

Master's thesis
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GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISM

Travel Motivations, Destination Choices and Holiday Experiences of Gays and Lesbians

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Summary of master's thesis

Gay and lesbian tourism has only recently started receiving attention and gaining importance as a field of study from researchers and marketers. This master's thesis is a contribution to the growing body of research on these consumers. In the thesis, gay and lesbian tourists' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences are analysed and discussed on the basis of findings from a qualitative, explorative study of more than 50 gays and lesbians. The study was conducted in the form of in-depth interviews with actual and potential gay and lesbian tourists. The interviewees were found through snowballing; contacts in gay accommodation; at gay and lesbian bars in Denmark; and at international gay and lesbian events. The participants in the study should, however, not be seen as representative of gay men and lesbians in general, but they do constitute a cross-section of homosexuals aged between 23 and 61 from thirteen different countries.

Three key findings have been made which will be outlined in the master's thesis. First of all, gay and lesbian tourists' travel motivations are extremely diverse, and it is therefore important to take into account the different interpretations and life worlds that gays and lesbians present. Moreover, many travel motivations of homosexuals seem to be in line with those of heterosexual tourists. However, some aspects of holidaying seem to be of particular importance to many interviewees, namely the wish for feeling safe and accepted, frequenting gay space, and joining gay/lesbian events while holidaying.

Secondly, when it comes to destination choices, it seems like some gays and lesbians avoid certain destinations because of their sexuality whereas it has not been possible to distinguish interviewees who choose to go to destinations exclusively based upon their sexuality. In addition, lesbian tourists' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences have been discussed separately, and there seem to be substantial differences concerning various aspects of holidaying between gay men and lesbians.

Lastly, it has been discovered that gays and lesbians are aware and capable of managing their multiple identities in the sense that they sometimes apply the 'gay' and 'lesbian' aspects of their identities while holidaying and sometimes emphasise other identities such as national, occupational or gender identities.

In the very end of the master's thesis, recommendations for further studies on gay and lesbians tourism are provided, and it is put forward that developing more research within this field is important because gays and lesbians have not been given much voice in tourism studies. Thus, researchers are encouraged to focus even more upon the influence on culture upon gays' and lesbians' travel motivations and holiday choices; conduct studies exclusively on lesbian tourists; and look into the holiday motivations of homosexual families.

Dear Reader,

This master's thesis on Gay and Lesbian Tourism is the culmination of five years' university studies. The research has been undertaken in collaboration between two students with different university backgrounds, one studying Master of Science in Business, Language and Culture at Copenhagen Business School, the other studying International Tourism and Leisure Management at the University of Southern Denmark. The constellation has been established due to related interests in tourism and is based upon an expectation of a fruitful alliance. The intention of the partnership was to make use of diverse educational backgrounds, skills and perspectives in order to create synergy effects which, hopefully, have enriched the content of this master's thesis.

We would very much like to thank the interviewees who have used their valuable time to participate in this study and who have, moreover, revealed their hearts and minds to us. Your time, contribution and honesty are deeply appreciated.

Lastly, we would like to thank our supervisors for critical questions and knowledgeable inputs. This thesis might have looked slightly different without your comments and suggestions.

Enjoy reading!

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1. INTRODUCTION	1
<hr/>	
1.1. DELIMITATIONS	4
1.1.1. GAY MEN AND LESBIANS	5
1.1.2. LEISURE TOURISM	5
1.2. TERMINOLOGY	6
1.2.1. TOURISM, HOLIDAY AND VACATION	6
1.2.2. GAYS, LESBIANS, QUEERS, LGBT AND HOMOSEXUALS	7
1.3. STRUCTURE OF MASTER'S THESIS	8
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
<hr/>	
2.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS	10
2.1.1. RELIABLE FINDINGS?	11
2.1.2. GAY AND LESBIAN IDENTITIES	12
2.2. TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS	13
2.2.1. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS	13
2.2.2. TOURIST TYPES	14
2.2.3. HOLIDAYING AS A MEANS OF EXPRESSING IDENTITY	15
2.2.4. ANONYMITY ON HOLIDAYS	15
2.3. DESTINATION CHOICES OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS	16
2.3.1. THE ROLE OF SEXUALITY ON DESTINATION CHOICES	17
2.3.2. GAY DESTINATIONS	18
2.3.3. RESTRICTIONS ON DESTINATION CHOICE AND HOLIDAY BEHAVIOUR	19
2.4. GAY SPACE	19
2.4.1. COMMUNITY AND GAY SPACE	20
2.4.2. GAY SPACE ON HOLIDAYS	20
2.5. GAY EVENTS	21
2.5.1. CRITIQUE OF GAY EVENTS	22
2.6. SEX ON HOLIDAY	23
2.6.1. SEXUAL ACTIVITY AS CONTEXT DEPENDENT	23
2.6.2. HOME VS. AWAY	24
2.7. LESBIAN TOURISTS	24
2.7.1. FEMINISM AND LESBIANISM	25
2.7.2. COMMUNITY, IDENTITY AND LESBIAN SPACE	26
2.7.3. LESBIANS AS CONSUMERS	27
2.7.4. LESBIAN AS TOURISTS	28
3. METHODOLOGY	30
<hr/>	
3.1. PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE	30
3.1.1. ONTOLOGY	31
3.1.2. EPISTEMOLOGY	32
3.1.3. METHODOLOGY	33
3.2. THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW	34
3.2.1. THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE	35
3.2.2. INTERVIEWS AS A MEANS FOR UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE	35
3.2.3. EMPATHETIC INTERVIEWING	36
3.2.4. THE ROLE OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCHER	37
3.2.5. THE JOURNEY INTO THE LIFE WORLDS OF GAYS AND LESBIANS	38
3.2.6. GETTING INSIGHT INTO A NEW WORLD	38

3.2.7. A STUDY ON GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS	39
3.2.8. ANONYMITY	40
3.2.9. SELECTION OF INTERVIEW PERSONS	40
3.2.10. THE USEFULNESS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS	42
3.2.11. THE INTERVIEW SESSION	43
3.2.12. ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS	44
3.2.13. THE MATRIX	46
3.2.14. A MULTIPLICITY OF WORLD VIEWS	46

4. DATA ANALYSIS **47**

4.1. INTERVIEWEE CHARACTERISTICS	47
4.2. TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS (PUSH FACTORS)	48
4.2.1. ESCAPE	48
4.2.2. RELAXING AND DISCONNECTING	50
4.2.3. ANONYMITY	50
4.2.4. TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS IN A CULTURAL CONTEXT	51
4.3. TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS (PULL FACTORS)	53
4.3.1. GETTING NEW EXPERIENCES	53
4.3.2. GETTING TO KNOW THE LOCALS	55
4.3.3. THE DIVERSE TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF GAYS AND LESBIANS	55
4.4. DESTINATION CHOICES OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS	56
4.4.1. UNKNOWN VS. KNOWN DESTINATIONS	57
4.4.2. DESTINATION CHOICES AS CONTEXT SPECIFIC	58
4.4.3. INTERESTS AS DRIVER FOR DESTINATION CHOICE	58
4.4.4. DESTINATION AVOIDANCE ON THE BASIS OF SEXUALITY	59
4.4.5. CONCEALMENT OF SEXUALITY	60
4.4.6. DESTINATION AVOIDANCE FOR OTHER REASONS THAN SEXUALITY	61
4.4.7. THE ROLE OF SAFETY IN RELATION TO DESTINATION CHOICE	62
4.5. GAY DESTINATIONS	64
4.5.1. POTENTIAL HOLIDAY MAKERS AT GAY DESTINATIONS	65
4.5.2. NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF GAY DESTINATIONS	66
4.5.3. LOYAL VISITORS TO GAY DESTINATIONS	67
4.6. GAY SPACE ON HOLIDAY	68
4.6.1. GAY SPACE, OPENNESS AND COMMUNITY	69
4.6.2. A NEGATIVE VIEW ON GAY SPACE	72
4.6.3. THE DEGAYING OF GAY SPACE	73
4.6.4. THE MASCULINE DOMINATION OF GAY SPACE	74
4.7. GAY FRIENDLINESS	75
4.7.1. DIVERSE DEFINITIONS OF GAY FRIENDLINESS	76
4.7.2. GAY FRIENDLINESS AS ACCEPTANCE	77
4.7.3. GAY FRIENDLINESS AS A NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTIC	79
4.7.4. THE INSIGNIFICANCE OF GAY FRIENDLINESS	81
4.8. THE ROLE OF EVENTS	82
4.8.1. MOTIVATIONS FOR TRAVELLING TO EVENTS	83
4.8.2. THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF GAY EVENTS	85
4.9. THE ROLE OF SEX	88
4.9.1. SEX AS AN ENHANCEMENT OF THE HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE	88
4.9.2. SEX AS A PHYSICAL NEED	89
4.9.3. GETTING INTO THE 'BACK REGIONS'	90
4.9.4. RELATIONSHIP STATUS MATTERS	91
4.10. TRAVEL MOTIVATION AND DESTINATION CHOICES FOR LESBIANS	92
4.10.1. LESBIANS AND SAFETY	93
4.10.2. LESBIANS, SPACE AND COMMUNITY	94

4.10.3. LESBIAN DESTINATIONS	95
4.10.4. LESBIAN FAMILIES	96
4.10.5. LESBIANS AND SEX ON HOLIDAY	97
4.10.6. LESBIANS AS FEMALE TOURISTS	98
4.11. GAYS' AND LESBIANS' MULTIPLE IDENTITIES	99

5. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH **103**

5.1. CONFIRMABILITY	103
5.2. TRANSFERABILITY	104
5.3. DEPENDABILITY	104
5.4. CREDIBILITY	105

6. CONCLUSION **107**

6.1. TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS	107
6.2. DESTINATION CHOICES OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS	107
6.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS	109
6.4. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	110

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY **112**

8. APPENDICES **127**

8.1. AUDIO FILES OF INTERVIEWS
8.2. SUMMARIES OF INTERVIEWS
8.3. THE MATRIX
8.4. INTERVIEW GUIDES
8.5. EXAMPLES OF FEEDBACK FROM INTERVIEWEES
8.6. ORIGINAL QUOTATIONS

Who has written what?

In order to provide an overview of the authors' contributions, it will in the following be outlined who is the main responsible person for the different parts of the thesis:

Introduction, p. 1-4:	Jane
Introduction, p. 4-9:	Nina
Literature review, p. 10-21:	Nina
Literature review, p. 21-30:	Jane
Methodology, p. 30-34:	Jane
Methodology, p. 34-40:	Nina
Methodology, p. 40-46:	Jane
Data analysis, p. 47-64:	Nina
Data analysis, p. 64-82:	Jane
Data analysis, p. 82-88:	Nina
Data analysis, p. 88-99:	Jane
Data analysis, p. 99-102:	Nina
Criteria for assessing qualitative research, p. 103-104:	Nina
Criteria for assessing qualitative research, p. 104-106:	Jane
Conclusion, p. 107-110:	Nina
Conclusion, p. 110-111:	Jane

1. Introduction

Tourism is an integrated part of the westernised lifestyle and travel reflect and help constructing the individual's status, identity and culture (Hughes, 1997, 2002a; Grubb and Stern, 1971; Howe, 2001; Cox, 2002; Wall & Mathieson, 2006; Bowen & Clarke, 2009). Furthermore, due to general increases in income; more leisure time; and enhanced mobility, today tourism is often acclaimed to be one of the fastest growing international industries (Wall & Mathieson, 2006; Sharpley, 2003; Theobald, 2005; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Holloway, 2004; World Tourism Organization, 2009). Billions of dollars are each year spend on travel, and for many countries and destinations around the world, tourism generates critical wealth for the host societies (Wall & Mathieson, 2006; Mowforth & Munt, 2007). Therefore, destinations across the globe seek to improve their tourism product and market their innovative offers to different segments in order to attract visitors and improve the economic situation within the destination (Holloway, 2004). However, the competition between destinations is fierce as all destinations try to offer the best holiday experiences in order to attract tourists and their money. At the same time, DMCs (destination marketing companies) as well as tourism companies start realising that the key to success is not necessarily standardised mass tourism, but more often strong niche positions that offer something special to a special group of consumers (Hughes, 2005b; Rushbrook, 2002; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Stuber, 2002). Accordingly, more and more destinations turn towards focus/segmentation strategies (Porter, 1980) and attempt to focus upon few markets or segments in order to better cater to the needs of these consumers.

One such niche is said to be 'the gay and lesbian tourists' (Burrows & Dumoulin, 2000; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Pritchard et al., 2000; Stuber, 2002; Hughes, 2005b; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Murray, 2007; Guaracino, 2007). In the literature, lesbian and gay tourists are suggested to be an especially lucrative segment (Guaracino, 2007; Pritchard et al., 1998b; Forrest & Clift, 1998; Boyd, 2008; Holcomb & Luongo, 1996). The view on gays and lesbians as a 'dream segment' is shared by practitioners (Haslop et al., 1998: 318) and an increasing number of destinations market their products to lesbians and gays (Guaracino, 2007). For example, in 2003 Philadelphia launched the campaign 'Philadelphia Get Your History Straight and Your Nightlife Gay', and cities such as Manchester and London have likewise made large-scale campaigns directed at gay and lesbian travellers (Community Marketing, 2009; Guaracino, 2007; Hughes, 2002c). Furthermore, in recent years several books on gay and lesbian tourism

were published (Hughes, 2006; Clift & Carter 2000; Clift et al., 2002; Guaracino, 2007; Waitt & Markwell, 2006) and every year key players within the gay and lesbian community, such as IGLTA (The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association) and Community Marketing Inc. host meetings and conferences on the topic (e.g. the 10th International Conference on Gay and Lesbian Tourism in Boston, November 2009). Lastly, gay and lesbian events like Prides, EuroGames, World Outgames, and Gay and Lesbian Film Festivals are huge crowd-pullers (Howe, 2001; Pritchard et al., 1998b; Community Marketing, 2008b; Philipp, 1999; Hughes, 2006; Johnston, 2007; Clift & Forrest, 1999). These activities directed at gays and lesbians all seem to indicate that this group of people is worth studying and marketing to.

At the same time, however, Clift & Carter (2000) state that gender and sexuality of travellers are under-researched topics, and other authors (Pritchard et al., 1998b; Hughes 2002c; Guaracino, 2007) argue that there is a lack of *critical* academic research on these topics. Waitt & Markwell (2006: 9) even state that a 'gay gap' characterises tourism literature. Accordingly, a variety of interesting issues within gay and lesbian tourism need to be covered in order to close this gap, and the purpose of this master's thesis is to make a contribution in this regard. Although a variety of books and articles on gays and lesbians exist (Medhurst & Munt, 1997; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Guaracino, 2007; Hughes, 2006; Clift & Carter, 2000), these contributions may over-emphasise the importance of gay and lesbian tourists as a distinct and interesting consumer group (Hughes, 2006). Furthermore, extant literature (Guaracino, 2007; Hughes, 2002a; Haslop et al., 1998; Stuber, 2002; Philipp, 1999; Fugate, 1993; Visser, 2003) predominantly focuses on marketing issues and on gay and lesbian tourists' income levels, travel patterns and holiday spending. However, we believe that before it is possible to look upon gay and lesbian tourists in a marketing context, we need to understand their travel motivations, destinations choices and holiday experiences. Therefore, we wish to make a contribution to a prosperous future for gay and lesbian tourism as a research area subject to academic rigor and critical reflection and not just look upon gay and lesbian tourists from a marketer's perspective.

A key reason why the lesbian and gay consumers are deemed to be of special interest for the tourism industry is that lesbian and, especially, gay couples are said to have higher levels of education and higher average income than straight couples, have no children and, therefore, higher discretionary income - they are so-called DINKs (Roth & Luongo, 2002; Stuber, 2002; Guaracino, 2007; Burrows & Dumoulin, 2000; Community Marketing, 2009). Moreover, it is

proposed that lesbian and gay couples travel more frequently than other people, spend more money on each trip and are more brand loyal than straight couples (Roth & Luongo, 2002; Guaracino, 2007). It should, however, be noted that some of the above suggestions might only apply to gay men couples as there is a lack of academic literature on lesbian tourists compared to gay male tourists (Hughes, 2006; Pritchard et al., 2002; Puar, 2002a, 2002b; Pritchard et al., 1998a). In this study, we will include both lesbian and gay tourists in order to ensure that both lesbian and gay male voices are heard.

From a marketing perspective, it is interesting to find out what gays and lesbian tourists actually seek when travelling. In his seminal article, Levitt (1960: 50) argued that 'selling focuses on the needs of the seller, marketing on the needs of the buyer'. According to Levitt, it thus makes little sense to try to make the 'right product' or try to communicate with potential customers unless one has a keen understanding of these customers. In accordance with Levitt's (1960) line of reasoning, the aim of the study accounted for in this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of the gay and lesbian tourist (if such a univocal customer exists). We seek to provide in-depth knowledge on the topic which might help marketers to ensure that niche products developed and marketed with this particular set of customers in mind actually cater to these people's needs.

Due to the reasons explicated above, we feel an urge to find out who a lesbian or gay tourist is. What is (s)he seeking when leaving home as a tourist? What is his or her motivation for going on holiday? Which destination does (s)he choose and why? What activities does (s)he enjoy at the holiday destination? In other words, the aim of this thesis is to investigate

Travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences of gay and lesbian tourists

In order to guide the research, the following research questions will be answered:

- What are the travel motivations of gay and lesbian tourists?
- Which destinations do they choose and why?
- Is there a difference between gay and lesbian tourists?
- Is there a difference between gay and lesbian tourists and other tourists?

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give a final conclusion to these questions. Rather, we want to explore the travel motivations for lesbian and gay tourists and expand the already existing knowledge on the topic. At the same time, we hope that this study can be of use to the tourism industry – and especially we hope that it will qualify as valuable input to the Danish tourism industry. Throughout the past years, the number of international tourists in Denmark has been decreasing and Denmark is losing market shares to other countries (VisitDenmark, 2009). A way of attracting more tourists to Denmark might be to focus on and be sensible towards the possible preferences of the gay and lesbian tourists. Therefore, we find it interesting to discover what gay and lesbian tourists seek when they go on holiday and what they expect of a holiday destination. However, with this study, we are not aiming at providing normative recommendations for marketing campaigns. Instead, our ambition is to provide deeper insight into gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences. As this study will to some extent be explorative, at the outset we are thus not expecting to be able to give a series of firm, normative pieces of advice on how to market a destination to gay and lesbian tourists. On the contrary, our contribution to extant knowledge is that of offering in-depth knowledge on these tourists; knowledge that should, at a later point in time, enable the tourism industry to fulfill the needs of these tourists.

Although we – in the above – write about gay and lesbian tourists as if they are one group of people, it is important to understand that we do recognise that this is a hoarse simplification (Hughes, 2007; Pritchard et al., 2000; Plummer, 1992). Hence, as researchers we acknowledge that homosexuals are not – per se – a homogenous group of people. Individuals of different age, status, race, nationality and the like qualify as gay and lesbian tourists, and it is crucial not to generalise when studying their travel motivations (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). Consequently, we want to talk to different kinds of gay and lesbian tourists in order to get a deeper knowledge of gay and lesbian travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 2005a, 2007; Pritchard et al., 2000).

1.1. Delimitations

As the field of study, Gay and Lesbian Tourism, can be approached in a diverse numbers of ways, in this section we point to a few, but important delimitations of the thesis.

1.1.1. Gay men and lesbians

Most of the literature on gay tourism focuses upon gay men, and Puar (2002a: 937) asks whether ‘conventional narratives of (queer) tourism reinscribe lesbian invisibility?’. In addition, Waitt & Markwell (2006) state that discourses in tourism are gendered and primarily masculine. They furthermore claim that gay tourism is generally exclusive as destinations are constructed and marketed towards white, male, professional and affluent gays (‘the good homosexuals’). As a result, some people are unwanted by the market, such as lesbians, gays of colour and fetish gays (‘the queer unwanted’) (Waitt & Markwell, 2006: 255-256). In this study, we want to give voice to those who are not always heard, and we find it relevant to focus on gay men as well as lesbians. Moreover, we aim to talk to people of different ages, social classes and nationalities in order to get an understanding of the diversity of the gay/lesbian experiences that transcend the ‘good homosexuals’. By focusing on lesbians as well as gay men, we take a more inclusive approach to the topic, and we enhance the opportunity for finding persons who can provide us with more insight into the phenomenon.

Although we would like to include minority groups in the study, we choose to focus exclusively on gay men and lesbian travellers and not to take the whole LGBT¹ group into consideration. We made this decision in order to delimit the pool of possible interviewees as it might be reasonable to think that other issues are relevant for bisexuals and transgender people, and that they might have other travel motivations than the likewise diverse group of gays and lesbians (Hoye & Lievens, 2003).

1.1.2. Leisure tourism

Leisure and tourism are closely related concepts. Leisure refers to discretionary time available when ‘obligations are at a minimum’ (Cooper et al., 2008: 15) and, consequently, it can be suggested that leisure tourism is blocks of leisure time that are spent away from home. In this thesis, we focus exclusively on leisure tourism since this is a voluntary choice undertaken by the tourists which offers independence to travel and spend money the way they prefer (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Sharpley, 2003; Williams, 2003; Veblen, 1970; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Furthermore, this study includes both domestic and international gay and lesbian tourists, albeit we tend to emphasise international travels due to the fact that the changes in context such travels evoke may especially contribute with knowledge on the ‘gay and lesbian

¹ LGBT = Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender people

tourists'. The tourists' nationalities might also influence holiday motivations and experiences, and therefore it seems relevant to include gays and lesbians of different nationalities in the study. We also need to talk to the people that can help us in the best way to investigate this topic, and these are gay and lesbian tourists – *in situ* on holiday as well as in their home environment. It is relevant to note that we look at the tourists (demand), not the destinations (supply) (Hughes, 2006). We will touch upon perceptions of supply (i.e. how certain destinations and tourist products are perceived), but only as a part of a general knowledge about the demand side, i.e. 'the tourist' (Johnson & Thomas, 1992).

Lastly, it is relevant to point to the fact that the thesis is written from a Western point of view, as both researchers are Danish and the majority of the interviewees come from Europe or America. Most literature on gay and lesbian tourism is written by authors from the Anglo-Saxon world, especially North America (Howe, 2001; Fugate, 1993; Community Marketing, 2008b; Philipp, 1999) and the United Kingdom (Pritchard et al., 2002; Forrest & Clift, 1998; Hughes, 2006). Thus, it could be argued that some of the insights and conclusions might be ethnocentric and biased in the way that they only take certain 'westernised' people and opinions into account. As this thesis will draw upon these theories, among others, and, adding our own inherent 'westernised' way of understanding the world, we acknowledge the limitations of the study.

1.2. Terminology

Many ways of referring to the topic of this thesis exist. As language is important for how we understand the world (Burr, 2003; Rasborg, 2004) and even minor differences can give another meaning to a text, we find it important to explain why we use some concepts when discussing gay and lesbian tourism and not others.

1.2.1. Tourism, holiday and vacation

According to the World Tourism Organization 'tourism is defined as the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited' (OECD et al., 2001: 1). We adopt this definition and thus view tourists as persons who travel away from their usual surroundings,

for a maximum of one year, and who do not have a job or perform other activities which are paid from within the destination. This definition thus includes one day tourists and excursions and tourists visiting relatives and friends, but not holidays made in one's home. Although business travellers are included in the definition suggested by the WTO, they are, as described above, excluded from this thesis (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Williams, 2003).

Decrop (2006) claims that when writing academic texts about tourism, the term 'vacation' is preferable over 'tourism' for more reasons. Firstly, the word tourism is related to 'touring' which means that it does not take into consideration vacations where people stay in one place during the entire vacation. Moreover, for some people, tourism and being a tourist have a negative connotation because of the harmful consequences that tourism often has upon local people and the environment (Wall & Mathieson, 2006; Decrop, 2006). However, having said this, we will in this thesis use the words 'vacation' and 'holiday' as well as the word 'tourism' because we believe that 'tourism' (as defined by the World Tourism Organization) is a valid term for what we aim to research.

1.2.2. Gays, lesbians, queers, LGBT and homosexuals

In this master thesis, drawing on Munt (1997), the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian' will be used when talking about homosexual men and women, respectively. Community Marketing, Inc. (2009) states that the preferred term for use by gay and lesbian consumers in tourism ads is 'Gay and Lesbian' and we consider that the terms covers the phenomenon, which we want to explore, very well. Furthermore, the word 'homosexual' will also be used when used by the academic sources we draw upon albeit we acknowledge that the word homosexual does, for some people, have a negative undertone of pathology and discrimination (Binnie, 1997). However, we use the term in a pragmatic way in order to describe 'individuals having sexual desire for, or sexual activity with, persons of the same biological sex' (Hughes, 2006: 15). Howe (2001) uses the term 'queer' because she finds that this term 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, transgendered persons, and persons who practice sadomasochism etc. By using an originally negative term and making it their own, gay and lesbian researchers turn a derogative term into something which symbolises identity and inclusiveness. Also Puar (2002a) uses the word queer, but she does so in order to show her methodological approach to the study of tourism, as she

distinguishes between the tourist industry's approach (and the use of 'gay' and 'lesbian') and her own academic approach. However, Munt (1997) claims that because the term 'queer' is mainly used within the academic world, it has become an elitist, exclusive expression. Furthermore, by using the word 'queer', Howe (2001) recognises there is a risk of forgetting the differences of race, gender and class between the people it intends to include and ending up seeing queer people as white, male and wealthy. Therefore, we refrain from using this term except when it is used in the literature that we refer to. 'LGBT' is, according to Guaracino (2007) the most inclusive and correct term when talking about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people. However, the term is most often used within a marketing context (Community Marketing, 2009; Guaracino, 2006; Pritchard et al., 1998b) or within literature which has a political content (World Outgames, 2009b; Harper & Schneider, 2003). As clarified above, we will focus exclusively on gays and lesbians, and we will therefore not make use of the abbreviation LGBT.

In the end, it is relevant to state that all categories imply certain perspectives and strategies for communication and we know that even the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian' are not flawless. Munt (1997) for example states that by using two different words for men and women, outdated gender dichotomies are reinforced. However, gay and lesbian are the terms most widely used in the professional as well as the academic world, and therefore we follow this way of naming the tourists we are interested in studying. Although Pritchard et al. (1998a: 34) state that 'the term "gay community" disguises gay men's oppression of lesbians and reinforces notions of patriarchal society in which the male experience is regarded as the norm, subsuming the female experience within it', we have in this thesis chosen to make use of the terms 'gay community', 'gay space', 'gay events', 'gay friendliness', 'gay destinations' and 'degaying'. Hughes (2006: 2) acknowledges that "'gay" is sometimes used to cover both male and female homosexuals', and for this reason, and in order to make our language more interesting and fluid, we will use these fixed concepts. However, we will use the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian' in order to distinguish between genders.

1.3. Structure of master's thesis

This master's thesis consists, not surprisingly, of five parts: Literature review; methodological reflections; data analysis and discussion of findings; assessment of the research; and conclusion as well as considerations for further studies. In the beginning of each separate

chapter in the thesis, the themes and findings will be outlined in order to, hopefully, make it easy and pleasant for the reader to go with us on a journey into gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences.

2. Literature review

In order to understand gay and lesbian tourists, we have made a long journey through different studies and theories. As the topic is complex, it has been necessary to neglect parts of the literature which was not considered utile for the understanding of gay men and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences. Furthermore, we have included theory from academic fields not immediately related to gay and lesbian tourism, in order to expand our understanding of the topic. All in all, we have drawn upon literature from studies related to Tourism; Gay and Lesbian Tourism; Gay and Lesbian Studies; Marketing; Identity; Geography and Sociology. Therefore, this part of the thesis will be compounded of and shift among relevant theories.

In this literature review, we will start out presenting some characteristics of gays and lesbians. Secondly, we will look into gays' and lesbians' travel motivations and destination choices and, subsequently, we will consider the role of gay space on holidays. Next, the role of gay events in relation to gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences will be explored, and afterwards we will discuss the issue of sex on holidays. Lastly, we will dedicate a separate chapter to lesbian tourists' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences.

2.1. Characteristics of gay and lesbian tourists

Here we meet David. He is American, 46 years old, white and has a college graduate. He works full-time and has lived with his partner Michael for five years. They have no children. David's monthly income is well above the median income in the US and he likes to use his high discretionary income on travelling various times a year.

[Adapted from Community Marketing, 2008a]

David, who is briefly described above, can be seen as the typical gay male tourists. In the literature, homosexual travellers are described as being well-educated professionals who have high discretionary incomes, no children, and, consequently, more spare time (Pritchard et al., 1998b; Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Hughes, 2002c; Stuber, 2002). Therefore, they travel more often than heterosexuals (Roth & Luongo, 2002; Haslop et al., 1998; Community Marketing, 2008b; Stuber, 2002; Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Philipp, 1999; Binnie & Valentine, 1999; Hughes, 2006) and when they travel, they spend a lot of money (Stuber, 2002; Roth & Luongo, 2002; Guaracino, 2007; Burrows & Dumoulin, 2000; Community Marketing, 2009).

Furthermore, gay and lesbian consumers are said to be brand loyal, meaning that once they have gotten a good experience with a product or they see that a company reach out to them, they would use this provider again (Pritchard & Morgan, 1996; Berlingske Business, 2009). All in all, for marketers, gays and lesbians seem to constitute an interesting consumer group (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Guaracino, 2007; Boyd, 2008; Stuber, 2002; Hughes, 2006; Roth & Luongo, 2002; Pritchard et al., 1998a, 1998b; Rushbrook, 2002; Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Ivy, 2001; Ryan & Hall, 2001; Community Marketing, 2008b).

2.1.1. Reliable findings?

The observations made above might be applicable to some gay and lesbians. However, one might get the impression that some of these findings are based upon stereotypes and biased data (Hughes, 2007). For example, Community Marketing's (2008b) study is made yearly with over 10,000 respondents. As the survey is repeated over time, some tendencies can be seen as durable (Roth & Luongo, 2002) and as many homosexuals participate, there might be some truth in the findings. Nonetheless, the participant in the study are mostly found through gay and lesbian media (Roth & Luongo, 2002), and it might be argued that people buying gay magazines might not be representative of the US gay and lesbian population as they are mostly self-identified homosexuals with money to buy such magazines (Puar, 2002a; Badgett, 2001).

One aspect presented in the literature is that gay men have a high disposable income (Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Community Marketing, 2008a; Haslop et al., 1998; Binnie & Valentine, 1999; Stuber, 2002). However, it is, at the same time, suggested that income varies among gay men and lesbians in the same way as it varies between heterosexuals (Pritchard et al., 1998a; Puar, 2002b). It might be true, though, that two gay men living together have a larger household income than two women living together or even straight couples, because men in general earn more than women in most countries.

In general, there seem to be some inherent biases and flaws in literature on lesbian and gay tourists (Hughes, 2007; Badgett, 2001; Stuber, 2002). First of all, almost all findings are biased because it is difficult to generate representative samples because the samples are often collected at gay bars, at gay events or in gay media which means that only a certain part of the gay population is reached. Hughes (2005a) moreover asserts that many gay and lesbian

researchers might present a too positive view of gays' purchasing power. However, Hughes (2005a) at the same time states that there seem to be a lucrative market segment which is profitable to target, but this market should not be seen as representative of all gays and lesbians. Lastly, Badgett (2001) puts forward that gays and lesbians are not necessarily wealthy and well-educated and that many do have children. Moreover, it should be noted that studies made in the US and the UK do not necessarily generate knowledge which can easily be transferred to another context (Hughes, 2006). As there is little information available on the European traveller (Pritchard et al., 1998a), we find it interesting to approach gays and lesbians from another part of the world than the US as this might provide new perspectives and insights on gay and lesbian tourism.

2.1.2 Gay and lesbian identities

Some authors (Howe 2001; Hughes, 1997, 2006; Fugate, 1993) suggest that homosexuals might not differ as much from heterosexuals in relation to demographic characteristics, but perhaps more in relation to identity and lifestyle. Howe (2001: 50) defines sexual identity as a 'fluid set of meanings hinging on notions of sexuality and gender' and Frable (1997: 139) asserts that 'identities are fluid, multidimensional, personalized social constructions'. Moreover, identity can be explained as the way that people feel they belong to a certain community and not to another (Hughes, 2006; Burr, 2003). For homosexuals, it is often stated that they do not choose to become homosexuals, but they do choose to identify as such (Hughes, 2006). At the same time, homosexual identities are the outcome between the individual and the social environment (Rudd, 1996; Haslop et al., 1998; Sinfield, 1997) and they are not stable, but multiple, dynamic and in flux (Hughes, 1997; Rushbrook, 2002; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Cantú, 2009; Plummer, 1992, Munt, 1997; Valentine, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Johnston, 2005).

Still, it should be noted that sexuality is just one aspect of a homosexual person's identity, so not only one 'gay identity' exists (Hughes, 2006). Therefore, it might be difficult to describe gays and lesbians as one entity. First of all, men and women are different and have divergent interests, and, secondly, there is as much diversity among homosexuals as between heterosexuals when it comes to social class, age, race and interests (Pritchard et al., 1998b, 2000; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Howe, 2001; Hughes, 1997, 2002c; Binnie & Valentine, 1999; Hughes, 2006). It could also be imagined that homosexuals travel for different reasons

and that they might sometimes look for socialising with other gays and lesbians while on vacation, while on another holiday they might travel like any other tourist. In order to try to get an understanding of how a gay/lesbian tourist could be like, we will look into travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences for gay and lesbian tourists in the following chapters.

2.2. Travel motivations of gay and lesbian tourists

Motivation can be defined as ‘the process by which an individual will be driven to act or behave in a certain way’ and is, moreover, described as a ‘state of tension within the individual which arouses, directs and maintains behaviour toward a goal’ (Mullen & Johnson, 1990: 178). In the following chapters, different travel motivations for gay and lesbian tourists will be discussed.

2.2.1. Push and pull factors

In tourism literature, Gnoth (1997) proposes the push and pull factors in tourism as an explanation for the process of tourist motivation. He states that needs can be established internally or externally to a person, and they evolve into an urge which influence the action that this person might take (*push*). When needs and psychological motives are combined with ‘signs in objects, situations and events’ (Gnoth, 1997: 290-291) (*pull*) that the tourist believes might satisfy the urge, motivation arises. The push and pull factors were originally adapted to tourism by Dann (1977) who explained that push factors are internal to the person and predisposes him or her to travel while pull factors are those aspects of a destinations which attracts the tourist.

When discussing gays’ and lesbians’ holiday motivation, it is relevant to notice that, according to a range of authors (Hughes, 2002a, 2002b; 2002c; Pritchard et al., 2000; Clift & Forrest, 1999), gay men typically go on holiday for the same motivational reasons as heterosexuals. Pritchard et al. (2000) reached the conclusion that lesbians and gay men seek relaxation, the opportunity to get away from everyday life and be free to enjoy unstructured time when they go on holiday. This is concordant with classical literature on tourist motivation (Urry, 1990; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Moreover, Hughes (2002b, 2005a) states that gay men look for social relations, escape and self-actualisation when they go on holiday.

Crompton (1979) found that people go on holiday in order to enhance relationships, facilitate social interaction, escape their everyday environment and explore their self. Thus, in relation to some aspects of travel motivations, it seems like many gays and lesbians go on vacation for the same reasons as straight people.

However, Pritchard et al. (2000) divide the push factors into two sets of motivational factors and explain that homosexuals' extrinsic motivation is shared with that of heterosexuals and is often related to escaping everyday life and work. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation is often related to the sexuality of homosexuals and the desire of escaping the heterosexual world, feeling a sense of belonging and finding a place to be 'oneself', and is therefore not shared with heterosexual tourists (Pritchard et al., 2000; Hughes, 2005a). The point of many authors (Pritchard et al., 1998b, 2000; Howe, 2001; Hughes, 1997, 2002b) is that by getting away from the heterosexual society while on vacation, gays and lesbians get an opportunity for feeling safe and accepted.

2.2.2. Tourist types

Plog (1974) claims that personality has an impact upon how people travel, and he suggests a continuum of tourist types with the allocentric person on the one end and the psychocentric on the other. The allocentric person is extrovert and sees travelling as an opportunity for discovering foreign cultures whereas the psychocentric person only travels because it is a social norm and prefers familiar destinations and package tours (Plog, 1974, 1991; Lowyck et al., 1992; Ross, 1998).

In relation to homosexual tourists, Clift & Forrest (1999) distinguish between two types of gay male tourists: gay men who seek gay social life and sex while on vacation, who are inclined to go to known gay destinations such as Ibiza, Grand Canary and Mykonos, and those who are interested in the local culture and who would most often visit non-gay destinations. This observation might be related to Plog's (1974) typologies: gay men who go to gay destinations might be psychocentric in the way that they look for relaxation in a well-known environment, whereas the men who visit non-gay destinations could be characterised as being more interested in discovering foreign cultures and are, following Plog's line of reasoning, more allocentric (Plog, 1974). However, Clift & Forrest's (1999) conclusions might also be interpreted to mean that some holidays are simply more 'gay' than others and

not that two types of gay tourists exist. As gay tourists might be as different as every other tourist, it might be more realistic to conclude that gay men choose different types of vacations over their life time than to state that two clear cut types of gay men exists. Closely related to Plog's continuum are the typologies of Gray (1970) who introduced 'Sunlust' vs. 'Wanderlust'. The former of the two refers to tourists seeking better amenities than the ones available at home, whereas the latter refers to people who travel in order to experience new places, meet new people and cultures (Gray, 1970; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). Theories of tourist types have been criticised for not taking into account the circumstance that even when two persons do the same things on one holiday, they might behave completely different on their next holidays (Lowyck et al., 1992). The idea that people make different holidays (and do not just fit into a 'type' of tourist) might also make sense when discussing gay and lesbian tourists. A homosexual tourist might choose to go to a gay destination like Sitges or Amsterdam one summer and go a non-gay destination like Saudi Arabia the next, and, therefore, it seems like the typologies are too simple to capture the holiday motivations of tourists, homosexuals as well as heterosexuals.

2.2.3. Holidaying as a means of expressing identity

Grubb & Stern (1971), on their side, found that a person's consuming behaviour is related to his/her self-concept. This means that a person might go on vacation in order to create an image of what he or she would like to be (Decrop, 2006). By consuming a certain brand (or going to a certain holiday destination), the consumer expresses to other people that (s)he wants to relate him or herself with other people consuming the same brand. When Crompton (1979) writes about self-exploration and Hughes (2002b, 2005a) about self-actualisation in relation to holidays, it lies in line with Grubb & Stern's (1971) theories. Consequently, it might be suggested that homosexuals, as well as heterosexuals, might feel that they are able to show others who they are through holiday choices.

2.2.4. Anonymity on holidays

Waitt & Markwell (2006) and Bell & Valentine (1995) state that because society is dominated by heteronormativity, many homosexuals are constantly thinking about how they speak and behave in their everyday environment. Thus, for some gays and lesbians, going on vacation is an opportunity for being themselves and feeling free. Because they are not known by anyone

at the destination, they can be anonymous and cease to be afraid of being discovered as homosexuals by people they know (Cox, 2002; Graham, 2002; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 1997, 2002b). However, in Hughes' (2002b) study of gay men, most of the men chose not to be more open about their sexuality while on vacation, and Hughes (2002b) suggests that this might be due to the fact that many were already openly gay in their home environments. Nevertheless, it might be that some gays and lesbians do feel an additional sense of freedom while holidaying because they go away from their everyday lives and, in this way, have a possibility for escaping constraints on their behaviour. However, Hughes (2002b) also states that going on holiday might not always be as liberating as anticipated because homosexual travellers still have to put bonds on themselves and modify their behaviour at the holiday destination.

In conclusion, it might be suggested that gay and lesbian tourists might not be very different from straight tourists. However, there might be some aspects which gays and lesbians find more important than straights when they go on holiday. For example, it seems like gays and lesbians to a larger degree seek belonging and acceptance when travelling (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Pritchard et al., 2000; Cox, 2002; Hughes, 1997; 2002b) and are concerned about safety and escaping constraints upon behaviour (Hughes 1997, 2002b, 2007; Pritchard et al., 2000; Howe, 2001). Furthermore, it can be seen that though some homosexuals might sometimes go to gay destinations, they might also choose non-gay destinations on another vacation, and it thus seems like no clear-cut 'gay' or 'lesbian' tourist necessarily exists.

2.3. Destination choices of gay and lesbian tourists

According to Seddighi & Theocharous (2002), the first choice in the holiday destination decision process is actually whether to go on vacation or not. Once the decision to go on holiday is made, the choice is upon whether to holiday domestically or travel abroad. This choice often depends on purchasing power. In relation to gay and lesbian tourism, it might be suggested that they travel more abroad than heterosexuals because their higher discretionary income makes this possible (Philipp, 1999; Community Marketing, 2008b; Haslop et al., 1998; Binnie & Valentine, 1999; Stuber, 2002). Again, it has to be noted that not all homosexuals are well-educated and have good jobs and that many actually have family responsibilities (Badgett, 2001; Hughes, 2007) and might, consequently, not have a higher disposable income.

Once the decision to go on holiday has been made, perceptions and feelings towards destinations are developed on the basis of their characteristics. The tourists' perceptions and feelings are subsequently cumulated into an ordering of destination alternatives that is expected to lead to choice (Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002). Hughes (2002a: 185), on his side, states that gay and lesbian tourists' choice of destination depends on 'destination attributes and images, the tourist's motives and values, and time and income constraints'. Hughes' (2002a) explanation for destination choices is in line with Seddighi & Theocharous' (2002) view and it can thus be seen that, apparently, gays and lesbians generally make their travel decision based upon the same factors as straight persons. However, one needs to be aware that microeconomic models on destination choice like Seddighi & Theocharous' have been criticised for being too rational for such a personal and emotional experience as tourism. They might work in order to measure vacation decision making, but not to *understand* it (Decrop, 2006). As this thesis aim at understanding gays' and lesbians' travel motivation, in-depth interviews have been used as the primary research method instead of questionnaires (such as Fodness', 1994) and vacation decision making models (Decrop, 2006). We will get back to the use of interviews as research method in chapter 3.

Lastly, Mathieson & Wall (1982) believe that motivation (in the sense of desire to travel) triggers information search, evaluation of alternatives and decisions. Travel desire arises out of the awareness of destination characteristics in combination with the tourists' profiles (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Hughes (2002c) also asserts that gay men's choice of destination depends on their profile; namely age, income, personality and relationship status.

2.3.1. The role of sexuality on destination choices

Hughes (2002c) puts forward that sexuality is of less importance than other characteristics when gays and lesbians choose their holiday destination. However, Hughes (2002c) still believes that an extra dimension might be of importance in relation to destination choice, namely that of 'gay space'. We will get back to the role of gay space on holidays in chapter 2.4.2.

Similarly, most homosexual tourists interviewed by Pritchard et al. (2000) did not believe that their sexuality had an impact upon their holiday choices and travel motivations. However, at

the same time, the surveyed homosexuals did not want to go on vacation to a country where homosexuality is illegal. Therefore, it could be suggested that sexuality might not affect the *choice* of destination, whereas it is a driving force for *rejection* of specific destinations.

Moreover, according to Hughes (2002a), when homosexual tourists choose their holiday destination, they are likely to take more factors into account than heterosexual tourists, such as the presence of gay space, the opportunity for socialising with other homosexuals and gay friendliness (Hughes, 2005a). Hughes (2002a) and Cox (2002) both argue that gays and lesbians do not only have to consider where they want to go and what they want to experience while on holiday, but they also need to take the social and juridical conditions for homosexuals at the destination into account. In 2008, it was seen as a crime to be a homosexual in 86 countries, and in seven countries, including Yemen, Iran, Mauretania and Sudan, homosexuality is penalised with death sentence (Hughes, 1997, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Amnesty International, 2008; Pritchard et al., 1998b). Therefore, some authors (Hughes, 2002a, 2002b; Pritchard et al., 2000) claim that gays and lesbians think about whether it will be possible for them to show affection openly during their holidays and whether they can and will suppress their sexuality in order to avoid problems in destinations where homosexuality is banned.

2.3.2. Gay destinations

Even in countries where homosexuality is legal, gay and lesbian tourists might face discrimination, social disapproval and prejudices (Hughes, 2002a, 2002b; Pritchard et al., 1998b). Hughes (2002b) states that the risk of being assaulted or feeling uncomfortable because of other people's reactions to their homosexuality is something that some gay men take into account when choosing a holiday destination. Therefore, gays and lesbians might choose destination that are 'gay friendly' which is described (Pritchard et al., 2000) as being destinations where homosexuality is accepted and where gay and lesbians can be open about their sexuality. According to Pritchard et al. (2000), this implies that gays and lesbians find themselves compelled to holidaying in gay resorts and gay hotels, since holidays in straight tourism spaces might not provide the gay and lesbian tourists with an opportunity for escaping heteronormativity, prejudices and discrimination. Likewise, Hughes (2002b) relates gay friendliness to physical places, such as bars and hotels.

2.3.3. Restrictions on destination choice and holiday behaviour

The risk related to gays' and lesbians' holiday making might lead to gays' and lesbians' destination choices being more limited than heterosexuals' destination choices (Cox, 2002; Hughes, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). However, it could be argued that these observations are too general as some gay and lesbian tourists might not care about being able to show their sexuality while on holiday or if their wish to see a certain attraction is stronger than the desire to be able to show affection in public. In addition, Hughes (2002a, 2002b) states that the actual stay in the destination might be restrained as well because of the need to adapt to cultural norms and laws at the destination, which often happens through change in behaviour. Some gay men even avoid going on holiday to certain countries because of the negative perceptions that they hold thereof (Hughes, 2002b).

In sum, it can be concluded that in general, gays and lesbians go through the same destination making process as straight tourists, and they do not specifically relate their choice of destination to their sexuality. However, some gays and lesbians might take factors such as gay space and gay friendliness into account when they choose their holiday destination and might, in this way, be influenced by their sexuality. Moreover, there seems to be a tendency for gays and lesbians to avoid certain destinations on the ground of their sexuality if they know that homosexuality is illegal or disapproved of at a destination. In this way, sexuality does seem to have an impact upon some gays' and lesbians' destination choices.

2.4. Gay space

As heterosexuality is a majority practice and the norm for sexual orientation in society (Haslop et al., 1998; Dyer, 1997; Pritchard et al., 1998b), gays and lesbians are said to feel invisible, alienated, stigmatised and oppressed by the dominating heteronormativity (Dyer, 1997; Grossmann, 1998; Haslop et al., 1998; Hindle, 1994; Cantú, 2009; Bowes, 1996; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 1997, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Pritchard et al., 1998b, 2000; Graham, 2002). Some gays and lesbians have, therefore, felt the need to define and express their sexual identities in a more conscious way than most heterosexuals do (Haslop et al., 1998). At the same time, gays' and lesbians' sexual identities are socially constructed and confirmed through membership of a certain community (Haslop et al., 1998; Medhurst & Munt, 1997; Cantú, 2009; Bowes, 1996).

2.4.1. Community and gay space

According to more authors (Adler & Brenner, 1992; Hindle, 1994; Sinfield, 1997), not all communities are physical but can consist of groups of people who feel a high degree of solidarity and belonging among themselves. However, Binnie & Valentine (1999) state that 'gay space' is the *basis* for gay identity and according to Bristow (1989: 74), 'homosexuals are only allowed to be gay in specific spaces and places'. Consequently, gay space can be suggested as being 'the physical manifestation of gay community' (Hindle, 1994: 11; Grossmann, 1998; Hughes, 1997). Likewise, Waitt & Markwell (2006: 178) define gay space as a 'homogenous, bounded and fixed place' in a metropolitan area, more concretely often made up by bars, restaurants, cafés, shops and residential areas (Graham, 2002; Hughes, 1997; 2002b; Pritchard et al., 1998b). In gay spaces, gays and lesbians get an opportunity for feeling part of a community; being open about their sexuality; being with people like themselves; and feeling safe from prejudices and discrimination (Grossmann, 1998; Hindle, 1994; Taylor, 1997).

2.4.2. Gay space on holidays

Binnie & Valentine (1999) and Howe (2001) argue that gays and lesbians have no physical or geographical homeland, which can authenticate their group identity, and, therefore, they go away from their everyday surroundings in search for it. Likewise, they are able to confirm their identity as homosexuals when they go on holiday as: 'same sex tourism is like a pilgrimage, a quest for an individual and collective identity' (Waitt & Markwell, 2006: 6; Howe, 2001) By seeking out gay space on holiday, gays and lesbians have the opportunity for expressing their gayness, networking, and being with people like themselves which can help them enhance their self-respect (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Pritchard et al., 1998b, 2000; Howe, 2001; Hughes, 1997, 2002b, 2002c). In line with these arguments, Cox (2002) and Hughes (2002a) state that gays and lesbians feel more relaxed and natural when they meet other homosexuals because they do not have to think about concealing their identity and are allowed showing affection in public.

However, it might be suggested that not all gays and lesbians have a need to frequent gay space. The importance of gay or lesbian identity might vary, and some homosexuals might identify more with, for example, their national identity than with their homosexual identity, and they might, consequently, not feel a need to search for an imaginary homeland.

Furthermore, many gays and lesbians do not feel oppressed in their everyday life and therefore they do not need to go to 'gay homelands' to find acceptance and recognition. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that gay space might not appeal to all homosexuals, and might not even be open to all gays and lesbians (Hughes, 2002b, 2002c). Gay leisure spaces are accused of being dominated by 'the good homosexual', that is to say white, wealthy, young and beautiful gay men and excluding 'the queer unwanted' such as ethnic minorities and women (Waitt & Markwell, 2006: 255-256; Puar, 2002a: 939; Howe, 2001; Hughes, 2002c).

To sum up, it might be that gay space plays a central role in relation to wellbeing and identity formation for some gays and lesbians, whereas others might not feel an urge to be with other gays and lesbians in gay space. Moreover, it should be noted that gay space is often claimed as being exclusively for a certain kind of homosexuals and that, consequently, even within the gay community, discrimination can be found.

2.5. Gay events

Some authors (Philipp, 1999; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Luongo, 2002) emphasise the role that gay events play in relation to gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experience. A variety of gay and lesbian events exist today all over the world, from Mardi Gras Parades and Prides to Gay and Lesbian Film Festivals and Christopher Street Days to the World Outgames and Gay Games (Howe, 2001; Pritchard et al., 1998b; World Outgames, 2009a). Often, the events are named after a historic incident related to gay rights and, therefore, the events have a connotation of remembrance and celebration. In fact, many gay and lesbian events are still political in some way because new political alliances are formed and concerns are debated. Moreover, an important objective of gay events is to create visibility and raise awareness of homosexuals in society (Howe, 2001; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Pritchard et al., 1998b).

Waitt & Markwell (2006) claim that when gays and lesbians gather for gay events, they get to feel that they are a majority which is not the way they feel in everyday life. The events thus provide an opportunity for gays and lesbians to get away from the heteronormativity which dominates society and celebrate their identity in public. Hughes (1997) likewise states that participating in events help to confirm and consolidate gays' and lesbians' identities.

Furthermore, Howe (2001) states that participants at the events often feel a strong degree of community and solidarity with other gays and lesbians, and, according to Getz (2008) sense of community is a general motivation for joining events. In short, gay events seem to offer gays and lesbians an opportunity for feeling safe and confident to show affection for their partner in public (Philipp, 1999; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Pritchard et al., 1998b).

2.5.1. Critique of gay events

However, gay events have been criticised for being too exclusive (Waitt & Markwell, 2006) in the way that they only allow for some people to form part of it. In general, events made for homosexuals are mostly attended by white and wealthy men. This argument is also put forward by Howe (2001) who says that there is a danger that 'queer' will in the end mean being gay, white, fit and male. Philipp (1999) likewise found that the gays and lesbians who attended a major US beach event were mainly young, well-educated and wealthy people. In this way, there actually seem to be tensions within the gay/lesbian 'community' because of differences in ethnicity, gender and social class (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). Furthermore, Goldsmith (1996) argues that gay parades lead to the ridiculisation and patronising of women because men dress up like women and act in grotesque ways. It is also suggested that gay events only serve to show gays and lesbians as 'sexually promiscuous' (Waitt & Markwell, 2006: 222).

However, the most common objection to gay events is actually not about the events in themselves, but about the spectators. Waitt & Markwell (2006) state that spectators are normally straight people which means that the gay parades and other gay events are turned into tourists attractions exposed to 'the tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990). Likewise, Howe (2001) states 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. Waitt & Markwell (2006) furthermore argue that straight tourists who go to see gay events want a freak show and are, consequently, re-establishing heterosexuality as normal. When gay sites and events are converted into tourist attractions, 'degaying' of events might be likely to occur (Pritchard et al., 1998a; Hughes, 1997). However, we would argue that if the aim of gay events is to create visibility of gays and lesbians in society then straight spectators are required because otherwise awareness will only be raised among the homosexuals themselves.

2.6. Sex on holiday

Gay and lesbian tourism is often associated with sex (Hughes, 1997, 1998, 2002a; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Clift et al., 2002), and Waitt & Markwell (2006) even state that many gay men do tourism through their body, meaning that they engage in sexual activities in gay bars, gay clubs, cruising areas and saunas² (Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Clift & Forrest, 2000). Gay guidebooks also cover opportunities for getting sexual experiences (Waitt & Markwell, 2006), and Howe (2001: 47) states that ‘sex penetrates guidebooks presumably because sex, desire and “object choice” have often been foundational for both forming queer communities and establishing identity for queer people’. In addition, it is suggested that some gay men might be motivated to holiday with the intention of getting involved with male prostitutes (Luongo, 2000; Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Bunzl, 2000).

A study undertaken by Forrest & Clift (1998) shows that just under a third of their sample of gay men found opportunities to have sex while holidaying very important while just over a third rated it as fairly important. Almost half of the sample reported having sex with a new partner(s) on the holiday in question, and the numbers of new partners ranged from one to 200. However, opportunities for having sex while holidaying rated substantially lower than other motivational factors for holidaying, such as ‘comfort and good food’, ‘opportunities for rest and relaxation’ and ‘guaranteed sunshine’ (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Clift et al., 2002).

2.6.1. Sexual activity as context dependent

Different factors are associated with the extent to which gay men are sexually active with new partners while on holiday. Not surprisingly, these include, among others, relationship status, holiday companions and motivational factors for going on holiday (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 2002a; Black, 2000). Sexual activity with new partners is likely to occur at destinations catering to gay men where the propensity of gay men often is higher than at home and where hedonic activities are likely to take place (Forrest & Clift, 1998; Clift & Forrest, 1999, 2000). This is in line with the findings of Clift et al. (2002) who found that sex clubs and saunas are visited to a greater extent at so-called gay destinations than at non-gay

² Cruising areas are public spaces like parks and beaches where gays, typically men, engage in casual sex. Saunas are, likewise, places where gay men go in order to have sex.

destinations. Gay men's sexual activity on holidays might be related to the behaviour of heterosexual youngsters who travel for sun, sand and sex (Carr, 2002; Clift et al., 2002), though Clift & Forrest (1999: 623) claim that 'the extent of sexual activity with new partners in holiday settings appears to be much higher among gay men than it is among unattached heterosexual men'.

2.6.2. Home vs. away

The above findings can be related to the issue of anonymity on holidays and being away from constraints at home which a study carried out in the gay resort Sitges in Spain reflects (Forrest & Clift, 1998). It is put forward that gay men were more likely to have sex in public sex environments than they were at home (59% compared with 46% at home) and this might indicate that sexual behaviour undertaken when holidaying is an extension of leisure time behaviour undertaken at home, however, performed more intensively (Forrest & Clift, 1998; Hughes, 2002b; Carr, 2002). On the contrary, Hughes (2002b) found that the gay men in his study had the same sexual behaviour when they were at home and away; they did not have either more or less sex while on vacation in relation to their everyday life. This finding was the same disregarding whether the informants were travelling with their partner, with a group of friends, alone or whether they were on a gay-centric vacation (Hughes, 2002b).

Hughes (2007) claims that sex does not play a major role for lesbian identity to the extent that it does for gay men's identity and Pritchard et al., (2000: 275) put forward that lesbian holidays are difficult to define because 'they lacked the strong associations with sex and the body which characterized gay holidays'. This corresponds with the circumstance that it has been difficult to find any discussions or findings on sexual behaviour for lesbian tourists.

2.7. Lesbian tourists

The picture of the homosexual traveller drawn above could be said to be rather simplistic as research and literature on gay and lesbian tourists seldom take age, social class, ethnicity, ability or gender into consideration (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Pritchard et al., 1998a; Hughes, 2005a, 2007; Puar, 2002b). Moreover, it is suggested (Hughes, 2005a, 2007; Puar, 2002a, 2002b; Badgett, 2001) that market statistics on gay and lesbian tourism are skewed and rarely distinguish between gay and lesbian travellers. Sender (2004) argues that the gay market is

assumed to be a gay male market, and Puar (2002a), among others, points to the invisibility of lesbians in tourism research and literature (Hughes, 2005a, 2007; Puar, 2002b, 2002c). Although lesbian tourism studies are scarce (Hughes, 2005a, 2007; Clift & Forrest, 1999), it is widely acknowledged that gay and lesbian tourism is diverse and that separate investigation on lesbian tourism is required (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 2005a, 2007; Bell, 1991; Stuber, 2002; Community Marketing, 2008b). As this thesis will attempt to comply with some aspects of the unbalance of gay and lesbian studies, the present chapter will focus exclusively on lesbian tourism. Due to the lack of existing literature and research on lesbian travellers, the chapter will to a greater extent than the previous include literature that does not have its roots in tourism studies. General theories on lesbians together with literature on female travellers will be explored and combined to hopefully provide a deeper understanding of the lesbian tourist.

The invisibility and inseparability of lesbians within the (gay) tourism literature might reflect the fact that tourism research traditionally has 'failed to recognize women as a specific market segment and research which sought to identify tourist typologies did not differentiate between men and women' (Aitchison, 1999: 28; Hughes, 2007; Aitchison & Reeves, 1998). Puar (2002c: 4) continues in the same vein and considers 'a failure to incorporate gendered analyses into conceptualizations of tourism and travel' to be the reason for the exclusion of female travellers within the literature. This viewpoint is supported by Aitchison & Reeves (1998) and Jordan (1998). A main reason for the invisibility of female homosexuals in tourism studies might be that lesbians, traditionally, have not been regarded as financially interesting. Explanations for this might include that lesbian consumers are often stereotyped, misunderstood, difficult to target and are not seen as constituting a lucrative market segment (Sender, 2004). These issues will be considered in more detail below.

2.7.1. Feminism and lesbianism

The simple definition of feminism concerns 'the full potential of women and the equality of the sexes' (Zimmerman, 1997: 147). However, feminism in the 1960's and 70's was not only about politics but also became a strategy for women to develop and raise consciousness about themselves as individuals. Some feminists argued that the patriarchal family was the main reason behind the oppression of women, and this situation could be challenged ultimately if women became lesbians. Lesbian feminism attempted to break with the standardised norms of

female behaviour by criticising existing consumer cultures and capitalism. The beauty and fashion industry was condemned, together with the capitalisation of the female appearance in commercial relations (Clark, 1993; Zimmerman, 1997; Sender, 2004; Schuyf, 1992; Bunch, 1987). Stein (1995: 478) argues that the 'lesbian-feminist anti-style was an emblem of refusal, an attempt to strike a blow against the twin evils of capitalism and patriarchy, the fashion industry and the female objectification that fueled it' and we therefore argue that this anti-style could be an explanation for today's stereotypic picture of lesbians as low-spending anti-consumers which prevents marketers from targeting lesbians. According to Clark (1993) and Miller (2002), this anti-style has recently been challenged by modern lesbians who believe that fashion is not equivalent to passivity, suppression or powerlessness but is a way of showing who they are and what they stand for. Therefore, the lesbian feminist is on the decline while the 'lipstick lesbian' is getting more visible (Sender, 2004: 189; Clark, 1993; Stein, 1995; Hughes, 2007). Consequently, we would argue that the lesbian market may possibly turn out to be increasingly interesting to marketers. Given the assumption that consumption of (tourism) products can be seen as an extension of the 'self' (Grubb & Stern, 1971; Decrop, 2006; Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959), it is not irrelevant to argue that, in the future, it might be appropriate to consider lesbian tourists as a viable consumer group (Fugate, 1993).

2.7.2. Community, identity and lesbian space

Like gay men, lesbians also socialise, form communities and create spaces where they get an opportunity for escaping heteronormativity (Sender, 2004; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Rothenberg, 1995; Schuyf, 1992). According to Schuyf (1992), socialising with other lesbians is an approach to form one's own life and identity. However, only parts of lesbians' identities are created through interaction with other lesbians, since identities are shaped by other factors such as culture, religion, geography and demographics.

It has been argued (Hindle, 1994; Valentine, 1993; Almgren, 1994; Bell & Valentine, 1995) that lesbian communities are not as strong as the gay communities and that fewer spaces exclusively for lesbians exist than for gay men. The limited visibility of lesbian community and space can be related to more reasons which might somehow be interconnected.

Initially, it is suggested that lesbians to a greater extent than gay men socialise at home and according to Castells (1983), the reason being that lesbians simply do not possess the

discretionary income necessary for socialising in public space. Likewise, other authors (McNee, 1984; Rothenberg, 1995; Bell & Valentine, 1995) suggest that female homosexuals do not have the money to run or support places that are targeting lesbians exclusively. Another reason why lesbians socialise in private sphere is that, traditionally, public space has been male dominated whereas women have been seen as less territorial and therefore associated with the private domain (Bondi, 1998; Almgren, 1994; Rothenberg, 1995; Bell & Valentine, 1995). This is closely related to the circumstance that lesbians generally put more emphasis on establishing and developing interpersonal relations than meeting in physical localities (Hindle, 1994; Bell & Valentine, 1995). Schuyf (1992), moreover, suggests that lesbian communities consist of loosely organised groups rather than actual physical space and that the main purpose of the groups is mutual support.

This can be associated with the claim of Almgren (1994) and Adler & Brenner (1992) who state that lesbian places do exist in public, but that they are only visible for those who seek them. However, this might at present be a simplification of the situation for lesbians because the Internet has facilitated access to lesbian space – in real life and virtually (Guaracino, 2007). Following the discussion above, we tend to believe that although lesbians have struggled to change the patriarchal patterns of traditional gender roles, it seems as they have still not completely defeated the conventional patterns of private versus public space.

2.7.3. Lesbians as consumers

Although ‘lesbians too are consumers’ (Clark, 1993: 186), not much has been written about the lesbian consumer within the academic literature. The idea of a lesbian market is underdeveloped and marketers are confused: considering that lesbians are both women (known as ‘expert shoppers’) and gay (fashion conscious and big spenders), their consumption gene should be much sought-after by marketers. However, reality is different, and Sender (2004: 182) argues that ‘lesbians are neither “real” women nor “really” gay’. Moreover, lesbians are hard to identify as a market segment on its own because they are difficult to reach and appeal to; difficult to measure; and do not demonstrate homogeneous consumer behaviour (Sender, 2004; Stuber, 2002; Hughes, 2007). Sender (2004: 174) recognises ‘that although lesbians may *want*, identifying the object of their desire is notoriously tricky’. One of the reasons for this statement is that lesbians, as explained above, to a greater extent than gay men, socialise at home.

In a marketing perspective, lesbians are not recognised as being economically powerful. In the academic literature, more reasons for this statement are given. Due to wage discrimination, women in general earn less than their male equivalents and the income of a lesbian household is therefore, on average, below that of a gay couple's or even straight counterparts' (Pritchard et al., 1998a; Puar, 2002a; Sender 2004). However, there are indications that the average income among lesbians is on the increase (Clark, 1993). Moreover, there is a tendency that lesbian couples to a greater extent than gay couples create their own kind of 'nuclear families'. This conflicts with the stereotype of homosexual couples as DINKs (Double Income, No Kids) and reduces discretionary income and leisure time in lesbian families (Bell, 1991; Puar, 2002a; Sender, 2004; Pritchard et al., 1998a). This could indicate that a new market, namely lesbian families, might be entering the stage ready for marketers to target in the future.

2.7.4. Lesbian as tourists

According to Community Marketing (2008b), American lesbians are less likely than gay men to have passports which and fact is closely connected to the circumstance that they travel less than gay men. Moreover, lesbians are said to spend less than gay men while on holiday and are less likely to return to a destination where they have been previously (Hughes, 2007). However, the last point could be related to the circumstance that lesbians travel less and, therefore, are more inclined to choose new destinations while gay men, whose travel frequency is claimed to be higher, have the possibility of both returning to destinations and as well as visiting new ones. Lesbians also found it of less importance than gay men that there were gay/lesbian venues at the destination (Hughes, 2007) which corresponds to the suggestion that lesbians socialise more in private spheres. Moreover, lesbians are more likely than gay men to be in a relationship, which, according to Hughes (2007) makes them less likely to go out while on holiday.

Far less lesbian destinations than gay destinations exist and, although gay destinations are also welcoming lesbians, they are often male dominated (Hughes, 2007). However, Miller (2002) mentions Olivia Cruises which only targets the lesbian market, and more authors mention Lesbos, a Greek island, which is suggested to be a place of pilgrimage for lesbians (Kantsa, 2002; Puar, 2002a, 2002b). Moreover, Puar (2002a) draws attention to Isla de Mujeres in

Mexico and Provincetown in the US as possible lesbian destinations. Kantsa (2002) explains that activities for lesbians at Lesvos include playing volleyball, swimming and sunbathing during day time. When the bonfire is lit on the beach at night, the women gather to drink, chat, flirt, play, sing and have long discussions about feminism. These activities create a friendly atmosphere and 'intimate bonding between women' (Kantsa, 2002: 41).

In accordance with the literature on gay and lesbian tourists, it could therefore be suggested that the activities that gay men and lesbians undertake while travelling are different, and lesbian activities may be more related to relaxing and socialising with other lesbians. Hughes (2007) suggests that lesbians have a greater number of holiday destinations to choose from because they might find destination which gay men do not consider attractive. This is related to the circumstance that two lesbians holidaying together might be more accepted than two gay men because other people could believe that the lesbians are just good friends – and not girlfriends - travelling together. Moreover, as suggested above, more lesbians today establish families and, as a result, lesbians holidaying with their children is becoming more common (Puar, 2002a; Hughes, 2007).

In conclusion, it can be seen that lesbians have frequently been overlooked, in tourism as well as marketing literature. Lesbians are often seen as being low spenders and hard to target, and they might have a tendency for meeting in private instead of public places. However, this view might be changing as lesbians are not necessarily related to anti-capitalist feminism anymore. In relation to tourism, lesbians find it less important that there is lesbian space available at the destination than gay men but they do like feeling welcomed and accepted at the holiday destination. Furthermore, lesbians are increasingly establishing families which mean that they start having an interest in family holidays. In short, there might be some differences in relation to lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences which are worth looking more into.

3. Methodology

In this part of the thesis we will consider the methodological choices on which this thesis is build; starting out with philosophy of science and continuing with a discussion of the qualitative research design.

3.1. Philosophy of science

The aim of this master's thesis is to create knowledge about gay and lesbian tourists. In order to produce scientific knowledge, we need to discuss how reality is perceived by us as researchers. Depending on how we perceive reality, we have a certain basis for construction of knowledge and deduction of conclusions. It is therefore important to consider under which paradigm the research has been carried out and how this choice affects the study (Guba, 1990; Darmer & Nygaard, 2006; Silverman, 2001).

A paradigm is a set of basic values which has an impact on how reality is perceived and on how scientific research is carried out (Guba, 1990). In other words, it is a set of basic beliefs which guides action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), and in this thesis, we will be guided by the social constructivist paradigm. As more varieties of social constructivism exist, we will in the following paragraphs discuss our approach to the constructivist paradigm (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Hirschman, 1994; Thompson et al., 1989).

Haslop et al. (1998: 318) claim that 'a social constructionist framework assumes importance in tracing how homosexual identities are developed and expressed in a social and cultural context' and that 'both heterosexuality and homosexuality are socially constructed forms of sexual identity'. In this way, sexuality and identity are seen as social constructs. In line with this way of reasoning, we believe that it is relevant to look at gays' and lesbians' holiday motivations and travel preferences from a social constructivist point of view. Furthermore, Binnie (1997) argues that homosexuals have all too often been studied by positivist researchers who wanted to maintain the distance between themselves and the object. According to Binnie (1997), this way of thinking has led to homophobia and the view of homosexuality as a pathological diagnosis. Like Binnie (1997), we wish to challenge the idea that sexuality and feelings are private and that knowledge is neutral and objective because

knowledge will always depend on and be influenced by the social-cultural context (Flick, 2002; Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Working under a constructivist paradigm has ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical consequences for knowledge creation. We will discuss these aspects of the constructivist paradigm in the following sections.

3.1.1. Ontology

Ontology defines what reality is from the researchers' point of view which has consequences for the epistemology and methodology (Darmer & Nygaard, 2006; Guba, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to Guba & Lincoln (2005), constructivism adopts a relativist ontology meaning that realities are locally co-constructed. The basic argument of social constructivism is that no ultimate truth about reality can be found because reality is constructed through people's interpretations (Darmer & Nygaard, 2006; Rasborg, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1989; Kukla, 2000). This means that no explanation of reality is the 'right' one, because reality can be understood in different ways depending on the person who experiences it (Burr, 2003; Kukla, 2000). Consequently, we also believe that no absolute truth about gays' and lesbians' travel motivations and holiday choices exists or can be found. Therefore, what we intend to do is to dig into the gay or lesbian tourists' realities and present interpretations(s) of their life worlds (Flick, 2002).

Thus, reality can never be understood independently from the perspective from which it is viewed (Polkinghorne, 1989). Many different interpretations of reality are thus plausible, as reality is shaped by our perceptions and is socially constructed (Kvale, 1990; Guba, 1990; Andersen, 1990; Darmer & Nygaard, 2006; Burr, 2003; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Creswell, 2003). As researchers, we, as well as the persons studied, are part of a system where neither of us can be defined without reference to the other. The persons that we are studying are not passive objects but active human beings who shape research (Salner, 1989). This means that the knowledge we aim to produce about gay and lesbian tourists is constructed on the basis of communication between us and the interviewees participating in the study. Through this interaction, many different world views and realities are created and represented in the thesis.

3.1.2. Epistemology

Epistemology concerns the relationship between the researcher and the known (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The constructivist paradigm implies that knowledge is subjective because the researcher and the subject are inseparable (Darmer & Nygaard, 2006). A constructivist belief system will always be characterised by subjectivity, because it is only through subjective interaction that we can truly understand the individuals' realities. Findings are thus co-created and the epistemology is transactional (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Hence, the researchers have an influence on the subject studied because who we are has an effect on our interaction with others (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Miller & Glassner, 2004; Flick, 2002). In short, interpersonal interaction influences how a phenomenon is understood and data can only be created through interaction with others (Kvale, 1990; Guba, 1990; Darmer & Nygaard, 2006; Flick, 2002; Creswell, 2003). In the present study, it is relevant to notice that both researchers are heterosexuals. This implies that the researchers do not possess particular knowledge about the life worlds of homosexuals and, therefore, interaction with homosexuals are of great importance in order to create understanding of their realities. In practice, this means that we have been introduced to a, for us, more or less unknown world through books, internet, observations and, not least, personal encounters with homosexuals.

Weick (1995, 2001) states that sense making of a situation is affected by the interaction with other people. Sense making is about understanding a situation through realising what you know and acting upon it while at the same time influencing how the situation develops. What is said and done in an encounter is influenced by the people participating, and, in this way, the social context influence how people act (Weick, 1995; Watson, 2006). The aim of the constructivist approach is to understand how people make sense of their life world, identify different constructions and find common patterns across them (Guba, 1990; Maxwell, 2009; Creswell, 2003). The idea is to 'produce as informed and sophisticated a construction (or, more likely, constructions) as possible' (Guba, 1990: 26). We aim at getting to know gays' and lesbians' different understandings of reality and constructing a complex, multisided knowledge of gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences. Moreover, we would also like to investigate whether there is any difference between homosexuals' and heterosexuals' perception of the world at all.

3.1.3. Methodology

Methodology is about finding the best methods for obtaining knowledge about the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As researchers, we are a part of the knowledge construction which emerges in interaction with the interviewees (Silverman, 2001). As stated by Guba & Lincoln (2005), the methodology is complex, hermeneutical (interpretive) and dialectical (based upon conversations). Furthermore, methodological choices hinge on one's ontological and epistemological stance.

Walle (1997) states that qualitative research methods have become more common in tourism studies because this type of research is useful when the purpose of the study is analysing multifaceted realities. Qualitative research is dedicated to understanding and studying the social world from the individuals' perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). More specifically, Denzin & Lincoln (2005: 3) assert that 'qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people put to them'. Qualitative research is about understanding the social construction of reality; the close relationship between the researcher and what is studied; and the situational conditions which shape the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2002). In our master's thesis, we study people in their natural settings such as in their homes, in bars and cafés, and during events. Accordingly, we try to look into their everyday experience in the way that we look into a moment in their lives (Silverman, 2005; Flick, 2002; Nielsen et al., 2008) though it might be argued that being on vacation is not exactly everyday behaviour. However, we interview people in environments that they would normally frequent and have not, for example, made experiments with them in laboratory settings.

Furthermore, Denzin & Lincoln (2005) argue that all inquiry is moral and political. We aspire to understand their interpretations of their life worlds, and what we conclude will have consequences as it presents our interpretations of the gays' and lesbians' accounts. Thus, it can be said that we make a political statement just by choosing the topic Gay and Lesbian Tourism for this master's thesis because we recognise the importance of these people – in their own right and in a tourism context.

The field of qualitative research is characterised by tensions and contradictions between the different scholars and types of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Moreover, qualitative research covers a wide range of methods, from ethnographic studies, participant observation

and text analysis to interviews, focus group research and visual data (Silverman, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Each inquiry strategy presents a different interpretation of the world and, hence, more than one method is often used in a study. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) claim that by using multiple methods, researchers attempt to obtain a profound understanding of the phenomenon. In order to co-construct rich data, and in an attempt to obtain knowledge and to some extent become part of the gays' and lesbians' life worlds, we have used different methods, such as participant observation, informal talks and semi-structured interviews.

Qualitative research is sometimes criticised for being non-scientific, of little value and subjective (Lincoln & Cannella, 2004). This disapproval might arise because qualitative research implicitly involves a criticism of positivist and post-positivist research (see for example Burr, 2003). Furthermore, within the positivist field, it is believed that an ultimate truth exist outside personal interpretations of reality. Therefore, positivist researchers claim that qualitative researchers cannot verify their interpretations of truth. On the other hand, qualitative researchers object to the tendency for positivists to look for absolute truths and the belief that their way of doing research is value-free (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2001; Flick, 2002). However, in our modern world, researchers are faced with new social perspectives, and focusing on causal relationships might no longer be the best way of creating knowledge (Flick, 2002). Taking our subject into account, we do not think that it is possible to obtain an in-depth understanding of gays' and lesbians' travel motivations by using quantitative methods as we are not interested in statistic correlations and quantities but in complex relations and qualitative questions (Maxwell, 2009). However, at the same time, we recognise that no way of doing research is 'better' than others as the choice of method always depends upon the topic of the project as well as upon the researchers' individual preferences (Silverman, 2001).

3.2. The qualitative interview

Language is a prerequisite for knowledge as it defines what we are capable of thinking. In other words, it is not possible to understand anything if we do not have concepts for it (Rasborg, 2004; Burr, 2003). We communicate through language and, therefore, it influences how we understand reality and give meaning to our experiences (Polkinghorne, 1989). This is relevant in relation to the interviews that we draw upon in this master's thesis as the interviewees actively create meaning during the interviews (Silverman, 2001). This is in

accordance with Kvale (2007), who suggests that the interviewer is a traveller on a journey away from home where she observes, talks to and encourages people to tell the stories of the world they live in. The traveller might start reflecting and get a new understanding of herself and the worlds around her. Throughout the journey knowledge is *constructed* and brought back home (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3.2.1. The construction of scientific knowledge

Scientific knowledge can be defined in a variety of ways as there is little accordance between the different views in the academic world what constitutes knowledge. However, there is more or less agreement that scientific knowledge is obtained through a certain methodological approach and that it can be assessed by using criteria accepted in the academic world (Voxted, 2006). Furthermore, knowledge is a social, human construction because it is created out of human activity (Guba, 1990; Burr, 2003). Thus, human knowledge will always be subjective and relative (Polkinghorne, 1989; Fuglsang & Olsen, 2004; Maxwell, 2009). As the realities depend upon who perceives them, we are in this study interested in understanding the meanings of the individual's action in relation to the systems that they find themselves in (Polkinghorne, 1989; Clift & Carter, 2000). We believe that it is crucial to gain knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon through the individual's point of view and dig down under the surface in order to obtain a deep knowledge (Kvale, 1990). The insights presented in this master's thesis might, though not objective and value-free, contribute to a better understanding of gay and lesbian tourists and thus to a covering up of parts of the 'gay gap' which currently exists in tourism literature (Clift & Carter, 2000; Pritchard et al., 1998b; Hughes 2002c; Guaracino, 2007; Waitt & Markwell, 2006). We aim at developing reliable knowledge even though everything we find out will be incomplete and open for reconsideration (Polkinghorne, 1989).

3.2.2. Interviews as a means for understanding people

Doing interviews is one of the most common and powerful methods through which researchers try to understand other people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Miller & Glassner (2004: 126) claim that '[...] information about social worlds is achievable through in-depth interviewing'. This means that through interpersonal interaction, which is the core of interviewing, knowledge is created and new insights achieved. Moreover, according to

Fontana & Frey (2005: 696), 'the interview is bound in historical, political, and cultural moments and [...] as those moments change, so does the interview'. Likewise, Burr (2003) puts forward that how we understand something depends on the historical and political context while Maxwell (2009) claim that one of the main goals of qualitative studies is to look into the influence with a particular context has upon study participants. In relation to this thesis, it is relevant to mention Kong et al. (2002) who found that as the perception of gays and lesbians in the US changed, so did the tone of interviewing of this group. People who fall in love with people of the same sex were no longer defined as 'homosexuals', but as 'gays'. Accordingly, how people think about sexuality has an impact upon how they treat others (Burr, 2003). Burr (2003) likewise gives an example of the way that our experience of the world is constructed through language when she describes how the invention of the word homosexual as a noun instead of an adjective meant that the concept got related to a *person* instead of to something people do ('a homosexual' vs. 'homosexual practices').

3.2.3. Empathetic interviewing

In a methodological context, the significance of language in the construction of realities means that interviews will never be neutral. Neither the interviewer nor the interviewee are impartial, as both are influenced by own feelings and personal bias and the exchange of words is, therefore, contextually bound (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Consequently, Fontana & Frey (2005: 696) suggest that researchers take an ethical approach to interviewing, called 'empathetic interviewing'. Thereby researchers hope that the conditions for the interviewees might be improved through the results of the study. In relation to this master's thesis, we hope to create a deeper understanding for gays' and lesbians' desires and needs. Our wish would be that this knowledge would lead to a more complex and nuanced view on gays and lesbians and offer a new perspective (Silverman, 2001) which would, in the end, make them feel less stigmatised and stereotyped. However, it might be too ambitious to think that this process would be triggered by our thesis. At the same time, empathetic interviewing does not mean that the interviewer and the interviewee are to become friends as this is seldom possible because the interviewee knows that he or she is an object in a study (El-Or, 1992) and the researcher will, in the end, decide what comes out of the interview (Wasserfall, 1993; Cheek, 2008).

As interviews became popular in the mass culture and were introduced to a wide range of social settings (like talk shows and voting polls), interviewing has become routine and it is assumed that an interview provides accurate knowledge about the interviewee's life (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Silverman, 2005). However, one is never to forget that all interviews are influenced by the context and, consequently, the results arise from the interaction and exchange between the researcher and the interviewee. In this way, interviews can never become completely standardised because researchers will always have to take both the individual and the social context into account (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Flick, 2002).

3.2.4. The role of the qualitative researcher

As qualitative researchers, we need to discuss our own role in the research process and creation of knowledge (Miller & Glassner, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It is sometimes claimed (Collins, 1990) that interviewers who are not part of the interviewee's social groups will not be able to gain trust and will therefore not obtain sincere answers from the interviewees. Furthermore, it is argued that researchers who do not share group membership with the interviewee might not know how to ask the right questions. Miller (2001) opposes this point of view and shows that researchers who are socially distant from the interviewee's social group will be more inclined to ask for clarification of statements, reveal hidden assumptions and not take things for granted. In addition, when the researcher has the status of an outsider in relation to a topic, the interviewee might start to think of himself as an expert and thus reveal issues of his life that he would otherwise not talk about (Miller & Glassner, 2004).

In this thesis, we stand outside the interviewees' social group, because we are heterosexual and they are homosexual. Consequently, it might be argued that there is a risk that we will not be capable of understanding the world of the interviewees and that they will not confide in us. However, this apparent constraint might also be seen as advantageous because we will be more aware of how we enact with the interviewees as we, hopefully, do not take anything for granted in the interaction with them (Miller & Glassner, 2004). Furthermore, as we are studying gays and lesbians from 'the outside', we do not know their world and, consequently, we might ask more frequently for clarification and explanations about otherwise assumed and assimilated topics.

3.2.5. The journey into the life worlds of gays and lesbians

During her journey, the traveller above got new insights and learned about herself and the worlds around her. As knowledge was constructed during the journey, her approach of talking to and learning from people continuously improved. When doing qualitative research, many processes go on concurrently and influence each other, and it is, therefore, important to learn from different stages of the process and continuously improve the research design. Literature reviews, interviewing and analysis are not linear processes and it is possible to move back and forth through the different stages. This hermeneutical spiral leaves room for increased understanding and improvements during the processes of interpretations and knowledge construction (Maxwell, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Pole & Lampard, 2002; Kvale, 2007).

In relation to this master's thesis, when having decided upon the topic Gay and Lesbian Tourism, we started out by reading numerous books and articles in order to be able to discuss the purpose of the study. As we wanted to dig deeper into the world views of gay and lesbian tourists and get a more profound understanding of their travel motivations, it seemed obvious to apply a qualitative research design and get insight through in-depth interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Jepsen & Madsen, 2006; Pole & Lampard, 2002).

3.2.6. Getting insight into a new world

Early in the process, we found that a special community existed around being homosexual, which we as heterosexual researchers were not part of, and we realised that we might not instantly be capable of understanding the life worlds of gays and lesbians. Therefore, different approaches to get more knowledge and insights about the community were initiated. Doing observations, engaging in informal conversations, surfing the internet, reading different non-academic literature such as 'Hvor Regnbuen Ender' (Lundis, 2008)³ and gay and lesbian magazines gave us a more profound understanding of the community. Participant observations were used throughout the entire research process as being a spectator at The World Outgames and visiting gay and lesbian bars and cafés provided us with insights and knowledge. Furthermore, informal chats and conversations with gays and lesbians offered a deeper understanding of their world views. Informal conversations are different from

³ Danish book in which famous Danes tell about the right to choose the partner they want; the wish for being oneself; and their opinion about the missing equality between heterosexuals and homosexuals.

interview situations because they are the way social interaction normally takes place. Thus, they might reveal information otherwise difficult to obtain and they are therefore not trivial (Silverman, 2001). However, participant observations and informal chats with people are difficult to analyse. Therefore, the main focus when analysing data is on the interviews since they have been recorded (listen to appendix 8.1.) and are thus accessible for listening to over and over again during the processes of analysis (Hair et al, 2006; Pole & Lampard, 2002). The recorder was used during the interview in order to make analysis possible while paying attention and listening to the interviewee (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Hair et al., 2006; Jepsen & Madsen, 2006).

Analysis of the interviews began after the first interviews were conducted and literature studies, interviewing and analysing occurred simultaneously. Analysis of the interviews has thereby influenced the literature review as we discovered that issues other than the ones initially found relevant were of importance and, therefore, literature on for example the gay and lesbian community and identity is included in our literature review. The first interview was conducted in March followed by a series of interviews, and most of May, June and July were spent on further literature review and analysis of the interviews. From end July and until the beginning of September another series of interviews were undertaken. Thereby, we had time to analyse the first interviews and develop the interview guide for the last session of interviews.

3.2.7. A study on gay and lesbian tourists

One of the first steps of the research process was to consider the design of the study together with the method for analysing data. As we wanted to do a qualitative study in order to get profound insights into the life worlds of homosexual tourists, we considered who the study should include, and we found it of particular importance to include lesbians in our study since this group has for long been almost invisible in tourism studies (Hughes, 2007; Puar, 2002a, 2002b). As travelling is today an integrated part of many people's lives (Wall & Mathieson, 2006), we decided that the only criteria for participating in the study was that interviewees were gays or lesbians in order not to exclude relevant participants. We considered that the chance of finding somebody who never left their home during leisure time was minimal and if so, their reasons for not travelling away from home could also be interesting. Although some of our interviewees before interview start proclaimed that they rarely travelled, it turned out

that all interviewees went on holiday. This circumstance initiated the discussion of what 'holiday' is because often the interviewees associated holidaying with going abroad. However, according to the previous definition of a tourist, holidays can also be undertaken in one's home country and include one day excursions of which we informed the interviewees prior to the interview or during the interview session.

3.2.8. Anonymity

The sexuality of the interviewee is the criterion for participating in this study and, moreover, a topic for discussion, and we have found that this topic is personal and sensitive. Therefore, anonymity and confidentiality were of great importance and promised to all interviewees. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that homosexuals are still a marginalised group in society and that, in some parts of society, homosexuality is not accepted (Haslop et al., 1998; Bowes, 1996; Graham, 2002; Pritchard et al., 1998b). Since a few of our interviewees are not fully 'out' yet, e.g. at their work, it seemed vital to secure their anonymity in this study. Therefore, fictitious names for the interviewees are used in the summaries and in the data analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Kvale, 2007).

3.2.9. Selection of interview persons

The interviewees were found through purposeful sampling, defined by Maxwell (2009: 235) as 'a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices'. We have aimed at capturing the heterogeneity among the individuals studied and have interviewed homosexuals across different age groups, social classes and nationalities. Participants for the interviews were found in numerous ways and as Fontana & Frey (2005: 707) note, the question of 'how do we "get in"?' arose in the very beginning as both of us are heterosexuals and are thus not part of any gay or lesbian in-group. To begin with, we told everybody about our project and made it clear that if they knew somebody who might partake, they were very welcome to give away our contact details. Moreover, we contacted homosexual acquaintances and asked whether they themselves or somebody they knew would be interested in participating in an interview.

Moreover, some interviews were made in Barcelona as one of the researchers was going there for SITC 2009, Spain's second largest tourism fair. A number of appointments were made from home through contacts gathered on the SITC fair in 2008, and other interviewees were found at the 'Pink Corner'⁴. People who were present in this area were asked whether they would like to participate in an interview for our study, and nine interviewees were found this way.

Another attempt for finding informants was made when a friend of ours went to a lesbian party and we made her bring along flyers on which the research purpose together with our contact details were printed. Moreover, one of us visited a lesbian café in Aarhus where she introduced herself and the study. Eight out of nine girls in the café were glad to help and would like to participate in an interview, however, only six ended up participating. A gay café in Copenhagen was also visited several times and here it was possible to find international tourists. Moreover, we joined gay and lesbian groups at the social network Facebook, sent out e-mails to all exchange students at Copenhagen Business School, contacted all gay/lesbian B&Bs and hotels in Copenhagen and attempted to get hold of tourists from a gay cruise ship boarding Aarhus. Finally, we used the opportunity for finding study participants during The World Outgames in Copenhagen, and one of us went to Stockholm Pride to interview gays and lesbians. All the interviewees were at the end of the interview asked whether they knew somebody who could have an interest in participating in an interview. This method of snowballing became very helpful, and we ended up interviewing people in the sixth link (Pritchard et al., 2000; Pole & Lampard, 2002; Jepsen & Madsen, 2006).

In some cases, incentives for participating in interviews were used, such as coffee, chocolate, wine and flowers. Although incentives were sometimes offered, this was not the primary reason for people wanting to participate in the study. The interest and positive response from participants were noteworthy and the willingness to help might reflect the circumstance that the research attempts to cast light on a stigmatised group which the informants form part of (Philipp, 1999; Cheek, 2008).

It is relevant to notice that much research has focused on gays and lesbians who are already 'out of the closet', and our study does not challenge this gap in the literature. Most of the

⁴ At the Pink Corner, tourism products targeting the LGBT market are offered to the visitors at the fair.

interviewees in our study are completely open about their sexuality and this might influence their travel motivations, destination choices and holiday motivations. As homosexuals have travelled to the 'homoeroticised' Mediterranean for centuries, it is not absurd to believe that gays and lesbians still travel to destinations far away to get a sense of anonymity while developing their homosexual identities (Binnie, 1995; Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Luongo, 2002; Aldrich, 1993). Moreover, it is important to notice that most interviewees come from the Western world, such as Scandinavia or urban areas in Spain, which again might affect their degree of being 'out' and thus their choices and motivations as tourists.

3.2.10. The usefulness of in-depth interviews

The interviews were conducted with one or two interviewees and in the very last interview, three good friends participated. When an interview was conducted with two people, they were either a couple or very good friends who travelled together. We did not find the topic of our study appropriate for focus group interviews since the goal of the focus group is the interaction between participants. However, some of the topics in our study might be sensitive to some interviewees, and there would therefore be a risk that not all people would feel confident about sharing their feelings and experiences. Moreover, focus groups interviews are not ideal for constructing knowledge about the individuals' world views which is exactly what we attempt to do in this thesis (Baarts & Mehlsen, 2006; Stewart et al., 2009; Pole & Lampard, 2002).

The interviews were undertaken in different places depending on where the interviewee found it most convenient to meet. Interviewing consequently took place in our own homes, in the interviewees' homes, at our or their workplaces, at our universities and at cafés and bars. From the beginning of the interview we tried to create a 'comfort zone' which was another reason to offer coffee or tea to the interviewees. Moreover, we started out with issues that made people feel at ease such as general questions about holidaying and this, furthermore, opened up the discussion. Asking questions about how their last holiday was spent or by asking 'What is holiday to you? What does it mean for you to be on holiday?' made the interviewees talk as holidaying seemed to be an experience, people gladly tell about (Hair et al., 2006).

3.2.11. The interview session

In the beginning of the interview process, we asked the interviewees what terms they found most appropriate when discussing homosexuality. As outsiders, we found it relevant to understand if any term was preferred over another in order not to offend any participants. Opinions on what term to use differed, however, there was widespread agreement that 'gay' and 'lesbian' (in English language) are neutral terms, and these are also widely used in the literature on gays and lesbians. During the interview, we attempted to use the term for 'homosexual' preferred by the interviewee.

The first interviews were very explorative and unstructured as the aim was to discover what the informants found important when travelling and what motivated them to go on holiday. During the explorative interviews, we only brought up themes for discussion and an interview guide was not in use. We then asked informants to elaborate on what they said, for example, by asking probing questions (Hair et al., 2006; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Pole & Lampard, 2002; Jepsen & Madsen, 2006). Moreover, three expert interviews were conducted with three different persons: Peer Kjær, who is the CEO of Pink Viking Adventures⁵; Uffe Elbæk, the CEO of World Outgames 2009 in Copenhagen⁶ and Angel Bigorra, who is director of Gay Barcelona⁷. These expert interviews, together with the explorative interviews and an extensive literature review, formed the basis for the interview guide (see appendix 8.4.). However, the interview guide was repeatedly subject to changes as we moved along the process of interviewing, analysis and further literature studies. When the interview guide came into use, the interviews turned from being unstructured to semi-structured which means that we did not follow the interview guide question by question but let the interviews evolve naturally (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Pole & Lampard, 2002; Jepsen & Madsen, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

As it is suggested in the tourism literature that the opportunity to get sexual experiences is important to gay men on vacation (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Waitt & Markwell, 2006), we found it relevant, although difficult, to ask the interviewees about their sex habits when travelling. For that reason we had left the question out for the first interview and would include it at a later state in the interview process. However, after this interview the interviewee asked us

⁵ Danish travel agency targeting gays and lesbian tourist. Closed down in 2009.

⁶ World Outgames 2009 is an international sports, culture and human rights event which makes the global LGBT community visible. Learn more on www.copenhagen2009.org

⁷ Gay Barcelona consists of a gay travel magazine and a webpage: www.gaybarcelona.com

why we did not include the topic 'sex' and suggested that we asked people about it. Hereafter, the question on sex was included in the interview guide. It can thus be seen how continuous alteration of the interview guide has occurred on the basis of the interaction with the interviewees.

During the interview process, the researchers conducted interviews together as well as separately. The first interviews were made together, hereafter interviews were made individually and, subsequently, some were made jointly. In the end, we separated again. This procedure was undertaken in order to make sure that the interviews were made in the same style. Moreover, it also made us able to learn from each other. During phases where interviews were made separately, we continuously communicated about how the interview guide could be improved and how questions could be reformulated.

It might be said that the interviews were conducted more as dialogues than actual interviews because interviews are human interactions (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2008). The interviewer might, consciously or unconsciously, show feelings, desires and opinions. The approach of empathetic interviewing can be used as a technique to encourage the interviewee to be more open and honest during the interview, and this approach has been followed during the interviews. The interviews have been surprisingly personal and candid for us as well as for the interviewees because the interviews touched upon many personal points in life such as feelings, sex, holidays and coming out as a homosexual. Due to the dialogue approach, we have also told the interviewees about personal aspects of our lives either because it happened naturally or because we were asked by the interviewees (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Hair et al., 2006; Jepsen & Madsen, 2006). Moreover, the empathetic interviewing approach implies that the interviewer becomes an advocate whose aim is, among others, to promote the visibility of an often stigmatised group in tourism. Thereby, empathetic interviewing also includes an ethical viewpoint supporting the group being studied (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 2007; Puar, 2002a).

3.2.12. Analysis of the interviews

In order to analyse the interviews, we decided to make summaries of each interview (see appendix 8.2.) although transcribing the interviews would have been the ideal method of translating from oral to written language (Kvale, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Pole &

Lampard, 2002). We are not only interested in the meanings of the words used by the interviewee, but also in the overall picture that they draw. Here it is relevant to notice that the interviews were conducted in many different languages other than Danish, such as English, Spanish, Swedish and Norwegian where none of us are native speakers. Moreover, we have made interviews in English and Danish with people who had another mother tongue and, therefore, it would not make much sense to dig deeper into the specific words used during the interviews. Accordingly, since we do not make linguistic analysis, the quotations used in the data analysis have been modified to an extent where unnecessary words have been left out in order to enhance reader-friendliness. Moreover, the quotations have been translated into English to the best of the authors' abilities (see appendix 8.6.). In order to get profound insights and varied data about the subject studied, we have chosen to do many interviews with different people. Therefore, we have also preferred to make summaries of the interviews instead of transcripts and, moreover, listen to the recorded interviews over and over again in order to get the full sense of the interviewees' meanings and world views.

Binnie (1997) states that heterosexual researchers must acknowledge their limitations when doing work on homosexuality and must be very aware of avoiding voyeurism and misinterpretations. For this ethical reason, together with the potential dangers of language confusions, we have sent out the summaries of the interviews to all participants. Thereby, they had a chance to correct misunderstandings or misinterpretation. However, responses have generally been very positive (see appendix 8.5.) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Kvale, 2007).

In total, we have conducted 41 interviews with 53 interviewees as well as three expert interviews. By far, most of these interviews were conducted as in-depth interviews and a few of the very last interviews were made as focused theme interviews where only a few, specific topics, which we found of special importance, were discussed (Jepsen & Madsen, 2006). The interviews last between 20 minutes and more than two hours. The length primarily varies depending on the setting in which interviews were carried out, e.g. at home, at work, during The World Outgames or with tourists *in situ*, and the characteristics of the interviewee. The interviews were conducted with 32 gay male interviewees and 21 lesbians. It could be suggested that the distribution between gays and lesbians interviewed might reflect that the percentage of homosexual men are greater than that of homosexual women and that gay men are more visible in public space whereas lesbians are more hidden in society (Philipp, 1999; Rothenberg, 1995). It is also noteworthy that the gay men interviewed are responsible for all

'snowballing' conducted for this study and that they found it easy and important to establish contacts through their networks.

3.2.13. The matrix

Interpretation and analysis is a process starting from the point when the first interview is conducted. In order to analyse our thick and rich data, we structured the summaries into a matrix (see appendix 8.3.) where the interviews are listed on the horizontal axis and themes of the study on the vertical axis. The themes of the matrix have emerged over time and are not exclusive or definite. However, they constitute a good basis for further analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Jepsen & Madsen, 2006). As the interview process evolved and the matrix grew, we became capable of seeing certain tendencies or patterns within our study. At some point, we felt that we had reached a saturation point and that we had gained a deep knowledge about gay and lesbian tourists, although it is important to remember that findings from a qualitative study cannot be used for generalising. Moreover, we felt that it was important to be able to penetrate all the interviews for analysis which might not be possible if the number of participants becomes too big. During analysis, the matrix made it possible to find out who said something about a specific topic. Hereafter, the summary was used to locate when the interviewee said this about the topic, and then the interview was heard again and again until the meaning was fully captured (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Jepsen & Madsen, 2006).

3.2.14. A multiplicity of world views

The knowledge constructed in this thesis is to some degree messy and multifaceted, and the analysis has therefore been challenging to construct because we wanted to get as profound as possible into the area of study. The open questions during the interviews have allowed the interviewees to give their explanation of what they found relevant about a specific topic and, consequently, many diverse answers have been given to the same question, which again reflects the constructivist approach of multiple life views. Lastly, it is relevant to notice that this master's thesis draws upon other literature than tourism studies, and the diversity of topics is reflected in the multiplicity of data. The richness of data constructed from qualitative interviews implicates that it is difficult to include all data. Consequently, topics which we believed to be of minor importance or which we have not felt a need to analyse in depth have been left out of the analysis.

4. Data analysis

In this section, we will discuss the diversity of gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences on the basis of the interviews conducted and academic literature. We will aim at casting light on the different viewpoints and opinions that gays' and lesbians' have on the role of holidays in their lives.

4.1. Interviewee characteristics

In the following, we will briefly describe the characteristics of the interview persons in order to set the scene for the rest of the analysis. By obtaining information about the gays' and lesbians' personal demographics such as gender, age and civil status, the researchers might get able to understanding their answers better as they get an insight into their everyday life contexts.

First of all, more gay men than lesbians have been interviewed, namely 32 men and 21 women. The age span of the interviewees is fairly broad as we have interviewed homosexual tourists between 23 and 61 years old. Moreover, the interviewees come from countries as different as, for instance, Australia, Germany, Thailand, Sweden and Canada. In total, 18 interviewees were Danish, 5 were foreigners who live in Denmark, and 30 where foreigners who live outside Denmark.

The interviewees' civil status might also have an impact upon their holiday patterns (Black, 2000; Theobald, 2005). In our study, the majority were in relationships; around a third where singles; and only six persons were married. Four interviewees had children, either from their present relationship or from a former, heterosexual relationship, and two interviewees were pregnant during the time of the interview.

Regarding occupation, we have talked to students; teachers; self-employed; unemployed; public and private employees; people in creative jobs and in many other jobs. Moreover, a few interviewees worked voluntarily in gay and lesbian organisations and projects. Thus, it seems like these gays' and lesbians' job situations are as diverse as for other people. Also in relation to income, the level varied greatly: from around 15,000 DKK to 65,000 DKK per month. However, income is hard to compare across countries so these numbers can only give

an indication of the wage level in Denmark. The interviewees' educations varied likewise: One interviewee ended school with 16 years, whereas others had further educations, and more than a third possessed university degrees.

It is worth noting that we have, in present study, deliberately aimed at talking to gays and lesbians of different age groups and nationalities who have diverse occupations, educations, and personal statuses in order to get as differentiated a view of gays' and lesbians' holiday motivations and destination choices as possible.

4.2. Travel motivations of gay and lesbian tourists (push factors)

A range of holiday motivations seem to be common across the gays and lesbians in this study, such as the wish for getting away from everyday life, relaxing, and enjoying anonymity. However, travel motivations are also dependent upon the context that the gays and lesbians find themselves in. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss these general travel motivations.

4.2.1. Escape

Hughes (1997; 2005a; 2006; 2007) and other authors (Pritchard et al., 2000; Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Philipp, 1999) state that many gay men and lesbians go on holiday because they feel pressured by social disapproval and discrimination at home. In this way, they feel 'pushed' to leave their everyday environment in order to feel free and unrestrained while on holiday.

However, our data show that many interviewees do not feel especially constrained at home and they, consequently, do not necessarily go on holiday in order to feel freer and show their sexuality openly. For example, the Frenchman Jérôme, who lives in Copenhagen, answers in the negative when asked whether he feels freer on holiday:

No, honestly, no. But I am also very lucky to be in a fantastic office where you are, what you are.
[Jérôme, 36, France]

Jérôme thus tells that as he feels that he can be himself on the job, he does not think that he feels freer when he goes on holiday. This is in line with Hughes' study (2002b) where he

found that gay men were not more 'out' during holiday because they already lived as openly gay in their home environments and felt that they could be themselves at home. On the contrary, Bell (1991) states that gays are normally not open about their sexuality at work. It should be noted, though, that the social acceptance and openness towards gays and lesbians have changed substantially throughout the last decades (Howe, 2001; Woolwine, 2000), and this might be the explanation for this discrepancy in opinions. This would moreover be in line with the constructivist thoughts that every phenomenon needs to be understood in a social and historical context as the view on homosexuality has probably changed from the early 1990's into the new millennium (Haslop et al., 1998; Burr, 2003).

Other interviewees in our study likewise tell that they do not feel inhibited at home:

I do not feel especially constrained here in Copenhagen [...]. No... I do not feel constrained or anything here. There is nobody who does not know that my partner is a woman.

[Cecilie, 32, Denmark]

According to Grossman (1998), socialising openly is something that many gays and lesbians wish to do in their everyday life, and many interviewees in our study actually relate 'being oneself' to showing feelings towards their partner and letting others know that they are homosexuals. In fact, many interviewees openly show feelings towards their partner in their home country as well as on holiday and, in this way; they feel that they can always be open about their sexuality. However, as the majority of the interviews have been carried out with Western gays and lesbians, we are aware that our data might reflect a westernised perspective. Consequently, we do recognise that being able to show affection openly is not everyday life context for many gays and lesbians (Pritchard et al., 2000; World Outgames, 2007; Amnesty International, 2009; Ivy, 2001).

To sum up, it might be suggested that some interviewees in this study are not motivated to go on holiday due to an 'intrinsic' need of escaping the heterosexual world and thereby 'being oneself' as Pritchard et al. (2000) argue. On the contrary, many interviewees feel that they can be open about their sexuality in their everyday environment and, therefore, they do not necessarily seek freedom from social condemnation while on vacation. In this way, it might be deduced that some gays and lesbians actually are quite self-contained and satisfied with their everyday life and therefore do not go on holiday in order to feel less constrained than at home.

4.2.2. Relaxing and disconnecting

Many interviewees admit that they *do* feel freer when they travel, but the reasons given are that they relax more on holiday and get away from the duties of everyday life, such as work and domestic chores, and not because the vacation offers them an opportunity for being more open about their sexuality. According to the interviewees, being on vacation means getting an opportunity for relaxing and disconnecting, and it sometimes feels as a relief to break the daily routines. Urry (1990) likewise states that being on vacation is about getting away from the ordinary life and into the extraordinary holiday experiences. This is something that is agreed on across almost all participants in the study:

I just want to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life

[Maria, 40, Australia]

Vacations means going anywhere where I can forget about work. Where I can disconnect.

[Julio, 36, Spain]

Anna: And then just get out...

Pernille: Not having to look at the laundry and the dishes.

[Anna & Pernille, 38 & 34, Denmark]

Pritchard et al. (2000) suggest that gay and lesbian tourists are motivated by the same extrinsic push factors of escaping ‘everyday life’ that straight tourists are, which is also reflected in the quotations above. The wish for disconnecting and getting away from chores and responsibilities while on holiday are mentioned in a variety of references on general travel motivations (Pritchard et al., 2000; Decrop, 2006; Plog, 1991; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Crompton, 1979; Plog, 2005; Lundberg, 1971; Lowyck et al., 1992), and we thus see that in this aspect, travel motivations of gays and lesbians in our study apparently do not differ notably from these general factors of motivations which make people go on holiday.

4.2.3. Anonymity

Another group of interviewees likes the feeling of anonymity when holidaying. This is in line with other authors’ (Cox, 2002; Graham, 2002; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 1997, 2002b) findings that some gays and lesbians enjoy not having to consider whether they will meet people they know while on vacation and, consequently, they might behave differently than in their everyday life. This is reflected in some interviewees’ accounts:

I am not Mister Super Popular but a lot of people know me where I come from and it's a small world, and I know that sometimes if I do something, the word will start spreading around, and I don't want that. When you're out of your city, it's easier to do maybe things that you would not normally do.

[Pierre, 30, Canada]

It's like everybody else. I have a freedom and nobody knows me when I am there. Therefore, I can behave as crazy as I want to...

[Anita, 51, Denmark]

Thus, some gays and lesbians in this study do things that they would normally not do because they feel anonymous during holiday and, therefore, do not have to consider rumours about their behaviour. Carr (2002) also made this observation in relation to tourists in general. Hughes (2002b) likewise found that some gay men felt more relaxed while on vacation because they could be anonymous.

Bell & Valentine (1995) claim that cities offer more opportunities for being anonymous, and Cantú (2009) argues that urban spaces are more liberal. A large number of our interviewees choose urban areas, such as London, Amsterdam, Berlin, Sydney and Cape Town as their holiday destinations, and this might, for some, be related to the feeling of anonymity that can be encountered in these huge cities. However, it should be noted that gays and lesbians, obviously, also choose other kinds of destinations and that, consequently, far from all feel that anonymity is important while holidaying. Furthermore, it could be suggested that the tendency for people to feel more relaxed on holiday because of the feeling of anonymity is not unique for gays and lesbians. The liberating feeling of anonymity might be common for all kinds of tourists, independent of sexuality (Carr, 2002; Figler et al., 1992; Kim & Jamal, 2007).

4.2.4. Travel motivations in a cultural context

A few interviewees do not feel that they are accepted for who they are in their home environment which means that it is a relief for them to get away on vacation. This is true for Jorge, who comes from Guadalajara in Mexico, and who tells that holiday for him is:

An opportunity for getting to know other places where there is more diversity; more acceptance towards us, as gays. Getting to know more and comparing what is missing in my country. It's a bit... more repressed because there are many Catholic people who do not like the gays.

[Jorge, 39, Mexico]

Thus, Jorge travels in order to get away from Catholic Mexico and he likes to go on holiday to places where homosexuality is accepted. This statement is in accordance with authors (Hughes, 1997; Pritchard et al., 2000; Holcomb & Luongo, 1996) who state that some gays and lesbians want to escape the pressures and discrimination of their everyday life when holidaying. However, the fact that the pressure and social condemn is felt by a Mexican gay man might indicate that Hughes' (2002b) push factors for gay men differ depending on the tourist's country of origin and national culture. Pritchard et al. (1998b) claim that Mexico is a homophobic country, and Catholic countries - and other countries where there is a strong Christian or conservative belief - are often seen as disapproving of homosexuals (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2009; Cantú, 2009). This might explain the attitude of the Mexican interviewee.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to see that none of the gays or lesbians from Spain feels uncomfortable in their home country, though Spain also is a Catholic country. Nevertheless, this might be due to the fact that most of the Spanish interviewees live in Madrid and Barcelona which are suggested as being urban cities which are open and tolerant towards homosexuals (Giorgi, 2002; World Outgames, 2009a; Community Marketing, 2008a). The attitude towards gays and lesbians in Spain has not always been one of acceptance, but this seems to have changed as a consequence of political transformations (Giorgi, 2002). Again, we see how homosexuality has to be understood and analysed within a specific context (Haslop et al., 1998; Burr, 2003).

A couple of Danish interviewees do not feel comfortable about showing their sexuality in their home towns either. This mainly depends on the geographical location (whether they live in an urban area or in a smaller city) and their occupation. For example, Anna's wife works with Muslim children and they do therefore not show that they are lesbians in public when they are in their hometown Aarhus as homosexuality is not accepted by many Muslims (Roth & Luongo, 2002; Hughes, 2007). However, when Anna and her wife are on holiday, they like showing affection towards each other:

When we were in Berlin, we went hand in hand because we walked in a gay friendly area and then it is very nice to walk hand in hand.

[Anna, 28, Denmark]

Thus, Anna and her wife behave differently while on vacation as they feel more comfortable about showing feelings openly. In this way, feeling free to being who they are and openly showing affection is an important part of some gays' and lesbians' travel motivation.

However, it should be noted that the research conducted here has been mainly with Western gays and lesbians, apart from a minor number of exceptions. This might indicate that the limitation of the research is that we mainly get an insight into gays' and lesbians' holiday experiences from one perspective, namely a Western. Plummer (1992) emphasises that lesbian and gay experiences are multiple and diverse and that no universal 'gayness' exists. Also Bell & Valentine (1995) write that cross-cultural varieties in sexualities are present, and Clift & Wilkins (1995) assert that identities are culturally bounded. Thus, we are aware of the differences of national culture and its possible impact upon the interviewees' holiday motivations.

In conclusion, it could be said that most gays and lesbians in this study are not driven by a wish to get away from heteronormativity and discrimination when they go on holiday. However, very few interviewees do feel that it is a relief to go on holiday to countries where homosexuality is more accepted than in their own cities or countries. Most interviewees travel in order to feel free from everyday duties and some also enjoy the feeling of anonymity obtained on holidays.

4.3. Travel motivations of gay and lesbian tourists (pull factors)

In relation to what attract gays and lesbians to a destination, it should be noted that people have divergent interests and that no interviewee goes on one single kind of vacation. However, there is a tendency for many interviewees to seek new experiences and wanting to enjoy the culture at the destination. Moreover, the interviewees go on either city breaks, sun and beach vacation, do adventure travel or are interested in nature. The gays and lesbians in our study also go on holiday in order to visit family and friends and meeting new people.

4.3.1. Getting new experiences

A range of authors claim that people go on holiday in order to experience something new (Graham; 2002; Plog, 2005; Cohen, 1972). This is a common travel motivation because

holidays offer experiences that cannot be obtained in our everyday environment (Urry, 1990). Anita seems to agree that holidaying is about getting new experiences and that it is something common for practically all people:

I travel in order to experience and get new impressions and meet new people. And that... that is basically why all people travel.

[Anita, 51, Denmark]

Other interviewees in our study tell that they look for cultural experiences, like visiting museums, exhibitions and historical sights; going to the theatre; and enjoying concerts while holidaying:

I believe that the concept 'cultural gay' describes me well [...]. Precisely because you don't have children, then you go to the theatre and that's something that fills up your life [...]. What matters is that you have been to the latest exhibitions, you have seen the movies that are 'in', and theatre performances and so on, right? [...] These are things, you might say, that attract you to a place.

[Flemming, 48, Denmark]

This interviewee identifies himself and his way of life with culture, and it also plays a role on holiday because culture can drive him to visit certain destinations. This motivation can likewise be found in general tourism literature (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; McIntosh et al., 1995; Figler et al., 1992).

Other interviewees mostly go on city breaks in order to feel the atmosphere and enjoy cuisine, arts, nightlife and shopping. These travel motivations are not exclusive to gay and lesbian tourists either as they are mentioned in various general sources on tourist motivations (Stebbins, 1996; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Lundberg, 1971). Activities sought on holiday are often the same as those undertaken at home (Carr, 2002), but the interviewees in our study mention that during vacation, the frequency of activities is intensified compared to when they are home.

Another group of interviewees are motivated to travel by a desire for sun, sand, beach and warm climate. There is a tendency among the interviewees for especially choosing warm destinations if they live in a cold climate normally. This is especially true for those interviewees who have moved from warm countries like France and Australia to Northern countries like Denmark or Germany because they miss the sun and warm temperatures. Robin, who has been living one year in Denmark but originates from Australia, tells:

Increasingly here, in Denmark, the climate is actually a choice [...]. The climate is coming into it so it's either, okay, South Africa, Thailand, eh... other ideas are out there. So you can see how the climate, in many respects, drives the destination. Primarily because of the, I consider it to be, quite cold climate here.

[Robin, 45, Australia]

The desire for sun, beach and warm weather is something that has often been touched upon in the general tourism literature as well (Lundberg, 1971; Plog, 1991; Smith, 2001; Cooper et al., 2008; Urry, 1990) and, consequently, seems to be something that gays and lesbians share with straight tourists.

4.3.2. Getting to know the locals

In addition, some interviewees in our study find it important to seeing the local way of life; learning about the foreign culture; spending time with locals; and meeting new people while holidaying. Thus, the possible social relations and experiences with locals is a pull factor for some gays and lesbians, like it is for other travellers (Plog, 2005; Crompton, 1979; Decrop, 2006; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Lundberg, 1971). This is in line with MacCannell's (1976) suggestion that tourists seek authenticity and getting to know other cultures when holidaying. It could, however, be proposed that for many gays and lesbians, being with other homosexuals while on holiday is of great importance. This urge for socialising might be even stronger for homosexuals than heterosexuals (Grossmann, 1998; Hindle, 1994; Taylor, 1997; Pritchard et al., 2000; Howe, 2001; Hughes, 1997). This can be seen by the circumstance that practically all interviewees state that they like going to gay space, and more interviewees seek it out while holidaying. It might be proposed that this aspect of gays' and lesbians' travel motivations differ from other, straight tourists' motivations. We will look more into the phenomenon of gay space in chapter 4.6 in this thesis.

4.3.3. The diverse travel motivations of gays and lesbians

Some interviewees assert that they like going on adventure travel in deserts, mountains, jungles and forests and doing sports, while a different group of interviewees go on vacation in the quest for experiences in nature. Again, this does not seem to be unique for gays and lesbians as many authors have also written on nature and adventure travel in relation to general tourists (Hudson, 2003; Swarbrooke et al., 2006; Lundberg, 1971; McIntosh et al., 1995). Furthermore, some interviewees use the holidays for visiting family and friends.

Especially those who live outside their country of origin long for going home, and vacations offer the opportunity for doing so. Also other interviewees tell that they visit friends when they travel, and many have friends and acquaintances in different parts of the world. Visiting relatives and friends is a general tourist motivation and thus not just typical for gays and lesbians (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Lundberg, 1971; Bowen & Clarke, 2009).

Like other people, gays and lesbians have different interests and motives for choosing a destination over time, and tourism motivations in general are extremely complex (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; McIntosh et al., 1995). Furthermore, many interviewees tell that they often combine different kinds of experiences, like city breaks and experiences in nature, during one single holiday. We are aware that by the mere fact that we are studying gays and lesbians, we assume that there is some kind of unity among them. Nonetheless, Plummer (1992) claims that there can be no unitary homosexual as gays' and lesbians' experiences are in fact multiple, fragmented and diffuse. We agree on this statement, but we still find it crucial to gain more insight into gay and lesbian tourism and we will, consequently, try to analyse and discuss their diverse holiday experiences throughout the rest of the thesis.

To conclude this chapter, it might be suggested that the majority of the pull factors which the interviewees in our study mention are also those found important by straight tourists. Yet, few motivational factors, such as the call for gay space and togetherness with other gays and lesbians are something which might be unique to gay and lesbian tourists. We will discuss the travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences of gays and lesbians in more details in the remaining part of the analysis and will especially put emphasis on the areas where gay and lesbian tourists might differ from other tourists, namely in relation to gay destinations, gay space, gay events as well as the role of sex and gay friendliness.

4.4. Destination choices of gay and lesbian tourists

In this chapter, we will discuss gays' and lesbians' destination choices. We will start out by relating the interviewees' viewpoints on their choice of destination to Plog's tourist types. Secondly, we show how the majority of the interviewees choose a holiday destination on the basis of their personal interests, and not necessarily their sexuality, whereas the decision to avoid certain destination seems to be based upon sexuality at times. Lastly, we will discuss the role of safety in relation to gays' and lesbians' destination choices.

4.4.1. Unknown vs. known destinations

At the outset, it seems that gays and lesbians go on holiday for the same reasons as straights and, consequently, sexuality does not appear to have an impact upon choice of holiday destination (Pritchard et al., 2000; Hughes, 2002c). Most interviewees in our study believe that they choose their holiday destination on the basis of their personal interests and not because of their sexuality. For example, quite a few interviewees want to go on holiday to a place where they have never been before:

What drives a destination choice is: Where haven't I been?

[Robin, 45, Australia]

I like it to be relaxing, I like it to be challenging, I like it to be something new. So I like to have... I like to go to different countries where I have not been before.

[Maria, 40, Australia]

But if I go on a vacation, then yeah, I go to somewhere that is... that is unknown, unfamiliar territory for me.

[Eric, 26, Israel]

The drive to visit a new destination and experience unknown territory could be connected to Plog's (1974) typology of the allocentric person who wants to discover foreign cultures (Lowyck et al., 1992; Ross, 1998; Plog, 1974, 1991) and to Gray's 'Wanderlust' typology which includes those who go on holiday to meet new people and experience different places from where they come from (Gray, 1970; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Wall & Mathieson, 2006).

In contrast, some interviewees like to go to a destination where they have been before. 53-year-old Lukas tells about his experiences in London:

When I come from the Metro, then I know exactly where I am [...]. And then I just walk there. I mean, the centre of London is just exactly like I remember it, right? And that's kind of the same with Paris, right? You almost always know where you are.

[Lukas, 53, Denmark]

Lukas tells how he often goes to cities that he knows, where he can easily find his way round. The gay segment is characterised as being particularly loyal towards products and destinations (Pritchard et al., 1998b; Berlingske Business, 2009; Pritchard & Morgan, 1996), and this assumption is also reflected in some interviewees' answers as they would like to return to destinations which they have previously visited and enjoyed. The gay man Lukas might be said to be more psychocentric (Plog, 1974) because he goes to familiar destinations like

London and Paris. Also other interviewees seek out familiar destinations when they go on holiday in the way that many choose European countries as their holiday destinations because they know the language and feel more comfortable there.

Consequently, it might be suggested that as gay men are said to be DINKs with high discretionary incomes who travel often (Roth & Luongo, 2002; Stuber, 2002; Guaracino, 2007; Burrows & Dumoulin, 2000; Community Marketing, 2009), they both have time and money to make return trips as well as visiting new places.

4.4.2. Destination choices as context specific

However, the problems with Plog's tourist types are that they are too simplistic and overlook the circumstance that a tourist can choose which holiday he or she wants from one time to the next (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Moutinho, 1987; McIntosh et al., 1995). For example, the gay man Lukas has also been to Cape Town which might be said to be outside the beaten tracks of well-known European capitals. Thus, it might not be possible to categorise Lukas as psychocentric. Furthermore, even interviewees who could be suggested as having a strong sense of 'gay identity' in the sense that they feel that being gay is a lifestyle and often seek out gay destinations when holidaying, such as Eric, sometimes go on holidays which are, by no means, gay related. Thus, we see how identities are multiple and flexible and how the interviewees actively construct and manage them (Ailon, 2007; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Munt, 1997; Sinfield, 1997). Furthermore, the wish to go to a known or unknown destination does not seem to be an area where sexuality has an influence on the gay and lesbian tourists, as the reasons given are not notably different from straight people's explanations for destination choices.

4.4.3. Interests as driver for destination choice

Only a few interviewees mention their sexuality when explaining how they choose a holiday destination. For example, Eric emphasises that he finds it of uttermost importance that there are gay bars, restaurants and accommodation at the holiday destinations because gay men are different from other people and therefore, Eric wants to go to places exclusively for gays while holidaying:

We have special needs. We are not straights. We don't have the straight dichotomy, we don't live the straight dichotomy, we break it. We come out from our cocoon and we break it. Every day, we break it. It's nice to go on a vacation one day where you don't have to break it every day when you wake up in the morning.

[Eric, 26, Israel]

Yet, the vast majority of the gays and lesbians in our study tell that they choose the holiday destination on the basis of their interests (culture, gastronomy, sports, shopping, sun bathing, and so on) and only once they have chosen a destination, they seek out gay space like bars, stores, restaurants, and accommodation (see 4.6 for a discussion of gay and lesbian space). This is in line with the finding (Hughes, 2002c) that gay men's choice of destination depends on age, income, personality and relationship status and not exclusively upon sexuality.

4.4.4. Destination avoidance on the basis of sexuality

Referring to the paragraph above, most gays and lesbians apparently do not choose their holiday destinations on the basis of their sexuality. However, it seems like some homosexuals might choose *not* to go somewhere because of their sexuality. Anita state that she would choose a holiday destination where she would be able to be herself and she would, as a result, feel very aggrieved if she went to a Muslim country:

So I would not go to Iran tomorrow, unless it was with my job. Because I know that then I have to compromise with myself to an extent where I would not feel comfortable. I would choose to go to a place where I can absolutely be myself [...]. But, I mean, if I go to a Muslim country, I would feel really offended [...]. So I would rather go to countries where people advocate that I am allowed to be there as well.

[Anita, 51, Denmark]

The tendency for some gays and lesbians to avoid Muslim countries can also be seen in the literature (Hughes, 2007; Roth & Luongo, 2002) and often this decision is based upon news reports and articles in gay media. Also Dennis affirms that Muslim countries in particular do not attract him because he knows that homosexuality is not accepted there:

My friend wants to... he has tried to talk me into going with him to Turkey. And I really don't want to [...]. And I don't want to, simply, because it's... because of their religion and because it might be that many Muslim men are homosexuals and bisexuals behind the values and stuff like that. But, I mean, the religion is still there and it's not... my impression from what I know about Turkey and Islam is that it is not like it's accepted. So with countries like that I would think twice before going.

[Dennis, 23, Denmark]

Lastly, some interviewees explain that there are countries which they will discard to holiday in because they prefer not to give financial support to regimes where minorities do not have equal rights. For example, Terzo explains:

When I decide where I want to spend my holidays, where I want to spend and leave my money, I also consider social things like: Is it a free country? Is it a country where not only homosexuals but also women and the minorities... do they have the same rights?

[Terzo, 28, Italy]

To sum up, it can be suggested that more interviewees prefer to avoid destinations where they might not be able to show their sexuality openly because homosexuality is not accepted. Some of them are also aware of their power as consumers as they do not want to give their 'pink pound' (Hughes, 2006) to regimes which oppress homosexuals and other minorities. This reflection is in accordance with Pritchard et al. (2000), and Hughes (2006) who found that many gays and lesbians do not want to go on holiday to a country where homosexuality is not accepted or even illegal. Therefore, Hughes (2006) concludes that gays and lesbians have less holiday destinations to choose from than straight holiday makers.

4.4.5. Concealment of sexuality

Some gays and lesbians in this study tell that if there is something they really want to see at a certain destination; they would go although they would have to hide their sexuality, and, consequently, it seems like Hughes' (2006) theory that destination choice is reduced for homosexuals might not be applicable to all our interviewees:

We have guide books and everything telling how is every country, every place. Of course, it is illegal in many places, right, and even sentenced with death or prison. Thus, you have to be informed [...]. Knowing how it is, following their laws, though I do not share them, but... but, that's how it is. But yes, I would go - of course! I don't care as much about that as I care about what there is to see there. Surely, their way of life is more interesting than me being able to hold another man's hand. Really, it's not that important.

[Juan, 24, Spain]

Juan here tells how he would go to a destination even though he knew beforehand that homosexuality was illegal there if that would make him experience life at the destination.

Likewise, Patrick expresses his opinion like this:

I think you can just be quiet, that's how I feel. Because if I want to go somewhere in the Middle East, where there is practically death sentence [...] then I would just not tell officially. Because then there would be things and experiences that would draw me to the destination, and then I would just go there.

[Patrick, 33, Denmark]

In contrast to existing literature on gay and lesbian tourism, which focuses extensively on gays and lesbians who want to visit destinations where homosexuality is accepted (Hughes, 1997, 2002a, 2005a; Pritchard et al., 1998a, 1998b; Ivy, 2001), it is interesting to note that many participants in present study have another approach when it comes to travelling to destinations where homosexuality is banned or condemned. As discussed above, some interviewees express that if there is something of great interest to them at a certain destination; they would go there although homosexuality is illegal or not accepted at the destination. Moreover, Martin believes that it is important to behave in accordance with the culture visited:

I don't think that you can go to a new country and behave as you want. I don't think you should do that. I mean, I think you should accept their culture and not start a political fight by holding hands, because that's a political fight in itself. But I don't think that you should do so when you're not in your own country. I mean, I kind of think that you have to respect those cultures or ways of being in a country where you don't belong.

[Martin, 26, Sweden]

Martin thinks it is essential to respect the culture at the holiday destination, and he might be said to show cultural sensibility and adaptiveness. Other interviewees also express that they are flexible when it comes to hiding or showing their sexualities. If necessary, the interviewees are able and willing to suppress their sexuality and adapt to the culture and country visited. We might tend to suggest that this might be related to the fact that interviewees in this study are 'out' and accepted in their home environments. Consequently, they do not mind suppressing their sexuality on holiday in order to experience parts of the world otherwise not open to them. This statement is in contrast to Hughes (2005b: 57) who suggest that although gay men do not encounter disapproval and intolerance at home, 'they would not wish to visit destinations on holiday that are less agreeable'.

4.4.6. Destination avoidance for other reasons than sexuality

Some interviewees give reasons for not wanting to go to a certain country which are not related to their homosexuality. For example, Simon would not go on vacation to Sunny Beach in Bulgaria, and Darío and Ramón would never choose Bolivia as their holiday destination because they believe there is nothing to see there. In the same vein, Else would not go to countries outside Europe, because she is afraid of flying long distances, or to Greenland because she believes it is too cold there. Thus, it is interesting to see how some gays and

lesbians do not relate unattractive holiday destinations to their sexuality whereas others think about the country's attitude towards homosexuality immediately when deciding upon where to spend the holiday.

Moreover, some women relate the perception of dangerous or unappealing holiday destinations to their gender, in the sense that they would avoid destinations where women are discriminated against. For example, Sabine would avoid certain holiday destinations if she knows that homosexuality would be sentenced or women in general are not treated well:

I wouldn't want to travel on my account to... to countries where there is death penalty [for being homosexual], for example, or where it's just... well, where women are treated badly.

[Sabine, 32, Germany]

Hughes (2007: 23) states that lesbians are subject to dual influences and that 'holidays of lesbians are the consequence of gender as much as sexual orientation'. Roth & Luongo (2002) agree and explain that a lesbian would probably not feel comfortable in a country where a straight woman would not go on holiday. In this way, our interviewees' accounts are in line with this theory. The two quotations highlighted here might furthermore be a verification of the way that gays and lesbians sometimes take into account and are very reflexive upon their homosexuality whereas in other occasions, other sides of their identities are significant. Bell (1991) claims that gay men are more influenced by their gay side than by other aspects such as profession, ethnicity and race, but we would reject this opinion and maintain that gays and lesbians have multiple, fluid identities which they relate to in different moments of their lives. At some point, the 'gay identity' will be stronger and at another point in time, other identities will dominate.

4.4.7. The role of safety in relation to destination choice

According to Hughes (2006), destination choice is limited for gay and lesbian travellers because additional risks exist, especially for gay men (Hughes, 2002b; Pritchard et al., 1998b). However, hardly any of the interviewees in this study have encountered problems at holiday which were related to their sexuality. Still, many agree that safety is important when travelling and some destinations are avoided by the interviewees because of considerations about safety:

Caroline: *I don't wanna go to a place where there is war. No...*

Sonja: *No, I don't want to. There has to be peace and friendliness.*

Caroline: *And I don't wanna travel to a Muslim country, which is very Muslim, because that would be a threat against me.*

Sonja: *At least when the two of us are together.*

Caroline: *So the answer is: I don't wanna go... I want to go somewhere where I feel safe.*

[Caroline & Sonja, 49 & 37, Norway]

As reflected above, safety is not only of importance in relation to sexuality and gender but is also about avoiding war-torn countries. However, what makes the interviewees feel safe on vacation vary greatly. For some, safety is associated with the presence of other tourists at the destination and for another, safety is related to staying at a hotel where everything is paid in advance. Other interviewees explain that uncomfortable situations can be avoided by the tourists themselves and that, for example flashing expensive bags and clothes in poor areas should be avoided.

In relation to safety on holiday, one interviewee regretted that he feels that it is important for him to feel safe on holiday, because he thinks that it is healthy to exceed the limits of everyday life and be in an environment which he perceives as being less safe:

I believe it is very dangerous to search for safety. I mean, sometimes it's good to get out from your safety frame. But intuitively, then I believe that when you feel safe, you feel more satisfied. But I try to avoid it.

[Martin, 26, Sweden]

It is interesting to note that Martin relates safety to satisfaction as Kozak (2007) in his study found evidence for the assumption that harassed tourists display lower holiday satisfaction than do tourists that have not faced harassment, and Hughes (2002a: 181) states that 'holidays will obviously be unsatisfactory if verbal or physical abuse, social disapproval or threatening behaviour are experienced or anticipated'. Within general tourism literature, it is suggested that 'because perceptions of risk and safety can influence destination image and choice, their relevance to behavioral intentions also needs to be recognized' (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998: 172). Furthermore, it is stated 'that the risk-reduction inhibitor factors are likely to be deterministic, rather than the attributes of the amenities or attractions of a destination' (Um & Crompton, 1992: 24).

It is interesting that the interviewees in this study do not necessarily link considerations of safety to homosexuality because other factors also influence how safety is experienced. In

fact, more interviewees have travelled in countries which are often seen as having a hostile attitude towards homosexuality, such as Morocco, the Sinai Desert, different parts of Africa, Oman, Egypt, Turkey and India. Moreover, destinations discarded by the interviewees are often countries in the Middle East and Africa and these are, according to Sönmez & Graefe (1998), the regions of the world which are most likely to be avoided by tourists in general due to fear of terrorism, health risks and lack of satisfaction.

In relation to destination choice and destination avoidance, it can be suggested that not many gays and lesbians in this study choose a certain destination on the basis of their sexuality, but some choose to avoid destinations because they do not believe that they would feel comfortable as homosexuals at the holiday destinations. However, others would not mind going to a destination even though they would have to hide their sexuality if they were truly interested in experiencing the destination. In this chapter, it has also been argued that safety means different things to the interviewees and that considerations of safety are not always related to sexuality.

4.5. Gay destinations

In the literature, it is stated that the number of gay destinations is increasing and that some gay men find these destinations attractive (Pritchard et al., 1998b; Clift & Forrest, 1999). Comparing our data with the literature, surprisingly few gays and lesbians from our study have in the past chosen so-called gay destinations as their holiday destination. The gay men that we interviewed are, however, clearly more likely to visit gay destinations than lesbians, as practically none of the women have ever visited a destination which they would label gay/lesbian.

Overall, it might be suggested that at least four different kinds of opinions of and experiences with gay destinations exist. Firstly, some gays and lesbians would probably not go on holiday to a gay destination ever. They are not interested because they are simply more attracted to getting cultural experiences, sensing the ambiance at the destination, and tasting local gastronomy than gay ambience.

4.5.1. Potential holiday makers at gay destinations

Another group of interviewees have never been to a gay destination, but would like to. This viewpoint is exemplified by more interviewees:

Yes, I would. There is, what's it called, Lesbos, which is a Greek island. I have never been there, but my ex-girlfriend [...] can tell some great stories about it. And then I become a bit curious. I don't have a thing with going down and making out with a hot, Greek woman or anything... That's not how I think, but, obviously, I get curious, because it sounds quite interesting. Women from all around the world go there.

[Else, 47, Denmark]

Well, in Spain you find Grand Canary: Maspalomas. Out of curiosity, I would go...

[Daniel, 38, Spain]

We see here how the interviewees are curious about going to a gay destination. In this way, some gays and lesbians have a desire to experience a place where they know that many other homosexuals gather while holidaying. It seems like some islands and destinations possess a status as gay destinations and they draw the attention of a number of gays and lesbians.

Other gays and lesbians, who wish to go to a gay/lesbian destination in the future, have other motives than curiosity, namely to get the opportunity for being themselves there and showing feelings towards their loved ones openly. In this way, it might be suggested that showing one's sexuality openly can be related to an idea of what a destination has to offer:

I mean, if I should choose a holiday with sun and summer, I would consider going to Lesbos because I know that many go there and that we could find a place where it was okay to be [my girlfriend] and I – and now the little one is coming – so maybe a place where it would be okay to be us as parent together with the little one without being looked at strangely. I think that I would consider more where to go in the future because we come as a family and are maybe then easier to spot. Instead of just being two friends then we actually come as a family with a child.

[Anna, 38, Denmark]

The circumstance that this lesbian couple is, in the future, going to travel as a family makes them more aware about where to go on holiday and more inclined to go to a gay destination. Furthermore, we see here how the wish to go to a gay destination is influenced by travel companions. In general tourism literature about destination choice (Plog, 2005; Theobald, 2005), there is agreement that the choice of destination and the experiences at the destination are influenced by the people one travels with. However, in gay and lesbian tourism literature, this has not been thoroughly discussed apart from Visser (2007) who mentions that gay men who travel in a group might be more likely to seek out gay space. In our study, more

interviewees actually mention that being single or not influences whether they would go to a gay destination:

It really depends whether you are in a relationship or not. Because if I were single, I would choose one of the places where there was something going on and something happening all the time. You can do that when you are in a relationship too, but you might not choose Grand Canary when you have a boyfriend - unless you have an open relationship, obviously.

[Dennis, 23, Denmark]

I don't think I would go there [Lesvos] just because everyone there is lesbian because why should it make a difference when I was there with [my girlfriend] and we were on vacation together. No... Maybe if I was single, I would look differently at this.

[Ulrikke, 28, Denmark]

Thus, for some gays and lesbians, their civil status and travel companions might have an impact on whether they choose to go to a gay destination or not. Moreover, it is interesting to see how Dennis implicitly indicates that going to a gay destination means having sex with other men, as he states that Grand Canary is only an attractive holiday destination if one is single or in an open relationship, i.e. one where it is accepted to be with other people than one's partner (please see chapter 4.9 for further discussion of the role of sex on holiday). Overall, it seems like singles find gay destinations more interesting than those who are in relationships. Actually, among all the interviewees in our study, very few mention that they have been to a gay destination with their partner.

4.5.2. Negative perceptions of gay destinations

A third group of gay and lesbian tourists, which can be found in our study, might consist of those who have been on vacation at gay destinations and did not like it:

I have been only at one gay destination in Grand Canary in Playa del Inglés and I think I won't come back because it is very boring. [...] No fun in general, no parties, just sex. [...] Never again, once was enough.

[Luis, 45, Spain]

I think I was there [in Sitges] for two days or something like that. Because again it was... no, now it sounds very prejudicial, but one also needs to have one's prejudices, right? But it was German gays with gold chains and so on and so on and that is simply not... that's not me.

[Poul, 58, Denmark]

Here we see how some gay men are not attracted to the life at gay destinations because they see them as boring, visited by unattractive tourists and characterised by too much focus on

sex. This stands in opposition to Hughes' (1997) claim that many gay men feel authentic in artificial settings such as gay destinations. However, it is, at the same time, recognised that not all gay men feel tempted to visit gay destinations (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Hughes, 1997) which is also the case among some of our interviewees.

4.5.3. Loyal visitors to gay destinations

A fourth group of interviewees in our study has been to gay destinations many times and keeps coming back. This is true in relation to, for example, Manuel who states that his best vacation ever took place in Montreal because he loved the gay area. Also Patrick has had great experiences at gay destinations:

We are actually four boys who go to Grand Canary in the same week, in the same apartment, in the same car – and this is the way it has to be. And we go out, and we go to the beach, and we eat good food, and we laugh, and we laugh, and we laugh, and we really have a good time. There is no culture whatsoever because that's not what it is all about. There, we live in Playa del Inglés just next to the YOMBO Center and it is ugly and it is stupid but somehow... somehow it has its very own charm.

[Patrick, 33, Denmark]

Likewise, Robin tells that he would be inclined to choose a gay destination where he would be sure to find leisure space for gays over another, otherwise similar, destination:

But if I'm weighting up, if I got two locations, two locations like West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale, then I would probably take Fort Lauderdale. Why? Because, okay, there is a couple of fun gay bars in Fort Lauderdale and I don't think there are any in West Palm Beach.

[Robin, 45, Australia]

The gay men cited above relate gay destinations to sun, beach, shopping, gay bars and nightlife. However, it is interesting to see that there are different views among the interviewees on what a gay destination is. Some interviewees, like the ones quoted above, think that a gay destination offers nightlife, partying, and good weather whereas others think of gay destinations as big, cosmopolitan cities, such as Amsterdam, London, Barcelona, Berlin and San Francisco. In the literature, gay destinations have also been defined as beach destinations like Sitges, Ibiza, Mykonos, Lesvos and Grand Canary (Hughes, 1997, 1998; Puar, 2002a; Kantsa, 2002; Johnston, 2007; Forrest & Clift, 1998; Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Pritchard et al., 2002; Visser, 2007; Spartacus Traveller, 2009) as well as urban areas like Manchester, Philadelphia, London, Sydney, Amsterdam, New York and San Francisco (Pritchard et al., 2002; Hughes, 2002c; Guaracino, 2007; Holcomb & Luongo, 1996). Again,

it can be seen that homosexuals are not alike and that they have divergent interests when it comes to their travel motivations and choice of destination.

In conclusion, we have become aware that at least four groups of gays and lesbian tourists can be found. First of all, some gays and lesbians would never go to a gay destination. Secondly, some have never been to a gay destination, but would like to go in the future. Thirdly, another group of gays and lesbian tourists have made vacations in gay destinations and do not wish to do so again, whereas the last group consists of those who have visited gay destinations previously and who would love to go back. It should be noted, however, that although it is, throughout this chapter, stated that some categories or groups of gays and lesbians exist, we have also found that the gays and lesbians in this study change their travel motivations from one holiday to another. People might choose to go to a gay beach destination in summer and visit a nature destination in fall which is in accordance with existing literature (Lowyck et al., 1992). Moreover, even within one holiday, people might wish to obtain both 'gay related' and 'non-gay related' experiences.

4.6. Gay space on holiday

'Gay space' is leisure space directed at gays and lesbians which can normally be found in clubs, bars, restaurants, shops and other physical places (Hughes, 1997; Haslop et al., 1998). Pritchard et al. (2002) state that gay spaces stand in opposition to the general domination of heteronormativity and that they, therefore, provide a sense of freedom of behaviour.

In our study, some interviewees also feel that gay spaces provide a freedom of behavior and a sense of community. In gay space, they do not have to explain themselves and they get an opportunity for establishing social networks. These interviewees would seek out gay space on holiday. Other interviewees see gay space as an extra bonus but they would only go there if convenient and do not regard it as an important aspect of their holiday. A minority of interviewees does not feel well in gay space, and others believe that it gay spaces constitute an unreal world. Lastly, degaying and the masculine hegemony of gay space will be discussed.

4.6.1. Gay space, openness and community

It seems like a part of the interviewees in our study feel more relaxed and are more likely to show affection towards their partner when they are in gay space, and in this way, the sense of freedom of behaviour is reflected in our study:

It is better that there is an area where you can hold your partner's hand tranquilly sometimes instead of being anxious. Therefore it is always good when there are places, a bar or bars, right? A zone of streets where you can feel more comfortable.

[Juan, 24, Spain]

It can be deduced that Juan feels that he can be more calm and openly show feelings towards his partner when he visits gay spaces, such as bars or certain areas of a city. Likewise, other interviewees feel that they can be themselves, be open about their sexuality and meet understanding for who they are when frequenting gay space:

If you go to a gay place then it does not become as, how do you say... awkward to explain why we know each other, me and my boyfriend. If you are in a gay place, then it is totally natural, then you can be yourself and you can talk about your own life.

[Martin, 26, Sweden]

Well, I think the atmosphere is that you don't have to explain yourselves. It's just that everybody knows who you are and everybody else is like the same [...]. Yeah, I feel that I don't have to explain myself and I feel that the others feel the same as I.

[Sabine, 32, Germany]

In relation to the feeling that the gays and lesbians in this study have about being able to be themselves and not having to explain themselves in gay space, it is relevant to notice that the sense of mutual understanding is closely related to the feeling of belonging to a certain community. In order to understand the importance of gay space for homosexuals, it is relevant to notice that more interviewees state that in their everyday life, they have to reveal their sexuality to new people all the time:

I come out of the closet every day to each new person that I meet.

[Eric, 26, Israel]

Every time you go out to meet people, you are coming out! Every single time!

[Maria, 40, Australia]

The process and importance of disclosing ones sexuality is also mentioned by Cox (2002) and it is interesting to witness how some interviewees actually relate the experience of 'coming out' to the feeling of belonging to a community:

It sounds very bombastic to say shared destiny, but we all have a 'coming out' story, and some crises, and some coming to terms with what we have been through in our lives, and that make us belong together in some way [...]. And I guess that's why you feel well in these environments.

[Simon, 43, Denmark]

Because gays and lesbians are used to being a minority in society (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2009; Pritchard et al., 2000; Harper & Schneider, 2003) and live in a world where heterosexuality is the norm (Waite & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 1997, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Pritchard et al., 2000; Graham, 2002), they are used to continually 'coming out' to other people or at least consider whether they want to reveal their sexuality to others or not. Therefore, it is a relief for them to be on holiday and to go to a place where they do not have to worry about 'coming out' because in gay space, homosexuality is the majority and the norm. One interviewee tells that:

In Chueca, when you have been there for a while and you see a boy and a girl holding hands, you think it looks strange.

[Flemming, 48, Denmark]

Flemming manages here, in very few words, to indicate how some zones in big cities (here the gay area Chueca in Madrid) allow gays and lesbians to constitute the majority. Interestingly, another gay man has a more negative view on Chueca which he sees as an artificial, superficial world:

The whole Chueca neighbourhood – do you know it? Now it's more open and I like it, right? But it's an unreal world. And sometimes, when I go out of there or when I come back, I realise that we are living an unreality which is night, muscles and tight clothes [...]. And life is not like that. There are people... it seems like they do not allow you to enter if you are not handsome; they do not allow you to go there if you are not young.

[Julio, 36, Spain]

Julio thus feels that some homosexuals are not as welcome in the gay area as others and that people have to be in a certain way in order to be part of the world which has been created in Chueca. This interviewee here digs right into one of the main critiques of the gay community: that it is dominated by 'good homosexuals' - young, wealthy, white gay men (Puar, 2002a: 943; Waite & Markwell, 2006). Other authors (Howe, 2001; Hughes, 2002c; Hindle, 1994; Pritchard et al., 1998b; Knopp, 1995) likewise agree that gay space is often dominated by a certain type of homosexuals.

Some authors in gay and lesbian literature, apart from the criticism stated above, still have a very positive view on gay space. In gay space, gays and lesbians are said to get opportunities for forming social networks (Pritchard et al., 2002; Valentine, 1993; Hughes, 2002c). When relating our data to this theory, it seems like there is a certain degree of accordance. For example, Anita tells that when she goes on holiday she:

[...] would seek out my milieu and see if there were some funny people there. And then they could kind of say: 'Well, we'll take you there' or 'you have to come' [...]. I would have to go to the bar and ask: 'Hey, is something happening that I have to experience, or what?' And then somebody responds and says: 'Well, I'm off tomorrow' or something like that: 'I can show you the city'. Or: 'You have to go to that place, because you just have to see that'.

[Anita, 51, Denmark]

Anita's account shows how she deliberately seeks out gay bars in order to meet people. In this way, gay bars are meeting places which give the gay and lesbian tourists an opportunity for getting into contact with the local culture. A wish for getting a sense of the local culture is, in point of fact, a general travel motivation which can be said to be valid for straights as well as gays and lesbians (Plog, 2005; Crompton, 1979; Decrop, 2006; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Lundberg, 1971).

Hence, for many gays and lesbians in our study, visiting gay and lesbian space while on holiday seems to be important. Gay spaces and communities can apparently be used by homosexuals as a point of reference to confirm their homosexual identities (Hughes, 1997), and Binnie & Valentine (1999) even state that space is the basis for gay identity. Somehow, this is also reflected in our interviews where many feel that, when frequenting gay space, they meet like-minded people and feel that they can show their sexuality openly.

However, many gays and lesbians have a quite complex view on the presence of gay space at holiday destinations. They feel that the opportunity for going to a gay or lesbian bar is a bonus or a plus, but it is not a prerequisite when choosing a destination:

As a gay person, you might wanna hang out in a gay bar for a little while and have a drink and whatever – just to be amongst your own, I think. But it's not... as I said, it's not a criterion. It doesn't... that does not drive the choice of the destination.

[Robin, 45, Australia]

It seems like a number of gays and lesbians in this study would go into gay bars or other gay space while on holiday, but actually it is not the opportunity for being in gay space that makes

them decide where to go on holiday. Apparently, they firstly choose a holiday destination and afterwards, as many tell, they start looking for offers for gays and lesbians in books, on the Internet or at the destination. Thus, it seems like the idea that many authors (Hughes, 1997; Pritchard et al., 2000; Binnie & Valentine, 1999; Castells, 1983) have about the importance of gay space for gays' and lesbians' holiday choices might be exaggerated as many of our interviewees claim that gay space is a bonus, but not a prerequisite, for a good vacation.

4.6.2. A negative view on gay space

At last, a few interviewees do not put any importance at all as to whether there is gay space at the destination or not, and they do not feel that gay space is an important part of their holiday experience. Sara, who lives in Barcelona, tells that:

I am not especially interested, no. Well, the truth is that, ultimately, I would like to go to a place where I could hold my partner's hand. That – yes. That's true. But in a very gay place, no [...]. I don't even go to gay and lesbian bars and discotheques here, no. It's only... it's about being able to go to a place without having to hide [...]. But I don't care whether it's a gay place or not. I think I prefer that it's not. I don't feel especially comfortable in gay and lesbian places.

[Sara, 25, Belgium]

Sara here tells that she does not feel well in gay bars and clubs. She wants to be able to show affection towards her girlfriend and not having to hide when she goes on vacation, but this desire would not make her go into a gay place. It might be suggested that Sara actually feels alienated from the space that is supposed to make her feel 'at home'.

Also Haslop et al. (1998), 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, one has to be aware that though many gays and lesbians *do* feel attracted to gay space, it can by no means be concluded that this is true for everyone. In addition, Hughes (1997) claims that many gay men confirm their identity as gay men in other places than gay space and not all gays choose a gay lifestyle. Moreover, Visser (2007) asserts that exclusive gay space is not necessarily essential to the creation of gay identities. This is supported by the findings of our study where some people obviously do not feel a need to frequent gay places.

Some interviewees even have a quite negative view on gay space. Flemming, for example, tells about his experience in the gay neighbourhood in Montreal and asserts that he sometimes feels like an animal in zoo when visiting gay space:

And when you walk in that zone, then people are holding each other's hands, and you would think: 'that's a bit too much, too demonstrative' if you saw it in Copenhagen, right? But what is weird is that when you walk out of the zone, then... like my boyfriend told me: 'no signs of affection'. Then suddenly, if you want to touch each other, then it's something like hitting each other on the shoulder in a masculine way or something like that. And for me it becomes quite provoking because [the Canadians] have actually been in front in relation to adoption and this, that and the other, right? But actually, I ended up thinking that it was like having a zoo or a place like that where you went in and then people came to look at us.

[Flemming, 48, Denmark]

Thus, this interviewee points to a disadvantage of making use of gay space, namely that gays and lesbians get too spatially isolated and other people then start to visit the gay zone in order to look at the homosexuals. In this way, the gays and lesbians become objects of 'the tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990). Graham (2002) and Hughes (2002c) made similar remarks about the gay space as a zoo and stated that gays and lesbians dislike being exposed in front of others.

4.6.3. The degaying of gay space

The presence of straight persons in gay places is by many authors (Pritchard et al., 2002; Hughes, 2002c; Haslop et al., 1998) considered a problem which is getting increasingly prevalent as gay spaces, such as bars and entire gay areas in larger cities, become popular tourist attractions. Hughes (2002c) claims that the presence of straight people makes gays and lesbians feel that they have to constrain their behaviour, even in gay space. This is ironic especially because gay space is supposed to be a place where gays and lesbians can relax and feel free to behave in a natural, unrestrained way (Pritchard et al., 2002). However, among the interviewees in this study, there is overall agreement that as long as straights are respectful towards the gay places they visit, they are welcome. This is illustrated by Dennis:

It doesn't bother me, but they just have to accept the place. That they are not on their own ground. They have to. I mean, it shouldn't be that if you hit on a hetero, then he turns around and slaps you in the face.

[Dennis, 23, Denmark]

Moreover, it should be noted that interviewees normally relate degaying to the leisure spaces which they use at home, and not on holiday, and in this way, degaying seems to be of minor important in relation to these gays' and lesbians' holiday experience.

4.6.4. The masculine domination of gay space

In gay and lesbian tourism literature, it is often claimed that gay space has less significance for women; that more leisure space exist for gay men than for lesbians; and that the majority of gay space is male dominated (Hughes, 2007; Hindle, 1994; Valentine, 1993; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Almgren, 1994; Haslop et al., 1998).

Various reasons for the masculine domination of gay space have been suggested. First of all, women in general earn less than men, and lesbians, consequently, might not have financial resources for socialising in public space (Valentine, 1995; Rothenberg, 1995; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Castells, 1983). None of the female participants in this study gives financial reason for not frequenting lesbian or gay space, however, lack of money might not be brought up voluntarily, and interviewees have not been asked about this matter either.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that lesbians are less territorial than men and often socialise in private, not public space (Bondi, 1998; Almgren, 1994; Rothenberg, 1995; Bell & Valentine, 1995). This supposition is supported by some interviewees, such as Anita:

More gay men travel, go out and go to more parties than the women do. They are more... men are more extrovert than women. I mean, genetically [...]. Most of us, of course there are others in between, but we are more like wanting to have a house, a home, children, friends, and family, and everything like gathered around us, and then sometimes we go out with our friends [...]. And then the men, they just go out more than they go home, because that's their nature if you, physically, look at all the Stone Age functions.

[Anita, 51, Denmark]

Anita thinks that men are more extrovert than women and therefore go out more, whereas women care about having a home and a family and therefore put more emphasis on meeting in private space. Also Maria, who is from Australia and lives in Copenhagen, recognises the circumstance that more leisure space for gay men exists than for lesbians:

They are usually male gay bars. There's a lot more... lesbians tend to be a little bit more hidden, you know. And if you do go to a gay bar and you see women there, they are most likely heterosexuals hanging out with gay guys.

[Maria, 40, Australia]

Elsewhere, the same interviewee admits that it is hard for her to meet other lesbians, and this might be connected to her statement that lesbians are not as visible as gay men. This is in line with the argument that lesbian space does exist, and that lesbians have the opportunity for

socialising there (Sender, 2004; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Schuyf, 1992; Rothenberg, 1995), but that places for lesbians are far less visible than gay space (Almgren, 1994; Adler & Brenner, 1992).

Interestingly, some gay men in our study are very aware of and critical towards the tendency for some gay spaces being exclusively for male homosexuals:

There are also gay bars where only men are allowed, and not women [...]. Within the homosexuality, they discriminate the lesbians. That's dominant machismo – even in the homosexual world [...]. When I found out that it was like that, I also thought that and said: 'I do not understand it. How can you, who defend some rights, be taking them away from another person who is fighting for the same as you do: for being with somebody of the same gender?'

[Juan, 24, Spain]

Here, Juan shows that he finds discrimination among homosexuals unacceptable. Basically, gay men and lesbians fight for the same rights, and, therefore, he finds it very wrong that some homosexuals, for example women, are not allowed to frequent certain gay places. Gay bars might function as a sanctuary from the heterosexual world (Pritchard et al., 2002) and, therefore, more interviewees think that there ought to be space (physical as well as psychological) for both men and women there.

In conclusion, it could be suggested that gay space is important for the holiday *experience* of many gays and lesbians, but it does not seem to drive the *choice* of holiday destination. Across all the participants in our study, it seems like people do not pick a destination because of the presence of gay space, but do frequent gay space when they arrive. Once in a destination, the majority of the gays and lesbians interviewed would visit gay bars, cafés, shops and restaurants but, in general, gay space is seen as an extra bonus and not a requirement for the choice of holiday destination. Lastly, mostly gay men make use of gay space which is also reflected in the masculine domination of gay space that some interviewees experience.

4.7. Gay friendliness

Hughes (2002a: 182) notes that 'gays seek out gay-friendly accommodation and tour operators, as well as gay-friendly destinations' and other authors also point to the importance of gay friendliness at destinations (Pritchard et al., 1998a, 1998b; Hughes, 2002b; Community Marketing, 2008b; Visser, 2003). However, the questions of what gay friendliness means and

whether it is important on holidays divide our interviewees. Some interviewees think that gay friendliness is related to the social and political conditions for locals, whereas others think about the way homosexual tourists are treated and whether they are met with acceptance and tolerance. Other interviewees believe that the term gay friendliness has been exploited by marketers and that it actually has a negative connotation. Lastly, some interviewees do not pay attention as to whether a destination is gay friendly or not.

4.7.1. Diverse definitions of gay friendliness

When asked to define what gay friendliness means to them, some interviewees consider the political rights of homosexuals at the destination, for example whether same-sex marriages and adoptions are allowed. This viewpoint is in accordance with Boyd (2008) who suggests that same-sex marriages and civil rights for homosexuals reflect gay friendliness and can be used as a means to brand destinations and increase gay travel revenue.

However, by far the most of our interviewees explain that gay friendliness for them means non-discrimination as well as tolerance towards gays and lesbians. The all-important factor of gay friendliness revealed by the interviewees is whether they feel that it is accepted to show affection towards their partners in public. Eric explains the feeling of gay friendliness like this:

When I go to a place and I can hold my partner's hand and give him a kiss without feeling people, you know, suddenly changing their moods.

[Eric, 26, Israel]

To the interviewee above, gay friendliness is related to other people's reaction towards him when showing feelings for his boyfriend. Thus, gay friendliness seems to be a psychological state of mind and not a physical need for gay places. This viewpoint is in accordance with many of the interviewees but is somehow in contrast to Hughes (2002b) who frequently indicates that gay friendliness is related to physical space. One interviewee, though, mentions physical places in relation to gay friendliness, but not as the major factor:

It means that you can hold another person's hand without people shouting of you and... or looking, for that matter. That you can kind of be yourself [...]. That's the principal thing, I think. And after that whether there are places for homosexuals.

[Cecilie, 32, Denmark]

Cecilie finds it of greatest importance that she feels that it is acceptable for her to show affection towards her girlfriend in public. Of minor importance for her understanding of gay friendliness is whether places for gays and lesbians are present at the destination. This quotation once again reflects that the feeling of being able to show affection in public is the overriding factor when the interviewees define gay friendliness.

Moreover, some interviewees explain that searching the Internet can be used as an indicator of the level of gay friendliness at a certain destination. Torben explains his view on gay friendliness like this:

I want it to be gay friendly [...]. I define that as tolerance... [...]. I always see if I can find something at web pages about the official attitude towards gays or about... If there are many gay places or bars, for example in Buenos Aires, I was really surprised that if you Google 'gay' and 'Buenos Aires' then there are a LOT of homepages and then I have a feeling that then it's at least not hidden.

[Torben, 61, Denmark]

Here we see that Torben relies heavily on whether he is able to find places for gays at a certain destination through the Internet. If not, he senses that homosexuality is not tolerated at the destination and that the destination is therefore not friendly towards gays. Gay and lesbian travellers use the Internet more when searching for and buying holidays than their straight counterparts (Guaracino, 2007; Hughes, 2005b) but although Guaracino (2007: 91) identifies gays and lesbians as 'a highly wired market segment', the use of Internet presence as an indicator of gay friendliness might be a new contribution to existing knowledge.

Some interviewees moreover indicate that bigger cities are often tolerant towards gays and lesbians. However, for example Daniel and Bernardo suggest that this is not so much related to the 'gayness' of the city, but the atmosphere and diversity which are often found in cities. This is in line with the findings of authors who suggest that gays and lesbians often travel to urban areas because cities in general offer diversity and a higher level of acceptance of homosexuality than other areas (Binnie & Valentine, 1999; Hughes, 1997, 2002c; Hindle, 1994; Knopp, 1995; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Howe, 2001; Clift & Carter, 2000).

4.7.2. Gay friendliness as acceptance

In the literature, it is suggested that acceptance of homosexuality at the destination is of particular importance to gay and lesbian tourists (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Howe, 2001;

Binnie & Valentine, 1999; Pritchard et al., 2000; Want, 2002). Howe (2001: 37) states that 'queer tourists leave "home", where they may not be accepted based on their sexual identity, in order to come to a "homeland" where they are accepted'.

Although being accepted is of importance for the interviewees in this study, they were generally not *seeking* acceptance when on holiday. For example, Luis expresses that he finds it of importance that the destinations he visits are gay friendly or at least not 'gay unfriendly'. Accordingly, Juan equals gay friendliness with a minimum level of acceptance of homosexuality. Hughes (2002b: 299), on his side, relates gay friendliness to places that are "welcoming", i.e. more than tolerant'. It could be suggested that a gap exist between the interviewee's and Hughes' opinion, since the interviewees do not have as high expectations to gay friendliness as Hughes.

Some interviewees are more sensitive towards feeling accepted when they travel with a partner than when they go on holiday alone. For example, Pierre is concerned about other people's reactions if he is on holiday with his partner:

In the sense that if I go on my own, it doesn't really matter but if I do go with my partner ehm... Like, I don't wanna have weird people looking at me, you know, if I'm out at a restaurant with my partner, you know, two guys at the same time sitting on a Saturday night at a table might look weird and I don't wanna feel that I'm being, you know, looked at or that people are gonna judging me.

[Pierre, 30, Canada]

Implicitly, Pierre says that if he is on holiday by himself, he is less concerned about how homosexuality is perceived at the destination compared to when he is travelling with a boyfriend.

Only a few of the interviewees in this study have had an actual experience of not being accepted at a holiday destination. According to Hughes (2002b), additional risks of discomfort and discrimination exist for gay men on holiday and, in relation to our study, Antonio explains how he has experienced discomfort while on holiday once:

Like I told you before about Egypt and Turkey, you don't really feel like yourself because... it's like you feel observed in any given moment, right? You even see mannered and effeminate gestures. You feel observed.

[Antonio, 43, Spain]

Harassment of tourists by definition includes ‘the use of obscene language, gestures, and actions to annoy, taunt, abuse, and insult a person’ (de Albuquerque & McElroy, 2001: 487; Kozak, 2007) and it is therefore relevant to consider the feminine gestures made towards this interviewee as harassment which made him feel uncomfortable.

Some of the interviewees, on the other hand, mention that the feeling of acceptance and friendliness is not only of importance to them as homosexuals but as persons in general. On the question whether Erik thinks about whether he feels accepted when going on holiday, he explains:

Yeah, but that's like any... any other tourists, anywhere in the world. I don't come to a hotel and say: 'Hi, I'm gay. Can I get a room, please?'. So, I would just go there and say: 'Can I get a room?' and if they treat me like... professionally, I wouldn't pay too much attention to it.

[Erik, 26, Sweden]

Thus, we see how Erik wants to be treated nicely everywhere, disregarding sexuality. His statement might imply that he does not always consider the homosexual side of his identity and that sometimes, he just feels like every other tourist. Thus, Erik might be an example of the way homosexuals sometimes make use of their sexual identity and sometimes put more importance on other identities.

4.7.3. Gay friendliness as a negative characteristic

Some interviewees mention that it is the *people* of cities and destinations that are gay friendly, not the locations or establishments in themselves. Some interviewees suggest that destinations, cities and hotels who market themselves as gay friendly only do so in order to promote themselves to gay and lesbian tourists and earn more money. This viewpoint has also been argued by Pritchard et al. (2000) and Hughes (2002a). Similarly, other interviewees believe that companies are taking advantage of the gay lifestyle, and Simon believes that gay friendliness is a strange term:

Isn't it a bit pseudo? That's how I see it. Yeah... But I really don't know what's in the word 'gay friendly'. I don't know. I feel like, I mean, it's a bit like: 'Then we write gay friendly, and then we'll get more customers'. And that's all there is to it. That's kind of how I see it. I don't look at 'gay friendly' and think: 'Well, then it's good for me'.

[Simon, 43, Denmark]

Here we see how Simon does not feel that he can relate to the term ‘gay friendly’. He thinks that companies use the term in order to attract more customers and, consequently, he is not attracted by the idea of ‘gay friendliness’. Likewise, Luis comments that gay friendly often means less value for money:

Usually, for example, if you look for the hotel in the gay media, they are worse than the general, because you find a more expensive place and far away from the centre.

[Luis, 45, Spain]

Hence, for some interviewees, the term ‘gay friendly’ is seen as companies’ way of selling at higher prices. Thus, they feel that the word ‘gay friendliness’ is primarily used in marketing contexts and is, consequently, not a sign of quality. Tourism authors (Pritchard et al., 2000; Hughes, 2002a) have, similarly, found that tourism products catering to gay men and lesbians are often seen as lower quality for premium prices. Guaracino (2007) agrees and asserts that gays and lesbians mostly know when something is really gay friendly and when a place is just targeting gay and lesbian consumers in order to get hold of their money.

Another viewpoint on gay friendliness is taken by Terzo who does not like the concept of gay friendliness:

I would say that Denmark is much more than gay friendly. I think that Denmark doesn’t need anymore to be gay friendly because people don’t care about that [...]. The concept ‘gay friendly’ is a bad concept. I mean, if you think about it, it means that you go in a restaurant because of the fact that the people owning this restaurant they won’t discriminate you [...]. I would say that in Copenhagen, it’s not necessary to show [...] the flag, to show people ‘here we are gay friendly’, because you can... you can take it for granted.

[Terzo, 28, Italy]

Thus, this interviewee feels that a city like Copenhagen is gay friendly to an extent where it is superfluous to label specific places as gay friendly because at every bar and restaurant, gay friendliness can be found. This interviewee’s perspective is based on the hypothesis that the prerequisite for the need of gay friendliness is discrimination of gays and lesbians, meaning that if no marginalisation of gays and lesbians would exist, gay friendliness would not be necessary to consider. Likewise, Darío and Ramón believe that there would be no gay communities if discrimination and violence did not exist and, similarly, Hughes (2005a: 66) states that ‘in the unlikely event (at least in the near future) of gays and lesbians becoming fully accepted by societies, then the market could disappear’. This implies that if places label

themselves 'gay friendly', there is a need for gay friendly places, because the whole city or destination is *not* gay friendly.

4.7.4. The insignificance of gay friendliness

For another group of interviewees, gay friendliness is not of importance when holidaying. For example, Linda says that she would never show off her homosexuality, even if she was on holiday with her girlfriend, and because she does not show that she is a lesbian, gay friendliness is irrelevant to her. In line with this, Else states that as she does not show off her sexuality, and as she primarily goes on holiday within Europe, she feels comfortable. Therefore, it might be said that she does not consider whether a destination is gay friendly:

I don't show off that I'm a lesbian when I'm abroad, like a lot. But I don't do the contrary either, if you know what I mean? It's not like... If I get a question about it, I wouldn't lie. But I don't seek it... I mean, I feel that if you move around within Europe - and that's what I do - then it's quite okay.

[Else, 47, Denmark]

Hereby, Else implicitly suggests that the countries she visits in Europe are to some extent gay friendly because she does not feel that she has to consider the gay friendliness of these places. This viewpoint is interesting because it contradicts part of the tourism literature where gay friendliness is said to be very important for gay and lesbian tourists (Hughes, 1997, 2005a; Pritchard et al., 1998a, 1998b; Ivy, 2001).

Overall, it could be said that for quite a lot of interviewees, it is important that destinations are gay friendly. For those interviewees, the overriding factor when considering gay friendliness is whether they have the opportunity to show affection towards their same-sex partners in public. Moreover, Internet presence is by some mentioned as an indicator of whether a destination is gay friendly. Other interviewees perceive gay friendliness as a term used by marketers to earn more money by attracting more customers, increasing prices and lowering quality. Others again feel that gay friendliness does not depend on the destination in itself but on the people at the destination. It is sometimes also suggested that bigger cities often are gay friendly due to the diversity found in urban areas. Lastly, some interviewees do not show their sexuality on holidays and, therefore, they do not feel that it matters to them whether a destination is gay friendly or not.

4.8. The role of events

In this chapter, we will discuss the role of events in relation to gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences. First of all, for some gays and lesbians in this study, gay events drive them to choose a certain destination over another because events are fun and provide an opportunity for feeling part of a community. Moreover, many interviewees mention that it is important to show that gays and lesbians are part of society and thus use the events for creating visibility. Other interviewees would like to join gay events if they happen to take place during their holidays, but they do not see them as reasons-to-go. Finally, some interviewees are critical towards gay events because they are not seen as being open for everyone and they transmit a false image of gays and lesbians.

For 51-year-old Anita, knowing that a gay event takes place at a certain destination would make her choose that destination over another:

The choice of my vacations is based upon what I would like to do or whether there are some events that I would like to go to which coincide with a nice place where I have not been before. [...] I mean, like Copenhagen now has the World Outgames. Is there something similar in one of the cities that I have my eyes on? Then I would choose that one, maybe, if it was a choice between three cities.

[Anita, 51, Copenhagen]

This quotation shows how events sometimes function as a reason to go for some gays and lesbians. The interviewee here refers to the World Outgames and thus thinks about lesbian and gay events in particular, but also in the general tourism literature, it has been recognised that events serve the purpose of motivating people to travel (Getz, 2008). Furthermore, Allen et al. (2005) even claim that special events are benchmarks in people's lives in the sense that most special occasions in human life are marked by some kind of events, either in private or in public.

Among our interviewees, there is also a certain interest for experiencing and travelling to special events which is in accordance with Philipp (1999), Clift & Wilkins (1995), Howe (2001) and Waitt & Markwell (2006) who all stress the importance of gay events in relation to gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, holiday experience and destination choice. Manuel, for instance, often travels in order to attend gay events:

I have extreme fun there. [...] I am more attracted to a city, for example The Pride in Amsterdam; I am enchanted if I go there around these days [...] and see that: people who are like me and more people than normally because everything is full of people.

[Manuel, 30, Spain]

Manuel here tells how he, when he goes on holiday, sometimes looks for gay events because he knows he will have a good time and he finds cities more interesting during events. More interviewees agree that they go to gay events because they imply fun, good spirit, and partying. This is well in line with Getz (2008) who puts forward that a number of events are arranged with the purpose of being fun and offering entertainment. However, many more reasons for attending gay events can be found among the interviewees. In the following, we will discuss some of them.

4.8.1. Motivations for travelling to events

Getz (2008) asserts that people attend events because it offers them a sense of community and cohesion. Howe (2001) claims that this is also true for gays and lesbians in the sense that participants at gay and lesbian events often feel a sense of unity and kinship towards each other. In our study, Robin tells that going to gay events is 'just something that one does' because it is part of being in the gay community. Most of our interviewees feel the sense of community in the way that they primarily go to gay events in order to meet new people and socialise with other gays and lesbians:

I mean I go to, for example, there is the Eulevoto European Lesbian Volleyball Tournament every Easter and I, yeah... well, I went there the last two years [...]. It is, as well, yeah, because of the lesbian thing. Because the atmosphere and everything there is really nice and, I mean, I like it very much [...]. It's the whole atmosphere, it's really nice and it's the same spirit because you have all the volley ballerinas, or whatever, and, yeah, I think it's the spirit there.

[Sabine, 32, Germany]

Sabine here expresses how she enjoys being with other female volleyball players and she thinks that there is a pleasant atmosphere and spirit at this lesbian event. Also Terzo likes attending gay events where he will be sure to meet other homosexuals. He describes his first time at the Gay Pride in Cologne like this:

It was new for me. Because I came from a small town and it was surprising for me to see, I don't know, 4000 homosexuals on the streets, and it was for me like 'Schlaraffenland'.

[Terzo, 28, Italy]

Accordingly, Terzo was delighted to become part of a group of thousands of other gays and lesbians and, from his point of view, their presence turned Cologne into a near paradise. This interviewee's statement could be related to Waitt & Markwell's (2006) claim that gays and lesbians go to special events in order to feel how it is to be part of the majority, as this is not what they feel in their everyday life. Getz (2008) moreover states that people attend events in order to obtain new experiences and gain a feeling of group identity, and Richards (2007) believes that people seek social cohesion at events. These observations are well in line with the interviewees' accounts. Thus, it might be that some of the reasons for joining events are not very different between homosexuals and heterosexuals.

However, more interviewees point to a motivation for attending gay events that might be more prevalent for gays and lesbians than straight people, namely awareness creation. Troels tells how he often joins the Copenhagen Pride, and he likes that gays and lesbians get an opportunity for being who they are and showing to others that homosexuality is normal:

I have been there and seen the Gay Parade, you know, and been at the party at the City Hall Square three years in a row. And it is fucking great! Fucking great! There is so much going on and hits from the Eurovision Song Contest over the whole place [...]. I think that it is cool that a day like that exists where people just don't care and just show up as they are [...]. And that it's actually normal.

[Troels, 28, Denmark]

In the same vein, Waitt & Markwell (2006) state that gay parades make gays and lesbians visible in public. Consequently, there might be a tendency for gays and lesbians to participate in gay events in order to gain visibility and show that homosexuals are normal people. Likewise, more interviewees in our study affirm that especially Gay Prides are important as political statements because they reflect the conditions for homosexuals in society. In general, destinations where Gay Prides are not allowed are countries where homosexuality is not accepted either. For example, Jérôme sees Gay Prides as strong political symbols and declares that:

Gay Pride is important. It's important because, even though it's a big party and it's quite silly, it's also extremely political. [...] Places where Gay Prides are arranged are places where gay people have rights. So it's very political.

[Jérôme, 36, France]

Other interviewees likewise think that gay events serve as a demonstration of the presence of gays and lesbians in society and find it important to be there in order to stand up for the rights and visibility of homosexuals. Julio, for example, puts forward that:

Being present in any way is a way of normalising and the society ends up getting use to it. But yes, I think that we have achieved a lot of things because we have manifested ourselves.

[Julio, 36, Spain]

Pritchard et al. (1998b) and Philipp (1999) also found that raising awareness and creating visibility about the situation for gays and lesbians in society are some of the drivers behind the celebrations of gay events.

However, it is remarkable to see how some of the interviewees actually tell that they hope that Gay Prides and other gay events will not be necessary in the future. They seem to think that the day when gays and lesbians become completely accepted in society, gay events will not be needed anymore. Juan, for example, tells that the idea behind gay events is good but that, hopefully, in the future they will disappear. He thinks that once people get aware of gays' and lesbians' presence in society, it will be necessary to shift the focus from parties and celebrations to education and normalisation of homosexuality throughout society.

4.8.2. The negative aspects of gay events

More interviewees in our study find that gay events do not transmit the true image of gays and lesbians. This is something that gay and lesbian tourism theory has, apparently, not touched much upon. 33-year-old Patrick, who has been a spectator at gay events abroad and has participated at the Copenhagen Pride, reflects that:

In the Pride Parade, you contribute to creating a very stereotypical picture of a gay. Or it can turn into that very fast because there are many people with loose wrists and the like. And that's one of the prejudices. And then suddenly people think that all gays are like that. But, I mean, you can also find Benny Boring who lives out in Roskilde somewhere, who is gay too, and has a totally normal life like everybody else.

[Patrick, 33, Denmark]

Patrick feels that Gay Prides do not always succeed in demonstrating how different gays and lesbians are, but that they typically show a stereotypical picture of homosexuals as feminine gay men with loose wrists. This feminisation that gay men often act out during prides, for example by putting on dresses and acting like women, is said to be patronising because it is done in a very exaggerated way (Goldsmith, 1996). Also Julio is unhappy with the image that is presented of gays during the Gay Prides because the media only shows the most extreme people, and he strongly believes that not all gays are like that.

Furthermore, various authors within gay and lesbian tourism studies (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Howe, 2001; Philipp, 1999) claim that gay events are dominated by young, well-educated, wealthy gay male and, consequently, are very exclusive and limited to those people who look good and have money to attend. The Swedish interviewee Martin tells about his experience at gay events in the United States which were mostly about looking good and doing drugs. He found it interesting to experience, but also artificial, and in the end it got too much for him. These gay events were dominated by gay men and fag hags⁸.

More interviewees agree with the viewpoint that gay events are dominated by a certain kind of homosexuals. For example, Charlotte states that she does not like to attend Gay Prides because they are often dominated by gay men:

Gay men dominate a lot in the homosexual world. I mean, men do not only dominate the heterosexual world, or normal world, I mean the general world, but in fact also the homosexual world. [...] and the Pride is clearly dominated by them as well, the gay men.

[Charlotte, 35, Germany]

Thus, Charlotte gives an example of the gay male hegemony in gay events. Moreover, 61-year-old Torben supports the claim that there is a tendency for gay events to be dominated by young gays as he tells that he would no longer attend gay events because of his age:

I think it's because of my age. I mean, I am more than 60, right? It's like I am behind the times. I would maybe do it if there were some kind of senior event or something like that, right? I mean, I would not deny that, but I feel... I mean, I would almost feel foolish with all the young, handsome guys who go there.

[Torben, 61, Aarhus]

Moreover, the Spaniard Manuel tells that it is often expensive to participate in gay events. For example, the World Outgames in Copenhagen has a high inscription fee (World Outgames, 2009a) which makes it difficult for, for instance, Spanish people to participate. Thus, it might be accurate to suggest that at least some kinds of gay events, especially the Prides, are dominated by young, wealthy male homosexuals. Most of the interviewees quoted here have attended gay events, and do therefore have a firsthand impression of these, and some are, as seen, quite critical towards them.

⁸ 'The term *fag hag* is normally used in gay male culture to describe a straight woman who associates with gay men' (Moon, 1995: 487).

Another group of interviewees simply do not see events as something special that they would be motivated to join while on holiday. For example, Lukas and Klaus do not specifically look for gay events when they travel, though they have once been spectators at the Copenhagen Pride. Likewise, Sara does not feel a necessity for participating in gay or lesbian events.

To sum up, it can be seen that gay and lesbian events are both seen as positive, in the way that they create a feeling of community, provide an opportunity for meeting new people and generate awareness about homosexuals in society, and negative, in the sense that they are controlled and dominated by males and often create a false image of how gays and lesbians are like.

Among our interviewees, around one third of the interviewees have actually travelled in order to participate in or be a spectator at gay events. Simon is a good example of a gay tourist who often travels in order to be part of specific gay events:

We travel often, [my friend] and I, we travel to Gay Prides. We're going to Berlin Pride, we have been there four years in a row now, in late June, and then we're going to München Pride in the middle of July, and then we're also going to Stockholm Pride. [...] Things are lively and there is party and high jinks, and there are many people and it's fucking cool.

[Simon, 43, Denmark]

However, many interviewees tell that they would only attend a gay event if it coincidentally takes place at their holiday destinations. Thus, they would see it as an extra bonus on their vacation, but none of them would choose a holiday destination in order to participate in a gay event. It is also important to note that, though many interviewees mention Gay Prides, also other events attract them such as Gay and Lesbian Film Festivals, beach parties, political events, conferences on gay and lesbian rights, and sport events (see for example Jérôme, Karin, Cecilie, Jorge, Martin and Flemming). Also the literature on gay and lesbian events supports the assumption that gays and lesbians look for different events when going on holiday, such as Pride Parades (Howe, 2001; Community Marketing, 2008a, 2008b; Johnston, 2007), beach events (Philipp, 1999), circuit parties (Hughes, 2007) and sporting events (World Outgames, 2009a; Guaracino, 2007; Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Pitts, 1997).

It might be said that at least three different groups of gays and lesbians exist in relation to which role they ascribe to events in connection with their holiday experience: those who have as their main holiday motivation to attend a gay event; those who would do it if it was

convenient, but who would not travel for it; and those who are not particularly interested in gay events. On one hand, one might tend to think that these groups would also be distinguishable among heterosexual tourists as also they would have different opinions about events as reason-to-go. On the other hand, the urge for creation of awareness and visibility that make some gays and lesbians join special events might not be as strong among straight tourists because by default, heterosexuality is visible in society (Dyer, 1997; Hughes, 1997, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Graham, 2002; Pritchard et al., 2000; Haslop et al., 1998;). Thus, gay events might offer an extra dimension of attraction for gays and lesbians than events made for heterosexuals.

4.9. The role of sex

As the role of sex for especially gay men has been heavily discussed in the literature, we will here provide our analysis of the role of sex in relation to travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences for gay men and lesbians. For some gay men in the study, sex on holiday is seen as fun; as part of a hedonistic lifestyle; as a need which must be fulfilled; and as a way of getting to know the local culture. For others, sex on holidays would be a possibility if they were single and made holiday in a so-called gay destination, whereas a last group of interviewees would never engage in casual sex while holidaying.

4.9.1. Sex as an enhancement of the holiday experience

According to Hughes (1997, 2002a), Clift & Forrest (1999, 2000) and Waitt & Markwell (2006), gay tourism and sex are closely related. This could also be the impression when talking to some of our interviewees who found it important to get sexual experiences when holidaying. For example, Eric answered very convincingly on the question whether having the opportunity for being sexually active is important for him when travelling:

Of course. Of course!

[Eric, 26, Israel]

Eric looks for sexual opportunities when he goes on holiday, but he explains that the situation does not always allow it and that some destinations simply do not offer opportunities for casual sex encounters. Likewise, Luis finds it important to get sexual experiences on holiday,

and he visits gay bars and saunas, but at the same time he makes clear that it is not a main motivational factor for going on holiday as it is the travelling in itself he finds of importance.

For the Thai gays Duy and Wat, opportunities for being sexually active is not the main motivation to go either. However, Duy states that they like to have sex during vacation:

100% we're looking for the drinks, dancing, cruising, whatever, the saunas. We want to be naughty sometimes.

[Duy, 33, Thailand]

Here we see how Duy and Wat seek out cruising areas and saunas where they have the opportunity for having casual sex with other men.

Interestingly, reasons for *why* single gay men tend to be sexually active while on holiday (Clift & Forrest, 1999) have not seemed to catch the interest of authors within the tourism studies to a notable degree. Hedonistic behaviour seems to be the motive for sexual behaviour in Clift & Forrest's (1999) study, whereas other authors (Carr, 2002; Forrest & Clift, 1998; Hughes, 1997) point to the anonymity obtained when being away from home, as the feeling of anonymity might trigger some people to seeking out sexual experiences. Some of our interviewees also acknowledge that anonymity is important when travelling, and Simon relates it to sex by saying:

There might be a cute guy there that I would like to kiss, you never know, right? [...] It's really fun to go out in the world and be a mysterious stranger. [...] And nobody knows you and it's fun and you don't know those standing there either, and I think that can be quite exiting.

[Simon, 43, Denmark]

Thus, Simon finds it exiting to be a stranger in a foreign place, and he sometimes looks for sexual opportunities with other men while holidaying. Thus, we see how at least some interviewees acknowledge, in line with other authors (Hughes, 1997, 2002a; Clift & Forrest, 1999, 2000; Waitt & Markwell, 2006) that sex is fun and might happen while on vacation.

4.9.2. Sex as a physical need

Some interviewees in our study point to other reasons for gays wanting to have sex while travelling, which are apparently not mentioned in literature about gay and lesbian tourism, namely that of the physical need of (gay) men; the instinct of reproduction; and the little risks

of having sex with men compared to women (although the risk of sexual transmitted diseases among gay men has received attention in e.g. Clift & Wilkins, 1995). According to Flemming:

I think it's wide-spread mostly in the world of gay men to say - I mean, I think it has something to do with the male sexuality - that sex can, without a doubt, be something physical, I mean it's a physical thing. It can be much more emotional to talk to another. I mean... For me, to have sex, and the hottest sex and this and that, that can be less, how to say it, binding and intimate than it is to talk and sleep close together, right?

[Flemming, 48, Denmark]

From the quote above, it can be seen that sex for Flemming is a physical need which does not necessarily involves intimate feelings. Likewise Jérôme believes that:

Men in general look more for sex than women [...]. If two men are together, then of course you fuck like dogs, because you do not have the limitations that a girl causes.

[Jérôme, 36, France]

Martin, on his side, acknowledges that sex is fun and important when travelling and thereby confirms Clift & Forrest's (1999) suggestion of sex being part of a hedonistic behaviour. At the same time, Martin also supports Flemming's and Jérôme's statements, as he sees sex as a need which he prefers to satisfy before he focuses on the attractions of a city:

It's fun, I mean sex is fun, so why not? [...] I don't really like spending time on sex, I mean, try to hit on somebody, I mean going out and try to get laid. If I'm out, it's mostly just to talk to people, because I believe that when you are three days in a city, you want to see something else. Then it's better just to go to a sauna and have sex there and then that's done and you go to a museum afterwards.

[Martin, 26, Sweden]

Consequently, for Martin sex is a need which he does not want to use much time on satisfying and, therefore, he uses sex offers like saunas when on vacation.

4.9.3. Getting into the 'back regions'

For other interviewees, sex is also an opportunity to getting to know new people as some invisible borders have been crossed after having sex. For instance, Antonio believes that gay men are curious about how local gays are sexually at the destinations visited. Jérôme is more explicit in his answer on why sex is important while traveling as he says:

It's a fantastic way of... suddenly being inside a society, no matter what. I remember, for example, that I went to Vienna in Austria many times, and then I met a guy there very fast... after a few hours, and then I saw some places in Vienna that I would never have seen as a sole tourist.

[Jérôme, 36, France]

The above quotation suggests that having sex is another way to experience the 'back regions' of the destination visited. Sex partners might, as in the passage above, serve as 'cultural brokers' or personal guides of the city. Moreover, this could be related to MacCannell's (1976) concept of authenticity, which he claims is often sought after while travelling, as it might be suggested that it does not get much more authentic than sleeping with the locals (Cohen, 1988; MacCannell, 1976; Adams, 1984; Boorstin, 1964).

4.9.4. Relationship status matters

As discussed in the theory (Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Forrest & Clift, 1998), sexual activity with new partners while holidaying is dependent on relationship status. More interviewees in our study say that they do not look for new sex partners when holidaying because they are in relationships but that this would be different if they were singles. This is illustrated by Dennis who is currently in a relationship and is, therefore, no longer interested in getting sexual experiences with new partners on vacation. He explains that:

But as single [...] it was a totally different case. Because then, yes of course, it was like that [...]. You went out alone or with your friends where you had that thing: 'It's okay that we go out together and go home with other people' and stuff like that. [...] I have also been to Grand Canary and places like that.

[Dennis, 23, Denmark]

The above quotation also reflects Forrest & Clift's (1998; 2000) findings that gay men who visit destinations specifically catering to gays are more likely to be sexually active with new partners than gays who travel to non-gay destinations.

On the contrary, some interviewees neglect the importance of finding possibilities for being sexually active with new partners while on holiday. None of the lesbian interviewees finds it important to have sex with new partners on holiday and, consequently, none of them travel in order to get sexual experiences. Nonetheless, it is not only the lesbians who do not find sex with new partners important when holidaying. For example, Darío states that neither he, nor his boyfriend, have ever travelled to get sexual experiences, not even when they were singles.

When the interviewer suggests that gay men might travel in order to get sexual experiences, he proclaims that:

This is the most absurd story! I think it is an archetype, I think it is a label... The person who says that should think before he speaks! [...] I suppose that we are all persons and that all people sometimes have impulses and that, well, everybody has his own motivations, but, anyway, I don't think that in this sense the gay is more special than a heterosexual.

[Darío, 41, Spain]

In conclusion, it can be seen that none of the interviewees in the study find that the opportunity to get sexual experiences with new partners is a main motivation to travel. However, some interviewees like to get the opportunity for sex on holidays whereas it for others depends on relationship status, type of holiday and travel companions. Therefore, it might be suggested that the importance of sexual activity could differ from one vacation to another and maybe even within the same holiday. Some interviewees show indifference to the possibility of getting sexual experiences with new partners on holiday but for some of these, sexual encounters arise out of coincidences. The interviewees who find it unimportant to get sexual experiences on holiday are mostly people in relationships or lesbians.

4.10. Travel motivation and destination choices for lesbians

In the analysis above, we have attempted to include both gay and lesbian tourists and, to some extent, the previous chapters have succeeded in illuminating some aspect of gays' and lesbians' travel motivations and destination choices. However, we have discovered that there seem to be differences between the genders, and it appears like the 'gay' or 'homosexual' aspects of the holiday can often be more related to gay men than to lesbians. This finding is moreover prevalent when comparing the number of quotations from gay and lesbian interviewees, respectively, to the number of gay and lesbian participants in the study, as far more men have made comments in relation to interview questions regarding offers for gays and lesbians on holidays, such as gay space and gay destinations. In this part of the thesis, we have therefore found it relevant to consider the lesbian tourists exclusively and look into some travel patterns and motivations different from those described in the rest of the thesis. In order to do that, we will focus upon the topics of safety, gay space, lesbian destinations, sex on holidays and family travel.

4.10.1. Lesbians and safety

To begin with, some interviewees, both males and females, have suggested that it might be easier for two women to travel together than two men. For instance, Caroline and Sonja put forward that:

The degree of acceptance might be different: it is easier to accept two girls together than two boys, at least for many of the boys [...]. So you might be more easily accepted when you are two girls together. It's like... it doesn't matter as much to a guy when there are two girls. [...] So that may be why [gay men] seek out safe space, maybe.

[Caroline, 49, Norway]

Like the interviewees above, Hughes (2007) suggests that the acceptance of two women holidaying together is usually greater than that of two men and, consequently, he proposes that destinations not available to gay men might be accessible to lesbian tourists. However, we have found no evidence for this statement since we would argue that destinations not available to gay men might not be available to women at all. Destinations considered to be inaccessible to gay men are often strict religious, like many regions of Middle East and Africa or other Muslim countries (Roth & Luongo, 2002), and it might be suggested that women should be careful in these countries too because they often do not have equal rights in relation to men there.

Among many lesbian interviewees, there is agreement that Middle East would probably be interesting as a holiday destination, but mainly due to their gender, they would almost certainly not go on holiday there:

I don't think that I would feel that I could be myself. [...] So I think, and I have also heard from my heterosexual friends, that you have to be covered up and especially if they have travelled with their boyfriends, then they had to be at the back seat in the cab and kind of have their personal responsibility taken away. Some places, not all places, but I think that especially in Saudi Arabia. I don't think I would like that. But of course... I would also find it annoying if I couldn't hold my girlfriend's hand.

[Cecilie, 32, Denmark]

Cecilie can be said to show two levels of consideration of safety: first of all in relation to her gender, as she would not like to be seen as a minor, and, secondly, in relation to her sexuality, as she would prefer to show affection openly towards her partner while holidaying. Among more female interviewees in this study, there is agreement that the issue of safety on holiday is related to their gender and not necessarily to their sexuality. Ulrikke, for example, mentions Arab countries when asked about where she would never go on holiday:

Maybe Arab countries which are very closed and hostile towards women... or have another view on women.

[Ulrikke, 28, Denmark]

It could be suggested that for Ulrikke, in this case, her gender identity (woman) might be more prevalent than her sexual identity (lesbian). Thus, it seems that this interviewee possesses more than one identity which is dominant at different times and places (Valentine, 1993).

In general, more female interviewees felt that their gender rather than their sexuality would cause them problems and affect their feeling of safety when visiting other countries. This is in line with Black (2000) who found that certain groups in society, including women, might be particularly at risk when travelling and that women normally consider the risks of violence and harassment more rigorously than men. Moreover, the quotation indicates that homosexuals are influenced by other identities than their sexual identity in relation to their holiday motivations and destination choices.

4.10.2. Lesbians, space and community

Moreover, Pritchard et al. (2000) found that while the gay men in their study were more likely to mention physical features of the holiday destinations as being important, lesbians put more consideration into the need for acceptance, feeling safe and avoiding uncomfortable situations where they might experience negative reactions from heterosexuals on basis of their homosexuality. Within gay and lesbian tourism literature (Pritchard et al., 2000; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hughes, 2002b; Howe, 2001), it is suggested that gays and lesbians seek out gay space on holiday in order to feel accepted and safe. Hence, if it is true that lesbians are concerned about safety and acceptance when holidaying, it is interesting to note that almost none of our female interviewees go on holiday in order to be in gay space or visit gay/lesbian destinations. On the contrary, lesbians sometimes go to lesbian space at home, but, unlike the gay men in this study, many of the lesbians do not make use of lesbian space on holiday.

Anita, though, likes to visit her 'milieu' when holidaying in order to get to know the local society. She feels that it is easy to meet new people when she goes to a lesbian venue while holidaying. By far the most of our interviewees acknowledge that some kind of community or

network exists between lesbians, but, at the same time, more interviewees admit that the only thing they have in common might be that their sexuality:

I actually don't think that I have a lot in common with other lesbians [...]. The only thing, I share with them, is that I look for other women, and that's not an application that you can take away, but it's actually only an application. And that does not mean that I have anything to talk to them about at all, necessarily or something in common.

[Laura, 45, Denmark]

Charlotte, on her side, explains the lesbian network in the following way:

Though you have not talked to them, for example, but that you have just seen one another in a gay place, for example, and know that the other one is homosexual. That can already mean that you actually, I mean, help each other without knowing each other.

[Charlotte, 35, Germany]

Hence, this interviewee tells that even though she has never talked to a person, just by knowing that she was a lesbian, she would be predisposed for helping her. Thus, some kind of emotional and mutual connection seems to be prevalent among some lesbians.

4.10.3. Lesbian destinations

Feeling a connection to other lesbians and wishing to obtain a sense of togetherness might be the reason why many lesbians in this study see Lesbos as an attractive holiday destination, though none of them has ever been there. The lesbians immediately think about Lesbos when asked to mention a lesbian destination. This might be connected to the circumstance that very few exclusively lesbian destinations exist and that even gay destinations, which welcome gay men as well as lesbians, are often seen as male dominated (Hughes, 2007). However, Puar (2002a) mentions that lesbian tourists also go on vacation in Provincetown and Isla de Mujeres in Mexico which might thus be seen as lesbian destinations too. Even so, none of the lesbians in our study mention these other locations when talking about gay/lesbian destinations. Only one lesbian interviewee points to a lesbian destination which is not mentioned anywhere in the tourism literature as she tells about her vacation at the Danish island Femø in the 'Femølejren' (Femø Camp):

It was super cosy, and there was a really good ambience [...]. I mean, it's kind of a phenomenon from the '70s and in the good old times, it was... then all kind of women went there. And now it's mostly centered around Kvindehuset⁹ in Copenhagen and the lesbian scene [...]. And it was totally great in the way that you just got to know a lot of different people and there was fellowship and it was cosy also to do practical stuff like cooking and other practical things with people that you don't know.

[Ulrikke, 28, Denmark]

It here seems like Ulrikke affirms her identity as a lesbian by defining the Femø Island as a lesbian destination. She goes there in order to socialise with other women and lesbians, which is in line with what tourism authors explain as motivations for going to gay/lesbian destinations (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Pritchard et al., 1998b). However, this interviewee seems to represent an exception among the lesbians as no other lesbian has ever been to a lesbian destination. In relation to the discussion of Lesbos as a lesbian destination, Linda makes an interesting remark:

I feel a bit like: 'No, there is no way that I will go to Lesbos because then all the people... ehe... then they could mess around with that'. It is kind of a cliché that you go to Lesbos, right? In fact, I would really like to because I have heard that it should be the most beautiful island of all of them. [...] But it is not about the history with Sappho¹⁰ and so on. It's not. It's because it's said to be one of the most beautiful places in Greece.

[Linda, 31, Denmark]

Thus, Linda distances herself from the idea that just because she is a lesbian; she has to go to a lesbian destination as she does not want to live out the stereotypes that other people have about gays and lesbians. This could be seen as an example of the way that some gays and lesbians actively manage their identities and consciously choose when to be guided by their 'gay' or 'lesbian' identity and when they choose their holiday destination upon other criteria (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Munt, 1997; Sinfield, 1997; Puar, 2002a).

4.10.4. Lesbian families

Another issue, which is relevant to discuss in relation to lesbian tourists, is related to family holidays. In this study, none of the gay men have children; whereas four lesbian interviewees have children; two were pregnant during the interview; a lesbian couple was on holiday in

⁹ Kvindehuset (The Women's House) is a socialistic and feministic non-profit house which is managed by the users. In the house, political and cultural activities are arranged throughout the year (Kvindehuset, 2009).

¹⁰ Sappho was a Greek poet from Lesbos and was the most famous of all female poets in the Antiquity. In her lyrics, she describes the love between women and is therefore often seen as an icon for lesbians (Johnston, 2007; Gyldendal, 2002).

Denmark in order to get artificially inseminated; and others would like to have children in the future.

Hughes (2007) puts forward that family vacations to homosexuals have recently been introduced in the US, and lesbians in our study also explicate that they consider where they will be able to holiday as a family. Anna, for instance, suggests that she might consider her holiday destinations more carefully in the future because she and her wife will travel as a family with a child, and this viewpoint is shared among other lesbian mothers in this study. Considering that close to 50% of lesbian couples plan to become parents at some point in their lives (Amato & Jacob, 2004), it is interesting that literature on gay and lesbian tourism has hardly considered the concept of holidays for 'Rainbow Families' (Amato & Jacob, 2004) as this group might have special motivations and needs. In relation to this study, it has been particularly interesting to notice that the interviewees have themselves put forward the topic as questions about family holidaying were not included in the interview guide. Thus, it seems like this topic is near to some interviewees' hearts.

4.10.5. Lesbians and sex on holiday

One of the issues which has, on the contrary, caught great attention in the gay tourism literature is that of gay men travelling to get sexual experiences with new partners. However, we have not found any studies focusing on whether lesbians are interested in casual sex on holidays too. Yet, it might be all the same since many of the female interviewees in this study are generally not interested in getting sexual experiences with new partners on holiday. One interviewee negates the wish for sex on holidays and explains that she is simply too conventional for engaging in casual sex encounters:

No. But, then again, I am very conservative. I am very 'straight' in my 'gay' life

[Maria, 40, Australia]

Other lesbians simply tell that they are interested in other aspect of vacations such as culture, nature, relaxing and getting to know the local culture, and that getting sex on vacation is not an issue of interest.

4.10.6. Lesbians as female tourists

We would argue that most lesbians in this study first and foremost identify as women and hereafter as lesbians and this statement is supported by Clark (1993). This finding might be closely related to the circumstance that some lesbians have come out relatively late, whereas more gay men realised they were homosexuals already as children or during their teenage years and never after turning 25 years old. A few of the lesbians do not even identify as lesbians but say that they have just happened to fall in love with another woman:

I have always thought that it was, I mean, that I was completely normal hetero. I truly believed so. But I will... I knew that there was something which was not like it ought to be, but I had never, before I met [my wife], thought that it was something like that [...]. That's what I use to say too: 'I am not a lesbian; I am just in love with [my wife].

[Puk, 42, Denmark]

In the literature (Frable, 1997; Valentine, 1993), it is put forward that lesbians come out gradually and usually later than men. In our study, except for a few lesbians who state that they have known since childhood that they were homosexuals, many interviewees realised rather late. Therefore, it might be argued that they have grown up as straight women rather than lesbians. Consequently, it seems like their lesbian identity is of minor importance to them compared to a number of gay men who relate their life to a certain 'gay identity'. Anita tells how she first learned to be proud of being woman and later of being a lesbian:

Because I come from the old political school from when women fought for getting the right to be women in the late 70s, 80s and 90s, and everything that happened on the way. And at that time, it was like: 'I am a woman, and I'm proud of it' and then you included the other: 'I am a lesbian and I am proud of it'.

[Anita, 51, Denmark]

If the importance of homosexual identity differ between gay men and lesbians, it might be suggested that the differences between men and women might be greater than between homosexuals and heterosexuals since the most important bonds between the latter seem to be the process of coming out as gays or lesbian and feeling part of a gay/lesbian community. This finding is likely to influence the understanding of lesbians' tourism motivation and destination choices since Carr (2002) suggests that gendered differences exist in leisure behaviour and that 'pleasure-oriented tourism and leisure behavior are closely related and should not be regarded as separate fields of study' (Carr, 2002: 981).

4.11. Gays' and lesbians' multiple identities

I forget that I am gay. I think that homosexuality is a personal characteristic, but it's not the first, nor the second, nor the third. Maybe it's the eighth, I think, right?

[Julio, 36, Spain]

I'm a man, I'm an IT engineer, I'm gay. I'm also a vegetarian, and I could go on...

[Manuel, 30, Spain]

As these introductory quotations show, it seems like the gays and lesbians in this study are quite conscious about the role of their sexuality in their everyday lives and in relation to holidays. They are actually capable of reflecting and discussing their identities' influence upon their opinions and actions in a very informed way. This observation is in line with Haslop et al. (1998) who claim that homosexuals express their sexual identities in a more conscious way that most heterosexuals do.

Furthermore, gays and lesbians are said to consider their behaviour on holiday more than other people (Hughes, 2002c, 2007) and reflect on some aspects of their (travel) life that heterosexuals would probably not think about, such as whether it is possible for them to hold hands in the streets and whether they will be met by acceptance or hostility at tourist establishments. However, it is, at the same time, relevant to note that many do not see their situation in a negative perspective, like otherwise often suggested in the literature (Grossmann, 1998; Dyer, 1997; Waitt & Markwell, 2006; Hindle, 1994; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Hughes, 1997; Pritchard et al., 2000; Graham, 2002). Certainly, a few homosexuals in this study feel excluded from the general (heterosexual) society, but many also choose to live happily with their sexuality and are actually pleased to feel part of a particular community of homosexuals.

In general, the interviewees provide a variety of different ways of relating their identities to their travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences, and quite a few interviewees touch upon the circumstance that they juggle with different identities. That individuals possess and manage multiple identities is something that has been discussed extensively in the literature (Frable, 1997; Valentine, 1993; Goffman, 1959, Ailon, 1997; Lawler, 2008; Watson, 2006; Abes et al., 2007; Pittinsky et al., 1999; Howard, 2000). Moreover, identities and sexualities are said to be context specific (Valentine, 1993; Ailon, 2007; Burr, 2003; Abes et al., 2007; Pittinsky et al., 1999; Howard, 2000) and it might, for

example, be argued that being homosexual does not mean the same today as it did in other periods of time (Burr, 2003).

In relation to holidaying, the interviewees sometimes consider themselves more as gays and choose, for example, to go to a gay bar while on vacation, whereas in other situations they identify more with their masculine/feminine side or their professional status. This is in line with theories that suggest that many different identities exist, such as national identities, occupational identities, gender identities and hierarchical identities and that individuals have freedom to shape their identities (Ailon, 2007). In our data, it can also be seen that many gays and lesbians are aware of their multiple identities and they actually use them actively in the way that they sometimes draw upon their homosexual identities and sometimes upon other identities. In this way, it can be seen that some gays and lesbians manage their identities as strategic resources which they can draw upon when they find it convenient or necessary (Ailon, 2007; Valentine, 1993).

Ailon (2007) and Lawler (2008) moreover state that the notion of identity is based upon a feeling of sameness, but, at the same time, it arises out of the feeling of differentiation from other groups. This might be part of the explanation why some homosexuals travel to gay space, seek out community and go to special events. In order for homosexuals to feel alike, they need to feel different from (heterosexual) others.

In relation to the topic of this master's thesis, the above findings are relevant because it seems like gays and lesbians cannot be categorised and targeted as one group. Even those gays and lesbians who seem to identify very much with their homosexual identity and, for example, believe that being gay is a lifestyle, sometimes choose to go on absolutely non-gay related holidays. This is in line with authors who suggest that even when people feel a membership of certain identity groups, each individual will still have unique experiences (Harper & Schneider, 2003; Plummer, 1992; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Clift & Wilkins, 1995).

Furthermore, many interviewees in the study actually felt more related to their gender or professional identity than to their homosexual identity. Thus, marketers might not succeed in attracting these customers to gay destinations if they only emphasise the gay aspects of these places, such as gay friendly accommodation, shops, bars and restaurants, together with friendliness and acceptance towards gays. Many homosexuals might actually prefer general

tourists destinations and once at the destination, combine it with some offers for gays (like events or bars), *if available*.

It has, in the same vein, been interesting to see that gays and lesbians do not necessarily choose destinations on the basis of whether they can find offers for gay or lesbians there or whether they are seen as being gay friendly. Many interviewees do consider whether a destination is gay friendly and whether homosexuality is accepted, but they would choose the destination anyway if the general tourist attractions there were very interesting from their point of view. Consequently, the 'gay part' of the holiday does not drive the choice of destination for the majority of the interviewees, and they are often able and willing to suppress their sexuality in order to experience a certain destination. In this way, it seems like identities are not stable, homogeneous and fixed but multiple, dynamic and flexible, which means that they can be combined in an infinite number of ways (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Sinfield, 1997; Ailon, 2007; Cantú, 2009; Goffman, 1959; Plummer, 1992, Munt, 1997; Valentine, 1993).

In conclusion, it might be tentatively suggested that most gays and lesbians actually choose their holiday destinations upon the same criteria as every other tourist, i.e. whether the destination provide them with an opportunity for escaping everyday life, relaxing, seeing interesting sights and experiencing the local culture. However, it might be that gays and lesbians, once at the destination, seek out other kinds of leisure spaces than heterosexuals, and, in this way, their holiday experience might be different from the heterosexual holiday experience. Actually, it has been surprising to see that the majority of the participants in the study have, at some point of time, sought out gay space or gay community, also while on vacation. However, gay attractions and gay aspects do not seem to be a crucial factor for the travel motivations and destination choices of gay and lesbian tourists. Hence, it could be suggested that professionals wishing to target and attract gay and lesbian tourists have to be aware that they might be homosexuals, but they might not always wish to purchase products, attractions and destinations directed at homosexual tourists.

In literature upon gay and lesbian tourists and gay and lesbian tourism marketing, there has often been a bias towards the 'gay experience' and the 'gay aspects' of holidaying, such as gay space, gay events and gay destinations. Furthermore, there has been a tendency for some authors to label homosexuals and state that gay and lesbian tourists are in a certain way. With

this study, we have intended to show that homosexuals are diverse and that they are in control of their multiple identities, meaning that they can choose when to be 'gay' and when not to be. Interestingly, hardly any authors have touched upon multiple identities in a gay/lesbian tourism context, apart from for a few exceptions such as Hughes (1997; 2006). In gay and lesbian studies, the discussions of multiple identities and the social construction of gay and lesbian identities do receive attention (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Sinfield, 1997; Plummer, 1992; Munt, 1997; Valentine, 1993), but it seems that, within tourism studies, some important aspects of the gay and lesbian tourism experience are left out. Therefore, we have in the present master's thesis drawn upon multiple academic fields in order to cast light upon some central aspects of gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences. In this way, we hope to present a more multifaceted approach to gay and lesbian tourism than the one that has until now been presented in traditional tourism literature.

5. Criteria for assessing qualitative research

In this chapter of the thesis, we will evaluate the findings which have been developed throughout the previous chapters. This will be done on the basis of Hirschman's (1986) four evaluation criteria which have been elaborated to fit the paradigms underlying humanistic inquiry. The four criteria are used for evaluating whether the inquiry is credible; whether interpretations are transferable; whether the study is dependable; and whether the conclusions can be confirmed by other researchers. Hirschman (1986) names the four criteria confirmability, transferability, dependability and credibility, and they will be discussed in relation to this master's thesis below.

Still, we are aware that other evaluation guidelines are more common within qualitative research, especially the concepts of validity and reliability (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Bickman et al., 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2001; Flick, 2002). We do not neglect the usefulness of these other criteria, but we follow Hirschman's (1986) line of thought as she states that validity and reliability have been adapted from quantitative studies whereas the concepts of confirmability, transferability, dependability and credibility have been developed especially for qualitative inquiries.

5.1. Confirmability

Since we, as researchers, are immersed personally in this study (Janesick, 2000; Hirschman, 1986; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Miller & Glassner, 2004; Flick, 2002) and are participants in the construction of knowledge through interaction, it is impossible for us to be objective and this is not even attempted. Subjectivity is a side effect of the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), but it is still important that the findings are logical without being prejudiced or judgemental (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In order to enhance confirmability, Hirschman (1986) advises that the study ought to be judged by one or more external researchers who are to go through every step taken in the research process. Although we deeply acknowledge the great importance of improving confirmability, we have neglected this process for different reasons. Enhancing confirmability is a time consuming process both for the researchers as well as the outside researcher, and we have simply not had the time. More important, we have not been able to find a researcher with the necessary characteristics that Hirschman (1986) suggests. In order for an external researcher to enhance confirmability, he or she must be

knowledgeable of gay and lesbian tourism beforehand and, at the same time be personally familiar with us, since this is the only way that the researcher will have the possibility of evaluating whether and to what extent the interpretations made are shaped by our values and personalities. Hence, we can actually not guarantee that the conclusions in the thesis have been made on basis of the collected data and that they are open and unbiased. However, senior researchers who have known us to some degree and who also have (limited) knowledge of the area of interest have guided us throughout the construction of the study. In this way, confirmability might have been slightly enhanced.

5.2. Transferability

In order to assess whether our findings are transferable, we would have to know the specific situation in which the interpretation is generated and, in addition, the exact conditions of the context where the interpretation should be applied. We know the specifics of the context of this study, but we do not have an understanding of the specifics of all other contexts in which the findings might be applied. However, we could have made the inquiry in more settings and have been sensitive to the difference in interpretations. Yet, it might be relevant to note that as people of different nationalities, who have been interviewed in different countries, take part in this study; we do try to be sensitive towards, for example, cultural contexts. However, the study could have been conducted in other cities and countries and we could have paid even more attention to the difference of contexts. Moreover, we recognise that the findings in this thesis are not durable over time and space, and we do not believe that they can necessarily be transferred to other contexts. Thus, the conclusions made in this study are not transferable to all gay and lesbian tourists and they might not be relevant in a different context (Hirschman, 1986).

5.3. Dependability

The constructivist paradigm does not offer a scale on which to measure dependability of the research, that is to say to what extent the findings of the study can be relied upon. Assessment of the internal consistency is done by the researcher undertaking the study and, consequently, Hirschman (1986) puts forward that multiple researchers enhance dependability. This study is undertaken by two researchers and we have deliberately sought to use this advantage by discussing different modes of interpretations with the purpose of presenting our data and

findings in accordance with the multiple realities that exist. Moreover, we have looked into other studies of gays and lesbians in order to get a sense of different interpretations and thus make our inquiry more dependable (Hirschman, 1986).

The fact that we are two researchers does not imply that 'perfect' dependability can be achieved at all since this is an unfeasible, and more important, non-existing ideal when doing humanistic inquiry. Rather, dependability is improved when two researchers are involved in the inquiry because they are likely to compare their interpretations. The aspects that both researchers consider might be said to be more dependable. However, it might be argued that the two researchers responsible for this study, although holding different world views, are somewhat alike. The fact that we are female heterosexuals who come from the same country, culture and social class with (almost) the same education and interests might limit our interpretations and bias us towards certain conclusions.

It might thus be suggested that dependability in this study has been somewhat enhanced since we are two researchers. Nonetheless, it would have been further enhanced if more researchers had been undertaking the study or if the researchers were more diverse. Even so, it is relevant to realise that dependability will never be completely obtained since construction of knowledge, interpretations and analysis occur on the basis of interactions which are unique due to distinctive individuals and situations.

5.4. Credibility

Since the findings of this study are primarily built upon construction of knowledge through interaction between researchers and interviewees, it is relevant to consider whether we have succeeded in understanding and representing the multiple world views and realities of gays and lesbians (Hirschman, 1986). Hirschman (1986) suggests that in order to obtain credibility, authenticity of interpretations can be sought among participants in the study, which is in line with the suggestion of Janesick (2000). We do believe that the participants are able to evaluate the interpretations made by researchers as they themselves probably have the most profound understanding of their own world view.

Interpretation and construction of knowledge already begin during the interview, however, these interpretations are not physically present until a summary is made from the interviews

(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Consequently, we found it relevant to send out summaries to most participants in this study via email in order for them to voice their agreement or disagreement with our interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Hirschman, 1986). Although all interviewees were interested in seeing our interpretations of the interviews, not all participants answered our emails. Still, 20 persons did respond and most were very pleased with our interpretations. Some even made additional remarks and comments such as ‘It is a very, very interesting project :-)’ and ‘I think I am becoming more gay informed - so thank you for pointing me in the right direction.’ Such feedback reflects that the interviewees think that this study is helpful in relation to creating visibility of an often marginalised group. One interviewee, though, commented on our English language as she did not find that we had translated her father’s profession correctly which blurred the impact of her strict upbringing on the understanding of her own sexuality. This and other relevant comments were written into the summary in order for the interpretation to become more authentic. The fact that not all participants in the study responded to our e-mail might be related to the wording that if they did not respond, we would take it as if they agreed to our interpretation. However, credibility would have been further enhanced if all interviewees had given their sincere opinion about the interpretations of the interview or a second interview focusing on the interpretation of the summary had been executed. As interpretation is a process, it would moreover have been useful if interviewees were present along the way, for example when translating and using quotations during the writing of the analysis.

Finally, it is relevant to keep in mind that since gay and lesbian tourism is a complex phenomenon which constitutes many different world views, the interpretation of this phenomenon will never become adequate or complete (Janesick, 2000; Hirschman, 1986).

6. Conclusion

In this very last part of this master's thesis, we draw conclusions on the basis of the research undertaken.

6.1. Travel motivations of gay and lesbian tourists

In existing literature on gay and lesbian tourism, it is often put forward that, apart from traditional holiday motivations such as relaxation and breaking the routines of everyday life, gay and lesbian tourists have a strong desire for escaping heteronormativity and the feeling of suppressing their 'selves' in everyday life. Thus, it is suggested that gay and lesbian tourists get an opportunity for being fully 'out' and open about their sexuality when holidaying. However, we have found little evidence of this suggestion in our study since nearly none of the interviewees feel inhibited at home and, consequently, the majority does not travel in order to get away from oppression and being 'themselves'. Instead, they seek cultural experiences of all kinds; enjoy anonymity while away from home; and are eager to feel the ambience of the destination visited - just like straight tourists.

Taking the above findings into consideration, it should be kept in mind, though, that most interviewees in this study are already 'out' at home and that this master's thesis is based upon interviews with gays and lesbians mainly from the Western part of the world. Findings might have been different if most interviewees would have come from parts of the world where gays and lesbians have to conceal their identities in their daily lives.

6.2. Destination choices of gay and lesbian tourists

Destinations choices vary greatly among participants in present study and, like other tourists, the interviewees visit cities, go on sun and beach holidays, and get experiences in nature. It is relevant to note that the type of holiday and the destinations chosen might differ radically from one holiday to the next for the individual tourist, and even within one holiday, people seem to seek out different experiences. Like straight tourists, many gays and lesbians in this study choose the holiday destination on the basis of where they have not previously been whereas a few like to re-visit places of special interest.

Even though there might be resemblances between straight and gay/lesbian tourists' holiday motivations, the literature claims that gays and lesbians have an extra dimension on which to base their holiday choices, namely their sexuality. It is argued that gays and lesbians are motivated to travel by a need for safety, acceptance and approval of their sexuality. Consequently, destination choices are said to be based on the likeliness of finding gay space at the destination and places displaying a certain level of gay friendliness, for which reason gay destinations are suggested as being popular among, especially, gay men.

In relation to this assumption, we acknowledge that gay and lesbian tourists often are more conscious about their destination choices than straight tourists and that they might take additional factors into account when they go on holiday. For example, some interviewees choose to avoid certain destinations because of their sexuality. Moreover, among participants in this study, there is widespread agreement that they like holidaying in destinations that are gay friendly and where homosexuality is accepted, and an issue which they put special emphasis on is whether they feel comfortable about showing affection towards their partner in public during holiday. At the same time, safety is deemed of importance when holidaying. However, this issue is rarely related to the sexuality of the interviewees, as otherwise suggested in the literature. In our study, the choice of holiday destination is generally not driven by the presence of gay space and gay friendliness either. Destination choice is to a high degree based on general travel motivations and interests, and only once the destination is chosen, interviewees start looking for gay venues. Likewise, some interviewees describe gay space at the destination as an extra bonus which they make use of during their holidays. However, for none of the interviewees, the presence of gay space was a prerequisite for choosing a destination. A number of interviewees have holidayed at gay destinations, but they also like to go on holiday at destinations that are by no means gay related.

In relation to gays' and lesbians' travel motivations and destination choices, it has been intriguing to discover that quite many interviewees travel in order to participate in gay events. They mainly join events for the same reasons as straight tourists, namely having fun and socialising with other people, but there seem to be an extra wish for creating visibility and awareness of the presence of homosexuals in society. In this way, the interviewees' sexuality might have an influence upon the choice of destination, but only when gay events, which are often seen as reason-to-go, are taking place. A last topic that we have looked into in this thesis is the role of sex. Our conclusion in this regard is that some gay men enjoy engaging in casual

sexual encounters, whereas a majority of the interviewees do not see sex as an important part of their holiday experience.

In general, homosexual tourists make diverse holiday choices. It is usual for the gays and lesbians in this study to visit Grand Canary on one holiday; do adventure travel in Costa Rica on the next; and going to Paris or the US at other times. Thus, there seems to be no clear-cut gay or lesbian tourist who is continuously driven by his/her sexuality when it comes to motivations and holiday choices. On the contrary, many gays and lesbians do not consider their sexuality in relation to travel motivations and destination choices in particular but seem to be characterised by a multiplicity of identities which they draw upon when convenient.

It is interesting to note that more gays and lesbians in this study have holidayed at destinations that are, in the literature, considered as being hostile towards homosexuals. This fact reflects another contribution of this master's thesis to existing literature, namely that gay and lesbian tourists are able and willing to suppress their sexuality when holidaying. If a destination facilitates sights or cultural experiences of major interest, the interviewees find it of greater importance to visit these attractions than being able to showing affection openly at the destination. Thus, we see that gays and lesbians do not necessarily look for 'gay' or 'lesbian' offers at the destination, such as gay friendly restaurants, shops, bars and accommodation, but that many actually find it more important to seeing the general attractions of the destination. Following this argument, we suggest that gays and lesbians are aware of their multiple identities and are able to manage them in multiple ways depending on the situation that they are in.

6.3. Differences between gay and lesbian tourists

Throughout the literature review undertaken during the research process, we have found that lesbian travellers are almost invisible in tourism studies and we have therefore dedicated a separate part of the thesis to these tourists.

Lesbian tourists seem to differ from gay male tourists in the way that the vast majority has never visited a lesbian destination; they do not find sex on holiday important; and very few make use of gay/lesbian space on holidays. Moreover, lesbian interviewees in our study were far more concerned about family holidays than the gay men (given that almost a third of the

women had or were expecting children whereas no male interviewee had children) and consider how to travel as a lesbian family in the future. Lastly, the lesbian interviewees, in accordance with the literature, give a lot of thought to their safety on holidays, but they generally relate safety first and foremost to their gender (is it safe to travel as a woman?), and, only secondly, to their sexuality (is it safe to travel as a homosexual?). In this way, it could tentatively be concluded that also lesbians juggle with different identities, such as gender identities, occupational identities and sexual identities.

In conclusions, it seems that gays' and lesbians' travel motivations and destination choices are seldom influenced by their sexuality, whereas holiday experiences are sometimes enhanced when gays and lesbians meet gay friendliness, feel comfortable about showing affection openly, and get the opportunity for visiting gay space during holidays.

6.4. Implications and recommendations for further research

As this thesis is rather exploratory and qualifies as no more than an incremental step towards the closing of the 'gay gap' mentioned in the introduction, more research is needed if we wish to truly understand the travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences of gays and lesbians. Accordingly, in this closing section we take one step back and, on the basis of reflections on how 'far our study went', we offer recommendations for future research.

As mentioned in the introduction, a drawback of the current study is that it draws upon both 'westernised' researchers and interviewees. However, few interviewees, namely Duy & Wat and Jorge, fall outside this category as they come from Thailand and Mexico, respectively. Frable (1997) asks the intriguing question whether Western ideas of sexuality can be applied to non-Western contexts. As our study does not answer this question, it would be interesting if future studies looked more into cultural differences among gay and lesbian tourists and, above all, tried to investigate the viewpoints of people outside the Anglo-American world.

A key contribution of our study to the extant pool of knowledge is that we included both gay and lesbian tourists. Our findings concerning lesbian tourists suggest that there are substantial differences pertaining to some aspects of holidaying between gay men and lesbians. Therefore, our findings suggest that further studies dedicated to lesbian tourists would be more than welcome.

A topic that emerged during our study that we had not anticipated at the outset is that of 'Rainbow Families'. Homosexuals with children think about where to go on holiday with their 'nuclear' family and according to our findings they, apparently, have special motivations and concerns in relation to holidaying. Although we searched both the literature on 'gay and lesbian tourism' and the literature on 'family vacation decision-making' for information pertaining to this group of tourists, we found no such information. Accordingly, further studies of Rainbow Families and their travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences would be highly relevant and interesting.

Lastly, it would be fruitful to consider our study's implications for marketing strategies and approaches. Although some authors (e.g. Guaracino, 2007; Pritchard et al., 1998b; Fugate, 1993) have discussed how to reach out to gay and lesbian tourists, much work is still needed within this field. In this thesis, we considered gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, destination choices and holiday experiences. However, as our study is exploratory and qualitative in nature and, consequently, does not generate 'generalisable' results, the thesis does not offer solid, normative pieces of advice on how to target gay and lesbian tourists. Nonetheless, we do hope that our findings qualify as a pool of knowledge on gay and lesbian tourists that will enable the industry to better cater to the needs of these tourists in the future. For example, drawing on our findings we find it advisable to look at the marketing strategies and campaigns towards gays and lesbian tourists which are carried out in relation to Copenhagen and the rest of Denmark and assess whether these strategies and campaigns could, perhaps, be improved.

As a final point, we find it appropriate to mention that gays and lesbians do not have much voice in tourism studies and when they are given voice often the portraits painted are rather stereotypic. With this thesis, we hope that we have shown that gays and lesbians constitute an active, reflective part of the pool of people we call 'tourists' and that they deserve to be part of the future research agenda for tourist studies.

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8. Appendices

8.1. Audio files of interviews

8.2. Summaries of interviews

8.3. The matrix

8.4. Interview guides

8.5. Examples of feedback from interviewees

8.6. Original quotations