Resort workers: the role of social media in connecting youth travellers and mediating the neo-tribe

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Neo-tribal theory is increasingly being applied to the study of tourism and leisure to help explain and understand the interactions and behaviours of subcultures. It is suggested by the author that nightlife resort-workers are one such group that exhibit neo-tribal qualities; in their shared sentiment; religiosity; fluidity in membership, and space (Maffesoli, 1996).

This exploratory study has two broad goals. Firstly, to consider how neo-tribal characteristics manifest in communities of young seasonal workers in European night-life resorts and secondly; to consider the role of social media as a neo-tribal 'space' for these communities; in which a shared sense of sentiment, belonging, customs, rituals and language are negotiated, communicated and learned. In doing so, the author intends to challenge the prevalent view that social networks and the Internet in general facilitate fast and superficial transitions between sites and identities (Levin and Barak-Brandes, 2014), rather more they support the creation of bonds and groupings of young people bound by their collective association around work and travel overseas in night-life resorts.

On initial glance, these communities display several neo-tribal qualities, in that they are composed by people who come together from all walks of life (Vorobjovas-Pinta , Hardy & Robards, 2014) their membership is typically limited to several 'seasons' (Hughes and Bellis, 2006), identities can be negotiated and constructed (Briggs and Turner, 2011), they offer a strong support network to share opportunities to support their common purpose of living and working overseas (i.e. facilitation of lifestyle Hardy, Hansen and Gretzel, 2011) and to have the time of their lives . The research will explore these prepositions further.

Of particular interest is the role that social media plays in offering a space for young resort workers to 'mediate' the neo-tribe; a space to which access must be granted, community initiation takes place; a hierarchy exists, codes of behaviour are established, stories are shared and advice is sought from 'elders'; representing a rite of passage for many British young people. However, as Brady and Robards (2011, p.15) observe, 'social network sites are simply articulations of collectivity that appear to be crystallising over time' calling for a re-assessment of Mafessoli's (1996) original model of neo-tribes.

To do this, the author intends to examine the bonds and groupings of young workers through a mixed, qualitative methodology of participant observation, in depth interviews and netnography, during which the communities and discourse of young people's resort work experiences will be studied via observations of the membership, anticipation, planning, consumption and reflection communicated in Facebook groups, via Twitter and travel blogs (Chau, 2012).

Author Bio:

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.