PhD candidate: Mechthild Irmgard Maria Donner

Graduation date: June 10, 2016

Title: Understanding place brands as collective and territorial development processes

ISBN: 978-94-6257-799-2

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.18174/379598

Promotor: Prof. Cees Leeuwis, Knowledge, Technology and Innovation group, Wageningen University

Promotor: Prof. Fatiha Fort, Montpellier SupAgro - IRC

Co-promotor: Dr Sietze Vellema, Knowledge, Technology and Innovation group, Wageningen University

This research was conducted under the auspices of the Doctoral School of Economics and Management (École Doctorale Économie et Gestion - EDEG) Montpellier, France, and Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS), The Netherlands, and as part of the joint Erasmus Mundus PhD programme AGricultural TRansformation by INnovation (AGTRAIN).

In the context of globalisation, the application of marketing and branding strategies to places has become increasingly popular. The thesis investigates place branding related to local food products and tourism for sustainable territorial development in Mediterranean rural regions (France and Morocco). The research uses an interdisciplinary perspective, by combining marketing and management literature with regional studies and sociology, to analyse how a variety of private and public actors collaborate and collectively shape the processes through which place branding contributes to agribusiness and territorial development. Hence, place brands in regions must be considered as more than mere marketing instruments. Collective place brands are embedded in the strategies of multiple actors pursuing territorial development, can be used in a flexible way, enabling various types of cooperation and governance, and potentially create cross-sector synergies.