

## Formation of the Territorial Brand Under Gender Consideration\*

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Nowadays, the issues of the territorial force of attraction and strategic development are growing more urgent. Territorial branding is one of the crucial stages in this process. It highlights the real and creates new narratives of the particular territory in time and space. The systematization of scientific sources showed that the theoretical and practical studies on territorial branding are contradictory due to the influence of many stakeholders preventing from elaborating a unique concept for territorial development. While territorial development is a complex system depending on the residents' perceptions and attitudes, the issues of gender aspects of regional identity are still poorly developed. Therefore, the formation of the territorial brand is becoming relevant due to the necessity to balance the interest of different social groups. This paper summarizes the arguments and counterarguments within the scientific discussion on the territorial brand's formation under consideration of gender features. This research goal is to consider the role of gender features in the mechanism of territorial brand formation. The study subject is the gender features in territorial units. The methodological base of the study involves the abstraction technique, generalization method, synthesis, graphical methods, and system analysis. In the study frameworks, the authors unveiled the differences in information perception between men and women. The main gender inequalities influencing the attitude to the territory were considered. The findings showed that territorial brand is not only the tool for promoting territory. It formulates territorial identity, mitigates and overcomes gender inequalities, and increases competitive advantages of territory.

*Keywords:* gender, gender inequality, branding, territory, territorial identity, territorial brand.

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**Introduction.** In today's context, the conditions of the stiff competition challenge the governments and their territories (regions, cities, towns, etc.) to have a distinction from others. The national and territorial strong brands is one of the most effective instruments for competitive struggle. Herewith the territorial brand is considered to be the most important intangible asset in the economy. Brand formation covers the economic, political, and social effects. Indeed, a strong territorial brand allows increasing the competitive advantages of its territory since it requires the improvement of the social, ecological, and economic conditions, increasing the people's welfare living in this territory. It stands to mention that any territory has its own identity depending on its cultural, historical, political, ecological, economic, social, etc., features. Besides, the territorial

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identity could express the affiliation to a particular territory or its perception by society.

The territorial brand is more than a logotype and slogan. It is the basis of territorial positioning. The territorial promotion requires distinguishing the identifying characteristics, territorial identity, philosophy of citizens, etc., to reflect the territorial potential properly. Therefore, the territorial brand designing is the instrument of innovative regional economic development by forming a positive territorial image attracting more tourists, investments, skilled labor workforce, etc.

**Problem statement.** The territorial brand formation is unique for each territory. It requires understanding the lifeworld of society living on this territory. Understanding society includes accepting gender features and stereotypes such as masculinity and femininity formed by a particular culture. Remarkably, strong gender expression could result in social inequality and hierarchy. Moreover, it could create figurative boundaries between different societies and compromise the territorial image. Therefore, it is relevant to consider the mechanism of territorial brand formation under gender stereotypes.

Recently, the issues of territorial branding have attracted more attention from domestic and international scholars [8; 1; 23; 25], businesses, governments, influencers, and other stakeholders. Scientific literature presents many studies that address issues of national brand formation [20; 22], country reputation, the influence of globalization on country image [10; 12], perception of national brand on international scene [24], theoretical and practical aspects of territorial branding [16; 2]. Besides, there are several studies focused on the elaboration of the territorial brand models such as destination branding [19], model of city brand management [6], relational network brand model [7], etc. However, the systematization of scientific sources showed that gender features have been hardly investigated in the theory of territorial branding.

**This study aims** to consider the mechanism of territorial brand formation in the view of gender features. The study involved the abstraction technique, generalization method, synthesis, graphical methods, and system analysis to achieve the research goal.

**Results of the research.** The territorial brand aims to establish the credibility of the residents, investors, tourists, businesses, and other stakeholders. The brand promotion and image improvement should be part of the regional strategy that addresses creating favorable conditions for doing business, development of the economic activity, study processes, routing activity, etc.

Following the study [9], theoretical background in branding presents many principles regulating the formation of brands of countries, companies, products, services, etc. Herewith it is appropriate to mention some of them regarding the territorial brand as follows:

- originality – providing the original idea or concept of the brand;
- boundaries – the territorial brand should be promoted in the external environment;
- narrowing – setting a focus on the narrow segment that is the brand core;
- awareness – the brand should make resonance in mass media and attract more attention of society;
- prevalency – the territorial brand should be identifiable with the specific sphere of life;
- word – the specific word or phrase should associate the brand name with this territory;
- advertisement – using different advertisements to promote the brand;
- time – the process of territorial brand formation should be consistent and controlled regularly;
- change – the territorial brand identity may be modified if the primary concept was wrong or other proven grounds;
- authenticity – the territorial brand should gain loyalty by being perceived as something real and genuine.

To ensure success, the formation and promotion of the territorial brand should involve different strategic, PR, advertising, symbolic and strategic tools. Moreover, the territorial brand must comply with different levels of quality as follows:

- functional brand quality – the brand ability to serve its purpose to allow consumers to identify its wants and needs;
- social brand quality – complying to requirements and expectations of social groups;
- individual brand quality – complying to requirements of individuals;
- communicative brand quality – involving and attracting the consumer by its functionality, individual and social features.

In view of the above, it is appropriate to consider the social impact of gender influence on the formation of the territorial brand.

Systematization of literature [13; 14; 15; 17] allowed to determine the main stages of the territorial brand formation such as strategic planning, research practice, development of the territorial brand platform, designing the brand identity, elaborating on creative strategy, development of the media strategy, brand promotion, and monitoring.

The development of a territorial brand depends on different factors. However, it stands to highlight two main groups of factors influencing the territory image as follows:

- 1) objective: geography, history, culture, heritage, social and innovation policies, science and technology potential, investment climate, technological and information potentials, etc.;
- 2) subjective: individual perception of national mentality, features, hospitality, territory attributes, and leaders, etc.

Indeed, the above factors have a direct or indirect impact on the territory's competitiveness and attractiveness. Figure 1 demonstrates that the most attractive regions for inter-state immigrants in 2020 were the regions with big perspective cities such as Dnipro, Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, and the city of Kyiv. Remarkably, the total number of male immigrants was significantly higher than females.

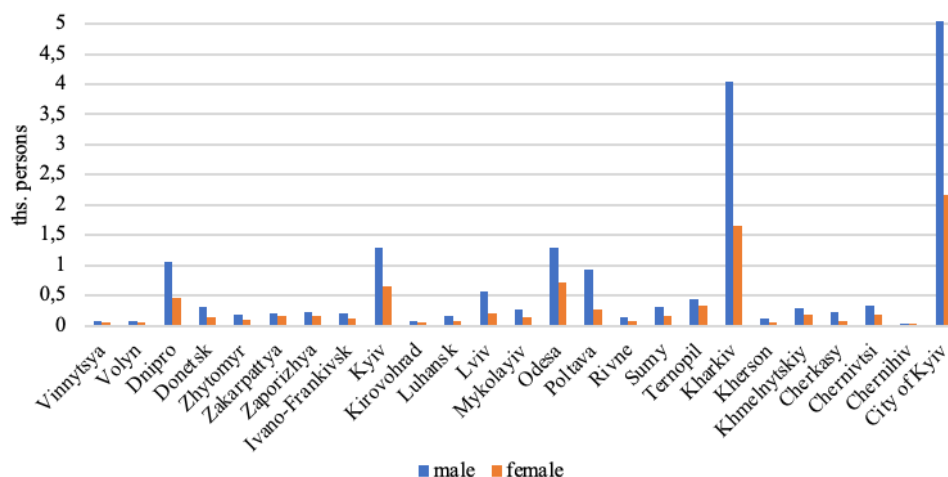


Figure 1. Number of inter-state immigrants by sex in 2020, by region  
Sources: developed by the authors based on [11].

Therefore, formulation of the attractive image and strong brand of this territory, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of territory characteristics and the level of residents' satisfaction. The territory must be fair-shared and handle comfortably for all. It means that all social groups could use the territory space without any barriers.

Following the above, it is appropriate to consider the role of social aspects, especially, gender in territorial brand formation. Remarkably, the demographic imbalances of the territory could be considered as the brand core. It is assumed that the female cities are small and historical, with the prevalence of older people and a bigger share of women. In turn, the male cities are big, business perspective, innovative with high potential for development [5].

Therefore, the territorial brand core formation should consider the categories of prestige, ecology, gastronomy, youths, business, perspective, rest, etc. The territorial brand as the semiotic system, considering the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in brand communication, allows formulating the methodological bases of territorial branding and create the theoretical framework for its concept.

Nowadays, the modern territorial infrastructure considers mostly the interest of the economically active and employed population. However, Figure 2 shows that in 2020 (compared to 2019), the unemployment level in Ukraine increased by 21.6 % among the female population and 14.7 % among men. Therefore, the local authorities should consider and protect their interests since social sensitivity is crucial for favorable living conditions and satisfaction. Moreover, female unemployment is higher. Thus, the territorial brand conception should package an idea to support them in housekeeping and provide special public smart spaces for them.

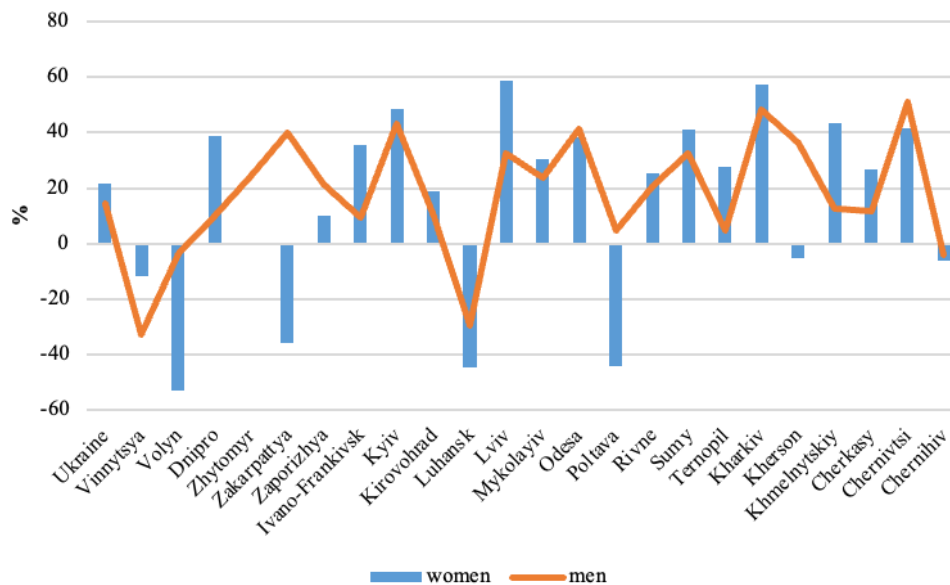


Figure 2 – Unemployment increase (decrease) in 2020 compared to 2019  
 Sources: developed by the authors based on [11].

It is worth noting that the environmental conditions of a specific territory are important aspects of territory attractiveness that influence people's preferences concerning the territory [21]. Even though the territory's environmental quality is considered gender-neutral, it could affect women and men in different ways due to gender inequalities. The bad infrastructure and living conditions increase the workload on women and men. This pressure on women is higher in the undeveloped and rural regions because women have lower access to additional resources [4]. Figure 3 shows that the share of women who emigrated from the rural areas exceeds those from urban areas. In 2020 compared to the previous year, the number of Ukrainian women who emigrated from rural areas was higher by 44.6 % than men.

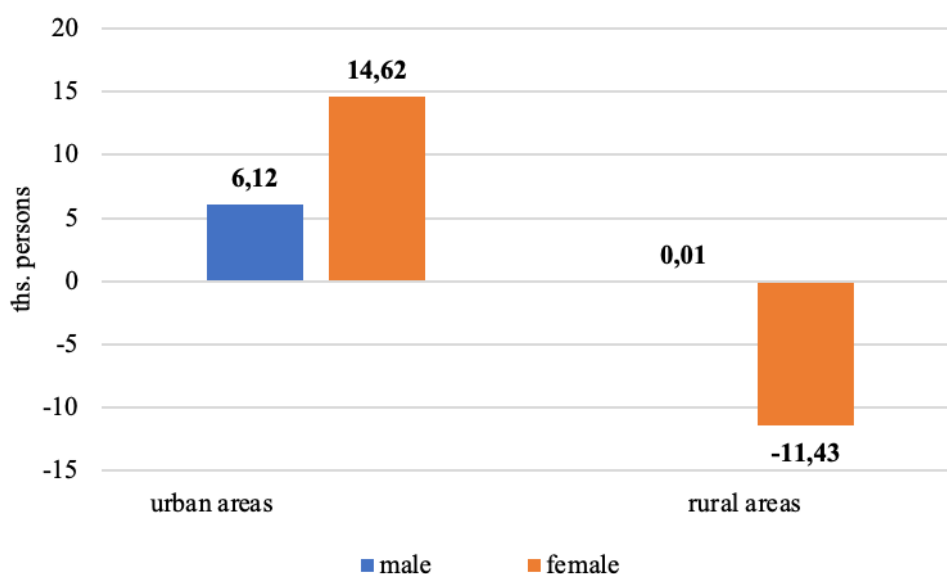


Figure 3 – Migration increase (decrease) in 2020 compared to 2019  
Sources: developed by the authors based on [11].

In addition, gender inequalities in access to education and training, information and technology, and decision-making hinder women's advancement in environmental protection. Thus, women and men could play different roles in environmental protection at community and family levels or daily activities. In addition, the choices that women and men make in everyday life can have different impacts on the environment [24; 3]. For example, women are more likely than men to recycle or reuse. They use public transport for regular commuting or prefer smaller, less polluting, and more fuel-efficient cars. Therefore, it is essential to consider the environmental aspects of the territorial brand in detail and assess the workload pressure on women and men. Moreover, their attitude in sustainable consumption and environmentally responsible behaviors such as recycling, reusing, water and energy conservation, waste utilization, using public transport for regular travel, etc.; estimate the share of women membership in environmental-related local NGOs and their participation in non-formal education or training related to the environment.

Theoretical findings evidence that men and women have a different perception of information due to common stereotypes imposed by society (Table 1). Men pay attention to financial solvency,

prestige, intellectual abilities, and success. They are interested in functionality, firstly, not the external image. Therefore, addressing men, the brand strategy should prioritize functionality, rationality, and quality, persuade them in the business advantages, investment attractiveness, opportunities for growth, etc. On the other hand, a woman's image rests on emotional features. To attract women, it is appropriate to use esthetic and visual effects.

Thus, the above makes it appropriate to consider central gender stereotypes during the formation of territorial brand strategy.

*Table 1*

Typical gender-stereotypical images

<b>Men (Masculinity)</b>	<b>Women (Femininity)</b>
Smart	Lovable
Educated	Cared-for look
Successful	Housewifely
Confident	Careful
Athletic	Kind
Assured	Sensate

Sources: systemized by the authors based on [18].

The starting point for designing a territorial brand should be the explanatory and promotional activities. Since the Ukrainian legislation base has no construction standards under gender urbanism, it is essential to survey the residents, civil society, business, social groups, vulnerable populations, etc., to determine the wants and needs of both sexes. As a result, it could improve the territory infrastructure, design a barrier-free environment, plan the shortest pedestrian routes, decrease the anxiety level among the residents, develop the space for creativity and relaxation, take cultural actions for older and vulnerable people, promote the women leadership and enrolment, creating the gender-neutral public spaces, etc.

The local authorities should popularize territory identity, for example, by reflecting its historical and socio-cultural values. Involvement of society in elaborating on the territory's brand identity, such as logotypes, emblems, anthem, colors, print, etc., would allow developing the most attractive image of the particular territory. In turn, the mass media and influencers in social media should encourage society's awareness of cultural, historical, patriotic region's features. It would allow expanding the community commitment and involve society in discussion on the strategic development of the territory and, as a result, to form the comprehensive perception of the region.

**Conclusions and prospects of further research.** The findings showed that women and men could perceive information differently because of existing gender stereotypes in society. Besides, they have different interests, wants and needs, while the women are still more underprivileged. Despite the above, combining the interests and values of both sexes is the core of the powerful territorial brand. The modern territorial brand pursues its twin goals: 1) external serving marketing function and attracting more tourists, investors, business, partners, etc.; 2) internal satisfying the residents and motivating them to work for this territory. To create a positive perception of the territory, the territorial brand must consider all influencing factors (economic, social, environmental, political, historical, cultural, ideological, institutional, international, etc.). In turn, it requires the involvement of different stakeholders such as businesses, authorities, social activists, represents of various professional fields, ordinary residents considering both sexes to make allowance for their particular needs and generalize them.

Therefore, designing the right image and strong brand of territory would increase the competitive advantages of this territory, promote the social interests outside, improve the investment climate, get additional resources to develop the local economy, popularize the cultural and educational centers for intellectual development, etc.

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**Формування бренду території: вплив гендерного фактору**

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Нині питання територіальної привабливості та її стратегічний розвиток стають більш актуальними. Територіальний брендинг є одним із головних етапів у цьому процесі, який дозволяє виділити реальні та створити нові переваги та асоціації із відповідною територією. Систематизація наукових напрацювань засвідчила, що теоретичні та практичні дослідження територіального брендингу суперечливі через вплив низки зацікавлених сторін, які перешкоджають розробці унікальної концепції територіального розвитку. Попри те, що територіальний розвиток є складною системою, яка залежить від сприйняття та ставлення мешканців, питання гендерних аспектів регіональної ідентичності ще недостатньо досліджені науковцями. Таким чином актуальним є пошук балансу між інтересами різних соціальних груп при формуванні територіального бренду. У цій статті узагальнено аргументи та контраргументи щодо формування територіального бренду з урахуванням гендерних особливостей. Метою дослідження є аналіз ролі гендерних особливостей у механізмі формування територіального бренду. Предметом дослідження є гендерні особливості територіальних одиниць. Методологічною базою дослідження є методи абстрагування, узагальнення, синтез, графічні методи та системний аналіз. У рамках даного дослідження було розкрито відмінності між чоловіками та жінками у сприйнятті інформації. Розглянуто вплив гендерної нерівності на ставлення до території. Отримані результати засвідчили, що територіальний бренд є не лише інструментом просування території, але сприяє формуванню її ідентичності, подоланню гендерної нерівності та підвищенню конкурентних переваг.

*Ключові слова:* гендер, гендерні нерівності, брендинг, територія, територіальна ідентичність, територіальний бренд.

*JEL Codes:* M31, M37, M38, Z33

*Table 1; Figure: 3; Figures: 9; References: 25*

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