

# Party tourism; the effects of a drug sub-culture in ibiza



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**Abstract** The following report examines the impact of party tourism in Ibiza, Spain. Ibiza has been widely regarded as the best spot for party tourism in the world and the amount of tourists visiting the destination for the sole purpose of partying replicates this trend.

However, this type of tourism is not ideal and the pressure it creates on a small destination is quite extensive. The report gives insight into the amount of drugs taken by individuals, with the findings indicating the majority of visitors who use back home increase their amount when holidaying in Ibiza. For those who do not use at home, 16 per cent experimented for the first time while in Ibiza. Details are also given into the usage patterns of casual labour working in Ibiza over the summer period. The report shows the impact drugs have on a destination and in particular Ibiza, where increase in crime has become a major issue with gangs fighting for the drug trade.

Moreover, a description for the potential damage this tourism market has on a destination's image is reported, with most other forms of tourists beginning to relocate elsewhere. A comparison with an Australian Capital City is entailed. The results show similar drug usage, however Melbourne has more government support for strategies combating the use of illicit drugs in nightclubs. Finally, some recommendations of potential strategies to minimise drug consumption in Ibiza are discussed at the conclusion of the paper. Introduction 90 kilometres off the coast of Spain lays the island of Ibiza, home to 2.

6 million visitors per annum (Botsford, 2001). The figure may not seem immense, although considering Spain recorded an annual visitation number

of 53. million in 2006 (UNWTO, 2007), and up to date tourist numbers in Ibiza would to represent a high increase in tourism arrivals, it is a large number in relation to the tourism market Ibiza attracts. Previously known for a culture of laid back attitudes and a hippie orientated life style, Ibiza soon started to attract tourism growth with the increase of music events and nightclub developments from owners already established in the United Kingdom (Horner, & Swarbrooke, 2004: 230). Over the course of four decades stretching from the 70's, Ibiza's tourist market began to alter.

The easy going lifestyle and relaxed atmosphere started to disperse, instead changing into a destination of constant late night partying and drug influenced tourists. " Ibiza has become synonymous over the past two decades with the drug-infested clubbing, or raving, subculture. Every summer, young tourists visit the destination and escape into drugs, alcohol, non-stop dancing and anonymous sex" states (Harman, 2002). (Curley, 2007) reinforces this comment, although suggests that the drug culture has been symbolic for decades, " since late 1960's drugs have been a factor in attracting tourists to Ibiza". The increasing demand for party tourism in Ibiza has seen an increase in the amount of drugs available in nightclubs and party spots in Ibiza.

(Chesshyre, 2001) supports this matter by stating, " Drugs, if you want them, are freely available in Ibiza. I was approached countless times during my visit. " Instances like these would be considered remarkable if, for instance, were reported from Venice or Hawaii, but it would appear now that this drug sub-culture that rules Ibiza has affected the island on many levels. However, there is the perception that Ibiza has become dependant on party tourism for <https://assignbuster.com/party-tourism-the-effects-of-a-drug-sub-culture-in-ibiza/>

economic growth and for the summer months when the party tourists are there, Ibiza residents like Pablo Vincente resent the clubbers, but benefit from the tourism money they bring in. " We complain, but we need them" (Harman, 2002). For the party tourist, why would you go anywhere else to experience the nightlife? This is the destination that charges 12 euros for a standard alcoholic beverage, but yet the cost of a pill that keeps you going for hours cost 5 (Govan, 2007).

The question to be addressed however is what damage is this tourism market having on Ibiza's destination image and local residents? Drug use patterns in Ibiza A key factor in the increasing use of recreational drugs is their association with nightclubs and dance music (Forsyth, Barnard & McKeganey, 1997). The modern phenomenon of clubbing (late-night dancing, often in combination with drug use) was imported, largely from Ibiza, by individuals holidaying abroad and then returning to recreate the combination of modern dance music and ecstasy use in their country of resident (Garret, 1998, p. 29). The figures below show the increases in drug use and sexual activity in Ibiza by first time users and the increase in drug taking for those who use at home and then when visiting Ibiza.

Tourist Tourists who use recreational drugs in their home of origin have a propensity to increase their levels of substance use when in Ibiza. (Bellis, Hale, Bennett, Chaudry & Kilfoyle, 2001) undertook a study to compare drug use among UK residents to that of their use in Ibiza. The key findings of the report found that 12 per cent of 16 to 29 year olds in the UK general population have used recreational drugs at some time, however in Ibiza 51. per cent of young visitors use illegal drugs on holiday.

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Of the major party drugs, 43.1 per cent of tourists use ecstasy, 37.5 per cent use cannabis and 24.6 per cent use cocaine. For first time users “an increasing number of young British holidaymakers begin experimenting with illicit drugs at top clubbing resorts” (Bjortomt, 2003). The same author reports that those taking ecstasy in Ibiza for the first time has risen 16% from 1999 to 2002.

17.4 and 33.1 per 1000 people were introduced to cocaine and ecstasy use, respectively in Ibiza. For those tourists who constantly use recreational drugs at their place of origin, (Hughes, et. l, 2004) identifies that for ecstasy, 2.9% of users in the UK who used the drug 5 or more times a week rose to 42.

6% whilst holidaying in Ibiza. Seasonal Employee Those people who travel to Ibiza for seasonal work in holiday resorts, nightclubs or bars (Hughes, Bellis & Chaudry, 2004) conducted a survey to identify the level of drug use among casual labour in Ibiza, compared to that of visitors from the UK. As the research determines, those participating in casual labour are more likely to use illicit drugs when working in Ibiza than when working in the UK.

Furthermore, casual labour used different types of drugs more frequent but used drugs on average two days a week, less frequent than recreational tourists in Ibiza.

Sexual activity patterns in Ibiza Tourist Major concern for the island and home origin of the tourist is the amount of sexual activity that is evident in Ibiza. (Bellis, Hale, Bennett, Chaudry & Kilfoyle, 2001) identify that 53.8 per cent of tourists to Ibiza had sexual intercourse during their stay, with 26.2 per cent not using protection and 23.

2 per cent having more than one sexual partner. These figures indicate a major problem for the spread of sexually transmitted infections in both Ibiza, with multiple partners being used without protection, and then the transference of these diseases to the home destination. Seasonal Employee For casual labour on the island, (Hughes & Bellis, 2006) identify that 80.5 per cent of casual labour in Ibiza had sexual intercourse with 65.5 per cent having unprotected sex. The mix of drugs and sex among tourists and casual labour has become a risk for the sexual health of individuals and a potential conduit for the international spread of sexually transmitted infections.

Destination Ibiza as a sense of 'freedom' The increase in drug taking and sexual activity can be described by (Dann, 2007) who developed a paper titled 'Tourist Behaviour As Controlled Freedom' with the purpose of identifying the correlation between a tourists perception of appropriate behaviour when on holiday to that of when they are in their home of origin. The paper suggests tourists assume the perception that the home environment portrays a lack of freedom to the individual through the idealisation of government laws and the sense that their lives are somewhat controlled by the notion of what is right and what is wrong. For the individual looking for a tourism experience, the event of taking a holiday can create a temporary respite from social incarceration - the pressures of a normal existence. Dann's model in contrast with Ibiza is best described by (Bjortomt, 2003) as, "once abroad in Ibiza, the sense of freedom and atmosphere of excess means that some individuals who have never used drugs experiment.

" It emphasises the argument from Dann that the individual gets empowered by the thought of 'no boundaries' whilst on holiday. With Spain playing host <https://assignbuster.com/party-tourism-the-effects-of-a-drug-sub-culture-in-ibiza/>

to 58. 5 million tourists in 2006 (UNWTO, 2007), and most of them looking for the escape of sun and sand, it's a probable thought that the individual who visits Ibiza is looking to challenge the system that restricts them on a daily basis in their home environment. Influence of drugs in Ibiza The Tourism Market Once thought of as a hot-spot for lucrative market tourists, the new breed of tourism that Ibiza now attracts rivals most world destinations in terms of returning visitors (Nash, 2008). This new tourism market is known as party tourism. (Horner & Swarbrook, 2004: 236) define party tourists as "tourists travelling to a destination with the purpose of experiencing the nightlife of a destination...consisting of dancing, consuming alcohol and as this report indicates, participating in drug related activities.

The scope of party tourists that enter Ibiza is from a large population. (Gardiner, 2007) states that, "Ibiza attracts party people of every age and demographic. However, (Hughes, 2004) reports that 250 000 Britain's aged between 18 and 30 travel there each year, suggesting that they are the main scope of the tourism market. A Drug Based Economy Just before the start of the 2007 clubbing season, three of Ibiza's major nightclubs were closed down by police in what they described as "a preventative measure to make these clubs deal with the issue of drug dealing and consumption of patrons inside the venues" (Botsford, 2001). The closure lasted one month. The statement is an example of how much the Ibiza economy relies on tourists to support it.

If local law enforcement agencies cannot implement a strategy long enough for it to have effect, as lost economic income is too great, then implementing any strategies that targets nightclubs will not be effective. Property Value <https://assignbuster.com/party-tourism-the-effects-of-a-drug-sub-culture-in-ibiza/>

The drug culture impacts highly on property owners in Ibiza. The seasonality of tourists entering Ibiza chasing the warm beach weather has implications on owners who rely on party tourists to rent their properties for various lengths of stay. (McDonald, 2007) reports that the hot, hedonistic summer period is when owners of rental properties will make most, if not all of their money. Warncke, 2007) reports that when three of the islands major nightclubs, DC-10, Bora Bora and the world-famous Amnesia were closed in early 2007, it had a damaging effect on the tourism industry on the island.

“ News of the closures led to people cancelling their trips to the island,” stated (McDonald, 2007). Reliance on tourists for business income and employment For the summer periods in Ibiza, locals rely on the vast number of tourists entering the island to generate a majority of their income. Furthermore, the party tourism market that comes seasonally generates a large number of jobs for locals and working tourists (Hughes & Bellis, 2006). Strategies by police and tourism officials with the purpose of restricting party tourism would damage the direct spending of visitors through fewer arrivals, therefore economic income for local businesses and employment opportunities would decrease.

Suppliers of illegal drugs High concern for the Ibiza Tourism Commission has to be the amount of illegal drug supply that is easily available to those who want it (Chesshyre, 2001). The majority of supply is coming from the UK through rival drug dealers -one from Liverpool, the other a mixture of people from Newcastle and Morocco (Counzens, 2006). The article proposes that expat gangs have traditionally moved their operations to feed the summer demand for ecstasy and cocaine in Ibiza's nightlife scene. The introduction of <https://assignbuster.com/party-tourism-the-effects-of-a-drug-sub-culture-in-ibiza/>



rival suppliers has had devastating impacts in Ibiza. (Townsend, 2006) reports that a spate of contract killings, some of Britain's most wanted criminals and an illegal drug trade that links San Antonio to drug syndicates in most major UK cities are evident in Ibiza.

In the same article, it is revealed that, " police believe hundreds of kilos of cocaine and hundreds of thousands of ecstasy tablets have been successfully dispatched to the 12-mile strip of sand and rock in the Mediterranean. " The supply of illegal drugs into Ibiza is an issue that needs to be addressed by governments in Ibiza and the UK. It is evident that the main supply comes from the UK, therefore the UK government has a duty to stop the illegal supply of drugs exiting their country and as shown, infecting another. Ibiza doesn't have the resources to stop the supply of hard drugs entering their country, and assistance is required from the UK. Nightclubs and Police Involvement It is unclear whether nightclub owners and their employees and local law enforcement are involved in the facilitation of drug dealing within the clubs however (Chesshyre, 2001) suggests that the island has tactically accepted drug dealing, and that police have effectively turned a blind eye to the problem for fear of destroying a lucrative tourist industry that attracts thousands of visitors each summer. Moreover, when asking a nightclub owner what would happen if police were to crack down on drugs in clubs, he noted, " I think most of the clubs would go under - and that just won't happen...drug culture is one of the most important parts of clubs.

" Consequence of a party culture Destination Image Ibiza first attracted the attention of artists, models, movie stars and musicians in the '60s and '70s. <https://assignbuster.com/party-tourism-the-effects-of-a-drug-sub-culture-in-ibiza/>

It was then the hippie clique descended on the island to practice yoga or to enjoy all-night parties and philosophical conversations around bonfires on the beach. The island had the image of a place to relax, somewhere to lose oneself in the tranquillity of sand and sun. Fast forward to the '80s and Ibiza's hippie attraction was starting to fade. By then the island had begun to carve out a reputation as the place to go if you wanted the best nightclub experience that Europe — perhaps even the world — had to offer (NW, 2007). The shift in destination image also changed the tourism market.

Tourists are now looking for the all night dance experience that floods the streets of Ibiza. Josefa Mari, head of Ibiza's tourism and economic department, states that “ the clubbing scene forms only a tiny part of what the island offers, but it's what defines us internationally, and it's damaged our image” (Nash, 2008). Ibiza is not alone in terms of the destination image being revolved around all night partying. Miami, South Florida, is also world renowned for tourists looking for the party experience whilst soaking up the sun on the beach during the day (McClure, 2008). However, Ibiza's differentiation strategy, whether they want it or not, is dangerous. Ibiza is directly linked to the notion that a drug-culture is embedded in the tourism experience, as (Chesshyre, 2001) notes “ drugs, if you want them, are freely available in Ibiza.

” (Nash, 2008) suggests Ibiza's tourism and economic department are trying to push the focus of Ibiza tourism to more nature-based experiences, with the hard partying scene being scaled down and in some cities, phased out. It would appear though, through the lack-lustre effort to control the party

scene for the past decade, significant damage to Ibiza's destination image  
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has been done. Crime The impact of crime increase in Ibiza has damaged the belief of safety that an individual demands when participating in tourism (Weaver & Lawton, 2006: 104). The rivalry between gangs competing for drug market-share has spilled out into the streets, affecting the safety of tourists visiting Ibiza.

(Couzens, 2006) reports that a “ shocking street gunfight between rival British gangs erupted with an 18 year old man touring the island shot in the face, spending a week in the hospital and another man being hit in the chest. Neither of the two had affiliations with the gangs. Other reports of crime rise come from (Fuchs, 2006) who reported that a group of tourists staying in a high-rise apartment were broken into twice in one week, having their belongings stolen on both accounts. (Marinos, 2004) identifies that Spain has one of the highest rates of drug related rapes in the world, with 244 rape victims reported in 2002. Crime experiences like these affect Ibiza in two ways.

Firstly, there is an element of cocooning among tourists when they enter a resort on the island. They will often stay close to the resort and wont venture across the island in fears of having being burgled or worse, raped. Secondly, Ibiza is trying to change its destination image. Tourists who can change this are those who spend money in the communities and are their for a relaxation experience, not partying.

However, this tourist demographic will not visit the island if they feel a sense of insecurity. If Ibiza is too attract a new tourism markets, or increase markets they see as importance in changing their destination image, then

the government needs to take a string stand on eradicating their underlying drug-culture. *Drugs In Nightclubs: An Australian Perspective* In the capital city of Melbourne, Victoria, the party scene has developed into a major tourism market. It is common for intrastate and interstate travellers to fly or drive into Melbourne for the weekend and party for two days straight, returning home on the Sunday evening. The party tourism phenomenon is an existing market that has seen major developments in Melbourne over the past decade with the introduction of cheap domestic flights and nightclub incentives of free entry and free drink cards upon early arrival. Moreover, the affordable costs of a two night stay at a backpackers and the extra amount of discretionary income available for young people has seen this tourism market develop extensively.

(Symons, 2004) reports that a study undertaken by the Australian Drug Foundation found that 60 per cent of patrons in Melbourne's clubs and bars had tried ecstasy over the past six months. This pattern is not confined to Melbourne. The (National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, 2001) found it "staggering" that 20 per cent of people aged between 20 -29 had taken ecstasy. That figure is now taken conservatively as it was taken from the population in 2001. "It is clear that illicit drug use is relatively common among groups of Australian people, notably those involved in clubbing, dance music and alternative music subcultures" states (Holt, 2005) after conducting a study of drug use among youth in Australia. At the nightclub industry scene, Brendan Prendergast - president of Australia's Crowd Control Employee's Association - comments that "the Australian public's only hearing the tip of the iceberg when it comes to drug use in Melbourne.

Prendergast, who worked as a crown controller for 30 years, believes that a major reason why drugs are such an issue is because of the amount of illegal crowd controllers working in clubs and pubs (Nolan, 2007). This statement presents a relationship between Melbourne nightclubs and Ibiza nightclubs in regards to the involvement of nightclub employees in the facilitation of drugs in nightspots and as (Chesshyre, 2001) acknowledges; a major problem with the amount of drugs available in Ibiza has a connection with nightclub owners and security personal on the island. The difference between Melbourne and Ibiza, in relation to drug use in party nightspots, is the amount of preventative measures from within both the nightclub industry and strategies at local and national governments to prevent drug use. A report produced by the Australian National Council of Drugs (Price, 2000) discussing the issues of drug use in Melbourne states that “ there are a number of judicial and police-diversion strategies being funded in the Melbourne area targeting drug use at the venue.

In Ibiza however, drug preventative measures inside the venue are relatively scarce with (Govan, 2007) commenting, “ Clubs are policed by their own security guards, with dealers still managing to ply their trade easily. ” At the government level, drug strategies are non-funded and the introduction of preventative strategies through heavier police involvement in nightclub venues is desperately needed to stop the dealing of illicit drugs to new and existing users. Preventative Measures/ Minimisation Strategies -Interventions in dance music resorts (Bellis, Hughes, Bennett & Thomson, 2003: 1717) identify that interventions are urgently needed in dance music resorts to prevent non-drug users from experimenting with illicit drugs and users from

moving into a wider range of substances. Such interventions are currently scarce and therefore represent a missed opportunity to reduce the spread of illicit drug use. Moreover, (Deehan & Saville, 2003) undertook a study to determine the scope of recreational drug use amongst clubbers in the South East of England. Key findings from the report found that many recreational drug users have actively sought out information about the potential health consequences arising from drug use and took measures to minimise the risk.

This indicates the willingness that clubbers are likely to be receptive towards the provision of practical, evidence-based information focusing on safe use and reducing harm. Drug minimisation strategies related to Ibiza should focus on having educational information at major nightclub venues through either flyers in restrooms or leaflets upon entry. Furthermore, the same approach can be utilised at the hotels of interest for these club tourists to indicate the risk and minimise use before the individual is caught up in the nightclub atmosphere. Administering nightclub and after party curfews “ The problem is that the party is non-stop...it’s difficult to keep going if you don’t take drugs” states Juan Pantaleoni, San Antonio’s town spokesperson (Fuchs, 2006). San Antonio, a town in Ibiza, is a renowned hot spot for British tourists looking to escape the pressures of home-life and party all night.

It is San Antonio however that has started to deal with the issue of all night parties. Before the opening of its party season in 2007, the government banned so-called “ after parties”, which start when the clubs close their doors and often run until noon that day. This strategy minimised the amount of drug influenced people on the streets during the day, reducing the

potential risks of violence and contact with tourists who are not attracted to  
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the destination for the party scene (Botsford, 2001). Ibiza would benefit from implementing the same strategy as San Antonio as its potential for success has been realised and regardless of the fact that it won't stop drug taking, it will enable other tourists and locals to feel safer during the day.

Cooperation between Ibiza government and origin destination Cooperation between the Ibiza government and that of tourists' home country is desperately needed to help minimise the demand for first time drug users to experiment with drug taking. Focusing on the UK market, the demand for tourists to enter Ibiza's party culture is an extensive market, with (Botsford, 2001) reporting that 700 000 British tourists arrive at the destination per year. Education for the tourist before they arrive in Ibiza is needed, with possible strategies including information flyers at airports or on the plane, and information websites on the dangers of drug taking specific to the Ibiza nightlife. As presented earlier, individuals are open to risk information and having a wider spread of information outlets will increase the amount of tourists coming into contact with risk educational material. Bellis, Hughes & Lowey, 2002) state that some countries have already developed approaches to nightlife health. However, growth in the international travel associated with nightlife and the additional risks posed by nightclubbing in an unfamiliar country mean both interventions and basic health and safety measures are now required on an international basis.

Conclusion The impact of drugs within Ibiza is something of serious concern for government officials and the future of tourism at the destination. Ibiza has adopted a drug culture that is not only affecting the island and its residents, but is starting to develop a negative destination image. Immediate <https://assignbuster.com/party-tourism-the-effects-of-a-drug-sub-culture-in-ibiza/>

strategies to combat the 'out of control' spiral that party tourism is having on the destination are needed, and these strategies must be implemented and evaluated efficiently. A drug sub-culture is a problem for Ibiza to attract other potential tourism markets with many wanting the perception of safety and relaxation when on a holiday. The party tourism market is starting to restrict the experience of other tourists, and if strategies aren't implemented, these tourists will start to relocate elsewhere. Ibiza would benefit from understanding the scope of drug problems in countries where the majority of their tourists come from to get insight into the drug implementation strategies that have been proven to work.

It is crisis time for Ibiza and cooperation between local governments, the Spanish government and nightclub owners is needed to restrict the drug issue as a whole industry, instead of trying to implement strategies that don't have the funding or support of key stakeholders. Ibiza should move quickly in implementing new strategies, before party tourism is the only culture identified by tourists and they lose lucrative markets. References  
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