

Heterolocal Identities? Counter-Urbanisation, Second Homes, and Rural Consumption in the Era of Mobilities

Keith Halfacree*

Department of Geography, Swansea University, Swansea, UK

ABSTRACT

This paper forms part of a critical engagement with the aspects of the core population geography concept of 'counterurbanisation'. It argues that contextualising counterurbanisation within the 'era of mobilities' has profound consequences for the concept. After introducing the era of mobilities and its implications for social science, migration's central and multiple places within this discourse are outlined. The paper then examines one set of ideas, 'dynamic heterolocalism', that facilitates the understanding of the existential significance today of the circulatory expressions of migration. Returning to counterurbanisation, the paper draws into its orbit the consumers of rural second homes, understanding of which has also increasingly adopted a quasi-heterolocal tone. An inclusive model of what is then recast terminologically as 'counterurbanisation' posits it as an extremely heterodox concept, potentially embracing not only second-home owners but also diverse other consumers of rural space or rural sojourners. The paper concludes by reiterating the sustained centrality of 'rurality' to counterurbanisation, second-home consumption, and other expressions of identity within the era of mobilities. Copyright © 2011 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION: RETHINKING AND REVITALISING COUNTERURBANISATION

'Researchers of rural population geography need to think more critically about the broad range of movements and mobilities that are being played out in rural spaces' (Milbourne, 2007: 385).

This paper is the third intervention in a loosely defined series that seeks to reconsider critically the established and widely used population geography concept of 'counterurbanisation', aiming to revitalise it (Halfacree, 2001, 2008). This project also fits broadly with the reflections on the state of population geography made by commentators such as Findlay and Graham (1991), Halfacree and Boyle (1993), White and Jackson (1995), and Graham (2000) and with the *Remaking Migration Theory* conference at which this paper was originally presented. In brief, these interventions call on population geography to be less inward looking in respect of its conceptual development and instead to draw critically on the insights provided by both the broader currents of social theory and the more general societal contexts in which population geographies are always being (re)written (Bailey, 2005).

As a social-scientific taxonomic concept, counterurbanisation can be regarded as strongly 'constructed' (Halfacree, 2001). This construction presents it as predominantly encompassing migration into more rural areas – usually but not necessarily from urban areas – underpinned by a desire to live in such an area and access various aspects of its perceived physical and social environment.

Of course, ever since its initial identification and naming by Brian Berry (1976) in the 1970s, counterurbanisation (or counterurbanization) has

* Correspondence to: Keith Halfacree, Department of Geography, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, UK.
E-mail: k.h.halfacree@swansea.ac.uk

been subjected to much academic debate, scrutiny, and respecification (for an excellent review, see Mitchell, 2004). Nevertheless, by the 30th anniversary of its 'discovery', much of this energy had dissipated, and counterurbanisation had arguably become something of an exhausted or 'saturated' research topic (cf. Halfacree, 2008). Consequently, Milbourne (2007: 382) argued the need to revisit critically and nuance carefully the 'metanarratives of population change ... based on lifestyle-led voluntary movements of middle-class groups to rural areas'.

Hitherto in this revisiting, counterurbanisation has been shown to be more complex than the 'purified' (Sibley, 1988) dominant understanding would lead us to expect. In particular, two dissident strands have been drawn out: 'alternative' or 'marginal rural settlers' seeking a more total and intensive 'back-to-the-land' lifestyle than the counterurbanisation mainstream (Halfacree, 2001; also Mackenzie, 2006) and an 'economic' international agricultural labour migrant dimension (Halfacree, 2008; also Rogaly, 2008). On top of this is the presence of low-income groups amongst counterurbanisers (Milbourne, 2007).

The present paper takes this critical reconsideration further by examining both the place and the scope of counterurbanisation within what will be labelled the contemporary 'era of mobilities'. The next section introduces this era and its implications for social science, before drawing out migration's central and multiple places within this discourse. It then examines one set of ideas, scripted here as 'dynamic heterolocalism', that facilitates the understanding of the existential significance of certain forms of circulatory migration today. The second main section of the paper returns to counterurbanisation with a specific focus on the consumers of rural second homes, the understanding of which is also seen to have adopted quasi-heterolocal tones. The section ends by presenting an inclusive model of what has become recast terminologically as 'counter-urbanisation', which I locate within the era of mobilities as an extremely heterodox concept, embracing not only second-home consumers but also other consumers of rural space, termed rural sojourners. The paper concludes by reflecting on the general centrality of 'rurality' within the era of mobilities.

Within the revisiting of counterurbanisation to date, attention has been paid primarily to the

types of people directly involved – counterurbanisation as practice – and their motivations for moving towards a more rural residential environment. Of course, within the breadth of scholarship on counterurbanisation (Champion, 1989a; Boyle and Halfacree, 1998a; Mitchell, 2004), there are various emphases, with their correspondingly detailed literatures. These range from the empirical and demographic studies of the changing populations of rural (and urban) areas (e.g. Champion, 1992, 1994) to a concern with counterurbanisation as a process, including detailing the triggers and the drivers that help make counterurbanisation such an uneven geographical and historical process (e.g. Champion, 1989b; Kontuly, 1998) to the implications of counterurbanisation for more established rural people and places (e.g. Cloke, 1985; Cloke *et al.*, 1995). There is also Mitchell's (2004) own useful distinction between pattern, process, and movements. However, the present paper retains the selective emphasis of focusing predominantly on how experiences for the migrant, associated with their locational shifts, can inform the conceptualisations of 'counterurbanisation'. It has to be left to other work to revisit the remaining chapters within the diversely woven 'counterurbanisation story' (Champion, 1998).

MIGRATION IN AN ERA OF MOBILITIES

An Era of Mobilities

A sense of near-constant change and transformation has long been recognised as a key feature both of the central mode of production dynamic and of life within capitalist society, especially by critics (Berman, 1983). For example, Rousseau (1782/2004: 137) lamented how 'Everything here on earth is in a continual flux which allows nothing to assume any constant form', whereas Marx and Engels (1848/1998: 6) famously hoped that the implications of 'All That is Solid Melts into Air' could signal the eventual fate of capitalism itself. However, it is only in the last couple of decades that a number of writers have elevated a sense of 'mobility' more generally to heightened existential *zeitgeist* status. From this perspective, with 'All the world seem[ingly] ... on the move' (Sheller and Urry, 2006: 207), both an experiential and metaphorical sense of flux now predominate within everyday life and consciousness.

John Urry and co-workers, in particular, have sought to elaborate this 'era of mobilities' through numerous publications (e.g. Urry, 2000; Hannam *et al.*, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007). For Urry (2000: 18), metaphors of 'movement, mobility, and contingent ordering' must transcend those of 'stasis, structure, and social order' to understand today's 'sociology *beyond* societies'. Consequently, Sheller and Urry (2006) herald the arrival of a 'new mobilities paradigm' with which to examine the present condition. This paradigm (also Urry, 2007) challenges, first, the dominant 'sedentarist' tradition within social science that assumes boundedness and authenticity in place foundational to human life. Sedentarism, Sheller and Urry argue (2006: 208), provokes an ignoring or trivialising of 'the systematic movements of people' at a host of different scales. However, the new mobilities paradigm, second, is also wary of embracing any nomadic counter to sedentarism, with its overt celebration of the freedom of living in the fluid times of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000). Inspired especially by feminist critiques of the (gendered) selectivity of any 'freedom' on offer (e.g. Wolff, 1993; McDowell, 1996), the era of mobilities must not be (over-)romanticised. Overall, therefore, the new mobilities paradigm seeks to transcend 'sedentarist *and* nomadic conceptualisations of place and movement' (Sheller and Urry, 2006: 214), acknowledging, for example, stability within movement and movement within stability.

Urry and his co-workers are not the only ones to observe and to try to come to terms with the era of mobilities. There is Clifford's (1997: 44) 'travelling ... foregrounded as a cultural practice', Bauman's (2000) aforementioned 'liquid modernity', or Cresswell's (2006: 21) lucid illustrations of mobility – where 'movement is made meaningful' – in the global North. Giving slightly more details, Doreen Massey developed her 'global sense of place' (Massey, 1991) into an evocative formulation of 'the event of place' as a 'throwtogetherness'. As the following quotation suggests, this formulation is clearly rooted in a strong sense of mobility but skilfully steers between the Scylla of sedentarism and the Charybdis of nomadism:

'if everything is moving where is here? ... "Here" is where spatial narratives meet up or form configurations, conjunctures of trajectories

which have their own temporalities ... But where the successions of meetings, the accumulation of weavings and encounters build up a history. ... what is special about place is not some romance of a pre-given collective identity or of the eternity of the hills. Rather, what is special about place is precisely that throwtogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now ... the coming together of the previously unrelated, a [temporary] constellation of processes rather than a thing' (Massey, 2005: 138–141).

Recognising Mobile Lives and Mobile Understandings

The era of mobilities has a central place for human migration within the 'flows' and 'scapes' (networked places, transport, and other infrastructure structuring flows) of the 'mobility landscapes' (Urry, 2000). This significance comes across quantitatively with the increased frequency and diversity of migration experiences within everyday lives. Consequently, 'systematic movements of people' feature numerous times in the work of Urry and colleagues, although they have tended to focus on more novel forms and expressions of mobility rather than on migration *per se*, allowing space for migration researchers to become more involved. This relative neglect reflects, in part, how mobility is not to be reduced to migration or even to 'corporeal travel' (Urry, 2007: 47).

Qualitatively, too, mobilities researchers have acknowledged how migration impacts on the human condition, including the issues such as belonging, community, identity, and social-cultural expression. For Hannam *et al.* (2006: 10; also Urry, 2007),

'studies of migration, diasporas and transnational citizenship offer trenchant critiques of the bounded and static categories of nation, ethnicity, community, place and state.'

The aspects of this qualitative significance of migration will be considered throughout the rest of this paper, notably in the next subsection and then in the context of second-home consumption.

Noting the conceptual challenges posed by the mobilities paradigm, however, means that acknowledging the increasing quantitative and

qualitative significance of migration within everyday life is not in itself enough. Whilst migrations may be empirically key elements of the era of mobilities, how they are (pre)dominantly conceptualised and understood within social science also merits critical scrutiny. When this is done, and somewhat paradoxically, 'migration' is found to be infused with sedentarism.

The sedentarist understanding of migration is reflected by its embeddedness within the networks of everyday life. In the global North today, the act of 'moving house', notwithstanding the vagaries of both the housing market and the economy generally, has become a relatively mundane practice, even if still often a stressful one! It is one to be undertaken as efficiently and painlessly as possible so as to minimise disruption to the emplaced normal condition. For minimal disruption, and as with mundane practices generally, moving house has become heavily institutionalised in and through facilitating networks. These networks comprise, *inter alia*, a wide range of both agencies and norms of practice. Any one move, even if just down the road, includes some or all the following: banks, building societies, letting agencies, mortgage providers, removal companies, decorators, and utilities companies. In addition, the norms of practice that can be called upon to explain and legitimise the move include discourses of migration for economic betterment, quality of life, accessibility, retirement, children's welfare, and so on. Furthermore, as the proponents of actor-network theory have suggested, once a network takes shape, it can rapidly acquire strong durability and opacity as it becomes 'heavy with norms' (Callon, 1992: 91). Thus, in addition to reinscribing a sedentary norm of fixity in place, for much of the time and in most places and circumstances, human migration as 'moving house' has become sedentarised itself. It has become one of our commonplace 'facts of (social) life', a largely unexamined element of 'collective behaviour' (Boyle and Halfacree, 1998b).

In the era of mobilities, however, the increase in migrations and its consequences create something of a contradiction with respect to this dual sense of sedentarism. On the one hand, its commonplaceness reinforces the embedding of migration within moving house networks, which are left to operate as rapidly as possible and with the minimum of fuss so as to reinstate the

emplaced norm. On the other hand, this same increased commonplaceness of migration and the consequences that flow from this, for the way people's worlds both are and seem, *challenge* any cosy sedentarist status quo. In particular, multifaceted experiences of entanglement with migration – as migrant, observer, and engager with the consequences – both expose 'migration' and position it more centrally with respect to the issues of identity formation. At least five related currents critique migration's sedentarism.

First, the fundamental sedentarist understanding of migration as a clearly bounded, discrete event is challenged. Within the era of mobilities, migration in all of its diversity merits being considered in its own right rather than as predominantly some kind of instrumental behavioural 'tool' used to achieve place-associated goals, such as a better job or a more pleasant residential environment. Migration can no longer be bracketed out, whether receiving specific research attention or not, but must be recognised as something inextricably and constitutively entangled with the biographies of those involved (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). Chambers (1994: 5; emphasis added) indicated this understanding early on by acknowledging an era of 'migrancy', where 'the promise of homecoming ... becomes an *impossibility*'. With migration 'deeply inscribed in the itineraries of much contemporary reasoning' (Chambers, 1994: 2), whether or not one is a migrant – and all of us are extremely likely to acquire such a status several times in our lives – it is a form of everyday practice that clearly impinges on all everyday lives.

Second, any breakdown of migration being understood predominantly as a clearly bounded event quickly leads to challenging the fundamental sedentarist norm of being settled in place. For example, migration as a clean-cut move from 'origin' to 'destination' is destabilised by the rise of 'dual-location households' (Green *et al.*, 1999), typically involving weekly long-distance commuting by one partner as family, and work commitments are split both spatially and between weekdays and weekends. This practice can be taken still further by partners maintaining two separate houses (Kaufmann, 2002).

Third, at a more global scale, knowledge of the sheer scale and scope of many people's mobility invoke Chambers' (1994) condition of migrancy. For example, one can identify a new international

migrant class system that features two core sets of mobile individuals: flexible specialists and 'new helots' (Cohen, 1987). Crudely, the former are highly qualified workers with high-demand transferable skills that can be utilised in almost any labour market, whereas the latter represent a global proletarian reserve army of labour deployed to take up low paid and otherwise unwanted jobs in the economies of the rich global North.

Fourth, and running on from all three previous points, the permanent–temporary binary that has conventionally pervaded and structured much of our understanding of migration (Bell and Ward, 2000) has increasingly been regarded as unhelpful. For example, in their review of the geography of highly skilled international migration, a hitherto relatively neglected topic, Koser and Salt (1997: 285; emphasis added) noted how one consequence of increasing recognition of 'temporary migration [as] the evolving norm' was 'that it took many forms, capable of metamorphosis into each other and into more permanent settlement'. Indeed, because any migration is likely to be 'temporary' in terms of the duration of a person's life, the very idea of 'permanent' migration increasingly seems a product of an implicit assumption of normative sedentarist settlement.

Fifth, reconsideration of past work on migration and the migrant's experiences also reveal latent challenges to any sedentarist norm. For example, within rural studies, the idea of the 'dormitory village' has been powerful since Pahl's (1965) classic account of *Urbs in Rure* identified a village population whose in-migration led to them using their new home practically as a place to sleep, with working lives lived elsewhere (e.g. through commuting to London), and social and cultural lives often equally displaced. In short, sustained connections away from both home and village undermined any sedentarist finality with respect to having 'moved house'.

In summary, the era of mobilities forces us to reassess our ideas of human migration from at least two angles. First, as a clear expression of mobilities and as a core constitutive element; migration assumes added significance as a marker of our age, thereby warranting renewed scrutiny. Second, when this is done, previously predominant understandings of migration are found to be underpinned by a strong sedentarist assumption that, whatever its validity in the past,

is now increasingly untenable. Fortunately, migration research has begun to appreciate both points, albeit mostly entangled within another problematic dualism, international versus intra-national migration.

Migration and a Dynamic Heterolocalism

The vast majority of work on counterurbanisation has been conducted within an intranational perspective, presenting it primarily as a domestic phenomenon (Halfacree, 2008). Although such an interpretation is quantitatively accurate, domestication both reflects and reinforces a long-recognised dualism within research between work on internal (intranational) and international migration (Salt and Kitching, 1992). This dualism, as Buller and Hoggart (1994: 3) prefaced in their pioneering study of 'international counterurbanisation', extends to 'concepts, theories and even the issues studied'. Of course, national boundaries remain highly significant even within a supposedly free-flowing globalised world (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004), but from the point of view of migration research, this dualism is often unhelpful.

More specifically, in terms of challenging sedentarist understandings of migration and acknowledging more fully the importance of extralocal linkages, there is much to be learnt from the now established international migration tradition of 'transnationalism' (Bailey, 2005). Transnational theory developed from the early 1990s, pioneered by the need of anthropologists Basch *et al.* (1994) to represent the multiple place attachments expressed by the international migrants they were studying (Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004). They went on to define transnationalism as follows:

'the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. ... An essential element of transnationalism is the *multiplicity of involvements* that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies' (Basch *et al.*, 1994: 7; emphasis added).

Work within this tradition (e.g. Hannerz, 1996) has gone on to explore what it is to live in an increasingly interconnected world without recourse to overgeneral metanarratives

such as 'global transformation' (Conradson and Latham, 2005).

Against the sedentarist 'container' model of society or the nation-state, where 'migration' easily becomes reduced to isolated 'objects' moving from country A to country B, transnationalism well expresses the flows and scapes web model (Urry, 2000) of a mobilities existence. Of course, this again needs to be qualified by acknowledging how state policies on immigration mean transnationalism should not be confused with any more idealistic 'transnational civil society' (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004).

Work on transnationalism also stresses how the experiences it encompasses are not specific to a narrow global elite (flexible specialists). Instead, they represent a broader range of connections between 'here' and 'there' (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004: 1177). Within these connections, a stability-within-movement sensibility has increasingly come through in an emphasis on 'grounded attachments, geographies of belonging, and practices of citizenship' (Blunt, 2007: 687). This is well represented by Michael Smith's (2001) 'transnational urbanism', with its stress on both 'mobility' and 'emplacement' or 'the complex interweaving of individuals and social networks within and through places ... [that] remains attentive to the continuing significance of place and locality' (Conradson and Latham, 2005: 228).

A similar joint emphasis on flow/connectivity and place comes through in a concept that begins to imagine transnationalism as internal [*sic*] as well as international circulation, transgressing the intranational/international dualism. This is Zelinsky and Lee's (1998) 'heterolocalism', developed to express ethnic minority communities in the US as conforming neither to the assimilation model of ultimate cultural and ethnic absorption nor to the pluralist model's presentation of lasting but relatively isolated cultural and ethnic islands. Instead, Zelinsky and Lee saw these communities adopting a dispersed pattern of residential location at the metropolitan scale, whilst retaining a strong sense of ethnic community identity. The result is a series of 'communities without propinquity' (Webber, 1964), expressed geographically as a sequence of 'spatial disjunctures' (Zelinsky and Lee, 1998: 287) between places of significance within everyday life. Heterolocalism thus brings transnational sensibility 'home' to the intranational scale, with its sense of an emergent identity rooted

through everyday connections between places of diverse 'everyday texture' (Conradson and Latham, 2005: 228), from the home to the church, festival site, other institutional location, and so on (Zelinsky and Lee, 1998).

Taking the concept beyond Zelinsky and Lee's ethnic communities, the next section seeks to arrive at a *dynamic heterolocalist* interpretation of second-home consumption within the era of mobilities. 'Dynamic' is appended here to stress heterolocalism engaging with what Kaufmann (2002: 37) calls 'motility' or 'the way in which an individual appropriates what is possible in the domain of mobility and puts this potential to use for his or her activities'. More specifically, dynamic heterolocalism is concerned with forging identity and lifestyle through multiple places that does not depend on the core sedentarist assumption of a single, settled home place.

SECOND-HOME OWNERS AND COUNTERURBANISATION

Second Homes in Britain and Nordic Countries

Second homes can be defined as an 'occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere and which is primarily used for recreation purposes' (Shucksmith, 1983: 174).¹ They are found across the world (Hall and Müller, 2004a), in urban as well as in rural environments and at international as well as intranational scales; for example, on the internationalisation of British second homeownership, see Chaplin (1999) or Williams *et al.* (2004) and on German second-home owners in Sweden, see Müller (1999, 2002). Numbers generally have been growing through the past century. Furthermore, although there is a correspondingly long history of scholarship on second homes within often strong national traditions, the recent upsurge in academic interest reflects, in particular, both their increased spatial reach (Williams *et al.*, 2004) and recognition of their significance within the more fluid sense of mobility and place affiliation signalled by the era of mobilities (Hall and Müller, 2004a; McIntyre *et al.*, 2006a).

For brevity, and to sustain the rural focus of the present paper, this section concentrates on second homes within rural Britain and the Nordic countries. These two sets of experiences usefully encapsulate something of both the

diversity of rural second-home presence and the consumption practices within the global North today. Crucially, as apparent in Shucksmith's definition given above, there is a strong distinction to be made between British second homes, whose owners represent an 'adventitious' rural population with usually little strong established connection with their second-home locations, and second homes in Scandinavia and elsewhere,² where bonds between supposedly urban populations and specific rural places are often much more strongly rooted. This difference is, of course, partly a legacy of Britain's status as the first highly urban industrial society.

Within Britain, figures suggest that there were around a quarter of a million second homes in England and around 17,000 in Wales circa 2001, representing just over 1% of the housing stock (Gallent *et al.*, 2003a, 2004). Around a third of these are rural holiday homes (others, e.g. being urban flats lived in during the working week, often associated with the dual-location households noted earlier). However, although overall figures are small, a distinctive geographical feature of second homes is their clustering in particular places, notably national parks and along the coast (Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2001a; Gallent *et al.*, 2003b).

Numbers of British second homes initially expanded with the growth of disposable income, leisure time, and interest in consuming the countryside in the 1960s. This stimulated a range of studies in the 1970s, epitomised by Coppock's (1977) edited collection, *Second Homes: Curse or Blessing?* A subsequent levelling off and even decline in numbers, reflecting the corresponding economic downturn, also saw a decline in research until around 2000, when Nick Gallent and colleagues (e.g. Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2001a, b; Gallent *et al.*, 2003a, b, 2004), in particular, revitalised academic interest. This work followed a small growth in second homes within Wales especially, stimulated in part by the release of equity from a buoyant housing market and improved rural accessibility. Indeed, fluctuations in numbers of British second homes tend to mirror fluctuations in the general housing market (Gallent *et al.*, 2003a).

Within British studies of second homes, and indicated by the title of Coppock's book, the political sensitivity of this form of property ownership is an overriding theme. In part, this

stems from the aforementioned lack of pre-established connections between British second-home owners and their rural second-home locations. For example, Gallent *et al.* (2003a: 271) noted within Wales a 'continuous and heated debate over the last 30 years'. This also comes through from often impassioned discussion of second homes within the media. One consequence of this is that second-home owners are often secretive, not making research easy. From the point of view of this paper, such controversiality means that full appreciation of motivations for second-home purchase and how they are then used might be missed. This was suggested in a recent review.

'The political problematisation of second homes has led ... research to have a relatively narrow focus, and second homes ... have been studied in relative isolation from other expressions of external housing demand in local areas, such as retirement and commuting' (Wallace *et al.*, 2005: 8).

Fortunately, as seen in the next subsection, Gallent and his team have begun to broaden this focus.

Greater insight into the practices of second homes has been provided by work in the Nordic countries. For example, in Norway the political shadow over these properties is much less intense – although on the increase due to recent developments in numbers and type – especially because of second-home clusters, often purpose-built, typically spatially separate from 'first' home settlements (Overvåg, 2009), and the aforementioned established stronger connections between second-home owners and their rural locations. Second homes are also much more numerous in Norway than in Britain, with recent estimates suggesting 40% of the Norwegian population having some access to an estimated 420,000 second homes (Overvåg, 2009). However, as in Britain, Nordic second homes tend to be geographically clustered, not only along the coast but also, especially and increasingly, in the mountains (Kaltenborn *et al.*, 2009), where they may easily outnumber first homes (Overvåg, 2009).

Rooted in Nordic romanticism and emerging as a decidedly bourgeois-lifestyle element in the 19th century, the social base of the *hytte* (cabin) broadened after 1945 such that by the 1960s, they

had become a leisure option even for some of the working class (Flognfeldt, 2004; Müller, 2007; Garvey, 2008). Facilitating recent growth in second homes have been key signifiers of the era of mobilities, such as increased personal mobility, disposable incomes, technological developments, and leisure time, as well as the growth of rural forms of leisure (Hall and Müller, 2004a; Støa, 2007).

What is particularly informative about many of the Nordic studies of second homes is that they reveal considerable intensity and diversity of engagements between second-home owners and both their properties and the surrounding environments. Whilst, on the one hand, the leisure use of the homes is a predominant theme across the Nordic countries generally (Kaltenborn, 1998; Hall and Müller, 2004a; Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen, 2010), on the other hand, their less controversial character and arguably normative position within Nordic culture have promoted fuller investigation of everyday usage. This will be considered next.

Second-Home Consumption: towards Dynamic Heterolocal Interpretations

‘mobilities need to be examined in their fluid interdependence and not in their separate spheres’ (Sheller and Urry, 2006: 212).

From the focus of the present paper, the question now arises of where second homes and their owners fit with respect to migration in general and to counterurban forms of rural consumption in particular. An immediate response is likely to be that they do not, because second-home consumers are not ‘in-migrants’ but merely visitors who come to (conspicuously) consume their second home and various aspects of its environment for a few weeks each year and then go home. However, such a response is much less tenable if one breaks with or at least shows awareness of the Anglocentric perspective of second-home owners having little or no established connections with the rural locations of their second homes. It is also increasingly untenable if the mobilities literature is taken seriously, as Tuulentie (2007), in particular, has argued. There is a need to try again with the

relative placing of second-home consumers, and fortunately, work has begun to do this.

Moving away from the predominant view of British second homes as a largely negative feature of the rural landscape, Gallent and colleagues have begun to revisit their potential benefits, both to rural communities and to second-home owners themselves. The former revolves largely around second-home owners’ local expenditure (Shucksmith, 1983) and their potential to facilitate touristic and other forms of economic development (Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2001b). This is clearly a very welcome input into otherwise often impoverished and declining rural local economies (Overvåg, 2009).

In terms of further consideration of consumption of the second home, Gallent (2007) has also recently invoked a dwelling perspective. Following Heidegger’s (1971) celebrated formulation, Gallent argues that dwelling needs to be seen as preceding building, not stemming from it as in the predominant sedentarist idea of dwelling as a process inherently rooted in ‘interactive productivity’ (Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000: 93) and engagement. Although second-home owners might not rate highly from the second perspective (at least in Britain) – although place attachment (roots) and mobility (routes) should not be seen as intrinsically oppositional concepts (Aronsson, 2004) – this does not mean that such consumption is not also dwelling. As Gallent notes, quoting another Heideggerian interpretation, ‘private dwelling’ can be defined in geographically embracing terms as ‘the house, the village, the town, the city and the nation in the generality – it is of humanity taking root in the soil’ (King, 2004: 21). And like plants that then grow, dwelling is not essentially static, fixed, or sedentary but can embrace mobility (Quinn, 2004). In the era of mobilities, people have not ceased to dwell but as being changes so do ways of dwelling, and the latter can now incorporate consumption (and production) of second homes.

Changing being and how second homes fit with corresponding changing practices of dwelling are exemplified more fully in work examining the consumption of Nordic and other countries’ second homes. Typically, and at first site very plausibly, consumption is interpreted as the second home providing some kind of ‘escape’ or ‘vacation’ from a predominantly

urban modernity (e.g. Kaltenborn, 1998). However, the adequacy of such a perspective has been questioned as second-home consumption is seen more as a direct part of everyday existence or dwelling (Overvåg, 2009) within 'a comprehensive life-course strategy' (Müller, 2007: 199).

Garvey (2008), Quinn (2004), and others (e.g. Chaplin, 1999; Støa, 2007) accept at one level the role of the second home as providing an 'escape' or 'release value' (Quinn, 2004: 113) but then nuance this by stressing how any nominal escape from the usually urban daily routine is always accompanied by much of this same everyday life and the existential issues it raises. People rarely travel without baggage, and the content of this baggage is unpacked at the second home and features in subsequent place consumption. Central here are desires to (re)connect with people, place, and everyday experiences; all of which are facilitated – or imagined as being facilitated – at the second home, where one can 'achieve some dimension of lifestyle that is not available at [the] primary residence' (Hall and Müller, 2004b: 12; also Jaakson, 1986). Thus, 'peoples' desire to escape is strongly tempered by an attempt both to re-connect with experiences from their past and to strive for a continuity that will strengthen into their futures' (Quinn, 2004: 118). This represents 'escape', therefore, as 'more a negation than flight from everyday existence' (Garvey, 2008: 205) and as 'an attempt to re-visit and rediscover experiences, times and places that create a sense of connectedness' (Quinn, 2004: 118) stability within movement. Consequently, life in the second home and its 'appreciation of what is not achieved within [the rest of] daily life' (Garvey, 2008: 218) can feed back to revitalise 'home life in the primary place' (Quinn, 2004: 117), making 'first' and 'second' homes mutually supportive rather than antagonistic.

The existential strand of second-home consumption set within – in an alternative reading to the era of mobilities – a globalised post-modern era of relentless simulation and spectacle enhances the significance of the equally well-established role of second homes as sites where 'nature' can be experienced more directly and meaningfully (e.g. Jaakson, 1986; Kaltenborn, 1998; Chaplin, 1999; Hall and Müller, 2004a, b). Thus, Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen (2010: 202–203) present second homes in Finland today as 'the last fortresses of the traditional and real

countryside ... [promoting c]onnection to wild nature, [a] counter-balance to urban life, family togetherness and the possibility to engage in various nature-based activities'.

Significantly, therefore, second homes may increasingly be seen as comprising an integral element of *home*, not somehow existing outside and independent of it. As numerous writers have outlined (Blunt and Dowling, 2006), the concept of home is in considerable flux in the era of mobilities, both feeding into and being informed by what Støa (2007: 4) describes as a changing 'home culture', defined as the 'dynamic inter-relationship between ... physical and socioeconomic structures and ideas, values and meanings'. In short, amongst other changes, home cultures have decreasingly come to revolve around the fixed, sedentarist, and place-based 'ideal home' but instead have come to encompass *multiple places* (Hall and Müller, 2004b), with Arnesen (2009, in Overvåg, 2009) proposing the idea of 'multihouse homes' over 'multiple homes', and Tuulentie (2007: 298) talking of how 'Different places seem to be needed for different purposes'.

In an increasingly significant *everyday* condition of normalised circulation (Quinn, 2004), it is not just that 'work, home [*sic*] and play are separated in time and place, and meanings and identity are structured around not one but several places' (McIntyre *et al.*, 2006b: 314). Nor is it just that 'individual properties can shift ... from being second to principal homes, or from summer holiday to winter season homes' (Williams *et al.*, 2004: 112). More than all of this, the 'usual residence' core concept within studies of permanent migration (Bell and Ward, 2000) is destabilised as *the very idea of home place becomes plural* (also Perkins and Thorns, 2006; Tuulentie, 2007), movement within stability. 'Being away' can become another form of being at home (McIntyre *et al.*, 2006b; Overvåg, 2009), and one returns to Gallent's (2007) expression of dwelling as not (normatively) static but increasingly expressing 'multiple roots in different places' (Aronsson, 2004: 76). One also returns to the concept of dynamic heterolocalism, specifically positioning second homes and their consumption firmly within the remit of this era of mobility's existential condition.

In summary, and drawing upon the rich tradition of Scandinavian second-home research in particular, to place second-home consumption

within the era of mobilities suggests that it is increasingly difficult conceptually to separate definitively second-home consumers from more 'permanent' counterurbanising rural place consumers. Consequently, as people strive to construct heterolocal identities through what can be obtained through a multitude of relational places (Massey, 2005) within a mobile world, and as academics recognise sedentarism inherent in seemingly fixed terms such as 'second home', there is increasingly a potential to stir second homes and their consumers into the 'counterurbanisation story' (Champion, 1998). In the era of mobilities, both permanent-temporary and leisure-everyday (Hannam, 2008) binaries have increasingly crumbled. Consequently, just as rural second homes can no longer be bracketed (Anglocentrically) merely as 'temporary rural leisure use' so can counterurbanisation no longer maintain its position as encompassing exclusively 'permanent rural home location'. But this intermingling does not even have to end here....

From Other Rural Sojourners to a Broader Imagination of Counter-urbanisation...

'Most people travel' (Hannam, 2008: 135)

'the dominant experience of "the rural" is one gained from fleeting visits to or journeys through rural spaces and places' (Milbourne, 2007: 385).

Just as second-home consumption in the era of mobilities suggests any clear defining line between what have traditionally been understood as second and first homes is increasingly ontologically untenable, so too have second-home researchers begun to challenge the sub-disciplinary sedentarist epistemological fixing of their subject. For example, whilst acknowledging the increased use of second homes by their owners, Müller (1999) proposed interrogating second homes through migration and population distribution theories as much as through the theories of tourism. Furthering this, Williams and Hall (2002) located second homes as 'temporary mobility' between tourism and migration, which Aronsson (2004): 76; also Chaplin, 1999) develops

into a more 'third space' formulation of the second home being 'between the ordinary and the extraordinary', whereas Müller (2002) came back more generally to suggest that neither space-time usage nor motivations are now sufficient to distinguish robustly tourism from migration.

What all this further epistemological destabilising suggests is that second homes have become something of a Trojan Horse in an assault, underpinned by the rise of diverse mobilities, on the distinction between leisure and migration. Indeed, again acknowledging in particular how 'circulation between different places no longer represents an aberration from ordinary, settled life' (Quinn, 2004: 114), the neglect of studies of circulation or temporary mobility in the global North (Bell and Ward, 2000) becomes increasingly untenable. Moreover, having just suggested that counterurbanisation and second-home consumption are increasingly entangled within circulation, other leisure-based and diverse circulatory practices involving some kind of 'rural sojourn' can be brought into the mix. This is in stark contrast, for example, to Shucksmith's (1983: 174) explicit exclusion of 'caravans, boats, and holiday cottages'. While this suggestion may smack of population geography heresy, it is surely a potential consequence of the anti-sedentarist line of the mobilities paradigm.

Although there is no space here to consider them in detail, any list of rural sojourners who stop for varying lengths of time but ultimately pass (and typically frequently re-pass) through the rural quickly grows. From owners of holiday homes – a group often elided with second-home owners but for whom the properties in question are less exclusively consumed – imagination can spiral outwards to those renting caravans and holiday homes and thence to the huge numbers of rural tourists and other leisure users and visitors who engage to a greater or lesser extent with rural space in potential expressions of dynamic heterolocalism. For all of these rural sojourners, albeit to highly varying degrees, their diverse consumption of the rural, in which they are part of the places' 'throwntogetherness' (Massey, 2005), can bring them into affiliation with second-home consumers and more permanent residents, whether (former) counterurbanisers or longer established residents. Indeed, and once again it must be stressed to very varying extents, their consumption of the rural can very

briefly make them all counterurban or, recast terminologically, *counter-urban*.

This considerable broadening of the counter-urbanisation lens suggests a new representation of rural populations as counter-urban populations. This model, shown in Figure 1, builds on an earlier effort to integrate different forms of more 'permanent' counterurban migrations (Halfacree, 2008). The latter had as its principal axis the extent to which the 'pull of rurality' (via representations or more affectively) underpinned the migration as compared with more

'instrumental' considerations, such as the presence of suitable employment or of family support in old age, where the 'rural' character of the destination, although unlikely to be entirely insignificant, is not the key underpinning of the migration. The 'pull of rurality' axis distinguished three groups: back-to-the-land counterurbanisation, where the pull of rurality is absolutely central; default counterurbanisation, where rurality is largely irrelevant; and mainstream counterurbanisation, where the pull of rurality is important but balanced by, for example, being near enough to

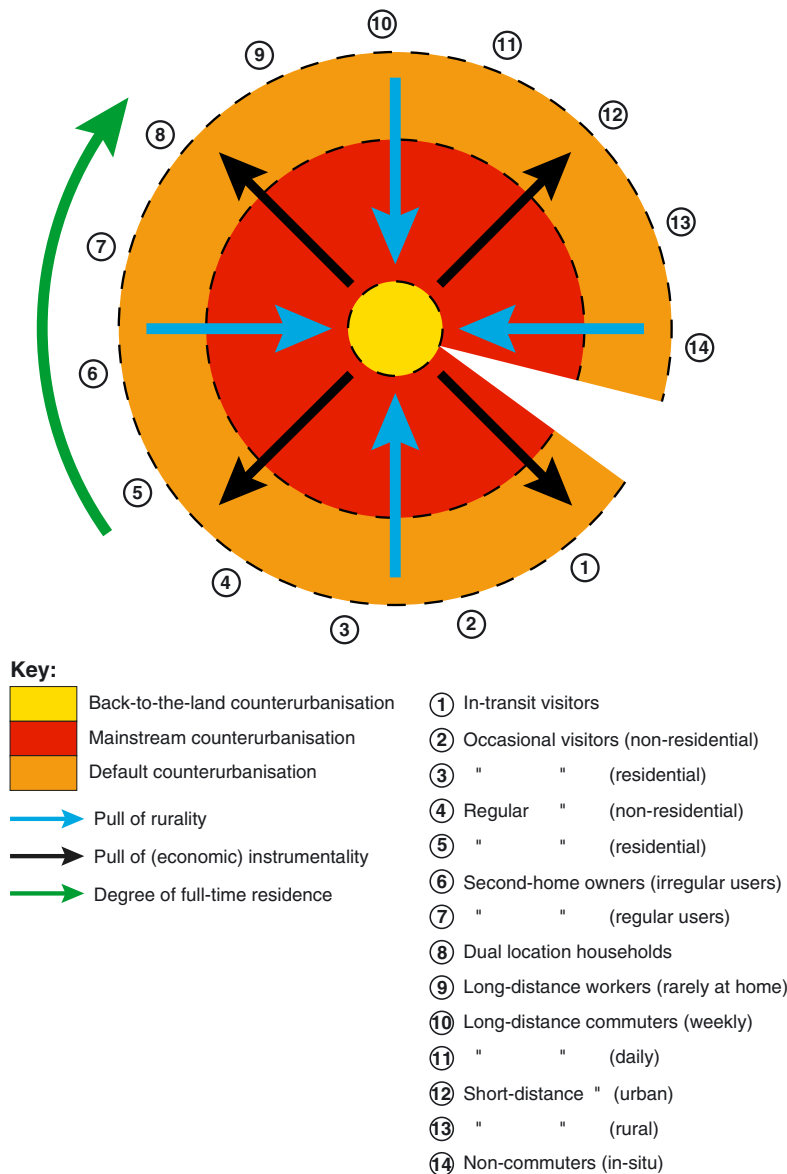


Figure 1. Model of rural counter-urban populations.

suitable urban employment or services. The new model significantly adds a further dimension, namely 'intensity' of time spent 'within' the identified rural environment.

This further dimension needs some further elaboration. First, the intensity of time spent within the rural environment seeks to get across some measure of the extent to which people who find themselves 'throwntogether' with the rural environment become entangled with this environment; their position on what Gallent (2007: 99) proposes as an 'inhabited' to 'immersed' typology. In short, how important is the rural environment for the person and their identity formation within any more broadly constituted dynamic heterolocalism? Time spent/duration in the rural (also Bell and Ward, 2000) is used as a proxy in Figure 1 to represent such connectedness. Of course, such a temporal measure will often not precisely map intensity or significance of the rural emplacing but is used demonstratively to enable initial naming of the 'slices' identified.

Second, the 14 slices named in Figure 1 represent counter-urban encounters, ranging from a person whose rural engagement is an incidental and minor aspect of their movement (in-transit visitor) to someone whose almost whole daily life is inscribed by their rural environment (non-commuters *in situ*). Within this imaginary, the conventional or mainstream counterurbaniser has now been substantially relativised even more than in the earlier model. This is because the new model expresses a counter-urban sensibility rather than a counterurban sensibility, where the emphasis is on the consumption of the rural (especially as it differs from urban consumption) within mobilities rather than any unidirectional migration rooted in sedentarism.

...But Not Always: a Qualification

Finally, a few words of caution are required. In short, it is not my intention to replace conclusively any existing sedentarist classification of rural populations with an equally fixed counter-urban alternative. Drawing inspiration from Foucault and others on how classification must *always* be recognised as (re-)presentation (Halfacree, 2001), Figure 1 needs to be seen as a modest, heuristic, and always contextual taxonomical construct.

From the points of view of appreciating allegiances between those consuming the rural

in otherwise seemingly myriad and unconnected ways, of acknowledging the diversity of those producing any post-productivist countryside (Vepsäläinen and Pitkänen, 2010) and of suggesting how old and easily taken-for-granted boundaries within the era of mobilities are just no longer adequate (also Urry, 2000), Figure 1 may be of social-scientific value. However, in other instances, it will be less so and will (re-)present an inadequate and even inappropriate classification. For example, returning to second-home owners, there are contexts in which they merit relatively clear delineation from the rural population, such as when considering politically the most appropriate way to tax them or subject them to planning regulations (from a British perspective, see Shucksmith, 1983; Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2001a, b).

CONCLUSION: RURALITY WITHIN DYNAMIC HETEROLOCALISM

'to categorise second home owners as "external" and as opposed to local residents is not very fruitful' (Overvåg, 2009: 65).

This paper has argued that migration, as a core constituent of the era of mobilities, has acquired heightened everyday significance in the 21st century. This energised post-millennial migration is not somehow 'the same' as migration in the past, with the mobilities paradigm also suggesting that it cannot thus be studied in the same ways as before. Instead, as migration has attained heightened existential and ontological significance, it has also become necessary to mobilise our own epistemological appreciation of it, notably through the deconstruction of the previously relatively firm binaries, such as stability versus movement, permanent versus temporary, and intranational versus international. One consequence of this turmoil is a shake-up, in turn, of counterurbanisation's normatively acquired status as a permanent, intranational move to a rural environment ultimately rooted in stable settlement. Such a shake-up has allowed this paper to bring into the counterurbanisation orbit second-home consumption and even less 'committed' leisure and other forms of rural consumption, all represented in Figure 1. Indeed, as Overvåg (2009) suggests, the

Norwegian second-homes experience posits an alternative model of rural population change to the dominant Anglocentric conventional 'counter-urbanisation story' (Champion, 1998).

Coming from a different direction but ultimately arriving at an allied argument, Gallent *et al.* (2004) positioned second homes as part of the broader processes and pressures faced by rural communities within Britain today. Elsewhere, they also placed their consumers with retirees, commuters, lifestyle changers, and others as all being forms of 'urban encroachment' seeking a common goal (Gallent *et al.*, 2003b: 23). This goal, it seems, is the 'rural' itself – or the elements of its locality, representation, or lived lives (Halfacree, 2006).

It is this 'rural goal', I argue in conclusion, that saves the narrative of this paper and Figure 1's model of (potential) rural populations, in particular, from the ever-lurking charge of comprising a new, and especially vexing, 'chaotic conception', an over-inclusive unhelpful representation that does more to confuse than to enlighten. It seems very clear that not only is 'seeking the rural' a profound, pervasive, and plural tendency within contemporary society but that this search is also increasingly seen less in escapist terms, that is, as ultimately signifying bourgeois ideological distraction from more radical political engagement with the era of (capitalist) mobilities. Instead, within our increasingly dynamic heterolocal existence, people experience through 'the rural', aspects of – for want of a better expression – 'being human' that are at best only animated in watered-down forms within the rest of everyday life (also Garvey, 2008). However, this (implicitly) critical edge of the rural as a heterotopic space (Halfacree, 2010; also Tuulentie, 2007) must be credited, cultivated, and corralled much more explicitly politically. Otherwise, rurality is predominantly recuperated and consumed as part of the spectacular consumer society it ostensibly critiques, and the second home, for example, certainly shifts from the sphere of 'heritage' to that of 'exclusive commodity' (Müller, 2007).

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NOTES

- (1) For more on the issue of defining second homes and the range of properties that can be encompassed, see Hall and Müller, 2004b; Müller, 2007; Støa, 2007. Also, it should be noted that Shucksmith's definition was very much indicative of its contemporary British context, with the article beginning by presenting the second-home owner as 'The most controversial and contentious of urban visitors' (Shucksmith, 1983: 174), a reasonable depiction within political debates at the time.
- (2) For example, in Spain, an important aspect of many urban residents' identities comes from participation in and involvement in organising fiestas and other social events in their ancestral villages (Barke, 2004; Querol, 2010).

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