

## **Capitalismo extremo, ideology and Ibiza** *A new perspective of youth deviance and risk on holiday*

Daniel Briggs, *Universidad Europea, Madrid*

### **Abstract**

Working class British tourists are renowned for their deviant and risk behaviours when they go on holiday to Spain. However, there is almost no consideration for a) how these accelerated attitudes to 'getting wasted' evolved; and b) the role of the resort, as well as the British people who work there, in the process of behavioural coercion. Based on ethnographic research, I argue in this paper that for many British youth, the idea of getting wasted on holiday is a socialised process which is commercially influenced which normally starts through *Club 18-30* package holidays. There young Brits learn what they should be doing on holiday - drinking, taking drugs, having sex and engaging in violence - and here begins the 'holiday career' where they start to learn of the pinnacle of the holiday experience: Ibiza. It is the 'place to be' - even though many don't really know why. Some shortcut the holiday career at a younger age and this, I argue, is what we are currently witnessing - a population of younger Brits who are being wooed by the potential acquisition of social status which can come from going to Ibiza which is ideologically constructed for them by marketing companies, travel operators and flight companies and the media. So well functions this ideology, that when people arrive, they are therefore familiar with what they should be doing - spending money they don't have and engaging in various deviant and risk behaviours - only the holiday occasion, away from home routines and responsibilities and with friends who have ambitions for the same thing, means that the excess and consumption takes on a greater pressure. This is what I want to argue is called 'capitalismo extremo', a money-making process concerned only with profit and which takes no prisoners; even if it means significant personal and social loss. It is this which is precisely what creates the impetus for the deviant and risk behaviours of young British tourists.

**Key Words:** Deviance; risk; holiday; British youth

## Introduction

Working class British tourists are renowned for their deviant and risk behaviours - heavy drinking, drugs, casual sex and violence - when they go on holiday to Spain. Indeed, their behaviour impacts on the local Spanish communities and has attracted a significant amount of media coverage as well as governmental campaigns in order to prevent/reduce the problems. However, the blame for these behaviours is placed directly with the tourists themselves - it is pathologised - and there is almost no consideration for a) how these accelerated attitudes to exaggerated hedonism evolved; and b) the role of the resort, as well as the British people who work there, in the process of this behavioural coercion. Using data gleaned from three years of ethnographic research, this paper unpacks these issues in greater depth.

I argue that for many British youth, the idea of engaging in excessive consumption and hedonism on holiday is a socialised process which is gleaned from popular culture and often is borne from their participation in the night-time economy (NTE) at home where they go out at weekends to drink, take drugs and get into fights. It is thereafter christened by their attendance at a *Club 18-30* package holiday when they are in their late teens. On these organised holidays, young Brits learn what they should be doing on holiday - drinking, taking drugs, having sex and engaging in violence - and here begins the 'holiday career' where they go to different commercial resorts around the Mediterranean and start to learn about the pinnacle of the holiday experience: Ibiza. Ibiza, they find out, is the 'place to be' - even though many don't really know why. Some, however, shortcut this holiday career at a younger age and this, I argue, is what we are currently witnessing in Ibiza now - a population of younger Brits who are being wooed by the potential acquisition of social status which has been ideologically constructed for them by marketing companies, corporations, travel operators and flight companies and the media. So well functions this ideology, that when these young Brits arrive, they are therefore familiar with what they should be doing - spending money they don't have and engaging in various deviant and risk behaviours - only the holiday occasion, away from home routines and responsibilities and with friends who have similar ambitions, means that the excess and consumption takes on a greater pressure. This means their behaviours become more extreme and bizarre. These British tourists - at various stages of their youth - therefore participate in what I want to call *capitalismo extremo*: a money-making process concerned only with profiting from what they spend and which simultaneously potentially leaves them with significant personal, financial and/or social loss.

I provide my insight through the lens of a group of young British men who I met in Ibiza in 2011. They exemplify many in my sample who have uncertain work futures, a commitment to partying on the weekends and generally looking for ways to relieve the boredom of home existence (see Briggs, 2013 for full details of sample and methodology). I call them

the Southside crew. They are all aged between 25-26, are from a coastal town in the UK and represent typical constructions of working class British holidaymakers abroad in resorts like San Antonio.

### **British holidaymakers abroad: The facts**

Like their European counterparts, young British holidaymakers have benefitted from cheap international airfares. While southern Spain and the Balearic Islands (Majorca, Ibiza and Menorca) have been popular for decades, in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, new tourist destinations evolved and were marketed at the British holidaymaker. Known as 'package holidays', they started to become popular and helped establish new transport and tourism economies, while at the same time, created unanticipated competition for already-established destinations such as those in the Balearics. However, over the last 20 years or so, many of these destinations have developed a reputation for social problems (Calafat et al., 2010). Here I provide some brief overview of the extent of the behaviours to which they are attributed in the context of Ibiza.

#### *The extent of British deviant and risk behaviours in Ibiza*

The most recent data on the level of deviant and risk behaviours among British holidaymakers comes from researchers from Liverpool John Moores University. Their survey of 1,022 British holidaymakers aged 16-35 in Balearic island airports of Majorca and Ibiza found that over half experienced 'drunkenness' five days a week or more (52%), a similar percentage (54%) reported using drugs and around a fifth having unprotected sex (20%) with multiple partners (15%) while on holiday in Ibiza. One third of the visitors to Ibiza were current ecstasy users (34%) and cocaine users (34%). Indeed, while just 2.4% of ecstasy users in the Ibiza sample reported using the drug two or more times per week at home, during the holiday nine out of ten users reported use at this frequency with 46.7% reporting use five or more days per week. Indeed, in comparison to German and Spanish tourists, British use more illegal substances in Ibiza when they holiday than when they are at home (Calafat et al., 2010).

More qualitative analyses have since followed and here is where some of my work began. In 2010, I led a team of four researchers to investigate binge drinking in San Antonio, Ibiza. During that excursion, we found that excessive alcohol consumption was socially embedded as part of the holiday ambitions of various single sex groups of young British holidaymakers, but that also this was endorsed, and at times aggressively coerced, by players in the social context in various marketing material, the reps, and the bar workers/owners. The following year, in 2011 when I met the Southside crew, I documented the role of the other players of the social scenery - bar and PR workers, the strippers, lapdancers, prostitutes as well as augmented my data on the British holidaymakers. We found that deviance and risk also emerged in the context of risky sexual practices,

drug and alcohol consumption as a consequence of the 'marketisation' of sex, drugs and alcohol which was prevalent as much in the ambitions of the British holidaymakers as it was in the discourses of the casual workers, the club promoters and the general landscape of San Antonio.<sup>1</sup>

The appeal of the holiday, as a form of continuous leisure venture, has been recently documented through the increased number of British casual workers/tourist workers. While there is some ambiguity attached to whether they are 'holidaymakers', I can only conclude that it is some extension of the holiday because often the workers do not keep the same job with the same company/boss for long and it is not permanent work nor intended as a long-term career. O'Reilly (2000: 113) would call these people 'residential tourists' whereby 'worklessness is celebrated and the work/leisure distinction is blurred'. Indeed, this is perhaps reflected in quantitative studies which have found that such workers are more likely to be using more drugs, and consider it safer to do so, than the British holidaymakers (Hughes et al., 2004). Like the tourists, the casual workers find it difficult to fend off the temptation to party - probably because they have been told it is part of their job to stimulate the party atmosphere and encourage drinking, sexual-innuendo-like games and general deviance (Guerrier and Adib, 2003). Recent research in Ibiza has found that this particular British population are more likely to take more drugs, take more risks with unprotected sex with multiple partners and have sought healthcare services abroad than the holidaymakers (Kelly, 2011). I now turn to the background circumstances of the Southside crew by examining how their cultural outlook - or *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984) - has come to be moulded over time by consumer capitalism.

### **Goin' Ibiza: Home lives and the holiday hype**

**Author:** *What is it that you all do [for work] in the UK?*

**Jay:** *Building.*

**Streetfighter:** *I just come out of the army so I am very stressed. I come out of the army, see people get killed, so I have a lot of stress.*

**Jay:** *That's why we've got to have fun, mate. So if he's not having fun, I'm not having fun. And we are on holiday. If I've got £100 and they have nothing, I'm gonna split it.*

**Author:** *Right. [To Popeye] What do you do at home?*

**Popeye:** *Construction work.*

**C-Dawg:** *Yeah me too.*

**Jay:** *We all do the same sort of thing.*

**Popeye:** *We're all riff raff [lower down the social chain].*

They say their work is 'boring'. It then transpires that all have criminal records and have spent a significant period of their youth in the weekend

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<sup>1</sup> For a similar analysis of the spatial construction of gender relations in the context of British holidaymakers see Andrews (2008).

local NTE, drinking heavily, and taking and dealing drugs, and getting into fights. Later in the interview:

**Jay:** *Yeah, we all used to smash it on drugs. When I was 18, I was on it non-stop. Proper on it. For a whole weekend, it would keep you alive. Say from Friday to Sunday night, it would be non-stop and you could drink more.*

**Streetfighter:** *It's true.*

**Jay:** *If you want the real truth, this is what we do. I wouldn't lie to you. Me, him [Streetfighter] and my mate in three hours, we finished 21 grams of coke [cocaine].*

**Author:** *How much was it worth?*

**Jay:** *Easily, that was strong shit, easily a grand's [£1,000] worth.*

**Popeye:** *I went to jail for selling it. That's why I don't touch them. I come out two years ago and won't touch them because I lost so much through drugs. It fucks you up, mate.*

The experiences the Southside crew describe here are similar to numerous others in my sample of young working class Brits who go to Ibiza. Many reflect on growing up and being familiar from an early age with drinking, drugs, drug taking and, in some cases, drug dealing. Those that have work, tend to describe it as tedious and mundane while others survive more by temporary and uncertain means (Standing, 2011) augmented with illicit activities such as crime (Hall et al., 2008). To some extent, a quest for transgression evolves from these precarious positions as there seems to be much more of an attraction for getting drunk and/or 'living for the weekend', perhaps getting arrested and/or engaging deviance and risky behaviours.

What it is, therefore, important to acknowledge is that these deviant and risk practices are already embedded in their *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984) and this, to some degree, influences what they do on holiday because it is what they have come to know they should be doing with their leisure time. However, it is these elements of their *habitus* that have, over time, been moulded - and are increasingly shaped by - the delegitimisation of work and labour, instead complemented by an aggressive commercialisation of their leisure time and increased emphasis of a consumer society (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007). It is this socio- and culturo-structural framework which blinds them with a thin film of ideological fantasy about how they should enjoy their leisure time - that is getting drunk and/or taking drugs at weekends, and engaging in deviance and risk behaviours in places like Ibiza - and that it is this which lays some foundation for what they do when they go on holiday abroad.

## **Constructing Ibiza: The holiday career and status stratification**

**Streetfighter:** *People say that Magaluf there is lots of slags [easy women] and it is easy to pull.*

**Author:** *Is it?*

**Streetfighter:** *Yeah but people say the birds are [good] quality in Ibiza.*

**Jay:** *Nah.*

**Author:** *No?*

**Jay:** *No because they are as good. Right, my mate, he come here [to Ibiza] and had one bird [girl] but went to Magaluf and had six birds over seven nights.*

[Pauses as if he wants me to show commendation of this feat]

**Author:** [Almost missing my cue and in a disbelievingly tone] *Six birds in seven nights?!*

**Jay:** *That is definitely better mate, without a doubt.*

**Popeye:** *But if you put the work in, you get it out.*

**Jay:** *Yeah but he will put in the work here mate, I guarantee it.*

**Popeye:** *But they are like upper class here.*

**Jay:** *They are not so easy.*

**Popeye:** *Lot more respectable, mate.*

**Jay:** *It does get messy here though mate. The booze cruises are mental. MESSY. 'Come on boys, drinks, drinks, boom, boom' [as he imitates knocking back shots].*

**Streetfighter:** *In Magaluf, it is like cheap man's fucking [lower class] holiday.*

**Jay:** *Yeah but here it is mental, just as messy.*

**C-Dawg:** *I don't know actually, I haven't been to any of these places.*

**Streetfighter:** *Nathan: It's cheap parties in Magaluf but Ibiza is more upper class.*

The Southside crew raise a number of interesting issues here. Firstly, they discuss the way in which different holiday destinations are populated by, as they see it, a certain 'class' of individual; Magaluf in Majorca they say has a different cohort to those who go to Ibiza. But Ibiza is different because there are supposedly 'quality women' who are 'upper class'. In addition, what the Southside crew perhaps do not recognise - yet seem to be describing - are groups of young British women from the same class bracket who are more seasoned on the holiday circuit; some of whom have had their fair share of blunt encounters with men and are, as a consequence, less forthcoming to male advances. This does not deter their candid approaches for sexual conquest but the fact they think the 'women are easier' says something about how young British men in this cohort objectify their female counterparts. But what I want to draw attention to

here is the fact that the Southside crew seem to be accumulating some sort of holiday experience in these resorts.

Since the post-war period, the holiday for the British working class has developed as a means of time out to more of a social occasion of celebration and engaging in excessive consumption and hedonism. This has come with the advent of mass tourism and the commercialisation of tourist destinations. A common feature which developed from this was the package holiday which helped to provide everything the working classes could need when they went on holiday. Today, this form of tourism exists in what's called *Club 18-30* or *Twenties* - package tourism companies which specifically cater for holidays for young people. The Southside crew and others in my sample seem to be christened into excessive consumption on these holidays as they are persuaded by the companies and their workers to buy tickets for 'bar crawls' and 'boat parties' which encourage deviant and risk behaviours. As they mature, however and realise that the young and inexperienced or 'lower classes' are in those places where they once went (such as Magaluf), they look for/hear about other places which are similar in their orientation where they can do exactly the same thing but without the young and inexperienced crowd. If they have not heard about Ibiza through the aggressive marketisation of the island through popular culture, they come to hear of it on this holiday circuit.

However, tourist numbers in Ibiza are falling because of the increased competition with other new European holiday destinations, so over the last ten years global corporations, marketing experts, commercial entrepreneurs, the music industry and the Superclubs have rampantly marketed Ibiza as the 'place to be'. This has attracted a younger British crowd who have not accumulated the same holiday experience as the Southside crew (Briggs, 2013). Consequently, they arrive not knowing what is expected of them and learn the hard way - often getting heavily into debt and engaging in deviant and risk behaviours with more severe consequences. Ibiza is one of those places and has attached to it a social status for which many aspire by 'goin' Ibiza'. However, for most, once they have been to Ibiza, they feel they have to come back because they find out that there are other levels of ideological social status they can claim if they had more money which prompts them to return. Many of these working class British want to try to climb the social class ladder by producing a level of social envy about the fact that they have gone to Ibiza. The cultural and commercial side of how this process takes place is explored later but for now I want to introduce you to this hierarchy. Pursuits toward this ideological status, I want to suggest, in part helps to create a revolving population of British tourists who not only talk about Ibiza, thereby contributing to the commercial and social ideology of the island but also to return to its shores.

## **'You can be who you want to be, do what you want to do': Identity and unfreedom**

**Jay:** *That was how we were in Magaluf mate, we couldn't remember the first day. Maybe that will be like that today; well we can remember everything so far. I thought I would be more minging [drunk] by now because me and him [Streetfighter], we don't really drink.*

**Streetfighter:** *That's because I have a girlfriend.*

**Author:** *You have a girlfriend.*

**Streetfighter:** *And a kid [child] on the way, mate.*

**Author:** *I see.*

**Streetfighter:** *But I am sexually frustrated mate.*

**Jay:** *Yeah, sexually frustrated idiot!*

[All laugh]

**Popeye:** *I've got a girlfriend...*

**Streetfighter:** *But mate [grabs my arm], what happens on holiday, stays on holiday [no one tells anyone about what happens on holiday]...But I am away, I need to get fucking something. If I don't have sex on this holiday I am going to go back more frustrated, more angry.*

**Popeye:** *Seriously, your girlfriend is pregnant.*

**Streetfighter:** *But you don't get a fuck when your misses is pregnant.*

**Popeye:** *That's why I think it's terrible [A young woman in a thong bikini walks past] Cor, look at the tits [breasts] on that.*

The Southside crew raise some important issues here with regard to how the holiday marks a shift in identity. Firstly, Streetfighter, in particular, feels he can finally do what he wants to do because he thinks he is 'free' in a landscape designed for his liberty. Secondly, and aside from the fact they cannot remember the first day of last holiday because they were so drunk, the holiday is constructed as time to do the things they feel they are missing out on, as well as the things they cannot do at home. The truth is that they are doing exactly the same things as they are doing at home but in a more exaggerated manner. Lastly, for Streetfighter, the holiday - and what he does on it - bares no reflection on his home relationships and the new baby which is due soon; there is also some clear determination in his tone to take advantage of this moment because no one will know who he is and there are no apparent repercussions on his behaviour.

For young British tourists the holiday signifies a decoupling from the perceived restrictions on everyday home life, routines and responsibilities. The first thing this does is create the immediate impetus for most to initiate default behaviours and practices which they would normally do at the weekends: that is get drunk, take drugs and engage in



playful forms of deviance and risk-taking. Yet the people in my research are seeking to maximise their experiences in the short time they have to do it - it may not come again so the occasion must be seized and drained for as much as possible. It is therefore in the excitement of this perceived 'liberation', heightened by a group dynamic which endorses transgression and a subjective intension of self reward and indulgence, that the occasion is marked by most by excessive consumption into the realms of *hyperconsumption*.

While this is partly because Ibiza is commercially depicted back home as a place where one can engage in these behaviours and marketed as a place with no visible repercussions, the other side is that this decoupling means people are increasingly likely to try things they would not normally do in places which are either constructed as *unfamiliar* (it is a foreign country and a plane has taken them there) or as *familiar* to them (in that they have come to know what is expected of them and are in an environment which reflects home NTE symbolisms such as bars, clubs and brand restaurants like KFC). In this sphere a new permissiveness is constructed around anonymity whereby they see no direct reflection on what they do as 'wrong' because everyone around them, including their 'friends' (and friends of friends), are doing the same/similar thing as well - that there is little pressure for them to adhere to their daily demeanour back home. This is especially true when the social context is offering the 'good life' for which they have come to be so familiar (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007; Hall et al., 2008). There are the familiar pub names, bars, take-aways which reflects what Billig (1995) calls 'banal nationalism' whereby everyday representations of the nation build an imagined sense of national solidarity and belonging. It is this therefore, this identity transition from home to holiday, which alerts the individual's subjective sensations to this new permissiveness.

In the new territory of the resort, people like the Southside crew think they are liberated and that their behaviours represent 'freedom' and 'unconformity'; yet from what I can see they represent only exaggerated forms of consumption or *hyperconsumption* which typically take place at home. Even extensions of these behaviours into very unpredictable realms (trying and experimenting with deviance and risk taking) symbolise efforts to escape *unfreedom* and *conformity* - this being their commitment to break free from consumer lifestyle and the way in which they are bound by reproducing the same practices typically undertaken on a night out back home (Briggs, 2013). In a similar vein, because much of what is going on around them is the 'same sort of thing', in 'same sort of places', with the 'same sort of people' and everyone around is wearing 'similar sorts of

clothing', this, I want to argue, prompts subjective adventures to claim back 'individuality' which can reap social commendation as well as individual ontology. These are additional elements to consider in the process of engaging in extreme deviance and risky behaviours; it is the leap of faith into the unknown which, for some, becomes legendary but for others, can go very wrong because they get injured, hurt or cause harm to others. These elements are important to acknowledge because, the other side to these subjective transitions, is the way the social context - San Antonio, Ibiza - has been commercially designed to coerce them into deviance and risk behaviours. The resort therefore acts as the catalyst for the behaviours.

### **The political economy: Consumerism and the commodification of everything**

**Author:** *So you two have been to San Antonio before [Jay and Streetfighter]?*

**Streetfighter:** *Same hotel, same place, San Antonio!*

**Author:** *That's interesting because some people are saying that Ibiza is the last one, the ultimate and that other holidays facilitate a step towards Ibiza. But there are people that come back here, year after year.*

**Jay:** *It's the name [the brand].*

**Streetfighter:** *Mate, I will always come back to Ibiza every year. That's how much I love it. The clubs, yeah? In Southside [back home], yeah, the club called the Kingdom. All the best DJs from Radio 1 come down. Drum and Base in one room and Van Dyke and all that and it is exactly like Ibiza, but Ibiza is like thousands of people but like Southside is like one thousand.*

**Author:** *So it is like the ultimate.*

**Streetfighter:** *It is a clubber's paradise. If you love the trance, house, I fucking love it.*

**Popeye:** *I hate it.*

**Streetfighter:** *Yeah, he doesn't like it [to Popeye], don't know about them two [C-Dawg and Jay].*

**C-Dawg:** *R&B.*

**Jay:** *Yeah R&B.*

**Popeye:** *All day long.*

**Streetfighter:** *Any day, mate. Me and him [to Jay as if to secure some common ground].*

**Author:** *What do you do if you are not into the clubs then?*

**Popeye:** *I would rather stay by the pool and go in the small clubs to be honest with you.*

**Jay:** *But we are mates and we'll have a laugh anyway [as if to try and unite group on separate interests].*

The tensions in individual holiday agendas are important here for they come to fruition when the Southside crew arrive on the West End drinking strip in San Antonio and split up. However, what I want to draw your attention to here, and as the Southside crew demonstrate, Ibiza now exists beyond its underground dance/house music reputation (which is now more mainstream than ever). As I have shown, some British tourists cannot quite locate the reasons for selecting Ibiza for their holiday; some say things like it's because of 'its name' or because it's the place to *be* but can offer little other reason. While there may be some allegiance to the music, the Superclubs or Ibiza town shopping boutiques, more than ever people feel they *should* go, to say they have gone, and feel they need to do so as part of life's experience. How is it then that they have come to believe this? Over the last ten years Ibiza's strategic immersion in the media, popular culture and celebrity stories has been coupled with its rampant marketisation. There has also been commodification and commercial transformation of its resorts and Superclubs, and the development of exclusive hotels and beach clubs. However, the island's infrastructure - health, criminal justice, and in some respects tourism (Bellis and Hughes, 2008) - is woefully short of supporting this development and demand for what is expected to be available in Ibiza. So where the formal economy falls short, in steps the informal equivalent (drug dealers, illegal taxis, etc.). Indeed, the British tourists and casual workers have their role to play in this respect because many arrive thinking they can get work but instead cannot and end up dealing drugs to sustain a wage.

These commercial and commodified advances and changes have occurred at the same time as Ibiza's tourist numbers have started to dwindle; in part, because of its image of 'drugs and crime' but also because of the increased competition it now has with other emerging tourist destinations which offer the same sort of thing (music, clubbing, sun, sea and the rest of it). With tourist numbers down and fighting an image problem, the corporations and marketing entrepreneurs, local authority, the Superclubs and, perhaps more reluctantly, many of the local community who work in the tourist industry on the island, more than ever, face a dilemma. They must ensure that the visitors who come maximise their spending in the short time they are there. And because Ibiza's economy relies so heavily on tourism, it means the principle elements of how this has to happen must take place in the Superclubs, the West End drinking strip, private hotels/beach clubs such as Ibiza Rocks and Ushuaia, and on the booze cruises. These tourist institutions and forums must therefore permit deviant and risk behaviours because they come as a consequence of the spending attached to the British (and other) tourists.

And here is where the ideology works because this cohort of working class British youth have come to believe that the better experiences come with spending more money - even if they end up in hospital as a consequence. So these tourist institutions and forums introduce different tariffs of VIP and create new spaces in which people feel they need to be seen just so they can tell everyone back home. What I am

describing here is a *spatial commodification of status stratification* (how space and 'social status' becomes intrinsic to spending power). It is these elements, I suggest, which also helps to propel British tourists into *hyperconsumption* and to feel they need to return the year after to attain the ideological higher status by spending more money. They want to go to the supposedly 'better' places which require them to have 'more money' and this is where the global corporations, commercial and marketing experts, the Superclubs win. These institutions are only concerned with making money from the British tourists and are not worried if they are harmed in any way as a consequence of their over-intoxication.

### **Capitalismo extremo: Risk taking and deviance in context**

After no fewer than six different casual workers approach us with offers for booze cruises, bars and clubs, we stumble out of the bar at around 4.45pm and they permit me to continue recording. We walk slowly in pairs down the road, distracted by different attractive women trying to pry us into bars or sell us tickets to help shape our 'night out'. As the sun bounces off our half-naked bodies, Jay practises his kickboxing techniques on me and shows me methods of killing people. Streetfighter then whispers in my ear about how he 'pulls women', telling one PR woman he will '*fuck her senseless in his apartment.*' '*Charming*' she replies. Yet their blunt advances have little success:

**Jay:** *Nice arse* [bottom].

[The girls passing by walk on unimpressed]

**Streetfighter:** [To me] *Mate, you have to push* [approach] *the birds out here.*

[One PR woman approaches us]

**PR woman:** *Hi guys we just want to let you know what is going on Thursday...* [Hands out leaflets for a pre-party 'booze cruise']

**Streetfighter:** *Nice face. Pretty.*

**Jay:** *Then to our hotel to party?*

**Streetfighter:** *We will fucking smash you up, fuck you* [have sex with you], *all sorts.*

**PR woman:** *Eugh, that's disgusting. That's vile.*

[All the lads laugh while Streetfighter remains serious about the offer]

Here continues the Southside crew's first night on holiday in San Antonio. All the data presented thus far has been from their lengthy focus group discussion. They are now loose in the social context of San Antonio and ready to continue the party. In doing so, and as this short excerpt shows, their no-nonsense holiday intentions and fetishes surface in tandem with the relentless bombardment of offers to help shape their night out and their holiday in general - all of which involve spending money, drinking, drugs

and are sold with the ideology and promise of sex (Andrews, 2008). That night, which is their first, they all get drunk and take drugs: Streetfighter has sex with two prostitutes; Jay loses his friends and ends up walking back to the hotel by himself; C-Dawg loses the group and ends up drinking in a bar by himself while Popeye drifts off with some other friends who he meets. The group separates because they have different conceptions of what they want from a night out and the West End drinking strip has been designed to cater for all their wild fetishes. I am saying that their attitudes for a holiday 'blowout' are persistently coerced by the commercial and commodified elements of the social context, which, results in deviant and risk activities - people continually approach them offering them sex, drugs and drink offers.

The Southside crew and others in my sample are participating in *capitalismo extremo* (extreme capitalism) - a sublime money-making process led by global corporations, commercial entrepreneurs, tourist companies/organisations who ideologically make the holidaymakers believe they should 'seize the moment', 'live the dream' and engage in excessive consumption, deviance and risk - all at the expense of themselves. This is evident in the way in which many of working class British holidaymakers have come to believe what they do on holiday is expected of them - because they learn about these behaviours at home and through popular culture - as much as the way in which the resort, and all its players, assists in those constructions and coerce them into those behaviours by offering them the opportunities to take drugs, drink heavily and have sex. *Capitalismo extremo* takes no prisoners because it is concerned only with exaggerating the tourists' 'blowout' attitudes to their holiday to make profit - even if it means significant personal, financial and/or social loss for the holidaymakers. Unknowingly, many British tourists participate in this social system, which often leaves them penniless and to their detriment, yet this does not seem to matter much to them. This is because their *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984) and ontology are already preset on reproducing similar kinds of behaviours back home (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007; Hall et al., 2008). So to do them abroad, when they occur in an exaggerated and/acute manner, means they are even more enjoyable - even if they may appear from the outside to be bizarre and extreme. Therefore, while the behaviours, and even some of the crude consequences, are constructed as something *real* which they can tell back home, they are as much a by-product of an ideological social conditioning of *being* over a period of time as they are drawn into excessive consumption, deviance and risk taking by the powerful corporations, commercial entrepreneurs and tourist companies/organisations. And despite all this, many often come back out to do the same thing the next year.

## **Going home ...only to come back out**

I sit drinking with Streetfighter and Jay in their local pub. As we gulp our pints of beer, their Ibiza holiday becomes the discussion point:

**Streetfighter:** *It was a year ago and I am just getting over it now [the holiday]. The last day, I really wanted to fucking stay. Didn't I say that, that I was going to sleep on the beach and find a fucking job; I didn't want to go.*

**Jay:** *If I didn't have a family, I would be there every year. Fucking on it. It has to be done.*

**Author:** *But why?*

**Streetfighter:** *Because it is freedom. There is no one to tell you what to do. No pressures or stresses of work or of the life you are in. So the person you see out there, is not the person you will see for the rest of your life.*

Over drinks the eventful night is confirmed as something which has gone down in history: a tale for many years. Later in the discussion:

**Streetfighter:** *Good night? And he was like yeah because I shit myself [laughs] and got sucked off [oral sex] by prostitutes.*

[All laugh]

**Author:** *Is that the best or worst?*

**Streetfighter:** *The best! The worst was coming back [home]!*

In a conversation a year after their holiday in Ibiza, the Southside crew can clearly recall the 'great moments'. In doing so, they confirm the perception that what they experience in Ibiza - and for many Brits on holiday elsewhere - a kind of constructed 'freedom'. My argument is that this is in fact *unfreedom* because of the way they reproduce what they have come to learn back home in the UK in the NTE, through popular culture and the media as well as on other holidays. For most, the feelings generated by the return to home life are sour and existentially penetrating, and this is evident in their admissions that they want to stay and that, despite everything - even the most bizarre moment of the holiday when Streetfighter was with the prostitutes - that the feeling of coming home was more depressing. The perfect life it seems is one without these home pressures where they can engage in this kind of hedonism on a daily basis.

Why is it that they feel like this then when they go home? I think the return to home life produces a dualism in the self: that is, how, over the course of the holiday, a gradual self deconstruction - a kind of emic and reflexive evaluation of the self takes place as they become unhinged from everyday home life, while, at the same time embrace the life of the resort and the dreamlike landscapes of the West End, the Superclubs and beach clubs. This identity reversal reinforces the perceived mundane of 'normal'

life, but also, at the same time, exaggerates the false happiness of the 'good life'; the *hyperconsumption* providing a bogus safety net, an imagined escapism towards security which easily stimulates the subjective need for enjoyment. This often results in an internal existential tug-of-war as people like the Southside crew end up not knowing what is real and what is false; they lose their ontological bearings. Their 'boring' home life, as they say, is laid naked before them while, at the same time, there is some small realisation that the dreamlike essence of what they thought they participated in was actually nothingness. What they are doing is reflexively looking 'below life' and it feels like looking deep into a desolate and personal abyss; a no man's land where the false is real and the real is false. Young Brits employ one (or a combination) of several methods of dealing with this depressing feeling: a) go out on the town when they get home to quickly revive the memories and home transgressions as part of their *being*; b) to start planning/saving for the next holiday next year, potentially in Ibiza; c) impulsively go out to Ibiza again the same summer or even fail to return and stay out there. Their return to Ibiza is also buttressed by a significant amount of marketing around the 'reunion parties', the release of Ibiza club compilations which stimulate memories of the 'good times' and the continued discourses which revolve around leisure and online time (in the pub, on Facebook) about the perceived magic of Ibiza. Some attend the same branded Ibiza clubs in the UK, go to reunion parties and buy the compilation CDs from the summer they had in Ibiza. This helps them rekindle memories and so we are also therefore talking about a *commodification of nostalgia* which provides the personal impetus to consider returning.

## Conclusion

This paper shows that the deviant and risky behaviours of British holidaymakers are as much about what they do/who they are abroad as what they do/who they are at home. The justification to 'play hard' on holiday, say these young British tourists, evolves from the pressure to 'work hard'. Yet some say work is 'boring' while others do not display such a commitment or any significant work ethic in their daily home lives. In fact, work is uncertain and precarious (Standing, 2011). To me, this validation seems more akin to an increasing commitment to a life of leisure and the role of consumer lifestyles and this seems evident in the hedonistic attitudes young British working class exhibit across town centres most weekends in the UK (Hayward and Hobbs, 2007; Hall et al., 2008); where work has little value as a means of identity construction which is where a life of leisure fills the void. This is not to suggest that they construct their lives as 'free beings' as some liberal-pluralists would like to think, but instead, make both conscious and subconscious decisions within the framework of an increased prevalence of the role of leisure and consumer capitalism.

With the advent of the holiday, there is an amplification of 'play' (at home) to 'play harder' (abroad). This splintering from 'work hard/play hard' to 'play/play harder', I would like to suggest, has occurred through a crude mixture of structural and social changes to the youth labour market and strategic marketing campaigns which do a number of things: a) make overt advertisements of leisure and the 'good life' (which involves a life mean attribution away from work); which, in turn, b) resonates with some working class groups who either have precarious, uncertain positions in the labour market (students, unemployed or those with temporary positions) and others who have quite mundane 9-5 jobs; c) thus creating the impetus for a life of leisure which, for most of the people in my study, is manifested by a premise of making impulsive decisions to spend money/experience 'life'/do 'crazy' things. Some of these social changes undoubtedly have affected all of us but I have been concerned with how these processes shaped a particular population; that is a small group of working class British youth and how they seek to 'experience' their holiday to construct the 'good times'.

It is this cultural ideology of 'leisure' and 'play' which directs people like the Southside crew to engage in deviance and risk abroad. At home, they are used to drinking, taking drugs and playful forms of deviant and risk taking - these actions are part of their *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984) - and so therefore it should be no surprise that these practices are often what they initiate when they can find any time out of the home predicaments in spaces which are specifically and symbolically designed for their 'blowout' (Billig, 1995; Miles, 2010). After all, one way or another, they have come to know that this is what is expected of them, and subconsciously what they expect from themselves. Because the holiday is a finite period of time, it must be seized and must be milked as much as possible before of the inevitable return to the banality of routine; the fixed time period often acting as a rationale to power through especially when a self deconstruction starts to pull apart some of the failings of home life - which only amplifies the need to make the most of it. Abroad, they are anonymous and a new permissiveness is personally rationalised and socially buttressed which allows for experimentation and exploration of the deeper realms of their fetishes and fantasies in the resort space which happily matches these interests...as long as money is being spent.

Yet everything around them is the same, the people they are with, the clothes they wear and they don't seem to have the cultural adventure to venture outside the resort: the only option for most is to remain in the resort area, engage in *hyperconsumption*, transgress and make some sort of version of memories on digital cameras by engaging in extreme deviance and risk activities to create social kudos and envy for their legendary activities. Quite often, although this can go very wrong and many end up with injuries or in hospital, they do not mind because they have come to believe the behaviours are more normal than not. As the holiday draws to a close, a personal crisis ensues which, for most, is negotiated by recommitting themselves to weekend excess and consumption as soon as



they get home, relive the Ibiza moments/discourses in the pub, and/or come back to Ibiza as soon as possible - perhaps even to work. This realisation not only assists with a reasoning to seize the reality as much as possible - to power on - as it does to tempt them back to Ibiza to relive the 'crazy times' and/or the 'good old days'.

There is therefore no pathology at play in the behaviours they exhibit abroad as they are in a perpetual cycle, not only to consume and live by this consumption as a means of identity construction - which by the way constrains them - but are equally bound to transgress it as a way of attempting to abscond its hold on their life. Here play the roles of the weekend, festivals, megaevents, and, in the context of my work, the holiday, and this is the tight grip the social system has on its subjects. Deviance and risk behaviours abroad are therefore as much culturally embedded as they are reinforcing; as much socially expected as they are situationally engaged; and consequently become as much subjectively reasoned as they are structurally and spatially encouraged.

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**DANIEL BRIGGS** is Professor in Criminology at Escuela de Derecho, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Europea. He is author of "Deviance and Risk on Holiday: An Ethnography of British Tourists in Ibiza". Email: [daniel.briggs@uem.es](mailto:daniel.briggs@uem.es)