

Semiotic Analysis of the “Paris Left Bank” brand

The example of Jean-Nouvel and Jean-Marie Duthilleul

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The approach aims at going deeper into the concept of “Territorial Branding” by elucidating it through a morphodynamic semiotics, and emanated from the meeting of two theories: Greimassian semiotics and the theory of catastrophes (René Thom, 1923-2002).

The morphodynamic semiotics model applied to the concept of “Territorial Branding” can be resumed in the following manner: this concept presupposes the presence of a hierarchical dynamism, to be developed according to a stratified path stretching over several morphological levels of territorial organisation.

In order to present and explain certain mechanisms of this model, we have chosen three moments whereby this process of “Territorial Branding” can intervene with a view to the construction of the “Paris Rive Gauche Brand-Values”:

- + within the duration of our historicity's and for the historical time;
- + in accordance with different interlocutors of urbanity, as well as in terms of their notions of “living together”;
- + in accordance with the identity of a town and its symbolic values.

The semiotics applied to the Territorial Branding Process enables us to delimit the stages, as well as the constitutive paths of the emergence process of the signification of a project. This process aims at producing scenarios of certain forms of “living together” (spatial and social) in the minds of the consumers (deciders, investors, inhabitants). Our demonstration, will be made up of examples:

- + the political choice of “Brand-Architects” (Jean-Nouvel and Jean-Marie Duthilleul) to think out this process of territorial re-signification of “Paris Rive Gauche”;
- + the “Brand-Concept” structuring of this project “Paris Rive Gauche”.
- + the articulation of two historical monuments – Salpêtrière Hospital and Austerlitz train station – as ideological Brand-Values;

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