An overview of restoration and regeneration possibilities of Spanish Mediterranean coastal zones; Case of second home tourism as retirement plans

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Abstract

Tourism and demographic changes are linked as important regional determinants in relation to urban and regional planning systems. Second home tourism in Spanish Mediterranean coastal areas has created a great real estate market demands in which local communities and authorities are both involved. Based on tourist area life cycle theory (TALC) current conditions of some tourists Mediterranean coastal areas in Spain falling to a degree of degradation or even stagnation among their practical life cycle, which demonstrated as last phases of TALC theory. Many second home projects were built within Spanish coastal zones during a rapid growth and the boob construction period in Spain, started from 1970s. This circumstance means facing with a variety of economic challenges in local and national scale, such as seasonal labor markets in coastal areas. Accordingly the aim of this paper is to evaluate European demographic changes in general, and in particular its potential effect on urban and housing planning in Spanish coastal zones. Throughout investigations on European mobility statics and demographic changes, this study tries to provide a prospect on the real estate challenges caused by second home tourism. Considering two phenomena provides this issue: ‘second home tourism’ and ‘international retirement migration’. Correspondingly, the initial focus of this study is on the challenges generating by rapid growth of second home development in Spanish Mediterranean towns. Then, the both mentioned phenomena and their positive and negative impacts on real estate market are demonstrated. Considering demographic and social characteristics would be a strong factor in order to make specific strategies towards improvement of related regional plans. This study evaluates the growing number of senior tourists and retired migrants, who are creating new market demand among the residential tourism market. This elderly population in each given touristic area needs specific services and accommodation, which may create a variety of local jobs as complementary activities. It has been universally agreed that by this initiative approach in urban and housing projects, the local economic condition, especially in the field of real estate and labor market may significantly be improved; however the effect is not limited to the local economy. Documentary data collection and example study evaluation
are taken as the main methodological approach to this study. As conclusive remarks of this study, some suggestions are presented in order to initiate a concentrated field of studies in area of regional planning systems responsive to such areas. This study advocates considering the influence of international retirement migration in the residential tourism market and its effective role, in which concludes with new strategies and housing policies that leading to the restoration and regeneration of Mediterranean coastal areas.

Keywords: Coastal Regeneration, Mediterranean Studies, Urban Tourism, Second Home, Spain

1. Introduction:

From the 1970s onwards, Spanish Mediterranean coasts have been under development of a new model of town planning offering second homes known as residential tourism; which has a high effect on socioeconomic characteristics and modernization of this area (Mantecón, 2010). Land use change, Urban and demographic growths are being the most significant expressions of this development process (Marti & Nolasco, 2011).

In spite of appearing a boom in tourism and real estate in Spain, it is believed that the situation doesn’t seem to be sustainable. Moreover, some evidences indicate that the rapid growth of residential tourism, which is laid in the real estate market is getting faced with some social and economic challenges (Aledo & Mazón, 2004; Hof & Blázquez-Salom, 2013).

In addition to residential tourism, which already plays a key role in the transformation of the region, especially by land use effect, there is another phenomenon in the field of demographic studies in Europe, called “Ageing Europe”. This phenomenon has been relatively little studied with respect to the development of second homes in coastal areas of Spain. Therefore, it should be considered as an external factor in the real estate and tourism market in order to find a wider perspective for future regional strategies.

Accordingly, the focus of this paper is to assess the current condition of residential tourism in Spanish Mediterranean coasts by evaluating the potential effect of demographic changes of Europe on urban and housing planning in Spanish coastal zones. With this paper, it is our intention to provide a prospect by considering two contemporary phenomena of “second home tourism” and “International retirement migration”, by the movements and demographic changes
impacting the residential tourism at European scale which may conclude to a new strategy in the housing policies of coastal areas.

2. Second Home Tourism Phenomenon

Nowadays, purchasing or renting a second home somewhere else is known as a phenomenon because of its high growth and high effect on the real estate market. This phenomenon has been investigated extensively in a series of international geographical research. Up to the beginning of the 1990s, problems of spatial planning associated with second home developments and aspects of the sustainable use of resources were among the central research questions in research by Ruppert (1973), Maier et al. (1973), Grimm and Albrecht (1990) & Baumhackl 1991 as cited in Breuer, 2005.

This phenomenon is also linked with Modern Multi residential strategies, Intra-European migrants and transnational lifestyles (Williams et al., 1997, 2000; King et al., 1998; Rodríguez et al., 2004).

Second home residents are initially described as residential tourists, but from the very beginning, there have been profound debates over the worthiness of the term ‘tourist’ to refer to these residents. People with a type of leisure mobility, ranging from tourism, lifestyle migration to transnational citizenship and multi-residential mobility may be called as residential tourist (Casado Diaz, 1999). Therefore, this type of residents in a tourist area could be placed among the new types of mobility and residence and be categorized as a type of semi-resident/semi-tourist people in the real estate market.

Second homes are not uncontroversial and have a negative impact on local communities, considering the conflicts which these properties cause between locals and the second home owners in some areas. In some attractive destinations, second homes are often ascribed to as a key factor in creating price inflation, increased property values and higher property tax for all dwellings, including permanent homes (Salazar & Zhang, 2013).

As growing demand pressure raised prices, conflicts with the local population were to be expected as access to housing options became increasingly limited for them and for their adult children, given the greater purchasing power of the new arrivals (Ghose, 2004; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). Higher prices, in turn, produce a population selection essentially based on purchasing power, which may lead to a new social homogeneity (Phillips, 2005).
Furthermore, it is argued that residential tourism development is causing a displacement of permanent residents from these areas (Marjavaara, 2007). Tourist-residential processes create common features of a higher social heterogeneity and residential segregation, found in a study on human mobility in Spain (Domínguez et al., 2011). The phenomenon of “Gentrification” is not only a displacement of social classes and persons, but also brings changes in leisure and retail activities, consumption patterns, and valuation of rural properties, whether used for housing or other purposes (Solana, 2010).

Considering the displacement theory, which occurs in some tourist areas, there is a question regarding second home demand: what is the extent of its effects on the increasing real estate prices? The results of a study on property value reveal increases in an area dealing with essential issues regarding the development of second homes, permanent homes and changes in property values in Stockholm. Showed increased assessed property values are caused primarily by increasing numbers of permanent homes, and the area is being repopulated rather than depopulated and finally resulted that no evidence of displacement caused by second home demand can be traced on a regional geographical level (Marjavaara, 2007). However, there is a current depopulation trend in some attractive second home destinations which is arguing that it is caused by a restructuring of the local labor market, economic crisis, and other social factors (Fraguell, 1993).

2.1 Review on the current situation of Spanish Mediterranean Coasts

Spanish Mediterranean towns have been under development of second home projects from 1970s and have specialized in this type of tourism in Europe. As mentioned before, second home phenomenon has a key role in development and modernization of these areas. The second home tourism, as an industry, has been growing constantly during decades, but being linked to real estate market, recently an anomaly among real estate and construction sectors appeared during 2004–2007 by the cause of the Spanish construction bubble. It could be said that Spain in recent years is experiencing a tourist and real estate boom that has left a deeply profound mark on land use (Hof & Blázquez-Salom, 2013). Hundreds of horizontal, low density residential estates were built on large areas of land, whereas a new aspect of tourism appeared as residential tourism or second home tourism (Mazón & Aledo, 1996). From the beginning of
this development process until now, these coastal towns have been renewed, reconstructed, or even transformed in some parts.

In 2011 in Spain, 26,018,179 dwellings, based on the data of ministry of public works, corresponding 17,909,691 of principle homes and 8,108,488 are second homes. Lopez in a study on second homes in Spain, made a model utilizing logistic regression with factors of age, socioeconomic category (high to low), type of household and immigrant or sedentary. Finally, it was found that the factor which most impacts the localization of second homes in another province is immigration so that in places with the subject of immigration, the possibility of second housing is 6.3 times more than other provinces (Lopez, 2003). This correlation between immigration and second home tourism seems in line with what is found in other research in Majorca in which is found that tourism attractive sites are attracting more residential tourists (Hof & Blázquez-Salom, 2013).

There are a variety of natural, social, cultural and economic factors involved in residential tourism growth in Spain, some of the main reasons for the increasing trend of residential tourism based on a local research in Catalonia are defined as:

- Tiredness of city life which is related to lifestyle migration
- Economic prosperity and increasing living standards in the western countries of Europe
- The revolution in communications
- The second home as an investment which acts as an investment for constructors, local community and new owners.

Focusing on residential tourism impacts on different characteristics of Mediterranean coasts needs a comprehensive database and this is exactly one of the problems in evaluating coastal areas specifically in the field of residential tourism. The lack of a specialized database with structuring properties and users of second homes makes it hard to gain a statistical evaluation of touristic properties. For example the residential tourist homes in Alicante counted in a research, was almost 13 times more than those registered by local authorities of Tourism. (Aledo & Mazón, 2004)

It is stressed that the impact of second homes on the municipalities that support them are not always negative and it can generate positive impacts. However, when low-density developments predominate and there is no any integration project, clusters of second homes
become an important vector of urban sprawl, trivialization and territorial landscape and environmental impact.

Some of the main characteristics of these coastal areas are listed as below:

- First of all, the concentration of tourists and related activities are seasonal. This temporary nature leads to a negative impact on the local economy and social concept at least by creating seasonal labor market.

- Also, as Aledo and Mazon described, there is not a huge amount of complementary activities, whereas this scarcity is of poor quality and seen as a frequent problem in the Spanish Mediterranean coasts. Golf courses and marinas are examples of improving the level of the complementary services as well as the increase in the value of properties (Aledo & Mazón, 2004).

From another point of view we should also note that residential production, including second homes generates a list of fiscal dependency on specialized municipalities. In exchange for a sound budgetary position on allowing these localities to deal with the demand for services and personal investment capacity, targeting local production falls, sometimes as a monoculture in real production, the constant pressure on possible developed land, and weakens or limits the creation of other wealth generating urban activities while urban management is difficult and tends to the short-term plan without zoning criteria (Mazon & Raya, 2008).

Based on the study of Aledo and Mazon, the majority of second-home owners are not interested in renting the property in regard to recuperate their maintenance costs. Therefore, summer visitors with a second residency are described as loyal to their destination. This attitude means that in a long period of the year these houses are unused and vacant. So, it is imaginable what happens in municipalities with a high number of second homes, especially in socioeconomic factors in different seasons of the year.

The last but not least character of Spanish Mediterranean towns is about the planning system. Hence, the planning legislation of Spain gives a great part of planning and management to the local authorities and the income of urban taxes finances most of the coastal councils. In this situation, urban planning has been seen as an “obstacle to”, or as a “brake on”, continuous and rapid growth of the construction in these urbanizations described by Stroud (as cited in Aledo &
The lack of attention on urban planning from this point of view finally resulted with some urban problems and negative environmental impacts in coastal areas.

Whereas the cycle of “second home tourism” is summarized in the land purchase, construction of homes and their sale, the lack of programmed activities in this relation find more importance. Sustainability as an aim in tourism like other developments needs to have more attention on multi-functionality of urban land use, diversity of residents and diversity of recreational and related activities as well.

The concern about existing or foreseen urban growth is a central theme of the debate regarding the best territorial model for rural municipalities in Spain. Whereas the attraction of rural areas is one concern and another one is the danger of transferring the residential and touristic growth model of the Spanish coast to the inland municipalities. (Solana, 2010)

Therefore, the current touristic growth model is not considered a positive model to promote in inland cities of the country.

In order to evaluate the current condition of coastal areas, Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) theory is analyzed by a research in Alicante, Spain (Aledo & Mazon, 2004). Six phases of the life cycle in a tourism destination based on destination life-cycle model (DLCM) are: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and a final phase of the rejuvenation or decline (Butler, 1980). Base on tourist area life cycle theory (TALC), the Tourism Life Cycle model is adapted to residential tourism model, by Mazon and Aledo, focusing on the interrelationships of residential houses and urban land scarcity. As a case, Torrevieja, a touristic city in Spanish Mediterranean has been studied in mentioned research by focusing on its tourism condition, demographic, labor structure and the evolution of housing in real estate market.

The last stages of the TALC are pertinent to the exhaustion of the main offered resource: urban land. Furthermore, environmental and landscape degradation, urban infrastructure and social service deficits, lack of complementary offers, decline in the urban quality of life, and increases of urban insecurity are other effects which are linked to the decline stage. (Aledo & Mazón, 2004)

The result of this analysis showed the weakness of the residential tourism model due to the lack of planning in this area (Mazon & Aledo, 2005). Through studying this city which is not
the unique one by this condition in Mediterranean Spanish coasts, this can be interpreted that
unsustainability in development process and the weakness of planning is leading to a fall to the
degree of degradation or even stagnation for these areas among their practical life cycle, which
demonstrated as last phases of TALC theory.

The review on the current condition of Mediterranean coastal areas in Spain helped us to
conclude that a considerable part of destinations with constructed projects for second homes,
are in the phase of stagnation or even decline. These phases are the last phases of TALC so they
are seen as serious problems in coastal areas.

3. **Ageing Europe and International retirement migration**

The second phenomenon which should be considered in planning the coastal areas is a
contemporary trend known as international retirement migration (IRM). This phenomenon is
closely related with another demographic fact, which is “Ageing Europe”. Hence, we have to
consider the Ageing Europe primarily. In recent decades, the population of Europe is going to
be older to the extent that the estimated ratio of retirees to workers in Europe will double to
0.54 by mid-century; from four workers per retiree to two workers per retiree (Carone &
Costello, 2006). Population ageing, described as one of the most challenging Megatrends of the
21st century, arises from two possible related demographic effects: increase of longevity and
declining of fertility. Due to an increase in longevity, the average age of the population rises by
increasing the numbers of surviving seniors and older people. This increase is combined with a
decline in fertility, the factor that reduces the number of babies, and as the effect continues,
finally the population of younger people in general reduces. Although the ratio of Ageing varies
between different countries, it shows a constant growth in future decades. The decline is more
dramatic in those with lower fertility rates in Western Europe.

One of the most important aspects of this demographic change is in Economy. As expressed,
the share of seniors in the population has two major effects on many economies within the
European Union. For example, in medical services, many nations are struggling to pay for
generous health coverage and pensions. Raising the retirement age or even a straight cut in the
value of monthly pension payments is some influent strategies of this fact. The more serious
aspect appears over the long term when fewer residents are of working age. This issue may lead
to many European economic struggles.
The United States in comparison with Europe has a relatively high fertility rate of 2.1, which refers to the average number of babies per women of childbearing age. Furthermore, it has been also more welcoming to younger immigrants than many European nations. It is expressed; by 2025 population growth is expected to stall in every developed country except the U.S.

International Retirement Migration is a phenomenon in the context of or involved in the Ageing Europe phenomenon, with a direct relation so that the increase of the elderly population will increase the international retired migrants as well. Developing technology, mobility and transport facilities have been facilitating different aspects of tourism and migration.

One of the first studies in the field of retirement migration has been done by Cribier in 1980. He focused on internal mobility within France which can be considered as a local context. Later, some studies in larger scale have been done by considering the direction of international retirement migration in Europe in the flows from northern and western European countries to southern Europe (Williams et al. 1997; King et al. 1998; Warnes et al, 1999). During recent decades, a series of case studies has been carried out on this issue, with difference in countries of origin and the destination countries, but it could be concluded that International Retirement Migration in Europe will continue to increase significantly in the next decades (Breuer, 2005).

Retirees make up the largest group (International Retirement Migration) who spend more or less extended periods of time in second home property, or their areas of influence, motivated by reasons more related to their search for a place where they can enjoy their leisure than a place to carry out an economic activity. However, it is worth noting that during the past few years,
and particularly in the case of Spain, the debate has intensified because of the increasing number of young British families that move to Spain to start a new life, and because of the movements of actual transnational citizens that travel frequently between Spain and their home country (O’Reilly, 2007b).

International retirement migration and long-stay tourism have occurred within the context of Japan being an aged society after experiencing post-war economic growth. Long-stay tourism has developed as a form of Japanese international retirement migration (IRM) (Ono, 2010).

International retirement migration in Spain is in line with the rapid growth of second home development along the Mediterranean coast; and in this regard, second home ownership has proven to be a key factor in deciding where to migrate later in life either on a temporary or permanent basis (Casado-Diaz, 2001). Breuer in a study on Canarias islands, found that the seasonal German residents clearly prefer the winter half-year for their stay so were described as "over winterers" (Breuer, 2005), they are trying, apparently successfully, to enjoy "the best of both worlds" (Rodriguez, 2001) by the deliberate use of different residences in complementary natural regions. For this reason, the behavior of the senior citizen second home users can be described as "touristic" (Breuer, 2005) Also, he noted that the seasonal use of second homes must be seen as a circulation rather than as a migration. In this context, the seasonal use of second homes is not a Segment in a continuum, which begins with a short-term tourist holiday visit and ends with the permanent retirement residence, but instead it represents a final state, which is regarded as optimal by more than half of the German senior residents in the Canaries. By doing this, they are putting into practice a "peripatetic" lifestyle in the sense of Williams and Hall (2000). The use of a second home is thereby the expression of a lifestyle that was practiced in many instances before the retirement age was attained.

Considering this phenomenon, now the question is: what is the impact of Ageing Europe on International Retirement Migration? Apparently, it seems that by growing the portion of elderly population, retired migrants will rise significantly. This population is creating new market demand inside the residential tourism market.

4. **Seniors and Second home Tourism**
Through taking into account Ageing Europe phenomenon, now we can focus on a narrow and more specific area, which is about retired tourists who select a destination for their second home and may categorized as second home tourists or even migrants. They are a considerable part of second home owners as well as senior tourists and in both markets; Tourism and Real estate, they are a growing population. What is the effect of this population on these markets? It is expressed that age has been an effective predictor of human behavior, needs and affects on economic demand (Weiermair & Mathies, 2004).

Senior tourism programs are examples of tourism planning, specialized for the senior population. In Catalonia, these programs are for people older than 55 years and offer discounts and stay at four-star accommodations in the Catalan coast during the off-season. Tourists from all over Europe will benefit from this initiative, which was launched off the coast of Barcelona and currently spread to the Costa Brava and Costa Daurada.

In the field of international retirement migration, when the mentioned population is interested in selecting the coastal Mediterranean areas as their destination, we should evaluate their housing requirements, respecting their age as well as their necessary urban facilities. Since Tourists, including seniors choose a destination by factors they find important (Turner & Reisinger, 1999), these issues should be studied in depth and could be recognized by planners and researchers for further strategies. However, some research has examined attributes that support the performance of tourism (e.g., Airline study by Assaf & Josiassen, 2012).

It is important to focus on housing models like assisted homes, which currently are undertaken around the world like the variety of "Senior housing" in the United States, “Les Jardins des Arcades” in France, “Vivienda Asistida” in Spain, etc. New forms of senior housing have a variety of share flats and independent flats in communities, to independent houses with some gradual services like cleaning, health and elderly care services.

5. Conclusion

The second home tourism in Spain, by its rapid growth had a lack of related planning in some municipalities like what is found in Torrevieja and needs a special attention in the field of urban and regional planning, predicting the future urban development and land use
management especially in order to control Urban sprawl appearing in Majorca and some coasts of the Iberian peninsula.

As Aledo and Mazon pointed out, residential tourism in real estate market “has to keep growing; that is to say, building, because there are neither other objectives nor any intentions to create alternative or complementary ones.” Therefore, it’s found that the residential construction could not act as the unique alternative in the production and consumption of urban land in coastal areas.

Given mentioned two phenomena - the retirement migration flow and increasing of residential tourism trend - which are affecting the Tourism and Real estate markets of European scale, it’s predicted that a growing population of elderly is involved in tourism market demand especially in the residential tourism market. The involvement of seniors or retired in the Second home market explained in this paper expect a specialized variety of facilities, services and accommodation so that these services could be considered as complementary activities in these areas in Spain.

Considering the effects of Ageing Europe phenomenon, it is argued that by preparation of coastal cities in order to a responsive accommodation for senior tourists, senior residential tourists and retired migrants could be a solution for the regeneration of coastal areas. A comprehensive plan for promotion and development of related activities with seniors are suggestions regarding to reach the aim of recovery of unsustainable tourist areas. This issue is the point that urban and regional planners in both markets should focus on, in depth.

Believing the market of residential tourism needs some strategies in line with demographic changes occurring in Europe, let us to suggest especial efforts about elderly needs in the real estate market in these areas. The issue should be taken into account in housing strategies in both, local and regional scale. From the perspective of emergence of suitable forms of residency whereas we are faced with a growing population in Europe, initiating and evaluating residential services is of more importance. So that in order to attract this growing population, we will need to do an assessment of their needs and look for residences and services responding their specific elderly residential needs.

The other point which is highlighted as our interest is based on what the previous authors have found about negative impacts of seasonal nature of second homes. As described above, the
great problem in touristic urbanizations in coastal areas of Spain is the lack of planning in the initiation and complementary activities. (Aledo & Mazón, 2004) New residence like assisted living forms, those by offering some facilitating services for elderly having the form of semi-hotel semi-residence, and some other new forms which offering annual services in independent units, may adapt in these areas. It is believed that promoting new types of residence can change the local economy by offering facility services and creating annual job opportunities in these areas. These economic activities by attracting investments could act as an engine for regeneration of the areas facing with stagnation in real estate market.

Finally, it is suggested that the new forms of elderly accommodation like assisted living models could be a new field of study in the field of urban management. Therefore, they should be studied and evaluated for future residential projects in order to adapt to the necessities of elderly residential tourists being attracted to the Spanish Mediterranean Coastal zones.

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