy mediates the relationship between exposure to a region-promoting ad and its efficiency. This result suggests the advertising legitimacy of place-branding activities is a necessary condition for the success of the strategy. Thus, we empirically confirm previous studies supporting the integration of residents in the place brand–building process (e.g. Aronczyk, 2008; Braun et al., 2013; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). We find evidence for the strategic importance of co-creating the brand with the stakeholders, particularly with residents.

1.8.1.3. Place branding for place promotion rather than local product promotion

From a managerial point of view, we emphasize that place branding is more adapted to place promotion than to the promotion of local products. The advertising legitimacy of a place brand is greater when it is used to attract firms, residents, or tourists than when it is used to promote local products. From an internal perspective, such attempts to commodify Auvergne by associating the place brand name with local products have been met with scepticism. Perhaps residents are wary that firms will take advantage of the region brand, seeing it as a form of piggybacking on the strengths of a public good. Consequently, we suggest that place brand managers focus on place promotion rather than local product promotion, if they want residents' approval. Places such as nations, cities or regions should be branded as a whole, not just as a product origin label.

1.8.1.4. A method to assess the legitimacy of place brands

Our research contributes to place-branding organizations, including consulting firms and local authorities, by providing a method to evaluate the legitimacy of place brands and enhance the effectiveness of their promotional actions. By using our participatory approach, place brand managers can select promotional actions that will unite residents of the promoted place. This participatory tool integrates residents into the place-branding process and allows them to play the three roles of integrated parts of the place brand, ambassadors and citizens/voters (Braun et al., 2013).

Promotional actions should be coherent with the targets in order to be perceived as legitimate and fall into a long-term perspective. In that sense, our results are in accordance with the place-branding paradigm (Kavaratzis, 2004) that considers place promotion to be far

more than a short-term marketing campaign or event (Muñiz Martinez, 2012). The shift from place marketing to place branding insists on the creation and promotion of a place brand that is centred on place identity.

1.8.1.5. A tool for assessing ex post facto democratic legitimacy

Public administration literature encourages public managers to listen to citizens and seek their participation, to achieve a redistribution of power that challenges the status quo (Arnstein, 1969). We propose a tool to help public managers address this issue, by investigating residents' legitimacy judgements of place-branding actions. More broadly, our study contributes to reinforce the need for place-branding organizations to seek legitimacy. Because they include both public and private actors, their actions suffer from a lack of democratic legitimacy. The legitimacy judgements of place-branding actions occur *ex post facto* and separate from votes by citizens. Our results emphasize that this *ex post facto* democratic legitimacy conditions the impact of place-branding actions. In this sense, the process is a new expression of democratic legitimacy, adapted to new forms of organizations that mix public and private actors.

1.8.1.6. A positioning grounded on the common elements amongst stakeholders

Skinner (2005) also has identified some key challenges associated with a coordinated IMC approach for place brands. Particularly, she notes inconsistencies in the marketing messages of key destination brand stakeholders. Our results, obtained by taking an IMC view on local product promotion, are in line with those findings and generalize the analysis to place branding. When we interviewed the head of the ANM association, he complained that some stakeholders promoted their products by sending stereotypical marketing messages (e.g. old-fashioned place), incongruent with the region brand's values (e.g. dynamic, innovative place). In that case, local product promotion was hindering the attractiveness of the region. Such brand behaviours might offer a partial explanation of our results, in that the positioning of the product brands and the place brand rarely are identical. The role of place brand managers then is to convince stakeholders to work together to send marketing messages that are congruent with the place brand's values (Hynes, Caemmerer, Martin, & Masters, 2014), whether by taking a role as a marketing consultant (e.g. the place brand is not explicitly mentioned in the firm's marketing messages) or by serving as a partner (e.g. co-branding). We suggest that place brand managers should build a positioning that is grounded on the common elements

amongst stakeholders, so that the place brand can fulfil its role as an IMC tool. Such a salient positioning can serve the interests of all stakeholders; for example, a strong positioning would attract tourists, appeal to firms and align residents. We encourage public managers who want to engage in place branding to introduce *ex ante* legitimacy by empowering residents to participate in every stage of the place-branding process, starting with its creation. Doing so likely can enhance the legitimacy of their future actions. We thus echo prior literature that has argued for a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to place branding (e.g. Braun et al., 2013; Medway, Swanson, Delpy Neirotti, Pasquinelli, & Zenker, 2015; Medway & Warnaby, 2014; Warnaby & Medway, 2013).

1.8.2. Limitations and future research

Our research has several limitations. First, it is based on the declarative assessments of a given region's residents. Although we have combined interviews and questionnaires, we cannot rule out the existence of a declarative bias. This limitation could be overcome by using implicit measures of attitude to further investigate internal validity.

Second, our quantitative data are cross-sectional and from a common source; this implies a potential risk of CMV. We used Harman's single-factor test, the most widely used CMV technique (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, the reliability of this CMV test is contested (Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Third, the Auvergne region selected for the study is a special cultural case. This region is much anchored in tradition and the 'Auvergne Your New World' campaign is designed to change this classical positioning. In this context, the issue of region-branding legitimacy is more salient than it may be for other regions and places. Further research is needed to compare place-branding legitimacy according to the gap between existing positioning and targeted positioning. Such studies would allow investigation of the external validity of the present research.

Fourth, we selected only five cases in our experimental design. We did not differentiate between leisure and business visitors, or firms and investors, and we did not target new residents. These are all targets that may influence perceptions of place-branding legitimacy; they may represent separate research avenues.

Fifth, we chose two fictitious images to depict co-branding between water companies and the ANM region brand, as the representation of local product promotions, because water is strongly associated with the Auvergne region (Auvergne Tourism Board, 2011). We could have associated the ANM brand with another product not tied to the image of the region.

However, we believe place brand managers would be unlikely to associate their place brand with a product that is incongruent with their place image. Further research should test different levels of congruence between the place brand and the associated local products, to reveal the impact of these levels on place brand legitimacy and ultimately on marketing communications efficiency.

Sixth, we evaluated a place brand per se. Our research focuses on how residents perceive a place brand's actions, irrespective of the mechanisms underlying the process for implementing the place branding. However, the legitimacy of place branding could depend on the way it is implemented; for example, if a public action is co-produced to a greater degree with residents, it might be perceived as more legitimate and reinforce their perceived ownership of the place brand. Researchers might investigate various forms of meaningful participation by residents (e.g. asking citizens to vote on their place brand, using blog discussions as springboards for crowdsourcing ideas; Ferro and Molinari (2009)) and assess the extent to which those forms influence brand ownership, legitimacy and efficiency differently.

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1.10. List of Tables

Table 1.1: Hierarchical tree node structure. 59
Table 1.2: Shared references between advertising legitimacy dimensions. 60
Table 1.3: Sample characteristics – 'place promotion' and 'local product promotion'. 67
Table 1.4: Place-branding legitimacy – A three-dimensional measure. 69
Table 1.5: Pearson correlations of advertising legitimacy dimensions. 70
Table 1.6: Place-branding legitimacy – A one-dimensional measure. 71
Table 1.7: Effects of manipulated advertisements on advertising legitimacy depending on type of place promotion. 71
Table 1.8: Scale of measurement for behavioural intentions in favour of the region. 72
Table 1.9: Mediating role of advertising legitimacy in the relationship between manipulated ads and behavioural intentions towards the region. 73

1.11. List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Representational and functional brand attributes of ANM. 57

1.12. List of Appendices

A.1: Semi-directive interview guide for the focus group sessions. 223
A.2: Sample characteristics of Focus Groups No. 1 and No. 2. 225
A.3: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 1). 226
A.4: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 2). 227
A.5: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Firms). 228
A.6: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Tourists). 229
A.7: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Local products). 230
A.8: 'Auvergne Your New World' ad presenting '30 reasons to love Auvergne'. 231
A.9: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting tourists. 232
A.10: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting (new) residents. 233
A.11: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting firms. 234
A.12: Local product promotion (Volvic) – Fictitious advertisement promoting local products. 235
A.13: Local product promotion (Cristaline) – Fictitious advertisement promoting local products. 236
A.14: Questionnaire administered to residents. 237

CHAPTER 2.

REGION BRAND COMMUNITIES

SPRINGBOARDS FOR INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose—To understand to what extent place brand managers use community marketing strategies to operationalize the integrated marketing communications (IMC) role of their place brand.

Design/methodology/approach—Undertaking content analysis of web sites, French 'integrated' region brands are described according to an observation grid. Using in-depth interview data from representatives of two region brands, the attitudes and behaviours of twenty place brand managers are then investigated.

Findings—A developed typology of French 'integrated' region brands distinguishes between 'communal region brands' and 'IMC-orientated region brands'. Then, results show two categories of 'communal region brands': to the pretext of IMC, one region brand community rests on terminal values whilst the other is based on instrumental values.

Research limitations—To diminish the potential influence of the place brands' governance mode on the results, future studies could distinguish the members of the place brand according to their use and/or contribution to the region brand image. The two chosen regions have positive images: further research should examine the role of brand communities in the development of 'integrated' place brands in places with different images. The creation of the place brands under study adopted a top-down approach: further research could analyse place brands that were co-created at the very beginning of brand creation. The sample size is relatively small and future research should determine the generalizability of the findings. The research focused on members involved in the place-branding process: it would be valuable to additionally analyse the place brand communities developed for (or by) the general public, and eventually the interplay between both brand communities.

Originality/Value—The brand community literature has focused on product-orientated brand communities developed around specialty (e.g. Harley Davidson) and convenience products (e.g. Nutella). The paper deals with a particular product, aka. a place, showing that place brands such as 'Alsace' or 'Auvergne Your New World' draw on communal arguments in order to function like a master brand.

RÉSUMÉ

Objectif—Cet article vise à comprendre dans quelle mesure les gestionnaires de marques territoires ont recours à des stratégies de marketing communautaire afin d'implémenter une communication marketing intégrée (CMI).

Méthode—Dans un premier temps, et dans le contexte français, les marques régions « intégrées » ont été décrites suivant une grille d'observation à partir de données recueillies sur leurs sites internet. Dans un deuxième temps, vingt gestionnaires de marques territoires, représentants de deux marques régions, ont participé à des entretiens individuels approfondis de manière à étudier leurs attitudes et comportements envers la marque territoire.

Résultats—Une typologie propose de distinguer les « marques régions communautaires » des « marques régions 'intégrées' ». Les résultats montrent également deux catégories de « marques régions communautaires », fondées sur des valeurs instrumentales pour l'une et terminales pour l'autre.

Limites—Il serait intéressant de distinguer les membres partenaires de la marque territoire en fonction de leur utilisation et/ou de leur contribution à l'image de la marque région, de façon à réduire l'influence du mode de gouvernance sur les résultats. Également, les deux régions étudiées ont des images positives : les recherches futures devraient examiner le rôle des communautés de marque dans le développement de marques territoires « intégrées » en s'intéressant à des territoires dont les images diffèrent de celles étudiées dans la présente recherche. Les marques territoires présentées dans cette étude ont été créées selon une approche *top-down* : cette recherche pourrait être reproduite au niveau des marques territoires qui ont suivi une approche *bottom-up* dès l'amont de la démarche de création. Puis, la taille de l'échantillon est relativement faible : les recherches à venir devraient démontrer la généralisation des résultats. Enfin, cette recherche s'est concentrée sur la communauté de marque territoire constituée des membres impliqués dans le développement stratégique de la marque : il serait utile d'analyser les communautés de marques territoires développées pour (ou par) le grand public, et éventuellement d'étudier l'interaction entre les deux.

Originalité—La littérature sur les communautés de marques a mis l'accent sur les communautés développées autour de produits de niche ou de luxe (par ex., Harley Davidson) ainsi que des produits de grande consommation (par ex., Nutella). Cet article traite d'un produit particulier : le territoire ; il montre que les marques territoires telles qu'« Alsace » ou « Auvergne Nouveau Monde » utilisent des arguments communautaires afin de faciliter la coordination des différents secteurs d'activités sur le territoire, leur permettant ainsi d'implémenter leur rôle d'outils de CMI.

2.1. Introduction

‘The idea is to federate through the shared brand. The individual may very well apply to join the brand, and incorporate a sign of recognition of the brand on their business cards for example. It can go that far, up to that level: purely individual. Or, it may be at the firm level. So, the shared brand is completely open… The idea is to ensure that as many people as possible, whether individuals or firms, highlight the Alsatian origin of their qualities or their products.’—This quote, from a member of the French region brand of Alsace, emphasizes that the ‘Alsace’ region brand relies on a brand community of persons, who are residents (natural) and firms (moral). One of the critical distinctions that the place-branding process entails is the multitude of diverse stakeholder groups, whose interests are often competing, such that place brand managers must use an integrated marketing communications (IMC) approach. The member’s degree of involvement in the brand community has been identified as a lever explaining member’s loyalty towards the brand (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008) and consequently the member’s capacity to recommend the brand (McAlexander, Kim, & Roberts, 2003). Thus, the way place brand managers have structured the place brand community should impact its efficiency, in terms of promotion by its members. Hence, the article draws a parallel between place brands and commercial brands through the observation of the community marketing strategies developed by places to manage the relationships and coordination of their stakeholders, asking: To what extent do place brand managers use community marketing strategies to operationalize the integrated marketing communications role of the place brand?

First, this research contributes to the field of community marketing literature, stressing that place brand community’s particularities have to be taken into account. Brand community marketing focuses on consumer’s groups dedicated to a brand, and emphasizes how the relationship with the group enriches the individual-brand relationship (Shang, Chen, & Liao, 2006). Because place brands deal with a particular object that is shared by essence with stakeholders, who are also integral to the pace, internal stakeholders are particularly involved in this community marketing: They incarnate the brand. In this sense, place brands may be considered as an extreme case of ‘public brand’ managed by and for the public who is involved with it (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). Living in a place is more than adopting a brand: It means being an actor of the brand (Braun et al., 2013). In this sense, the community is not only grounded on shared values, but on a vision of common interest. As they arrive to community management, place brand managers have then to determine the members they

have to integrate to the community and how to optimize this participation in balancing between values and self-interest.

Second, this research contributes to the field of integrated marketing communications in emphasizing the role of community management in this integration process. Indeed, in the case of place brands, communication is shared not only between professionals (e.g. destination marketing organizations, chambers of commerce) but between all the stakeholders involved in a so called place brand community. Using community management for implementing IMC has been identified as a relevant strategy since it enriches brand associations via anthropomorphism (Gabrielli & Baghi, 2016). In the place brand case, community management seems to be a natural way to proceed because the brand is incarnated by individuals themselves: The question is not yet to enrich brand associations but more to make it convergent amongst those people integral to the brand to ensure a clear positioning. This research highlights various community marketing strategies for enhancing place brand efficiency, based on managerial practices in the French region brand context.

The article proceeds as follows: The review of literature is presented in Section 2.2, and addresses integrated marketing communications and community marketing so as to show the link with the place-branding process. In Section 2.3, an observation grid is used to study the French 'integrated' region brands, and results in a typology. The research question is assessed in Section 2.4, using data gathered from in-depth interviews amongst place brand managers, thereby describing the major community branding strategies used by French 'integrated' region brands. At last, results are discussed in Section 2.5, and limitations are considered with suggestions for further research.

2.2. Theoretical framework

2.2.1. Place branding: An integrated marketing communications approach

The emergence of integrated marketing communications (IMC) principles started in the mid-1990s, with a tactical approach to IMC orientated towards 'combin[ing], integrat[ing], and synergiz[ing] elements of the communication mix' (Kitchen et al., 2004, p. 20) to convey consistent messages and images to consumers (Schultz & Kitchen, 1997). Today, the literature urges practitioners to move away from this basic tactical conception, to adopt a financial and strategic integration approach (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000).

Researchers have not reached consensus on the definition of the concept (Eagle, Kitchen, & Bulmer, 2007), and mainly study the phenomenon through the point-of-view of advertising agencies (Kitchen et al., 2004).

When IMC is considered in a place-branding context, the multiplicity and diversity of place stakeholders, who have divergent visions and expectations with regard to the place brand (Merrilees et al., 2012; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013), complicates IMC implementation (Anholt, 2004). Skinner (2005) notably identifies some key challenges associated with a coordinated IMC approach for place brands. Particularly, she notes inconsistencies in the marketing messages of key destination brand stakeholders.

Place-branding strategy that draws on IMC principles demands an appropriate degree of inter-organizational coordination across public local agencies and collaborations with private organizations (Dinnie et al., 2010). An 'integrated' place brand extends beyond the promotion of tourism, to function like a master brand, drawing on the principles of IMC. It is not just a destination brand or a brand to promote industry; this master brand encompasses all domains associated with place-branding strategy (the 'supporting pillars' of Ikuta et al. (2007)).

2.2.2. Brand community: From mainstream marketing to place branding

Brand community was introduced by Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001), who proposed to address community in the context of consumer behaviour to the extent that '[brand] is the tie that binds' (p. 426). As such, members of a brand community are looking for relationships more than utilitarian satisfaction derived from the consumption of the brand.

Brand community is a social structure and can be described with seven criteria (Jallat et al., 2006): number of members, whole composition, degree of interaction and communication, common objectives and centre of interests, norms and shared values, feeling of solidarity amongst members, and permanency of the whole. Brand community is often used interchangeably with other concepts that denote alikeness, such as *brand tribe*, and *sub-culture*. The paper doesn't discriminate between the alike concepts; it therefore adopts the approach of Anglo-Saxon researchers to brand community literature (Cova & Pace, 2006, p. 1088).

Brand community is defined as 'any group of people that possess a common interest in a specific brand and create a parallel social universe (subculture) rife with its own myths, values, rituals, vocabulary and hierarchy' (Cova & Pace, 2006, p. 1089). In particular, three components are inherent to brand community (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001):

- *Consciousness of kind (or 'we-ness')*, i.e. the sense of belonging amongst members in a community. This is the most important quality of brand community. The brand is co-constructed as a result of the 'consumer-brand-consumer' relationship triad. In that sense, the brand is a socially constructed object (Perret & Séville, 2007), born from the interactions between actors, and acquiring stability through a consensus within the brand community.
- *Shared rituals and traditions*, i.e. the social processes that encourage consciousness of kind and brand meaning.
- *Moral responsibility*, i.e. the shared sense of obligation to the community and its members.

Therefore, it seems like brand community is relevant to the place-branding context to the extent that place results from relationships amongst place stakeholders, who share values, traditions, history, emotional bonds, etc.

Kozinets (1999) categorizes four types of community members (Kozinets, 1999), according to a 2x2 matrix that crosses 'social ties to community' (weak versus strong) with 'self-centrality of consumption centrality' (low versus high): *tourists* are not socially bound to the community and are vaguely interested in the consumption of the brand; *minglers* have strong social ties but are little interested in the consumption activity, whilst *devotees* have little attachment to the community but are very much interested in the consumption activity, and *insiders* have strong social ties and strong interest in the consumption activity. In particular, members may join a brand community for four motives (Amstrong & Hagel, 1996), that relate to transaction, interest (seek interaction), fantasy (want to escape from reality and to belong to a parallel world where they can give free rein to their imagination), or relationship (seek sense of belonging, contacts and socialization in the act of consumption).

Brand community has an impact on each component of brand equity (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001), i.e. perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations. Interestingly, brand community also fosters innovation ideas, such that there is co-creation in a strategic sense besides operational co-creation and brand meanings (Capelli & Dantas, 2012).

Managers can decide to use extensive or intensive tribal strategies (Cova & Cova, 2002; Cova & Roncaglio, 1999). An extensive tribal strategy is for a firm to create a community around its products: The social relationship between community members exists due to the brand. On the contrary, with an intensive tribal strategy, a firm uses an already existing community to market its products: The firm, through its commercial offers, support pre-

existing links between consumers, notably with ritual artefacts such as objects (cult objects), clothes (ritual costumes), place (cult places and/or places of historical significance), words (magical words) and images (idols, icons). In return, the community legitimates the brand offer for its targets.

Members' engagement towards the community has been identified as a determinant of their loyalty towards the brand (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Jang et al., 2008). This engagement is linked to member's participation level in the community: At the core of brand community are regulars, whilst occasional participants are part of the periphery.

Using community management for implementing IMC has been identified as a relevant strategy since it enriches brand associations via anthropomorphism (Gabrielli & Baghi, 2016). In the context of place branding, the two-fold purpose is to attract external stakeholders and enhance the sense of place for internal stakeholders by promoting a single consistent image. However, one of the critical distinctions that the place-branding process entails is the multitude of diverse stakeholder groups, whose interests are often competing, such that place brand managers must use an IMC approach. The place brand becomes an IMC tool that encourages effective relationships between the brand and stakeholders, to the extent that each stakeholder has a relationship with the place brand and the relationships between the stakeholders lie in the place brand, which ensures a consistent and coherent place image. Therefore, the authors suggest that it is pertinent to use brand community to unite stakeholders, which then becomes a springboard for integrating the place brand's communications.

2.3. Content analysis of web sites: A typology of French region brands

First, this study uses secondary sources, in the form of data gathered on the web sites of place brands that describe the region brands implemented by the French regions, so as to come to a typology.

2.3.1. Method

The sample was selected based on the criteria that the place brand was (a) at the region spatial level, and (b) envisioned like an integrated marketing communications (IMC) tool that covers the region's business sectors (economics, culture, tourism, new populations, etc.). Thereby, the authors identified three French 'integrated' region brands: 'Alsace', 'Auvergne Your New World' ('Auvergne Nouveau Monde', ANM) and 'Bretagne'. The region brands respectively

represent the regions of Alsace, Auvergne and Brittany. Alsace is located at the east of France, whereas Bretagne is located at the west and Auvergne at the centre.

Data collection was done by the authors through direct observation of web sites according to two observation grids: On the one hand, the outset of the region-branding approach is detailed for each region brand, with clarification pertaining to their date of creation and values, the originator of the initiative, the method that was used, as well as the organization in charge of the region brand. On the other hand, a description of the region brands is provided, which outlines the region brand communities and the brand elements.

2.3.2. Results

The observation grids (Tables 2.1 and 2.2) show similarities between the three 'integrated' region brands: (1) The origin of the place-branding initiative emanates from the Regional Council, which is also the main source of funding of the region brand; (2) A single consultancy firm guided the region brand–building process, following an approach that rests on two basic concepts: The place brand is envisioned like a 'shared brand', the building of which depends on the strategic analyses of the place identity and attractiveness. Thus, the foundations of the region brand rest on communal values around which the various regional actors should rally. A place brand guide then shapes the boundaries of its use by the actors of the region (e.g. the brand elements). In addition, the consultancy firm chose to follow a top-down approach to place-branding creation; (3) The region brand is the responsibility of an association with a governance mode that involves the region's socio-economic actors but excludes citizens, such that there is no direct integration of residents in the place brand–building process; (4) The region brand is envisioned like an IMC tool; (5) The region brand name consists of the toponym so as to capitalize on the place image and on a name that is already 'branded' in the minds of place consumers; (6) A brand community, named 'brand partners', is created by the region brand. It unites organizations from public and private sectors, and (mostly[8]) excludes natural persons; and (7) The logo and other symbols can only be used by the partners of the region brand.

The study of the 'Alsace', ANM and 'Bretagne' brands also highlights differences in the governance and management of the region brands: (1) The status of the brand owner

[8] It is ambiguous whether natural persons can be members of the brand community, and their number is not specified on the region brand's web sites and documents. Indeed, the directory of partners, available online, only lists private organizations. It is also interesting to note that only one participant of the exploratory study presented in Section 2.4, talked about natural persons being inside the community of 'brand partners'.

differs. ‘Alsace’ and ‘Bretagne’ are managed by their Regional Development Agency, whereas an independent association is in charge of the ANM brand; (2) The President of the association is a regional councillor in the case of ‘Alsace’ whilst a businessman has authority over ‘Bretagne’ and ANM; (3) Membership to the ‘Alsace’ and ‘Bretagne’ brands doesn’t entitle brand partners to participation at the association’s General Assembly. ANM adopted the opposite approach; (4) The number of brand partners is quite similar between ANM and ‘Bretagne’. ‘Alsace’ really stands out with a positive difference of more than 1,000 partners; (5) The application to become a brand partner of ‘Bretagne’ follows a two-step approach: the candidate must participate in a meeting, then complete a time-consuming and demanding application. Membership must be approved by a review committee, and lasts three years. ANM seems to offer the easiest application procedure, and lasts one year; (6) ANM is the only region brand to charge membership; (7) ANM and ‘Bretagne’ plan recurring events to encourage interactions between brand partners. ‘Bretagne’ program three events, one of which is charged, and no on and off events. ‘Alsace’ chose to offer on and off events. Thus, ANM appears to emphasize interactions between members the most; (8) ‘Alsace’ and ANM built a second level of brand community, which is fuelled by natural persons (or citizens) who become brand ambassadors. Sign-in is easy, open to everyone and free. The ‘Alsace’ brand created a logo for its ‘Club of Alsace Ambassadors’ for use by the members, but ANM did not. ANM schedules recurring events, and encourages interaction between both levels of brand community, i.e. between brand partners and brand ambassadors. The number of brand ambassadors differs significantly. Alsace unites more citizens, with 27,883 brand ambassadors against 4,452 for ANM. ‘Bretagne’ solely focuses on the public and private sector organizations; and (9) ‘Alsace’ and ‘Bretagne’ don’t deny partners the use of the brand logo on packaging, though the request is reviewed by a committee. In contrast, ANM doesn’t allow its brand partners this opportunity. In addition, ‘Alsace’ and ANM provide partners with ‘ready for use’ brand elements, whereas ‘Bretagne’ did not implement this initiative.

In summary, one consulting firm answered the place-branding proposals and bids of the French regions looking for the creation of a place brand. Its offer is constructed such that it is a ‘kit-form solution’ to the building of a place brand. The strategic analyses were developed for a place that is looked upon as a convenience product and uses traditional marketing methods (e.g. quantitative analysis using questionnaires) and tools (e.g. SWOT—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to define the place’s identity and attractiveness. This standard method to place brand creation led to homogeneous solutions (Table 2.1). However,

in light of the differences that arise following the content analysis, there is evidence of brand ownership by the place brand managers.

Table 2.1: Observation grid: Creation of the French region brands.

Region brand	*'Alsace'*	*'Auvergne Your New World'*	*'Bretagne'*
Date of creation	March 2012	October 2011	January 2011
Use of toponym	Alsace	Auvergne	Bretagne
Values	Excellence, humanism, dynamism, sharing and pragmatism	Idealism, nature, sharing, excellence and creativity	Commitment, sense of community, openness and imagination
Web site	http://www.marque-alsace.fr/	http://www.auvergne-nouveau-monde.fr/qui-sommes-nous	http://www.marque-bretagne.fr/a-brand-for-bretagne-region
Originator	Regional Council	- Regional Council - Regional Tourism Agency	- Regional Council - Bretagne Development & Innovation Agency - Regional Tourism Agency
Consulting firm[9]	Same	Same	Same
Method used	(1) Identity strategic analysis (2) Attractiveness strategic analysis (3) 'Shared brand' strategy (4) Brand elements	(1) Identity strategic analysis (2) Attractiveness strategic analysis (3) 'Shared brand' strategy (4) Brand elements	(1) Identity strategic analysis (2) Attractiveness strategic analysis (3) 'Shared brand' strategy (4) Brand elements
Integration of brand community	Top-down approach: integration after the brand creation	Top-down approach: integration after the brand creation	Top-down approach: integration after the brand creation
Organization in charge of the region brand	Access Alsace (Regional Development Agency that mixes economic and tourism issues)	- Auvergne Your New World association - With the support of the four Regional Development agencies (economics, culture, tourism, new populations)	- Bretagne Development & Innovation Agency (Regional Development Agency that mixes economic and innovation issues) - With the support of the Regional Tourism Agency
Status	Association	Association	Association
Governance mode	Excludes residents	Excludes residents	Excludes residents
	Public and private organizations	Public and private organizations	Public and private organizations
Main funding	Region	Region	Region
President	Chairman of the Regional Council	Businessman	Businessman
General manager (GM)	Former GM of the Regional Tourism Agency	Former GM of the Regional Tourism Agency	Former GM of the Regional Innovation Agency
Web site	http://www.alsace.com/en/	http://www.auvergne-nouveau-monde.fr/espace-institutionnel	http://www.bdi.fr/serving-the-regional-economy

[9] Consulting firm involved in the place brand–building process.

Table 2.1: Observation grid: Creation of the French region brands—Continued.

Region brand	*'Alsace'*	*'Auvergne Your New World'*	*'Bretagne'*
An IMC-driven purpose	'Access Alsace was created […] to boost the region's competitiveness and raise its profile. It was based on a deep-rooted, shared desire to help economic, tourism, cultural and institutional stakeholders to recognise the level of excellence achieved in Alsace as well as the region's untapped potential.'	'The idea is to gather and mobilize all the actors involved in the attractiveness of Auvergne, in order to jointly promote and communicate.'	'This is a brand to be shared by all those private and public players—from the worlds of business, the arts, research, academia or sport—who wish to make reference to the region and its values in publicising and promoting their activities on the national and international scenes.'
Quotation reference	http://www.alsace.com/en/about/	http://www.auvergne.org/pourquoi-rejoindre-collectif-auvergne	http://www.marque-bretagne.fr/a-brand-for-bretagne-region

Table 2.2: Observation grid: Overview of French region brand communities.

Region brand	*'Alsace'*	*'Auvergne Your New World'*	*'Bretagne'*
Brand Partners			
Status of members	- Organizations from public and private sectors - Natural persons, although their membership appears marginal[10]	- Organizations from public and private sectors - No residents	- Organizations from public and private sectors - No residents
Link between membership and governance	Membership doesn't give the automatic right to participate in General Assembly (GA)	Membership gives the automatic right to GA	Membership doesn't give the automatic right to GA
Number	> 2,000	> 700	664
Application process	- Online application (not time-consuming, no enquiry about motivations to become a member) - Applicants then are asked to explain how they will use the brand elements - The region brand accepts or refuses the application - Duration not mentioned	- Online application (not time-consuming, one enquiry about motivations) - Membership lasts 1 year	- Obligation to participate in a workshop - Online application (time-consuming, in-depth enquiries about motivations) - Under review of the Brand Committee - Membership lasts 3 years, renewable 1 year
Free or Fee	Free	Fee (subscription)	Free
Programmed interaction by region brand	No recurring event dedicated to partners, but several on and off events	Members of Executive Committee and Board (once a month), GA (once a year), New World Workshop [Ateliers du Nouveau Monde] and several on and off events	Workshop (charged) [Ateliers Partenaires], Partner Meetings [Rencontres Partenaires], Networking Meetings [Rencontres Networking Partenaires]

[10] The public list of members (partners) solely consists of socio-economic organizations.

Table 2.2: Observation grid: Overview of French region brand communities—Continued.

Region brand	*'Alsace'*	*'Auvergne Your New World'*	*'Bretagne'*
Brand ambassadors			
Name	'Club of Alsace Ambassadors'	'New World Pioneers'	-
Status	Natural persons Open to everyone	Natural persons Open to everyone	-
Link between application and governance	No link	No link	-
Number[11]	27,883	4,452	-
Application process	Sign-in online (< 1 minute)	Sign-in online (< 1 minute)	-
Free or Fee	Free	Free	-
Logo (to be used by ambassadors)	Ambassadeur Alsace	No	-
Programmed interaction by region brand	No recurring event dedicated to ambassadors, but several on and off events	#UPHEROS (social event scheduled once a month), Pioneers Committee (once a month) and several on and off events	-
Web site	www.ambassadeurs-alsace.com	http://www.auvergne-nouveau-monde.fr/	-
Programmed interaction between brand communities	-	Once every three months	
Logo	Alsace	AUVERGNE YOUR NEW WORLD	BRETAGNE
Use	Partners	Partners	Partners
Use on packaging	Under committee review	No	Under committee review

[11] Updated on 14 July 2017.

Table 2.2: Observation grid: Overview of French region brand communities—Continued.

Region brand	*'Alsace'*	*'Auvergne Your New World'*	*'Bretagne'*
Other brand symbols	'A heart'[12]	'3 exclamations' 'contour lines' 'Ariane thread' 'Speech bubble'[13]	Suggestions are made but concrete tools are not provided
Use	Partners Possibility to integrate the 'A heart' symbol in their logo	Partners Possiblity to integrate the '3 exclamations' symbol in their logo	Open to everyone
Baseline	imaginalsace		
Use	Partners	-	

2.3.3. Discussion

In conclusion, the region brands were created as a result of a top-down approach. The identity and attractiveness strategic analyses are based on a very basic and common mainstream marketing tool—SWOT—that aims at analysing the region's marketing environment. Consultations with actors from the public and private sectors were done after the creation of the region brand, and aimed at explaining its purpose and use so as to encourage membership by regional actors. Thus, this differs from co-creation.

Now, the 'integrated' region brands use a communal approach intended for public and private sector organizations, which become brand partners of the region brand. This brand community was created mainly to facilitate the coordination of the region's sectors (Table 2.1). Therefore, it would seem that community marketing is used for an IMC purpose.

Brand partners of 'Alsace' particularly adapt their firms' marketing communications to include brand elements, such as the logo (after a committee review), and are especially careful to use the 'A heart' symbol in their own logo when it is possible (i.e. presence of the letter 'a' in the logo so as to substitute the letter with the symbol). Their interactions are few in that the region brand doesn't organize regular meetings. It mainly gathers brand partners for fairs.

[12] This symbol is shaped like a pretzel, which is a traditional pastry from the Alsace region.

[13] 'Speech bubble': '[Insert proof] Yes, New World is Auvergne'.

Their membership doesn't give right to the association's General Assembly, such that they don't have a strategic role in the region brand–building process. Therefore, brand partners of 'Alsace' may be place brand managers who co-create the brand at the operational level.

In Auvergne, the brand partners meet regularly thanks to recurring events, and Board and/or General Assembly meetings. They can use ANM brand elements; for example, they can integrate the '3 exclamations' symbol into their logos. Thus, they may assume the role of place brand managers who potentially co-create the region brand at the strategic and operational levels.

Membership to 'Bretagne' doesn't give brand partners right to the General Assembly. The first level of community gathers firms, which meet several times a year. In addition, the region brand authorizes partners to use the logo after authorization by a committee, and provides suggestions on how to use the brand; however, the region brand doesn't offer 'ready to use' brand elements. Interestingly, the web sites don't mention whether several symbols can be integrated directly to the logos of the partners. Symbols like the 'horizontal black and white stripes'—the flag of Brittany, called 'Gwenn-ha-du', consists of nine horizontal stripes alternating black and white, with several ermines—would be easy to include in the logos, and would contribute to enhance the visibility of the brand, especially considering the region brand's logo uses this striped symbol. Therefore, it appears that the degree of co-creation between the region brand and brand partners is mainly operational-orientated; however, its impact is reduced because the tools are not ready for use.

Then, the 'Alsace' and ANM brands, respectively with 'Club of Alsace Ambassadors' and 'New World Pioneers', created a second level of brand community for adoption by the mainstream (natural persons who don't need to reside in the region, nor they need to originate from it). Brand ambassadors don't have access to the brand elements and are excluded from the governance of the associations. Citizens thus play an indirect role in the region brand–building process, which consists in enhancing brand awareness and/or living the brand. 'Bretagne' did not form this second level of brand community with citizens, although the region brand could leverage the prominent Breton diaspora.

Interestingly, citizens are not integrated in the region brand–building process whereas the public and private actors co-create the region brand, thus forming the first level of brand community. As such, residents are not empowered to have some degree of control over the direction of the region brands; this goes against the promoted 'shared brand' vision of the region brands, which should follow a democratic and participative approach to place branding. It is however necessary to enquire about the region brands' definitions of 'citizens':

Do they consider that firms and/or elected officials be citizens? On the one hand, firms are run by particular citizens with very specific priorities. On the other hand, there is democratic legitimacy when elected officials make the decisions for the residents; however, in the case of the region brands, the elected officials are selected members, such that there is no longer democratic legitimacy (Luhmann, 2001). Also, whilst elected representatives should represent citizens' interests, they can be driven by self-centred motives (e.g. being re-elected). It is therefore fundamental to integrate citizens into the region brand governance.

Finally, 'Alsace' is the region brand that is claimed by the most persons, as is attested by the number of partners and ambassadors who congregate around the brand; therefore, it is considered to be the most efficient in this research. This may be explained, in part, by the creation and extensive use of the 'A heart' element, shaped like a meaningful regional symbol—the pretzel. On the contrary, the '3 exclamations' symbol of ANM has only meanings for the members of the brand community, in so far as it represents quite generic values (e.g. dynamism). As such, in terms of region brand efficiency (e.g. contributing to brand awareness, increasing membership), its usefulness is compromised.

In conclusion, a typology emerges that distinguishes region brands according to their degree of communal orientation (Table 2.3): 'Alsace' and ANM are considered to be communal region brands, whereas 'Bretagne' is defined as an 'integrated' region brand to the extent that participation in the place-branding process is low, thereby implementing a top-down approach to place branding, whereas the other region brands endeavor to adopt a more bottom-up approach using community marketing.

Table 2.3: Typology of the French 'integrated' region brands.

Categories[a]	*Communal region brand*		*IMC-orientated region brand*
	'Alsace'	*'Auvergne Your New World'*	*'Bretagne'*
Creation of the place brand			
Approach	Top-down	Top-down	Top-down
Purpose	IMC tool	IMC tool	IMC tool
Organization in charge	Dependent from politics: local development agency, governance and funding	**Independent from politics, but main funding by region**	Dependent from politics: local development agency and funding
Governance	Excludes citizens	Excludes citizens	Excludes citizens

Table 2.3: Typology of the French 'integrated' region brands—Continued.

Categories[a]	*Communal region brand*		*IMC-orientated region brand*
	'Alsace'	*'Auvergne Your New World'*	*'Bretagne'*
First level of brand community (aka. brand partners)			
Status	**Mainly public and private organizations**	Public and private organizations	Public and private organizations
Link between membership and governance	No link with General Assembly (GA)	**Directly included in GA**	No link with GA
Membership			
- Completion	**Easy**	**Easy**	Two-step approach: time consuming and demanding
- Review of application	Committee review	-	Committee review
- Duration	**No time frame**	Time frame (1 year)	Time frame (3 years)
- Free or fee	**Free**	Fee	**Free**
Planned interactions between members by the region brand team	On and off events: disparate, mainly around commercial events	**Recurring as well as on and off events**	Recurring events (one with a fee) No mention of on and off events
Second level of brand community (aka. brand ambassadors)			-
Status	Citizens	Citizens	
Membership	Open to everyone	Open to everyone	
Free or fee	Free	Free	
Planned interactions between members by the region brand team	On and off events	**Recurring as well as on and off events**	
Implementation of brand elements			
Use of logo	Partners	Partners	
Use of logo on packaging	**Committee review**	No	
Possibility to integrate brand symbol in the member's logo	**'A heart' (partners)**	'3 exclamations' (partners)	
Use of brand symbols in member's marketing communications	Partners	Partners	
Logo ready for use by second level of community	**Yes**	No	
Planned interactions between levels of brand community	No	**Yes**	
Efficiency (# of members)			
Brand partners	+	−	
Brand ambassadors	++	− −	

[a] Words or symbols in bold mean that the approach is more pertinent compared with the practices of other region brands.

2.4. Exploratory study: Instrumental versus terminal value brand communities

This component of the study, qualitative in nature, was intended to provide insights into the extent by which place brand managers use community marketing strategies to operationalize the integrated marketing communications approach of the region brand.

2.4.1. Method

The authors used in-depth interviews to investigate the attitudes and behaviours of place brand managers towards their region brands. The 'Alsace' and 'Auvergne Your New World' region brands were chosen due to their clear willingness to build brand communities, as is attested by the two levels of brand community.

Place-branding efforts include both public and private actors, such that place brand managers are defined as any person (moral or natural) involved in the place brand–building process—as such, a place brand manager can be part of the staff in charge of place brand but can also be a member of the brand community to the extent it co-creates with the brand, at the strategic and/or operational levels. Consequently, in the present research, place brand managers are the region brand's team and brand partners.

2.4.1.1. Data collection

The population under study consists of the place brand managers involved in the 'Alsace' and ANM region brands. Participants were consulted based on two public lists available on (or computed thanks to) the website of the region brands[14]: 87 business representatives involved with the 'Alsace' brand were listed on their web site at the time of the study whilst 225 were part of the 'Auvergne Your New World' brand. According to the lists defined above, the participants were selected randomly.

We conducted semi-structured interviews over the telephone, in which participants were asked to (a) discuss the origin of the place-branding approach, (b) describe any evolutions the region brand went through, (c) indicate the desired audiences of the region brand as well as their degree of involvement in the place-branding process, and (d) define the 'shared brand' expression that is put forward by the region brand. The semi-structured interview guide (Appendix A.15) thereby offered the opportunity to identify emergent themes during the content analysis of the interviews.

[14] Lists available on: http://www.marque-alsace.fr/ ('Alsace' region brand), and http://www.auvergne-nouveau-monde.fr/espace-institutionnel ('Auvergne Your New World' region brand).

Interviews lasted an average of thirty minutes in duration, and were collected over a two-month period in 2014. The participants consisted of a sample of twenty individuals, from which eight were representatives of the 'Alsace' region brand and twelve of the ANM region brand (Table 2.4). Males represented 50% of the participants. The varied profiles of the participants attest that a representative sample of the population, in terms of gender, organization's status and degree of involvement, was not the intent of this exploratory study. The only requirement was that participants be partners of the ANM or 'Alsace' region brands.

Table 2.4: Sample characteristics.

Characteristics	*'Alsace' region brand*	*ANM region brand*
Sample	8	12
Gender		
Female	4	6
Male	4	6
Organization's status		
Region brand project manager	2	1
Institution	1	5
Firm	5	6
Degree of involvement (Institutions and firms)		
Member of Executive Committee and Board	-	6
Member of Board	-	3
Partner	6	2[a]

[a] The brand partners are invited to participate in the association's annual General Assembly.

2.4.1.2. Data analysis

The interviews were recorded, later transcribed and a thematic analysis was used to clarify the data using the qualitative data analysis software program NVivo10. The analysis of the interview data followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) guide to doing thematic analysis whereby the researchers engage into a six phase analysis: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. The researchers used an inductive approach to identify the themes within data; this way towards thematic analysis is 'data-driven' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84) to the extent that the researchers identify repeated patterns of meaning irrespective of their interests and knowledge in the domain. The authors reached saturation of the data.

2.4.2. Results

The inductive approach led to 810 nodes ('Alsace': 229 references versus 'Auvergne Your New World': 581 references), grouped into 9 thematic codes: motivations to become a partner of the region brand, membership, structure of brand community, use of the brand elements, 'we-ness' (Link supremacy), governance, perceived objectives of the creation of the region brand, perceived difficulties, and parallel between the region brand and commercial brands (Table 2.5). Therefore, the 'Alsace' (AL) and 'Auvergne Your New World' (ANM) region brands exhibit some degrees of traditional markers of brand community: consciousness of kind, evidence of rituals and traditions, and moral responsibility towards the community and its members (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001). The results are presented and discussed under two sub-headings. First, the brand community membership is examined through an overview of the motivations and perceived criteria to join the brand community, as well as its structure. Second, the roles of the partners and their region brand are defined.

Table 2.5: Hierarchical tree node structure.

Nodes	*'Alsace' (AL)*			*'Auvergne Your New World' (ANM)*		
	Sources	*Ref.*	*%*	*Sources*	*Ref.*	*%*
1. Motivations to become a partner of the region brand						
Emotional motivations to become a partner of the region brand						
Altruistic motivations: work for the common good	0	0	-	4	10	1.72
Lifestyle: express and share values, be part of a group, regional pride, actual way of life and way of doing business, personal conviction, love the region	4	7	3.06	8	39	6.71
Functional motivations to become a partner of the region brand						
Business-related	5	22	9.61	8	13	2.24
Win-win deal	4	6	2.62	8	21	3.61
2. Membership						
Easy to become a partner	3	6	2.62	0	0	-
Selection entrance based on shared values	2	3	1.31	9	28	4.82

Table 2.5: Hierarchical tree node structure—Continued.

Nodes	*'Alsace' (AL)*			*Auvergne Your New World' (ANM)*		
	Sources	*Ref.*	*%*	*Sources*	*Ref.*	*%*
3. Structure of brand community						
Central: socio-economic entities versus Peripheral: residents/citizens	7	32	13.97	11	52	8.95
Central: different degrees of involvement in the region brand	1	1	.44	9	14	2.41
Clear mention of the second level of brand community (residents/citizens)	1	2	.87	6	16	2.75
Interaction						
Both-way interaction between partners	1	1	.44	10	23	3.96
One-way interaction between partners	2	3	1.31	0	0	-
4. Use of the brand elements	8	33	14.41	8	19	3.27
5. 'We-ness': Link supremacy						
A network of actors who work together/co-create	4	7	3.06	11	47	8.09
Assisting brand community partners in the proper use of the brand						
Between partners	0	0	-	4	8	1.38
From region brand team to partners	3	7	3.06	0	0	-
Demarcation between users of the brand and users of other brands: 'Us = Special people'	2	2	.87	4	10	1.72
Partners have a role of influencers	5	10	4.37	9	34	5.86
Region brand is more than a logo: its values makes sense and should be lived	1	1	.44	9	28	4.82
6. Governance						
Region brand managed by an independent association (versus politics): the brand is a common asset owned by its members who can collaborate to decide its strategic and operational orientations	2	3	1.31	10	33	5.68
Region brand managed by Regional Development Agency = IMC tool with synergies	6	8	3.49	0	0	-
Region brand managed by Regional Development Agency guarantees more expertise	2	2	.87	0	0	-
7. Perceived objectives of the creation of the region brand						
Region brand is a positioning tool for one consistent image around the brand's values	1	2	.87	7	20	3.44
To be more attractive (image, offers) and to attract more targets	7	31	13.54	12	56	9.64
To create synergies with the assistance of organizations from the public and private sectors	6	10	4.37	7	23	3.96
To encourage the use of shared values	1	1	.44	6	7	1.20
To enhance sense of place (residents)	1	1	.44	6	12	2.07
To promote the region as a whole	3	7	3.06	10	16	2.75

Table 2.5: Hierarchical tree node structure—Continued.

Nodes	*'Alsace' (AL)*			*Auvergne Your New World' (ANM)*		
	Sources	*Ref.*	*%*	*Sources*	*Ref.*	*%*
8. Perceived difficulties						
Hard to make competitors work together (either organizations from the public sector or the private sector)	0	0	-	3	4	.69
Long to rally members around the region brand	0	0	-	3	4	.69
Low budget	0	0	-	4	5	.86
No (or little) economic impact(s) for the region and businesses / Lack of awareness	1	9	3.93	3	6	1.03
Not enough assistance in the proper use of the brand by region brand team	2	8	3.49	0	0	-
Not enough collective actions	1	3	1.31	0	0	-
Region brand deemphasizes residents	0	0	-	4	11	1.89
Region brand emphasizes one sector: tourism	0	0	-	3	6	1.03
9. Parallel between the region brand and commercial brands						
Perceived differences	0	0	-	3	11	1.89
Perceived similarities	1	1	.44	4	5	.86

The percentage was computed based on the following ratio: number of references / total number of references for the region brand under consideration.

2.4.2.1. Membership: Joining the brand community

2.4.2.1.1. Motivations to membership

Motivations to join the brand community are mainly functional for the partners of the 'Alsace' region brand. They want to benefit from the attractiveness of the place and regard the region brand like a tool they can use to improve their own business-related interests. The following is illustrative:

> *My expectations are that the Alsace brand does its job of promoting, improving the attractiveness and enhancing the brand image of the region in France and abroad. That is to say, I can use it as a relay for my company policy... Without the 'Alsace brand', it's been 200 years that I [firm] have been living and I have been carrying this message. So I can live without it, but now that it exists and it provides tools, I have an interest in associating myself with these tools to amplify my message. (AL5)*

> *By respecting the requested criteria demanded for successful application, everyone can use it [region brand] for its own promotion. (AL5)*

Lifestyle motivations are minor for joining the 'Alsace' brand community, and they all centre on regional pride, whereas pride was a minor motive for entering ANM.

Participants from the Auvergne sample primarily express emotional motives to enter the brand community; in particular, they manifest lifestyle desires such that joining the community enables participants to be part of a group, share and promote values they believe in, and express regional pride. They believe joining the brand community is a natural process to the extent that there is congruence between their way of life, way of doing business and the region brand's values.

> *This collective, solidarity feeling… This is something quite new. It was a power that was available amongst the socio-economic actors of the region; it was available but not mobilized. (ANM12)*

> *If there was not this notion of sharing, I certainly would not be in the association (ANM2)*

> *What initially enlivened me is... My involvement is above all a personal involvement because I love this region, I live there now[...]It seemed to me very obvious, for me as a person but at the same time for my firm, to join 'Auvergne Your New World' because it completely coincided with the values I have for my firm. (ANM7)*

To a lesser extent, participants feel moral responsibility towards the region:

> *Besides that, I am a committed member of 'Auvergne Your New World' because it seems to me just important and it seems to me to be my responsibility to work for the future of this place. (ANM1)*

They also believe they are in a win-win relationship with the brand, thus exhibiting functional motivations. They explain that they become part of a virtuous circle whereby investing (financial resources, time, discussion, etc.) in the region brand will contribute to make the region more attractive, which will eventually benefit their businesses. This triad is mirrored in the following quote:

> *So, more than the firm, it's the guy who is involved because I am in this association from the very beginning. But it's very related to my activity because, for 30 years, I have had the concern to bring talent to my clients in Auvergne, and I have always had trouble. So, I found it particularly smart to have a regional brand that values*

this region. And obviously my company follows, but it's not very complicated because I am the boss and it does what I say we must do. (ANM2)

Precisely, to work on this problem of recruitment, to bring people to Auvergne for work. Well, thanks to these workshops [New World Workshop; Table 2.2] we can manage to put around the table Michelin, Limagrain, Sanofi. All the major actors that hire in Auvergne. And all this under the leadership of 'Auvergne Your New World', in a final objective that is, indeed, to convey this message outside Auvergne to tell people that, in Auvergne, there are living standards, there are infrastructures and we can find a lot of fun and carry out a professional project. (ANM6)

In summary, motivations to membership are particularly functional for the 'Alsace' region brand since partners join the brand community motivated by individual interests. On the contrary, membership to the ANM brand community is driven by emotional motives, and participants join the brand community for common interest. Indeed, whether they perceive an emotional gain by entering the brand community, or whether they believe an attractive region will benefit the activities of their firms, they put the region at the centre of their preoccupations. Whereas the 'Alsace' brand is perceived as a tool to be exploited, place brand managers of ANM use the region brand as a pretext for team-working—the values are considered to be fundamental in this brand community, which perceives values as the tie that binds the community together.

2.4.2.1.2. Governance that encourages membership

It appears that governance and membership are intertwined for the partners of the ANM brand who link the expected 'shared brand' nature of the place-branding approach with their evaluation of the structure of the association—an association that is independent from political influences. All but two members highlight this distinction. Participants believe this dissociation contributes to empower them in the place brand–building, and reinforces sense of ownership.

At the same time, a strong support from the politicians was needed, and that is why the region brings a few bucks. But above all, it [ANM region brand] should not be the 'tool' of the region. So, it was entrusted to company heads who have a vision... I don't want to say more realistic, but at least more pragmatic, of needs and solutions to implement.[...]it means that we [company heads] have a real vision of the problems we encounter when we talk about Auvergne outside. (ANM2)

> *The associative model appeared to be the most relevant in order to work on this mix of actors, and to this collective appropriation that is not assimilated to a political project of the local authority[...]It's also the structure and the associative assembly of actors from all sectors and all types, in this association, that makes possible to consider it is a brand that is a 'shared brand': One that comes from the actors, and not a top-down brand determined by a local authority that tries to impose it on all the territories. (ANM9)*

In the case of 'Alsace', participants perceive that the creation of the association in charge of the region brand seek to create synergies, in particular because the association mixes economic and tourism activities; however, this is not linked with governance.

2.4.2.1.3. Brand community selectiveness

Again, both region brands have reversed views with regard to membership selectiveness. The application to join the brand community of 'Alsace' is defined by participants as easy, straightforward, and not very selective.

> *Probably… contrary to other place marketing approaches, I think that there was a very strong desire for this brand to be shared, but in the sense that it could be appropriated by all the actors of the place, and that there were voluntarily no restrictive selection criteria at the start [of the place-branding approach]. (AL1)*

> *Well, it's actually free. You make a request. I made my request by e-mail where there is a small application form to complete: They explain what you have the right to do with the logo, they give you different logos, different colours to use. It is quite specific. And then, we make a request and when we have the answer they send us what they call the 'Alsace' brand guide with the logos in different formats that we can use. They explain to us how to use it, and we too, for our part, we need to specify in the application under which formats we will use it. And if you want to do something else with it, you have to warn them beforehand and ask for authorization. That's it. That's not complicated. (AL2)*

> *I think that there is no true selectivity [in sorting out applications]: All companies from Alsace, in my view, can claim to use the brand if, of course, they fulfill the conditions that are requested in the specifications. But the specifications are not very very restrictive. (AL5)*

Interestingly, whilst Table 2.2 from the previous section hinted that becoming a partner of ANM was easy, the interview data show the brand community is very selective. It would seem that ANM is a closed brand community. Membership is authorized for a time frame of one year, in exchange for subscription, and on the basis that the applicant shares the values that are embodied by the brand, as the following quotes make clear:

> *[...]everyone who has been asked [to become a brand partner] had in some way something that met these values [region brand's values].[...]For me, this is a brand by which every person, regardless of their role or their affiliation to... how would I say?... I was going to say 'Colleges' [of the association that is structured in four Colleges] like for the elections... shares values. (ANM7)*

> *There is a real membership dynamic. I will not say a shared citizen dynamic. We do not go to the streets of Clermont [a city in Auvergne] or of the region but... I think there is a form of network. There is a network and there is a collective feeling that, as the brand has very well demonstrated, is based on values that are truly shared. A kind of esprit de corps and solidarity that corresponds to a movement which, I think, is innovative. (ANM12)*

2.4.2.1.4. Structure of brand community

The 'Alsace' and ANM brand communities are constituted of two levels: brand partners and brand ambassadors. In both instances, participants do not mention interaction between the two levels of brand community; this is contradictory with the data collected on the web sites of the ANM brand (Table 2.2).

The place brand managers of both region brands perceive that the primary members of the brand community are the region's socio-economic actors; thus, brand partners, who are mainly socio-economic entities, are at the centre of the region brand communities.

> *[The region brand] is shared by all the actors of the Alsace marketplace. So it is carried by all the players in the Alsatian economy. (AL3)*

> *There are quite a few different actors. Well, especially from the business world. It is also a brand that remains a little bit confidential to the business world: businesses, associations and local authorities. (ANM4)*

> *Obviously, if all the Auvergnats [people from Auvergne] were members of the association, it would be perfect but it would be ridiculous. That is not the objective.*

> *The goal is actually, at least, that they share the [brand] vision. After that, for me, whether they act in their corner in a very little way or they come to the association to act a little bit more, it has relatively little importance.[…] 'The basic Auvergnat', as such, interests me rather little. The one that interests me is the one who can act, and it is quite often the firm. (ANM2)*

Members of ANM mentioned the existence of brand ambassadors ('New World Pioneers'), whereas participants who are members of the 'Alsace' brand community did not talk about the 'Club of Alsace Ambassadors'. Therefore, citizens are peripheral in both region brand communities. Four participants from the Auvergne sample feel that the region brand deemphasizes residents, and that it should try to involve them more.

> *It is a brand that unfortunately speaks less to its residents. That would be its flaw.[...]Meaning that this brand will speak to economic actors, as well as social and public actors, but it won't speak to residents when it is supposed to do so. (ANM4)*

Members, especially from the 'Alsace' brand community, use the image ritual artefacts provided in the form of a brand guide to increase visibility inside and outside the brand community, as the following quotes illustrate:

> *I know that there are quite a few people who have the 'Alsace' brand in their logo when I get emails, so it is very used. More and more, I have the impression. But, for those who are Alsatians [people from Alsace], it is kind of a gathering, of a sign of recognition. (AL2)*

> *I would say that the brand guide, in a sense, it's to arrive at the most consistent homogeneity possible with regard to these values and the construction of this 'New World' in relation to these values. (ANM1)*

In the ANM brand community, values are also very important, such that 'leaders' are the ones who live and implement business actions in accordance with the region brand's values. In that, they are brand *enthusiasts* (Hynes et al., 2014). For example, a bank was identified by two members for its deep implication in the brand community. The values are judged to be more important than the brand elements.

> *The first action we have implemented, we took to heart that it was symbolic; we know that 'Auvergne Your New World' is not just a logo. It's a logo, sure, but it's not just a logo. (ANM6)*

Interestingly, participants from the 'Alsace' brand community don't mention instances of interactions amongst them, but a one-way interaction which originates from the region brand team. On the contrary, ANM members meet regularly, notably at the occasions of monthly and annual meetings that relate to the chosen governance of the ANM association (Board, Board of Directors, and General Assembly). They also meet at programmed and not programmed meetings.

> *It's also for this reason that, from time to time, there are General Assemblies of 'Auvergne Your New World'; precisely so that we can discuss things to refine, and so on. (ANM4)*

> *For us, it was precisely to adapt the tool as we talked about it, to discuss it and there was no taboo, and voila! At each General Assembly we go on about: 'This year, what can we change?', 'What must be changed?', 'What must be done?' The forecast program of the coming year: It is built; it is not forced [on the members]. There is a framework, of course, but it is not a very rigid framework. (ANM8)*

In summary, firms constitute the core of the two brand communities, whilst residents are at the periphery (Figure 2.1). The place brand managers attach importance to brand ownership by firms, but not necessarily by citizens. However, the peripheral groups have an important role in that they allow access to other communities, unlike the members at the centre of the structure who are too similar.

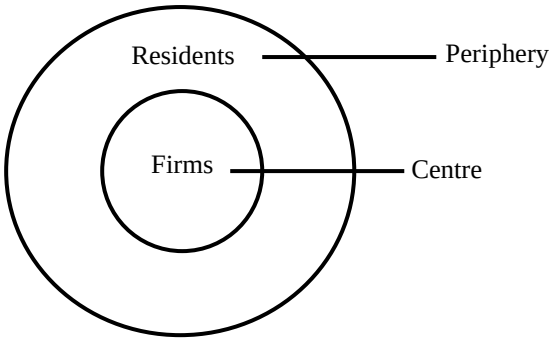


Figure 2.1: Perceptions of brand communities by place brand managers.

2.4.2.2. Roles of members and region brand

As a result, members of the 'Alsace' region brand perceive that their role in the brand community is to promote the region brand to others outside of the brand community, whereas that of ANM members is to live the values of the region brand.

> *The idea is to ensure that as many people as possible, whether they are individuals or firms, that they showcase the Alsatian origin of their qualities or their products. (AL7)*

> *I think there is a form of network. There is a network and there is a collective feeling that, as the brand has very well demonstrated, is based on values that are truly shared. A kind of esprit de corps and solidarity that corresponds to a movement which, I think, is innovative. (ANM12)*

Therefore, the 'Alsace' region brand is a promotion tool at the disposal of the members and the ANM brand's role is to federate members around communal values.

> *I think the brand is a set of... it's actually a bit of a toolbox I think, which is detailed in the brand guide. (AL1)*

> *It's a brand that we allow other firms, other communicators than us, to use so as to spread it to the maximum. The idea is that it's not something we are going to control completely and that we will guard jealously for us, but we will rather try to make it into something that's going to be taken over by others to make it as visible as possible. (AL4)*

> *'Auvergne Your New World', ok, it's a brand, it's a way of communicating but, to me, it's also a positioning for my business activity. That is to say, if I ask myself a question about this or that action that I have to make or, if in the future there is something I am considering, I say to myself: 'Does this action, this project fit well with the values of 'Auvergne Your New World'? (ANM10)*

In conclusion, it appears that the region brand communities are different (Table 2.6): 'Alsace' rests on instrumental values whilst ANM rests on terminal values. According to Rokeach (1973), instrumental values are modes of conduct (aka. the preferred methods of behaviour) and consists of personal characteristics and personality traits. Terminal values (aka. values that are end-states of existence) are the goals that individuals work towards and view as most desirable. Therefore, the authors distinguish two types of region brand communities: A brand community around instrumental values constituted of active brand ambassadors who benefit from the region-branding approach ('Alsace') and a brand community around terminal values, one that is a community of values assembled on the pretext of a brand ('ANM').

Table 2.6: Categories of Communal region brands.

Communal region brands	*'Alsace'*	*'Auvergne Your New World'*
Motivations to membership	Functional Personal interest (business-related)	Emotional Collective interest (attractiveness is a team effort)
Governance	Highly political	Politics stay in the background
Brand community selectiveness	Low (e.g. easy application, free)	High (e.g. charged membership, applicants are selected on the fit between their values and the brand's, and their ability and willingness to live the region brand's values)
Structure of brand community	Centre: Firms Periphery: Residents	Centre: Firms Periphery: Residents
Perceived role of members	To promote the brand	To live the values of the brand
Perceived role of the region brand	Central role: Promotion tool available to members	Peripheral role: Unite the brand community around shared values
Conclusions	**Brand community around instrumental values**	**Brand community around terminal values**
	Active brand ambassadors who benefit from the region-branding approach	A community of values assembled on the pretext of a brand

2.5. Discussion and conclusions

The paper investigated the use of community marketing by place brands in the context of region branding by addressing the following research question: To what extent do place brand managers use community marketing strategies to operationalize the integrated marketing communications (IMC) role of the place brand?

The contribution of the research to the extant literature and practice is threefold.

2.5.1. Contributions

2.5.1.1. From product-orientated to place-orientated brand communities

In examining the degree to which communal arguments are used as facilitators of the place brand's integrated approach, this research found evidence of brand community in place branding environments and, more broadly, public management. This reinforces the external validity of brand community, a classical marketing concept, and contributes to the body of literature on place branding by studying the understudied region branding form. The paper takes an innovative approach, demonstrating that community marketing can be used to

facilitate coordination for an integrated approach to place brand management; in that, it also contributes to IMC literature.

First, if place brand community marketing seems to be a natural development considering the stakeholders of the brand are an integral part the branded entity, all the French place brands have not yet decided to adopt community marketing. For example, the Brittany region is a brand developed to promote the place in an integrated way, but it is targeted to firms' marketing communications departments exclusively. Since the objective of the 'Bretagne' region brand is not to federate its members, the number of members can't be a valid criterion for evaluating its efficiency compared with other place brands. Also, 'Bretagne' did not take a communal approach to federate residents. However, it would have been useless to the extent that residents have developed a very strong identity connection with their region (Dion, Sitz, & Rémy, 2011) before the creation of the place brand, so that the brand is conceived more as a tool dedicated to the external targets of the region. This finding may explain why French regions with a very high identity connection (Dion et al., 2011) are not involved in the place brand community process.

Second, as the place brand is by essence grounded in people linked with each other's, the role of the place brand for reinforcing or creating those social links amongst the place brand community is not so obvious, compared with classical brands. In terms of place brand community strategy, the place brand managers could decide to create a community that doesn't already exist, using an extensive tribal strategy (Cova & Roncaglio, 1999). On the contrary, since the community members were already tied together before the creation of the place brand, place brand managers can use the community to legitimate its claim in an intensive tribal strategy; the challenge is then to implement ritual artefacts to ensure its position in the community. Place brand managers of 'Alsace' and 'Auvergne' seem to have adopted this second strategy, but their use of ritual artefacts remains parsimonious. The ritual artefact that they use deals with the visual recognition of the brand. Place brand managers should consider implementing more various tools for supporting rituals, such as highlighting cult places or specific words (Cova & Roncaglio, 1999). In this view, past research advocates in favor of implementing community management methods adapted for brand communities such as crowdsourcing, user content generation, or co-creation of events (Schau, Muñiz, & Arnould, 2009).

Third, the comparison of the two place brand communities suggests that the community which emphasizes on functional motivations is more efficient for promoting the place via its members than the one which encourages emotional motivations. Indeed, the 'Alsace' brand is

the one that gathers the most members; in that sense, it is considered to be the more efficient. The 'Alsace' brand is less restrictive and selective when it comes to membership and the use of brand elements. Members are functionally driven to join this brand community, which encourages the use of the place brand and its promotion. Members co-construct the brand operationally by claiming their Alsatian origins through the brand elements, notably putting the 'A heart' in their logos, but they don't live the brand. On the contrary, members of the ANM brand community are enthusiasts (Hynes et al., 2014) but they don't implement the place brand such that it is lived by everyone. It's a club for those who share ANM's values. Place brand managers' motivations to be part of the community are more emotional than functional. It would seem that the emotional motivations restrain place branding efficiency.

2.5.1.2. Encouraging citizen empowerment

The results emphasize that, when French place brands implement IMC, they fail to integrate residents in this process, whereas they are at the core of place branding efficiency (Braun et al., 2013) and consumer empowerment is crucial for community marketing (Wathieu et al., 2002). The region brands studied in this research only empower firms of the region, whilst residents are being relegated at the periphery of the community. In that sense, they adopt a particular brand community vision that is very close to the notion of cluster. However, residents should be encouraged to play the roles (Braun et al., 2013) of integral parts of the place brand, ambassadors and citizens/voters. Residents are targets of the place brand, but they are also integral to the place; at the simplest level, they enrich the place brand by residing in the place. The involvement of residents in the place brand–building process may be weakened by their own barriers (e.g. lack of brand awareness/knowledge, lack of brand identification, disapproval of local government actions, and cynical attitudes towards involvement; Insch & Stuart, 2015) and depends on the degree to which place brand managers are able and willing to empower them. Place brand community may be an approach towards empowering citizens to re-establish democracy in the context of new forms of organizations that mix public and private actors (Fırat & Dholakia, 2006). The place brand should therefore involve them in the place-branding process. This participative approach can consist in opening free membership to individuals or extending the use of the brand elements to the general public. The fact non-members can't use the logo of the 'shared brand' further indicates that the community is not open. The idea to only allow the members of the brand to use the brand elements runs counter to the purpose of the place brand which was initially created to be claimed by people. For instance, the logo can serve as a sign of recognition and

foster symbolic ties in the community, and as a tool to encourage brand awareness; in that, students should be encouraged to use the logo. It is also a means of prospecting for the brand in the sense that if individuals use the logo, they are interested in the process, so the brand can identify them and start proposing them to become a member.

Moreover, when considering the peripheral position of residents in the community, place brand managers may, in contradiction to what they claim, have created two distinct brand communities: brand partners and brand ambassadors. In this sense, region brand community adopts a shape of neo-tribal constellation, with small interconnected communities. The role of place brand managers should then be to facilitate the communication between those two communities to achieve IMC. The level of integration and communication, identified as a pillar for social structures (Jallat et al., 2006), has to be considered by place brand managers when they implement community marketing strategies.

2.5.1.3. Priority to functional motivations

A community is created around the region brand to facilitate the coordination of the place's socio-economic activities and promoting a unique image. This research shows that the development of the brand community must not rely solely on commitment to the brand. This research suggests that the emphasis be placed more on the win-win side of the brand relationship, particularly highlighting the members' interests, so that the members of this community see an interest in joining it, appropriating it, and using it. The authors thus suggest that the place brand be positioned in a proof-based approach to explain to the stakeholders the utilitarian interests to join it and to appropriate it (e.g. the region brand is an instrument for profit, for international visibility, etc.).

This prioritization of functional motivations in instrumental-orientated place brand communities stresses a new aspect of the brand public concept (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). Indeed, the place brand managers of 'Alsace' took a risk in allowing the brand to be completely managed by the public, and thus in being so much open and in allowing such an appropriation of the place brand. However, as this community is very focused on functional values, members share the main goal: They will benefit from the brand promotion. This is the reason why this brand public strategy is not risky anymore in such a context where all the members using the brand want to promote the brand and are driven for doing it in the best way.

2.5.2. Limitations and further research

This study has several shortcomings. First, the in-depth interviews were undertaken on participants with varying degrees of involvement in the region brand–building process; this may have influenced the results. For example, the in-depth interview data from the region brand of Auvergne overrepresented individuals with a high involvement level in the governance of the place brand, whereas it was the opposite for the 'Alsace' brand sub-sample. However, the sample is a result of participants being selected randomly based on two public lists that are available on the web sites of the region brands. Additionally, the nature of the sample was conditioned, in part, by the governance mode of the organizations in charge of the place brands; for example, whereas membership to the ANM brand gives right to participate in the General Assembly, the governance of the 'Alsace' region brand is made such that it is not the case for the partners of the 'Alsace' region brand. To overcome governance issues, other studies could reproduce this research adapting the framework developed by Hynes et al. (2014) by distinguishing members according to their use and/or contribution to the region brand image.

Second, the findings of this research may be specific to the French region-branding context. The analysed region brands are particular cultural cases; they are anchored in regionalism and have positive brand equity (Chamard et al., 2013) to the extent that they elicit positive associations in people's minds and encourage favourable behavioural intentions. Therefore, it would seem worthwhile to investigate another region-branding context to allow the external validity of the present research. Then, brand equity is positively impacted by brand community (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001); thus, it would be valuable to additionally examine the use of brand community arguments by an 'integrated' place brand which is developed for a place with no strong place identity and/or a negative image.

Third, the creation of the place brands under study adopted a top-down approach. The region brand communities were solicited after the brand creation for message appropriation. Further research could reproduce this research, analysing place brands that were co-created before the creation.

Fourth, this research, using a qualitative method, identifies issues that merit further investigation to allow representativeness of the results. Further research should be carried out quantitatively to examine the role of brand community in the development of 'integrated' place brands, sampling members of the brand community.

Fifth, this research attempted to show that the place brand use a community branding approach to facilitate its very nature as an ‘integrated’ place brand, thus interviewing place brand managers to understand the extent of its use. The region brands under study developed two levels of brand community such that one comprises members involved in the place-branding process and the other consists of the general public who notably relays information pertaining to the region brand. Using the netnography technique (Kozinets, 2002), further studies could investigate the ‘Club of Alsace Ambassadors’ and/or ‘New World Pioneers’ (e.g. explore the online communities’ web sites, their Facebook and Twitter pages, etc.) as well as study the interplay between both types of brand communities.

2.6. Bibliography of Chapter 2

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2.7. List of Tables

Table 2.1: Observation grid: Creation of the French region brands. 100
Table 2.2: Observation grid: Overview of French region brand communities. 101
Table 2.3: Typology of the French ‘integrated’ region brands. 105
Table 2.4: Sample characteristics. 108
Table 2.5: Hierarchical tree node structure. 109
Table 2.6: Categories of Communal region brands. 119

2.8. List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Perceptions of brand communities by place brand managers. 117

2.9. List of Appendices

A.15: Semi-directive interview guide. 243

CHAPTER 3.

REVISITING THE DESTINATION BRAND BOX MODEL

ASSESSING IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ATTITUDES TOWARDS DESTINATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In an effort to extend the Destination Brand Box Model (Caldwell & Freire, 2004), three experiments test the extent to which a region brand image constitutes a relevant vehicle for promoting a destination integral to the nation brand image, according to two sub-questions: (1) To what extent do the brand dimensions of a destination brand image attract tourists? and (2) What role does the nation brand image play in promoting the region brand image as a destination? Data reflecting implicit and explicit measures, collected from international tourists on the basis of both the Implicit Association Tests (IATs) and surveys, show that the representational and functional dimensions of a destination brand impact differently implicit attractiveness and intentions to visit. International tourists also perceive the region and the nation brand images as congruent overall, which contributes positively to their intentions to visit the region.

RÉSUMÉ

Afin de prolonger le *Destination Brand Box Model* (Caldwell & Freire, 2004), trois études testent la capacité de l'image de la marque région à promouvoir une destination touristique, complémentaire à celle de la marque pays, selon deux sous-questions : (1) Dans quelle mesure les dimensions de l'image de la marque destination permettent-elles d'attirer les touristes ? ; (2) Quel rôle l'image de la marque pays joue-t-elle dans la promotion de l'image de la marque région, en leur qualité de destinations touristiques ? Les données, reflétant des mesures implicites et explicites, et recueillies auprès de touristes internationaux sur la base du Test d'Associations Implicites (TAI) et de questionnaires, montrent que les dimensions représentationnelle et fonctionnelle de la marque destination influencent différemment l'attractivité implicite et les intentions de visiter. Les touristes internationaux perçoivent également les images des marques région et pays comme étant globalement congruentes, ce qui contribue positivement à leurs intentions de visiter la région.

3.1. Introduction

Countries, regions, cities and destinations invest massively in destination marketing efforts to win a greater share of domestic and international travel markets. Countries such as Australia invest $156 million in travel promotion annually, competing with Canada's travel budget of $109 million and South Africa's $103 million; even tiny Cyprus invested $91 million (U.S. Travel Association, 2014).

Destinations around the world have been proclaiming their qualities for a long time. Whereas place promotion is highly developed and well practised (Ward, 1998), branding destinations is a recent development (Gnoth, 1998; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). To compete in such a cutthroat environment (Go & Govers, 2000), destination marketing organizations (DMOs) have started to recognize the value of adopting branding techniques (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005; Morgan & Pritchard, 1999). For example, U.S. states and cities collectively invested $2 billion in destination promotion in 2013 (Oxford Economics, 2014), including $437 million by state-level DMOs to promote their destination brands, and they earned strong returns on those investments (Oxford Economics, 2016; U.S. Travel Association, 2011), including benefits for local economies (e.g. more investors, more jobs). In this paper, we adapt Hanna and Rowley's (2015, p. 100) definition, characterizing a *DMO* as 'the organization that is perceived as leading the [destination] branding initiatives associated with a given place' and is committed to achieving destination competitiveness (Pike, 2012).

Branding initiatives contribute to differentiating the place's identity, securing competitive advantages that reinforce the uniqueness of the place's offerings (Kapferer, 2011a). However, destination brand managers face issues pertaining to the very nature of the destination product. Morgan and Pritchard (1999) apprise destination managers of the difficulties relating to brand destinations, highlighting their restricted budgets[15], the political pressures they must face in their function as public tourism organizations and their relative lack of control of the destination product marketing mix. To overcome these difficulties, Hankinson (2007) suggests a conceptual framework for the management of destination brands drawing on corporate branding; the author highlights guiding principles (leadership of top-management, organization's culture and integrated marketing communications approach) in which the DMO plays a central role.

[15] The budgets spent by U.S. state DMOs to market and promote their destination brands is less than 1 per cent of the budgets of the top 50 corporate advertisers, who collectively spent $80.6 billion on their brands (U.S. Travel Association, 2016).

Building destination brands to promote a particular destination reflects the recent developments in place marketing (Kavaratzis, 2004), such that branding offers a strategy on its own to attract consumers, not just a marketing tool. The shift from place marketing to place branding (Kavaratzis, 2004) necessitates an image-building strategy that makes a place more attractive to identified markets. This strategy also must engage stakeholders other than consumers (Hankinson, 2007), such as local residents (Stylidis, Biran, Sit, & Szivas, 2014a), to enhance the destination's image, render that place more visible, and attract visitors, investors, and other residents (e.g. the #ThisisCLE campaign that encouraged residents to share their favourite things to do in Cleveland).

Places build and manage their brands, by leveraging their images, to attract place consumers and visitors. Those place consumers perceive a place or destination image in terms of its representational (self-expressing values) and functional (physical) elements (Destination Brand Box Model; Caldwell & Freire, 2004), such that place brand managers must find the right balance between these two dimensions when designing a place brand (Giovanardi, 2012). Yet countries, regions, and cities each have their own images that may diverge, depending on the targets' points of view, or overlap (Braun & Zenker, 2010); images are not independent across place levels (Andéhn & Zenker, 2015; Boisen, Terlouw, & van Gorp, 2011). For example, the image of the state of Nebraska and that of the United States are very different, but Nebraska is still perceived as part of the bigger 'USA' context. However, prior research rarely considers the potential interplay across these different levels (Syssner, 2010).

To investigate tourists' perceptions of place brand images, we assess place brands according to their destination brand images. That is, place brand managers seek to attract visitors by leveraging a destination brand. We seek to reveal which destination characteristics they should advertise to attract their target markets, especially in relation to the higher-order place brand image. In this sense, to what extent does the region brand image constitute a relevant vehicle for promoting a destination integral to the nation brand image? Investigating both the region and nation as destination brand images, we aim to answer this central research question according to two sub-questions: (1) To what extent do the brand dimensions of a destination brand image attract tourists? and (2) What role does the nation brand image play in promoting the region brand image as a destination?

In answering these questions, we offer a fourfold contribution to theory and practice. First, we propose a multi-level approach to place branding, as suggested by Syssner (2010), and thus explore interrelations between a region brand image and its wider, nation brand image. These insights highlight the relevance of using the congruence concept in relation to

place branding. Second, we extend the Destination Brand Box Model (Caldwell & Freire, 2004) by analysing the brand dimensions of two destinations and their relationship with international tourists' behavioural intentions. Third, we assess destination brands using a dual methodology that mixes implicit and explicit measures. Fourth, our research provides place brand managers with insights regarding how to leverage the nation's image for the destination brand for a region, as well as how to choose relevant aspects to advertise in marketing communications.

The article proceeds as follows: In Section 3.2, we review literature on destination marketing and branding, with an emphasis on brand dimensions, to highlight destination brand dimensions. In Section 3.3, we advance our hypotheses and test them in two experiments. Studies 1 and 2 pertain to the implicit and explicit differences between branding for two place levels (region and country) and their impact on international tourists' behavioural intentions towards the destination. We further our analysis in Section 3.4, by developing new hypotheses that we test in a third study to assess the congruence between the region and nation brand images and its impact on intentions to visit the region. Finally, we discuss some implications, study limitations, and research directions in Section 3.5.

3.2. Theoretical framework

3.2.1. Destination marketing and branding

The post-modern world encourages tourists to stop being passive (Decrop, 2011). In their continuous search for experiences, they become co-creators, seeking to participate in the creation of their vacations and the very tourism product (Decrop, 2011; Kreziak & Frochot, 2011). Therefore, tourists' image formation changes (Kislali, Kavaratzis, & Saren, 2016), as well does their decision-making process (Decrop, 2011), with consequences for the tourism product (Kreziak & Frochot, 2011), such as the destination. In turn, DMOs should adapt their destination marketing initiatives to these new environmental factors; building and marketing a place brand (herein, a destination sub-brand) is one way to do that. The destination branding strategy would act like an integrated marketing communications (IMC) tool (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998), facilitating the collaboration amongst stakeholders (i.e. DMO members, such as any individual or entity that supports tourism) and contributing to the formation and persistence of a consistent image, message and experience.

Destination branding is amongst the most studied forms of place branding (Hankinson, 2007); other forms are nation branding, city branding and region branding (Hankinson,

2010a). Whilst destination branding is a recent development (Gnoth, 1998; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998), tourism literature seemingly has been confusing it with destination image until recently, when tourism academics started to recognize the practice of branding was broader in scope than that of image (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). A destination image is a hot topic in the tourism research literature (Pike, 2002), which acknowledges it is a critical driver of tourists' motivations to choose a particular destination (Goodrich, 1978). Since seminal work by Goodrich (1978), which highlighted the link between destination image and intentions to visit, image has been extensively studied by academics who recognize its critical role in tourist's behavioural intentions (Cai, 2002). However, most literature in the tourism research domain has been concerned with the formation of destination image (for a review, see Kislali et al., 2016), and less with its branding (Cai, 2002). Destination image relates to the beliefs, emotions and overall perceptions held by tourists about a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a). This paper addresses the destination brand image, which consists of 'identifying the most relevant associations for the destination and strengthening their linkages to the destination brand' (Murphy, Moscardo, & Benckendorff, 2007, p. 6). It is a function of tourists' perceived image (pre-visit or post-visit), for which three types of image communication—primary, secondary and tertiary (Kavaratzis, 2004)—are the leading characters.

Building destination brands to promote a destination image reflects some recent developments in place marketing (Kavaratzis, 2004) that recognize that branding transcends the marketing tool role it was restricted to play, to become a strategy of its own. Branding is no longer a basic tool of marketing, solely in charge of promotional activities (i.e. a logo and its attached slogan). Branding is the baseline—the origin—of place marketing, which implies that the branding decision encompasses all marketing initiatives. The focus moves from brand elements to the way the brand connects with people (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005); first and foremost, the brand has to appeal to people's lives (identity is, therefore, a critical component of the place brand). Thus, the shift from place marketing to place branding (Kavaratzis, 2004) manifests the importance of establishing an image-building strategy grounded on the place identity that makes the place more attractive to its identified (internal and external) markets.

Based on Keller's (1993) conceptualization of the brand image of commercial brands, Braun and Zenker (2010, p. 5) define a place brand as 'a network of associations in the consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design'. Therefore, a place is a brand even if it is yet to be

officially branded (Andéhn & Zenker, 2015; Boisen et al., 2011). As such, place brand managers face the challenge of building and marketing a brand that takes into account the various and diverging place perceptions of all its target groups (Zenker & Beckmann, 2013), such as residents, firms and tourists (Kotler et al., 1993). The marketing activities of places are not independent of one another (Andéhn & Zenker, 2015; Boisen et al., 2011; Syssner, 2010) per se as well as between places. A place, such as a region, falls in 'a system of geographical abstractions' (Andéhn & Zenker, 2015) in which the perceptions (meanings) of the different places vertically interfere (herein, a region and its country). In that sense, we anchor our research in the sub-brand strategy of Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) (for a review of brand architecture in the context of place branding, see Dooley & Bowie, 2005), considering the nation brand to be an umbrella brand with daughter brands that decline geographically (e.g. region brand) but retain strong links and associations with the master brand. Prior literature insists that place branding initiatives should be studied by adopting a multi-level perspective, because they interact across the different scales of places (Go & Govers, 2000; Syssner, 2010). For instance, the United States voted for the creation of Brand USA in 2010, in an effort to strengthen the country's tourism position in the global market. This public–private organization, which is an independent structure financed by a tourism tax, promotes the country and each of its region (i.e. state) brands, as well as other destinations worldwide, through consumer campaigns, cooperative marketing activities and business-to-business marketing efforts (U.S. Travel Association, 2014). Therefore, each state naturally derives an advantage (consumer campaigns), and Brand USA also helps them promote themselves abroad (co-op operations), assuming that the majority of states focus on the domestic market and that Brand USA is there to give them a boost internationally.

The primary roles of a destination brand are two-fold: (1) pre-experience roles of selection and reassurance, such that the destination brand enhances awareness, ensures differentiation from competitors, builds preferences and helps tourists choose between travel destinations, whilst also creating desire for the destination whilst offering a guarantee, in that it assists in closing the gap between what is expected and what tourists will really experience, and (2) post-experience role of recollection, such that the brand helps consolidate and reinforce tourists' perceptions of the destination.

Tourists, especially non-visitors, use the destination brand in their decision-making process so as to infer meanings about the place that will guide them in deciding whether or not they choose to visit the destination. This representation includes two types of attributes: representational and functional elements.

3.2.2. Brand dimensions: Representational and functional values

People consume a commercial brand for the symbolic and utilitarian values it may procure (Levy, 1959), as is the case with tourists' consumption of a destination. Academics and practitioners recognize the importance that emotions play in the decision-making process of tourists (Decrop, 2011) because '[a] tourist looks beyond functional utility to social meaning' (Gazley & Watling, 2015, p. 639).

A commercial brand is characterized by the degree to which it embraces both representational (self-expressing values) and functional (physical) dimensions (Brand Box Model; De Chernatony & McWilliam, 1990). Consistently, place consumers perceive tourist brands (Clarke, 2000)—as well as a place or a destination—in terms of these two brand facets (Caldwell & Freire, 2004). When applied to a destination brand, functional characteristics pertain to the physical aspects of the destination (e.g. climate, mountains, beaches, museums), whereas representational characteristics are the self-expressive values associated with the destination that reflect on tourists' self-concept (i.e. visiting a specific destination says something about one's personality to others as well as to oneself; choosing to visit a particular destination is like making lifestyle statements). Representational attributes are often used as substitutes for brand personality (Ekinci, 2003; Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013).

In a conceptual paper, Giovanardi (2012) reflects on the two dimensions of city brands, concluding they are interrelated to form a single *haft* or *sord* facet, depending on the nature (internal versus external) of place consumers. According to the meanings that targets attribute to the place, the place brand managers should leverage either the *haft* facet, which includes more functional attributes than representational elements of the place, or the *sord* facet, which displays the opposite.

Thus, place brand managers must find the right balance between these two dimensions when designing the place brand (Giovanardi, 2012). Moreover, they have to consider this balance when they integrate the perceptions of the higher destination brand level of which the given brand is a part (Andéhn & Zenker, 2015; Boisen et al., 2011).

3.3. Part 1: Destination brand dimensions and impact on behavioural intentions towards the destination—Implicit and explicit assessments

The first step of our study considers the destination brand image (herein, the region brand) independently from any other place brand level (herein, the nation brand). In line with Caldwell and Freire's (2004) work that distinguishes representational from functional

attributes to build tourists' perceptions, we consider the extent to which the brand dimensions of a destination brand image (shortened to region brand and nation brand) can attract tourists.

3.3.1. Hypotheses development

Caldwell and Freire (2004) found that tourists perceive regions more in terms of their representational characteristics than their functional attributes. Conversely, their results also show that tourists perceive nations to better fulfil functional needs than representational ones. Perceptions or beliefs about an object influence behavioural intentions towards this object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), particularly when the decision-making process happens through a central route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), as is the case for destination choice. Hence, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H_1: The representational dimension of the region brand better explains tourists' behavioural intentions (attractiveness and intentions to visit) towards the region than its functional dimension.

H_2: The functional dimension of the nation brand better explains tourists' behavioural intentions (attractiveness and intentions to visit) towards the country than its representational dimension.

Because the region brand is perceived as more representational and less functional than the nation brand, these differentiated loads should replicate for explaining behavioural intentions, such that:

H_3(a): The representational dimension of the region brand has a greater impact on tourists' intentions to visit the region than the representational dimension of the nation brand has on tourists' intentions to visit the country.

H_3(b): The functional dimension of the region brand has a lesser impact on tourists' intentions to visit the region than the functional dimension of the nation brand has on tourists' intentions to visit the country.

3.3.2. Study 1: Destination brand dimensions and destination attractiveness

To analyse branding techniques for a region and a country, we use implicit measures to uncover the link between a destination's representational and functional attributes and international tourists' implicit attitudes, thereby addressing H_1 and H_2.

3.3.2.1. Implicit measures in the field of destination marketing

Since seminal work by Greenwald and Banaji (1995), researchers in social cognition psychology have developed several indirect measures of consumer behaviours, recognizing the limits of self-reported ones (Gawronski & Payne, 2010); for example, people have trouble reporting on their mental processes (i.e. accurate introspection is impossible), and they also suffer from self-presentation biases. As a result, individuals tend to make irrational decisions that are not necessarily deliberate (Ackermann & Mathieu, 2015), a symptom of the prevalent place held by unconscious thoughts in the decision-making process (Zaltman, 2003).

Implicit measures are indirect methods to obtain an answer about the focus of interests (e.g. construct such as attitudes, process) without informing respondents about it or asking them to report it directly. Thus, it leads to no introspective effort and a reduced social desirability bias (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Researchers focus respondents' attention on the realization of a task, the outcome of which will allow them to estimate the construct or the process under focus indirectly (Fazio & Olson, 2003).

In marketing, the most popular implicit measures are physiological measures (e.g. pupil dilatation) and those that rest on qualitative methods, particularly projected tests (Trendel & Warlop, 2005). Examples of their application in the marketing domain include studies to better predict behaviours, evaluate brand positioning, judge the image of or attitudes towards a brand or a service, measure brand attachment and assess advertising and sales techniques effectiveness (Cuny, Trendel, & Werle, 2011). Trendel and Warlop (2005) suggest that implicit measures of memory restitution should prevail in marketing, because they are more user-friendly and less subjective than the currently used implicit methods, and they actually measure differences amongst response stimuli (i.e. not between individuals). These authors distinguish implicit memory measures that aim to verify the implicit memory restitution of a single concept (e.g. implicit perceptual or conceptual measures) from those that examine the associations stored in memory between concepts (e.g. the Implicit Association Test implemented in our study).

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) is the most popular implicit response time measure (Nosek, Hawkins, & Frazier, 2011; Teige-Mocigemba, Klauer, & Sherman, 2011) as well as the most prevalent implicit measurement technique used to measure implicit attitudes (Ackermann & Mathieu, 2015). As introduced by Greenwald and Banaji (1995), an implicit attitude is 'an association stored in memory between an attitude generator object and an evaluation, automatically activated by the

presence of the attitude generator object, generated by past experiences which are inaccessible or hardly accessible by introspection and whose valence is likewise inaccessible or hard to access by introspection' (Ackermann & Mathieu, 2015, p. 62).

The IAT assesses the strength of association between two target categories (e.g. the United States versus France) and two attribute categories (e.g. good versus bad), by comparing the response latencies between two differently combined tasks. The main assumption is that it will be easier for participants to categorize two concepts that they perceive as compatible (i.e. highly linked); thus, the lower the response latencies are, the stronger the association is between two concepts (i.e. the stronger the implicit attitudes are).

Researchers in tourism literature have recently started to measure implicit attitudes using the IAT (Choi, Liu, & Kim, 2015; Kim & Chen, 2010; Kim, Chen, & Hwang, 2011; Lee & Kim, in press; Yang, He, & Gu, 2012). Their purpose is to measure the destination image of a country, assessing and comparing explicit and implicit attitudes towards destinations (Appendix A.16).

Our research contributes to these previous studies by assessing two levels of places, according to their brand dimensions. Moreover, using the IAT allows us to counterbalance the introspective limits of self-reported responses (e.g. people lacking place awareness and familiarity may not feel comfortable answering questions about a destination they may think they don't know enough about) and to reduce declarative bias.

3.3.2.2. Method

We investigated the implicit attitude differences between the branding of two levels of places (region or region brand and country or nation brand), using two brand dimensions of a destination: representationality and functionality. Therefore, the implicit measures relate to participants' attitudes towards destination brand images, according to their brand dimensions (representational or functional). In addition, we focused on potential international tourists and their perceptions of two French destinations: Auvergne, a region with strong place brand equity (Chamard et al., 2013), and France overall, which also has a strong place brand equity with its status as the world's most popular travel destination (United Tourism Organization, 2016). France is also amongst the 22 countries that are perceived to be a brand (FutureBrand, 2015); it elicits stronger than average positive perceptions, conferring a competitive advantage on it in areas such as tourism (e.g. tourists are more likely to visit a country that is perceived to be a brand than its counterparts; FutureBrand, 2015).

3.3.2.2.1. Procedures

To assess international tourists' implicit attitudes for a destination brand, depending on how the destination is characterized (i.e. brand dimensions), we used the IAT (Greenwald et al., 1998). Specifically, we implemented the IAT with word stimuli script, designed for Inquisit 3 software by Millisecond, for which the template is available on the company's website.

An IAT presents a set of categorization tasks that measure the ease with which respondents can associate target concepts with given attributes on a computer screen. During various pre-defined tasks (blocks), participants must categorize stimuli as belonging to target concepts or attributes, with the words randomly assigned. For this study, the IAT participants categorized stimuli into target categories (*France* and *Auvergne*) and attribute categories (*appealing* and *unappealing*); these tasks represent the discrimination tasks in the test. One target category and one attribute category shared a response key (e.g. *France and appealing* shared the e key), whereas the others shared the other response key (e.g. *Auvergne and unappealing* shared the i key). Thus, this step corresponds to the test's combined tasks, as detailed in Appendix A.17.

Only the combined tasks (Blocks 3, 4, 6, and 7) were taken into consideration for measuring the strength of the association between the target and attribute categories; we measured the difference in the average response latency required to categorize the items between target and attribute categories. The discrimination tasks (Blocks 1, 2, and 5) functioned as learning tasks.

Participants are inclined to make fewer mistakes when classifying stimuli and to categorize stimuli faster if the two concepts presented at the top corners of the screen are close (e.g. *France and appealing* versus *Auvergne and appealing*). The complexity of the combined tasks and the speed expected for each response essentially force participants to perform the task unconsciously and automatically, thereby reducing declarative biases.

3.3.2.2.2. Design

We developed two IATs (Table 3.1). In one IAT, the stimuli of the two target concepts (i.e. *France* and *Auvergne*) are words that pertain to each destination's representational (self-expression) attributes. The other IAT was designed such that the target concept stimuli refer to the functional (physical) attributes of the two destination brands under study.

Before the experiment, we undertook a pre-test to derive the characteristics of each destination. We asked 146 respondents from the University of Leicester (England), aware of

France and Auvergne, to describe both tourist destinations in three words. The stimuli also reflected the information provided by DMOs' websites and the region brand's website.

Two researchers familiar with the Brand Box Model (De Chernatony & McWilliam, 1990) and its application to destinations (Caldwell & Freire, 2004) classified the most cited words into two categories: representational attributes and functional attributes. The chosen representational attributes appear more symbolic in nature, rather than fulfilling self-expression needs, but the selected words also can apply to both people and places. Thus, these emotional attributes enable people to connect their own identity to that of the place (e.g. people visiting a destination that they perceive as fashionable claim something about themselves by extension, namely, that they are keen on fashion too).

The stimuli for the two attribute categories, shared across the two IATs, came from the pre-test, informed by work by Russell, Ward, and Pratt (1981) and Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) pertaining to the affective dimension of destination image, and by Kim et al. (2011), who assess attitudes towards destinations using implicit and explicit measures. Five of the six words for the appealing category were repeatedly associated with France and Auvergne by pre-test participants. Negative affective words or attributes were rare.

Table 3.1: IAT with word stimuli script for each test.

	Target categories		*Associated attribute categories*	
Categories	France	Auvergne	Appealing	Unappealing
Representational IAT stimuli	Romantic	Healthy	Interesting	Uninteresting
	Elegant	Sharing	Pleasant	Unpleasant
	Fashionable	Authentic	Beautiful	Ugly
	Different	Adventurous	Exciting	Gloomy
	Stylish	Bon-vivant	Arousing	Sleepy
	Intellectual	Real	Attractive	Awful
	Iconic	Friendly	Relaxing	Distressing
	Popular	Familial	Pretty	Plain
Functional IAT stimuli	Diverse	Volcanoes	Interesting	Uninteresting
	Sunny	Cows	Pleasant	Unpleasant
	Paris	Rugby	Beautiful	Ugly
	Nearby	Countryside	Exciting	Gloomy
	Historical	Natural	Arousing	Sleepy
	Cultural	Central	Attractive	Awful
	Wine	Water	Relaxing	Distressing
	French cuisine	Spa centres	Pretty	Plain

3.3.2.2.3. Sampling

A gap in extant literature pertains to non-visitors, in that few studies consider this category of stakeholders, even though tourists' perceptions about a place change after their first actual experience of the place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b). In this research, we focus on a region's (international) non-visitors.

The experiment relied on convenience sampling. The 62 participants completed the experiment in Leicester (England), and most of them were enrolled in the University of Leicester. They completed the experiment individually on a voluntary basis. In the within-subject design, each respondent completed two IATs, then a paper-and-pencil questionnaire that collected demographic information. Participants were told that we wanted their opinions on two French tourist destinations, France and the Auvergne region. We explained that words pertaining to France and Auvergne, as well as positive and negative words, would appear on the computer screen, and their task was to classify the words by pressing either the e key or the i key. Half the sample completed the IAT with representational attributes first, followed by the one with functional attributes, and for the other half, the order was reversed.

Data provided by eleven participants were excluded: six because they did not complete the second IAT, three because more than 10 per cent of their response latencies were shorter than 300 milliseconds (ms), and two participants because they had previously visited the Auvergne region. The final sample thus included 36 women and 15 men, of whom 22 were British, and 21 had heard of Auvergne as a tourist destination. None of these respondents had visited Auvergne, but 35 had visited France. The mean age was of 29.37 years (17–72 years). Table 3.2 presents the sample characteristics. The data were processed using the SPSS statistical software package.

Table 3.2: Sample characteristics of Study 1.

Characteristics	*IATs*
Sample size	51
Average age (years)	29.37
Minimum	17
Maximum	72
Gender (%)	
Female	70.59
Male	29.41
Nationality (%)	
British	43.14
Non-British	56.86
Place awareness towards region (%)	
Yes	41.18
No	58.82
Familiarity with France (%)	
Familiar (visitors)	68.63
Not familiar (non-visitors)	31.37

3.3.2.2.4. Measures

As recommended by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003), we cleaned our data set before the analysis by excluding participants with extravagant latencies, beyond the interval of 400 ms to 10,000 ms, as well as those who took less than 300 ms to issue at least 10 per cent of their responses.

3.3.2.3. Analysis and results

We relied on two one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to identify significant differences in the latencies across the four groups of brand dimensions associated with attractiveness (Table 3.3), regarding the destination branding activities of both place scales (region and country). Studies that use the IAT as an implicit measure usually favour student samples, because their homogeneity supports a comparison across response latencies. Our sample consisted mainly of students, except for five retired persons. We conducted two ANOVAs, for the region and the country, in which one included the five retirees and one excluded them. Their inclusion had no impact on the results, so we decided to keep them in our sample.

Table 3.3: Effects of nation's and region's destination brand dimensions on attractiveness, depending on response times.

	Destination brand dimensions associated with attractiveness	*Latency means*
Nation brand	Representationality-Appealing	$1{,}124.70^{RuN}$
	Representationality-Unappealing	$1{,}269.32^{RaN}$
	Functionality-Appealing	$1{,}124.31^{FuN}$
	Functionality-Unappealing	$1{,}251.42^{FaN}$
Region brand	Representationality-Appealing	1,354.87
	Representationality-Unappealing	1,290.77
	Functionality-Appealing	$1{,}381.74^{FuR}$
	Functionality-Unappealing	$1{,}247.07^{FaR}$

Letters in italics indicate a significant difference ($p < .05$) with the Bonferroni test. *RaN* = Representationality and appealing (Nation); *RuN* = Representationality and unappealing (Nation); *FaN* = Functionality and appealing (Nation); *FuN* = Functionality and unappealing (Nation); *FaR* = Functionality and appealing (Region); *FuR* = Functionality and unappealing (Region).

As Table 3.3 shows, the region is very unappealing for our sample participants. The region brand's functional attributes influenced its attractiveness significantly but negatively ($M_{\text{Functionality-Unappealing}}$ = 1,247.07 ms < $M_{\text{Functionality-Appealing}}$ = 1,381.74 ms; p = .028). The association between the region's functional attributes and *unappealing* happened significantly faster than its counterpart. Representational attributes of the region were associated with unappealing attributes faster than with appealing attributes ($M_{\text{Representationality-Unappealing}}$ = 1,290.77 ms < $M_{\text{Representationality-Appealing}}$ = 1,354.87 ms), though this difference was not significant ($p > .05$). That is, attributes linked to self-expression needs have no impact on the implicit attractiveness of the region. The difference between latencies is significant in the case of the region's functional attributes but not significant for the representational attributes (Figure 3.1), so we must reject H_1. The region brand's representational dimension does not explain the attractiveness of the region better than its functional dimension does. The results instead show the opposite effect: The functional attributes have more weight (though negative) on the region's implicit attractiveness than the representational attributes.

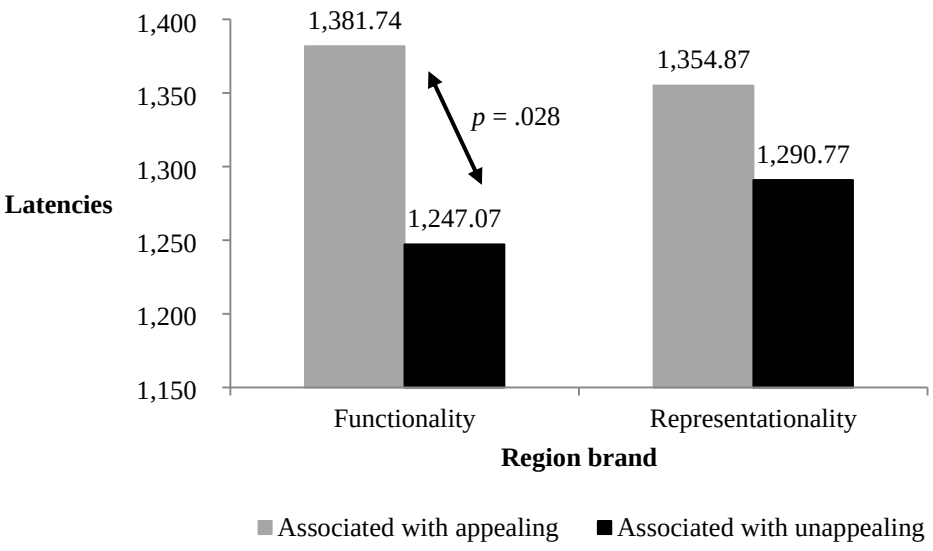


Figure 3.1: Impact of the region brand's dimensions on attractiveness of the region.

The nation brand's functional and representational attributes significantly contribute to the attractiveness of the destination (Table 3.3), which is implicitly perceived as highly appealing by participants. The response times were significantly shorter when participants associated the nation's functional attributes with appealing attributes than if they associated these attributes with unappealing attributes ($M_{\text{Functionality-Appealing}}$ = 1,124.31 ms < $M_{\text{Functionality-Unappealing}}$ = 1,251.42 ms; p = .011). Furthermore, participants' response times were faster when they associated representational attributes with *appealing* than with *unappealing* ($M_{\text{Representationality-Appealing}}$ = 1,124.70 ms < $M_{\text{Representationality-Unappealing}}$ = 1,269.32 ms; p = .003). Both destination brand dimensions had significant, positive influences on the attractiveness of the country (Figure 3.2) with no significant difference between the differences ($M_{\text{Functionality-Appealing}}$ = 1,124.31 ms < $M_{\text{Representationality-Appealing}}$ = 1,124.70 ms; p > .10 and $M_{\text{Functionality-Unappealing}}$ = 1,251.42 ms < $M_{\text{Representationality-Unappealing}}$ = 1,269.32 ms; p > .10), such that H_2 was not validated.

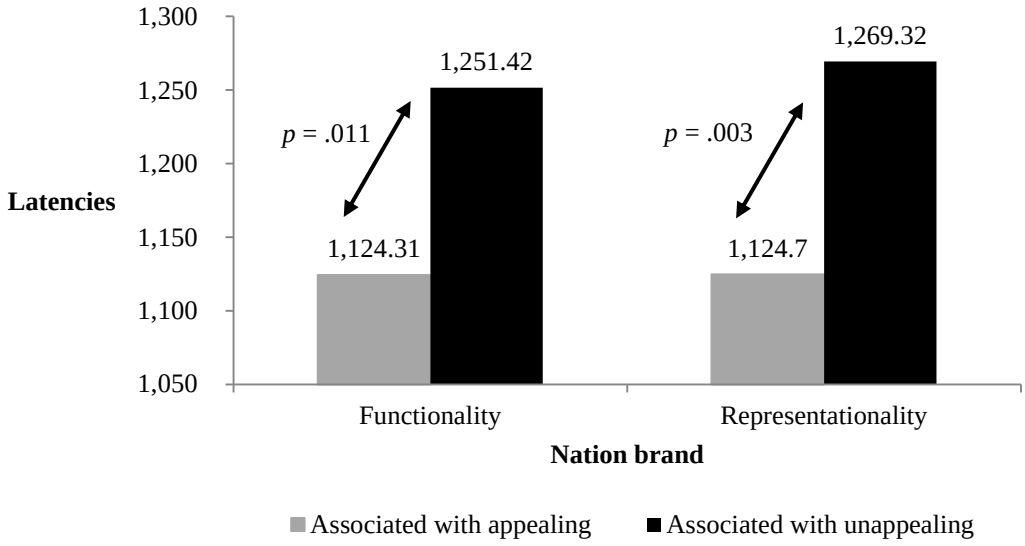


Figure 3.2: Impact of the nation brand's dimensions on attractiveness of the country.

3.3.3. Study 2: Effects of destination brand dimensions on intentions to visit a destination

Study 1 focused on the automatic attitudes of international tourists for a region or country, relative to its brand attributes. Study 2 furthers Caldwell and Freire's (2004) adaptation of the Brand Box Model (De Chernatony & McWilliam, 1990) to destinations, by analysing the destination brand dimension that best contributes to intentions to visit the destination. We investigate both the region and the nation as destination brands. Our objective is two-fold: (1) to analyse the relationship between the dimensions of a destination brand and tourists' intentions to visit it and (2) to compare both destination brands in terms of the dimensions' impact on visit intentions.

3.3.3.1. Method

We carried out a survey to address our two previous research hypotheses, as an alternative to the implicit measures and to test H_3.

3.3.3.2. Sampling

Consistent with Study 1, we selected France and the Auvergne region. The unit of analysis is place consumers, specifically, international tourists who have not visited the region previously, irrespective of their familiarity with the country. This decision helps ensure ecological validity, in that international tourists tend to visit France but not necessarily

Auvergne, which is one of many French regions. International tourists are a distinct minority amongst hotel and camping guests in Auvergne: In 2013, they accounted for 350,000 visits, compared with 40,724,000 in France, or just .86 per cent of total foreign arrivals in France (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, 2014).

We sent 1,045 e-mails with a link to a standardized online questionnaire to students and faculty members of the University of Leicester. The survey was structured into two parts, such that all respondents answered the part pertaining to France as a destination, but only those with place awareness and no place familiarity answered questions about Auvergne as a destination. The screening questions ensured only those who had heard about the region but never visited it could proceed with the second part of the survey. Place awareness was assessed in three steps: (1) An item that asked, 'Have you seen or heard about the Auvergne region, which is a region of France?'; (2) If not, respondents were re-directed to a small text that briefly described the region, mainly to ensure they associated cities they might have had heard of before with the correct region; and (3) Then an item, 'Now that you have read a little narrative about the Auvergne region, do you reckon you have ever seen or heard about it?' Participants who indicated they had not were directed to the end of the survey (Appendix A.18).

A total of 146 surveys, representing a 13.97 per cent response rate, were coded for data analysis. Five responses were deleted because the respondents resided outside of the United Kingdom or had a French background. As a result, our final sample comprised 141 respondents who answered questions relative to France, and 44 proceeded to answer questions about Auvergne.

The mean age of the respondents was 39.32 years (20–65 years) for those who described the Auvergne destination and 35.84 years for the total sample for France (Table 3.4). Furthermore, 9.93 per cent of the respondents had never visited France. All respondents in our sample had heard of the region but never experienced the destination first-hand. The respondents enjoyed traveling for vacation. These data again were processed using the SPSS statistical software package.

Table 3.4: Sample characteristics of Study 2.

Characteristics	*Destinations*	
	France	Auvergne
Sample size	141	44
Average age (years)	35.84	39.32
Minimum	18	20
Maximum	78	65
Gender (%)		
Female	53.19	45.45
Male	46.81	54.55
Nationality (%)		
British	70.21	84.09
Non-British	29.79	15.91
Familiarity (%)		
Familiar (visitors)	90.07	-
1 visit	14.17	-
2 or more visits	85.83	-
Not familiar (non-visitors)	9.93	100.00
Experience of vacation travel (mean) (1: no experience; 7: great experience)	5.53	5.82

3.3.3.3. Measures

We adapted the measures developed for the Destination Brand Box Model (Caldwell & Freire, 2004), using a 5-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree; 5: strongly agree; Table 3.5). Consistent with Rossiter's (2002, 2011) advice to use a single-item scale for basic constructs, we measured behavioural intentions towards the destination with one item, 'If I could, I would like to visit [destination]', on the same 5-point Likert agreement scale.

3.3.3.4. Analysis and results

We began by testing the two-dimensional conceptualization of the Destination Brand Box Model using a factorial analysis, before proceeding to a regression analysis to investigate the contribution of destination brand dimensions to intentions to visit the destination.

3.3.3.4.1. Destination brand: A two-dimensional measure

We used an exploratory factorial analysis with principal components analysis (PCA) using Varimax rotation (Table 3.5), because the more independent the variables are, the better it is for a regression analysis. Using both the scree test criteria and the requirement that the

eigenvalue be greater than 1, we find a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value above .50 (.670), with a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .001$). We checked each scale's reliability using Cronbach's alpha; the alpha of the first factor was good ($.70 < \alpha < .80$) whereas that of the second factor was weak ($.60 < \alpha < .65$). We kept all three items of the functionality scale, because they all contributed to improving the Cronbach's alpha. To address the potential for common method variance (CMV), we used Harman's single-factor test, which led to a PCA with items related to the destination brand and behavioural intentions (variance explained by the single factor = 31.518 per cent < 50 per cent).

The first dimension, representationality, explained 36.014 per cent of the variance. The main dimension of a destination brand thus deals with representational (self-expression) attributes. The factor consisted of three items. The second dimension regrouped all three functionality items and accounted for 28.200 per cent of the variance.

Table 3.5: Destination brand, measurement scale.

Construct	*Cronbach's alpha*	*Communalities*	*Factor loadings*
Destination brand			
Representationality *(Variance extracted: 36.014%)*	*.767*		
- [Destination] somehow defines the people who travel there.		.613	.783
- You've got to feel right amongst your friends because you can say that you went to [destination].		.721	.847
- People would go to [destination] because they feel it associates them with a certain group of people.		.678	.823
Functionality *(Variance extracted: 28.200%)*	*.621*		
- You travel to [destination] not for its publicised image but more for its actual characteristics.		.561	.668
- People go to [destination] because the place puts more effort into creating a pleasant experience, rather than emphasizing the sort of people who travel there.		.610	.768
- When you think about [destination] you think more about the [place scale]'s characteristics than the type of visitor.		.671	.817

The two destinations, France and Auvergne, were inserted inside the brackets in each case.

The international tourists in our study perceive two facets of the destination brand: representationality and functionality. Our results thus confirm Caldwell and Freire's (2004) transposition of the Brand Box Model (De Chernatony & McWilliam, 1990) to region branding and nation branding, understood in terms of their destination forms. In this sense, we have grounded our analysis in extant literature on destination marketing and branding. The dimensionality of the model and the associated measurement scale originate from Caldwell and Freire's (2004) transposition of the Brand Box Model (De Chernatony & McWilliam,

1990). Our findings confirm this two-factor dimensionality, distinguishing representational from functional items. The correlation matrix (Table 3.6) indicates that representational and functional dimensions are not significantly linked (r = -.047, p > .10); they constitute two different dimensions of the same construct, namely, the destination brand.

Table 3.6: Pearson correlations of destination brand dimensions.

	Representationality	*Functionality*
Representationality	1	
Functionality	−.047	1

3.3.3.4.2. Destination brand dimensions: Predictors of intentions to visit the destination

We carried out two backward linear regressions (Model 1, region brand; Model 2, nation brand) to determine the extent to which the destination brand's dimensions can predict international tourists' intentions to visit a destination.

For Model 1, both tolerance and the variance inflation factor (VIF) were close to 1 (tolerance = .842 > .3; VIF = 1.188 < 3). Thus, representationality and functionality are not closely correlated, in support of the model's quality. Model 1 predicted 22.6 per cent of the variance (Table 3.7) and can predict the outcomes [F = 7.280, df = 44, p = .002]. To test the hypothesis that the dimensions of the region brand's standardized beta weights for representationality (β = -.348, p < .05) and functionality (β = .262, p < .10) on intentions to visit the region differ significantly, we estimated their corresponding 95% confidence intervals using bias-corrected bootstraps (1,000 re-samples). The ensuing confidence intervals do not overlap (Table 3.7); the beta weights thus are significantly different. The representational dimension of the region brand better explains tourists' intentions to visit the region than does its functional dimension, in support of H_1.

Model 2 instead accounts for 19.2 per cent of the variance on visit intentions (Table 3.7), and it can predict the outcomes [F = 34,303, df = 141, p < .001]. Model 2 excluded representationality and retained functionality. Thus, the dimensions of the nation brand's standardized beta weights for functionality (β = .445, p < .001) and representationality (β = 0) on intentions to visit the country differ significantly; the beta weight of the representational dimension is not significant. These results validate H_2: The functional dimension of the nation brand is perceived by international tourists as having a greater influence on intentions to visit

than does the representational dimension. The results go even further to the extent that the representational dimension has no impact on intentions to visit the country.

Table 3.7: Relationship between destination brand dimensions and intentions to visit.

Models		*Unstandardized coeff.*		*Standardized coeff.*	*t*	*Sig.*	*Bias corrected accelerated (BCa) 95% Confidence Interval*	
		B	*Std. error*	*Beta*			*Lower*	*Upper*
Model 1: Region brand Adjusted R^2 = .226								
	Constant	3.908	.901		4.337	.000		
	Functionality	.347	.194	.262*	1.791	.081	−.057	.479
	Representationality	−.350	.147	−.348**	−2.380	.022	−.610	−.148
Dependent variable: Intentions to visit								
Model 2: Nation brand Adjusted R^2 = .192								
	Constant	1.507	.467		3.224	.002		
	Functionality[a]	.717	.122	.445***	5.857	.000	.253	.598
Dependent variable: Intentions to visit								

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .05$, and * $p < .10$.
[a] Representationality was excluded from Model 2 as a result of the backward regression.

3.3.3.4.3. Comparison between region brand and nation brand to explain intentions to visit

First, the representational dimensions of both destination brands' standardized beta weights, region brand (β = -.348, $p < .05$) and nation brand (β = 0), are significantly different from each other; the beta weight of the nation brand's representational dimension is not significant. International tourists thus perceive the region brand, more than the nation brand, in terms of its representational dimension to explain their intentions to visit the destination. $H_{3(a)}$ is supported.

Second, the test of moderation checks for significant differences between the betas of two regression models. We implemented the test of moderation using the PROCESS macro (version 2.13, released 26 September 2014) for SPSS (model 1; Hayes, 2013) suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004). It consisted of testing the moderating effect of place (region = 0, country = 1) on the relationship between the functional dimension and intentions to visit, as we detail in Table 3.8.

The results show that the regression coefficient for the interaction term of functionality (independent variable) and place (moderator) was not significant (b = .186, p > .10). Hence, the difference between the betas of both destination brands' functional dimensions was not significant, though the beta weights were ranked as expected ($\beta_{\text{region brand}} < \beta_{\text{nation brand}}$); $H_{3(b)}$ is rejected. Though the functional dimension of the region brand does not have a significant lesser impact on tourists' intentions to visit the destination compared with that of the nation brand, the small size of the Auvergne sample could explain this result to some extent.

Table 3.8: Differences between destination brands' effects of functional dimensions on intentions to visit.

	Coeff.	*Sig.*	*95% Confidence Interval*	
			Lower	*Upper*
Functionality x Place	.186	.361	−.2144	.5856

In summary, the results validate $H_{3(a)}$ such that the region brand is more representational than the nation brand, but they reject $H_{3(b)}$ in that the region brand is not significantly less functional than the nation brand, in terms of its ability to explain intentions to visit the destination.

3.3.3.4.4. Synthesis of H_1, H_2 and H_3 results

To conclude, in investigating which dimension of a destination brand has the stronger effect, in terms of attracting tourists, we analysed the relationship between the dimensions of a destination brand and tourists' intentions to visit, and we compared both destination brands according to their dimensions' impact on these intentions. Both dimensions of the region brand exert an impact on intentions to visit the region. In terms of absolute values, the region brand's representational dimension ($|\beta|$ = .348, p < .05) was stronger than its functional dimension ($|\beta|$ = .262, p < .10), but the opposite was true for the nation brand, with its stronger functional dimension ($|\beta|$ = .445, p < .001) than representational dimension ($|\beta|$ = 0). Comparing the absolute values for the betas of the region brand dimensions, we find that representationality had a stronger impact than functionality on intentions to visit the region. Its beta coefficient was negative, so self-expressive values had stronger, negative impacts on intentions to visit Auvergne. Furthermore, the functional dimension of the nation brand solely influenced intentions to visit the country. Representationality played no part in the relationship between France's brand dimension and intentions to visit.

Our results thus further Caldwell and Freire's (2004) finding that the region exhibited a higher representational score and the nation had a higher score on its functional than on its representational dimension. However, in comparing the region and nation brands in terms of the weight of their dimensions on intentions to visit, we find that for international tourists, the region's representational dimension had a stronger impact on their intentions to visit than that of the nation, but the functional dimension impacts the region as much as the nation when explaining intentions to visit.

Figure 3.3 displays the results for our three hypotheses graphically. The bars relate to H_1 and H_2; the lines pertain to H_3. The lines are not flat, so the betas tend to differ across the representational and functional dimensions, though the test of moderation was not significant for the functional dimension.

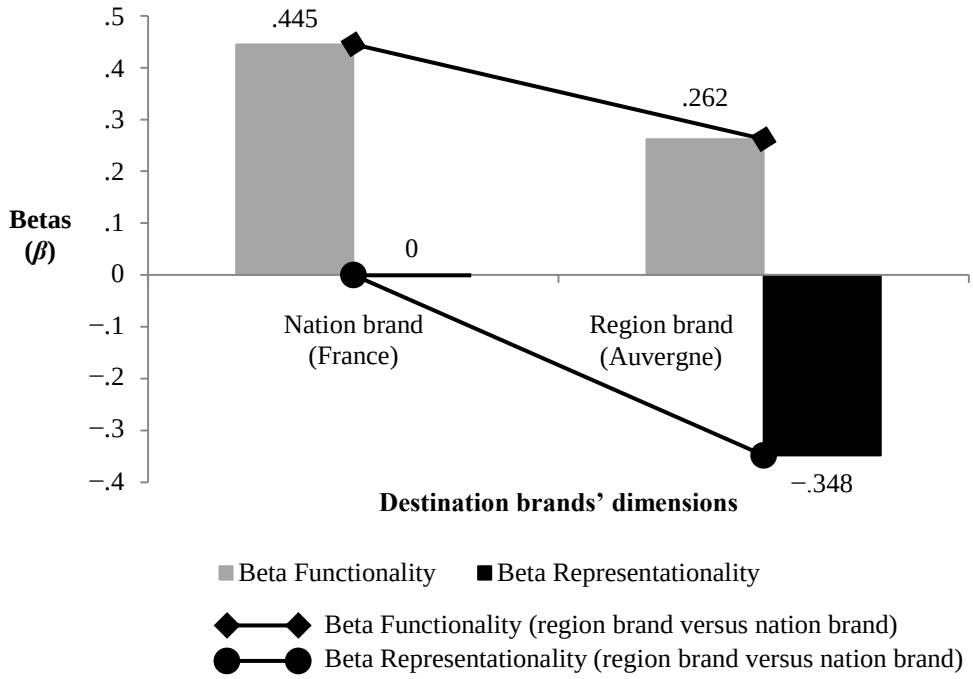


Figure 3.3: Synthesis of the results of Study 2.

3.4. Part 2: Destination brand dimensions—Perceived congruence between region and nation brands

With Part 1, we have highlighted that it is not necessarily the same brand dimensions that contribute to behavioural intentions towards a destination, with regard to a region brand versus a nation brand. Thus, we investigate the interplay of the region brand and the nation brand more closely, by questioning their interaction according to their brand dimensions. Therefore, in Part 2, we study the congruence between region and nation brands and seek an answer to our sub-question: What role does the nation brand image play in promoting the

region brand image as a destination? We thereby attempt to determine the congruence between region and nation brands, as well as the extent to which it affects international tourists' behavioural intentions towards the region.

3.4.1. Theoretical framework

3.4.1.1. Congruence in the marketing domain

With its origins in the domain of cognitive psychology (Tversky, 1977), the concept of congruence (Mandler, 1982) has been adopted by marketing literature and transposed to the field of consumer behaviour (Loken, 2006). Congruence has received particular study in relation to brand extensions and advertising, notably pertaining to celebrity endorsements and sponsorships (Fleck & Quester, 2007), because it plays an important role in defining consumers' perceptions and, ultimately, the effectiveness of marketing activities (Fleck & Maille, 2010).

However, the lack of an explicit and consistent conceptual framework leads to inconsistent findings, hindering the managerial relevance of such a concept (Maille & Fleck, 2011). For example, evaluated under many different names, *congruence* is often used interchangeably with other constructs that denote alikeness, such as *fit* or *similarity* (Bèzes & Mercanti-Guérin, 2016); for reviews, see Fleck, Darpy, & Roux (2005); Maille and Fleck (2011). To be specific, prior literature is conflicted with regard to the dimensionality of the congruence concept and diverges depending on two approaches. First, congruence can be conceptualized as comprising two dimensions. For example, Heckler and Childers (1992) consider congruence by looking at its relevancy and expectancy dimensions; *relevancy* is the degree to which the pairing of two objects is clear and comprehensible, and *expectancy* relates to the idea that the pairing is in conformity with expectations (i.e. the degree to which the pairing corresponds to the pre-existing mental schemas of individuals). In another example, Gwinner (1997) considers the degree of similarity—or congruence—according to its functional and image based dimensions. Second, in an alternative approach, congruence is considered a one-dimensional concept, whose dimensions are not distinguished (e.g. Speed & Thompson, 2000; Trendel, 2006).

3.4.1.2. Congruence in destination marketing and branding

Following advancements in self-concept research such as Sirgy's (1982), destination image literature began to study congruence in relation to the perceived self-concept (i.e. actual, ideal,

social, or ideal social self-image) and destination image to explain tourists' travel intentions (i.e. self-consistency), thereby applying self-congruity theory (Chon, 1992). Self-congruity is the relationship between an individual's self-image belief and her or his perceived image of a product, such as a place or a destination. Self-consistency is one potential driver of behavioural intentions, in that tourists likely seek a destination that is congruent with their self-image beliefs. In particular, authors have studied the relationship between individuals' personality traits relative to the 'value-expressive' attributes of the destination, viewed like an anthropomorphic object (Bekk, Spörrle, & Kruse, 2016; Murphy et al., 2007). To explain destination preference and choice, some authors study the congruence between tourists' ideal functional aspects of a destination and the extent to which they perceive that the destination fulfils their expectations (i.e. functional congruity) independently from self-congruity or as a complementary approach (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Sirgy & Su, 2000). Thus, self-congruity refers to symbolic consumption behaviour, whereas functional congruity 'refers to the knowledge aspects of congruity' (Hung & Petrick, 2011, p. 102).

In this paper, we apply the concept of congruence to place branding differently—adopting a holistic conceptualization of the degree to which place consumers perceive that the association between the brand image of a lower-order place and that of a higher-order place is logical.

3.4.1.3. Conceptualization at the intersection of congruence and relational similarity

Our research looks at the interrelation of two levels of places, integrating the congruence concept to place branding to reach this purpose. It is therefore necessary to clarify the concept, especially in relation to the notion of similarity.

The concepts of *similarity* and *congruence* are often used interchangeably (Maille & Fleck, 2011) to describe the degree to which two objects are perceived to be alike. As such, authors in the marketing domain have been applying those notions in the context of brand extensions and advertising, notably celebrity endorsement and sponsorship (Fleck & Quester, 2007). For instance, in country-of-origin literature, from which place branding is a derivation (Papadopoulos, 2004), these two notions are often used to study the *spillover effect* (Iversen & Hem, 2001, 2011)—that is, the transfer of associations and affect between a master brand and its extension. Recently, Iversen and Hem (2008) made the transition from the country-of-origin literature to place branding, conceptualizing a framework in which similarity (or congruence) takes an integral part in the transfer of provenance associations to the partners of

the umbrella place brand. However, congruence and similarity are conceptually diverse and serve different purposes, though the lines between them are not always unequivocal (for reviews see Bèzes, 2010; Bèzes & Mercanti-Guérin, 2016).

Tversky (1977) paved the way for research in psychology and marketing domains that focuses on *similarity*, which consists of the comparison of shared salient features—mostly tangible attributes and, to a lesser extent, abstract (image-based) elements—between two objects of the same category. In turn, authors mostly have concentrated on taxonomic feature-based similarity. However, extant literature now supports a dual-process model, with separate effects on perceptions of similarity (Estes, Gibbert, Guest, & Mazursky, 2012) such that the two processes work as distinct predictors of brand extension evaluation, based on *fit* (Estes et al., 2012). Thus, similarity is extended from its taxonomic, feature-based type to encompass thematic relation-based similarity—respectively defined as literal and relational similarities (Bèzes & Mercanti-Guérin, 2016). Whilst literal similarity entails comparing two objects of a single category on the basis of their identical shared attributes, such that they are internal to the objects and independent of the context, relational similarity occurs between two or more objects from multiple categories but from the same theme, in which they perform different roles, and it consists of studying whether they have common goals (e.g. usage) or are connected through spatial, temporal or functional relations (Estes et al., 2012). In that sense, the new development of similarity blurs the lines between similarity and congruence, inasmuch as they now both relate to structured representations or schemas (Bèzes, 2010), so that 'it is the structure of the object, and not the presence or absence of certain features, that seems to determine its value' (Mandler, 1982, p. 10). As such, relational similarity relates to the congruence concept (Bèzes & Mercanti-Guérin, 2016).

Congruence 'involves indirect equivalences between objects that may be of various kinds, while [literal] similarity implies a direct comparison between alike and homogeneous attributes or objects, that is to say, of the same kind' (Bèzes & Mercanti-Guérin, 2016, p. 6). As such, our work is close to the literal similarity insofar as we focus on two objects that are of the same nature (i.e. place brands), but it differs somewhat from this type of similarity, because the place brands represent different spatial levels (i.e. region brand versus nation brand) and correspond much more to structured representations than to categories. In addition, we compare two place brand images in terms of their representational attributes (self-expressing values) on the one hand and their functional attributes (physical aspects) on the other hand.

Representational elements are extrinsic cues. In this work, we also suggest that functional attributes of a place are extrinsic cues, because we define place brands as perceptual entities; for example, landscapes or the Eiffel Tower are no longer intrinsic attributes of the place but extrinsic elements to the extent that they derive from individuals' perceived images (Beerli & Martín, 2004). Perceived images form in people's minds on the basis of their experience with the place (i.e. primary image) and are constructed on the basis of organic (socialized) and induced (marketed) sources (Gunn, 1988), which reflects the secondary image. Thus, individuals may form an image of a place without actually being familiar with the destination. The focus of our work is on place brands, which are social phenomena, and on their images, which are social, mental representations, structured such that they reflect a network of associations in people's minds (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). The purpose of our work is to study the abstract relationship between these two entities. In that sense, our work is close to relational similarity, which pertains to the congruence concept (Bèzes & Mercanti-Guérin, 2016).

We have adopted a marketing approach that comes close to the notion of a master brand (nation brand) and its extension (i.e. daughter brand), which is implemented at the geographical level. However, our research differs from the notion of *fit* to the extent that we are interested in beliefs (Bèzes & Mercanti-Guérin, 2016), postulating that beliefs have impacts on attitudes (i.e. output); we are not looking at the brand extension evaluation.

Therefore, our work sits at the intersection of the concepts of similarity (i.e. relational type) and congruence. We consider the perceived interrelations between two entities of the same nature (i.e. place brands) but not of the same levels (one place brand at a lower level and the other at the higher level), according to their representational and functional aspects. Consequently, in the remainder of the paper, we refer to *congruence*—which is the most widely used term in the field of marketing—to reflect this particular conceptualization of congruence, which relates to relational similarity. We propose that congruence between a lower-order place and a higher-order place reflects the degree to which the place brand image dyad is perceived to be alike (i.e. to go well together). Congruence is strong when place consumers perceive a logical link between the brand images of both place scales and weak if there is no perceived logical link between the two entities.

3.4.2. Hypothesis development

Using the concept of congruence from a holistic conceptualization perspective, we first study the association between the overall brand images of two scales of places.

Places are specific products (Hankinson, 2007; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008); their particularities translate themselves to their branding and management. A place brand can take many facets, according to its scale, targets and purposes. Tourists, as a social group, try to apprehend and understand this social object (e.g. image formation, construction of the self) to form attitudes towards it when considering a destination. In that sense, just like a commercial brand (Michel, 1999; Rosa, Tafani, Michel, & Abric, 2011), a place brand generates representation within the social group (i.e. international tourists). Rosa et al. (2011) emphasize that congruence between the social representation of a brand and that of its category extension facilitates the transfer of associations from the brand to the branded product and thus contributes to increasing its perceived value and buying probability. We propose that the dynamics are somewhat similar when place consumers consider a higher-order place brand in relation to its lower-order place brand, because place brands are social constructs that are subjected to social representation. People tend to define a lower-order object (e.g. region) in terms of its higher-order object (e.g. country; Andéhn & Zenker, 2015; Tversky, 1977), as would particularly be the case for place consumers who are not familiar with the place (Boisen et al., 2011), such that they transfer attributes (including representational and functional elements) from the higher-order place brand to the lower-order place brand to form an idea about the lower-order place, beyond the connotations they would have already inferred about its name. Therefore, we suggest that congruence between the two leads to favourable attitudes towards the lower-order place. Our fourth hypothesis addresses the overall congruence between two destination brand images and its impact on intentions to visit one destination:

> *H_4: The more international tourists perceive the region and nation brands as being congruent, the higher are their intentions to visit the region.*

Moreover, we distinguish between representational and functional characteristics using congruence as a single construct, because each brand dimension affects brand image separately.

The results of Study 2 show that the representational dimension of the region brand and that of the nation brand have a distinct impact on intentions to visit the destination. The nation brand's representational dimension has no impact on intentions to visit the country, and the region brand's representational attributes significantly and negatively influence it. We can therefore assume that there is no congruence between the representational dimensions of the region and the nation brands to explain intentions to visit the region. Thus, we propose:

H_5: The perceived representational congruence between the region and nation brands does not affect international tourists' intentions to visit the region.

Conversely, in light of the declarative results of Study 2, we suggest that congruence exists between the functional dimensions of the destination brands. Participants perceived no difference between the nation brand's functional attributes compared with those of the region brand, in terms of explaining their visit intentions. Therefore, the region may not need to advertise its physical attributes to attract international tourists, because the attributes of the nation brand are sufficient. Andéhn and Zenker (2015) highlight that physical characteristics of lower-order scales can play a synecdoche for a higher-level scale image; for instance, a Parisian district such as Montmartre may drive international tourists to think of the architecture of historical city centres as being along such lines in the French cities of all regions. We therefore predict:

H_6: Perceived functional congruence between the region and nation brands enhances international tourists' intentions to visit the region.

3.4.3. Method

We looked at international tourists' perceptions of the overall congruence between the nation and region brand dyad, as well as the perceived congruence between both destinations' brand dimensions, using a survey that participants completed after finishing the IAT from Study 1. To ensure coherence and avoid confusing the participants, we retained our focus on France and Auvergne.

3.4.3.1. Sampling

The data were collected through an anonymous, voluntary, self-administered survey, which took respondents an average of 10 minutes to complete. The survey yielded 62 responses; two were excluded due to the respondents' familiarity with the Auvergne region and one for being an outlier. We did not exclude participants who did not complete one of the two IATs or those who did not follow the recommendations of Greenwald et al. (2003), as we did in Study 1.[16] The final sample consisted of 59 respondents.

In two questionnaire versions, we randomized the questions related to perceived representational and functional congruence. Half the respondents answered questions relating

[16] We found the same results when we reproduced our analysis with Study 1's sample.

to the perceived association between both tourist destinations in terms of their functional attributes first, before responding to questions about representational congruence; the other half answered the questions in reverse order.

As we show in Table 3.9, the sample consists of 69.49 per cent women and 44.07 per cent British individuals. The mean age is 28.73 years (17–72 years). We did not screen out the participants who lacked place awareness of the Auvergne region. The data were processed using the SPSS statistical software package.

Table 3.9: Sample characteristics of Study 3.

Characteristics	*Respondents*
Sample size	59
Average age (years)	28.73
Minimum	17
Maximum	72
Gender (%)	
Female	69.49
Male	30.51
Nationality (%)	
British	44.07
Non-British	55.93
Place awareness towards region (%)	
Yes	37.29
No	62.71
Familiarity with France (%)	
Familiar (visitors)	66.10
Not familiar (non-visitors)	33.90

3.4.3.2. Measures

In the interest of parsimony, we modelled perceptions of congruence between the place at the higher level and a place at a lower level in terms of a single construct that did not distinguish between relevancy and expectancy. Adopting a bi-dimensional concept would have resulted in a long questionnaire, spanning the three types of congruence we measure (overall, representational and functional). Therefore, we assessed congruence as a one-dimensional concept on a 7-point Osgood scale (Table 3.10). Grounded in extant literature on congruence (see Fleck & Maille, 2010; Maille & Fleck, 2011; Speed & Thompson, 2000; Trendel, 2006), we propose that in a place-branding context, congruence as a uni-dimensional concept refers

to the degree to which people perceive the region/nation brand dyad as logical or not and going well together or not.

To measure the three types of congruence, we asked participants to rate France and Auvergne as vacation destinations. Each question pertaining to the destination brand dimensions began with simple instructions, explaining what participants should understand by phrases such as the emotional characteristics or physical characteristics of a destination; they provided the proxies for the representational and functional dimensions of the destination brands. We next asked participants to take a moment to think about Auvergne in terms of these types of attributes separately and to write down adjectives that came to their minds (Appendix A.19). We chose to refer to symbolic attributes of a destination brand, instead of self-expression values, to reduce the threat of social desirability bias. These attributes still can be linked to personal identity, in that people tend to project the values they perceive a place to embody onto those who have experienced the place.

Behavioural intentions were operationalized with four items on a 7-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree; 7: strongly agree; Table 3.10). The first three items related to intentions to visit the region. The fourth item pertained to word-of-mouth intentions.

3.4.4. Analysis and results

3.4.4.1. Reliability and validity of constructs

The PCA results in Table 3.10 confirm the constructs' reliability and validity. That is, the KMO values are greater than .50 ($KMO_{Overall\ congruence}$ = .826; $KMO_{Representational\ congruence}$ = .833; $KMO_{Functional\ congruence}$ = .865; $KMO_{Behavioural\ intentions}$ = .711), with significant Bartlett's tests of sphericity ($p < .001$). We checked each scale's reliability using Cronbach's alpha values, which ranged from .862 to .942 ($\alpha > .70$). To address the potential for CMV, we used Harman's single-factor test (variance explained by the single factor = 39.738 per cent < 50 per cent). The amount of variance extracted for the factors were 68.453 per cent for overall, 80.382 per cent for representational, and 81.729 per cent for functional congruence.

After removing one of the behavioural intentions items, 'If the opportunity arises, I will speak positively of Auvergne to others', we found a better Cronbach's alpha (α = .862) and an explained variance of 78.741 per cent.

Table 3.10: Reliability and validity of the study's constructs.

Constructs	*Cronbach's alpha*	*Communalities*	*Component matrix scores*
Overall congruence *(Variance extracted: 68.453%)*	*.883*		
- Very irrelevant / Very relevant		.584	.764
- They fit poorly together / They fit well together		.598	.773
- Does not make sense / Makes sense		.683	.826
- They go poorly together / They go well together		.847	.921
- Very inconsistent / Very consistent		.710	.842
Representational congruence *(Variance extracted: 80.382%)*	*.935*		
- Very irrelevant / Very relevant		.679	.824
- They fit poorly together / They fit well together		.882	.939
- Does not make sense / Makes sense		.747	.864
- They go poorly together / They go well together		.882	.939
- Very inconsistent / Very consistent		.828	.910
Functional congruence *(Variance extracted: 81.729%)*	*.942*		
- Very irrelevant / Very relevant		.716	.846
- They fit poorly together / They fit well together		.855	.925
- Does not make sense / Makes sense		.823	.907
- They go poorly together / They go well together		.908	.953
- Very inconsistent / Very consistent		.784	.886
Behavioural intentions *(Variance extracted: 78.741%)*	*.862*		
- If I could I would like to visit Auvergne.		.848	.921
- A trip to Auvergne will be a lot of fun.		.754	.868
- If I could go to France, I would like to visit Auvergne.		.760	.872

The correlation matrix in Table 3.11 shows that overall congruence is positively and significantly correlated with representational congruence (r = .575, p < .001) and functional congruence (r = .598, p < .001). Representational and functional congruence also are highly correlated constructs (r = .832, p < .001).

Table 3.11: Pearson correlations of congruence variables.

	Overall congruence	*Representational congruence*	*Functional congruence*
Overall congruence	1		
Representational congruence	.575**	1	
Functional congruence	.598**	.832**	1

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

3.4.4.2. Hypothesis testing

We carried out a backward linear regression, with behavioural intentions as the dependent variable and the three types of congruence as independent variables, to ascertain the extent to which the congruence between destination brands' dimensions can predict international tourists' intentions to visit a destination. With a model that excluded representational and functional congruence and retained overall congruence, we aim to explain declarative intentions to visit a region. It predicted 5.6 per cent of the variance. The model was suitable for predicting the outcome [$F = 4.329$, $df = 57$, $p = .042$]. Congruence between the region and nation brands enhances intentions to visit the region ($\beta = .270$, $p < .05$), in support of H_4. In summary, overall congruence between both destination brands is a driver of intentions to visit associated with the region brand.

We also account for the high correlations between the variables (Table 3.11). A backward linear regression with representational and functional congruence variables as predictors of intentions to visit the region indicated the failure of the model. This result thus confirms H_5 but leads us to reject H_6. Overall congruence is the only form of region/nation brand congruence that can explain intentions to visit the region.

3.5. Discussion and conclusions

We gathered implicit and explicit data from one place consumer group, namely, international non-visitors of a region, to assist efforts to brand a region as a tourist destination. The results of our efforts to address the main research question contrast somewhat between the findings from our quantitative approaches in Part 1 (Table 3.12), which is consistent with the previous studies that applied both the IAT and self-reported methods to the context of destinations (Appendix A.16). International tourists' implicit attitudes towards a destination conflict with their self-reported opinions about the destination, in terms of its representational and functional aspects and their impacts on behavioural intentions.

Table 3.12: Implicit and explicit assessments of international tourists' attitudes towards destinations.

Measures	*Implicit measures*		*Explicit measures*		
Scales of places	*Region brand*	*Nation brand*	*Region brand*	*Nation brand*	*Region brand versus Nation brand*
Representational dimension (R) → Behavioural intentions	No Sig.	+	-	No Sig.	Region brand > Nation brand
Functional dimension (F) → Behavioural intentions	-	+	+	+	No diff.
(R) versus (F)	R < F	No diff.	R > F	R < F	

'No Sig.': Not significant; 'No diff.': No difference.

First, the region was perceived as very unappealing, with latency means that are lower when representational and functional attributes are associated with unappealing rather than appealing attributes (Study 1). The representational dimension does not correlate significantly with region attractiveness (Study 1), but the results align with those of Study 2, in that representational attributes are perceived negatively by respondents in both studies. Whereas functional attributes were largely perceived as unappealing in Study 1, they had a positive impact on intentions to visit the region in Study 2.

Second, participants indirectly perceived the country as highly appealing, such that they answered the tasks swiftly when the target category and its two types of stimuli were associated with *appealing* rather than *unappealing* (Study 1). Participants categorized both representational and functional attributes significantly faster when they were associated with *appealing* than *unappealing.* The representational and functional dimensions of the nation brand thus both significantly correlated with the country's attractiveness, taking into account the indirect attitudes of international tourists. However, results that assessed international tourists' self-reported opinions showed that only the functional dimension exerted a significant and positive effect on intentions to visit the country (Study 2).

In showing that the impact of a destination brand image depends on the methodology used, this article highlights the importance of looking at a region brand through implicit and explicit lenses, as might be adopted by tourists. Destinations brands exist in people's minds, as reflected by international tourists' automatic and conscious attitudes towards the brand images of both destinations. Consistent with the researchers who have applied the IAT to the context of destinations (Choi et al., 2015; Kim & Chen, 2010; Kim et al., 2011; Lee & Kim,

in press; Yang et al., 2012), we recommend that place brand managers acknowledge both approaches and incorporate the results into their place-branding initiatives.

3.5.1. Contributions

3.5.1.1. Multi-level approach to understanding place branding

Little research has focused on different levels of places and their relationship (Syssner, 2010). We take a multi-level approach to understand place branding, looking at the interrelations of region and nation brands. In doing so, we stress that consideration of a place brand exclusively could lead to mistakes. The interaction across several levels, as is the case for commercial brands, must be considered when devising a place brand positioning (Andéhn & Zenker, 2015; Boisen et al., 2011). In particular, the place brand from the lower level (herein, the region brand) should acknowledge the place brand at the higher level (herein, the nation brand), because it is more known and anchored in tourists' minds (Tversky, 1977).

Brand architecture is a mainstream marketing concept (Aaker, 2004) that is traditionally used to design and manage a portfolio of commercial brands. Recently, place branding scholars began to question its relevance for the management of place brands (e.g. Andéhn & Zenker, 2015; Boisen et al., 2011; Braun, 2012; Braun & Zenker, 2010; Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014; Dooley & Bowie, 2005; Hankinson, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Hanna & Rowley, 2015; Hopper, 2003; Ikuta et al., 2007; Iversen & Hem, 2008; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Brand extension decisions are usually taken by a single department in a private organization. However, in the context of place branding, decisions are fragmented amongst several people from different institutions within the same place, which may result in unified strategies (e.g. the 'Bretagne' region brand and the 'Finistère' sub-brand), or in inconsistent strategies (e.g. the 'Auvergne Your New World' region brand and the 'Cantal Auvergne' sub-brand, or the 'OnlyLyon' city brand, which does not take into account the identity and values of the Rhône-Alpes region). The hierarchical system implies that the images of the different place brands overlap; it is thus fundamental that a place brand portfolio be coherent. Kapferer (2011b) supports that all lower-order place brands should act within the strategic framework of the nation brand by putting forward the same brand positioning, through their own local assets (representational and functional). We go further, suggesting that the lower-order places should leverage their brand positioning on that of the higher-order place.

Giovanardi's (2012) conceptualization of *haft* and *sord* factors recognizes the interconnectedness of representational and functional elements. We confirm this

conceptualization looking at one external place consumers (herein, the tourists): Respondents perceived an overall congruence between the two destinations. Thus, our study recognizes the interconnectedness of representational and functional aspects of a destination brand, bringing to light a new type of congruence that reflects the congruence between two place brands. Congruence is a concept that has been studied in various fields within the marketing discipline (Fleck & Maille, 2010); however, congruence as conceptualized in this paper—which relates it to relational similarity (Bèzes & Mercanti-Guérin, 2016)—remains to be further analysed in destination branding.

3.5.1.2. Furthering the Destination Brand Box Model: Impact on international tourists' behavioural intentions

Although Caldwell and Freire's (2004) adaptation of the scale developed by De Chernatony and McWilliam (1990) to places, to highlight differences across branding nations, regions, and cities, offers great insights, their work also has been subject to two main challenges. First, comparing scores has limited statistical validity. It is possible to compare the responses of two different people on a given question, but comparing scores on different items is questionable, especially if certain items are more personal than others, as is the case with the representational dimension. Therefore, their results might be biased by social desirability. For example, respondents to their study might have been afraid to confess that they visit certain countries to show off to their friends, which would have affected the results that showed that the country's score was higher on the functional dimension. Second, their findings are ambiguous when it comes to the recommendations based on their findings. The authors advise countries to focus on their representational attributes, whilst regions and cities develop their functional aspects, which is contrary to their actual findings.

We further this adaptation of the Brand Box Model by introducing an output and analysing the relationship between destination brand dimensions and behavioural intentions, so as to investigate the predictive validity of the Destination Brand Box Model. The region and nation were perceived differently on their brand dimensions, and these dimensions affected intentions to visit the destination. Both region brand dimensions influenced intentions to visit, but only the nation brand's functional dimension had an impact. More precisely, the region brand's representational dimension had a stronger impact on intentions to visit than its functional dimension, whereas the nation brand's functional dimension had a greater impact. Region brand managers should insist on developing both destination brand dimensions; nation brand managers should emphasise their destination's functional elements. Furthermore, with

this study, we show that the functional dimension of the region brand and that of the nation brand equally influence intentions to visit the destination, a finding that conflicts with the results of Caldwell and Freire (2004). Conversely, the representational dimension explains more intentions to visit in the case of the region brand than that of the nation brand, which aligns with those authors' results.

The representational dimension relates to the self-expression needs of individuals (i.e. having visited a place may help define a person's identity). This dimension thus can be a source of social desirability bias. By introducing an output, our study reduces the potential effect of this social desirability bias, which could come at the expense of the representational dimension.

Finally, we have taken an implicit perspective on the Destination Brand Box Model, implementing two IATs to understand the unconscious, automatic attitudes of international tourists. We have measured the strength of associations between target categories (two destinations) and attribute categories (*appealing* and *unappealing*), as well as the nature of the target stimuli that differ between these IATs (representational or functional aspects of a destination). Doing so, we confirm the relevancy of the Destination Brand Box Model approach with an alternative measurement method.

3.5.1.3. Dual methodology for assessing place brands

Our multi-method approach to investigate place branding, using explicit and implicit measures, also enables us to examine differences between the branding of a region and its nation, whilst excluding the threat of a declarative bias. The differences in the results across methodologies indicate that they are complementary. In particular, implicit attitude towards a destination does not induce an explicit intention to visit, whereas an explicit attitude towards the place does. This phenomenon may be explained by our consideration of an extended decision-making process for choosing a destination, which induces cognitive information processing. A more impulsive decision (e.g. choosing a destination for the coming weekend) may be predicted better by implicit attitudes (Trendel & Warlop, 2005) since it involves a shorter decision-making process characterized by low involvement behaviour and limited problem solving (Dunne, Flanagan, & Buckley, 2011). In this sense, our results suggest the need to consider implicit versus explicit attitudes towards the place, depending on the behaviour. On the one hand, regarding international tourists' implicit attitudes (e.g. impulsive decision), our results suggest that the Auvergne region's brand managers should leverage the functional attributes of the destination to create an intention to visit. On the one hand,

regarding international tourists' implicit attitudes (e.g. impulsive decision), our results suggest that the Auvergne region's brand managers should leverage the functional attributes of the destination to create an intention to visit. On the other hand, when considering explicit attitudes (e.g. reasoned decision), it seems that region brand managers from Auvergne should take into account both brand dimensions, with an emphasis on the destination's representational elements. The functional dimension appears to be essential for both types of attitudes when considering Auvergne as a destination. The differences between implicit and explicit attitudes suggest international tourists have dual attitudes towards destinations (Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000), which encourages individuals to evaluate the same object (e.g. destination brand) differently—endorsing both implicit and explicit attitudes—depending on 'whether they have the cognitive capacity to retrieve the explicit attitude and whether the explicit attitude overrides the implicit one' (Wilson et al., 2000, p. 102). Therefore, using a within-subject design, further research could study the link between tourists' implicit and explicit attitudes, manipulating the types of destination choice (e.g. low involvement versus high involvement), as well as how it is moderated by variables such as motivation.

3.5.1.4. Leveraging the nation brand image to develop the region brand

The managerial implications of this work are intended primarily for place brand managers in agencies and local authorities that need to leverage their nation brand image when designing their destination brand for the region, as well as choose relevant destination aspects to advertise in their marketing communications. This research suggests a dual implicit/explicit method that can allow the region and nation brands to draw on each other's images, build their reputational capital, and thus attract specific target groups. With our approach, a region brand could have a stronger impact on its international non-visitor targets, spend less on designing the destination brand, and still maintain the brand image of the destination. Therefore, our research advocates for IMC between different place scales, such as between the place brand managers of the lower-order place (herein, the region brand) and those of the higher-order place (herein, the nation brand).

Consider, for example, that the representational dimension of the region brand helps explain international tourists' intentions to visit the region (Study 2). Our results show that the region's representational dimension hindered intentions to visit the Auvergne region. The representational dimension has '"value-expressive" aspects whereby people choose to visit a place to display their own self-concept' (Caldwell & Freire, 2004, p. 58). Our results suggest

that Auvergne is perceived as old-fashioned, which is detrimental to the region; region brand managers should address this dimension actively in their marketing communications to international tourists. These impacts were negative for Auvergne, but the representational aspects also could be positive for other French regions.

But international tourists do not take the representational dimension into account with regard to the nation brand. The representational aspects reflect self-expression needs related to a particular place; whether they have experienced the place or not is irrelevant for self-expressive values. An experience will reshape the image of the place, on the basis of the emotions and memories felt during and after the visit though. Place awareness is thus more important than place familiarity when it comes to representational elements. This hierarchy may explain why France's functional elements explain visit intentions, whereas representational aspects do not (Study 2). Caldwell and Freire (2004) hint that most media advertise functional aspects of countries but representational elements of regions and cities, contributing to a more enduring and stable image of nations, with physical attributes at the forefront of people's minds.

3.5.2. Limitations and further research

Our research has several limitations. First, it is based on the declarative assessments of international non-visitors of a region. We tried to avoid potential declarative bias by combining self-reported studies (Studies 2 and 3) with implicit measures of attitude (Study 1), which enhances the internal validity of our findings.

Second, the IAT results are conditional and contextual (Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007). People's implicit attitudes towards one destination relative to another may differ as a function of their pre-conceived ideas about the place and its inhabitants. However, implicit methods seek to bypass existing clichés, such as those about a country and the people who live there. Our results clearly transcend the popular practice of 'French bashing' and indicate positive implicit attitudes towards France. We should note that the French nationality of the experimenter may have influenced these results though (Nosek et al., 2007).

Third, five retired persons took part in the IAT experiment (Study 1), along with a majority of students. Usually, an IAT requires homogeneity in the sampled population. We tested several 'compare means' procedures that included or excluded the five retired people, and none of them showed effects on the results. Furthermore, two studies shared respondents, in that we asked the participants to take part into a procedure that mixed implicit (Study 1) and explicit (Study 3) measures.

Fourth, we focused on two destinations that have strong place brand equity. However, congruence between the nation and region brands may hinder intentions to visit the region if the country has weak brand equity, especially if it elicits mostly negative associations in place consumers' minds. This question represents an avenue for research.

Fifth, we conceptualized congruence in a general sense, in the interests of parsimony. However, it can result in internal validity and conceptual homogeneity problems (Fleck & Maille, 2010). Other studies could use a bi-dimensional conceptualization of congruence.

Sixth, we focused on the Auvergne region, for which we gathered only a small sample. Further research is needed to guarantee the external validity of this present research.

Seventh, the data were collected in Leicester; the city's professional rugby team regularly competes against Auvergne's. We thought this link might help enhance place awareness of the region. However, not many Leicester inhabitants were aware of the region without having had some first-hand experience, which is why we did not split the Study 3 data set according to participants' place awareness. Few non-visitors knew precisely or had heard of the region. Participants had an overall global impression of what the region was, which may explain the overall congruence they perceived between the region and nation brands.

Eighth, the region was looked upon as a tourist destination brand, targeting an external audience in search of a vacation destination. We did not differentiate business and non-business prospective visitors, though this distinction might represent an avenue for further research. Studies also might broaden our research to domestic audiences; national tourists are likely to perceive a destination brand differently (Carr, 2002) in terms of its (expected) functional and representational attributes.

Ninth, our respondents were non-visitors of the region who had or not visited the country at least once. Tourists might visit a destination once and repeat the experience for specific motives (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984); international tourists might easily visit a nation without going to a specific region (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, 2014). Thus, it is important that place brand managers understand their particular target. Further research might differentiate various types of visitors (e.g., no visits, two or more visits), because image formation and its influence on tourist behaviours vary with place experience (e.g. Rodríguez Molina, Frías-Jamilena, & Castañeda-García, 2013), and repeat visitors represent a potentially lucrative market segment.

3.6. Bibliography of Chapter 3

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3.7. List of Tables

Table 3.1: IAT with word stimuli script for each test. 145
Table 3.2: Sample characteristics of Study 1. 147
Table 3.3: Effects of nation's and region's destination brand dimensions on attractiveness, depending on response times. 148
Table 3.4: Sample characteristics of Study 2. 152
Table 3.5: Destination brand, measurement scale. 153
Table 3.6: Pearson correlations of destination brand dimensions. 154
Table 3.7: Relationship between destination brand dimensions and intentions to visit. 155
Table 3.8: Differences between destination brands' effects of functional dimensions on intentions to visit. 156
Table 3.9: Sample characteristics of Study 3. 164
Table 3.10: Reliability and validity of the study's constructs. 166
Table 3.11: Pearson correlations of congruence variables. 166
Table 3.12: Implicit and explicit assessments of international tourists' attitudes towards destinations. 168

3.8. List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Impact of the region brand's dimensions on attractiveness of the region. 149
Figure 3.2: Impact of the nation brand's dimensions on attractiveness of the country. 150
Figure 3.3: Synthesis of the results of Study 2. 157

3.9. List of Appendices

A.16: The IAT test in the tourism research domain. 247
A.17: Sequence of Trial Blocks in the 'Nation versus Region' Implicit Association Tests (IATs). 249
A.18: Questionnaire of Study 2 (Part 1) administered to tourists. 252
A.19: Questionnaire of Study 3 (Part 2) administered to tourists. 255

CONCLUSION

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Practitioners' comprehension of place branding (including destination branding) is limited; for example, they tend to narrow the place brand to brand elements (e.g. logo, slogan) and define a brand personality and positioning that are identical to competitors', ultimately damaging the place brand equity (Blain et al., 2005; Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2002). The issue for place brand managers is then to dodge problematic toponymic commodification (Medway & Warnaby, 2014). In addition, the place is a 'particular product' that is multi-faceted, comprising the convergence of a multitude of diverse stakeholders with competing visions and expectations (Merrilees et al., 2012; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). The success of a place brand therefore will be based on the place brand managers' capacity to involve and manage stakeholders in the place brand–building process.

Place branding is an emerging domain, characterized by a lack of conceptual clarity and empirical evidence (Vuignier, 2016), especially when it comes to the region level (Ikuta et al., 2007).

Our doctoral work endeavours to answer those practice-driven and theoretical concerns, focusing on a relatively unexplored research domain to date: using the perspectives of different stakeholders to improve the efficiency of place brands by duplicating mainstream marketing concepts and methods. More precisely, this research consists of three chapters in which my co-author and I investigate perceptions of the place residents, place brand managers and international tourists in relation to three classic marketing concepts: (1) advertising legitimacy of a place-branding activity as perceived by the residents of the region; (2) community marketing strategies used by place brand managers to integrate the activities of public and private sectors and federate stakeholders around the place brand; and (3) congruence between a place and its higher-order place as a vector of touristic attractiveness. We use the French region-branding context, in which promoting an entire region through a brand is a recent development.

This conclusion chapter first summarises the main results of each chapter and highlights how they contribute to the efficiency of a place brand. I then discuss the primary contributions of the dissertation that emerge from our work as a whole, and I emphasize the consistency across the results of the three chapters. After presenting some limitations of this thesis and suggestions for further research, I reflect on the position of this work in the face of the new French territorial reform that started on 1 January 2016.

0.1. Results of the dissertation

This dissertation starts with the residents' perceptions of the region-branding activities, inasmuch as place branding is a recent approach that involves adapting commercial practices to a public good. Chapter 1 highlights two focal points (Table 0.3): (1) Residents perceive a region brand to be more legitimate when it targets firms, residents or tourists than when it promotes local products; and (2) the efficiency of a place-branding activity is positively influenced by residents' perceptions of the legitimacy of the practice.

Table 0.3: Main results of Chapter 1.

Research question	**What is the advertising legitimacy of a place brand as perceived by the residents? Does it influence place-branding efficiency?**	
Qualitative study	*To understand how the residents of a region perceive the practice of place branding and whether they have legitimacy concerns about it.*	
Hypothesis development	Region branding raises legitimacy questions from the residents of the place.	
Quantitative study	*(1) To analyse the extent to which the residents of a place perceive place-branding actions to be legitimate.* *(2) To analyse the relationship between advertising legitimacy as perceived by residents and their behavioural intentions towards the place.*	
Hypotheses		
H_1: Place promotion is more legitimate than local product promotion.	**Supported**	Region branding is significantly more legitimate for place promotion than for regional product promotion.
H_2: Advertising legitimacy mediates the link between the type of place promotion (place promotion versus local product promotion) and residents' favourable behavioural intentions towards their place.	**Supported**	There is an indirect-only mediation of advertising legitimacy on the relationship between the type of place promotion and behavioural intentions.

Chapter 2 highlights the degree to which place brands build brand communities to operationalize integrated marketing communications (IMC). Results are recalled in Table 0.4. First, a typology of French 'integrated' region brands is developed, that distinguishes between 'communal region brands' and 'IMC-orientated region brands'. Second, results show that the 'communal region brands' have different visions and expectations regarding community marketing strategies: one region brand community rests on terminal values whilst the other is based on instrumental values. The members of the 'Alsace' brand community have functional-laden motives to membership and can benefit from brand elements; thus, it is a brand community of instrumental values. The common objectives and shared tools enhance IMC efficiency.

Table 0.4: Main results of Chapter 2.

Research question	**To what extent do place brand managers use community marketing strategies to operationalize the integrated marketing communications (IMC) role of the place brand?**	
Content analysis of web sites	*To develop a typology of French 'integrated' region brands.*	
'Integrated' region brands	*'Alsace'* *'Auvergne Your New World'*	*'Bretagne'*
Conclusions	**Communal region brand**	**IMC-orientated region brand**
Qualitative study	*To study the extent to which community branding arguments are used as springboards for implementing the IMC role of the place brand.*	
Communal region brands	*'Alsace'*	*'Auvergne Your New World'*
Motivations to membership	Functional Personal interest (business-related)	Emotional Collective interest (attractiveness is a team effort)
Governance	Highly political	Politics stay in the background
Brand community selectiveness	Low (e.g. easy application, free)	High (e.g. charged membership, applicants are selected on the fit between their values and the brand's, and their ability and willingness to live the region brand's values)
Structure of brand community	Centre: Firms Periphery: Residents	Centre: Firms Periphery: Residents
Perceived role of members	To promote the brand	To live the values of the brand
Perceived role of the region brand	Central role: Promotion tool available to members	Peripheral role: Unite the brand community around shared values
Conclusions	**Brand community around instrumental values**	**Brand community around terminal values**
	Active brand ambassadors who benefit from the region-branding approach	A community of values assembled on the pretext of a brand

The primary results of Chapter 3 are summarized in Table 0.5. In this chapter, I focus on the implicit and explicit attitudes of international tourists with regard to the region brand, and particularly its interrelatedness with the brand dimensions of the nation brand.

Table 0.5: Main results of Chapter 3.

Research question	**To what extent does the region brand image constitute a relevant vehicle for promoting a destination integral to the nation brand image?**	
Study 1: Implicit measures	*To analyse the extent to which the brand dimensions of a destination brand image attract tourists.*	
Hypotheses		
H_1: The representational dimension of the region brand better explains tourists' behavioural intentions (attractiveness) towards the region than its functional dimension.	**Not supported**	The functional elements of the region brand have a stronger (though negative) impact on the region's implicit attractiveness than the representational attributes. The region brand managers should therefore communicate on the functional attributes of the region to create intentions to visit, especially for its more impulsive place products.
H_2: The functional dimension of the nation brand better explains tourists' behavioural intentions (attractiveness) towards the country than its representational dimension.	**Not supported**	Both the representational and functional attributes of the nation brand have a strong positive influence on tourists' perceptions of the attractiveness of the country. Nation brand managers should put forth the two brand dimensions of the nation to stimulate visits.
Study 2: Explicit measures	*(1) To analyse the relationship between the dimensions of a destination brand and tourists' intentions to visit it.* *(2) To compare both destination brands in terms of the dimensions' impact on visit intentions.*	
Hypotheses		
H_1: The representational dimension of the region brand better explains tourists' behavioural intentions (intentions to visit) towards the region than its functional dimension.	**Supported**	The representational and functional dimensions of the region brand explain tourists' intentions to visit the region. The representational elements have a stronger impact on behavioural intentions towards the region than the functional attributes.
Region brand **H_1 implicit versus H_1 explicit**		In the case of the region brand, functional elements are important for both impulsive and reasoned decisions.
H_2: The functional dimension of the nation brand better explains tourists' behavioural intentions (intentions to visit) towards the country than its representational dimension.	**Supported**	Tourists' intentions to visit the country are influenced more by the functional attributes of the nation brand than its representational attributes. In fact, the representational dimension does not impact tourists' intentions to visit the country.
Nation brand **H_1 implicit versus H_1 explicit**		In the case of the nation brand, place brand managers should place emphasis on allocating resources to communicating the functional attributes of the country since this dimension is important for both implicit and explicit destination choices.
$H_{3(a)}$: The representational dimension of the region brand has a greater impact on tourists' intentions to visit the region than the representational dimension of the nation brand.	**Supported**	The representational dimension explains more intentions to visit in the case of the region brand than that of the nation brand.
$H_{3(b)}$: The functional dimension of the region brand has a lesser impact on tourists' intentions to visit the region than the functional dimension of the nation brand.	**Not supported**	The functional dimension of the region brand and that of the nation brand equally influence intentions to visit the destination.

Table 0.5: Main results of Chapter 3—Continued.

Research question	**To what extent does the region brand image constitute a relevant vehicle for promoting a destination integral to the nation brand image?**	
Study 3: Explicit measures	*What role does the nation brand play in promoting the region brand as a destination?*	
Hypotheses		
H_4: The more international tourists perceive the region and nation brands as being congruent, the higher are their intentions to visit the region.	**Supported**	Overall congruence between nation and region brands is a driver of intentions to visit the region.
H_5: The perceived representational congruence between the region and nation brands does not affect international tourists' intentions to visit the region.	**Supported**	The perceived congruence between the representational dimension of nation and region brands doesn't explain intentions to visit the region.
H_6: Perceived functional congruence between the region and nation brands enhances international tourists' intentions to visit the region.	**Not supported**	The perceived congruence between the functional dimension of the region brand and that of the nation brand doesn't influence intentions to visit the region.
Conclusions		Overall congruence between both nation and region brands is the only driver of intentions to visit the region.

Whereas the previous tables summarized the main results of each chapter, Table 0.6 shows how they contribute to the efficiency of a place brand—specifically, a region brand—and the potential barriers to this end-goal.

Table 0.6: Link between the results and the efficiency of the place-branding practice.

Research question	**How to enhance the efficiency of place brands looking at different stakeholders' perspectives through the adaptation of classic marketing concepts?**		
	Chapter 1 Place residents	**Chapter 2 Place brand managers**	**Chapter 3 International tourists**
Efficiency of the place brand	The practice of region branding needs to be legitimate in the eyes of the region's residents. In that case, its marketing communications are in tune with the residents who develop a more favourable response towards the region.	The region brand managers should develop a brand community around instrumental values.	The region brand needs to stimulate visit intentions using its representational and functional attributes, as well as leveraging its higher-order place.
Barriers to the place brand's efficiency	Residents' lack of perceived legitimacy of the region's place-branding activities, especially its promotional actions.	A brand community that is too selective, too close, and that doesn't involve stakeholders in a broad way because it wants to keep control over the brand.	Destination's attributes not coherent with tourists' needs. Region brand image not related to higher-order place.

0.2. Contributions of the dissertation

The main contributions of this work are five-fold (Table 0.7). First, we ground our research in the domain of place branding. In particular, we look at the place brand according to its region branding form, whereas there has been a particular lack of focus on the regional level in the place-branding literature (Ikuta et al., 2007).

Second, we apply a stakeholder approach to understanding place branding through the lenses of several stakeholders, whom we analyse sequentially. We recognize the role of various stakeholders in the development and maintenance of a successful place brand, suggesting that the place brand is an integrated marketing communications (IMC) tool that encourages effective relationships amongst stakeholders, which in turn ensures a consistent and coherent place image. In that sense, our doctoral work represents one way to adopt the multi-stakeholder approach proposed by Stylidis, Sit and Biran (2014b), which they define as 'measuring and triangulating the image perspectives of multiple stakeholders' (p. 11).

Third, place brands are 'particular products' (Hankinson, 2007; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008), so place brand managers must make adjustments when applying commercial marketing (branding) techniques to their place brand. This thesis uses mainstream marketing concepts to address the place-branding context (i.e. advertising legitimacy, brand community, brand dimensions, congruence), highlighting similarities between commercial branding and place branding and reinforcing the external validity of those concepts in the process.

Fourth, this dissertation uses different methodological approaches to apprehend a place brand. We adapt several mainstream marketing measurement tools to the place branding domain (i.e. scales of advertising legitimacy, brand dimensions and congruence), providing both place-branding literature and practitioners with new approaches that are tailored to the challenges they face. In addition, we use a mixed-method approach to understand a place brand, resorting to qualitative (focus groups, content analysis of web sites, interviews) and quantitative (surveys and IATs) methods. This approach not only reinforces the internal validity of the present research but also closely follows the specificities and stakes inherent to each stakeholder under consideration (e.g. residents are an integral part but also targets of the place-branding process; tourists are particularly subject to introspective bias because they are targets who are not necessarily aware of or familiar with the place's main attributes). Conjointly, the self-reported and indirect measurement methods of this doctoral work contribute to rule out the existence of a declarative bias.

Fifth, this research advocates for an IMC approach per se (herein, between the stakeholders of the region brand), as well as across different place scales, such as between the place brand managers of the lower-order place (region brand) and those of the higher-order place (nation brand). For example, place brand managers might position their place brands according to an overall positioning that covers shared elements across stakeholders, so that they can all relate to the brand. We also suggest that place brand managers apply an IMC approach through the adoption of a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to place branding. Indeed, integrating residents in the definition of the place-branding strategy, starting from the early stages of brand development, should enhance the legitimacy of the place brand, and then should reinforce its efficiency since residents are the ambassadors of the brand. In that sense, engaging more broadly the stakeholders via the use of community marketing should be an efficient tool for improving place-branding adoption. We also propose that they use a dual implicit/explicit method to understand stakeholders' perceptions of the place brand image and its higher-order place, to leverage on the image of the latter, which is usually more known and anchored in people's minds (Tversky, 1977).

Table 0.7: Main contributions of the dissertation, shared amongst the chapters.

Theoretical contributions	*Methodological contributions*	*Managerial contributions*

Analysis of a place brand through its region branding form, underrepresented in the literature.
 	
Confirmation of the importance of adopting a multi-stakeholder approach.
 	
Bringing together commercial branding and place branding.
	Several methodological approaches that (a) are developed for the place-branding context, (b) extend the existing place-branding tools, and (c) meet the specificities and stakes associated with the main stakeholders of a place brand:
	- Measurement tools: Scales of advertising legitimacy, brand dimensions and congruence;
	- Mixed-method approach:
	  - Qualitative methods: Focus groups, content analysis of web sites and in-depth interviews;
	  - Quantitative methods: Surveys and IATs.
		Combination of methodological approaches (measurement tools and methods) to support the place-branding initiatives of hybrid (public–private) organisations, local authorities and consulting firms:
		- Analysis grids provided so as to take into account the specificities and stakes associated with the main stakeholders of a place brand;
		- Analysis grids provided so as to involve the stakeholders in the place-branding process.
		
		The call for place brand managers and local authorities to adopt an IMC approach, per se and multi-level.

The degree of consistency amongst the chapters is affected by each chapter's perspective, research and data. First, place brand managers aim to trigger favourable attitudes towards the place they are promoting, but there is the issue of the image content to promote.

To that end, this thesis suggests that their initiatives must be perceived as (1) legitimate by the residents of the place, which happens when the perceived image of the place brand by the residents corresponds with what exists in their minds, and (2) congruent for those who do not reside in that place. In replicating the concepts of advertising legitimacy and congruence in a place-branding context, Chapters 1 and 3 show that consumers perceive the implemented place-branding actions in relation to their mental schema. As such, place brand managers should avoid any rupture with the mental representations held in people's minds; instead, they must ensure that the place brand's positioning and ensuing actions are in accordance with the mental representations that the stakeholders make of the place. This recommendation calls into question some repositioning strategies. The place brand must avoid repositioning itself using 'the purveyor of dreams path'. It would not be coherent for the external audience and especially not for the internal stakeholders who reside in the region. It is critical to draw a positioning anchored in reality. Places should thus re-evaluate their desire to engage in a repositioning strategy, or be particularly cautious in such an enterprise, because it may cause advertising legitimacy and congruence problems, ultimately limiting efficiency. Thus, it seems like a repositioning strategy is even more complicated to implement for a place brand than for its commercial equivalent.

Second, in light of the results of Chapter 2, we could wonder whether the values of the place brand correspond solely to those of the socio-economic actors of the place. Merrilees et al. (2012) show that, whilst groups of stakeholders such as residents and firms hold different brand meanings of a city brand, there exists a *common filter* through which stakeholders of the same group share brand meanings—for example, businesspeople have business and resident facets when they work where they live; thus, when they drop their status as businesspeople, they and the other residents share place brand meanings. If we take the example of 'Auvergne Your New World', the socio-economic actors of its brand community were selected for their moral status. The role they play in the community is also in accordance with this status. Thus, they might use a filter that is different from that of residents, in terms of their perceptions of the region brand's purpose. In addition, businesses co-create the region brand strategically, whilst residents are not integrated in the core of the brand community. This might explain, in part, the results of Chapter 1 that show residents perceive co-branding activities between a firm and the region brand to be less legitimate than place-branding actions aimed at attracting place consumers. The region brand might infer little to no brand meaning for residents, who would not have functional motivations to buy the co-branded product (e.g. the region brand is not a quality guarantee) or emotional motivations (e.g. they

don't relate to the region brand). Communities of instrumental values and of terminal values would then represent little interest for the residents, because of issues pertaining to brand values and brand meaning.

Third, Chapters 1 and 2 show two approaches (advertising legitimacy and community marketing) towards empowering citizens, to re-establish democracy in the context of new forms of organizations that mix public and private actors.

0.3. Limitations

This research has several limitations that provide opportunities for further research (Table 0.8). First, we chose to study the stakeholders of the region brand in a sequential and independent manner, irrespective of the interactions between stakeholders. We studied their attitudes and behaviours using different measurement tools and methods; for example, we interviewed Auvergne's residents and managers but did not use a qualitative approach with tourists, preferring to gather their unconscious attitudes using two IATs. We made this decision on the basis of the reflection that the region brand's objectives differ according to the category of stakeholders under study, each of whom also has their own specificities. Other studies could address a broader research question, implying a general output (e.g. the region brand's capacity to gather stakeholders' support). That is, researchers could investigate the object under study from the perspectives of various stakeholders, using a sole approach, then compare the results to highlight the differences from one stakeholder to another.

Second, place branding is a domain depicted in a wide array of research fields (Lucarelli & Berg, 2011). We adopted a marketing approach to study the place brand, which is a set of marketing actions that is subject to social representation, particularly by the citizens of the place. In addition, internal stakeholders of the place brand, who are citizens of the place, have multi-faceted identities, which we did not take into consideration (e.g. residents of a region are also tourists of that region; place brand managers are tourists, as well as residents of the region—in that sense, they are citizens of the region they promote). Additional research could investigate citizens' (i.e. internal stakeholders') social representations of the place brand (central and peripheral brand associations; Michel, 1999) and their impacts on citizens' behavioural intentions towards the place, in terms of advertising legitimacy, the ability of the place brand to federate stakeholders within a brand community, congruence with the place at the higher level or even their opinions and behaviours towards the place brand, according to their political preferences for example.

Third, this doctoral work mainly addressed the efficiency of one region brand—the ‘Auvergne Your New World’ region brand launched by Auvergne. We suggest that studies reproduce this work for external validity purposes, undertaking a cross-study comparison for example, or studying a region outside of France that has invested heavily into the development of its image through the use of a place brand, but that also is relatively similar to Auvergne in terms of reputation and image.

Auvergne is a particular region that is deeply anchored in tradition and regionalism. The region brand implemented the repositioning of a dynamic and innovative region that is orientated towards well-being, thereby accentuating the discrepancy between the existing positioning and the targeted positioning. In this context, issues of region-branding legitimacy and congruence are more salient than they might be for other regions and places. To allow investigations of the external validity of the present research, it would be worthwhile to compare place-branding legitimacy and place-branding congruence according to the gap between existing positioning and targeted positioning (high, moderate and low). In the case of Auvergne, the gap is important and may imply greater efficiency in the practice of region branding for tourists (e.g. it may change their common preconceptions—the ‘30 reasons to love Auvergne’ marketing campaign illustrates this attempt; Appendix 8) but work to a lesser extent when addressed to residents who do not identify with the message. Conversely, the gap between both types of positioning is narrower for Alsace, so it might affect the behavioural intentions of stakeholders differently, in terms of advertising legitimacy and congruence. In this particular instance, residents might identify with the place brand better, in support of its positioning.

In addition, we focused on a region brand with positive brand equity (as is the case with the nation and region brand dyad we studied). Subsequent studies could further our work by analysing place brands that are developed for places with negative images, which might have different impacts on residents and tourists, whilst encouraging place brand managers to make different strategic choices to achieve an efficient place brand at the lower level. For example, studies could analyse the French ‘Hauts-de-France super region’, born from the fusion of the Picardie and Nord-Pas-de-Calais regions, which have been afflicted by negative brand equity (Chamard et al., 2013).

Table 0.8: Limitations and further research.

Main limitations	⇨	*Avenues for research*
Study of the stakeholders of the region brand in a sequential manner.		Investigation of a region brand from the point of view of different stakeholders using the same research question and the same methods.
A marketing approach to the study of the place brand.		The study of internal stakeholders' social representations of the place brand and their impacts on behavioural intentions towards the place.
Our doctoral work mainly addressed the efficiency of one place brand, 'Auvergne Your New World', which is built for a region that is a special cultural case.		A reproduction of our work to investigate the external validity of the present research.

0.4. Meeting the challenges born from the French territorial reform

Ultimately, the results of this research stem from the notion of region. Whilst the French territorial reform may be a limitation, we endeavour to lay the groundwork for tackling the latent challenges and opportunities inherent to this reform. The territorial reform challenges the future of French place brands, such as the ANM brand, especially because they are mainly funded by place officials. The Auvergne region merged with the Rhône-Alpes region, becoming the 'Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes super region'. Whilst Rhône-Alpes has a multitude of individual sub-brands such as 'OnlyLyon' (to promote the city to investors and an international audience) or 'Savoie-Mont-Blanc' (to promote the destination to tourists on national and international markets), it lacks an overall sense of place and does not have a region brand. Place brand is not limited to administrative boundaries (Hankinson, 2001); it rests on the existence of a place identity, because it is socially constructed (Paasi, 2002). Ironically, Auvergne—with a distinct geography and a place identity that transcends administrative boundaries—is destined to be defined by those boundaries, after merging with the Rhône-Alpes region. Therefore, our study focuses on spatial identities, which may correspond but are not limited to territorial-administrative levels (Boisen et al., 2011).

Given the diversity of space-identities and the size of the place, it would not make sense to communicate about 'Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes' as a whole. We suggest place-branding activities (e.g. marketing communications) should still be carried out to promote the smaller spaces within the 'super-region' that have strong identities, such as Auvergne or Savoie and Haute-Savoie.

Far from reducing the multi-layered bureaucracy, this reform could add a new administrative layer that might result in dissonant marketing strategies across places,

ultimately enhancing the risk of brand confusion (Hankinson, 2007). In this context, our work stresses the need for congruence between certain facets of places' marketing and branding strategies and advocates dialogue amongst different stakeholders of place(s). By expanding the existing regions into 'super-regions', the territorial reform reinforces the importance of questions relating to integration and congruence; our research provides place brand managers with tools and complementary approaches to help address those challenges.

Finally, this doctoral dissertation acknowledges that all places seek to increase their attractiveness. However, a place may face a situation of over-attractiveness, going against its very survival (e.g. environmental issues, endangered well-being of residents and other stakeholders), as is the recent problem of the Canary Islands, which are looking at ways to reduce tourism. Uncertainty caused by various terrorist attacks in Europe and worldwide has shaken up the international travel market (McVeigh, 2016). Popular destinations, such as the Maghreb countries, are now shunned by tourists, who prefer the Canary Islands. The Spanish Archipelago, faced with this increase in tourist arrivals, wants to turn away mass tourism (Keeley, 2015) and considers limiting visitor numbers and restricting all-inclusive vacations to assist in preserving the wild beauty of its environment and its quality of life, the destination's added-value. Thus, in a context of over-attractiveness, it would be interesting to reproduce our studies on the advertising legitimacy of place-branding activities as perceived by residents, the branding strategies chosen by place brand managers and the attitudes of tourists towards the brand images of destinations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES OF CHAPTER 1

Appendix 1

A.1: Semi-directive interview guide for the focus group sessions.

Part 1: The Auvergne region

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the words 'the Auvergne region' (symbols, landscapes, monuments, products, etc.)?

Materials: 12 images [Appendix A.3]. Each respondent have to select three images that fit best with Auvergne.

- *If Auvergne were a colour, it would be…?*
- *If Auvergne were a well-known person (from political, sport, cultural backgrounds, etc.), it would be…?*
- *In your opinion, what are the region's pros and cons?*
- *Do you favour the purchase or consumption of products from Auvergne?*
- *Why are you living in this region / Why did you choose to remain living there? (versus Why did you come live in Auvergne?)*

Part 2: The ANM region brand

2. Have you heard about the 'Auvergne Your New World' brand? (If yes ➔ How/When?)

Brief presentation of the ANM region brand: It's a brand created for the Auvergne region.

3. What comes to your mind when you hear the words 'ANM brand'?
   - *If the ANM brand were a colour, it would be…?*
   - *If the ANM brand were a well-known person (from political, sport, cultural backgrounds, etc.), it would be…?*
   - *In your opinion, the name 'Auvergne Your New World' is…?*
   - *What comes to your mind when you hear the words 'New World'?*
   - *In your opinion, what does 'Your New World' from the brand name 'Auvergne Your New World' mean…?*
   - *In your opinion, what are the ANM brand's pros and cons?*

4. What comes to your mind when you look at the ANM logo (form, colours, etc.)? In your opinion, what brand values ANM stands for?

Material: 1 image [Appendix A.4].

- *If the brand were a product, it would be…?*
- *In your opinion, a brand to represent a region seems to be…?*

5. Look at these ads. What do you think about them?

Materials: 3 images [Appendices A.5–A.7].

5.1. The ANM brand and industry
   - *What about the fact the ANM logo is depicted in this ad?*
   - *Do you think the ad would make firms want to set up in Auvergne?*

5.2. The ANM brand and tourists
   - *What about the fact the ANM logo is depicted in this ad?*
   - *Do you think the ad would make people want to visit the Auvergne region?*

5.3. The ANM brand and local products
   - *What about the fact the ANM logo is depicted in this ad?*
   - *Do you think the ad would make people want to buy Volvic natural spring water?*

Part 3: The Auvergne region

6. What comes to your mind when you hear the words ‘the Auvergne region’ (symbols, landscapes, monuments, products, etc.)?

Demographics:

- Birthplace
- Gender
- Department of residence
- Age

Note: The present interview guide was translated from French. It is an overview of two interview guides: one version for the residents who were born in the region (Focus Group No. 1) and another for the residents who were born outside of the region (Focus Group No. 2).

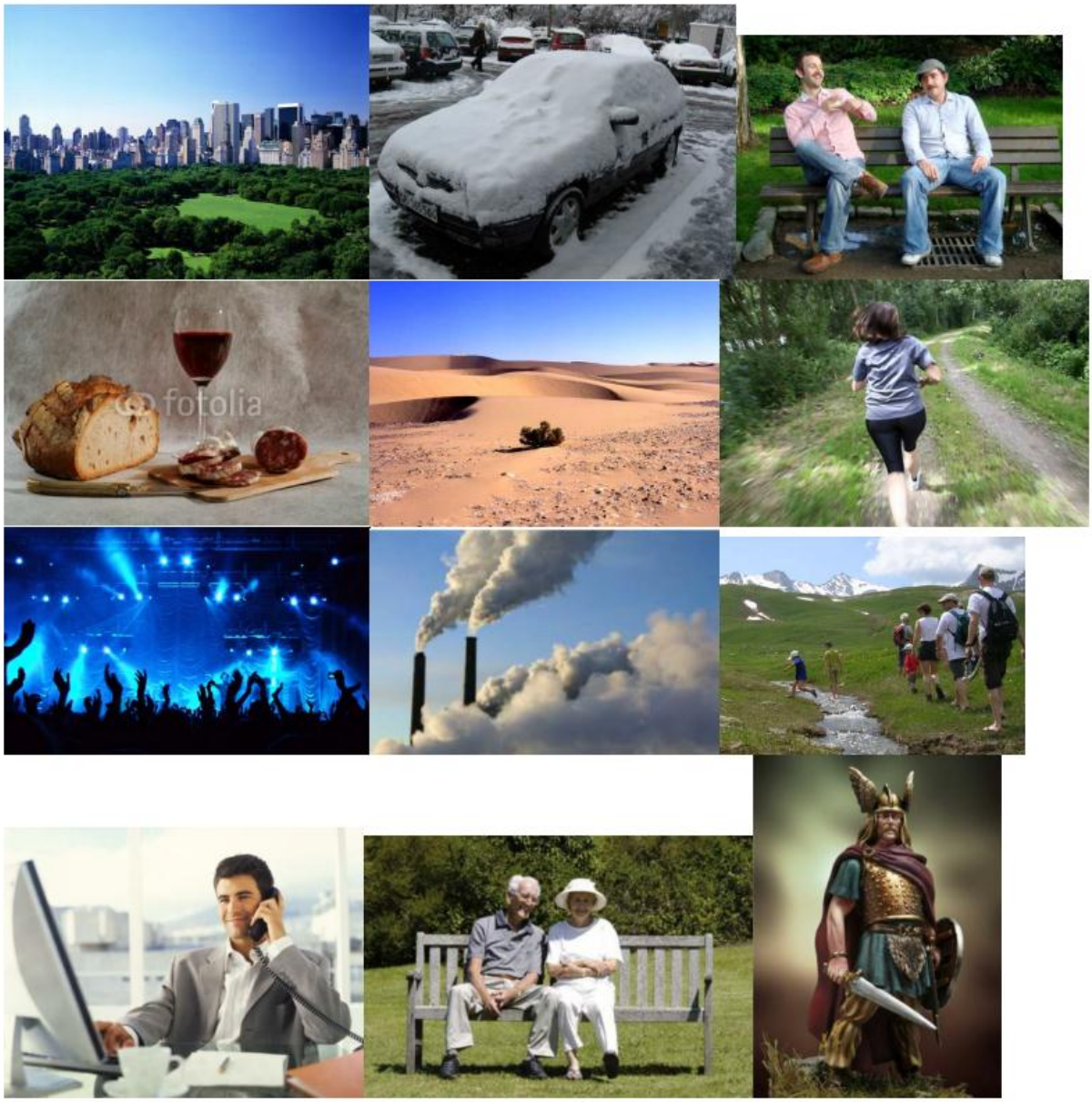
Appendix 2

A.2: Sample characteristics of Focus Groups No. 1 and No. 2.

Characteristics	*Focus group No. 1*	*Focus group No. 2*
Birthplace		
Born in the region	10	-
Not born in the region	-	10
Gender		
Female	3	5
Male	7	5
Department of residence		
Allier	-	1
Cantal	-	-
Haute-Loire	-	-
Puy-de-Dôme	10	9
Age		
[15-18]	2	-
]18-25]	2	2
]25-45]	2	6
]45-65]	4	1
]65-85]	-	1

Appendix 3

A.3: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 1).



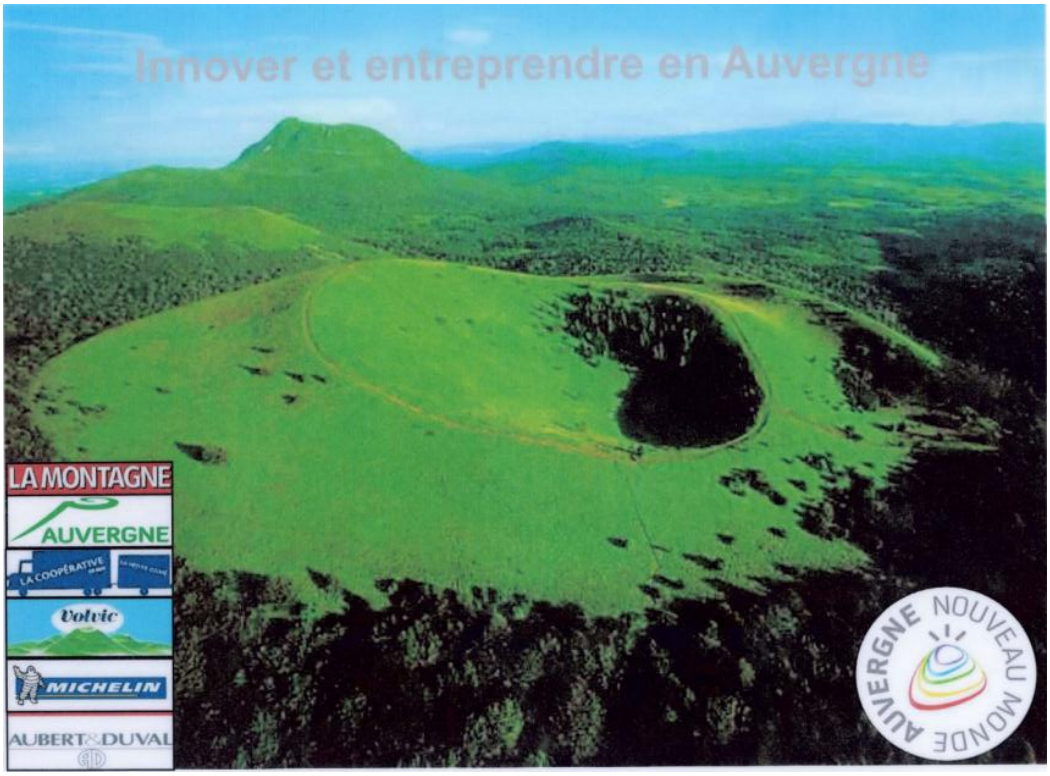
Appendix 4

A.4: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 2).



Appendix 5

A.5: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Firms).



Note: Translation
'Auvergne… Be dynamic, do business.'

Appendix 6

A.6: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Tourists).



Note: Translation

'Escape to Auvergne.

Auvergne is a unique area with a well-preserved natural environment, offering its visitors a real treat for body and mind alike. Allow yourself to be carried away by its monumental volcanoes, the natural quality of its products, the purity of its 109 springs and the conviviality of a land which provides valuable natural refuges.'

Appendix 7

A.7: Materials of the qualitative study (Part 3: Local products).



Note: Translation
'Volvic, filled with Auvergne's volcanicity.'

Appendix 8

A.8: ‘Auvergne Your New World’ ad presenting ‘30 reasons to love Auvergne’.



Appendix 9

A.9: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting tourists.



Note: Translation

'Auvergne, a place that regenerates body and mind.

To those who know how to taste the Auvergne region, it offers the promise to transform them.

Auvergne is a source of protected areas, of nature and fresh air that contributes to the moral, cultural and physical fulfillment of both children and adults.'

Appendix 10

A.10: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting (new) residents.



Note: Translation

'Auvergne, our heritage to share.

The Auvergne region brings us together... It builds our collective identity, sharpens our senses and opens us to the world.'

Appendix 11

A.11: Place promotion – Fictitious advertisement targeting firms.



Note: Translation

'Auvergne, an innovative and dynamic region in an environment conducive to economic initiative.

With a share of industrial employment higher than the national average (17.7 per cent against 13.9 per cent in 2011), and in a preserved natural setting, companies find in Auvergne an economic and technological environment that promotes their development.'

Appendix 12

A.12: Local product promotion (Volvic) – Fictitious advertisement promoting local products.



Note: Translation

'Volvic, drink healthy, live happy!

Volvic water, pure with perfect mineral balance.

Natural Volvic water, with unique mineral composition, is well suited for everyone.

Its source begins at the very heart of an ancient and dormant volcanic park in Auvergne, that gives the water its delicious taste and ensures its natural purity, guaranteeing health and good shape for those who drink it.'

Appendix 13

A.13: Local product promotion (Cristaline) – Fictitious advertisement promoting local products.



Note: Translation

'Cristaline, drink healthy, live happy!

Cristaline water, pure with perfect mineral balance.

Natural Cristaline water, with unique mineral composition, is well suited for everyone.

Its source begins at the very heart of an ancient and dormant volcanic park in Auvergne, that gives the water its delicious taste and ensures its natural purity, guaranteeing health and good shape for those who drink it.'

Appendix 14

A.14: Questionnaire administered to residents.

The Auvergne region and you

As part of a Ph.D. thesis, we are currently conducting a research at Clermont University on the image of the Auvergne region. We want to thank you for agreeing to participate in our study. The time required to complete the questionnaire is of approximately 15 minutes. This survey is completely anonymous and confidential, meaning the collected data will remain anonymous and will only be used for academic purposes. Also, there are no right or wrong answers. We just want you to share your honest opinion.

Part 1. The Auvergne region

1. **Do you reside in Auvergne?**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No (End of questionnaire. Thank you for your participation.)
2. **Have you heard about the 'Auvergne Your New World' brand?**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

'Auvergne Your New World' ad:
You will see one ad. Please, look at it for a maximum of 30 seconds. Once this delay is over, you won't be able to look at it again.

Please, ask your interviewer to show you this ad [Appendix A.8].

Thank you for viewing this ad. Please, give it back to your interviewer before continuing answering the questionnaire.

3. **About the ad you just saw, you would say…?**
(Please, rate the ad you saw earlier against a series of descriptors by placing a check on the scale from 1 to 7 that best reflects your judgment.)

This ad is **informative.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	This ad is **not informative.**
This ad is **relevant.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	This ad is **irrelevant.**
This ad is **effective.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	This ad is **ineffective.**
Those who paid for this ad **only seek to serve their interests.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Those who paid for this ad **really seek to add value to the Auvergne region.**
Those who paid for this ad **take the opportunity to improve their image.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Those who paid for this ad **use their resources to add value to the Auvergne region.**
Those who paid for this ad **just want to be noticed.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Those who paid for this ad **want to take real action towards the Auvergne region.**
Those who paid for this ad **have been taking action for the Auvergne region for a long time.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	**The commitment** of those who paid for this ad is **recent.**
Those who paid for this ad **use marketing tools well.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Those who paid for this ad **do not use marketing tools well.**
Those who paid for this ad **typically use marketing.**	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Those who paid for this ad **hardly used marketing before.**
I'm surprised we should advertise a region.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	**I'm not surprised** we should advertise a region.

4. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
If the opportunity arises, I will speak positively of the Auvergne region.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
If possible, I will keep living in Auvergne.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Part 2. How you see the Auvergne region

You will see two ads. Please, look at each one of them for a maximum of 30 seconds. Once this delay is over, you won't be able to look at them again.

TOURISM:

Please, ask your interviewer to show you this ad [Appendix A.9].

5. According to you, the fact that the 'Auvergne Your New World' logo appears in this message is…?	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Logical	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Coherent	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Normal	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Acceptable	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Moral	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

6. For the following statement, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
This ad makes me want to visit the Auvergne region.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

RESIDENTS:

Please, ask your interviewer to show you this ad [Appendix A.10].

7. According to you, the fact that the 'Auvergne Your New World' logo appears in this message is…?	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Logical	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Coherent	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Normal	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Acceptable	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Moral	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

8. For the following statement, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
This ad makes me want to keep living in the Auvergne region.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

FIRM:

Please, ask your interviewer to show you this ad [Appendix A.11].

9. According to you, the fact that the 'Auvergne Your New World' logo appears in this message is…?	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Logical	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Coherent	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Normal	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Acceptable	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Moral	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

10. For the following statement, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
This ad makes firms want to set themselves up in the Auvergne region.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

PRODUCT:

Please, ask your interviewer to show you this ad [Appendix A.12].

11. According to you, the fact that the 'Auvergne Your New World' logo appears in this message is…?	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Logical	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Coherent	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Normal	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Acceptable	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Moral	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

12. For the following statement, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
This ad makes me want to buy Volvic water.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

PRODUCT:

Please, ask your interviewer to show you this ad [Appendix A.13].

13. According to you, the fact that the 'Auvergne Your New World' logo appears in this message is…?	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Logical	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Coherent	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Normal	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Acceptable	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Moral	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

14. For the following statement, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
This ad makes me want to buy Cristaline water.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Part 3. The region and you

15. In what department do you live?
- ☐ Allier
- ☐ Cantal
- ☐ Haute-Loire
- ☐ Puy-de-Dôme

16. How long have you been living in Auvergne? ☐ years.

17. Are you…?
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

18. How old are you? ☐ years old.

Thank you very much for the time you allocated to answering this survey!

Note: The present questionnaire was translated from French. It is an overview of five questionnaires.

APPENDICES OF CHAPTER 2

Appendix 15

A.15: Semi-directive interview guide.

Since October 2011 *(March 2012)*, Auvergne *(Alsace)* has engaged in a place-branding project, launching the 'Auvergne Your New World' *('Alsace')* region brand.

1. In your opinion, who is at the origin of this place-branding approach?
   - According to you, why was this region brand created?
     - Objectives?
     - Expectations?
   - One consulting firm, CoManaging, was overseeing the creation of the place brand. Do you know why?
     - Why this one in particular?
2. Could you tell me who the project manager of the 'Auvergne Your New World' *('Alsace')* brand is?
3. The Auvergne region brand is managed by an association. Would you mind telling me a bit more about this governance mode choice?
   - According to you, what are the motives and objectives behind this choice?
   - Has there been a recent change in the management of this project?
   - Who are the different stakeholders (actors and partners) involved in this project?
     - Can you tell me about your organization's involvement? (degree, responsibilities, why, when, expectations)

Recently, the 'Alsace' region brand has changed its governance mode.—Note: In 2012, the 'ImaginAlsace' department was responsible for the region brand. Since March 2014, this responsibility lies with the 'Agence d'Attractivité de l'Alsace' (AAA)—Could you tell me more about it?

- *Why this evolution?*
  - *Objectives?*
  - *Expectations?*
- *Who are the different stakeholders (actors and partners) involved in this project?*
  - *Can you tell me about your organization's involvement? (degree, responsibilities, why, when, expectations)*

4. According to you, who are the targets and audiences of the region brand?
   - Main targets?
     - Firms
     - Residents
     - Tourists
   - What are the roles played by these targets in the region-branding process?
     - Did they participate in the creation process?
     - Are they involved/empowered in any way?
     - According to you, do they benefit from the region brand? How so?
5. 'Auvergne Your New World' *('Alsace')* defined itself to be a 'shared brand.' According to you, what does it mean?
   - Definition
   - Term origin
   - How can the region brand prove it lives up to this term?

Demographics:

- Organization's status in relation to the region brand
- Gender

Note: The present interview guide was translated from French. It is an overview of four interview guides—Region brand (2) x Status of organization (2).

APPENDICES OF CHAPTER 3

Appendix 16

A.16: The IAT test in the tourism research domain.

Author	*No. of studies*	*Destination*	*Method*	*Target and attribute categories*	*Sample*	*Main objective*	*Focus and approach*	*Findings*
Lee and Kim (in press)	3	Countries: - China - England - France	Single-target IAT (ST-IAT)	- '*Destination under study* versus *Other countries*' - '*Good* versus *Bad*'	- Study 1 (England): N = 76 students - Study 2 (France): N = 92 students - Study 3 (China): N = 97 students	- To measure the cognitive image attributes of destinations	- Attitudes/behaviour - Explicit and implicit measures	- No significant impact of familiarity on explicit and implicit attitudes towards the destinations - Different image perceptions between explicit cognitions and implicit cognitions when assessing destinations - The negative attributes of the destinations' images damage the images and reduce intention to visit
Choi et al. (2015)	1	Countries: - China - England	IAT	- '*China* versus *England*' - No attribute category	N = 87 students	- To assess tourists' top-of-mind awareness (TOMA) of salient destination icons using explicit and implicit measures	- Attitudes - Explicit and implicit measures	- Responses vary depending on the two measures

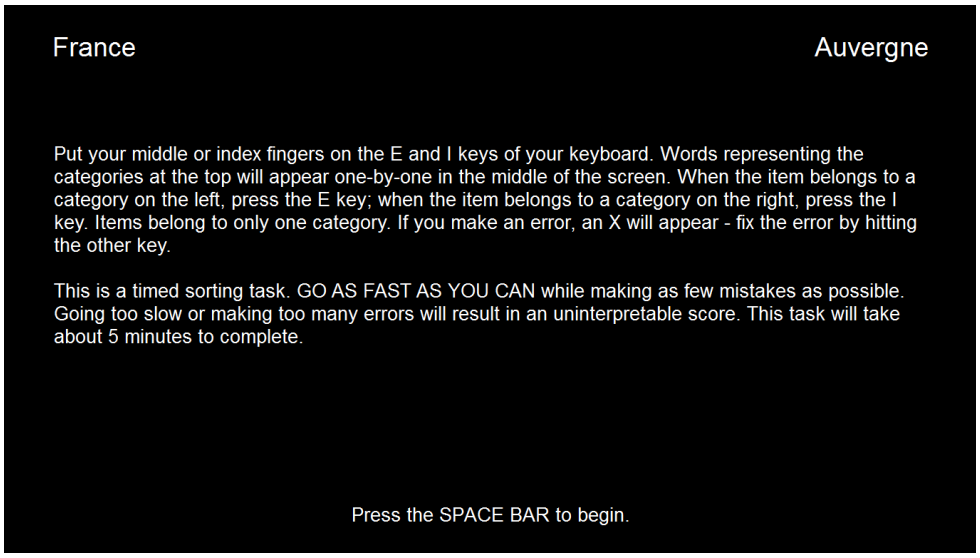
A.16: The IAT test in the tourism research domain—Continued.

Author	*No. of studies*	*Destination*	*Method*	*Target and attribute categories*	*Sample*	*Main objective*	*Focus and approach*	*Findings*
Yang et al. (2012)	1	Countries: - Japan - Hong-Kong	IAT	- '*Japan* versus *Hong-Kong*' - Positive adjectives versus Negative adjectives	N = 114 students	- To assess tourists' attitudes towards two destinations using explicit and implicit measures	- Attitudes - Explicit and implicit measures	- Explicit attitudes towards Japan and Hong-Kong are not significantly different, whereas the implicit attitudes towards destinations are significantly different
Kim et al. (2011)	1	Countries: - China - England	IAT	- '*China* versus *England*' - '*Appealing* versus *Unappealing*'	N = 84 students	- To assess tourists' attitudes towards a couple destinations using explicit and implicit measures - To examine how nationality impacts explicit and implicit attitudes towards a destination	- Attitudes - Explicit and implicit measures	- Nationality significantly impacts implicit attitudes towards a destination, which is not the case when attitudes are self-reported
Kim and Chen (2010)	1	Countries: - China - England	IAT	- '*China* versus *England*' - '*Appealing* versus *Unappealing*'	N = 89 students	- To assess tourists' attitudes towards two countries using explicit and implicit measures	- Attitudes - Explicit and implicit measures	- Explicit attitudes towards China and England are not significantly different, whereas the implicit attitudes are - Explicit and implicit measures of attitudes towards a destination are complementary

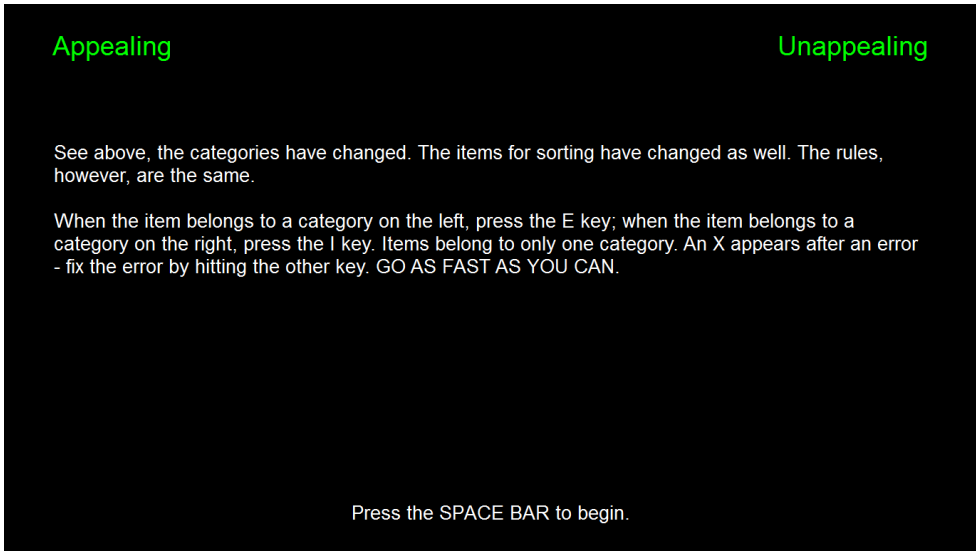
Appendix 17

A.17: Sequence of Trial Blocks in the 'Nation versus Region' Implicit Association Tests (IATs).

Blocks	*No. of trials*	*Function*	*Task description*	*Items assigned to left-key response*	*Items assigned to right-key response*
B1	20	Practice	Initial target-concept discrimination	'France'	'Auvergne'



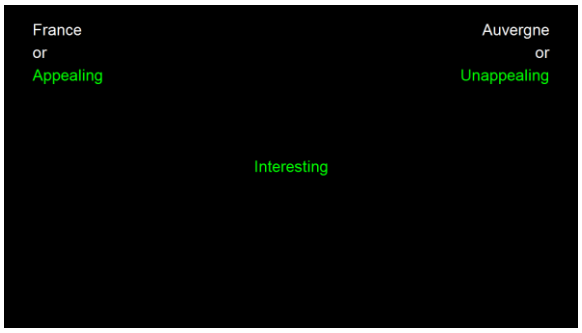
B2	20	Practice	Associated attribute discrimination	'Appealing'	'Unappealing'



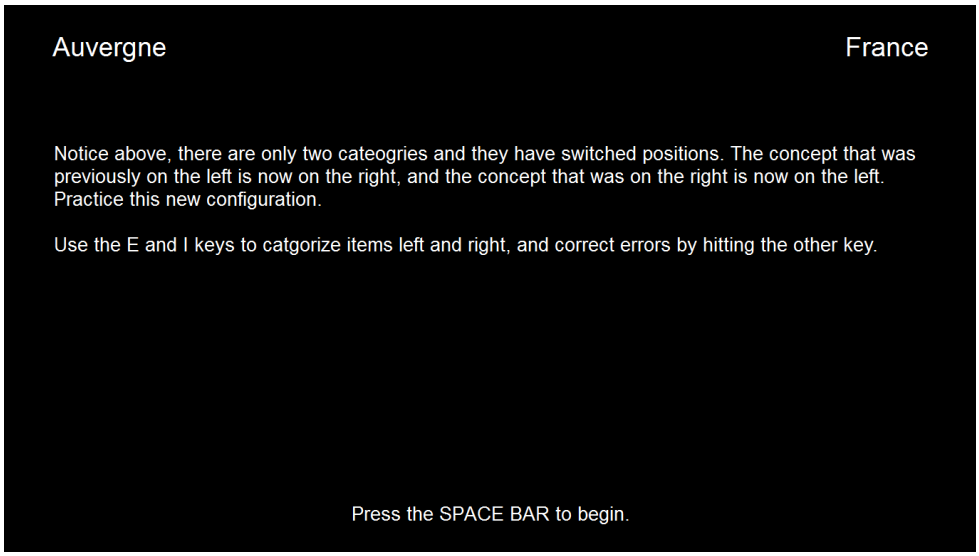
A.17: Sequence of Trial Blocks in the 'Nation versus Region' Implicit Association Tests (IATs)—Continued.

Blocks	*No. of trials*	*Function*	*Task description*	*Items assigned to left-key response*	*Items assigned to right-key response*
B3	20	Test	Initial combined task: Combination of the two previous discrimination tasks	'France' + 'Appealing'	'Auvergne' + 'Unappealing'
B4	40	Test			





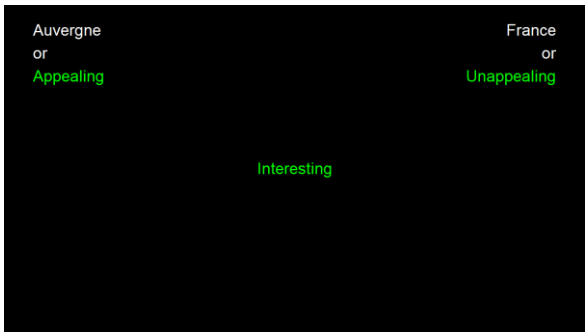
B5	20	Practice	Reversed target-concept discrimination	'Auvergne'	'France'



A.17: Sequence of Trial Blocks in the 'Nation versus Region' Implicit Association Tests (IATs)—Continued.

Blocks	*No. of trials*	*Function*	*Task description*	*Items assigned to left-key response*	*Items assigned to right-key response*
B6	20	Test	Reversed combined task:	'Auvergne' +	'France' +
B7	40	Test	Combination of discrimination tasks 2 and 5	'Appealing'	'Unappealing'





Note: For half the participants, the positions of Blocks 1, 3, and 4 were respectively switched with those of Blocks 5, 6, and 7.

Appendix 18

A.18: Questionnaire of Study 2 (Part 1) administered to tourists.

French tourist destinations

As part of a PhD thesis, I am currently conducting a research at Clermont University (France) on French tourist destinations.
This survey is completely anonymous and confidential, meaning the collected data will remain anonymous and will only be used for academic purposes. The time required to complete the questionnaire is of approximately 15 minutes.
We want to thank you for agreeing to participate in our study, and for making sure you answer all questions, even if some of them seem redundant and even if you don't know very well certain destinations listed in the questionnaire.
Also, there are no right or wrong answers. We just want you to share your honest opinion.

Part 1. You and travelling

1. What is your nationality?

2. In what country do you currently reside?

3. How many times have you travelled to France?

time(s).

4. What three words best describe France as a destination for vacation travel?
(There is no order of importance.)

Word

Word

Word

Part 2. Destination France

***Important:* From now on, please rate France as a vacation destination.**

5. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
You travel to France not for its publicised image but more for its actual characteristics.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
People go to France because the place puts more effort into creating a pleasant experience, rather than emphasizing the sort of people who travel there.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
When you think about France you think more about the country's characteristics than the type of visitor.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
France somehow defines the people who travel there.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
You've got to feel right amongst your friends because you can say that you went to France.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
People would go to France because they feel it associates them with a certain group of people.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

6. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
If I could I would like to visit France.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Part 3. The Auvergne destination

7. Have you seen or heard about Auvergne, which is a region of France?

- ☐ Yes (please, go to question 9)
- ☐ No (please, read the text below)

Located in the very centre of France, Auvergne is made up of four counties, the Allier in the north, the Puy-de-Dôme in the middle, and the Cantal and Haute-Loire in the south. Auvergne has several main cities such as Vichy, Moulins, Le Puy-en-Velay, Brioude, Aurillac and Clermont-Ferrand, the region's capital city.

8. Now that you have read a little narrative about the Auvergne region, do you reckon you have ever seen or heard about it?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (please, go to question 13)

9. Have you ever visited the Auvergne region?

- ☐ Yes (please, go to question 13)
- ☐ No

10. What three words best describe the Auvergne region as a destination for vacation travel?
(There is no order of importance.)

Word ☐

Word ☐

Word ☐

Important: From now on, please rate the Auvergne region as a vacation destination.

11. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
You travel to the Auvergne region not for its publicised image but more for its actual characteristics.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
People go to the Auvergne region because the place puts more effort into creating a pleasant experience, rather than emphasizing the sort of people who travel there.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
When you think about the Auvergne region you think more about the region's characteristics than the type of visitor.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
The Auvergne region somehow defines the people who travel there.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
You've got to feel right amongst your friends because you can say that you went to the Auvergne region.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
People would go to the Auvergne region because they feel it associates them with a certain group of people.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

12. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
If I could I would like to visit the Auvergne region.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

In the end... Who are you?

13. Are you male or female?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

14. How old are you?

☐ years old.

15. What is your experience of vacation travel?
(Please, place a check on the scale from 1 to 7 that best reflects your judgment.)

No experience ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 Great experience

Your response has been recorded. Thank you very much for the time you allocated to answering this survey!

Appendix 19

A.19: Questionnaire of Study 3 (Part 2) administered to tourists.

French tourist destinations

Your number: ☐

We want to thank you for agreeing to participate in our study. The time required to complete the questionnaire is of approximately 10 minutes. Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential.
Please, make sure you answer all questions, even if some of them seem redundant and even if you don't know very well certain destinations listed in the questionnaire.
Also, there are no right or wrong answers. We just want you to share your honest opinion.

Part 1. You and travelling to France on vacation

1. **What is your nationality?**

☐

2. **In what country do you currently reside?**

☐

3. **How many times have you travelled to France on vacation?**
   - ☐ 0 visit
   - ☐ 1 visit
   - ☐ 2 or more visits
4. **Have you ever resided in France?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

Part 2. The Auvergne destination

5. **Have you seen or heard about Auvergne, which is a region of France?**
   - ☐ Yes (please, go to question 7)
   - ☐ No (please, read the text below)

Auvergne, located in the centre of France, has four departments: the Allier in the north, the central Puy-de-Dôme, and the Cantal and Haute-Loire in the south. Auvergne has several main cities such as Vichy, Moulins, Le Puy-en-Velay, Brioude, Aurillac and Clermont-Ferrand, the region's capital city.

6. **Now that you have read a little narrative about Auvergne, do you reckon you have ever seen or heard about it?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
7. **How many times have you travelled to Auvergne on vacation?**
   - ☐ 0 visit
   - ☐ 1 visit
   - ☐ 2 or more visits
8. **Have you ever resided in Auvergne?**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

9. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the most appropriate box on a scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (7).	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
If I could I would like to visit Auvergne.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
A trip to Auvergne will be a lot of fun.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
If I could go to France, I would like to visit Auvergne.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
If the opportunity arises, I will speak positively of Auvergne to others.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

Please, for questions 10 to 14, remember to rate France and the Auvergne as <u>vacation destinations.</u>

10. According to you, the association between France and Auvergne is…?
(Please, rate the following association against a series of descriptors by placing a check on the scale from 1 to 7 that best reflects your judgment.)

Very irrelevant	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Very relevant
They fit poorly together	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	They fit well together
Does not make sense	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Makes sense
They go poorly together	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	They go well together
Very inconsistent	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Very consistent

<u>Take a moment to think about Auvergne:</u>

Think about the various images and experiences one would encounter when they hear about or visit this destination on vacation. Imagine this region in your mind and then describe the destination using several **emotional adjectives** such as: exciting, traditional, young, sexy, or whatever symbolic adjectives you think describe the image of this region.

11. Please, write down what came to your mind in the box below.

12. According to you, when it comes to the emotional characteristics you just thought about, the association between France and Auvergne is…?
(Please, rate the following association against a series of descriptors by placing a check on the scale from 1 to 7 that best reflects your judgment.)

Very irrelevant	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Very relevant
They fit poorly together	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	They fit well together
Does not make sense	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Makes sense
They go poorly together	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	They go well together
Very inconsistent	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Very consistent

Again, take a moment to think about Auvergne:

Think about the various images and experiences one would encounter when they hear about or visit this destination on vacation. Imagine this region in your mind and then describe the destination using several **physical attributes** such as: the weather, the architecture, the landscape, the infrastructure, the activities, or whatever physical characteristics you think describe the image of this region.

13. Please, write down what came to your mind in the box below.

14. According to you, when it comes to the physical characteristics you just thought about, the association between France and Auvergne is…?
(Please, rate the following association against a series of descriptors by placing a check on the scale from 1 to 7 that best reflects your judgment.)

Very irrelevant	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Very relevant
They fit poorly together	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	They fit well together
Does not make sense	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Makes sense
They go poorly together	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	They go well together
Very inconsistent	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Very consistent

Part 3. Who are you?

15. Are you male or female?
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

16. How old are you?
☐ years old.

17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- ☐ High school or below
- ☐ University/college degree
- ☐ Postgraduate degree

18. What is your occupation?
- ☐ Professional/technical
- ☐ Manager/official/proprietor
- ☐ Clerical
- ☐ Sales
- ☐ Operator
- ☐ Crafts/trades
- ☐ Laborer
- ☐ Service worker
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Homemaker
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Other (Please, specify:……..)

19. You would say you travel outside the UK for vacation purposes…?
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once every two years
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Two times a year
- ☐ Three times a year
- ☐ Four times a year and more

Thank you very much for the time you allocated to answering this survey!

Note: The present questionnaire is an overview of two questionnaires whereby we randomized the questions related to perceived representational and functional congruence.

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ABSTRACT

In the globalized world, Nowhere, Place, is directly competing against Powerful, World, to attract residents, tourists and talent, as well as firms and investments, whether the place is a meta-region, a country, a region, a city or other locations. Whilst places and destinations around the world have been proclaiming their qualities for a long time (e.g. 'What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas'), mainly to create awareness or maintain preference, those marketing communications campaigns are short-term and don't contribute to unifying the place offerings (e.g. the campaigns don't take into account that Vegas is a city located in Nevada, and that Nevada is a state in the United States). To compete in such cutthroat environments, public authorities and place agencies have started to recognize the value of adopting branding techniques by way of practising place branding. Place branding adapts several tools developed in the field of commercial branding to contribute to place development and establish image-building strategies that render places more attractive to identified markets. However, a place is a 'particular product' that is multi-faceted, within which converges a multitude of diverse stakeholders with competing visions and expectations. The success of a place brand therefore depends on stakeholder management. As such, this doctoral work endeavours to adapt mainstream marketing concepts to the context of place branding, taking into account the views of three groups of stakeholders to enhance place brand efficiency. I address these research questions in a French region-branding context, according to three sub-questions that summarize the chapters of this thesis. First, what is the advertising legitimacy of a place brand as perceived by the residents? Does it influence place-branding efficiency? The results confirm that advertising legitimacy mediates the relationship between exposure to an advertisement and its efficiency. The place brand is more legitimate when advertisements target firms, residents or tourists than when they promote local products through co-branding. My co-author and I highlight a new expression of democratic legitimacy: a process adapted to hybrid (public–private) organizations. Second, to what extent do place brand managers use community marketing strategies to operationalize the integrated marketing communications (IMC) role of the place brand? A developed typology of French 'integrated' region brands distinguishes between 'communal region brands' and 'IMC-orientated region brands'. Then, results show two categories of 'communal region brands': to the pretext of IMC, one region brand community rests on terminal values whilst the other is based on instrumental values. Third, to what extent does the region brand image constitute a relevant vehicle for promoting a destination integral to the nation brand image, as perceived by international tourists? Results show that the representational and functional dimensions of a destination brand impact differently implicit attractiveness and intentions to visit. International tourists also perceive the region and the nation brand images as congruent overall, which contributes positively to their intentions to visit the region. From a theoretical point of view, this research highlights the importance of adopting a multi-stakeholder approach to understanding place branding. Doing so contributes to the development of empirical evidence in the domain, by studying the understudied region branding form. This dissertation also highlights similarities with commercial branding and reinforces the external validity of three classic marketing concepts. The methodological implications of this work come from the different methodological approaches (i.e. measurement tools and methods), developed to meet the specificities and stakes associated with the main stakeholders of a place brand. In addition, this approach reinforces the internal validity of the present research and contributes to ruling out the existence of a declarative bias. The managerial contributions of this thesis are connected with the methodological implications, inasmuch as it provides place brand managers with diverse analysis grids that will enable them to take into account the specificities and stakes associated with the main stakeholders of the place brand, and also involve stakeholders in the place-branding process. Finally, I demonstrate the need for an IMC approach that is per se—for example, through the use of an overall brand positioning that covers shared elements between stakeholders so that they all relate to the place brand, or through the adoption of a bottom-up rather than top-down approach to place branding. This approach also should be able to extend to other place scales, by leveraging the image of a higher-order place.

Keywords: Place branding, place marketing, region, destination, stakeholders, advertising legitimacy, brand community, brand dimensions, representationality, functionality, congruence, integrated marketing communications