Cultural intermediaries in place branding: Who are they and how do they construct legitimacy for their work and for themselves?

Abstract

This article applies a social constructionist approach to the analysis of the promotional actors in place branding. Previous studies have provided useful conceptual and empirical perspectives on place branding as an emerging practice in urban governance. However, little attention has been paid to the dispositions and occupational resources drawn upon by the promotional actors responsible for the design and implementation of place brand strategies. This article extends Bourdieu's notion of cultural intermediaries to the field of place branding by analysing the promotional actors engaged in it. Through in-depth interviews with 16 professionals in Toronto, Canada, this paper employs a case study approach to identify the habitus, forms of social and cultural capital and field adaptation utilised by various promotional actors to not only construct legitimacy for their work for the city they represent, but also for themselves.

Introduction

Much theoretical and analytical attention in tourism and urban studies has been paid to those cities that came to prominence as centres of global power, innovation and financial control in the latter years of the last century, seen as 'drivers of globalisation dynamics and metropolitan norms' (Peck, 2015, p. 163) and upon which competitive benchmarks for global positioning were built (Sassen, 2001). This lent itself to a type of urban entrepreneurialism that reflected the need for cities to position themselves in relation to dominant market forces, resulting in urban policy theories increasingly being driven by tourism, promotional considerations and market-oriented governance.

In a time of increasing competition driven by market forces, the conceptualization of places as brands is now firmly established (Dinnie, 2011; Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013; Pike, 2009; Ward, 2000; Warnaby, 2009), although subject to contestation on the grounds of potential commodification of places (Medway and Warnaby, 2014) and for over-simplifying the complex, multidimensional nature of territorial space (Ren and Blichfeldt, 2011). Place promotion has attracted scholarly attention from a variety of perspectives including public relations (Gold and Ward, 1994), economic geography (Pike, 2013), public administration (Eshuis, Braun and Klein, 2013), political geography (Hymans, 2010), cultural sociology (Cormack, 2008), tourism (Lorenzini, Calzati and Giudici, 2011) and marketing (Gilmore, 2002).

Critical approaches to the idea of urban subjugation, the "pervasive naturalization of market logics" (Peck and Tickell, 2002) or the problems inherent in creating a 'market

46 city' (McCann et al., 2013) reflect a post-globalist view, and emphasise that cities
47 following this path might gear their management more towards markets than people.
48 Place branding scholars also reflect that place branding, as a discipline, is used to
49 legitimize neoliberal urban governance models and the elitist market-oriented strategies
50 that support them (Kavaratzis and Kalandides, 2015).
51
52 Thus explorations within geography have moved away from the predominantly global
53 powerhouse and market-oriented theories to consider the multiplex, ordinary city – a shift
54 from big picture urbanism to study the microcosms of cities (Peck, 2015). Cities are
55 conceived as places of everyday practices, or 'unique assemblages' of human/non-
56 human, economic and cultural factors that played out in everyday practice, endlessly
57 renewing themselves according to the actions and dispositions of its actors (McCann et
58 al., 2013). This anti-essentialist and deconstructivist turn in urban studies represents a
59 new, grassroots way of reading a city, through the close exploration of the daily rhythms
60 of the people and their practices (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Peck, 2015). Such an approach
61 emphasises the city 'as a place of mobility, flow and everyday practices, and which reads
62 cities from their recurrent phenomenological patterns' (Amin and Thrift, 2002, p. 7). This
63 perspective opens up multiple avenues for new research in terms of understanding how
64 cities are continually made and re-made in the image of those who promote them,
65 especially from a destination management perspective.
66
67 Reflecting Morgan and Pritchard's (1998) assertion that tourism processes have broader
68 cultural meanings which extend far beyond the actual consumption of tourism products
69 and places, and that tourism identities are packaged according to particular dominant
70 value systems and meanings, reinforcing dominant ideologies (p. 3), this paper uses a
71 social constructionist approach and draws specifically on the theoretical lens of
72 Bourdieu's (1984) notion of cultural intermediaries to analyse the characteristics and
73 work of the promotional actors in place branding.
74
75 We build upon and extend previous work that highlights the interactive participatory
76 nature of place brands (Kavaratzis and Kalandides, 2015) by examining the professional
77 knowledge, cultural/social capital, and other occupational resources drawn upon by the
78 promotional actors responsible for the design and implementation of place brand
79 strategies. Because 'the product must plausibly resemble the representation, and thus
80 cities often remake themselves in conformity with their advertised image' (Judd
81 and Fainstein 2009, p. 4), and 'representation of place, the images created for marketing,
82 the vivid videos and persuasive prose of advertising texts, can be as selective and as
83 creative as the marketer can make them' (Holcomb 1993, p. 54) a cultural intermediary
84 framework is an appropriate starting point from which to explore the means by which
85 such actors construct legitimacy for their work and for themselves. This study contributes
86 to a broader sociological understanding of the occupational functions and impacts within
87 tourism promotion, and opens new avenues for research in considering how the tastes and
88 aesthetic dispositions of marketers might translate into a city's policy decisions and
89 government practices.
90
91 This paper will first identify the unit of analysis – the actors who work in a variety of

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92 professional contexts, but whose dominant function is the promotion of place. It will
93 highlight that 'place' is a three-dimensional construction, one that is a lived and breathed
94 reality in the minds of those hired to promote it representing a unique set of occupational
95 challenges. Thus, place is paramount in their lives and requires their personal investment
96 of 'taste' in order to succeed at their jobs. The paper then goes on to identify the
97 theoretical foundations that underpin this occupational reality, with a focus on Bourdieu's
98 notion of cultural intermediation. The third section identifies Toronto as an appropriate
99 context for the case study, while the fourth section outlines the methods used in obtaining
100 the data to explore it. The fifth section reports the findings and offers a discussion on how
101 Bourdieu's theories might be applied to practice.
102
103 **Cultural intermediaries**
104
105 Through the cultural intermediary lens, Bourdieu (1984) addressed the sociology of
106 consumption by identifying those social actors who work at the intersection of culture
107 and the economy, adding value through the symbolic qualification of goods and services
108 in a market-oriented society. Bourdieu sought to establish a *theory of practice* that
109 explored the human interactions and conventions that helped maintain hierarchical social
110 orders; he focused on the behaviours of people within public arenas, exploring how they
111 might hold influence over others and maintain privileged positions of power in society
112 (Bourdieu, 1994; Browitt and Nelson, 2004). Such individuals achieve this through the
113 display of 'autonomy, authority and an arsenal of devices', acting as 'professionals of
114 qualification' who operate on the supply side of markets (Smith Maguire and Matthews,
115 2014, pp. 2-4). Cultural intermediaries are 'taste-makers' who leverage their own
116 personal experiences into occupational resources to legitimate certain forms of culture
117 over others (Bourdieu, 1984). The central tenet of cultural intermediation is that it places
118 an emphasis on those workers who reside in the nexus between reality and what is
119 *perceived as reality* by the target audience, continually engaged in forming a point of
120 connection, or 'articulation' between production and consumption (Curtin and Gaither,
121 2007) in the 'circuit of culture' (du Gay et al., 1997). Bourdieu's notions of *habitus*,
122 *capital* and *fields* focus on the means by which cultural intermediaries are able to do this,
123 and where. Thus his attention is turned towards the taste-making and influential functions
124 of the social actors who work in promotional occupations such as marketing, advertising,
125 design and public relations (Bourdieu, 1991).
126
127 Bourdieu conceptualized *habitus* as "a structured and structuring structure" (1994, p.
128 170). It is 'structured' by one's past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing
129 and education. It is 'structuring' in that one's habitus helps to shape one's present and
130 future practices, and it is a 'structure' in that it is systematically ordered rather than
131 random. This structure comprises a system of embodied social structures such as race,
132 class and gender that are internalized to form one's values, disposition and lifestyle that
133 generate perceptions, demeanor, knowledge and practices within specific *fields* – the
134 various institutional and social structures where people perform their roles and create
135 their identities (Bourdieu, 1990 c.f Maton, 2008: 51). These fields are where power is
136 developed and manifested.
137

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138   The place that actors hold within a field are dependent on the relative weight of their
139   combined capital assets, which derive from a broad range of both personal attributes as
140   well as current social values. Power and identity are not fixed; a field can be created in
141   the intellectual, religious, cultural or social arenas, and an individual's sense of
142   themselves and where they are situated in a given social hierarchy can change depending
143   on the field they occupy at a given moment. Fields are formed from networks of social
144   relations; they are competitive environments in which social actors leverage their own
145   habitus to compete for placement – for economic, cultural, social and symbolic power.
146

147   The currency that allows this to occur is *capital*. Economic capital, or the attainment of
148   monetary currency, was not Bourdieu's primary concern. He extends the importance of
149   capital beyond the material and contends that one's social or cultural influence could be
150   just as valuable in determining the amount of power that one has in society. Bourdieu
151   uses these concepts to detail how the social order is progressively inscribed in people's
152   minds through 'cultural products' including systems of education, language, judgements,
153   values, methods of classification and activities of everyday life (1984, p. 471).

154   The resources that actors rely on, such as educational or professional credentials,
155   knowledge, networks, affiliations, memberships, social style, titles and qualifications, in
156   aggregate make up their 'symbolic capital'. Bourdieu characterizes the 'taste' that is
157   legitimated through these forms as 'aesthetic disposition' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 28). Actors
158   exert their influence over others through their symbolic capital, legitimating the way they
159   see the world over others, and performing an influential taste-making function within
160   consumer-driven society.
161

162   The past decade has witnessed a trend in exploring promotional occupations through a
163   socio-cultural lens, building on Bourdieu whose work focused on societal power and
164   influence (1984). The working lives of cultural intermediaries often overlap with their
165   lives outside of work, with many believing that the lifestyles they lead personally help
166   them impart an authority and authenticity necessary for the messages they promote and
167   the organisations they represent to be perceived as credible (Smith Maguire and
168   Matthews 2010). For example, the public relations practitioners in Hodges' (2006) study
169   in Mexico City drew on their own personal experiences and believed that their social
170   capital and lifestyles played a significant role in maintaining their credibility as bridges
171   between organisations and their publics. Practitioners expressed a need to embody the
172   values they were responsible for communicating, and that drawing on their personal
173   experience and demonstrating authenticity was 'central to their effectiveness as
174   professional communicators' (Hodges 2011: 39). Thus, the boundary between work and
175   leisure is often blurred for cultural intermediaries, as they are often called upon to insert
176   their own personal taste, or cultural capital, gleaned from their habitus to bestow
177   legitimacy on both the products they endorse, as well as cement their own general
178   authority as 'arbiters of taste and style' (Smith Maguire 2014: 219). A cultural
179   intermediary's private life becomes a crucial occupational resource, and their credibility
180   as a mobiliser and motivator of consumers to emotionally connect with the brand they
181   represent thus becomes central to the legitimisation of their professional identity.
182

183 Thus there has been increased interest in applying the concept of cultural intermediation
184 to the promotional occupations in recent years, particularly in the fields of branding
185 (Moor 2008, 2014), advertising (McFall 2004; Cronin 2004; Kelly et al. 2008, Hackley
186 and Kover 2007) and public relations (Hodges 2006; Piecska 2006; L'Etang 2007;
187 Edwards 2012; Edwards and Hodges 2011; Hodges and Edwards 2014).

188 The relevance of this to place branding is that Bourdieu's theory of cultural
189 intermediation is largely concerned with how certain occupations appear to possess more
190 social and cultural capital than others in certain fields. He suggests that representation
191 and symbolic production is central to the work of cultural intermediaries as it helps them
192 forge a sense of identity with the product, place, artist, or commodity they represent and
193 contextualise it for their target audiences. The symbolic power they hold stems directly
194 from the economic, social and cultural capital they possess – and this capital is highly
195 valued within the profession. If we understand that place marketers, by way of their
196 position at the centre of cultural representation, create specific identities that represent
197 certain ways of seeing reality, and have a certain degree of power over how reality is
198 perceived by target audiences, we can infer that these identities might both reflect and
199 reinforce perceptions that are grounded in particular hegemonic power structures
200 (Morgan and Pritcharad 1998). This makes a case for understanding who such individuals
201 are, how they develop their social and cultural capital and where it is leveraged to impact
202 promotional outcomes (Smith Maguire and Matthews, 2010).
203
204 **Promotional actors in place branding**
205
206 Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) point to Zenker and Braun's (2010) comprehensive
207 definition of place branding as 'a network of associations in the consumers' mind based
208 on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through
209 the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and
210 the overall place design' (p. 5). They emphasize that place branding does not stem from a
211 single unified managerial process, but is implemented through a set of intertwined
212 collective sub-processes (ibid). This builds on Hanna and Rowley's (2011) assertion that
213 there is a need to understand the 'agents, relationships and interactions' (p. 473) involved
214 in those sub-processes to better understand how place brands come about.
215
216 The literature on place branding clearly points to the importance of partnerships and
217 relationships in forming a 'collaborative stakeholder approach' and 'strong compatible
218 partnerships' (Hankinson, 2007) that emphasise the co-creation of meaning in the
219 development of a place brand, and the need for key individuals with strong leadership
220 abilities to bind communities together (Landry, 2008) and to form networks to facilitate
221 the creation of shared meaning that will inevitably enhance brand strength (Kapferer,
222 2001).
223
224 If we understand that places do not emerge fully formed but as endlessly redefined and
225 socially constructed products that are reinterpreted via discourse by the people hired to
226 promote them, then the nature of a place is constantly being rewritten through creative
227 human endeavor (Warnaby and Medway 2013, p. 357). This theoretical position is
228 grounded in a participatory approach to place branding which stresses co-creation,

229 community and collaboration in promotional activities among myriad stakeholders who
230 care about the future of the brand.
231
232 The network of actors involved in city branding may occupy all levels of government
233 (regional, municipal, arm's length/agency), as well as permeating civil society (voluntary,
234 non-profit) and the business sector. This constitutes a large infrastructure of workers
235 including, but not limited to: marketing and public relations personnel at the local
236 destination marketing organization (DMO); brand consultants hired by the local
237 government to carry out campaign-specific work focused on targeted audiences both
238 locally and internationally; bureaucrats and politicians within municipal and regional
239 government who work within an economic development, inward investment, tourism, or
240 a resident engagement capacity; the various 'taste-makers' around the city who write
241 about local happenings (bloggers and cultural influencers who write about food, theatre,
242 nightlife, arts/culture, festivals/events, sport); and the city's daily and weekly media who
243 report on the activities of all of the above. At various levels, all of this work could be
244 classed as *promotional* and takes place within a 'culture of circulation' – a cultural
245 process created by the interactivity taking place between circulating forms and the
246 interpretive communities built around them (Lee and LiPuma, 2003; Aronzyk, 2013).
247
248 The 'place myths' that are constructed about a place – the combined imagery, narratives,
249 clichés and messages that circulate within society – need not necessarily reflect its actual
250 reality; perception becomes reality through the constant repetition and circulation of these
251 messages in the media environment (Lash and Urry, 1994; Lübbren and Crouch, 2003).
252 The visual and discursive representations of a city are encountered everywhere, including
253 through official channels such as advertising, way-finding signage, maps, photography,
254 travel brochures, web sites, B-roll and YouTube videos created by marketing and public
255 relations staff, and in 'talking points' in political speeches and policy documents. These
256 are further reinforced by unofficial media discourse in traditional mainstream and
257 alternative press, lifestyle and personal blogs, and through the personal iconography
258 captured by residents and visitors who take photos, upload them and share them via
259 social media, prompted, in some cases, by the messages they primarily encountered
260 through official promotional channels. Thus the stories told about a place can ultimately
261 impact its culture, as such stories are often shared and repeated through an ongoing circle
262 of production, representation and consumption (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005; du Gay
263 et al., 1997). This discourse is then adopted into policy documents and press releases, and
264 begins to infiltrate the decisions that might be made about infrastructure and economic
265 development strategy. If we accept that the messages that originate through official city
266 branding processes have broader cultural meanings which extend beyond the actual
267 consumption of tourism products and places, then place branding practitioners, through
268 the images and narratives they deploy, are responsible for creating a certain way of
269 seeing reality – and possess a great deal of influence over how that city comes to be
270 perceived (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998).
271
272 Yet, while much analysis of the occupational function of place marketers exists, to date
273 there has been little exploration of the personal and professional dispositions of
274 practitioners – who they are (Aronczyk, 2013) and how their lives might impact their

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275 work. Moreover, as with most promotional occupations, they are most influential when
276 invisible. The work of interpreting the city, collecting, curating and amplifying its
277 meaning via communicative action is meant to be felt, not seen, and yet it is a crucial
278 element in the broader practice of city branding. The lack of academic enquiry into the
279 social, cultural and symbolic impact of these occupational functions is a conspicuous
280 omission in the tourism and place branding literatures, which the current study seeks to
281 redress.
282
283 A broader sociological approach to city branding through the lens of promotional culture
284 points to the cultural influence exerted by promotional actors, who are in a position to
285 directly impact the dominant discourses that exist about the commodity they represent,
286 through a process of meaning-making (Wernick, 1991; Davis, 2013). Because meaning is
287 culture-specific, places rely on cultural intermediaries who understand the local nuances
288 of a place and can articulate that meaning through communication channels that resonate
289 with multiple audiences.
290
291 Given the centrality of cultural intermediaries in the formulation and implementation of
292 place brand strategy, there have been calls to better understand the challenges
293 practitioners face and the mechanisms by which they overcome these challenges
294 (Moilanen, 2015). Taking a participatory approach to place branding means that
295 examining the ways in which practitioners approach their work, the meanings they create
296 and the discourses they influence, matters (Hudak, 2015). Identifying the promotional
297 actors in place branding within a socio-cultural framework helps to contextualise the
298 importance of their work amongst broader sociological and institutional structures. It also
299 identifies the important role that they play and makes a stronger case for their input early
300 in the policy planning and development phases of city branding. The aim of this study is
301 thus to position the promotional actors in place branding as *cultural intermediaries*, and
302 to argue that this position uniquely affords them the ability to shape the culture of that
303 place. We introduce a new way of thinking about the occupational functions of the
304 promotional actors in place branding, and open up new avenues for future research.
305
306 **Theoretical framework: Cultural Intermediaries**
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403 (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). This makes a case for understanding who such individuals
404 are, how they develop their social and cultural capital and where it is leveraged to impact
405 promotional outcomes (Smith Maguire and Matthews, 2010).
406

407 While Bourdieu's theories of cultural intermediation and capital are not the only ways of
408 understanding the influence and impact of practitioners, his emphasis on taste-making
409 and symbolic cultural power are of particular relevance when considering place. Other
410 theories such as actor network theory, stakeholder theory, and legitimacy theory might
411 also be considered useful in this regard. Latour's (2005) actor network theory has
412 informed a burgeoning body of tourism research that offers an opportunity to extend our

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413 understanding of the human and non-human actors in tourism and the social, economic
414 and political relations between them (Arnaboldi & Spiller, 2011; Beard et. al., 2016;
415 Murdoch, 1998; Paget et. al., 2010; Pollack et. al., 2013; Ren et. al., 2010). Stakeholder
416 theory also provides a potentially useful lens through which to view cultural
417 intermediaries and place branding. Building on Hankinson's (2004) contention that a
418 stakeholder approach is central to place branding, stakeholder theory offers a managerial
419 and organizational framework to help us understand the specific perspectives and needs
420 of a diverse population with a vested interest in the city's success. While stakeholder
421 theory is widely applied in a business context, it remains under-explored in tourism,
422 although events and festivals offer a ripe playground for enquiry (Todd et. al., 2017).
423 Finally, given the micro-actions of legitimacy construction that promotional actors might
424 need to undergo in the promotion of both the place they represent as well as their own
425 credentials in representing it, tenets of legitimacy theory might also be applied. In its
426 broad academic application, however, this theory largely concerns itself with the macro
427 forces of corporations, organisations and movements within a broader society, and has
428 yet to be explored in the context of the individual and the personal activities that form
429 one's occupational resources within a professional context. Thus, although far from the
430 only potential theoretical approach, Bourdieu's notions of habitus, fields, capital and
431 cultural intermediation offer a worthy lens through which the influence and impact of
432 promotional actors in place branding might be explored.
433
434 Please insert Figure 1 here
435
436 **Research context: Toronto**
437
438 The city of Toronto was selected as an appropriate locus for the study as the city has an
439 active network of promotional actors operating within a complex web of promotional
440 bodies, internal and external stakeholders, and media. Toronto is the heart of Canada's
441 commercial, financial, industrial, and cultural life. The Toronto Census Metropolitan
442 Area (CMA) is comprised of the City of Toronto as well as 23 surrounding
443 municipalities, each with their own powers of planning and spending in the areas of
444 economic development, infrastructure, services, arts, culture and recreation. Toronto is
445 part of a metropolitan area known as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), made up of the
446 central City of Toronto, and the four regional municipalities that surround it: Durham,
447 Halton, Peel and York. The former cities of Toronto, Scarborough, Etobicoke, North
448 York and the borough of East York, were amalgamated to form the new City of Toronto
449 on 1 January 1998. Since then, the City's governance structure has been formed of a
450 Council made up of a Mayor and 44 city councillors each representing one of the city's
451 wards.
452
453 The city sees itself as a rising power on the world's cultural stage. After undertaking
454 major structural renovations for most of its major cultural institutions and entertainment
455 attractions from 2003 onwards, Toronto has pursued an ambitious branding and
456 promotion strategy centred on its identity as a 'Creative City'. This includes integrating
457 key phases of development into its urban cultural policy as a means of improving its
458 economic position; from the regeneration of 'flagship' cultural institutions, to arts
459 districts, waterfront development and festivals (Richards and Palmer, 2012; Oakley and

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460 O'Connor, 2015). This has led to the rise in the need for promotional actors both within
461 City Hall as well as in attractions, arms length cultural properties, and tourism
462 organizations.
463
464 The construction of Toronto's place brand and the decisions that are made about how to
465 promote it through various marketing, advertising and public relations channels fall to a
466 diverse group of public sector organizations which are vested in both the tourism success
467 as well as the overall economic development of the city. These public sector
468 organizations work closely with relevant partners in the private sector in order to achieve
469 the city's promotional goals.
470
471

472 **Organizations within which Toronto's promotional actors operate**

473

474 The development of a city brand requires the collaboration and cooperation of a wide
475 range of organizations and individuals within both the public and private sectors, and
476 acting within official channels as well as on an ad hoc, volunteer or entrepreneurial basis.
477 Below is a broad description of the most significant organizations within which Toronto's
478 promotional actors operate. Though not comprehensive, the range of organizations
479 detailed below provides insight into the organizational and personnel resources required
480 for a city to undertake branding or promotional endeavours.
481
482 The City of Toronto operates under a decentralised communication structure, with each
483 internal Division managing its own promotional and communicative activities. The
484 Strategic Communications Department is responsible for the overall direction and
485 implementation of communication outreach (both reactive and proactive) and issues news
486 releases on behalf of communication professionals in divisions such as Transportation,
487 Parks and Recreation, and Economic Development and Culture. Within the latter
488 department, there exists a team of marketing and public relations professionals who are
489 responsible for promoting the city's cultural endeavours, including the City Cultural
490 Events, any one-off tourism initiatives, and activities that fall under the Visitor Services
491 portfolio. This team is an award-winning group of professionals who manage multi-
492 million dollar marketing and publicity campaigns in both traditional and social media.
493 They work with the promotional actors at Tourism Toronto to ensure that the arms-length
494 agency is aware of what is happening within City Hall. They have in recent years been
495 more closely linked with the City's Economic Development arm, assisting in developing
496 brand strategies, outreach, communicative tools and consultancy services to help guide
497 those tasked with securing inward investment and business incubation and development
498 within the city.
499
500 Tourism Toronto is the official not-for-profit agency and industry association responsible
501 for promoting and selling the greater Toronto region as a destination for tourists,
502 convention delegates and business travellers. It is now fully funded by the province of
503 Ontario, and has added responsibilities of promoting the Greater Toronto Region,
504 including cities Mississauga and Brampton to the west of Toronto. It represents over
505 1,200 public and private sector members and is governed by a 22-member Board of

506 Directors drawn from a broad range of representatives from Toronto's tourism industry.
507
508 As a partnership of public and private sectors, Tourism Toronto's partners include the
509 Greater Toronto Hotel Association, the City of Toronto, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism
510 and Culture, the Canadian Tourism Commission, the City of Mississauga, the City of
511 Brampton, Air Canada and VIA Rail. It also works in collaboration with representatives
512 from the Toronto Board of Trade, Metro Convention Centre, Ontario Restaurant, Hotel
513 and Motel Association, and Attractions Ontario.
514
515

516 **Materials and Methods**

517

518 In order to obtain 'rich' data (Creswell, 2013) and to gain insights into the complex
519 phenomenon under investigation, this study employs an in-depth, qualitative single-case
520 approach (Yin, 2003). The case study approach facilitates theory-building (Eisenhardt,
521 1989) and is appropriate for exploring previously under-researched topics. The single
522 case approach has been used in the context of place branding to investigate, for example,
523 complex phenomena such as historical materiality and linearity/diffuseness (Warnaby,
524 Medway and Bennison, 2010). It has also been used extensively in the case of cultural
525 intermediaries to examine how their occupational functions impact certain geographic
526 fields (Hodges, 2006). The lead researcher of this paper implemented three different
527 methods of investigation, ensuring the validity of the research through the triangulation
528 of gathered data (Decrop, 1999; Yin, 2003). We drew upon multiple sources of evidence
529 involving a mix of interviews, autobiographical ethnography and document analysis.
530 Documents analyzed for historical content and discourse are summarized in Table 1.

531

532 **Insert Table 1 Documents analyzed for historical content and discourse here**

533

534 A series of 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted with marketing,
535 communications, public relations, cultural policy and tourism promotion and
536 management personnel at a variety of organizations that represent the diverse landscape
537 of Toronto's cultural and tourism offering. These included the Economic Development
538 and Culture Division at City Hall, the Special Events Office, Waterfront Toronto, Tourism
539 Toronto, the Toronto International Film Festival, the (now defunct) Municipal Tourism
540 and Planning Division, a major museum, a prominent music/entertainment weekly
541 newspaper, a place branding consultant with clients throughout Toronto and in the
542 surrounding regions, and the CEO of an urban sustainability and place-making collective.
543 The interviews addressed the respondents attitudes towards Toronto's promotional efforts,
544 its brand development and cultural policy strategies over the last 15 years, the extent and
545 nature of their work with other stakeholders, and the specific occupational functions they
546 employ that allow them to best perform their jobs.

547

548 Concepts of process, identity, interpretation and meaning were explored through open-
549 ended conversational interviews. The lead researcher held the position as Public
550 Relations Supervisor (responsible for festivals, events and tourism strategies) within the
551 Economic Development and Culture Division at Toronto City Hall from 2007-2013. As

such, professional relationships had been formed with some of the participants prior to the research being conducted. As this researcher had an intimate familiarity with the city as well as with the intermediaries hired to promote it and their strategies, a degree of informality, collegiality and 'knowingness' occurred in the interactions, allowing for the extraction more meaningful data, as well as a greater degree of access to otherwise hard-to-reach informants. This closeness with interviewees, whilst providing deeper data, might be perceived as creating a bias on behalf of the lead researcher. However, several steps were taken to minimise bias. There was a several year gap between when the researcher acted in a promotional capacity for the city, and conducted research into its processes. Further, many of the interview participants and the researcher were not previously acquainted; contact was made via snowballing, independent research and unsolicited requests. Whilst there was a familiarity amongst some (not all) of the participants, formalities were enacted (i.e., recording the interviews, using a templated interview guide, and whenever possible, conducting interviews within formalised, professional environments and timeframes) to mitigate the expectations of the researcher or the words and actions of participants. Further, follow up questions during the interviews were used to ensure that the researcher's interpretation of certain narratives matched the interpretation of the informants.

Interview questions followed a theoretical framework and initially focused on how the informant understood the nature of their job, their personal and professional backgrounds (to explore habitus and fields), how decisions are made about promotional and message strategies (construction of legitimacy), how they develop their knowledge about the place they represent (cultural capital), and how they share that knowledge with key stakeholders (social capital). These questions were formulated to initially put informants at ease, while they recounted the day-to-day obligations, challenges and successes of their evolving career and the dynamics of their current occupation. Given that the over-arching brand promise of Toronto as a 'Creative City' celebrates its a high degree of cultural diversity, socially progressive values and creativity, questions focused on the social and cultural component of the work, especially as these are subjective assets that benefit most from meaning-making and narrative. Respondents' understanding of the brand of their city, how they leverage relationships to gather content, interpret and promote the brand promise for key audiences offered insight into their position as cultural intermediaries whose role is integral to the creation of a cultural identity in the city for which they work.

The interviews typically lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. They were transcribed, anonymized and coded in NVivo with regard to specific themes that emerged from the interview data. The codes aligned with the theoretical framework and included evidence of forms of cultural and social capital, as well as descriptions of professional knowledge and constructions of legitimacy being leveraged. Inter-coder reliability (Saldaña, 2009) was achieved through intensive ongoing discussion between the researchers regarding the coding of the data. The use of theory-driven codes enhanced the validity of the study (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). Further steps to increase the validity of the study included prolonged observations in the field and the use of thick, rich descriptions (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

598 When data saturation became apparent, it was decided that an adequate number of
599 interviews had been undertaken. A list of interview participants described by titles and
600 the organizations they represent are summarized in Table 2.
601
602 **Insert Table 2 Interview participants here**
603
604 The next section examines the material function of the promotional actors who operate
605 within the above organizations – their professional knowledge, the cultural/social capital
606 they employ, and the ways in which they construct legitimacy for their roles, positioning
607 them as cultural intermediaries.
608
609 **Results and Discussion**
610
611 Smith Maguire and Matthews (2014) argue that an important arena for studying cultural
612 intermediaries lies in the practicalities of the profession – analysing the ways in which
613 such individuals leverage their knowledge, dispositions, and cultural and social capital to
614 frame themselves as experts in the qualification of goods, services or places they might
615 promote. Thus we examine how promotional actors as cultural intermediaries go about
616 constructing legitimacy, both for themselves, as well as the product/place they represent;
617 and how the material practices of their work enable them to wield influence at the
618 articulations of production and consumption in the promotional value chain.
619
620 A detailed analysis of the interview data led to the identification of two main dimensions
621 of occupational resources drawn upon by promotional actors as follows: first, their
622 *cultural capital,* gained through having a 'finger on the pulse' of unfolding cultural
623 developments and an educational and professional background conducive to taste-
624 making; secondly, their *social capital*, the quality of being politically savvy and an
625 honest broker amongst a complex web of interacting organizations and individuals, and
626 leveraging their relationships to inform their craft. We were able to discern that these
627 actors drew upon these forms of capital to achieve a certain level of legitimacy for their
628 work, and for themselves as professionals suitably positioned to perform it. The
629 dimensions of these occupational resources are discussed below.
630
631 **Cultural Capital**
632
633 Respondents in this study, whether knowingly or not, rely heavily on symbolic forms of
634 cultural capital to demonstrate their efficacy in their roles. Promotional actors (n=12)
635 frequently displayed large, graphic depictions of media coverage celebrating the city,
636 advertisements promoting festivals and attractions, glossy marketing collateral and
637 dramatic city imagery on their office walls, highlighting the outcomes of their
638 promotional work, an example of *objectified cultural capital*, or the display of artefacts
639 and possessions that contain perceived value (Bourdieu, 1990; Browitt and Nelson,
640 2004). Many (n=11) were quick to point to their academic and professional backgrounds
641 in politics, corporate marketing and cultural management, and spoke often about the need
642 for continuous learning and the pursuit of higher credentials that might assist them in
643 more fully performing their occupational roles – a clear indication of *institutionalized*
644 *cultural capital*, the demonstration of qualifications conferred by recognized bodies, for

14

645 instance academic degrees or measures of professionalization which is dependent upon
646 rates of exchange within society, or the values held by dominant social coalitions
647 (Bourdieu, 1990; Browitt and Nelson, 2004). A common theme (n=8) was to talk about
648 their *habitus* – how their particular personal background enabled them to do their job
649 properly, whether that meant growing up in Toronto, or being Canadian, or having
650 intimate knowledge of certain neighbourhoods by maintaining a very active social life in
651 the city.
652
653 *Finger on the pulse.*
654 It is imperative that those who are hired to promote a city remain abreast of the latest
655 trends and happenings within their city, as well as in other competitor cities around the
656 world. The constant need for good content and innovative promotional strategies requires
657 that practitioners 'keep their finger on the pulse' of what is going on in their city
658 (Informant 1) and maintain an up-to-the-minute awareness on issues such as the latest
659 hotel and restaurant openings, major shows, architectural and infrastructural
660 developments, leisure, retail and entertainment options, as well as business opportunities
661 and economic development trends. It is also vital that they remain consistently informed
662 about developments in other cities, both politically as well as promotionally, and follow
663 rankings, analyses and research on the factors that might nudge competitor cities into
664 greater international prominence.
665
666 The onus generally falls to the practitioner to proactively seek out relevant content that
667 aligns with both political and city branding goals, as well as audience preferences,
668 seeking to link the two in promotional discourse. Staying abreast of what's new, unique,
669 popular and sought after is an important part of the practitioner's role in maintaining their
670 cultural capital. However, more than just knowing what's new, or what's happening, they
671 must also contextualise this information against what audiences *want* to know. It is not
672 enough to be aware of new restaurants, bars or attractions – practitioners must also
673 intrinsically understand what makes these locations attractive to potential tourists and
674 residents. This not only requires a broader knowledge of cultural trends that are occurring
675 beyond the boundaries of the city, but a willingness to look at and shape current trends
676 within the city as well. As one informant stated:
677
678   *'We do a lot of call-outs to our partners in the community. You always have*
679   *to stay current on what's new, what's happening. A lot of journalists will ask,*
680   *'what's new, what's hot' ... So that's why we always need to figure out,*
681   *'what's the new bar, new club, new lounge, new restaurant'? We're*
682   *constantly looking and reading what other people are covering as well, to*
683   *find out what they're covering, whether it's local or international, to see what*
684   *some of our journalists are covering in other destinations, and how long ago*
685   *it was, and how long it's been since they've covered the destination if they*
686   *have at all'* (Informant 3).
687
688 Vitally, the dominant way that participants were able to acquire this 'finger on the pulse'
689 was through leveraging their networks throughout the city. Thus, intermediaries were
690 able to orchestrate a *conversion process of social capital into cultural capital*, and utilise

15

both to achieve their legitimizing ends. This conversion process, and the means by which it occurs, is an area ripe for new research.

Social Capital

Social capital refers to the networks of social influence that actors might maintain within certain fields (Bourdieu, 1990). It is made up of the aggregate of actual or potential interpersonal resources an individual can access by virtue of their belonging to a certain group:

> *'...we've got these huge groups of stakeholders. There's the broader public which is important to us, but in terms of achieving these goals and getting our projects done, it's more about governments, opinion leaders, thought leaders, influencers, and that kind of ecosystem around them. And that includes any possible platforms in there. That's social media, that's one to one, that's the whole universe in there. Well beyond traditional media relations, which we also do a lot of as well.'* (Informant 12)

The main way that promotional actors can stay connected to the happenings in the city is through networking and the development of relationships with like-minded professionals in similar organizations. These social and professional links allow them to share successes and failures, and contextualise their specific work within a larger city branding context. Promotional actors also find that they 'speak the same language' and can leverage their relationships to lend a greater consistency in their overall strategies. One respondent commented:

> *'...we've got a lovely a network of people in both marketing and communications and creative within other arts institutions and the city at large, and there's an informal network of people liaising with each other and chatting about best practices and frustrations that might occur. There's a lot of shared learnings.* (Informant 6)

Membership affiliation within certain groups and a commitment to leveraging partnerships with key stakeholder groups outside the city was also a priority:

> *'I think my vision for the city is one that comes from seeing a lot of cities globally. I spend a lot of time with different institutions globally. I'm doing a lot of work with the Rockefeller Foundation globally working with other cities, the Davos Forum, the Creative Cities tour, that was also interested in what we're doing. It involved a half a dozen of those groups looking at cities and where they're going, what they're doing, and how we can do something similar.'* (Informant 8)

Political savvy, the honest broker:

Professionals responsible for city branding initiatives tend to work in highly complex, political and bureaucratic structures. These are the fields where they must constantly negotiate their position and powers of influence and persuasion. They are beholden to myriad stakeholders, straddling the divide between public sector accountability and

16

private sector promotional discipline. As such, their work is situated within a challenging web of public/private partnerships, balancing the need for exposure with the need to be perceived as unbiased and committed to the public good. This dilemma – to remain objective and true to public sector principles, while also not playing favourites and getting the job done in the most effective (but not necessarily cheapest) way – was alluded to by one respondent:

> *"I get asked all the time about suppliers, everything. I deal with over 400 event companies and get asked make recommendations all the time. And I can't. Even though I know who are the best players in the city and who the best providers are that would make everyone's life easier if they were hired, I still can't do it."* (Informant 4)

Where the need for political savvy in these cases is most pronounced is in the promotional actors' ability to resolve the tension between short-term political goals and long-term branding objectives. Within the political field, politicians tend to occupy front-line positions in the promotion of their city, whether at home or abroad. However, their focus tends to extend the length of a political cycle and may not align with long-term strategic city branding objectives in place over a time period of several years or even decades. However, promotional actors appeared to understand that without political backing or influence, little can be achieved. This can lead to some taking a 'behind the curtain' approach, allowing political actors to command the spotlight on promotional endeavours, but firmly present in guiding the result:

> *"I often think of us as back-seat drivers. We're definitely not sitting in the front seat, we're not steering. The Mayor is doing that, along with a bunch of other people, like Councillors. But we are provoking from the back seat. We're creating the parade. We're building that parade for them to participate in."* (Informant 13)

Such findings suggest that the promotional actors mostly perceive themselves as 'Honest Brokers' (Informants 3, 5, 6), especially within certain fields. Their role is to take into consideration all of the moving parts and how they fit within the overall reputation of the city, bringing stakeholders together in a common pursuit of a public goal. The ability to do this effectively derives from the maintenance of objectivity in stakeholder relationships, a focus on the bigger picture as it relates to branding strategies and careful navigation the power relations inherent in certain fields.

Social capital is not a permanent fixture; intermediaries' standing within the groups they occupy must always be re-evaluated and re-affirmed in the context of any given field, meaning that they are constantly in a position of seeking legitimacy and favour within the dominant group within that field (Smith Maguire and Matthews, 2014). One way of achieving this is through constructing forms of legitimacy that might act as currency that transcends multiple fields in multiple social arenas.

Construction of legitimacy

785 The study of cultural intermediaries has tended to focus on their standing within capitalist
786 and market-oriented environments, both as actors within markets who construct value
787 through the interpretation and mediation of value placed on the good/services/places they
788 represent, and also as 'needs merchants' who 'always sell themselves as models and as
789 guarantors of the value of their products, and who sell so well because they believe in
790 what they sell' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 365; Smith Maguire and Matthews, 2014). Through
791 their 'symbolic imposition' of meaning, cultural intermediaries employ various tools to
792 legitimate their advice and maintain their influence (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 362). Thus they
793 are not only responsible for framing cultural forms and aligning them with consumer
794 taste, but also legitimating those cultural forms, injecting them with a credibility that
795 speaks to their own personal taste and value within specific fields. This then requires
796 them to secure and maintain a certain degree of professional authority; the meanings and
797 messages they construct must carry credibility if they are to be successful at their jobs
798 (Smith Maguire, 2008).
799
800 In a place branding context, promotional actors need to be diligent in their construction of
801 legitimacy, in the face of conflicting priorities, accountability to diverse stakeholders, and
802 the breadth of exposure the role entails. They do this by leveraging their social and
803 cultural capital, with legitimacy manifested as symbolic power as the intended outcome.
804 Theoretical articulation points to two arenas where cultural intermediaries must
805 'construct repertoires of cultural legitimacy' in their professional roles as 'authorities of
806 legitimation' – not just as taste-makers, but 'professional taste-makers' (Smith Maguire
807 and Matthews, 2014, p. 21; Bourdieu, 1990, p. 96). The first is in the social standing of
808 the occupation, in using 'symbolic rehabilitation strategies' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 358) to
809 lend a degree of credibility to the work. The second is in 'canonizing the not-yet
810 legitimate' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 326) to transpose existing forms of established authority
811 on to new cultural forms or understanding of value.
812
813 Our findings point to clear articulations where promotional actors engage in both forms
814 of construction of legitimacy. As the work of place branding is still in its relatively
815 nascent stages, place promoters do not necessarily enjoy a level of autonomy and
816 authority that marketers in other more established sectors might. The concept of city
817 branding is still largely new and misunderstood in political circles (Moilanen, 2015).
818 Thus, promotional actors might need to downplay their activities in order to achieve buy-
819 in, or even to be able to continue their work. This can sometimes manifest in the need to
820 'fly under the radar' with regard to the implementation of overt promotional activities:
821
822   *'It's really hard to market unless your leaders understand it. In a municipal*
823   *context – your leaders, or your politicians, need to be on board or you'll*
824   *never ever get the money. Either that or you'll need to hide your marketing*
825   *budget in other places. For years we never called anything marketing.*
826   *Because the minute you said you were marketing, the money got taken away.*
827   *Because it was considered a frill.* (Informant 12)
828
829 This challenging environment presents a need for promotional actors to constantly
830 attempt to improve their professional standing within the larger policy value chain of the

831 city. Literature in other fields has focused on marketing's ongoing social struggle for
832 professional legitimacy and influence in relation to business life (Lien 1997); the struggle
833 is exacerbated in a governmental or public sector context, where notions of production,
834 consumption and promotion might be considered inappropriate (Svensson, 2007). As one
835 respondent stated:

837   *'It's considered distasteful. It's like investing in attractions, or anything*
838   *that's entertainment focused, or doesn't have a pay off. Anything marketing is*
839   *considered frivolous and it's hard to show a direct economic impact from*
840   *marketing. Especially in the short term, within an election cycle.'* (Informant
841   6)

843 This means that promotional actors are constantly having to 'sell' themselves and the
844 professional services they provide within the city context. They may endeavour to do this
845 through clearly articulated messaging about the value they provide, being consistently
846 present and 'at the table' when policy decisions are being made, and through the
847 construction of their own reputation management campaigns:

849   *'Constantly, every day you have to make the case. That's a daily thing. I*
850   *don't think it's a bad thing, because it's made us more robust than other*
851   *sectors and other areas. In other areas where they don't have to make the*
852   *case, they're vulnerable.'* (Informant 3)

854 Cultural intermediaries are also cognizant of the need to legitimize their actions through
855 the imposition of other forms of established authority, such as illustrating a mastery of
856 abstract knowledge, assigning new criteria to the assessment of quality, or injecting
857 meaning into cultural forms where none may have previously existed (Bourdieu, 1984, p.
858 326; Smith Maguire and Matthews, 2014, p. 21). This is especially crucial as
859 practitioners undertake large-scale campaigns:

861   *'…Our communications overlay begins with goals. I refuse to do anything*
862   *unless we have a larger organizational objective to work towards. And you*
863   *can boil that down to a communications goal or a perception goal. But*
864   *without goals we refuse to waste our time doing stuff when we don't know*
865   *what it is we want to achieve.'* (Informant 14)

867 Especially within a constantly evolving market context increasingly driven by
868 technological advancements, cultural intermediaries must exhibit their expert orientation
869 through an arsenal of professional skills, usually acquired and displayed as cultural
870 capital. A unique challenge that faces the promotional actors in place branding is that in
871 addition to the softer diplomatic skills they require to navigate a constantly changing
872 economic and stakeholder environment and potentially tricky political climate, they must
873 also possess a broad spectrum of 'hard' skills in public relations, marketing, advertising
874 and brand strategy, maintain up-to-date skills in media relations, metric-driven campaign
875 measurement techniques, strategic communications planning, visual and videographic
876 story-telling, and most recently, social and digital interactive platforms. The speed and

877 accessibility of ever-changing 24/7 media platforms has also necessitated an 'always on'
878 attitude among practitioners who feel they can never fully step away from their work.
879 This leads promotional actors to pursue increasingly complicated means of measuring
880 their outputs and outcomes, in an attempt to quantify their impact on citizen engagement
881 and the overall success of the city's reputation at home and abroad.
882
883   *'We all have social media metrics… if you unpack the social we've got huge*
884   *sets of statistics for each. One for Twitter, one for Facebook, one for*
885   *LinkedIn. Retweets, engagement, efficiency. Because we started spending*
886   *money on promoted posts and things like that. We found that when we break*
887   *it down, it's actually an extremely efficient way of spending money.'*
888   (Informant 9)
889
890 From the interview data it emerged that the promotional actors in place branding should
891 not expect that stakeholders will inherently see the value in their work. Promotional
892 actors employ a complex system of reputation management protocols, internal and
893 external engagement, and the imposition of quantifiable metrics – as well as digging deep
894 into their arsenal of social and cultural capital – in order to inject a layer of credibility
895 into the work they do. This construction of legitimacy draws heavily from the actors'
896 own perception of their role, and requires a certain degree of confidence in their ultimate
897 contribution to the complex undertaking of city branding.
898
899 **Conclusion**
900
901 As cultural intermediaries, promotional actors use their taste-making proclivities to
902 collect, curate and amplify information that portrays a place or product in its most
903 positive light. Drawing upon Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*, *fields* and *capital*, this article
904 seeks to shed light on the practice of promotional actors in city branding by
905 understanding who they are, where they might be situated, as well as identifying the
906 cultural and social capital they leverage to inform their practice and construct legitimacy
907 for themselves and for their work.
908
909 Situated within the broader canon of literature that embraces place particularity and
910 pluralism in tourism studies, this paper explores practical and professional considerations
911 within place branding by extending Bourdieu's theory of cultural intermediaries to the
912 domain of place promotion. For Featherstone (1991) and Lash and Urry (1994), cultural
913 intermediaries act as early adopters in the consumption and communication of new
914 lifestyles and trends. As a consequence of the professional activities of these groups,
915 reality has been transformed "into images and fragmentation where aesthetic experience
916 becomes the master narrative" (Jayne, 2006, p. 62). These occupational groupings are the
917 communicators and meaning-makers who encourage cities to remain innovative,
918 competitive and act entrepreneurially. What is perhaps most significant about this work is
919 the scale, scope and degree of influence that is afforded these promotional actors. The
920 communicative structures they employ are often broad and far-reaching. As municipal
921 representatives they are relied upon to take complex and varied ideas and pieces of
922 information about the city and quickly distil these into a promotional communication that
923 lends itself to mass consumption, while still appearing objective, strategic and unbiased.

This is the output of 'discourse workers', or contemporary story-tellers, who combine material objects with words, symbols, and technological behaviours to create particular, specialized identities that might resonate with audiences (Edwards and Hodges, 2011; Gee, 2005). This aligns with Hodges' (2011, p. 35) assertion that cultural intermediaries, "through their own symbolic work, have the potential to contribute to the transformation of the city through the narratives, imageries and rhetorical frameworks they present."

The findings in this paper – namely that these intermediaries feel called upon to leverage their personal proclivities, their personal and professional relationships, and their specific yet broad professional knowledge to legitimise their influence and impact – offer particular implications for the study of both place branding and the promotional occupations more generally. Places undergoing promotional efforts and looking to hire key personnel might consider this information in their recruitment processes, adapting job descriptions and HR policies to align more closely with the tenets of cultural intermediation. Politicians and senior public sector management and policy makers might offer promotional actors an increased role in urban/regional/national planning decisions, recognizing their input to be both strategic and stakeholder-focused. The findings also suggest that promotional practitioners looking to work in tourism, culture, economic development or other public sector need to be politically savvy and an honest broker. This research also highlights the significant challenges faced by promotional intermediaries more broadly, as such intermediaries often operate in grey areas, balancing their personal lives with their professional obligations. This brings to the fore the importance of further research in this area, particularly in the realm of 24/7 communications and digital work, as well as emotional labour.

While the literature on place branding and destination marketing frequently mentions the need for strong, strategic leadership in urban promotion and planning (Hall, 1998; Kotler et al., 1993; Anholt, 2003; Morgan et al., 2011), in practice, cities still tend to overlook the contribution of promotional actors in helping to guide policy development. Promotional activity is still seen as an 'add-on', something to consider after policy decisions have been made. Place brand scholars reflect that promotional considerations are still treated with a level of distrust or derision, or treated as an after-thought, merely an aesthetic 'nice to have', mostly in a tourism capacity (Anholt, 2003; Govers and Go, 2009). Despite the tacit understanding by practitioners that the work is highly strategic, driven by consumer research, and measurable, similar attitudes persist among political decision-makers in Toronto, according to the (n=11) respondents in this study. As such, there is an expectation that the promotional actors in place branding should quantitatively and qualitatively demonstrate that the work makes a major difference – in awareness, attendance, acceptance and adoption of images and messages into wider discourse.

However, the work of promotional actors across a city – with roles in culture, attractions, heritage, tourism, entertainment, foreign investment and economic development – is largely invisible to the broader citizenry. The value that the largely unseen promotional actors offer the city is in their interpretive, taste-making and representative function; embracing the cultural vibrancy of the city and communicating it effectively to audiences both within and beyond the city. Positioning these actors as cultural intermediaries thus

offers an empirically grounded point of entry into the complex economic, social, political and cultural process of place branding. Employing this approach allows us to 'follow the people' in order to better understand how a city might be both conceptualized, packaged and ultimately produced for consumption by myriad stakeholder groups (Matthews and Smith Maguire, 2014). It also offers a sense of how cultural intermediaries might be positioned within the larger social processes of tourism, migration and urban planning. This provides opportunity for further qualitative and quantitative research into substantiating this position, shedding light on how occupational structures might impact place brand strategies in future, and why it matters. It also helps better understand the layers of professional knowledge that promotional actors might require, the forms of social and cultural capital they draw on to perform their roles, as well as the challenges they face in legitimizing their work and earning the credibility necessary to practise their professional taste-making function.

Certain limitations of the study should be noted. The focus on a single city, for example, limits the generalisability of the study findings. Future studies should investigate cities in other geographic settings in order to establish commonalities and differences in the roles played by cultural intermediaries in place branding. A further, related limitation is the relatively small sample size; future research is called for which utilises alternative methodologies in order to capture a fuller understanding of the focal phenomenon. Another limitation concerns the evaluation of cultural intermediaries' legitimacy. Their legitimacy could be investigated in future studies in various ways, for example by tracking official events they attend, and their impact on issues such as policies, funding, and media coverage. Finally, an alternative perspective on cultural intermediaries could fruitfully be gained by conducting research amongst the stakeholders who interact with the cultural intermediaries. Our study reflects the perspective of the cultural intermediaries; future studies may contribute to the field by investigating the attitudes and behaviours of the complex web of stakeholders who have an influence on the work of the cultural intermediaries.

References

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1290   Branding and Place Brand Management. Paper presented at The 39th EMAC Annual
1291   Conference 2010, Frederiksberg, Denmark.
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1295 **Table 1** Documents analyzed for historical content and discourse
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Document Name	Published	Responsible	Theme
Culture Plan for the Creative City	2003	City of Toronto, Culture Division	A policy framework that establishes Toronto's Cultural Economy and outlines cultural priorities for the following decade
Imagine a Toronto … Strategies for a Creative City	2005	Strategies for Creative Cities Project Team	Creative City strategy framework for Toronto
Making Toronto the Best it Can Be: The Premier-Ranked Tourist Destination Project	2007	City of Toronto, Toronto Tourism, Province of Ontario, BrainTrust Marketing and Communications	A destination audit, and thorough inventory of Toronto's tourism assets in relation to a provincially-mandated framework.
Culture Plan Progress Report II	2008	City of Toronto, Culture Division	A mid-point analysis of achievements and outcomes relating to original Cultural Strategy
Ontario's Entertainment & Creative Cluster	2010	The Ministry of Tourism and Culture	A vision for the growth and leadership of Ontario's cultural and other creative industries

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Table 2 Interview Participants

	Title	Organisation	Gender	Age	Years of Experience
1	Marketing Manager	Economic Development and Culture Division	F	45-50	20-25
2	Vice President, Marketing and Communications	Tourism Toronto	M	40-45	15-20
3	Director, Media Relations	Tourism Toronto	F	35-40	15-20
4	(Former) Executive Director	Toronto Culture Division	F	60-65	30-35
5	Senior Policy Advisor	Economic Development and Culture Division	F	40-45	10-15
6	Media Relations Manager - Europe/Asia	Tourism Toronto	F	35-40	5-10
7	Publicity Supervisor	Toronto Special Events	F	30-35	5-10
8	(Former) Sponsorship Supervisor	City Cultural Events Office	F	35-40	10-15
9	Director	Toronto Culture Division	M	55-60	20-25
10	(Former) Director, Tourism	Municipal Tourism and Planning Division	F	55-60	25-30
11	Brand Manager, Consultant	Place-Branding Agency	F	55-60	25-30
12	Music Journalist	Entertainment Weekly	M	35-40	15-20
13	CEO	Arms-Length Sustainability Collective	M	40-45	20-25
14	VP Publicity and Communications	Toronto International Film Festival	F	40-45	20-25

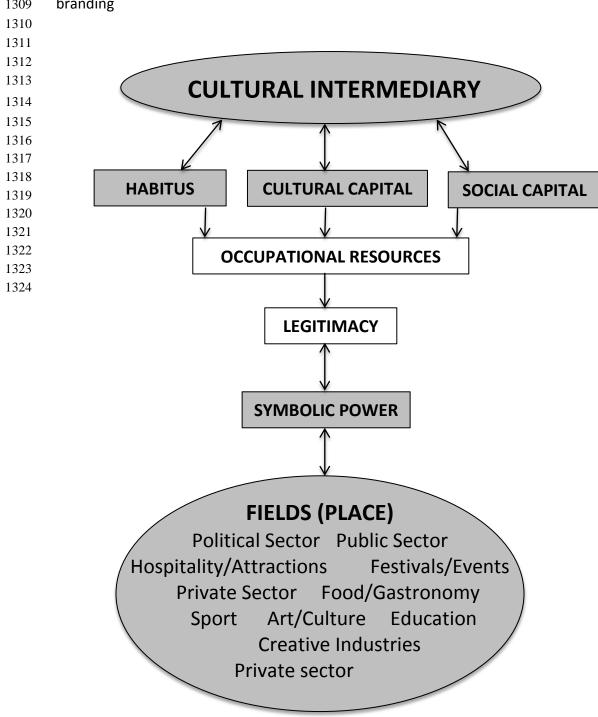| 15	Manager, Marketing & Communications	Waterfront Toronto	M	40-45	15-20
16	CEO, (former) Marketing Director	Major Museum	M	55-60	25-30

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1308 Fig. 1: Bourdieu's theory of cultural Intermediation adapted to the context of place
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CULTURAL INTERMEDIARY

HABITUS   **CULTURAL CAPITAL**   **SOCIAL CAPITAL**

OCCUPATIONAL RESOURCES

LEGITIMACY

SYMBOLIC POWER

FIELDS (PLACE)
Political Sector   Public Sector
Hospitality/Attractions   Festivals/Events
Private Sector   Food/Gastronomy
Sport   Art/Culture   Education
Creative Industries
Private sector