BATTLE OF THE BRANDS
The Gold Coast Identity Crisis

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1.0 Introduction

City identity can be examined from a number of political, economic and cultural perspectives including the way it has been perceived by residents and outsiders. While residents derive the city's identity from their experience of it, for outsiders various branding schemes used to sell the city have an important role in constructing the identity. Sometimes the images viewed from the inside and the outside do not overlap. Insiders and outsiders may focus on certain aspects and images of a city and not see the complete picture. In places like the Gold Coast this may result in a prejudice against the city and investment and removal decisions may be made based on incomplete information.

Utilising the case study of the Gold Coast Australia, this paper aims to discuss city identity and the role of branding in the formation of the city image and explore whether residents and tourists perceive city identity differently. The paper approaches a perspective of place identity that takes into account modern practices of place marketing and branding rather than experiential self-identity (as in Dovey et al., 2004; Proshansky et al., 1983). From a planning perspective, understanding city identity is highly important because a city's identity forms the context from which planning policies, plans and decisions are made. However, if perception of this identity by outsiders is inaccurate attracting investment and residents will be challenging. The inherent polycentric nature of city or place identity further emphasises the need for those planning for the multiplicity of communities, suburbs, cities, regions and states to understand the context and basis of those within such places.

2.0 Mirror Mirror on the Wall - City Identity, Image and Branding

Arreola (1995, p.1) states that 'city identity involves the meanings projected by a landscape. Urban identity is inevitably a constructed idea that is tied to a real or ideal landscape'. However, the perceived image of a city may not accurately reflect its identity. Rather, the image perceived by individuals is likely to be based on a mélange of experiences, images projected to them (through marketing and city branding) and history. City identity is a means for cities to differentiate themselves from other destinations.

City identity is a social construct created by individuals based on their exposure to (through media, word of mouth, pictures, etc.) and experiences of the city to interpret and make sense of it (Lynch, 1993). City image builds upon the existing city identity and incorporates the branding of the city to meld the reality of the city with the idealism of marketing professionals, city councils and government bodies (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). City image is consequently a marketing construct based on various purposely chosen values, representations, ideas and impressions relevant to a city that are used to 'sell' or portray the city in a certain way to different consumer groups. Although the two concepts build and evolve congruently, there is a risk when introducing falsified (or more usually highly exaggerated) images of a city that 'the identity of a city is not necessarily the same as the image that individuals perceive' (Arreola, 1995, p.1). The next sections will discuss the theoretical foundations of city identity and branding.

2.1 City Identity
Defining identity, particularly city identity is a complex task as exemplified by the multiplicity of definitions within planning and psychology fields. Despite the significant number of studies discussing place identity (Valera & Guardia, 2002; Twigger-Ross &. Uzzell, 1996), few clearly define the term or explore its importance in planning decisions. Relating the concept of personal identity to a place, Amundsen (2001, p.10-11) suggests that place identity is a contextual social construct which consists of four primary elements:

- 'Spatial qualities that distinguish the place from others (location, infrastructure, communication and architecture),
- Characteristics or qualities of inhabitants that distinguish them from inhabitants of other places

(values, customs, physical appearance),
- Social conditions and social relations between the inhabitants,
- Culture and/or history, seen as a unifying element that again connect the inhabitants to tradition and again distinguish them from others'.

The literature currently fails to adequately acknowledge, analyse and discuss the role of branding or marketing of cities in the formation of a city or place image.

Proshanksy et al. (1983), tentatively extends the concept of self-identity as a possible product of place identity. This can been explained as 'personal attachment to geographically locatable places, a person acquires a sense of belonging and purpose which give meaning to his or her life' (Proshansky et al., 1983). For example, a person may see a source of their own identity as being a product of the place in which they were born or live. A person asserting that they are a New Yorker is not merely claiming to live there, but to embody the subjective personality and attitudes of the city (i.e. big apple, brash, loud).

In the Australian context, Dovey et al. (2004) argue that self-identity as a product of the 'idea of 'place' or 'character' as inextricably connected to essentialist ideals of closure and uniformity, there is evidence that the quest for 'place-identity' is not easily dismissed'.

The field of organisational psychology defines identity as that 'which is central, enduring and distinctive about an organisation's character' (Gioia et al., 2000, p.63). Image as defined by organisational psychology is construed externally to the corporation and reflects the way in which those within the organisation believe outsiders perceive the organisation (Albert et al., 2000). One of the main purposes of branding is to project the desirable perceived identity of the city to potential visitors to attract them to spend more time in the environs. The defining attributes of identity are those which may be regarded as central, enduring and distinctive about the city. This paper argues that city identity can be defined through the combination of any of the four elements identified by Amundsen (2001) and is interpreted by visitors and residents through the lense of city branding to create a uniquely perceived city image.

The process of branding and marketing a city attempts to integrate the 'reality' of the city with the medium of idealistic imagery. Cities are increasingly turning to the tool of branding to differentiate themselves from other cities (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2004). This indicates that branding in fact contributes to the city's perceived identity and consequently the city's image.

2.1.1 Spatial qualities
Kavartizis and Ashworth (2004, p.507) state that city identity relates to resident's understanding of the city based on which 'physical, symbolic or other elements they evaluate in order to make their assessment of the city'. This echoes Lynch's (1993) theory that cognitive maps created by the inhabitants of a city create a complex and multifaceted image of the city that cumulatively describes its identity. Lynch's (1993) theory also supports the idea of city identity being sourced from multiple physical and temporal foundations, encompassing history, shared experience, landmarks, networks and events as elements of a city's identity, as perceived by its inhabitants.

2.1.2 Inhabitant Characteristics
City identity is more than a culmination of history, culture or economy alone, rather identity 'functions as a symbol or an image of values, orientations and processes… it functions as a *symbol or image* of what actually binds the inhabitants together today, but it also gives links to earlier periods and even to the landscape and the area itself' (Amundsen, 2001, p.14). In this way, the values, customs and physical appearances of a city's inhabitants differentiate them from other places and thus contribute to the area's unique identity.

2.1.3 Social Conditions and Social Relations
It is through the social context that tourists are able to view, understand and differentiate the city's inhabitants' 'genuine way of behaving, thinking and managing their lives' (Amundsen, 2001, p.12). As such culture oriented tourism has become an intrinsic component of local and international tourism. The culture and social relations of a specific geographical location are often well recognised locally and globally, creating a highly defined and important tourism resource. An example of this is Maori culture in New Zealand, and Uluru in the Northern Territory of Australia.

2.1.4 Culture/History
History is the most commonly identified basis or source of a city's identity in urban theory. City identity is sourced from personal experiences of place, which act as 'sources of empowerment and connection, of stability and continuity' (Plumwood,1993, p.63). Friedman (1992, p.854) identifies history as the 'discourse

of identity' whereby the complex and fragmented tapestry of our society that contains multiple cultural identities must also inherently contain multiple histories.

2.2 City Branding

A city's identity can also be based upon the mixture of advertising representations and narratives of the city shown to its inhabitants and outsiders. Although this claim has a degree of common sense, there is very little discussion of the influence of branding in complex construction of a city identity in the urban or identity literature. Branding is a means of marketing a city by differentiating it from other cities in order to attract visitors and utilises a 'specifically designed place identity and then promotes it to identified markets' (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2004, p.506). In arguing the importance of city branding, Dinnie (2003, p.3) asserts that 'the unbranded [city] has a difficult time attracting economic and political attention and that image and reputation are becoming essential parts of [city's] strategic equity'.

Branding draws upon Amundsen's four elements to sell a favourable image of the city to residents and outsiders, making it possible to manufacture an image of the city biased towards enticing various visitor or resident age, interest and experience groups to 'consume' the city as a product. However, branding and interpretation of cities is not without bias or motivation. Consequently the identity portrayed through marketing schemes to tourists may not hold true to the same identity experienced by the residents of the city.

3.0 Putting on the Glitz – The Gold Coast Case Study

The Gold Coast, located in the South East corner of Queensland (Qld) in Australia, is a major domestic and international tourist destination with 57 kilometres of coastline. The city attracts more than 9 million tourists annually and has a resident population of approximately 500,000 people (GCT, 2010). The Gold Coast has a somewhat malleable urban identity that has been molded and changed progressively throughout the city's short history. It is one of those peculiar places that represents different things to different people. The city has been variously described as 'a sunny place for shady people' (Jones, 1986, p.1), 'the most heterogeneous region in Australia' (McRobbie, 1991, p.vi), a city experiencing 'adolescence' (Burton, 2009, p.1) and a resort centre that is currently evolving into a city (Edwards et al., 2007). Such representations are likely to be experienced in varying degrees by tourists and residents within the city.

Griffin (1998, p.286) identifies the crux of the Gold Coast's identity crisis as the fact that it is not 'an easily definable place with a singular identity, even though it might appear to lend itself to easy typecasting'. This indicates a need for a study exploring the tension between marketed or imposed identity of the Gold Coast and the self-identified social, cultural, physical and aesthetic identities of the Gold Coast assumed by the residents. Therefore, this paper explores how the Gold Coast City's identity is different to different people and attempts to compare how resident perceptions of the city differ from tourist perceptions.

4.0 Methods

4.1 Research Design

Currently, no established method exists to measure city identity or image in a survey instrument, there are however numerous qualitative approaches that rely on subjective or anecdotal methods to measure the blurry interface between self and place-identity (Dukerich, et al., 2002). In creating a measure for this paper, inspiration was drawn from organisational psychology because its practice has sought to define both small companies and multi-national corporations. Like cities, large organizations have often ill-defined multiplicities of purposes, interests and means of selling their products which are not always self-evident. An example of this is Woolworths who are best known for their grocery sales being in fact Australia's largest operator of poker machines (Horin, 2011). Organisational psychology utilises employee questionnaires which focus on the way in which employees and outsiders view a company by determining the attractiveness of the organisation, attractiveness of the organisation's construed external image (branding, marketing and reputation), and the degree to which employees identify with the company (Dukerich, et al., 2002). These factors indicate that organisational psychology methods are highly applicable to understanding the relationship between city identity and city image.

In order to measure the perceptions of residents and visitors of the Gold Coast an intercept questionnaire was constructed, containing questions designed to extrapolate both quantitative and qualitative information from participants. Whilst this method is limited in comparison to the theoretical issues raised by organizational psychology and place-identity, it was identified as being a diagnostic tool rather than a comprehensive review. More work will need to be done to develop such comprehensive methods. The

independent variable was whether the participant was a resident or visitor to the Gold Coast and the dependant variable was the participant's perception of the Gold Coast and its identity as a city. Two locations were utilised: one in high proximity to tourist accommodation and recreation facilities (Southport Broadwater Parklands and Central Business District (CBD)), and a second in an area close to offices, a shopping centre and local parklands (Cavill Avenue Mall and Surfers Paradise Foreshore).

4.1.1 Questionnaire Procedure
429 subjects were intercepted and 203 of them participated in the surveys at the two locations on the Gold Coast during a peak tourist period (Easter Public Holiday weekend and April school holidays – 19/4/11 to the 30/4/11). The overall response rate was 47% with residents less likely (45%) than visitors (51%) to participate in the survey. There was no statistically significant difference between respondents and non-respondents. The sample was divided into a subset of the two target populations of residents (101) and visitors (102). 100 participants from each target population was considered significant enough to show whether there would be a statistically significant difference in perception of the city between the two samples. Visitor and resident participants were provided with a two page general questionnaire and a single page questionnaire containing more specific questions relevant to their self-identified visitor/resident status.

4.1.2 Measures of Identity
Open-ended, qualitative-response questions were utilised to measure three of Amundsen's four elements of city identity as they required the participant to describe their observations and feelings regarding the city's inhabitant's characteristics, social characteristics and spatial attributes. The respondents were then asked to respond to a series of questions measured in Likert Scale to examine how strongly they associated a series of nine attributes such as the beach or multiculturalism with the Gold Coast as a city. They were then asked to use the same scale to indicate how well a further nine statements described the city. Respondents were also asked to describe the accuracy and possible improvements to current branding and marketing of the Gold Coast as well.

4.2 Data Analysis
Significance testing through a two-tailed T-test (which provided a T and P value) was carried out to compare the mean association or agreement of the two sample groups based on a series of statements regarding the Gold Coast and its characteristics. This indicated where significant differences in perceived city image between Gold Coast residents and visitors had occurred. P values were considered at confidence intervals of 0.01, 0.05 and 0.10 with scores greater than 0.10 indicating no statistically significant variation in opinion between the two samples. P values that were closer to 0.01 indicated a greater strength of opinion variation between the two samples.

Qualitative responses were analysed utilising a grounded theory approach consisting of a three step coding process: open, axial and selective coding. Open coding disaggregated the data into separate units of measurement or categories (Veal, 2006; Flick, 2006). The list of codes generated by the open coding process was reviewed and similar or related concepts were grouped together (axial coding). This refined list was then selectively coded, which enabled the finalisation and further refining of the codes into core groups of codes (Flick, 2006). These core groups formed the basis of discussion and theory relating to visitor and resident perceptions of city identity and city image of the Gold Coast.

5.0 Results

5.1 Overview of Respondents
429 Gold Coast residents and visitors were approached across the five-day survey period to participate in the questionnaire and approximately 47% of those approached completed the questionnaire (45% of residents approached and 51% of visitors approached). A total of 101 residents and 102 visitors were surveyed.

5.1.1 Resident Demographic
The respondents were evenly spread regarding their gender (50 females, 51 males) and age, with only the 16-25 age bracket represented by a greater proportion of respondents when compared to other age brackets. Approximately 28% of residents surveyed have lived on the Gold Coast for more than 21 years, whilst only 9% of respondents were born in the city. This indicates that 91% of residents were not originally from the Gold Coast and 29% of those came from within SEQ (Brisbane, Toowoomba, Logan, etc). Those respondents who had moved to the Gold Coast nominated work as the most common reason for moving to the city (34%) and 22% moved for the city's lifestyle. Interestingly, 18% of Gold Coast residents had moved

to the city for the lifestyle in combination with at least one other deciding factor including work, study, retirement, other and health.

5.1.2 Visitor Demographic

102 visitors completed the questionnaire during the five day survey period, with 48 females and 54 males partaking. The age of visitor participants was heavily weighted in the younger age groups with 34% in the 16-25 age bracket and 27% in the 26-35 age bracket. This differs from the 56-65 age bracket which contained only three participants and the 65+ age bracket which was represented by seven participants. The largest category of visitors earn less than $25,000 per annum (39%), with increasingly smaller percentages of participants earning greater amounts. This trend is noticeable except for the greater income levels whereby 7% of visitors earn between $150,001 and $200,000 and 3% earn greater than $200,001 per annum.

The bulk of visitors surveyed were international visitors (43%) with smaller numbers of interstate visitors (27.5%), intrastate visitors (6%) and SEQ visitors (22%) also surveyed. Just under half of the visitors surveyed first visited the Gold Coast during the 1990s and 2000s (49%), and 34% in the past year (2010-2011). Fewer participants indicated that they had first visited the Gold Coast between the 1950s and 1960s (4%) and the 1970s and 1980s (11%). None of the visitors questioned had visited the Gold Coast prior to 1950. Furthermore, many of the visitors surveyed had visited the Gold Coast more than once, with only one quarter nominating this as their first visit. For 29% of visitors it was their second or third visit, 11% indicated it was their fourth or fifth visit and 33% had visited the city more than six times. 70% of visitors were residing along the coastline of the city and few visitor participants nominating their accommodation as being located in the northern (5%), central (6%) and southern (8%) areas of the Gold Coast. Unsurprisingly, the most commonly stated reason or purpose for visiting the city was pleasure (66%) seconded by visiting family or friends (15%), business (2%), other reasons (2%), a combination of pleasure and business (2%), and a combination of pleasure and visiting family or friends (9%).

5.2 City Image

The results can be summarised into three primary conclusions. Foremost, the results indicate that there are some statistically significant differences in perception of the Gold Coast city image by visitors and residents. The differences present denote a significant difference in perception of three of Amundsen's four elements of city identity in the Gold Coast context. Secondly, the results imply that visitors and residents do not rely equally on Amundsen's four elements of city identity to form an image of the city. The city's identity may in fact be strongly perceived through one or several of the elements whilst having little to no reliance on other elements. Finally, the significant differences that were observed indicate where current marketing schemes are failing or succeeding. Improvements may still be made in the future to sell a more comprehensive and diverse image of the city.

The data as a whole indicates that there are some statistically significant differences in visitor and resident perceptions of the Gold Coast, where the responses do not differ significantly may be partially explained by the high percentage of residents who migrated from other locations to live in the city. Moreover, this difference supports the inference that, the conflicting images portrayed by the different tourism bodies regarding the city's image have contributed to differing visitor and resident understandings of the Gold Coast. The data conclusively indicates that the Gold Coast is perceived as being distinctly different and unique compared with other locations as 91% of residents and 95% of visitors consider the Gold Coast as distinctly different to other locations or cities. Participant responses also provided valuable insight into the Gold Coast's identity and the way in which visitors and residents gain a sense of place through their experiences of the city's spatial qualities, inhabitants, social conditions and relations and historical and cultural context.

The following sections describe in detail the similarities and differences in the perceptions of visitors and residents regarding the Gold Coast's city image and identity based on data collected through intercept surveys. The results will be discussed using Amundsen's four elements of city identity – spatial qualities, inhabitant characteristics, social conditions and social relations and culture/history, as a theoretical framework for discussion and interpretation.

5.2.1 Spatial qualities

The spatial qualities of the Gold Coast were the primary foundation of the image of the city perceived by both residents and visitors. Approximately 42% of visitor and resident responses identified spatial attributes such as the city's geospatial location, natural attributes, and urban attributes as the basis for the Gold Coast being distinctly different to other locations or cities (Table 1). Responses regarding the city's spatial qualities were broadly grouped into three categories shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response categories and Percentage of Responses Discussing the Gold Coast's Spatial Qualities

Primary Response Categories	Example Responses	Mentioned in % of Responses	
		Residents	Visitors
Geospatial Location	Proximity to the beach, hinterland areas, capital cities, facilities	10%	3%
Nature-based Attributes	The beach, climate, coastal features, hinterland, the 'green behind the gold'	9.5%	14%
Urban Attributes	Architecture, city design, city functionality, transport, infrastructure	23%	25%
	Total	42.5%	42%

Urban attributes were the most commonly nominated spatial attribute by residents, followed by the city's Nature-based Attributes and Geospatial Attributes. Residents and visitors alike identified urban attributes, particularly the urban form (development along the coastline, sprawl, high rises) of the city as being distinctly unique about the Gold Coast. A plethora of urban attributes were identified to a lesser degree including the city's age, the distinctive lack of a primary CBD, a sparsely populated city and the city's cleanliness. The Gold Coast's architecture, entertainment precincts, lack of infrastructure, fast paced growth, and low congestion were associated with the city by fewer than two residents for each attribute. Visitors also identified the city's geospatial relationship with the coastline and beaches as a distinguishing feature of the city. As the surveys were undertaken along the coastline, this was not a surprising response and is likely to be due to respondents contemporaneously observing the surrounds in which they completed the survey instrument and the purpose for which they came to the city (i.e. to holiday at the beach).

The Gold Coast's proximity to the nearby capital city Brisbane, other cities (via domestic and international airports within or near to the city), facilities and nature (predominantly the beach) was the primary geospatial attribute identified by residents as unique about the city.

Table 2: Ranking of Resident and Visitor Association of Attributes with the Gold Coast

Visitor Association	Average Likert Score	Resident Association	Average Likert Score
1. The beaches and surf	4.50	1. The beaches and surf	4.62
2. The tourist strip	4.31	2. The tourist strip	4.23
1. The relaxed/laidback lifestyle	4.25	3. The tourist attractions	4.17
4. The tourist attractions	4.18	4. The relaxed/laidback lifestyle	4.06
5. The sub-tropical climate	3.88	5. The sub-tropical climate	4.01
6. The architecture	3.47	6. The Hinterland	3.77
7. The multiculturalism	3.43	7. The architecture	3.70
8. The availability of business opportunities	3.24	8. The multiculturalism	3.24
9. The Hinterland	3.07	9. The availability of business opportunities	3.21

The primary difference between the visitor and resident attribute rankings and subsequently perception of city image is the level of association of the Hinterland with the city (Table 2). Residents associated the Gold Coast Hinterland to a greater degree than visitors with an average Likert score of 3.77 out of 5 compared to the visitor's average association of 3.07 out of 5 (Table 2). The more positively leaning average resident

Likert score is explicable by the assumption that residents are more aware of their city's geographic layout and areas of interest and surroundings.

The application of a two-tailed T-test indicated a stastically significant difference of perception between the residents and visitors in four attributes: the Hinterland ($p<0.01$), the city's architecture ($p<0.05$), the relaxed, laidback lifestyle and its multiculturalism (both $p<0.10$) (Table 3). Moreover, the two attributes within the list that returned a highly significant difference ($p<0.05$) in perception were spatial attributes. This leads to the inference that city image and particularly the Gold Coast's city image relies moderately on a person's spatial awareness, experiences and perceptions of their environs.

Table 3: Two-tailed T-Test of Visitor and Resident Association of Attributes with the Gold Coast

	The relaxed, laidback lifestyle	The architecture	The tourist strip	The tourist attractions	The beaches and surf	The hinterland	Its multiculturalism	Availability of business opportunities	The subtropical climate
Visitor Average Association Likert Score	4.25	3.47	4.31	4.18	4.50	3.07	3.43	3.24	3.88
Resident Average Association Likert Score	4.06	3.70	4.23	4.17	4.62	3.77	3.24	3.21	4.01
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.08*	0.03**	0.21	0.57	0.46	0.00***	0.09*	0.72	0.61

*** *Significant at 0.01 level*
** *Significant at 0.05 level*
* *Significant at 0.1 level*

The T-test indicated that residents and visitors had entirely different perceptions of the Gold Coast and its relationship to the Hinterland (Table 3). The scores were relatively neutral for visitors (3.07) and more positive leaning for residents (3.77), inferring that the Hinterland is a stronger element of the resident's perception of the city than the visitor's. The Hinterland's t-test score of 0.00 provides certainty that the difference is so significant that sample error could not have caused the variation.

Participants were asked to indicate on a Likert scale the degree to which they agreed with a series of statements describing the Gold Coast and its residents which were then subject to a two-tailed T-test. Three of the nine statements returned T-test scores confirming the hypothesis: Gold Coasters do not visit Surfers Paradise, The Gold Coast lacks defining architecture and The Gold Coast is more than a tourist location (Table 4). The implications of this are that visitors perceptions of the city may be completely limited to their experience or exposure of one urban environment such as Surfers Paradise and consequently be unaware of the other facilities, attractions and diversity that the Gold Coast contains. The results indicate that residents and visitors perceive the Gold Coast slightly differently at a spatial level regarding urban attributes (specifically architecture) and nature-based attributes (the Hinterland), but similarly regarding geospatial attributes.

Table 4: Two-tailed T-Test of Visitor and Resident Levels of Agreement with Descriptions of the Gold Coast

	The Gold Coast is distinctly different from other tourist cities	Gold Coasters are laidback	The Gold Coast lacks defining architecture	The Gold Coast's only attraction is the beach	Gold Coasters do not visit Surfers Paradise	The Gold Coast is an attractive city	The Gold Coast lacks any real culture or history	Gold Coasters are friendly people	The Gold Coast is more than a tourist location
Visitor Average Agreement Likert Score	3.57	3.84	2.91	2.42	2.74	3.73	3.13	3.80	3.53

Resident Average Agreement Likert Score	3.62	3.65	3.27	3.48	3.27	3.49	3.11	3.75	3.82
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.68	0.20	0.01***	0.72	0.00***	0.15	0.73	0.51	0.05**

*** Significant at 0.01 level
** Significant at 0.05 level
* Significant at 0.1 level

5.2.2 Inhabitant Characteristics

The characteristics of the Gold Coast's inhabitants were the least identified elements by both residents and visitors as defining or distinctive about the city when compared with Amundsen's other elements of city identity. However, residents identified inhabitant characteristics as unique to the city twice as frequently as visitors with only 4.3% of visitor responses relevant compared to 8.8% of resident responses. The responses encompassed by four general categories outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Response categories and Percentage of Responses Discussing the Gold Coast's Inhabitant Characteristics.

Primary Response Categories	Example Responses	Mentioned in % of Responses	
		Residents	Visitors
Attitude	Materialistic, happy, friendly, 'zen' locals	3.7%	3.6%
Demographic	Large numbers of residents were not born on the Gold Coast, more tourists than residents, greater diversity in residents	3%	0.07%
Dress	Casual dress code, brighter clothing	1.6%	0%
Physical Characteristics	Beautiful people	0.5%	0%
	Total	8.8%	4.3%

Visitors identified the Gold Coast resident demographic and attitude as the only inhabitant characteristics contributing to the city's distinctness. Residents placed the greatest emphasis on inhabitant attitudes, with individuals identifying resident's positive outlook on life, good values, and materialistic, friendly and hospitable residents, than on any other category of characteristics (Table 5). Although there were limited responses by visitors relating to inhabitant characteristics, the primary characteristic they identified was the friendly attitude of residents they had interacted with. Resident's physical attributes and sense of dress were not mentioned in visitor responses and were infrequently referred to in resident responses.

Responding to the question 'Are Gold Coasters unique in their culture? How/How not?', nearly all the answers described inhabitant characteristics, particularly attitude (Figure 1). Approximately 45% of residents and 25% of visitors described attitude traits, specifically the laidback attitude and lifestyle of residents as the most unique element of resident culture. These responses represent the interaction and interreliance of Amundsen's elements in forming an image of a city. Theoretically each element can be discussed separately, but practically there is a degree of cross over and interaction.
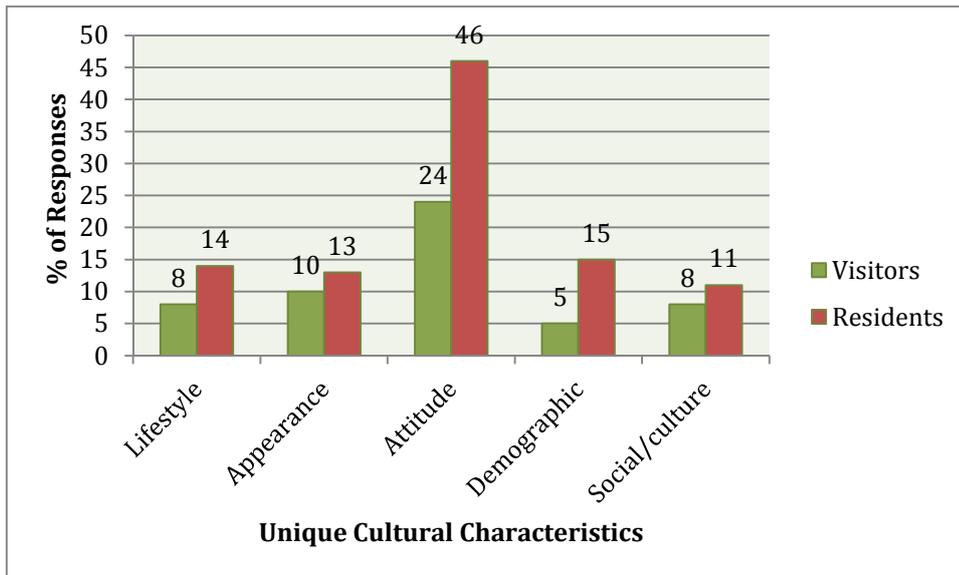
Figure 1: Unique Characteristics of Gold Coast Culture Identified by Residents and Visitors

There was a statistically significant difference in the way in which residents and visitors responded to the statement 'Gold Coasters do not visit Surfers Paradise'. Visitors were inclined to disagree (Average: 2.74) whilst residents tended to agree with the statement (Average: 3.27) (Table 4). The T-test provided a score of 0.00 meaning the difference in perception was statistically significant and not likely to be caused through sample bias or error (Table 4). This is likely to be due to the amount of time visitors had spent on the Gold Coast, the potentially limited number of residents they had interacted with or observed during their stay and their pre-formed perceptions of the city. The overall lack of responses relevant to Gold Coast inhabitants and their characteristics indicates that for residents and visitors, inhabitant characteristics play a minor role in forming an image of the city as a whole.

5.2.3   Social Conditions and Social Relations
The social conditions and social relations of the Gold Coast and its residents were the second most distinctive city identity element of the Gold Coast after spatial qualities for both residents and visitors. Visitors had a slightly stronger association with the social conditions and relations with 39.1% of responses related compared to 31% of resident responses. The responses were grouped under four encompassing categories described in Table 6.

Table 6: Response categories and Percentage of Responses Discussing the Gold Coast's Social Conditions and Social Relations

Primary Response Categories	Example Responses	Mentioned in % of Responses	
		Residents	**Visitors**
Lifestyle	Laidback, beach lifestyle, variety of social groups, outdoor lifestyle, safety, affordability, relaxed, family oriented	17%	26%
Employment/Industry	Development and service industries the primary employers, unemployment, tourism main source of city income	4.7%	1.4%
Population	Highly transient, busy, tourist focused city attitude	8.9%	10%
Other	High crime rate, high rises primarily for visitors rather than residents	1%	1.4%
	Total	31.6%	38.8%

Lifestyle was the most strongly associated component of social conditions and social relations by both residents and visitors (Table 6). Lifestyle factors that were identified as distinctive about the Gold Coast included its beach-focused lifestyle, laidback lifestyle, variety of activities, family oriented nature, its high cost of living and being a nice place to live. In this way the image and the identity appear to be aligned with each other as demonstrated by the congruency of the visitor and resident perspectives. Interestingly, visitors tended to disagree slightly more than residents that the city's only attraction is the beach however the difference was not statistically significant. The high exposure of visitors to brochures and advertising

regarding the tourist attractions and other attractions available on the Gold Coast explains this trend. Social conditions and relations evidently play a role in forming a perception or image of a city, however they are less influential when compared to the spatial attributes and more influential than the characteristics of a city's inhabitants.

5.2.4   Culture
The Gold Coast's culture was the second least distinctive element of the city's identity for visitors and residents. Visitors were fractionally more likely than residents to identify culture as a defining characteristic of the city, with 19.5% of residents and 16% of visitors mentioning it in their responses (Table 7). Responses were limited to three broad categories (Table 7).

Table 7: Response categories and Percentage of Responses Discussing the Gold Coast's Culture

Primary Response Categories	Example Responses	Mentioned in % of Responses	
		Residents	Visitors
Tourism	Tourist-oriented city	13%	12%
Culture	Multiculturalism, no culture/history, similar culture to Miami, Florida	5%	3.6%
Other	Meter Maids, city of opportunities, not a real city	1.5%	0.07%
	Total	19.5%	15.67%

Tourism (and the tourist-oriented nature of the city) was the most commonly associated element of the Gold Coast's culture by residents and visitors, consisting of approximately 70% of both sample group responses. This is not surprising considering 25% of residents are employed in service or tourism related industries and tourism is a primary driver of the Gold Coast's economy (GCCC, 2010).

Visitors and residents were comparable in their perception of the city's culture, ranking multiculturalism as the 7th (visitors) and 8th (residents) strongest associated element of the Gold Coast identity of a possible nine attributes (Table 2). The T-test revealed a 91% confidence level, which represents a statistically significant difference in opinion at a $p<0.10$ level (Table 5), allowing the inference that residents and visitors differ in their perception of the city's culture.

6.0 City Branding

6.1 Advertising Accuracy
Residents and visitors were at a relative consensus regarding the accuracy of advertising campaigns regarding the Gold Coast and its attractions (Figure 2). Visitors were fractionally more inclined to believe that the advertising campaigns were accurate (71%) when compared to residents (57%) (Figure 2) whereas a greater percentage of residents (28%) found the advertising to be inaccurate compared to only 12% of visitors. This difference indicates that residents are unsurprisingly more aware of the realities of the city and its day to life, whilst visitors are more likely to see a small window of the city and what life is like within it because of the relatively short time they stay, the locations in which they briefly inhabit and their original purpose and focus for their visit to the Gold Coast.
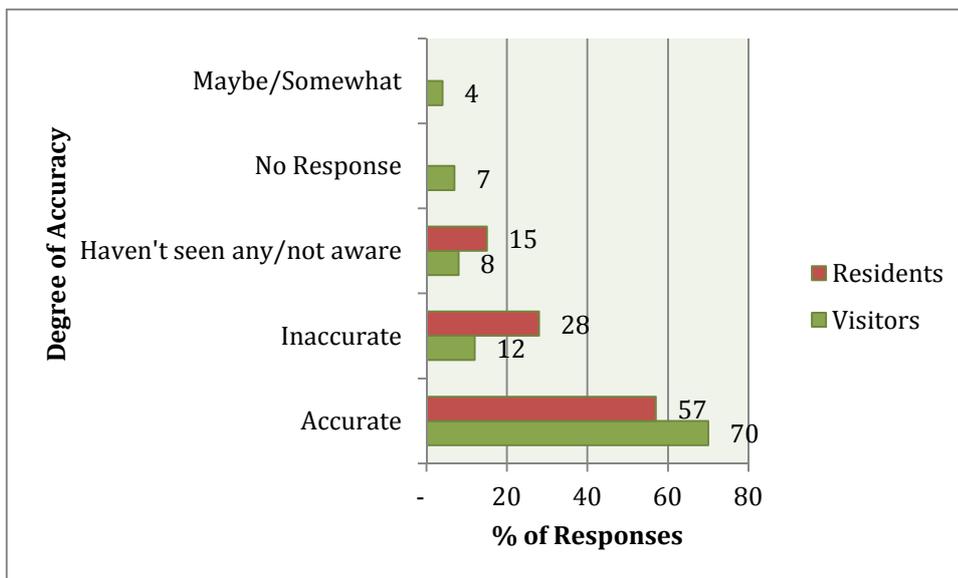
Figure 2: Resident and Visitor Assessment of the Accuracy of Advertising about the Gold Coast

Interestingly, residents were twice as likely (15%) as visitors (8%) to be unaware of any advertising for the city (Figure 2). This is likely the result of tourism organisations' focus on international, interstate and inter-regional tourist markets rather than on residents within the city they are promoting.

Obviously, the advertising is not the sole basis for visitor expectations of the city and other factors such as word of mouth, social media and past experiences may also shape expectations. However, a comparison of visitor expectations of the city and whether those expectations were met provides an insight as to whether advertising is accurately portraying the Gold Coast. Approximately 68% of visitor's expectations were met with a further 21% having their expectations exceeded by their experiences of the city. This supports the inference that the advertising of the Gold Coast to potential (and actual) visitors is a relatively accurate depiction of the city, its attractions and experiences that visitors can expect to have whilst staying there.

The minority of visitors (7%) whose experiences differed from their expectations identified primarily weather as the reason for their experiences failing to meet their expectations of the city. The surveys were undertaken after a period in which the Gold Coast experienced relatively high rainfall and it is thus not surprising that visitors identified this as a difference to their expectations of the city which is advertised to be a sunny location.

Residents were asked to identify the advantages and disadvantages of living on the Gold Coast which, when compared to visitor expectations provides a comparison of the image and identity of the city as a whole. This comparison of the selective codes supported the results provided by the T-test regarding the strength of each of Amundsen's elements in forming the Gold Coast's identity. Spatial attributes were again the most commonly identified attribute by visitors and residents. Visitors focused on urban and nature-based attributes in their expectations, listing the beach and good weather as their greatest expectations with other attributes such as high rises, the city being busy and centred around the beach area being featured in their responses. Residents also prioritized the beach and good weather associated with the Gold Coast as the primary advantages of living in the city. Moderate numbers of residents also discussed the city's high accessibility and proximity to other locations as a significant benefit of the Gold Coast.

Social conditions and relations, specifically the relaxed and laidback lifestyle, were the second most commonly identified advantage by residents, further reiterating the results of the T-test (Tables 4 & 5). This differed from visitors who did not particularly focus on the Gold Coast's social conditions or relations in their expectation descriptions. Alternately, inhabitant characteristics were not considered important to residents in describing the advantages of the Gold Coast, whilst visitors had a moderate focus on them in their responses. Visitors were expecting friendly, laidback and classy residents, surfers and attractive women on the Gold Coast. Fewer numbers of residents identified many of the same inhabitant characteristics in their responses. Culture and history were of a similar level of importance to both samples and were identified by a minority of participants as a feature of their expectations or experiences of the city

These results indicate that existing and past advertising campaigns promoting the Gold Coast have been relatively accurate in portraying the city to outsiders. This is supported by the high level of agreement of visitor expectations and resident identified advantages of living on the Gold Coast.

7.0 Conclusions

Inevitably there is a blurring between the nature of identity as a construct of experience and branding as a social construct of a city's image. The crossovers and interplay between image and identity are complex. It is trite to say that each city has one clear identity or experience, as much depends on the social circumstances and history of the people being asked to delineate their experience of the city. Image, which seeks to clarify and perhaps even purify external identity through the process of branding, must of its nature produce one experience. A series of words and pictures, which seek to promote feelings of wellbeing, warmth and attractiveness, must of themselves be simple enough to be readily taken up by the target audience.

There exist a 'profusion of competing discourses, constructions, values, perceptions and interests when it comes to planning, defining, imagining (or Imagineering) the city's future urban forms and identities' (Griffin, 1998, p.286). Although these elements may qualify the city's crisis of identity, they also seek to define it. Because of its rich history of growth, change, multiculturalism, gold lame bikinis and development, the Gold Coast's identity is perhaps that, a city with multiple, competing and at times contradicting identities. From these competing identities emerges 'a strong sense of space and place', emphasizing the importance of branding activities in the foundation of a city identity (Griffin, 1998, p.287). The problem is, usually the goal of the agencies that engage in branding is not equally diverse. Agencies trying to sell the Gold Coast as a tourism product have no interest in showing the city in its entirety or correcting the misconceptions. On the contrary, they do not shy away from reaffirming commonly held beliefs. Their economic power enables them to dominate the battle of brands as the results of this study indicates. The primary disparities between residents and visitor perspectives in this project demonstrate the influence of beach focused branding campaigns. Visitors did not relate the Hinterland area as being an important part of the Gold Coast, whilst residents ranked it as the sixth most iconic attribute of the city. This demonstrates that unfortunately, what works to attract tourists might not work for investment or prospective residents. Further research, particularly on the Gold Coast, is needed to better understand the role of the branding processes in forming the image of the city for outsiders.

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