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# Religious Tourism versus Secular Pilgrimage: The Basilica of La Sagrada Família

## Cover Page Footnote

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# Religious Tourism versus Secular Pilgrimage: The Basilica of La Sagrada Família

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In recent decades, the number of tourists visiting religious buildings of special cultural attraction, mainly due to their exceptional architecture, has significantly increased. In such cases, it is hard to discern whether it is a question of religious tourism or of so-called secular pilgrimage. This paper analyses this issue by means of a paradigmatic case study: The Basilica of La Sagrada Família in Barcelona, Catalonia, a Roman Catholic church that receives over 3 million visitors a year; the part of the “unfinished cathedral”, built under the direction of Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, was registered in 2005 as a cultural site on UNESCO’s World Heritage List; and the church was consecrated in 2010 as a minor basilica by Pope Benedict XVI. The methodology used consists of two parts: the study of events and circumstances that may have influenced the projected religious or secular image of the basilica, and an analysis of the image perceived by visitors. Perceived image is obtained through a quantitative content analysis of more than 10,000 online travel reviews (OTRs) on La Sagrada Família, written by foreign tourists from five English-speaking countries. OTRs, as user-generated content (UGC), are a trustworthy source for analysing perceived and transmitted image. To ensure the quality of the results in the case study, the most suitable websites hosting OTRs are selected by applying a weighted formula, and then these OTRs are downloaded, classified, cleaned and debugged so that the HTML pages collected contain only what is written by the user, preserving the original format. Through a quantitative content analysis, a table displaying the frequencies, density and weight of keywords is constructed, which are in turn categorized, and segmented by nationality, to observe in detail the density and weight of keywords related to feelings and religion. Our findings suggest a prevalence of cultural over religious motives for visiting La Sagrada Família, and that Irish and British OTRs stand out for their content of good feelings while North-American OTRs are notable for containing keywords related to Christian faith.

**Key Words:** Religious tourism, secular pilgrimage, online travel review, perceived image, Barcelona, Catalonia

## Introduction

Travel for spiritual or religious reasons has increased in recent decades and represents a considerable share of international tourism (Olsen and Timothy, 2006). Lanquar (2011) recognizes the difficulty in measuring flows of religious, faith or spiritual tourism, but notes that the demographic base is 60% of the world population who practise a religion. It is estimated that each year approximately 600 million national and international religious and spiritual trips are made in the world, of which 40% take place in Europe. This weight of religious tourism in Europe contrasts with the fact that, since the Treaty of Rome in 1957, Western Europe has been engaged in a rapid, intense,

and seemingly irreversible process of religious individualization and the unchurched of the population (Casanova, 2006).

In the articulation between religion and travel there are many instances ranging from pious sightseeing to voyeuristic tourism (Norman, 2013). To delimit the concepts of religious and secular tourism, Smith (1992) proposes a travel diagram (Figure 1); in the central part he situates religious tourism, with pilgrimage and secular tourism at the extremes, as opposite end-points,

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**Figure 1 The Pilgrim-Tourist path**

PILGRIMAGE		RELIGIOUS TOURISM	TOURISM	
a	b	c	d	e
sacred		faith / profane		secular

Note: a. pious pilgrim; b. pilgrim > tourist; c. pilgrim = tourist; d. pilgrim < tourist; e. secular tourist

Source: Based on Smith (1992)

but recognises the difficulty of delimitation because, in between these extremes, there can be infinite sacred-secular combinations. In a similar vein, Ambrosio (2007) denotes a consensus to consider three types of travellers: pilgrims and secular tourists, at the ends of the spectrum, and religious tourists in the middle.

In most of the literature, tourists and pilgrims are considered to be similar; the opposite perspective denies that the pilgrims should be tourists (Olsen and Timothy, 2006). Some authors explain that a potential dichotomy between pilgrimage and tourism is that while a pious pilgrim needs to participate in some kind of adoration at a religious shrine, the tourist does not; however, other authors consider that a visit to a shrine may have reasons other than worshipping God (Ambrosio, 2007), such as identification with shrines and sacred places of historical and cultural meaning, whose sensual images are important to both sacred and secular travellers to remember and relive the experience (Smith, 1992). Then these shrines also function as secular tourist attractions due to their artistic or historical significance (Nolan and Nolan, 1992). In keeping with the “Turnerian tradition” in which a tourist is a half-pilgrim, if a pilgrim is a half-tourist, Ambrosio (2007: 87) concludes that “it is possible to theorize about the unification of tourism and pilgrimage as concepts”. Moreover, Collins-Kreiner (2010) assumes that differences between pilgrimages in the past and today’s tourism are vanishing while numerous similar aspects arise. In contrast, Palmer, Begley and Coe (2012) found numerous differences between tourism and pilgrimage (secular / religious, pleasure / faith, curiosity / duty, etc.) and between a tourist and a pilgrim (profane / religious, superficial / deep, playful / committed, etc.).

The aim of this paper is to analyse the motivation of a great number of tourists visiting the Basilica of La Sagrada Família in Barcelona. More specifically, the weight of cultural motives in general and of religious ones in particular is assessed. The methodology consists of two parts: the study of events and circumstances that may have influenced the projected religious or secular image of the basilica, and the analysis of the image perceived by visitors. Perceived image is obtained through a quantitative content analysis of more than 10,000 online travel reviews

(OTRs) on La Sagrada Família, written by foreign tourists from five English-speaking countries. As user-generated content (UGC), OTRs are a trustworthy source for analysing the perceived and transmitted image (Marine-Roig, 2014a). To ensure the quality of the results in the case study, the most suitable websites hosting OTRs are selected by applying a weighted formula, and then these OTRs are downloaded, classified, cleaned and debugged so that the HTML pages collected only contain what is written by the user, preserving the original format. Through a quantitative content analysis, a table displaying the frequencies, density and weight of keywords is constructed, which are in turn categorized, and segmented by nationality, to observe in detail the density and weight of keywords related to feelings and religion.

### **Case study: Basilica of La Sagrada Família in Barcelona (Catalonia)**

Catalonia is a Mediterranean destination with a millenary history, its own culture and language, and a wealthy historical and natural heritage. Its capital is Barcelona, a leading smart city and tourist destination: Cohen (2014) lists Barcelona first in the annual Smartest Cities in the World ranking, and Michael (2014) reports that Barcelona is the sixth most powerful city brand in the world. Regarding the contrast between religious or spiritual pilgrimages and secular pilgrimages, Getz (2008) gives the example of Barcelona and the 1992 Olympics as a kind of city that hosts mega events and has turned event venues into places of pilgrimage, ultimately becoming destinations.

The Basilica (formerly the Expiatory Temple / Church) of La Sagrada Família (The Sacred / Holy Family), (Figure 2) so-called the “unfinished cathedral”, is the most prominent landmark of Barcelona (Sobrer, 2002; Marine-Roig, 2011). The first stone was laid on 19 March 1882. In late 1883 the Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí Cornet took charge of its construction, a task that continued up to his accidental death in 1926. Since then, other architects have continued the work according to his original plans. Because Gaudí’s workshop was destroyed at the time of the Spanish Civil War (Hartman, 2002), there are controversies about Gaudí’s original idea (Moore, 2011).

**Figure 2** Basilica of La Sagrada Família

Author: Official work, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

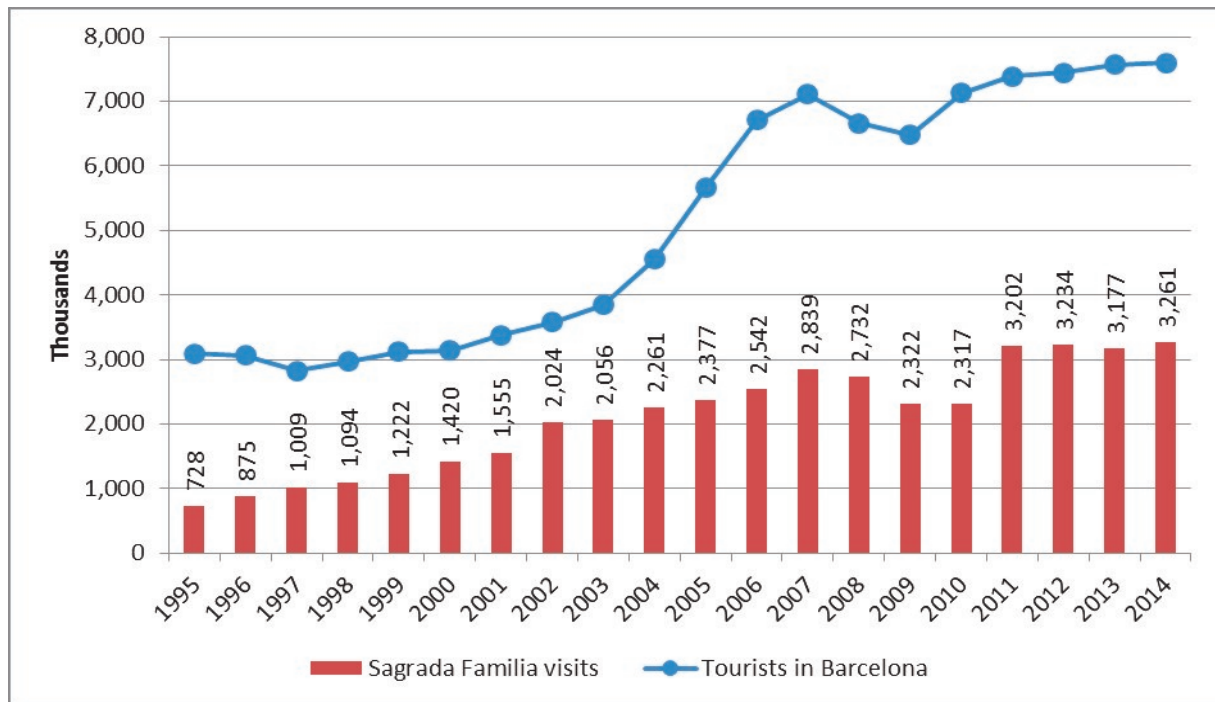
The number of visitors to La Sagrada Família has grown steadily in recent decades except for the period of the global financial crisis (2008-2010 - see Figure 3). A new record of visitors (3,260,880) was reached in 2014, of which 12% were North-American, 10% French, 6% Italian, and 6% English. Time has proved Gaudi right when he said more than a century ago that:

*It will be a temple to which people from all over the world will come to see what we are doing.*  
(Pressitt, 2014).

Figure 3 highlights two milestones: the leap from 1.5 to 2 million visits in 2002 and from 2.3 to 3.2 million in

2011. The year 2002 was declared the “International Year of Gaudi ”, to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the architect’s birth (BBC News, 2002; Hartman, 2002), and in late 2010 the church of La Sagrada Família was raised to the rank of minor basilica by Pope Benedict XVI (Marine-Roig, 2014b). The effects of the 2007 / 2008 global financial crisis can also be perceived in the chart.

Later in this paper, some events and circumstances related with the projected image of La Sagrada Família are described, distinguishing its cultural, spiritual and religious dimensions. In some cases, it is not possible to separate the three aspects, such as in the exhibition

**Figure 3 Trends in the last two decades of visits to La Sagrada Família and tourist influx**

Source: Compiled by author from Statistical yearbook of Barcelona city ([www.bcn.cat/en](http://www.bcn.cat/en))

held in the Vatican City, from 24 November 2011 to 15 January 2012, “Gaudi and the Sagrada Família in Barcelona. Art, Science and Spirituality”, divided into five sections to contemplate different aspects of Gaudi and his work.

Acknowledging the site’s role in the nexus between religion and secularity, in 2011, the Cardinal Archbishop of Barcelona set out a diocesan pastoral plan to support dialogue between faith and culture called the Court of the Gentiles. This is a deliberate move in reference to the outer courtyard of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem which was not reserved for the Jews, but was instead opened to anyone regardless of their culture or religion. Through this initiative La Sagrada Família has become a meeting place for Catholics and non-believers, and the archdiocese informs visitors:

*We remind you that the Basilica is a place for prayer and contemplation. We invite you not only to admire the beauty and majesty of the site on your visit, but also to take part in prayers here.*

There are very few studies dedicated to investigating the motivation of visitors to La Sagrada Família. Poltronieri, Codina, and Pestana (2014) conducted a field study with a random sample of 162 tourists. Participants responded to an ad hoc questionnaire prior to their visit. Despite being able to select more than one option, only 3.7% of respondents selected religious

motivations, in contrast to the 40.7% who indicated their interest in art and architecture, and a high percentage that saw the visit almost as an obligation, due to external pressures.

In a similar case concerning Cathedrals in the United Kingdom, Olsen (2013) assessed that there are very mixed motivations for visiting cathedrals, but that very few visitors considered themselves pilgrims. Generally, visitors expect to learn about the history of the cathedral.

### **Cultural dimension**

There are constant references to the artistic value of La Sagrada Família. In 1915, Papal Nuncio Monsignor Ragonesi visited the church and told Gaudi:

*Maestro, you are the Dante of architecture . . . your magnificent work is a Christian poem carved in stone* (BBC news, 2002).

At the time of the Spanish Civil War, Orwell (1938: 133) described it scornfully:

*a modern cathedral, and one of the most hideous buildings in the world. It has four crenelated spires exactly the shape of hock bottles,*

but comments that unlike most churches in Barcelona it was not damaged by its artistic value.

In 2002 (International Year of Gaudi), Barcelona celebrated the sesquicentennial of Gaudi's birth with a series of events designed to raise awareness of his architectural legacy. Sobrer (2002: 206) described the church highlighting its natural elements:

*In its monumentality, the Sagrada Familia is a triumph, an outburst of imagination and playfulness. The visitor cannot fail to admire the mixture of religious and natural motifs in the church's decoration: columns resting atop sculpted sea turtles, gargoyles in the shape of snails, stony bunches of grapes crowning towers.*

Sobrer concludes that the success of La Sagrada Familia is touristic, that is to say, a laic success, and considers that the current laic signification of La Sagrada Familia opposes its original expiatory programme (atonement for societal sins).

### **Heritage status**

Religious buildings were among the earliest and largest group of UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) in the first 20 years of this recognition (Di Giovine, 2009). Still, to this day, more than half of WHS are religious or sacred sites (Levi and Kocher, 2012). On 15 July 2005, the Crypt and the Nativity façade were registered as cultural sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List, along with other masterpieces that were already included since 1984. In the justification for inscription it is said that:

*Gaudi's work represents the genius of the architect, expressing particular spatial qualities and plasticity in the undulating lines and harmonies of colours and materials in architectural surfaces and sculpted features. His main undertaking is the church of Sagrada Familia, based on the Latin cross. (UNESCO, 2015).*

However, in relation to the impact of its declaration as a WHS on the cultural projected image, Palau-Saumell, Forgas-Coll, Sanchez-Garcia, and Prats-Planaguma (2013) found that 45.53% of a sample of 883 visitors to La Sagrada Familia did not know that it was a WHS.

### **Spiritual dimension**

Eade (2000) makes the distinction between the religious and spiritual motives of pilgrims, understood as the difference between orthodoxy and personal devotion. That is to say, the spiritual motives reflect the emphasis on the personal or transcendent spirituality before religious orthodoxy.

The spiritual dimension of La Sagrada Familia is influenced by the spirituality of Gaudi. Asked once

why it was taking so long to finish La Sagrada Familia, Gaudi replied "My client - meaning God - is not in a hurry" (Moore, 2011). When he died, his countrymen already considered him a saint; the director of the Archdiocesan Museum wrote an article calling Gaudi "God's Architect" (Rose, 2000). On 9 July 2003, the decree opening the process of Gaudi's beatification was signed at the Vatican Congregation for Sainthood Causes.

In relation to the emotional or spiritual involvement of visitors to a sacred place, Poria, Butler and Airey (2003) found that the religious background of the tourists was associated with their perception of the site; those tourists with strong religious beliefs were more emotionally involved than those who expressed weaker belief or than those belonging to other religious groups.

Some conversions resulting from the architecture of La Sagrada Familia have been documented (Rose, 2000). In contrast to Poria *et al.* (2003), the most outstanding conversions involved two Japanese men with very different religious and cultural backgrounds to the Judeo-Christian tradition. One is the architect Kenji Imai who travelled to Barcelona two months after Gaudi died; La Sagrada Familia made such an impression on him that after a time he converted to Catholicism. The other convert is the sculptor Etsuro Sotou who stayed to work on La Sagrada Familia.

In an autobiographical essay, Condon (2014) tells the story of the life she shared with her mother, Suzy, who was diagnosed with chronic / progressive multiple sclerosis in 1973 and who died on 31 May 2013. This author makes the spiritual dimension of La Sagrada Familia very clear when she narrates the impression caused by their visit to it:

*The cathedral, it seemed to us, appeared as if a mountain had melted away and left its heart, revealed, both to grace humanity with hope and to tremble our certitudes. Or, we said, if to see the shifting qualities of light across the face of the Grand Canyon was to view the mind of God as nature might reveal it, to see the Sagrada Familia was to view the mind of God as the human imagination at its apex might conceive it (p. 4).*

In the same sense, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI said:

*What do we do when we dedicate this church? In the heart of the world, placed before God and mankind, with a humble and joyful act of faith, we raise up this massive material structure, fruit of nature and an immense achievement of human intelligence which gave birth to this work of art. It stands as a visible*

*sign of the invisible God, to whose glory these spires rise like arrows pointing towards absolute light and to the One who is Light, Height and Beauty itself (Pontiff's homily at Gaudi's Holy Family Church, 7 November 2010.)"*

In Figure 4, the spires described by Orwell (1938) and by the Pope are seen from below.

### **Religious dimension**

On the one hand, as a worship centre, the church has its parishioners who regularly attend Mass and other religious ceremonies and on the other, it is a religious tourism attraction.

Josan (2009) suggests that pilgrimage can be seen as a rudimentary form of modern tourism, in which religious edifices become tourist attraction factors or heritage sites, and classifies attractors of religious tourism into: Holy places, religious edifices and artistic objects of worship. In the religious buildings section she asserts (p. 165):

*The wonder of the 20th century is undoubtedly La Sagrada Família in Barcelona, masterpiece of the famous architect Antoni Gaudi. Its designer used to say about it: My model is a tree. It has branches with leaves on them. And everything is developing harmoniously. A tree does not need help from the outside. Things*

**Figure 4 Sagrada Família. Passion façade**



Author: Mstyslav Chernov, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons



*themselves are in harmony. Everything is in equilibrium.* (Figure 5)

The main event in relation to projecting the religious image of La Sagrada Família, undoubtedly was the ceremony of consecration on 7 November 2010 by the Pope (Marine-Roig, 2014b). Benedict XVI dedicated the church, to which he gave the title of minor basilica, with the bull *Templum Dei et Christifidelium communitatis*, dated and sealed with the Ring of the Fisherman on that same day in Barcelona.

The centrepiece of the religious events saw the Pope holding Mass with 100 bishops and 1,000 priests attended by 6,500 faithful inside the church and 51,000 people sitting in the surrounding areas. For the media coverage of the religious event, 2,319 journalists were accredited from 327 different media outlets. The

**Figure 5 Sagrada Família. Ceiling of the nave**



Author: Mstyslav Chernov, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

official images were supplied to more than 1,000 TV channels worldwide.

However, Ordeix and Lalueza (2012) conclude that the figure of Benedict XVI obtained more publicity than La Sagrada Família in the media, and gives some possible reasons for that: An improved public relations' strategy by the Vatican in detriment to the one undertaken by the representatives of the basilica; which was depicted as a mere scenario for the world to acquaint itself with the ideas of Benedict XVI; and that written media tend to focus more on people than on things.

### Content analysis of OTRs on La Sagrada Família

The content analysis of the OTRs is divided into three phases with their corresponding steps (Marine-Roig and Anton Clave, 2015):

- Data collection (website selection, hyperlinks analysis, and data download),
  - Pre-processing (arranging, cleaning and debugging) and
  - Analysis (parser settings and categorization);
- in addition to analysing the set of OTRs.

#### Data collection

This phase consisted of the selection of the most suitable sources for the case study and of downloading with a web copier the most significant OTRs and storing them on the local hard disk.

**Website selection** - Based on previous works, websites hosting OTRs with more than 100 entries about La Sagrada Família were selected, and a structure was established which allows downloading, classifying and processing reviews. Next, to be able to select the most suitable websites for the case study, a ranking was built by applying the weighted formula (Marine-Roig, 2014)  $TBRH = 1*B(V) + 1*B(P) + 2*B(S)$ , where 'B' is Borda's ordering method, 'V' stands for website (quantity and quality of inbound links), 'P' stands for its popularity (received visits and general traffic), and 'S' the size (number of entries related to the case study). In Table 1, the 3 top websites of the classification can be seen: TripAdvisor.com (TA), TravelPod.com (TP) and VirtualTourist.com (VT).

TA hosts OTRs, TP hosts travel blogs and some OTRs, and VT is a virtual community which hosts travel pages, travelogues and OTRs. Subsequently, it was observed that the OTRs in TP did not have a suitable structure to automatize the process, which is why finally TA and VT were selected.

**Table 1 Webometrics of the top three websites hosting OTRs (2015-03-01)**

Webometric	Source	TA*	TP**	VT***
Indexed pages	Google.com	239,000,000	389,000	553,000
	Bing.com	3,030,000	50,800	72,400
Link-based rank	Google PR	7	6	7
	Yandex CY	1,700	325	350
Visit-based rank	Compete.com	52	13,595	2,488
	Quantcast.com	168	8,474	4,276
	Alexa.com	212	27,390	5,644
Size	Entries	18,452	250	392
TBRH	Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

\* TA = TripAdvisor.com / \*\* TP = TravelPod.com / \*\*\* VT = VirtualTourist.com

**Hyperlink analysis** - According to Liu (2011), web structure mining discovers practical knowledge from hyperlinks, which represent the structure of the Web, and from anchor text associated with hyperlinks. To be able to configure the web copier we must search the URLs (Uniform Resource Locator) from the start pages manually, as they contain the hyperlinks that point to the OTRs, and assess which filters are more adequate to download only the webpages of interest.

This step is important, because, for example, TA hosts 200 million pages and all of them are interlinked at several levels.

**Start webpages** - By introducing the keyword “Barcelona” in the search box of TA and VT we find the start pages of the OTRs on La Sagrada Família and their URL can be extracted in the navigation bar:

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g187497-d190166-Reviews-Basilica\\_of\\_the\\_Sagrada\\_Familia-Barcelona\\_Catalonia.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g187497-d190166-Reviews-Basilica_of_the_Sagrada_Familia-Barcelona_Catalonia.html)

[http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Europe/Spain/Catalunya/Barcelona-274654/Things\\_To\\_Do-Barcelona-Sagrada\\_Familia-BR-1.html](http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Europe/Spain/Catalunya/Barcelona-274654/Things_To_Do-Barcelona-Sagrada_Familia-BR-1.html)

TA has over 4,000 start webpages and VT about 30. These pages contain hyperlinks that lead to OTRs.

**Filters** - These start webpages contain many hyperlinks that must be filtered in order to avoid the unnecessary overload of the webhost, reducing download time and saving space on the local hard disk. The filters can be of file type, level, URL and content (Marine-Roig and Anton Clave, 2015). In the case of TA we can see that the filename of all OTRs contains the name and the code of La Sagrada Família (d190166), therefore it is only necessary to include a filename filter with such keyword. Conversely, the URL of VT’s OTRs does not have the name or the code of La Sagrada Família, but we see that all files contain the name in an HTML entity (<span class=“headingTitle”>Sagrada Família</

span>), hence it is necessary to include a content filter in order to avoid having to store all types of webpages.

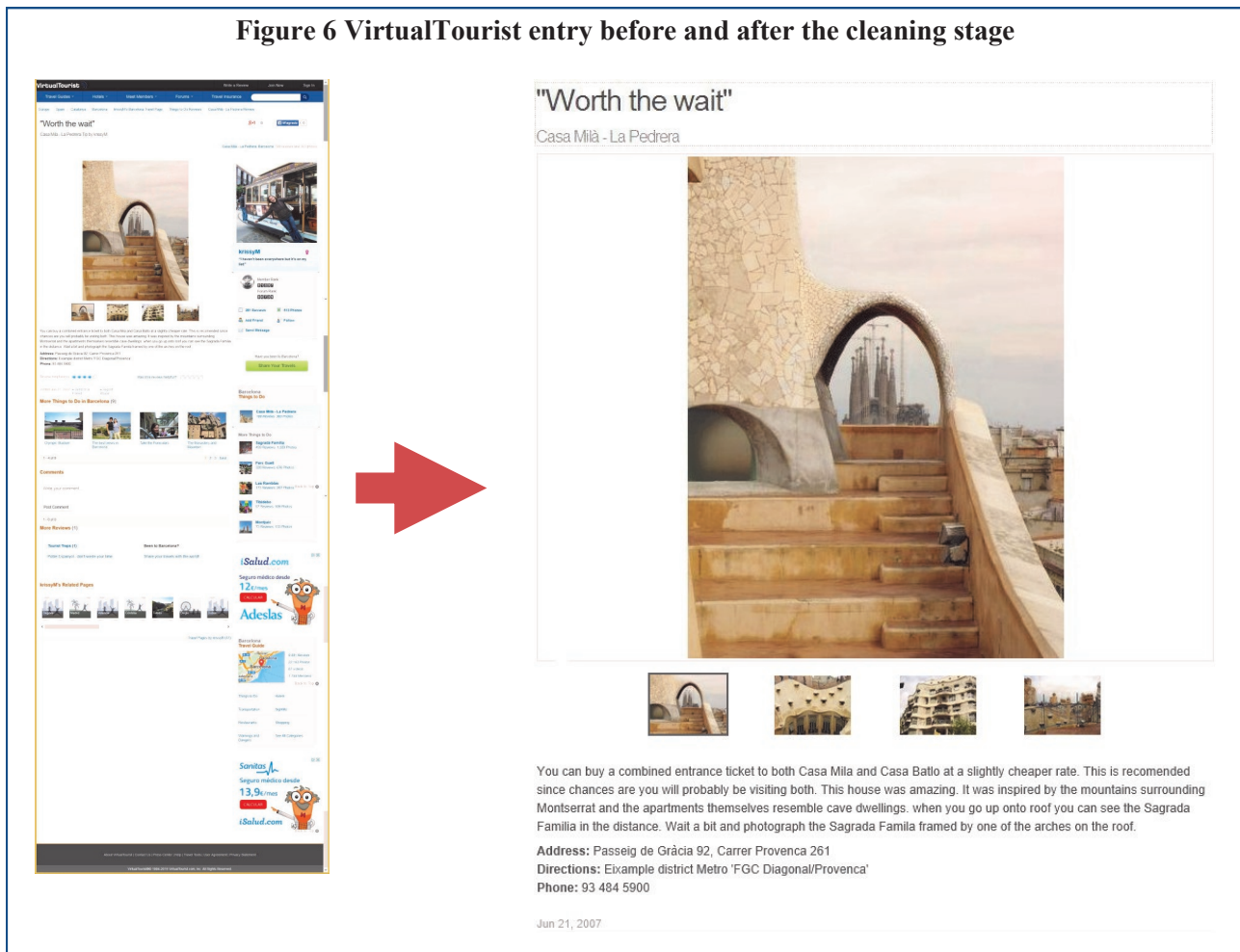
**Data download** - To download the OTRs we used the Offline Explorer Enterprise (OEE) web copier because it has the capacity to download up to 100 million URLs per project, and the fastest possible multi-threaded processing of downloaded files by using all CPU cores (MetaProducts.com). OEE was configured with the list of start webpages, the previously mentioned filters, and a file type (HTML) filter. The HTML pages are text-based files which occupy little space, and we can access the associated files (images, multimedia, etc.), of a considerable size, via an Internet connection.

### **Pre-processing**

In this phase the dataset was prepared to improve the efficiency of the analysis phase and to guarantee the quality of results. The objective was to reduce the downloaded webpages to the OTR written by the user, avoiding the most common mistakes and preserving the HTML format.

**Arranging** - The names of downloaded HTML files do not provide enough information for their classification. To solve this, through the use of an ad hoc programme, the character string was concatenated at the beginning of the filename: “date\_lang\_isFrom”, with ‘date’ being the date of the review in the format ‘YYYYMMDD’ based on the ISO 8061 norm which enables both alphabetical ordering and numerical by dates; ‘lang’ two-letter language code (ISO 639-1); and ‘isFrom’ two-letter country code (ISO-3166-2) of user’s hometown.

**Cleaning** - In this step, all elements on the HTML page that were not written by the user were eliminated, without altering the original format. In figure 6 we can observe an OTR, with La Sagrada Família framed by one of the arches on the roof of Mila House / La Pedrera (WHS), before and after the cleaning process.

**Figure 6 VirtualTourist entry before and after the cleaning stage**

**Debugging** - An analysis must be performed prior to detecting the most common mistakes (MCM), especially in the spelling of proper nouns (destinations and tourist attraction factors) that are frequently made by many of the foreign visitors. In addition, the Catalan language has vowels with accents which have a special codification in HTML. Before the analysis phase, it is necessary to substitute the MCM with the correct word and the special coding with their corresponding Latin character (ISO 8859-15).

### Analysis

Farahani and Mohamed (2013) in their work, study the relationships between nationality, culture and religion, and tourist behaviour; they include multiple searches, which confirm the influence of nationality on tourist behaviour and remark that the Saudis behave differently from other Arab tourists because of their strong religious beliefs. Therefore, in this phase, in addition to the analysis of the whole set of OTRs on La Sagrada Família, analysis segmented by nationality was conducted. Thus, we selected the five English-speaking countries with the highest number of OTRs: Australia (au), Canada (ca), Ireland (ie), the United Kingdom (uk) and the United States of America (us).

The Site Content Analyzer (SCA) programme was selected to conduct keyword counts. This software generates a CSV (comma-separated values) file for each OTR conveying all the words appearing in that entry-file, their frequency, density and weight. It parses online and offline for keywords, suggests the most relevant and weighty phrases, and analyses link structure (CleverStat.com). Subsequently, keywords are grouped into categories in order to analyse the perceived image of users.

**Parser settings** - SCA enables the configuring of multiple parser features, but the most interesting are: black list, composite-words list, and weight of HTML tag and position of keywords. The black list contains stop words, i.e. insignificant words, such as adverbs, articles, conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns. The composite-words list consists of groups of words with their own meaning as “Basilica of La Sagrada Família”. SCA gives a greater weight to keywords situated in the upper part of the webpage, in the title and other headings, as well as their emphasis (bold, italic or underline font).

**Categorization** - As Stemler (2001) states, content analysis has been defined as a technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content

categories. Categories are groups of words with similar meaning or connotations and must be independent, mutually exclusive, and exhaustive. There are two approaches to coding data: a priori code applying a theory to establish categories, and emerging code that requires some preliminary analysis of the data.

To analyse the feelings of visitors, two categories were built (good feelings and bad feelings), based on a list of English and American positive and negative words, considering the word root and the endings, such as from amaze (positive), amazed, amazing and amazement, or from annoy (negative), annoyed, annoying and annoyance. Composite words which change the sense of the feeling have also been considered, for example “nice” and “not nice”, “not so nice” or “not very nice”.

To count the words related to religion, first several words directly related to Christianity were included in the category, such as priest, clergyman, archbishop, pontiff or Virgin Mary.

Then some words related to the religious symbolism of La Sagrada Família were extracted from the official website ([www.sagradafamilia.cat](http://www.sagradafamilia.cat)), because although some may be common words it is highly probable that they will refer to religious terms in the context of an OTR about a visit to the basilica. For example, Nativity (birth of Jesus the Messiah), Passion (the pain, the sacrifice and the death of Jesus) and Glory (heaven) are common words but are the names of three façades of La Sagrada Família, as well as the three portals of the Nativity façade devoted to the Theological virtues (Faith, Hope and Charity). Conversely, significant words such as “Mass” have not been included because SCA is a case-insensitive parser and confuses “Mass” (Catholic prayer services) with “mass” (a large amount).

Finally, a preliminary frequency analysis was conducted in order to include other related frequent keywords in the categories that were written by the authors of OTRs.

## Results

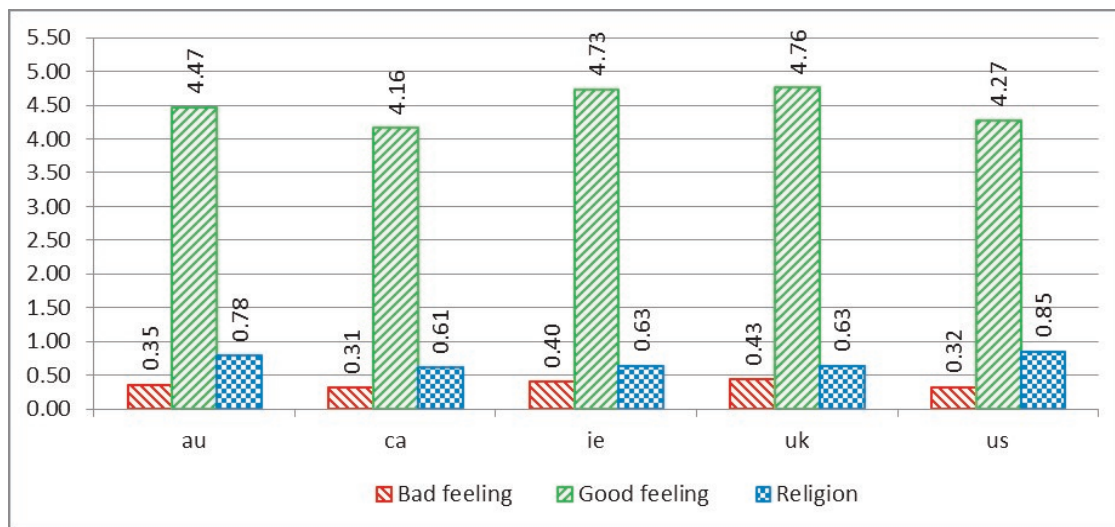
The preliminary quantitative content analysis included all 18,884 OTRs on La Sagrada Família written in English, without segmenting by nationality. Table 2 includes the 25 most frequent keywords ordered by number of appearances of each word. As expected, Sagrada Família and Barcelona have the greatest density and weight, and remarkably the Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, designer of the church, appears in fifth position. In 3rd, 8th, 19th and 24th position, four positive adjectives appear (amazing, beautiful, stunning and breathtaking) with a considerable weight; altogether they account for 23,377 appearances, i.e. an average of 1.24 good feelings per OTR.

Table 2 also shows several common words which are related to the material structure (church, building, tower, architecture, cathedral, basilica and construction). It is remarkable, that in 4th position, the keyword “ticket/s” appears, which is directly related to “line”, “online”, “queue” and “wait”, given that in La Sagrada Família there is an average of about 9,000 daily visitors, it is normal that most OTRs mention the online purchase of tickets, the long lines or queues for the box office and the waiting time to enter (Figure 4). On 8 January 2011, an open Saturday with free entrance during the morning, over 20,000 people visited the basilica (Marine-Roig, 2014b).

**Table 2 Most frequent keywords of 17,751 unique English words**

Rank	Keyword	Count	Sitewide Density	Average Weight
01	sagrada família	44,977	4.39%	78.84
02	barcelona	28,948	2.83%	70.71
03	amazing	11,306	1.10%	29.93
04	tickets	10,682	1.04%	7.72
05	gaudi	8,720	0.85%	12.77
06	church	8,097	0.79%	12.69
07	visit	8,049	0.78%	13.86
08	beautiful	6,302	0.61%	25.64
09	building	5,898	0.58%	10.77
10	tower	5,370	0.52%	3.00
11	line	5,325	0.52%	5.47
12	online	5,090	0.50%	11.39
13	architecture	4,808	0.47%	19.56
14	place	4,524	0.44%	14.36
15	tour	4,514	0.44%	5.16
16	book	3,635	0.35%	15.38
17	cathedral	3,315	0.32%	13.26
18	work	3,273	0.32%	10.89
19	stunning	3,009	0.29%	32.01
20	basilica	2,977	0.29%	9.65
21	seen	2,961	0.29%	11.56
22	queue	2,946	0.29%	6.85
23	construction	2,846	0.28%	8.69
24	breathtaking	2,760	0.27%	34.22
25	wait	2,705	0.26%	2.85

**Figure 7 Site-wide density of keywords related to feelings and religion categories**



Source: 11,033 OTRs written by tourists from five English-speaking countries

Figure 7 represents the frequency (site-wide density) of the keywords in the three categories as percentages with respect to the total words (i.e. also counting stop words). We observe that good feelings represent more than 90% of all feelings in all cases, which may indicate that the visit satisfies the tourists' expectations. Segmenting by nationality, we observe that the British and Irish stand out for their higher percentage of good feelings, and American and Australian visitors stand out in the religiousness category.

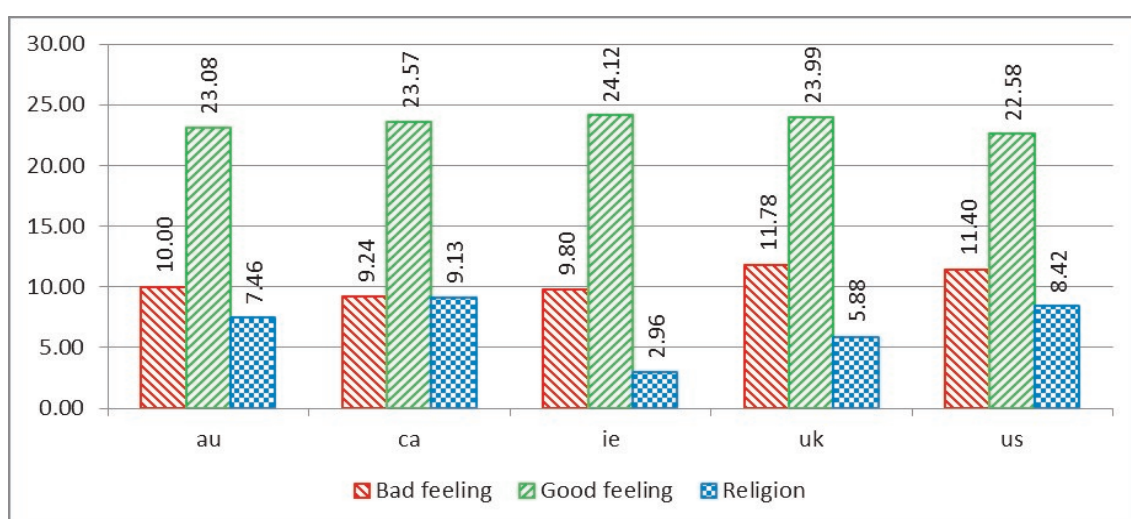
Figure 8 shows the average weight of keywords (HTML emphasis of words) in the three categories. In it, we can observe that the weight of good feelings

represents more than two thirds of the average weight of feelings. Segmenting by nationality, it coincides that the Irish and British, who stand out for the density of good feelings, are also noteworthy in terms of weighting, and religion is the most prominent category for Canadian and American visitors.

### Conclusions

From the analysis of the spiritual, religious and cultural dimensions of La Sagrada Família, we can of course see that this Roman Catholic church is a worship centre for its parishioners who regularly attend Mass and other religious ceremonies, but cannot be considered a religious tourism attractor. This paper's

**Figure 8 Average weight of keywords related to feelings and religion categories**



Source: 11,033 OTRs written by tourists from five English-speaking countries

results are along the lines of the survey conducted by Poltronieri et al. (2014), which found that religious motivations do not reach 4%, while more than 40% indicate their interest in art and architecture, reinforcing the idea of the “Courtyard of the Gentiles” initiative which recognizes the weight of non-Catholic visitors.

Indeed, in the quantitative analysis, from the 18,844 OTRs we observe that keywords related to religion have some density but a smaller weight than those related to good feelings. As a general rule, these positive adjectives qualify artistic or architectural aspects of the church, not religious ones. In the analysis of the 11,033 OTRs segmented by nationality, it is observed that the British and Irish tourists stand out for the high density and weight of good feelings, and American tourists stand out for the high frequency of mentions of religion-related keywords.

Moreover, it is remarkable that much of tourists’ perceived (and transmitted) image of the church emphasizes aspects such as the ticket process or the queues and waiting times, which aspects could be of interest to La Sagrada Família managers in order to improve tourists’ experiences.

In conclusion, the results suggest a prevalence of cultural (artistic or architectural) over religious motives for visiting La Sagrada Família.

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