

LINKED POPULATION AND SECOND HOMES IN GALICIA

Julio Hernández Borge

Department of Geography (University. Santiago de Compostela)

E-mail: xe0812@usc.es

The populations of economically developed countries tend to have a high spatial mobility, especially in urban areas. Within such movements a distinction is usually made between migration strictly speaking and lifestyle-related mobility. Migration implies a definitive or temporary change of residence, usually for economic reasons and leading to a change in the professional activity. Lifestyle-related mobility does not share these features, even though the home might be abandoned for varying periods of time, ranging from a few hours a day to certain days of the week or even a certain time of year. These movements may be prompted by various purposes: commuting journeys to and from work or study centres, shopping trips, leisure and recreation activities, etc. They are recurrent movements going under the name of «*mobilité habituelle*» (Noin, 1994, 209) or «circulation» (Hornby and Jones, 1986, 83) to differentiate them from migration proper, also a form of spatial movement. Their cyclical and repetitive character mean that large masses of people are brought together at certain times of the day (in the morning from abodes towards work centres and the reverse direction on the homeward leg at the end of the working day), on given days of the week (weekend movements to leisure and rest areas) or at certain times of year (the heaviest holiday months). These movements have very varied knock-on effects in the affected territories.

Some of these movements (those not involving a return journey on the same day to the usual abode) call for accommodation facilities, so to this extent they do have an undoubted territorial impact. This is the case of the weekend or holiday movements, requiring facilities for the overnight stays of the travellers, whether these be hotels or other collective tourist accommodation establishments (hotels, guesthouses, holiday apartments, country cottages, campsites...) or second homes. It is the latter type of accommodation, necessary for meeting the leisure, -tourism- or rest-related needs of the population using it, that this article deals with, limiting the analysis to the territory of Galicia and quantifying for each municipality the demographic impact of the population travelling to a second home. This increase in

the spatial mobility of today's societies has broken with the traditional single-residence relationship. Many people are no longer registered for residential purposes in a single place; multiple residence means that different places are home to different people at different times of the year (López Colás and Módenes Cabrerizo, 2004).

To study the phenomenon of second homes in Spain and their spatial distribution we can tap into the figures of the Population and Dwellings Censuses (*Censos de Población y Viviendas*), brought out every ten years. Until 1991 these census figures gave information only on the municipal breakdown of the number of dwellings used for this purpose but not the number of people using them. Neither could this information be gleaned from other sources, since the private character of these residences means that no figures have to be kept on the number of overnight stays, as is obligatory for hotels or other collective accommodation establishments. This situation changed with the latest Population and Dwellings Census (of 2001), which furnishes for the first time figures on the number of people, at municipal level, using second homes. This new information therefore allows us to ascertain the existing spatial diversity within Galician town - and city-councils (*ayuntamientos*).

Some methodological changes have been introduced in the 2001 census. One of the most important and far-reaching changes for the purposes of demographic studies is the incorporation of the new concept of «linked population» («*población vinculada*» in the Spanish wording). The aim of introducing this new concept is to reflect more faithfully each municipality's real population charge by including the persons who go there for work, study or leisure purposes (therefore including those who visit second homes). The linked population is defined by the Spanish Statistical Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística*: I.N.E.) as «the set of persons includable in the census (i.e. with a residence in Spain) who strike up some sort of habitual relation with the municipality in question, either because they live, work or study there or because they spend time there at certain periods of the year (summers, long weekends, normal weekends...)». The latest census, on the other hand, drops the concept of «de facto population» (made up by those who are present there at a particular time plus temporary visitors), which was the figure normally used in demographic studies hitherto, while keeping the concept of «de jure population» (made up by those present and residents who are temporarily absent), which henceforth goes under the name of «resident population» («*población residente*»).

Second homes have taken much longer to catch on in Galicia than elsewhere in the country. In 2001 second homes in Galicia accounted for 4.96% of the national total whereas the region's population percentage is 6.6%. In recent years, however, the growth rate has picked up considerably, the latest census doubling the figure recorded thirty years earlier (2.43 % in the 1970 Census), when the phenomenon was still embryonic (Hernández Borge, 1987). In this region the location of the dwellings of this type bears a very close relation to the more built-up areas and also the areas with most tourism, with the highest number of hotels and other collective accommodation establishments (Hernández Borge, 2000) and the highest density of transport and communication systems (Díaz Fernández, 2000). Pride of place here goes to the Rías Bajas and Golfo Ártabro, two of the most heavily built up tourism areas of Galicia, as we can see in the corresponding maps (figs. 1 and 2).

The proliferation of second homes and the number of people using them are two factors with a considerable territorial impact. In Galicia there are as yet few areas with a high

incidence (eight of the ten municipalities with the highest related-population rates lie in the areas of greatest demographic dynamism and greatest population density, which have the highest number of second homes). There are, however, already one-off problems of saturation, especially in the areas of highest tourism activity, as is reflected in the corresponding map (fig. 3). But it is perhaps in the most depressed and sparsely populated rural areas where they have the greatest knock-on effect on local development in terms of both jobs and revenue, thereby helping such areas to survive in conjunction with other leisure-related activities such as rural tourism. It is therefore in many inland municipalities, and at times in fairly backward areas (for example some municipalities in the Sil valley), where, despite the census problems in terms of classifying dwellings, the percentage of secondary dwellings as a proportion of main dwellings and also the related-population rate are highest, helping to stimulate the development of these districts.

