

*Review Article*

## **TERRITORIAL BRAND AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH SUSTAINABILITY: HYBRID REVIEWS AND RESEARCH AGENDA**

Giovana Goretti Feijó de Almeida <sup>a, \*</sup>, Paulo Almeida <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a, b</sup> *CiTUR - Polytechnic University of Leiria, Portugal*

### **ABSTRACT**

**Background** - Serving as a contemporary strategic multi-scalar asset, attending multiple dimensions is one of the functions of territorial branding in regional development. Soon, sustainability concerns should be embedded in the processes of this type of brand, given the global pressure of Agenda 2030. In addition, the territorial brand has a unique management structure of which tourism is part.

**Purpose** - The purpose is to analyse how research on territorial branding engages the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in promoting sustainability.

**Methodology** - Using a hybrid approach, the study draws on literature review to establish links (active or absent) between Agenda 2030 and the territorial brand theme.

**Findings** - The correlation between territorial brand and sustainability has been little explored in the literature in previous research. Although there are publications on both themes, in most cases the use of the terms is superficial, with no depth in their discussions. Thus, it is perceived that there is a great potential in this discussion that covers interdisciplinary fields.

**Results** - Practical implications - The results showed that the creation of a territorial brand with proper management can positively increase regional territorial competitiveness. Social implications - We found that social agents use the territorial brand as a guiding guide to meet the SDG, reinforcing the role of the 2030 Agenda. Theoretical implications - The deepening of the territorial brand theme associated with sustainability brings valuable insights for researchers, students, and public policy makers.

**Originality** - The value of the study lies in the use of a hybrid literature review in understanding the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability. The use of the hybrid method in searching articles published in the Scopus database has not been found in previous studies. This review seeks to provide insights that will help contribute to the development of this emerging field of research.

**Keywords:** Territorial Brand, Sustainability, Tourism, Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030.

### **Introduction**

Territorial branding has been used as an indicator to foster the resilience of territories (Sgroi & Mónica, 2022). One of the functions of territorial branding is to be a strategic multiscalar contemporary asset (local, regional, national, global), serving multiple dimensions (Almeida, 2023). Therefore, sustainability concerns should be embedded in the triple process of this type of brand. Almeida (2018;

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\* Contact: [goretti.giovana@gmail.com](mailto:goretti.giovana@gmail.com)

2023) highlights that there are three processes in the territorial brand. A creative process that structures the brand's base thought, driving the production process that performs a logical sequence of steps that form it. Finally, the third process, the strategic one, comes into action to generate value for the brand and the territory represented in the promotion of development(s).

The use of brands resulting from certifications, such as denomination of origin and indication of source, may favour the permanence of man in the rural environment. According to Sgroi & Mónica (2022) this happens because sustainability is becoming a strategic variable for the creation of value for rural areas (Sgroi & Mónica, 2022). The certifications mentioned by Sgroi & Mónica (2022) correspond to the category of territorial brands called "Geographical" (Almeida & Cardoso, 2022), in which a brand is built from the production of a specific product, being possible to register it in its country of origin. The brand, in this case, generates added value to the territory, becoming a territorial asset. This is the case, for example, of terroir which, according to Capitello et al. (2022), refers to a place of distinction capable of creating value through marketing. Moreover, the territorial brand has a singular management structure of which tourism acts as the main domain.

The research problematization involves the competitiveness generated by the territorial brand (Almeida & Almeida, 2021; Escourido-Calvo et al., 2022; Sgroi et al., 2022) that does not always rely on sustainability in its basis. The image that cities, countries and regions create for themselves determine positive or negative factors linked to the strategies of territorial brands (Evstratova et al., 2020) and their link with the SDG. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) challenge the global community to build a world where no one is left behind (Rivest et al., 2021). This global initiative requires further efforts in policymaking to improve understanding of future initiatives close to the SDG (Stafford-Smith et al., 2017).

Soon, the question-problem that arises is: how does territorial branding research engage the Sustainable Development Goals in promoting sustainability? With Agenda 2030 at the top of the global conversation, territorial branding cannot remain on the sidelines of sustainability discussions, given that the four dimensions of the SDG (UN, 2023) correspond in some ways to part of the set of territorial brand dimensions found in Almeida (2018; 2023).

The research justifications involve the interdisciplinary nature of the discussions on territorial branding (Almeida, 2018; Pobirchenko et al., 2019; De Figueiredo & Rodrigues, 2021; Ranzo & Scalera, 2021; Almeida, Bridi et al., 2022; Almeida & Cardoso, 2022; Martins et al., 2023), as a tool for territorial innovation (Annese et al., 2022) and contemporary urban planning (Lucarelli, 2018; De San Eugenio et al., 2019; Horlings & Soini, 2019; Radosavljević et al., 2019; Almeida & Rezende, 2021). The SDG, in turn, constitute an ambitious list of targets to be met by 2030 (SDG, n.d.) in order to meet humanity's aspiration for a better life, while respecting the limitations imposed by nature (SDG, n.d.; UN, n.d.; Fonseca et al., 2020; Qazi et al., 2023). Thus, global partnerships and interdisciplinary research become necessary and essential to achieve progress towards the SDG (Meschede, 2020).

The aim of the research is to analyse how research on territorial branding engages the Sustainable Development Goals in promoting sustainability. To achieve this objective, the study examines the literature corpus on the role and potential of territorial branding in promoting sustainability through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda. It also investigates if and how territorial branding can include the SDG in generating value to the territorial and regional development process. Therefore, it is intended to summarize the current state of scientific research on the relationship between territorial brand and sustainability.

## Literature Review

### Territorial Branding

Territorial brands are not a new phenomenon (Almeida, 2023), but the use of marketing strategies in the promotion of territories and their management is recent. To understand the territorial brand, it is necessary to understand two concepts: territory and brand. Territory is not a universal concept (Paasi et al., 2022), so this study uses Raffestin's (1993) perspective of territory delimited by the power relations of social actors. Brand is a distinctive sign (Aaker, 1996; Kotler, 2001; Hart & Phau, 2022). It is important to note that brand and logo are different terms. The logo is only the visual graphic representation of the brand, but is not the brand itself (Kelly, 2017).

Communicating the place of origin in a relevant way to create empathy with the local community is one of the strategies that encourages the creation and consolidation of the territorial brand. The use of branding or marketing in territorial branding strategies acts in the affirmation of territories on different levels at various scales, beyond tourism, such as: social, economic, and cultural (De Figueiredo & Rodrigues, 2021).

Almeida (2018; 2023) mentions that there are three processes involved in the creation of a territorial brand: creative, productive, and strategic. These processes work in an integrated way, drawing on branding and marketing. De San Eugenio et al. (2019) added the citizen participation process as a key element in the construction of territorial brands while Almeida & Rezende (2021) positioned the territorial brand as a strategic contemporary urban instrument that influences citizen participation. In this sense, the territorial brand is embedded in municipal planning (Almeida, Bridi et al., 2022), fostering sustainable governance (Lucarelli, 2018; De San Eugenio et al., 2019). This shows that territorial branding and place branding do not act only from the perspective of tourism promotion, but in several dimensions, including politics and environment.

Territorial branding is the product of a specific management, place branding, therefore, they are not synonymous, just as branding and marketing are not either. Thus, this study employs Almeida's (2018) concept of territorial branding as a cultural product in regional development. For the author, "[...]territorial branding in view of the cultural approach to Regional Development refers to the creation of symbolic value, the articulation of actors as to the plurality of identities present in a territory, the way they make use of that brand and make it a significant asset for the territory and, consequently, for the region" (Almeida, 2018, p. 247). Narratives about the territory are constructed and strategies are used to enable the construction of a brand that articulates a specific set of actors that can change over time. "The territorial brand is, therefore, a multifaceted concept [...] organized between elements, discursive and visual, articulated by social actors [...] who draw on culture and territorial identity to create a specific brand [...]" (Almeida, 2018, p. 247).

To form a territorial brand, one needs four factors: brand, territory, dual territoriality (social actors and brand) and strategic articulation (Almeida, 2018). These factors still need to be integrated. In the absence of one or another factor or its integration there is no territorial brand formed, only isolated branding or marketing actions. The formation of the territorial brand involves numerous intentions, one of them being the "[...] communication of actors about and in the territory, encompassing a set of symbols, cultures and identities that become brands", favouring "[...] the elaboration of strategies that generate power relations and act on the potentialities of territories and regions" (Almeida, 2018, p. 247).

One of the distinctive factors in the competitiveness of destinations are the associated brands, both the destination brand and the brands within that destination. For Hacala et al. (2013), tourism benefits greatly from a strong country brand and the image of a place is considered a key factor for international

investments. The brand thus strengthens the link between supply and demand, and, in the specific case of tourism, brands are important because they differentiate products, services and destinations, boosting their notoriety and demand in tourism markets. The competitiveness of a destination is not only reflected in its occupancy and consumption rates, but also in its capacity to attract investment and generate economic and social development.

The competitiveness of a tourist destination is highly dependent on the strategic manipulation of several dimensions, variables, and attributes of that destination. It is up to public and private agents, with responsibilities in the planning and promotion of these destinations, to define strategies for articulation between these dimensions, variables and attributes that reflect in the markets an image of quality of these destinations motivating the reservation, experience, satisfaction, recommendation, and revisit.

## **Sustainability, Agenda 2030, and SDG**

### ***Sustainability***

The term 'sustainability' is diverse in its definitions (Hermundsdottir & Aspelund, 2021). Sustainability or sustainable development is related to the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations, therefore, it is a long-term vision (WCED, 1987). Furthermore, the theme occupies concerns in the most varied human activities.

Sustainability is composed of three interdependent dimensions: economic, environmental, and social (Elkington et al., 1987; Claro et al., 2008; Seuring & Müller, 2008; Engert et al., 2016; Missingham, 2021). These dimensions are called the "triple bottom line" (Elkington et al., 1987; Almeida, 2002; Cunico et al. 2017; Pinto et al., 2017; Surya, 2021) because they include people, planet, and profit (Elkington et al., 1987). For Elkington et al. (1987) the components of the triple bottom line are interdependent to mutually reinforce sustainable development.

According to Almeida (2002), the economic dimension includes the formal economy and informal activities that provide services to individuals and groups and thus increase the monetary income and standard of living of individuals. The environmental or ecological dimension encourages companies to consider the impact of their activities on the environment in the form of use of natural resources and contributes to the integration of environmental management into the work routine. The social dimension consists of the social aspect related to the qualities of human beings, such as their skills, dedication, and experiences, encompassing both the company's internal and external environments.

In the literature there is also mention of three initiatives related to sustainability: environmentally sound sustainable development, economically sustainable development, and development of socially sustainable actions (Hamad; Al-Fadel, 2021; Singh; Mishra, 2021; Singh; Dixit, 2021). These initiatives correlate to the three dimensions cited by Elkington et al. (1987) and the territorial brand in the scope of regional development (Almeida, 2018).

### ***Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development***

In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), forming the 2030 Agenda (UN, n.d.; Meschede, 2020). This Agenda represents an agreement among all 193 UN member states to introduce a set of common strategies in achieving the 17 SDG before 2030 (Pizzi et al., 2020). The document is also an action plan for people, planet, and prosperity, seeking the strengthening of universal peace (UN, n.d.; SDG, n.d.). Thus, to put the world on a "sustainable path" it becomes necessary to take bold and transformative measures, being this the guideline that guides the 2030 Agenda and that formed the SDG (UNODC, 2023).

## *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)*

The Sustainable Development Goals, recognized by the acronym SDG, are ways of measuring the aggregate performance of individual countries' progress against the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability (Qazi et al., 2023). These dimensions are known as the "triple bottom line" (Almeida, 2002; Cunico et al. 2017; Pinto et al., 2017; Surya, 2021). In total there are 17 SDG (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Sustainable Development Goals (Source: ONU (s.d))

Each SDG has specific targets, totalling 169 targets to which countries commit themselves to meet to achieve more equitable sustainable development at the global level (SDG, n.d.; Fonseca et al., 2020; Omri, A., 2020; Sachs et al., 2021; Qazi et al., 2023).

## **Methodology**

### **Method**

To this study, the domain-based systematic reviews method (Paul & Criado, 2020) conducted by a hybrid review integrating other types of review (Dabić et al., 2020; Lim, 2016; Paul et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2019; Lim et al., 2021) was employed. The reason for applying a systematic approach is because it provides an overview of the body of literature on a particular topic (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

### **Data Collection**

First, we performed a bibliometric analysis in the Scopus database with the term "territorial brand" in January/2023, finding 76 documents from 2007 to 2022. Of these documents, only 52 were considered because they were full articles. We searched these 52 documents again with the term "sustainability", resulting in 18 articles. Of the 18 we chose 6 because only in these articles there was the SDG indicator from Scopus included. Then, the research took as a basis the hybrid review on the selected articles to provide a map of the knowledge generated and disseminated by the specialized literature on the topic.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The research techniques used were qualitative from an exploratory-descriptive approach to data collection and analysis.

The study employed a protocol with 11 analytical categories: article title, year of publication, authors' names, journal name, number of citations, field-weighted citation impact (FWCI) score, prominence percentile score, keywords, method name, context/country, and SDG name. The methodology we used was based on Almeida (2018) who used the systematic of guiding questions. However, we used in this study, instead of guiding questions, guiding objectives that led the research (Table 1). It was this systematic that guided the analysis and the research results. Thus, in each category analysed there was, at the beginning of the section, the corresponding guiding objective.

Table 1: Analytical category and guiding objectives



<b>Research objective</b> - to analyze how research on territorial branding involves the Sustainable Development Goals in the promotion of sustainability	
<b>Analytical category</b>	<b>Guiding Objectives</b>
1. Article Title	To verify whether the term "territorial brand" and "sustainability" were considered important to be used in the title of the publications
2. Year of publication	Show the retrospective of the years of publications.
3. Authors' names	To identify the authors who discuss the correlation between territorial branding and sustainability, as well as the authors who pioneered this correlation.
4. Journal name	To identify the authors who discuss the correlation between territorial branding and sustainability, as well as the authors who pioneered this correlation.
5. Number of citations	Check the number of citations of the authors
6. Score field-weighted citation impact	Check the number of citations according to FWCI.
7. Score prominence percentile	Check prominence percentile score of each analyzed study.
8. Keywords	Check which words are most often quoted.
9. Method name	Check which methods are most used in the analyzed studies.
10. Context/country	Check the contexts of the analyzed articles.
11. SDG Name	Check which SDGs are linked to the analyzed articles.

Content analysis was used in comparing the protocol categories with each other. The research was developed in December/2022 and January/2023.

## Results and Discussion

Table 2 Presents the mapping of the literature review and its correlation with the SDG.

Table 2: Mapping of the literature review and its correlation with the SDG

Number	Title	Yea	Authors	Journal	Cited by	FWCI	Prominence percentile	Method	Context/Country	SDG
1	Neo-nomadic Culture as a Territorial Brand for 'Authentic' Tourism Development in Kazakhstan	2020	Tiberghien, G.	Europe - Asia Studies pp. 1728-1751	1	0,39	98.374	Case study	Tourism Development  United Kingdom	 
2	Building a place brand on local assets: The case of the Pla de l'Estany district and its rebranding	2019	de San Eugenio, J., Ginesta, X., Compte-Pujol, M., Frigola-Reig, J.	Sustainability (Switzerland) 11(11),3218	8	0,54	97.565	Case study	Public Policies  Spain	 
3	Gender differences in the reception of territorial development (The example of Irkutsk region)	2018	Zavarzina, I.V.	Woman in Russian Society 2018(4), pp. 111-119	0	0	87.118	Case study	Territorial development  Russian Federation	
4	The image of municipalities	2020	Evstratova, T.A., Kabanova, E.E., Vetrova, E.A., Kulikova, O.A., Kolosova, O.A.	International Journal of Criminology and Sociology 9, pp. 2711-2717	1	0,38	98.855	Hybrid	Marketing  Russian Federation	
5	Territorial brands for tourism development: A statistical analysis on the Marche region	2011	Lorenzini, E., Calzati, V., Giudici, P.	Annals of Tourism Research 38(2), pp. 540-560	41	1,2	77.952	Case study	Planning and managing destinations  Italy	
6	Coexistence or contradiction? GM crops versus alternative agricultures in Europe	2008	Levidow, L., Boschert, K.	Geoforum 39(1), pp. 174-190	76	5,45	65.144	Case study	Agrobiotechnology  United Kingdom	

### Title of the Publications

*Guiding objective: to ascertain whether the term "territorial brand" and "sustainability" were considered important to be used in the title of the publications.*

The function of the title is to clarify the subject to be addressed in the text, drawing the reader's attention, and instigating the reading, in addition to creating a support for the text (USC, 2017). According to Hairston and Keene (2003), writing an appropriate title for a scientific article consists of ensuring the achievement of four factors. First, it should reflect the content of the article. Second, it should be

interesting to the reader. Third, it should reflect the tone of the article's language. And fourth, it should contain important keywords that facilitate the context of the research.

Of the articles analysed, only 3 articles inserted the term "territorial brand" (or similar expression) in the title, while the term "sustainability" did not appear in any (Table 3).

Table 3: Analysis of titles

No.	Title Article	Does it reflect the content?	Is it interesting?	Does it reflect the tone of the language?	Do you have important keywords?
1	Neo-nomadic Culture as a Territorial Brand for 'Authentic' Tourism Development in Kazakhstan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Building a place brand on local assets: The case of the Pla de l'Estany district and its rebranding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Gender differences in the reception of territorial development (The example of Irkutsk region)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial
4	The image of municipalities	Partial	Partial	No	No
5	Territorial brands for tourism development: A statistical analysis on the Marche region	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Coexistence or contradiction? GM crops versus alternative agricultures in Europe	Partial	Partial	Partial	No

Source: Adapted from Hairston and Keene (2003).

Title 1 begins with a catchy title, followed by information about the content and method of the study.

Title 2 presents the theme in a comprehensive way, followed by a subtitle with the method adopted.

Title 3 describes the topic and arouses the reader's curiosity but does not mention the method.

Title 4 only describes the theme in a partial way, without providing information about the method of the study - it could simply be a theoretical or opinion article.

Title 5 describes the topic, method and is particularly catchy.

Title 6 starts with a broad question, followed by the topic without providing information about the method of the study - it could simply be a theoretical or opinion article.

Thus, to some extent all the titles analysed met all the criteria of a suitable title as proposed by Hairston and Keene (2003). At the same time, as can be seen in Table 3, each article deals with a different territorial brand theme and, although they were associated by Scopus with the SDG, none of them mentions the term "sustainability" in the title. The term appears only in the abstracts of the published articles.

According to Imbelloni (2012) the title should be a "well compressed summary" of each scientific work. In this sense, only 3 articles matched this criterion (Tiberghien, 2020; De San Eugenio, 2019; Lorenzini et al., 2011).



It is understood, therefore, that the term "territorial brand" and similar ones were considered important to be used in the titles of the researchers analysed. However, the term "sustainability" was not considered to be inserted in any of the titles.

### Year of Publications

*Guiding objective: to show the retrospective of the years of publications.*

The analysis of the year of a set of publications offers a retrospective of the content published in the field of the investigated theme. Thus, Figure 2 shows that the theme of the articles analysed was investigated from 2008 to 2020 with breaks between the years.

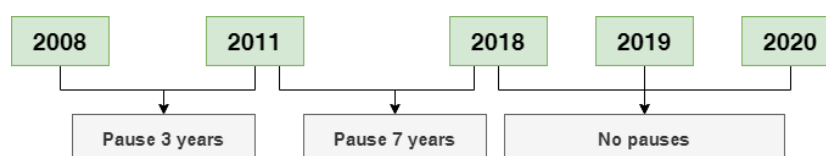


Figure 2: Timeline publications

The first break lasted 3 years and the second 7 years, followed by breaks of one year. Three situations call our attention. One is that the sustainability theme begins to be associated with the territorial brand only in 2008, one year after the territorial brand theme was included in scientific publications in Scopus. Another situation is that the theme is resumed annually from 2018 to 2020, showing that the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability is important. It also evidences a certain growth of the theme in scientific research. A third situation is exposed in relation to two great pauses of publications between the years 2008 and 2018 (10 years without research correlating one theme to the other). Finally, the situation that after two years of the peak of Covid-19 (from 2021 to 2022) there was no publication on the mentioned correlation also draws our attention.

Thus, the correlation between the themes occurred before the creation of the SDG, but in a timid way with only 2 published articles (Levidow & Boschert, 2008; Lorenzini et al., 2011). After 2015, post the formation of Agenda 2030, 4 published articles appeared, double the number of publications (Zavarzina, 2018; de San Eugenio et al., 2019; Evstratova et al., 2020; Tiberghien, 2020). The new panorama of publications between 2018-2020 evidence a certain fad in associating themes with the "sustainability" theme, possibly due to the creation of Agenda 2030. The absence of post-Covid 19 discussions (post 2020) among the themes reinforces this hypothesis.

### Authors

*Guiding objective - to identify the authors who discuss the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability, as well as the pioneering authors of this correlation.*

The pioneer of the discussion between territorial brand and sustainability in Scopus is Levidow & Boschert (2008). However, the authors discuss the themes in a superficial way based on a European network of regional authorities that promoted the 'GMO-free zones' as a territorial brand for green agri-food production, whose qualities depend on symbolic and immaterial characteristics. The central discussion of Levidow & Boschert (2008) is about alternative agricultures in contradiction to and with the coexistence of GM crops. In this case, the term territorial brand was only used as a reference and not as the focus of the study. The same occurred with the term sustainability. Thus, one cannot consider the authors as pioneers of the theme.

Lorenzini et al. (2011) used the term "territorial brand" in the title of the study, evidencing the relevance of the theme for the authors. Understanding the impact of territorial brands on tourism development was the focus of the cited study, concentrating on regional networks of certification programs and tourism destination planning and management. Thus, it is taken Lorenzini et al. (2011) as the pioneers in the correlation between the theme's sustainability and territorial brand.

In 2018, Zavarzina discussed gender differences in the formation and development of concepts about territorial development. It was a different discussion to consider these views in the development of a region's tourism priorities. The conclusion of the study was that in the case investigated by the author, nature, cultural and religious traditions, and mythology are the key idea of territorial branding in the formation of a specific region, Irkutsk.

In 2019, de San Eugenio et al. analysed: 1) whether the positioning of the Pla de l'Estany district in Catalonia could be redefined in a context of possible saturation of the sports brand that was structured due to the success of the 1992 Olympic Games; and 2) how to design and implement long-term public policies in place branding. This study is interesting because it places citizen participation processes as a key element in the construction of territorial brands; it reorients the narrative of the Pla de l'Estany territory based on the concepts of "sustainable nature" and "traditional culture"; and it conceptualizes place branding not only from the perspective of promoting tourism, but also of fostering sustainable governance.

The following year, two new studies were published. Tiberghien (2020) explored the concept of neo-nomadic culture as a territorial brand for Kazakhstan's 'authentic' tourism development. The author examined Stakeholders' perceptions of the authenticity of the heritage dimensions of nomadic culture and how these perceptions intersected with the notion of 'terroir'. The author argued that the construction of 'authentic' tourism products and experiences based on nomadic culture and traditions reaffirmed territorial and cultural identities in the post-Soviet era and promoted international recognition of authentic ecocultural tourism practices among tourism in similar destinations in Central Asia.

Finally, Evstratova et al. (2020) investigated the image of municipalities and determined the factors that give the city a positive image of the territory. For the authors, the image of the municipality is formed from the priority elements of its structure and a set of certain factors of development and promotion of the territory.

It is understood that the authors of the analysed articles discussed the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability investigating the theme from different perspectives, but none deepened the relationship between territorial brand and sustainability.

## **Journal**

*Guiding objective - to identify the pioneering journals that discuss the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability.*

Six different journals pioneered the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability in the Scopus database: Geoforum (2008), Annals of Tourism Research (2011), Woman in Russian Society (2018), Sustainability (2019), Europe - Asia Studies (2020) and International Journal of Criminology and Sociology (2020).

Conclusion of the analysis - It draws attention to the International Journal of Criminology and Sociology publishing on the themes of "territorial brand" and "sustainability". The pioneer discussion of the theme goes to the journal Geoforum (2008).

## Number of Citations

Guiding objective - to verify the number of citations of the authors.

Three studies stand out in citations in Scopus: Levidow & Boschert (2008) with 76 citations; Lorenzini et al. (2011) with 41 citations and de San Eugenio et al. (2019) with 8 citations. The remaining articles have 1 or no citations. Citations are important because they give sustainability to the position defended by the author, based on the ideas of already known authors. It is the citations that give credit to the citations and theoretical bases used in scientific studies.

When publishing a scientific paper an author does not automatically get citations for his work. This requires time. Thus, Levidow & Boschert (2008), for being the oldest authors in the theme presented more citations than the other authors.

## Field-weighted Citation Impact (FWCI)

*Guiding objective - to verify the number of citations according to the FWCI.*

The Field-weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) is sourced directly from SciVal which measures the total citations received by the denominator output and the total citations expected based on the subject field average (Scopus, 2022). A FWCI of more than 1 indicates citations above what is expected based on the global average for similar publications. For example, an FWCI of 1.38 indicates 38% above the global average. Field-weighted Citation Impact considers differences in research behaviour across disciplines. It is particularly useful for a denominator that combines several different fields, although it can be applied to any denominator.

Based on the Scopus FWCI, the citations above the expected based on the global average for similar publications were Levidow & Boschert (2008) with 5.45; Lorenzini et al. (2011) with 1.2. De San Eugenio et al. (2019), Evstratova et al. (2020) and Tiberghien (2020) had the FWCI below 1, meaning that the output was cited less than expected according to the global average for publications. The study by Zavarzina (2018) was the only one with FWCI at 0.

It is inferred that older publications obtained higher FWCI, and this logic is consistent. Among the FWCI below 1, the study by De San Eugenio et al. (2019) stands out, indicating that it is 54% above the global average.

## Prominence percentile

*Guiding objective - to verify the prominence percentile score of each analysed study.*

The prominence percentile is considered a recent indicator that reveals the current moment of a given topic, considering the citations, the visualizations and the CiteScore limits (Cardoso et al., 2021). Three studies showed higher prominence percentile: Evstratova et al. (2020) with 98,855; Tiberghien (2020) with 98,374; and De San Eugenio et al. (2019) with 97,565. The remaining articles analysed were below the 90th percentile, meaning that they are studies that are in the top 20% and top 40% of the world.

Being in the 90th percentile means being in the top 10% of the world in momentum and visibility, while above this percentile means being in the top 1% of the world. The highlight is the Evstratova et al. (2020) and Tiberghien (2020) studies. Above the 90th percentile no authors were found.

Most of the studies analysed were below the 90th percentile, showing that the themes, territorial brand, and sustainability (alone or crossed between them), are not among the most discussed themes in the world.

## Keywords (word cloud)

*Guiding objective - to see which words are most cited.*

A word cloud can be used in many different situations. They serve as a tool for text analysis and to highlight the most important themes. The word cloud generated from the keywords of the analysed articles (Figure 3) showed three highlights: development, territorial and tourism; followed by brand, marketing and territory (Table 4).



Figure 3: Word cloud from the keywords

Again, among the Keywords, the term sustainability was absent. In contrast to brand which, when added to the keyword territorial, has a frequency of 7. In this case, territorial brand and development are the two most mentioned words in the analysed articles.

Table 4: Frequency of Keywords

Word	Frequency
development	7
territorial	4
tourism	4
brand	3
marketing	3
territory	3
agricultural	2
european	2
gender	2
prospect	2

## Method

*Guiding objective - to verify which methods were most used in the analysed studies.*

Most of the articles analysed used the case study method, whilst only one study used the hybrid method.

This shows that there is a wide range of methods that can be applied to the themes investigated, leading to new findings. Therefore, the crossing of knowledge between the field of territorial branding associated with the field of sustainability proves to be emergent.

## Context/Theory

*Guiding objective - to verify the contexts of the articles analysed.*

The analysed studies are from different countries: United Kingdom (2), Russian Federation (2), Spain and Italy.

Each analysed study used a different context (Table 2), leading to different approaches when it comes to the discussion of territorial branding. However, none of the contexts was specifically about sustainability.

If it is considered that tourism development (Tiberghien, 2020), territorial development (Zavarzina, 2018) and destination planning and management (Lorenzini et al., 2011) address similar contexts, then it can be said that the tourism context is at the core of the analysed studies. The general context of the other analysed articles (Table 2) supports the sub-theme "sustainability", there being consistency in the association of the SDG by Scopus.

## Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

*Guiding objective - to verify which SDG are linked to the analysed articles.*

Most studies in Table 2 were associated with SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production (Levidow & Boschert, 2008; Lorenzini et al., 2011; De San Eugenio et al. 2019; Tiberghien, 2020). The remaining SDG had only one reference (SDG 5, 8, 11 and 16). In Tiberghien's (2020) study more than one SDG was inserted (SDG 8; SDG 12), the same happened in De San Eugenio et al.'s (2019) study (SDG 12; SDG 16).

The association with SDG 11 Sustainable city and communities is consistent with the study of Evstratova et al. (2020) that deals with the image of municipalities, and there is also consistency in the study of Zavarzina (2018) on gender differences in the reception of territorial development being associated with SDG 5 gender equality. However, the association with SDG 16 peace, justice and strong institutions was not perceived in the study by De San Eugenio et al. (2019) that deals with building a place brand on local assets, analysing the case of Pla de l'Estany district.

The greatest evidence in the articles analysed is to SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production. Possibly due to the relationship with economic development with which the territorial brand and sustainability are associated.

## Results

From the analyses carried out, Table 5 was generated which summarizes the results per guiding objective of the categories set out in the research protocol.

Table 5: Results of analytical categories

Analytical category	Category objective	Findings
Article title	Check whether the term "territorial brand" and "sustainability" were considered important to be used in the title of publications.	The term "territorial brand" and the like were considered important to be used in the titles of the analyzed research. However, the term "sustainability" was not considered to be inserted in any of the titles.
Year of publication	Show the retrospective of the years of publications.	The correlation between the themes occurred before the creation of dgS, but timidly with only 2 published articles (Levidow & Boschert, 2008; Lorenzini et al., 2011). After 2015, 4 published articles appeared, double publications (Zavarzina, 2018; by San Eugenio et al., 2019; Evstratova et al., 2020; Tiberghien, 2020). The new panorama of publications between 2018-2020 shows a certain fad in associating themes with the theme "sustainability", possibly due to the creation of the 2030 Agenda. The absence of post-Covid 19 discussions (post-year 2020) between the themes reinforces this hypothesis.
Nome dos autores	To identify the authors who discuss the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability, as well as the pioneer authors of this correlation.	The authors who discuss the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability investigated the theme on different perspectives, but none deepened the relationship between territorial brand and sustainability.  Pioneer authors Lorenzini et al. (2011).
Journal name	To identify the authors who discuss the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability, as well as the pioneer authors of this correlation.	The International Journal of Criminology and Sociology publishes on the themes of "territorial brand" and "sustainability" draws attention. Annals of Tourism Research (2011).
Number of citations	Check the number of citations of the authors.	When publishing a scientific paper an author does not automatically get the citations of his work. That takes time. Thus, Levidow & Boschert (2008), because they are the oldest authors on the subject, presented more citations than the other authors.
Score field-weighted citation impact (FWCI)	Check the number of citations according to FWCI.	Older publications obtained higher FWCI, and this logic is coherent. Among fwc below 1, the study by De San Eugenio et al. (2019) stands out, indicating that it is 54% above the world average.
Score prominence percentile	Verify percentile prominence score of each study analyzed.	Most of the studies analyzed were below the 90th percentile.
Keywords	Check which words are most quoted.	Most cited words were development and territorial brand.
Method name	Check which methods are most used in the studies analyzed.	Most of the articles analyzed used the case study method, while only one study used the hybrid method.
Context/country	Check the contexts of the analyzed articles.	United Kingdom and Russian Federation lead the discussions of the issues investigated.
Name of SDG	Check which SDGs are linked to the analyzed articles.	Greater evidence to SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production.

The findings indicate that the research analysed in this study focused mainly on SDG 12 due to its connection with economic development. In a shy way, SDG 5, 8, 11 and 16 appeared associated with Scopus studies. The results allow us to conclude that the scientific production analysed in the correlation between territorial brand and sustainability is composed of 6 major thematic areas: (1) economic

development, (2) public policies, (3) territorial development, (4) marketing, (5) planning and management of destinations and (6) Agrobiotechnology. If we add together the contexts of economic development, territorial development and planning and management of destinations, we will have a large research area, which would lead us to only 4 major thematic areas.

Territorial brand is taken in different ways, including it as strategic indicator (SgROI & M3dica, 2022) and territorial asset (Almeida, 2023). It is believed that sustainability concerns should be present in the discussion about the territorial brand in a more thorough way, but what was found was only a superficial discussion of the themes and their correlation. Sustainability has become a strategic variable for the value creation of territories (SgROI & M3dica, 2022); however, the term was also used superficially in the analysed publications. The relationship that is perceived with the added value to the territory and territorial assets, mentioned by Capitello et al. (2022) and SgROI & M3dica (2022), are more isolated marketing actions than a territorial brand as that of Almeida's (2018) perspective.

The researches of Almeida & Almeida (2021); Escourido-Calvo et al. (2022) and SgROI et al. (2022) emphasize the role of competitiveness in the territorial brand, however, sustainability is not at the basis of the analysed studies. The image of cities, for example, does not characterize a correlation with sustainability if the focus is only on determining positive or negative factors linked to the strategies of territorial brands, as was done in the study of Evstratova et al. (2020). Linking sustainability to the SDG and other discussions, such as the territorial brand, is still a challenge. In fact, building a more equitable world is in itself a great challenge to the global community, as mentioned by Rivest et al. (2021). One cannot also forget that interdisciplinarity moves both themes (Almeida, 2018; Lucarelli, 2018; De San Eugenio et al., 2019; Horlings & Soini, 2019; Pobirchenko et al., 2019; Radosavljević et al., 2019; Fonseca et al., 2020; Meschede, 2020; Almeida & Rezende, 2021; De Figueiredo & Rodrigues, 2021; Ranzo & Scalera, 2021; Almeida, Bridi et al., 2022; Almeida & Cardoso, 2022; Martins et al., 2023; Qazi et al., 2023), making them complex to investigate just as with the terms territory and brand (Raffestin, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Kotler, 2001; Kelly, 2017; Almeida, 2018; Lucarelli, 2018; De San Eugenio et al., 2019; De Figueiredo et al., 2021; Almeida, Bridi et al., 2022; Hart & Phau, 2022; Paasi et al., 2022; Almeida, 2023).

The term sustainability is used more extensively than the territorial brand in the studies investigated. The concern, in this case, is to meet the world's needs without ceasing to compete and to have economic development (WCED, 1987). The problem is the diversity of definitions of the term sustainability (Hermundsdottir & Aspelund, 2021) that in itself generates misunderstandings just like the territorial brand (Almeida, 2018). In this sense, several authors highlight the interdependent dimensions contained in the term sustainability (Elkington et al., 1987; Almeida, 2002; Claro et al., 2008; Seuring and M3dler, 2008; Engert et al., 2016; Cunico et al., 2017; Pinto et al., 2017; Omri, A., 2020; Hamad, Al-Fadel, 2021; Missingham, 2021; Singh; Mishra, 2021; Singh; Dixit, 2021; Surya, 2021; Qazi et al., 2023).

## Conclusions

The correlation between territorial brand and sustainability has been little explored in the literature in previous research. Although there are publications on both themes, in most cases the use of the terms is superficial, with no depth in their discussion. The planning of a destination is based on sustainability, bringing together a set of interactions between tourism agents with responsibility in the destination, which responsibly should plan and design it in identified target markets. From all these correlations between variables there is great potential in this discussion, covering multiple interdisciplinary fields trying to produce new knowledge.

## **Resuming the Objective**

The analysis on how territorial brand research engages the Sustainable Development Goals in promoting sustainability was the objective of this study. The study showed that there is a lack of research on territorial branding and sustainability, addressing their relationships, challenges, and opportunities. Both terms were used superficially in the articles analysed, except for the study by De San Eugenio (2019). Therefore, it would be interesting to address in depth the relationship between the terms, exploring their processes, roles, and professional practices. As a starting point, it is suggested that the gaps found in the analysed studies form a research agenda that serves as a basis for future studies.

## **Practical Implications**

The results showed that the creation of a territorial brand with proper management positively increases territorial and regional competitiveness. Furthermore, with proper management, there is a positive increase in territorial and regional competitiveness, with the territorial brand serving as a gauge of the SDG.

## **Social Implications**

However, we also found that social actors use the territorial brand as a guiding guide to meet the SDG, reinforcing the role of the 2030 Agenda.

## **Theoretical Implications**

The deepening of the territorial brand theme associated with sustainability brings valuable insights for researchers, students, and policy makers. In view of this, these insights can help contribute to the discussions of the development of this still emerging field of research.

## **Limitations**

The limitation of this study lies mainly in the fact that only one database was investigated, even though Scopus is the largest database in the world. The inclusion criteria also limited the study, as only six articles that contained the new Scopus metric linked to the SDG could be analysed.

## **Suggestions for future research**

For further research, it is suggested to investigate all documents on territorial brand contained in the Scopus database, without exclusion criteria, analysing its link with the SDG. In this study only the articles that had the Scopus metric were considered, but in future study it is suggested to manually make this association that does not contemplate all the 79 studies found in Scopus, limiting the study to only six articles. It is also suggested that the topic sustainability, including good practices found in the environmental, economic, and social pillars, and the consequences/impacts on human development be crossed with discussion of territorial branding proposed by Almeida (2018). The indication of this proposal comes from the fact that Almeida's (2018) concept is more comprehensive than the concept used in the specialized literature that associates territorial branding specifically with economic development.

## **Final considerations**

In conclusion, the term sustainability presents superficial relations with the territorial brand topic. Research on territorial brand superficially involves the Sustainable Development Goals in the promotion of sustainability, regardless of whether the scope is local, regional, national, international, or global.



The literary corpus on the role and potential of territorial brand in promoting sustainability through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda is scarce and emerging. This matches the short time of discussion of the theme that began in 2007, therefore, having little more than 15 years.

Although the involvement of the SDG in the territorial brand is superficial, the territorial brand includes the SDG in generating value to the process of territorial and regional development. The few studies that have attempted to make this link allow this approximation, although the studies have not delved deeply into this correlation. Possibly there was no in-depth study because the totality of the territorial brand in the context of regional development was not understood. In this sense, the study of Almeida (2018) adds value to the discussion. The study undertaken makes it possible to say that the territorial brand can include the SDG in generating value to the process of territorial and regional development in an interdisciplinary way from a critical approach, such as, for example, the Cultural Studies approach.

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