

## **Leisure Studies Association Conference 2017, Leeds Beckett University**

### **Theme 1 - Enacting leisure: identities, lifestyles, and play**

#### **A paradise for pleasure seekers: Spaces for hedonism on the island of Ibiza**

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The academic discourse on hedonism as a feature of travel motivation has largely focussed upon deviance and hedonistic egoism (Wickens, 2002; Currie, 1997 and Bellis and Hale, 2000) where hedonism is equated with overindulgence and moral decay (Veenhoven, 2003). Attention is given to the marketing implications for the supply of tourism and the societal impacts when problematic relations with the host community arise (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007). The notion of ethical hedonism, however, which is less widely supported, takes a less critical view and views hedonism as natural and healthy (Veenhoven, 2003) whereby people have the right to pursue pleasure as a way of life without harming themselves or others (Onfray, 2007).

Existing research would suggest that hedonic travel motives are more dominant within the youth market (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007; Tutenges, 2012), however Goulding's research on lived nightlife experiences (2004) notes a rise in 'cognitively young thirty-something's' as an under-researched, hidden sector, where attitudes to leisure are changing, disposable incomes are high and the quest to maximise net pleasure is strong. There is a notable gap in existing knowledge where travel behaviour, hedonism and this market is concerned.

Additionally, as there is growing concern associated with various forms of "bad behaviour" of the British holidaymaker (Binyon, 2013), arising from what are alleged to be hedonic motives, there is a need to establish a greater understanding of the nature of hedonism as a feature of travel motivation and the management implications for destinations and the travel industry alike, on account of the potential severity of resultant "bad behaviour".

This paper documents some of the initial findings of a study on the extent and nature of hedonism as a motivating influence on travel behaviour within nightlife resorts, with a particular focus on how this compares between the 18-30 years of age market and 30-50 market. So far, the research has observed how the behaviour of individuals belonging to these age groups alters when they are on holiday. A picture of how pleasure is interpreted and pursued by both groups has been established and contrasted, as well as the manner in which moral codes alter within a holiday setting between both groups.

The paper will view the destination of Ibiza specifically, as a context for these discussions, to assess how various forms of hedonic behaviour within each age group play out "on the ground". It is proposed that, within this context, "zones" of hedonism can be observed, as spaces that cater for the

particular hedonic desires of the different age groups. It is intended that the research will have implications for the supply, design and management of the night-life economy within tourism destinations as well as destination branding implications.

*Keywords: Hedonism, Travel, Ibiza, Bad Behaviour, Impact*

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Faye is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Nottingham Trent University where she has the combined role of Course Leader for the Online MBA, Module Leader for International Tourism; Development, Impact and Sustainability and she is part of the core team for the Nottingham Business School Personalisation Project. She completed her PhD in 2012, which concerned the influence of political economy and interpretations of sustainability within the post-disaster tourism redevelopment of Koh Phi Phi Island, Thailand. Her historical research has focused upon the political economy of post disaster tourism re-development, interpretations of sustainability and ethics of tourism development. Currently, however, she is pursuing research in the field of tourism and leisure behaviour; more specifically in respect of travel and nightlife consumption, neo-tribalism and the non-conformist behaviours of the cognitively young.