The Entrepreneur Experiences of Gay Business Owners in Madrid’s Gay Neighborhood Chueca and its Degaying Process in the Post-Gay Era

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I, Te-Yang Lee hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “The Entrepreneur Experiences of Gay Business Owners in Madrid’s Gay Neighborhood Chueca and its Degaying Process in the Post-Gay Era”, submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

I declare that the written (printed and bound) and the electronic copy of the submitted MA thesis are identical.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

Signed ........................................................
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6/7/2020
Abstract

This master’s thesis is an interdisciplinary research on the ‘degaying’ process of Madrid’s gay neighborhood, Chueca, in the post-gay era and gay business owners’ entrepreneurial experiences. It strives to fill a gap in the literature in LGBT tourism studies, gender studies and entrepreneurial studies by giving voice to the LGBT community and creating contemporary knowledge and observation.

The investigation involved conducting 11 qualitative semi-structured interviews with gay business owners in Chueca. The aim of this research was to shed light on the owners’ motivations in opening their businesses and to explore the challenges and changes they noticed throughout their time in the neighborhood, reviewing if Chueca has entered the post-gay era and is experiencing a degaying process. It also discusses other aspects of the district such as the marginalization of certain groups within it, its market economy and the city government’s role in gay tourism.

The results of this study show that breaking the lavender ceiling is not one of the main motivations of owners in starting their businesses. Moreover, while the gay market is a profitable niche market, it is wiser for business owners to target both heterosexual and LGBT markets if possible. Lastly, Chueca has entered the post-gay era, although it is unlikely that the neighborhood will face dissolution due to its historical meaning and the fact that many people still feel more comfortable in Chueca than in other parts of the city.

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Preface:

As a Euroculture student, I had the privilege of studying at two outstanding universities, Uppsala University and the University of Deusto; for the third semester I did an internship in Madrid, a city I have loved for a long time. I like the Spanish capital because it is extremely liberal, open-minded and one can easily feel the sense of diversity and freedom when walking on the streets. Here you can meet people from all over the world and society is open to learning about other cultures. No matter what race or what sexual orientation you are, you will feel welcomed and accepted. I first visited Madrid in 2014 when I was studying Spanish in Salamanca, a small Spanish university city in Castile and León, where people are more conservative and there are not many LGBT-themed places. I came to Madrid for one weekend and I immediately fell in love with the city and I even felt at home because of its unique, open, and friendly atmosphere and outrageous liberty.

In 2019 I came back for an internship and this city once again failed to disappoint me. It is full of life and there is always something going on, which means that it is impossible to get bored or tired of this city. My internship experience was very positive because people are very friendly, curious about foreign cultures and employees can show their sexual orientation freely. This surprised me, since in Asia few people come out in their workplace out of fear of facing discrimination.

I also remember in 2016, when I was an exchange student in Pamplona, I came to Madrid for the LGBT Pride Week (MADO, Madrid Orgullo). The event was an unforgettable experience because I had never been to a Pride as massive as this one. The whole city is like a dance club – cars cannot circulate in the city center and the city is filled with people drinking, walking, listening to live music and dancing. Madrid’s Pride
is famous not only for its open-air concerts and parties but also for its many cultural, artistic and sporting activities. Madrid’s incomparable gay nightlife scene, which is used as a reference by many other cities around the world, is another reason why this Pride is so well-known and popular among both LGBT communities and straight people, normally attracting more than two million participants each year.

Madrid boasts around 500 businesses orientated towards the LGBT population such as bars, cafes, restaurants, clubs, bookshops, travel agents, gyms, hotels, shops as well as many other gay-friendly businesses.¹ As a proof of how liberal Spain’s capital city is, Madrid was chosen as the host city for the 2007 Europride, the 31st International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) Global Convention in 2014 and the celebration of the World Pride in 2017. In addition to the annual Pride in July, Madrid also hosts a wide variety of LGBT events including the Day of Family Diversity in September, during which Madrid’s Amusement Park hosts lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) individuals, as well as their friends and families, for a rainbow-colored day in a festive and inclusive atmosphere. Another example is Lesgaicinemad, a week-long, high-profile LGBT-themed film festival which takes place each November. In December, the MadBear festival, one of the biggest international gatherings for bears², attracts thousands of people from all over the world to Madrid every year.

I decided to write about Madrid’s gay neighborhood Chueca for my master’s thesis for several reasons. First of all, I have always been interested in Spanish history and culture and in deepening my knowledge of Spanish societal development. Secondly, I genuinely love the neighborhood of Chueca for its inclusive atmosphere and vibrant


² In male gay culture, a bear is often a larger or obese hairier man who projects an image of rugged masculinity. Bears are one of many LGBT communities with events, codes, and a culture-specific identity.
nightlife. I also witnessed how successful Madrid’s LGBT Pride Week was, but after conducting an extensive literature review, I realized that there is currently a lack of academic research on gay tourism in Europe. This strengthened my determination to make a humble contribution to filling this research gap. Last but not least, I have always wondered if opening a gay bar is lucrative and this thesis offered an amazing opportunity to interview gay business owners and learn more about their entrepreneur experience in this so-called niche market.

I would like to dedicate some words to all the fighters who fought for equality and let today’s LGBT community enjoy equal rights, freedom and respect. We shall always remember all the efforts such as the Stonewall riots, Compton's Cafeteria riot and many other incidents. Without their efforts, it would have been unthinkable to do this research.

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Nagore Espinosa Uresandi from the University of Deusto and Dr. May-Britt Öhman from Uppsala University. In November 2019 we made contact for the first time, after I proposed my interest in studying gay tourism in Chueca. I am thrilled and honored to have them as my assigned supervisors since both of them are extraordinary scholars and professionals. I received help from Dr. Espinosa Uresandi on how to structure my thesis and get familiar with the Spanish tourism industry and important actors. Dr. Öhman always reminds me of coherence and important principles when writing a dissertation. Both of them kept in touch with me throughout my writing process and helped me whenever I needed their advice. They regularly checked in on my progress and also inquired about my wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis. I am highly fortunate to have them as my supervisors because I know they are always there when I need them.

I also need to express my gratitude to all the participants who partook in the interviews. This investigation would have been much easier were it not for the COVID-19 situation. In this delicate time, all businesses are affected and so are their owners’
emotions. It was extremely difficult to find business owners to interview and many of them refused to participate in the investigation due to the worrying circumstances. Therefore, I am incredibly grateful to all the people who helped me to finish this project and allowed me to stick to it even when things were not easy. I also have to thank the journalists and scholars who helped me to find more interviewees for their time and recognition. I am truly honored to be able to contribute some insights and knowledge to LGBT related studies. I hope this is just a stepping stone and that many other researchers pay attention to this understudied area.

Thank you for reading this. It means the world to me.

Enjoy reading!
Chapter 1 Introduction:

1. Objectives:

This thesis dissertation aims to contribute to the interdisciplinary academic fields of tourism studies, LGBT gender studies and entrepreneurship studies via qualitative in-depth interviews with gay business owners in Chueca, the gay neighborhood of Madrid.

After going through scholarly literature, I realized that there is currently a lack of academic research on gay tourism in Europe. Therefore, this thesis project will partially fill that gap by discussing three research questions: (1) Do gay business owners in Chueca open their businesses out of a desire to break the lavender ceiling? (2) Is the gay market a niche market and is it lucrative to target the LGBT community? (3) Has Chueca entered the post-gay era and is it experiencing the degaying process?

It is important to point out that this research was designed in November 2019, before the COVID-19 crisis broke out, which means the intention of this thesis was not to unveil challenges caused by the coronavirus; instead, it seeks to understand business owners’ motivations in the beginning, as well as the changes or challenges they have experienced throughout the years.

2. Historical background of Gay tourism studies:

Tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world and involves a wide variety of professions. For many developing countries, it is one of the main sources of foreign exchange income and the number one export category, creating much-needed
employment and opportunities for development. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals are expected to increase by an average of 43 million a year over the next two decades, reaching 1.8 billion by 2030, showing the enormous economic potential of this industry. The LGBT travel market, considered by many marketers to be a niche market, is estimated to have an annual worldwide economic impact of over 140 billion USD. It is important to conduct more research related to LGBT travel, not only because of its market value but also its economic and social impact on local destinations. Nonetheless, this aforementioned economic potential was not noticed until the 1980s.

Investigations on gay tourism started to emerge in the 1980s and the majority of academic work on gay tourism focuses on tourists’ traveling motivations and the potential value of the market. However, as Oskaras Vorobjovas-Pinta argues, in many studies, gay tourists are assumed to be homogenous, subjected to generalizing stereotypes, and studied from a Western point of view. Apart from travel motivations and the market value of the gay tourism industry, Clift and Wilkins investigate the relations between gay identity and places, arguing that travelling to certain destinations can strengthen gay identity and allow homosexuals to feel freer to express their sexuality. Schindehutte and Allen focus on gay business owners’ entrepreneurship and put emphasis on the interaction between sexuality and motivations for venture creation.

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3 UNWTO, Global Report on LGBT Tourism, 4.
4 UNWTO, Global Report on LGBT Tourism, 3.
Another detected problem is that while a lot of research has been conducted on the gay tourism industry in the US, investigations of the industry in Europe are few and far between. These studies will be discussed in further detail in the literature review chapter.

3. Brief history of Chueca and its current situation:

Chueca is an area in central Madrid, named after its main square, Plaza de Chueca (Square of Chueca). The square was named after Spanish composer and author Federico Chueca. It became Madrid's gay neighborhood in the late 1990s and it is located in the administrative neighborhood of Justicia. In the 1980s, Chueca was mostly populated by drug dealers, prostitutes, and immigrants; hence, the area was considered dangerous. In the 1970s, the neighborhood experienced considerable degradation due to drug trafficking, which in turn led to the abandonment and repurposing of commercial premises (for example, abandoned cafes were turned into gay bars). It was against this backdrop that some of the first LGBT businesses appeared in Chueca, such as Café Figueroa, Black & White, Sachas and the Berkana bookstore, and Chueca progressively transformed itself from a marginal, deteriorating area into an open, cosmopolitan neighborhood with widely recognized cultural appeal and international fame.

Chueca is one of the most influential LGBT communities in Spain and the only one with a fixed physical and social structure. It is limited to the north by Fernando VI Street, to the south by Gran Vía, to the east by Barquillo Street and to the west by Hortaleza and Fuencarral. In Barcelona, for example, LGBT resources exist in the form of bars, as well as health and political organizations, but these are dispersed throughout

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the city and not within a fixed boundary. Other famous Spanish LGBT destinations such as Maspalomas, Torremolinos and Sitges are all ‘for partying and holidaying,’ making Chueca the only inhabitable LGBT area with fixed “borders” in Spain.

Chueca is vibrant, alternative and bohemian with many stylish cafes and boutique shops. One can find traditional shops, modern restaurants, sex shops, saunas, cafes, bars, night pubs and a plethora of services more or less focused on a homosexual public such as clothing stores, travel agencies, counseling, clinics and so on in the streets of Chueca. It is described as "extravagantly gay, lively, young, and always inclusive regardless of your sexual orientation." As gay and lesbian residents like to say, ‘Chueca isn’t gay-friendly, it’s hetero-friendly’. No one bats an eye if you are straight and you walk into a gay bar.

Nowadays, gay travelers tend to use the internet to acquire information about the gay area of their destination before traveling and Chueca is omnipresent when one tries to search for gay parties or gay-friendly places in Madrid. The Gay Travel Guide 2020 for Europe, USA, Asia is an international website where one can find useful, updated information on LGBT businesses in many destinations. Take Madrid for example, the website provides extensive information on what the Spanish capital can offer for a LGBT traveler, including gay-friendly hotels, the current human rights situation, gay bars, lesbian bars, dance clubs, cruising clubs, saunas, gyms, sex shops, restaurants,

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services, city guide, gay tours, gay map, special events and group trips.

Other similar gay travel websites include the Patroc Gay Travel Guide Europe, GayCities, GayWelcome, Nighttours, GayIberia and VisitChueca among others. Some general tourist guides, including the Lonely Planet Madrid guide, also include information relevant for LGBT travelers”. Many gay businesses in Chueca have their own websites, list their location and information on Google Maps, and are active on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the purpose of informing their clients of their latest events, admission fees, entry requirements, opening hours, addresses, telephone numbers, and so forth. They also send advertisement messages on gay dating apps such as Grindr, ROMEO, GROWLr, Wapo, and others.

4. Research questions and motivation:

As stated above, this master’s thesis aims to discover Chueca’s gay business owners’ motivations for starting a business, their opinions on the gay market and if Chueca has entered the post-gay era and is experiencing the degaying process. The dissertation tries to enrich the body of research on gay tourism in Europe and at the same time providing some insights on the so-called “post-gay” era.

Two different research articles that deal with gay business, published in 2011 and in 1999 that inspired this thesis project. The first one is “The experiences of male gay business owners in the UK,” which is an investigation of UK’s gay business owners’ motivations for starting a business and explores the concept of the “lavender ceiling,” which is a similar concept to the “glass ceiling” for women, but for homosexuals.

Moore et al. argue that one of the push factors that makes female business owners decide to become entrepreneurs is the glass ceiling, which represents discrimination, oppressive corporate politics, and corporate values which result in women facing wage disparities and difficulty of promotion.\(^{15}\) Building on the concept of “glass ceiling” for women, Schindehutte and Allen argues that homosexuals experience a lavender ceiling, which can be far more subtle and less openly discussed.\(^{16}\) A difference between “The experiences of male gay business owners in the UK” and this thesis is that this thesis is more focused on the owners of gay businesses, while the article focuses on LGBT people who opened a business and does not look into whether their target clients were members of the LGBT community or not.

Another article that inspired this thesis project was “Revisiting the ghetto: how the meanings of gay districts are shaped by the meanings of the city”.\(^{17}\) Coffin, Banister and Goatman find that many Western countries have entered a “post-gay” era where LGBT people experience stigmatization so rarely that they no longer see their sexuality as a defining or dominant identity. In “post-gay” cities the demand for gay villages is low, making them economically unviable and thus under threat of dissolution. The authors also claim that gay villages, instead of being a place of community and belonging, risk turning into tourist attractions where non-homosexual tourists come to consume a commodified gay culture.\(^{18}\) Waitt and Markwell also state that spectators in gay parades are normally straight people which suggests that gay parades and other gay


\(^{18}\) Coffin, Banister and Anna Goatman, ”Revisiting the Ghetto: How The Meanings of Gay Districts Are Shaped by The Meanings of The City,” 290-295.
events may have turned into tourist attractions.¹⁹

In addition, technology is playing an important role in this epoch: dating apps enable gays to meet in any type of space, which is far more convenient than having to seek companionship in a bar or club. Some people believe that dating apps are an important factor leading to the gradual disappearance of gay districts around the world.²⁰

While Chueca is still busy, an investigation will be of help to understand the evolution and possible future development of the neighborhood, reviewing if it is experiencing critical changes in the post-gay era. This thesis will explore gay business owners’ motivations, their business management and the challenges they are currently facing, offering a contemporary contribution to gay tourism studies – a field which is often said to be outdated and under-researched.²¹

5. Significance of the investigation:

Most of the scholarly work on gay tourism refers to North America and very little is related to gay tourism in Europe.²² Many authors challenge the assumption that homosexual men have more disposable income due to their status of being DINKs (double income, no kids).²³ Several researchers recall that gay tourists cannot be treated

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²² Melián-González, Moreno-Gil, and Jorge E. Araña, "Gay Tourism in a Sun and Beach Destination," 1027-1037.

as a homogenous group, and tourism marketers should recognize that the gay market is not as homogenous as it has been portrayed in the tourism literature. For example, many researchers who have studied travel motivations by interviewing gays and lesbians who are already out of the closet and this might be one of many factors that influence their travel motivations, destination choices and holiday behaviors. Hence, more diversity in gay tourism investigations had been called for.

Besides, there are many “modern” problems worth investigating such as the commodification of gay culture; neocolonial marketing strategies; biased western-centric investigation angles; insufficient investigation on lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people; the neoliberal economic model that makes gay villages unaffordable to visit; homonormativity; and so forth.

Another value of this investigation is that it focuses on business owners instead of tourists, offering a distinctive viewpoint compared to existing literature on gay tourism. It could also provide valuable advice for people who are interested in starting a business in gay neighborhoods.

6. Spain’s LGBT rights:

Spain is one of the most gay-friendly countries in the world and Madrid’s gay neighborhood Chueca is well known and symbolic worldwide. However, the protection, recognition and respect that the LGBT community enjoys today has been hard-fought

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24 Melián-González, Moreno-Gil, and Jorge E. Araña, "Gay Tourism in a Sun and Beach Destination," 1027-1037.


and has come a long way.

After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Francisco Franco took power and established a religious, conservative dictatorship which lasted for decades, from 1939 to 1975. During the 1950s, the Francoist regime took its strongest stand against homosexuality. In 1954, the reform *Ley de bagos y maleantes* (Vagrancy Act) declared homosexuality illegal and men found to be practicing were sent to prison.\(^{28}\) During Franco’s dictatorship, many dissidents, critical thinkers, homosexuals, and activists did not find a safe space in the peninsula and hence fled to the Spanish Mediterranean Island of Ibiza\(^ {29}\) to find freedom, escaping from the repression of the government.

After Franco’s death in 1975, Spanish politics and society started to change drastically. The country experienced a transition to democracy (1975-1978) and also a major post-Franco social movement in Madrid called La Movida Madrileña which led to sexual liberation, freedom and increased recognition of rights.\(^ {30}\) This social movement also sparked new trends in design, culture, fashion, music, film, and family structures. La Movida Madrileña flourished in neighborhoods like Chueca, advocating for LGBT-related equality and justice. In 1978, homosexuality was decriminalized in Spain.

During the 1990s, the Spanish Workers Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) started reaching out and advocating for the LGBT community. Additionally, since joining the EU in 1986, Spain has made considerable progress in the


\(^ {29}\) Ibiza became really popular because of its alternative culture artist, gay life, hippies and more open-minded people. Figueretas is the main area for gay hotels, restaurants, bars and clubs.

area of policies related to gender and sexuality.\textsuperscript{31} In 2005, the Spanish government amended the National Adoption Law, allowing same-sex couples to adopt. In the same year, the Spanish government legalized same-sex marriage and its dedication to gender equality was recognized by the EU.

Chueca is the national epicenter of the LGBT civil rights movement creating change in Spanish society. Nowadays, LGBT culture plays a significant role in Spanish literature, music, cinema and other forms of entertainment, as well as social issues and politics. Public opinion on homosexuality is overwhelmingly positive, with surveys indicating that more than 88\% of Spanish citizens accepted homosexuality in 2013.\textsuperscript{32} In Spanish films it is common to see homosexual characters, for example in the movies of Pedro Almodóvar, who has played an important role in promoting tolerance towards the LGBT community. The cities of Madrid and Barcelona have a reputation as two of the most LGBT-friendly cities in the world and Gran Canaria’s Maspalomas is also known worldwide as a LGBT travel destination. The existence of many other gay-friendly party cities like Torremolinos, Sitges, Ibiza, Benidorm also help to explain why Spain is one of the favored destinations for LGBT travelers.

The principle of equality and non-discrimination in Europe has been respected for a long time and is now considered to be one of the crucial fundamental values of the European Union.\textsuperscript{33} Nevertheless, we should always remember that in many countries there is still punishment for homosexual behavior and homophobia persists. At the same time, if we look at how commercial LGBT travel facilities are distributed across the globe, there is a huge difference between rural and urban areas, even within the same


\textsuperscript{33} See articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
country. Even within Europe, a continent which has advocated for human rights for a long time, there exist large discrepancies in attitudes towards LGBT communities. For instance, popular attitudes towards LGBT people differ dramatically between Spain and Poland, highlighting that efforts should still be made to make LGBT rights respected in every corner of the world.

7. Global influences on Chueca:

(1) International gay identity:

Gay identity in Chueca is partly shaped and affected by a global gay identity coming mainly from North America and Western European countries such as France, England, and Germany. International LGBT symbols such as the rainbow flag are almost everywhere in Chueca and English names are common for the major bars and restaurants. Based on this, gay tourism actually creates a monolithic gay identity through internationalizing a particular Western gay consumer culture as Evans suggests.\(^\text{34}\) Altman argues that a uniform homosexual identity is a myth, but he introduces the term “global gay” to describe how commercial lesbian and gay tourism facilities become part of “the apparent internationalization of a certain form of social and cultural identity based on homosexuality”.\(^\text{35}\) In many cases, this particular homosexual identity and its characteristics are norms of gay neighborhoods, which therefore creates a hierarchy of homosexuals and leads to discrimination within the LGBT community.

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(2) Capitalism and the market economy in Chueca:

Chueca embodies the modernity of the European Union, capitalism and the market economy. Its high market value is obvious, especially given that investment in venues in the area such as bars, travel agencies, saunas, restaurants, and shopping stores has increased and progressed.\textsuperscript{36} The potential of LGBT tourism was recognized by the Spanish National Tourist Office which published a magazine on Madrid’s Night Life that included a section on Madrid’s gay life, informing readers of the major LGBT-related attractions and LGBT life in Spain.\textsuperscript{37}

One of the consequences that capitalism brought to Chueca is that underprivileged people are forced to move out. It is believed that many transgender sex workers have been pushed to the margins as a result of unaffordable living costs and they do not enjoy the increasingly affluent gay and lesbian market economy. Chueca rapidly became one of the most expensive areas in the city center to live in and the prices of services and foods skyrocketed. In a nutshell, it is ironic that some members of the LGBT community cannot afford a drink in the place where they are supposed to belong.

(3) Multicultural Chueca:

Chueca visitors and residents can perceive a sense of inclusivity and diversity not just in relation to sexuality but also ethnicity. Spain was the first Spanish-speaking country to enact laws and policies forbidding discrimination in housing and employment based on race/ethnicity, as well as sexual orientation.\textsuperscript{38} Chueca has


\textsuperscript{37} Gabriel Giorgi, “Madrid en Transito: Travelers, Visibility, and Gay Identity,”

become popular with immigrants because it is a safe space where they can freely express their sexuality and gender identity and where their cultures are accepted. Many of these foreigners flee their countries to find acceptance in Spain.

8. Outline of thesis:

This research is based on 11 qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with business owners in Chueca and one interview with an anthropologist who has been following the development of Chueca, Dr. Ignacio Elpidio Domínguez Ruiz at the Autonomous University of Madrid, during the month of April 2020 in order to obtain a better understanding of the neighborhood and answer the research questions. The thesis is divided into five chapters.

The first chapter provides an introduction to the problem that this research seeks to explore. It sets out the research questions of the thesis, presents some brief historical observations, and describes the importance and relevance of the topic chosen, methods of research, and structure of this thesis.

The second chapter reviews existing academic literature, including the history of the origins of gay tourism studies, the history of gay tourism itself and articles relevant to this research topic.

The third chapter introduces the research questions of this thesis, as well as the conceptual framework and methodology utilized in this study, providing details about the nature of qualitative interviews and their execution in the context of this research.

The fourth chapter presents the data obtained from the conducted interviews, including the observation, reflection and discussion. This chapter will also connect the results with theories mentioned in the previous chapters to establish conversations.

The concluding chapter presents a summary of the key findings of this research. Moreover, it provides answers to the questions posed in the introduction and the
opinions of the author are compared to the positions shown in the interviews. It also
discusses the limitations of this research and provides some recommendations for
further investigation.


Chapter 2 Literature Review

1. Introduction

Gay tourism is often considered a market full of potential because marketers believe that gay tourists are wealthy, middle or upper-class, and frequent holidaymakers since they normally have no children. Community Marketing Incorporated in 2014 estimated that LGBT travelers spend an estimated US$100 billion a year in the USA alone.\(^{39}\) Homosexuals are claimed to have higher per trip expenditures and have higher brand loyalty than their heterosexual counterparts.\(^{40}\) Nonetheless, some scholars have challenged this stereotype and argued that many gay individuals often suffer from salary discrimination.\(^ {41}\)

Speaking of the beginning of gay tourism, there were homosexual people that did not feel comfortable showing their sexuality in their hometowns, so they traveled to their “imagined homeland” or “Gay Mecca” to feel free and be themselves. Scholars argue that gay tourism is needed because of “the need for safety, to feel comfortable with like-minded people, and to escape heterosexism”.\(^ {42}\)

With the rising popularity of international trips in the late 1990s and the shown value of gay tourism, articles concerning gay tourism started to appear in the general press as well as in the tourism industry. Jeff Guaracino manifests that cities and

\(^{39}\) Oskaras Vorobjovas-Pinta and Anne Hardy, "The Evolution of Gay Travel Research," 409-416.

\(^{40}\) Melián-González, Moreno-Gil, and Jorge E. Araña, "Gay Tourism in a Sun and Beach Destination," 1027-1037.

\(^{41}\) Oskaras Vorobjovas-Pinta and Anne Hardy, "The Evolution of Gay Travel Research," 409-416.

countries have come out of the closet as gay-friendly mainly because of the 9/11 tragedy. It was the time when the hospitality industry needed business and thus started to target gay customers because they did not stop travelling. Gay tourism continued to grow, as legal recognition and societal acceptance created new opportunities for hospitality and tourism organizations.

Having stated the potential of gay tourism, it is relevant to bear in mind that in order to avoid overestimation of the market, it is incorrect to assume and generalize gay travelers as disproportionately white, affluent, male, and well-educated, a stereotype that circulates as the dominant representation of gay identity. Not every gay tourist likes gay dance parties, Pride parades, gay resorts, and cruising bars in their travel destination. Clift and Forrest help to dispel the myth that all gay men are sexual predators who travel only for sexual adventures. Gay tourists are not homogenous and therefore the need for further investigation remains.

2. Current studies on gay tourism: Postmodern theory/ Queer theory

After consulting the existing literature, it becomes apparent that a lot of research has focused on the demographic of wealthier middle-class white gay men without children living in urban areas, whereas many other perspectives and demographics have been


overlooked. These studies focus on how tourism contributes to shared ideas of identity and community and on how gay tourism can lead to social and spatial transformations of these concepts. Many of these studies draw on postmodern theories and posit that sexual identity is a much more fluid and contentious social category than was formerly thought. Butler’s writing is one key source of inspiration for conceptualizing space as performative. This work is widely known for the way the author challenges the idea of the body as something “natural”, and instead conceptualizes the sexed and gendered body as established or maintained through the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names.

Queer theory can help re-conceptualize the tourist as well as tourism destinations since gay tourism destinations are places that are sexualized along lines that are fluid and unbounded. In other words, human interactions are at the center of our conceptualization of tourists and tourism destinations. A person might become more aware of how they constantly negotiate their subjectivities through dress, movement, speech and interactions with other people.

3. Gay identity on venture creation

A study by Minet Schindehutte et al. provides initial insights into the nature of the

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gay entrepreneurial experience and assesses the level of homogeneity within the
collection of gay, lesbian, and bisexual entrepreneurs.54 Attention is devoted to the
concept of “gay identity” and how it manifests itself through entrepreneurship. The
results showed that the factors (in order from strongest to weakest) that motivated LGB
entrepreneurs to start ventures were “ability to do what I want to do,” “freedom,”
“making a living,” “helping people,” “getting rich,” “prejudice/discrimination/social
hostility” and “limited opportunities with established companies”, which to some extent
rejects the assumptions that LGB individuals start a business out of a desire to break
the lavender ceiling.

The results of this study also suggest that in an increasingly competitive world,
encapturing so-called minority groups is very important for lucrative purposes. This
argument inspired this thesis and begs the question: did gay business owners in Chueca
start their businesses because they wanted to target a minority group for profit or
because they aspired to create a space for the LGBT community? Or did they have other
motivations altogether?

However, theoretically, the idea of targeting the gay segment of the tourism industry
is questionable and lacks support. According to Mucha’s marketing criteria, a target
segment market must have a level of accessibility, measurability, profitability, stability
and homogenous consumer behavior.55 According to Stuber and Mucha, the gay market
lacks consistent homogenous consumer behavior. As a matter of fact, homosexuality is
diverse and therefore stereotypical behaviors that are often exhibited are representations
of only a portion of the gay population. Due to the existence of different types of gay

54 Schindehutte, Morris, and Jeffrey Allen, "Homosexuality and Entrepreneurship: Implications of Gay

55 Dana-Nicoleta Lascu and Kenneth E. Clow, Essentials of Marketing (Mason, OH: Atomic Dog
men in the society, Stuber argues that there is no such thing as gay consumer behavior.\textsuperscript{56}

Sender\textsuperscript{57} refuses the need for any theoretical basis for market segmentation since for her a market segment exists as long as marketers believe it does.\textsuperscript{58} In other words, if marketers are able to find distinguishable characteristics that allow for viable and profitable segments, they will continue to do so. The academic credibility of such segments is questionable, but it is true that companies around the world have affirmed that the gay community has strong monetary power and for such reasons there are ongoing projects and campaigns to target this market.\textsuperscript{59} In Europe, gays represent about 6\% of the total population and they make up 10\% of the total number of tourists.\textsuperscript{60} The success of gay tourism in Canada, the UK and South Africa has made the tourism industry recognize the “pink market” as a growing market.\textsuperscript{61} To conclude, even though some scholars have expressed doubts about targeting the gay segment of the tourism industry, the reality proves that it is worth investing in and paying attention to.

4. The post-gay era and degaying process

Haslop et al. have conducted research on the attitudes of gays towards the gay village in Manchester and the results show that participants experienced very little


\textsuperscript{58} Howard L. Hughes, \textit{Pink Tourism: Holidays of Gay Men and Lesbians} (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 2006): 156.


\textsuperscript{61} Ersoy, Ozer and Demet Tuzunkan, “Gay Men and Tourism: Gay Men’s Tourism Perspectives and Expectations,” 394-401.
homophobia in the rest of Manchester, and thus did not feel compelled to visit a bar purely because of its status as a gay bar. Hence, the researchers argue that Manchester’s gay village is more like a tourist destination than a subcultural refugee camp.

A study by Jack Coffin et al. presents similar findings, testifying that LGBT venues are themed places where different LGBT cultures are packaged and sold as experiences. The investigation shows that nowadays visitors view the gay village as a source of unique consumption experiences, a place to consume a commodified gay culture. This means that gay areas might not disappear as a result of greater acceptance of LGBT communities in cities; however, these areas might turn into tourist attractions where one can experience gay culture. This study also called for further research on the perspectives of LGBT venue owners, managers, or designers. Such perspectives would allow researchers to consider whether producers also interpret and design gay villages as themed environments. This master’s thesis will answer this question by interviewing gay business owners in Chueca.

What happened in Manchester’s gay village could be classified as an example of the “degaying” process of gay spaces, a concept mentioned by Oskaras Vorobjovas-Pinta. He points out that an increased concentration of heterosexual consumers in traditional gay spaces, such as bars, clubs and gay districts, and the integration of gay consumers into heterosexual spaces has fused previously strongly dichotomized understandings of homosexual/heterosexual spatiality.

An example in South Africa shows that gay districts can literally disappear: Visser

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analyzes the district De Waterkant that has changed from a gay residential and leisure neighborhood into an urban tourism haven. It is argued that gay men are increasingly absorbed into mainstream heterosexual society, while at the same time, the area has become increasingly populated by heterosexual patrons. The neighborhood has been converted into a space of sophisticated heterosexual leisure and tourism consumption. Betsky echoes this point, stating that the commodification of queer spaces has meant that “almost as soon as queer spaces were started, they disappeared into mainstream culture as their very power became useful for advertising, lifestyles, and the occupation of real estate.” Furthermore, young gay men are not supporting gay spaces in the same manner as past generations. The outcome of greater gay acceptance by mainstream society is that the notion of the gay village, either physically or symbolically, is not sought out. Also, as stated previously, the emergence of gay platforms and social media has changed the way gay men interact with one another.

Many other cities in the world such as San Francisco, Chicago and New York are experiencing a departure of LGBT-centric businesses, which makes traditionally gay neighborhoods, or “gayborhoods” disappear. The main reason, according to Jonathan Lovitz, Senior Vice President of the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC), is that these businesses are moving to more economically advantageous parts of town. In many gay districts around the world, gentrification and rising rent prices are leading LGBT business to face economic challenges and sometimes move locations.

Take the longest continuously running gay bar in San Francisco, the Stud, for example. In September 2016, the monthly rent leaped from $3,800 to $9,500 with the arrival of newcomers taking high-paying technology jobs downtown or in nearby Silicon Valley.\(^68\) London has also lost many LGBT venues in recent years as rents skyrocket and property development accelerates. In November 2017, University College London published a report looking at LGBTI nightlife in London since 1986, which highlighted an intensity of closures of long-standing key venues in the British capital.\(^69\)

Many factors contribute to changes in these urban neighborhoods, but the main one appears to be a societal shift toward more widespread inclusivity and acceptance. Gayborhoods historically formed, in part, so members of a marginalized group could easily connect and socialize. They provide a safe haven where those in the LGBT community can worry less about verbal and physical attacks than they might in other parts of a city. Because of greater mainstream acceptance in straight venues and because of the ease of finding like-minded individuals in the digital age, a growing number in the LGBT community view gayborhoods as less essential in the modern era.

### 5. The post-gay era and degaying process in Chueca

El Independiente\(^70\) suggests that Chueca is currently facing an identity crisis, pointing out that the daily scenery in Chueca has changed significantly compared to the past.

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One of the people mentioned in the article is Mili Hernández, the owner of the Berkana bookstore, which was one of the first LGBT shops in the neighborhood and has been open for 24 years. She mentions that in the past gays who were still in the closet went to Berkana to look for self-help books and stories starring homosexuals, while today the homosexual public does not need a reference bookstore in the same way.

The book “Adiós Chueca” by the famous Spanish LGBT activist Shangay Lily argues that “gaypitalism” has made the neighborhood’s sense of community disappear and transformed Chueca into a brand. Shangay Lily takes the annual Gay Pride as an example, arguing that the event is organized by the night entertainment organization AEGAL and not by the LGBT community.

Javier Bujarrabal, a militant of the left-wing political party PODEMOS, echoes the changes by suggesting that there is an entire generation of people aged between 20 and 40 who do not feel represented by the usual LGBT collectives.

The change that Chueca is experiencing is also reflected in the numbers. The total population has fallen by about a thousand people in ten years. In 1996 there were almost forty businesses dedicated to the LGBT community including bars, discos, shops and clubs. In 2006 the number almost doubled, but by 2016 it had been reduced by a third. Gay or lesbian bars have been replaced by other non-LGBT themed bars. Businesses targeting visitors and tourists have multiplied, including gourmet shops and fancy restaurants. The advent of AirBnB has also had a significant impact on rent prices in the area, with the average price per square meter now being above Madrid’s average even during the Spanish financial crisis. The only places that seem to be unaffected are the gay night clubs that open after midnight and only welcome a clearly homosexual male audience.

According to the architect Álvaro Ardura, there are several possibilities for the future of gay neighborhoods like Chueca. Scenario one: if the decreasing population
facilitates tourist businesses, it could end up like Puerta del Sol, Madrid’s main square, tourist attraction and meeting point where no one lives anymore.

Scenario two: it could be like Le Marais, the gay district of Paris, which underwent significant gentrification and became an extremely elitist area – so much so that much of its population moved to marginal but more affordable neighborhoods like Belleville. In Madrid this is already happening: part of the homosexual collective are moving away from Chueca to places like Lavapiés, La Latina and Malasaña. Paco Ramírez, from Stop LGTBfobia, confirms this tendency. There are more attacks due to the greater LGBT visibility and because community members are leaving Chueca. Homosexual couples no longer stop holding hands after leaving the neighborhood, as they did before, and gender expressions are also not hidden outside the neighborhood.71

The saturation of tourist and elitist businesses can also lead to the worst-case scenario. Bleecker Street in New York is one example of an area that became so expensive that it remains filled with empty storefronts. In 2018 an article in the magazine Yorokobu discussed the changes caused by social tolerance and technology in Chueca. The writer stresses the impact dating apps have had on the development of gay neighborhoods. Grindr, the application which facilitates sexual contact between men, was considered the most important urban revolution in recent years since it reduces the importance of going out and socializing in the streets and squares. It is assumed that the apps are directly related to the disappearance of nightlife venues in the gay community worldwide from the Castro in San Francisco to Soho in London, passing through Greenwich Village in New York, Le Marais in Paris and Chueca in Madrid. Many consider it a pity because gay neighborhoods are places of culture, memory and social

movements and the progressive disappearance of these areas might threaten the creative potential of the entire city and its personality.

Mar de Griñó, the co-owner of the legendary aforementioned Berkana bookstore, recalls that in the past many people from other Spanish cities visited Madrid to spend the weekend there and be themselves, which was called the “Cinderella syndrome”. She believes that Chueca is going to become a tourist district but that it is undesirable to see a neighborhood strongly linked to LGBT community struggle. This area was the engine of social changes and where historical movements took place.

Dr. Ignacio Elpidio was also interviewed in this article and argues that it is incorrect to suppose Chueca is going to die since the fact is that a certain part of Chueca has already died. He points out that the profile of Chueca has been changed since the eruption of online chatrooms as well as gentrification and ‘touristification’. He also states that every “non-heterosexual person” has a very clear mental map of where they can hold their partner’s hand in public and where not, but those maps have been expanding. In other words, rather than talking about the disappearance of the LGBT neighborhood, Elpidio prefers to talk about the extension of Chueca and its assimilation into the rest of the city. He emphasizes that this phenomenon can promote the construction of a more inclusive city.

In short, this thesis will discover how gay business owners think about the future of Chueca. Is it going to disappear or become like Manchester’s gay village? Is it going to

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remain as a tourist destination? Or will it evolve in its own unique way?

6. City government and LGBT rights

Gay tourism flourished in North America, Europe and Australia thanks to the success of gay civil rights movements, the recognition of gays as a niche market, and urban transformation, notably the commodification of space related to a growth in tourism and a shift toward an entrepreneurial form of urban governance.75

Secondary cities like Chicago, Miami and Manchester, that want to raise their profile on the global stage, have engaged in competitive strategies to attract capital, re-creating themselves as places of culture and consumption.76 As they market themselves as postindustrial, postmodern places, they lay claim to a certain cosmopolitanism that labels them as participants in the global economy of the new millennium. Queer space has functioned as one of these spaces in consumer culture, serving as a marker of cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and diversity for the urban tourist. Toronto’s official tourism website, for example, lists the city’s “Gay and Lesbian neighborhood”, along with the Italian, Greektown, and Chinatown areas. The gay and lesbian neighborhood is presented as a tourist attraction equivalent to the city’s ethnic zones.

Local governments have changed their attitudes toward the LGBT community throughout the years, especially in the context of the commodification of gay neighborhoods and LGBT festivals. Toronto’s LGBT pride is claimed to be the biggest LGBT event in North America and Sydney’s pride is the biggest nighttime parade in the world. In the space of just over a decade, city governments have gone from encouraging police to make arrests and put a halt to LGBT events to actively protecting and

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75 Dereka Rushbrook, “Cities, Queer Space, and the Cosmopolitan Tourist,” 183.
76 Dereka Rushbrook, “Cities, Queer Space, and the Cosmopolitan Tourist,” 188.
escort participants. Many politicians nowadays also actively join the celebrations as a political statement, and it is widely recognized that these events attract immense income for cities.  

With increased local government support, gay culture completely transformed. Private, unmarked bars turned into spaces with neon signs and full-length windows open to the street. Nowadays, gay neighborhoods are often frequented by straight people, which has led to an interesting phenomenon: LGBT communities went from being consumers to commodities. When straight spectators began to attend pride events and drag shows, LGBT people, spectators or performers became part of the product or experience sold to the straight public. In many cities such as San Francisco, New York and Madrid, there are LGBT themed walking tours that show tourists around the neighborhood. Howe reaffirms that gays and lesbians are often seen as just another attraction of the city and that, when gay and lesbian events take place, straight people feel invited to look at them from the distance. However, even though the border between gay districts and other ‘straight’ places is getting blurred, Waitt and Markwell argue that many straight tourists who go to gay events want a freak show and are, consequently, re-establishing heterosexuality as normal.

7. Impacts of the commodification of queer space

(1) The degaying process of gay villages

Have tourism and the commodification of queer space for consumption affected


gays who live in and visit these spaces?

Bell’s results suggest that some gay men feel increasingly alienated by straight couples touring the gay scene, and have expressed their resistance to branding through symbolic boycotts of venues or events.\textsuperscript{80} As Bell argues, the absence of these men, combined with an increased flow of straight tourists, has only helped to integrate these spaces into the wider heterosexual urban fabric. Place is always under a process of continual negotiation as different social groups try to make competing claims.\textsuperscript{81}

Many members of the LGBT community in certain neighborhoods feel disturbed and suffer from a lack of privacy, suggesting that some gay villages are experiencing a ‘degaying process’. One lesbian recalled that when she was holding hands with her girlfriend while vacationing in Provincetown, a presumably straight tourist popped out to snap photos of their queerness.\textsuperscript{82}

(2) Sexism and racism in the gay scenes

In the 1800s, Greenwich Village in New York was a tourist zone for uptown white people who found it to be an area of fantasy. The presence of gays and lesbians on the streets offered bourgeois tourists an escape from the codes of middle-class respectability and morality.\textsuperscript{83} In the early 1920s, as the Village became too touristic and hence less exotic, Harlem arose as a new sexualized nightlife zone.

In that epoch, while whites could enjoy the tolerance of homosexuality that existed in these liminal spaces, blacks were systematically excluded from white homosexual

\textsuperscript{80} David Bell, “Public sex / gay space,” Progress in Human Geography 25 (2011): 132-133.

\textsuperscript{81} Waitt, Markwell, Andrew Gorman-Murray, “Challenging heteronormativity in tourism studies: locating progress,” 781-800.

\textsuperscript{82} Dereka Rushbrook, “Cities, Queer Space, and the Cosmopolitan Tourist,” 197.

\textsuperscript{83} Gordon Waitt and Kevin Markwell, Gay Tourism: Culture and Context, 194.
establishments. In the past, gay bars were seen as places only for gay men and other people such as lesbians, bisexuales and transsexuals were not welcomed. This begs the question: do these displays of cultural imperialism and sexual racism continue to exist?

(3) Hierarchies of homosexuality

There is a certain type of gay man accepted and promoted by marketers, governments and societies. They are desired by the market since they are rich, educated, white, attractive, non-threatening and frequent holiday makers. This gayness is welcomed and assumed to be the rule by which all homosexuals should abide, which is called homonormativity.84 Gays who meet these criteria are regarded as normal, mainstream and on top of the ‘hierarchy of homosexuality’. As a result, some people are unwanted by the market, such as feminine gays, gays of color and fetish gays.85

As Puar86 warns, this type of advertising for gay tourism cannot always be interpreted as politically progressive. While national tourism organizations promote inclusivity, those welcomed into mainstream society are a select group of lesbians and gay men. They represent the wanted homosexual created by mainstream consumer marketers – nonsexual, affluent, clean-cut, and normatively masculine.87

Le Marais, a relatively new commercial gay quarter in Paris, has been criticized for showing little tolerance for the poor, the old, the homely, the overweight and the overly effeminate – in other words, those who violate current social norms relating to homosexual bodies and desire. Again, it is worth worrying about invented hierarchies

that make other gay men feel silenced, alienated and discriminated against.

(4) Oppressed gay male subcultures

The incorporation of gay space into city tourism promotions seems to exclude certain gay male subcultures, such as leather men, skinheads or bears, and those men who engage in bondage, rubber/latex fetishes, BDSM or public sex. Subcultures positioned as deviant, threatening, dangerous or marginal to city marketing campaigns are forced into the invisibility of backstreets.88 Within the LGBT community, many subcultures are ignored and oppressed because they are not “morally acceptable” according to civil society and their appearance might damage the whole image of the community.89

(5) Conclusion

As queer spaces continue to be repurposed as destinations for local travelers and out-of-town tourists – as a site of cosmopolitan consumption – it is important to examine the implications of these changes and the commodification of queer spaces and culture.90

8. Under-studied perspectives on gay tourism

(1) Under-studied LBT groups

Even though we often use the term LGBT, the dedication of investigations to

lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people is not sufficient. Lesbians in gay scenes are already marginalized and now they have to deal with non-queer women parodying their experiences, which decreases their senses of belonging and comfort.

(2) Interactions between LGBT tourists and local destinations

Another aspect of gay tourism studies that is under-investigated is the field’s colonial side. Studies have mostly been undertaken in Western contexts and based on the voices and experiences of white, middle-class and well-educated homosexuals. This suggests a need for further research focused on other samples including different races, ethnicities and socioeconomic classes, and perhaps published in other languages. One investigation has been done in the Mexican context and another in the Indonesian one. These studies explore the sexual identities of local host communities affected by Western tourists. Lesbian and gay tourism can help to generate greater visibility and legitimacy for LGBT rights.91 Undoubtedly, for other cultures, these influences might be negative. For example, Egyptian authorities deployed discursive borders to define gayness as foreign, Western and imposed, which had undesirable impacts on local communities. Western LGBT tourists, from a certain angle, are condemned for destroying the social, moral and sexual values of local people.92

(3) Neocolonial marketing strategy of gay tourism

Tourism marketers and planners sometimes reach out to gay, lesbian and queer consumers with a “heteronormative colonial discourse” to help pitch the non-Western as

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91 Carlos Monterrubio, “Tourism and male homosexual identities: directions for sociocultural research,” 1058-1069.

both gay-friendly and exotic by differentiating self and other.\textsuperscript{93} Namely, they offer binaries of neocolonial impulses for travel: culture/nature, master/slave, human/nature, civilized/primitive, reason/eroticism, and heterosexual/homosexual. These dualist structures of otherness help to sustain flows of white, euromerican, gay male tourists to the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{94} The seductiveness of colonial nostalgia serves only to construct the West as consistently heteronormative, and the non-West as a sexual utopia.

All in all, gay tourism studies cover a great variety of aspects and there is still a need for more investigation within the field.

\textsuperscript{93} Waitt, Markwell, Andrew Gorman-Murray, “Challenging heteronormativity in tourism studies: locating progress,” 781-800.

\textsuperscript{94} Waitt, Markwell, Andrew Gorman-Murray, “Challenging heteronormativity in tourism studies: locating progress,” 781-800.
Chapter 3 Methodology

In this chapter, research questions, the conceptual framework and field research design will be covered.

1. Research questions

(1) Lavender ceiling:

Laura Galloway\textsuperscript{95} conducted a study on British gay business owners’ motivations for starting a business and mentions the concept “lavender ceiling,” which is a similar concept to that of the “glass ceiling” for women, but which instead pertains to homosexuals. The first question of this dissertation is that even though Madrid is a liberal city and Spain in general has high acceptance of the LGBT community, did gay business owners in Chueca open their ventures because of the lavender ceiling?

(2) Gay market as a niche market:

Theoretically, the idea that targeting the gay segment of the tourism industry is profitable is questionable and lacks academic support. For example, according to Mucha’s marketing criteria, the gay market lacks consistent homogenous consumer behavior. However, Sender argues that a market segment exists as long as marketers believe it does. Therefore, this thesis’ second research question is that is it lucrative to run a gay business targeting a specific group? Do business owners in Chueca believe the gay market to be a niche market?

\textsuperscript{95} Laura Galloway, “The experiences of male gay business owners in the UK,” 890-906.
(3) Chueca is experiencing a degaying process:

In gay neighborhoods around the world, the composition of clientele has changed throughout the years. Madrid’s gay district might be becoming a tourist attraction instead of a place of for LGBT community to feel a sense of belonging, protection and privacy in the way that it used to be. Wayne Myslik argues that these gay neighborhoods are most important as sites of cultural resistance because they provide symbolic meanings for struggles that have moved from the political to the cultural sphere. For the LGBT community, safety meant having the freedom to be openly gay and to challenge the normalization of public spaces as straight, rather than freedom from violence. These days, Chueca seems to be losing its sense of the community and is becoming more and more touristic. Therefore, the third research question is that is Chueca experiencing a degaying process?

2. Terminology

(1) Gay

The word “gay” was originally used to mean carefree, cheerful, or bright and showy. The term's use as a reference to homosexuality may date back to as early as the late 19th century, although its use gradually increased in the mid-20th century. In the 1960s,

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gay became the word favored by homosexual men to describe their sexual orientation.\textsuperscript{98} It is sometimes used to cover both male and female homosexuals. In this master’s thesis, it refers to a male person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted predominantly to persons of the same sex. This attraction may be experienced by men who are openly gay, by others who are less open and by those who adopt a heterosexual lifestyle.

The terms “gay” and “lesbian” are not flawless, though. Munt\textsuperscript{99} states that by using two different words for men and women, outdated gender binaries are reinforced. However, gay and lesbian are the terms most widely used in the professional and academic world, and therefore the thesis will continue using the two terms.

(2) Homosexual

The word homosexual will be used extensively in this research too. It has, to some extent, negative connotations of discrimination.\textsuperscript{100} However, here the term is used in a neutral way to describe individuals having sexual desire for, or sexual activity with, persons of the same biological sex.\textsuperscript{101}

A common mistake in defining homosexuality is to say that it is strictly based on same-sex activity. There is a distinction between homosexual activity and homosexual orientation. The former is probably more widespread that the latter.\textsuperscript{102} In other words, a man may partake in same-sex behavior but not identify with the gay population at large.


\textsuperscript{101} Howard L. Hughes, \textit{Pink Tourism: Holidays of Gay Men and Lesbians}, 15.

\textsuperscript{102} Howard L. Hughes, \textit{Pink Tourism: Holidays of Gay Men and Lesbians}, 16.
(3) Queer

The word queer is used often in academia since it is a term that encompasses a more complex understanding of group identity than gay and lesbian. Queer includes all kinds of sexualities different from heterosexuality such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender persons, etc.

(4) LGBT

The latest term is LGBTQIA+ since it is the most inclusive and correct term when talking about gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and many others. However, in this thesis, the use of LGBT will be applied because LGBT is widely used in marketing and academic literature.

3. Field research: qualitative interviews

(1) Introduction:

No matter which realm of social science we are exploring, we rely on a common scientific method, developed over the course of several centuries of scientific revolution spurred by Renaissance philosophers. Rather than consulting an established text, researchers seek to answer research questions by collecting empirical information as their primary data. This data is then subjected to critical analysis that in turn leads to

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103 A common abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender, Genderqueer, Queer, Intersexed, Agender, Asexual, and Ally community.


generalizable conclusions, which hopefully allow investigators to better understand the world.\textsuperscript{106}

To comprehend the development of the gay neighborhood Chueca in Madrid in this modern era and discover gay business owners’ motivations, their management styles and the current challenges they are facing, this thesis relies on in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews with gay business owners in Chueca.

(2) Qualitative interview characteristics:

A. Qualitative interviews v. Quantitative interviews:

The use of qualitative interviews is popular among scholars who seek to understand the nature of phenomena of the social sciences.

This research will apply the semi-structured interview method. This type of interview addresses specific dimensions of the research question while also leaving space for study participants to offer new insights on the topic of study according to their experiences.

The biggest difference between qualitative and quantitative methods is that in qualitative interviews, participants are allowed to offer rich and in-depth qualitative data. Even though it can be a more complicated process for the researcher to transcribe and collate the interview responses, this method reduces researcher biases within the study, particularly when the investigation involves many participants.\textsuperscript{107}

When researchers utilize qualitative methods, instead of making use of statistical


software like SPSS and Stata to produce standard descriptive statistics and inferential statistical tests, they rely on data-reduction techniques that are designed to work with words, whether they are full text summaries, sentence fragments, key terms, or something else that is more word-like than number-like. The common point of both methods is that it is important to identify which variables are important and informative.

B. Qualitative interview classification:

According to Daniel W. Turner III, qualitative interviews can be classified into three categories: informal conversational interviews, general interviews and standardized open-ended interviews.

Informal conversational interviews contain spontaneous questions in a natural interaction. The researcher asks questions in order to learn more about the social setting without having a predetermined set of structured questions.

A general interview is between an informal conversational interview and standardized open-ended interview. The ways that questions are potentially worded depend on the researcher conducting the interview. That is to say, researchers can change the way they pose the research questions. With this method, the lack of consistency in the way investigators conduct the research can be an issue.

Standardized open-ended interviews are relatively structured in terms of the wording of the questions. Participants are always asked identical questions, but the questions are open-ended.

Each type of interview has its advantages and disadvantages and no way of doing research is better than others as the choice of method always depends upon the topic of

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108 Gordon Willis, Analysis of the Cognitive Interview in Questionnaire Design, 149.

the project as well as upon the researchers’ individual preferences. Standardized open-ended interviews were chosen for this master’s thesis because they allow participants to contribute as much information on their viewpoints and experiences as they desire in a more orderly way than with the other two types of interviews.

(3) Positivism v. Interpretivism:

The selected research method of this thesis is qualitative in-depth semi-structured empirical interviews and therefore the investigation has utilized an interpretivist approach.

The interpretivist approach is characterized by the belief that meaning is constructed socially by the perceiver within a social environment. It can be distinguished from its opposite, positivism, which holds that a true, concrete world exists and gives rise to meaning. Apart from the construction of meanings based on human thought, interpretivists insist that among the various interpretations of a phenomenon, all are valid, rather than some being either right or wrong. The idea that reality is constructed through people’s interpretations is agreed upon by many scholars, most of whom believe that no explanation of reality is the right one because reality can be understood in different ways depending on the person who experiences it.

The knowledge this investigation aims to produce is based on communication between the researcher and the interviewees partaking in the study. Through this interaction, many different worldviews and realities will be represented in this thesis. In a nutshell, the interpretive paradigm heavily emphasizes processes by which respondents give meaning to questions.

(4) Interview preparation:

A. Interview questions:

The questions are aimed at understanding the owners’ motivations in starting a gay business, the changes they have witnessed throughout the years in Chueca, their management styles, and the challenges they have faced such as the possible loss of young clients due to technological advances and the ‘touristification’ of gay neighborhoods.

Moreover, the interviews seek insights from the gay business owners on their thoughts about commodifying gay culture, marketing strategies, marginalized LGBT community members such as lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, market economy impact, the hierarchy of homosexual men, the role of local governments and so forth (see annex 1). The questions are open-ended, as neutral as possible, worded clearly and were asked one at a time.

B. Selection of participants:

Qualitative research does not involve the random sampling of participants in the same sense as quantitative research does. It is critical to formulate criteria for the selection of participants so that the results respond to the research question. Qualified candidates are people who will provide the most credible information for the purposes of the study and who are willing to openly and honestly share information or “their story”.

While the number of participants is often influenced by many resources including time, cost, and other practicalities, the most ideal approach is to recruit participants until the researcher feels that the interview data are no longer revealing new thematic
patterns. In other words, the research will reach a kind of saturation point.113

Originally, since this research was going to be conducted by one researcher and
given the time limitation, this research was going to focus mainly on gay bars and gay
dance clubs in Chueca. However, due to the COVID-19 situation, the response rate was
extremely low, which led the researcher to interview the owners of a wider range of
businesses in Chueca, such as gay bars, dance clubs, sex shops, cafés, bookstores, and
so forth. Moreover, this investigation did not set a seniority limit, which means both
owners that have been in the neighborhood for quite some time and others that moved to
it more recently were interviewed.

C. Finding participants:

a. Three personal participant-seeking visits:

The process of finding participants was incredibly challenging due to the COVID-19
situation. The author made three attempts to find interviewees in Chueca in person
before the government started to ask businesses to shut down.

On March 11, 2020, the first attempt was not successful because the researcher
visited the area at 17:00 when the majority of the bars were closed. Only one business
owner showed her willingness to participate but she also explained that the current
situation was very complicated and said that she would prefer to help when the situation
calmed down.

On March 12, 2020, a second visit to the neighborhood was made and 37 businesses
were visited. Many businesses were closed due to the coronavirus and some owners
rejected the interview request for the same reason. It was obvious that the virus is

113 Galletta, Anne, and William E. Cross, Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond: From
impacting the businesses heavily as well as business owners’ emotions. Several business owners expressed their willingness to partake after everything calms down, but the situation did not improve until May 2020. Some owners are foreigners, so it was also hard to contact them, and some potential participants turned down the interviews for personal reasons. For example, one bar owner rejected the interview because he is heterosexual and he does not want people to know he owns a gay bar.

On March 13, 2020, Madrid’s government asked businesses to close their terraces and advised the hospitality industry to close down. The third visit was conducted; however, all the businesses were closing down and rejected the interview.

b. Personal visit approach and Spain’s situation under COVID-19

The interview subjects were initially approached by the investigator in person. If the owner was found on the business premises, the researcher explained to him/her the purpose of the interview and asked if he/she would be willing to participate in the investigation. The format of the interview was also presented, as well as the terms of confidentiality, the expected interview duration, and the researcher’s contact details.

In the cases where the owner could not be located, the researcher talked to other staff members, asked for contact information and left an invitation letter with contact information so that potential interviewees could get in touch about participating or ask questions about the research (see annex 2).

c. Spain’s situation under COVID-19

On March 14, 2020, Spain announced a state of alarm and national quarantine for 15 days, meaning all the businesses were closed down and people could not leave their house without justifications such as doing necessary grocery shopping, going to pharmacies, and so forth. The research was therefore impeded greatly.
The difficulty of finding interviewees increased as Spain became the second most severely virus-stricken country in the world and the government announced the prolongation of the confinement period. The author exhausted all possible means to find participants, including asking journalists who interviewed people who could qualify for this research and contacting all the businesses in Chueca via their websites or Google Maps. On top of that, the investigator also tried to reach businesses through their social media accounts such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The confinement was prolonged until May 10, leading many business owners to feel desperate and upset and to show their emotion in their emails and phone calls. Fortunately, the researcher managed to interview several business owners and some of them accepted to participate during this difficult time because they believe that this research aims to cast light on a stigmatized group to which they belong.

d. Snowball sampling

A method called snowballing or snowball sampling was introduced and applied to interviewees in order to find more participants under these difficult circumstances. Snowballing means existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances.

In this case, at the end of each interview all the interviewees were asked whether they knew somebody who would be qualified and would have an interest in participating in this research. This method of snowballing became very helpful in this critical time. This technique is normally applied when a mutual trust has been established and interviewees consider the investigator to be trustworthy. At the end of each interview, the contact of details of potential interviewees were respectfully requested. However, it is important to acknowledge that this method does not guarantee a representative sample of the targeted population, in this case business owners in
Chueca. On the other hand, initial subjects tend to nominate people that they know well, and it is highly possible that the subjects share the same traits and characteristics. As a result, what the researcher will obtain is only a small subgroup of the entire population.

D. Interview setting:

It is generally recommended that in-person interviews be conducted in locations with few distractions to facilitate audio recording. It is also important that the location is comfortable for participants (for example the respondent’s place of work) in order to ensure confidentiality and encourage trust. However, due to the COVID-19 situation, the interviews were conducted via Skype or WhatsApp phone calls. The interview approach was informal and conversational to build rapport and respondents were encouraged to speak freely and at length.

E. Research ethics

a. The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

This thesis dissertation follows the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity114, abiding by its fundamental principles of reliability, honesty, respect and accountability. The results and interpretations will be published in an open, honest, transparent and accurate manner, and respect confidentiality of data or findings when legitimately required to do so. The author handles research subjects with respect and care, and in accordance with legal and ethical provisions.

b. Good practice guide to researching LGBT communities and issues

As this investigation is related to the LGBT community, it is of great importance to stick to the five ethical principles suggested by the LGBT Foundation in its publication ‘Ethical research: good practice guide to researching LGBT communities and issues’.115

The first principle is integrity and quality. Since the LGBT community is not always strongly represented in existing research, it is important to consider the impact of any research and how any new knowledge it provides could benefit the community. Hence, the investigator should have a good understanding of said community in order to ensure the research is designed with respect for the participants and that interactions with participants are appropriate, generating accurate findings that are representative of the community.

The guide also advises investigators to amplify the voices of LGBT participants, rather than speak for them. It also holds that everyone involved in the research should be properly acknowledged and thanked for their contribution.

The second principle is to fully inform researchers and participants. All interviewees should be fully informed of the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research. They must also be aware of what their participation in the research entails and any risks that might be involved.

In the invitation letter for the interview, messages on social media and emails to the potential participants, clear information was presented. This included the focus of the research, the purpose of the research, information on the researcher, what the research is asking participants to do, the expected duration of the interview process, the risks of

taking part and how these risks were being addressed. When it comes to informing
LGBT participants, researchers should be sensitive to the fact that they may not be out,
which shows the importance of the next principle: confidentiality and anonymity.

It is the ethical responsibility of the researcher to preserve the confidentiality and
anonymity of participants throughout the research process. This ensures that they can
speak freely and that they will not face consequences for their involvement in the
research should they be identified. The importance of preventing participants from
being identified cannot be overstressed and thus, to ensure confidentiality and
anonymity, number-coding was used and any other information that could help identify
participants was excluded from this dissertation.

The LGBT Foundation also encourages researchers to conduct interviews where the
participants will not be overheard by anybody nearby but given the confinement
imposed by the Spanish government and the fact that the interviews were conducted
online, it was easier to control the privacy of settings.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed, although select details were
omitted or altered to protect the participants’ anonymity. All digital documents and
recordings are currently stored in password-protected folders and will be deleted after
the agreed period of time stated in the consent form signed by all participants before the
interview. The agreed date to destroy the files is August 31, 2020.

The fourth principle is voluntary participation free from coercion. No participant
should feel as though they are taking part in research against their will at any stage of
their involvement. It is therefore essential that participants are able to give their
informed consent to take part in research and are given the right to withdraw their
consent at any time. Failure to provide this information can constitute a form of
coercion. Participants should even be permitted to withdraw their consent during the
interview and any data they have provided should be fully removed from the research.
However, it is understandable that this often becomes impossible after the data has been anonymized and/or already analyzed. Therefore, it is appropriate to stipulate a cut-off date after which participants can no longer withdraw their consent, as long as this is clearly communicated and explained in a written consent form for participants to read and sign with the purpose of obtaining informed consent from the interviewees. For this thesis, the investigator informed participants that they could withdraw their consent up to a week after the end of the interview process. In a nutshell, an information sheet was provided by the researcher before the interview to ensure that all participants were aware of their rights to ask questions, withdraw their participation at any time and to withdraw their consent by a fixed date (see annex 1).

The fifth and final principle is avoiding harm. Whether it is physical, mental or emotional, researchers should take great care to ensure that participants are not harmed as a result of their involvement. Thus, the language used in the interview should be LGBT-inclusive and appropriate. The investigator should try to make sure that they do not ask anything that could be considered offensive, disrespectful or invasive.

(5) Interview execution:

Before the interview, participants were asked to sign a consent form granting their consent to the use of the interview for the research and also the use of recording devices. After greeting the participant, the researcher started the interview with a statement of the purpose of the research and an expression of gratitude for the participant’s involvement. Broad questions were then asked in order to create openings for them to begin to speak from their experience.

When necessary, the researcher probed for clarification and mentally noted meaningful junctures in the participants’ story which could be returned to for greater exploration later in the interview.
When some degree of trust was established, narrower questions related to the research questions were raised and the participants were offered an opportunity to tell a narrative in relation to theory-driven questions.

Before ending the interviews by thanking the participants and emphasizing their contribution to the research, they were asked if they knew any others who would be willing and qualified to participate in the investigation.

Due to the open-ended nature of the interviews, the participants’ responses sometimes offered a perspective that differed from the theoretical framework, creating a new meaning. Therefore, it was important to engage the participants by exploring their experiences through another angle of vision in order to facilitate later interpretation of the data and the researcher’s capacity to respond to the research question.

On the other side, respondents in an interview did not always answer the question posed to them and occasionally answered a question that was planned to be asked later in the interview.\textsuperscript{116} Due to this unpredictability, the researcher had to be flexible during the interviews.

(6) Data analysis for qualitative interviews:

According to Gordon B. Willis\textsuperscript{117}, the term “analysis” is classically vague. He defines analysis as the series of steps that occur between data collection and the communication of findings. In qualitative research, data analysis actually occurs alongside data collection. In this way the analysis is ongoing, as researchers note thematic patterns emerging in the data.

This research followed Willis’ suggested steps for conducting data analysis,


\textsuperscript{117} Gordon Willis, Analysis of the Cognitive Interview in Questionnaire Design, 161.
including providing a definition of the data, reducing the data into some type of summary of results, interpreting results relevant to research objectives and reporting results.\textsuperscript{118} It put emphasis on the words that participants themselves used to let readers to understand better their arguments and allow data and theory to have a conversation.\textsuperscript{119}

As for the data that did not respond directly to the research question but nonetheless yielded information that is important to the study, it was offered as a recommendation for future follow-up research in chapter five.

4. \textbf{Participatory observation:}

Participant observation is one type of data collection method by practitioner-scholars typically used in qualitative research and ethnography. This type of methodology is employed in many disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, communication studies, human geography, and social psychology. This method helps the researcher decide which questions are relevant, what language to use, and what the culture is like.\textsuperscript{120}

As Kang et al. argue, gender and LGBT studies are based on personal experience turning into research, theorizing lived experience.\textsuperscript{121} Hence, it is necessary to point out that this research has utilized my personal experience to identify research questions and describe Chueca’s current situation. As an insider, I can get a better feel of what is important to the research participants and therefore this investigation underwent less

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\textsuperscript{118} Gordon Willis, Analysis of the Cognitive Interview in Questionnaire Design, 171.
\textsuperscript{119} Gordon Willis, Analysis of the Cognitive Interview in Questionnaire Design, 173.
\textsuperscript{120} Barbara B. Kawulich, “Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method,” \textit{Forum: Qualitative Social Research} 6 (2005): 91.
\textsuperscript{121} Miliann Kang et al., \textit{Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies} (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2017): 6.
\end{flushright}
difficulty during the interviews due to relatively enough knowledge about the area and experience from frequenting some premises that participants of the interviews own.
Chapter 4 Results and discussion

1. Introduction:

In this chapter, collected data from conducted interviews will be discussed with a focus on Chueca’s gay business owners’ entrepreneurial motivations, management, views on how Chueca has changed over the years, and the challenges they have faced.

This research aims at casting light on the real opinions of Chueca’s gay business owners’ and seeks to create knowledge and understanding of Madrid’s gay neighborhood in this modern era.

For the purposes of this thesis, 11 qualitative interviews were conducted with gay business owners in Chueca. Seven of these interviewees owned bars, one owned a night club, one a bookstore, one an Airbnb and one a sex shop. Ten of these eleven interviewees were men and one was a woman. In addition, a twelfth interview was conducted with Dr. Ignacio Elpidio, a Spanish anthropologist from Madrid and an expert on the history and significance of Chueca. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and just over two hours.

2. Summary of interviews:

(1) Entrepreneurial motivations:

A range of entrepreneurial motivations were mentioned in the interviews, such as the wish to be free and to have time to travel. However, those motivations are also dependent upon the type of business concerned. In the following paragraphs, these entrepreneurial motivations will be shown.
A. The lavender ceiling:

Surprisingly, participant 10 is the only informant who touched on the idea of the lavender ceiling. He had a sex shop in Amsterdam before moving back to Spain and opening a sex shop in Chueca. He had been working for 25 years before he started his business in the Netherlands, and he indicates that being a business owner is pleasant, free and he enjoys the right to make important decisions. Based on his working experience in the Netherlands, he suggests that being gay is not a problem in the Netherlands and there was no difficulty for him to get promoted in the company.

David J. Bell states that gays are normally not open about their sexuality at work. However, social acceptance and openness towards LGBT people has changed substantially over the past few decades, especially in certain parts of the world. Therefore, the lavender ceiling might not be one of the motivations for Chueca’s business owners to launch a business in the contexts of the Netherlands or Spain.

Moreover, this would be in line with the constructivist thoughts that every phenomenon needs to be understood in its social and historical context, as societal views on homosexuality have changed over time.

B. Previous related working experiences:

The most common answer was that they had previously worked in the industry before starting their own business and therefore found it easier to set up a similar business. Five out of eleven informants mentioned their previous working experiences as one of their motivations.

Participant 9:
“My business partner worked in two or three bars before, but this is the first time that

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we have owned an entire business ourselves, and we have succeeded...at age 50!”

C. Undesirable party environment in the past:

Three informants considered that there was lack of nice leisure places in Chueca in the past and they wanted to open businesses with a better atmosphere.

Participant 4:
“Many bars were not professional, and the public was faced with exorbitant prices for poor service. I wanted to do something that people value and at a fair price. And it worked.”

Participant 8:
“The atmospheres of bars were ugly, dirty, and unpleasant. I wanted to create a bar that offers good service, good treatment with a lot of respect and inspires customer loyalty.”

D. Taking over legendary businesses:

Two interviewees were former workers at two of the most famous LGBT businesses in Chueca and they did not want to see these legendary long-running places to close. Therefore, they took over the businesses to keep their histories alive.

Participant 5:
“It is the first gay nightclub with a drag queen show in the neighborhood or even in Spain. I have been an owner for 3 years, but I had been working at this club for 23 years beforehand. To put that into perspective, this disco has 40 years of history. The previous owner wanted to retire, and he offered me the chance to continue this business. It is a very emblematic place and I would be very sorry if it were gone. This club started when society was persecuting homosexuals and it was a place of refuge.”

Participant 6:
“The business has been in operation for 25 years. I was previously a manager here and because the former owners wanted to retire from the nightlife, they gave me the opportunity to take over the business.”

E. Liberty:

Two informants stressed the importance of being free as an advantage of being an
owner. Both of them showed a strong interest in traveling and argued that running a business arrange their schedule with much more flexibility.

Participant 2:
“I don’t do business to always be there. I want to have freedom. Being an owner allows me to travel as much as possible and I can leave whenever I wish.”

F. The philosophy of the business:

The owner of the only accommodation business in this research, participant 3, shared his view on Airbnb and its philosophy. He believes that Airbnb is a great way to travel on a tight budget and even experience the local lifestyle. This led him to open his Airbnb eight years ago.

Participant 3:
“Madrid was not touristic at all 15 years ago. Spanish tourism put emphasis on its beaches. It was not until low-cost flights started to emerge that Madrid became a popular travel destination. I also think that in Madrid tourists and Airbnb are still far from becoming a problem for local habitants.”

G. The LGBT community’s wishes and needs:

When it comes to the relation between their motivations and the LGBT community’s needs, four interviewees expressed very realistic standpoints. They point out the importance of financial viability and they care about benefits to a great degree.

Participant 2:
“I set up this business as a business. I look for options to offer it to the maximum.”

However, another group placed emphasis on the LGBT community and affirmed their businesses’ care for the community’s needs and wishes.

Participant 10:
“Yes, especially for my partner. He likes to help, not only by promoting our products but also by providing health information, recommending places to go out, etc.”

Participant 11:
“We wanted to create a safe place where people feel comfortable and can be themselves, as well as have fun. We also try to carry out actions that promote social
One of the most notable motivations revealed in this investigation is that of the owner of the bookstore. It is the first and the oldest bookshop specializing in LGBT literature with 26 years of history. It is not simply a bookstore, it is also a space for the community. The owner made a trip to LGBT bookstores in London (Gay's The Word) and New York (Oscar Wilde Bookshop) to find some answers about her sexuality and challenge some of the dominant ideas of her heterosexist education. When she eventually came back to Spain, she was worried that there was no place to guide LGBT people. Therefore, she decided to create a bookstore where people could feel free, happy, like part of a community and where anyone who wanted to know more about LGBT community could find answers to their questions. She also wanted to boost Chueca’s profile as a center of cultural and social activity and increase the community’s daytime visibility.

Participant 1:

“We were psychologists, advisers, confidence-boosters... We organized cultural activities, we invited the press and tried our best to make LGBT culture visible. Many came looking for answers to all those questions they posed themselves and could not find in any other bookstore. They were looking for literature with themes and plots that felt familiar, for example stories with homosexual protagonists. Our customers were able to raise their self-esteem and feel like members of LGBT culture with our help. And it is my motivation to help find answers.”

(2) Entrepreneur managements and challenges:

A. Composition of clients:

According to the informants, especially those who have been in Chueca for several decades, the composition of clients has changed significantly. In the past, the majority of patrons were male homosexuals, while now their establishments are frequented by a
diverse range of people, including bisexuals, pansexuals, lesbians, heterosexuals and many others. The main reason for this change is social change and the normalization of the LGBT community within society.

Participant 5:
“I have every kind of client. When I started to work here 23 years ago, it was just male gays. And now everyone – a mixed clientele. So much freedom... bisexual, pansexual, lesbian, everyone is welcome, we are like a family.”

Since the interviewees have different type of businesses, the composition of their clientele varies between them and depending on the hour and day. For example, participant 6 has a gay bar with a drag queen show which attracts people from Madrid, other places in Spain and other countries. During the week, the percentage of LGBT patrons is 90% while on weekends this percentage can go down to 40% due to the high number of heterosexual tourists frequenting the place. On the contrary, participant 8’s bar is more like a café in the mornings and attracts a very mixed clientele during the week, including local lawyers, writers and architects, although it becomes gayer on weekends.

B. Change of flow of clients:

A surprising 9 out of 11 business owners interviewed held that their businesses were doing very well before the COVID-19 crisis, but that success depends on the season and type of business. If we take participant 3’s Airbnb for example, we can see the changes in tourist flows in Chueca over the course of a year. The participant pointed out that January, February and August are the worst months for his business since people normally do not come to Madrid during these months, preferring beach destinations instead. The best times are from March to May and from September to November. The busiest times for Madrid’s tourism are, of course, the gay pride in July, Christmas and Easter.
If we want to know how clientele flows have changed over the decades, we can take a look at participant 1’s long-running bookstore and participant 5’s nightclub. The former mentioned that starting the business was tough in the beginning because many LGBT people were in the closet, but fortunately with the advance of LGBT rights in Spain and the development of the neighborhood, the bookshop became popular and enjoyed both national and international press coverage. However, the business was hard hit by the financial crisis, which took a long to recover from, and it is now affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

Participant 5, the owner of a legendary nightclub, was the only pessimistic one in the interviews. He compares the current situation to the “golden age” of 1990 to 2000, stating that there were many more visitors to his establishment during that period than now and that the number of clients never stops decreasing. He was also the only interviewee to point out the impact of the drug trade on the neighborhood. In addition, he thinks there are too many offers and competitors in Chueca. Besides, he believes that customers are growing “tired of these things”, suggesting the need to innovate his business.

Participant 5:
“We must find another method. Drugs have destroyed the area a lot. Chueca was a marginal, drug-abortion neighborhood for a long time and now drugs like cocaine and heroin are making a comeback in nightclubs. In addition to drugs, the multi-offer had an impact on customers. Now there are many business deals in Chueca and people are also a little tired of things.”

C. Strategy to attract LGBT clients:

In response to a question on how they attract clients, all participants acknowledged that they benefit from an extremely ideal location. Chueca is right in the city center and even tourists who have never heard of the neighborhood can accidentally stumble across it. They also consider it important to utilize social media platforms such as Facebook
and Instagram and to be featured in magazines or tourist guides. The distribution of flyers on the streets, at the door and in hotels is also an important technique for attracting business, as is holding special activities, promotions or shows. For example, participant 11’s bar is famous for its RuPaul’s Drag Race themed party and participant 4’s bar has a famous bear party. Lastly, word of mouth is also considered indispensable. Participant 4 and participant 5 both agreed that good value for money is crucial and that it is not recommended to offer low quality alcohol.

When asked how to attract the LGBT community to their businesses, participants 7 and 8 argued against attracting an exclusive crowd, demonstrating that it is no longer a necessary thing to do.

Participant 5:
“We are not trying to attract exclusively gay audiences. Homosexuality has been normalized and consequently this is not necessary anymore. Good service naturally attracts both straight and gay publics. Since we are in Chueca, we don’t even need to use flyers because people know they are in a gay neighborhood. If my business were in Chamberí (another area of Madrid), maybe we would use them.”

Another participant echoed this point of view. Participant 3 also held that in this open era, it is wiser to focus on the whole market instead of the segmented gay market.

Participant 3:
“Limiting is a business mistake. If I were to only focus on LGBT customers, I might lose a lot of benefits and also tourists from conservative countries like India, China, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and other Arabic countries.”

Another surprising comment made by participant 3 is that he changed his preference of clients. He actually likes to have heterosexuals as his clients rather than homosexuals since he feels that heterosexuals are more traditional and keep his Airbnb tidier.

Participant 3:
“I believe that, to date, straight people are more traditional. I prefer to have heterosexual tenants, so my flat suffers less.”

It is obvious that the preference of customers differs depending on the type of business and in this case it was surprising to learn that the informant preferred to have
heterosexuals in his Airbnb. As a matter of fact, gays are sometimes targeted by leisure zones with the purpose of reducing violence and rowdiness. In Romford, on the eastern edge of London, the police encouraged one club to start a gay night as part of a broad effort to attract a “more sober and ethnically diverse crowd.”123

In contrast to the informant’s view and Airbnb experiences, the director of a British gay tour operator claimed that “hoteliers love the fact that we’re a gay company because they tend not to get their hotel rooms or apartments smashed up, and they tend not to get complaints from other residents about terrible drunken revelry at four o’clock in the morning.”124 This again shows the constructivist approach of multiple life views even in similar contexts.

D. Challenges throughout the years:

It was predictable at this stage that respondents would say COVID-19 when asked what challenges they are currently facing. It is relevant to know that this research was designed much earlier than the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis and is more focused on other kinds of challenges or problems that business owners had before the outbreak.

COVID-19 has severely affected the neighborhood as businesses, especially those in hospitality and tourism, are fundamental to Chueca, a neighborhood of services and leisure. Participant 8 also pointed out that the premises are already very small in this neighborhood and if we limit the number of clients, business might be unviable. He also anticipated that this virus will heavily affect almost everything in daily life because of Spanish people’s behavior.

Participant 8:
“We Spaniards touch, hug and kiss often and we literally live on the street. We

southern Europeans like to celebrate things and dance on the street.”"

Other challenges faced by the interviewees are diverse and vary depending on their business. The LGBT bookshop owned by participant 1 has experienced two major challenges. The first one was the lack of Spanish LGBT writers and works in the first few years. They solved the problem by setting up their own publishing house, which just turned 25 years old and has published over 400 books. Another crisis was the Spanish economic crisis which forced them to move to a smaller premise and fire all the staff. They were so desperate that they launched a gay and lesbian awareness campaign that saved the bookshop. Before the crisis the bookstore was doing well and on the right track and they were quite happy about it until the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020.

Participant 2 and participant 3 both have experienced difficulties dealing with the government. The bar owned by participant 2 is in a basement and he endeavored to obtain the permission from the local authorities to open his bar until 6 in the morning. In other words, he wants to turn his bar into a night club, but he did not manage to acquire permission for this, nor did he obtain permission to open a terrace.

Participant 2:
“We struggled a lot to be able to open until 6 and they didn't allow us. The city hall did not give us the permission to have terrace either. In Madrid if you don't have a terrace your business is dead.”

Participant 3 revealed his worries about the fight between the considerable lobbying power of hotel groups and Airbnb. The problem is that the administration for Airbnb is a mess: taxes are the concern of national governments, tourism is the concern of autonomous communities and licensing is the concern of municipal governments. On the one hand, local inhabitants in the city center complain about tourists and want to limit many things. On the other hand, hotels are trying to use their lobbying power to force Airbnb out of the market by setting up unfair regulations.
Participant 5, the owner of a long-running night club, indicated two major challenges he is confronting in addition to COVID-19. On the one side, many people assume that in the basements of gay clubs, people are having sex in dark rooms. However, he claims that this was a thing of the past. He hopes to open people’s minds and let them know that gay culture is not only perversion, promiscuity, sex, drugs, and so on.

On the other side, this night club was famous for drag queen shows and the owner himself is a drag queen. He thinks drag culture is not accepted as gay or lesbian at least in Spain. He hopes drag queens will get more attention and respect soon.

*Participant 5:*

“*Drag queen culture matters a lot to me. RuPaul’s Drag’s Race is a fad in the US even though they have a homophobic president. But in Spain, even though it is a very open country, it is still rare to see a drag queen hosting a television program.*”

(3) The LGBT community as a niche market:

A. Views on the LGBT market as a niche market:

In general, all interviewees agreed that the LGBT community is a niche market and the transformation of the Chueca neighborhood is proof of its market value. Participant 7 described Chueca as dangerous in the past: the subway station was scary and the square was not always safe. People started rebuilding the neighborhood as a gay area and the LGBT community brought business and life to Chueca. It was a place of refuge where the LGBT community could live peacefully without asking anyone's permission. Chueca was like an island. In the past, the gay pride was confined to Chueca, but now it is a massive party throughout the whole city of Madrid that draws millions of people each year, producing tremendous benefits for the tourism industry.

On the other hand, with the development of Chueca and further social integration of
the LGBT community, businesses in Chueca expect to have more diverse clientele and welcome people of every sexual orientation.

Participant 5 criticized big international brands exploiting the aforementioned market, stating that there are homophobic companies that put rainbow flags on their products in order to take advantage of “pink power” or “pink money”. Participant 2 encouraged business owners not to limit themselves by only focusing on the LGBT market, unless it is a very specific business targeting an exclusively gay population such as a gay sauna or a gay cruising club. He suggests that apart from being economically profitable, a business that welcomes non-LGBT people can increase their understanding of the community, erasing their stereotypes and prejudice. However, he also admits that this is in the context of Chueca. If the gay business was in another place, he would only focus on the LGBT community since in other cities, the LGBT community might still need a place of refuge.

Participant 2:
“[They] LGBT people] are people with education, without children, DINKs sometimes and tend to spend more on leisure activities but there is no need to limit your business! It is close-minded and a business error to only focus on the community. If your business fits everyone and if straight people can get to know the community better, why not focus on the whole market? Straight guys can shop in a fetish clothing store!”

Although as discussed in the chapter 2, the idea of targeting the LGBT market because it is lucrative lacks theoretical support, Sender refuses the need for any theoretical basis for market segmentation since a market segment exists as long as marketers believe it does.\textsuperscript{125} It is noticed that the majority of informants agree that it is a niche market, but it is important to always bear in mind that there are very different profiles within the community with very different tastes and needs.

\textsuperscript{125} Katherine Sender, \textit{Business, Not Politics: The Making of the Gay Market}, 139.
Ignacio Elpidio

“I see it as a set of niches. For example, in LGBT tourism there are destinations that target LGBT families or calmer couples, without parties, while there are other destinations that focus on partying and having fun.”

B. Tourists’ characteristics in Chueca:

Participant 1 has been in the neighborhood for decades and she said that in the past, when international travel was unpopular and society was still conservative, domestic tourists came every weekend eager to enjoy a space of freedom that allowed them to publicly express their feelings without danger. Chueca was the place that made them build and reinforce their self-esteem and they knew that in Chueca they could be free.

Nowadays, several interviewees think LGBT tourists are educated, pleasant and have more purchasing power than locals.

Participant 9:

“They are a delightful group of clients [LGBT tourists]. They are educated, orderly, positive, permissive, empathetic, polite, healthy, and with a desire to have fun while respecting others. There are many Europeans from England and France and most of them have a relatively high budget, which is great for our bar and for the entire hospitality industry in general.”

Nonetheless, participant 5 expressed a different view on the incoming tourists, especially in recent years. He finds that many young Erasmus students are coming to Madrid, most of whom have little money and are not well-behaved, particularly those from the US and the UK.

Participant 5:

“Tourism has become a lot worse in recent years ... now in my dance club there are many young heterosexual people on a shoestring budget, especially Erasmus students from the States or England. They often get really drunk and vomit in the streets.”

Again, the LGBT community is incredibly diverse so it would be incorrect to generalize all LGBT tourists, especially because there are many LGBT tourists who do not travel to LGBT destinations or use LGBT facilities. However, these interviews
intend to shed a light on business owners’ experiences and create knowledge or understanding.

(4) Chueca: the present and the past

A. Chueca as a world-famous gay neighborhood:

Concerning how people find Chueca, all interviewees seemed confident and positive that Chueca is world famous. Participant 5 compared it to the Red-Light District of Amsterdam and participant 8 compared it to Soho in London. Several informants mentioned the 2017 WorldPride, which is evidence of Chueca’s popularity and recognition among the global LGBT community. Participant 1 also recalled that for many years Chueca and the Spanish LGBT community attracted a lot of international media attention, especially when homosexual marriage was legalized. It should also be recalled that Madrid’s gay pride is one of the prides that attracts the most foreigners in the world. Before the financial crisis in 2008, Chueca had around 200 businesses. Ignacio Elpidio also pointed out that Chueca is now sold by the Madrid city government as a modern part of Madrid. Chueca entered into tourism promotion and developed from something marginal or "new" to a central part of the Madrid tourist destination.

Participant 10:
“Chueca is well known in the global gay community. It is normal that when you visit a city, you look for the gay neighborhood. Gay bars are meeting places which give gay and lesbian tourists opportunities to get into contact with the local culture."

B. Changes in Chueca throughout the years:

a. Chueca in the eighties:

Informants who have been in the area long enough know the history of Chueca and
how it was in the 80s. Chueca was a poor, ugly district filled with drug dealers. As mentioned above, when society was more conservative, LGBT community members had to come to Madrid for weekends to be themselves and free. This phenomenon was called “Cinderella syndrome”. When participant 5 recalled this period of time, he mentioned that customers had to come and leave by taxi, showing that the neighborhood was not really safe.

Participant 3:
“In the 80s, Chueca was a dark place. The smell of pee was everywhere, there were a lot of drugs on the streets, and it was a dangerous place...you had to think twice before going there. It was before the neighborhood became gentrified, so it was not nice and no one walked in the area in the mornings.”

Despite that, Chueca experienced an explosion of liberty at the end of 1980s and it became a trendy area. In 1987, Chueca became the first place in whole Spain to play house music in its dance clubs.

Participant 5:
"People did not imagine that we were going to get where we are: number one in Europe and in the world in terms of freedom. It is clear that a neighborhood can be revitalized."

b. Chueca in the nighties:

In the 90s, Chueca became a popular district, especially after 1995. Thanks to the city government’s remodeling efforts, Chueca became a delightful place with many colors and boutique shops. People started to stroll around the neighborhood and come to Chueca to see homosexuals.

Participant 2:
“Many people came to Chueca to see mannequin dolls with gay clothes in the windows. Chueca was like a place of attraction. People also came to see boys kissing.”

Gays and lesbians became objects of “the tourist gaze,” meaning that the gay space became like a zoo or circus. The feeling of being observed and exposed is not always
enjoyable, which is one of the reasons why some LGBT community members find the gay neighborhood unnecessary. Haslop et al.\textsuperscript{126} in their study of Manchester’s gay village, found that at least one person felt alienated the first time she went to a lesbian bar. Consequently, it is critical to be aware that though many gays and lesbians do feel comfortable in gay spaces, it is incorrect to assume that this is true for everyone.

c. Chueca in its golden age 2000s:

All informants mentioned that Chueca went through a better time in every sense. It was a time of economic boom, greater societal acceptance and unforgettable parties.

\textit{Participant 2:}

\textquote{From the turn of the century up until ten years ago, no matter what kind of business you were talking about – all of them were successful. The best years of Chueca undoubtedly... The 2007 Europride was insane. I have never in my life been to a party like that. I have goosebumps now.}"

d. Fall of Chueca – economic crisis, social openness and increasing rent:

The economic crisis did strike the district hard, which in part explains its downturn, along with skyrocketing rents and the emergence of a more open society. Today there are not as many gay businesses as in the past, as the economic crisis forced many of them to close down. Participant 11 also has noticed a change in customs at the time of going out. Before, he could find people on any day of the week going out for a drink. Now, most people only hang out with friends on weekends, a change which he blames on the loss of purchasing power since the 2008 economic crisis and the use of flirting apps.

Social openness plays a role in the plunge of Chueca as well. Domestic tourists do

\textsuperscript{126} Coffin, Banister and Anna Goatman, “Revisiting the Ghetto: How The Meanings of Gay Districts Are Shaped by The Meanings of The City,” 290-295.
feel a need to come to Madrid on weekends since it is not the only place to be free anymore. Many cities have their own gay neighborhoods and Chueca has become a place for foreign tourists to visit. The LGBT community has been normalized and integrated into wider society, meaning that their comfort zone has expanded to other areas of Madrid such as Malasaña, La Latina and Lavapiés.

*Participant 8:*
“The worst drop was in 2010 when Chueca lost its pulse. Many people started to go out in Malasaña because homosexuality became normalized. You can walk hand-in-hand with your boyfriend in Malasaña and it is not a problem. People are more open now.”

Chueca became a nicer neighborhood thanks to the LGBT community which brought businesses and life to the place. After turning into a pleasant and trendy district, landlords increased the rents. Businesses in the area had to lift the price of their services or move to a more affordable area such as Lavapiés. Gay dance clubs, as well as other gay business, have started leaving Chueca. Participant 2 has a flat in the area, which he bought for 54,000 euros 25 years ago but now it worth 300,000 euros, showing how much rents have increased in Chueca.

*Participant 2:*
“Chueca’s atmosphere was very good. People were flirting, laughing, and talking on the streets. It was like no other place in the world. It is a pity, but what rules is the money. Now it is complicated because you pay what you earn for your rent alone. The whole neighborhood has slowed down. There are very nice places but very expensive.”

It is often said that rising rents are the consequences of Airbnb and tourism, although participant 3 claims that the decline of Chueca has nothing to do with Airbnb. In fact, he argues, Airbnb has given Chueca another life. He believes Chueca has fallen due to greater social openness and Airbnb has brought people and money back to the area. He further suggests that the fault lies with the owners of premises who raised the rents and that the government should have imposed restrictions by differentiating
purposes of use.

e. Another transformation of Chueca:

Chueca has turned from a dangerous, drug-affected area into a lovely neighborhood. It experienced another transformation in 2013 after the slump brought on by the financial crisis. Many restaurants began to enter and remodeled the neighborhood. They are essential because they regenerated the neighborhood and attracted a new clientele. The San Antón Market was also renovated. The restaurants also help other businesses because after eating, people usually have a drink and shop.

Participant 8:
“One street used to have many shoe stores, but today it is lined with restaurants. Now Chueca is like a small town with everything, including a gym. You no longer have to leave Chueca.”

f. Other changes in Chueca:

Other changes noted by the informants are the city government’s policy, safety, gay pride and the atmosphere of the neighborhood.

Firstly, Spaniards love to do “botellón (drinking in the street)”, which the government has prohibited, thereby ‘killing’ Chueca to some extent. People have started to go out in Malasaña because it has more terraces than Chueca. One the other side however, the fact that botellón was prohibited benefits certain businesses such as participant 5’s dance club. Since people can no longer drink on the streets, they have to enter his club and consume alcohol there.

Participant 2:
“The city government destroyed the party. Now we can’t drink on the streets and Chueca has lost its delightful atmosphere. In the past there were tons of people drinking and talking on the streets, around 3,000 people...that joy was transmitted by the botellón.”

Participant 5 also shared his concerns about the security of the district. He argues that
drugs have come back to Chueca as well as pickpocketing, suggesting a strong contrast between daytime and nighttime in Chueca. For example, participant 10, who runs a daytime business, manifests that Chueca is a beautiful, clean and safe neighborhood, while participant 5, who owns a nighttime gay dance club, is worried about safety.

Participant 5:
“The gangs are back again ... certain marginal young immigrants from Arabic countries or Romania who think gays are weaker steal my customers when they are drunk.”

Thirdly, a couple of informants mentioned that the MADO (Madrid Pride) has changed over the years and somewhat lost its focus on the vindication of rights.

Participant 1:
“It is logical that the Pride has changed, but it has changed too much. I think that people give more importance to the playful-festive side than to the demand for equality. Let’s not forget the importance of continuing to fight.”

Lastly, participant 6 described the changing atmosphere and trends in Chueca. On the one hand, he describes Chueca in the past as more “plural” – that is, it was a neighborhood with many types of bars such as gay bars, lesbian bars, Indie bars, Latino bars, and so forth, many of which no longer exist. In terms of fashion, things are different as well. In the past, there were many boys who dressed differently and there were a lot of drag queens. Everything changed when the obsession with muscle came a few years later. Many men no longer needed to dress up to flirt – on the contrary, they needed to go out with as few clothes as possible.

As for the feeling of belonging and community, he feels it changed as well. He used to go to Chueca every day to visit friends, walk his dog and he felt integrated. However, now he thinks that in the gay world a lot of prejudice and discrimination exists, even within the community. For instance, he has been discriminated against for his effeminacy.

Participant 6:
“Why don’t you accept a feminine man? I think many straight men are teaching us a
lesson, because they are more natural and do not have those notions of masculinity that make us do so much damage to each other in the gay world.”

Even with all these seemingly negative changes in Chueca, participant 6 still recalled that the very possibility of having a neighborhood, of walking around freely, of living and co-living with neighbors and people who are staying temporarily, is already a sufficiently wonderful story. It does not occur in any country in the world.

C. Marginalized members of the community:

When asked if there are members of LGBT community who are marginalized in Chueca, 5 informants said that they think so, 4 disagreed and 2 said perhaps. In general, they all believe that there are “tendencies”. For example, effeminate men are discriminated against as are transsexuals. A few interviewees said that they think gays and lesbians do not get along. Other groups of people who experience discrimination are bisexuals, the elderly, people from lower social classes and men who do not conform to the ‘norms’ of male attractiveness (i.e. unmuscular men). One of the main critiques of the gay community is that it is dominated by “good homosexuals” - young, wealthy, attractive, muscular and masculine white gay men. In other words, gay spaces are often dominated by a certain type of homosexual. An informant in another gay tourism study127 shared his experience of Chueca:

Julio, 36:

“Chueca is an unreal world. Sometimes, when I leave and come back, I realize that we are living an un-reality of night, muscles and tight clothes. And life is not like that. It seems like they do not allow you to enter if you are not handsome or not young.”

Participant 2:

“Transsexuals and transvestites are the most complicated group. Being trans 20 years ago was like being gay 100 years ago in that that they faced aggression and

had difficulty finding a proper job. Even today transsexuals are still suffering discrimination and therefore 90% of them have to work in cabarets or as sex workers.”

Participant 10:
“Gays discriminate against effeminate men and gays don't get along with lesbians. We were discriminated against as a community for so long and now we discriminate against each other.”

Participant 11 shed light on discrimination against feminine gays within the community and claims it is not only happening in Chueca but all over the world.

Participant 11:
“We live in a hetero-patriarchal society and we have been educated through this system. For this reason, we replicate behaviors in society such as the rejection of effeminacy. That is why masculine gay men are the most accepted and have more visibility.”

Ignacio Elpidio echoes this view and further states that most of the visibility is enjoyed by middle and upper-class gay men, with minimally normative bodies and then by lesbians, bisexuals, and finally by transsexuals. He also stresses the importance of social class since higher social status can make it can be easier to escape marginalization in some cases, which would be an interesting topic of study in the future.

Participant 6, on the contrary, thinks that Chueca is an open-minded neighborhood and discrimination does not exist. He holds the perspective of a businessman and considers it reasonable to classify guys into different types such as bears, elderly, twinks, fetish, drags and so forth in order to differentiate gay bars and themed parties for profitability.

Participant 6:
“Here I think I will be somewhat controversial. We are talking about business, not NGOs or associations. By this I mean that businesses should focus on a type of consumer in order to be lucrative.”

It is understandable that participant 6 sees things from a business point of view. It remains important to reflect on whether it is acceptable to classify people and to dig
further into subcultures that were mentioned only once in this study such as fetish culture.

D. City government’s role in Chueca’s tourism:

Diverse responses to the role of city government of Madrid have been observed. Some informants mention that it has been a right-wing government for many years and that it loves gay tourism because it brings money. Even though right-wing parties sometimes vote against the LGBT community, they enjoy welcoming tourists with high purchasing power. From 2015 to 2019, Manuela Carmena from a left-wing party served as Mayor of Madrid. Participant 1 remembers that during Carmena’s governance, Madrid was calm and Chueca was remodeled, especially its sidewalks.

One informant, on the other hand, did not observe a difference of governance between right-wing and left-wing parties when it came to Chueca.

Participant 12:
“Since we took ownership of the bar (less than a year ago) we have gone through two governments on different sides of the political spectrum, but we have not seen great changes, for better or for worse.”

Participant 10 recognized the government’s efforts in keeping the neighborhood clean, pretty and safe. He also mentioned that the authorities allow the businesses in Madrid to have more flexible opening hours compared to other Spanish cities, which is good for his business. As mentioned above, it is important to notice the difference in sense of security observed between daytime business owners and nighttime business owners, as participant 5 thinks Chueca is becoming dangerous again at night.

Several interviewees brought up the changes to Madrid’s gay pride and the incident of moving the gay pride out of the city center. Participant 2 suggests that although the gay pride is an important income for Madrid, the city government does not do much for the LGBT community and they establish more and more limitations each year. On top
of that, the city government has proposed to move the gay pride out of the city center from Chueca to Casa de Campo, the largest public park in Madrid situated west of central Madrid. The atmosphere has also changed and he now thinks the pride is expensive and less exciting.

Participant 2:
“The pride was fun because we could talk to people on the streets but now they limit us as if it were Germany. The heels race was very fun, and the carriages were spectacular and creative. Now it’s expensive to rent a carriage and normally there are only trucks and buses. Of course, the officials are 40 or 50 years old and they don’t care about parties.”

(5) Degaying process of Chueca in post-gay era:

In order to know if Chueca has entered the so-called “post-gay era” and is experiencing a “degaying process”, it is important to review all the factors that make the degaying process possible, including greater social acceptance, the influence of technology such as dating apps, the touristification of the district and unviability of gay businesses in the area due to decreasing demand by the LGBT community and increasing rents.

A. Chueca, tourist attraction or place of the community?

Five interviewees hold that Chueca is not a tourist attraction nor a place for the community, four still believe it is a place of the LGBT community, one informant feels that it is more like a tourist attraction and one thinks it is a little bit of both. For many of them, Chueca is a reference place for the LGBT community. It is touristic but it is not considered as an attraction.

For some people who think that Chueca has lost its sense of community and that homosexuality has become completely normalized, the gay neighborhood is no longer necessary.
Participant 5:
“Heterosexuals and homosexuals have started to integrate and mingle. It was time to mix. Now gays no longer attract as much attention and they are everywhere, not only in Chueca anymore. People used to come to Chueca to see gays and we were like a circus! Now everything is very modern, both in Chueca and outside Chueca.”

Participant 1 pointed out that this phenomenon is happening in many places around the world and that gay neighborhoods in many countries have changed. The advance of LGBT rights and visibility has made these neighborhoods no longer as necessary as they were before.

As for the informants who think Chueca is neither a tourist attraction nor a place for the community, they justify their positions by arguing that today it is a touristic residential neighborhood without the sense of refuge it had before. This is because it is no longer such a problem to be gay and LGBT community members can go to other neighborhoods such as La Latina, Lavapiés and Malasaña.

Participant 7:
“It is not an attraction or a place of community. It is a place now where people go to dance and eat, because there is not so much homophobia and homosexuality has been normalized.”

B. Madrid as an open-minded society:

Born and raised in Madrid, participant 5 takes pride in his city and his people, stating that Madrileños (people from Madrid) are welcoming and immediately accept everyone. He suggests that there is little xenophobia and the LGBT community is well accepted. According to Pedro Zerolo, an important Spanish social activist, Chueca had the effect of waking up people from all over Madrid and from all over Spain. He argues that with the collaboration of its neighbors, Chueca has become a social-political experiment of coexistence and he affirms that without Chueca, the equality we see today would not have been possible.
Pedro Zerolo

“Chueca was like a virus that spread throughout Madrid, little by little. It used to be the only place with total freedom. Then I saw gay couples saying goodbye with a kiss in Plaza España, and I thought: “it’s expanding!” Madrid then became a world leader on these issues.”

All informants indicated that Madrid is generally quite an open society. Although there is of course some intolerance and violence against the LGBT community in Madrid, no place in the world is free of this. Participant 1 recalled the importance of being visible and fighting for equality. She argues that we have achieved a lot at the political level, but at the social level we still have a long way to go because approving laws does not guarantee a response from society. This is why education is so vital. On the other hand, laws can be reversed so we should keep paying attention to politics.

Participant 1:

“We have to be careful especially given that extreme right-wing parties have become stronger in the Spanish parliament. It is not a question of “getting equality” but a question of “manifesting it”. We have to be more visible than ever.”

Some interviewees pointed out that Madrid is open and tolerant, but just in certain areas. Participant 2 argues that in the city center, specifically within the limits of the M-30, the orbital motorway that circles the central districts of Madrid, tolerance to LGBT people is generally extremely high.

Participant 2:

“If we leave the M-30 to the south, we enter the working-class neighborhood where we might receive insults, aggression, unfriendly looks, etc. And to the north is the posh neighborhood where people very moral and where they might kick you out of the place.”

Participant 11 also agreed that conditions in the city center are safer and pointed out the risk of misunderstanding society for staying in the “bubble”.

Participant 11:

“It is common to live in a bubble in which we surround ourselves with people who share our values. This creates a feeling of security and that everything is, let’s say, overcome. But the reality is that, although it is true that we have come a long way, there is still much to do and we should not relax.”
Participant 10 compared his experience of living in Amsterdam and Madrid, indicating that Madrid is more open than Amsterdam. He holds that Amsterdam and Berlin were very open in the past but both cities have changed a lot because of conservative politicians and Muslim immigrants. This comment sheds a light on the impact immigrants have had on gay neighborhoods, which is another important factor to study.

C. Needs of the LGBT community for Chueca:

One of the crucial reasons why a gay neighborhood experiences the degaying process is that the need and demand for the place from the LGBT community decreases. All the interviewees believe that there is no necessity for the LGBT community to go out in Chueca, but community members still enjoy hanging out in the neighborhood for the wide variety of leisure activities that it has to offer. In the past, LGBT people wanted to live in Chueca with their partners in order to be surrounded by likeminded people, and to avoid discomfort and feeling identified. They came to Chueca because of the need for refuge. However, even though homosexuality has been normalized, many LGBT community members still feel more comfortable and accepted in the neighborhood. Participant 7 has a “burger house theory” that describes the importance of Chueca for the LGBT community.

*Participant 10:*

“Although heterosexuals do not have problems with gays, it is more comfortable to be with your partner in Chueca surrounded by other gays.”

*Participant 7:*

“It is like a burger house. If you want to eat a hamburger, you can go to any restaurant because they are served everywhere, but some people go to a burger house because the burgers are tastier and more authentic.”

Participant 7 made several points about going out outside Chueca. For instance, districts like La Latina, Lavapiés and Malasaña are quite gay-friendly, but are they as
comfortable as Chueca for LGBT community members?

Another interesting idea shared by participant 9 is that the extent to which one views Chueca as necessary depends on one’s age and background. He argues that younger people have much more freedom and much more acceptance in their groups of friends, and their leisure destinations are more diverse. This offers an angle to study the degaying process and post-gay era that this research does not manage to cover. It is very probable that older LGBT people are more likely to view Chueca as necessary due to its extremely open-minded atmosphere that welcomes anyone of any race, age and sexual orientation. This group of people was also raised in a more traditional time and many of them frequented gay places for many years. Lastly, they are less likely to use dating apps to socialize with others from the community and therefore physical LGBT spaces for meeting new friends are more important to them.

Ignacio Elpidio also echoes this view:

“People raised in open places may need Chueca less than others. It is no longer a necessary space for all LGBT people in Madrid, but there are still people who need it.”

It should also be noted that lesbians and gays are more socially accepted than transsexuals, which is why participant 3 stressed that many transsexuals still view Chueca as a necessary place.

D. Chueca’s possible future:

Homosexuals feel more relaxed and are more likely to show affection towards their partners when they are in gay spaces. The sense of freedom and the possibility to be themselves without having to provide an explanation is what draws many people to gay spaces and strengthens their feeling of belonging to a certain community. They do not have to worry about “coming out” because in gay space, homosexuality is the the norm. As time passed by, Madrid became a modern city where homosexuals no longer needed
a designated gay space. On top of that, the rent in the neighborhood skyrocketed, making the viability of gay business decrease. That is why this thesis is interested in Chueca’s future as a gay neighborhood.

All the informants held that while greater social openness towards the LGBT community has changed Chueca to some extent, the neighborhood is still preferred by many members of the LGBT community who feel more comfortable there. As participant 10 said, though heterosexuals for the most part accept homosexuals, it feels better to be surrounded by gays and not need to explain your sexual orientation.

Participant 1:
“Perhaps Chueca will continue being the gay neighborhood because it has always been a symbolic place for the community. Gays, lesbians and transsexuals will continue to come because they feel more comfortable there.”

Participant 5 and Ignacio Elpidio both agreed that Chueca’s historical significance will keep the neighborhood alive and popular among tourists.

Participant 5:
“People will still come to Chueca, especially the tourists, because when people visit a place, they want to see where history was made and to commemorate the fight and the efforts made to advance equality.”

Participant 9:
“It is quite expensive to live in this neighborhood, so it could possibly stay as a touristic area full of vacation rental apartments.”

Some interviewees pointed out that Chueca will not die. Instead, it is being integrated into the whole city of Madrid. As informant 5 mentions, now Madrid is Chueca and Chueca is Madrid, meaning that the sense of liberty in Chueca has spread throughout the city, or at least the city center. Despite the fact that some neighborhoods in Madrid are considered gay-friendly (namely La Latina, Lavapiés and Malasaña), participant 3 believes that when people talk about Madrid’s gay neighborhood, they will always refer to Chueca. When someone wants to buy a t-shirt with a rainbow flag, Chueca is the place to shop.
Participant 6 expressed his concerns on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on Chueca, a neighborhood dominated by service industry. The pandemic has influenced how people interact and may therefore change people’s consumer behavior such as their frequency of going out, dining out and partying, which could severely damage Chueca’s economy.

E. Impact of non-LGBT people in gay places:

Scholars in the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s argued that the presence of straight people in gay places is a problem. The normally happens when gay places like gay bars and gay neighborhood become popular tourist attractions.\(^{128}\) Hughes claims that the presence of straight people makes gays and lesbians feel that they have to constrain their behavior, even in gay spaces.\(^{129}\) This is ironic especially because gay spaces are supposed to be where gays and lesbians can relax and feel free to behave in a natural, unrestrained way. A degaying process of gay villages is facilitated when the LGBT community feels disturbed in their own neighborhood.\(^ {130}\)

In the context of Madrid’s gay neighbourhood, none of the informants held that the presence of non-LGBT people in their businesses has negatively influenced their LGBT clientele. Additionally, they think it is important to welcome heterosexuals and boost mutual understanding.

Participant 8:
“We [the LGBT community] were marginalized for a long time but now we welcome straight people in our space with open arms. We, both homosexuals and heterosexuals, have learned how to respect each other and coexist.”


\(^{130}\) Dereka Rushbrook, “Cities, Queer Space, and the Cosmopolitan Tourist,” 183-206.
Participant 5:
“I like when heterosexuals come because if they integrate and feel comfortable with gays, they will educate their children and people around them, and there will be less homophobia in society.”

Participant 5 admitted that in the beginning, a minority of his gay customers felt uncomfortable with heterosexuals present in the gay dance club, especially older clients and young people who wanted to hook up. The majority of people come to his dance club to have fun with friends and he joked that those looking for sex should go to a gay sauna or a cruising club instead.

Despite agreeing that heterosexuals bring more business and money to the neighbourhood, Ignacio Elpidio warned that this can make Chueca stop being a safe place for the LGBT community. As Paco Ramírez from Stop LGTBfobia mentioned, there are more attacks on people from the LGBT community in Madrid these days because gays are starting to go out and show their affection outside Chueca.131 This could also happen in the gay neighborhood given the increasing number of heterosexuals in the area.

F. Impact of technology (dating apps) on gay places:

As discussed in chapter two, several scholars believe that dating apps are an important factor contributing to the gradual disappearance gay districts around the world.132 Apps which facilitate sexual contact between men reduce the importance of going out and socializing in the streets and squares by enabling gays to meet in any type of space.


In this research, the informants expressed both positive and negative feelings about these dating apps. Some believe that they do have an impact on gay bars and gay dance clubs because these places are no longer the only spaces for gays, particularly young gays, to meet new people. Participants 4 and 11 were optimistic about these apps since they view them as a new way to meet people virtually and hold that they do not prevent people from meeting physically in their gay bars later.

Some participants do not think dating apps play a role in Chueca’s development and some even pointed out that there are other more concerning issues such as the use of drugs among gays. Participant 5 mentioned that it is now popular to hold sex parties with alcohol and drugs, or “sessions”, at home. These sessions are disturbing and also decrease people’s interest in going out. Drugs are also present in gay dance clubs in Madrid, which is a problem that needs more attention.

Participant 8 thinks that dating apps are for having random sex rather than meeting new people. He held that people who want to meet others will still come to gay bars to do it face to face. If someone wants sexual contact, they will use the apps.

G. Innovation of businesses:

In Manchester, thanks to increased social acceptance of the LGBT community, the city’s gay neighborhood has become a touristic place for heterosexuals to learn about LGBT culture. Many gay bars are more like tourist attractions and homosexuals who are inside become part of the tour.

None of the interviewees have plans to turn their business into something new. The most worrying problem for them is not the disappearance of the neighborhood but the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Participant 6:*

“Today my only concern is the socio-economic situation of the business. I am worried
about my employees.”

Participant 9:
“When the pandemic hit us, our bar was quite successful. Now it’s time to put ourselves together and try hard to get back to where we were. It may take at least a year or two.”

(6) Chueca for new business owners?

Before ending each interview, the informants left their suggestions for people wanting to start a business in Chueca.

First of all, the rent is expensive and there are not many empty premises left in the neighborhood. Besides, car mobility in the city center has been prohibited by the government, so it is important to consider if Chueca is a good place to launch one’s business.

Participant 1:
“Rents are through the roof now. In the past I paid 600 euros for my premises and now I pay 6500 euros per month. Establishing a business in Chueca is almost unfeasible now. When we started our business, there were around 200 empty premises available, but now there are only about 20 left.”

Many participants recalled that it is crucial to decide what business one is going to start. They believe that it does not matter if it is related to the LGBT community. Instead, what matters are the number of competitors, the cost and potential profits. It is critical to have a focused group of consumers and to be original.

Participant 5:
“If it is a dance club, it is worth looking at larger spaces in nearby neighborhoods because in Chueca the premises are quite small. In addition, there are already many places of entertainment for people here. I would recommend opening restaurant businesses. People always spend on eating and if it’s something original, all the better. Have you seen the “waffle cock” shop? It has a long queue!”
Chapter 5 Conclusions

This research is an interdisciplinary project that involves many academic disciplines such as tourism studies, LGBT gender studies, sociology and entrepreneurial studies. It aims to study Madrid’s gay neighborhood, Chueca, from several perspectives. On the one hand, it intends to discover gay business owners’ motivations in starting their businesses and learn more about their management. On the other hand, it reviews Chueca’s development as a gay neighborhood and the changes that have occurred over time. It also speculates about its possible future, answering if Chueca has entered the post-gay era and is experiencing a degaying process.

It is based on qualitative semi-structured interviews with gay business owners in Chueca and also explores related issues such as marginalized groups in the LGBT community, the city government’s role in gay tourism and the consequences of Chueca’s market economy. Since the thesis uses qualitative methods, the answers are quite diverse and reflect a variety of points of view.

1. Discussion and responses to research questions:

This investigation is based on three research questions, the first one was proven correct through the interviews. The first question is whether gay business owners in Chueca open their businesses out of a desire to break the lavender ceiling. My analysis of the informants responses show that the motivation of the entrepreneurs differ depending on personal experiences and the type of business concerned, but no one mentioned experiencing pressure for being homosexual in their previous jobs and the only interviewee who mentioned his previous working environment argued that nowadays, being homosexual is not a problem in progressive countries like the
Netherlands and Spain. Most of the interviewees opened their businesses because of their relevant working experience and the desire to open a premise with pleasant atmosphere. Hence, based on the findings, there is not a lavender ceiling that they need to break since Madrid or Spain in general has great acceptance of the LGBT community.

The second question is whether the gay market is a niche market and whether it is lucrative to target the LGBT community. All the informants recognized the value of the segment market and some of them take the fact the Chueca transformed into an attractive neighborhood thanks to the gay businesses as proof of this. However, it should also be noted that many informants stressed the importance of welcoming all kind of clients. Nowadays, as a result of widespread acceptance of the LGBT community, Chueca has changed into a place where homosexuals and heterosexuals alike come to have fun.

The biggest challenge business owners are facing right now is the COVID-19 crisis that came up during the research process, which is an issue I had not foreseen when planning the study. However, this aspect turned out to be the most challenging factor at this point. Several informants shared some of the problems they were facing before the pandemic such as use of drugs, the stereotype of traditional gay dance clubs, difficulties obtaining government permission, financial problems, the lobbying power of their competitors, and discrimination against drag queens.

The thesis then digs into the history of Chueca and analyzes whether it is going through a degaying process. Chueca, unanimously recognized as world-famous by the interviewees, has undergone ups and downs from the 1980s to the present day. Chueca transformed from an abandoned zone to an exclusive neighborhood. It was then hard hit by the 2008 financial crisis but bounced back around 2013. Many other changes and phenomena have been observed such as discrimination against feminine gays within the gay community and the city government’s role in Chueca’s tourism.
Lastly, the research reviews the participants’ thoughts about Chueca in order to verify the third question: has Chueca entered the post-gay era and is experiencing the degaying process? It is agreed that Madrid, at least the city center, is very open-minded and liberal and that the LGBT community enjoy great acceptance. That said, it is believed that Chueca has lost some of its sense of community and the number of gay businesses has decreased. However, a degaying process is a phenomenon that happens when social acceptance, capitalism, touristification and technology interact in a gay neighborhood.

In the case of Chueca, only a few interviewees believe that dating apps such as Grindr have negatively impacted their businesses and the majority of them argue that Chueca is not “dying” but “expanding”; that is to say, Chueca has made Madrid a more LGBT-friendly city and the gay neighborhood has just spread out. Moreover, they hold that Chueca will not disappear because it has historical significance and many community members still prefer to go out in Chueca than in other gay-friendly neighborhoods in Madrid. In a nutshell, from the interviews and participatory observation I find that Chueca is certainly undergoing a degaying process. However, I think it is unlikely that it will lead to a situation of the kind that is described by Gustav Visser on Cape Town during the year 2014 when De Waterkant that has changed completely from a gay residential and leisure neighborhood into an urban tourism haven.

2. Limitations of the research:

This thesis is rather exploratory and intends to be simply a steppingstone for others to close the “gay gap” in academia. It seeks to make a humble contribution to studies of

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LGBT tourism, gay neighborhoods and LGBT entrepreneurship in a European context. More research is clearly needed if we wish to understand the reality better.

This research was conducted during a special and difficult time for both the researcher and the interviewees due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many gay business owners in the area rejected the interview and it took longer to find participants because they could only be reached virtually due to the quarantine. Therefore, some of the informants in this dissertation do not meet the original participant selection criteria. For example, it is a pity that no owners of gay saunas or male dance clubs could be interviewed. It would have been interesting to see if they have different ideas on the degaying process of Chueca.

This investigation might reflect a westernized perspective even though the researcher is Taiwanese. It is crucial to remember that being able to express one’s sexuality openly is not possible for many homosexuals around the world. Thus, the fact that we can talk about the “post-gay era” is already a huge privilege because in other corners of the world, equality is still a distant goal.

It is fascinating to conduct research on a gay neighborhood targeting business owners and listening to their points of view on different phenomena, even though it was hard to convince them to participate in the research. Another lesson learned from writing this thesis is that many business owners do not have much time to help student investigations unless they are guaranteed visibility in return. This thesis owes infinite thanks to all interviewees for their participation and contributions. Despite the fact that this is a qualitative research project with a small number of participants, this thesis provides insights into the current situation in Chueca from the perspectives of local business owners. It also offers advice on marketing strategies for people interested in opening a business in this legendary neighborhood.
3. **Recommendations for future follow-up studies:**

As mentioned above, a drawback of the current study is that it does not cover enough business types due to limited time and difficult circumstances. Therefore, there is space for other investigators who are interested in this area to expand upon this research. The interview and thesis writing process revealed a number of topics that warrant further investigation.

(1) **General topics:**

It has come to my attention that in every gay neighborhood in the world, gay businesses are more prominent than lesbian ones, making me wonder if this has to do with consumer behavior.

When talking about “homonormative” and “accepted gays” Ignacio Elpidio mentions that belonging to a higher social class can prevent discrimination, a claim which would be interesting to review.

This research focuses on business owners, which is unique because previous studies have tended to focus on gay tourists. Research focusing on different aspects of gay tourism are encouraged, such as gay tourism in non-western countries. The impact of the gay tourism industry on local populations in Mexico has been studied\textsuperscript{134}, as has the intriguing question of whether Western ideas of sexuality can be applied to non-Western contexts.\textsuperscript{135} Gay bars are meeting places which give gay and lesbian tourists an opportunity to get in contact with local culture. From my personal experience, it is an

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\textsuperscript{135} Deborrah E. S. Frable, “Gender, racial, ethnic, sexual, and class identities,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 48 (1997): 139-162.
advantage of being gay that I get to know local people easily and learn about their culture more profoundly.

Lastly, one interviewee claimed that he actually prefers straight clients because they are more traditional and maintain better hygiene and cleanliness in his Airbnb. This contradicts the findings of some studies discussed in the literature review, which reveal that many places prefer homosexual visitors because they cause less problems.\(^{136}\) Hence, more research is necessary to explore how businesses think about LGBT tourists in different industries and contexts.

(2) Gay niche market:

During the interviews, some informants suggested that for exclusively gay businesses, the gay market is an ideal niche market to target. Therefore, it would be relevant to interview business owners of gay saunas, gay dance clubs and gay cruising bars. On the other hand, some interviewees criticized international corporations who support the LGBT community for the “pink money” while not actually believing in equality.

(3) Degaying process:

As discussed in the literature review, many gay subcultures are hidden in order to maintain the “accepted gay image”. While subcultures were not included in this research, it would be interesting to study the experiences of marginalized subgroups who might need the gay neighborhood more than other community members.

There are numerous questions related to the degaying process in Chueca that remain unanswered such as the impact of heterosexuals and immigrants on the neighborhood.

On the one hand, when heterosexuals are present, gays are likely to constrain their behavior; on the other, according to the business owners interviewed for this research, this is not a problem. It would be interesting to ask customers themselves if they agree with this view. Moreover, as one informant mentioned, the impact of immigrants on gay neighborhoods in Amsterdam and Berlin, it would be fascinating to investigate whether immigration has impacted Chueca in a similar way.

The need for Chueca might differ according to people’s age and where they live. It would also be interesting to interview older customers in the area to know their thoughts on Chueca since many of them have frequented the neighborhood for decades and they are less likely to use dating apps such as Grindr. They might also care more about what people think than younger people do and therefore prefer to live in gay neighborhoods to avoid judgment.

One informant also pointed out that although Spain is generally considered a gay-friendly country, the LGBT community is not accepted as much in small towns as in the big cities, which would also be an interesting topic of investigation. Even within a big city like Madrid, there are areas where gay couples are advised against walking hand in hand, so we should never assume that we have reached a point where we can stop fighting and relax.

During the analysis, it occurred to me that Spanish culture should also be taken into consideration when discussing whether Chueca will disappear. This is because, in the words of one informant, Spanish people are almost “living in the street” and love celebrating things and going out, meaning that the need for lively neighborhoods like Chueca will always remain high. Another factor that should be considered is the population of Madrid. The Spanish capital has a high population density and around 6.6 million residents. It possible that many young people no longer choose Chueca as a party destination, but given the city’s large population, proportionally there are
sufficient clients for Chueca to survive. To answer better all these questions, more research is needed, as is a clearer definition of the term ‘post-gay era’.

As a final point, it is appropriate to mention that the LGBT community does not have much voice in tourism studies. This thesis seeks to enrich gay tourism studies in a European context and to amplify the perspectives of gay business owners. It has been a fruitful process that has led the researcher to consider many different points of view. It is a topic of market value and historical meaning, and therefore deserves to be part of the future research agenda for scholars in tourism studies, LGBT gender studies and entrepreneurship studies.
Bibliography

Books:


Kang, Miliann et al. *Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2017.


**Journal articles:**


Harper, Gary W. and Margaret Schneider. “Oppression and Discrimination among


**Thesis:**


**Public documents:**


Newspaper articles:


Websites:

Annex 1

Interview questions for the thesis
Daniel Teyang Lee

Date:
Objective:
Gender:
Place:
Business type:
Business name:
Location:
Starting year of the business:
Contact info:

All the interviews will be anonymous, number-coding will be used and any other information that could help identify participants will not be published.

Thank you for your participation in this research. The study is part of a master degree theiss in Euroculture, at Uppsala University and Universidad de Deusto. Supervisors are Dr. May-Britt Öhman and Dr. Nagore Espinosa Uresandi.

We conduct this interview in order to get more insights of business owners’ experiences and changes/challenges they have been through over the years in order to create more knowledge and understanding of Chueca in this modern era. We appreciate your participation and according to rules for research ethics within the European Union, you have the right to remain anonymous and also to withdraw from the study at any point. You may of course opt to not respond to questions. The study follows recommendations for ethical protocol from Ethical research: good practice guide to researching LGBT communities and issues.

You can withdraw your participation in this research within a week after we finish the interview today. The content of the interview will be stored in password-protected folders and after the thesis is completed, the files will be deleted on 31 of August, 2020.

You should know this is an important contribution for the area of studies and we appreciate your participation. If you don’t have other questions, we will start the interview.
1. Please tell me about your business, what type of business is it? What kind of service do you offer to your customers?

2. Why did you start this business? What is your motivation to run this business?

3. Do you consider your motivation to run this business as linked to the needs/wishes of the LGBTQ community? If so, how?

4. What are the main type of client in your business?

Now I would like to talk about the gay market and its implications.

5. Do you see LGBT market as a niche market you desire to target? Is it your main key target customers?

6. How was your business at the beginning until nowadays, in terms of flow of customers? What are the variables you consider relevant for this change?

7. How would you describe gay and lesbians tourists/customers?

8. Do you think there are certain groups of people in the LGBT community marginalized in Chueca?

9. How do you attract gay audience?

10. How do tourists and others find your business?

Now I would like to learn more about Chueca’s development.

11. How do tourists and others find Chueca?

12. Do you think Chueca has changed throughout the years in regard to tourism? Other kind of changes?

13. Do you think gay neighborhood nowadays is more like a tourist’s attraction or a place of LGBT community?

14. Do you think the society of Madrid is open to LGBT community?

15. Do you think LGBT people in Madrid still have the need to frequent gay district?
16. What do you think about Chueca as a gay business district in the future, what will it look like?

**Now I would like to know challenges you may face nowadays.**

17. Do you have any challenge now? What are they?

18. Does the presence of non LGBT clients have an impact on your business?

19. Does technology have an impact on your business? If so, how?

20. Are you thinking of turning your business into something new? If so, how?

21. What is the City government’s role for gay tourism in Madrid?

22. Do you recommend people to start a gay business?

23. Do you want to add anything before we finish the interview?

**Thank you very much for your time and help. This interview will make a contribution to the field of study and I will send you my thesis when I finish it.**

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Estimado dueñ@ del local:

Me llamo Daniel Teyang Lee y soy estudiante del Máster en Eurocultura en la Universidad de Deusto. Estoy escribiendo mi tesis sobre el barrio Chueca y me gustaría hacerle una entrevista para conocer mejor el barrio y su negocio.

El título de la tesis es “Las experiencias de emprendimiento de los dueños de negocios gay en el barrio Chueca” y en la entrevista le preguntaré su motivación de empezar este negocio, sus experiencias y sus retos. La entrevista no durará más de media hora y será anónima. Su participación será muy importante para esta investigación y enriquecerá el conocimiento del turismo gay en la academia.

Le dejo esta nota para que pueda encontrarme. Muchas gracias por leerla y espero que pueda ponerse en contacto conmigo!

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Muchísimas gracias,
Un saludo!
Daniel