The Role Of Second Homes In A Mediterranean Coastal Mass Tourism Destination

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Introduction

Second homes, housing used temporarily for recreational purposes (Hall & Müller 2004), have been one of the driving forces of change in the landscape of the Mediterranean coast over the past sixty years (Karayiannis et al. 2013; Romano & Zullo 2014; Prévost & Robert 2016). In the case of Spain, their expansion can be interpreted as a clear result of the implementation of a holiday model that has been dominated by development with a rather more residential than strictly tourism-related purpose (Anton Clavé et al. 2011).

The process of developing second homes has led to urban structures with unique features that have often been characterised by their rapid rate of growth (Pié 2005), their predatory, uncontrolled, improvised, unplanned, scattered and discontinuous nature (Quero 2004), their aterritorial, meaningless or banal character (Nogué 2007) and the heterogeneity and fragmentation of the resulting landscape (Muñoz 2007). In addition to this vision, it has also been observed that second homes have created singular urban landscapes that are permanently evolving and have transformed the local identity of places (Coëffé & Violier 2008). The process cannot obviate the attraction of the permanent resident population to second home areas in a context of transformation of population mobility (Hall 2005) and, more generally, to tourist destinations (Williams & Hall 2000, 2002), especially those in metropolitan regions (González Reverté 2008).

Given this background, this chapter seeks to analyse the evolution of the role of areas of second homes as components of tourism destinations in the Spanish Mediterranean coast, using as a case of study the second home developments of the central part of the Costa Daurada in Catalonia between 1960 and 2010. The basic information sources used for the analysis are quantitative indicators derived from urban planning documents that include areas of second homes.

In Spain, modifications to urban planning statements (referred to as “partial plans”) regulate the land use of new developments. The results show the extent to which the urban planning of second home areas has been used recently as a tool for the redevelopment of the whole destination and how second home spaces have become multifunctional.

The first section highlights the extent of second homes on the Spanish Mediterranean coast and the role they play in the creation of an urban structure with a unique landscape. The second
section discusses the utility of partial plans as a source of information for studying the evolution of areas of second homes. Thirdly, the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis are discussed and the evolution of the role of areas of second homes in central Costa Daurada is explained. Finally, the conclusions are presented.

Theoretical background

In 2011, more than 3.6 million dwellings in Spain were second homes. In 1950 they accounted for approximately 2.8% of all homes built, while in 2011 they accounted for 14% of the total (Serrano 2003). The last period of intense growth pertaining to this evolution took place between 1990 and 2007. This period ends with the global economic crisis that began at the end of the first decade of the new millennium, the immediate consequence of which was the practical paralysis of building works for both second homes and primary residences. Between 1990 and 2007 there was a housing boom characterised by some authors as a “tsunami” of urban development (Gaja 2008) that drastically increased the pool of housing in Spain, including second homes, and accentuated their concentration on the coast.

In Spain, almost 50% of second homes are located on the Mediterranean coast (del Pino Artacho 2015). This is a consequence of the implementation of a “sun, sea and sand” tourism model that came into being in the 1960s and was characterised by the formation of large holiday spaces set on the coast with an intense production of temporary residential dwellings (Cortés-Jiménez & Anton Clavé 2015). It gave rise to another outcome, from the perspective of the structure of the supply: the predominance of second home accommodation (5.3 million beds) over regulated accommodation (1.7 million beds in hotels, apartments and campsites) in Spanish coastal municipalities.

Parallel to their consolidation, since the 1980s a process of transformation of some mature tourist destinations has taken place where areas of permanent residence have been developed. This occurs especially at destinations located in areas close to the major coastal metropolitan regions. This process is also described in other contexts (Équipe MIT 2002; Mullins 1992; Butler 2014) and some classic theoretical models are even attributed to it (e.g. Lundgren 1974). In the case analysed below, these dynamics result in the integration of areas of second homes in both processes of tourism restructuring and the urban transformation of the actual destination.

The incorporation of spaces of second residences in the dynamics of tourism and urban restructuring has, in many cases, ensured their gradual functional integration in the urban fabric of towns and cities. This transformation has taken place in two ways: (1) fully consciously and proactively in cases in which the public administration has provided existing second home areas with new functions and facilities with the aim of turning them into areas of permanent residence, or, (2) reactively in cases in which the growing concentration of the permanent resident population in the areas that were initially of temporary residences has led the generally local administration to react to meet the basic needs of the permanent population which has different requirements from the temporary population. In either case, there has been a process of transformation that has been documented in urban planning instruments specific to local administrations. As Pié (2005: 25) states, when it has come about proactively, this has also meant a “qualitative leap” that has enabled dealing with the problems of the different spaces of second homes from a perspective of ‘pursuing the transformation of the present agglomerate into an urban system that facilitates the arrival of new activities, the transformation of much of the residential stock into permanent residence and improved tourism’. How this proactive transformation has been implemented by planning is the focus of this chapter. Moreover, the results also provide for debate on the evolution of urban dynamics in coastal tourist destinations.
(Smith 1991; Papatheodorou 2004; Andriotis 2006) and the role of territorial planning in their (re)development (Clivaz et al. 2014).

**Material and methods**

The following case study is of central Costa Daurada in Catalonia, a specialised mass tourism destination located in the urban area of Tarragona, near Barcelona. The area is well connected with France and with other Spanish Mediterranean regions via the AP-7 motorway and to northwestern Spanish inland regions and Madrid via the AP-2 motorway. These are the most important terrestrial routes for the arrival of domestic and international tourist flows in addition to Barcelona-El Prat and Reus airports.

Central Costa Daurada in Catalonia comprises three different resorts: Salou, Cambrils and La Pineda (municipality of Vila-seca) (Figure 3.1), and was home to more than 60,000 permanent inhabitants in 2014. It receives about 4.5 million tourists each year. The main attractions of the destinations are their beaches and the Port Aventura theme park, which welcomes more than 3.5 million visitors annually. This 20 km strip of coast offers a concentration of hotels, campsites, registered tourist apartments (all of them supplying more than 11 million overnight stays per year) and second homes (Sanz-Ibáñez et al. 2017). Between 2006 and 2011, 40% of tourists coming to the Costa Daurada stayed in one of 45,285 second homes that are found in this sector. In fact, second homes dominate the tourism landscape. Interestingly, in terms of the focus of this chapter, according to the census, the number of houses used as second homes decreased in the study area by 5% between 2001 and 2011.

As is customary in Spain, urban areas (including those with existing second home uses, which are usually known as second home urbanisations), were planned via a planning instrument.

![Figure 3.1 The central part of Costa Daurada.](source: Authors.)
known as a partial plan. The partial plan is the planning instrument ‘aimed at ordering in detail a usually homogeneous area, of small size to be urbanised and built on in a relatively short time to join the city’ (López de Lucio 1999: 160). Partial plans actually guide and reflect the local authority’s desire to organise, on the basis of the city’s social needs. It is, therefore, a document that effectively builds ‘the physical space of the city and its tangible form’ (Esteban 1984: 160), and it marks the urban fabric, defines its structure, and determines functions and uses in detail.

The study of these documents in the case of second home urbanisations allows for exploration of how the planning of spaces has evolved in form and function, how new urban developments have adapted to the requirements of the prevalent visitor markets, and how the desires and imagination of planners and, more generally, of the end users of the urban space have transferred to urban planning. In this sense, for example, Ursic, Misetic and Misetic (2016) highlight the importance of their regulatory role but also the fact that they reflect different visions of society and affect quality of life and sustainable development.

For the analysis, a total of 94 partial plans with second home uses were taken into account representing a total surface area of 10.27 km² in central Costa Daurada. Twenty-four of them were adopted in the early 1960s and represent 19.71% of the total developed surface area arranged by partial plans analysed in the area of study. They are plans located closer to the coastline. In the 1970s, another 21 partial plans developed 17.94% of the total developed land based on the partial plans analysed, while in the 1980s, 15 partial plans developed 14.99%. In the 1990s, 19 plans developed 22.2% of the area arranged. The first decade of the new millennium had only 14 partial plans approved. However, these 14 plans developed the highest contingent of potential building land of the entire study period, accounting for 25.13% of the total area designated for building based on the partial plans under study in central Costa Daurada.

Partial plans allow identifying the basic elements that compose and configure newly created residential units such as the area dedicated to open green areas, the area dedicated to the local road communications network, the area for accommodation facilities, the area given over to public and collective facilities, and the area dedicated to private space. They also require the forms from which this private space is built (e.g. single family home, semi-detached home and multifamily housing), intensity in the use made of private space and the occupancy of urban space.

Based on this basic information, two variables have been used to distinguish the different types of plans that exist in the study area and to study their evolution: (1) the area given over to private building, and (2) the area occupied or built on, whether public or private property. The occupied area incorporates not only private housing, whether permanent or temporary, but also all necessary urban facilities for the running of the city.

In addition to the quantitative information, partial plans also include qualitative information such as the objectives or needs each urban area aspires to satisfy, the justification of new developments or issues related with the design, and construction processes of residential areas for temporary use. This other information allows for understanding the changes that are proposed in terms of the physical arrangement of space. Finally, thanks to the cartographic information taken from plans it is also possible to find out the proposed spatial configuration for urban areas used for second homes, and specifically the way in which their constituents are arranged.

Results

By combining the variables set out, nine types of partial plans with secondary residential uses in central Costa Daurada have been identified (see Table 3.1). By taking into account their year of approval, it is observed that the analysis results in a chronological cadence for the set typologies (see Figure 3.2).
Two types of plans were characteristic of the 1960s. Partial plans belonging to type A were generally approved in 1967, while type B plans were generally passed in 1969. Types A and B are characterised by presenting large spaces without any constructed elements, between 30% and 40% on average respectively of the total surface of the partial plan, but at the same time, with built-on areas that are mostly dedicated to private space, between 70% and 80% of the total surface of the partial plan.

Types C, D and E reflect the tourist landscape of the areas of second residence of the 1970s. Type C partial plans were more likely to be approved in 1971. Types D and E were generally approved in 1979. Types F and G reflect the tourist landscape of the areas of second residence of the 1980s. Type F partial plans were more likely to be approved in 1980. Types G and H reflect the tourist landscape of the areas of second residence of the 1990s. Type G partial plans were more likely to be approved in 1990. Types I and J reflect the tourist landscape of the areas of second residence of the 2000s. Type I partial plans were more likely to be approved in 2000.

Table 3.1 Partial urban plans with second home uses in central Costa Daurada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a low average of building space, and with a medium average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a low average of building space, and with a high average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a medium–low average of building space, and with a medium average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a high–medium average of building space, and with a medium average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a medium–low average of building space, and with a high average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a high–medium average of building space, and with a low average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a medium–low average of building space, and with a low average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a low average of building space, and with a low average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a high average of building space, and with a low average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Urban areas with second home uses with a high average of building space, and with a low average of private use surface</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors.

Figure 3.2 Characteristics of partial plans with second home uses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Functional characteristics</th>
<th>Formal characteristics</th>
<th>Characteristics of configuration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Monofunctionality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Simplicity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reiteration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Predominance of the residential function. Between 67% and 87% of the surface of the partial plans is given over to private space.</td>
<td>The dominant types of construction are single family homes in the inner part of the partial plans and multifamily housing close to the coastline. Both types include open green areas for private use.</td>
<td>Urban configuration in response to the expectations of temporary users. Urban components that allow identification of the landscape as typical of a space used by temporary residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Complexity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Diversity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dedifferentiation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in the surface dedicated to the public components of the urban space that represent more than 50% of the surface area of partial plans.</td>
<td>Increase in the types of construction with a presence of semi-detached housing.</td>
<td>Configuration that includes a greater diversity of urban components and that responds to expectations not only associated with temporary residence and recreational uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Multifunctionality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Heterogeneity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Diversification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Predominance and diversification of public components. Planning of permanent residences in spaces traditionally for second homes.</td>
<td>A great variety of building. For single family housing there is a low-density model, scattered housing near the coast, and a second, denser, more uniform model heading inland. For multifamily housing there is: a higher density model, without facilities for private use, and a second model of lower density and with facilities for private use in residential complexes enclosed in themselves.</td>
<td>Sustainability criteria are introduced in the planning of spaces with second home uses and are integrated in the urban structure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
approved in 1972 and 1975, respectively. The land of these types of developments is occupied with elements built on 40–55% of the total area. However, types C and D had between 65% and 75% of their total surface area dedicated to private construction, while for type E, private space accounts for over 80% of the total area of the partial plan.

The areas of second homes developed during the 1980s are defined by type F, which includes the partial plans more likely to be approved in 1983, and for types G and H, that include partial plans generally approved in 1989. These plans are characterised by devoting between 45% and 65% of the surface area to private space. For urban development types F and G, between 45% and 55% of the total surface area is occupied by some constructed element while in type H urbanisation this development occurs on less than 40% of its total surface area. The plans of the 1990s, and by extension of the first decade of the 2000s, make up type I. They are characterised by their dedication of a lower percentage of the total surface area to private space, less than 40%, but have more than 60% of the total area occupied by a constructed element.

Suitably grouped, the nine types of partial plans make it possible to differentiate three evolutionary stages in the development of areas of second homes in central Costa Daurada. The definitions of these three stages are summarised in Table 3.2. As can be seen, the resulting characterisation explains the different role of second home urbanisations in the development of central Costa Daurada as a tourist destination.

The first evolutionary stage is characterised by the simplicity of the landscape and is reflected in types of urbanisations A, B, C, D and E. The result is spaces whose goal is simply the production of second homes and was a main factor of the initial plans that were focused on meeting the demand for housing in the area during the peak tourist season. In addition, the construction of housing was also justified by the creation of employment opportunities, and the increased capital gains arising as a result of the change in land designation.

The landscape resulting from this first stage is characterised by its monofunctionality, since more than half of the land designated for building is devoted to the construction of second homes. Open green areas were poorly defined and appreciated in the planning process. For example, in the 1960s the planning process even envisaged the incorporation of public spaces into the private domain, and consideration was given to defining as open green areas locations that were not accessible to the population, such as cliffs, for example. In the 1970s, open green areas were directly considered in the 1975 Land Law (Land Law 19/1975), requiring a minimum percentage for each area in each partial planning action. The uncertainty of the first stage also affected public and collective facilities. Some plans indicate that public facilities, such as schools and cultural buildings, were not regarded as an “indispensable” requirement because of the temporary presence of the user population of the planned spaces. Some attention was given to the recreational use of urban space, as in the case of Carolina Mar in 1961, although roads were often only considered in terms of giving accessibility to the newly constructed units rather than in terms of developing an efficient transport network. Inland road connections, situated between the coastline and the urbanised areas, also represented a space of transition between different planning regimes.

The formal simplicity of the constructed space also characterises this first stage. Despite this, there is a predominance of isolated single family homes in types A, B and C, and a predominance of multifamily housing in types D and E. The multifamily housing, that reaches a considerable height, is situated along the coastline, creating a screen effect that affects the low-density constructions that are located further inland. These are enclosed residential complexes with beach views and are concentrated in the parcel earmarked for private building, leaving the rest for recreational facilities and private leisure areas. The rest of the urbanised area is occupied by private single family homes, visually heterogeneous low-density constructions.
The second stage in the evolution of partial plans with second home uses includes residential areas F and G that are characteristic of the 1980s. This stage represents a change in the way of arranging the basic urban components and generates a new way of configuring and understanding the landscape of second homes. Not only does the process of growth continue, but areas that were developed in earlier decades start to be regenerated. The 1980s saw the emergence of minimum legal standards governing public spaces in land designated for building and greater awareness of their role in built-up areas. This period continued the focus on the construction of second homes. The combination of these elements led to an increase in the structural and functional complexity of the landscape and a reduction in the land dedicated to private space in favour of public spaces. In addition, a different urban landscape from the one developed in the 1960s and 70s is planned. A more diverse range of public and collective facilities is considered, some related to the needs of the resident population, such as schools, for example, although, in general, they do not occupy a central role in the configuration of the plans. The road communications network is also more regular, supported by elements that optimise traffic and seek to facilitate access. However, road planning continues without taking connectivity with other urban pieces into account. Finally, the role of open green areas becomes established, as they start to occupy large areas in the inner part of the sectors for development. Parks begin to occupy central areas and are located adjacent to public and collective facilities thereby increasing the quality of life of the inhabitants whether temporary or permanent. There is also a marked increase in multifamily housing, thus diversifying the forms of the urban landscape. Single family homes are located on the coastline where, for the first time, the landscape is no longer dominated by multifamily housing. Apartment blocks also start to incorporate private spaces with private facilities such as swimming pools. However, overall, the plans envisage denser construction due to a greater use of urban space.

The last evolutionary stage includes types H and I urbanisations. This stage is characterised by a more complex configuration of the landscape from both formal and functional points of view. It is worthwhile noting that in some cases, the partial plans of this period respond to the paradigm of sustainability design criteria. Under them, the 1990s reflect a new model of growth that erased the boundary between tourist areas and the “conventional” city. This intention is reflected in strategies aimed at providing continuity to the urban fabric (so far the growth process of residential tourist areas had been discontinuous along the coast, with unconnected residential units popping up), urbanising open spaces between urbanised units and providing facilities to already established residential areas. In the 2000s there was a clear commitment to creating a “more compact and complex” model of town that ‘reconciles its tourist orientation with its emerging role as a medium-sized coastal city … [There are] new processes of urban development [and] the reconversion of existing urban areas – densities, open green areas, roadways and mobility, etc. – to the extent possible’ (Municipality of Cambrils 2005: 25). For this, partial planning seeks to ensure the consolidation of initially temporary residential spaces as components of some coastal towns that have ended up becoming a part of a genuine metropolitan area.

The resulting landscapes, which are multifunctional in nature, are characterised by their dedication of a high percentage of land to public space. As for open green areas, planning strategies tend to create continuous, integrated and balanced spaces. Thus, in addition to their role of “cushioning” the process of urbanisation, and as elements that facilitate traffic, a new role is added to them as connectors of established urban areas. Open green spaces also emerge as social meeting places and provide additional landscape quality. With respect to road communication networks, some impermeable urban areas remain around single family homes with the aim of preserving private space. However, in general, the road communication networks are now more
regular and more extensive and ultimately more efficient. In the most recent planning strategies, public and collective facilities also play an important role and their location becomes essential from the perspective of turning them into places of permanent residence and is reflected in the explicit construction of permanent residences in areas traditionally used for second homes. However, areas continue to be reserved for establishing tourist facilities, such as hotels, that begin to occupy areas near the coastline. There is, lastly, a huge variety in the forms of constructions in these residential areas, given their diversity, especially when it comes to multifamily housing. The multifamily model coexists with other constructions whose occupation of the area designated for building is lower and is spread out within their private space.

Conclusions

Since the works of Wolfe (1952), Lundgren (1974) and Coppock (1977), academic interest in second homes has included such topics as housing, planning, leisure and tourism (Müller 2004). Currently, this interest takes the economic, social and environmental dimensions into account (Hall & Müller 2004), relates to a variety of geographical environments (Roca 2013), and has been developed by different academic disciplines ranging from tourism studies to housing studies (Hall 2014; Müller 2014). The planning of secondary residences has also been a topic of growing interest (Müller 2014; Hall 2015). This is a relevant issue for the case of the Spanish Mediterranean, where second homes are directly associated with the processes of urbanisation generated by tourism in coastal areas (García-Ayllón 2015). This, as Roca (2013: 15) explains, has led to the ‘convergence between social science research, spatial planning and public policy concerns regarding second homes and the evolving functional and morphological features of tourism as a steady driving force behind increased geographical mobility, on the one hand, and the various motives for establishing second homes, on the other’.

The focus of this chapter has been on the analysis of the changing role of second homes in the urban dynamics of a tourism destination in the Mediterranean Coast. It becomes clear that, in this case, the planning of areas of second homes has become a deliberate tool for the transformation of both the destination and the urban space. Their analysis has allowed us to better understand the impact and prevalence of second home developments within a metropolitan context in the sense put forward by Visser (2004).

The results obtained for central Costa Daurada confirm that the role of areas with second home uses and their relationship to mass tourist destinations located in metropolitan contexts of the Spanish Mediterranean coast has evolved from the 1960s to the present. They have gone from being urban spaces fundamentally geared towards use by temporary residents to becoming much more structurally and functionally complex areas (Rovira Soto & Anton Clavé 2014). This evolution has gone through the ‘de-recreation of the secondary residence [that] means their defunctionalization and reduced regional specialization, resulting in their direct insertion into broader demographic and regional processes’ (del Pino Artacho 2015: 18), and by the dissolution of differences between second home development areas and the conventional city, as a result of the harmonisation of the urban landscape and the creation of new public facilities and services (even primary schools and basic health services). These processes are reflected in the previously noted 5% decrease in the number of secondary residences in the region between 2001 and 2011. Interestingly, such changes have also been identified in the South Tyrol (Brida et al. 2011), suggesting a shared process of evolutionary change with respect to second homes and the transformation of the urban landscape.

As observed in this chapter, in all these processes, planning has been the key factor for the destination and urban change (Brouder et al. 2017). In the case studied, the transformation has
been observed proactively on the basis of urban planning with sustainability criteria as of the last stage. On the other hand it has provided for their continued ability to attract both visitors and residents to an established urban area. Specifically, the evolution of the processes of planning areas of second homes in central Costa Daurada has led to: balancing the low levels of public urban components (open green areas, local road communication networks and public and collective facilities) inherited from the 1960s to 1980s, connecting areas of second homes with other permanent residential areas already built (linking them to a sustainable urban form), holding back the geographic expansion of urban growth, covering the needs of tourists and residents in terms of public services, and homogenising the typology of developments and the urban landscape.

This functional and morphological transformation highlights the importance of planning for areas of second residences (inherited or new) on the Mediterranean coast of Spain both from an urban perspective and from the perspective of destination regeneration strategies, particularly taking into account the conversion of some of the temporary housing areas into permanent residence neighbourhoods and, at the end, into good places to live. In addition, the results highlight the need to keep the issue of the continuous urban and landscape change and transformation in coastal mass tourism destinations on the research agenda (Brey et al. 2007)

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References


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