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Exploring the heterogeneity of second homes and the 'residual' category

Journal of Rural Studies

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Abstract

This paper contributes to the growing literature on the uneven geography of second homes in three ways. First, the heterogeneous nature of second homes in a rural, mountainous area of the European periphery is identified. Second, a conceptual model is developed, relating this heterogeneity to different types of population mobility. Third, a category of property, termed 'residual' is shown to be a part of the second home typology within the study area, albeit with a varied and ambiguous role. The spatial patterns of different types of second home are analysed and their implications for the local impact of rural development policies discussed.

Key Words: Alpujarra; second homes; heterogeneity; place specificity; migration processes, 'residual' second homes

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the importance of the heterogeneous composition of the second home housing stock as a major impact on rural change within a given area. We do this through identifying different types of second home, analysing their geographical patterns within our study area and introducing some of the key operative processes, especially those relating to different migration patterns within the region. A locally important part of the area's second home heterogeneity relates to a category of property we term 'residual'.

Since Coppock's (1977) study of the impacts of second homes the subject has continued to attract the attention of geographers and other social scientists, generating a multitude of disciplinary perspectives and approaches, including planning perspectives (Gallent, 1997; Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; 2001; Gallent et al, 2003; Shucksmith, 1983), housing studies (Paris, 2009; Barke, 2008), rural studies (Rye, 2011), environmental management (Gartner, 1987; Hiltunen, 2007; Kaltenborn et al, 2008) and tourism and leisure studies (Hall and Müller, 2004; McIntyre et al, 2006; Tuulentie, 2007). According to Müller (2011) the majority of the research on second homes since the 1990s has broadly been within the field of tourism studies and more specifically within the context of the so-called new mobilities paradigm (Halfacree, 2011; Müller, 2011). While increased personal mobility, the widespread availability of global telecommunications technology, and the growth of international tourism have clearly been major contributors to the increased significance of second homes in some parts of the world, we argue that that these are not the sole contributors to the growth of the phenomena in all areas. In significantly depopulated, relatively remote mountain regions such as our case study area in the Alpujarra region of southern Spain, such a perspective adds only partially to our understanding of the processes at work (Pino Artacho, 2014; 2015). The complex and locally specific balance between the processes of depopulation, immigration, counterurbanisation and second home tourism are also key elements in such areas.

The volume of published work on different aspects of the second home/multiple dwelling phenomenon is extensive (see Hall and Müller, 2004; Müller, 2011; Müller and Hoogendoorn, 2013;

Paris, 2014). Our research reinforces the arguments of Müller et al (2004), and later developed by Back and Marjavaara (2017), that we should consider the “uneven geography” of the second home phenomenon within particular regions and recognise the importance for rural change of the heterogeneity within the second home category. When studying the impacts of second homes in an area, previous studies have tended to overlook the different types of second homes and their potentially differential material impact on a local area. An exception concerns Müller et al’s (2004) contrast between converted and purpose-built second homes with the latter, they argue, generally leading to a net increase in population, consumption patterns and economic resources in an area when compared to the former. They also cite the importance of the regularity of second home use, differentiating weekend and vacation homes in this regard. Although we echo Müller et al’s call for more research on the specificity of second homes and recognise the utility of this typology (Figure 1) we argue that, to ensure wider applicability, it requires some refinement. Using empirical evidence from fieldwork and the Spanish housing census, additional structural components and usage characteristics of the second home housing stock are incorporated in our analysis.

2. Conceptual framework

	<i>Weekend homes</i> ← → <i>Vacation homes</i>				
Converted homes	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Ordinary rural landscapes in urban hinterlands</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Extensively-used peripheral landscapes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Amenity-rich hinterlands, coast and mountain landscapes</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Major vacation areas, coasts and mountain landscapes</td> </tr> </table>	Ordinary rural landscapes in urban hinterlands	Extensively-used peripheral landscapes	Amenity-rich hinterlands, coast and mountain landscapes	Major vacation areas, coasts and mountain landscapes
Ordinary rural landscapes in urban hinterlands	Extensively-used peripheral landscapes				
Amenity-rich hinterlands, coast and mountain landscapes	Major vacation areas, coasts and mountain landscapes				
Purpose-built homes					

Figure 1 : Second homes types and their areas of occurrence (source: Müller et al, 2004:16)

An important category of second home recognised by Müller et al (2004) but not explicitly included in their typology is what we refer to here as ‘residual’ properties (see Fig 2a). This is a category of second home, the significance of which is acknowledged but under-represented in other research studies (Clout, 1971; Flognfeldt 2006; Nefodova & Savchuk, 2014; Nouza et al, 2018).

We define ‘residual’ properties as those properties created primarily by out migration linked to rural economic restructuring. They are properties that have been retained (but not necessarily actively maintained) by their owners who are now primarily living and working elsewhere. They are likely to be visited relatively infrequently. Within the official housing census, these properties could be categorised as either empty dwellings or second homes. The distinction between these two is often difficult to assess but mainly relates to the frequency of use. Some may be used as second homes by their owners quite regularly others infrequently or not at all. We argue there is a continuum between these types of residual second homes, empty dwellings and the more active recreational second homes. They are an ambiguous category which is internally extremely variable. Given the relative disinvestment of both time and capital in relation to these properties, a common feature is their condition and maintenance. We have used census data to group together all those properties

categorised as either second homes or empty dwellings that are recorded as being in unsatisfactory or worse condition by the census. This is a broad categorisation, but it is important to distinguish between these properties and other more active second homes. The former represents a relative disinvestment in the village economy and its built environment whilst the latter is a form of investment of capital and resources. We will use the term 'residual properties' in relation to this category as the units we are referring to are, in the first instance, concerned with physical buildings rather than use.

This 'residual' category consists of properties retained by owners for the practical purpose of occasional leisure or perhaps through a deep emotional and familial attachment to place or a mixture of both. Rather than an exercise in consumption these second homes result initially from economic necessity.

Whilst Müller et al (2004:16) recognise the importance of out-migration and rural depopulation as a process contributing to the 'ongoing conversion of permanent homes to second homes', more attention needs to be given to the relationship of different types of population mobility to the creation of second homes (see Fig 2b). For example, in our study area some migrant flows are localised to neighbouring towns and cities whereas others are longer distance moves to other cities, elsewhere in Spain or northern Europe (Hoggart, 1997). While the degree of permanency of these moves varies considerably (see Fig 2b), in many cases the initial intention was arguably only a temporary move, implied by the retention of a home in the village of origin (see, for example, Brandes (1975), p.125). However, in addition to emotional attachment to the place of origin practical, structural considerations may also be significant, for example the difficulties of selling a home in an area experiencing depopulation. Furthermore, the emigrant's initial desire to return may diminish over time as emotional and financial roots are established elsewhere, and village ties start to weaken. Nevertheless, this process has produced the retention of many such second homes in these villages although some are used and maintained more than others (see Fig 2a and b).

Indeed, the 'residual' category contains a quality continuum from excellent condition to bordering on the ruinous although with a bias towards the latter end of the scale. The impact of these different forms of population mobility on rural housing types is illustrated in Figures. 2a & 2b below. Our model attempts to capture a dynamic rural housing system which is in a constant state of flux, responding to competing forces of inward and outward population movements.

Research has also highlighted the importance of return migration as a demographic and economic phenomenon in rural Andalucía (Rhoades, 1978; 1979; Rodriguez et al 2002) and specifically in the Alpujarra (Alcalá-Zamora, 1979). Not only do some emigrants retain these 'residual' second homes but also return-migrants may improve and redevelop their 'second' homes upon return (possibly re-converting them back into primary residences) (Rhoades, 1978). An additional variant may occur when 'residual' second homes are inherited by other family members living elsewhere which may or may not then have a positive impact, removing their 'residual' status. In terms of the wider significance of this process, our field research has confirmed that return-migrants may also play a valuable role in the maintenance and development of village services, investing their capital in new shops, bars and even tourist accommodation. The cumulative role that these services have subsequently played in attracting and retaining non-local, second homeowners should not be underestimated. The subtle and complex interplay between these economic and social processes of emigration, return-migration and immigration are fundamental in understanding the local dynamics of the second home phenomenon in these settlements, as illustrated in Fig 2b. Our perspective is that these mobility processes are much more fluid than is conventionally recognised.

We argue therefore that much work on second homes has focussed more on the immigration side of the housing market, portraying second homes as a largely inessential leisure resource. Insufficient attention has been given in second home typologies to the significance of local emigrants who appear to leave behind a 'residual' property. We also recognise that these two 'types' of second home are part of a dynamic housing market system (Barke , 2008) and not only do they potentially

both co-exist within the same locality but, as described above, individual properties can circulate from one category to the other over time (see Fig 2a & b). Whilst the impact of inherited (formerly ‘residual’) rural second homes has been studied elsewhere, particularly in a northern European and Scandinavian context (Kaltenborn, 1997; Pitkanen, 2008; Flemsaeter, 2009; Nouza et al, 2018), and these form a key part of Müller et al’s (2004) typology, apparently less active ‘residual’ second homes have attracted far less academic attention.

‘Residual’ properties		Typical locality/context	
Official status	Building condition		
Empty dwellings  Second homes	‘Ruin’  ‘Poor’ ‘Unsatisfactory’	Depopulated relatively remote rural areas in economic decline Limited Services and Amenities	
‘Active’ Second Homes		Weekend homes	Vacation homes
Converted homes  Purpose-built homes		Ordinary rural landscapes in urban hinterlands	Extensively-used peripheral landscapes
		Amenity-rich hinterlands, coast and mountain landscapes	Major vacation areas, coasts and mountain landscapes

Figure 2a: Second home types: a refinement of Müller et al (2004)

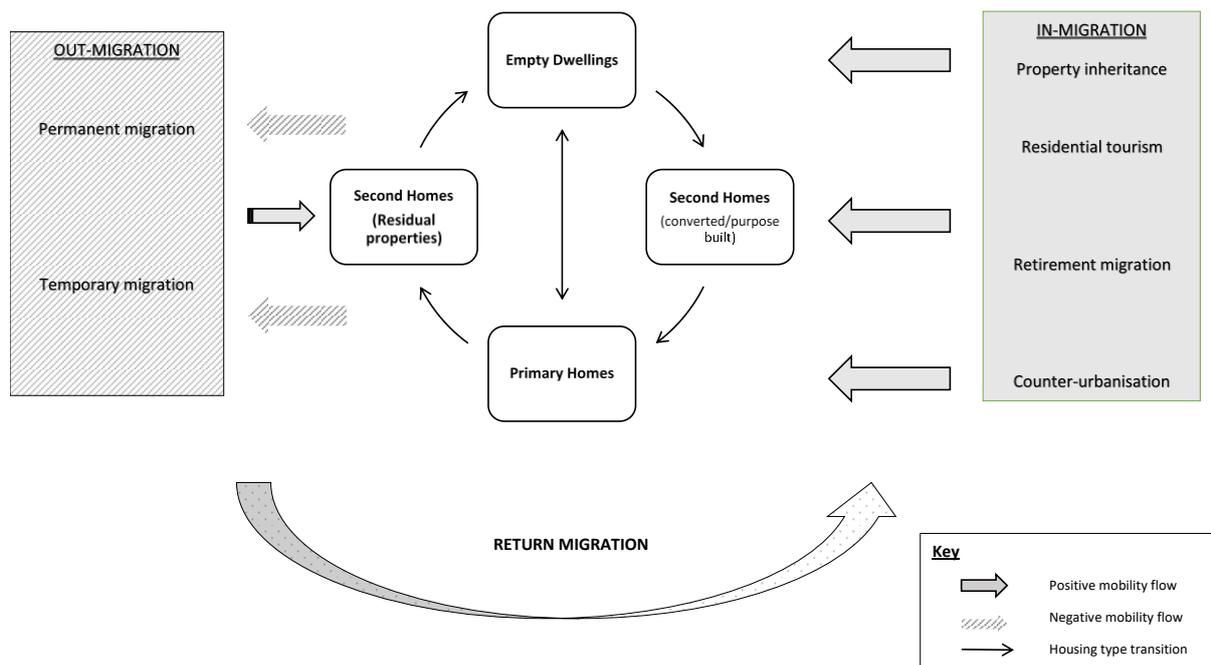


Figure 2b: Housing types and population mobility flows

Recognition of the diversity of second home types is especially important in the context of the debate on their role in the broader issue of rural development. Many analyses of the impact of second homes highlight a variety of negative socio-economic outcomes. More recently, however, Gallent (2014) has drawn attention to more positive factors including the possibility of ‘opening up’ remote rural areas to “wider socio-economic and professional worlds” (p.174). Farstad and Rye (2013) also argue that second home owners and ‘locals’ often share the same values and attitudes to new development in rural areas, arguing that the main conflicts are not between these two groups but between those initiating new development and those who place a high value on the existing qualities and appearance of the area. A central tenet of our argument in this paper is that the types of second home found in a locality is of fundamental relevance for socio-economic outcomes on the ground for both local residents and second home dwellers themselves. This being the case, it is equally imperative that rural development policy recognises this diversity. This is not simply a case of

recognising the existence of different types of second homes but of also recognising the specificity of the mixture of types found in different localities.

Work by Back and Marjavaara (2017) uses Müller et al's (2004) model to create 'second home landscapes', mapping where one kind of second home prevails. But their analysis is somewhat reductionist and simplifies the real geography of second homes. In some areas this consists of a more complex pattern with different mixes of types of second home. This is crucial to assessing their impact. However, we acknowledge that certain categories of second homes may be more prevalent in some geographical and cultural milieu than in others. For example, 'residual' second homes may be less prevalent in cultures where return migration and roots tourism are of limited significance.

In summary, our paper makes three substantive arguments with regards to second homes research:

1. The importance of 'residual' second homes has tended to be overlooked in previous research on different types of second homes. We argue they are fundamental to fully understanding the impact of second homes on rural communities.
2. Second homes (and different types thereof) are part of a dynamic local housing system which is in a constant state of flux responding to competing forces of inward and outward pressures of population mobility.
3. Local scale analysis and place specificity is fundamental to our understanding of the impact of second homes/multiple dwellings on rural areas.

In the remainder of this paper, we will explore these key arguments and apply our second home typology in our study area of the Alpujarra Granadina in southern Spain using empirical data from the Spanish housing census, supported by a substantial history of field observations.

3. The Study Area: Alpujarra Granadina

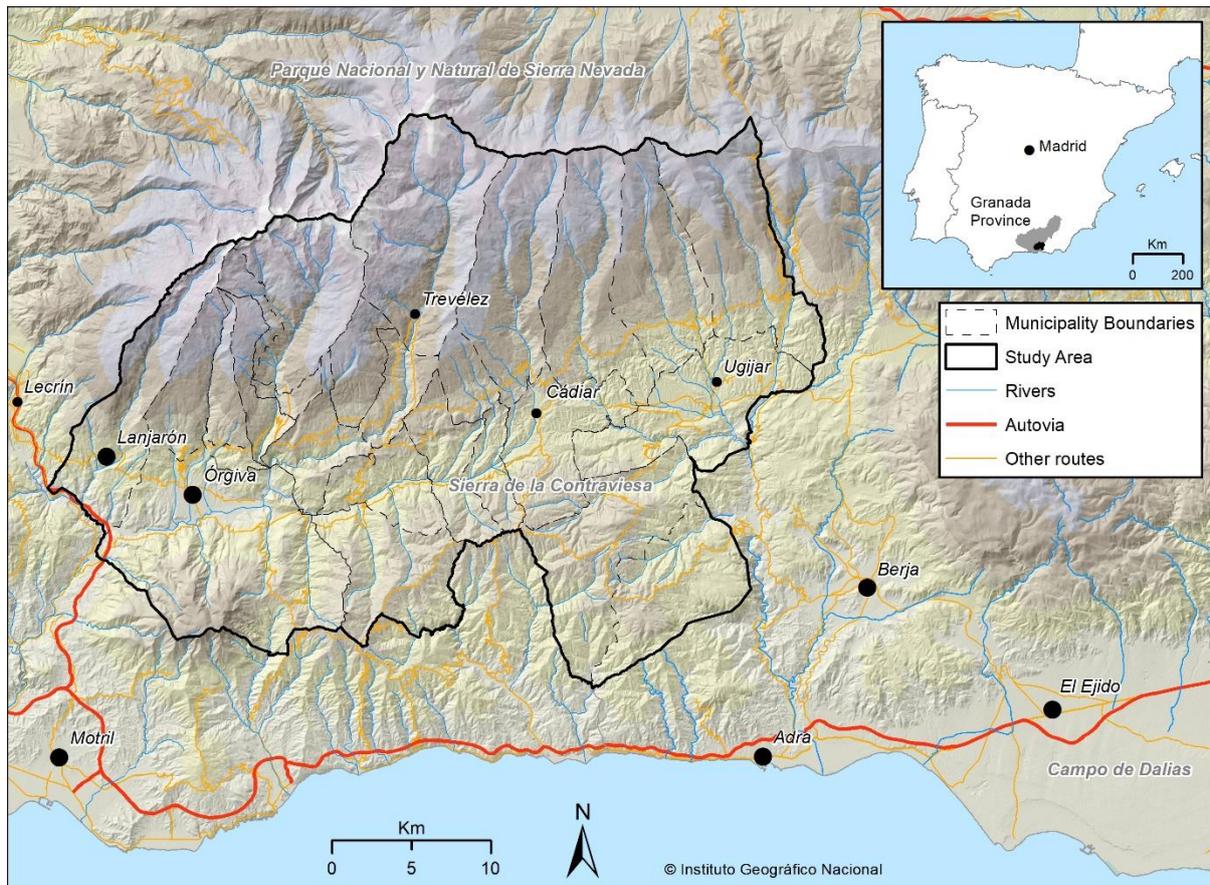


Figure 3: Location map of the Alpujarra Granadina study area

Well into the second half of the twentieth century, it was common for the Alpujarra region to be described as ‘unknown’ (Carrascosa Salas, 1984; López Méndez, 1967). Such an epithet added to the sense of a region that was remote, backward and symptomatic of rural decline. Aggregate statistics support such a generalisation. Population numbers peaked in the first half of the nineteenth century rising to over 68,000 in 1857, although McNeil (1992, p.190) suggests that an earlier peak of around 64,000 had been reached at the height of Moorish occupation in the sixteenth century. This was followed by fluctuating but gradual decline up to the 1960s when catastrophic falls started, from 52,000 in 1960 to just under 40,000 in 1981 but, at the 2011 census, the population of our study area was 24,384 (INE, 2011). Furthermore, mainly due to selective out-migration, the age structure shows progressive ageing, 25% of the 2011 population were over 65, implying associated

problematic issues of labour supply and welfare provision. However, intriguingly, and contrary to the prevailing image of universal decline, Rodríguez Martínez (1988) noted important demographic and migration differences between Alpujarran villages.

Apart from a brief period of intensive mining activity in the early nineteenth century, traditionally, the area has been highly economically dependent on agriculture (Carrascosa Salas, 1992; García Martínez, 1999). The adoption of terracing and irrigation techniques in Moorish times ensured high levels of productivity but deforestation and soil erosion subsequently impacted negatively on many areas. Difficult terrain limits the capability of technological advances in agriculture and adds to the requirements of labour inputs, clearly a problem in an area of declining and ageing population. More recently, the massive growth of intensive horticultural activity on the nearby coastal areas provided some opportunity for investment and employment but the growing dominance of highly capitalised agri-technology businesses, along with increasing environmental concerns, has limited the economic benefits of such activity (Tout, 1990). Viticulture (Remmers, 1994) and high value tree crops such as almonds remain locally important activities. However, the main economic growth area in recent years has major implications for the local housing market, especially second homes, and concerns tourism- related activities (Barke and Newton, 1997).

This trajectory of socio-economic change within the Alpujarra region has motivated policy responses. The most significant early document was the *Plan de Actuacion de La Alpujarra* (IFA, 1991). The need to strengthen local economies and the importance of social infrastructure to this end was recognised in the plan with suggested emphases on the potential of tourism, viticulture, pork products, berry fruits such as raspberries and traditional handicrafts (Carrascoso Salas, 1992). Recognising the diversity within the Alpujarra, much consideration was given to the most appropriate administrative structures for the delivery of future policy initiatives. To some extent, the more active involvement of the EU in remote rural area development initiatives has superseded Spanish regional planning mechanisms, especially with the implementation of the several phases of the LEADER Programme

(Pérez Yruela and Giménez Guerrero, 1994; Barke and Newton, 1995a). The emphasis of the latter is on endogenous rural development, but the most significant economic activity encouraged by the Programme is rural tourism (Calatrava and Ruiz, 1993; Barke and Newton, 1995b; Navarro, et. al., 2018). Many of the activities encompassed by the term 'rural tourism' clearly impact upon second homes within the region.

4. The study of Second Homes in Spain

According to the 2011 Spanish census, there were nearly 3.7 million second homes in Spain which represents about 15% of all dwellings (INE, 2011). Around one in seven households in Spain have a second home (López Colás et al, 2007). As would be expected in a country with a very high number and proportion of second homes, the Spanish literature on this phenomenon is substantial. The subject has attracted the attention of both domestic and foreign academic researchers and, increasingly, that of policy makers. The topic is, therefore, not just a matter of intellectual interest and inquiry but also of public policy. The sheer size of the second home presence in Spain emphasises the practical relevance of developing a clear understanding of the nature of the phenomenon and justifies revisiting and interrogating some apparently well-established interpretations and perspectives. Significantly, Spain also still has a substantial 'residual' second home sector with a relatively large number of surplus (vacant or only very occasionally occupied) properties particularly found in those rural areas, such as the Alpujarra, which have experienced significant out migration since the 1950s (Pinilla et al, 2008; Collantes and Pinilla, 2004; 2011; Collantes et al, 2014).

The historiography of second homes in Spain has developed through several quite well-defined stages. Although not couched initially in terms of a second home debate, several social anthropological studies of Spanish villages (e.g. Kenny, 1961; Brandes, 1975) noted the presence of 'residual' family properties resulting from rural depopulation where a younger generation had migrated from the traditional family rural home but retained ownership, returning periodically (Mansvelt Beck, 1988). This process was not just limited to remote, chronically depopulating rural

areas and a further variant related to the 'industrialization' of agriculture reducing the demand for local labour but, again, where former residents had retained rural properties to use for leisure purposes (Ponce Herrero, 1985). Crucially, second homes in these contexts are "...components of a family-centred social network, rather than playground objects for the urban middle classes." (Hoggart and Paniagua, 2001, p. 77). With the growing recognition of the occurrence of second homes, studies sought to establish their numerical presence and distributional characteristics in Spain both nationally (Ortega, 1975) and within specific regions (Valenzuela, 1976). Most of these early studies were concerned with rural areas, with an initial concentration on the potential conflict between second home development and local agriculture (Sabaté Martínez, 1977; Salvà Tomás, 1979). Slightly later, some studies exhibited rather wider concerns about the implications of second home development on rural social and economic change, for example Canto Fresno (1981) on the Sierra de Gredos, Chuvieco and Aldecoa (1983) on the Sierra de Madrid and Weatherley (1982) on the Sierra Morena. The latter study was also one of the first to draw attention to the diversity of types of second home, even within a limited locality. In the 1970s there was diffusion from more accessible locations to more remote areas, with the former being characterised by purpose built chalet-type accommodation and the latter by more rudimentary provision. An early example of the recognition of a different type of second home concerned a study of Mijas in Málaga province (Jurdao Arrones, 1979), a *pueblo* adjacent to the Costa del Sol mass tourism area where, in addition to anxieties about impact on the traditional rural agricultural economy (Gomez Moreno, 1983), the social and cultural implications of imbalance and potential conflict between local populations and foreign second home owners was recognised (see also Cuadrado Roura and Torres Bernier, 1978).

As social and economic welfare increased in Spain in the later twentieth century, a further group of studies began to recognise the growth of the second home phenomenon in close proximity to many of Spain's urban centres. Sometimes associated with the growth of 'hobby farming' (Salva Tomas and Socias Fuster, 1985), this peri-urban location more broadly resulted from the desire of urban 'weekenders' for a semi-rural retreat in accessible locations. Anton Clavé and Ibareguren (1993)

examined the development of this type of leisure space in the Barcelona metropolitan area, Hermosilla Pla in Valencia (1992), Requena Sánchez (1992) in Seville, and Canto Fresno (1994) and Valenzuela (2003) in Madrid.

The remarkable expansion of mass tourism in Spain during the 1960s and 1970s inevitably added a further, and quantitatively vast dimension to second home studies of the Spanish littoral. A process of marked segmentation of tourism activity was soon identified with second homes developing as an integral part of this diversification. This category attracted considerable attention with more localised studies of the growth and impact of residential tourism where second homes play a prominent role (Olmedo and Gómez, 1989; Casado Diaz, 1998; Mazón, 2006). Picking up on some of the issues raised earlier by Jurdao Arrones, issues of segregation, social isolation and potential conflict between 'locals' and foreign residents attracted continuing attention (Barke and France, 1988; O'Reilly, 2000; 2009; Baños Páez and Baños González, 2009). Further studies drew attention to the increasing complexity and fluidity of use of the dwelling stock within nominally 'tourist' areas (Simancas Cruz, *et. al.*, 2009). One aspect of this is the potential eventual conversion of a second home into a permanent residence (Blasco Peris, 2009), demonstrating the much neglected dynamic aspect of second home studies. Even before the major crash experienced within the Spanish housing market in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the property speculation motives for the development of what were, ostensibly, second homes were questioned (Fernandez, 2003). Such studies drew attention to the diversity of processes and outcomes taking place within the same type of locality.

Crucially for our study of diversity, attempts to characterise different localities in relation to second homes were attempted. Intriguingly, one of the first concerned the province of Granada (Urdiales Viedma, 1989). This research examined dwelling differentiation by size, tenancy regime and services and identified distinctive areas within the province. However, the significance of this heterogeneity has been insufficiently recognised elsewhere. It was some time before this identification of second

homes as a multi-faceted phenomenon was developed further. Nevertheless, several studies at the national scale emerged, seeking to demonstrate the operation of different processes in different locations (Barke, 1991; 2007; Casado Diaz, 2004). This issue is significant in the present context and our concern for the heterogeneity of the phenomenon of second homes. In a broad scale study at the provincial level, Barke (2007) attempted to devise a typology of second homes, ranging from the 'residual' rural family home, possibly visited at weekends or during the summer months, to purpose-built coastal apartment in a mass tourism destination. However, despite noting that "...very different processes can produce a similar outcome" (p196) Barke failed to recognise the significance of scale of analysis and to pursue this complexity at different geographical hierarchical levels. The present paper is, in part, an attempt to redress this omission.

More recent studies have explored the second home phenomenon from a widening variety of perspectives. These are mainly a product of the search for universalities in terms of process and explanation and relate to broader issues of the impact of globalisation on local areas. These include the relationship of second homes to macro changes in the broader housing market (Barke, 2008; Módenes and López Colás, 2005; Hof and Blazquez-Salom, 2013), sociological and changing life styles perspectives (Pino Artacho, 2003; López Colás et al, 2007; Mazón, et. al., 2009), the recognition of the concept of multiple dwellings (López Colás and Módenes Cabrerizo, 2005), and the related 'new mobilities' paradigm (Borge, 2007; Pino Artacho, 2014, 2015). These perspectives do possess a degree of connectedness in that they signal a break with the traditional perspective on place as a bounded, static phenomenon. They recognise the emergence of a contemporary reality of universal processes produced by the emergence of much larger scale networks and flows of people, ideas and commodities (Urry, 2000). However, the identification of such processes (and, in our interpretation, their increasingly varied outcomes) does not obviate the continuing need for 'place-based' studies that focus on the actual experiences of individual places and individual people.

Where studies have been conducted at the local level they tend to be 'sectoral' in focus. There are few recent local studies that explore the issue of diversity of second homes within a locality. In asserting the desirability of such research we are in agreement with Halfacree (1993) that there are "significant structures operating which are unambiguously associated with the local level." (p.27). Furthermore, to assert the globality of process and outcome is somewhat elitist. For many, the so-called reality of a 'placeless' world is meaningless. It is only a reality for those who can afford (and desire) the technological means to participate in it. A 'place', in the sense of a specific named locality – village, town or city, still has a fundamental meaning for many. Furthermore, it is 'place' in the sense of a bounded area, that defines administrative functions and is the medium through which policies and services are delivered.

5. Methodology and Sources

This study utilises data from the Spanish population and housing census from 1991 and 2011 to explore the uneven geography of second homes at a sub-regional (municipal) scale. Other studies have used this source but very few thus far have utilised its potential for examining temporal change and spatial variation at the sub regional scale (for an exception, see Urdiales Viedma, 1989).

Furthermore, the potential opportunities that the Spanish housing census provides for identifying different types of second homes in a local area by cross tabulating housing use with other measures has been hitherto under-explored.

We acknowledge the practical and philosophical issues around defining, categorising and identifying second homes and also the problems associated with the use of the term itself (see, for example, Gomez and Olmedo, 1989; Paris, 2014). But for practical ease of comparison in the measurement of change over time and spatial variations within the study area, we employ the definition of second homes (*viviendas secundarias*) used by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Statistical Institute or INE) in the population and housing census, in which a secondary dwelling is identified as:

'A family dwelling is considered secondary when it is only used part of the year in a seasonal, periodic or sporadic way, and does not constitute the regular residence of one or several persons.' (INE, 2013).

The Spanish population and housing census also categorises all family dwellings into three types; primary (*vivienda principal*), secondary (*vivienda secundaria*) and vacant (*vivienda vacía*). The latter is defined as:

'A family dwelling is considered to be unoccupied or empty when it is not the regular residence of any person, nor is it used seasonally, periodically or sporadically by anyone. These are uninhabited (vacant) dwellings.' (INE, 2013)

Whilst in theory the distinction between secondary and vacant dwellings appears to be quite obvious, in practice distinguishing between the two for the purpose of census enumeration, in a rural area, such as the Alpujarra, may actually be quite difficult (see Figure 4) and potentially subject to errors and inconsistencies (see Barke, 1991; Casado-Diaz, 2004; Sikiö et al, 2014, Adamiak et al, 2015). The task is made particularly difficult because of the demographic fluidity of this area, which has experienced significant depopulation, creating abandoned or semi-derelict properties whilst also receiving an influx of seasonal second homeowners (see Fig 2b. above). The physical distinction between second homes and vacant properties is particularly difficult when dealing with the 'residual' category of second homes which are more rarely visited and may be in various states of semi-abandonment and dereliction. Whilst we assume that census enumerators are consistent in their classification of such dwellings, and that a degree of local knowledge in terms of ownership and visitation rates must be involved in this categorisation for the census, we acknowledge the necessary caution when interpreting these statistics.



Figure 4: Traditional style property in Nechite, Válor *municipio*. Empty or occupied? Note adjacent ‘traditional’ style new build property. (Source: Authors, April 2019)

Although the data available from the Spanish census only classifies residential properties into the three categories described above, it also provides information on the condition (good, unsatisfactory, poor etc.) and year of construction for all residential properties, including second homes. It is this additional information we have used to differentiate between the key types of second home and empty dwellings at the municipal scale. In doing so, we aim to further refine our understanding of the uneven geography of second homes in an area to include not just variations in the number and proportion, but also the local predominance of certain types. Whilst we recognise the importance of Müller et al’s (2004) typology of second homes, the limitations of the Spanish census data do not allow us to distinguish between their four key types. For example, the census does not differentiate between ‘weekend’ and ‘holiday homes’ in an area, an important distinction in Müller et al’s categorisation. We argue, however, that this distinction may have more significance in some cultural and social settings than in others and that, in the southern European context, other types of differentiation may be more important in societal and policy terms. For this reason, we are primarily interested in the ‘residual’ category of second homes (discussed earlier) which doesn’t feature in Müller et al’s typology and tends to be overlooked in other studies of second homes. A primary reason for this omission is their focus on tourism development and leisure consumption. As

we have argued above, the 'residual' category of second homes is particularly significant in our specific geographical context and in other similar heavily depopulated, relatively remote, Mediterranean mountain regions (McNeil, 1992; Hoggart and Paniagua, 2001; Collantes and Pinilla, 2004). We also believe that it is particularly important to identify the proportion of this category of second homes, as they are likely to be the ones that are least active, most rarely visited and thus likely to be making a limited contribution to local consumption and the maintenance of local services.

We have manipulated the available census data to achieve an approximate surrogate measure of 'residual' second homes. We argue, with some confidence, that properties within this category of 'residual' second homes that are rarely used are more likely to be in poorer condition than those visited regularly at weekends or invested in as holiday homes. Fortunately, the Spanish census provides comprehensive data on the age and condition of properties, including second homes. With these concerns in mind, we have cross-tabulated the Spanish housing census data to construct additional sub-categories of dwellings to produce an approximation of the number of 'residual' second homes/properties as distinct from other more 'active' second homes. We have done this by subtracting from the total number of enumerated 'secondary dwellings' those that are classified as being in unsatisfactory or worse condition and combining these with the number of enumerated 'empty dwellings' also classified as in unsatisfactory or worse condition. (We distinguish between this category of empty dwelling and those in 'good' condition as these are more likely to be those properties either being maintained due to inheritance or for possible sale or unsold new build empty dwellings built by property speculators). Combining these two categories of 'secondary dwellings in unsatisfactory or worse condition' with 'empty dwellings in unsatisfactory or worse condition' produces a more accurate representation of residual properties which are likely to be in various stages of disrepair and possible abandonment but nevertheless form a segment of the second home typology.

Whilst we recognise that this subcategorization is based on a series of imperfect assumptions and an implied relationship between the regularity of building use and building condition, it is informed by our extensive field observations in the study area. Our empirical analysis in the study area therefore examines the spatial distribution and temporal change in the numbers and proportions of four key sub-categories of dwelling, those being:

1. primary dwellings
2. 'active' second homes (those classified as in good condition)
3. 'residual properties' (second homes and empty dwellings classified as unsatisfactory, poor or ruined condition)
4. 'new build' empty dwellings (empty dwellings built during the decade prior to the census date)

The Spanish census is the principal source of data for this study but this is complemented by a substantial record of field work relating to social and economic change within the study area, extending back into the 1990s (see Barke and Newton, 1997). The research reported here has been informed by annual field trips with students to the area from 2005 to 2019, focussing on the three villages of Yegen (Alpujarra de la Sierra), Válor and Laroles (Nevada) with the purpose of assessing four dimensions of change in each village – the built environment (see Barke and Parkes, 2016), service provision, social space and the agricultural economy. Three extensive field surveys, focussed specifically on second homes and potential tensions between 'incoming' second home owners and indigenous residents, were carried out in 2012, 2015 and 2018. On these occasions the principal village in each *municipio* was visited along with a number of subsidiary settlements. Semi-structured Interviews were carried out with second-home owners and/or mayors in the villages of Pampaneira, Cástaras, Pitres, Torvizcon, Órgiva, Juviles, Lobras, Mecina Bombaron, Yegen, Ugíjar, Válor, Laroles, Mairena, Picena and Murtas. Interviews focused, for example, on second home ownership,

frequency of visits, relationships with local community, impact on local services, impact on built environment, and different types of second homes. Along with detailed field observations, the latter were fundamental in alerting us to the significance and ambiguous nature of ‘residual’ properties in the context of second homes.

6. Findings

6.1 Different types of dwellings in the Alpujarra

Alpujarra Granadina	1991		2011		Ab. change 91-11	% change 91-11
	Total	% of all dwellings	Total	% of all dwellings		
1. Primary Dwellings	9247	61	10019	53	772	8.3
2. Secondary homes	3230	21	4992	26	1762	54.6
2a. Second homes (good condn.)	2235	15	4237	22	2002	89.6
2b. Second homes (unsatisfactory, poor, ruined condn.)	773	5	755	4	-18	-2.3
3. Empty dwellings	2558	17	4038	21	1480	57.9
3b. Empty dwellings (unsatisfactory, poor, ruined condn.)	1097	7	1395	7	298	27.2
4. Residual properties (2b + 3b)	1870	12	2150	11	280	15.0
5. New build empty dwellings	410	3	340	2	-70	-17.1
All Dwellings	15141		19049			

Table 1: Census categorisation of dwellings in the Alpujara Granadina, 1991-2011 (INE, 1991; 2011)

Between 1991 and 2011, the total number of dwellings in the Alpujarra Granadina region increased by nearly 4,000 or 26%. Over the same period the resident population actually fell by over 2,000 or

9%. Much of this disproportionate increase in additional dwellings can be attributed to the relatively rapid growth in second homes over that period, increasing from 3230 in 1991 to 4992 in 2011 (Table 1). Some of this growth relates to the conversion of traditional properties by foreign owners (Figure 5). But this type of second home is actually not the majority. Second homes now account for more than 1 in 4 (or 26%) of all dwellings in the region compared to a national average of nearly 15%. Between 2001 and 2011 alone, the number of second homes in the region increased by 25% amounting to nearly 1,000 properties with 43% of these additional second homes actually being new build properties (INE, 2015a;2015b). As a consequence, primary dwellings only represented just over fifty percent of all dwellings in the region in 2011.



Figure 5: Foreign owned ‘vacation’ second home (centre) in Válor *municipio* (Source: Author, January 2019)

However, when we examine these changes in more detail by disaggregating the second homes according to our typology (figure 2a) the complexity of second homes in the region is revealed. As Table 1 illustrates the majority of second homes in the area (85%) are those classified as in 'good condition' (type 2a). Moreover, the number of these properties has nearly doubled between the two census dates, increasing by just over 2,000 in absolute numbers. These properties are most likely to be those 'active' second homes we describe in our typology above; those being more regularly visited and thus actively maintained. In contrast, our category of 'residual properties' (type 4 in Table 1), made up of both second homes and empty dwellings in unsatisfactory or worse condition, is numerically less significant overall in the region with just over 2,000 properties of this type in 2011, and a relatively modest increase (15%) in number between 1991 and 2011. The majority (65%) of these 'residual' properties are officially classed as empty dwellings (type 3b in table1) although, as already discussed, this could be highly problematic. Whilst we recognise that these 'residual' properties are not as numerically significant as the 'active' second homes in the region, they need to be seen as a distinct sub-group of possible second homes. As argued below, it is important to appreciate the balance of these different types of property in a region as they have quite different economic causes and consequences for local communities.

A further, although less numerically significant sub-category of dwelling, enumerated in table 1, we categorise as 'New build empty dwellings'. These are properties that have been relatively recently constructed (in the last ten years before each census) but remain empty. Most of these properties are unsold surplus housing stock built by developers in the period before the Spanish housing market crash of 2008. Whilst this sub-group of properties only represents about 2% of all housing stock in the region, they are more heavily concentrated in certain localities and thus add to the size and significance of surplus housing stock there.

This aggregate pattern, summarised in Table 1, is actually made up of a complex geography of local variations and changes over time. We now proceed to an analysis at a more localised scale. Our

purpose is to demonstrate the importance of these local trajectories within this region, which is all too easily characterised as uniformly similar or convergent in its experiences.

6.2 The geography of Second homes in the Alpujarra

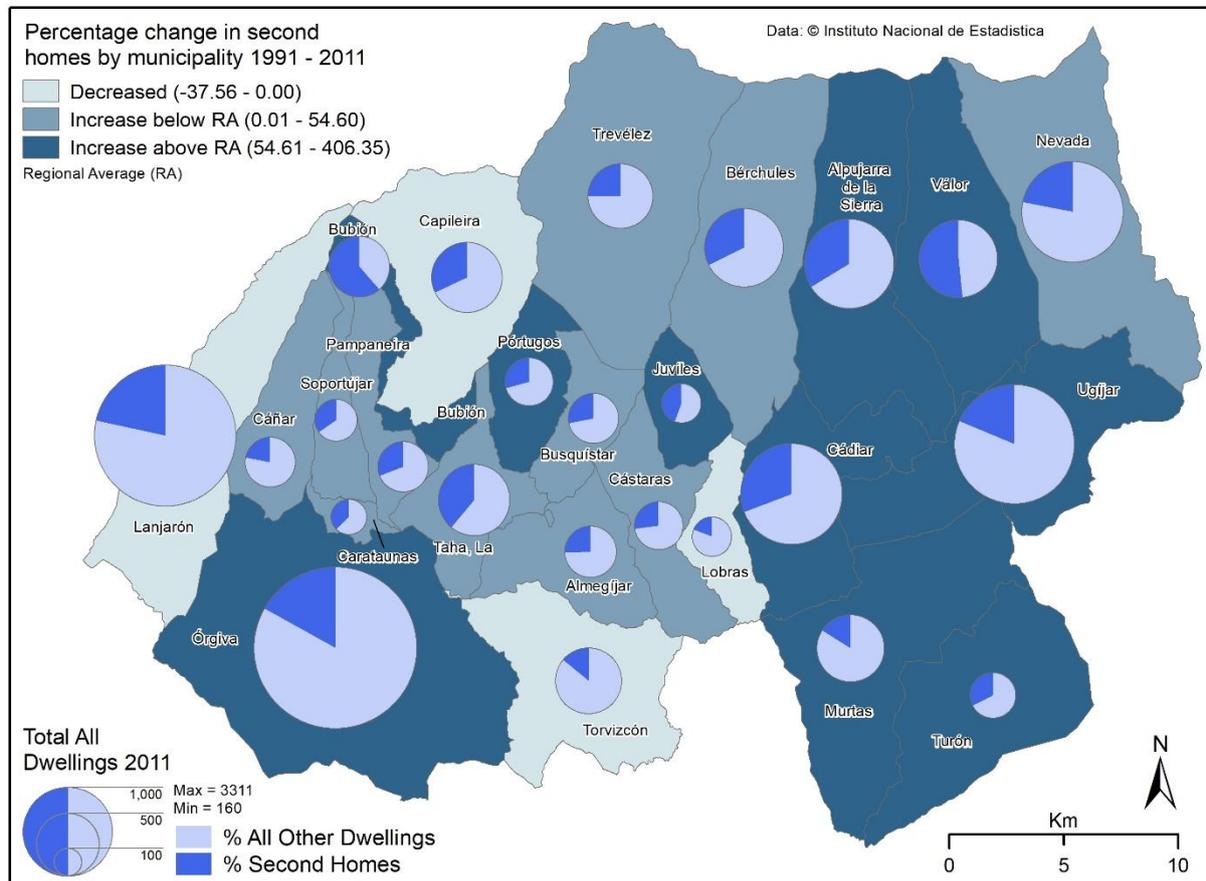


Figure 6. Second homes in Alpujarra Granadina, 1991-2011

Figure 6 displays change in the number and percentage of second homes at the municipal scale over the twenty-year study period, 1991-2011. The majority of municipal areas have experienced a relatively rapid growth in the number and proportion of second homes since 1991 but some have actually experienced a decline. Examples of the latter include the single village municipalities of Cañar and Capileira, in the high western Alpujarra, albeit declining from a relatively high level above the regional and national average in 1991. Significantly, both have also experienced a demographic revival with a net increase in resident population in the second decade of the study period and a

decline in the proportion of the population over 65 years old to a level below the regional and national average. Coupled with a relative increase in primary dwellings these settlements, which are both relatively accessible for the Granada-Motril motorway, are both now showing signs of counterurbanisation rather than more typical patterns of rural depopulation and decline. This has included the conversion of some former second homes to permanent residences. At the other extreme, several municipalities in the eastern Alpujarra, including Válor, Cádiar, Alpujarra de la Sierra and Juviles have all experienced a doubling in the number of second homes. They now account for more than half of all dwellings in Válor. In addition, all of these municipalities have declining and ageing populations. On these statistical measures alone, these areas would appear to display several of the characteristics of other Mediterranean region mountain settlements experiencing depopulation and decline (Collantes and Pinilla, 2011). However, in fact, these municipalities, which share a similar profile of increased dominance of second homes, actually display some significantly different characteristics when we examine the condition and age of these properties and their spatial distribution.

6.3 'Active' second homes in the Alpujarra

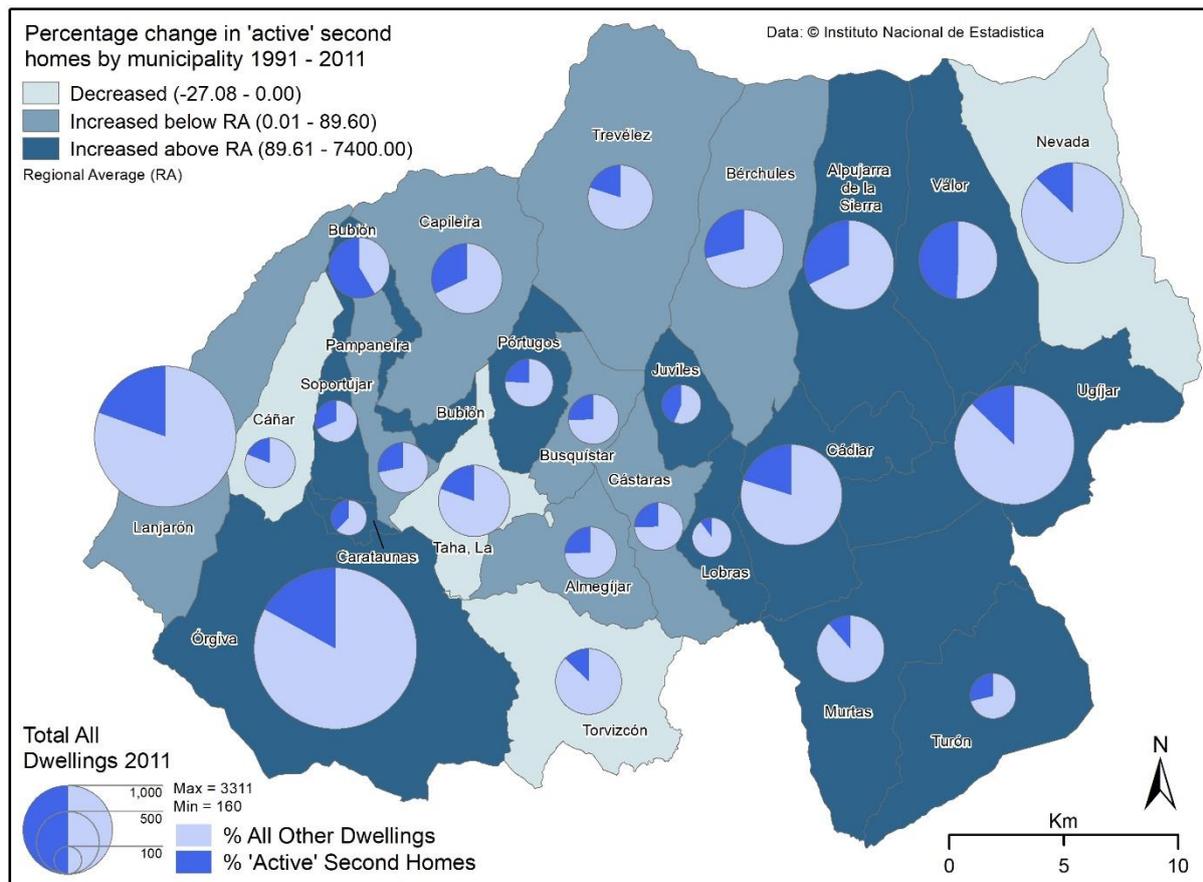


Figure 7: 'Active' second homes in the Alpujrra Granadina, 1991-2011

Figure 7 shows change in the number and percentage of 'active' second homes (those classified as in good condition) at the municipal scale over the twenty-year study period, 1991-2011. The majority of municipal areas have experienced a relatively rapid growth in the number and proportion of this sub-category of 'active' second homes since 1991. However, the percentage of these active second homes varies from only 10 per cent of all dwellings in Lobras to nearly 60 per cent in Bubiión. While the majority of the municipalities with higher percentages of active second homes are located in the more tourist orientated western Alpujarra, including Carataunas, Sóportújar and Capileira, there are notable exceptions to this east-west pattern, for example Vélor and to a lesser extent Alpujarra de la Sierra. Our extensive field work in these areas confirms the relatively positive impact that these more active weekend and holiday second homes appear to have on the number and range of

services in these municipalities. However at the other extreme several municipalities in the east and central Alpujarra (la Taha, Torvizcón and Nevada) not only appear to have relatively low percentages of these more active second homes but have also experienced a decline in the absolute number and proportion of them over the study period. In some of these settlements, these trends seem to also coincide with a commensurate increase in our defined ‘residual’ properties. Our main concern in the remainder of this paper is to highlight the significance of this often overlooked ‘residual’ category and its variation within the region.

6.4 ‘Residual’ properties and surplus newly built empty dwellings in the Alpujarra

6.4.1 Empty ‘newly built’ dwellings in the Alpujarra

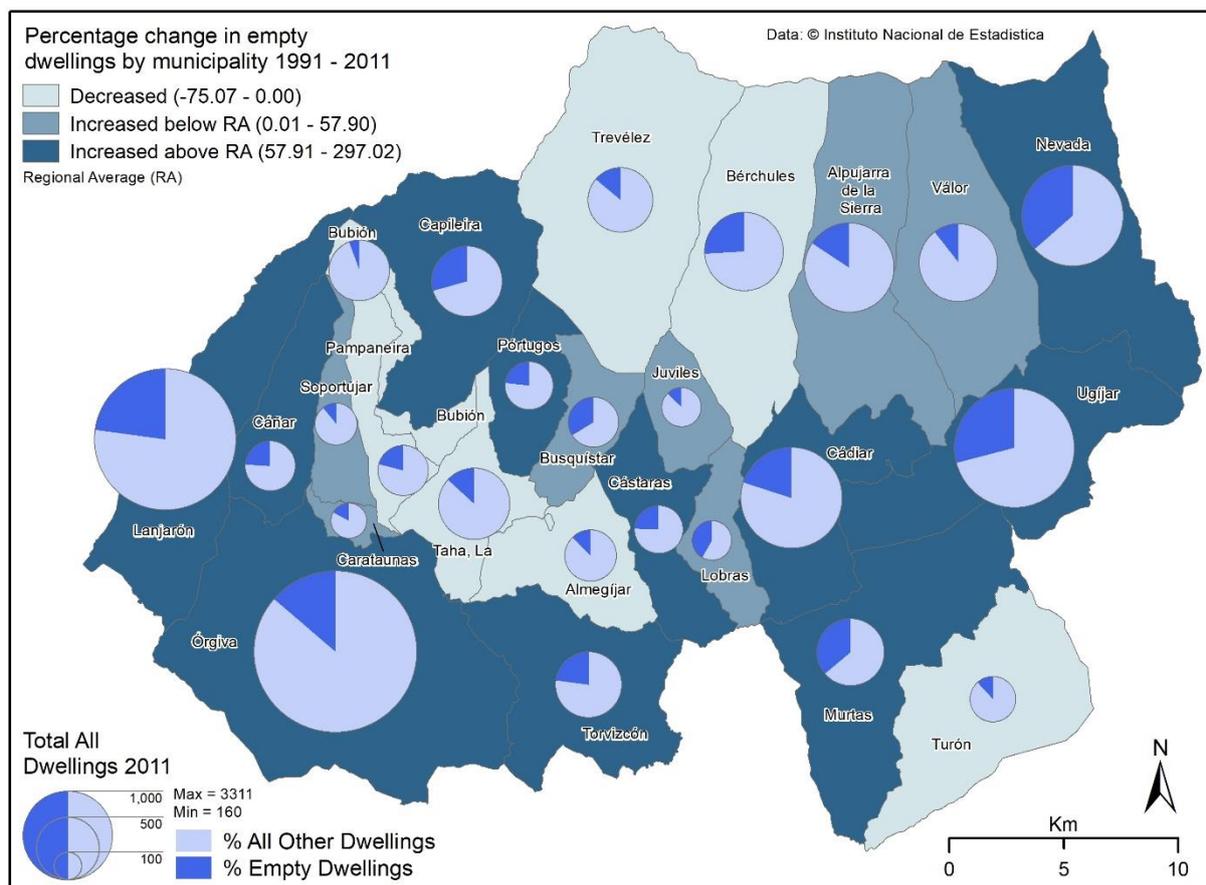


Figure 8 Empty dwellings in the Alpujarra Granadina, 1991-2011

As already observed, the distinction between ‘empty’ dwellings and second homes in a depopulating region such as the Alpujarra, can be quite subtle but also potentially significant. Individual properties

can, for example, progress and recycle through different categories of dwelling type and levels of occupation even without necessarily ever changing ownership simply due to the changing circumstances and preferences of the owners (see Figure. 2b above). The presence of significant numbers of empty dwellings is clearly a sign of a housing surplus and, when taken together with the numbers of second homes, some municipal areas have a high proportion of underutilised dwellings. In addition to the impact on the local housing market there are also implications for the sustainability of local services. Again, this pattern is not evenly distributed across the region with the number of empty dwellings far outnumbering second homes in some municipalities whilst in others they are very few in number. In the region as a whole, there are almost as many empty dwellings (4038) as there are second homes (4992). Taken together, these two types of dwelling account for around 47% of all housing in the area. In more than half of the municipalities this figure is over 50%, with permanently inhabited dwellings being the minority in these areas. In one settlement - Bubión, in the high western Alpujarra - permanent dwellings now make up less than a third of the total housing stock.

Whilst some of these empty dwellings are a product of decades of chronic depopulation, a significant number are actually unsold properties (Figure 8), constructed relatively recently-before Spain's housing market crash in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In some villages there are consequently some relatively large unoccupied housing developments built with the growth of second home tourism in mind. Unfortunately, due to the relatively small number of these recently constructed empty dwellings (340 overall in the Alpujarra in 2011) in some municipalities, some of the data on this category of dwellings in 2011 is suppressed by the Spanish census website (INE) due to data confidentiality restrictions. We therefore only have reliable figures for a limited number of *municipios* where the number of this dwelling type is relatively high and thus more significant in terms of its potential impact. Nevada for example has 75 empty dwellings that were built between 2002 and 2011 and a further 40 between 1991 and 2001. Thus around 1 in 4 of the empty dwellings in this locality were built in the twenty years before the 2011 census. This statistic is borne out by

our detailed field observations in this area (Figure 8). Some quite extensive new property developments have remained largely unsold and unoccupied since our initial field visits in the 1990s. Given the number of surplus properties in the area and the current state of the Spanish economy it is hard to envisage when, if ever, these empty buildings will become the second homes the property speculators presumably intended.



Figure 9: 'Newly' built but unoccupied housing development, Picena, Nevada municipio (Photo: Author, Sept. 2012).

6.4.2 'Residual' properties in the Alpujarra

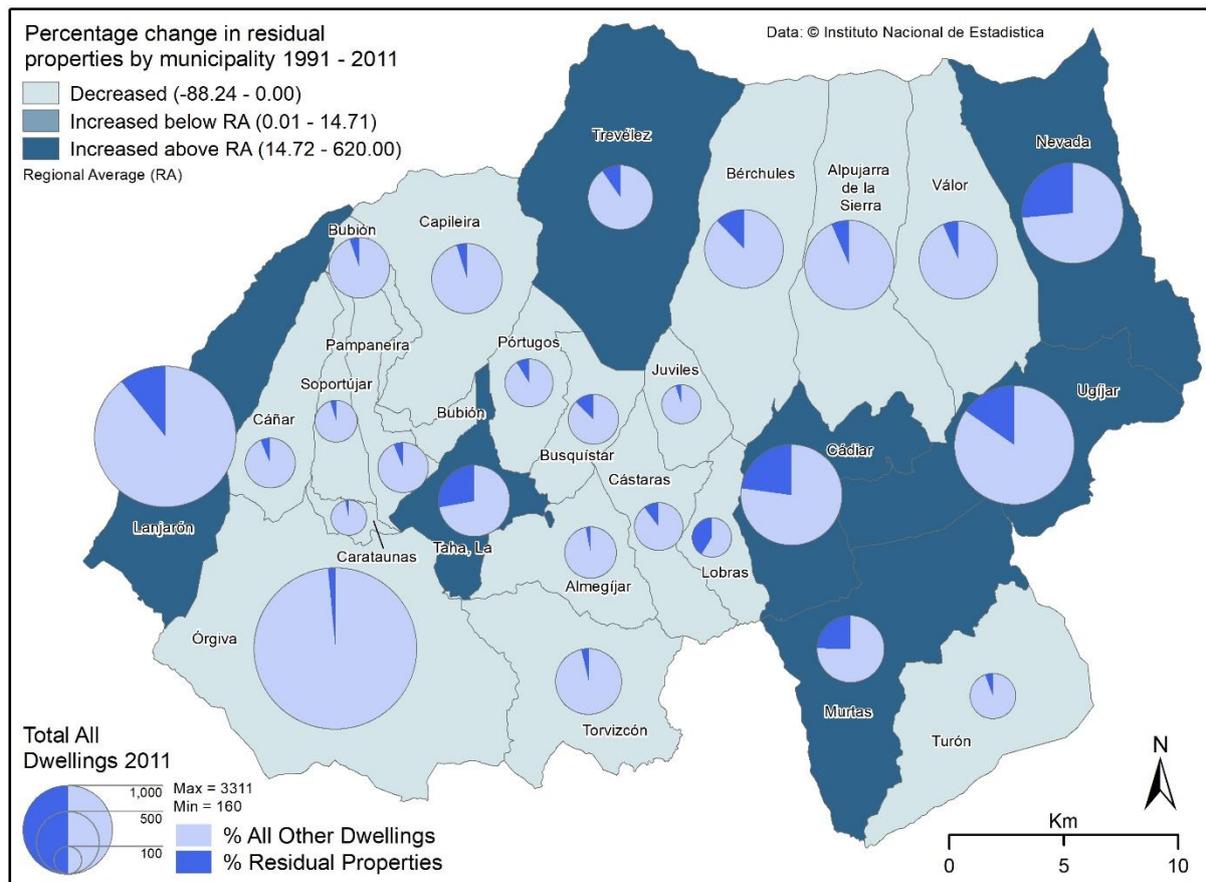


Figure 10: 'Residual' properties (second homes and empty dwellings in unsatisfactory or worse condition) in the Alpujarra Granadina, 1991-2011

While the majority of second homes in the Alpujarra are in good condition (85%), suggesting most are either regularly used or at least well maintained by their owners, our themes of heterogeneity and place specificity are reinforced by noteworthy variations between municipalities. Although most have 80-100% of their second homes in good condition, some municipalities, notably Lobras, La Taha, Nevada, Ugíjar and Cádiar, have a large number of properties that are not as well maintained and are likely to fall into our 'residual' property category. Significantly, all of these *municipios* have small and quite remote satellite settlements and detailed observational evidence from field visits suggest that many of these less well maintained, and possibly 'residual' second homes (see Figure

10), are found in these settlements (e.g. Mecina Tedel, Ferreirola, Cojáyar, Picena, Júbar, Jorairátar, Yátor and Nariles). Municipalities such as Cádiar, Lobras, Murtas, Nevada and la Taha, that have a relatively high number of these ‘residual’ properties (see map Figure 10) are most likely those that have experienced historic out migration but also those which have been less successful at either encouraging native return migration or attracting non-native second home residential tourism leading to regeneration and upgrading.



Figure 11: Residual ‘properties in ‘unsatisfactory or worse’ condition, Alpujarra Granadina. (Source: Authors, April 2015).

By comparing the 1991 and 2011 housing censuses we can also establish the extent to which this ‘residual’ category of local housing stock is actually increasing in some areas. Such a trend suggests the growing residualisation of second/vacant homes in an area. Although the absolute number of poorly maintained ‘residual’ properties has increased by nearly 15% in the whole area since 1991, their overall significance as a percentage of all housing stock fell slightly during the same period,

mainly due to the number of additional new homes that have been built. However, yet again we see heterogeneous local outcomes. Whilst most municipalities have experienced net improvement in the condition of their vacant and second home properties over this period (e.g. Almegíjar, Alp. de la Sierra, Carataunas, Juviles, Órgiva, Soportújar and Pórtugos), others have suffered a further deterioration of this component of the housing stock (e.g. Cádiar, Murtas, Nevada, Ugíjar and la Taha). This suggests increased levels of residualisation and abandonment of second homes due to continued net out-migration and non-return. Nevada for example has witnessed an almost fivefold increase in the number of these ‘residual’ properties and they now represent 1 in 4 of all properties in the municipality. The Nevada municipality, the most eastern part of the Alpujarra Granadina, contains the four separate settlements of Laroles, Mairena, Picena and Júbar. Laroles is by far the largest of these settlements with a reasonable range of essential services (including shops, bank, several bars, a hotel, town hall, petrol station and primary school) (see also Figure 12) whilst the others are smaller with more limited or no services. Observational fieldwork shows that these smaller settlements have higher concentrations of these properties in unsatisfactory condition.



Figure 12: Well-maintained, non-traditional, new build second homes in core village of Laroles, Nevada *municipio*. (Source: Authors, April, 2014)

Further evidence of decline in the settlements we have identified above is that in four of these five *municipios* (i.e. Murtas, Lobras, Nevada and Ugíjar) the number of empty dwellings not only outnumbered second homes but also the ratio of empty to second homes has increased between 1991 and 2011. This suggests that these *municipios* have a growing property surplus in part created by unsold, relatively newly built properties but mainly older abandoned dwellings. At this scale of analysis these important variations between settlements in terms of the number, type and condition of second homes not only becomes more visible but also matters in terms of the material futures and lived realities of these places.

7. Conclusion

In this paper we have demonstrated the importance of the heterogeneous composition of second homes as a major impact on rural change within a given area. We have done this through identifying particular key types of second home using the Spanish census and by analysing their geographical patterns within our study area of the Alpujarra Granadina. In doing this, we have also illustrated the importance of some key operative demographic processes, especially those relating to different migration patterns within the region. These processes, we argue, are fundamental to understanding the 'uneven geography' and heterogeneous nature of the second home housing stock in different settlements and we have proposed a refinement of Müller et al's (2004) second home typology which incorporates these broader processes of continuity and change.

The 'official' categories used by the census do less than justice to the physical reality of different types of second homes found in the study area. Accordingly, we have identified a specific and often overlooked category of secondary dwelling we have termed 'residual'. This category is significant, not so much because of its overall numerical presence, but because of its frequently misunderstood physical character and geographical location. Physical condition creates a sense of ambiguity leading to simplistic conclusions as to actual 'use'; the substantial variations in the latter point to the inadequacy of 'blanket' interpretations with subsequent policy implications. However, we must

acknowledge that this is an ambiguous group containing properties which, despite their condition, are still 'used' as second homes, but also properties that have, in reality been abandoned.

Even within a region apparently as homogeneous as the Alpujarra Granadina there are significant local variations in the housing market and in the nature and scale of second home development. In some settlements, immigration-led second home growth is driving the demand for properties leading to the extension of the built environment but also sustaining valuable local services. In others however, emigration has continued to outweigh the demand for weekend and vacation second homes and local housing stock is gradually deteriorating in a depressed local housing market. A declining and ageing local population has led to an absence of local services, further reducing the appeal of these settlements to potential second homeowners. Nonetheless, in some of these areas the 'second' home retains a positive human, emotional value to original residents with a use value that far transcends its physical appearance. These different local scenarios pose very different challenges for local planning and policy makers even within the same local authority area. In the first scenario, the number of second homes may be reaching saturation point and measures to control further growth may be necessary, whereas in the second scenario measures to curtail further population decline and the deterioration of village fabric may be desirable to prevent settlement abandonment. Determining whether second homes are a 'blessing or a blight' for rural areas requires both an appreciation of the heterogeneous nature of the phenomena and geographical specificity of the places in which they are found.

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