UDC: UDK: 711.45:659.126
doi:10.5379/urbani-izziv-en-2024-35-01-05

Received: 18 January 2024
Accepted: 13 May 2024

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Business improvement districts and their impact on territorial brands: A case study analysis

Numerous cities worldwide employ business improvement districts (BIDs) to manage their central areas. This article analyses the contribution of BIDs to cities' territorial brands. Employing a case study methodology, we utilize the "territorial brand in regional development" (TBRD) matrix for qualitative analysis of selected BIDs. The findings underscore BIDs' role as a versatile territorial brand in regional development shaping strategic discussions and fostering local, regional, and global reputations. It can be concluded that BIDs significantly enhance the territorial brand of their cities, receiving endorsement across various scales. Furthermore, urban and regional development processes involve political and cultural discussions, and this article revealed that BIDs are an active player in these discussions.

Keywords: business improvement districts, territorial brand, management of urban areas, urban and regional development, urban renewal

1 Introduction

Discussions on urban and regional development encompass a multitude of dimensions. The cultural dimension, as an extension of political influence (Williams, 2011), shapes discussions on the interconnections between the local and the global. The territorial brand in regional development (Almeida, 2018) and business improvement districts (Charenko, 2015; Guimarães, 2021) play crucial roles in complex urban and regional processes.

Business improvement districts (BIDs) are urban governance structures that first emerged in Canada during the 1960s (Mitchell, 2008). At their core is the principle that the private agents of an area, depending on the geographical context, have a financial obligation to contribute to a management structure that will develop activities that promote the attractiveness of the area. Usually, this contribution takes place over five years, after which the BID may or may not be renewed (Guimarães, 2018).

Research underscores that BIDs may participate in the commodification of urban areas through diverse mechanisms, such as the privatization of public spaces and urban infrastructure, revitalization efforts (Serin et al., 2020), or institutionalization of regions (Zimmerbauer, 2013), including districts. This involvement generates economic impacts (Dotti et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2023) and contributes to the establishment of city regions (Salder, 2020).

This study examines the role of BIDs as semi-private entities in shaping the territorial brand of areas they intervene in and contributing to the overall place branding of cities. The significance of BIDs has been evident at the international level, mainly from projects implemented in the United States. Furthermore, their importance is underscored by substantial influence on decision-making within urban planning. Notably, the activities carried out by BIDs have evolved over time (Silva & Cachinho, 2021), going beyond functional aspects, encompassing interventions such as beautification initiatives in the area intervened in and involvement in strategic urban planning decisions that may reshape the urban governance structure. Thus, BIDs are not merely public-private entities; instead, they are integral participants in regional and urban governance.

Thus, we position BIDs as integral components of governance, placing them within the framework described by some authors as quasi-public entities (Ratcliffe & Flanagan, 2004; Zieberth, 2020). By engaging in activities that influence an area's character, BIDs help improve its economic environment, differentiate it from competing areas, and actively participate in creating a territorial brand for the development zone. This contribution extends beyond economic aspects to encompass ethnocultural diversity, recognized as an asset in contemporary urban society (Schmiz, 2017), influencing place management strategies (Anholt, 2010) and urban creative activities (Uršič, 2021).

This article presents evidence of the role of BIDs in governance. Thus, it focuses on the specific aspect of the territorial brand, hypothesizing that BIDs reflect the territorial brand strategy in their activity. From this perspective, the symbolic value of the territorial brand is acknowledged, emphasizing the coordination and participation of diverse social actors and local narratives within the framework of a brand (Almeida, 2018). These brands play a role in the sense of belonging (Martin & Capelli, 2018; Pedeliento & Kavaratzis, 2019; Jain et al., 2022), in boundaries (Scott & Sohn, 2019) as spaces defined by power relations (Raffestin, 1993), and in territorial identity (Jiménez-Medina et al., 2020; Ramos & Royuela, 2020). Territorial brands are also integrated into urban branding initiatives aimed at shaping the identity of places influenced by urban imagination (Donald & Kofman, 2008; Kourtit et al., 2020). This extends beyond traditional city marketing (Gotham, 2007) and its related activities.

Employing a multiple case study methodology (see Yin, 2015), this article examines BIDs within the English context. It uses the "territorial brand in regional development" (TBRD) matrix developed by Almeida (2024). This matrix has been previously used in the context of branding literature. In this research, this framework is applied to urban studies, using information collected from websites.

2 Background

2.1 Business improvement districts

The dynamic evolution of cities is manifested in the reshaping of their hierarchical structure. BIDs play a pivotal role in this restructuring scenario, serving as revitalization mechanisms initiated by entrepreneurs within specific urban areas and authorized by public authorities to legitimize their actions. Although research on BIDs has surged since the early 2000s, it predominantly remains an Anglo-American focus (Silva et al., 2022).

From a broad perspective, BIDs are perceived as urban regeneration initiatives (Grail et al., 2020). Guimarães (2021) identifies four dimensions in the literature on BIDs: a) urban governance, b) policy transfer, c) type of BIDs and areas of implementation, and d) developed activities. These dimensions

form BIDs as a neoliberal intervention mechanism in urban spaces (Wee, 2016; Richner & Olesen, 2019).

Research on BIDs in urban governance emphasizes the transformative effects of BID implementation on the governance structure of each area. The success of BID projects hinges significantly on achieving consensus among stakeholders from public and private domains, often materialized through public-private partnerships. These partnerships concurrently entail a diminishing role of the state in delivering public services, signalling a shift from government to governance (Cook, 2009). Because BIDs implement public activities and services, Justice and Skelcher (2009) characterize them as quasi-governmental entities.

Three groups categorize the involvement of BIDs in the urban governance of a given territory (Morçöl et al., 2014). First, BIDs are viewed as instruments of public policies aligned with retail-led urban regeneration strategies (Guimarães, 2021). Second, BIDs are analysed as key players in the urban governance of their operating areas (Briffault, 1999). Finally, BIDs are considered private entities governing public spaces. Despite not directly impacting the public sector, their modus operandi mirrors those of the private sector, yet they wield managerial control over delimited public areas (De Magalhães, 2014), sparking discussions on their accountability for their actions and performance (Farhat, 2012; Unger, 2017).

The BID model has gained international prominence as more countries adopt this intervention approach. Some research delves into the BID policy transfer process (Peyroux et al., 2012). First, Toronto and the development in the Bloor West Village Business Improvement Area is the acknowledged birthplace of the BID model (Charenko, 2015). Second, cities such as New York highlight the significance of BIDs, influencing other countries to adopt a similar model (Sutton, 2014). Key actors in BID transfer, such as decision-makers and urban planners, have emphasized BIDs as best-practice models for revitalizing central areas (Stein et al., 2017). Research also focuses on the geographic contexts in which BIDs are adopted, including South Africa (Kaye-Essien, 2020), Germany (Kreutz, 2009), and Sweden (Cook & Ward, 2012). Each country's adoption of the BID model requires specific legislation, particularly to regulate mandatory contributions from entrepreneurs for executing BID business plans. This adaptation to legal frameworks results in BID variations, highlighting specific national, regional, and local features.

Regarding the third axis of research, concerning the type of existing BIDs and their implementation areas, cities are commonly regarded as privileged spaces for BID projects (Ruffin, 2008; Grail et al., 2020). BIDs predominantly occur in urban environments to increase the viability of existing businesses (Sutton, 2014; Pitkeathley, 2019). Some research-specific examples such as Milwaukee (Ward, 2007), Malmö (Kronkvist & Ivert, 2020), or New York (Yoon & Byun, 2020) concentrate on more circumscribed areas such as "downtown" (Ward, 2007; Unger, 2017) or the "town centre" (Coca-Stefaniak & Carroll, 2015).

The fourth dimension emphasized in studies focuses on the activities developed within BIDs, which have experienced notable evolution in recent years. It is crucial to recognize that, although these activities are categorizable, they are diverse and closely linked to the characteristics of each area and the project management structure's capacity. In essence, the financial resources allocated to the project significantly influence the prioritization of activities.

Considering these foundational assumptions, a discerning typology of initiatives emerges, primarily geared toward enhancing the commercial environment. This comprehensive typology (Gross, 2005; MacDonald et al., 2013), positions the BID model at the forefront as an ideal approach to retail-led urban regeneration (Lloyd et al., 2003) or as a powerful economic development model (Elmedni et al., 2018). Common activities undertaken by BIDs are often encapsulated by the label "clean, green, and safe" (De Magalhães, 2012). Regarding BIDs in the UK (Silva & Cachinho, 2021), their scope can extend further, including participation in urban requalification projects, business lobbying, collaboration in social and community initiatives, digital training, and place marketing and branding. In this regard, emphasis should be placed on marketing campaigns and animation initiatives, which contribute to improving the BID area's attractiveness. Within the conceptual framework of place branding and territorial brand literature, further exploration is needed to understand the role of BIDs in establishing and/or consolidating a territorial brand.

Regarding the theoretical analysis of BIDs, two other aspects merit attention. The first is that there is a growing body of critical literature on BIDs. Studies by Richner and Olesen (2019) and Valli and Hammami (2021) criticize BIDs for potentially privatizing and gentrifying the areas they intervene in. The discussion on whether BID interventions improve urban environments without neglecting access for the entire population to the area is of paramount interest. Second, legal frameworks of BIDs vary between the different countries where the model is implemented. Recognizing differences between BIDs in North America, Britain, and other areas, as well as variations between English and Scottish BIDs, we focused on established BIDs in England, which share a basic legal structure. We intentionally excluded London BIDs due to particular aspects of their legal framework.

2.2 Place branding and territorial brand

The terms *place branding*, *place brand*, and *territorial brand* are subject to debate (Anholt, 2010). Almeida (2018) argues that in Brazil place branding is viewed as strategic brand management rather than the product itself (a territorial brand). However, in countries such as Portugal, the terms *place branding* and *territorial brand* are used interchangeably, suggesting that the terminology of place branding is context-dependent, influenced by geographical location (Ntounis & Kavaratzis, 2017). Furthermore, Anholt (2010) emphasizes that place branding diverges from the concept of a brand in marketing literature because it entails managing the reputation and character of a place, extending beyond a mere distinctive sign. These discussions are crucial in examining place branding and territorial brands because a lack of clarity can confound readers specialized in brands (Almeida, 2018). Complexities arise with the terms *place*, *region*, and *territory*, each bearing distinct meanings in geography (Raffestin, 1993; Santos, 1996). When applied in place branding without a nuanced understanding, theoretical and practical errors may occur. Therefore, the concept of a territorial brand in regional development involves a cyclical process of establishing or constructing power relations (Almeida, 2018). However, it transcends mere social constructs and relationships within and beyond the territory. Territorial brands strategically serve to legitimize the discourses of actors engaged in the governance of a given territory (Almeida, 2018), encompassing several spheres.

Within territorial and regional development, the brand-territory relationship is analysed from three perspectives: brands in the territory, brand territories, and territory as a brand (Almeida, 2015). Place branding aligns with the latter, signifying a management approach that incorporates the territory within the realm of brands. It is crucial to recognize that, similar to the product and brand distinction (Kotler, 2001), the terms *place branding* and *territorial brand* are not synonymous. Place branding involves the management of a collective product (a territory), which may or not be branded (Rainisto, 2003; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2006; Anholt, 2007), with the territorial brand emerging as the product of place branding (Almeida, 2018).

This fundamental understanding is significant because the territorial brand serves as a focal point in discussions spanning branding, marketing, political diplomacy, urban-regional development, administration, and more, affirming its interdisciplinary nature. Whereas traditional literature on place branding examines the brand from an economic perspective (Kotler, 2001; Anholt, 2007; Kavaratzis, 2015), there is an increasing exploration of place branding within the contexts of public policies (Lucarelli, 2018) and cultural studies (Almeida, 2018).

In this context, it is crucial to distinguish between a brand and a logo because a logo is a component of a brand, not the brand itself (Aaker, 1996). In many instances of territorial brands, the focus is on place marketing (Kotler, 2001) for economic development, often seen as isolated strategies of self-promotion by local authorities. It is noteworthy that in Latin America the brand is often approached as a promotional element, resulting in its ephemerality (Almeida, 2018). Conversely, in Europe, the brand is viewed institutionally from a long-term perspective (Semprini, 2010). Applying the brand to a territory without specific management (place branding) or solely for identification, irrespective of the size of the territory, often results in a transient logo rather than a lasting brand (Almeida, 2018).

Within this conceptual framework, a territorial brand in regional development is construed as a "set of symbols, cultures, and identities transformed into distinctive signs (brands), visual, discursive, or mixed (visual-discursive), in a planned or organic manner, facilitating the formulation of strategies that engender power relations over, within, and beyond the territory" (Almeida, 2018, p. 244). Strategies are the means to achieve specific objectives (Seitan, 2018), including establishing, maintaining, or altering a territorial brand, which can strategically preserve territorial identity (Almeida, 2018) and modern urban assets.

3 Reasearch methodology

A significant part of the articles on BIDs presupposes a strong connection between these structures and the territorial brand of the locations they intervene in. We anchor the methodology of our article in the inductive method, using a qualitative approach, and in secondary data by analysing the official documents of four English BIDs: Manchester, Bristol, Leicester, and Norwich. All the cities analysed are in England; Manchester is located in northwestern England, Leicester is in the East Midlands, Norwich is in eastern England, and Bristol is in the southwest. It should also be noted that we chose not to include the London region in this analysis because the BIDs in this area fall under a different urban governance structure, making them difficult to compare with BIDs in other cities. Except for Norwich, which has a population of less than 100,000, the remaining cities are medium-sized (Table 1).

The first city, although it is the largest among the sample, has the smallest number of levy payers within the delimited BID implementation area. This information does not diminish the significance of the area, given that it largely consists of the primary commercial streets of the city and the surrounding metropolitan region. The remaining three BIDs cover an area

Table 1: General information about the cities and BIDs analysed.

City	Population	Number of terms	Levy payers (number)	Budget (yearly average, GBP)	Area of implementation
Manchester	389,000 (metropolitan district)	Two (2013–2018, 2018–2023)	+400	1,000,000	City centre
Bristol	323,000 (unitary authority)	One (2017–2022)	763	1,212,000	City centre
Leicester	230,000 (unitary authority)	One (2018–2023)	714	850,000 (4,268,989 in five-year period)	City centre
Norwich	96,000 (non-metropolitan district)	Two (2012–2017, 2017–2022)	+700	1,147,466	City centre

Source: authors.

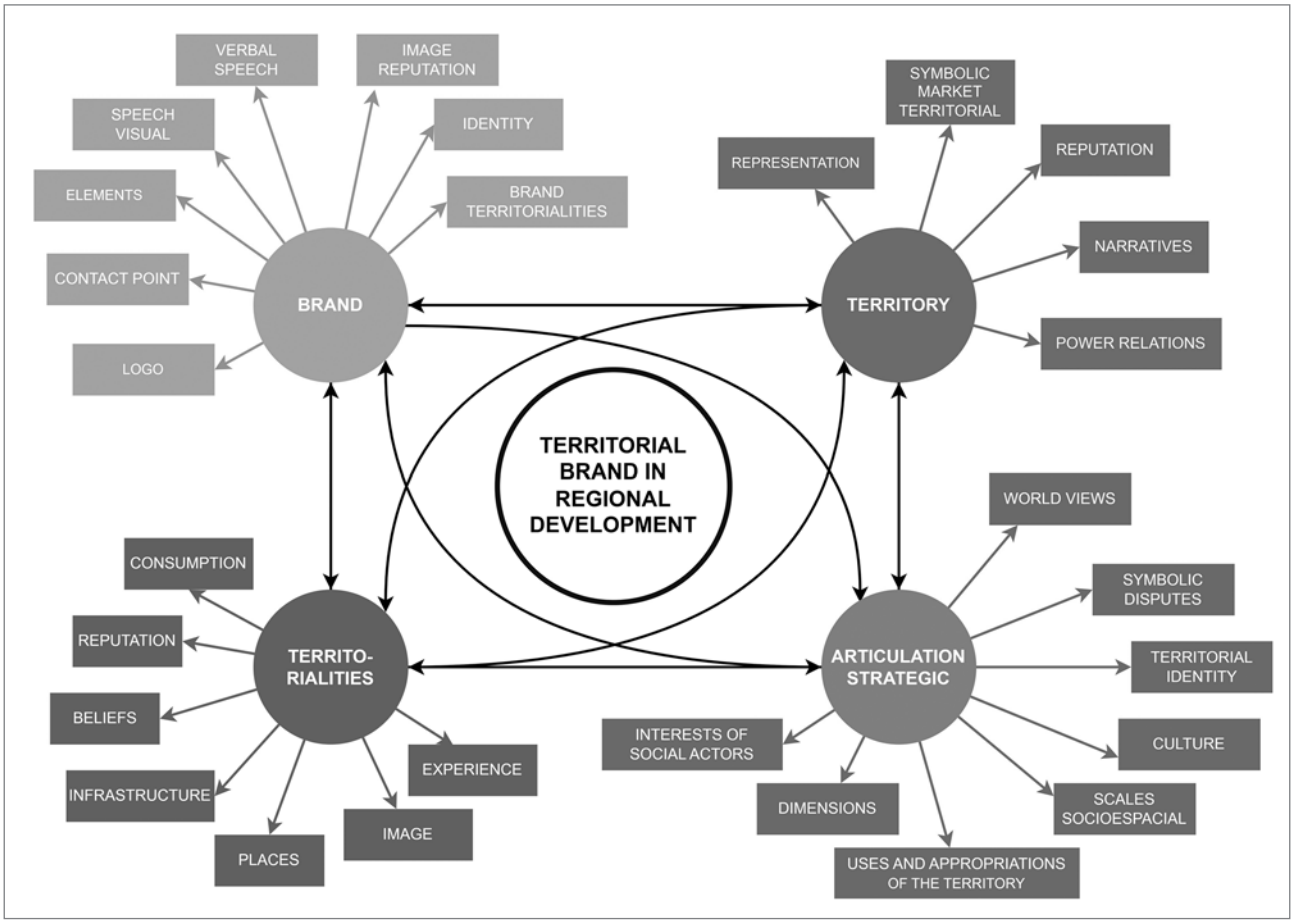

Figure 1: TBRD matrix (source: Almeida, 2024).

with around seven hundred levy payers. The annual budget of the three BIDs is also similar, around a million pounds a year. Acknowledging the BIDs' varied urban contexts, central locations, and broad scopes beyond commerce, these four BIDs become more comparable with one another.

This study focuses on the information available on the official websites of each BID. The research protocol employs four categories related to territorial brand in regional development: brand, territory, territorialities, and strategic articulation. These categories align with the TBRD matrix developed by Almeida (2018, 2024; Figure 1), in which each category is underpinned by distinct qualitative micro-variables. The TBRD matrix provides a framework for analysing territories with a territorial brand in the regional development context, extending beyond economic considerations.

Data analysis was performed using the TBRD matrix (Almeida, 2018, 2024) to investigate the relationships between brand and territory. When considering a BID as a generic territorial

Table 2: The brand axis.

Element	Manchester	Bristol	Leicester	Norwich
Logo				
Logo elements	Heart symbol, red/grey	Highlighted letter B, blue	Flower (five petals), magenta	Set of arrows, symmetrical elements, movement
Brand territorialities	City centre	City	City centre	Local to national
Brand identity	Supporting inner-city vitality, economic success, and Manchester's public agencies. The aim is to improve operations and help attract additional customers through a range of activities, events, and services.	Introducing significant improvements for the benefit of taxpayers. It aims to ensure that the city centre is increasingly known for being safe, attractive, and welcoming to all that work, study, live, and play in the city.	Transforming Leicester's city centre into a better place to live, work, visit, study, and do business	Positioning Norwich as one of Britain's leading cities
Verbal/visual discourse	We are the place where the private and public sectors meet.	Making Bristol an even better place for everyone	Transforming the city centre	The city of stories
Brand image/ reputation	A consortium of four hundred leading retail and hospitality brands in the central shopping area	Collaboration of 763 levy payers. Delivered by Visit West. Registered in England and Wales (no. 3715280).	Representing 714 companies and organizations	Extensive coverage in respected publications such as The Guardian and The Metro, and promotion through 360 digital marketing campaigns. Norwich's reputation as a warm and welcoming city, and one of the UK's best working, living, and shopping environments
Brand points of contact	Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, telephone, e-mail	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, e-mail	E-mail, telephone, Twitter	LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, e-mail, telephone

Source: authors, based on information from the BIDs' websites.

brand, this matrix can be applied to highlight the relationships in the BID's spaces. The research was conducted from August 2021 to October 2023, being part of international research on correlations between BIDs, territorial brand, and urban-regional development. Despite BIDs being prevalent in numerous countries, many are still deliberating the model's potential integration into their urban planning frameworks, including Brazil (Chede Neto, 2021) and Portugal (Guimarães & Cachinho, 2020).

4 Empirical section

4.1 Brand axis

The elements that constitute a territorial brand were found in the BIDs surveyed (Table 2).

All the BIDs analysed have a logo, indicating the graphic representation of a brand. The elements vary in shape and colour (Table 2). The brand's territorialities are addressed at three delimited scales: city centre, city, and country; thus, ranging from local to national coverage. Regarding the identities of their brands, BIDs prioritize the vitality of the city centre to generate transformations and a reputation for the city. Only the Norwich BID highlighted that it is concerned with expanding the local reputation to the national scale.

When creating a specific identity, brand discourses are involved as the discourses found in BIDs: public-private partnership (Manchester), local improvements (Bristol), urban transformation (Leicester), and local narratives (Norwich). These discourses generate a reputation anchored in the brands, con-

Table 3: The territory axis.

	Manchester	Bristol	Leicester	Norwich
Boundaries				
Power relations	Economic and political	Economic, political, and cultural	Economic and political	Economic and political
Representations	Events, heart (feeling of belonging), variety of colours, logo	Blue (trust, seriousness), events, logo. Thanks to the investment and involvement of our contributors, we are creating a better (city) Bristol: more caring, more welcoming, safer, cleaner, wonderfully diverse, and better promoted.	Magenta (feeling of belonging), events, logo	Events, icons, logo
Territorial symbolic market	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reputation	A consortium of four hundred leading retail and hospitality brands	Collaboration of 763 levy payers	Represents 714 companies and organizations	Endorsement by The Guardian and The Metro
Narratives	We connect the people, projects, and ideas that are driving Manchester's city--centre economy.	Contributors working together to make Bristol an even better place for everyone	Transform Leicester's city centre into a better place to live, work, visit, study, and do business.	City of Stories. Helping Norwich prosper.

Source: authors, based on information from the BIDs' websites.

tributors, and companies involved, and endorsement of local and regional media (*The Guardian*, *The Metro*). Bristol BID also uses the endorsement strategy on its official website, which highlights the registration of this BID in England and Wales. Moreover, social networks, e-mail, and telephone are the main points of contact between the brand (BID) and its consumer public, facilitating interaction between them (Table 2).

4.2 Territory axis

Each BID represents a specific territory, presented on maps on the respective websites (Table 3). This highlights the limits of spaces produced on a local scale, exposing a territory delimited by and based on power relations, mainly economic and political.

Only the Bristol BID made evident the cultural dimension on its website with the use of a set of icons such as pictograms of the Porto brand in Portugal (Figures 2, 3). The representations found in the brands concerning the territories refer to local events promoted by the BID to generate local consumption. The brand is used as a representation of the BID to generate a sense of belonging. For this, the brand's resources are activated: colours (blue = confidence, magenta = charisma, red = emotion, black = sobriety and knowledge), shapes (logos and icons), tourist attractions, aiming to increase local consumption, and advertising language (a better, more attentive, more welcoming, safer, cleaner, wonderfully diverse, and better-promoted city).

4.3 Territoriality axis (dual: brand and social actors)

The relationships between the different stakeholders in each of the areas analysed generate different territorialities, which involve the uses and appropriation of the territory to generate a feeling of belonging (Table 4).

The category "place of the territoriality axis" refers to the spatial scale of the BIDs, which are all of a local nature (municipal scale), referring specifically to the city centre. Thus, the BIDs analysed focus on a micro-scale smaller than the local scale, being a fragment. Regarding the reputation of BIDs, it can be said that they are consolidated and endorsed in different ways (number of contributors, businesses, and networks of social actors). Another element involved is the belief that they

Figure 2: Bristol BID homepage (source: https://bristolcitycentrebid.co.uk/)

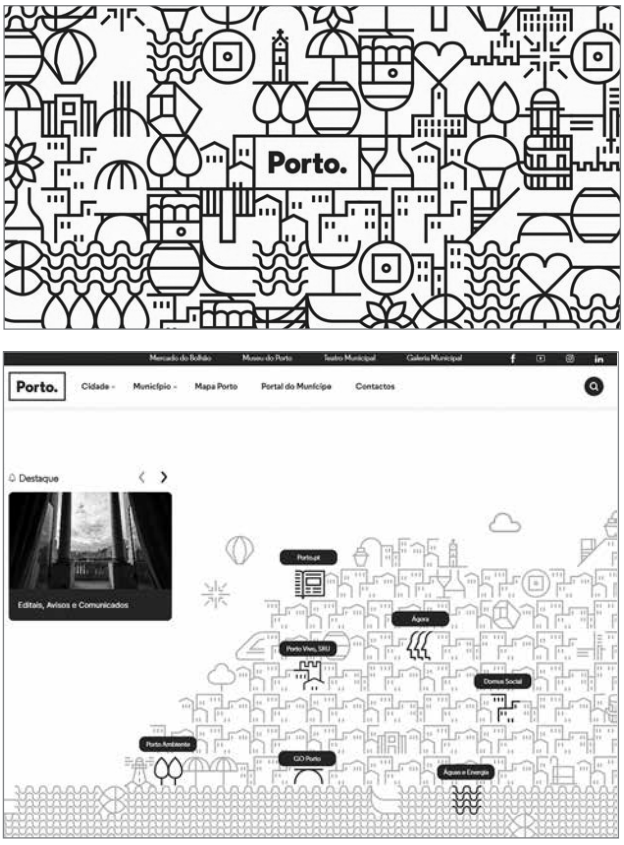

Figure 3: Pictograms of the Porto city brand (source: https://www.cm-porto.pt/marca-porto/marca-porto and http://www.jornalarquitectos.pt/en/journal/uid-4cbbb98c/urbi-et-uber).

generate territorialities, as well as the public-private partnership (Manchester) and the promise of becoming a better place (Bristol and Leicester) so that the city can prosper (Norwich). To sustain these promises, BIDs need an infrastructure that supports and justifies their territoriality, whether through the provision of services, security, or initiatives, or aiming for a pleasant generally sustainable look to promote the vitality of that space (BID area) in particular. However, although the focus is on the space produced collectively by the BID (the local micro-scale), the promise is made for the entire city (the local macro scale). Economic consumption in the BID's territory is evident, with cultural consumption taken as a secondary element. To maintain its image, the BID makes use of endorsements: percentages of approval for installing the BID in each area, who manages it, and whom the BID represents. These are ways that social actors find to maintain their territoriality in the territory that emerges from the implementation of a BID. Finally, there is the experience element, emphasizing the events agenda and brand ambassadors.

4.4 Strategic articulation axis

The analysis of the strategic articulation axis involves internal and external scenarios. In all the BIDs analysed, although the view of the social actors is comprehensive, they mainly direct their interests to the economic sphere (Table 5).

There are symbolic disputes because one place presents itself as better than the other. In this case, each BID mentions that it is in the "best place in town" or it is the "best BID in town." Overall, the territorial identity of the city is evidenced, showing relations between the brand and territory. The socio-spatial scale is local and local-municipal, but the Norwich BID has shown interest in the local-national scale. The interests of the social actors are mainly economic, but the public-private partnership that forms the BIDs reveals other dimensions (political and cultural), uses, and appropriations of the territory (business space, distinct part of the city centre, negotiations between the actors involved in BIDs, and space between public and private for consumption, including tourist consumption).

5 Discussion

The BIDs analysed are classified as a generic territorial brand. Recognizing BIDs as generic territorial brands reveals the intricate power relations within their areas. These territories initially arise from political and economic ties, gradually encompassing additional connections in cultural, environmental, and tourism domains. We would emphasize that a territorial brand goes beyond a mere logo or visual identity because brands linked to territories have territorial protagonism. One of the fundamental roles of a territorial brand is to legitimize the actions of the various social actors within a specific region. Thus, to establish a meaningful relationship between a BID and a territorial brand, it is crucial to recognize that BIDs are established in spaces delimited by the territorialities of social actors and that a specific territorial identity for the BID is created during the process. Within these defined boundaries

Table 4: The territoriality axis.

	Manchester	Bristol	Leicester	Norwich
Place	City centre	City centre	City centre	City centre
Reputation	Consolidated	Consolidated	Consolidated	Consolidated
Beliefs	Partnership between public and private sectors	Making Bristol an even better place for everyone	Transforming Leicester's city centre	Making the city of Norwich prosper
Infrastructure	Range of business support services	Promote the BID area as a safe and pleasant place to work, live, and enjoy leisure	Run various projects and initiatives to help businesses attract customers	Make a clear positive impact on the vitality of the city centre
Consumption	In addition to economic consumption, there is concern about perceptual consumption.	In addition to economic consumption, there is concern about perceptual consumption.	In addition to economic consumption, there is concern about perceptual consumption.	In addition to economic consumption, there is concern about perceptual consumption.
Image	Representing the interests of the levy payers	The sidebar is similar to the Porto brand (icons).	Eighty-five percent of businesses voted yes to the BID.	Run by local businesses for local businesses and has proven to be a highly inventive, energetic, and progressive organization.
Experience	Top retail and hospitality brands in the city	Create a cleaner and greener city with a better location, parking, and ambassadors	Experience through projects and events agenda	Norwich experience

Source: authors, based on information from the BIDs' websites.

Table 5: Strategic articulation axis.

	Manchester	Bristol	Leicester	Norwich
Vision of the world	Embracing	Embracing	Embracing	Embracing
Symbolic disputes	Best place in the city	Best place in the city	Best place in the city	Best place in the city
Territorial identity	Associated with the city	Associated with the city	Associated with the city	Associated with the city
Culture	At the local level, these cities' heritage is strongly connected with the industry sector, except for Bristol with its maritime heritage. All BIDs aim to reposition themselves as post-industrial cities, focusing on retail (and consumption), new industries (such as creative industries), culture, and arts. At the national level, there is a neo-liberalization stance that can be traced to the last decades of the twentieth century, in which a public–private partnership culture evolved, of which town centre management schemes and business improvement districts are paradigmatic examples.			
Socio-spatial scales	Local (part of the city)	Local–municipal	Local–municipal	Local–national
Uses and appropriations of the territory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dimensions	Economic, cultural, political, environmental, social	Economic, cultural, political, environmental, social	Economic, cultural, political, environmental, social	Economic, cultural, political, environmental, social
Interests of social actors	Economic	Economic	Economic	Economic

Source: authors, based on information from the BIDs' websites.

(tangible and intangible), BIDs not only implement physical improvements and development programs, but also establish a territorial identity of their own. This identity, even if it does not conventionally represent a city, region, or country, can be considered a form of "territorial brand".

To be considered as such, the BID analysed must encompass the four axes of the TBRD, which also confirms that the BID is a territorial brand. Because the BID is a territorial brand, the application of the TBRD matrix is justified, in line with Almeida's (2024) view of the layers of power relations that are laid out in these brands. In other words, BIDs create a reputation and an image associated with that specific area within the wider urban context. Therefore, by analysing BIDs as a "territorial brand", managed in a public-private format, we are recognizing the impact they have on shaping and promoting

the identity of a defined urban space. This perspective emphasizes the role of BIDs in defining the image and projecting the distinctive characteristics of a defined area, thus contributing to the construction of the micro-local territorial brand.

From this perspective, the TBRD matrix is a useful tool for examining the power dynamics of territorial brands because it specifically addresses this topic. Given the central role of BIDs in shaping identity and promoting distinct area characteristics, using the TBRD matrix allows a more comprehensive assessment of BIDs' impact on urban power dynamics. This approach is vital for understanding the interplay between BIDs and territorial brands in shaping urban development, including both visible and hidden power relations. The cyclical process of power dynamics within BIDs' territorial brands is crucial for understanding the conditions necessary for successful ballot renewals of the five-year term of each BID. These relationships reveal the territorialities of the social actors that shape a collective space oriented toward product and culture consumption. In this context, the BID brand serves to legitimate the discourses of social actors, thereby fostering a triadic competition: among the generic territorial brands of BIDs, among the BIDs themselves, and among the actors implementing BIDs (public and private entities). The legitimation of the BID brand through the discourse of the territorial brand aligns with Almeida's (2018) assumptions regarding the utilization, appropriation, and dynamics of the territory. This strategy is in alignment with the third concept, termed "territory as a brand", as proposed by Almeida (2015).

Two perspectives emerge regarding BIDs. One involves BIDs in the management of a place's reputation and image (place branding), and other necessitates the product of this management process, the territorial brand. This distinction underscores the importance of separating the terms *place branding* and *territorial brand* because the former involves management and the latter represents the product. The English BIDs analysed use the territorial brand in the context of regional development, strategically employing unique symbolism to transform identities into distinctive signs (the territorial brand). This management, conducted through place branding, involves planned and intentional efforts, facilitating the formulation of strategies that generate power relations over, in, and beyond the territory, as noted by Almeida (2018).

The TBRD matrix analysis further highlights the significance of BIDs in city place branding, encompassing a multiscale and multisectoral analysis. On the one hand, BIDs are developed in strictly delimited areas. In the analysis of the brand and the territory, this information is presented, with the city centre standing out as the area of intervention of the respective BID. However, even though the brand's territoriality is associated with this area, the brand's reach is broader because it contributes to the recognition of the city itself and improvement in national rankings. Although the English BIDs have an obvious economic component, insofar as they are directly financed by entrepreneurs, they aim to contribute not only to improving the economic environment but also to increasing the attractiveness of the areas as places to live and engage in leisure. It therefore appears that the territory where BIDs are developed is not the only one that is intended to be improved.

At this level, BID interventions are like urban acupuncture, insofar as the scope of the brand identity refers to the production of multiplier effects that transcend the streets that are part of the BID. The existence of these multiscale and multisectoral elements extends into the territoriality axis, where the city centre is simultaneously highlighted as the intervention area, but its impacts transcend that area. In this understanding, the BID produces positive impacts not only in the city centre (the area of intervention), but also in its surroundings, and in the character of the city itself. Only the Bristol BID logo refers to the specific area where the BID has been developed; namely, Broadmead. The logos of the other three BIDs do not refer only to their specific area, but to the city. On the one hand, this means that the brand's reach is intended to have a supra-municipal scale and, on the other hand, that the brand is built particularly for outsiders, rather than for locals - that is, the population that lives or works in the BID area.

This comprehensiveness of the effects produced by BIDs makes sense when one sees that BIDs are not mere tools for economic revitalization, and that they directly contribute to the governance of urban space (Briffault, 1999). Thus, BIDs are present in the strategic articulation axis, above all due to the need to articulate the interests of the different private and public actors, but they also fall within the territory axis when recognizing the twofold power relations that emanate from the existence of the BIDs. First, this relates to the aforementioned fact that the coexistence of different actors, often with different objectives, within a BID structure means that compromises are necessary. Second, the presence of these different actors and the relative freedom of action in each area, which is public in its genesis, leads the BIDs to be considered governance agents with a certain degree of power; this aspect has been particularly highlighted by authors that question the accountability of the activities developed by the BID (Farhat, 2012; Unger, 2017).

Once the BID operates in a certain area of the city centre, that area can acquire a territorial brand. In this case, the emphasized layer of power in BIDs is economic, but there are other layers that are not so obvious (e.g., social) or those that remain strategically hidden (e.g., political). When referring to the relationship between BIDs and a territorial brand, it

is important to make it clear that it is not about the territory having characteristics that make it a brand, but rather the idea that, when the territory is perceived and promoted as an entity with its own identity, it is effectively transformed into a territorial brand.

The formation of a brand for a city centre, as a result of the operations of a BID, is a crucial aspect and demands an in-depth analysis carried out by using the TBRD matrix. It can have significant implications, not only in terms of economic potential, but also in terms of social cohesion, attracting investment, and improving quality of life for local residents in areas where BIDs are established.

This type of formation of a brand for a certain area of the city centre goes beyond simply creating an image or reputation for a place, and it is in this sense that the TBRD matrix applies. One can more easily see, for example, the attraction of investment and the stimulation of tourism and local commerce as a result of this territorial brand coming from the BID. However, when the TBRD matrix is applied to the BID as a territorial brand, it goes beyond simple visual perception and its (more direct) link to economic development. The phenomenon of the "BID as a territorial brand" places it as a driver of social, cultural, and public-private development, although the scope of the impacts may differ between BIDs.

6 Conclusion

BIDs play an increasingly vital role in managing central urban areas globally. BIDs transcend being mere public-private entities, intricately woven into urban governance. This heightened engagement is notably pronounced in countries with established BID processes. A parallel scenario unfolds with territorial brands, which are solidly present in Europe and North America, but are ephemeral elsewhere (e.g., in Brazil in a nascent stage). Leveraging Almeida's (2018, 2024) TBRD matrix, correlations among social actors, territories, and BIDs are visually apparent, affirming its efficacy as an analytical tool within the BID context.

This study investigated whether BIDs impact the territorial brand of the locations they intervene in. We observed that BIDs' online communication channels serve a dual purpose: functionally transmitting multidirectional information and acting as a catalyst for establishing and consolidating their territorial brand. The areas analysed are delimited by territorial brands, thus highlighting the physical limits of the areas the BIDs intervene in and showing a territory delimited by and from power relations. These relationships are mainly economic and political. Different relationships generate different territorialities in the use and appropriation of the territory. The strategic articulations from BIDs involve internal and external scenarios, and directing interests, mainly economic, political, and cultural. It was only possible to reveal these findings by considering BIDs as generic territorial brands, stressing the multiple power relations in the area where they developed.

Overall, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of BIDs and territorial brands in regional development. This interconnected approach between the concepts is novel because it considers BIDs territorial brands in regional development, changing the way BIDs are viewed and managed. For local public authorities and BID managers, the study offers valuable insights by framing a BID as a territorial brand. Thus, managers can develop strategies more comprehensively, viewing the brand as a dynamic entity requiring continuous adaptation. Naming BIDs after cities, such as the Manchester BID or Bristol BID, adds a political dimension to urban space. For citizens, it provides urban strategies and benefits from territorial brands, enhancing the quality of life for those residing or working in BID areas and their surroundings.

Our research demonstrates the contribution of BIDs to their cities' territorial brands and it also shows that the BIDs themselves are beneficiaries of the city's own brand. This cyclical relationship involves BIDs, territorial brands, and semi-private urban management, influencing territorial use and expanding to surrounding regions. Urban and regional development processes, integrating political and cultural discussions, include territorial brands. Future studies could explore BIDs in other countries with the BID model for comparative analysis.

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