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Territorial Communication as a Lever for Regional Attractiveness: An Exploratory Study in Morocco

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Abstract

In Morocco's context of advanced regionalization, territorial authorities (cities, regions, municipalities) are required to develop appropriate and effective communication strategies to strengthen their economic attractiveness (for investors and firms), showcase their heritage and assets (tourism, culture, quality of life), and enhance their visibility amid national and international competition. Accordingly, the central question of this research concerns how local actors mobilize communication to reinforce the image and competitiveness of the Maarif district (Casablanca–Settat region), a modern economic hub facing visibility challenges.

Drawing on theories of place marketing and collaborative governance, we adopted a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews with elected officials and communications managers, complemented by an analysis of the district's communication materials. Our findings show that Maarif's territorial identity is articulated around economic dynamism and modernity, yet constrained by budgetary limitations and a heavy reliance on social media. The study also underscores the importance of citizen participation and offers context-sensitive recommendations to optimize the communication strategy in line with local cultural specificities, thereby providing avenues for enhancing regional attractiveness in Morocco.

Keywords: Advanced regionalization, territorial communication, regional attractiveness, place marketing, Casablanca–Settat region.

Introduction

Since the launch of the advanced regionalization process in 2011, this policy orientation has established itself as a central strategic lever in Morocco's development agenda. It rests on a progressive and structured devolution of competences to territorial authorities, with the objective of stimulating integrated regional development economic, social, and cultural. In this context, regions are expected to assume a driving role in energizing their territories, notably by attracting investment, creating employment opportunities, and consolidating a distinctive image and identity. In this regard, territorial communication emerges as an essential strategic vector: it not only showcases regional resources and potential, but also strengthens the visibility and attractiveness of territories among diverse target audiences, citizens, investors, and visitors.

Territorial communication lies at the heart of a broader place/territorial marketing strategy aimed at enhancing a territory's image by highlighting its specificities and differentiating assets. It relies on the active involvement of local stakeholders, particularly elected officials and those responsible for institutional communication, in designing instruments intended to reinforce territorial attractiveness. This communicative dynamic thus contributes to building a competitive territorial identity capable of appealing to investors, residents, and visitors alike.

Crucially, territorial communication goes beyond a purely promotional function. It also entails managing public perceptions, constructing a coherent and robust local identity, and networking economic and social actors. As such, it stands as a decisive instrument for consolidating regional attractiveness, particularly in a context of heightened inter-territorial rivalry.

The Casablanca–Settat region, endowed with substantial economic and demographic potential has emerged as a strategic industrial and commercial hub in Morocco. Yet this dynamism is accompanied by major structural challenges, including urban congestion, environmental degradation, and intensifying interregional competition. In this context, the establishment of an effective territorial communication system appears imperative, insofar as it would project a positive, coherent, and attractive image of the region both to external stakeholders, especially investors and to local populations.

It is within this perspective that the present study positions itself, seeking to address the following research question:

How does territorial communication contribute to strengthening the attractiveness of the Casablanca–Settat region?

More specifically, the study focuses on the Maarif district, an emblematic urban area of Casablanca. It aims to explore the communication strategies implemented and to apprehend how they are perceived by elected officials and institutional actors in charge of territorial communication. To this end, we adopt a qualitative methodology based on interviews with key actors in Maarif, complemented by an analysis of the district's communication materials.

To answer this question, the first section reviews the main theoretical approaches that help delineate the core concepts of territorial communication and regional attractiveness. The second section presents the empirical results drawn from interviews conducted with the institutional actors involved, notably elected officials and communication managers.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Territorial Communication and Regional Attractiveness

Territorial communication encompasses all actions undertaken by a territory to promote its image, showcase its distinctive resources, and strengthen its attractiveness among diverse target audiences including residents, investors, tourists, and institutions. According to Houllier-Guibert (2012), its purpose is to « promote the territory by highlighting the personality, know-how, and resources that underpin its attractiveness and shape its image ». This definition underscores the centrality of leveraging local specificities in building a positive and attractive image.

From this perspective, territorial communication is increasingly emerging as a major strategic lever for local authorities, particularly in Morocco's context of advanced regionalization. This institutional reform grounded in a broader transfer of competences to the regions, grants them expanded autonomy in economic, social, and cultural development, thereby reinforcing their responsibility to valorize their territories.

Regional attractiveness may be defined as a territory's capacity to attract and retain human, economic, and cultural resources. It results from a constellation of factors such as quality of life, infrastructure, economic dynamism, accessibility, and the territory's perceived image. In their study, Alaux et al. (2015) emphasize that « the territorial marketing of small and medium-sized territories rests on identity, image, and relationships », highlighting that attractiveness does not reside solely in a territory's material offer but also depends on its ability to convey a positive, distinctive, and coherent image that stands out in a competitive environment.

In the Moroccan context, advanced regionalization introduces new challenges and opportunities for local authorities in the realm of territorial communication. Regions are now called upon to play a proactive role in showcasing their potential in order to attract investment, energize the tourism sector, and enhance residents' quality of life. As Eshuis and Edwards (2013) point out, an effective territorial communication strategy must not only faithfully reflect the territory's identity but also be designed with adaptability in mind, in response to shifts in the socio-economic environment.

1.2. Territorial Marketing: A strategy for attractiveness and differentiation

Territorial marketing is a strategic approach that transposes the fundamental principles of marketing to the realm of territories. The aim is no longer simply to promote a product or service, but to design a comprehensive territorial offer capable of responding in differentiated ways to the expectations of target audiences residents, investors, tourists, and institutional partners. In this vein, Vuignier (2017) argues that territorial marketing seeks to « differentiate the territory by creating a unique and attractive identity, » thereby underscoring the importance of a distinctive positioning in a context of intense interterritorial competition.

At the heart of this dynamic lies territorial branding, the process through which a territory constructs its own brand. The territorial brand becomes a strategic instrument of differentiation, enabling a city or region to strengthen its visibility and attractiveness within a competitive environment where territories vie to attract human, economic, and symbolic resources.

Building a territorial brand presupposes the definition of a strong, coherent, and shared identity that reflects the territory's specific assets heritage, natural environment, cultural practices, and social values. A well-conceived brand enhances positive perceptions of the territory, fostering both its attractiveness and competitiveness. In this logic, scholars concur that brand construction must take into account the expectations and perceptions of different target audiences. Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) suggest that territorial branding is an interactive process in which a territory's identity and image evolve through exchanges between local actors and target publics.

In the Moroccan context, this approach is particularly pertinent, as territorial authorities are actively engaged in initiatives to valorize their cultural and historical resources with the aim of attracting high value-added tourism and stimulating foreign investment.

Moreover, the success of a territorial branding process rests on the coherence of the messages conveyed and on the capacity of actors to coordinate their efforts and disseminate a homogeneous and attractive image. Boisen et al. (2011) emphasize the need for strategic coordination among actors to ensure alignment of actions and messages. Consequently, territorial marketing cannot be reduced to one-off promotional activity; it forms part of a long-term strategy oriented toward the progressive construction of durable territorial notoriety at both national and international scales.

1.3. Collaborative Governance and Territorial Marketing

Within territorial marketing, collaborative governance rests on the active involvement of local stakeholders in decision-making processes. It mobilizes a heterogeneous set of actors citizens, elected officials, economic players, associations around a collaborative logic of co-constructing communication strategies. This participatory approach proceeds from the conviction that the success of a territorial communication strategy largely depends on collective ownership and stakeholder engagement. In this regard, Eshuis and Klijn (2012) argue that territorial marketing exhibits the characteristics of a governance process, in which the effective participation of stakeholders is indispensable to ensure the legitimacy, relevance, and effectiveness of the actions undertaken.

Citizen participation in territorial marketing confers legitimacy and ownership on local initiatives. It enables residents to identify with development projects, to contribute to defining the territory's image, and to strengthen their sense of belonging. Shared governance thus fosters a collective vision of the territory in which citizens are no longer confined to a passive role as beneficiaries but become fully engaged actors in the co-construction and promotion of their territory. In this perspective, Kooiman (2003) emphasizes that stakeholder participation constitutes a fundamental lever for establishing effective collaborative governance, as it consolidates transparency, reinforces mutual trust, and promotes cooperation among the various actors.

In the context of Morocco's advanced regionalization, shared governance assumes particular importance insofar as it accommodates local specificities while fostering the direct involvement of communities in the promotion and development of their region. This participatory approach facilitates the identification of citizens' real needs an essential condition for formulating territorial communication strategies that are both pertinent and adapted to on-the-ground

realities. Shared governance therefore emerges as a key factor of sustainability and effectiveness in steering territorial communication actions.

1.4. Digital Communication Strategies for Territories

With the rise of digital technologies and social media, territorial communication strategies have undergone a profound transformation, now integrating high-performance digital tools. These instruments enable territories to disseminate their messages instantly and broadly, while cultivating an interactive and personalized relationship with diverse audiences.

In this regard, Kotler and Gertner (2002) note that digital communication has profoundly reshaped how territories position themselves on the international stage, facilitating the construction of a more accessible, modern, and attractive image.

Digital platforms, particularly social media, make it possible to establish two-way communication, fostering user engagement and a sense of proximity. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasize that these tools strengthen belonging by establishing continuous, contextualized interactions between the territory and its target audiences. Within a territorial communication strategy, this interactivity is a valuable lever for refining messages, gathering real-time feedback, and adapting actions agilely to expressed expectations.

Beyond social media, territorial websites play a central role in the digital strategy. A well-designed website serves as a showcase for the territory, highlighting its assets, heritage, and economic opportunities. Content must be optimized for search engines (SEO) to maximize visibility. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), an effective SEO strategy attracts qualified traffic to the site, thereby increasing the likelihood of drawing visitors and potential investors. Finally, digital communication enables territories to adapt rapidly to trends and crises. For example, during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, territories used social media to inform and reassure their audiences, demonstrating responsiveness and adaptive capacity. Sigala (2020) argues that digital communication is a key tool for territories seeking to remain attractive and resilient in the face of change.

1.5. Evaluating the Performance of Territorial Communication Campaigns

Performance evaluation is a crucial component for optimizing territorial communication strategies. In a context where territories must position themselves competitively, it is essential for managers to monitor campaign impact in order to maximize effectiveness and better meet the expectations of target audiences. According to Grönroos and Ravald (2011), the evaluation of communication campaigns should consider not only tangible outcomes, such as increases in visits or investment, but also more qualitative indicators, such as audience satisfaction and perceptions.

The principal performance indicators used to assess territorial communication campaigns include reach (audience size), engagement (interactions), sentiment (positive or negative perception), and the conversion rate (concrete actions by target audiences, such as visits or investment). According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), these indicators enable managers to gauge message visibility, audience engagement, and the actual impact of campaigns on behavior.

1.6. Comparative Case Studies in Territorial Communication

The table below presents three case studies of territorial communication strategies, namely the Oriental region in Morocco, the « Auvergne Nouveau Monde » brand in France, and the city of Rennes in France. These examples offer diverse perspectives on the implementation of territorial communication in varied contexts, highlighting the objectives pursued, the actions undertaken, and the results achieved. This presentation aims to derive recommendations for strengthening the communication strategy of the Maarif district, while taking into account local and cultural specificities.

Table 1. Summary of Comparative Case Studies

Country	Case Study	Main Objectives	Communication Actions	Lessons and Practical Implications
Maroc	Oriental Region, Morocco ¹	Strengthen the region's attractiveness to stimulate socioeconomic development. Showcase and enhance local human and natural resources.	Implementation of major, structuring projects for territorial promotion. Use of messaging that showcases regional identity.	Importance of communication rooted in local culture. Highlighting and leveraging local resources contributes to authentic and coherent attractiveness.
France	« Auvergne Nouveau Monde » brand ²	Develop a strong brand identity to attract investors and tourists.	Creation of a territorial brand with a distinctive visual identity. Use of multichannel promotional campaigns.	The importance of a coherent brand identity for differentiation. Visual symbols anchor the territory in the minds of target audiences.
France	Ville de Rennes ³	Strengthen the city's image by integrating sustainability and citizen participation.	Sustainability initiatives, participatory campaigns, and the integration of residents into decision-making.	Citizen participation strengthens the legitimacy of actions and projects the image of an open, sustainable city, actively involving residents in promotion.

Source : auteurs

¹ Région de l'Oriental. *Stratégie de communication territoriale*. IOSR Journals, 10(5). <https://www.iosrjournals.org>

² Auvergne Nouveau Monde. *Gestion et management public* (vol. 3). <https://shs.cairn.info>.

³ Ville de Rennes. *Revue Communiquer*. <https://journals.openedition.org/communiquer/1848>

The case studies analyzed summarized in the table above, show the diversity of approaches and territorial communication strategies adopted by different territories to strengthen their attractiveness and promote their identity. The Oriental Region in Morocco, the « Auvergne Nouveau Monde » brand in France, and the city of Rennes, also in France, offer varied and instructive examples.

- **Oriental Region, Morocco:** This region has implemented a territorial communication strategy aimed at strengthening its attractiveness. Structuring projects have been launched to ensure the region's socioeconomic takeoff by leveraging its human and natural resources.
- **« Auvergne Nouveau Monde » brand, France:** this initiative illustrates the creation of a territorial brand to promote Auvergne. It relies on a strong identity and coherent communication to attract investors and tourists.
- **City of Rennes, France:** Rennes has developed a territorial communication approach that integrates the dimensions of sustainable development and citizen participation, thereby reinforcing its image and attractiveness.

These case studies demonstrate the importance of territorial communication strategies adapted to local specificities and to the expectations of target audiences. Whether through valorizing local resources, building a strong place brand, or encouraging citizen participation, each example shows how well-designed territorial communication can reinforce a territory's attractiveness. These lessons offer concrete avenues for the Maarif district, which could incorporate such practices to develop a more coherent communication strategy that accounts for its cultural particularities and socioeconomic context.

3. Methodology

The study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach aimed at capturing, in situ, local actors' perceptions and practices regarding territorial communication and their links with attractiveness. This choice is justified by the need to grasp contextualized, culturally situated phenomena that are difficult to reduce to standardized metrics. The qualitative approach thus produces rich data on logics of action, trade-offs, and the coherence of the messages conveyed by local institutions.

2.1. Research Setting

The study focuses on the Maarif district (Casablanca–Settat), selected for its symbolic and economic weight within the metropolitan area, the diversity of its publics (residents, businesses, visitors), and the density of its communication instruments. The single-case design enables a fine-grained analysis of communication mechanisms in a Moroccan urban context and of the local conditions under which attractiveness is constructed.

2.2. Data Sources and Collection

- Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview guide organized data collection around key themes: communication objectives and target audiences; tools and channels deployed; challenges encountered; and perceptions of territorial attractiveness and identity. The study population comprised local elected officials and the head of communications. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, was conducted in person, recorded with informed consent, and fully transcribed.

- 2.3.2. Documentary Analysis

The interviews were complemented by an analysis of communication materials produced by the arrondissement official releases, social media posts, and relevant digital supports. The assessment focused on key messages, target audiences, style, and coherence with the territory's image, in order to evaluate the effective contribution of these materials to the attractiveness and reputation of Maarif.

2.4. Data Analysis Method

Data were processed through a manual thematic analysis: (1) exploratory reading of transcripts and the documentary corpus, (2) initial open coding, (3) aggregation into coherent themes and subthemes, (4) linkage of themes to the conceptual framework (territorial communication, tool mix, governance/participation), and (5) synthesis of observed regularities and singularities. This procedure structured the results around categories such as communication strategies and tools, perceived attractiveness, and operational challenges.

To strengthen validity, triangulation was employed by systematically cross-checking interview verbatim with documentary traces. This approach deepened our understanding of the arrondissement of Maarif's territorial communication practices and helped identify potential gaps between local actors' intentions and messages as perceived by the public.

3.Results

This section presents the findings from interviews conducted with local elected officials and the head of communications for the Maarif district. The analysis of their responses brings to light several core themes that illustrate the practices, perceptions, and challenges associated with territorial communication in this dynamic urban context.

The table below provides a synthesis of the results obtained from interviews with elected officials and the communications lead of the Maarif district. These results are grouped into five main themes: (1) communication strategies and objectives, (2) tools and channels employed, (3) challenges encountered, (4) perceptions of attractiveness and territorial identity, and (5) the impact of communication actions on citizens. This format enables concise comparison and structuring of the study's key observations, thereby facilitating data interpretation and their integration into the theoretical framework of territorial communication.

Table 3. Result Areas and Recommendations from the Interviews

Axis	Main Observations	Recommendations
Strategy and Objectives	<p>Promote Maarif's image as a hub of economic and cultural attractiveness.</p> <p>Highlight the district's assets, such as its commercial dynamism and centrality.</p> <p>Strengthen its territorial identity as a symbol of modernity and cultural diversity within Casablanca.</p>	<p>Consolidate positioning by showcasing concrete examples of economic and cultural success.</p> <p>Develop targeted campaigns for each specific asset.</p>
Tools and Channels Used	<p>Predominant use of social media to reach broad audiences, complemented by local awareness campaigns for direct engagement and public signage to reinforce the visibility of official messages.</p>	<p>Diversify communication channels by integrating digital platforms and local media for more comprehensive coverage.</p>
Challenges Encountered	<p>Budgetary and staffing constraints hindering the diversity and scale of communication initiatives.</p> <p>The influence of stereotypes and preconceived notions about Maarif, complicating efforts to convey a positive and innovative image.</p>	<p>Prioritize initiatives according to their potential impact.</p> <p>Seek private partnerships to secure additional resources and overcome constraints.</p>
Perception of Attractiveness	<p>Positioning Maarif as a territory that balances tradition and modernity.</p> <p>Aspiring to be recognized for economic dynamism while remaining welcoming.</p> <p>High urbanization poses challenges to this vision of a quality living environment for all.</p>	<p>Adopt differentiated communication actions: promote modernity to investors and highlight quality of life for residents.</p>
Impact on Citizens	<p>Measured but meaningful citizen engagement, especially via social media.</p> <p>Need to strengthen trust and commitment to local projects.</p> <p>Importance of direct interactions to better gauge expectations and improve the district's image.</p>	<p>Organize community events to involve citizens more actively.</p> <p>Intensify direct interactions through interactive platforms.</p>

Source : auteurs

The results table highlights the main axes of territorial communication in the Maarif district, as well as associated challenges and opportunities. In terms of strategy and objectives, emphasis is placed on promoting Maarif as an economic and cultural hub, with a territorial identity that combines modernity and diversity. The recommendations suggest consolidating this positioning through concrete examples and targeted campaigns in order to better showcase local achievements.

The tools and channels employed reveal a reliance on social media, although diversifying toward other digital platforms and local media is essential to reach a broader audience and complement message reach. The challenges identified point to resource constraints and the impact of stereotypes on perceptions of Maarif, indicating the need to prioritize actions and seek partnerships to optimize resources. Regarding perceptions of attractiveness, efforts to balance tradition and modernity call for a differentiated approach, adapting messages to the specific expectations of residents and investors.

Finally, the impact on citizens shows moderate engagement via social media but signals a greater need for direct interactions to build trust and support for local projects. The recommendations underscore the importance of organizing community events and intensifying exchanges through interactive platforms to foster active citizen participation and refine the district's positive image.

4. Discussion

This section compares the findings from the Maarif district with the theories and concepts examined in the literature review. It highlights the similarities and differences observed in relation to territorial communication practices and discusses their implications for managing regional attractiveness. Finally, it addresses cultural and regional specificities specific to the Moroccan context and their influence on communication strategy.

4.1. Situating the Findings in the Literature: Links between Brand Image and Territorial Attractiveness

Territorial communication, as explained by Houllier-Guibert (2012) and Alaux et al. (2015), rests on promoting a coherent image that showcases local resources and know-how to strengthen a territory's attractiveness. In the Maarif district, this logic is reflected in efforts to project an image of modernity and economic dynamism. These findings are consistent with Kavaratzis (2004), who underscores the importance of a strong territorial identity for capturing target audiences' attention.

However, Maarif's communication strategy appears partly constrained by a limited budget and a reliance on social media, whereas the literature recommends a more integrated approach. Studies by Kotler and Gertner (2002) indicate that building a territorial brand image requires sufficient resources and effective coordination across communication channels to construct a robust reputation. This gap highlights the challenges faced by territories with limited means, which struggle to fully apply the theoretical principles of territorial branding.

4.2. Digital Communication Strategies and Territorial Marketing

The use of social media and digital tools is an essential component of Maarif's territorial communication, aligning with Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) recommendations on the importance of digital communication. Digital channels enable direct interaction with residents and potential visitors, providing flexibility to adapt messages in response to feedback. However, the results indicate that Maarif's digital strategy relies mainly on a limited number of platforms, in contrast to the diversified practices recommended by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who advocate website optimization and the use of SEO to maximize online visibility.

This limitation in the use of digital tools suggests that, despite technological advances, some territories have yet to fully exploit the potential of digital. Maarif's managers could benefit from broadening their digital strategy to include multichannel campaigns and improved content optimization, in order to enhance the territory's attractiveness and visibility.

4.3. Shared Governance, Citizen Participation, and Storytelling

The theories of shared governance and citizen participation discussed by Eshuis and Klijn (2012) are partially observable in the context of Maarif, where efforts are made to involve residents in certain communication initiatives. However, this participation appears limited and could be strengthened to meet citizens' expectations and increase their engagement. The literature underscores that active resident participation enhances the legitimacy of communication actions and contributes to a positive image of the territory. By more extensively involving residents in promotional projects, Maarif could foster a more authentic and durable brand image.

Moreover, territorial storytelling which aims to reinforce local identity by crafting narratives around the territory's particularities, could be more fully integrated into Maarif's communication strategy. Storytelling not only conveys the territory's values but also forges an emotional connection with audiences. In the Moroccan context, where oral tradition and narratives are deeply rooted in the culture, this approach could provide considerable added value.

4.4. Regional and Cultural Specificities: The Importance of the Moroccan Context

In light of the preceding findings, it is essential to consider the cultural and regional particularities that shape the perception and reception of territorial communication in Morocco. Given the country's cultural diversity and historical heritage, an approach tailored to each region is required. For example, in the Casablanca–Settat region, modernity and economic dynamism are central themes, but they must be combined with the valorization of local cultural elements to reach a broader audience.

Advanced regionalization provides a unique opportunity for Moroccan territories to adapt their communication to local specificities while developing a cohesive and consistent image. However, as Alaux et al. (2015) suggest, territorial

communication must be calibrated to the perceptions and expectations of different publics, taking into account the diversity of local realities. This adaptation is crucial for territories such as Maarif, which can leverage their unique identity while integrating into a broader regional communication strategy.

4.5. Measuring and Evaluating the Impact of Communication Strategies

In light of the preceding results, ensuring the durability and effectiveness of communication actions requires establishing performance indicators and measurement tools to assess campaign impact. Using data collected from social media, website traffic, and interactions with residents, territories can identify which campaigns are effective and which require adjustment. Buhalis and Law (2008) highlight the importance of data analysis in managing territorial communication, enabling decision-makers to optimize their strategies based on feedback and observed trends.

Implementing continuous evaluation mechanisms also makes it possible to respond rapidly to environmental changes and audience expectations by proactively adjusting messages and channels. This analytical monitoring is essential for maintaining the attractiveness and relevance of territories in an ever-evolving environment.

Conclusion

This research explored territorial communication as a strategic lever for strengthening regional attractiveness, using the Maarif district in the Casablanca–Settat region as a case study. Through a qualitative analysis of communication practices and interviews with elected officials and the district’s head of communications, the study provides new insights into the local specificities, challenges, and opportunities of territorial communication in a Moroccan urban context.

The findings underscore the importance of territorial communication in promoting a coherent and attractive territorial identity. For regions such as Casablanca–Settat, territorial communication plays a significant role in enhancing the territory’s image and assets and in mobilizing resources to stimulate economic and social development. In the Maarif district, communication strategies revolve around projecting an image of modernity and dynamism, with a focus on economic and cultural attractiveness.

The study highlights several key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of territorial communication. First, a strong, coherent, and authentic brand identity enables local actors to stand out in an increasingly competitive environment. Second, communication tools must be adapted to the cultural and social characteristics of target audiences, with social media taking precedence in an urban context where digital technologies are well integrated. Third, a participatory strategy one that gives local populations an active role fosters stronger ownership of development initiatives.

As an integral part of Casablanca, the Maarif district reflects some of the distinctive features of the Casablanca–Settat region while also illustrating challenges typical of high-density urban territories. Selecting Maarif as a case study made

it possible to analyze territorial communication within a framework representative of metropolitan issues such as balancing tradition and modernity, competing for investment, and managing local perceptions.

Casablanca–Settat, as Morocco’s leading economic region, benefits from a natural appeal linked to its strategic location, industrial development, and demographic dynamism. However, the Maarif case shows that maintaining and strengthening this attractiveness requires targeted, well-orchestrated territorial communication. The study highlights how Maarif’s communication practices indirectly contribute to the region’s overall image by reflecting values of innovation, diversity, and dynamism. In this sense, Maarif’s experience could inspire other districts of Casablanca and other Moroccan regions in developing their own territorial communication strategies.

This study has certain limitations inherent to the chosen methodology. The number of interviewees is limited, which may affect the diversity of viewpoints captured. The focus on a single district restricts the generalizability of the results to other regions or urban contexts. Moreover, the subjective nature of qualitative data implies that respondents’ perceptions may vary according to their position and personal experience. These limitations were taken into account in interpreting the results and point to avenues for future research.

The findings open several paths for further inquiry. One is to extend the analysis to other districts of Casablanca or other cities in the region to identify similarities and differences in territorial communication approaches. For example, comparing a highly urban district such as Maarif with a more residential or industrial district could reveal different dynamics in the perception and reception of territorial communication. Another promising direction is to examine the impact of territorial communication on specific target groups, such as youth, foreign investors, or tourists, in order to refine strategies to meet each group’s needs more precisely. Finally, integrating additional actors local businesses, cultural associations, and educational institutions could enrich initiatives through their expertise and networks, given their key role in disseminating the territorial image.

The study also offers practical recommendations for territorial communication managers seeking to enhance their territories’ attractiveness. First, develop a coherent, well-defined brand identity that reflects the territory’s distinctive values and assets; ensure it is shared by all local actors and communicated consistently across channels. Second, prioritize a participatory approach that involves citizens and values their contributions; citizen participation not only strengthens the legitimacy of actions but also fosters a sense of belonging and engagement. Digital tools, particularly social media, provide interactive means to mobilize residents and gather feedback in an accessible, responsive manner. Third, adopt a flexible and adaptable communication strategy capable of addressing the specific challenges of each territory. In regions such as Casablanca–Settat, marked by significant cultural diversity and strong economic dynamism, territorial communication must adapt to societal and economic changes while remaining anchored in local values. By embracing flexibility, managers can adjust messages and tools to evolving expectations, thereby ensuring greater relevance and impact of communication actions.

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