

THE RELUCTANT TOURIST? AN EXPLORATION OF SECOND HOME OWNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR IMPACTS ON NORTH CORNWALL, UK

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates second home owners' perceptions of the impacts of second home ownership. Although the impacts of second home ownership have attracted some scholarly interest, to date the perceptions of second home owners themselves have been conspicuous by their absence. In-depth interviews were conducted with owners of second homes in the tourist region of North Cornwall. Findings demonstrated general acknowledgement of impacts, both positive and negative, although the positive economic contribution of second home ownership was placed to the fore. Factors that affected perceptions included degree of second home use, degree of place attachment, location, length of ownership and visitation behaviour. An emergent typology is also presented classifying second home owners as *Inheritors, Investors, or Enjoyers*. The study thereby provides a starting-point for further research in this largely neglected, and yet growing, area of tourism. **Keywords:** Second home tourism, second home ownership, tourism impacts, tourist perceptions, North Cornwall

INTRODUCTION

With almost 1.6 million people owning a second home in England and Wales according to the 2011 census (Christie, 2013) second home ownership (SHO) is an important phenomenon, which has attracted limited academic attention within the context of tourism. One explanation for this could be the nature of SHO, where ownership conjures up images of permanent residency as opposed to tourism, which relates to temporary residency (see for example the World Tourism Organization's definition of tourism (1990)). Nonetheless, SHO is a large and

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growing facet of tourism in many destinations, in the UK and beyond, bringing with it a range of impacts and which therefore is deserving of further scholarly interest.

Consequently the aim of this study is to explore the perception of these impacts, from the second home owners' perspective. Second home owners hold a particularly intriguing position in that they may arguably be regarded as tourists-cum-locals due to what Aronsson (2004) describes as their semi-residency status. Thus, whereas a common distinction in tourism is that between hosts and guests, the line between the two is blurred with regard to second home owners who, it would seem reasonable to assume, have a greater stake in the destination than the traditional tourist given their property ownership status.

The UK region of North Cornwall provided the context for the study. North Cornwall is not only an important tourist destination but also, as shall be described in detail below, very much affected by SHO. As such it serves as a useful case to explore the relationship between SHO and tourism. Cornwall itself is one of the UK's poorest regions. Unemployment is high and productivity is low (it has the lowest level of productivity of any Local Enterprise Partnership region in the UK, (Cornwall and Isles of Scilly [C&IoS] Strategic Economic Plan, 2014)). Tourism and agriculture provide the region's two key pillars and in this regard, Cornwall reflects many peripheral regions in Europe. Data at the sub-regional level indicate that C&IoS had the highest level of Gross Value Added of the Tourism Industries (GVATI) of all sub-regions in the UK apart from Outer London (Office for National Statistics, 2014). The vast majority (94%) of visitors to Cornwall are from the UK with 4% from Europe and 2% from further afield with the beauty of the natural landscape being a key reason for visiting (Beaufort Research, 2013).

The paper is structured as follows: The literature review first discusses SHO as a concept, pointing out its place at the margins of tourism research. We then proceed to explore characteristics of second home tourism (SHT) before looking at the nature and determinants of its impacts. The methodology is described before the data, collected in the form of in-depth interviews with second home owners, is analysed and discussed according to key themes. An emergent framework is proposed that seeks to provide a foundation for further studies of SHT.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Second Home Tourism as a Concept

Second homes are hard to define. Reasons for this include disagreements around their types and functions, constraints relating to primary

data sources, fluctuating patterns of use in practice and academic attention from several disciplines (Coppock, 1977; Thornton, 1996; Muller, 2011). Historically, the term 'second homes' itself is rooted in administrative practices (Hall and Muller, 2004), which conceal the phenomenon's scope and complexity by defining people as static when society is increasingly mobile (Urry, 2000; Muller, 2002; Muller and Hall, 2003; Bauman, 2005). Which property is a first or second home is arguably the owner's decision, though most seem unaware of its consequences (Muller, 2002). Defining a home as 'secondary' may result in its owner being viewed as a 'temporary resident', an 'outsider', irrespective of time spent in a community (Muller, 1999; Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Flognfeldt, 2002; Hall and Muller, 2004); for example. Kaltenborne (1998) therefore claims that 'alternative home' may be a more appropriate term. In practice, most researches employ a pragmatic approach to definition based on data access (Hall and Muller, 2004). This study combines Downing and Dower's (1973), Clout's (1973), and Shucksmith's (1983) definitions, arguing that second homes are 'structures owned or leased long-term as an additional residence for a household which predominantly lives elsewhere, primarily but not exclusively for recreation.'

Characteristics of Second Home Ownership

A range of features of second homes and SHT have been identified in the literature. According to Hall and Muller (2004) and Muller (2011), they occur sparsely in urban environments, but are often concentrated in ecologically sensitive rural and coastal areas (Tombaugh, 1970; Muller 2011; Kondo *et al.*, 2012) which would be the case for North Cornwall. Density of second home ownership is related to travel times from primary areas of residence, the geography of amenity rich areas, real estate costs (which are of course also related to demand for second homes) as well as links to places of childhood/family origin (Hall and Muller, 2004). Second home ownership has also been related to life stages, specifically retirement (Coppock, 1977; Williams *et al.*, 2004). Status considerations may be an additional aspect of location and purchase decision. Second homes are frequently regarded as providing access to cheaper albeit more authentic holidays (Hall & Muller 2004) but also to elitism (Wolfe, 1977; Jaakson, 1986; Halseth, 1998), though this is dependent on national context (Hall & Muller, 2004). Halseth (1998) argues second home locations are becoming elite playgrounds in Canada. In the UK, there is increased perception that they are the domain of the rich (Hall and Muller, 2004). Further features exist that set second home owners apart from the indigenous population. Drawing on Halseth (1998, 2004) and Gill and Clarke (1992) these comprise: older than permanent residents, fewer children present, high-

er levels of education, higher levels of annual household income, and more likely to be employed in the professional sector or to be retired.

Reasons for second home ownership vary, although common themes appear in the literature. Thus, the notion of escapism or its inverse 'returning' in the sense of finding oneself, returning to nature as well as the notion of leisure pursuits and recreation are identified by Clout (1972) Jaakson (1986), Kaltenborn (1998) and Quinn (2004), whereby Chaplin (1999) focuses on gaining control. In a similar vein Suffron (1998) offers the opportunity for finding solitude. Other motives include health benefits (Suffron, 1992) and investment (Clout, 1972; Kaltenborn, 1998). Robertson (1977) points to the irony of escape as a motive for a place that is repeatedly visited, in an organised manner and that has to be maintained. Nonetheless, Jaakson (1986) suggests that the organisation and maintenance of the second home assume a different meaning from that undertaken in one's primary place of residence, forming, so it is argued, part of the leisure domain.

Impacts

Turning to the impacts of SHT, McHugh, Raffel, Foss, and Blum (1974) identified, before research in tourism per se had started to proliferate, that tourists are present in communities without being responsible to them. SHT however implies different socio-economic host-tourist relationships because property is acquired in a destination (Muller *et al.*, 2004). This involves responsibilities and rights, contact with Government (or public sector agencies), receiving of services in return for property tax and arguably social obligations of community (Williams *et al.*, 2004). Thus financial and emotional investment is made beyond what may be deemed 'normal' for other forms of tourism. There is clearly a greater attachment to a place if one has made a personal investment in it. The ability to simply 'move on' is constrained by property ownership, and it is reasonable to assume that the decision to buy a property in a specific location is made with greater care and consideration than a typical holiday decision. In this regard Svenson (2004) agrees that SHT means committing to place, community, and future generations and Aronsson (2004) concludes 'vacation residents' are between tourists and permanent residents. Indeed research has revealed place attachment close to that of local residents (Muller, 2011), somewhat discounting Wolfe's (1977) view of second homes as inessential. They can be inherited (Kaltenborn, 1998) and may represent family and childhood place affiliations and importance in identity concepts (Jaakson, 1986; Hall and Muller, 2004).

Using as a basis the common distinction between economic, environmental, and social impacts, tables 1 (a, b, c) summarise these, both positive and negative, for SHT.

Table 1a: Economic Impacts of Second Home Tourism

| | |
|----------|---|
| | <p>Infrastructure investments</p> <p>Contribution to maintenance of rural retail services (second home owners tend to favour small rural shops)</p> <p>Employment in banking, real-estate sale, craft and retail</p> <p>Provides a resource which attracts local business</p> |
| Positive | <p>Maintenance of service supply in peripheral communities through creating more demand</p> <p>Broadening of local communities' economic base</p> <p>Second home owners assisting entrepreneurial start-ups, building new business networks and opportunities as well as re-stocking intellectual capital lost in rural de-population and out-migration</p> |
| | <p>Increasing property prices</p> <p>Local inflation</p> |
| Negative | <p>Increased costs associated with increased provision of infrastructure and services</p> <p>Seasonality</p> |

Sources: Shucksmith, 1983; Sharpley and Sharpley, 1997; Casado-Diaz, 1999; Muller, 1999; Nordin, 1993; Flognfeldt, 2002; Jansson and Muller, 2003 in Hall and Muller, 2004; Frost, 2004; Muller, 2004; Muller, 2011

Table 1b: Social Impacts of Second Home Tourism

| | |
|----------|--|
| | <p>Second home owners may be perceived as local patriots</p> <p>Creates stakeholders for rural areas in urban areas</p> <p>Second home owners socialise with local populations, acting as ambassadors for the rural locations of their second homes by promoting produce and virtues</p> |
| Positive | |
| | <p>Displacement of traditional permanent populations</p> <p>Creation of seasonal resorts which can lead to increased crime and reduced local services</p> <p>Disruption of long established socio-cultural norms and practices</p> <p>Resentment, caused by social distance</p> |
| Negative | <p>Rural gentrification</p> <p>Transformation of countryside into elite playground</p> <p>Conflict/social integration issues/difficulties caused by limited contact and social distance</p> <p>Conflict/Differing views on future development</p> <p>Intrusion of urban expectations into rural working environments</p> <p>Locals may feel displaced in terms of area use</p> |

Sources: Pacione, 1979; Jordan, 1980; Halseth and Rosenberg, 1995; Halseth, 1998; Muller, 1999; 2011; Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Flognfeldt, 2002; Muller, 2004; Quinn, 2004

Table 1c: Environmental Impacts of Second Home Tourism

| | |
|----------|---|
| | Can be viewed as relatively environmentally friendly compared to other tourism forms |
| Positive | Second home owners tend to appreciate same aspects of destination as local population Second home owners favour preservation Fosters understanding of ecology and respect for environment |
| Negative | Pollution Visual impact Clearance of vegetation |

Sources: Ragatz, 1977; Burby, Donnelly and Weiss, 1972; Gartner, 1987; Aronsson, 1993 in Muller, 2004; WINZ, 1997 in Muller et al., 2004; Gillion, 1998 in Muller et al., 2004; Kondo et al 2012

As can be seen in Table 1a, Table 1b, and Table 1c, the impacts of SHT are numerous and varied. Perhaps one of the most clear-cut negative impacts, in the UK at least, relates to house-price inflation. A shortage of local, affordable housing, particularly in rural and coastal areas driven in part by an influx of older, wealthier second home tourists, has led to the gentrification of some areas (Paris, 2010). This is unsurprisingly a contentious issue, and some such as Gallent *et al.* (2005: 301) view second homes as the 'manifestation of a problem created fundamentally by the planning system,' not so much second home owners themselves. This argument holds some sway when one considers that in Cornwall, there has been pressure on the Council to press for a change in the planning regulations which would mean that homeowners who want to use their property as a second home or as a holiday let would require planning permission (Cornwall Council, 2013).

The impacts of SHT may vary according to levels, type, and local and regional contexts. Muller (1999) identifies factors such as levels of seasonality and nature of existing housing stock, i.e., whether second home owners are buying vacant properties or building new ones. The spatial distribution of second homes is also seen as important (Kondo et al., 2012) but social distance is also an important factor and the degree to which locals and second home tourists desire integration (Halseth, 2004).

Second home ownership has long been a feature of the South West region of the UK (e.g., South West Economic Planning Council, 1975). The region contains 21% of all second homes in England (ONS, 2011). The 2011 census recorded 23,000 'second residences' in Cornwall, most in North Cornwall where the proportion of second homes to permanent residents is the highest in any district (Osborne, 2012). There is nonetheless some difficulty in establishing precisely how many homes are in fact second homes in Cornwall. According to council tax records, in 2012, 14,000 homes in Cornwall were paying a

tax rate that suggested these were second homes (Cornwall Council, 2013). The same source suggests second home ownership in the region of this study was amongst the highest in the country, ranging between 11-20% of dwellings. This is significant, as the proportion of second to main homes is an important factor in determining socio-economic impacts (Thornton, 1996).

House price inflation due to high levels of second home ownership is identified as a pressing social concern in the region (Buck, Williams and Bryant, 1993; Paris, 2010; Osborne, 2012, Cornwall Council, 2013), although retirement migration, low regional wage levels, and strict planning regulations also play a part (Paris, 2010). Unsurprisingly, given the extent of the problem, local attitudes are often split between permanent and temporary residents (Thornton, 1996). It may be tenuous at times to provide blanket statements about resident attitudes given that these may differ considerably depending on factors such as levels of involvement in tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Cui and Ryan, 2011) and demographic variables such as age and/or gender (Gu and Ryan, 2008; Brunt and Courtney, 1999) i.e., the fact that people will also differ, of course, and as such variety should be assumed (McGehee and Andereck, 2004).

Pulling together the threads in this review it can be claimed that SHT both as a concept and in its manifestation presents a complex picture. Often regarded as being on the edge of tourism, research into SHT is still relatively unexplored, despite recognition of the phenomenon over thirty years ago.

As with the vast majority of tourism activities, SHT can result in positive as well as negative impacts, economically, socially, and environmentally. That said, the literature tends to focus more on the negative impacts, particularly those relating to the inflation of real estate values and this is certainly a major cause for (ongoing) concern in North Cornwall. Rather than the cause of rural decline, SHT may however simply be a symptom of it, or indeed in some cases one could argue that it represents a remedy against rural decline itself (if not the sole remedy, we hasten to add).

Even where research on SHT exists it generally seeks to understand the impact of the phenomenon on residents; the second home tourists' voice is conspicuous by its absence. However, Girard and Gartner (1993) acknowledge second home owners' attitudes and perceptions may be equally as important as permanent residents' in determining community direction, possibly due to the place attachment and commitment exhibited by second home owners. Given their investment in the destination, they should have a greater interest in its sustainability. Certainly, as we have shown, the reasons for second home ownership are manifold and yet it is evident that a second home owner does gen-

erally not come to a place to deliberately destroy it, although the desire to preserve may be at odds with what the local population regard as desirable development. It is these kind of issues that require further attention if tourism development in the form of second home ownership is to proceed in an equitable manner.

METHODS

Given the exploratory nature of the study, a qualitative approach was adopted which involved in-depth interviews with second home owners in the North Cornwall region. The adoption of a survey approach, had this been desired, would have raised insurmountable difficulties in gaining access to the population of second home owners. There is no list of second home owners and creating one would have been unfeasible, given data protection requirements, i.e., the only bodies that might have access to these data, local councils, would not be in a position to share them. In fact, the access issue is a likely reason why so little research exists on the perceptions of second home owners. Given the potentially contentious nature of their relationship with the local community (see for example Halfacre, 2012), and/or identity considerations (i.e., not wanting to be considered an outsider, even in their own minds) at least in some cases, there are reasons for second home owners not to raise awareness of their status, let alone participate in a study about SHO.

Fortunately, one of the authors had a family member who was able to provide access to three second home owners, this family member living in the region itself, and subsequent snowball sampling ensured a further four participants were located, i.e., there were seven in total. Although this method may adversely affect data quality and lack intellectual credibility (Marshall, 1996), we lay no claims to the sample being representative of the broader population of second home owners in the region, let alone beyond the geographical confines of the study. What the sample does provide is the surfacing of issues around SHO as they relate to second home owner themselves. Despite initially envisaging the inclusion of approximately ten participants (ten individuals were approached, but two did not respond and the other had in the meantime sold their second home and as such did not strictly fit the criteria for inclusion), the in-depth nature of the interviews and the fact that themes had already started to re-appear (cf. 'saturation' in qualitative research) in the interviews leads us to believe that, as an exploratory study, a solid foundation for further studies into SHT is hereby provided.

Interviews were conducted at a place of the participants' choosing, usually their (second) homes, but a café was also used and two interviews were conducted over the phone. There is the potential that the telephone method would have affected data quality, but as these two participants were loosely acquainted via one of the researcher's family members, there was some initial rapport and in fact the telephone interviews in some respects provided some of the most revealing insights. This could indicate that those participants with whom there had been no initial acquaintance were less willing to 'open themselves up' with regard to their feelings, attitudes, and beliefs towards their second home ownership status and its impact on the community, further demonstrating the difficulty of accessing this group of people.

Rather than use a pre-determined interview schedule, to allow for a natural conversational flow and the opportunity for novel themes to emerge, a checklist of topics was employed. The checklist consisted of multiple items based on five key areas: (1) details on the second home itself, (2) perceptions of environmental impacts, (3) perceptions of economic impacts, (4) perceptions of social impacts, and (5) personal characteristics. These broad themes and the items contained within them (e.g., 14 items for key theme (3) economic impacts) derived from the broader literature on tourism impacts (key areas 2-4, see also Table 1) and the existing literature on second home ownership (key items 1 and 5). Denzin (1989) confirms that semi-structured interviews should convey equivalent meanings, but this does not mean ensuring the use of standardised questions and this was the principle adopted. Rapport was striven for, as Patton (1990) and Oppenheim (1992) acknowledge that it can reduce the risk of socially desirable answers. The danger that the interviewer's preconceived ideas might influence data (Newton, 2010) and dependency on interviewer skill was accounted for by conducting pilot interviews with peers and receiving feedback. One theme, the potential for SHT to increase further, did not initially feature in the interview schedule, but as this theme emerged in the first interview, it was subsequently adopted in all interviews.

It had initially been the intention to employ elements of judgement sampling to ensure a diversity of second home owners were included; however, given the difficulty in locating second home owners the snowball sampling method was ultimately adopted. Using snowball sampling meant interviewees were often from the same areas, however the sample obtained did include second home owners, from parts of North Cornwall with both high and low concentrations of second homes and other factors affecting magnitude of impacts, for example amenity values, both inland and coastal locations. The participants did differ then according to income and type of second home (see also discussion below).

Once data collection was complete, interviews were transcribed. Subsequently, the 'framework method' as devised by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) to systematically sort data by key themes was employed. This method is acknowledged as an effective means of analysing qualitative data (Brunt, 1997) and comprises five stages; familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping, and interpretation (Ritchie, Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls, 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Participants were in some respects quite diverse. The youngest was 31 and the eldest 70, meaning life stages also differed. Uses of second homes also varied, covering personal and commercial use, though none were used solely commercially. This was particularly important because use affects visitation patterns which likely influences perceptions (Williams *et al.*, 2004). Interviewees were largely highly educated with professional jobs, with the exception of one retiree and one mother with young children. The sample covered a 20 mile radius North of Wadebridge.

Interviewees (referred to as participants 1 – 7) were divided according to a framework of use, see Table 2, to facilitate analysis. At least one interviewee corresponded to each category, A, B, C, or D. Interviewee 4 was difficult to place, having recently retired to North Cornwall following frequent visitation and community involvement and owning a converted barn which was used as a holiday let. However participant 4 was inserted as a D (future permanent home) because her situation seemed too unusual to merit an additional category and displayed use and behaviours most readily compatible with this category. Participant 6 stated that retirement to her second home was possible and so was also a D. All the other interviewees were easier to place.

Table 2: Framework of second home use

| Function/use of second home | Participant | Frequency of visit | Length of stay | Likely influence on perception of impacts |
|---|-------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| Weekend home/personal use | 5 | High | Short | High |
| Holiday home/personal use | 1, 7 | Low | Long | High |
| Income generator/rented with possibility of some personal use | 2, 3 | Low | Short | Low |
| Future permanent home/personal use and/or rented | 4, 6 | Decreasing | Increasing | High |

Participants' second homes ranged from small cottages, a house, a barn conversion, and a caravan, and so were from traditional housing stock as opposed to purpose-built chalets. Surprisingly therefore, given the use of existing housing stock as opposed to the creation of new housing stock (apart from the caravan) to accommodate participants, there was a view that homes were not being taken away from the local community: "A lot of these second homes wouldn't be a property that someone would want to live in full time...It might lie empty, you know a young couple might not want to move into a 215 year old cottage." (Although the inclusion of direct quotations may be regarded as providing a degree of transparency in our analysis, the main purpose for their inclusion was to bring to life the voices of the second home owners themselves.). The exception to this was participant 7, who supposed he might be denying someone a business opportunity because he didn't let his property. However, all participants felt that their properties would always have been someone's second home, supporting the view that second home owners fill vacancies (Lundgren, 1974; Jenkins, Hall and Troughton, 1998; Muller, 1999; 2004; 2001; 2011) rather than take housing stock away from the local population. Gallent, Mace, and Tewdwr-Jones' (2005) assertion that second homes indicate rural jobs do not provide sufficient income to live locally also appears correct: "I think wages down there must be low and then I think that they wouldn't be able to, you know, afford the houses" (the participant did not care to mention that a possible reason property was unaffordable was demand from outside the region, which pushed up prices). In a coastal environment, this has the effect of pushing local workers inland. Cynically, one might add, these may represent rationalisations to justify second home ownership in an area where many people are excluded from home ownership given inflated house prices.

As Thornton (1996) has argued, the ratio of second to main homes is a key determinant of real and perceived socio-economic impacts. Certainly, the distinction between those whose second home was on the coast or by contrast inland is striking. As one participant (3) explained: 'Do you know, I don't think there are many locals here, I mean there's nobody here, they're all in Wadebridge I'd say or somewhere else. I mean the only people I know round here who live here are retired.' This comment may be interpreted in two ways; firstly in the way described by the participant in terms of minimal impacts on the local destination due to the absence of a local population. Alternatively, it is possible that the impacts of second home ownership are so extensive that a local population no longer exists.

In terms of motivations for second home ownership in North Cornwall specifically, proximity and travel time to primary residence was a major factor: "We chose North Cornwall because it's not too far away,

Penwith would've been nice but it's another two and a half hours on the journey." It also seems North Cornwall has its high amenity values to thank for its high concentration of second homes (Thornton, 1996), "But this place just is just extraordinary, which is why everybody loves it...I mean it's just got everything within two miles." Motivating factors including escapism, leisure activities, fitting with life stage and status are strongly supported (Clout, 1972; Jaakson, 1976; Kaltenborn, 1998; Suffron, 1998; Quinn, 2004). In fact, status was a recurrent theme, despite not being a direct line of enquiry in the interviews. Interviewees repeatedly use the words 'desirable' and in one instance 'aspirational' to refer to the locations of their second homes. This suggests a subconscious motivation or a wish to convey status to the researcher, as one participant clearly phrased it, not quite so subtly: "I like to show it off, sharing is maybe not the right word."

The fact that second home owners too differ, not just the social setting of the destination, was brought home by participant 3, who provided a categorisation of SHOs: "To my mind there's...people who started coming here the same sort of time as us who own houses... they're not poor but they're not loaded they're just normal people... And then you've got all this new stuff, new builds, and it's from the whole culture of in London getting million pound bonuses." Indeed participant 5 sees distance between herself and other second home owners because she owns a caravan. A case could be made then for a hierarchy of second home ownership, certainly this seems to exist in the minds of some participants. Interestingly, no interaction between second home owners was found: "Yeah it's not like there's a community of second home owners; they don't come from one place and band together, they're separate. Like satellites around the centre of the community." Taking the initial framework (Table 2) further, we propose the following emergent typology of second home ownership in tourist destinations:

Table 3: Framework of second home use

| Type | Characteristics |
|------------|---|
| Inheritors | Inherit second home and have strong place attachment, more likely to use as personal property. Visitation is frequent and for as long as possible, usually weekends and holidays. Likely to continue ownership and cycle of place attachment. |
| Investors | Purchased second home mainly as a source of income, though they may use personally out of season. Perceive economic impacts more positively. Continued ownership while commercially viable. |
| Enjoyers | Purchased second home mainly based on place attachment. May use commercially or personally, visitation similar to inheritors, likely to continue ownership, retire to area and pass on to children. |

Turning to the perception of impacts, participants did not believe there were any serious negative environmental impacts as a result of their second home ownership. In contrast, in some instances, the opinion was expressed of the positive impacts of second home ownership. Thus, recycling and litter picking were repeatedly mentioned, along with a statement that demonstrates a belief about the characteristics of second home owners, which is revealing in many ways: "I think this bit of North Cornwall is really middle class and middle class people don't leave rubbish" and "I think I'm quite an environmentally aware person anyway...but that whole area is quite again that kind of class."

Although some literature suggests second home owners might be less supportive of development, and therefore a potential source of conflict with permanent residents, this was not necessarily found to be the case, and if indeed it was true for the participants, they hid it using terms such as sensitive development and such like: "Yeah I'm in favour of development but it has to be very tastefully done" (4). There was a degree of consensus in fact about permanent residents being less supportive of development. So it seems Kondo *et al.*'s (2012) findings may not apply to this region, however it is questionable whether interviewees would outwardly admit opposition to development.

Turning to the economic impacts of SHO, these were also generally regarded as positive. The second home owners largely saw their contribution in bringing money, their spending power, into the region. One participant summed this up as follows: "It's not like there is any industry in Cornwall so if we, the tourists, weren't providing industry then I don't know what would be the alternative." While the category A participant (5) perceived increased local expenditure, she did point out that due to their frequent visitation they "try to not make it a holiday every time," which demonstrates that second home owners tend to spend more lavishly when they take advantage of their second homes compared to when they are in their place of permanent residence. The point raised by participant 5 demonstrates the second home owner's position as falling somewhere between permanent resident and holidaymaker. The above claim also underpins Muller's (1999) contention that second home owners cannot substitute the spending power of permanent residents due to seasonality. Only participant 7 considered this aspect: "People there all year round would spend all year round but when our house is empty no one's spending money" although category Cs thought it was important that their homes were rented out as much of the year as possible.

Participants also recognised the themes of expanding the economic base and attracting new businesses as impacts of second home ownership. There was clearly a market for goods and services that appealed largely to the SHO market rather than to the local residents or neces-

sarily to the traditional tourist (e.g., boutique furniture, gardening and maintenance services) although when speaking of their impacts, participants tended to reflect also on the role of tourism more widely, i.e., they saw the SHO segment as being part of the wider tourism industry in terms of its impact.

SHO was also perceived to increase employment opportunities and several interviewees employed people on an ad hoc basis. Category C, income generators, apparently have a more positive direct impact on employment than any of the other categories. The types of employment were all in the services sector, as maintenance for second homes. To some extent, seasonality, if it was seen as an issue at all, was simply put down to a different way of life, i.e., people working enough over the peak and shoulder seasons to get them through the year.

Interviewees did not have that much to say about their impact on services in either an economic or social context. Some impacts were hinted at: "Well I mean there must be extra doctors on in the summer mustn't there, I don't know, I would have thought there must be because you have the most enormous influx of people" but there was an impression that things "are all open all year round because they service the local community." Frequently using services was equated to using public transport, whereby participants had access to their own private vehicles and so did not feel they were using a scarce public resource.

Participants were candid about potential negative social impacts, "I don't mind a certain amount of holiday properties (however) if they all become holiday properties you've lost Cornwall, you've lost community." Participants also accepted some responsibility for this "I can see that I'm another place on the map that's not part of the community." This led most participants to making an effort to integrate with the community, although one claimed most second home owners kept to themselves. These kind of contradictions demonstrate the complexity of the issue at hand, which is amply demonstrated in the next issue; that of integration.

If indeed there is an attempt to integrate, this would demonstrate the commitment to place suggested by Svenson (2004), while Aronsson's (2004) notion of 'vacation residents', which are between tourists and residents, is also apparent. Further comments suggested that second home owners felt a sense of commitment and belonging to the region and wanted therefore to integrate. Equally important to some was a sense of belonging with regard to the physical aspects of the destination, specifically their holiday homes. One participant expressed this very clearly: "I mean I do actually feel like it is my house there...I feel at home. You know the minute I walk in the door and that's really important to me." This view opens a range of interesting interpretation options. For example, Bauman (2005) has written extensively on the

fluidity of modern life, as have others (e.g., Sennett, 1998). It is arguable that given increased personal mobility (Urry, 2000) a strong sense of community no longer exists in many places. Participant 3 argues as much in describing the lack of community in Polzeath (a coastal resort in North Cornwall). This being torn between the place of permanent residence and the tourist destination, of recognising that one is not a full member of the community, but at the same time a greater attachment to it than the average tourist was succinctly expressed by participant 4: "I've been a reluctant tourist really."

Participants were also asked about open feelings of resentment or hostility towards them. On the whole, they expressed generally good relations with local people, albeit sometimes recognising that it was a mutually convenient one given the dependence of the local economy on second home owners, or tourism more generally: "Well I don't think I have really (any examples of conflict), you know just general grumbles but nothing specific...the Cornish know which side their bread's buttered."

The one issue where second home owners spoke with a unanimous voice was the issue of house price inflation and displacement of the local population. There was an acknowledgement that second home owners were at least in part to blame for rising property prices, and that this has resulted in difficulty for local people getting onto the property ladder. Interestingly though, this was stated in a very matter-of-fact way, as though this was simply the face of a new reality one had to accept. 'Globalisation' is what one participant called it, and others argued that prices away from the coast were lower and that the government had started to implement schemes to assist local people in buying property, i.e., somehow making out as though things were not that bad for locals and that the issue was being addressed.

CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to investigate second home owner perceptions of their impacts in the tourist region of North Cornwall. Although a research base is now developing in relation to SHT, the voices of the second home owners themselves, i.e., the tourists, are seldom heard in academic discussions of this phenomenon. As such this exploratory study sought to lend a voice to second home owners, providing data for the development of an emergent typology that future studies may develop further within their own contexts. Subsequently, second home owners may be classified as either inheritors, investors, or enjoyers. This study has thereby provided more detail to the broad-brush classification of someone simply as a second home owner and while

many features ascribed to SHOs in the literature may hold true, there is equally a great deal of difference in terms of reasons for SHO which has implications for community integration.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the nature of self-report data, participants overall felt they were making a positive contribution to the destination. They clearly felt that they were bringing money into the economy, providing income and employment for the local population. Certainly, economic impacts were perceived more positively than the literature suggests they are (see for example SWEPC, 1975; Thornton, 1996; Heywood, 2010), especially by commercial use second home owners. There is however another side to this story. Some participants readily acknowledged the destination's dependence on tourism. The power relationship is skewed towards the second home owners and so a comparison to core-periphery discourse may be apt (e.g., Chaperon and Bramwell, 2012). Furthermore, in support of other studies (Wolfe, 1977; Jaakson, 1986; Halseth, 1998), for some participants there was an element of elitism and ostentation relating to their second home owner status and the type of property they owned. The issues surrounding second home ownership are clearly complex, making it difficult to determine definitively whether second home ownership is a cause, symptom, or indeed remedy for rural decline. It may be 'all of the above' depending on the context and the context of North Cornwall certainly favours this multifaceted explanation.

Whereas economic impacts were readily commented on, environmental impacts seemed an issue participants had few views on. SHT was generally seen as more environmentally friendly than other tourism forms, either because it substituted more damaging tourism forms or attracted a certain type of visitor. It was social impacts, albeit difficult to disentangle from their economic causes, which were most discussed by interviewees; these seemed to be their main concern and our interpretation also favours the primacy of socio-economic impacts.

Notwithstanding the small sample size and the diversity of participants, it was nonetheless surprising how similar participants' views were on many of the issues discussed. The second home held a position of great importance in participants' lives. Place attachment was readily discernible and related to childhood place affiliations, thereby confirming an aspect of SHO picked up on by Hall and Muller (2004). In this sense, one may question the extent to which this group of second home owners saw themselves as tourists. At best, participants regarded themselves as reluctant tourists, but in terms of meaning and significance their second homes were anything but a fleeting concern. This goes some way to confirm second home owners' position as bordering tourism, but clearly not belonging to permanent residency either. Although they did not consider themselves outsiders (Muller, 1999;

Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Flognfeldt, 2002; Hall and Muller, 2004) it was clear to participants that they were straddling the permanent resident-tourist divide.

Though the study achieved its objectives the sampling strategy represented a key limitation, ideally judgemental sampling would have been used, but convenience and snowball sampling was necessitated by access issues. Though this method may lack some intellectual credibility, the sample did reflect a more diverse range of second home owners than expected, which has resulted in a more nuanced picture of second home owners. As with the investigation of any potentially contentious topic, being able to access participants can present a difficulty. Once recruited, there is then the next step of 'digging deeper' into some of the more problematic issues around SHO without causing offence. Although we felt that participants opened themselves up to us during the interviews, as researchers bound by ethical considerations, we did not see it as our role to unduly challenge interviewees.

The topic of second home ownership lends itself to further research which may profitably take some of our ideas forward. Certainly there are opportunities for comparative studies which would give a fuller understanding of this phenomenon along the lines of both motivation/attachment to the second home, as well as linking second home owner characteristics to impact types. Other areas of further investigation identified in this study involve social impacts and locational contexts. Social impacts will perhaps always represent the greatest concern with second homes. However second home owners' perception and attitudes did not appear as likely to influence community direction as permanent residents in the way Girard and Gartner (1993) suppose. Perhaps because they do not rely on the community beyond wishing to feel welcomed into it, this inference might be further tested by research on second home owner's influence. If tourism development is to become more sustainable, then it needs to take into account the voices of various stakeholders; this much is clear. Being neither locals nor tourists in a traditional sense, it is too easy to overlook second home owners in this regard.

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Submitted: 17th December 2014

Final version: 4th February 2015

Accepted: 15th April, 2015

Refereed anonymously