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Cultural Development Strategies and Urban Gay Tourism Revitalization

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ABSTRACT

Municipal governments increasingly turn to cultural and leisure activities to promote and revitalize their cities. This study analysed the development of gay tourism in Barcelona (Spain) by means of music festivals. While a significant body of literature has examined revitalization strategies that focus primarily around entertainment and commerce, this paper focuses on strategies in the development of cultural and leisure activities around this specific tourism population. It presents findings from a local survey distributed to key stakeholders in the promotion and development of this tourism (local agents and gay tourists). The survey data indicate that although most agents are guided by a varied set of goals, marketing objectives (“image city” and “brand city”) guide the development and support of urban gay tourism in Barcelona.

Keywords: Gay Tourism, Music Festivals, Urban Tourism, Brand, Barcelona.

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Introduction

The tourism market is characterised by its high degree of competitiveness, as there are many quite similar places on offer as tourist destinations. Therefore, constant development and transformation is needed in order to seek new products that meet the needs of the different target publics. It should be said that destinations are difficult products to control, manage and commercialise due to the complexity of the relations between the different stakeholders involved: tourists, the local community, tour operators, associations, tourism companies, travel agencies, tourism offices, other enterprises and the public sector (Buhalis, 2000; Maclead, 2004). This is particularly true of urban destinations, due to the high number of sectors and stakeholders intrinsically linked to the local economy (Buhalis, 2003). The application of marketing concepts and tools may be the best planning platform for a public body that seeks to satisfy the needs of citizens and provide them with value. In the private sector, one of the maxims is to make a profit and to satisfy the customer. Both approaches create value: in the private sector, for consumers; in the public sector, for the general public (Kotler & Lee, 2007).

It is important to stress that a tourist destination must seek to obtain maximum competitiveness and attractiveness. Tourists' overall experience is made up of numerous small encounters with a variety of stakeholders, such as tourist information officers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, citizens, taxi drivers, as well as a variety of local elements of attraction such as museums, theatres and cinemas, beaches, music festivals, sport competitions, congresses, etc. (Mac Kercher & Du Cros, 2002).

Such a diversity of impacts means that there is much overlapping between the marketing strategy of the destination and the strategies of individual producers of different tourism services (Maclead, 2004). Hence, the competitiveness of each stakeholder is highly interrelated with –and often difficult to separate from– the behaviour of the rest of the stakeholders. It is essential to understand the typology of tourists sought by the different stakeholders and the characteristics of a destination so that it can be managed and commercialised adequately (Hammit, Kyle & Chi-Ok, 2009). The bodies responsible for managing destinations need to understand tourists' motivations so that they can develop products suitable for the different market segments and help with the integrated planning of all of the activities that come into play at a destination (Buhalis, 2000).

A strategic approach to improve the positioning in the market of a town as a tourist destination is, on the one hand, the appropriate organisational structure of the public institution responsible for the planning, coordination and management of local tourism policies and, on the other, the suitable design of the tourism product, the distribution channels used, and the communications policies. All of these are essential elements for the commercialisation of a tourist destination (Hammit *et al.*, 2009), and systems must be in place to evaluate and control the image of the destination, to study the

characteristics of the product on offer and understand the profile of the tourists visiting the destination. Having knowledge of the characteristics of the global experience and impression obtained by tourists is key to understanding the future behaviour of tourists, as regards both repetition and recommendation (Barroso, Martin & Martin, 2007).

Cultural heritage, involving both tangible and intangible assets, is a major tourism source, especially in European cities, and can play an important role in increasing the value of urban destinations in terms of cultural diversity, territorial identity and long-term sustainability. Culture can take material and non-material forms, and includes archaeological and historic sites, architecture, visual and performing arts, lifestyles, traditions, crafts, custom and societal values; as such, these are territorial assets which must be enriched and enjoyed by both tourists and locals alike (Scott, 2004).

Urban destinations in Europe need innovative approaches, models and tools that enable user-relevant promotion of cultural heritage through inclusive destination management (Sigala & Leslie, 2005). Cultural heritage gives a sense of belonging to the local area and a sense of time based on history and geography of a place (Paskaleva, 2008; Salman, 2010).

The main aim of this work paper is to know if the agents involved with the development of urban gay tourism are guided by the same goals (brand image city, economic profit, new employment, revenue, marketing objectives, cultural and educational objectives, etc.) or not, in order to develop this type of tourism in a big city with a lot of cultural heritage and events, such as Barcelona, in Spain.

1. The image of an urban tourist destination

Urban destinations are a mixture of tourism products that offer consumers an integral experience (Buhalis, 2000). It is increasingly being acknowledged that a destination may be understood as a concept of perceptions, that is to say, that it may be interpreted subjectively by tourists, depending on the type of their trip, their cultural education, the reason for the visit, their level of education and their previous experiences. In any case, a tourist destination encompasses a variety of tourism resources and infrastructures that make up a system (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). All of the experiences that tourists accumulate during their stay in a city or town will become a part of the overall vision they will have of it, without considering each of the products or services individually consumed.

Tourists perceive their holidays as an overall experience and therefore products and services must be coordinated in order to fulfil their expectations. In order to plan, manage and commercialise a tourist destination, it is fundamental to consider which are the tourism resources and services that relate to each other within the destination, their degree of concentration, and what they mean to tourists (Elizagarate, 2003).

Developing a destination is a difficult task, given that different visitors use destinations for different reasons. For example, Buhalis (2000) gives the following types of urban destinations: exotic, business, coastal, cultural, historic, academic and industrial. To this end, public tourism bodies should assist with the integrated planning of the sets of

activities that affect an urban destination and establish relationships among all participants. Of course, each participant or stakeholder seeks different benefits, from different points of view, and each one's interests may conflict with those of another. In order to advance in strategic development, work must be done to formulate the destination as a tourist product and as a combination of tourism services and infrastructures (accommodations, transport, catering, entertainment and leisure, etc.) and public resources (landscapes, beaches, environment, etc.) (Pike, 2002).

All of these elements must fit under an umbrella brand with the name of the destination. That is to say, tourism professionals must look after the image and the resources of the destination and work to offer leadership in the development of innovative products with the cooperation of both the public and the private sectors and ensure the competitiveness of the urban tourism product in the long term (Bigné, Font & Andreu, 2000).

In the context of modern socioeconomic changes, the internationalisation of relations in the global economy, new technologies and the information society, the search for efficiency and improved competitiveness also begins to affect urban management (Elizagarate, 2003).

Satisfying the internal customer must aim to identify the citizens' main concerns and to create a product of a city or town with which they can fully identify; in contrast, the main objective of satisfying the external customer must be the attractiveness of the city or town to other publics (potential visitors, tourists, investors and residents) (Pike, 2002). Seisdedos (2008) described city marketing as a philosophy of urban management in which all the social stakeholders must be involved. The tendencies of city marketing point towards integration in the process of urban planning, in which politicians, entrepreneurs, cultural stakeholders, historical heritage, tourists, potential investors, civil servants and residents should play a part.

The creation of a brand is a strategy that can be used in order to ensure a desired position in the minds of potential consumers (Ries & Trout, 1986). Nowadays, a tourist destination is an image, a brand, and acquires identity and notoriety. A city's brand contributes to creating value, to establishing preferences and to building loyalty. Nevertheless, the process of the creation of an urban brand is complex.

Constructing a brand requires identifying the attributes of the city, their benefits to the target public and the values it wishes to convey (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005). It is important to stress that in the case of the tourism sector, different strategies coexist when deciding as to the use of the brand (Ejarque, 2005). Big cities, as Barcelona, have the strategy of "umbrella branding". It is a brand that encompasses different sub-brands. The main aim of these brands is to attain notoriety in national and international markets, and the different sub-brands can benefit from their recognition, attributes and image.

Another type of strategy is the "range brand", which identifies a type of crosscutting product or tourist attraction, such as gay tourism, around which the whole image will hinge. The present study analyses the dual branding, "Barcelona, gay friendly": First is "Barcelona", an umbrella brand (a big tourist city), together with "gay friendly", a range brand (homosexual sector).

Cities and their hinterlands have become stages for a continual stream of events, which lead eventually to the 'festivalisation' of the city and 'festival marketplaces' (Harvey, 1991). Increasing competition between cities in a crowded field of images is one of the major factors stimulating cities to adopt such branding strategies, or even 'hard branding' (Evans, 2003) that seeks to transform fixed cultural capital into competitive advantage through the staging of cultural events or the construction of cultural landmarks (Richards and Wilson, 2004). Some major cultural events have arguably become 'brands' in their own right.

The image of a place is usually very important in attracting visitors, and place image research has been particularly prevalent in the tourism studies field. Research has tended to underline the complexity of the image concept (Jansson, 2003), a point that is made clear when reviewing the image literature, although in broad terms, images could be described as the 'currency of cultures' (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998), reflecting and reinforcing particular shared meanings and beliefs and particular value systems. Major events have become a particularly valuable form of cultural currency, particularly in terms of their image effects (Richards & Wilson, 2004).

Recent studies of city marketing and tourism have pointed to the increasing use of events as a means to market places and major cities in particular (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Law, 1993; Schuster, 2001; Pike, 2002; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Barroso *et al.*, 2007; Tasci, Gartner and Cavusgil, 2007; Bigné *et al.*, 2009).

This phenomenon can be linked to a general increase in competition between cities for the attention of important stakeholders, including consumers, investors and policy-makers. A great many studies have been carried out to respond to the definition of the concept of tourism image itself and to the conceptualisation, implementation and measurement of the tourism image to determine effective and cognitive constituents for creating an image from the point of view of the tourist (Browne, 2008).

The relationship between tourism and cultural heritage is a fertile field for study, building on a large body of literature. The debate about the sustainability of tourism runs parallel with the debate on sustainable development (Carbone, Oosterbeek & Costa, 2013).

2. Gay urban tourism

Tourism in a city is related to a combination of its primary and secondary tourism elements (Jansen-Verbeke, 1994). The activity setting consists of attractions that characterise most cities, such as museums and historic sites, whereas the leisure setting is the physical and sociocultural context within which the attractions are set: the overall spatial structure of the city and its ambience. In Jansen-Verbeke's view, the secondary elements include shops, cafés, restaurants and bars, hotels and entertainment. Primary elements that are in proximity to each other, as clusters, may have a greater appeal to the tourist than non-proximate elements.

Several tourist clusters, spatially separate and with distinct features, may exist in a city to give it polycentricity (Hughes 2002). The identification of clusters ultimately depends on tourist use. These elements are, however, usually consumed by both tourists and

local residents. The over-lapping use of gay leisure cluster(s) and primary as well as secondary tourism elements may also cause a city, in whole or in part, to be transformed, both materially and symbolically (Visser, 2003; Berdychevsky, Nimrod, Kleiber & Gobson, 2013).

Gay tourism is increasingly seen as a powerful and profitable market segment (Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgely & Jenkins, 1998; Russell, 2001; Jensen-Campbell, 2004). In that regard, for many years, it has been described as the closest thing to a recession-proof market and some authors consider it a profitable, rapidly growing sector (e.g., Pitts, 1997; Waitt & Markwell, 2006).

In times of economic recession, this segment seems to attract attention, as the estimated size of this market exceeded 2.7 million trips only in the UK (Mintel, 2000). However, that perception contrasts with the scant information about this type of tourism (Hughes, 2002). Moreover, most of the available information refers to North America and very little is related to the gay European tourist (Pritchard *et al.*, 1998). That lack of data has previously been recognized as one of the main difficulties not only for reliable evaluation of the size and importance of this market, but also for the destination to make strategic decisions to attract this type of tourist (Mulryan, 1995; Pritchard *et al.*, 1998; Hughes, 2002).

Any approach to this research topic must specify what is understood by gay tourism. Hindle (1994) defines the gay space as the physical manifestation of the gay community, while Hughes (2002) describes it as “a spatially discrete concentration of bars and clubs, but also cafes, restaurants, shops, residences and public space that permit gay identity to be validated by relationships with others”.

Holidays can be a good opportunity to reaffirm one’s sexual identity by acting in spaces that can be considered at least gay-friendly, which Hughes (2002) conceives as not necessarily managed by gays or exclusively gay, but that welcome the gay public with a more than tolerant attitude. One of the origins of this type of tourism lies in the fact that gay individuals are, in the most part, able to be themselves only in gay spaces, which are usually leisure spaces (Bell, 1991; Clift, Luongo & Callister, 2002).

Waitt & Markwell (2006) define the gay tourism destination as a “social leisure space that affords an opportunity to escape terrains of heteronormativity that are ongoing and constantly becoming through the intersection of sets of heteronormative social relations stretched out over particular spaces and across geographical scales” (Browne, 2008).

Holcomb and Luongo (1996) indicate that gay tourists tend to travel to places with a reputation for hospitality to homosexuals. Those facts result in gay tourist destinations being characterised by being highly concentrated and specialised; some authors go so far as to predict that, even if prejudice against gays diminishes, they will continue to spend their holidays in places with those characteristics (Visser, 2003).

More recently, in a study applied to the North American market, Jensen-Campbell (2004) concluded that, when making travel decisions, the gay community considers factors that go beyond price and the product itself to include aspects such as commitment to the homosexual cause. For this author, the most important motives for USA homosexuals to go on holidays are: vacations with their partner, gay pride

festivals, holidays with friends and vacation packages. Gay tourists who had visited South Europe gay destinations (The Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, etc.) placed higher emphasis on gay social life and sex; those who had travelled to European cities gave significantly higher scores to culture and sights (Melián-González, Moreno-Gil & Araña, 2011).

Pitts (1997) signals the importance of gay events as important pull factors for gay tourists. In this sense, Pritchard et al. (1998) mention as the most important factors in the constitution of a gay destination the gay scene, liberal attitudes toward homosexuals, and festivals and events. Gay space has a crucial role in gay identity and in attracting gay tourists (Hughes, 2002); although some authors warn that tourism can impact negatively on the gay residents who live in those destinations (Visser, 2003; Browne, 2008).

Based on 2011 data, gay tourism attracts almost 100 million tourists worldwide, who travel four times more than the average tourist. The estimated annual individual expenditure is more than eight thousand Euros in trips and activities of leisure, and preferred city destinations are San Francisco, Sydney, Barcelona and London (Melián-González *et al.*, 2011), with a total economic impact of 1,356 million Euros.

In Spain, the profile is homosexual individuals aged 18 to 35 years, mainly self-employed professionals of medium and medium-high economic level, spending 130 Euros daily (compared to the overall tourism average of 80 Euros per day), which represents 15% of total tourist expenditures in Spain (Turespaña, 2013).

3. Barcelona and gay music festivals

Barcelona is an historical and cultural Mediterranean city in Spain, and the capital of Catalonia. It offers plenty of sun, good weather, beaches, airport and port, and beautiful architecture (Gaudí, Puig i Cadafalch, etc.), along with museums, churches, cathedrals, historical heritage, archaeology, Catalan traditions and cuisine, nautical activities, sports, music festivals, congress, nightlife, relaxation and shopping. Barcelona has become one of the main tourist destinations in Europe (#6 in the European ranking), receiving more than seven million tourists in 2010, (Turisme of Catalonia, 2013). The public sector has established strategies to adapt the urban space to the new global economy, giving greater visibility to the image of the city with the aim to situate it in the worldwide market of cities and attract new flows of capitals and consumption, especially in the form of tourism (Benach & Tello, 2004; Capel, 2010).

The celebration of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona was key to this process of urban transformation, and the flows of consumption linked to tourism have continued to grow. Despite the growing price of urban properties, investments in real estate, infrastructure and facilities have also continued to increase (Tello & Martínez, 1995). After 1992, the urban transformation of the city continued with the Universal Forum of Cultures in 2004, the urban restructuring of District 22@ and other initiatives (Borja, 2010).

In Barcelona, to the equal that in many other big cities, the municipal authorities development the urban tourism in several modalities, being the tourism gay one of

them –this tourism was used to world-wide level by almost ten million people in the year 2012, with 15% of the total expense realised in tourism-. From 1970, Barcelona is an important destination for this tourism, supported in the attraction of Sitges –small coastal village to twenty minutes of the Catalan capital-, and favoured from the years 1980s by not penalty the homosexuality in Spain, in a frame of democracy and freedom (Turisme of Catalonia, 2013).

Between the reasons that have converted Barcelona in one of the urban destinations preferred by the homosexual community -in 2011 had 425 gay friendly businesses (hotels, apartments, rural houses, restaurants, spas, etc.) in all the region of Catalonia, of which 214 were in Barcelona (Turisme of Catalonia, 2013)- stand out the liberal environment, the climate, the cultural resources (helped by the Antoni Gaudí's buildings and the Gothic Neighbourhood), the port and nautical activities, the beaches and the different events that periodically there celebrate (sportive, congresses, festivals of music, etc.) (Hosteltur, 2007).

In addition, there is a lower cost of life that in other countries of Western Europe, citizen security, good infrastructures, equipments and services, a prestigious gastronomy and suitable hotels. Spain is a good destination for this tourism because is a country very receptive with the gay community, as it gives off of the Randow Europe Country Index (RECI) - a classification of the European countries with elder and lower attention to the homosexuals and that annually elaborates the International Association of Gays and Lesbian-.

This index evaluates different factors in relation with the protection of the discrimination of these communities, the legal recognition of the couples of the same sex, the paternity, the laws against the homosexuality and the equality of the age in the laws of consent to have sexual relations. In the last study realised in the year 2011, the only European country that approved in all the areas -and first of the list-, was Sweden. In the classification followed him Belgium, Holland, Norway and Spain.

Barcelona combines the urban tourism with sun and beach. Their beaches have 4.2 kilometres long and are a case in Europe of integration of metropolis and sea. The recovery of the seafront façade, begun with the construction work done for the 1992 Olympic Games and culminating with the Barcelona Forum 2004 of the Cultures, has totally opened the city to the Mediterranean.

Every year, Barcelona's beaches greet more than seven million people who come to enjoy one of the city's largest public and leisure spaces. "Barcelona gay friendly" is a new sub-brand of specialisation, which is awarded to this destination that is especially appropriate for homosexual tourism. For this reason, Barcelona has been pioneer in Europe in seeking a brand for this segment of the public.

This means that their supply of accommodation, catering and activities are adapted to the needs of gay tourists, providing a variety of leisure and entertainment. The gay music festivals are events programmed yearly for these tourists.

Richards (2007) has introduced the term "festivalization" in studying why and how music festivals have globally become preferred tools in place marketing and tourism development. Music festivals are an important driver in increasing the destination attractiveness (Arcodia & Robb, 2000; Andersson & Getz, 2008) and this is confirmed

in looking at the international market where events have become a worldwide tourism phenomenon (Getz, 2005). These festivals can provide important profits like social and recreational opportunities for residents (Reid, 2011).

Getz (2005) says that many festivals are focused on traditional community celebrations (largely organic, even spontaneous) or cultural and specific celebrations. The gay music festivals are executed by a coalition of stakeholders (gay people, private companies, voluntary organizations, artists, sponsors, suppliers, public authorities, tourism traders, etc) (Reid, 2011). The efforts of interacting stakeholders lead to the building of a festival and its image, which is expected to attract visitors (Richards, 2007).

In 2012, Barcelona has organised many music festivals to satisfy the demands of the homosexual public. The more important are Pride Barcelona, Circuit Festival and Girlie Circuit.

Pride Barcelona has received in the 2012 around 25.000 visitors (25% more than the previous year), that have enjoyed of a series of free activities, popular and non-profit, so much cultural as of leisure (Prat & Cànoves, 2012). The program includes concerts and musical performances, gastronomic fair, conferences, sport activities, commercial events the election of a "miss", the party of the foam and multiple games.

This festival is sponsored by private companies and public institutions (Government of Catalonia, Deputation of Barcelona, City Council of Barcelona), associations (PIMEC) and Municipal Transports of Barcelona (TMB). More than 80% of visitors are foreign. It has estimated a medium stay of four days and this activity has reported an income to the Catalan capital of sixteen million Euros.

Festival Circuit, organised in Barcelona from the year 2008, has happened of less than 35.000 participants in the first year to the more than 70.000 in this last year. It treats of one of the greater European events of leisure and cultural tourism for the homosexual community, with more than 270.000 participants along the five years of life. The 19% of participants are Spanish, 15% French, 11% English, 6% Italians, 6% North American, 5% Germans, 4% Australians and very little percentages the other countries. Every participant spends 160 Euros daily, being his profile, in the case of the women (14% of the assistants to this festival), from 20 to 40 years, medium or medium-high economic level and secondary or university studies, whereas in the case of the men his profile is from 20 to 45 years, high economic level and university studies (source: Matinée Group, in Prat & Cànoves, 2012).

Circuit Festival has been taking place for six years in Barcelona and it has becomes one of the biggest events en Europe for all lesbians. Every year, in August, it attracts more than 10.000 women to enjoy seven amazing parties, recreational daytime activities and the best sun-beach-culture-gastronomy lesbian vacations (Turisme of Catalonia, 2013). Almost 80% of the participants are foreigners -with 50 different nationalities-, of which 60% are European, with predominance of French, Italians and British, although in these last editions also have increased considerably of Brazilians, Russians, Indians and American (source: Matinée Group, in Prat & Cànoves, 2012).

The general profile of the assistants to this festival is homosexual people with 40-45 years, liberal or autonomous profession, medium or university studies and medium-

high or high economic level, what allows them have of a good capacity of consumption -the total expense estimated is more than fifty million Euros- and giving direct employment along the event to 300 people and indirect to more than 600 (Prat & Cànoves, 2012).

4. Methodology

To understand the practices and goals of strategies in the development of the urban gay tourism, we make a survey (march 2012-october 2012) to different actors involved with this tourism in Barcelona: gay tourists and agents (public sector, tourism agencies, associations, gay organisations, music festival sponsors and organizations, tour operators and travel agencies, tourism companies, etc.). The survey was designed to provide an understanding of gay music festivals development strategies at the local level. Such an overview of these strategies has not been carried out previously in Spain, and therefore offers important insight into local development strategies nationwide. The survey was distributed to 217 agents and 265 gay tourists, and we received a complete response from 185 agents (85.25%) and 221 gay tourists (83.40%). The profile of the surveyed is detailed in Table 1 (gay tourists) and Table 2 (local agents).

Table 1. Profile gay tourists surveyed

	frequency	percent		frequency	percent
gender			nationality		
men	169	76.47%	Spain	67	30.32%
women	52	23.53%	France	28	12.67%
age			United States	23	10.41%
< 30 years	54	24.43%	United Kingdom	17	7.69%
30-45 years	93	42.08%	Germany	16	7.24%
45-60 years	51	23.08%	South America	12	5.43%
> 60 years	23	10.41%	Italy	11	4.98%
educational level			Russia	8	3.62%
elementary	25	11.31%	Nederland	7	3.17%
secondary	120	54.30%	Asia	6	2.71%
university degree	76	34.39%	Nordic European countries	6	2.71%
main activity status			Africa	6	2.71%
employed	53	23.98%	another European countries	5	2.26%
self-employed	61	27.60%	another North and Centre		
student	25	11.31%	American countries	5	2.26%
freelance	33	14.93%	Oceania	4	1.81%
artist	17	7.69%	economic level		
other	8	3.62%	low	8	3.62%
retired	8	3.62%	low-medium	35	15.84%
homework	9	4.07%	medium	97	43.89%
unemployed	7	3.17%	medium-high	57	25.79%
			high	24	10.86%

source: own elaboration

Table 2. Profile agents surveyed

	frequency	percent		frequency	percent
trading intermediaries	12	6.49%	tour operators	6	3.24%
music festival organisations	3	1.62%	local government	8	4.32%
music festival sponsors	9	4.86%	hotels	18	9.73%
tourism offices	4	2.16%	restaurants	28	15.14%
tourism companies	11	5.95%	gay night clubs	8	4.32%
gay events organizations	22	11.89%	local residents	56	30.27%

source: own elaboration

The choice to focus the survey was based on the fact that a mission of them concerns developing, managing, funding, marketing, sponsoring or participation in multiple types of activities (cultural and leisure) around the main gay music festivals celebrated in Barcelona in the last year. The survey targeted the managers/directors/person in charge of the agents and some participants in these gay music festivals.

5. Survey results

The agents surveyed indicated that main activities coordinated or helped for them were (Table 3) providing information to gay tourists (63.24%), programming visits to local heritage (52.43%), promoting leisure activities in the gay nightclubs and discos (49.19%), visiting to Gaudí's buildings (such as La Pedrera, Casa Batlló, Parc Güell) (44.86%), and promoting, sponsoring or attending to music festivals (Pride, Circuit, etc.) (38.92%).

Table 3. Gay tourist activities coordinates or helped by agents

	frequency	percent		frequency	percent
provide information to gay tourists	117	63.24%	beach activities	20	10.81%
program to know local heritage	97	52.43%	program to know folk and local traditions	17	9.19%
promotion and advertisement of gay nightclub and disco activities	91	49.19%	bicycle urban trips	12	6.49%
visits to Gaudí's buildings	83	44.86%	performing arts,		
gay music festivals	72	38.92%	cinemas and theatres	10	5.41%
visits to city	68	36.76%	boat trips	7	3.78%
local gastronomy	38	20.54%	sport championships	6	3.24%
visits to museums or galleries	31	16.76%	nautical activities	4	2.16%
visits to old city	23	12.43%	visits to markets	2	1.08%
			playing cards	1	0.54%

source: own elaboration

As it can observe in this table, predominate the cultural activities (436 votes), between which stand out the visits related with the art (local heritage, emblematic buildings, museums, theatres) and the knowledge of the city (old city, markets, general vision of the city, walks in bicycle). They follow him the informative activities (117 votes) and the nocturnal leisure (91 votes). It stands out the small percentage devoted to coordinate or promote the sportive, beach and folklore activities, whereas the festivals of music duplicate the votes devoted to promote the local gastronomy.

The main activities realised by gay tourists surveyed are (Table 4) to attend to music festivals and to visit to the city (97.29%), night activities (96.38%), to know local heritage (93.21%) and to visit Gaudi's buildings (91.40%). In the case of the tourists, predominate the cultural activities (1,443 votes), between which stand out the consumption of art and the visits to the city, gone on down the ones of nocturnal leisure. The assistance to the festivals of music surpasses to the gastronomic activities and to the knowledge of the folklore.

Table 4. Activities realised by gay musical tourists

	frequency	percent		frequency	percent
gay music festivals	221	100.00%	visits to museums or galleries	105	47.51%
visits to city	215	97.29%	sport championships	68	30.77%
gay nightclub activities	213	96.38%	boat trips	46	20.81%
to know local heritage	206	93.21%	bicycle urban trips	45	20.36%
visits to Gaudi's buildings	202	91.40%	performing arts, cinemas and theatres	38	17.19%
local gastronomy	194	87.78%	visits to markets	30	13.57%
visits to old city	187	84.62%	nautical activities	23	10.41%
to know folk and local traditions	124	56.11%	playing cards	8	3.62%
beach activities	107	48.42%			

source: own elaboration

The opinion of the surveyed (agents and gay tourists), in order their mind about the most important benefits obtained with those activities, is presented in the following table (Table 5).

Table 5. Respondents’ opinions of the most important benefits of gay tourist activities

	agents		gay tourists	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
improve image of city	123	67.21%	142	65.74%
attract visitors and tourists	119	65.03%	185	85.65%
increase local revenues	117	63.93%	135	62.50%
improve quality of gay holidays	113	6.75%	207	95.83%
create local employment opportunities	95	51.91%	114	52.78%
support local business and services	69	37.70%	108	50.00%
strengthen competitive advantage of city	37	20.22%	46	21.30%
improve public spaces	28	15.30%	27	12.50%
encourage understanding and awareness of other groups and cultures	25	13.66%	31	14.35%
promote education in the arts	21	11.48%	49	22.69%

source: own elaboration

For the agents, the main profit is economic (attract visitors and tourists, improve the quality of the holidays, the increase of income, help to the local businesses and generate employment) with 513 votes, following him the promotion of the image of the city and the improvement of the quality of the holidays, that also help to attract visitors and repeat visits. For the gay tourists the opinion is similar, since they also think that the main profits obtained with these activities are economic. To make cultural and leisure strategies politically acceptable to all, cities tout them as “improving the quality of life” for all, citizens and visitors.

The agents think that the most important benefits are improving the image of the city (67.21%) and improving a gay quality holidays in Barcelona (61.75%), and entrepreneurial motives, like attracting visitors and tourists (65.03%), increasing the local revenues (shopping, hotels, restaurants, travels, bars, nightclubs) (63.93%). However, the gay tourists think that the most important benefit is to improve quality in the gay holidays (95.83%) and to attract more visitors and tourists to Barcelona (85.65%). Both elements are more valued by gay tourists. Other components with different evaluation are the support to local business and services (37.70% the agents and 50.00% the gay tourists) and to promote art education (11.48% the agents and 22.69% the gay tourists). More specific indicators of a positive quality of life – such as “encouraging understanding and awareness of other groups and cultures” (13%-15%), “promoting education in the arts” (11%-23%), and “improving public spaces” (12%-16%) received considerably fewer responses.

This opinion is agreed with the type of activity that achieves more benefits (Table 6), where both actors emphasize the shopping (91.57% and 94.93%) and the use of hotels and apartments (89.33% and 93.55%) as the activities that obtained more benefits with this type of tourism. However, the opinion about the benefit obtained in the rest of activities due to gay music festivals celebrated in Barcelona is better in the gay tourists

than the agents (84.33% vs. 15.17%). The same occurs with the local gastronomy (84.33% vs. 58.43%) and night activities (54.38% vs. 17.98%).

Table 6. Type of activity that achieves more benefits

	agents		gay tourists	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
shopping	163	91.57%	206	94.93%
hotels and apartments	159	89.33%	203	93.55%
local gastronomy	104	58.43%	183	84.33%
trips	62	34.83%	115	53.00%
major cultural facilities (museums, galleries, performing arts centres)	35	19.66%	68	31.34%
nightclubs and discos	32	17.98%	118	54.38%
music festivals	27	15.17%	183	84.33%
tourist agencies	21	11.80%	87	40.09%
cultural tours and itineraries	17	9.55%	65	29.95%
cultural and historical heritage	13	7.30%	34	15.67%
cinemas and theatres	11	6.18%	54	24.88%
sport	6	3.37%	23	10.60%

source: own elaboration

In general, the gay tourists think that the gay music festivals, discotheques and nightclubs, the visits to the city and his heritage and the assistance to cinemas and theatres generate a lot of more profits of what believe the agents. However, both communities think that the greater profits are in the shopping in the shops, the use of hotels and apartments and the consumption of the local gastronomy.

The agents have developed several strategies to achieve his aims. The most frequent (Table 7) are the programming of cultural and leisure activities designed for these tourists (96.17%) and the promotion of the mark "Barcelona" (95.08%), gone on down the development of specific cultural initiatives for this type of tourists (85.25%) and the activities to draft sponsors that help economically to the development of these activities (83.06%). The frequency of the development of said strategies corresponds perfectly with the perception of the agents about the degree of success of the same, valued of one (very low) to five (very high). Like this, what greater is the perception of success of the activities developed by the agents more use these.

Table 7. Agents Strategies Employed and Perceived Degree of Success

	frequency	percent	success perception
developed initiatives in support of the gay tourism activities	176	96.17%	4.21
worked on the promotion of brand	174	95.08%	4.07
developed initiatives in support of the gay cultural tourism	156	85.25%	3.97
developed and formalized marketing partnerships with other organizations	152	83.06%	3.95
worked on creating an identity / image	113	61.75%	3.82
invested in the creativity to invent new products within the festival	106	57.92%	3.75
worked as a lobby for funding or other profits	65	35.52%	3.41
worked as a lobby for funding or other profits	57	31.15%	3.29
invested in the creativity to invent new products within the festival	16	8.74%	2.73
imitated other festivals / events to keep up with market trends	9	4.92%	2.56
converted a supplier in a sponsor	8	4.37%	2.38

source: own elaboration

We also inquired as to the types of cultural activities that most successfully promote a positive city image. Consistent with prior responses, major events and facilities were mentioned much more frequently. Thus, an overwhelming number of agents believe that cultural activities help them to “stand out” by emphasizing their distinctiveness and generating local pride (Table 8).

Table 8. Most important ways that gay tourist activity create a positive city image

	stakeholders		gay tourists	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
emphasize the distinctiveness of the city	146	86.39%	114	55.07%
demonstrate international importance of the city	96	56.80%	185	89.37%
revitalize business activities	88	52.07%	112	54.11%
developing gay cultural tourism	64	37.87%	203	98.07%
building gay pride	26	15.38%	156	75.36%
overcome a negative city image	14	8.28%	78	37.68%
creating a positive image of local government	11	6.51%	15	7.25%

source: own elaboration

However, sometimes the perception is different between the agents and the gay tourists. The agents emphasize more the distinctiveness of the city (86.39% vs. 55.07% the tourists), while the tourists prefer the demonstration of the international importance of the city (89.37% vs. 56.80% the agents). Significantly fewer survey respondents argued that those activities helped to overcome a negative city image (8-38%) and neither created a positive image of local government (6-8%).

As displayed in Table 9, the respondents indicated that the most important benefits of cultural flagship projects were to “improve the quality of gay holidays” (70% the agents and 98.54% the tourists) and to “attract visitors and tourists” (67.22% and 97.57%).

Table 9. Most important benefits of gay music festivals

	stakeholders		gay tourists	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
improve quality of gay holidays	126	70.00%	203	98.54%
attract visitors and tourists	121	67.22%	201	97.57%
improve image of city	102	56.67%	194	94.17%
increase local revenues	97	53.89%	174	84.47%
support local business and services	96	53.33%	143	69.42%
create employment opportunities	91	50.56%	149	72.33%
strengthen competitive advantage of city	62	34.44%	130	63.11%
promote education in the arts	59	32.78%	65	31.55%
improve public spaces	48	26.67%	61	29.61%
encourage understanding and awareness of other groups and cultures	24	13.33%	75	36.41%

source: own elaboration

Consistent with prior responses, the primary role of flagship cultural facilities appears to be focused on attracting people to a particular destination – both as a quality of life amenity for gay tourists and as a visitor attraction – and thereby stimulating consumption. However, although flagship projects are emblematic of the entrepreneurial model, respondents showed mixed feelings regarding their ability to promote the arts, to improve the public space and to understand and awareness other groups and cultures. While respondents have confidence in flagship projects as quality of attractions, their overall support in a wider context is more mixed.

The analysis realised indicates that although most agents are guided by a varied set of goals, marketing objectives (“image city” and “brand city”) guide the development and support of activities around this urban gay tourism. His interest is to develop a series of events, in this case the festivals of music and complementary activities, that consolidate a tourist mark (“gay tourism”) around the image of Barcelona, that help to increase the visits and promote repetitions, with the main aim to generate economic profits for the city and the local community (“more income and more employment”).

Conclusions

In existing literature on gay and lesbian tourism, it is often put forward that, apart from traditional holiday motivations such as relaxation and breaking the routines of everyday life, these tourists have a strong desire for escaping heteronormativity and the feeling of suppressing their ‘selves’ in everyday life. Thus, it is suggested that they get an opportunity for being fully ‘out’ and open about their sexuality when holidaying.

In this work we have found evidence of this suggestion, because the majority of the gay tourists does not travel in order to get away from oppression and being 'themselves'. Instead, they seek cultural experiences of all kinds; enjoy anonymity away from home; and are eager to feel the ambience of the destination visited. Many actors recognize the cultural activities as important facets of the local development. In this regard, the survey highlighted certain trends. First, in the gay tourism development, Barcelona seems to prefer the culture and the leisure strategies based on special events, such as the music festivals. The survey findings reinforce the fact that culture and leisure activities are essential components of gay tourism development. Second, these activities are largely seen by the actors as an important way to emphasize a city's uniqueness, as a "branding" strategy in order to attract visitors. Besides, while the agents want to stress the economic objectives, the local government does not necessarily abandon the social and educational goals, arguing that the cultural activities stimulate economic development while improving the quality of life of the residents and tourists. The prevalence of cultural and leisure activities in recent programs of urban gay tourism development makes it imperative for the public planners in order to understand how this tourism contributes to local development. The above analysis shows the importance of these strategies carried out at destination to connect with other sustainable development strategies.

On the other hand, it is also important to know the local citizens' own perception about the image of the city and not just know the perception of the tourists, because the creation of an urban image must be committed and accepted by all local stakeholders. Also is important the political commitment and desire to maintain and work towards consolidating a destination's image and products in the long-term. It is essential for the urban tourism development.

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