

“The Gay-Friendliness Index of World Cities”<sup>1</sup>

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This report presents the first-ever index of “gay-friendliness” of world cities. This index ranks leading cities according to how many GLBT-owned or GLBT-friendly organizations exist in the most important cities in the world. The data is extracted from *Spartacus*, a publication that for the past 38 years has been producing a directory of GLBT businesses and organizations in cities worldwide. Billed as the world’s best “international gay guide,” *Spartacus* publishes an annual directory of GLBT-friendly business and organization addresses in the main cities of approximately 160 countries, for a total of almost 22,000 addresses. Precisely because its mission is to help gay travelers find gay friendly establishments and resources abroad, *Spartacus* is a useful source for measuring the GLBT organizational density of world cities.

To construct this index, we counted the number of GLBT-friendly businesses (bars, clubs, discos; coffee shops; discos; restaurants; hotels; book shops; sex shops; saunas/gay baths; leather clubs; publications) and organizations (gay centers; gay liberation; religious groups; health services; help; gay radio stations; switchboards, help lines) as listed in *Spartacus*. Column A reports this number. We listed the top three most populous cities for each country. We did not include cities with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants. The total list includes 180 world cities.

The problem with the figures in Column A is that they do not correct for population size. A city of 2 million is likely to have far fewer GLBT organizations than a larger city. To correct for population size, we divided the total number of GLBT businesses and organizations by each city’s population, to come up with the number of GLBT establishments per 1 million inhabitants. Column B reports the results.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Lee Badgett for her comments, and Sarah Harper and Rachel Meketon for their research assistance.

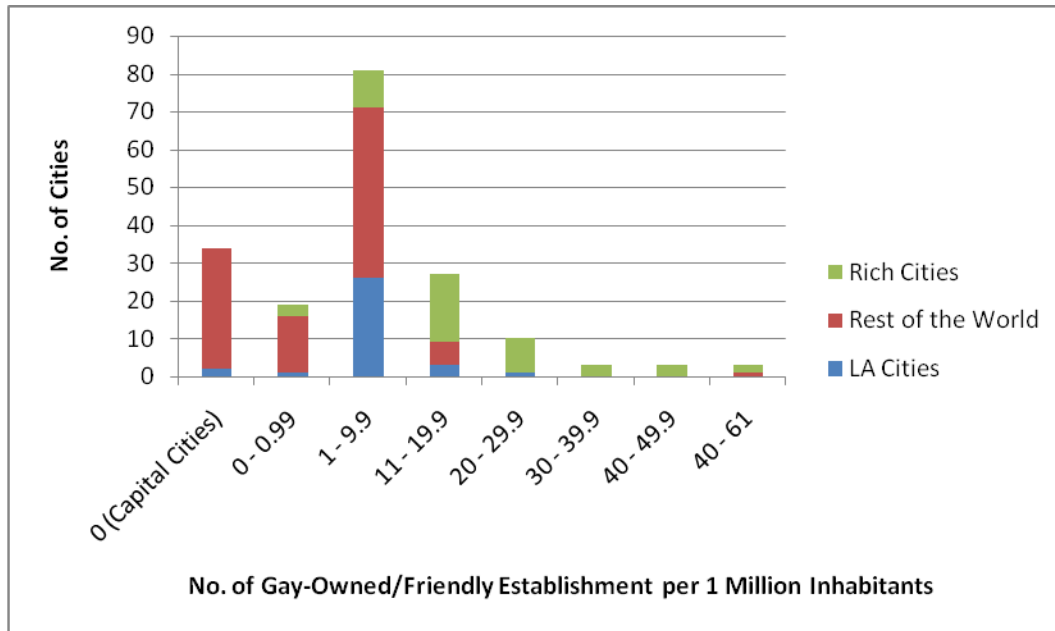
Several features stand out:

- 1) First, there is a wide-spectrum of gay density, ranging from cities with zero data to very gay friendly: cities that have 30 or more gay establishments per 1 million inhabitants (see Figure 1)
  - 2) The top 10 cities in the index include, not surprisingly, the world's "richest" cities.<sup>2</sup>
  - 3) Most Latin American cities are located in intermediate positions—not quite at the bottom (score of zero to 0.99), not quite at the top of the list (the 30 to 61 range). Only two of 33 Latin American cities have zero scores (Port-au-Prince and Tegucigalpa).
  - 4) Some Latin American cities do quite well, with per capita scores that are higher than New York City: Montevideo, San José, Quito (remember, it's a per capita index)
- 5) Most Latin American cities do much better than the majority of cities in the developing world (the majority of which are at the very bottom of the list (in the 0 to 0.99 range).
- 1) First, there is a wide-spectrum of GLBT organizational density, ranging from cities with zero data (meaning that the editors of *Spartacus* were unable to identify or report GLBT-friendly businesses and organizations) to very gay friendly-cities (Rome tops the list with 61 GLBT establishments for every one million inhabitant).
  - 2) The top 10 cities in the index include mostly cities in rich countries.
  - 3) Latin American cities do not fare so badly: most are located in intermediate positions—not quite at the bottom (score of zero), not quite at the top of the list (see Figure 1).
  - 4) Some Latin American cities do quite well, with per capita scores that are higher than New York City: Montevideo, San José, Quito.
  - 5) Only two Latin American cities have zero scores (Port-au-Prince and Tegucigalpa).
  - 6) Most Latin American cities rank higher than most developing country cities.

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<sup>2</sup> Cities include cities in the richest countries in the world, including Western Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

Figure 1: Gay Density Index by World City



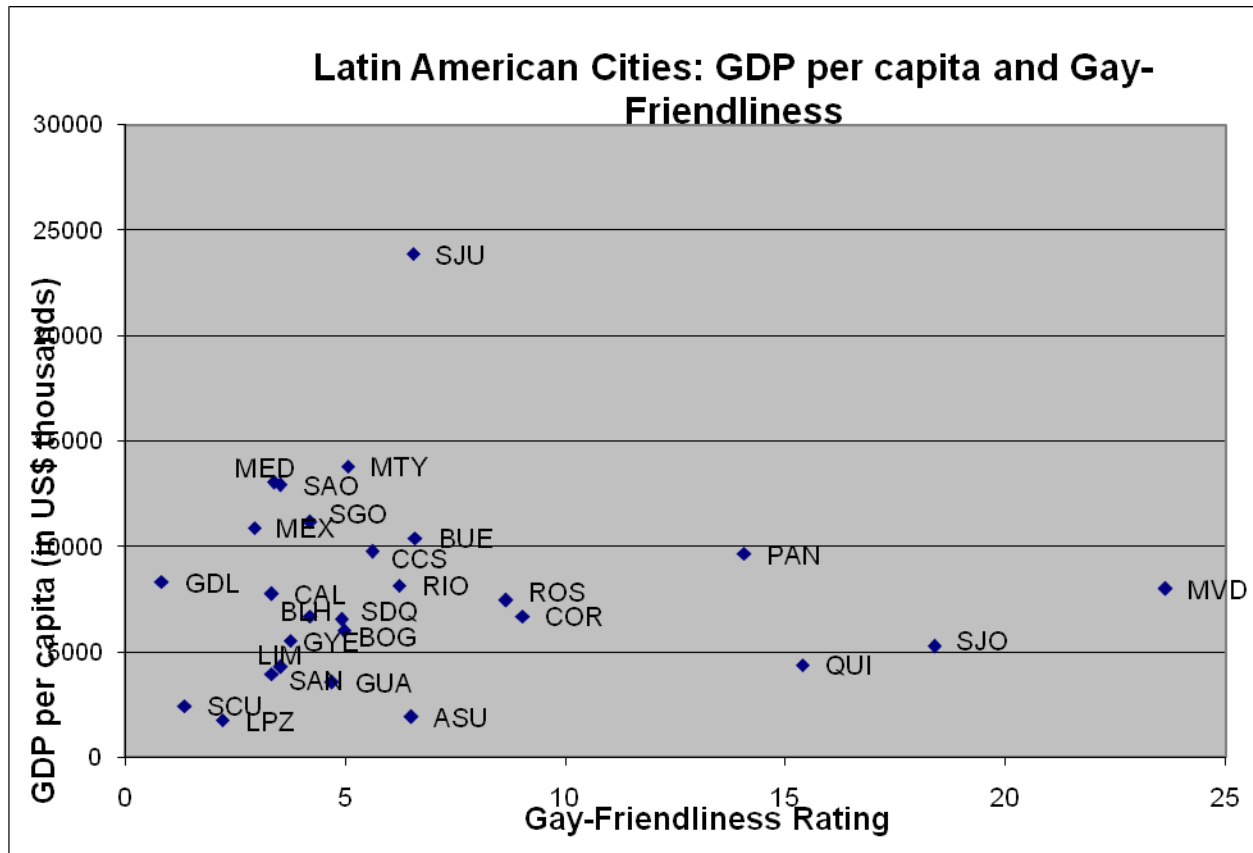
This gay-friendliness index must be treated with caution, for a number of reasons. First, the index is somewhat biased *against* cities with the larger populations. In the index, a city such as Asunción, with only 13 GLBT establishments, appears higher on the ranking than New York City, with 140 establishments; Asunción’s population (2 million) is far smaller than New York’s (21.8 million). Furthermore, it is fair to assume that in larger cities, there is a greater chance of “missing data,” since it is harder for researchers to find all GLBT establishments in large environments. Third, the source used, *Spartacus*, was not created by scholars but by an organization that is trying to explore the tourism-friendliness of cities. It is thus somewhat biased towards more touristy destinations—mostly Europe and North America—the regions of the world that in fact receive the largest influx of tourists. Fourth, the lack of open GLBT establishments does not mean that the city’s gay underground life is non-vibrant or unsafe. The index thus underreports an important component of GLBT life—that which occurs in private domains. Fifth, the index makes no mention of the legal and illegal forms of discrimination or protection environment. Sixth, the index does not take into consideration risk factors such as the incidence of hate crime or gender-based crimes, the extent of sexual epidemics, and the gay-friendliness of health services in each city, all of which affect the quality of life of sexual minorities.

Yet, the index does provide the best account of the openness of GLBT organizations in world cities. The index shows clearly that Latin American major cities, on a per capita basis, are not gay deserts any more. They may not be as filled with GLBT organizations as European capitals such as Rome, Amsterdam, and Berlin, but they are not as empty as so many cities in the developing world continue to be, or as those very same cities were in the recent past.

In addition, the index reveals a number of interesting puzzles for future researchers to

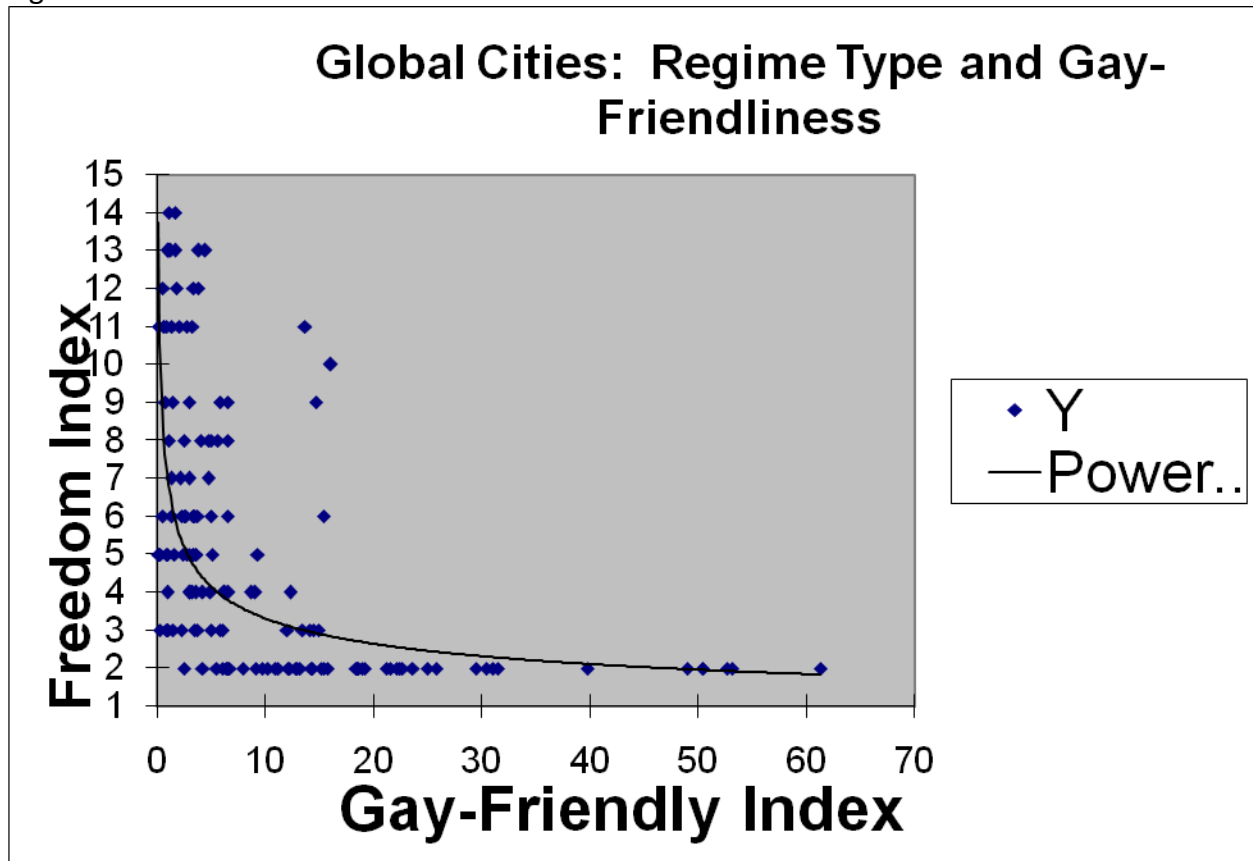
unravel. First, the ranking cannot be explained by income levels, which is usually a variable considered to be a strong predictor of strong associational life. Figure 2 plots the relation between the index score for Latin American cities and a measure of each city's per capita income calculated by the magazine *América Economía*. There is virtually no correlation.

Figure 2



A better predictor of gay-friendliness is “regime type.” Figure 3 shows the correlation between the GLBT-friendliness index and levels of democracy in the country where the city is located. The measure of regime type used is the “Freedom in the World Index” produced by Freedom House. This Freedom Index assigns two scores per country: one for political liberties (ranging from 1, freest, to 7, least free) and one for civil liberties (same scoring). Figure 3 adds both the civil and political liberties scores, creating a scale ranging from freest countries (2 points, one for political liberties plus one for civil liberties) to least free countries (14 points, seven for political liberties plus seven for civil liberties). Figure 3 shows, not surprisingly, the cities in mostly authoritarian regimes (those scoring 7-15) tend to have low gay-friendliness scores, suggesting that regime features matters: authoritarianism tends to block a city's gay-friendliness.

Figure 3



However, even this predictor is imperfect. It's not correct to say that the more democratic countries will always yield the most gay-friendly cities. Along the 2 score for regime type, there is far greater variation in gay friendliness values. Levels of democracy seem to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for gay-friendliness. Not all democracies have the same level of gay-friendliness.

3 most populous cities	population (in 1000s)	Spartacus '07 no. of bus.	Spartacus '07 no. of org.	Column A	Column B (per capita)
				Org + bus	D + E / C
1 Rome	3100	81	109	190	61.29032258
2 Amsterdam	1900	93	8	101	53.15789474
3 Prague	1310	62	7	69	52.67175573
4 Antwerp	1110	51	5	56	50.45045045
5 Zürich	1110	51	5	56	50.45045045
6 Berlin	4225	196	11	207	48.99408284
7 Brussels	1910	70	6	76	39.79057592
8 Montréal	3750	111	7	118	31.46666667
9 Barcelona	4150	119	10	129	31.08433735
10 Copenhagen	1380	33	9	42	30.43478261
11 Vienna	1970	50	8	58	29.44162437
12 Stockholm	1900	45	4	49	25.78947368
13 Helsinki	1120	24	4	28	25
14 Montevideo	1650	39	0	39	23.63636364
15 Auckland	1280	26	3	29	22.65625
16 Dublin	1070	20	4	24	22.42990654
17 Valencia (Spain)	1580	34	1	35	22.15189873
18 Budapest	2275	41	8	49	21.53846154
19 Madrid	5950	122	4	126	21.17647059
20 Lisbon	2925	53	3	56	19.14529915
21 Sydney	4375	73	10	83	18.97142857
22 Oslo	807	14	1	15	18.58736059
23 Paris	9950	179	5	184	18.49246231
24 Milan	3525	58	7	65	18.43971631
25 San José	1360	25	0	25	18.38235294
26 Bangkok	8550	135	2	137	16.02339181
27 Manchester	2475	37	2	39	15.75757576
28 Quito	1690	25	1	26	15.38461538
29 Lyon	1430	22	0	22	15.38461538
30 Vancouver	2175	29	4	33	15.17241379
31 Thessaloniki	806	11	1	12	14.88833747
32 Beirut	1360	20	0	20	14.70588235
33 Riga	761	11	0	11	14.45466491
34 Stuttgart	2650	38	0	38	14.33962264
35 Marseille	1470	21	0	21	14.28571429
36 Panama City	1280	18	0	18	14.0625
37 Phnom Penh	1390	18	1	19	13.66906475
38 Athens	3500	42	5	47	13.42857143
39 Rhein-Ruhr North	5750	73	3	76	13.2173913
40 Melbourne	3725	41	7	48	12.88590604
41 Rotterdam	1480	18	1	19	12.83783784
42 Cape Town	3575	41	3	44	12.30769231
43 London	12000	142	5	147	12.25

44 Toronto	5300	60	4	64	12.0754717
45 Sofia	1250	13	2	15	12
46 Göteborg	803	8	1	9	11.20797011
47 Porto	1370	15	0	15	10.94890511
48 The Hague	1370	13	1	14	10.2189781
49 Warsaw	2375	18	5	23	9.684210526
50 Belgrade	1510	10	4	14	9.271523179
51 Brisbane	1860	14	3	17	9.139784946
52 Córdoba (Arg)	1550	14	0	14	9.032258065
53 Rosario	1270	9	2	11	8.661417323
54 Chicago	9750	72	5	77	7.897435897
55 Los Angeles	17900	117	3	120	6.703910615
56 Buenos Aires	13500	80	9	89	6.592592593
57 San Juan	2750	18	0	18	6.545454545
58 Johor Baharu	1070	7	0	7	6.542056075
59 Asunción	2000	13	0	13	6.5
60 Singapore	4775	29	2	31	6.492146597
61 Lodz	1090	7	0	7	6.422018349
62 New York	21800	128	12	140	6.422018349
63 Rio de Janeiro	12200	75	1	76	6.229508197
64 Zagreb	1124	7	0	7	6.227758007
65 Naples	3300	17	3	20	6.060606061
66 Taipei	6950	41	1	42	6.043165468
67 Tel Aviv-Jaffa	3100	13	5	18	5.806451613
68 Yerevan	1210	7	0	7	5.785123967
69 Caracas	4800	24	3	27	5.625
70 Birmingham	2550	14	0	14	5.490196078
71 Monterrey	3950	20	0	20	5.063291139
72 Bogotá	8450	42	0	42	4.970414201
73 Tbilisi	1210	6	0	6	4.958677686
74 Haifa	1010	4	1	5	4.95049505
75 Santo Domingo	3050	14	1	15	4.918032787
76 Colombo	2500	11	1	12	4.8
77 Guatemala City	2125	10	0	10	4.705882353
78 Minsk	1800	7	1	8	4.444444444
79 Belo Horizonte	5700	22	2	24	4.210526316
80 Santiago (Chi)	5950	24	1	25	4.201680672
81 Maracaibo	2225	9	0	9	4.04494382
82 Aleppo	2875	11	0	11	3.826086957
83 Hanoi	2125	8	0	8	3.764705882
84 Guayaquil	2400	9	0	9	3.75
85 Taichung	2425	9	0	9	3.711340206
86 Kiev	3325	7	5	12	3.609022556
87 Lima	8200	26	3	29	3.536585366
88 São Paulo	20400	68	4	72	3.529411765
89 Istanbul	11700	41	0	41	3.504273504
90 Kaohsiung	2925	10	0	10	3.418803419
91 Ho Chi Minh City	5600	19	0	19	3.392857143
92 Medellín	3550	12	0	12	3.38028169
93 Cali	2700	9	0	9	3.333333333

94 San Salvador	2400	8	0	8	3.333333333
95 Donetsk	1807	5	1	6	3.320420587
96 Kharkov	1830	6	0	6	3.278688525
97 Durban	3375	11	0	11	3.259259259
98 Almaty	1230	4	0	4	3.25203252
99 Johannesburg	7700	23	0	23	2.987012987
100 Kathmandu	1340	4	0	4	2.985074627
101 Mexico City	22100	60	5	65	2.941176471
102 Lusaka	1700	5	0	5	2.941176471
103 Bucharest	2050	5	1	6	2.926829268
104 Surabaya	2925	8	0	8	2.735042735
105 Saint Petersburg	4775	9	4	13	2.722513089
106 Managua	1120	3	0	3	2.678571429
107 Kuala Lumpur	4450	11	0	11	2.471910112
108 Katowice	2850	7	0	7	2.456140351
109 Izmir	2850	7	0	7	2.456140351
110 Dakar	2525	6	0	6	2.376237624
111 Busan	3575	8	0	8	2.237762238
112 La Paz	1800	4	0	4	2.222222222
113 Metro Manila	15400	33	0	33	2.142857143
114 Moscow	13400	24	4	28	2.089552239
115 Tunis	2250	4	0	4	1.777777778
116 Havana	2375	4	0	4	1.684210526
117 Beijing	12700	21	0	21	1.653543307
118 Bandung	3150	5	0	5	1.587301587
119 Daegu	2675	4	0	4	1.495327103
120 Amman	2825	4	0	4	1.415929204
121 Santa Cruz	1480	2	0	2	1.351351351
122 Dubai	1490	2	0	2	1.342281879
123 Nairobi	3100	4	0	4	1.290322581
124 Shanghai	17300	20	0	20	1.156069364
125 Yangon	4625	4	1	5	1.081081081
126 Damascus	2800	3	0	3	1.071428571
127 Valencia (Ven)	1890	2	0	2	1.058201058
128 Tokyo	33400	31	2	33	0.988023952
129 Ulan Bator	1030	1	0	1	0.970873786
130 Homs	1030	1	0	1	0.970873786
131 Seoul	23,200	22	0	22	0.948275862
132 Jakarta	14900	14	0	14	0.939597315
133 Harare	2175	2	0	2	0.91954023
134 Osaka	16600	13	2	15	0.903614458
135 Cairo	15900	14	0	14	0.880503145
136 Guadalajara	44250	34	3	37	0.836158192
137 Casablanca	3875	3	0	3	0.774193548
138 Alexandria	5050	3	0	3	0.594059406
139 Nizhni Novgorod	1700	1	0	1	0.588235294
140 Hai Phong	1814	1	0	1	0.551267916
141 Ankara	3825	2	0	2	0.522875817
142 Delhi	21100	3	3	6	0.28436019
143 Nagoya	8250	2	0	2	0.242424242



144 Calcutta	15500	1	2	3	0.193548387
145 Bombay	21300	2	2	4	0.187793427
146 Lahore	7850	1	0	1	0.127388535
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162 Abidjan	4175	no info.	no info.	#VALUE!	
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