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**Postdoctoral Research Title:** “Institutions, Gastro-cultural Identity and Place Branding”

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**Summary:**  
Destination branding (i.e. the most popular term when referring to any effort to ‘build’ and manage place brands in a tourism context) gradually loses space against its more inclusive, and possibly more sustainable, ‘counterpart’, namely place branding. Place branding experts embrace, among others, the tourism potential of a place, while reminding how place brands should focus on plans that define the most realistic, competitive and compelling strategic vision for the country, region or city (Anholt, 2003: 212). Despite the clear emphasis branding plans attribute to culture and identity, current practices still largely focus on local or national cultures and identities. Such practices often ignore synergies which extend beyond national borders, as well as cultural identities and heritage older than the very creation of nation-states and constantly under adaptation as living organisms. The aim of this project is to discuss the central role of identity and inclusive place branding through the examples of experiences, gastronomy, wine and intangible heritage. The conceptualization takes place in a gastro-cultural context and is developed following a qualitative approach. Having as a starting point cases from the Mediterranean region, thematic analysis contributes to the discussion on the role of identity, culture, neolocalism, institutions, destination and place branding.

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- Research output:**
- Kladou, S. and Trihas, N. (2021). Gastro-cultural identity and branding: Acknowledging the goose that lays the golden egg. 4th International Scientific Conference “Restarting tourism, travel and hospitality: The day after” (TOURMAN 2021), 21-23 May.
  - Kladou, S. (2021). Destination Brand Equity. In Buhalis, D. (ed.) Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
  - Kladou, S. (2021). Whose culture? The role of identity-based branding. 5th Annual Conference of the International Place Branding Association, 7-10 December 2021, Barcelona, Spain.
  - Kladou, S. and Trihas, N. (2021). Public diplomacy, place branding practices and cross-border cooperation around the table. Place Branding and Cross Border Regions, Online Conference, 13 December.
  - Kladou, S. and Trihas, N. (2022). Place Branding through Resource Integration and Gastro-Cultural Experiences: A Transnational Perspective. Tourism and Hospitality, 3(1), 1-14.

- Kladou, S. (2022). Gastro-cultural identities for place branding: The forbidden fruit of minorities? In Slocum, S.L. (ed.) *Building inclusion in tourism: Overcoming institutional discrimination and bias*. Routledge. (forthcoming)
- Trihas, N., Kladou, S. and Apladas, G. (2022). Quality Labels and Their Contribution to Sustainability: Local, Traditional vs Geographical Indication Products. *9th International Conference on Social Responsibility, Ethics and Sustainable Business*, 15-16 September, Östersund, Sweden.
- Kladou, S., Trihas, N. and Apladas, G. (2022). Gastronomic, culinary and food tourism on the plate: The case of Crete, Greece. *2<sup>nd</sup> Tourism and Hospitality International Congress (THInC) "Re-Defining Alternative Tourism: Adaptations and Future Steps"*, 3-4 October.