

NEW APPROACHES AND NEW MOTIVATIONS IN THE ELECTION OF DESTINATIONS OF CULTURAL- URBAN HOMOSEXUAL TOURISM: THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT OF BARCELONA

José M^a Prat Forga
Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona
JosepMaria.Prat@uab.cat

The general aim of the present article is to confirm if they are producing new variables that influence decisively in the election of an urban tourist destination-cultural by part of the homosexual communities. For this, there are two hypotheses to check. The first is to see if the urban tourism present homosexual in Barcelona is in full expansion and has an important cultural component. The second is to check if in the election of an urban cultural event designed for this objective public, as it is the case of the Festival Circuit of Barcelona, predominate the affective appearances of the tourists or the quality of the destination and of the own offer.

Thus, this work, after presenting the explanatory frame of the new approaches in the urban tourism in front of the current economic crisis, with the homosexual tourism like a segment of market that presents some singularities, and that the cities, from his cultural heritage and his equipments of leisure, are putting in tourist value, every time with greater intensity. To continuation, the article centres in the case of Barcelona and his characteristics like destination of cultural tourism and of leisure for the communities of gays and lesbian, and present the main events of this tourism that have realised, in the year 2012, in the Catalan capital. Finally, from the case of the Festival Circuit of Barcelona, and following the model proposed by Prat and Cànoves (2012) to know the motivation of the homosexual tourists in the process of election of an urban tourist destination, present and analyse the results of a survey realised by the author of this article, checking the hypotheses posed and detailing the different logical that uses this community in the moment to decide the tourist destination.

The Festival Circuit is organised in Barcelona from the year 2008 and it presents a multiple offer of activities, realised along the first fortnight of August. His growth has been uninterrupted; happening of less than 35.000 participants in the first year to the more than 70.000 in this last year, such as it can appreciate in the figure 1. The Festival Circuit offers a quantity of multiple social activities, cultural and of leisure, diurnal and

nocturnal (see the detail in the table 1), for enjoy and consumption of the participants, that are used to reside in hotels of four and five stars, mostly in the Eixample Barcelonan, and that remain some days more in the city when finalising the Festival, with the consequent additional consumption (hotels, restaurants, cafés, discotheques, museums, shops, cinemas, theatres, etc.).

To check the here posed hypotheses have analysed the results of two surveys. One, realised personally by the author of this article, by means of an enclosed questionnaire, to a sample of 62 participants in this festival in August of the 2012, and another realised by the Centre of Sociological Investigations (CIS) in the 2005 to the tourists in general.

For the design of the questionnaire presented to the assistants to the Festival Circuit it has considered the model presented by Prat and Cànoves (2012) on the motivation of the homosexual tourists in the election of urban tourist destinations. In this model, in spite of considering that the motivations that guide to the tourist can be very varied (McKercher and Du Cros, 2003), it has been identified several groups of factors: some related with the motivations of the tourist and other related with the binomial quality-price of the tourist services, in accordance with other similar studies (Molina et al., 2007; Mondéjar and Gómez, 2009). It treats of a model based in the theoretical model more frequently used for the election of a determinate tourist destination, the one of the motivation by the satisfaction of different personal needs, taking into account characteristic and virtues (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005).

In concrete, the model applied in this work is formed by three big groups of external variables: intrinsic, qualitative and pragmatic. The intrinsic are composed by the affective appearances (previous experiences / relate personal / recommendations) and by the new experiences (be fashionable / to increase the network of personal relations / curiosity / know a new city). The qualitative are composed by the point of view of the tourist on the offer (organisation of the event / cultural activities / recreational activities and of leisure), as on the place (global image perceived of the city / information purchased on the possible / destination activities in the city apart from the planned in the offer). The pragmatic are formed by the price of offers it / quality of offers it / information on offers it / cost of the travel / availability of dates. Each group of variables influences in the other, and all influence in the motivation for the election of the destination that is the endogenous variable of the model (Prat and Cànoves, 2012).

The direct survey has designed by means of the assessment of 1 (less) to 5 (more), according to the scale of Lickert, of thirty different appearances to consider in the election of the Festival Circuit 2012 like tourist destination. Of these variables, three were affective, four were pragmatic, sixteen took into account the own qualities of the place visited, three considered the qualities of the own event and the four remaining were related with the possibility to realise new experiences. For this, were interviewed personally, by means of a questionnaire, 62 foreign participants that attended to the Festival along the month of August of the 2012. The questionnaires answered to the entrance of the assistants to the event (see the detail of the profile of the respondents in the table 3).

The results obtained for each one of the appearances analysed, are those that present in the table 4. It can be observed like the most valued reasons to choose this destination and this event were win them to amuse of the tourists (4.65 on 5), his degree of satisfaction

by the experience of previous years (4.48), the image of Barcelona (4.48), the possibility to see again to the friends (4.36), the climate of the city (4.22), the urban cultural heritage there existent (4.17) and the recreational activities offered in the destination (4.16). To his time, the less valued appearances were to do the visit for being fashionable (2.95), the signposting in the city (2.86) and the curiosity for realising the tourist experience (2.85).

By demographic profiles, the analysis realised in this work also indicates that the five better concepts valued by the women were the satisfaction obtained in previous trips, the existent entertainments in the destination, the possibility to see to the friends, the climate of the destination in this period of the year and the presence of an important urban heritage in the Barcelonan city. By his part, in the case of the men the better appearances valued were the entertainments, the possibility to see to the friends, the recreational activities around the festival, the image of the city and know new friends.

According to the groups of age, the minors of 30 years gave the greater importance to the entertainments, the recreational activities and see to the friends; whereas the visitors between 30 and 45 years, in addition to the entertainments and see to the friends, had very in account the image of the city. The group between 45 and 60 years valued fundamentally the entertainments, the satisfaction of the previous trips and the urban heritage of the city; whereas the greater of 60 years preferred to see to the friends, the image of the city and the satisfaction by the previous trips.

According to the level of studies, the respondents that manifested to possess only elementary studies indicated that his preferences were the entertainments, the recreational activities and the possibility of find with the friends. Those that possessed half studies, in addition to the entertainments and see to the friends, also took into account the image of the city. Those that had of upper studies manifested his preferences by the possibility to see to the friends, the image of the city and his satisfaction about the previous visits.

Finally, according to his economic level, those that manifested to have a low or half level-low had more in account the entertainments and the recreational activities, whereas those that had a higher level gave greater importance to the affective appearances (the possibility to see to the friends and the satisfaction by the previous visits).

With this has checked that the first here proposed hypothesis only has fulfilled partially. In effect, the urban tourism present homosexual in Barcelona is in full phase of development, but, however, although it treats of a destination that presents an important cultural catchword, this is not one of the most valued appearances by the homosexual tourists in the moment to choose this destination. Regarding the second hypothesis, in the analysis of the Festival Circuit has seen as in the election of a tourist trip to assist to an urban cultural event designed for the homosexual public predominate the affective appearances of these tourists in the case of which has more studies, greater ages and better economic level, whereas they predominate the playful appearances (present entertainments in the destination and attractions around the festival) in the case of which has fewer studies, less age and an economic level lower.

Of the analysis of the here presented case extracts the conclusion that for the homosexual tourism does not exist only a logic, but a group of different logics to select a determinate tourist destination cultural and urban. Said decision has a big emotional component and affective, that, in a lot of occasions, does not take individually but of conjoint way,

and if it takes individually can affect to the behaviour of others, taking into account that the nature of the experience looked for, as much as the experiences lived in the past, mark the decision, being these associated more with the type of trip that carries out that with the place in which it realises. However, in the decision of the election also influence other factors, like the image of quality that projects the destination and the quality of the offer of the cultural activities and of leisure that there will be able to realise along the stay.

However, as it has showed in this article, do not exist conclusive proofs that allow to link only the motivation of a trip with the election of destination, neither the assessment of the distinct attributes of the destination with the satisfaction with the trip, neither with the repetition of the visit. Like this, in the case of the urban homosexual tourism find that it does not exist only a logic, but a group of different variables that influence mostly in the election of a determinate tourist destination cultural and urban. Said decision depends of the profile partner-demographic of the visitor, predominating the emotional appearances or the playful appearances, according the profile of the tourists. However, in this decision also influence other factors, like the existent security in the destination, the presence of a local community that agrees to homosexual people or at least that it is not against, a good offer of cultural heritage, a suitable climate, a good tourist image of the city to visit and the importance of the event to consume.

All this without forgetting that the nature of the experience looked for, as much as the experiences lived in the past, mark the decision, taking into account that the experience is associated more with the type of trip that carries out that with the place in which this realises. In the decision of the election also influences the image that projects the destination -cultural heritage, security, infrastructures, equipments, services, quality of life, etc.- and the offer of the cultural activities and of leisure that there will be able to realise along the stay.

In this regard, it fits to signal that the image of an urban tourist destination is a multidimensional phenomenon, composed by several dimensions of cognitive and affective nature, although they are the first those that contribute in greater measure to the generation of the global image of the destination. Thus, the perception of the destination is integrated, no only by the cognitive evaluations of the tourist about the attributes of the city visited, discovering the tangible characteristics (beaches, monuments, museums, parks, streets, discotheques, parties, friendships, between other) and abstract (security, tranquility, hospitality, between other) more evoked by the tourists when they think in the destination, but also by his feelings to her. These dimensions of perception will be used by the tourists to discriminate between tourist destinations and realise the election. Like this then , the greater part of the logics of decision of the homosexual tourism in the election of an urban tourist destination obey to a model in which they take into account the mutual interactions between the distinct factors already commented.