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## Sun, beach ... and nightclubs: a study on the nightlife and tourism in Ibiza (1950–1971)

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**Abstract:** In the 1960s, Spain received millions of European tourists attracted by the Mediterranean climate and beaches, but who also wanted to listen to music, dance and have fun, a demand that was satisfied by the nightclubs. In this paper, we analyse the nightclubs of one of the great destinations of the time, the Island of Ibiza, using their advertising as the main source of information. We will determine their range of shows and with it, the interests of the tourists who visited them. We will discover that their numbers grew spectacularly despite the fact that they thrived in a political context that was not at all favourable: Francoist dictatorship.

**Keywords:** tourist behaviour; mass tourism; nightclubs; music; dancing; Ibiza; Francoism.

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### 1 Introduction

In the early 1950s, the first post-war European tourists appeared in Spain. They came to the Costa Brava with their newly acquired cars or to the Balearic Islands on the first charter flights. Their numbers increased steadily and by the mid-1960s the tourists arriving on the Spanish coast were already a real crowds; 3s (sun, sand and sea) mass tourism was born. This phenomenon revolutionised tourism from that moment on and soon spread throughout the Mediterranean.

These tourists were the initiators of one of the most innovative social phenomena of the second half of the 20th century, the emergence of masses of tourists thirsty for sun and sand. The quantitative importance of the phenomenon is undeniable, but despite this, today we know very little about what these first tourists were like, what their interests were and the reasons that satisfied them and led them to repeat their trips year after year. This lack of knowledge is due, among other causes, to the disinterest with which leisure tourism was viewed in the 1960s and 1970s by anthropologists and sociologists (Canosa et al., 2018, p.377; Nash, 1981, p.465; Shepherd, 2002, p.183; Stronza, 2001, p.268).

Our contribution to this knowledge of the international tourist visiting Spain in the 1950s and 1960s is based on the study of tourists who visited Ibiza, one of the major destinations of the time. In Ibiza, as in Mallorca and the Costa Brava, the most characteristic and universal element in the behaviour of these tourists was the attraction they felt for the Mediterranean sun, which was the main attractive factor. Consequently, there is no difficulty in classifying the tourists we are analysing here as sunlust tourists, those who performed leisure activities to escape from the daily routine (Cohen, 1984, p.374; Crompton, 1979, p.409; Dann, 1977, p.185; Gray, 1974, p.387; Fodness, 1994, p.562).

But this love of sun and beach did not mean that they were relatively lazy people, classifiable as organised mass tourists. We should bear in mind that reaching the Spanish coast in the 1950s was neither an easy nor a comfortable goal (Cirer, 2016; Cohen, 1972; Lewis, 1959; Lyth and Dierikx, 1994; Papatheodorou, 2002). Integrated package tours had just been born, they were an expensive and underdeveloped product, as was the Spanish airport network.

We have already indicated that the birth of mass tourism did not arouse great interest among academics, with the result that little fieldwork was carried out and, consequently, we know very little about the birth of a social phenomenon whose importance has not stopped growing to the present day. Right now, when more than seventy years have passed, it is impossible to conduct interviews with the first tourists who came to the Mediterranean, but we can analyse their behaviour as buyers, determine the activities on which they spent their money, a very clear indication of what their interests were.

Focusing on the case of Ibiza, in the following pages we will see that local entrepreneurs were quick to discover that their visitors were not an undifferentiated mass of buyers, but that they wanted to consume a wide range of goods and services in addition to accommodation and catering. In response to the complexity of their customers' demands, island entrepreneurs were quick to offer them a wide range of entertainment and nocturnal amusements.

## **2 An object of study situated far away in time and hard to pin down**

Every social researcher knows how difficult it is to acquire information about the elements that make up people's daily lives, the places where they socialise, have fun, look for a partner, etc. This difficulty increases when the protagonists are no longer accessible and a historical study has to be carried out. In our case, we have a particularly valuable ally that helps us to overcome these difficulties: advertising. The Ibizan nightclubs advertised their offerings profusely and thanks to this we are now able to carry out research that is both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative because we can count the advertisements and establish statistics and classifications, qualitative because we are referring to a cultural and, as we shall see, very diverse object of study.

The data provided in this paper, extracted from the publicity carried out by the Ibizan nightclubs, will help us to verify the scope of the phenomenon, its great quantitative importance and its strict relationship with tourism. We will see that the nightclubs offered a diverse programme, but in which dance music for couples, the so-called 'modern dances', clearly dominated. The public did not just want to watch a show, they wanted to dance, to participate, to have fun.

It should be noted that the approach of the present work is not very common. Social and anthropological studies on tourism usually consist of the work of one or more outsiders who analyse the natives and the impact of foreign visitors on local society. In this case it is a native who analyses the behaviour of outsiders in order to understand it and to identify the reactions of his own society in response to the massive presence of tourists. Even if the research is conducted by a native, it cannot be qualified as autoethnography, as the author does not reflect any personal experience in the work (Ellis et al., 2011, p.275; Hayano, 1979, p.99; Tedlock, 1991, p.78). It is a study that aims to provide information about both the society visited and that of the visitors [Bruner, (1989), p.440].

In a work such as this, which has a notable historical component, it is essential to begin by presenting the general and specific background and context. On a general level, we analyse one of the components of sun and beach tourism, a phenomenon that began in North America and developed in Europe just after the end of the Second World War. Within the specific Spanish environment, Francoism is omnipresent, censorship, economic and cultural autarchy and extreme distrust of everything that came from abroad were powerful obstacles to the development of international tourism in Spain, but they were overcome thanks to the drive of a demand that seemed inexhaustible and the hunger for economic growth that dominated host societies such as Ibiza.

We will now begin the analysis of the protagonist of our work, the Island of Ibiza, a tourist destination whose trajectory had begun in the thirties of the twentieth century and which had entrepreneurs who quickly adapted to the demands of the new tourists who arrived in the fifties, including the demand for nightlife venues.

**Figure 1** Map of the Island of Ibiza indicating the towns where the analysed nightclubs were located



Source: Own elaboration

### 3 Background, context and first nightclubs in Spain

#### 3.1 Warm beaches attract new tourists in Europe

In 1910, the medical journal *The Lancet* proclaimed that '[A] fine brown colour suggests health and good times, and is a pleasant thing to see.' [Albert and Ostheimer, (2002), p.932]. It was the foundation stone of a medical and social revolution that made sun and outdoor activities a sign of well-being and culture. Until then, tanned skin was a sign of low social status, and, consequently, seaside tourism had its epicentre in the promenade, a

space where aristocrats strolled in luxurious clothes that displayed their social rank (Nash, 1979).

After the end of the First World War, the epicentre of the seaside as a tourist entity shifted to the beach, a space dedicated to sunbathing and swimming. Now the prevailing fashion was to wear an increasingly small, skin-tight bathing suit, clearly inappropriate as a badge of social class (Kidwell, 1968; Hsue, 1997). Soon, the enjoyment of the beach became a mass fashion, but before 1939 the beach was a pleasure that in Europe was still prohibitively expensive (Furlough, 1998; NRA, 1934).

The situation changed very rapidly in the late 1940s, when the golden age of the Western economy began, a long period of solid growth in economic welfare (Crafts, 1995; Maddison, 1995; Toniolo, 1998). The Second World War had been long and hard, and those who had survived so many years of hardship and deprivation were eager to enjoy themselves, to escape temporarily from work and obligations. The war period significantly increased Europeans' appreciation of paid holidays, which became one of the most universally appreciated social achievements (Cross, 1989; Jones, 1986; Sherwood, 2011).

Thanks to the continued rise in disposable income and the generalisation of paid holidays, the new European middle classes were able to aspire to consume goods and services that, until then, were the exclusive preserve of the privileged classes, such as the enjoyment of an annual holiday in a tourist destination (Kaiserfeld, 2008). As a consequence, coastal tourism grew dramatically across Europe (Nash, 1979; Jones, 1986; Cross, 2006; Østby, 2013). But in the North Sea and the Baltic the new trends faced an unsolvable problem: the weather only allowed beach holidays for a very short period of time.

The solution was provided by the revolution in the means of transport. Firstly, Marshall plan aid focused on improving roads instead of railways (Schipper, 2007), which enabled coaches and private vehicles to reach the Mediterranean coast in increasing numbers (Badenoch, 2007; Cassamagnaghi et al., 2010; Walton, 2011). Secondly, the first airlines offering charter flights appeared, using DC3 aircraft (Lyth and Dierikx, 1994; Papatheodorou, 2002).

Within a few years, the tourist situation experienced an unexpected turnaround, in line with the accelerated social changes of the post-war period: aristocratic and bourgeois demand declined while the new middle classes craving the Mediterranean sun at a reasonable price forced the 'institutionalisation' of tourism (Cohen, 1972). A few traditional destinations, such as Blackpool or the Côte d'Azur managed to adapt and survive, but others declined.

In Spain, in the 1950s, three pioneering tourist destinations were developed: Mallorca, Ibiza and the Costa Brava. In them, tourism expansion did not follow the linear model proposed by authors such as Giampiccoli and Saayman (2018) or Lea (2006) that ends with an industry dominated by foreign companies and a society threatened by acculturation and degradation (Özekici and Ünlüönen, 2019; Stronza, 2001).

In the early 1950s, mass tourism was being born in the hands of tiny companies that were learning by doing and had no effective power over the market. As a result, in the first Spanish destinations, such as Ibiza, there was a division of roles, with local entrepreneurs providing accommodation and complementary services, and foreign travel agencies taking care of sales at source and air transport. At the economic level, this model made it possible to limit economic leakage from the tourism system, unlike what has subsequently happened in many other mass tourism destinations (Cirer, 2021b). At

the social level, the interaction with the masses of foreign tourists did not lead to any process of disorganisation or disintegration (Cooper and Cirer, 2023).

### 3.2 *Francoism, an environment not conducive to the development of sun, sand and sea tourism*

At the same time that middle-class Europeans were beginning to pine for the Mediterranean sun in Spain the Franco dictatorship was reaching its peak. This was a regime that aspired to determine the entirety of the lives of Spaniards and used every means at its disposal to achieve its social moulding goals. Like any dictatorial government, it did not take long to equip itself with an extensive apparatus that controlled any message, written, musical, visual or spoken that had public dissemination: censorship (Pérez, 2011, p.877; Ruiz, 2017, p.72).

For the particular interests of this work, the position of the censors with respect to modern dance music is of special interest, and it must be said that they were particularly zealous in their persecution and repression. Any modern dance music of foreign origin: foxtrot, charleston, shimmy ... was called, in a generic and clearly derogatory way, 'black music'. Their programming was banned outright from radio stations. Moreover, the strict instructions received by radio programmers limited the maximum time each station could devote to broadcasting dance music to one hour a day (Iglesias, 2010, p.126; Pérez, 2011, p.879; Sevillano, 1998, p.130).

Modern dances performed by couples generated a special rejection and, in practice, were banned, as 'many clergymen were obsessed with the supposed immorality of the dances and did not hesitate to describe them as a mortal sin in their sermons' (Román, 2020, p. 330). The Franco regime, in its first years of existence, intended to provide itself with an anaesthetic, traditional and strictly national soundtrack, impervious to foreign innovations and interferences, (Caparrós, 2019, pp.31–33; Murelaga; 2009, p.368).

This rejection of foreign music was but one facet of the animosity that everything foreign provoked in the Franco regime. At the end of the Second World War, the regime felt cornered and its hierarchs considered that almost everything outside its own borders constituted a serious potential danger, hence the attempt to isolate the Spanish people from all contact with the outside world. In this context, the presence of foreign visitors could only generate rejection and mistrust, especially if they were tourists wishing to sunbathe or stroll along the beach in swimming trunks, two behaviours that, at the time, were strictly forbidden in Spain. The hedonic aspirations of the new middle-class European tourists clashed head-on with the social model that National-Catholicism sought to impose on the population (Díaz, 1990; Sánchez, 1999).

Consequently, a complex legal framework was created whose sole objective was to strictly control all foreigners wishing to enter Spanish territory. Tourists arriving in Spain had to put up with expensive, slow and cumbersome bureaucracy and an exchange rate that blatantly undervalued their currency [Storm, (2017), p.248].

If any type of visitor was to be assumed, Francoism did not want the rising European middle classes, it aspired to attract a wealthy, classist and conservative tourist, and the official tourist advertising of the time was designed with this objective in mind. This was based on the exaltation of the bellicose and Catholic Spanish past materialised in castles, monasteries and cathedrals (García and Marías, 2011; Ramón and García, 2016; Torres, 2019). To this essentialist architecture were added references to the great diversity of landscapes offered by Spain and a cultural touch that sought to highlight differences

through bullfighting, flamenco, folklore and popular religious festivals (Fandiño, 2010; Rina, 2018; Storm, 2017; Wieczorek, 2017).

### 3.3 Tourism spreads the nightclubs along the Spanish coastline

Sun and beach tourism was not a complete novelty in Spain; in fact, it had already appeared in the 1930s in the Balearic Islands leading to the emergence of an extensive complementary offer among which nightlife venues stood out (Cirer, 2014). The first venue of this type was the Mallorcan nightclub *Tito's*, which opened in 1923 and would become the most emblematic venue of the Mallorcan nightlife throughout the 20th century (Pujals, 2002).

At the end of the 1940s, as international tourism resurged on the Island of Mallorca, new venues appeared offering danceable rhythms such as *Trocadero*, *Salón Ibiza*, *Trebol* and *Jack el Negro*. The latter offered an eclectic show combining modern dance music and traditional Mallorcan song and dance. In 1955, *La Cubana*, an establishment dedicated to Caribbean rhythms, opened its doors [Canyelles, (2012), pp.50–55].

As soon as the French border was reopened, the first tourists began to arrive on the Costa Brava of Girona. Initially, the local business community used its scarce financial resources to build a minimal range of accommodation and restaurants, but it did not take long for them to try to satisfy the tourists' desire for fun (Cirer, 2016). In 1955, the open-air nightclub *Los Almendros* opened in Calella de Palafrugell, and two years later three similar venues were opened: *Las Vegas*, located in Sant Feliu, and *Salon Fiesta* and *Casa Vella* in Platja d'Aro (Bofill, 2015, pp.68–69; Castellón, 2015, p.69).

The conclusion of this brief review is that, in the 1950s, at the same time as the first European tourists appeared, nightclubs were springing up, offering them all kinds of shows and modern dance music. Visitors to the Spanish Mediterranean coast were not only looking for sun, sand and sea, they also wanted to have fun and were prepared to pay for it. It was an opportunity that was seized by local entrepreneurs in all the fledgling tourist destinations of the time, despite the clear contravention of the regime's directives.

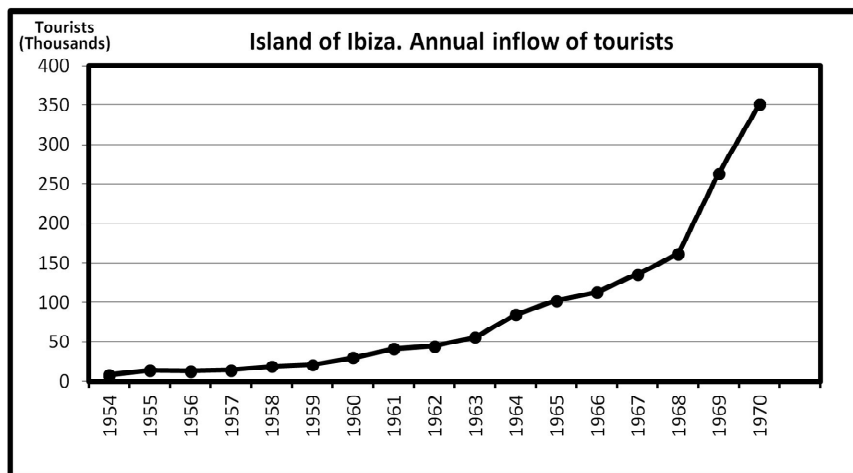
## 4 Ibiza, a long-established tourist destination

In Ibiza, tourism became a truly important economic activity in 1933. In that year, the first large hotels were inaugurated with a design intended to satisfy the demands of European tourists, which placed them well above the Spanish standards of the time (Cirer, 2021a). In addition to this first-class hotel offer a high quality complementary offer was created, including bars, restaurants, companies offering boat and coach excursions, etc. As far as the particular interests of this work are concerned, the *Mitjorn Dancing-bar*, promoted by a French citizen, and an establishment offering jazz music, the American Bar, are worth mentioning. The *Gran Hotel* also offered dance music to its clients.

The take-off of tourism in Ibiza was brutally halted on 18 July 1936, when the Spanish Civil War began. The subsequent outbreak of World War II eliminated any tourist activity until 1946. That year, a group of eleven local businessmen reopened the *Gran Hotel*, an initiative that ended in a serious failure. Tourists were unable to reach the island due to poor maritime communications and the extreme shortage of food meant that the hotel's dining room could not be supplied (Cirer, 2021b).

It was not until 1951 that the first tourists began to arrive and then, as if by magic, the hotels inaugurated twenty years earlier reopened their doors. They did so in more than precarious conditions due to the absence of furniture, crockery, linen, etc., but by the summer of 1953, practically all the Ibizan hotel plant had been recovered (Cirer, 2021b). From that moment on, Ibiza tourism accelerated and in the following 16 years it grew at an astonishing rate: 26% per year (Figure 2). It is within this environment of overflowing expansion of tourist activity that the central object of study of this work is situated: the nightclubs located on the Island of Ibiza.

**Figure 2** Evolution of tourist arrivals on the Island of Ibiza. 1954–1970



Source: Palma de Mallorca Chamber of Commerce. Annual reports 1961–1971.

## 5 Nightclubs in Ibiza

### 5.1 Sources of information used

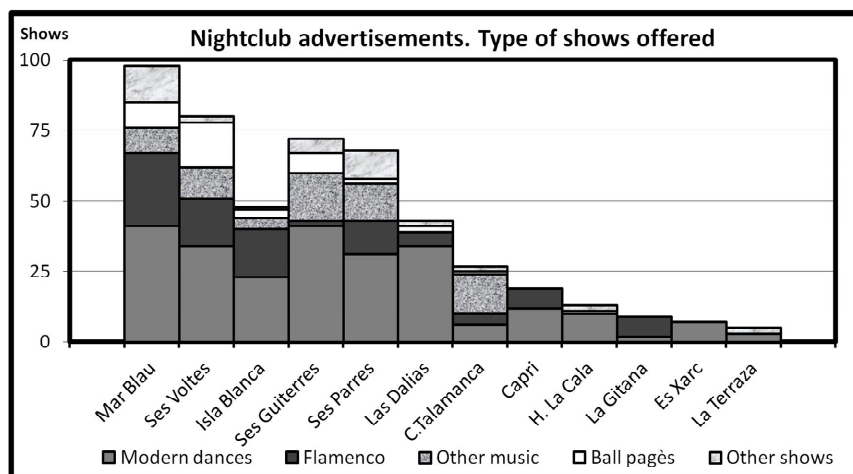
Ibiza's nightclubs offered a varied and variable programme. The island's situation made it difficult to comply with a fixed programme of shows. Accordingly, the Ibizan nightclubs were constantly changing their programming, which obliged them to keep their potential clients informed and to do so they used all the means at their disposal: radio, press, street advertisements, etc. The aim of this advertising effort was not so much to convince potential customers as to inform the prescribers, those professionals who were in a position to influence foreign tourists: hotel receptionists, taxi drivers, tourist guides, etc.

The main information medium available was the *Diario de Ibiza*, the only daily newspaper on the Island of Ibiza between 1951 and 1970, and nightclubs used it massively. This has allowed us to carry out an exhaustive monitoring of the nightclubs that were open at any given time and the programming they offered. Our database includes 204 advertisements in which 489 entertainment offers of all kinds appear: music, shows, etc. These advertisements correspond to 37 nightclubs and 5 hotels that had their



own lounge open to the general public. In this article we have analysed the offer of the twelve most important ones, which are shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3** Offer of the main nightclubs in Ibiza between 1951 and 1970



Source: Own elaboration based on advertisements in *Diario de Ibiza*.

As far as spatial distribution is concerned, the nightclubs quickly spread throughout the island as tourism increased. In keeping with this scheme, the most important concentration was in Sant Antoni, (*Ses Voltes-Isla Blanca*, *Ses Guiterres*, *Capri* and *La Gitana*) and the second concentration was in Santa Eulària, (*Ses Parres*, *La Cala*, *Es Xarc*). Next to Ibiza town were Mar Blau and Club Talamanca, but there were no nightclubs within the town (Figure 1).

## 5.2 *Mar Blau and Ses Voltes-Isla Blanca, leaders in nightlife offerings*

These two establishments were the most important, the ones that set the standard and at the same time maintained a fierce competition from the very moment of their inauguration in 1951 (Figure 4). *Ses Voltes* was created by a radio and show business professional who was well known in Spain at the time: Joaquín Soler Serrano, star announcer of *Radio Barcelona* and owner of several venues that offered variety shows in Barcelona.

Soler ran the venue for two years and then closed it when he moved to Venezuela. The venue survived thanks to the conductor of his orchestra: Alfonso Oya Simó, known by his stage name: Alfonso Rivero. He took over the venue and reopened it in 1955, the following year he abandoned the original venue and changed its name to *Isla Blanca*.

Alfonso Rivero kept in his premises a programme in which dance music was the main offer. He and his orchestra were the mainstay of his venues, the axis of a programme to which flamenco groups, singers, dancers, comedians, etc. were added. Rivero did not take long to diversify his business, in 1967 he opened the Marco Polo hotel, of which he was the owner and director.

*Mar Blau* also opened its doors in 1951 in modest premises located next to Ibiza town. Practically every year it was expanded by adding terraces and other spaces and the

complex ended up including a hostel. Its initial offer consisted almost exclusively of dance music. Orchestras such as *Ritmo y Melodía*, *Bahía* and *Hawai* performed there. In 1958 it took a spectacular qualitative leap forward when it hired Tolo Jaume as artistic director. He was a former dancer who had just left the management of the most important dance hall in Mallorca: *Tito's*. Tolo Jaume gradually diversified the programme by incorporating flamenco and South American music.

**Figure 4** Advertisements appearing in the *Diario de Ibiza* on 20 August 1953

# MAR-BLAU

¡la terraza más bella de la isla!

Hoy a las 11 de la noche

## JUEVES DE MODA

Diviértase y baile al son de la

## ORQUESTA BAHIA

El conjunto más dinámico de IBIZA

¡Una auténtica Verbena!

¡Un ambiente distinguido!

Toda señora o señorita que nos honre con su visita, será obsequiada con una copa del exquisito licor ibicenco

To-day, Thursday, at 11 P. M.

### BALL

Come and dance on the charming terraces of the MAR-BLAU Hotel (Puig des Molins, Ibiza) overlooking the sea.

Aujourd'hui, Jeudi a 23 heures

### GRAN BAL D'ETÉ

sur les terrasses enchantées de MAR BLAU, surplombant la baie d'Ibiza, dans un cadre unique, au milieu d'une ambiance distinguée.

# SES VOLTES

SAN ANTONIO

Hoy jueves, gran verbena, a las 11 de la noche

## Orquesta Ritmo y Melodía

Honrad con vuestra presencia SES VOLTES, pues son un prestigio para Ibiza  
Acudid a sus terrazas en donde agradablemente se reúnen belleza y distinción

El público es quien ha proclamado SES VOLTES ES LO MEJOR

Terraces ouvertes au public depuis 11 h. du soir, Mercredi, Jeudi, Vendredi et Samedi de cette semaine  
Terraces open to public this week on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, from 11 p. m.

Notes: An example of the fierce competition between the two nightclubs. On that day both establishments advertised dances to the rhythm of the Bahía and Ritmo y Melodía orchestras.

Source: *Diario de Ibiza*

### 5.3 A varied range of second-tier nightclubs

The third nightclub to open its doors was in Sant Antoni, *Ses Guiterres*. Its owners were two local businessmen, the Prats brothers, who hired the musician and composer Félix Strohecker as director. According to *Diario de Ibiza*, this nightclub had 'facilities decorated in the purest Ibizan style'. It was used in July 1964 by the Rolling Stones for a private party.

The first nightclub in Santa Eulària was *Ses Parres*, which opened in 1954. It was owned by local businessman Josep Mari Juan, who also ran a cinema. The English writer

Norman Lewis, who spent his summer holidays in Santa Eulària at that time, left us a picturesque description of the atmosphere that prevailed there:

“*Ses Parres* bar, dancing and cabaret, [...]. The floor show was innocent entertainment, intended to provide something typical for foreign visitors”.  
[Lewis, (1959), p.205].

*La Gitana* was located in Sant Antoni and, as its name suggests, was a venue fully dedicated to flamenco, a specialisation that clearly differentiated it from the rest of the Ibiza nightclubs. Its owner, Marita Nájera, was an Andalusian aristocrat, a true expert in flamenco singing and dancing, who offered a high-quality programme [Castro, (2003), p.198]. It was probably the only venue that offered truly authentic flamenco, performed by professionals. In any case, the life of the venue was very short.

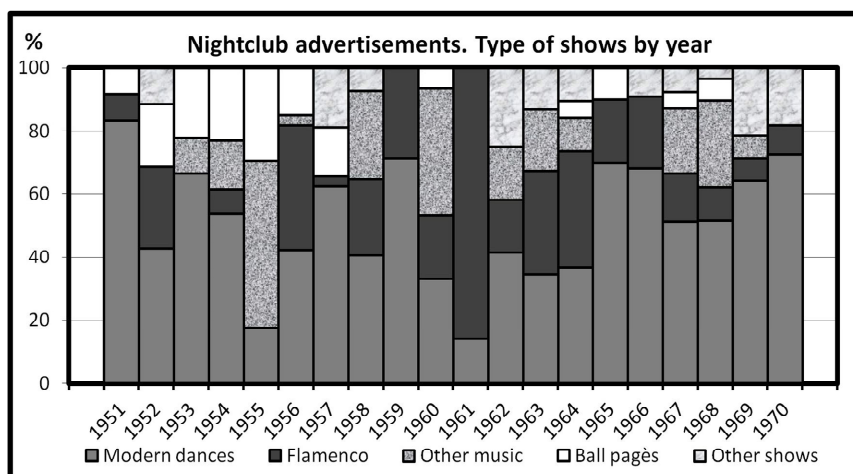
Several hotels had their own nightclub, but few opened it to the outside public and even fewer advertised it in the press. One of them was the hotel La Cala, in Santa Eulària, whose nightclub had a long history. It was one of the few nightclubs that had a mixed commercial approach, as it combined local and foreign clientele. Very similar was *Las Dalias*, located in the inland town of Sant Carles. Both nightclubs were open all year round and in winter, when their clientele was exclusively local, they chartered buses to transport their customers from Ibiza town.

## 6 Music for all tastes

### 6.1 A diversified offer

Figure 5 shows the annual programmes of the Ibiza nightclubs. It collects the percentage of each type of music out of the total number of advertisements analysed that year.

**Figure 5** Annual distribution of the types of music advertised in the nightclubs



Source: Own elaboration based on advertisements in *Diario de Ibiza*.

Figure 5 shows the dominance of the offer of modern dances over any other type of music or show. Modern dances represented more than half of the offer between 1951 and

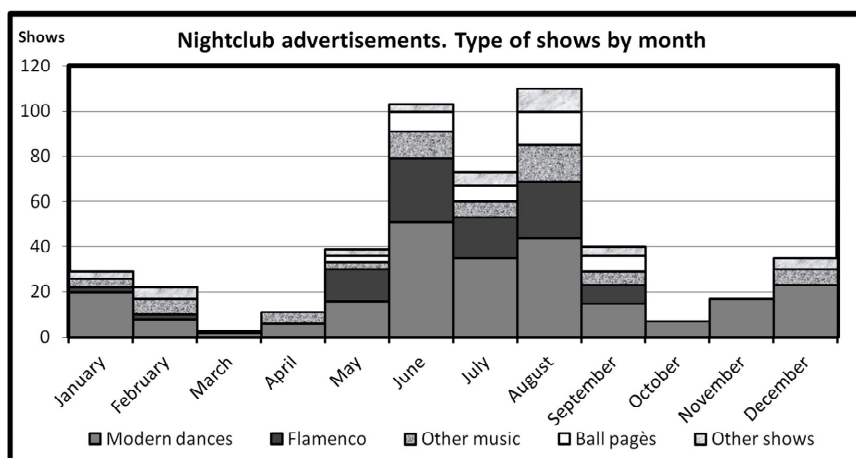
1970. The second most programmed type of music was flamenco, with 20% of the offer, and in third place came other music, a section that included South American music, melodic song, etc. Advertisements for exhibitions of local folkloric dances, of ball pagès, accounted for 8% of the offer. Non-musical shows, such as comedians or conjurers, accounted for another 8% of the total.

Since the early 1960s, dance orchestras have dominated the programming of the most prominent nightclubs. At that time it was inconceivable that one of these establishments would not have a musical group offering dance music. Customers wanted to dance, to have fun, not just to watch a show. The only exception to this rule was *La Gitana*, which we have already mentioned had a short career.

## 6.2 For the time being, there was no music without musicians

The members of the groups that played dance music had a varied origin. First and foremost was the orchestra led by Alfonso Rivero, who generally hired musicians from outside the island who, like himself, only came to the island to perform during the summer season. The orchestras *Ritmo y Melodía* and *Hawai* were formed by local musicians (Torres, 2009). The advertisements also sporadically feature an orchestra from outside the island, such as that of the Catalan Luís Duque or those that offered Caribbean or South American music. The latter, in general, only appeared on the billboard for one year; none managed to consolidate their presence in the island's musical world. The same was true of those dedicated to flamenco, whose names were rarely repeated from one season to the next.

**Figure 6** Distribution of the number of shows announced and the type of music advertised by the nightclubs by months



Source: Own elaboration based on advertisements in *Diario de Ibiza*

During the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, musicians only used acoustic instruments, essentially percussion and wind, but soon gave way to electrified groups such as *Los Diana* and *Es Amics* (Cirer, 2010). These ensembles were the leaders of a transition that did not cause the slightest stridency, as many musicians were part of one type of group or another, both simultaneously and alternatively. However, the

electrification of musical groups that performed live had an ephemeral life, beginning around 1965 and soon fading away. As electric guitars and basses appeared, so did records and DJ booths, which ended up dominating the Ibiza nightlife scene in the 1970s.

Figure 6 shows the extent to which Ibiza's musical offer was dependent on tourism: June, July and August accounted for two thirds of the announcements. Outside the summer season, the nightclubs only offered a discreet programme during the months of December and January on the occasion of the Christmas holidays. Some nightclubs reopened their doors on those days, but most of them remained closed for the whole winter.

## 7 'It does not look like Spain'

In the first pages of this article we have indicated that the Franco regime was not at all willing for people to have fun and dance freely, but we have gone on to detail the great diffusion that dance music had in Ibiza thanks to tourism. The incompatibility between the two statements is obvious, but the inconsistency is resolved by recognising the lack of zeal shown by the island authorities in applying the rules coming from the Spanish Government.

An early example of the lack of intensity of Francoism in Ibiza is provided by a lecture given by the poet Marià Villagómez on the work of Antonio Machado in 1950. The Catalan writer Josep Pla, who was present at the event, confessed to the Ibiza poet his surprise at the freedom with which he had expressed himself by repeatedly quoting a poet of recognised Republican affiliation. Pla assured Villagómez that there was no way that lecture would have been possible in Barcelona [Villagómez, (2012), p.150].

Another example is provided by the names of the nightclubs themselves. If we recall the names that appear in Figure 3, we will see that among the twelve that appear in that list there are five with names that are unequivocally Catalan and not linked to any geographical location: *Ses Voltes*, *Mar Blau*, *Ses Guiterres*, *Ses Parres* and *Es Xarc*; moreover, the Isla Blanca room was subtitled *Ca Vostra* in the advertising. This was happening at a time when the Franco regime had declared a veritable crusade against any public use of the Catalan language, a crusade that was particularly intense in the world of music [Pérez, (2011), p.879].

The literary tolerance and the presence of names written in Catalan give us a first idea of the laxity with which the local authorities took the application of the Spanish rules of the time. The same was true of the tourists' clothing, which did not cause any scandal among the island's population and which, outside Ibiza town, did not cause the local authorities the slightest concern either.

The English writer Norman Lewis, who spent his summers in the coastal town of Santa Eulària in the 1950s, tells us that French tourists there used to show themselves in bikinis without causing any problems, despite the strict legal prohibition in force at the time [Lewis, (1959), p.222].

In Ibiza town, where the official representatives of the Franco regime, generally from outside the island, lived, there was much less tolerance of tourists' dress. Some of them were fined for leaving the hotel shirtless or showing necklines wider than was considered tolerable [Planells, (1984), p.276]. Especially belligerent was the bishop of Ibiza, who waged a particularly fierce war against the indecent dress of tourists, a war that he ended

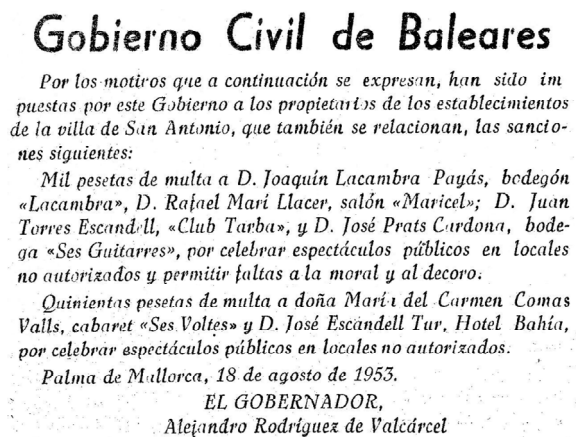
up losing, as he was forced to resign under pressure from the local population (Borthen, 2010, p.31; Nash, 2020, p.49; Cirer, 2021b, p.492).

The same permissiveness also applied to prohibitions on dancing in public places:

“Society dancing and nightclubs were forbidden on the Island of Ibiza, while in Sant Antoni dancing took place every night on the terrace of a café near the town hall. Nor were the ladies bothered because of the way they dressed”. [Planells, (1984), p.276].

Despite all this, there were many clashes between the Civil Government of Palma de Mallorca and the Ibizan nightclubs. As a result, on several occasions heavy fines were imposed on different venues for breaking the rules that were intended to prevent public dancing. On 18 August 1953, four Ibizan premises, including *Ses Guiterres*, were fined 1,000 pesetas on charges of ‘holding public shows in unauthorised premises and permitting breaches of morals and decorum’. On the same day, *Ses Voltes*, pompously described as a ‘cabaret’, was fined five hundred pesetas (Figure 7).

**Figure 7** Announcement of the fines imposed by the Civil Government of the Balearic Islands on six Ibizan nightclubs in August 1953



Notes: All of them are blamed for holding shows in unauthorised premises and four of them are also fined for ‘moral misconduct’, probably for allowing their clients to dress in a manner considered indecent.

Source: Diario de Ibiza

This type of problem was common even at the end of the 1960s: in 1967, for example, the Civil Governor was still imposing fines on different nightclubs ‘for allowing acts contrary to good manners and for disobedience to authority.’

Perhaps the best description of the atmosphere that prevailed on the Island of Ibiza is provided by two writers from Madrid who spent many summers there in the 1950s and 1960s:

“As soon as you finish, we’ll go to Ibiza. I have been told that it is the most beautiful island in the Mediterranean. And it does not look like Spain. It is a free island...” [Aldecoa, (1986), p.175].

“The island was the summary of everything that was denied us in the Madrid of that time. A relaxed moral climate. A truly cosmopolitan social environment [...] Ibiza was the physical joy of living”. [Castro, (2003), p.19].

## 8 The nightclubs were only the beginning

The year 1970 marks the end of our work because it coincided with a radical change in the world of music on the island: the appearance of discotheques in which live music disappeared in favour of records. In principle, discotheques made it possible to greatly reduce costs, but, in reality, those that offered great shows were as expensive or more expensive than the traditional nightclubs.

During the 1970s, in Ibiza, huge discotheques opened their doors offering shows to thousands of customers, some of them, which based their offer on innovative electronic music, were very expensive, others had as their main attraction the sale of cheap alcohol in an environment enlivened by commercial music. However, the expansion of the tourist market meant that the large, world-famous Ibizan discotheques coexisted with dozens of smaller venues specialising in jazz or bossa nova music, for example, and often, offering live music in a small format. It was also possible to find luxurious restaurants where one could dine while watching a high-quality variety show (Capellà, 2018; Berrozpe et al., 2017, 2019).

**Figure 8** Advertisement in the *Diario de Ibiza* on 15 August 1958

EXCURSIONES DE NOCHE DIARIAS DAILY NIGHT EXCURSIONS EXCURSIONS DE NUIT TOUS LES SOIRS TÄGLICHE ARENDAUSFLÜGE	
IBIZA	SAN ANTONIO
20'30 - 02'00 Sal (Dep) San Antonio	21'15 - 01'30 Sal (Dep) Ibiza
22'00 - 03'00 Sal (Dep) San Antonio	22'45 - 02'30 Sal (Dep) Ibiza
BONO - BON - VOUCHER A SU ELECCION—VOTRE CHOIX—YOUR CHOICE—IHRE WAHL	
TRANSPORTE } CENA } <b>155 Ptas.</b> NIGHTCLUB }	RESTAURANTES: «El Corsario» (Ibiza) «Hotel Floray» (Ibiza) «Hotel Tanit» (San Antonio)
TRANSPORTE } CENA } <b>110 Ptas.</b>	CLUBS: «Mar Blau» (Ibiza) «Club Talamanca» (Ibiza) «Isla Blanca» (San Antonio) «Capri» (San Antonio) «Sex Guiterres» (San Antonio)
TRANSPORTE } NIGHTCLUB } <b>70 Ptas.</b>	

Notes: At that time, nightclubs were already a sufficiently consolidated attraction to create a complementary offer to themselves. A travel agency offered night bus tours of the main restaurants and nightclubs on the island.

Source: *Diario de Ibiza*

## 9 Conclusions

The first fact to take into account is the intensity of the nightclub phenomenon in Ibiza. The number of venues that opened their doors following the rhythm of the arrival of tourists is surprising. And we have already seen that the phenomenon did not occur exclusively in Ibiza; nightclubs flourished along the Mediterranean coast as European tourists arrived.

Tourists' interest in Mediterranean cultural expressions was limited to the occasional flamenco show and a bit of ball pagès, and they were not particularly demanding in terms

of authenticity. We must remember that only ball pagès was part of Ibiza culture, as flamenco was completely alien to it. Consequently, we can affirm that in Ibiza, nightclubs offered entertainment that had almost nothing to do with the local culture. In no way can it be suggested that we are analysing a case of commodification of local culture brought about by the arrival of foreign visitors [Macleod, (2006), p.73].

Nor were these interests specific to the tourists who came to Ibiza, as demonstrated by one of the first surveys carried out in the early 1970s:

“The motives that the survey calls ‘holiday’ play a very prominent role; they constitute ‘the main reason’ for coming to Spain by 84.7% of those surveyed. [...] very low participation of ‘monuments and works of art’ with 3.8% and negligible that of ‘gastronomy’.” [Cals, (1974), p.43].

The tourists who came to Ibiza in the fifties and sixties had nothing to do with the aggressive agents of the new forms of ‘pseudo-colonisation’ proposed by Brohman (1996), Bruner (1989) or Matthews and Richter (1991). They did not seek to ‘impose’ tourism on the local population, nor to ‘buy’ or ‘commodify’ an alien culture (Lévi-Strauss, 1972; Nash, 1981; Macleod, 2006; Shahzalal, 2016). It is also clear that the search for authenticity was not a particularly widespread concern (MacCannel, 1973).

European tourists coming to Ibiza did not respond to a single model, or even to a limited set of stereotypes, but they had solid and mundane, even frivolous if you like, common goals. After years of war and deprivation, Europeans wanted to disconnect, to put aside their obligations and responsibilities, they wanted to relax, to stroll, to dance, to have fun, to socialise with other people like themselves, to eat and drink in their company and they wanted to do so in a pleasant, sunny, warm environment, far from their grimy, dark cities. Contrary to what it may seem, their demands went far beyond the 3s.

Those who had experienced the Second World War were the ‘inventors’ of the new format of the Mediterranean holiday, and thanks to them an industry was born that could fully satisfy their demands. They were so happy with their experience that they repeated it and recommended it to acquaintances and relatives, expanding the demand. This growing demand was met by business people in the industry, both in the sending country and in the receiving destinations. They all learned to reduce costs, to industrialise the tourism product. As prices and travel time fell, more and more Europeans could afford a trip to the sun. Throughout the 1960s demand became explosive and the tourist crowds overwhelmed the pioneering destinations and spread up and down the Mediterranean coast.

Returning to the case of Ibiza, by the early 1970s the tourism arriving on the island was already massive, but that is not to say that it consisted of an undifferentiated herd. If the island was able to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, it was by offering a product suited to each market segment: there were expensive hotels and cheap guesthouses and flats, expensive avant-garde shows and affordable small discos. The modern dances, which had dominated the musical offer in the previous two decades, did not disappear, but were hidden in a new phase dominated by electronic music.



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