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Place branding, embeddedness and endogenous rural development: Four European cases

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1 Original Article

2 Place branding, embeddedness
3 and endogenous rural
4 development: Four European
5 cases

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39 ABSTRACT This article deals with place branding on the regional scale, in the rural
40 context of food and tourism networks in Europe. Place branding is linked to the
41 concepts of endogenous rural development, territory and embeddedness, by ana-
42 lysing how the valorisation of specific rural assets takes shape. The overall objective
43 is to provide more understanding of how the branding of rural regions can contribute
44 to endogenous rural development. Four European regional rural cases on place
45 branding are explored, two from France, one from Ireland and one from Germany.
46 Described are pre-conditions for branding, brand management, cooperation forms
47 and development outcomes. The analysis is based on interviews as primary data and
48 various secondary data. The cases all involve multiple stakeholders, and integrate
49 the capacities and needs of local people. The findings show different levels of
50 societal, structural and territorial embeddedness, and that higher degrees of

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51 embeddedness contribute to a successful branding process. The results indicate that place
52 branding can support endogenous rural development and benefits from the adoption of com-
53 mon values and joint reflections on brand extensions, although there remains a need for more
54 consistent impact measurement methods.

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56

57 Keywords: place branding; rural areas; food networks; embeddedness; regional development;
58 endogenous development

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60 INTRODUCTION

61 Rural regions are facing ecological, social and
62 economic vulnerabilities and competition,
63 embedded in wider processes of globalisation.
64 Globalisation is the dominant force reshaping
65 rural economies and societies at the start of the
66 21st century, which has a transformative impact
67 on rural regions (MacDonagh *et al.*, 2015). For
68 many rural regions, an obvious choice is to
69 compete with other regions for global mobile
70 capital and labour, for example via ‘smart
71 specialization’ (McCann and Ortega-Argilés,
72 2015). These strategies are targeted towards
73 gaining some form of economic advantage over
74 other regions (Bristow, 2009). This has been
75 criticised as a competitiveness discourse, littered
76 with the language of ‘winners and losers’, which
77 lacks sensitivity to critical issues of context and
78 place and the interdependencies between places
79 (Bristow, 2010).

80 On the other hand, and as a counterforce to
81 these global logics, new strategies for rural regions
82 are being developed, which are more place-based,
83 such as the construction of identities or images
84 around new rural goods and services (Horlings
85 and Marsden, 2014). These strategies can be seen
86 in the context of the ‘New Rural Paradigm’
87 (OECD, 2006) challenging regions to valorise
88 their local assets and exploit hitherto unused
89 resources. The attention for the unique qualities
90 and potential of areas is also mirrored in other
91 policy-related documents such as OECD reports
92 on regional development (OECD, 2009, 2011),
93 the European cohesion policy (Barca, 2009) and
94 the EU territorial Agenda 2020 (EU, 2011).

95 In this article, the focus is on the valorisation of
96 regional rural assets via place branding. Here,

place branding is not considered in a narrow sense
as merely the promotion or the marketing of a
place, but – referring to Pedersen (2004) – as the
construction of territorial ideas, signs and practices
and devising new ways for a local society to
identify itself. This includes the valorisation of
unique qualities of rural regions which can be
tangible (natural, agro-climatic or cultural,
patrimonial resources), intangible (skills, know-
how, traditional recipes, lifestyle) or temporal
(historical, e.g. family tradition linked to
generations) (Rastoin, 2012).

Place branding in research has paid attention to
different scales, e.g. nation branding (Anholt,
2002; Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2010), city branding
(Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005; Kalandides *et al.*,
2011) and, more recently, regional branding,
showing how regions can distinguish themselves
from others based on their unique qualities,
cultural story-lines and the image they
communicate (Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2010;
Kavaratzis *et al.*, 2015; Oliveira, 2015a, b, c;
Zenker and Jacobsen, 2015). Place branding
strategies have also become increasingly part of
the regional public agenda (Pedersen, 2004;
Pasquinelli, 2010).

With regard to specifically the branding of rural
regions, it is argued here that despite interesting
research in for example the North of Portugal
(Oliveira, 2016a, b), the River Minho estuary in
the borderland of Portugal and Spain (García *et al.*,
2013), the Shetland Islands (Horlings and
Kanemasu, 2015), Catalonia (Eugenio-Vela and
Barniol-Carcasona, 2015) and the Netherlands
(Horlings, 2012), this topic is still under
researched in the field of place branding
(Vuorinen and Vos, 2013).

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134	Therefore, in this article, four European	180
135	regional rural cases on place branding are explored	181
136	and analysed which aim to valorise their food and	182
137	tourism assets, in order to understand how the	183
138	process of rural place branding takes shape in the	184
139	context of embeddedness and neo-endogenous	185
140	rural development. Empirically, attention is paid	186
141	to the pre-conditions for branding, brand	187
142	management, forms of cooperation and	188
143	development outcomes, and to the links between	189
144	the branding of rural regions and localised food	190
145	and tourism networks. This has become relevant	191
146	as the system of food provisioning has become	192
147	increasingly ‘place-less’, disconnected from the	193
148	particular socio-cultural and ecological settings of	194
149	places, and creating various sustainability	195
150	problems which require a ‘re-embedding’ of the	196
151	food provisioning system (Wiskerke, 2009). A	197
152	regional strategy of re-orientation on territorial	198
153	capital via the development of culturally	199
154	embedded food products which reflect the ‘story	
155	of the region’ and offer experiences to citizens can	
156	support tourism (Horlings and Marsden, 2014).	
157	Theoretically, as only a few studies consider	
158	place branding from a rural sociological perspective	
159	(Rausch, 2008; Horlings, 2012; García <i>et al</i> , 2013),	
160	the overall aim is to link place branding to the	
161	concepts endogenous development, territory and	
162	embeddedness, in order to provide more	
163	understanding of how place branding of rural	
164	regions can contribute to rural development.	
165	Four cases were selected, two from France (<i>Sud</i>	
166	<i>de France</i> and <i>Produit en Bretagne</i>), one from Ireland	
167	(<i>A taste of Cork</i>) and one from Germany (<i>Echt</i>	
168	<i>Schwarzwald</i>). The research questions are:	
169	– What can be learned about the process and	
170	working mechanisms of place branding and the	
171	valorisation of food and tourism assets in these	
172	four rural regions?	
173	– How are the analysed place brands societally,	
174	structurally and territorially embedded?	
175	– What are the outcomes in terms of endogenous	
176	rural development?	
177	It should be mentioned that the notion of	
178	territory is not unproblematic (Paasi, 1995;	
179	Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger, 2006; Elden,	
	2013). Territory in Anglo-Saxon literature often	180
	refers to territorial settlements and administrative	181
	or organisationally bounded areas. Others have	182
	referred to notions of territorialisation as a process	183
	which constructs places including the making of	184
	borders (Raffestin, 1986; Raffestin and Butler,	185
	2012; Horlings <i>et al</i> , 2016). Here we apply the	186
	French definition of territory as a delimited area	187
	which results from a social construction of private	188
	and public actors who search for solving a	189
	common problem while sharing a common	190
	identity (Pecqueur, 2001).	191
	The article is structured as follows. First, neo-	192
	endogenous rural development will be defined.	193
	Then, the analytical framework on embeddedness	194
	will be outlined and the methodology described.	195
	Finally, results will be presented in terms of a	196
	comparison and analysis of the relations between	197
	regional rural brands, embeddedness and	198
	endogenous rural development.	199
	ENDOGENOUS RURAL	200
	DEVELOPMENT AND PLACE	201
	BRANDING	202
	The valorisation of rural assets is central in	203
	endogenous rural development (ERD). In rural	204
	sociology, (neo-)endogenous development has	205
	been defined as the utilisation and celebration of	206
	local and regional characteristics as the basis of its	207
	economic activity and livelihood (Oostindie <i>et al</i> ,	208
	2008). The emphasis in most sociological	209
	approaches to ERD is in understanding the	210
	(natural, human and cultural) characteristics of a	211
	place that makes it special and/or distinctive	212
	(different from other regions), and how these may	213
	become the focus of sustainable economic activity	214
	(Vanclay, 2011). Endogenous development is	215
	based on local resources, control and a re-	216
	distribution of economic gains (Oostindie <i>et al</i> ,	217
	2008). The focus is on a reorientation of activities	218
	within the local territory to maximise the	219
	retention of benefits by valorising and exploiting	220
	local resources, and on the needs, capacities and	221
	perspectives of local peoples (Dessein, 2016).	222
	Endogenous development does not imply that	223
	external or global factors are not important	224



225 influential factors, rather, these external factors are 273
 226 transformed into a self-constructed model, 274
 227 creating autonomous capacity (Oostindie *et al*, 275
 228 2008). Extra-local factors are recognised and 276
 229 regarded as essential, while retaining the belief in 277
 230 the potential of local areas to shape their future 278
 231 (Ray, 2006). The term neo-endogenous 279
 232 development has been introduced to emphasise 280
 233 the art of balancing exogenous (global) forces and 281
 234 external resources and endogenous resources and 282
 235 local control – thus reducing the vulnerability and 283
 236 exchangeability of rural areas (Ray, 2006). (Neo-) 284
 237 endogenous development implies a co- 285
 238 production between humans and their 286
 239 environment, expressed in practices (Van der 287
 240 Ploeg and Marsden, 2008), and refers to the 288
 241 interaction of the social and the natural, society 289
 242 and environment, or man and living nature. 290
 243 Endogenous development can contribute to a 291
 244 re-embedding and ‘re-grounding’ of rural 292
 245 practices in territories. This re-grounding takes 293
 246 place at the level where endogeneity, that is “*the* 294
 247 *degree to which a regional economy is grounded on* 295
 248 *regionally available (and regionally controlled) resources*” 296
 249 (Van der Ploeg *et al*, 2008: 8), can be managed 297
 250 and controlled. Specific (re-)localised networks 298
 251 may be part of endogenous rural development 299
 252 strategies. 300
 253 In this article, the focus is on place branding for 301
 254 endogenous rural development, which is built on 302
 255 the resources and values of a rural territory, its 303
 256 name and (historical) reputation, to enable the 304
 257 promotion and sales of local food products and 305
 258 tourism services through strategic branding, joint 306
 259 marketing and quality management. Despite the 307
 260 increasing number of place branding practices, 308
 261 there is no widely accepted scientific definition, 309
 262 due to its cross- and multidisciplinary 310
 263 characteristics (Hankinson, 2010). Authors have 311
 264 for example defined place branding from a 312
 265 geographic perspective (Ashworth, 2009) as well 313
 266 as from a marketing perspective (Govers and Go, 314
 267 2009). Here, place branding is understood as the 315
 268 application of a brand *strategy*, supporting the 316
 269 economic, social and cultural development of 317
 270 places, more specifically rural regions. In contrast 318
 271 to the country-of-origin (COO) literature (for an 319
 272 overview cf. Dinnie, 2004; Papadopoulos and 320
 Heslop, 2014; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999), 273
 which analyses the ‘made-in’ effect (buy- 274
 domestic) on the consumers’ perception and/or 275
 buying behaviour and has often been applied to 276
 agricultural products due to their intrinsic origin 277
 value, place branding incorporates a strategic 278
 marketing and brand management approach. Its 279
 main instrument is a collective umbrella brand, 280
 applying the same brand name, identity and logo 281
 for different product or service categories (Iversen 282
 and Hem, 2008; Horlings, 2012). With regard to 283
 the food sector, the approach incorporates the 284
 French concept of *terroir*, which links local actors, 285
 typical characteristics of agricultural products 286
 (quality, taste) and physical assets of a territory like 287
 geography, geology and climate (Bérard and 288
 Marchenay, 2004; Casabianca *et al*, 2005). Local 289
 food products reflecting urban consumers’ ideas of 290
 the countryside are considered as particularly 291
 interesting for developing a place brand 292
 (Tellström *et al*, 2006). 293
 A challenge of place branding is the creation of 294
 a strong common brand identity, which 295
 incorporates the core values of the labelled 296
 territory and fits to the different sectors as well as 297
 different product and service categories (Aaker 298
 and Keller, 1990; Kotler and Gertner, 2002). 299
 Stakeholders’ involvement is an integral part of 300
 the branding process, since stakeholders co- 301
 construct, give meaning to, and share identities of 302
 a place (Kavaratzis and Kalandides, 2015; Garcia 303
et al, 2013). A challenge is to co-create an ‘inner 304
 brand’ or joint storyline with stakeholders in 305
 order to add value to local products through 306
 innovative ways of promoting, and to support 307
 sustainable perspectives for rural regions 308
 (Horlings, 2012; Horlings and Marsden, 2014). 309
 Other challenges described in literature are: 310
 how to find an appropriate marketing-mix (Braun 311
 and Zenker, 2010), to keep a coherence of quality 312
 within the portfolio of products and services to 313
 avoid damaging the brand image (Wernerfelt, 314
 1988; Iversen and Hem, 2008) and to create a 315
 strong governance structure, such as a public- 316
 private partnership (Rainisto, 2003); and finally, 317
 the challenge to orchestrate the cooperation 318
 between different actors (Therkelsen and Halkier, 319
 2004). 320



321 In the cases of regional branding presented in
 322 this article, we take into account how these
 323 challenges can be faced by developing rural
 324 regional brands. As place branding capitalises on
 325 local assets, strategic domains and place-specific
 326 values and calls for specific governance and multi-
 327 stakeholder cooperation models, a link to the
 328 socio-economic concept of embeddedness will be
 329 made. The concept of embeddedness in its three
 330 dimensions allows us to analyse the specific
 331 (territorial, network and societal) context in
 332 which place branding occurs.

333 BRANDING AND EMBEDDEDNESS

334 There are different meanings of embeddedness;
 335 therefore, it has been characterised as a
 336 ‘confusingly polyvalent concept’ (Jones, 2008). In
 337 the original sense, described by Polanyi (1944) in
 338 ‘The Great Transformation’, the economy is
 339 related to a social, cultural and institutional
 340 context (societal embeddedness). The author
 341 emphasises the historical pathways of economic
 342 actors and gives embedding an evolutionary
 343 character. Polanyi argues that the great
 344 transformation to a modern and capitalist market
 345 economy is inextricably linked to social and
 346 political changes (Castles et al, 2011). While
 347 Polanyi does not connect the concept directly to
 348 social networks, a subsequent seminal work on
 349 embeddedness by Granovetter (1985) describes
 350 relations between individuals or firms as
 351 embedded in actual social networks (structural
 352 embeddedness) (Granovetter, 1985). Both ideas of
 353 Polanyi and Granovetter disapprove neoclassical
 354 economic thoughts which under-socialise
 355 economic behaviour and postulate a dominance
 356 of pure market forces.

357 A third dimension of embeddedness, which
 358 emerged in line with the new regionalism from
 359 the beginning of the 1990 s, is linked to a specific
 360 geographical or spatial aspect: territorial
 361 embeddedness. It has been defined as “*the extent to*
 362 *which an actor is anchored in particular territories or*
 363 *places*” (Hess, 2004:177) and asks about the
 364 relevance of the spatial dimension of the process
 365 of embedding. In the context of food and
 366 agriculture, embeddedness emphasises

connectivity between a food product or food
 system to a place in a territorial, cultural or
 geographic sense. These understandings are
 constructed, negotiated and reinforced (Hinrichs,
 2003) in the social conditions of a particular place.

Figure 1, below, is an adapted version from
 Hess (2004). At the interface of each two
 embeddedness dimensions – as indicated by the
 arrows – various socio-economic concepts are
 located that investigate either social-structural
 (New Economic Sociology, Organisation and
 Business Studies), structural-territorial (Economic
 Geography, New Regionalism) or social-
 territorial (Business Systems) linkages. As a whole,
 the figure illustrates the three interrelated
 dimensions of embeddedness, which, combined,
 form the spatial (territorial) and temporal
 (historical) context of socio-economic activity
 (composition and structure of networks) and
 allow considering developments over time in the
 configuration of localised networks. Figure 1
 serves as analytical framework to investigate
 possible links between embeddedness and regional
 branding.

Analysing regional brands with regard to the
 theory of embeddedness seems adequate for
 several reasons. First, branding geographies
 intersect economic (products and services in
 markets), social (collective action), historical-
 cultural (cultural heritage, traditional know-how,
 values) and political (public policy and
 governance) worlds (Pike, 2011). Second, place
 branding is based on relations and interactions
 between different stakeholders (Hankinson,
 2004), including chain (farmers, processors,
 retailers, consumers) and non-chain actors
 (governmental institutions, intermediary
 organisations). It shows the vertical and horizontal
 interrelations in a local business system, including
 cooperation and competition (co-opetition;
 Pasquinelli, 2013) in local clusters and networks
 (Kasabov and Sundaram, 2013; Uzzi, 1996;
 Halinen and Törnroos, 1998). In this context, the
 question of the role of public policy interventions
 is also important, as the state may influence the
 formal and informal institutional environment in
 which firms operate (Helmsing and Vellema,
 2012). Place branding can be a strategic spatial

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Author Proof

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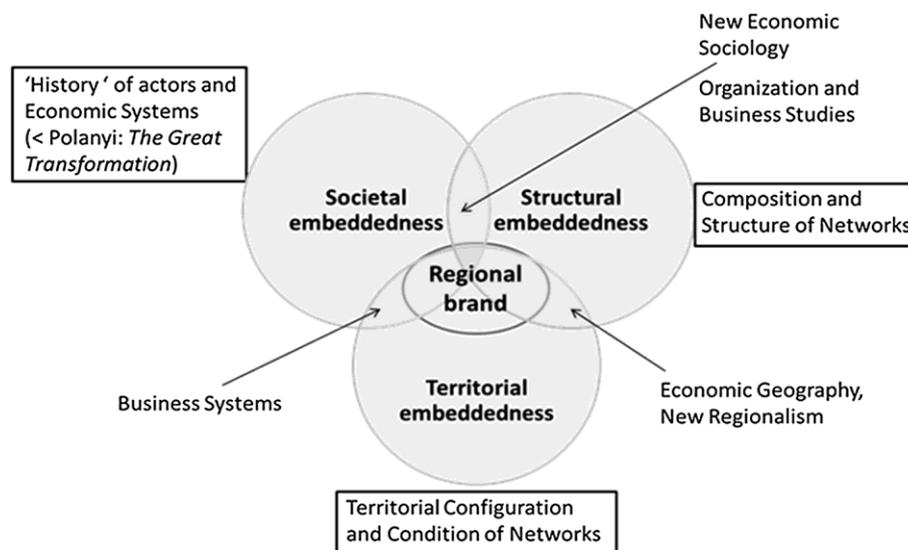


Figure 1: Regional brand linked to embeddedness.
Source Hess (2004), adapted by the authors.

415 planning instrument to improve the economic
416 and social structure of places and reshape
417 responses to contemporary challenges faced by
418 places (Oliveira, 2015a). Third, place branding
419 also shows the ‘dialectical tension between
420 embedding and dis-embedding forces’ (Sonnino,
421 2007), i.e. activating local resources for going
422 global (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). In our
423 view, analysing a series of rural regional brands
424 and their diverse territorial contexts allows one to
425 demonstrate how place branding strategies and
426 cooperation processes are connected to local as
427 well as trans-local consumer markets.

428 The analysis of the cases is based on branding
429 and marketing aspects (objectives and strategy,
430 brand identity and extension, distribution,
431 product quality), the concept of embeddedness
432 (pre-conditions, socio-economic, institutional
433 and territorial context, cooperation and
434 governance structure), and development
435 outcomes.

436 METHODOLOGY

437 In the past few years, an increasing number of
438 regional branding strategies have been applied in
439 Europe. Four cases of rural regional branding
440 were selected, two from France (*Sud de France* and

Produit en Bretagne), one from Ireland (*A taste of
441 West Cork*) and one from Germany (*Echt
442 Schwarzwald*). With the term region, we refer here
443 to a sub-national territory, not necessarily an
444 administrative area.
445

446 The first reason for this choice was that France
447 has a long tradition and a lot of experience with
448 the valorisation and commercialisation of local
449 food products. The INAO (*Institut National de
450 l’Origine et de la Qualité*) is the oldest institute for
451 legal food protection in Europe and has been the
452 basis for the elaboration of the European legal
453 framework for geographical indications.¹ France
454 has the highest sales value of products with
455 geographical indications², and French retailers
456 such as Carrefour and Leclerc have, for more than
457 a decade, successfully promoted own brands for
458 local food such as *Reflets de France* and *Nos régions
459 ont du talent* (Beylier et al, 2012). Thus, France
460 strongly capitalises on local food products and
461 food culture to attract national and international
462 tourists.³ This is also reflected by the number of
463 regional brands building on local food products in
464 France.⁴

465 The second reason was that the cases from
466 Bretagne (*Produit en Bretagne*; launched in 1993)
467 and Ireland (*A taste of West Cork*; since 1998) are
468 two of the oldest rural regional branding



469 initiatives in Europe, already in a mature phase,
 470 and often cited as successful examples⁵; therefore,
 471 they were considered as good references by the
 472 authors. *Sud de France* (2006) and *Echt Schwarzwald*
 473 (2008) are more recent⁶ and have not been
 474 researched before. The empirical analysis of these
 475 cases revealed valuable information on the
 476 conditions for place branding.

477 The methodology used was qualitative in
 478 nature, which allows describing and interpreting
 479 new or under-researched issues, theory
 480 development and policy evaluation and advice
 481 (Bitsch, 2005). Various secondary data, such as
 482 policy documents, press and academic articles as
 483 well as data from internet sites, were collected for
 484 all the cases in order to trace the branding
 485 processes, their history and development. Process
 486 tracing in social science allows studying decision
 487 making and causal mechanisms as well as revealing
 488 information about evolutions (Beach and
 489 Pedersen, 2013). The origin and management of
 490 the brands were explored, events in time, related
 491 problems, and the value added by the brands for
 492 the place and its stakeholders, including network
 493 effects. In addition, primary data in the form of
 494 twelve semi-structured interviews with public and
 495 private key stakeholders were collected, but only
 496 for the two more recent rural regional branding
 497 cases (*Sud de France*: eight interviews and *Echt*
 498 *Schwarzwald*: four interviews); the two older
 499 brands being already well researched as isolated
 500 cases, but not in a comparative way. All
 501 interviews were done face-to-face and lasted
 502 between half an hour and one and a half hour.
 503 Notes were taken during the interviews and
 504 reviewed and completed immediately after.
 505 Questions with public stakeholders and brand
 506 managers concerned the strategic goals, the
 507 governance, the financing and the marketing-mix
 508 as well as benefits and critical issues of the brands.
 509 Brand members such as food enterprises or
 510 tourism providers were asked about their
 511 motivation for the brand adherence, the kind of
 512 cooperation and perceived benefits. The
 513 interview data were analysed according to the
 514 thematic method, as proposed by Berg (2009).
 515 First, a basic coding was done in order to identify

overall themes, followed by an interpretation of
 the more specific patterns.

The purpose of the comparative case analysis
 was to develop a deeper understanding and to get
 more generic insights into the process and
 working mechanisms of rural regional brands, of
 how public-private interactions around them are
 formed and evolve; to explore whether and how
 territorial and societal embeddedness generate
 novel partnerships and synergies (structural
 embedding), and how regional brands can support
 rural development.

INTRODUCING FOUR EUROPEAN CASES OF RURAL REGIONAL BRANDING

In this section, the four different European cases
 of rural regional branding are presented in a
 chronologic order, to show how local food and
 tourism are marketed via place branding.

Produit en Bretagne (PeB)

Produit en Bretagne is one of the oldest regional
 brands for food in Europe.⁷ It has evolved from a
 difficult economic context. In 1993–1994, Brit-
 tany – situated in the North-West of France –
 suffered from a heavy crisis concerning one of its
 most important sectors, fishery. This went to-
 gether with the general tendencies of de-industri-
 alisation and de-localisation, giving the habitants a
 feeling of being marginalised.⁸ As a consequence
 of this socio-economic context, four entrepre-
 neurs from the Finistère department took the
 initiative to develop a regional brand in order to
 keep and create local employment, to enable
 people living in this territory and to contribute to
 the regional economic development (hence ter-
 ritorial embeddedness, as discussed later). The
 collective strategy was based on such ethical
 principles as solidarity and sustainability, inviting
 consumers to buy responsible, to buy ‘Breton’.⁹
 Such a purchasing incentive was possible as
 regional identity and solidarity are strongly rooted
 in Brittany’s culture, due to the specific history of
 the region (societal and territorial embedded-
 ness).¹⁰ In the 2010 report *L’Etat social de la*



- 560 France, realised by the *Observatoire du dialogue et de*
 561 *l'intelligence sociale* (ODIS, 2010), Brittany was
 562 ranking as the second French region regarding
 563 social ties linked to economic performance.
 564 The brand PeB soon became institutionalised
 565 via an association with the same name, which
 566 started with thirteen food enterprises but now has
 567 370 members from many different business sectors
 568 (44 per cent from the agri-food sector, but also
 569 hotels, restaurants, financial and logistics services,
 570 cultural and creative sectors...).¹¹ The association
 571 constitutes the largest economic network in the
 572 region and is still growing. Together with the
 573 regional chamber of commerce and industry and
 574 the higher school of commerce *Bretagne Brest*, it
 575 also successfully created, in 2006, a business
 576 incubator, *Incubateur Produit en Bretagne* (Merieau,
 577 2011), which stimulates and supports innovative
 578 projects and the creation of new local enterprises
 579 (structural embeddedness). It is particularly
 580 interesting that the PeB network was the first to
 581 be set up in France by enterprises, not from a
 582 public or governmental side. However, the geo-
 583 graphical extension from Finistère to other
 584 departments within the region has created ten-
 585 sions between brand members, who see their
 586 differential advantage threatened with an
 587 increasing number of (competing) brand members
 588 (Stervinou *et al.*, 2006).
 589 In 2013, about 3900 different products carry
 590 the logo PeB (Baldos, 2013). While these were in
 591 the beginning mainly food products, the brand
 592 has over time been extended to other product
 593 categories (such as typical regional textiles, crafts,
 594 books or discs etc.) and various services. If
 595 enterprises want to sell products under the brand
 596 name, they must be members of the association,
 597 respect its values and ethics and pay an annual
 598 contribution fee. They are evaluated via audits by
 599 an independent agency, *Bureau Veritas*. Further-
 600 more, each product is separately checked with
 601 regard to its origin and quality before it can be
 602 labelled. Concerning distribution, there is a strong
 603 interrelation between the association and the
 604 regional as well as national retail groups, but also
 605 alternative channels are used as bars or restaurants,
 606 special boutiques, e-commerce and also collective
 607 restaurants are foreseen.
- The outcomes of the brand have been mea- 608
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- A taste of West Cork (ToWC)** 635
 The Irish case of regional branding has been 636
 documented in detail (O'Reilly, 2001; Woods 637
 and Deegan, 2006; Crowley, 2004; Dempsey and 638
 O'Reilly, 2008; Messely *et al.*, 2009). In 1994, 639
 West Cork, a rural agricultural region in the 640
 South-West of Ireland, made a bid for financial 641
 support from the European LEADER II pro- 642
 gramme with a positive outcome. Accordingly, 643
 the West Cork Leader Co-operative (WCLC) 644
 analysed regional strengths and weaknesses (EU 645
 LEADER European Observatory, 1999). It 646
 became clear that the area on the one hand had 647
 valuable assets such as beautiful and diverse 648
 landscapes, friendly hospitable people and food 649
 specialties, but on the other hand, there were no 650
 cooperative marketing initiatives and only a 651
 fragmented services sector (lack of territorial 652
 embeddedness). 653



654 Therefore, the WCLC decided to promote the
 655 region by creating a strong umbrella brand for
 656 high quality local food products and tourism
 657 services. The main objectives of this strategy were
 658 to develop a branded identity and to stimulate
 659 collective action by bringing together key stake-
 660 holders into a single organisational structure. The
 661 *Fuchsia Brands Ltd.* was set up, incorporating the
 662 WCLC, West Cork Tourism, Cork/Kerry
 663 Tourism and West Cork Food Producers Asso-
 664 ciation (WCFPA). This organisation was
 665 responsible for the brand management and pro-
 666 vided infrastructure to network activities of vari-
 667 ous public agencies and private firms.¹⁴

668 Operations of the WCLC were later been taken
 669 over by *West Cork Development Partnership*.¹⁵

670 In 1998, the brand was launched commercially
 671 for food products (*A taste of West Cork*) and
 672 tourism services (*West Cork, a place apart*), and was
 673 later extended to crafts. It was set up to attract
 674 tourists on a regional, national and international
 675 scale. The logo carries the typical fuchsia flower,
 676 which has a strong association with the region and
 677 is easily recognisable (McCutcheon, online doc-
 678 ument). Promotion is done via trade fairs, tourism
 679 brochures, media, the publication of a guide
 680 showing the best and most typical West Cork
 681 products, in-store tasting etc. The brand is based
 682 on high quality and safety, guaranteed through
 683 internationally recognised *Hazard Analysis and*
 684 *Critical Control Points* norms and reinforced by
 685 *Fuchsia Brands Ltd.* training programmes for pro-
 686 duct quality, customer care, marketing, food
 687 hygiene and safety (O'Reilly, 2001). Since 2003,
 688 a special Fuchsia Retail Affiliate Scheme has been
 689 developed, which includes a listing of Fuchsia
 690 branded products in qualified, labelled regional
 691 retail stores.

692 The West Cork Fuchsia brand produced a
 693 number of positive outcomes for regional devel-
 694 opment (O'Reilly, 2001; Dempsey and O'Reilly,
 695 2008; Ryan et al, 2004). The results are consid-
 696 ered to be related to the European Leader+
 697 programme initiated by the West Cork Leader
 698 Co-operative. Among these outcomes, perceived
 699 benefits are increased knowledge of brand mem-
 700 bers (through information and training), a high
 701 consumer awareness and a positive image of the

place, improved market access and cooperation. 702
 In addition, the impact studies confirm the brands 703
 contribution to the regional economy in terms of 704
 total direct value creation, employment rate and 705
 multiplier effects on jobs and expenditure within 706
 the region. Furthermore, the brand has created a 707
 strong territory-based network with inter-sectoral 708
 synergies between the food and tourism sector, 709
 such as multifunctional agriculture (structural 710
 embeddedness). In his case study, O'Reilly (2001) 711
 shows that the institutional support and cultural 712
 environment have been key factors for the 713
 emergence and identity of the network, as they 714
 provide a basis for solidary economic behaviour 715
 among enterprises (societal embeddedness). 716
 Another study of Messely et al (2009) confirms 717
 that people in West Cork have a strong sense of 718
 belonging to the region and a strong regional 719
 identity. 720

Sud de France (SdF)¹⁶ 721

722 The region Languedoc-Roussillon is situated in
 723 the South of France and bordered by the Pyrenees
 724 Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea; its capital
 725 is Montpellier. Geography and culture are deeply
 726 contrasting due to different historical origins; the
 727 economy is still at the bottom of all French
 728 metropolitan regions, with a high percentage of
 729 unemployment (13.9 per cent in 2013).¹⁷ Tour-
 730 ism and agriculture are economic key sectors –
 731 Languedoc-Roussillon is the world's largest wine
 732 producing region (territorial embeddedness).
 733 Compared to Provence or Côte d'Azur, the
 734 region has remained for a long time relatively
 735 unknown, despite its beautiful landscapes, cultural
 736 heritage (such as the Pont du Gard or the city of
 737 Carcassonne), and hundreds of kilometres of coast
 738 with sandy beaches.

739 The brand *Sud de France* was launched in 2006
 740 due to the influence of the former president of the
 741 regional government, Georges Frêche (2004–
 742 2010), who wanted to bring the region out of its
 743 seclusion, activating resources for interna-
 744 tionalisation and creating a common identity (1,
 745 brand manager of *Sud de France Development*, 14
 746 June 2013; societal embeddedness). He initiated
 747 the brand together with a new institution for



748	wine professionals, <i>Inter Sud de France</i> , regrouping	796
749	all different winemakers of the area for the first	797
750	time (structural embeddedness): “ <i>the brand has</i>	798
751	<i>grouped different organisations within the wine sector</i>	799
752	<i>which did not communicate before</i> ” (2, director of a	800
753	wine organisation, 22 January 2013). Even	801
754	though SdF was firstly intended to be a common	802
755	export label for wine producers, which were in	803
756	crisis due to a worldwide increasing competition,	804
757	it was extended to other food companies and	805
758	tourism service providers in 2008. ¹⁸	806
759	The marketing strategy has, since its beginning,	807
760	a strong focus on promotion, with enormous	808
761	advertisement campaigns financed by the regional	809
762	government as brand owner – a fact which has	810
763	been critically regarded. ¹⁹ The promoted image	811
764	builds upon the values of the Mediterranean art of	812
765	living, as expression of a convivial lifestyle, with	813
766	authentic, diversified, healthy food and wine.	814
767	These values are shared by member enterprises:	815
768	“ <i>The brand corresponds exactly to our own firm policy</i> ”	816
769	(3, marketing director of a food enterprise, 3 April	817
770	2013). Using the brand is free of charge and	818
771	entrance criteria are defined in a catalogue of	819
772	specifications, which until 2014 has not been	820
773	subject to strict audits. However, problems con-	821
774	cerning food provenance and quality were leading	822
775	to dissatisfaction among brand members: “ <i>A</i>	823
776	<i>problem is the enormous increase of members, which not</i>	824
777	<i>always have typical products of the South or good</i>	825
778	<i>quality</i> ” (4, director of a cooperative, 14 February	826
779	2013). Therefore, product specifications were	827
780	redefined in 2014 and external quality controls	828
781	were introduced (5, brand manager of <i>Sud de</i>	829
782	<i>France Development</i> , 14 June 2013). Since then, the	830
783	number of brand members and labelled products	831
784	from the agrifood sector has considerably	832
785	decreased (approximately by half). In 2015, <i>Sud</i>	833
786	<i>de France</i> counted 4163 registered agricultural	
787	and food products from 1332 member enterprises	
788	and 1100 labelled quality tourism providers. ²⁰	
789	The brand related activities are coordinated by	
790	<i>Sud de France Development</i> , which defines collec-	
791	tive strategies for distribution, export and business	
792	development: “ <i>Sud de France Development gives an</i>	
793	<i>enormous support for export</i> ” (6, wine grower, 24	
794	April 2013). This organisation is financed by the	
795	regional government and supported by other	
	public institutions. It plays a strategic role as	796
	interface between producers and buyers, princi-	797
	ally the big retail groups. In addition, it coop-	798
	erates with the international <i>Maisons de la Région</i>	799
	<i>Languedoc-Roussillon</i> , which give commercial and	800
	logistic support to exporting enterprises in key	801
	markets (embedding – dis-embedding).	802
	Regarding the outcomes of SdF on rural	803
	regional development the interviews revealed two	804
	major brand values: “ <i>An economic one for enterprises,</i>	805
	<i>as communication and commercialization tool and an</i>	806
	<i>institutional one that gives value to the region as a</i>	807
	<i>whole, by increasing the awareness and creating a</i>	808
	<i>common strong identity. This includes an extension of</i>	809
	<i>the brand to other sectors</i> ” (7, member of the	810
	regional council, 7 February 2013). For tourism,	811
	the brand helps to attract visitors: “ <i>The value of the</i>	812
	<i>brand is enormous, seen the number of visitors per year</i>	813
	<i>due to the promotion</i> ” (8, manager of a tourist	814
	organisation, 4 April 2013). An indicator for the	815
	attractiveness of the brand was also the constantly	816
	growing number of brand members. However,	817
	this increase was most probably partly due to the	818
	fact that access to public support was only possible	819
	if one becomes a brand adherent. There is not yet	820
	a formal network among brand adherents: “ <i>There</i>	821
	<i>is not yet a cluster or a network of enterprises around the</i>	822
	<i>brand, but it is in development, and there are several</i>	823
	<i>initiatives, like trade fairs, meetings etc.</i> ” (9, project	824
	manager of the regional industrial food enterprise	825
	organisation, 25 January 2013; structural embed-	826
	dedness). Particularly, a stronger cooperation	827
	between wine, food and tourism is desired by	828
	brand members: “ <i>The region has an enormous</i>	829
	<i>potential for oenotourism, e.g. wine routes or wine cel-</i>	830
	<i>lars with tasting wine and food products for consumers</i> ”	831
	(10, director of a wine organisation, 22 January	832
	2013).	833
	Echt Schwarzwald (ES)	834
	The brand <i>Echt Schwarzwald</i> was initiated in 2006	835
	by the <i>Naturpark Schwarzwald Mitte/Nord</i> , which is	836
	situated in the South-West of Germany and	837
	belongs to the Bundesland Baden-Württemberg.	838
	Covering an area of 3750 km ² , this natural park is	839
	the largest one in Germany. The typical Black	840
	Forest (Schwarzwald) landscape is diversified,	841



842 with deep valleys, rivers, grassland and pastures 890
843 with animals, and dark mixed forest with the 891
844 typical white fir. A key feature, furthermore, is 892
845 the alternation between natural and cultivated 893
846 landscape. However, the use of agricultural 894
847 grazing areas has decreased in a sense that “the 895
848 image of traditional cultural landscape, which is very 896
849 important for the tourist attraction, is threatened” (11, 897
850 project coordinator of *Ecozept*, the supporting 898
851 consultancy, 7 August 2013). This is due to dif- 899
852 ficult cultivation conditions (e.g. steep hill farm- 900
853 ing) combined with low incomes for farmers, 901
854 who are searching for other job opportunities 902
855 (territorial embeddedness). 903
856 In the light of a growing demand among 904
857 farmers for forestation of unprofitable grassland, 905
858 the Natural Park, together with the central 906
859 Ortenau community, started to think about 907
860 developing a collective strategy to preserve the 908
861 traditional landscape. The idea was to develop a 909
862 marketing concept for high quality beef products. 910
863 This niche strategy should create added value (via 911
864 price premium) for local farmers to keep grassland 912
865 farming attractive and profitable (Koch, 2008). In 913
866 2007, the association *Echt Schwarzwald e.V.* was 914
867 founded as a steering organisation, coordinating 915
868 both production and commercialisation.²¹ This 916
869 association now has about 100 members, princi- 917
870 pally farmers, but also butchers, restaurants, local 918
871 communities and the two natural parks Sch- 919
872 warzwald Mitte/Nord and Südschwarzwald. 920
873 With the support of the consulting firm *Ecozept* 921
874 the brand was launched in 2008 and was rapidly 922
875 extended to other typical local food products. 923
876 Only extensive cooperation and a public-private 924
877 partnership made it possible to create and expand 925
878 the regional marketing project (Koch, 2008). On 926
879 the other hand, “the motivation among farmers was 927
880 initially low, as they were convinced to already have 928
881 their own valuable products” (12, chief executive of 929
882 *Echt Schwarzwald e.V.*, 5 August 2013). Addi- 930
883 tionally, “the communication between the different 931
884 partners was difficult, because of strong discrepancies 932
885 between consultancy, administrative and an entrepre- 933
886 neurial culture and way of thinking” (13, project 934
887 coordinator of *Ecozept*, 7 August 2013). Accord- 935
888 ing to the project coordinator, another problem 936

was that brand management and financing had to 890
be assigned from the public to the private sector 891
after four years (societal embeddedness). This is 892
why at present, all brand activities are handled by 893
a single chief executive of *Echt Schwarzwald e.V.*, 894
which is not without its financial and managerial 895
risks. 896
The basket of goods currently comprises 897
mainly beef and beef products, but also lamb, 898
typical fruit schnapps and liquor, honey, milk and 899
finally also pork products, such as the famous 900
Schwarzwälder Schinken (Protected Geographical 901
Indication since 2010). The brand is related to 902
local tourism in the natural parks, but the pro- 903
motion is done with a different logo. ES stands for 904
healthy, qualitative and authentic food, guaran- 905
teed through high quality requirements and audits 906
for producers. The commercialisation is effected 907
by short distribution channels, preferring local 908
sales at farms, farmer markets, butchers or 909
restaurants, but also by an online shop. 910
The economic impact of the brand for farm- 911
ers’ incomes is “signifi with on average a 10– 912
12 per cent price premium” (14, chief executive of 913
ES e.V., 5 August 2013) and a 50 per cent sales 914
increase from 2009 to 2010.²² However, one 915
interviewee who joined the initiative as it cor- 916
responded to his own beliefs, criticised the fact 917
that the brand does not yet clearly shows its 918
values: “the brand does not bring off the ecological 919
value and animal welfare, but focuses too much on 920
economic goals” (15, restaurant owner, 5 August 921
2013). Furthermore, “cooperation among brand 922
participants is important and exists” (16, chief 923
executive of *ES e.V.*, 5 August 2013), but can be 924
attributed to normal business exchanges rather 925
than directly to the brand (structural embed- 926
dedness). According to the project coordinator 927
of *Ecozept*, “at present, the brand has not yet led to 928
increased solidarity or a common identity among 929
members, but it has the potential to create a strong local 930
network” (17, project coordinator of *Ecozept*, 7 931
August 2013) In particular, a stronger coopera- 932
tion with the tourism sector is pursued: “Such a 933
cooperation would be ideal as tourism is extremely well 934
developed here” (18, chief executive of *ES e.V.*, 5 935
August 2013) (Table 1). 936



Table 1: Review of the 4 cases

	<i>Produit en Bretagne</i>	<i>A taste of West Cork</i>	<i>Sud de France</i>	<i>Echt Schwarzwald</i>
Year of creation	1993	1998	2006	2008
Governance structure; main stakeholders	<i>Produit en Bretagne</i> is a private association of about 370 local enterprises from various sectors (44 per cent from agri-food)	'Fuchsia Brands Ltd.' incorporates the West Cork LEADER Co-Operative, the West Cork Food Producers Association, West Cork Tourism, Cork/Kerry Tourism	<i>La Région Languedoc-Roussillon</i> is the owner of the brand; management support is given by Sud de France Development Other stakeholders are: food producers and processors, tourism service providers	<i>Echt Schwarzwald e.V.</i> is an association of local farmers and butchers. Other stakeholders are: local communities and the Naturpark Schwarzwald Mitte/Nord
Geographical scale	The region Bretagne in the North-West of France	The West Cork region situated in the County Cork, South-West of Ireland	The region Languedoc-Roussillon in the South of France	The Black Forest region, a large forested mountain range in the state of Baden-Württemberg in southwestern Germany
Objectives	Maintain and create local employment, support sustainable development of Bretagne	Stimulate local development; promote West Cork by developing a branded identity through collective action	Increase the awareness of the region and its assets as well as facilitate wine export	Preserve the traditional, cultural landscape by adding value to high quality regional food products in order to keep farming attractive and valuable
Main targets	Residents and (inter-) national consumers	Tourists	International consumers and residents	Local consumers and tourists

Source Authors.

937 ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON 938 OF THE CASES

939 In order to answer the three research questions,
940 the cases will first be compared with regard to the
941 main branding and marketing aspects. Then, the
942 findings will be analysed along the three
943 dimensions of embeddedness, and finally, the
944 outcomes of the brands on endogenous rural
945 development will be assessed.
946 The *objectives* of the four cases show similarities:
947 place branding supports regional economic actors
948 (employment, competitiveness, incomes) and
949 local sustainable development (common identity,
950 quality of life, preservation of cultural and natural
951 heritage). All cases follow a niche strategy, based
952 on specific cultural and/or qualitative
953 differentiation and exploiting unique territorial
954 assets, as landscapes, local products, or people's
955 traditions and know-how. Consequently, the
956 brand identities are strongly rooted in the
957 territories and their values, highlighting
958 geographic origins and characteristics. In the case

of SdF it is notable that this origin does not
correspond to the political, administrative term of
the area, Languedoc-Roussillon, but rather profits
from positive connotations related to French food
and the South, in general associated with Côte
d'Azur and Provence.

In the four cases *brand extensions* have been
performed, i.e. the original portfolio has been
enlarged by adding other products or services
from the territory to the brand. This seems not to
be negative for the brand images, if these newly
entering products or services are in congruence
with existing brand values and are included in a
transparent way. However, in two cases, an influx
of new brand members has been considered as a
threat by interviewed participants, because of
either inconsistency in product quality (SdF) or
increased level of internal competition (PeB).

Distribution channels are primarily operating at
the local level, which may correspond to the
predominant consumer's idea that local food is
linked to short distribution channels. An

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981 exception is SdF, which required a global strategy
 982 in order to find new markets for its abundant
 983 wine production. Since 2011, Brittany has also
 984 started to export selected products under the sub-
 985 brand *Bretagne Excellence*.

986 By comparing the cases, it can be observed that
 987 strategic as well as operational marketing aspects
 988 are important. The development of a strong brand
 989 identity and related values are essential,
 990 incorporating a territorial unique selling
 991 proposition. Here, a future challenge will be to
 992 differentiate and highlight the uniqueness and
 993 distinctiveness of a place among an increasing
 994 number of competing place brands. Furthermore,
 995 a well-balanced choice of products and services is
 996 important, with possible brand extensions already
 997 in mind, whereby originality and coherence of
 998 quality are imperative in order to avoid damage to
 999 the brand's image.

1000 A key research question was till what extent
 1001 place brands can be linked to the three dimensions
 1002 of embeddedness.

1003 First, regarding *societal embeddedness*, the analysis
 1004 confirms that each brand has its origin in a specific
 1005 socio-cultural, natural, institutional or economic
 1006 context. All initiatives started as reactions to a
 1007 concrete threat – and not an opportunity: an
 1008 economic (loss of competitiveness, sales decreases
 1009 due to globalisation: PdB, SdF), social
 1010 (marginalisation, rural depopulation, brain drain:
 1011 ToWC), or natural (loss of cultural landscape: ES)
 1012 threat. In three cases, brands were initiated by
 1013 institutional actors, as a top-down strategy
 1014 involving different public and private
 1015 stakeholders. This public role in development is
 1016 illustrative for ToWC and SdF; the first was
 1017 financed by the EU Leader+ programme and the
 1018 second was created by a local politician using
 1019 public subsidies. However, PeB was developed in
 1020 a bottom-up way and is uniquely governed by
 1021 private entrepreneurs, leading to a strong
 1022 network. This was feasible within the specific
 1023 socio-cultural conditions of Brittany, i.e. a
 1024 territory with a strong regional identity and
 1025 solidarity among residents. ES is a particular case,
 1026 as the brand was supported by public institutions
 1027 from the start, but after a relatively short time, the
 1028 responsibility has been handed over to the private

sector; a fact which has been critically observed by
 the project coordinator of the supporting
 consultancy.

Territorial embeddedness deals with the spatial
 aspect of the embedding process and the
 anchorage of actors in a particular place. An
 illustrative example is the creation and
 management of the brand PeB by local
 entrepreneurs intended to develop their own
 territory. In a similar way, the founding father of
 SdF, Georges Frêche, has for a long time
 advocated his region and its territorial capital,
 being a political actor with strong economic
 interests – as highlighted by one of the brand
 managers. Furthermore, the spatial aspect of
 embeddedness becomes evident considering the
 specific territorial determinants functioning as
 building blocks for the brands. This means e.g.
 the traditional landscape in the Black Forest, the
 ‘friendly character of people in Cork’, the
 Mediterranean atmosphere in the Languedoc-
 Roussillon and the strong historical independency
 features of Brittany.

The third analytical dimension is *structural embeddedness*. Considering the cooperation and network aspects, this is a kind of emerging outcome preceded by territorial and societal embedding. All cases have shown a need for a leading organisation as orchestrator to ensure various stakeholders' involvement (*Echt Schwarzwald e.V., Association PeB, Fuchsia Brands Ltd., SdF Development*). The cooperation forms are horizontal and transversal; they all include chain and non-chain actors, mainly within regional business systems. In all cases, branding results at least in some common activities such as seminars, workshops, trade fairs, platforms as well as in business agreements between producers and distributors. Thus, creating durable partnerships between various stakeholders is a key element of these place branding processes, but its strength is a question of time. In the older cases, ToWC and PeB, a regional network has already become more deeply rooted than in the case of ES and SdF.

The analysis of the four empirical cases confirms our initial assumption that place brands in rural regions are linked to the three dimensions of embeddedness as shown in the overview in



1077 Table 2. This includes their way of financing, 1104
 1078 governance forms, identity and values as well as 1105
 1079 cooperation structures. Regional brands are 1106
 1080 influenced by the level of embeddedness, but at 1107
 1081 the same time can also stimulate it. Therefore, the 1108
 1082 relation can be characterised as reciprocal. The 1109
 1083 cases also show that the dimensions of 1110
 1084 embeddedness are intertwined and 1111
 1085 interdependent, thus revealing a kind of blending 1112
 1086 or continuity pattern. For example, structural 1113
 1087 embeddedness in two of the cases has been 1114
 1088 influenced by the societal and/or territorial 1115
 1089 context (PeB, ToWC). SdF, however, partly 1116
 1090 building on extra-territorial partnerships, gives an 1117
 1091 example of forces of dis-embedding. Altogether, 1118
 1092 the concept of embeddedness with its three 1119
 1093 dimensions is useful to understand rural regional 1120
 1094 brands within their specific context. 1121
 1095 Finally, reviewing the various outcomes of the 1122
 1096 brands on *endogenous rural development*, it can be 1123
 1097 stated that different methods and indicators have 1124
 1098 been applied by varied stakeholders and 1125
 1099 researchers for measurement, thus complicating a 1126
 1100 direct comparative assessment. Quantitative 1127
 1101 indicators have shown the level of brand 1128
 1102 awareness and perception among consumers 1129
 1103 (PeB, ToWC), increased sales figures (SdF, ES) and tourists (SdF), the employment rate (ToWC) or the added value in financial terms as price premium (ES, PeB, ToWC). On the other hand, qualitative measures have revealed insights in individual stakeholder opinions (SdF, ES, ToWC), brand impact on local knowledge and innovations (PeB, ToWC) as well as on novel networking schemes (ToWC, PeB, SdF). In addition, branding outcomes reflect endogenous aspects, such as the use and control over rural resources and qualities (agriculture, landscape, cultural heritage and values), local activities (farming, food processing, small-scale tourism) as well as the retention of benefits (price premium, employment) in the place itself. Table 3 highlights the outcomes in terms of endogenous rural development for each of the four cases. While the two older brands (PeB, ToWC) show a high degree of exploitation and control over diverse local resources and qualities and keep economic benefits within the region, ES could profit from combing diverse local resources under its brand name. In addition, both SdF and ES could improve the way of cross-sector organisation, especially between food and tourism as stated by the respondents.

Table 2: Overview of the rural regional brands and dimensions of embeddedness

	<i>Produit en Bretagne</i>	<i>A taste of West Cork</i>	<i>Sud de France</i>	<i>Echt Schwarzwald</i>
Origin (territorial, societal embeddedness)	Crisis of fish sector, de-industrialisation Private initiative	Bid for LEADER II funding Public initiative	Crisis of the wine sector, due to worldwide competition Public initiative	Need for protection of cultural landscape Public initiative
Funding (societal embeddedness)	85 per cent private funding by members' contributions, 15 per cent public subsidies	EU LEADER II funding 50 per cent; remainder invested by the private sector. From 2006, transition to a fee-paying scheme	100 per cent public funding by the Languedoc-Roussillon government	In the beginning supported by local communities, now financed by participants
Identity and values communicated by the brands (territorial embeddedness)	Traditional gastronomy, local know-how Values are based on ethics, solidarity and strong historical ties	Clean unspoiled environment, friendly people, and diversity of the culture and landscape	Mediterranean and convivial lifestyle, authentic, tasty and diversified food and wine	True (echt) = authenticity What is outside (packaging, logo) should be inside 100 per cent regional, quality and taste
Cooperation (structural embeddedness)	Largest economic network of the region	Strategic cooperation between tourism and food	Policy aim to develop a sustainable network	No formal network until now

Source Authors.

Table 3: Regional branding and endogenous rural development

	<i>Produit en Bretagne</i>	<i>A taste of West Cork</i>	<i>Sud de France</i>	<i>Echt Schwarzwald</i>
Type of outcomes	High brand awareness and recognition of the brand values by consumers Positive effect on local employment Largest economic network of the region, business incubator	Better access to markets Increased local employment Improved use of natural resources	Increased awareness of the region and its local products Better access to export markets and increase of sales Creation of a common regional identity	Price premium and sales increase for farmers
Use of (different) local resources and qualities	Use of multiple local resources: History, culture, language, human values, agriculture	Multiple resources: Landscape, food products, friendly people	Wine, but also other food products. Mediterranean climate and Sea exploited for tourist attraction	Mainly beef Natural landscape used to emphasise the product quality
Control over local resources (organisation, models for resource combination)	High level of control and organisation by the Association <i>Produit en Bretagne</i>	Strong intersectoral cooperation between food and tourism	Cross-sector cooperation not yet fully developed	Brand only covers food, while multi-functionality (agritourism) well organised within the region
Economic redistribution	Retention of benefits (innovations, employment) in the region	Retention of benefits (incomes, employment) in the region	Farmers, food processors, tourism providers profit from the collective brand, but also the large national distributors	Price premium goes directly to farmers

Source Authors.

1130 Altogether, these results suggest that place 1151
 1131 brands (potentially) can have a positive influence 1152
 1132 on (local) rural development, although there 1153
 1133 remains a need for a more consistent method to 1154
 1134 measure their impact, especially in terms of 1155
 1135 qualitative outcomes. It can also be concluded 1156
 1136 that the (rural) regional brands are strongly 1157
 1137 directed towards supporting the capacities and 1158
 1138 needs of local people, including entrepreneurs. 1159
 can play an important role as identity markers, 1151
 expressing a specific culture and way-of-life. 1152
 Place branding strategies are increasingly 1153
 implemented in Europe to stimulate regional and 1154
 rural development, by valorising and promoting 1155
 territorial assets based on distinctive identities. 1156
 However, it was argued that until now in place 1157
 branding literature, links between place branding, 1158
 embeddedness and endogenous rural 1159
 development have not sufficiently been addressed. 1160
 The comparison of four European cases has 1161
 shown that the branding of rural regions is not 1162
 only a matter of marketing a territory and its 1163
 assets, but can be an endogenous development 1164
 strategy, which should be interpreted in an 1165
 integrative manner, including different 1166
 dimensions of embeddedness. Branding rural 1167
 places does not just incorporate marketing 1168
 products and services or the development of a 1169
 brand, but also the anchorage of actors in a 1170
 particular place and its identity (territorial 1171
 embeddedness) and public-private interactions 1172
 (societal embeddedness), which may result in new 1173

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

1139 Governments in rural areas are challenged to 1162
 1140 develop new strategies to stimulate rural 1163
 1141 development, to support agency on the ground, 1164
 1142 and to ensure welfare and well-being of their 1165
 1143 population, in the context of globalisation and an 1166
 1144 increased worldwide competitive economy. The 1167
 1145 concept of endogenous rural development 1168
 1146 highlights the interaction and co-creation 1169
 1147 between the natural environment, unique and 1170
 1148 distinctive territorial resources and capacities of 1171
 1149 local people. Typical local food and tourism assets 1172
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1174	synergies and partnerships (structural	European policies, seeking for a greater resilience	1222
1175	embeddedness). It is the intertwining and	and competitiveness of rural areas by building on	1223
1176	interdependency of these three dimensions of	territorial capital and promoting cross-sector	1224
1177	embeddedness which supports the success of place	synergies.	1225
1178	branding as development strategy for rural		1226
1179	regions.		1228
1180	The analysis of the four cases has demonstrated	NOTES	1227
1181	that local development outcomes of rural regional	1 http://www.inao.gouv.fr/Les-signes-officiels-	1229
1182	brands are various and reflect endogenous aspects,	de-la-qualite-et-de-l-origine-SIQO/Appellation-	1230
1183	such as the exploitation and control over rural	d-origine-protgee-Appellation-d-origine-con	1231
1184	resources and qualities (agriculture, landscape,	trolee , accessed 11 July 2016.	1232
1185	cultural heritage and place-specific values), local	2 FoodDrinkEurope (2012): Data & Trends of	1233
1186	activities (farming, food processing, small-scale	the European Food and Drink Industry 2012;	1234
1187	tourism) as well as the retention of benefits (price	http://www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/uploads/pub	1235
1188	premium, employment) in the place itself. This	lications_documents/Data Trends_(interactive).	1236
1189	indicates that rural branding in our cases seems to	pdf .	1237
1190	be directed towards the capacities and needs of	3 “Food culture is a major element of the French	1238
1191	local people and development ‘from within’, in	identity and appeal... For many tourists, France	1239
1192	contrast to nation and city branding which often	not only evokes romance but culture in its	1240
1193	focus on the attraction of immigrants, investors	broad sense... France has a special relationship	1241
1194	and tourists.	with food, a unique importance on which it has	1242
1195	Hence, using concepts from rural sociology has	capitalised for years in order to make itself	1243
1196	enabled us to gain new insights into the process	better known, better appreciated and to export	1244
1197	and working mechanisms of rural regional brands	more” (Fouassier, 2012:159).	1245
1198	and their outcomes. Place branding of rural	4 In 2011, about 20 of these regional brands	1246
1199	regions is a collective process fostering	existed in France, i.e. in nearly all of the (former)	1247
1200	cooperation, in which the exploitation and	23 metropolitan regions. Cf. http://	1248
1201	control over local resources is considered as more	www.leparisien.fr/economie/chutier/les-fran	1249
1202	important than competition between areas. These	cais-retrouvent-le-gout-des-marques-regionales-	1250
1203	brands depend on their specific social,	20-06-2011-1499854.php , accessed 11 July	1251
1204	institutional and territorial context. This includes	2016.	1252
1205	their way of financing, governance forms, identity	5 Cf. for Produit en Bretagne: http://lentreprise.	1253
1206	and values as well as cooperation structures. The	lexpress.fr/mieux-que-le-made-in-france-le-pro	1254
1207	relation between rural regional brands and	duit-en-bretagne_1532583.html ; A Taste of	1255
1208	embeddedness has emerged to be reciprocal and	West Cork: http://www.regional-products.eu/	1256
1209	dynamic: on the one hand, rural regional brands	en/best-practise/detail/8/from-community-to-	1257
1210	can stimulate structural, societal and territorial	cluster , accessed 11 July 2016.	1258
1211	embeddedness; on the other hand, the branding	6 Cf. for Sud de France: http://www.sud-de-	1259
1212	process itself is influenced by embeddedness	france.com/marque-sud-de-france/ ; Echt Sch-	1260
1213	expressed via its three dimensions. This leads us to	warzwald: http://www.suedkurier.de/region/	1261
1214	conclude that embeddedness (potentially) can be a	schwarzwald-baar-heuberg/schwarzwald-baar-	1262
1215	driver as well as an outcome of place branding	kreis/Naturpark-setzt-auf-bdquo-echt-Schwarz	1263
1216	processes.	wald-ldquo;art372502,3684199 , accessed 11	1264
1217	Thus, place branding strategies can offer a basis	July 2016.	1265
1218	for rural development plans for their strategic	7 Cf. Jacques Bernard, president of the associa-	1266
1219	positioning in the long-term. This is even more	tion Produit en Bretagne, about the origins of	1267
1220	relevant in the context of the increasing attention	the brand: “The association Produit en	1268
1221	for place-based regional development in		



1269 Bretagne takes shape from 1993 on in order to
 1270 promote employment and sustainable devel-
 1271 opment... At that time, this brand is the only
 1272 regional brand in Europe.” [http://www.utl-](http://www.utl-morlaix.org/2016/01/29/produit-en-bretagne/)
 1273 [morlaix.org/2016/01/29/produit-en-bretagne/](http://www.utl-morlaix.org/2016/01/29/produit-en-bretagne/),
 1274 accessed 11 July 2016 and translated by the
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 1281 [de-la-bre-](http://www.construirelabretagne.bzh/produit-en-bretagne-pour-la-reunifi-de-la-bretagne)
 1282 [tagne](http://www.construirelabretagne.bzh/produit-en-bretagne-pour-la-reunifi-de-la-bretagne), accessed 11 July 2016.
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 1284 Bretagne: [http://www.lemoci.com/media/](http://www.lemoci.com/media/produit-en-bretagne)
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 1286 12 Cf. [www.produitenbretagne.bzh/les-chiffres-](http://www.produitenbretagne.bzh/les-chiffres-cles)
 1287 [cles](http://www.produitenbretagne.bzh/les-chiffres-cles) and [http://www.lemoci.com/media/pro-](http://www.lemoci.com/media/produit-en-bretagne)
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