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Between "ghettos", "safe spaces" and "gaytrification": exploring the specificities of LGBT neighbourhoods in Southern Europe

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Abstract

In recent decades, "LGBT neighbourhoods" or "gay Villages" have been gaining some prominence and particular characteristics within cities, representing safe spaces for the expression and negotiation of individual and collective identities as well as for the political affirmation of LGBT communities and queer identities. As other areas that have been the main drivers of urban revitalization of inner-cities, such as cultural and creative quarters or multicultural spaces, these territories distinguish for the social practices of their users and inhabitants, the specificities of their economic activity, or their contribute to creativity or social integration. More than community ghettos, these areas have been characterized by their openness and vibrancy, enhancing the coexistence of diverse lifestyles, trajectories and identities, but also by the contribution of LGBT people to the gentrification of these districts through their strong commercial, residential and symbolic presence.

Drawing upon an empirical work developed in Lisbon (Príncipe Real district) and Madrid (Chueca district), based on in-depth interviews to LGBT residents and participant observation in the two neighbourhoods, this paper characterizes the main evolutionary trajectories and specificities of these two districts. An analysis is made confronting the characteristics and contingencies of these areas with other cases previously studied in literature, identifying the existence of notable differences and suggesting evidence of significant specificities, which can represent a "South European" approach to the reality of "Gay Villages". Some generic principles for urban planning are drawn out from the analysis.

Keywords: Gay villages, city of quarters, LGBT, gaytrification, Lisbon, Madrid.

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1. Introduction[3]

In recent decades, "LGBT neighbourhoods" or "gay Villages" have been systematically spotted around the world as prominent lively territories. Embodying particular social, cultural and economic practices, they represent safe spaces for the expression and negotiation of individual and collective identities, as well as for the political affirmation of LGBT communities and queer identities (Bell and Binnie, 2004; Bell and Valentine, 2005; Binnie and Valentine, 2009; Knopp, 1995; Castells and Murphy, 1982; Giraud, 2014; Chisholm, 2005; Hanhardt, 2016).

The "LGBT neighbourhoods" present many similarities with several other areas that have been the main drivers of urban revitalization of inner-cities, such as cultural and creative quarters or multicultural spaces (Bell and Jayne, 2004; Cooke and Lazzeretti, 2008; O'Connor and Wynne, 1996; Scott, 2000; Costa et al, 2011; Pratt and Hutton; 2013). These territories are distinguished in their cities by the social practices of their users and inhabitants, the specificities of their economic activity, or their contribute to creativity or social integration. More than community ghettos, these areas have been characterized not only by the coexistence of diverse lifestyles, trajectories and identities, but also by the contribution of LGBT people to their gentrification. In fact, the strong commercial, residential and symbolic presence of LGBT communities induces a phenomena that has been coined as "gaytrification", due to the material and the symbolic changes they perform in these neighbourhoods. Actually, they can both be seen as inducers or promotors of deeper gentrification processes, as (sooner or later, at least some of them) object of it, and as victims forced to eviction.

Many authors argue that this model of the "Gay Village", often centred on the reality of Anglo-Saxon cities (and particularly north American, or eventually European cases), does not cover or represent the complexity of practices, attitudes and representations that embodies the spatialities of LGBT life in those cities - which naturally do not restrict to these areas - neither accomplishes the diversity and complexity of identities inherent to them.

The diversity, flexibility and complexity of patterns that the spatiality and the territoriality of LGBT lives assume in contemporary cities (challenged for example, by other social and cultural urban segregation mechanism, by financialization and globalization of real estate markets, or by all the geographical potential of technological mediated social practices), require a careful eye on the analysis of these territories, as well as on the social, cultural, economic practices of their communities. In line with this, many authors underline the need to disentangle the complexity that mark the individual and collective LGBT life in the city and the reconfiguration of self and group identities in the urban space, from a queer perspective, complexifying the debate on these urban districts and their specific historical and geographical contexts (e.g., Chisholm, 2005; Brown & Knopp, 2004; Bell & Binnie, 2004).

It is not our purpose to go deeper in that debate in this article, even if we base on empirical work carried out in two charismatic neighbourhoods in the two capitals of the Iberian Peninsula: Príncipe Real in Lisbon (Portugal) and Chueca in Madrid (Spain). Our aim is to analyse the principal evolutionary trajectories and specificities of these two territories, comparing their characteristics and contingencies with other cases previously studied in the literature, in particular the in-depth analysis developed by Colin Giraud (2014) in two other LGBT neighbourhoods: the Marais in Paris, France, and the Village in Montreal, Canada.

The research hypotheses we are assuming are the following: (i) there may be considerable differences in our case studies in relation to those other cases; (ii) there may be evidence of important specificities that could represent a "South European" approach to the reality of "Gay Villages".

With this setting in mind, next section will present the general conceptual framework mobilized for this research and some of the conceptual issues involved in this analysis. Section 3 will present the methodology used and the general context of the case studies. Section 4 presents and discusses the main analytical results of the empirical work carried out in the two neighbourhoods, and a brief concluding note is provided in section 5, suggesting further examination of the specificities of LGBT neighbourhoods in Southern Europe. .

[3] This text draws upon two previous presentations at international academic conferences: "Between the ghetto and gaytrification: specificities of GLBT neighborhoods in Southern Europe", at 2016 AAG (Association of America Geographers) Annual Meeting, March 29 – April 2, 2016, San Francisco. CA, USA, and "Between the ghetto and 'gaytrification': LGBT neighborhoods in Southern Europe" at AESOP Annual Congress 2017 "Spaces of Dialog for Places of Dignity: Fostering the European Dimension of Planning", Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal, 11th-14th July 2017. The authors acknowledge all the feedback and comments received in both occasions.

2. Theoretical background and conceptual issues

The analysis developed in this article is grounded on two main streams of work, with quite different theoretical and conceptual traditions in literature. The first is based on work we have been developing for years (e.g., Costa and Lopes, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017; Costa, 2007, 2008; Costa et al, 2011) on the territorial dynamics and evolution of cultural and creative districts in various global contexts (and the processes of gentrification, massification and all related conflicts in the urban sphere). The second pursues a dialogue and links with recent analyses of LGBT neighbourhoods and their dynamics, with particular emphasis in two different (potentially ideal-typical) contexts: Europe and North America.

In the first, concerning the dynamics of cultural and creative quarters, a wide and diverse corpus of literature has developed around the territorially-based dynamics that embed creative practices, and the intensive knowledge-based transactions and symbolic exchanges inherent to these dynamics (Scott, 2000; 2014; Caves 2002; Camagni et al, 2004; Markusen, 2006, 2007; Kebir et al, 2017; Landry, 2000; Cooke and Lazzeretti, 2008; Lazzeretti, 2013; Pratt and Hutton, 2013; Costa, 2007; Costa et al, 2008, 2011). Cultural quarters and other territorialized cultural consumption-production complexes have been particularly studied (e.g., Scott, 2000; Bell and Jaýne, 2004; O'Connor and Wynne, 1996; Zukin, 1995; Cooke and Lazzeretti, 2008; Costa, 2007, 2008; Costa and Lopes, 2013, 2015, 2017).

From the analysis of the dynamics of cultural and creative quarters and other territorially embedded creative clusters, in various global contexts (e.g. Costa and Lopes, 2013, 2015, Costa, 2013), it is particularly relevant to highlight aspects that normally play a fundamental role in the sustainability of these "creative milieus", such as the pattern of "conflicts of use" in these territories, the dynamics of governance and regulation, the mechanisms of appropriation of public space, or the relationship with urban morphology. The combination of specific conditions within each of these items is fundamental to the long-term sustainability of the creative dynamics in the territories in which they are embedded, as exemplified in several cultural neighbourhoods around the world, in multiple contexts (Costa and Lopes, 2013).

This is particularly important when these territories face the challenges related to the processes of gentrification, massification and touristification, which are spreading in the contemporary urban domain, also affecting gay villages and LGBT communities in a similar way. Another important aspect that is also seen in the analysis of cultural quarters and LGBT neighbourhoods is related to their own territorial characteristics, which are essential in the nurturing of creative territorially-embedded dynamics (such as the existence of conditions of openness, tolerance, diversity, liminality), which are also fundamental for the settlement and development of "gay villages" and "queer territories".

In what concerns to the second stream, the analysis of "gay neighbourhoods", a wide range of literature can be found in recent decades in the fields of geography, sociology, urbanism or cultural and queer studies, standing out in the broader framework of the analysis of LGBT and queer geographies within urban space.

The history of this broader relationship has been well documented (Aldrich, 2004; Knopp, 1995; Hanhardt, 2013; Springate, 2016; Ruiz, 2012), and covers a multiplicity of topics, emphasizing the essential urban-metropolitan nature of these territorial complexes (e.g. Abrahams, 2009), giving space to the understanding of deviance from social norms in the city (Becker, 1963) and their connection with urban cultural identities (e.g, Zukin, 1995), or by examining the spatialization and territoriality of the social, cultural and economic practices (and representations) of LGBT communities, and the mechanisms for their political and cultural statement in the city.

From classical studies on community-based movements and the spatialization of "gay villages" (Castells and Murphy, 1982; Castells, 1983; Lauria and Knopp, 1985; Bell and Valentine, 1995; Knopp, 1995) to a wide diversity of empirical work on the LGBT and queer spatial patterns, multiple analyses have drawn attention to a diversity of spatial practices (and representations) - in the city, in the neighbourhood, or even at home - and to the complex mechanisms of permanent negotiation of identities in the urban sphere, both in public and private space (Binnie and Valentine, 1999; Binnie, 1995, 2004; Bell and Valentine, 1995; Hanhardt, 2013, 2016; Giesekind 2013, 2016; Springate, 2016; Lau et al, 2014; Chisholm, 2005; Pilkey, 2013, Brown et al, 2004; Vieira,

2011). Several issues have fuelled a lively academic field of debate and an arena for public participation, political activism and community involvement including, for example: the relations between power, violence, space and difference; discussions on the relationship between sexuality, community and urban space; debates on the mechanism between consumption, gentrification and symbolic change in LGBT neighbourhoods; as well as discussions on more concrete topics (ghettos/openness to the city; suburban, local and translocal urban spaces; safe public/private spaces; carnivalesque and daily life, etc.). In fact, the LGBT and queer movements and their spatial and territorial expression can be seen as a clear example of what Loretta Lees calls "emancipatory practices" (Lees, 2004), in the affirmation and resilience of "difference" in contemporary cities, when this idea of difference is a fundamental asset for ensuring liveliness, creativity and well-being in cities, as always, throughout urban history (Hall, 1998).

In practice, as Christina Hanhardt puts it, in dealing with LGBT neighbourhoods and the discussions about their role in the cities, we have moved from "white ghettos" to "canaries of the creative era" (Hanhardt, 2013), as the struggle for identity affirmation and the fight for collective and individual space gives floor to the role of the LGBTQIA+[4] community in gentrification processes, to the analysis of city branding mechanisms and of political instrumentalization of LGBT communities, or to the assumption of more complex perspectives on intersectionality. On the one hand, discussions about the commodification of these territories draw attention to the way in which the LGBT community can be "instrumentalized" or challenged by neoliberalism and by the institutions and the regulation mechanisms of cognitive-cultural capitalism (Scott, 2014). On the other hand, the fluidity and "multilayerism" of queer approaches to spatial patterns of LGBTQ practices note the diversity, fragmentation, and complexity of queer life, the queer city and the risks of reducing it to specific neighbourhoods or particular places.

In this work - for pragmatic reasons and assuming that, at least to some extent, "quartering fixes queer in place" (Binnie, 2004) – special attention is paid to the work done by Colin Giraud (2014) comparing two other "gay villages" in contexts different from ours. In line with more "classical" works in this field, from the 1980's, but applying his analysis to a wide range of dimensions (concerning practices, identities, representations), this study leads us through an in-depth analysis carried out in two neighbourhoods which themselves represent two different logics (social, cultural territorial institutional) of the "LGBT neighbourhood ": le Marais (at Paris, France) and the Village (at Montreal, Canada). The diversity of dimensions covered by this author's intensive work in these two neighbourhoods - including aspects related to the development of gay villages, the understanding of material and symbolic aspects related to the commercial and residential trajectories in these neighbourhoods, as well as the practices of daily life, the mechanisms of socialization and sociability in gay villages, or the relations of 'gaytrifiers' with their neighbourhoods - allows us to aspire to have a comparative perspective in a reality that may not be so far from the Iberian context where we conducted our analysis.

Naturally, this does not underestimate the multiple important reflections and empirical observation work done for decades, on a diversity of other cases in multiple other contexts (New York, San Francisco, London, Sydney,…), which is also mobilized in this research. In fact, the settlement and functioning of these neighbourhoods has been well documented (e.g. Castells and Murphy, 1982; Bell and Valentine, 1995; Knopp, 1997; Binnie, 2004; Boyd, 2011; Collins, 2006; Giesekin, 2013, 2016; Hanhardt, 2013; Giraud, 2014; Springate, 2016) particularly in Anglo-Saxon (and mostly North American) "village model". Outside this context, however, there is also a rather lively debate, with a variety of interesting empirical studies and conceptual reflection exploring beyond the Anglo-Saxon queer narrative (Lizama, 2014; Lau et al, 2014; Giraud, 2014; Collins, 2006; Leroy, 2005; Salinas, 2007; Robbins, 2011; Vieira, 2010), which definitely need to gain academic visibility and assert their specificities.

With this framework in mind, and before we move on to exploring the results of the empirical work, two (often underestimated) issues need to be addressed.

[4] Although acknowledging the differences between the multiple conceptual perspectives developed to disentangle LGBT and queer realities (and, particularly, their implications in terms of the analysis of the spatiality of LGBT life in the city, from the traditional "gay villages" to more fluid models), for simplification purposes, in this text it is generally assumed the LGBT acronym, except in specific references (when it is considered that further specification is required for explanatory purposes). Naturally, this simplification does not express any reductionist view of the diversity that underlies the reality analyzed.

The first relates to the pragmatic question of how to define and operationalize an LGBT village/ neighbourhood. Even if its existence is consensual and perceived (in physical or symbolic terms), with limits that could be identified by the LGBT community (or externally to them), for academic purposes it may not be so clear, and in some cases it may be an important operational or methodological issue. What defines a LGBT neighbourhood? The existence of LGBT businesses? Their visibility, with rainbow flags on the street? The appropriation of public space by the community? The level of "openness" of their social practices and behaviours? Would it be the existence of LGBT residents? Or of LGBT users, regardless the fact of living (or be able to afford living) in the neighbourhood? Or would it be the image of the quarter? Or the representations (within the own community, of external population?) about it and the symbolic awareness of it in the society?

This issue is related to the effective importance of LGBT neighbourhoods (more open or more closed they may be) for LGBT liveability and daily practices, namely to understand to what extent these neighbourhoods are relevant (or symbolically central) to the daily life of LGBT communities (bringing here the debate-on its symbolic importance vs the effective practices that occur in neighbourhood). In fact, as most of the discourse on queer practices (and the debates on LGBT versus queer approaches) has been pointing out in recent years, much more diverse, flexible and complex patterns can be identified in the spatiality of LGBT lives in contemporary cities. This alerts us to the need to disentangle the complexity of individual and collective practices (and representations) of LGBT people within the city, as well as the permanent negotiation of group and individual identities within the different urban spaces, both in the centres and peripheries of metropolises, as well as both in private and public spaces (and in all the intermediate "spheres" fuelled by the intermediation of new technologies).

A second topic to be preliminarily addressed is the "gaytrification" idea itself. In fact, the LGBT community has been repeatedly associated with specific gentrification processes, and that is empirically proven, in a variety of contexts, with the occurrence of gentrification processes, linked to urban regeneration (or "revitalization", or "renaissance") dynamics, in this kind of neighbourhoods. LGBT neighbourhoods have often gone through a symbolic and physical lifting of their territories and, like artists and other creative segments, for example, this community has been accused of gentrifying these areas (or at least "opening the door" to other gentrifyiers). Actually, this community (or at least part of it) also becomes a target of displacement and eviction when the symbolic uprising in these territories turn into a fast increase in the real estate prices.

But as in other cases of gentrification, the main question is about the drivers of this "gaytrification" process, and to what extent it leads to social, cultural, and economic changes (not controlled or foreseen) in these territories. What kind of gentrification is this? Is it essentially driven by economic capital? By cultural capital? By symbolic capital? Is it transformed when the first "marginal" gentriyfiers give way to the "hardest" processes driven by economic capital? Is the queer community just a kind of "intermediate" piece in a broader long-term process? Are LGBT neighbourhoods fated to transience, and to the condition of just adding value to attract other segments of society? These are questions that recurrently come to mind when it is found that the openness, tolerance and informality that are essential characteristics to the liveliness of these areas, and to the diversity that it is in its roots, are often self-destructed, through branding and commodification mechanisms, developed in order to promote the liveability, the attractiveness and even the political affirmation and institutionalization of the neighbourhood.

Without entering into the debate on the instrumentalization (or self-instrumentalization) of the LGBT community in these processes, it is easy to identify a parallelism with the creative and cultural field (and the similarities with cultural/creative districts), with the symbolic valorisation or mainstreaming of these neighbourhoods resulting in higher prices and in limitation of access, to both private and public (or semi-public) space, to this community (with an extreme example in the case of Marais in Paris, even if morphology and planning measures help to hinder these processes - cf. Costa and Lopes, 2013.

3. Framing the two case studies: methodological aspects

In our analysis we have taken on two case studies, concerning two specific neighbourhoods with a very lively LGBT life (at least if we consider a specific period of time, from the last 2-3 decades of the 20th century to the first ones of the 21st century...) in their respective cities: Chueca, in Madrid (Spain) and Príncipe Real, in Lisbon (Portugal).

Our work aimed to develop a comparative analysis with the results obtained by Giraud (2014) to Marais (in Paris, France) and Village (in Montreal, Canada), taking the opportunity to explore hypothetical distinctions in the Iberian countries for the (different) realities already studied in Colin Giraud's work. This premise implied the use of methodologies that would allow, to some extent, the comparability with the work developed by this author and his findings.

In this sense, we have taken a methodological approach similar in its fundamental aspects to that used by Giraud (2014), in order to allow the comparability of our results, at least to a certain extent, and naturally considering the difference in socio-cultural contexts and all possible constraints in the application of the methodological procedures for our cases. In practice, a double layer methodology was followed, with (i) the undertaking of direct observation in the public space of both neighbourhoods by researchers and (ii) conducting in-depth interviews to some residents, both in Chueca and Príncipe Real.

The fieldwork was carried out between September 2015 and April 2016, in Madrid and Lisbon, and was complemented by additional less systematic observation visits to both areas in the following years. During this period ten in-depth interviews were conducted in both cities with residents of the local LGBT community.

Although the intention was not to have a representative sample of the neighbourhoods (following Giraud's methodology in this respect, and assuming naturally that the results would only reflect the people who were analysed, thus considering all the inherent limitations of the methodological technique used, including the potential constraints linked to the number of interviews conducted and the snowball method), our intention to compare the reality of these two districts with that analysed by Giraud (2014) was always taken into account. The socio-demographic characterization of the sample (which, as in the case of Giraud, was composed by gays living in both neighbourhoods) guarantees some degree of comparability. However, we should clarify that an analysis based on qualitative data (such as the ones resulting from in-depth interviews and participant observation), only allows a generic degree of comparative analysis between different realities, and not an exhaustive comparative approach that a research project with a broader scope (for instance the possibility of launching a broad survey) could bring.

In any case, considering that one of our purposes is to discuss possible differences between these realities and other typological realities of "gay villages" elsewhere in the world (e.g.: Anglo-Saxon/Europe), we do not intend to characterize exhaustively the reality of these two neighbourhoods. As in Giraud's work, the aim is to look at the two gay neighbourhoods and explore their similarities and dissimilarities with the analyses of other case studies carried out by other authors, with different methodological procedures. As such, the comparative approach should also be taken with all these methodological precautions.

Of course, the contextual aspects of each experience and all the cultural, institutional and social mechanisms that condition and regulate the functioning of these territorial systems should not be forgotten. Neither can we forget the morphological dimension which conditions decisively (in these and in all studies that try to unveil the cities "of quarters" in their variety – Bell and Jayne, 2004; Costa and Lopes, 2013), the practices, the identity mechanisms, and the processes of symbolic sphere that occur and affect these territories.

Chueca is a neighbourhood located in the centre of Madrid, close to the main tourist and administrative points of this metropolis, being Madrid a city of almost 3.2 million inhabitants, within a metropolitan area of approximately 6.5 million inhabitants. Chueca has faced a considerable development in gay life, especially since the 1970's and 1980's, and is still marked by a strong LGBT presence, clearly visible in public space, in local commerce and services, and in the appropriation that the queer community makes through its daily practices. This area, which is central in the representations of the LGBTQ community in Spain, and strongly recognized, internally and externally, as a LGBT area in Madrid in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century (Salinas, 2007; Robbins, 2011) has been deeply affected in recent years by the processes of touristification and gentrification, like other central areas of this city. As such, the LGBT territorial dynamics has registered a shift and an expansion to other areas near the centre of Madrid, such as Malasena (and, to a lower extent, Lavapies).

Príncipe Real is a neighbourhood in the historical centre of Lisbon, that albeit traditionally marked by the presence of the middle and upper-middle class, is also characterized by a recent evolution associated with strong

gentrification and touristification processes, and a symbolic change in urban representations that has increased its attractiveness for more mainstream and capital-oriented population strata (e.g. Gato, 2015; Silva, 2014). It is important to underline the difference in scale (and also in density and heterogeneity of social practices) when compared to Madrid. The municipality of Lisbon has just over half a million inhabitants and is the centre of a metropolitan area with nearly 2,8 million inhabitants. The LGBT community in the area is noted has having grown in the 1980's and 1990's, but the area does not correspond precisely to what is usually called a "gay village", as the invisibility of this community to external eyes is still prevalent, and the marks in the public space (essentially related to bars and nightlife or sporadic specialized trade) are not so frequent. Unlike the case of Madrid, Príncipe Real is still characterized by a more discreet presence of this community, in coexistence with other population segments, benefiting from a symbiotic long-term relation with adjacent areas (particularly the Bairro Alto and Chiado neighborhoods), where the LGBT community is also traditionally welcomed, particularly in recent years of greater openness in Portuguese society to gender issues (e.g. Meneses, 2000; Vieira, 2010; Costa & Magalhães, 2014).

4. Main analytical results

The in-depth interviews conducted with residents of the two neighbourhoods contemplated seven analytical dimensions, plus the socio-demographic characterization data[5]. Thus, analysis considered the following issues: (i) Location factors; (ii) Daily use and experience of the neighbourhood; (iii) Sociability relations; (iv) Assessment of neighbourhood evolution; (v) LGBT identities and sociability in the neighbourhood; (vi) Image of the neighbourhood; (vii) Governance and policies. A summary of the main results on perceptions expressed by residents is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Main ideas/representations expressed by the interviewees for each analytical dimension surveyed

	Chueca (Madrid)	**Príncipe Real (Lisbon)**
Location factors	- Most are owners (houses / businesses) - Most live in the area for more than 2 years - Most lived previously in Madrid or outside Madrid - Live in Chueca mostly because they like the centrality	- Most are owners (houses) - Most live in Principe Real for more than one year - All come from abroad, the majority from outside Lisbon - They live in Principe Real because of the location and being a "trendy" place
Daily use and experience of the neighbourhood	- Most use the neighbourhood for shopping for groceries, pharmacy and going out during the night - LGBT services/spaces are only important for going out during the night	- Most use regularly local supermarkets, coffee places or pharmacies - Most of them like to go to the gay discos that exist in the area
Sociability relations	- Most of them do not mingle with other people from Chueca, apart from their direct neighbours	- There is not so much conversation or contact with other people that live in Príncipe Real - Most socialize with the family and friends outside the neighbourhood
Assessment of neighbourhood evolution	- Most enjoy Chueca for the location and the chance to go out during the night	- Most complain that Príncipe Real has more and more tourists (gentrification is also noticed) and more "mainstream" population/users

[5] Characterization data was collected (and is available for further research) on the following domains: self-classification in terms of sexual orientation; age; occupation; residential status (land ownership/rental; longevity of stay); geographical origins and trajectory; social origins; conjugal status)

	- But don't enjoy the dirt and the noise that surrounds it (negative externalities) - They notice that increasingly there are more straight bars and consequently straight people going to Chueca - This place is no longer the "Gay place" per excellence, but Malasana and Lavapies are taking over this position	- The garbage is a problem, as well as parking and traffic jams - There are less and less old people and more and more "short-rental" apartments
LGBT identities and sociability in the neighbourhood	- There is no big difference between the behaviour inside or outside Chueca, for most interviewees - Chueca was very important for most of the sample, due to the gay movement during the 80s (they could kiss, hold hands, etc., inside the neighbourhood; no longer the case, since outside it is now also normal to do it)	- Príncipe Real was very important in terms of coming out (and reinforcing LGBT identity) and still is, because it is seen as one of the few places where they can be free to hold hands and kiss in public spaces - In that sense, behaviours are still often considered different here, and more "open" in this "safe" area
Image of the neighbourhood	- Chueca is definitely considered a LGBT place - But more and more it is a "trendy" place, rather than a gay place alone - It is seen as a ghetto, mostly for the people that come from outside Madrid	- Príncipe Real is seen as a LGBT neighbourhood (though sometimes just by LGBT population), although not "dominated" by gays, as it has more and more straight people - It is seen also as a ghetto, although a lot less than it used to be
Governance and policies	- The bars (e.g. Black and White, Why Not and LL) really helped to construct the image of a gay neighbourhood - The intervention from the city hall during the Gay Pride is the only one referred by the respondents - When asked if public policies should do more, all answer no	- LGBT businesses (mostly nightlife), LGBT residents, but also a certain specific type of trade helped to construct the idea of Príncipe Real as LGBT neighbourhood - Public policies are just referred as "facilitators" and "mainstreamers" of LGBT issues - No direct intervention is required, since it is regarded as a "mentalities" problem

Source: own elaboration.

In terms of location factors, interviewees were asked about their longevity in the neighbourhood and the reasons for their residential preferences, including the relationship of their residential trajectories to personal life trajectories. From the answers obtained[6], the importance assumed by local territorial factors, namely the centrality of the neighbourhood in relation to the city (and also, to a lesser extent, the "trendy" image in the case of Lisbon), was verified. More than a LGBT question, the preference for these neighbourhoods is represented and self-expressed as a result of the locational advantages associated with their extreme centrality in the city.

In relation to their daily life experiences, interviewees were asked about their use of the neighbourhood and the functions it provides them. It was sought to understand how they "live" the neighbourhood, and what kind of "services" or "functions" they use in the geographical territory of this district in their daily life, as well as those they have to look for outside it. One of the aims was to understand to what extent the LGBT places/functions/shops that the neighbourhoods offer were (or not) central to their lives. It was found that most of them use the

[6] And crossing it with a diversity of characterization variables, including information on the extent of their permanence in the neighbourhood and their residential trajectories.

neighbourhood for the usual central functions (not particularly the LGBT-oriented ones), such as local commerce for day-to-day shopping. The LGBT activities used are essentially linked to nightlife (unlike in other "gay villages" in literature), which has considerable centrality in both neighbourhoods.

In relation to sociability relations, each of the interviewees was asked a set of questions related to their family, friendship and neighbourhood ties, with the aim of perceiving and assessing the connectivity between the LGBT resident community and the territory (e.g., if they had daily relations and bond to other people in the neighbourhood; if their main social relations were stablished inside or outside the district; to what extent the neighbourhood was “central” in their lives and their everyday life; if they knew and interact with their LGBT and non LGBT neighbours). From the answers, it emerges that daily life does not seem to be very marked by privileged relationships within these neighbourhoods (particularly within a specific LGBT resident community, with distinctive lifestyles). The majority of interviewees work and interact more with family and friends living outside these neighbourhoods than with the local community.

In terms of assessing the evolution of these neighbourhoods and their key dynamics, several topics were under discussion, in order to understand the strengths and weaknesses of these territories pointed out by the interviewees, the main changes identified and the expectations they have regarding future transformations, as well as their positionings towards those changes. Gentrification processes were clearly identified in both districts, although without clear reference to the type of 'social' change involved (and a particular absence of mention of their economic effects). Emphasis was placed on the most visible processes of change (such as the symbolic mainstreaming of neighbourhoods, 'straightification', touristification), including their impacts on the relocation of people and economic activities. A number of negative externalities have also been identified (in relation to both old and new activities), and an awareness has been expressed (particularly in Madrid) regarding the transition of LGBT vibrancy from the neighbourhood to adjacent territories or other areas of the city.

Considering LGBT identities and sociability practices in these neighbourhoods, interviewees were asked if their behaviour (as well as that of other people) was different in their residential area, in comparison with their practices in other areas of the city, since it can be seen as a "LGBT territory", a "safe place". It was also asked about the relevance that living in these neighbourhoods has in reinforcing (or not) the LGBT identities of the interviewees, as well as in reinforcing their daily practices as LGBT people. In both neighbourhoods the importance of the place in structuring behaviour as well as in marking and reinforcing LGBT identities was recognised (although today less than before, particularly in the case of Madrid, as the city is now seen as more "safe" and LGBT friendly everywhere). However, there are significant differences in scale and temporality in both cases. In Madrid these issues were particularly relevant in the 1980s as people now do not recognise a major difference in practices and in the assertion of identities, as compared to other areas of the city. In Lisbon the neighbourhood continues to be identified as important in these two domains, being referred as one of the few "open" and "safer" places in the city.

As for the image of the neighbourhoods, the interviewees were asked about the existence of a clear LGBT connotation associated with it and to what extent this representation would still reflect the reality. One of the objectives was to capture their perceptions of change and expansion into adjacent areas. In this topic, the perceptions of the interviewees regarding the greater or lesser "ghettoization" and openness of neighbourhoods and their respective evolution in terms of image were also explored. The responses show that, in general, the symbolic aspect of the LGBT neighbourhood is perceived diversely and evolves considerably, with both neighbourhoods converging towards a certain mainstreaming. Chueca is clearly considered as a LGBT place, although there is an evolution of the image as a "trendy" place rather than just a "gay place". Príncipe Real is also seen as a LGBT place, although sometimes only by the LGBT population. However, it is not considered as "dominated" by the LGBT community, having more and more straight people. The representation as a ghetto exists, but also tends to diminish in both neighbourhoods. Chueca is seen as a ghetto mainly for people coming from outside Madrid; Príncipe Real is also seen as a kind of ghetto, though much less than it used to be.

Finally, in a section dedicated to the actors, the governance mechanisms and the public policies affecting these neighbourhoods, interviewees were asked which actors were considered most relevant to the image of their territories as LGBT friendly (among residents, external visitors, commerce and bars, local associations, media). It was also sought to understand to what extent public policies have contributed to this reality or how they could be

improved. From the responses obtained, it was found that the representations mainly highlight the self-regulatory governance mechanisms existing in the neighbourhoods. Several shops, bars and even residents are pointed out as central to the symbolic construction of the neighbourhood as a LGBT space, while local public policies are only recognized laterally (related to occasional support for community events) and additional public intervention is not assumed as expected or necessary.

With all these dimensions in mind, we can sum up some ideas. It seems clear that there are strong specificities in each case, which affect the functioning of each of these territorial systems as LGBT neighbourhoods and the way in which social practices, economic activities and mechanisms of appropriation of public space are structured. The same applies to the symbolic sphere around these neighbourhoods and their centrality in the queer communities of each city. The importance of critical thresholds (and the size, density and even heterogeneity of social practices) in structuring these practices should be highlighted, as well as the fact that they are rather unbalanced in the two cities, with Madrid's advantage. It is therefore natural that the structuring of Chueca as a gay neighbourhood, perceived internally and externally in a more universal way, is much more evident than in Príncipe Real.

In the case of Chueca we can consider that we are more clearly in the presence of a LGBT "village", in the traditional "Anglo-Saxon" or "European" format (e.g. Marais), in a process that came from the 1970s and deepened in the 1980s, changing the face of the neighbourhood and making it central to the LGBT (and foreign) community of Madrid. This district (with a strong presence of residents, but also with a variety of LGBT commerce and services) is currently facing the challenges related to the sustainability as a gay "village", being affected by strong forces towards a process of territorial spreading or even relocation (to nearby locations). This is largely due to massification, "heterofication" (related to their symbolic mainstreaming), and also to the pressures from rising real estate prices. Notwithstanding the pressures on residents to leave and the degradation of living conditions in recent years due to the increase in externalities and growing massification, it can be considered that we still have a strong centrality of LGBT businesses in this neighbourhood (although some are also leaving and others are increasingly massified), even if other neighbourhoods prepare to assume Chueca's past centrality in the imaginary and practices of Madrid's queer life.

In the case of Príncipe Real it is much more difficult to use the label of "gay village" of the city, regardless of its strong weight in Lisbon's LGBT activities, in the structuring of community identities and in collective representations. Despite the centrality of this neighbourhood in Lisbon's queer world, the lower density (and external visibility) of the resident community and of the LGBT-oriented commerce represents a barrier to strengthening a clearer image as a LGBT area. The recent pressure towards accentuated economic gentrification processes - with significant increases in real estate market, accompanying the symbolic move to more mainstream markets - represents a threat to the resilience of (the generality of) the LGBT community living in the neighbourhood. This is a reality that also threatens the development of LGBT-oriented businesses, since changes in commerce and services are playing an essential role in the current transformations of this neighbourhood. With the exception of nightlife, the centrality of not exclusively LGBT commerce in this neighbourhood - and even a certain invisibility of those who have been in this place for decades due to the profusion of new trendy stores and upper-middle-class oriented commerce - are aspects that do not help to consolidate the area as a central place for the LGBT community, at the same time that gentrification and touristification pressures are contributing to the destruction of the residential potential of this neighbourhood for queer population.

Like in many other LGBT neighbourhoods around the world, particularly those located in central and historical areas of capital cities, the main challenges in these two cases are related to the pressures arising from the processes of massification, gentrification and touristification, as well as to the structural socio-economic changes related to the development of cultural-cognitive capitalism, globalization processes and the increasing importance of symbolic value in urban structuring. And it should be noticed that, in view of all of these, and given the way in which this type of neighbourhood have been structured and organised for decades, the LGBT community may not be completely free of guilt.

5. Conclusion

Drawing upon the empirical work conducted in Chueca and Príncipe Real (in Madrid and Lisbon, respectively), it was our goal in this paper to characterize the main trajectories and evolutionary specificities of these two neighbourhoods . Comparing the characteristics and contingencies of these areas with other cases previously studied in the literature, namely the analysis conducted by Colin Giraud (2014) in two other LGBT neighbourhoods (Marais in Paris and Village in Montreal), we can consider that it is possible to identify the existence of substantial differences in relation to them and suggest the evidence of some specificities that could represent a "South European" approach to the reality of the "Gay Villages".

In fact, when we compare our work with Giraud's analysis on the French and Canadian cases (and regardless all the strong particularities of each territorial system, at different levels), we can admit that there is some specificity in the Iberian cases compared to the other two. When we analyse sociability practices, identity mechanisms and the representations expressed by our interviewees, we identify (particularly in the case of Lisbon), an evolutionary process that is not so marked by the sense of belonging to a "community" and daily practices and routines (and symbolic representation, internal and external to the LGBT community) as those found in the other cases.

In a certain sense we can admit that the realities analysed in Madrid and Lisbon present more similarities to the processes that normally occur in cultural and creative areas. These areas are usually characterized by greater openness to accommodate strategies of diversity and liminality. On the contrary, a "traditional gay village" is based much more on strong LGBT community mechanisms, as the examples of Paris and, especially, Montreal show. In other perspective, the reality of the Chueca and Príncipe Real neighbourhoods could be more easily compared to the other two cases through a (much more flexible and fluid) queer-oriented approach than with a traditional "gay village" framework. It is in that sense that we talk about a "South European" type of "Gay Villages".

It is also important to note that considerable differences were also found between the two cases observed. The justification for this may be due to a multiplicity of aspects (including the relevance of critical thresholds in terms of size, density and heterogeneity of social practices, but also historical and cultural issues or urban morphology, for example). Further work can and should be done on exploring the specific dynamics of each of these neighbourhoods, as well as additional exploration of the qualitative data collected in these districts, to be complemented by more extensive data to be gathered in further observations.

It was not so clear, in both neighbourhoods, that there were consistent processes of "gaytrification", despite the current strong gentrification dynamics verified in both. From the perceptions of the LGBT community members interviewed, their role in the early stages of these processes is not directly expressed (it is not assumed as in many other "gay villages" around the world), even if it is clearly admissible. However, from the observation that we have made so far, in both neighbourhoods there has been a clear increase in gentrification and massification processes, with the expected results in terms of eviction (as well as voluntary mobility) of LGBT residents and commerce to abroad. As in many other cases, and in particular with the artistic and creative communities, the LGBT community can be seen as "instrumentalized" (or in some cases self-instrumentalized) to create value in broader socio-economic processes.

Despite the need for further research, in both neighbourhoods it is already clear, for now, that in terms of policy implications:(i) local authorities must be attentive to the particularities and mechanisms of self-regulation that are critical to the existence of any LGBT neighbourhood (be it conditions for its development, openness to liminality and expression of identity, etc.) and those that prevent it from undesirable processes; (ii) serious attention should be paid to the specificities of southern countries (not importing a-critically external prescriptions); and (iii) a mechanism should be implemented to address mainstreaming pressures (as much as gentrification and tourism burdens), if the idea is to "preserve" LGBT life in these neighbourhoods. In any of these fields, an attentive and informed policy action is needed, particularly in view of the complexity of the governance mechanisms regulating the functioning of these territorial systems, avoiding the risk of compromising with their actions (as well-intentioned as they may be) the conditions to the functioning and the long-term sustainability of these territorial dynamics.

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