

# The Adoption of Residents of The City Brand: A Case Study of Casablanca City

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*Like private organizations, territories have become concerned about their image and their competitiveness. Thus, to improve their attractiveness, cities have invested to enhance their image and create brands to differentiate them from other cities. A territory cannot have a good image if the residents are not satisfied. They constitute the first target to be satisfied and integrated into the development project of the territory. The purpose of this research is to study the determinants of the residents' adoption of the city branding. What will make residents adopt or not the brand of their city? This research will be carried out as part of a study on the case of Casablanca, which has had a city branding since September 2016 to promote the city.*

**Keywords:** city branding, place marketing, satisfaction, membership, consultation, residents

**JEL Classification:** M31

## 1. Introduction

The question of the attractiveness of cities has become a central concern for all city managers. Like private organizations, cities have become concerned about their image and their competitiveness. For a long time, competitiveness has been a peculiarity of companies before spreading to the field of city management. To improve their attractiveness, cities have invested to improve their image and create brands to differentiate them from other cities. Turok (2009) explains that branding is highly sought after by cities to differentiate them in a highly competitive environment for resources, visitors, residents and businesses. To attract this target audience and differentiate one city from another, Braun (2008) explains that city managers are increasingly focusing on establishing the city as a brand (Braun, 2008). City branding is an integrated part of multi-level urban governance (Ye, Björner 2018).

On a marketing plan, one of the major difficulties of cities is the diversity of targets. Thus, they must attract and satisfy investors and tourists. They must also be able to attract talent to benefit from their skills and know-how. Retirees in rich countries are also beginning to be an attractive target because of their purchasing power and the jobs they can create locally. Each of these targets is characterized by a set of needs and expectations of their own. Satisfying the whole is a real challenge for communities. On a marketing plan, a territory can choose its own positioning by focusing its offer on tourism, the attraction of investments or the creative class.

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Cities must give residents a special place because they are an internal target. They constitute the first target to be satisfied and integrated into the development project of the city. The position of the residents is complex because they constitute a target to be satisfied and influence the city's offer, hence the choice of the internal customer or target designation. Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013) explain that residents play three key roles in the territorial brand: through their characteristics and behaviors, as ambassadors of the brand thus providing more credibility to communication partners and as citizens and voters giving political legitimacy to the territorial mark. A city cannot have a good image if the residents are not satisfied. The issue of resident satisfaction is beginning to be mentioned in the literature despite the youth of this field of research. The place marketing is more precisely the city branding is under construction and development. In fact, the first articles on city branding were published in the late nineties. The authors explain that this theoretical field is still underdeveloped and under construction.

The purpose of this research work is the study of the adoption of the residents of the city of Casablanca to the new brand of the city. In September 2016, Casablanca acquired a brand for a better promotion of the city. The objective is to study the degree of the adoption of residents of this new brand and to identify the determinants of this membership. Thus, the first part will be devoted to the presentation of the review of the literature. The methodology will be explained in the second part and the presentation of the results will be the subject of the third part.

## 2. Literature Review

The late nineties saw the birth of a new trend in marketing research. It is the transposition of the principles and concepts of marketing to the promotion and promotion of places. Kotler, Gertner (2002) looked at how a country's image influences attitudes towards the country's products and services and its ability to attract investment, businesses and tourists. They assessed the role of strategic marketing management in promoting the image of the country. Zenker, Eggers and Farsk (2013) argue that today, cities are in strong competition for the attractiveness of companies, tourists and especially talent and that to differentiate cities between them, the marketing place aims to create a Brand and application of marketing principles for identifying competitors and analyzing their brand image.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, research on city-branding has largely developed. Some authors link the development of city branding to the phenomenon of regionalization. Braun (2012) explains that decision-makers use branding to communicate positive images of their city and position their city favorably in the minds of target groups. According to Zenker and Jacobsen (2015), there is a large intersection of branding and regionalization, especially with regard to spatiality. Regionalization has created a form of competition between regions at the national and local levels, prompting communities to look for differentiating factors.

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination thereof, for the purpose of identifying the goods or services of a seller or group of sellers and differentiate them from competitors". Regarding the city brand Raubo (2010) defines it as the planning and execution of the entire process of creating, managing and / or improving the perceptions of current and potential customers of a city and other city stakeholders. A city brand is a network of associations formed in the mind of the consumer, and those who matter for the future of the place are developed from the visual, verbal and behavioral expression of a place Braun et.al. (2013). Anholt (2010) discusses the process of constructing a brand for a place based on the identity of the place and the formation of a positive image in the minds of the stakeholders.

Anholt and Hildreth (2005) argue that a city brand is essentially "nothing more and nothing less than the good name of something that is offered to the public. Turock (2009) explains that the development of a city brand is more difficult than product brand because of the complex and contradictory qualities of the cities. Thus, according to Ooi and Stoeber (2010), any discussion of the application of the brand to places is also very complex and must go beyond the theories of branding the product or the company. Moreover, Kavaratzis (2004) explains that the application of general marketing principles to cities posed a number of difficulties related to the specificities of the territories. Among these difficulties, he cites the ignorance of marketing specialists of territorial specificities and the lack of knowledge of administrative or territorial officials of marketing principles. For Anholt (2010), a brand cannot be created for a country (or city or region) in the same way as for a product of a company. Dinnie (2004) explains that the city brand is distinguished from the trademark by a set of characteristics. It highlights the multidimensional character of the city brand image by integrating the historical and cultural dimensions of the constitution of nations and their impact on the city brand image. It argues that the determinants of perceptions of the image in the context of the city branding are of cultural, social and political origin.

Internationally, there is a proliferation of initiatives from cities or regions to build a brand. Initially, the phenomenon was exclusively reserved for large metropolises before spreading to more average and less wealthy cities. This brings us to the question of a city's ability to create a city brand, Dinnie (2011) explains that in the same way as for a product, one must set the territorial brand on the physical elements. The physical elements of a territorial brand represent the unique and differentiated identity of the city, the traditional monuments and the modern architecture, the unique characteristics and its place of recent development as well as the tourism which can be the mark of the city.

Successful countries have been able to put in place effective systems and systematic methods to develop and project themselves as brands. Their long-term success, according to Baker (2009), depends on the aligned participation of key group stakeholders. Several researches highlight the role of the stakeholders in the success of this type of projects: residents, civil society and companies located in the city. This multitude of stakeholders is one of the first challenges. Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2010) highlight the importance of the role of residents in the political legitimization of the city brand. Braun (2017) explains that the city brand does not only depend on government actions and communications, but also and especially on the actions and communication of many private organizations, public bodies, residents and visitors. For Klijn and Koppenjan (2016), branding is a question of governance in a network of actors, depending on the contribution of stakeholders. The city brand must imperatively be accepted and adopted by the residents. This adoption constitutes a condition and a first step towards the success of the said brand. Their integration into the branding process is essential. Moreover, Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) argue that stakeholder management is a major imperative in city branding.

The literature talks about the adoption of the city brand, which is the result of the integration of residents in the development project. According to Zumbo-Lebrument, the permanent adhesion of citizens to the brand project of a territory is based on the ability to implement a territorial marketing approach structured around participatory devices. The adoption of the brand by residents improves the reputation of the city. This adoption depends on the acceptance of the new brand by residents and its ability to reflect the reality of the city as lived by residents. Moreover, for Kemp et al. (2012), greater involvement of the brand development process should lead stakeholders to have more knowledge and influence on branding, which should lead to a stronger brand connection and a sense of ownership. ownership of the brand, thus increasing the adoption of the brand among stakeholders. One of the consequences of this adoption is reflected in the role of residents as ambassadors of their city. The literature speaks of the formal ambassadors, that is to say the residents who are formally chosen to become ambassadors of their cities: the athletes, the artists ... etc. Residents are always ambassadors of their cities and their quality of life, satisfaction, adoption of the city brand are all conditions for the good image of the city.

The city of Casablanca is the largest in Morocco with an area of 1200 km and 70km of coastline. The population of the city is estimated at 4.75 million, of which 31% of the inhabitants are under 15 years old. It is considered as the economic capital of the country with 46% of the active population of Morocco, 30% of the national GDP and a concentration of 48% of investments. The importance of this city can be attributed also to its port area which is the first of the country with 60% of the country's trade. Casablanca is considered the country's leading financial center with 30% of the banking network and a concentration of head offices of the country's main banks. Moreover, the country has a great ambition to make it an international financial hub. In this sense, a set of actions and development projects of the city has emerged.

Casablanca's problem is that it's a two-tier city. On the one hand, a real desire for development with very ambitious projects and achievements. On the other hand, the city has many challenges to overcome. Thus, it is still full of slums and poor neighborhoods that are the result of an uncontrolled rural exodus. Thus, 12% of the inhabitants of the city live in dwellings representing 0.6% of the total surface area. The city is also home to 72,000 households in poor housing in slums. It has a lot of challenges in terms of infrastructure knowing for example that 23% of residents are still not supplied with drinking water and that the wastewater treatment rate is barely 45%.

Despite this reality, Morocco wants to strengthen the attractiveness of its economic capital. Several projects have been launched to improve transport, infrastructure and support for foreign investment. The city has realized the value of a marketing approach and a city brand to achieve its goals. In this respect, the city has decided to build a brand allowing it to differentiate itself from other cities nationally and internationally. The purpose of this work is to study the adoption of residents of this new brand. The objective is to analyze the determinants of the adoption of the residents of the city brand.

### 3. Methodology

As we have explained above, the objective of this paper is to study the adoption of the residents of the city of Casablanca of the new brand of the city and to identify the determinants of this adoption. The data used was collected through a survey of 403 Casablancais. The survey was conducted face-to-face between January and March 2017. The study was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire.

**Adoption of the city brand:** The adoption of the residents of the city brand expresses their degree of acceptance and identification to the city brand. The city branding literature emphasizes the role of resident involvement for the success of the city brand. Some researchers talk about connecting residents with the brand. They explain that this brand does not only depend on the actions of government communication, but also and especially the actions and the communication of many private organizations, governmental organizations, residents and visitors.

**Residents' consultation:** The city brand is the use of the marketing place to sell a city to current and potential residents as a place of life and to businesses as a place to invest. The integration of residents in the city brand process is essential for the success of the process. Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2010) explain that residents are an internal target exercising political power to legitimize the brand. Their consultation for the development increases the chances of their acceptance of the mark. Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) and Csaba (2005) emphasize that the city brand is characterized by multiple identities and interests that can lead to a lack of unity to build a strong brand.

**Residents' satisfaction:** The perception of the city brand internally depends on the level of satisfaction of the residents. By transposing marketing principles, the brand image depends on the quality of the product and the level of consumer satisfaction. Literature links the satisfaction of the residents of a city to the satisfaction of the quality of public services. Thus, Ryzin et al (2004) explains that the quality of public services is the main determinant of the satisfaction of residents. He explains that the quality of a number of public services such as safety, quality of schools, recreation, quality of infrastructure determine the satisfaction of residents.

**Representativeness of the Casablanca identity logo:** The name and the logo constitute the visible elements of the brand. They play an important role in the success of the brand. The choice of the brand name is more complicated for a territory because it already has a name. Govers (2013) explains that an attractive logo or brand name is not enough to improve the attractiveness of a territory. He argues that Branding is the management of brand reputation and equity management. He explains that several politicians and practitioners think that the identification of a city brand is the definition of logos or slogans whereas it is rather the identification of what makes a territory distinct. The choice of logos must be very careful because it is the visual identity and sound of a territory that already has an identity. The starting point is therefore this identity which must be studied, defined and worked on. This identity can form the basis of branding work through the use of storytelling to communicate that identity. The attitude of the residents towards the brand depends on the logo's ability to represent that identity. The representativeness of a city brand identity determines its ability to represent residents.

**The contribution of the new brand to improve the image of Casablanca:** The goal of the brand is to promote the city and create a positive image. Moreover, the role of the brand has shifted from a legal role of protection, guarantee and authentication to a role of value creation. The role of the brand is therefore to create value around a distinct territorial offer. The introduction of this variable in our study is to probe the perception of residents of the brand's ability to create value and improve the image of the city of Casablanca.

To study the relationship of the determinants of the adoption of the city brand we proceeded to a logistic regression. The data collected by our survey are of a qualitative nature. Our dependent variable "Adoption of the city brand" takes two forms: 1 = if the individual does not adopt the city brand and 2 = if the individual adopts the city brand.

The nature of our variables requires the use of qualitative econometrics and the use of binomial qualitative variables models. Our model seeks to explain our dependent variable Y "adoption of the Casablanca brand" which is binary (yes, no) by a set of binary qualitative variables, logistic regression finds all meaning.

### 4. Results

According to the descriptive statistics, 61.5% of the people interviewed do not adopt and do not adhere to the new brand *wecasablanca* project against 34.7% who declare joining the project and adopting the new brand city. 51.5% of those who do not join are men and 48.5% are women. These results show that the gender of the interviewees does not influence the adoption of the city brand.

Regarding the consultation, 88.6% of respondents say they have not been consulted by the city for the choice of brand logo. 55.6% think that the logo does not represent the identity of casablancais. 61% of respondents believe that the brand could help improve the image of the city. With regard to public services, 69.5% say they are dissatisfied with public services in the city of Casablanca. The questionnaire explained that public services include security, infrastructure, public transport, education and recreation.

**Table 1. Variables in the equation**

	A	E.S.	Wald	ddl	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 0 Constant	,590	,110	28,708	1	,000	1,805

Table 1 shows that our model with just the constant is a statistically significant predictor of the result ( $p < 0.001$ ). The model specification test (Table 3 and Table 4) allows us to verify that the new model (with the explanatory variables included) is an improvement over the base model. We deduce that the new model is an improvement over the base model (chi-squared = 134.5,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < .000$ ) so our new model is significantly better. Note that the -2LL value of our model is (333, 13) and we notice a decrease in the -2LL value compared to the null model. The second table allows us to deduce that our model has a better fit than the null model.

**Table 2. Model Specification Tests**

		Khi-Chi-deux	ddl	Sig.
Step 1	Step	134,572	6	,000
	Bloc	134,572	6	,000
	model	134,572	6	,000

**Table 3. Summary of models**

Step	-2log likelihood	R-two of Cox & Snell	R-two of Nagelkerke
1	333,137 <sup>a</sup>	,313	,429

a. at. The estimate was interrupted at iteration number 6 because the parameter estimates changed by less than, .001..

For the Hosmer-Lemeshow test of quality of fit suggests that the model is well suited to the data,  $p = 0.447 (> 0.05)$ .

**Table 4. Test of Hosmer-Lemeshow**

Step	Khi-Chi-Two	ddl	Sig.
1	7,861	8	,447

**Table 5. Variables in the equation**

	A	E.S.	Wald	ddl	Sig.	Exp(B)	IC pour Exp(B) 95%	
							Inferior	Superior
Image	-2,375	,394	36,382	1	,000	,093	,043	,201
representation	-1,170	,275	18,084	1	,000	,310	,181	,532
Consultation	-1,255	,462	7,380	1	,007	,285	,115	,705
P. services	-1,049	,294	12,697	1	,000	,350	,197	,624
Sex	,100	,263	,145	1	,703	1,105	,660	1,851
Vote	,258	,306	,712	1	,399	1,295	,711	2,359
Constant	3,171	,484	42,912	1	,000	23,831		

The results of our model show that citizens' image of the city, the representation of the city's identity logo and the satisfaction of public services influence residents' adoption of the new brand. On the other hand, other variables such as consultation (Sig 0.07), sex of respondents (Sig 0.703) and voting (Sig 0.399) do not influence the adoption by residents of the city brand.

**The satisfaction of public services** is a determinant of residents' decision to stay in the city and their trust in local authorities (Ryzin et al (2004), Belkadi (2017)). The satisfaction of the public services is a determinant of the adoption of the city brand. The Citizen Satisfaction Index (CSI) is an important independent factor that – alongside well-known measurements like place attachment or place brand attitude – helps to measure success in terms of the social functioning of a place (Zenker, Rutter 2014). Thus, in the same way that the quality of the products conditions and strengthens the brand image, the quality of the public services in a city conditions the adherence and the adoption of the brand by the residents. This brings us back to saying that improving the quality of services offered by a city is a prerequisite for any city branding project.

**The representation of the city's brand of local identity** is a determinant of the adoption of the city brand because the identity of a city is the result of an interconnection between social and human characteristics and physical characteristics and specials of the city. Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace and Hess, (2007) define the identity of a city as a composition of a social and personal identity. The city brand must therefore represent the local identity either at the level of the logo, the promise or the musical signature that sometimes accompanies the logo. Residents must be able to identify with the brand of their cities or regions. Hence the interest of basing the new brand on elements of local identity.

The perception of the residents of the interest of the brand in improving **the image** of the city that we summarized by the variable image influences the adoption of the city brand. The adoption and adherence to the city brand will be even greater than the individual is convinced of the interest of the brand in improving the image of the city.

**Sex** does not influence the adoption of the city brand. Thus, being a woman or a man does not influence the probability of adoption of the city brand. We introduced the Vote variable as a factor in the residents' involvement in the city's management affairs. The results show that whether or not to vote in elections has no impact on the adoption of the city brand. The results show that adherence to the territorial brand is not stronger in individuals who vote in relation to individuals who do not vote.

With respect to **residents' consultation**, several studies emphasize the need to open the branding project to the participation of residents. The city brand development process must take into account the tangible and intangible attributes and values of the different actors making up the territory (Tasci and Kozak (2006)). At the level of our model, we can deduce that the consultation of the population does not necessarily influence the adoption of the city brand. Moreover, the city of Casablanca organized several think tanks and focus groups before the development of the brand. But this participation remained limited and most Casablangans had not heard of the project before the publication of the brand by the city.

## 5. Conclusion

The place marketing today affects both developing countries and rich countries. There is a universal awareness of the interest of creating brands to promote the attractiveness and development of places. Several cities and regions have developed their own brands to differentiate themselves from competing metropolises and succeed in attracting tourists, investors and the creative class. But places are characterized by the multiplicity of stakeholders (Weible (2006), Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan (2010), Garcia, Gomez and Molina (2012)).

Residents must accept the city brand. A city brand that is not accepted internally can not enhance the city externally. The acceptance of the brand is a first step in the involvement of residents. But this involvement can go further since residents can be ambassadors for the brand. Thus, Kavartzis and Zenker (2010) explain that residents can play a big role in the territorial brand process as long as they are an internal target and an integral part of the city brand, they have the power to influence policy in determining policies and initiatives to legitimize city branding.

The results of this research lead us to the following conclusion: Resident satisfaction is essential. The implication of this result for the territory is that place marketing can not be considered without the prior satisfaction of the residents. Cities and regions must start with the implementation of public services and quality public management before thinking about a marketing approach.

In this research, we analyzed the determinants of adoption by residents of the city brand. The results show that the adoption of the brand is influenced by the level of satisfaction of residents with the quality of public services, the brand's ability to represent local identity. These results lead us to the conclusion that cities must, before embarking on branding projects, begin by improving the quality of services offered to residents to improve the quality of life and enhance resident satisfaction. Regarding the city brand, it must lie on elements of local identity for it to be accepted by residents. Finally, a consultation process should be launched to establish the city brand on an identity basis and to ensure the acceptance of the residents of this brand. An unaccepted brand internally could hardly lead to a valuation of the city to external targets. The territories have become very concerned about their competitiveness which makes the implication, the integration and the satisfaction of the inhabitants a prior necessity to any reflection on the attractiveness.

The results of this research come consolidate the results of other research like that of Zenker and Rutter (2014), Nathaniel, Youcheng (2017) and Gómez, Fernández, Molina, Arandawho (2018) focus on the satisfaction of residents in the success of the brand place.

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