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**Commentary on Second Homes Tourism and Mobilities**  
**Are we breaking free from tradition?**

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**Introduction**

Second homes, traditionally defined as dwellings for leisure purposes, are an important component of contemporary tourism and mobility (Hall and Müller, 2004). These dwellings include stationary, semi-mobile and mobile units, and can be converted or purpose-built homes which are used by owners, their extended family and friends or by paying guests. The characteristic of non-permanent residence in the second home makes all dwellers *tourists* – no matter if owners, renters or non-paying guests. More recent developments place second homes users at the conceptual transition point between tourists and seasonal or lifestyle migrants (Hall, 2015a; Osbaldiston, Picken and Duffy, 2015) and foresee the consumption of multiple homes and multiple identities (Paris, 2012; Volo, 2015). To some extent modern second homes can still be seen in the same light as their historical predecessors: they both represent escape from everyday life, the need for relaxation, contact with different landscapes, and family or personal time. However, recent investigations highlight traces of further motives that permeate this type of mobility consumption, such as: international real estate investments, opportunities to live multiple identities, ways to experience different locations and cultures, and ultimately places for retirement (Paris, 2011; Casado-Diaz, Casado-Diaz, and Casado-Diaz, 2014). Furthermore, second homes have taken on different forms: they are increasingly owned or used by multiple dwellers, on the basis of time or home sharing. In this changing landscape, reexamining the role of second homes in the broader tourism mobility scene can be beneficial to scholars and policy makers.

## Second homes research: any move forward?

The new mobility paradigm (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Duncan, Cohen, and Thulemark, 2013; Hall, 2015b) creates significant research opportunities when investigating second homes tourism; indeed, as the borders between ordinary and extraordinary dimensions of space and time become loose, scholars in the field of second home tourism must broaden the scope of investigation. Past literature on the motivations and impacts of second home mobility is abundant and numerous scientific studies have described the phenomenon geographically at local, regional or even national level. Hall and Müller (2004) had already framed the second home discourse around the mobility paradigm and had pointed out the role that these dwellings have on developing novel and more fluid mobility patterns. However, the changing trends in the second home market -such as the increase in the mobility of retired households, the leisure home as opportunity to experience multiple identities, the growing interest in urban and luxurious dwellings and the internationalization of second home markets, (Müller, 2013; Paris, 2013; Hall, 2014)- show novel levels of complexity. Nevertheless, many recent contributions still focus on operational definition and statistical issues (e.g. Volo and Giambalvo, 2008; Czarnecki and Frenkel, 2015), on the analysis of the impact on the host community (e.g. Volo, 2011; Velvin, Kvikstad, Drag and Krogh, 2013; Anabestani, 2014), and on geographical dimensions and on meanings, themes and representations of second homes (e.g.; Módenes Cabrerizo and López Colás, 2007; Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen, 2010). A few published studies are including traces of the changing landscape of second home tourism mobility and several noteworthy topics seem to emerge (e.g. Norris, Paris and Winston, 2010; Paris, 2011; Halfacree, 2012; Hall, 2015a; Persson, 2015). On the basis of these insights some food for thoughts is herein presented.

Hall's recently published international review (2014) shows great need for a deeper understanding of the temporal and spatial dimension of the phenomenon. Though, the key question is to comprehend the influences that second homes novel uses and their related mobilities have, at different levels and at different points in time, in the big picture of *tourism destinations' well-being*. Implicitly suggesting a longer term perspective, some of the ideas that are worth of investigations require a continuous, open and topical debate between tourism scholars and other scholars interested in the dynamics of second homes usage. The discourse should encompass the following scholars and issues:

(a) *landscape and urban planning scholars*: their contributions ought to be included in the research agenda of tourism scholars and joint discussions about *public services and*

*environmental protection* can be beneficial as the boundaries between ordinary/traditional and extraordinary/modern use of second homes are fainting: those who were considered tourists, weekenders or seasonal visitors are more and more using their second homes dwellings for other reasons (part-time working locations, temporary rentals, home exchanges) and their status of non-permanent residents can easily shift to that of permanent residents;

(b) *real estate scholars*: their knowledge about different real estate *markets' dynamics* can help to assess and compare second home destination with high financial margins (those currently creating inequalities issues with limited access to housing to the locals) and explore the under researched area of “second homes ghettos” (those agglomerations of gentrified vacations estates, that are not often detected by scholars, but that have the ability to change destinations' identities); these different real estate markets are permeated by different mobilities and will engage destinations planners and policy makers with diverse local concerns and issues;

(c) *mobility scholars*: their vision of contemporary fluid mobilities can help tourism scholars to assess the new components of the *production dimension* for second home tourism, such a vision needs to be developed to ensure proper destinations offerings and that can contribute to the long term sustainability of vacation homes destinations; this is essential as tourism governance -seen under the light of the new mobility paradigm- ought to include traditional tourism agents, housing entities, providers of public services, territorial space planners and many more stakeholders that can create or reshape altogether the identity of the destination. A more mature academic interest in the topic could also open opportunities for cross-cultural comparisons. Undeniably second or multiple homes are *places and spaces of new lifestyle mobilities and identities* that ought to be compared and integrated rather than dissected and compartmentalized.

## **Conclusion**

Conclusively, the mobilities paradigm has always permeated second homes movements as these forms of dwellings are infused by their consumers' sense and usage of space and time. However, second home research could benefit from a more critical and integrative approach of analysis. The effect of second homes on destinations' long term identities, market dynamics and developments is far from understood and more systematic inquiries on their impact on tourism governance and production system, landscapes and

public services planning, environmental protection and real estate aspects are needed. The bases for such investigations are available, indeed numerous studies have depicted second homes from different angles, presenting a fluid image of users' motivations, mobilities and locations (Hall, 2014; Müller, 2014). The move forward however, is not without obstacles: it requires a critical intervention of scholars in the investigation of the relationship between tourism stakeholders' traditional understanding of mobility and the actual evolving mobilities practices of second home users. Furthermore, it requires an open and constructive debate with scholars of different but related fields of investigation; indeed, having told the many second homes stories characterizing rural landscapes and seaside destinations, current literature should consider extending the observational studies of single areas and opening to comparisons and systematic reviews. Meanwhile, those investigators of second homes whose instincts are to follow more closely terminologies, definitions and statistical issues, would be well advised to subject both their approaches and their observations to a review of relevance, using landscape and urban planning investigations, mobility studies and real estate literature as possible benchmarks.

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