

THE ROLE OF SPORT IN CITY BRANDING

The Role of Sport in City Branding: A Case Study of Ottawa

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Abstract

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, cities around the globe are increasingly seeking to use various branding techniques to uniquely position themselves on the world stage. They do this via points of difference they hope corporations, institutions, and individuals recognize as having value; the intention being a variety of investments in those cities, primarily economic, but, often, via the ingress of human talent. That high-performance and mega sport events (e.g., IOC Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup, and F1 Grands Prix) have often been used to provide such points of difference is very well documented. However, the use of other, less high profile, forms of community-based recreational sport and physical activity in city branding activity has not received much attention. This thesis aims to begin to redress that imbalance.

Initially, the thesis describes sporting activities as taking place on a continuum, and proposes a conceptual model to illustrate the notion: the continuum's end points are labelled 'upper-case' for high-performance sport, and 'lower-case' for more community-based activities. Subsequently, and using a sample of senior leaders involved in the management of the municipal branding of Canada's national capital, and various other engaged individuals, the thesis examines perceptions of various modes of sporting activity in the city branding process. Results indicate lower-case community-based recreational sport and physical activity experienced in the city can serve a variety of purposes. Firstly, it can encourage citizen engagement in the city, which could further stimulate ongoing branding activity on behalf of the city via resident's word-of mouth conversations. Such activity would necessarily reflect individual's lived experience of the city. Secondly, the notion of quality of life amongst residents emerged from the data. This would appear to be a positive aspect of city living that could be used to actively promote the city to a

wide range of corporate and individual audiences seeking to optimise their investment—be it financial or personal.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction, Research Statement, and Literature Review

Introduction and Research Statement

Since the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Olympic and other world-class high-performance sport have been used increasingly by cities around the world in efforts to (re)brand and (re)position themselves on an ever-changing and dynamic global stage, largely in terms of economic and infrastructure development, financial investment, and tourism. Many cities in North America develop policies to promote sport and physical activity amongst their populations for a variety of reasons: improving health (e.g., Berg, Warner, & Das, 2015; De Nazelle et al., 2011; Taks, Green, Misener, & Chalip, 2014), stimulating the economy via inward investment (Burbank, Andranovich, & Heying, 2002; Matheson & Baade, 2006) and tourism (Gratton, Dobson, & Shibli, 2000), building image and brand (e.g., Herstein & Berger, 2013; Heslop, Nadeau, O'Reilly, & Armenakyan, 2013), encouraging population growth (Harvey, 2012), and citizen engagement (Govers, 2015; Harvey, 2012). The promotional activity can range from hosting large-scale and mega sport events to providing access to local facilities and building community infrastructure (e.g., Barghchi, Omar, & Aman, 2009; Veal, Toohey, & Frawley, 2012). To a lesser extent, such activities have been used in an attempt to attract new residents who, it is hoped, will help rejuvenate and revitalize specific locations within the larger metropolitan area. Such activity can be positioned overall within marketing; and much has been written about country, city, and place branding (e.g., Aronczyk, 2013; Ashworth, Kavaratzis, & Warnaby, 2015; Harvey, 2012; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Kotler, 2002; Ward, 1998), and the differences between them.

Whilst the role of sport within place branding has received some attention (e.g., Francis & Murphy, 2005; Herstein & Berger, 2013; Heslop, Nadeau, O'Reilly, & Armenakyan, 2013; Smith, 2005), scholars have almost exclusively focussed on the role of 'upper-case' large-scale

and mega-events such as the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, the Tour de France, Formula One Grands Prix, etc., and major league sports such as the NHL, NBA, NFL, MLS in (re)branding and (re)positioning countries and cities on the world stage. Within the sport and city branding literature, outcomes of such large-scale mega-events, and professional leagues, are usually framed quantitatively in terms of increasing numbers of tourists visiting the city (e.g., Baumann, Matheson, & Muroi, 2009; Ferrari & Guala, 2017; Gratton et al., 2000), increasing amounts of inward investment into the city (e.g., Ferrari & Guala, 2017; Taks, Kesenne, Chalip, Green, & Martyn, 2011), and, more recently, qualitative measures of citizen satisfaction with the city authorities for sport participation and promoting healthy lifestyles amongst citizens (e.g., Bretherton, Piggan, & Bodet, 2016; Girginov & Hills, 2008; Taks, Chalip, & Green, 2015; Taks, Green, Misener, & Chalip, 2014; Taks, Misener, Chalip, & Green, 2013; Veal et al., 2012). Much research has focussed on economic analyses of large event or major league team hosting (e.g., Gratton et al., 2000), be they related to tourist spend or levels of investment.

However, little attention has been paid to the role of ‘lower-case’ community-based recreational sport and physical activity in helping cities build a positive image amongst residents, thereby improving their overall branding efforts, and becoming more attractive to a wider group of people; in particular enabling the positive image of the city to gain traction amongst existing populations. This research is aimed at contributing to the latter body of work by exploring ways in which a city understands the role of citizen-focussed sport in building a brand, particularly via the creation of positive images around the representations and perceptions of community-based recreational sport and physical activity within the city.

The city in question is Ottawa, Canada’s national capital city. Whilst the municipality has previously hosted high-performance sport events (e.g., FIFA Women’s World Cup, Red Bull

Crashed Ice, etc.), and is home to various major and minor league teams (Ottawa Senators, Red Blacks, etc.), the sports of interest here are those supported and funded by the city in various ways, and aimed at enabling a wider population of existing and potential citizens to be physically active. Through supporting 'lower-case' recreational sport and physical activity, the city is potentially engaging existing citizens, and fostering positive perceptions amongst those considering moving to the city.

The format of this master thesis is article-based and consists of two self-contained articles that will answer the following aim and questions. The overall purpose of this study is to build a case study on the ways in which the City of Ottawa represents the recreational sport and physical activity in city branding, via utilizing the perceptions of elected representatives, employees, and others involved in the delivery and management of recreational sport and physical activity within the city. The semi-structured interviews will be used to gather relevant data for subsequent content and thematic analysis.

The following four questions will inform the research:

1. What is the role of recreational sport and physical activity in city branding?
2. Does the city perceive the community-based recreational sport and physical activity as part of the creation and development of a tangible and positive city brand?
3. How do employees and representatives at various levels of municipal government and relevant organizations/associations perceive the contribution of community-based recreational sport and physical activity in relation to the creation of the city brand?
4. Is word-of-mouth used by the city as a tool of a bottom-up brand-building?

Literature Review

As this research will be primarily located within the domain of general marketing and branding, the review of literature will be structured to provide a brief overview of marketing, and then evaluate the current state of research around country, city, and place branding. It will then review contemporary literature surrounding how the sport is used in the creation and development of place branding.

Marketing

Marketing has various definitions; for example, the American Marketing Association describes it thus: “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2013, para. 1). O’Reilly & Seguin (2009) spoke of marketing as “a set of processes that enable the creation of relationships between an organization and its stakeholders” (p. 3). In this instance, the relationship being described is between the city of Ottawa and various stakeholders within and outside the municipality.

Branding

The concept of branding has a long history, though modern branding and the use of individual brand names have their origins in the nineteenth century (Room, 1998). Whilst consumers who are in frequent contact with brands often think branding is “roughly synonymous with advertising, graphic design, promotion, public relations, or even propaganda,” and is a topic that has a close relationship with media (Anholt, 2007b, p. 3), branding is actually the “culmination of a range of activities across the whole marketing mix, leading to a brand image which conveys a whole set of messages ... about quality, price, expected performance, and status ... it must be regarded as the focus of marketing ... the brand acts as a common point of

contact between the producer and the consumer” (Blythe, 2006, p. 89). Historically, manufacturer names served as a trademark implying the inherent quality of their products. Over time, place names and symbols, often those associated with the site of manufacture of particular products, began to be used; an example of this is the use of the German city of Wolfsburg’s coat of arms on the badge adorning early Volkswagen cars (Blythe, 2006). Business owners intended to build recognizable and distinctive identities for their enterprises in an increasingly crowded marketplace (Low & Fullerton, 1994). Put another way, building a positive brand is similar to “persuading, seducing, and attempting to manipulate people into buying products and service” (Olins, 2003, p. 7).

Anholt (2005) further defined branding at three levels. Firstly, the traditional explanation is that branding is a marketing approach whose purpose is to change people’s perceptions toward products. Next, the simple explanation of branding is forming a visual identity for particular products and services. Finally, by associating products and services with specific images, companies create better and more meaningful communication opportunities with their public and other stakeholders. In doing so, modern branding is regarded as a part of an integrated business strategy that expects to position products precisely in highly competitive marketplaces (Anholt, 2005). Surowiec (2016) noted modern branding is “a product of promotional culture: its contemporary, dominant meaning originates in marketing model and practice” (p. 18).

Place Branding

In the early 21st century, many nations, cities, and other notable places use branding techniques to build unique images that can be *externally* projected to a worldwide audience for a variety of largely economic reasons, such as inward investment (Anholt, 2007b; Aronczyk, 2013; Harvey, 2012; Watkins & Herbert, 2003), obtaining the attention of international media (Anholt,

2007b), governments (Anholt, 2007b), general populations to promote tourism (Anholt, 2007b; Aronczyk, 2013; Harvey, 2012; Watkins & Herbert, 2003), creating high-value employment opportunities and attracting a skilled workforce (Anholt, 2007b, De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012), attracting entrepreneurs (Anholt, 2007b; Harvey, 2012), industry (Anholt, 2007b), and students (Aronczyk, 2013), and *internally* improving local community pride and identity within existing populations (Harvey, 2012; Watkins & Herbert, 2003). Place branding activities mainly focus on the creation of differentiation and preference based on marketing communications (Ward, 1998). They permit the projection of distinct images, enabling places to survive and prosper in an increasingly competitive global market. Via the creation and development of strong brands, nations, cities, and regions “with good, powerful and positive reputations find that almost everything they undertake on the international stage is easier” (Anholt, 2007b, p. 2). Consequently, it is the responsibility of a place’s policymakers to understand the world’s perceptions of their location, and to create a strategy for managing and positioning a place’s image(s) using branding techniques (Anholt, 2007b; Fan, 2006) within an integrated marketing communication strategy (Hankinson, 2010). The outcome will be an enhanced perceived ‘value’ of the place (Surowiec, 2016).

According to Warnaby, Ashworth, and Kavaratzis (2015), place brands comprise “promotional tactics and identity claims, associations with placemaking elements (in terms of attempting to create some form of ‘sense of place’ for an individual location), and also in terms of place narratives and the collective construction of meaning about a place” (p. 243). This means place branding is a “powerful and persuasive promotional activity” (Ashworth et al., 2015, p. 5) that is intended to “appeal to a specified appropriate ‘target group’” (Ashworth et al., 2015, p. 6). The main resources of place-branding activities are usually found in “official,

intentional and coordinated communication [activities] by local stakeholders” (Ashworth et al., 2015, p. 5).

Due to an increasingly competitive global environment, and as a development of place branding, Anholt (2007a) originated the notion of ‘Competitive Identity’ to describe the synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy, and with trade, investment, tourism, and export promotion: “It is a model for enhanced national competitiveness in a global world, and one that is already beginning to pay dividends for a number of countries, cities and regions, both rich and poor” (Anholt, 2007b, p. 3). As an evolution of place branding, separate, yet related, literature exists for both nation and city branding.

Nation Branding

Aronczyk (2013) stated that nation branding stems directly from product branding. This perspective is reinforced and expanded by Surowiec (2016) who observed nation branding “originates in the marketing discipline, specifically its sub-field of place marketing” (p. 20). Nascent awareness of nation branding derives from the increasing “competition for global investment, trade, and tourism” (Aronczyk, 2013, p. 4) and “competition between nations increasingly takes place in three commercial areas – inward investment, tourism, and export of goods and services” (Olins, 1999, p. 4). According to Anholt (2007b), “the reputation (brand) of a country has a direct and measurable impact on just about every aspect of its engagement with other countries, and plays a critical role in its economic, social, political and cultural progress” (p. 9). Supplementary to these commercial purposes, Anholt (2007b) pointed out that the competition between nations is also for attracting talented immigrants, include foreign nationals who are seeking “ideal social, cultural, fiscal and living conditions” and “returning members of the diaspora looking to reinvest in their home country” (p. 20).

For Aronczyk (2013), national identity is a competitive resource for shaping places in the world, and national brands are a way of managing and manipulating this resource for competitive advantage. Facing the pressure generated in dynamic global marketplaces, through creating a distinctive national identity, nations can build a unique image that becomes “a solution to perceived contemporary problems affecting the space of the nation-state: problems of economic development, democratic communication, and especially national visibilities and legitimacy amid the multiple global flows of late modernity” (Aronczyk, 2013, p. 4). National brand images also “signif(y) the country’s connection and relationship with its stakeholders in other countries” (Wang, 2013, p. 31). Furthermore, Tourism Mauritius (2009) stated that nations should utilize their strength, as exemplified by brand image, to fight for “visitors, investment and business opportunities” (p. 4). Indeed, Wang (2013) indicated that building national brands can profit investment and tourism development, and political alliances. According to Holston and Appadurai (2003), policymakers should pay attention to the functions of citizens while implementing branding strategies, as they are significant stakeholders in the process of branding, who can be affected directly by the images created to support the nation’s brand. Whilst national branding usually has a strong connection with city branding, they are not always complimentary. National brands are rarely developed in the same cohesive and integrated manner that most city brands are.

Nye (1990) originally articulated the notion of ‘soft power’ to describe an ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. In relation to nation branding, soft power comes from perceptions of culture, political values, and foreign policies (Nye, 2004). Surowiec (2016) explicitly linked nation branding with the corporatization of soft power in a nation. This corporatization is explained as an “application of modes of thinking, business solutions, and

communicative practices derived from the corporate sector into statecraft” (p. 4). According to Surowiec (2016), the management of soft power plays an important role in nation branding. Based on Mosco’s (2009) views on the political economy of communication, Surowiec (2016) also considered the brand of a nation as soft power. According to Nye (2004), from an international relations perspective, “soft power is an attractive power” (p. 6). This persuasive power attracts people to view a nation positively. In Surowiec’s (2016) definition, nation branding is a consequence of “political governance, soft power and national identity” (p. iii). By improving a nation’s soft power, countries are able to attain more resources internationally (Surowiec, 2016).

City Branding

There are some differences between nation branding and city branding because cities have smaller and simpler attributes. A city is usually seen as a single entity (Anholt, 2007b), whereas a nation is an accumulation of individual city identities accompanied by some unifying notion of nationhood. The competition that exists between nations for scarce resources also occurs between cities. As a small unit of a nation, cities also meet competitive challenges from other cities, both nationally and internationally. Ashworth et al. (2015, p. 4) named these challenges as “inter-place competition.” In a similar way to when commercial firms compete in a dynamic marketplace, cities try to be unique places to resist pressure from other cities (Shirley, 1999). For example, cities seek to develop “internationally competitive investment environments for investors who possess global reach” (Cashman, 2008, p. 23). Hence, it is necessary for cities to utilize place promotion strategies in order to become distinctive and stand out, to attract investment, and other benefits they are seeking. As noted in Parent and Smith-Swan (2013, p. 171), “image, identity, and branding processes” have an impact on destination image; and

work in conjunction with media to promote that image to a wider world (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003). Subsequently, and from an economic perspective, an awareness of the potential of marketing cities has developed due to the growing demand of attracting investment and tourism to regenerate cities (Kovács & Musterd, 2013; Ward, 1998). Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) pointed out that the “increased mobility of capital, the easier relocation of economic activity, the radical development of the knowledge-based society and increased global connectivity” stimulate “cities to become more proactive and even more effective in their marketing decisions” (p. 163).

At a fundamental level, “place branding is merely the application of product branding to places” (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005, p. 508). However, Dinnie (2015) argued that city branding “is more complex and multidimensional than the branding of a physical product or of a corporation owing to factors such as the multitude of stakeholders and the infinite range of brand touchpoints associated with the branding of places” (p. 3). The building of positive city images is a long-term goal for cities (Stubbs & Warnaby, 2015). Generally, cities make promotional strategies, including “branding exercises, hosting cultural or sports events and festivals of all forms, plan marketing initiatives, tourism promotion, and even immigration campaigns” (Harvey, 2012, p. 10), to build their cities’ images. Consequently, the image a city projects can be said to be the result of deliberate city brand marketing (Kovács & Musterd, 2013). Harvey (2012) advised a city’s image-building is to “boost civic pride and generate social cohesion” (p. 10). Ashworth et al. (2015, p. 5) indicated that “place-making” can shape the image of a city. The process of image communication to a target market is an important part of place branding (Lucarelli & Olof Berg, 2011). According to Ashworth et al. (2015, p. 5), “promotional tactics” and “identity claims” are commonly regarded as two key components of city brands.

Promotional tactics involve dialogue between local stakeholders. Ashworth et al. (2015) pointed out that the resources that are for city brand construction can be found in these communications.

City Branding for Citizen Engagement

Competition amongst cities in global marketplaces can be traced back to the nineteenth century when city officials promoted their municipalities in response to growing economic and commercial competition for scarce resources (Kavaratzis, 2005). For example, place promotion played a significant role in attracting immigrants to developing cities in the Western regions of Canada in the mid-to-late nineteenth century (Lehr & Lehr, 2007).

Many policymakers attempt to build unique city images to enhance their competitiveness (Kovács & Musterd, 2013). Through image-building, cities can become better known by people living elsewhere, and ultimately attract them as investors, tourists, or even citizens. As a result, a city's economy can improve (Harvey, 2012) via increased "local pride, identity and self-confidence, and countering [of] negative perceptions" (Watkins & Herbert, 2003, p. 252). As a result, residents can receive direct benefits from a positive city brand (Black, 2008; Law, 2009; Whitson, 2004).

Morgan and Pritchard (1999) emphasized the necessity for cities wishing to be considered as destinations to create a unique identity. Such unique identities can encourage existing citizens to be tourists in their own cities (Harvey, 2012). These authors also noted that cities build various congruent images to persuade different publics the cities are an ideal place to live.

City brands also provide a potential locus for uniting citizens to promote the development of a city (Ashworth et al., 2015). In the process of city branding, the citizens are usually treated as informant, controller, main beneficiary, and audience (Warnaby, Koeck, & Medway, 2018).

Generally, they are brand ambassador for their cities (Braun, Kavaratzis, & Zenker, 2013). As Gotham and Irvin (2018) indicated, the city can harmonize the citizens' views and the internal perspective of the city with urban tourism goals and *externally* oriented branding effort. Hence, Warnaby et al. (2018) saw the need to involve and extensively discuss with citizens during the creation of a refined city brand. With the engagement of the citizens, at a local community level, a "place brand can help maximize positive place experience," so it can improve residents' satisfaction with a city (Ashworth et al., 2015, p. 4). For example, the engagement of the citizens, who are sharing their home, allows the hosts to come closer to their community and strengthen knowledge of their area (Warnaby et al., 2018). Thus, city branding can demonstrably be a useful tool to promote city development via citizen engagement (Kalandides, 2011).

Storytelling is also important for *internal* city branding directed towards citizens, to promote positive engagement (Ashworth et al., 2015). According to Colomb and Kalandides (2010), "the creators of such 'stories' are often professionals in the sectors of public relations, communication, advertising and city marketing" (p. 3). The storytelling can translate a city's resources into images to be projected to its citizenry (Fog, 2010). For example, in 2008, Berlin's branding campaign targeted Berliners directly: by incorporating residents' personal success stories into the city branding campaign, the intention was to build elements of the city brand relying on residents' experiences. Their stories comprise individual personal experiences of events, which are naturally different to events in other cities because of the multitude of factors that combine to make a specific place unique; in this case, the narrative contributes to building a unique image for Berlin, based on how residents are inspired by living in Berlin. This city branding campaign served to stimulate residents' civic pride. Such civic pride can also be beneficial for attracting *external* groups, such as tourists and migrants (Colomb & Kalandides,

2010). Furthermore, as Therkelsen (2015) discussed, this type of place branding is “no longer solely directed at new lucrative markets, but is also concerned with maintaining established markets through community building activities” (p. 161). The literature suggests stories used in city branding should be based on culture (Fog, 2010), and they can incorporate every key facet of the city (Ashworth et al., 2015).

From a functional perspective, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) stated places [cities] need to differentiate themselves from each other to receive economic, policy, or social-psychological benefits for their citizens. They continue by noting city marketing should not only entertain visitors but also focus on other target groups, such as residents; they emphasize the importance of residents’ attitudes toward place marketing efforts. Balmer (2002) indicated the emotional ownership of brands belongs to the people who are affected by them: in the case of a specific city, that would directly implicate the citizens. Cities are not only tourism destinations; they are primarily the locus of residents who form the nucleus of a community (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008). From a local community level, Therkelsen (2015) indicated that any marketing activities are “done in the name of inhabitants and [utilize] their resources” (p. 162). They indicated residents should be “both the foremost target group of the marketing effort and, in effect, the most influential place marketers” (p. 162). Hudson and Hawkins (2006) concurred that residents play a significant role in the process of city branding. They observed: “local people can help to set the ambience for visitors as well as acting as credible brand ambassadors” (p. 175). De Clercy and Ferguson (2012) indicated that non-mega-sized cities brand their attributes “not only to the regional, national, or global levels but also to their own citizens or prospective new citizens” (p. 145). Successful cities’ images promote “a sense of community, solidarity, inclusion, and pride among the current citizenry” (De Clercy & Ferguson, p. 152). City

marketing may alienate residents if they focus exclusively on aspects that do not directly impact the community: residents need to be considered in setting and achieving city branding goals (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008).

Sport and City Branding

According to Harvey (2012), one acknowledged element of a city image-building strategy can be to host sports events; as a consequence, cities often utilize sport as part of their branding activity to receive benefits, such as attracting investment (e.g., Matheson, 2009; Tien, Lo, & Lin, 2011) and tourism (e.g., Baumann et al., 2009; Ferrari & Guala, 2017; Gratton et al., 2000; Henderson, Foo, Lim, & Yip, 2010). The literature surrounding sport and city branding is mainly focussed on the high-performance and professional end of the scale (referred to here as ‘upper-case’). The manner by which many governments (national, provincial, and municipal) grasp the opportunity to host large-scale and mega sport events to (re)brand and (re)position their cities illustrates the manner in which high-performance and professional sport is used as a tool in place branding, and is fairly well documented and analyzed (e.g., Herstein & Berger, 2013; Lee, Taylor, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Ritchie & Smith, 1991; Smith, 2005; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). Reviewing such literature allows for the identification of the role of high-performance and professional sport in city branding. Cities can also use sport to help rebrand their national and international image, as Barcelona did with the 1992 Olympics (e.g., Valls, Banchini, Falcón, & Tuñon, 2013).

In the case of post-1992 Barcelona, significant increases in tourism, amongst other positive metrics, indicate the success of the city in utilizing the Summer Olympic Games as a key element in rebranding the city (Valls et al., 2013). Vall et al. further highlighted that a key element of the city’s successful branding strategy was the establishment of sport as a distinct

strategic business group through the recognition that [mega] sports events can promote a city brand. Moreover, they (2013) noted: “tourism is driving the city’s economy, especially in times of crisis” (p. 99), and this economic activity can benefit all stakeholders, including residents.

Sport has many different expressions: from high-performance competition manifest in events, such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup, to amateur semi-organized games of soccer, recreational open-water swimming, cycling paths, and public parks. It is at points along this spectrum that cities can choose to utilize sport in their brand building activities. Whilst, in this context, ‘lower-case’ sport is taken to mean recreational, community-based sport and physical activity (Green, 2007), examples from the use of other levels of the sport will be used to illustrate the potential sport has in relation to city branding.

Contemporary cities are regarded as places that contain “consumption-related activities related to tourism, sports, culture, and entertainment” (Hannigan, 2003, p. 352). Sport can play various roles in cities branding because the sport has different meanings for different people. In general, sport activities are useful for promoting physical activity as a means of boosting the local economy (e.g., Matheson, 2009; Tien et al., 2011), and enhancing residents’ lives (Bretherton et al., 2016; Frawley & Cush, 2011; Girginov & Hills, 2008; Ramchandani, Davies, Coleman, Shibli, & Bingham, 2015; Veal et al., 2012; Wicker et al., 2013).

Hosting international sports events is widely perceived to have a lasting positive influence on a city (e.g., Searle, 2008; Veal et al., 2012). Such legacies can include “sport and non-sport infrastructure construction, urban design and planning, destination marketing, and economic development” (Veal et al., 2012, p. 157). Moreover, through hosting high-performance sport events, host cities usually create sport development strategies for stimulating local sports participation (Bretherton et al., 2016). At the same time, host cities tend to put financial and

other capital into specific sport programs; Frawley and Cush (2011) pointed out that this investment is often regarded as having a long-term influence on residents' sport participation; though they do not consider whether the resultant participation could have an impact on how the city brand is perceived.

Likewise, the process of hosting mega sport events offers host cities an opportunity to gain significant media exposure to rapidly increase global awareness of their city (Anholt, 2007b). There are several studies suggesting a key purpose of hosting mega sport events is the improvement of host cities' economic development (e.g., Essex & Chalkley, 2004; Harvey, 2012; Searle, 2008; Lee & Taylor, 2005). Of those, Essex and Chalkley (2004) also suggested that hosting mega sport events, such as the Olympic Games, is beneficial for attracting tourism, inward investment, and creating new images for host cities. In the case of Australia's Sydney, a modern image was built around the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games (Anholt, 2007b). Through developing the Sydney Olympic Park for these Games, the New South Wales government planned to attract tourists, residents, and workers toward that area (Cashman, 2008). Whilst it is not conclusive, a decade later Sydney Olympic Park appeared still able to attract considerable international media attention (Davidson & McNeill, 2008); Cashman (2008), stated Sydney Olympic Park continues to attract a large amount of investment even after the 2000 Games. The investment includes "commercial, sporting, education and hospitality development" (p. 36). As another example, Beijing's municipal government still utilizes the 2008 Beijing Olympic Park for business purposes, using it to attract both investment and tourism (Ren, 2008). Though the legacies of some editions of the Olympic Games may have negative impacts on the urban development in the post-Game (Searle, 2002), as a part of Olympic Games legacies, sport stadiums often utilize fiscal subsidies which might otherwise be "spent on social infrastructure

and services” (Searle, 2002, p. 846). Moreover, according to Searle (2002), Sydney Olympic Stadium is too large to host any other events; which results in the waste of scarce resources. In pursuit of maintaining Sydney Olympic Park, the post-Olympic development strategy partly sacrifices the Olympic Games-related pledges, such as sustainability and community benefits (Davidson & McNeill, 2012). Additionally, in the past decade, the New South Wales government needed to begin to promote Sydney Olympic Park by hosting other events (Davidson & McNeill, 2012).

By hosting mega sport events, cities attract considerable inward investment. These investments can be used in building local infrastructure, such as transportation and physical facilities, which can positively affect residents’ life. For example, the Olympic Games hosting cities invest in local infrastructures development, sports facilities, and urban development (Searle, 2008). Such urban developments may include “airport, road, and public transport improvements, new residential quarters, new hotels, new commercial centres, (the) upgrading of communication systems, and new recreation and leisure spaces” (Searle, 2008, p. 91), all of which can positively impact the lives of a city’s existing residents.

Apart from attracting investment, Fan (2006) indicated the [cultural] product of a place can positively influence the images of the place, so utilizing the image of sport can help generate positive and vibrant imagery that acts as an opportunity to (re)brand and (re)position cities on the world map. According to Smith (2005), some cities, such as Melbourne (Francis & Murphy, 2005), Birmingham, and Sheffield (Smith, 2005), utilize sport to promote their images. Moreover, some cities, such as Manchester, Cardiff, and Dubai, are regarded as ‘sport-cities,’ due to special sport themed zones in which their governments create concentrations of sports facilities (Smith, 2010).

Many Middle Eastern cities currently utilize the image of the sport to attract tourists and immigrants (Smith, 2010); for example, Doha, Qatar, uses Moto GP and the 2020 FIFA World Cup, Dubai uses major golf and tennis tournaments, and Abu Dhabi and Bahrain (Manama) use FIA Formula One Grand Prix. Such sporting mega-events play “a role of ‘signalling’ the city’s global image scope” (Harvey, 2012, p. 19).

In Canada, mega sporting and cultural events, such as 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, the FIA Formula One Grand Prix in Montreal, the Toronto International Film Festival, and Montreal Jazz Festival usually fulfill the role of promoting the host cities as world-class destinations. Whitson (2004) pointed out that many Canadian cities attempt to use mega-events to rebuild their cities’ images and reposition the cities on the world stage. In doing so, the cities are potentially able to attract tourists, investors, and new residents (Harvey, 2012).

Such authors mainly discuss the outcomes of hosting large-scale sports events in a quantitative way. There appears to be little research that explores the way in which citizen-focussed sports and recreational activities can contribute towards city brand-building endeavours. According to Munar (2011), destination branding has now become the expression of the interaction and participation of the end users. The citizens are a vital end user in the process of destination branding. Meanwhile, Giovanardi, Lichrou, and Kavaratzis (2018) emphasized the role of citizens, as an important internal stakeholder, in the process of city branding. Moreover, according to Warnaby et al. (2018), a city’s brand is created by a system of interactions that allows for co-creation of meaning. Through the exchange of ideas, experiences, emotions, opinions and messages, the co-creators consistently re-create the place brand (Warnaby et al., 2018). Hence, the residents of a city should be considered a significant stakeholder in city branding and development. The residents can be spectators in a sports event or participants in

sport and recreational activity. Moreover, in many cities, the purpose of building sports facilities is to create a more positive environment for residents. Sports facilities are a prime site in which residents participate in civic life (Harvey, 2012).

As this literature review indicates, mega sport events are perceived to contribute to city brand building and positioning. There is, however, little research on the role of community-based grass-roots level sport and recreational physical activity in city branding. In addition, not every city has the desire or resource to host mega sport events; small- and medium-scale cities such as Ottawa, though, still have ambitions towards utilizing sport and recreational activity to engage with their stakeholders (residents) thereby building the city's brand (City Ottawa, 2015). Nowadays, social media makes word-of-mouth communication easier and fast in terms of impacting on city branding (Oliveira & Panyik, 2015). The place brand is usually (re)created by the communications among the co-creators (stakeholders). The messages related to the place are considered as the raw materials processed in the construction of place branding (Kavaratiz, 2018). Of those co-creators, Kavaratiz (2018) emphasized that citizens are a key internal stakeholder. Furthermore, involving citizens in a city branding process can help prevent the fragmentation of branding effort. Hence, engaging local stakeholders is meaningful for city branding (Houghton & Stevens, 2011; Kavaratzis, 2013). It is apparent though that cities that do not host mega sports receive less attention from researchers in terms of city branding (Harvey, 2012). As a consequence, these areas are worth studying. Although there are a few larger-scale sports events in Ottawa, the capital city has its own sports environments. Also, Ottawa appears to have a series of implicit and explicit strategies for developing sport and recreational activity. According to the City Ottawa (2015), the city explicitly claims the determination of promoting Ottawa as a destination for tourism, business investment, and sporting events. One issue for

Ottawa in terms of branding is the intimate, yet competing, relationship between Ottawa as a municipality in its own right, and Ottawa as the federal capital city. This issue is further compounded by Ottawa's close proximity to the city of Gatineau in Quebec (Ville de Gatineau, n.d.), and its relationship with the National Capital Commission (NCC), which has its own mandates for promoting the entire region, including parts of Ottawa and Gatineau (NCC, n.d.).

CHAPTER 2

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

Kavaratzis (2004) developed a city brand communication model where city image is formed via multifaceted processes encompassing three main types of communications: 1) the city's action (cityscape, urban / green space environment; infrastructures; organizational/administrative; and the city's behaviour, city vision and strategies); 2) intentional communication (mainstream marketing mix practices); and 3) word-of-mouth, the image communication that is not controllable by city marketers or by the two previous types.

Kavaratzis' (2004) notion of word-of-mouth communication coupled with his later (2018) model of inclusion emphasizes the importance of resident citizens as legitimate stakeholders in the development of city brands and simultaneously prioritizes them as a valid target market. According to Oliveira and Panyik (2015), word-of-mouth communication is considered an influential way to build up a city brand, since the posts and comments on social media are easy to spread out widely and quickly. Meanwhile, Lichrou, Kavaratzis, and Giovanardi (2018) emphasized the concept of co-creation in the process of city branding. Many co-creations happen in the dialogic processes among the internal stakeholders, which highlights the importance of word-of-mouth communication in the process of city branding. A city's internal audience should be empowered to participate in the creation of the brand image, as they are a tangible part of the brand. Braun, Kavaratzis, and Zenker (2013) demonstrated that beyond being just passive beneficiaries, residents are "active partners and co-producers of public goods, services and policies" (p. 18) and should, therefore, be integrated within a more participatory approach to branding that counters the external and rather imposed top-down traditions. Besides, citizens are usually more likely to share ownership and participation while engaging them in the process of city brand development (Warnaby, Koeck, & Medway, 2018). Braun et al. (2013)

proposed a threefold role for residents in city branding: **1) Residents as integral part of a place brand**, which highlights how local people, in “their interactions with each other and with outsiders obviously form the social milieu of a given place” (p. 20), and should, therefore, be at the centre of branding processes; **2) Residents as ambassadors** for their place brand, which emphasizes the importance of the residents within the communication process, as they are “naturally considered informal, authentic and insider sources of information about the place” (p. 21). Residents, therefore, contribute to the co-creation of the brand and the whole place product. This notion leads to the idea of an internal lived brand where residents become brand champions (see also Achrol & Kotler, 1999; Warnaby, 2009); and **3) Residents as citizens**, which highlights the political engagement and democratic endeavours of the civil society that elects government officials and participates in political decision-making. This is why innovative and cutting-edge city branding processes should develop tools to favour residents’ participation and empower them in becoming engaged in ‘living the brand.’ Since the residents have this threefold role in the process of city branding, the participatory place branding process becomes valued, and co-created destination brands will be the future success stories. The participatory approach can be a solution to brand incorporation issues and areas previously ignored by the brand (Warnaby et al., 2018). Participatory tools can be surveys and any creative forms using e-marketing techniques and other Web 2.0 tools that provide remarkable opportunities for citizens to meaningfully participate in the co-creation of the city brand.

Methodology

The research utilizes a case study methodology surrounding perceptions of the role of community-based sport and recreational physical (lower-case sport) activity in Ottawa’s city branding. According to Yin (2009), the case study is a research strategy that is utilized in

exploring contemporary phenomena in depth—in this case, elements of the city branding process in Ottawa. Yin (1994) also stated the case study is suited to do exploratory research. In this research project, since there is a lack of research around lower-case sport in the process of city branding, an exploratory case study was employed to explore the formation of a city brand from a bottom-up and participatory perspective. Also, Yin (1994) pointed out that case studies aim to inform research questions related to “how.” The “how” question is what this research explores. For answering the role of lower-case sport in the process of city branding, this research examines the participants’ perspectives on the impact of the lower-case sport on city branding. Besides, the case study is an effective research strategy that has been utilized in various research fields, such as social sciences, psychology, anthropology, business, and law (Yin, 1994). Thus, the case study, as employed in this research, is an appropriate research process to explore various stakeholder perspectives toward the role of lower-case sports in the creation, development, and maintenance of Ottawa’s city brand image (implicit or explicit, intentional or unintentional).

The case study has another strength in that it contains a variety of evidential data, such as interviews (Yin, 1994; Yin, 2013), which are the primary data resources for this research. The case study also has an advantage of solving real-life questions, such as “what is the role of lower-case sport in Ottawa’s city-branding process?” According to Yin (2013), in comparison to experimental studies, the outcomes of case studies are often richer and have greater depth, they have practical meanings, and they can answer research questions directly. Moreover, a case study can help by adding value for participants through discussions (Yin, 2013). In addition, the case study cannot only be used to generalize theories, but also can offer an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being investigated. That understanding can be the “tentative hypotheses that help structure future research” (Merriam, 1988, p. 32).

Methods

This research primarily uses semi-structured interviews to collect data. These were conducted amongst a sample created via a 'snowball' technique whereby respondents for subsequent interviews were suggested from the initial 'seed' interview. Subsequently, thematic analysis was undertaken to provide material to construct the case study.

Since this research is about the city brand of Ottawa, the researchers considered it important to research existing city policies and strategies in terms of city branding at the beginning of the research. To achieve this goal, the researchers conducted archival research. The researchers went to the Ottawa City Archives to search for city branding related material in the official Minutes of City Council Meetings. The researchers began searching these minutes starting in 2001 because, in that year, the former Region of Ottawa-Carleton, the former cities of Ottawa, Nepean, Kanata, Gloucester, Vanier and Cumberland, the former townships of West Carleton, Goulbourn, Rideau, and Osgoode, and the former village of Rockcliffe Park were amalgamated into the new City of Ottawa under the 1999 City of Ottawa Act (*City of Ottawa Act, 1999*). At that time, the city of Ottawa started to market the city as a whole entity. Unfortunately, this archival research yielded few results. Based on those limited city brand related materials, the researchers discovered the city of Ottawa only ever invested money in OCRI (Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation), the previous name of Invest Ottawa, to market the city as a high-tech hub, which ultimately failed (Spigel, 2011). Beyond these findings, and various budget items related to Invest Ottawa and Ottawa Tourism (e.g., Budget 2018, 2018; City of Ottawa, 2004), there were no direct references to creating a branding strategy for the city.

Semi-structured interviews were used to retrieve data for this research. According to Longhurst (2003), while using semi-structured interviews, not only do researchers receive data

from the participants based on pre-structured interviews' guides, but the researchers also have opportunities to receive information that the participants feel is important in relation to the research question(s). The interview guide (see Appendix A) provides clear guidance to the interviewers to produce reliable and comparable data (Horton, Macve, & Struyven, 2004). In addition, the possibility for respondents to provide supplemental information enables the data from the interviews to possess greater depth.

Semi-structured interviews were an appropriate method of data collection for this research because there is little research identifying the role of community-based sport and recreational physical activity in city branding that incorporates related citizen-focussed municipally-funded organizations' perspectives. Moreover, the participants occupied different positions within various organizations related to the field of study, so they had different perspectives regarding the potential role of community-based sport and recreational physical activity in the creation, development, and maintenance of Ottawa's city brand.

Snowball sampling is a research method that "uses a small pool of initial informants to nominate other participants who meet the eligibility criteria for a study" (Given, 2008, p. 815). Coleman (1958) indicated that snowball sampling is an optimal method for social research due to its natural attribution of samples. According to Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), snowball sampling is suitable for research in which respondents are able to refer other individuals who "possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (p. 141). Respondents are regarded as assistants to the study. They offer their resources to help complete data collection (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). From a single key known informant, a snowball sample was created with opportunities to conduct a further series of semi-structured interviews with other individuals who had some connection to sport and city brand building within Ottawa. As the sample size

increased, it informed many aspects of the research questions and provided multiple perspectives from a variety of different stakeholders.

For this project, I interviewed elected representatives, employees, and others involved in the delivery and management of municipally-funded, community-based recreational sport and physical activity within the city. A first key informant is a three-time city councillor with a strong connection to sport; he agreed to act as the seed for the snowball sample. This research collected rich data due to the position he holds, and the network of people to whom he is connected, and to whom he introduced the researcher. Moreover, the Councillor has a strong sports management background; his position and work experiences provide him with a sound understanding of the potential influences of sport and recreational physical activity in the city brand. According to Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), such qualities commend him as an ideal start point for the subsequent referral chain (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

Thematic Analysis

In this research, analysis of semi-structured interview data was guided by thematic analysis, which emphasizes the identification of “patterns of meaning across a qualitative dataset” (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016, p. 290). The thematic analysis focusses on making sense of the data, where findings can be induced from the data (Braun et al., 2016). Thematic analysis is applied to various data collection methods (Braun et al., 2016). In this project, it was applied to semi-structured interview transcripts in order to collect different perspectives towards the role of municipally-funded, community-based sport and recreational physical activity in building and maintaining Ottawa’s city brand.

In the process of data collection and analysis, the researchers followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases. Firstly, the researchers digitally recorded all but one interview in

MP3 format; the other person was interviewed during an unrecorded telephone conversation. After each interview, I listened to the recording and verbatim transcribed all content. To guarantee the accuracy of the language in the transcriptions, my supervisors read through the transcript whilst listening to the recording, correcting any errors. In undertaking these steps, all researchers became familiar with all aspects of the data, which provide the foundation for the following thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once the verified transcripts were available, they were sent to each interviewee, who were asked to review their words, correct any mistakes, or rephrase any content they thought misrepresented their opinion. Only one respondent proposed minor changes: the rest were happy that the transcripts were an accurate representation of the interview. Once this validation stage was complete, we imported the transcripts into Nvivo 12, the “most used qualitative and mixed methods data analysis software tool” (Who uses Nvivo, n.d., para. 1), this allowed the systematic and formalized re-reading of the data, and we subsequently begin to code the responses. While searching the data in Nvivo 12, the researchers could easily capture the keywords and locate them across various transcripts. Meanwhile, it is convenient to classify the data and link the relevant data from multiple transcripts, since Nvivo 12 allows the researchers to revise and organize the codes at any step. Just as though they were reading and annotating reading a hard copy, the researchers wrote notes around the contents, while using Nvivo 12 to check through the interviews.

This research utilized an inductive thematic approach to code the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, “inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions” (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). In this sense, this form of thematic analysis is data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Since this research intends to answer the four main research questions, we preliminarily identified descriptive open codes relevant to these research questions, such as “community-based sport engages citizens,” “community-based sport in city branding,” and “word-of-mouth,” to name but a few. Meanwhile, the interviewees confirm “lower-case sport” is a valid phrase to frame the community-based recreational sport in understanding the role of sport in city branding. Hence, this phrase also becomes our interest topic during the first round reviewing. Based on these preconceived ideas, for the first round of reviewing the transcripts, we intended to ascertain how the interviewees framed community-based recreational sport (lower-case sport) in the process of city branding. Since we have three researchers in this project, after each round of coding, there were open dialogues among the researchers to discuss and refine the codes. In analyzing the first round codes, we generated the themes “citizen engagement in lower-case sports,” “contribution of the city in lower-case sports,” “impact of citizen engagement in lower-case sports,” and “general branding communication in the city.”

During the first round coding, the researchers noted the emergence of “quality of life” in several responses. However, the researchers did not frame the interview guide by using this phrase. Besides, Ottawa is considered a city that can offer the residents quality of life by external third-party organizations, such as MoneySense Magazine, and Mercer’s quality of living city ranking. Meanwhile, Invest Ottawa is marketing this attribute for the city. Hence, we consider it is a valued code to explore. We paid attention to develop the codes around “quality of life” in the second round coding. After analyzing the second round codes, we developed the main theme “Ottawa’s brand as the quality of life.” Based on this main theme, we developed the subthemes about engaging residents in community-based recreational sport. When we explored the codes of residents participating in community-based recreational sport more closely, we indicated the link

between the residents and the community and the link between the residents and the city via participation in the lower-case sport. After this round of analysis, we generated the subthemes “city with high rates of sports participation – active living urban,” “family oriented city,” and “sport for all” to name a few. These subthemes also respond to our research interest of word-of-mouth in inclusive city branding. Finally, after we came to an agreement on this round of analyses, we reviewed and categorized all of the themes. As a result, we presented those themes in our findings.

Organization	Position	Number
City of Ottawa	City Councillor	Respondent 01
Recreation, Cultural and Facility Service, City of Ottawa	General manager	Respondent 02
City of Ottawa	City Councillor	Respondent 03
Communication & Outreach, City Councillor’s Office	Director	Respondent 04
Public Information and Media Relations, City of Ottawa	Director	Respondent 05
City of Ottawa	Mayor	Respondent 06
Invest Ottawa & Bayview	President & CEO	Respondent 07
Sport and Culture, Ottawa Tourism	Manager	Respondent 08
Ottawa Sport Council	Executive Director	Respondent 09
Sports Canada		Respondent 10
Cycling Canada	Development Coordinator	Respondent 11
Sports Services, University of Ottawa	Director	Respondent 12
High-Performance Sport & Compliance, University of Ottawa	Advisor	Respondent 13
Centre for Urban Research & Education, Carleton University	Research Associate	Respondent 14
Blueprint Management Consultants	President	Respondent 15
Janet LeBlanc + Associates Inc.	President	Respondent 16
National Capital Commission	Senior Manager	Respondent 17

Thesis Format

This master thesis consists of two publishable articles. The first article explores the perceptions of high-level city officials and others involved in the delivery of sport in Ottawa towards the notion of using word-of-mouth marketing via utilizing community-based recreational sport and physical activity in the process of co-creating an inclusive city brand.

Whilst analyzing data, the researchers recognized a certain number of participants framed Ottawa's wide range of accessible community-based recreational sport and physical activity as comprising a vital part of Ottawa's 'quality of life.' As this emergent concept was not included in the interview guide, the researchers considered this is an interesting notion to explore further. Based on this logic, the researchers explored the phrase more deeply. This work became the foundation of the second article.

Overall, the researchers consider the contribution of this project to be beneficial to the current research regarding the co-creation of inclusive city branding. Meanwhile, the findings of this project can support future city strategies and policies in terms of using community-based recreational sport and physical activity in the process of city branding.

CHAPTER 3

Lower-case sport in city branding: Using word-of-mouth to promote community-based recreational sport and leisure in the construction of an inclusive city brand

Introduction

This paper considers how a second-tier North American city, Canada's national capital, Ottawa, could use community-based recreational sport and physical activity in the inclusive creation and promotion of their city brand. The notion of branding a city has evolved considerably since experts such as Kotler, Haider, and Rein (1993) started writing about the subject. Originally conceived of as an extension to consumer goods marketing theory, the theoretical approach moved forward to embrace the developments associated with branding corporations, and is now seen as a unique and highly inclusive perspective that deserves its literature (e.g., Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Giovanardi, Lichrou, & Kavaratzis, 2018). Cities are perceived as competing globally for the attention of external corporate stakeholders making strategic decisions largely associated with inward investments (Harvey, 2012), tourists (Aronczyk, 2013), and the media (Anholt, 2007b). Whilst most cities also seek to attract new talent (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012), they also can use a variety of measures to retain existing populations (Harvey, 2012), though few seem to recognize that. Cities use a variety of measures to achieve their own strategic goals; the majority are outward facing, often ignoring both their residents' opinions and needs (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). Likewise, this paper indicates Ottawa is focussing more on external stakeholders than internal in their city branding activities.

For any branding or marketing exercise to work efficiently and effectively, all related communication has to be clear, coherent, consistent, and relevant to the target audience (Richards, Gushue, & Bulger, 2012). One of the issues with branding a city as opposed to a product or corporation is the multiplicity of their audience, each requiring a [slightly] different framing mechanism in order to be relevant (Merrilees, Miller, & Herington, 2012). Cities are complex and diverse entities, and the creation and management of the image[s] to be associated

with the entity is often not a major priority for the city's elected officials, but driven by the [elite] interests of business (De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012). This has an impact on the way residents view their city; though little research has been conducted in this area.

The present study indicates that Ottawa does not have a clear policy vision regarding the city image they want to project, nor do decision-makers agree whether it should be distinct from that of the national capital or not. Ottawa's brand decision-makers also appear to have a largely external perception of the city's stakeholders, with little appreciation of existing residents or the role they could play in developing Ottawa's brand. Likewise, the role of community-based recreational sport in the brand building appears to be largely overlooked.

Cities use sport, physical activity, and recreation [components impacting on citizens' quality of life] to construct visual and verbal images that then become representative of the brand (Richards et al., 2012). However, much of the literature surrounding the role of sport in city branding focusses on large-scale and mega-events, such as the Summer Olympic Games (e.g., Valls, Banchini, Falcón, & Tuñon, 2013), or the FIFA men's World Cup (Smith, 2010). The benefits range from an improved brand image (Valls et al., 2013) and related repositioning of the city within the panoply of 'world-class' cities (Whitson, 2004), thereby attracting the interest of potential investors (Kovács & Musterd, 2013), the supposed tourist, and other economic benefits reaped during and after the event (Cashman, 2008), or the attraction to the city by people looking to relocate (Cashman, 2008). Other, less high-profile sport does not feature prominently in the literature. Ottawa, as evidenced by its Municipal Sports Strategy¹ has a positive attitude towards hosting events that are commensurate with the city's resources and aspirations without over-

¹ <http://ottwatch.ca/meetings/file/452907>

stretching itself; however, it appears that to some extent, the branding opportunities available via community-based recreational sport and physical activities exist, yet are overlooked.

This research is based upon thematic analysis of a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews ($n = 17$) with elected officials, career administrators, and marketing consultants involved in the management and promotion of the city of Ottawa; a few individuals outside this cadre, who have expert knowledge and insight into the workings of the city, and a knowledge of either brand or sport management also contributed.

City image-building and marketing communication theories are conjoined with the core concept of stakeholder theory, and Kavaratzis and Hatch's (2013) model of inclusive city branding, to consider the role that community-based recreational sport and physical activity [lower-case] could play in transforming the city's residents into brand advocates, using word-of-mouth marketing techniques to create unique images of the city that could be fed into an inclusive process of creating a vision of the city that is recognizable to many, including citizens and other internal stakeholders, external corporations and tourists alike. After discussing the poor policy vision of Ottawa's brand, as perceived by the participants, the paper proposes a city branding sport continuum that could be useful to a wide range of practitioners in informing strategic decisions regarding the use of sport in future city branding activities.

Literature Review

City Branding

It is necessary to distinguish the concepts of place promotion, place branding, placemaking, image building, and marketing of cities and places: Harvey (2012) indicated that all terms are used in the various literature and there is not a consensus regarding the usage of these phrases. Of those definitions, Kotler et al., (1993) considered the images of a place to be

the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place, and they represent the simplification of a plethora of associations and pieces of information that are connected with that place. Dinnie (2015) indicated that, compared to the branding of a physical product or a corporation, branding of a city “is more complex and multidimensional owing to factors such as the multitude of stakeholders and the infinite range of brand touchpoints associated with the branding of places” (p. 3). Warnaby et al. (2018) simply described city branding as a strategic activity involving all stakeholders.

Nowadays, because of cultural homogeneity, many cities lack a sense of identity (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012). In order to receive more desired resources, cities create a unique image thereby differentiating themselves from their competitors [other cities], both nationally and internationally. Consequently, “the creation or re-creation of city identity and sense of the city is a fundamental concern” for cities wishing to (re)position themselves (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012, p. 50). Generally, city branding aims to increase inward investment (De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012); obtain attention from international media (Anholt, 2007b), governments (Anholt, 2007b), and general populations to promote tourism (Aronczyk, 2013); create high-value employment opportunities and attract a skilled workforce (Anholt, 2007b; De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012); attract entrepreneurs (Harvey, 2012), industry (Anholt, 2007b), and students (Aronczyk, 2013); and improve local community pride and identity within existing populations (Harvey, 2012; Watkins & Herbert, 2003).

Due to the long-term nature of city branding strategy, and its resource-intensive nature, such activity is often ignored or overlooked, and not included directly in a city’s development strategy; politicians are often looking for more short-term activities to immediately boost visibility (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012). At a policy level, occasionally, long-term image building

plans are formed, though they tend to be formed in isolation, informed by specific business interests, and without wide-scale collaboration (De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012). Besides, different-sized cities have different problems in city branding practices: generally, city branding of a small city is simplified because small cities have limited resources and only target a single market; for larger cities, it is a more complex process. For instance, in Prince Edward Island (PEI) cities are small, and tourism is their main industry; hence, the objective of building a clear city brand is primarily to attract tourists (Richards et al., 2012). The resultant city image, created for tourism, is specific and not “infinitely elastic”; it “cannot extend beyond the bounds of physical and cultural reality” (p. 92). In other words, tourists will expect to see a reality that clearly matches the projected, almost unidimensional, image. On the other hand, the image of larger, more complex cities is “inevitably heterogeneous” (Young, 2012, p. 173), which makes it “difficult to create a stable image, or to avoid conflicting images, or... to generate any image at all” (Young, 2012, p. 173). Given the greater complexity in creating brand images that resonate with diverse stakeholder groups involved with larger cities, it is natural that they will use a more multilayered approach. It is here that the citizens often get forgotten and the different images created by the “interlocking elites” are targeted towards external agents and agencies (De Clercy & Ferguson, p. 135).

Braun, Kavaratzis, and Zenker (2013) commented only “meaningful participation and consultation can produce a more effective and sustainable place branding strengthening the brand communication and avoiding the pitfall of developing ‘artificial’ place brands” (p. 18). Meanwhile, Ind and Bjerke (2007) also emphasized the value of internal audiences while discussing the participatory approach to marketing and branding. In 2018, Kavaratzis, Giovanardi, and Lichrou discussed at length the concept of “inclusive city branding” to

encourage city marketers to pay attention to all stakeholders' engagement to allow them to recognize their 'lived city' and not just the image that appeals to business (Harvey & Young, 2012). Moreover, Braun et al. (2013, p. 19) advised avoiding "an overly heavy focus on external target groups." Instead, city marketers should pay attention to "non-powerful" stakeholders (Lichrou et al., 2018, p. 4). In this context, Braun et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of engaging the residents in the process of city branding, which is usually ignored in the city branding practices. Although some city marketers realize the importance of the residents, they only include new residents as their marketing target (Braun et al., 2013).

As Braun et al. (2013) indicated, the residents play a threefold role in developing a city brand. Firstly, the residents are an "integrated part" of the city brand (Braun et al., 2013, p. 20). The physical setting of a city and the social milieu created by the interaction between the residents and the outsiders form an experience of the city (Warnaby, 2009). Secondly, the residents are a brand ambassador of a city since the residents are directly involved in the city brand communication (Braun et al., 2013). As Braun et al. (2013) described, "all residents are able to transmit [these] reliable messages about their place individually and collectively as a community" (p. 21). Of those communications, Braun (2012) considered word-of-mouth as an effective way for the residents delivering the messages about their city since it embodies authenticity and trustworthiness. Thirdly, Braun et al. (2013) considered residents as citizens, which means the residents can directly impact the city policies. Residents can participate in the governance process (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O'Leary, 2005; Garcia, 2006; Zenker & Seigis, 2012). By doing so, the citizens participate in the process of city branding. Hence, the residents need to be recognized as legitimate and important stakeholders who own and can co-create the city brand (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

Identifying Stakeholders in City Brand Development

A stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Since city branding policies usually “exist in an unstructured and informal basis” (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012, p. 83), a city needs various stakeholders, people who will be affected by the outcomes, working coherently together to build up an appropriate image of the city (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012). As few municipal administrators perceive image building to be a high priority (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012), and image building does not appear to be “firmly anchored to political ideology,” the stakeholders who could exert influence on the development of a city brand are generally from “businesses, service clusters, community organizations, individual citizens” (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012, p. 77). Among these stakeholders, Lehr and Zubrycki highlighted the driving force behind any such initiatives is a “local champion ... someone who has the vision, energy, and time to develop and promote an idea or project” (p. 82). However, as “individuals and groups representing non-business” are usually ignored in the process of city branding (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012, p. 95) because they do not appreciate the inner workings of policy, many “community groups,” who object to a “top-down” approach to strategy development, are also left out of the process (De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012, p. 153). Other groups, such as Aboriginal groups and those representing the poor are similarly ignored in policy making (De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012). Generally, the more visible non-business groups rely on being represented by “interlocking elites,” who serve as a conduit to influence any city branding efforts (De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012, p. 151). Since each of the many different stakeholders will have their conceptions regarding a city’s brand image, their inclusion in the process of determining policy could delay the overall process of city branding (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012). The widespread

inclusion of a multiplicity of diverse stakeholders could also lead to a fragmented city image building policy as evidenced in Winnipeg (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012). As a result of this lack of any real coordination amongst stakeholders, cities can fail to successfully deliver a coherent image to reach their many target groups, including its residents and prospective visitors (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012).

City Branding Communication and Citizen Engagement

According to Dewhirst and Davis (2005), incorporating consumers' feedback iteratively is essential to make marketing communication effective, and effective communication is vital in the formation of a brand (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, & McDonald, 2005). Branding, which can potentially impact a consumers' perspective toward a product or service (or, in this case, a city), is "generating by managing brand equity contacts via integrated marketing communication (IMC)" (Madhavaram et al., 2005, p. 73). According to these authors, a clear brand identity strategy has a positive impact on IMC. In city branding practices, the messages from a city should be "simple, consistent, and recognizable" (Richards et al., 2012, p. 115), which can deliver the target groups a clear meaning and understood identity (Warnaby et al., 2018). In a similar fashion to product promotion, where emotional and psychological bonds are built between the brand and the consumer, the process of city branding is required to "build a strong image of [a] place, and use advertising techniques to implant this image in the public consciousness. When the market reciprocates by associating specific characteristics with the place, it has been successfully branded" (Lehr & Zubrycki, 2012, p. 50–51). Historically, place branding has been a 'top-down' process that excluded many groups. Kavaratzis et al. (2018) pointed out that more recently there has been a move to more participatory place branding. Nowadays, in Canada, more and more officials realize the importance of how the citizens and the

visitors perceive their cities (Young, 2012). Those people are usually regarded as brand ambassadors (Warnaby et al., 2018). Nowadays, using the Internet, cities can “project themselves on a grand scale” (Young, 2012, p. 167); whilst this would usually mean communicating with a diverse and geographically-dispersed audience, in this case, it can also mean that the city can consistently project its chosen image locally. Furthermore, through social network posts, citizens are able to engage with city brands faster and easier. Online posts usually have a significant influence on a city brand that emphasizes the position of city consumers (Oliveira & Panyik, 2015).

In consumer marketing literature, customers are regarded as a key stakeholder due to their contribution to purchase (e.g., Garvare & Johansson, 2010). In the context of city branding, customers related to visitors or residents who purchase for an experience staying in a city. As Munar (2011) asserted, destination branding has now become “the expression of the interaction and participation of the end-users” (p. 291), the end-users in many situations being the citizens of a city. On the one hand, nascent ideas for city branding are often advocated by citizens at the grassroots level, as “politicians and administrators are seldom the catalyst(s) for image building initiatives” (Lehr & Zubrucki, 2012, p. 78); though, in reality, most originate with businesses who see a direct and immediate benefit of attracting people to the city (De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012). In parts of Canada, some city branding strategies were developed to retain existing population levels (De Clercy & Ferguson, 2012) because, compared to the usual role of attracting new migrants, there is more of a threat of the population leaving the city (Harvey, 2012). Hence, in the process of shaping a city image, Lehr and Zubryki (2012) advised city officials “should look to its citizens (to assist in determining the image to be promoted) rather than to its outside marketing companies” (p. 85): involving citizens in city branding can help cities use their

“human capital” sufficiently (Lehr & Zubryki, 2012, p. 85) as well as promote active engagement with the city and its brand. When city branding “resonates with ordinary people” (the citizens), the city can get a better result in the process of their image building (Lehr & Zubryki, 2012, p. 86) and engage their existing population better (Young, 2012).

The Role of Sport in City Branding

The literature surrounding sport and city branding is mainly focussed on the high-performance and professional end of the scale (e.g., Chalip & Costa, 2005; Xing & Chalip, 2006; Zhang & Zhao, 2009). The manner by which many governments (national, provincial, and municipal) grasp the opportunity to host large-scale and mega sport events to (re)brand their cities illustrates the manner in which high-performance sport is used as a tool in place branding, and is fairly well documented and analyzed (e.g., Herstein & Berger, 2013; Lee, Taylor, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Ritchie & Smith, 1991; Smith, 2005; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). Sport has many different expressions: from high-performance competition manifest in events, such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup, to amateur semi-organized games of soccer, recreational open-water swimming, cycling paths, and parks. It is at points along this spectrum that cities can choose to utilize sport in their brand building activities. Whilst, in this context, ‘lower-case’ sport is taken to mean recreational, community-based sport and physical activity, which is similar to the usage of Green (2007) in comparing the different level of sports, examples from the use of other levels of sport will be used to illustrate the potential sport has in relation to city branding.

Sports can play various roles in promoting a city’s image. For example, hosting mega sport events can help the “largest cities as world-class destinations” (Harvey, 2012, p. 3). The facilities constructed for hosting mega sport events can attract future visitors (Andrew, 2012).

Meanwhile, professional sport is effective in influencing city branding. Firstly, continuous media coverage provides cities with exposure, which can present the cities on the global stage (Anholt, 2007b). Secondly, professional teams promote civic pride when hosted teams win championships (Young, 2012). However, it is acknowledged that the potential mobility of professional teams could make this method of city branding inconsistent: some professional sports teams move from one city to another (e.g., Hayes, 2017). From Ottawa's perspective, there has been recent speculation that the Senators NHL team could move away from the city (Fox, 2017)—which would result in some damage to the city image.

As this literature indicates, mega sport events contribute to city brand building (e.g., Herstein & Berger, 2013; Lee et al., 2005; Ritchie & Smith, 1991; Smith, 2005; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). It appears there is little evidence of any research on grass-root level sport and recreational physical activity in relation to city branding activities. In addition, not every city has the desire or resource to host mega sport events; but second- and third-tier cities, such as Ottawa, still have ambitions towards utilizing sport and recreational activity to engage with their citizens, thereby building the city's brand (City Ottawa, 2015). Hence, engaging local stakeholders is meaningful for city branding (Houghton & Stevens, 2011). It is suggested that cities that do not host mega sports receive less attention from researchers in terms of city branding (Harvey, 2012) but community-based recreational sports are citizens' daily activity, which can have an "influence on citizens' sense of belonging and civic pride" (Harvey, 2012, p. 12). As a consequence, these activities are worth considering. Although there are very few large-scale sports events in Ottawa, the capital city has its sports environments (Ottawa Tourism, n.d.a). Also, Ottawa has a series of (implicit and explicit) strategies for developing sport and

recreational activity. According to the City Ottawa (2015), the city explicitly talked of promoting Ottawa as a destination for tourism, business investment, and sporting events.

Methods

This research primarily used snowball sampling, semi-structured interviews, and documentary archival research as the basis for data collection. As to documentary archival research, the authors went to the City Archives to analyze the Council Minutes from 2001 (when smaller cities were amalgamated into the new city of Ottawa) to 2017, looking for references to brand building, city image, and other related terms. Subsequently, only the data collected by snowball sampling and semi-structured interviews was analyzed via thematic analysis. The research was approved by the University of Ottawa's research ethics board.

Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants who met the criteria (Given, 2008); e.g., they had to have some connection to the city of Ottawa and/or sport within the city. Generally, in snowball sampling, respondents are regarded as assistants to the study; they offer their resources (experience, perception, opinion) to help complete data collection (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). The research started with one city councillor, to whom one researcher has a strong connection, who has a strong knowledge of sports management and who is a part of both official (Ottawa Sport Council) and unofficial sports networks in Ottawa. His background, current position, and work experiences provide him with a solid understanding of the potential for sport and recreational physical activity to contribute to the construction of the city brand. Leveraging his connections, this research was able to reach other city councillors and officials, key employees of Ottawa Tourism and Ottawa Sports Council. After each interview, the researchers asked each respondent to effect an introduction to other potential respondents. As a

result, the research includes individuals from Invest Ottawa, the local communities, and consulting organizations working with various elements of the city.

Since there is little research dealing with the role of community-based recreational sport in relation to city branding, this research utilized semi-structured interviews to allow respondents to contribute more fully (Longhurst, 2003); they would be able to flesh out their responses and generate dialogue around a particular topic if desired. The interviewees were asked to respond to the questions outlined in the interview guideline (Appendix A). The interview guide consisted of three core parts: (1) questions about respondents' situation in relation to the overall survey, in order to help frame their perceptions within the context of their professional experience; (2) their perceptions of Ottawa's city brand; and (3) their perceptions of the role of sports in Ottawa's city branding, including both high-performance elite sports and community-based recreational sports. At the end of each interview, respondents were asked if there was anything they thought essential, but which had not been covered: this helped inform the next round of questioning. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, depending on the availability and engagement of each subject. They were all recorded via a digital recorder so that transcripts of each conversation could be created. Each transcript was subsequently returned to the respective respondent to allow them to correct anything they considered to be an inaccurate representation of their perceptions. Once the amended transcripts were returned, they were entered into NVivo 12. Table 1 provides details of the sample recruited for the research and shows the order in which they were recruited, starting from the seed – respondent 01.

Table 1: Interview Sample		
Organization	Position	Number
City of Ottawa	City Councillor	Respondent 01
Recreation, Cultural and Facility Service, City of Ottawa	General Manager	Respondent 02
City of Ottawa	City Councillor	Respondent 03

Communication & Outreach, City Councillor's Office	Director	Respondent 04
Public Information and Media Relations, City of Ottawa	Director	Respondent 05
City of Ottawa	Mayor	Respondent 06
Invest Ottawa & Bayview	President and CEO	Respondent 07
Sport and Culture, Ottawa Tourism	Manager	Respondent 08
Ottawa Sport Council	Executive Director	Respondent 09
Sports Canada		Respondent 10
Cycling Canada	Development Coordinator	Respondent 11
Sports Services, University of Ottawa	Director	Respondent 12
High-Performance Sport & Compliance, University of Ottawa	Advisor	Respondent 13
Centre for Urban Research & Education, Carleton University	Research Associate	Respondent 14
Blueprint Management Consultants	President	Respondent 15
Janet LeBlanc + Associates Inc.	President	Respondent 16
National Capital Commission	Senior Manager	Respondent 17

After the data collection, transcription, and data entry in NVivo 12, thematic analysis of all interview data was performed. Thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the transcripts in order to seek convergence to corroborate key findings and themes across the different datasets (each interview). Following Braun, Clarke and Weate's (2016) six thematic analysis phases: (i) the researchers became familiar with the data, (ii) coded the data, (iii) developed key themes, (iv) reviewed the data, (v) defined and named the themes, and then (vi) generated a report outlining the major findings.

Results and Discussion

From an archival perspective, there were almost no references indicating the city considered either the image of the city or the notion of a city brand in the council chamber during the period studied. The only specific references were made over a decade ago and referred to budget items to pay external consultants (Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation) to position Ottawa as a high-tech hub. Moreover, the city image created by previous efforts is fragmented

and inconsistent. In addition, there is not any document showing that the city plans to produce a policy or a budget for utilizing sport in terms of developing a city brand.

For identifying Ottawa’s existing brand, this research began by asking respondents whether they thought Ottawa has a distinct and discernible city brand. The data (See Table 2) shows that there are two opposing camps when the participants perceive the brand of Ottawa. This runs clearly counter to best practice, where having a unified vision is the most effective way to create a brand message.

Table 2: Responses to questions regarding whether Ottawa has a distinct and discernable brand	
Ottawa does have a distinct and discernible brand	Ottawa does not have a distinct and discernible brand
<p>“...I think their brand is a government town and living in the world of high-tech in the 90s or early 2000s as a high-tech centre...” (Respondent 09)</p> <p>“...my perception of Ottawa’s brand when it comes to sport, I was thinking about that a lot is, we are very much an outdoor city... It’s a great family city, very active, I think Ottawa is a very active city...” (Respondent 15)</p> <p>“...it’s very different when you are talking about Ottawa, when you are outside of Ottawa, then you immediately picture government and Parliament Hill...” (Respondent 05)</p> <p>“...I think the residents here, in terms of brand, it’s the green space, the quality of life...” (Respondent 05)</p> <p>“...there is always that view from people from the outside that Ottawa is viewed as a government city... People, they think Ottawa is, like it’s a friendly place where you think about people, like it’s a safe community where there is a lot of green space...” (Respondent 04)</p>	<p>“...I don’t think so, either in sport or anything else, the city has tried over 20 or 30 years. Sometimes high-tech, sometimes sport events, sometimes... I don’t know. Environmental but it’s never really stuck...” (Respondent 03)</p> <p>“...I would say they don’t have a distinct brand. They are the national capital. They are a governmental city. They are... That’s how the, in my opinion, they are seen and viewed, but that’s the business of Ottawa. It’s not Ottawa and all the neighbourhoods and the suburbs...” (Respondent 10)</p> <p>“... I don't think the city of Ottawa has ever managed to clearly articulate or to get a brand and bring to think. I think there are impressions that people have. They don't think it's been consolidated as a discernible brand.” (Respondent 14)</p> <p>“When you start looking at that, it's just, does your brand carry in those respects? No. People are not aware of it, because it kind of gets lost in Ottawa being seen as almost the voice of the latest federal headline. So, I believe the answer is no.” (Respondent 07)</p>

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The interviewees who perceive Ottawa as not having a distinct and discernible brand indicate that the images of Ottawa are not delivered effectively and efficiently in a manner that can take root in the population's mind. On the other hand, respondents who consider Ottawa to have a distinct and discernible brand frame Ottawa's brand in two ways: either as the national capital or as an independent city (See Table 3). As the national capital, Ottawa's brand is mostly impacted by the federal government. That presents a challenge to the city of Ottawa to deliver an independent brand image. The federal government is well-established in Ottawa, and Ottawa has a roster of buildings that personify that role: for example, Parliament Hill, the Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council, the Supreme Court, and the Senate of Canada building. Those symbolic buildings are representative of Canada. That makes many people physically associate the brand of Ottawa with the federal government and conflate the municipal brand with that of the federal capital.

“We are the nation's capital. I think the fact that we have the Parliament and the most national museums and institutes located here. That's for most Canadians is a brand that people think of Ottawa.” (Respondent 06)

Media exposure also plays an essential role in highlighting Ottawa as a nation's capital. Most news that the people receive about Ottawa is about the federal government. That strengthens the link of the city image between the city of Ottawa and the federal government.

“...Anywhere in Canada whenever a news item starts with Ottawa, what they actually mean is our federal government. ‘Ottawa announced today...’; and it’s once in a blue moon where it actually means ‘The city of Ottawa announced today.’ It’s always ‘The Prime Minister or the federal government announced today...’” (Respondent 03)

Additionally, within the nation’s capital the federal government has established a particular corporation, the National Capital Commission (NCC), which is responsible for “ensuring that Canada’s Capital is a dynamic and inspiring source of pride for all Canadians, and a legacy for generations to come” (NCC, n.d., para. 1). The NCC owns about 11% of all land resources in the capital region. Those urban lands include various parks, pathways, and scenic parkways. Due in part to the effort of the NCC, Ottawa has a high reputation in terms of community safety and transportation, which are essential indexes in evaluating a livable city. Meanwhile, on behalf of the federal government, the NCC is in charge of delivering a symbolic image of the capital. Hence, in the process of establishing a city brand, the NCC has a massive impact on the image of Ottawa—and yet, it is not under the jurisdiction of the municipal government.

Similarly, Ottawa’s close geographical proximity to the city of Gatineau, Quebec, and its reliance on citizens’ access to Gatineau Park adds to the peculiarity of the city of Ottawa’s branding process, as Respondent 07, a business leader, observed: “You have to include Gatineau on that because there's a lot of great assets there. Ottawa's where the core of the tech capability is, but Gatineau is a really important part in the recreation of our region.... Gatineau and Ottawa, we present them together all the time. I can't see us not doing that. I just think that's good business.”

Funded by the municipality, Ottawa Tourism and Invest Ottawa are two leading organizations that are, in part, responsible for creating images of Ottawa. Specifically, Ottawa Tourism targets external tourists more and Invest Ottawa focusses more on external investors. Neither considers citizens to be a legitimate target for their brand building activity. It is also noteworthy that the two organizations act independently, and use different metrics to measure their success. Because of their different audiences, they produce different brand images and associated messages.

Since Ottawa Tourism's primary target is tourists, according to their Five Year Strategy, Ottawa Tourism intends to improve the visitor experience and deliver an image of the nation that overlaps with the goal of NCC (Ottawa Tourism, 2017). This strategy is intended to strengthen Ottawa's image as the national capital to prospective external visitors (national and international). They currently do not consider residents to be a legitimate target: "That's one of our (future) strategies, is to start looking at how do we increase awareness of Ottawa Tourism and what we do amongst local residents (Respondent 08). Invest Ottawa is mandated to create an image of the city as a centre for technology and innovation: "(We are) basically enabling Ottawa to achieve its full potential by being an innovative future-focussed city" (Respondent 07). This notion is reiterated by Respondent 16: "We, of course, are trying to position Ottawa in the Silicon Valley North technology here, in invention and research development, all the research that we do here." Boosting a high quality of life via working opportunities in business and high-tech companies, Invest Ottawa wants to attract new talent to the city. The efforts of both organizations need to be accounted for in an analysis of Ottawa's brand. The main target audiences of both organizations are external. Internal audiences, resident citizens, are ignored by

both organizations. The lack of a unified vision (mandate) and lack of inclusion of residents could be detrimental when Ottawa could build a consistent, effective, and inclusive city image.

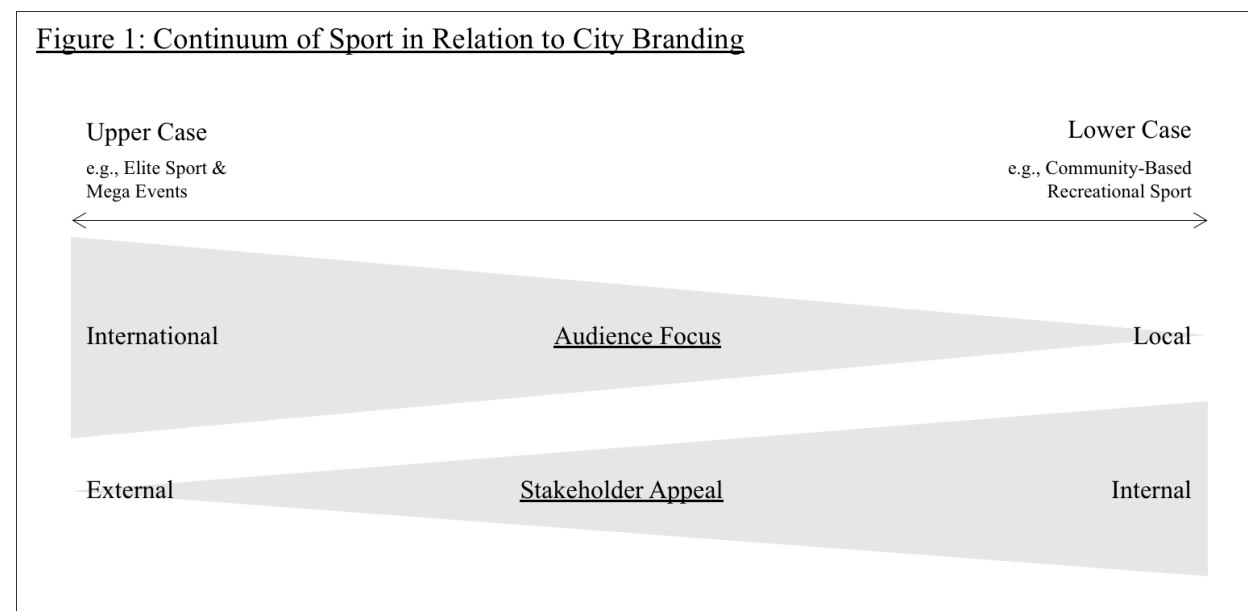
Table 3: Responses to a question regarding whether Ottawa's brand is conjoined with that of the national capital, or if it is seen as a municipal entity	
As the national capital	As a distinct city
<p>"...I think their brand is a government town and living in the world of high-tech in the 90s or early 2000s as a high-tech centre..." (Respondent 09)</p> <p>"...it's very different when you are talking about Ottawa, when you are outside of Ottawa, then you immediately picture government and Parliament Hill..." (Respondent 05)</p> <p>"...there is always that view from people from the outside that Ottawa is viewed as a government city..." (Respondent 04)</p> <p>"We are the nation's capital; I think the fact that we have the Parliament and the most national museums and institutes located here... that's for most Canadians is the brand that people think of Ottawa." (Respondent 06)</p> <p>One of the things that we always from a tourism angle, it's, obviously we use the typical, as the G7 capital, a beautiful capital city." (Respondent 08)</p> <p>"My personal background would have said that it was a government..." (Respondent 09)</p> <p>"We are our nation's capital that in itself helps to create this brand image that is unique and should get us further, because of it." (Respondent 12)</p> <p>"They [Ottawa] are the national capital. They are a governmental city. That's how the, in my opinion, they are seen and viewed, but that's the business of Ottawa." (Respondent 10)</p>	<p>"...my perception of Ottawa's brand (is) when it comes to sport, I was thinking about that a lot, is, we are very much an outdoor city... it's a great family city, very active. I think Ottawa is a very active city..." (Respondent 15)</p> <p>"When you're a resident in the city of Ottawa, yes, that's there (the federal capital). But, I think the residents here, in terms of brand, it's the green space, the quality of life, tech to a certain extent." (Respondent 05)</p> <p>"I think of it [Ottawa] as an active city, a sport city... you can play any sports anytime of the week at any level in Ottawa, which, especially for an adult female, is not likely in a lot of cities around the world." (Respondent 11)</p> <p>"People [residents], they think Ottawa is like, it's a friendly place where you think about people, like it's a safe community where there is a lot of green space. There is not a lot of cities that have that many cycling paths." (Respondent 03)</p> <p>"I think it does have a brand of mass sports." (Respondent 01)</p>

<p>“It’s like, there is always that view from people from the outside that Ottawa is viewed as a government city.” (Respondent 03)</p>	
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Proposed Continuum of Sport Model

This section introduces a model, derived from data collected for this research, that helps to understand the somewhat arbitrary relationships between sport, physical activity, and recreational leisure events, activities and infrastructure in respect of two key indexes: Audience Focus and Stakeholder Appeal. It also serves to illustrate the two anchor points as “upper-case” and “lower-case” sport respectively.

Figure 1 theoretically articulates the author’s vision of the role of sport in relation to city branding: fundamentally, we consider sport as a continuum of activities, with well-defined elite, high-performance sport and events as the left-hand anchor, and community-based recreational sport and physical activity as the right. A continuum is described as “a continuous system or range in which adjacent elements do not vary from each other in any marked degree although the endpoints of the system may be dramatically different” (WhatIs, 2018, para. 1). The notion of a continuum in sport is currently used to describe the development and formal progression; for example foundational, participation, performance, elite. Other examples are seen in Sport England’s development continuum (7Sport, 2014), or the Canadian LTAD framework (Athletics Canada, 2018). It can also be seen in the US college sport continuum of recreational, college, academy, etc. (NCAA, 2018).



There appear to be no specific terms to comprehensively describe a continuum of sport in relation to city branding, so the authors propose the use of the terms ‘upper-case’ and ‘lower-case’ respectively to describe the anchors of the continuum. As a point of reference, the terms ‘high-brow’ and ‘low-brow’ are used to describe cultural activities, where ‘high-brow’ is seen as elitist, e.g., high culture. However, this notion is also pejorative, as its opposite, ‘low-brow,’ is seen as being vulgar and having little intrinsic value. By contrast, ‘upper-case’ and ‘lower-case’ are terms used in letter-case by typesetters to describe capital and small letters: SPORT versus sport. They connote and describe the *scale*, not *value*. In the example used here, ‘upper-case’ equates to international and elite sport, and ‘lower-case’ equates to smaller, more community-based recreational sport and physical activity: respondents largely thought it was a valid way to describe such a sport continuum. (To avoid any confusion, the continuum proposed here is strictly related to city branding and is obviously different from the gender-based sport continuum proposed by Kane [1995]).

In the continuum of sport proposed here, and for the purposes of describing the role of sport in relation to city branding, ‘upper-case’ is positioned as the left anchor point and ‘lower-

case' as the right. In terms of defining the respective anchor points of the continuum, elite sport and mega-events, for example, the IOC Summer Olympic Games or the FIFA men's World Cup, are placed at the extreme left anchor point. The other end of the continuum is captured by any formal or informal community-based recreational sport. For example, pick-up games (Pickup game, n.d.) in various sports would fit towards the right-hand anchor point.

The shaded areas on the diagram indicate varying levels of focus and appeal. For example, in the case of *audience focus*, upper-case sports events staged on a national or international level would necessarily attract a substantial external following: their appeal is naturally widespread. The competition to host such events is a testimony to this. Such external interest does not necessarily mean that the local audience (relative to the size of a specific city) is particularly large. The diminution of the shaded triangle, from left to right, is intended to graphically represent the relative levels of audience focus and interest amongst external and internal populations.

In the case of the other shaded area, which is intended to represent stakeholder appeal, the graphic element clearly diminishes from right to left. As way of explanation of this visual component of the diagram, it implies that there are a significant number of internal stakeholders (primarily residents, but including teams, associations, facility owners, the municipality) in lower-case recreational sport and physical activity compared to a relatively small number of external stakeholders in elite and mega sport events. For example, out of the roughly 1 million residents of Ottawa (stakeholders), a significant proportion will necessarily be active in some form of recreational physical activity. By comparison, there are only a few (by number) external stakeholders involved the hosting of large-scale sporting events (organizing committee, international federation, sponsors, broadcasters, and athletes).

Continuums are not exact or absolute reference tools; they provide a subjective, relative scale, and their application is generally used to furnish a point of comparison. Similarly, Figure 1 indicates that for this purpose, audience focus and stakeholder appeal are not exclusively tied to one anchor or another, but are considered to be progressive, also as visually described in the graphic. So, for example, Ottawa's marathon², with its mix of professional and amateur runners, and variety of competitions within the main event, would fall at some arbitrary mid-point between the two anchor points. The main thing is that the examples provided in the continuum are *relative* to each other.

Continuing the explanation of Figure 1, based on the literature, it appears that 'upper-case' sport and sporting events have a predominantly large national and international audience focus: information and content from the events are widely disseminated via national and international media. Part of the hosting intention, from a city branding perspective, is to promote an image of the city to a wide audience, thereby raising its profile to prospective investors and tourists (Essex & Chalkley, 2004). At the other end of the continuum, 'lower-case' community-based recreational sporting activity has little national or international appeal; and whilst individual events may not have widespread local attention or focus, cumulatively they could.

'Upper-case' elite sport and mega-events are directly targeted at segments of, for example, industries that the city wants to attract to locate in the city. In Ottawa's case, the current target is high-tech companies (Invest Ottawa, 2018b), and the city hosting a major league franchise is seen as an extremely important factor (Respondent 07). Whilst the Ottawa Senators would not necessarily fulfill the requirements to occupy the extreme left-hand anchor point of the continuum, they would certainly deserve to be positioned towards the left-hand side. In other

² <http://www.runottawa.ca/torw/about/about-the-weekend>

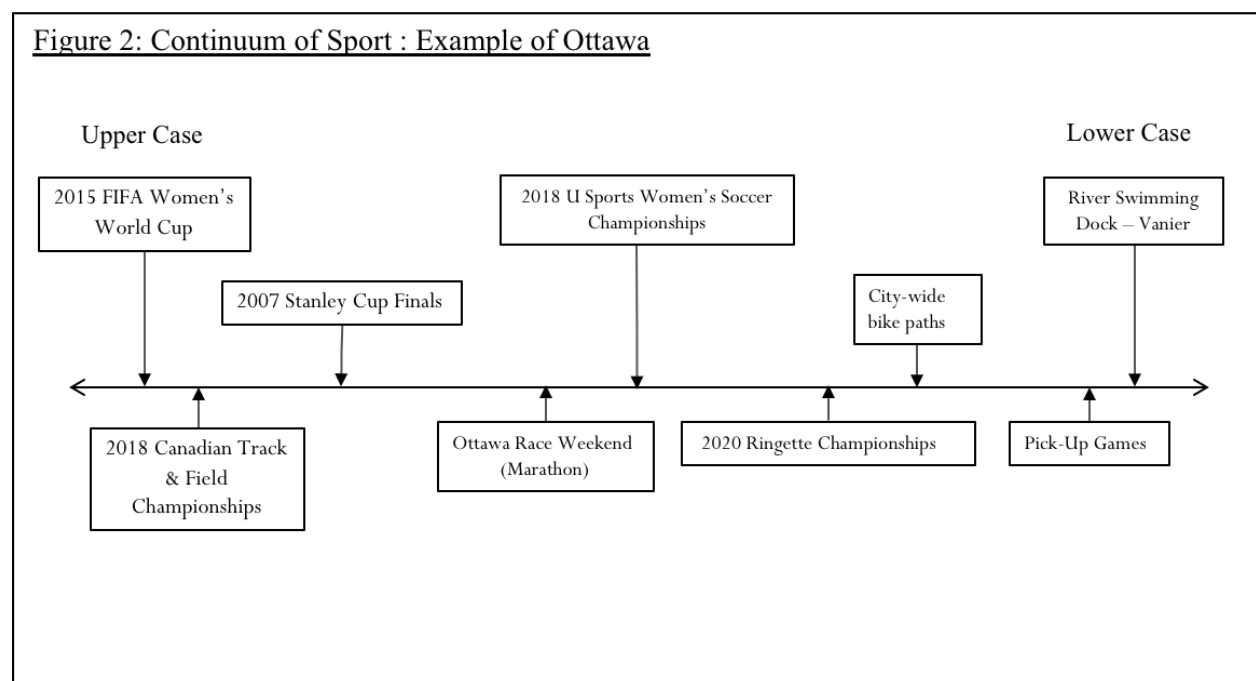
words, hosting world championship events, the Grey Cup, Davis Cup, and FIFA Women's World Cup etc., enables Ottawa to promote and locate the city as a solid second-tier city in North America, making it attractive to corporate entities in the tech sector, such as Adobe or Shopify. Whilst *tourism* could be described as a stakeholder, individual *tourists* would be less so. Hence, the way sport is used by entities such as Tourism Ottawa is of interest in relation to the stakeholder appeal. Naturally, many of Ottawa's residents also appreciate the hosting of such events and Major League teams, which is why Figure 1 displays that element of the continuum as a gradient.

In the model, 'lower-case' community-based recreational sport has a much narrower national or international appeal, but considerable opportunity to engage citizens in their home city. For instances, NOKIA Sunday Bikedays provides the families with an opportunity to enjoy car-free roads every Sunday from May to September. Rideau Canal Skateway, as a World Heritage Site and the "world's largest skating rink," provides citizens with free skating every year during the season. During summer, the pathway along the Rideau Canal is an ideal place for jogging and cycling.

As another example, in Rideau-Vanier, the provision of a floating dock enabled residents in the lower-income municipal ward to safely access the river for recreational activity in a way that was not possible before. This allows citizens to feel their needs are recognized by the city, and, at the same time, to tangibly appreciate the quality of life the city offers. From a marketing perspective, as will be discussed later, this affords Ottawa a tremendous opportunity in terms of encouraging citizens to become advocates for their city, and the currently untapped potential for the city to leverage word-of-mouth communication as an effective method of building the brand franchise amongst both internal and external stakeholders.

Figure 2 depicts the proposed continuum in relation to a sample of events and practices that occur(ed) in Ottawa in order to illustrate the key principle underlying the construct. With Upper-case Sport anchoring the left-hand side of the continuum and Lower-case the right, there are examples of nine different manifestations of sport and leisure situated between the two anchor points. These are discussed below, together with a rationale for their position on the continuum.

It is important to note that all of the above is highly subjective. It is not meant to be an absolute or definitive apparatus in any sense. The continuum is intended to illustrate the broad scale of manifestations of sport that take place in Ottawa and to try to place them in some kind of relational context. As a reminder, a continuum is described as “a continuous system or range in which adjacent elements do not vary from each other in any marked degree although the endpoints of the system may be dramatically different” (WhatIs, 2018, para. 1).



Close to the left-hand anchor point is the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup event hosted for the first time by Canada. A total of six games were staged at Ottawa's TD Place (Lansdowne) Stadium. Given the global nature of the World Cup, the model indicates that the audience focus would be primarily external to Ottawa, with a large national and international following. Similarly, given the sporting agencies (FIFA, National Federations, etc.), the stakeholder appeal is considered to be largely external. Media and social media appeal are international. It is definitely considered an 'upper-case' sporting activity.

The second event on the continuum is the 2018 Canadian Track and Field Championships; these are an event of primarily national importance, though the outcomes could have an impact on associated international events. Whilst there was some local interest, the Championships are considered to have a broader audience than Ottawa residents, though not as international as the FIFA Women's World Cup. The stakeholder appeal would be more nationally focussed also. Media and social media appeal, whilst having an international dimension, would have a more national focus.

The third event on the continuum is the 2007 Stanley Cup Finals, where the Ottawa Senators played the Anaheim Ducks at Ottawa's Scotiabank Place and won. This event had a strong local audience, as well as appealing to fans of the Anaheim Ducks and the NHL generally; hence, it is situated more towards the middle of the continuum. Stakeholder focus would likewise be quite strong locally, due to the Senators being the local team, though the NHL, many sponsors, and broadcast media are external to the city. Media appeal would have been limited internationally, but quite wide nationally (social media being very immature at that point).

The Ottawa Race Weekend is situated next on the continuum, as it has a strong local presence, coupled with a wider appeal. Over 40,000 participants take part in the various events

throughout the weekend; the weekend draws a strong slate of athletes from national and international sources. The signature event, the Ottawa Marathon, is the largest marathon in Canada and is a qualifier for the Boston Marathon, as well as being home to the Canadian Marathon Championships and the Canadian Forces Marathon Championships. In 2015 it became an IAAF Gold Label road race, widening its international appeal. Due to the widespread appeal of the event, its audience is considered to comprise both residents of Ottawa, as well as national and international individual visitors. Similarly, the stakeholder focus has to encompass both constituencies. Media and social media appeal would be international, national, and local. Accordingly, the Race Weekend sits close to the middle of the continuum.

Fifth on the continuum is the 2018 U Sports Women's Soccer Championships: U Sports is the governing body of university sport in Canada and sponsors national championships. Ottawa is home to two major universities (Carleton and the University of Ottawa) with very successful sports teams. Any national varsity sports event held in the city will attract an audience from students, their friends and families at both universities, as well as other universities across Canada. In addition, there will be some level of (social) media interest in the event as women's sport generally receives more mainstream coverage.

The next event on the continuum is the 2020 Ringette Championships, which is a national event. Given that ringette is not an Olympic sport, neither does it have a particularly wide international or national following, the event is located closer to the mid-point of the continuum. Whilst ringette has some international following in Finland, Sweden, and the US, as this is a national championship, the audience will most likely be comprised of residents of Ottawa, the friends and relatives of team players and officials, and hardcore ringette fans. The key institutional stakeholders, Ringette Canada, and the different stadia hosting individual games are

based in Ottawa. Media and social media coverage would most likely be focussed on the national and local level.

Ottawa has been developing its 'bike-friendliness' for several years, and has instituted a number of formally dedicated bike lanes in the downtown core that link to an extensive network of bike paths connecting many of the various different communities that constitute the wider city, including inter-provincial connections between Ottawa and Gatineau.³ The audience for these recreational paths can be considered primarily local, though they are also promoted as infrastructure for tourism. The paths' main stakeholders are the city and residents, though there is some interest from external sources. Media and social media coverage would be highly local in its nature.

Pick-up games are generally considered a game (in any sport) that has been "spontaneously started by a group of players" (Lauder, 2001, p.14) as opposed to exhibition games, where there is an obligation for players to play. Pick-up games are usually highly informal, lacking referees or officials: as a consequence, they are less structured and more disorganized than regular 'league' games. Given their spontaneous nature, they are definitely local in terms of both audience and stakeholders. As a consequence, this type of informal activity is located towards the right-hand anchor of the continuum; it would definitely be considered a 'lower-case' sporting activity.

The final iteration of sport on this continuum of Ottawa's sporting activity would be the dock mentioned by a city counsellor during the interviews conducted for this research. The dock is a relatively simple piece of infrastructure intended to enable local residents in a particular ward in the city to gain safe and easy access to the waters of the Rideau River. Consequently, the

³ <https://ottawa.ca/en/residents/transportation-and-parking/cycling/routes-and-maps>

audience is very localized to a specific part of that electoral ward (Vanier) and the stakeholders are limited to the city. Media and social media coverage, if any, would be very localized too. Due to the extremely specific and local nature of this infrastructure installation, which encourages a very basic level of recreational physical activity, it has been situated almost at the right-hand anchor. This could be considered the embodiment of ‘lower-case’ sport in relation to Ottawa’s brand.

Lower-case sport as word-of-mouth

As we saw in Table 3, most respondents perceive Ottawa as an active city or outdoor city. They commented on the perceived ease of access to lower-case sports as an influence on the formation of such images, as Respondent 05 commented: “you have a significant working population to have easy access to recreation, and what they call the weekend warriors and such that does add to the overall brand, to the quality of life.” This sentiment was noted by Respondent 13: “We have a healthy city and I think that encouraging kids to participate in sport just adds to that image; so we want to make sure that they have access to it.” In Ottawa, citizens can participate in sports easily since residential areas are surrounded by sports and recreational zones, such as Rideau Canal, Gatineau Park, and the many parks and leisure facilities in the area. Accessibility to these facilities is perceived to be associated with citizens’ quality of life. The image of high quality of life is what the citizens have in mind currently. Unlike the upper-case sports, which are for high-performance athletes, lower-case sports are for every citizen. The lower-case sports provide the citizens with an opportunity to perceive the local communities. When citizens are involved in lower-case sports, they start to communicate with others in their local communities: such communication forms the basis for word-of-mouth brand building.

For sure, it may not be as conscious at the community level, right? But, I look at thing like when we hosted tournaments, and again, as a mom in sport, there were tournaments you wanted to go back to because they were in communities that had done a hell of a job. And it was good. The people were good. The volunteers were good. The care and comfort of everybody was good. So, for sure, it's a way of building brand akin to... I mean, some of it is word of mouth, right? But, it's all related to, can be related to building brand. (Respondent 12)

I mean that ties into word of mouth, so for example, when I was a pregnant, I quickly became a member of a pregnant mum's group on Facebook for people who are giving birth in Ottawa in 2016. And I think there's like five hundred members. So, if I went and say "hey, I am taking yoga at the Nepean Sportsplex," that's five hundred people that now know about it. And I think in this day and age, advertising from one person, it can make a huge difference that it really couldn't before social media existed. So, if you can engage someone to come out to your Sunday Fun Day Bike Day, they don't even have to tell anyone they can just post the picture of their kid on their bike and say, "We had fun downtown today" and they've just advertised it to five hundred people. (Respondent 11)

Through interacting with the communities and the city while participating in lower-case sports, the citizens can feel the connection with their communities and the city. That is beneficial to the city of Ottawa to deliver an image of sports consistently and cohesively. Nowadays, citizens are regarded as an essential influencer in the process of city branding. As an ambassador of a city brand, the citizens will advertize their communities or the city independently if they

have a positive living experience. This behavior is akin to word-of-mouth marketing that costs less but works efficiently.

Besides, lower-case sports can help the city's image reach further because this level of sports can involve a wide range of citizens, such as lower-income families. The lower-income families have difficulty affording the cost of attending upper-case sports, but they can enjoy the physical facilities around the communities. To support lower-income families, the city of Ottawa has a budget on lower-case sports participation, such as the Financial Assistance (FA) program. That financial support program improves the lower-income families' quality of life. Meanwhile, by providing the opportunities to participate in lower-case sports, the city's brand of sports spreads out in those lower-income communities. It is difficult to achieve this effect with upper-case sports.

The lower-case sports, I think that they, in some ways, can have a bigger impact in a sense that it actually gets people engaged that might not be engaged, and for a city like Ottawa, now, I am a part of a young family, so I can see it as a kind of young family, a very like suburban city. And so when they do on Sundays, the Family Bike Day, a lot of people show up for that. And, so I think that those are the kinds of things... in my opinion, maybe it's my place in life... that's more beneficial for me to live in the city with those kinds of options rather than a professional football team. (Respondent 11)

Conclusion

City branding has evolved considerably since first being described by Kotler et al. in 1993, and best practice is now widely perceived to be a highly inclusive process amongst a well-

defined set of stakeholders. To be effective, branding must be consistent and inclusive of both residents and external audiences, enabling both to recognize, and buy into, the brand that is being created and promoted. Established city branding efforts often use sport, via big-budget elite, large-scale and mega-events such as the Olympics or the FIFA World Cup, marquee events such as world and national championships, hosting Major League sports teams, stadia, etc., in the articulation of the brand.

This study examined the policy vision of Ottawa's brand, as perceived by elected officials, career administrators, marketing consultants involved in the management and promotion of the city of Ottawa, and also a few individuals outside this cadre, who have expert knowledge and insight into the workings of the city, and a knowledge of either brand or sport management. There appears to be no well-articulated notion of using lower-level sport as a word-of-mouth brand promotion tool amongst the citizenry. Ottawa, which can be considered a second-tier North American city, is working to reinforce its current position in order to attract a variety of audiences, largely external tech-corporations such as Amazon.⁴ This positioning appears to have been established by a 'coalition of elites,' and largely ignores ordinary citizens in its creation. The role of sport in creating the brand, whilst articulated at some level as including community-based sport and recreation, appears to focus more on medium-to-large scale events that can attract external coverage. Using data gathered via a series of semi-structured interviews, this article proposed that Ottawa's city branding is ill-defined and would benefit by shifting its thinking away from a paradigm that seems set in the 1990s to one that is current, cohesive, coherent, consistent, and inclusive. In addition to revealing a poorly aligned brand policy vision,

⁴ Ottawa bid to host Amazon's HQ2 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/amazon-shortlist-ottawa-gatineau-1.4493151>

the paper proposed a city branding sport continuum that could be useful to a wide range of practitioners in informing strategic decisions regarding the use of lower-case sport as a way to engage citizenry as advocates for the city, facilitating word-of-mouth promotion, for a bottom-up and more participatory city brand.

CHAPTER 4

Aspects of sport and recreation in quality of life:

An opportunity for Ottawa's city branding

Introduction

Research has shown that city branding is more complex than it has traditionally been articulated and managed, involving not only tangible attributes, but also subjective experiences and representations (Kavaratzis, 2004; Greenberg, 2009). For Giovanardi et al. (2018), “in the same logic as place marketing, very often place branding is suggested as a response to inter-place competition and is discussed as if it operates in vacuum only addressing the needs of external audiences, regardless of the needs of the local communities” (p. 3). Neglecting to consider how communities constitute, live in and perform the very cities to which they belong has contributed to eroding real place identities and distinctiveness. City brands can therefore act as a locus for uniting citizens to promote city development; at a local community level, a place brand can improve residents’ satisfaction with a city (Ashworth, Kavaratzis, & Warnaby, 2015). City branding is demonstrably a useful tool to promote city development by engaging citizens (Kalandides, 2011) and stimulating pride (Colomb & Kalandides, 2010). As Therkelsen (2015) noted, city branding is not solely directed at “new lucrative markets,” but is also concerned with community-building activities (p. 161). Hence, an interest in more “internal” aspects of city branding, representing the views of citizens and their lifestyles, should be central to those involved in the process (Houghton & Stevens, 2011). Successful cities’ images promote “a sense of community, solidarity, inclusion, and pride among the current citizenry” (Young, 2012, p. 152).

The Living in Canada independent guide describes Ottawa as a “clean, sporty city,” with “the highest salaries in the country” (Living in Ottawa, 2018). Despite a reported high quality of life, the city’s concerted efforts and decades-long policies have attempted to position Ottawa as ‘the Silicon Valley of the North,’ based on an existing technology hub and factors such as the

number of STEM graduates, etc., produced by the city (Novakowski, 2010). Such positioning is slowly showing results. While Ottawa's branding has been depicted as vague and poorly planned (Authors, forthcoming; Deffner & Liouris, 2005), one thing remains clear: sport, in any of its related forms, is clearly considered an important characteristic of Ottawa's city branding. The City of Ottawa Municipality Sport Strategy (MSS, 1917-1922) places sport, active living and recreation as important "personal, health, social, cultural and economic benefits to its residents"⁵. While the MSS was developed by the city's Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services department (RCFS) and the Ottawa Sport Council (OSC), it is acknowledged that sport delivery is the responsibility of several stakeholders including "community organizations, educational bodies and corporate partners."

Perceptions and meanings related to sport, physical activity and recreation, which incorporate activities as broad and varied as cycling to work and hosting mega-events, can be difficult to gauge and are often taken for granted. In this study, we interview key city branding and recreation stakeholders and explore aspects of lower-case sport and recreation as the main feature of Ottawa's perceived attributes for its inhabitants. This reinforces, on the one hand, important existing imagery that could be better leveraged within city branding efforts, and on the other hand, it offers a bottom-up approach emphasizing "living" in Ottawa, as opposed to the more external economic and tourism-related branding focus that is typical. Stakeholders participating in this research have argued that "active living," "family focus," "inclusive sport" and "community building and engagement" in sport and recreation are at the centre of Ottawa's quality of life.

Sports in City Branding

⁵ <http://ottwatch.ca/meetings/file/452907>

According to Harvey and Young (2012), one element of a city image-building strategy is the hosting of sports events; as a consequence, cities often utilize sport as part of their branding activity to receive benefits, such as attracting investment (e.g., Matheson, 2009; Tien, Lo, & Lin, 2011) and tourism (e.g., Baumann, Matheson, & Muroi, 2009; Ferrari & Guala, 2017; Gratton, Dobson, & Shibli, 2000; Henderson, Foo, Lim, & Yip, 2010). The literature surrounding sport and city branding is mainly focussed on the high-performance and professional end of the scale. The manner by which many governments (national, provincial, and municipal) grasp the opportunity to host large-scale and mega sport events to (re)brand their cities illustrates the manner in which high-performance sport is used as a tool in place branding, and is fairly well documented and analyzed.

However, there is little research that explores the way in which citizen-focussed sports and recreational activities can contribute towards city brand-building endeavours. The residents of a city should be considered a significant stakeholder in city branding and development. The residents can be spectators in a sports event or participants in sport and recreational activities. Moreover, in many cities, the purpose of building sports facilities is to create a more positive environment for residents. Sports facilities are a prime site at which residents participate in civic life (Harvey & Young, 2012).

Sport has many different expressions, from high-performance competition manifested in events such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup, to amateur semi-organized games of soccer, recreational open-water swimming, cycling paths, and parks. It is at points along this spectrum that cities can choose to utilize sport in their brand-building activities. Whilst in this context, 'lower-case' sport is taken to mean recreational, community-based sport and physical

activity (Green, 2007), examples from the use of other levels of sport will be used to illustrate the potential it has in relation to city branding.

As this literature review indicates, there is little research on grass-root level sport and recreational physical activity in city branding. In addition, not every city has the desire or resources to host mega sport events; however, small- and medium-scale cities, such as Ottawa, still have ambitions to utilize sport and recreational activity to engage with their stakeholders (residents), thereby building the city's brand (City Ottawa, 2015). Hence, engaging local stakeholders is meaningful for city branding (Houghton & Stevens, 2011). Despite this, it is obvious that cities that do not host mega sports receive less attention from researchers in terms of city branding (Harvey & Young, 2012). As a consequence, these areas are worth studying. Although there are few larger-scale sports events in Ottawa, the capital city does have its own sports environments. Also, Ottawa has a series of (implicit and explicit) strategies for developing sport and recreational activity. According to the City Ottawa (2015), the city explicitly claims the determination of promoting Ottawa as a destination for tourism, business investment, and sporting events.

Citizens in City Branding

Many policymakers attempt to build unique city images to enhance their competitiveness (Kovács & Musterd, 2013). Through image-building, cities can become better known by people living elsewhere, and ultimately attract them as investors, tourists, or even citizens. As a result, a city's economy can improve (Harvey & Young, 2012) via increased "local pride, identity and self-confidence, and countering [of] negative perceptions" (Watkins & Herbert, 2003, p. 252). Thus, residents can receive direct benefits from a positive city brand (Black, 2008; Law, 2009; Whitson, 2004). Morgan and Pritchard (1999) emphasized the necessity for cities wishing to be

considered as destinations to create a unique identity. Such unique identities can encourage existing citizens to be tourists in their own cities (Harvey & Young, 2012). These authors also noted that cities build various congruent images to persuade different publics that the cities are an ideal place to live. City brands also provide a potential locus for uniting citizens to promote city development (Ashworth et al., 2015). These authors pointed out that, at a local community level, a “place brand can help maximize positive place experience,” so it can improve residents’ satisfaction with a city (Ashworth et al., 2015, p. 4). City branding is demonstrably useful in promoting city development via citizen engagement (Kalandides, 2011).

From a functional perspective, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) stated that places [cities] need to differentiate themselves from each other to receive economic, policy, or social-psychological benefits for their citizens. They continued by noting city marketing should not only entertain visitors but also focus on other target groups, such as residents; their article emphasizes the importance of residents’ attitudes toward place marketing efforts. Balmer (2002) indicated the emotional ownership of brands belongs to the people who are affected by them: in the case of a specific city, this would directly implicate the citizens. Cities are not only tourism destinations; they are primarily the locus of residents who form the nucleus of a community (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008). From a local community level, Therkelsen (2015) indicated that any marketing activities are “done in the name of inhabitants and [utilize] their resources” (p. 162). They noted that residents should be “both the foremost target group of the marketing effort and, in effect, the most influential place marketers” (p. 162). Hudson and Hawkins (2006) concurred that residents play a significant role in the process of city branding. They observed: “local people can help to set the ambience for visitors as well as acting as credible brand ambassadors” (p. 175). Harvey and Young (2012) indicated that non-mega-size cities brand their

attributes “not only to the regional, national or global levels, but also to their own citizens or prospective new citizens” (p. 145). Successful cities’ images promote “a sense of community, solidarity, inclusion, and pride among the current citizenry” (Harvey & Young, 2012, p. 152). City marketing may alienate residents if it focusses exclusively on aspects that do not directly impact the community; residents need to be considered in setting and achieving city branding goals (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008).

Conceptual Framework

Kavaratzis (2004) developed a city brand communication model in which city image is formed via multifaceted processes encompassing three main types of communications: 1) the city’s action (cityscape, urban / green space environment; infrastructures; organizational/administrative; and the city’s behaviour, city vision and strategies); 2) intentional communication (mainstream marketing mix practices); and 3) word-of-mouth, the image communication that is not controllable by city marketers or by the two previous types.

Word-of-mouth emphasizes the importance of residents as legitimate stakeholders and prioritizes them as a valid target market. A city’s internal audience should be empowered to participate in the creation of the brand image, being a tangible part of the brand. Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013) demonstrated that beyond being just passive beneficiaries, residents are “active partners and co-producers of public goods, services and policies” (p. 18) and should, therefore, be integrated within a more participatory approach to branding that counters the external and rather imposed top-down traditions. These authors proposed a threefold role for residents in city branding: First, residents as an integrated part of a place brand highlight how local people, in “their interactions with each other and with outsiders[,] obviously form the social milieu of a given place” (p. 20), and should, therefore, be at the centre of branding

processes. Second, residents as ambassadors for their place brand emphasizes the importance of the residents within the communication process, as they are “naturally considered informal, authentic and insider sources of information about the place” (p. 21). Residents, therefore, contribute to the co-creation of value and the whole place product. This notion leads to the idea of the internal lived brand where residents become brand champions (see also Achrol & Kotler, 1999; Warnaby, 2009b). Finally, residents as citizens highlights political engagement and democratic endeavours of the civil society that elects government officials and participates in political decision-making.

By focussing on a perspective of lower-case sport and recreation as living and performing the city, this paper seeks to highlight the value of community sport, active lifestyles and recreation, and putting these at the centre of Ottawa’s distinctiveness.

Methods

This research uses a case study approach (Yin, 2009) to explore various stakeholder perspectives toward the role of municipally-funded sport and recreational physical activity in the creation, development, and maintenance of Ottawa’s city brand image. For this paper, snowball sampling was used, as a method that “uses a small pool of initial informants to nominate other participants who meet the eligibility criteria for a study” (Given, 2008, p. 815). From these key informants, the snowball sample created opportunities to conduct 17 semi-structured interviews with individuals who deal with the provision of municipally-funded organizations in Ottawa that have an interest in city branding (see table 4 for the stakeholders interviewed). According to Longhurst (2003), while using semi-structured interviews, not only do researchers receive data from the participants based on pre-structured interviews’ guides, but the researchers also have opportunities to receive information that the participants feel is important in relation to the

research questions. The interview guide provides clear guidance to the interviewers to produce reliable and comparable data (Horton, Macve, & Struyven, 2004). The basis of this article was two questions that led to various conversations around the concept of lower-case sports and city brand. In response to the questions “How can you describe Ottawa as a city to live in?” and/or “Can you tell us about the role of lower-case sport and recreation in Ottawa city branding?” most respondents discussed several dimensions of how they link sport and recreation to “quality of life” and how these were perceived as key characteristics worth leveraging in city branding.

Organization	Position	Number
City of Ottawa	City Councillor	Respondent 01
Recreation, Cultural and Facility Service, City of Ottawa	General Manager	Respondent 02
City of Ottawa	City Councillor	Respondent 03
Communication & Outreach, City Councillor’s Office	Director	Respondent 04
Public Information and Media Relations, City of Ottawa	Director	Respondent 05
City of Ottawa	Mayor	Respondent 06
Invest Ottawa & Bayview	President and CEO	Respondent 07
Sport and Culture, Ottawa Tourism	Manager	Respondent 08
Ottawa Sport Council	Executive Director	Respondent 09
Sports Canada		Respondent 10
Cycling Canada	Development Coordinator	Respondent 11
Sports Services, University of Ottawa	Director	Respondent 12
High-Performance Sport & Compliance, University of Ottawa	Advisor	Respondent 13
Centre for Urban Research & Education, Carleton University	Research Associate	Respondent 14
Blueprint Management Consultants	President	Respondent 15
Janet LeBlanc + Associates Inc.	President	Respondent 16
National Capital Commission	Senior Manager	Respondent 17

In this research, analysis of semi-structured interview data was guided by thematic analysis, which emphasizes the identification of “patterns of meaning across a qualitative dataset” (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016, p. 290). Thematic analysis focusses on making sense of

the data, and can be undertaken when findings can be induced from the data (Braun et al., 2016). Thematic analysis was applied to the interview transcripts in order to collect different perspectives towards sport and recreation and their role in Ottawa's city branding. All collected data from interview transcripts was imported into NVivo 12 to help with all six stages of thematic analysis.

The City of Ottawa

Ottawa is the fourth-largest city in Canada with a population of 970,000 (City of Ottawa, 2016). Ottawa borders Gatineau (forming the Ottawa-Gatineau region), a city in the French province of Quebec, which has the Gatineau Park, a large national park that provides residents with an ideal place for hiking, camping, skiing and many other outdoor activities (Novakowski, 2010). In terms of workforce demographics, federal government and high-tech companies are two pillar industries in Ottawa. Hence, the median household income (\$91,122) is relatively high among major Canadian cities (MoneySense, 2017). Additionally, Ottawa has three universities and one college (the University of Ottawa, University of St-Paul, Carleton University and Algonquin College), which guarantee the high level of talented workers in Ottawa's labour market.

Ottawa is also the nation's capital, and its city image is associated with the federal government for most Canadians, a characteristic that often equates the city with calm, conservative and ultimately potentially boring attributes. Invest Ottawa, a non-profit organization financed by the city and linked to a five-year Economic Development Strategy and Economic Development Implementation Plan of Ottawa, has contributed to the reinvigoration of Ottawa's image by highlighting and investing on its most positive aspects. This is how the organization describes Ottawa:

Ranked as the most affordable among all Canadian and U.S. cities and Mercer's top 20 for global quality of living, Ottawa is a world-class capital, globally recognized as a diverse metropolitan hub, with a friendly atmosphere and magnificent natural beauty. Affordable housing, low taxes, low crime, good transit infrastructure, strong arts and sports community, and access to healthcare have catapulted Ottawa to first place in MoneySense Magazine's Best Place to Live in Canada, 2017. In addition, five Canadian cities, including Ottawa, share 16th place on Mercer's personal safety list. By comparison, no U.S. cities have made it to the top 50 in terms of personal safety. Lush green spaces and natural oases (populated with 500 species of wildlife) can be found all over the National Capital Region. Visitors can also enjoy the region's impeccable cuisine and attend as many as 180 different annual festivals, fairs, and special events tailored for any chapter of your life. With a vibrant entertainment scene and breathtaking landscape, Ottawa is considered one of the top ten cities for the following rankings: Best Place to Raise Kids, the Best Place to Retire and the Best Place for New Canadians. Overall Ottawa is an ideal city to live and work! (Invest Ottawa, 2018a).

Sports in Ottawa. Sports play various roles in Ottawa. On the left end of the continuum, Ottawa has high-performance elite sports, a professional hockey team (Ottawa Senators), a professional football team (Ottawa Redblacks), and a professional soccer team (Ottawa Fury FC), which provide the city sports matches year-round. At the other end of the continuum and guided by the Municipal Sport Strategy, Ottawa promotes a significant number of community-based recreational sports, clubs and community sports events. Due to the area's geography and the

transportation system, Ottawa is able to provide its residents with a wide range of opportunities for sports participation. The city is one of the best places for white-water rafting in the world due to the Ottawa River (Ottawa Tourism, n.d.b). Rideau Canal Skateway is the world's largest skating rink, providing residents with opportunities for winter sports activities. Furthermore, according to Invest Ottawa (2018b), Ottawa has over 850 parks, 800 km of biking trails, and 250 km of cross-country ski and snowshoeing trails, all of which provide residents access to a great variety of sports and active recreation practices. In addition, Saidla (2017) indicated that Ottawa is the Active Transport leader in North America, with higher percentages of residents using human-powered methods of transportation such as walking and cycling, in an urban environment that favours safe sidewalks, cycling paths, and crosswalks, which all encourage a physically active city. Additionally, Ottawa hosts a series of community-based sports events regularly, such as Scotiabank Ottawa Marathon, H.O.P.E. Volleyball SummerFest, free yoga sessions in front of Parliament Hill, NOKIA Sunday Bikedays, Canada Army Run, Bell Capital Cup, Canadian Ski Marathon and Gatineau Loppet. A significant number of medium- and large-scale sports events such as the Ottawa Marathon, HOPE Volleyball SummerFest and the Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival started at a club level and grew to engage a significant number of citizens today.

Guided by a strategy called "Bid more, Host more, Win more," the city of Ottawa provides funding to Ottawa Tourism to attract sports events. These efforts have helped Ottawa to rank 4th in the Global Sport Index (GIS) assessment on national sports event hosting in 2017 (SIRC, 2018). That means Ottawa's sports events hosting strategy has considerably impacts. In 2017, the city of Ottawa also cooperated with the Ottawa Sport Council to produce the City of Ottawa (2017), which outlines the city's expectation for sports development at a policy level. This strategy outlines five strategic priorities: "Space to Play," "Partnerships," "Open to

Everyone,” “Recognition and Support of Volunteers,” and “Tourism and Sport.” These five strategic priorities suggest that the city of Ottawa intends to engage a wide range of citizens in sports, from those participating in community-based sports to volunteers in sports, and attract more sports events to the city.

Findings

An analysis of the stakeholders’ views on the role of sport and recreation in Ottawa city branding emphasized different levels of lower-case sports involvement and their potential significance in more participatory city branding. Interestingly, in addition to discussing various levels of sports practice, the respondents emphasized quality of life, which came up as a key concept to be leveraged in a city branding strategy.

Ottawa’s brand based on “Quality of Life”

To the question “How can you describe Ottawa as a city to live in?” several respondents suggested answers along the lines of, “in short, Ottawa is a city with one of the best quality of life in the country” (Respondent 1). Based on these answers, we are here presenting what they mean in referring to the quality of life as a brand, and particularly, how this related to sport and recreation.

Sport participation – urban active living. Ottawa citizens are proud to corporeally engage in the city through sport, physical activity and active living. Despite its cold and challenging winter climate, “Ottawa is among the top-performing North American cities for active transportation (AT), with approximately 28 per cent of people using AT for daily trips at the city level” (Saidla, 2017, p. 2). With its important cycling infrastructure comprising over 600 km of recreational pathways in an urban setting that offers multiple recreational and AT experiences, Ottawa is often described as an active and outdoor city. As one responded explained, “We are very

much an outdoor city. It's a kind of thing like Gatineau Park, the canal, I think we've done a great job, the skiing. It's a great family city, Ottawa is a very active city" (Respondent 15). Aspects of sport and recreation in quality of life are often linked to environmentally friendly features such as bike paths, public transport, green spaces access or activity-friendly spaces, where various measures or indexes have been linked to concepts such as sustainable cities (Nijkamp & Perrels, 2014), green cities (Beatley, 2012), or even sport cities (Smith, 2010). Indicators analyzing active transportation (AT) and AT modal split (Saidla, 2017), the 'urban green' space quantification that measures 'ecosystem services recreation in the city' (Grunewald et al., 2017), or multisport games and world championship ranking for hosting assessments (SIRC, 2018) all touch upon issues related to physical activity, health, and recreation. All these seem to be relevant to the city of Ottawa:

It's an active outdoors city, compared to a lot of others with all sorts of opportunities. And then, for someone like me who has been all over the world, realizing other than some cycling infrastructure in some European cities which is superior, I can't find anywhere which can match Ottawa for the breadth and the quality of so many sport/recreational opportunities. (Respondent 3)

Not only is the city built environment offering green spaces and cycling infrastructure to promote active living but the city's citizens are also perceived as frequent users, and as sporty, outdoor people looking for such opportunities. As one respondent noted:

When I'm driving along Queen Elizabeth on the morning and just how many people are out cycling and running and even skating in the winter to work... I mean when it's minus thirty out. It always baffles me how many hard-core people there are out there skating... At night the accessibility that we have to bike paths in the city, is unbelievable. I think it's second to none, actually, in North America, so if not around the world.

(Respondent 8)

Family oriented. Having opportunities for active living within the daily routine, as a means of transportation, and for recreational purposes is an important aspect of quality of life. Ottawa has managed to design and support activity-friendly environments (Sallis et al., 2015) that are highlighted as one of the most important features of the city's quality of life. In addition to this access and these opportunities, citizens seeking healthy lifestyles look for family-friendly opportunities for sport, recreation and active living. A family-oriented city is also part of Ottawa's key quality of life features: "It is a beautiful city, and it's definitely a place I want to be and bring up families. It is seen to be quite a family-oriented city in my mind" (Respondent 12). A family-friendly city also refers to safety and security: "I do see it as family oriented. So, those looking for a good quality of life, young professionals, for new Canadians who are looking for a safe, secure, healthy community" (Respondent 5). As another respondent puts it, "and so there is that nice side to Ottawa's quality of life which is at least until recently the traffic isn't that bad, the air quality is quite good, there are lots of parks" (Respondent 3).

Access to active living and transportation, green spaces, parks and trails, and attracting outdoorsy and sporty families go hand in hand with sport and recreation programming, recreation clubs, associations and groups being at the heart of sport participation—all family-friendly

attributes that encourage active living. For individuals living in Ottawa, this can be perceived as more important than upper-case sport, or be more meaningful for residents:

Whereas, the lower-case sports, can have a bigger impact in a sense that it actually gets people engaged that might not be engaged, and for a city like Ottawa, now, I am a part of a young family, so I can see it as a kind of young family. And so when they do on Sundays, the Family Bike Day, a lot of people show up for that. And, so I think that's more beneficial for me to live in the city with those kinds of options rather than a professional football team.

(Respondent 11)

Sport for all. Whether formally implemented and funded by local government, or born out of citizen engagement or opportunities, the quality of life in terms of active living opportunities must be an inclusive attribute. In fact, sport must be for all citizens, from all sociocultural and economic backgrounds; “We run what's called the Financial Assistance (FA) program. The FA program is a number of points or credits that are given to a family member, a kid from a family of low income. That means a threshold” (Respondent 1). Several programs are working towards improving opportunities to be active for everyone. Another respondent explained

Well it's providing equal opportunity to all. We do have the subsidized [recreational programs] and such, and by encouraging children of all, children and adults, of all economic backgrounds. Again, it's that common identity, that common community, so in terms of branding that again and thinking of Ottawa as a city for all where everyone has a quality of life and inclusive, I think it's critical for that. (Respondent 5)

Specific programs backed by the Ottawa Sport Council, such as the “I love” sports program, aim to provide accessibility and inclusivity, and target those who are most vulnerable and often excluded from or unable to participate in sports:

I think, for example, that, our “Love to” programs, that we have I Love to Skate, I Love to play Soccer, I Love... So... it’s our Giant Tiger brand. It costs nothing. It’s often supported by Canadian Tire Jumpstart. And ‘I love to Mentor’ for the older kids that want to participate. It’s been successful... the skill is sport. It’s skating, it’s soccer, it’s whatever, but bringing in mentorship from youth, participation by parents, and it’s often targeted at communities where parents wouldn’t be inclined to participate, having them come out help with fitting the helmets or just participating in events around the program, has been successful in, we think, bringing out people that wouldn’t otherwise be engaged in the community. Likewise, some of the things we are doing for our youth programs like our Youth Futures program that is, you know, trying to build leadership in youth, some of the, some of those activities I think have been successful. (Respondent 2)

Another example in which sports were made more inclusive is how local sport policies have been adapted to provide more ice time for girls’ hockey. Previously, ice time was allocated based on history, or past usage, with hockey associations getting more time getting as much time again in the following years. This was modified to accommodate changing hockey demographics;

So, what has changed in the past five, ten years, we're seeing more and more girl-only hockey teams being put, girls playing sports, girls getting involved. So, what was happening is like all the boy hockey association's been there since so many years had all the best time, the best arena because it was based on history. So, it didn't make sense because girl hockey was new. Girls were playing a lot more hockey. They wanted to play on a girls' team so we had to revise the whole policy... (Respondent 4)

The City of Ottawa (2017) adopted "The True Sport principles of 'Stay Healthy,' 'Include Everyone,' 'Give Back' and 'Keep it Fun' [that] are embedded in the City of Ottawa's philosophy of recreational sport program delivery" (City of Ottawa, 2017, p. 2), which demonstrates an inclusive philosophy committed to providing opportunities for all residents. In addition, sport is perceived as an important way to help newcomers integrate and make them feel at home, while also celebrating diversity, inclusion and community building.

I think of new Canadians, what a great opportunity to really welcome someone to your country and make them feel part of the country by getting them involved in sport. Because to me, sport is community based, it's team oriented, it's everybody matters. It doesn't matter what role you play on the team or whether it's just a bunch of people going for a walk or a bike ride or skating on the canal. For that moment, it doesn't matter where you are from. It doesn't matter how long you've been here. Everybody feels the same. So, I think that's a great opportunity. (Respondent 15)

Volunteerism as a part of citizen engagement. The city and sports organizations cannot provide all the resources necessary to improve sports opportunities for the most disadvantaged. While outside organizations in community sport contribute as part of their social responsibility stream, community sport relies heavily on the goodness of volunteers—and the spirit of volunteerism seems to be an already existing quality of Ottawa’s active and engaged citizens. One respondent noted, “Sport is the second leading voluntary sector area. There are 36,000, I think, if I recall that was the number, 36,000 clubs, community clubs out there, just operating. They are operating voluntarily with people” (Respondent 12). Lower-case sport definitely brings people and organizations together while citizen engagement has enabled sports events to grow rapidly, as another respondent pointed out, “Yes, Hope Volleyball is an example. Hope was a fundraiser for a local initiative that grew into one of the biggest outdoor volleyball tournaments in the country. Dragon boat is another example. So it starts with local clubs trying to fundraise and it turns out to be a massive sports participation event” (Respondent 1). Another respondent had another example:

Another really good example is the Ottawa Girls Hockey Association. They created a program down in Rideau-Vanier Ward for newcomer girls to play hockey. And the hockey association got together and provided all of the equipment. They provided the coaches. And the Councillor was able to get one of those Sens [Ottawa Senators] rinks that was built down in his Ward for free and those girls went out, I think, like 16 times, and learned to skate and learned to play hockey. (Respondent 9)

Conclusion and Discussion

Residents have gained increasing but fragmented consideration only in recent years. Kavaratzis (2012) pointed out that the internal audiences' role is still underestimated, as most place branding campaigns are clearly oriented towards developing external investment and tourism. Such omission leads to branding campaigns that lack a "sense of place" (Aitken & Campelo, 2011), and that residents often don't recognize. While in this paper, citizens themselves were not empowered to share their views on city brand, other important city brand stakeholders shared their ideas, both as city brand stakeholders and as citizens, allowing the more internal aspects representing the views of citizens and their lifestyles to be revealed. From these conversations, lower-case sport and recreation has proven to be a key aspect of Ottawa city branding that should be considered in all city branding: "Providing more opportunities for people to participate at that lower level and have their kids participate, I think, is really important from a branding perspective. That aspect of Ottawa, the sports culture, quality of life is extremely important, you know, in Ottawa, in terms of place branding" (respondent 8).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, participants shared that there was little mention or utilization of lower-case sport in the official branding development strategy. The wide variety of opportunities to be active and the eagerness of citizens to take advantage of what was referred to as sport and recreation access as a quality of life factor could be potentially leveraged and benefit a more participative, inclusive city brand that would help create community-building activities and civic pride, which is considered fundamental. Future research is needed to understand how residents conceive of recreational sport and physical activity, and envisage their participation in the co-creation of a city brand image that incorporates recreational sport and physical activity, and that more accurately reflects their lived experience in Ottawa.

Word-of-mouth sees residents as legitimate stakeholders, a valid target market and the heart of a place brand. When the city will find ways to consider, integrate and develop more participatory approaches in city branding, only then will residents live the brand fully and become true ambassadors by participating in the communication process as brand champions.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Future Implications

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which the City of Ottawa represents recreational sport and physical activity in city branding, via the perceptions of elected representatives, employees, and others involved in the delivery and management of recreational sport and physical activity within the city. The main questions guiding this research were the following:

1. What is the role of recreational sport and physical activity in city branding?
2. Does the city perceive the community-based recreational sport and physical activity as part of the creation and development of a tangible and positive city brand?
3. How do employees and representatives at various levels of municipal government and relevant organizations/associations perceive the contribution of community-based recreational sport and physical activity in relation to the creation of the city brand?
4. Is word-of-mouth used by the city as a tool of a bottom-up brand-building?

This work has reinforced that existing imagery located in what was defined as lower-case sports could be better leveraged within city-branding efforts by offering a bottom-up approach that emphasizes “living” in Ottawa, as opposed to a more typical external economic and tourism-related branding focus.

City images are often created by corporate, economic, and political elites; evidence suggests that many residents do not even recognize their own city via such images (e.g., Aronczyk, 2013; Harvey & Young, 2012). Modern theoretical constructs envisage a participatory co-creation of city image, recognizable by all, involving citizens and elites, and appealing to

external entities (Braun, Kavaratzis, & Zenker, 2013). Gotham and Irvin (2018) further indicated that co-creation of a city brand happens within a dialogic process between all internal stakeholders, elites and citizens. In this context, lower-case sport and recreational physical activity provide the city leaders with an opportunity to co-create elements of the city brand through a process of word-of-mouth marketing, since lower-case sport and recreational physical activity tend to engage internal stakeholders. Such engagement can encourage residents to participate in the dialogic process of city branding. Meanwhile, Christensen (2013) outlines a way that participatory city branding can engage residents in meaning-making activities; the author examined a case where Twitter was used to engage residents in the process of city branding. Here, as lower-case sport and recreational physical activity can engage residents from a wide range of diverse communities within a city, city leaders can suggest this level of sport as a meaning-making activity to achieve city branding purposes; to do this requires a level of understanding and commitment on behalf of the city elite, such as counsellors. Furthermore, since lower-case sport and recreational physical activity can engage residents, as Gotham and Irvin (2018) suggested, city elites can utilize this engagement to potentially harmonize and align urban tourism goals and externally oriented branding efforts with residents' perceptions of their city and together build a cohesive and internally cogent city brand.

Ashworth et al., (2015) emphasized that engaging residents in the city branding process can maximize the potential of creating a positive place experience. As this research suggests, lower-case sport and recreational physical activity can engage a city's residents in their living communities in a positive way. Through this process, residents can become more satisfied with their lived experience and then share this satisfaction via word-of-mouth, thus fulfilling the notion of this as a branding tool. At the same time, residents can deliver information regarding

this lived experience in the dialogue with other city stakeholders.

In Ottawa's case, while talking about the city image, the residents evoke visual elements of the city, like Parliament Hill, which is regarded as a key symbol of the nation. However, this research also finds that residents also perceive quality of life in a non-visual sense while living in the city. In addition, the participants consider lower-case sport and recreational physical activity to play an important role in the overall creation and lived-experience defined as quality of life. Drobnick (2012) indicated that non-seeing senses can supplement the visual elements of a city image; non-seeing senses, such as quality of life, can provide an immersive and experiential impression of a city. However, in the case of Ottawa, there is no official city branding strategy or policy to help strengthen the significance of quality of life within the overall brand. Hence, there is a strong opportunity for city elites and residents to co-create a strategy by using lower-case sport and recreational physical activity to perhaps concretize existing brand images of the city.

This research showed that some manifestation of sport plays a significant role in Ottawa's brand imagery, predominantly references to large-scale events and professional league teams, which are seen as "essential to attract talent" (Harvey & Young, 2012). From the official brand-making perspective, there was little mention of how recreational sport and physical activity are used to promote the city. Findings also indicate that Ottawa faces several issues impeding the creation of a consistent brand image with internal recognition and external appeal. There appears to be a lack of clear municipal branding policy, with tension caused by the duality of the city: it is both the nation's capital, and a municipal entity in its own right. There is little evidence of any resident participation in the co-creation of the image(s) used by either Ottawa Tourism or Invest Ottawa, the two organizations mandated to realize the city's branding ambitions. Whilst hosting major sports events and professional league teams enhances a city's

image (Ferrari & Guala, 2017), recreational sport and physical activity, despite having widespread appeal for residents, are often ignored in the process (Kavaratzis, 2004). There are several initiatives and policies with sport writ large in the somewhat successful creation of Ottawa's brand image as a 'sport city,' which emphasize large-scale events, the presence of a professional hockey team, and the perception of lower-case sport and active living as a component of quality of life for Ottawa's citizens. However, there is little evidence of the participation of residents in the co-creation of this image. There is a distinct possibility that residents feel alienated and disconnected from the projected image of their city. This could impact levels of citizen engagement with the city, and citizens' willingness to promote positive aspects of the city via word-of-mouth marketing.

Future Research

Future research could examine Ottawa's municipal brand-building process, look at the relevance to residents of the existing use of sport in the city's brand image building, and investigate the potential role of recreational sport and physical activity in contributing to the co-creation of a more recognizable city brand image. New research questions could evaluate whether residents recognize the city via existing projected brand imagery, whether they think recreational sport and physical activity could be incorporated into Ottawa's brand image, or what their perceptions are of the role lower-case sport plays in this image. The most interesting topic for future research would be an exploration of the best methods by which residents could participate in the co-creation of a city brand that accurately reflects their lived experience, incorporating recreational sport and physical activity. This would allow for a better understanding of how citizens' word-of-mouth brand advocacy could be formally incorporated into the city's brand strategy (Braun, Kavaratzis, & Zenker, 2013).

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Interviewee: Personal data

1. Please can you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to occupy your current position?
2. Can you describe your current role, please?
3. How long have you held your current position?
4. Are you formally involved with any high-performance or elite sport entities within the city?
5. Are you formally involved with any community-based recreational sport and physical activity entities within the city?
6. Do you actively participate in sport or physical activity on a regular basis?

City Brand: These questions pertain to Ottawa's city brand

1. Do you think the city of Ottawa has a distinct and discernable brand?
2. Can you articulate your perception of the brand?
3. What are the key elements on which the brand is based?
4. How would you describe the people to whom the Ottawa brand is attractive?
5. Do you think the Ottawa city brand was consciously created?
6. If so, how and by whom was the city brand created?
7. How does Ottawa promote its brand?
8. What specific things impact on your perception of the city brand?
9. How does sport contribute to Ottawa's brand image?
10. Do you think Ottawa has official formal or informal policies and strategies related to building its brand?

11. If so, please can you explain them for us?

Sport: For this study, we are looking at community-based [recreational sport and physical activity](#), something we term “lower-case” sport as opposed to “upper-case” sport which could be considered to be [high-performance and elite sport](#) such as the Senators, RedBlacks, FIFA Women’s World Cup, etc., though we consider them to exist as two points on a continuum, e.g.,

[Upper Case](#)

[Lower Case](#)



1. Would you agree that this is a valid way of framing two different areas of sport in relation to Ottawa’s city brand?
2. How do you think these two different aspects of sport (upper and lower-case) have unique impacts on the creation of Ottawa’s city brand?
3. Do you think lower-case sport can achieve citizen engagement?
4. If so, how?
5. Do you think citizen engagement is a way of building brand, akin to WOM marketing?
6. How does Ottawa formally use sport to build their brand and promote the city positively?
7. How does Ottawa informally use sport to build their brand and promote the city positively?
8. Who do you think Ottawa is targeting with its formal promotion of sport?
9. Who do you think Ottawa is targeting with its informal promotion of sport?

10. How does community-based recreational sport and physical activity contribute to Ottawa's city brand?
11. What specific (demographic, socio-economic) groups do you think can be targeted using lower-case sport to build the city images?
12. How do you think lower-case sport impacts on low-income and high-income communities within Ottawa respectively?
13. How do you think Ottawa is currently using lower-case sport in the process of city branding?
14. How effective do you think this process is?
15. Are there any other aspects of sport in relation to city branding that you think are important?

Appendix B

Consent Form

The role of lower-case sport in city branding: a case study of Ottawa

Professor Alexandra Arellano, School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa.

Professor Stephen Stuart, School of Social Communication, Faculties of Human Science and Philosophy, Saint Paul University.

Hao Pan, MA candidate, School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa.

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Professors Arellano and Stuart and by MA candidate Hao Pan.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to seek out and highlight the ways in which municipality-and-community-led (lower-case) sport and recreation, and other types of physical activity manifest in Ottawa contribute to the way in which the city is branded and presented to the world in order to attract inward investment, economic development, immigrant populations, etc.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of participating in one or two up to one-hour interviews (depending on the amount of detail covered) during which questions pertaining to my experience and perceptions will be asked. The interviews will be scheduled for a date, time, and place that is convenient to me.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I will volunteer information relating to my professional experience in respect of the sport, recreation, and physical activities manifest in Ottawa, and my personal perceptions on how they affect the brand image of the city. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks by avoiding any questions regarding my opinion of my employers or other work-related matter unrelated to the study.

Benefits: My participation in this study will enable a fuller picture of how lower-case sport, recreation, and physical activity can contribute positively to the ways in which a city can be perceived by those interested in the city.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for the writing of academic journal articles, a Masters dissertation and academic conference presentations, and a report to be shared with a city Councillor. **Anonymity** will be protected in the following manner: my confidentiality will be protected by the removal of any identifying personal data and the assignment of a randomly generated alpha-numeric code which will be used to identify

any quotes or other data I provide that is subsequently used in publications or conference presentations. The organization I am working for and the position I occupy may be mentioned, so I understand there are limits to the complete anonymity and confidentiality.

Conservation of data: The data will be collected electronically by means of a digital voice recorder. It will be transferred to an encrypted computer in the possession of one of the Professors conducting the study. The data will be kept securely on an encrypted hard-drive within a locked office at the University. The researchers and their masters' student will have access to the data on the University premises. The data will be kept for a period of five years after which it will be destroyed by overwriting with military-grade software.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will, unless otherwise agreed, be immediately deleted as per the above.

Acceptance: I, (*Name of participant*), agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Professors Arellano and Stuart of the School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact either of the researchers.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, Tel.: (613) 562-5387; Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

I wish to receive a copy of the transcript of my interview at this email: yes ___ no ___
Email:

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date: