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A Review of “Second Home Tourism in Europe” (ed. Zoran Roca)

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BOOK REVIEW

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This edited collection of papers on the subject of second homes is entirely focussed on European countries, both EU and non-EU. It explores the parameters of second home economics, policy and experiences across a variety of countries. It successfully highlights the complexity of the subject of second homes. The overall aim of the project is to produce a compendium of current second home research, planning and policy issues. In order to do this the book is organised into three sections: Owners’ conditions, perspectives and roles; location factors, criteria and patterns; expansion drivers and public policy choices.

The first section contains two papers on the financial issues surrounding the phenomenon of second homes. The impact of the Global Financial Crisis is discussed in both papers. Chris Paris’ contribution is a well-informed, insightful comparison between Ireland and the UK. There is plenty of contextual discussion throughout. The contention is that affluence and mobility led to second home development in both Ireland and the UK. The availability of reliable data about second homes was found to be difficult, most particularly in Ireland. This is an issue that comes up throughout this book. Mazón et al present opinions of key social actors in the Alicante region of Spain. The issue of very significant unplanned development, which is then impacted by the Global Financial Crisis, is explored. This discussion would have benefitted from the provision of a chapter plan in the introduction. The term ‘mortgaged tourists’-who feel forced to stay at home and not spend in the local economy because they cannot pay their mortgage – is introduced. The contention is that there should have been thought given to quality rather than quantity of homes. The two remaining two papers in this section were on attachment; Perri presents a paper on return tourism to Calabria, Southern Italy. The second home owners, or second home residents, have moved from being emigrants to being tourists. The types of tourism evident are described as roots, residential and genealogical tourism. In the final paper in this section Maria de Nazaré and Oliveira Roca examine the relationship between place attachment and the role of local development stakeholders (this resonates with the work of Mottiar & Quinn, 2003).

The second section Back to Nature: Between Urban Sprawl and Countryside Idyll contains four papers on second home life style across different countries. Nefedova & Pallot explain that the Russian dacha involves all strata of society but that the experience can be quite different for the various groups. The weekend retreat to the countryside in the summer remains an essential feature of the Russian way of life (there are some similarities here with what Paris has to say about second homes in the West). There are two features that make the Russian variety different: its seasonal character and its continuing role in food production. It is recommended that there be an urgent change in understanding of what constitutes rural

development to include consideration of recreation, leisure and conservation. Müller focuses on the division of activities between first and second homes in the Swedish context. He found that behaviour in the second home is not that different to home. Factors such as demographically aging societies, economic restructuring, technical changes, modernity and globalisation all contribute to growth in demand for second homes, as do greater leisure time and new mobility. Using the Vendée as a case study location, Zaninetti focuses on second home earning capacity and expands this discussion with reference to the economic polarisation of French society. This paper uses some very nice spatial maps to illustrate discussion. In the final paper in this section Hiltunen et al confirm that 50% of Finns have access to a second home. They report that while much traditional cottage life remains, second home lifestyles and cultures are currently diversifying. Their research illustrates multiple place attachment and the mobile way of life. The term dual dwelling implies living at the primary home and secondary home alternately. Conceptually, this is a particularly well developed paper.

The third section Leisure Housing Expansion: Driving Forces and Policy Choices contains three policy papers and one lifestyle paper. Karayiannis et al investigate how current Greek economic policy is impinging on the development of second home policy. Cyclades is presented as the case study area. The development of second homes and second home tourism since 1970 is linked to housing issues, as well as land and urban planning policies. The Greek 'peculiarity' of 'off plan building' is discussed. Like Ireland (see Paris above) and other countries, it is hard to keep track of second homes in Greece. The second paper in this section is an exploration by de Oliveira of the relationship between second homes and tourism in Portugal. The paper presents an analytical model in which three domains are posited: evolution of the housing market and relationship with fragile economy, increased adoption of new consumption habits by growing urban population and, actions of public authorities. It is strongly argued that the phenomenon of second homes should not be separated from related tourism and real estate markets. Despite a reported difficulty with sourcing official statistics, the paper presents extensive tabular presentation to support discussion. The third paper is an interesting piece by Romita about 'undetected tourism' in Italy. The term refers to tourism that is 'organised independently and beyond rules'. There is a thought that residential tourism may actually be higher than conventional tourism. The paper acknowledges that little study has been completed with regard to the lifestyle and consumption of the residential tourist in Italy. This conclusion is in contrast with what Müller study of Sweden's second home sector. Overall, this paper appears to have been written in a fairly casual style. In the final paper in this section, and in the book, Arnesen & Erisson aim to provide a generalised discussion about, multi house use in the context of policy on the subject in Norway. Since 1970, the number of leisure homes in Norway has more than doubled. The contention is that policy measures over the years have worked. The paper provides a detailed, logical account of policy developments.

Paul Claval's conclusion to this compendium confirms that for centuries there has been a blurred division between first and second homes. He stresses the importance of the development of mobility to the second home and says further that mobility is not merely an

economic construct but that it is 'something that comes from human dreams'. Justification indeed for the publication of this book! The variety of treatments is a strength of the book. In overview it is clear that nearly all chapters talk about the difficulty of measurement, the growth in numbers of homes, and the increased comfort of homes. An inherent difficulty, acknowledged throughout the book, is that it is hard to know if homes are being used for tourism or as just main homes.

What is clear as the reader progresses through this book is that in many situations researchers are finding that there is little understanding not only of what tourism is, but also of how second homes contribute towards tourism. The importance of connecting second home expansion with tourism is stressed. The assertion that tourism has brought more professionalism to the study of the second home is, in the context of the work presented, still open to debate. The second home as it reflects general housing policy is discussed in several papers.

This book leaves the reader wanting more. A similar treatment of North American, Australian, and perhaps Asian and South American second homes would be interesting. A focus on studies offering a more qualitative approach would offer more insight; only two of the papers in this collection use a qualitative approach. This book would appeal to a broad range of interest groups: academic, local and national policy, and those with an interest in history. The book aims to bring attention to recent insights about the spatial diversity and social complexity inherent in Europe as a result of tourist mobility in Europe; it has achieved this aim.

Mottiar, Z. & Quinn, B. (2003) Shaping Leisure/Tourism Place – the role of holiday home owners: A case study of Courtown, Co. Wexford, Leisure Studies, 22, pp.109-127.