

# Second Homes and Potential Impacts on Return Migration and Rural Tourism Development

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**Abstract:** The emergence of second homes in Portugal are strongly related to emigration (especially between 1960-1974) and out-migration (between 1960-1973) and the consequent depopulation of many rural areas where, apart from new housing construction, the emigrants' and out-migrants' first homes were frequently converted into second homes. These territories are still socially depressed, mainly due to the inability to create employment and income opportunities, as also attract and nurture the establishment of communities. In this case, culture can be a generator of important external economies of human capital and a catalyst for tourism development. The tourism sector, too, under certain conditions, can be a driving force for economic activity in general. Therefore, the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics (2020) states the strategic importance of the association of local populations in tourism activities. Thereby, this study suggests that those second homes can encourage return migration and rural tourism development in Portugal. How return migration will address rural culture and tourism development will also influence how visitor's perceive local culture and hospitality in the places of origin of Portuguese emigrants. With this aim, 5,157 Portuguese emigrants were surveyed through the application of a questionnaire to assess the potential impact of their return on tourism development in Portugal. Results show that Portuguese emigrants of the working age and with a second home in a rural area consider that their participation in associations of Portuguese emigrants in the host country, has been a way of maintaining their culture of origin. If they had a job in the tourism sector, in Portugal, would like to control their own working hours so that they can have a rural lifestyle and reconcile with the practice of agriculture, mainly for self-consumption. While locals, their return can also strengthen rural culture and, consequently, develop rural tourism in Portugal. The financial benefits are similarly key variables that can encourage them to rent accommodation units in the second home of their family in the place of origin.

**Keywords:** Second homes, Return migration, Rural Culture, Tourism development, Portugal

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## 1. Introduction

The identity debate has increased in intensity since the emergence of the phenomenon of globalization. In relation to emigrants, they are often forced to assimilate a dominant national culture and their identity can become hybrid. However, when considering the Portuguese case, it is possible to adhere to transnational practices without questioning belonging to a nation-place considering emigrants intention to maintain their cultural difference from the culture of the host country. One way they manifested their symbolic commitment to Portugal was through the self-building of second homes in their place of origin. These are, above all, large houses with individual, exuberant and expressive styles, and sumptuous interior that distinguish themselves in rural landscapes. The places of origin of Portuguese emigrants are rural areas with only populations of up to 2000 inhabitants. This is mainly due to its inability to create opportunities for jobs and better salaries. In this regard, culture can be a generator of important external economies of human capital and a catalyst for tourism development (see e.g. Walmsley, 2003). Since authenticity of tourism experiences is also critical variable to offer a competitive advantage (Rosado-Pinto and Loureiro, 2023), this study analyse potential impacts of those existent second homes on return migration and, consequently, rural culture and tourism development in Portugal. The first two sections begin by explaining the emergence of second homes, considering the Portuguese case, and its potential impacts on return migration (of the working age) and rural tourism development in Portugal. The methodology, results and discussion of the study will be topics also covered. The main conclusions and directions for future studies are put forward in the final section.

## 2. The Phenomenon of the Owner-Builders of Second Homes in Portugal

This section presents a framework for Portuguese emigration from the second half of the twentieth century to the present day, aiming at related it with the emergence of the owner-builders of second homes in the place of origin. In this regard, the great wave of Portuguese emigration took place between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s and was linked to post-war European economic growth, in an essentially intra-European process of massive transfer of labour from the peripheral south to the industrialised north, in which Portugal was substantially involved (Barreto and Mónica, 1999). The various studies published in Portugal cite the lack of jobs and salaries that would provide a more dignified and secure future as the main reason for the evolution of the phenomenon that led to the exodus of isolated emigrants and entire families (see e.g. Rocha-Trindade, 1986;

Ferrão, 1996). Portuguese emigration, however, did not end in 1973-1974, and it increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Ferrão, 1996). But the 1990s were clearly marked by a progressive reduction in estimated flows and especially by the affirmation of a logic of temporary emigration, involving long-distance and wide-ranging forms of “commuting” with some EU countries (Ferrão, 1996). With the proximity of the countries and the ease of travel, emigrants never completely severed the umbilical cord with their country of origin. Various authors state that the most evident way in which Portuguese emigrants affirmed their material and symbolic commitment to Portugal was through a common project to build a second home there, revealing the extent to which they were linked to their origins (see e.g. Silva et al., 1984; Lewis and Williams, 1986; Rocha-Trindade, 1986; Villanova, et al., 1994).

The analysis of a selected case studies of Portuguese communities settled in the host countries also suggests that the experience of emigration didn't contribute to rejecting their cultural identity of origin (see Beswick, 2007; Campos and Siqueira, 2006; Gomes, 2001; Klimt, 2009; Nunes, 2008; Rocha-Trindade, 1986; Webb, 1999). Most Portuguese emigrants opted to build a new house themselves in the place of origin, rather than undertaking a renovation project, mainly as a strategy of differentiation from the past, because of their improved socioeconomic condition and the individual features reflected in the transformations of their own taste (Villanova, 1994:15). The owner-builders of second homes still have preserved the rural organization of the houses in the region with a vegetable garden, orchard and trellises on the sides and back of the house (Villanova et al., 1994). Most of them also have other cultivated lands scattered through the village (Villanova et al., 1994). Recognizing that second homes built by Portuguese emigrants in the place of origin continue to appear places of absence, its potential effects on the return of the new generation of Portuguese emigrants, as also on rural culture and tourism development will be topics covered in the following section.

### **3. Potential Impacts of Second Homes on Return Migration and Rural Tourism Development**

This section provides a discussion about an internationally accepted definition in literature of second homes and its potential effects on return migration and tourism development in rural areas, considering the Portuguese case. The literature review in second homes shows the lack of an internationally accepted definition, since some authors consider it in the field of tourism (see e.g. Jaackson, 1986; Cavaco, 2003; Müller, 2002; O'Reilly, 2003), other authors consider second homes at the intersection of tourism and migration (see e.g. Hall & Williams, 2002; Hall, 2005; Müller, 2006), while others consider second homes a consequence of the increase in mobility as a lifestyle (see e.g. Mazón and Aledo, 2005; Mantecón, 2008; Oliveira et al., 2015). In Portugal, the expansion of second homes has had some special features that are strongly related to emigration and out-migration (Cavaco, 2006; Santos and Costa, 2009; Oliveira et al., 2015; 2023). Studies also show that the main reasons for Portuguese emigrants to purchase or construct second homes, in the place of origin or in large cities or close to them, are related with holidays, retirement and/or savings investment (see e.g. Cavaco, 2003; 2006; Oliveira et al., 2015; 2023).

According with Gallent (2014: 174) analysis of the impacts of second home ownership in rural areas, around the world, regularly align with a “loss of community” thesis, linking second homes to a range of negative socio-economic consequences. During the 1970s, this debate was primarily focused on rural areas wherein second homes were sometimes seen as contributing to the development of elite landscapes (Hall and Müller, 2004; Müller and Hall, 2018). Regarding this topic, the second homes in consideration in this study already exist in rural areas of Portugal (see section 2). While locals, nostalgia and place attachment of Portuguese emigrants are to what is observed in permanent residents (see Adie and de Bernardi, 2020). On the other hand, Müller and Hall (2018:3) argue that it is the combination of factors that influences to what extent second homes are seen as a “curse or blessing” and whether second home tourism is seen as a challenge or opportunity. In this scope, Afonsopérez et al. (2022) argue that different economic impacts can occur in tourism destinations with a strong presence of second homes compared to resorts and hotel destinations, whereas in rural communities - where the population decrease, second homes can become an important economic contributor. Despite second homes having been studied from the point of view of changing landscapes and lifestyle, studies have also evidenced that its beneficial economic effects in Portugal generally outweigh some negative ones for the local economy, due to its contribution to the generation of income for the local population, government accounts and reduction of seasonality, (Oliveira et al., 2015).

Müller (2004) stands out that the owners of second homes, including foreigners, consume as much or more local products and services than permanent residents, so that this demand for agricultural products by temporary residents may cause price inflation, which may affect the purchasing power of the local population. However, according with Portuguese Institute of Statistics, in Portugal, rural areas have populations of up to 2000. Moreover, the enjoyment and habit of Portuguese emigrants for the practice of traditional agriculture for self-consumption - in the second home and other lands they own scattered in the place of origin (see e.g., Cavaco, 2003; Villanova et al., 1994), can also have a positive effect on the maintenance of traditional agriculture landscape and as a complementary activity to increase their disposable income (Santos, 2021). The tourism sector, too, can be a driving force for rural economic activity in general, helping to reduce existing development asymmetries and improve the quality of life of local population (see e.g. Fleischer and Felsenstein, 2000; Mahony and Zyl, 2002; Crompton et al., 2016; Ruzic and Demonja, 2017; Ferrari et al., 2018; Tohmo, 2018). In this regard, studies have shown that Portuguese emigrants of the working age and with a second home in the place of origin would like to return, invest and have a job in the tourism sector - especially in self-employed secondary residence services (Santos, 2021). They also have more financial capital, knowledge and professional experience in tourism and/or hospitality sectors acquired while settled abroad (Santos, 2021). Their return can also encourage tourism demand in rural areas, particularly in rural and local accommodations types (Santos and Freitas, 2023).

Rosado-Pinto and Loureiro (2023) argue that guests appraise the authenticity of the upper accommodation experience regarding their own knowledge about what is original and genuine. In this regard, considering the rural culture of Portuguese emigrants, while locals, this study suggests they should be the hospitality and tourism promoters in rural areas. According with Pers et al. (2018) there can be strong emotional bonds between people and the properties where earlier generations have farmed and lived. Other authors also mention that the younger age of homeowners (Bieger et al., 2007), as well as the financial benefits (Beritelli et al., 2008), positively influence their propensity to rent out their properties for the opportunity of income. Thus, the new generation of Portuguese emigrants may have greater propensity to rent accommodation units in the second home of their family in the place of origin and promote rural tourism development.

#### **4. Research Design and Methods**

The discussion conducted in sections 2-3 suggests that existent second homes can encourage return migration and, consequently, rural culture and tourism development in Portugal. Therefore, the following objectives have been defined for this study: i) to assess if the experience of emigration contribute to Portuguese emigrants of the working age rejecting their cultural identity; ii) if they would like to reconcile tourism with the practice of agriculture, mainly for self-consumption; and iii) if they intend to rent for tourism purposes the second home (of their family) in the place of origin. Because official data on the number and characteristics of Portuguese emigrants around the world is not available, the goal has been to obtain relevant information from as many Portuguese emigrants as possible, leading to the option of an unrestricted sample. For the preparation of the questionnaire, nominal scales, checklists, and ratio scales were used.

The data collection process started on 1 July 2011 and ended on 31 October of the same year, with a total of 5157 completed and valid questionnaires. From 1 July until 31 October the questionnaire was carried out by mail and internet. Initially, 4000 questionnaires were sent to households of Portuguese emigrants in the host countries, 54 were returned and only 9.32% were responded to. By 31 July, the questionnaire was conducted in the press and in digital electronic portals of Portuguese communities abroad, as well as by sending e-mails to emigrant associations and official bodies directly related with emigration. During the month of August, the questionnaire was conducted on the social network Facebook, through the official pages of famous Portuguese singers, resulting in the gathering of another 4800 completed and valid questionnaires. In the last two months of data collection, the questionnaire continued to be conducted on a Facebook Study Page. During this period, with the goal of informing Portuguese emigrants about the forms of participation in the study, the page was released, several times a day, through the Portuguese radio and television. Data analysis was carried out by means of quantitative descriptive analysis (frequencies and crossings) and tests of the correlation of variables, as well as a qualitative analysis through the application of student's t-tests and ANOVA analyses (Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney). This analysis will be illustrated and discussed in the next section.

#### **5. Results and Discussion**

Results of the study described in section 4 show that the data obtained with Pearson's correlation test corroborate the hypothesis that the experience of emigration did not contribute to Portuguese emigrants rejecting their culture of origin. This is because they show that their participation in associations of Portuguese

emigrants in the host country, as a way of maintaining Portuguese culture, positively influences their affirmation that their culture is Portuguese ( $r=0.602$ ) (table 1). On the other hand, the results of this test do not show that a set of factors influenced the Portuguese culture of emigrants.

**Table 1: Participation in Portuguese associations in the host country as a way of maintaining Portuguese culture vs the culture identified as Portuguese**

| The culture identified as Portuguese | Participation in Portuguese associations in host country |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Pearson Correlation                  | .602**   |
| Sig. (2-tailed)                      | .000   |
| N                                    | 494  |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Own Elaboration

The reasons given by the 13.1% of emigrants who report having (and perhaps having) a different culture from the Portuguese one and those who do not know or did not answer, are mainly related to having little contact with Portuguese culture and identifying more with the culture of the host country. Regarding emigrants who are undecided, they most often mention the factors related to adaptation to the host country. The analysis of the intersection of these variables allows us to add that, although there is a higher percentage of emigrants aged 29-39 who do not attend (or have attended) Portuguese associations in the host country and do not recognize their influence on their desire to return to Portugal, it is also found that these emigrants, aged between 29-39, are the ones who most claim to attend (14.4%) and recognize the influence of participation in these associations on their desire to return (15.9%) (table 2).

**Table 2: Age vs Influence of participation in Portuguese associations in emigrants' willingness to return**

| %   |                        | Influence of participation in Portuguese associations in willingness to return |       |       |                           | Total  |
|-----|------------------------|--|-------|-------|---------------------------|--------|
|     |                        | Yes  | Maybe | No    | Doesn't no/Doesn't answer |        |
| Age | Less than 18 years old | -  | -     | -     | 8.7%                      | 8.7%   |
|     | 18-28 years old        | 7.1%   | 11.2% | 10.9% | 3.3%                      | 32.5%  |
|     | 29-39 years old        | 15.9%  | 14.6% | 23.9% | 4.3%                      | 58.8%  |
|     | Total                  | 23.0%  | 25.8% | 34.8% | 16.4%                     | 100.0% |

Own Elaboration

The chi-square independence test was carried out and it has been rejected the null hypothesis. In other words, it has been observed that the age of emigrants influence the location of their house in the place of origin. In this scope, the frequencies analysis also show that the emigrants who are between the ages of 29-39 years are also the ones that mainly refer to have a house in a county with lower index of centrality (or rural area) (table 3).

**Table 3: Age vs County of the house in Portugal**

| County of the house          | Age                    |                 |                 | Total  |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|
|                              | Less than 18 years old | 18-28 years old | 29-39 years old |        |
| Highest centrality index     | 0,6%                   | 2,1%            | 6,7%            | 9,3%   |
| Lowest centrality index      | 0,3%                   | 7,2%            | 15,9%           | 23,3%  |
| Doesn't Know/ Doesn't Answer | 1,3%                   | 30,0%           | 36,1%           | 67,4%  |
| Total                        | 2,1%                   | 39,2%           | 58,7%           | 100,0% |

Own Elaboration

As regard the total number of emigrants of the working-age who would like to control their working hours in Portugal if they could have a job in the tourism sector, the data obtained using Spearman and Pearson tests did not allow to conclude anything with this variable and the variable "age" of the Portuguese emigrants. However, the frequencies analysis also enable to observe that the reasons more mentioned by emigrants with ages

between 29-39 years are because they want to i) practice agriculture, mainly for self-consumption (66.5 %); ii) have a rural lifestyle (65.7 %); and ii) have a job in tourism sector (60.4 %) (table 4).

**Table 4: Age vs. If emigrants had a job in the tourism sector, in Portugal, would like to control their own working hours due to a number of factors**

| %  |    | Age                    |                 |                 |
|--|----|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|  |    | Less than 18 years old | 18-28 years old | 29-39 years old |
| If emigrants had a job in the tourism sector, in Portugal, would like to control their own working hours due to a number of factors. | a) | -                      | 39.6%           | 60.4%           |
|  | b) | -                      | 33.5%           | 66.5%           |
|  | c) | -                      | 34.3%           | 65.7%           |
|  | d) | -                      | 53.4%           | 46.6%           |
|  | e) | -                      | 41.9%           | 58.1%           |
|  | f) | -                      | 41.3%           | 58.7%           |
|  | g) | -                      | 45.3%           | 54.7%           |
|  | h) | -                      | 41.3%           | 58.7%           |
|  | i) | -                      | 50.0%           | 50.0%           |
|  | j) | -                      | 41.0%           | 59.0%           |
|  | l) | -                      | 44.6%           | 55.4%           |
|  | m) | -                      | 42.1%           | 57.9%           |
|  | n) | -                      | 41.6%           | 58.4%           |
|  | o) | 9,1%                   | 34.7%           | 56.2%           |

Own Elaboration

Legend: A) I would also want to practice agriculture, primarily for self-consumption; B) I would have a job in the area of tourism; C) I want to have a rural lifestyle; D) I have a hard time getting a permanent job; E) I could have had more than one job; F) I could better reconcile work with my family/social life; G) It would be easier to comply with health commitments (among others); H) I could devote more time to domestic work; I) I'd be less tired by the end of the day; J) I would have a higher level of job satisfaction; L) I would be more productive at work; M) I'd have less intention of changing job; N) I'd have less pressure; O) Did not know/ Did not answer.

The fact most Portuguese emigrants mention that the second home they have in the place of origin belongs to family, may also explain their greater predisposition to invest in self-employed secondary residence services (Santos and Freitas, 2023). Therefore, the hypothesis was also tested that the new generation of Portuguese emigrants approves the possibility of renting accommodation units in the second home in the place of origin if they benefit from the exemption of the municipal property tax (table 5). Again, are the Portuguese emigrants with ages between 29 and 39 that most agree to rent accommodation units in the second home in the place of origin if with exemption from property tax (24.6%).

**Table 5: Age vs Rental of rooms to tourists in the second home in the place of origin with exemption from property tax**

| %  |                           | Age                |                   |                  | Total  |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------|
|  |                           | Under 18 years old | 18 - 28 years old | 29 -39 years old |        |
| Rental of rooms with exemption from property tax | Yes                       | -                  | 16.5%             | 24.6%            | 41.1%  |
|  | Maybe                     | -                  | 11.6%             | 15.4%            | 27.0%  |
|  | No                        | -                  | 6.6%              | 9.3%             | 15.9%  |
|  | Doesn't no/Doesn't answer | 3.9%               | 5.0%              | 7.1%             | 16.0%  |
|  | Total                     | 3.9%               | 39.7%             | 56.4%            | 100.0% |

Own Elaboration

## 6. Conclusions

The common project of Portuguese emigrants to build a second home in the place of origin, was the most evident way in which they affirmed their material and symbolic commitment to Portugal, revealing the extent to which they were linked to their origins. The places of origin of Portuguese emigrants are still socially depressed areas mainly due to the inability to create employment and income opportunities, as also attract and nurture the establishment of communities. In this regard, local culture and the tourism sector can be a possible driving force for the rural economic activity in general in these territories. Moreover, the authenticity of tourism experiences is also a critical variable to offer a competitive advantage. There, since the second homes built by Portuguese emigrants in the place of origin continue to appear places of absence, this study assess its potential impacts on return migration, rural culture and tourism development in Portugal.

Data analysis show that Portuguese emigrants of the working age and with a second home in a rural area (in the place of origin) are the ones who most claim to attend and recognize the influence of participation in Portuguese associations on their desire to return. If they had a job in the tourism sector, in Portugal, would like to control their own working hours so they can have a rural lifestyle and reconcile with the practice of agriculture, mainly for self-consumption. While locals, the return of these emigrants can strengthen rural culture and develop rural tourism. Since they are the ones that most refer to have a second home from family in the place of origin, the financial benefits are similarly key variables that can encourage them to rent accommodation units in there. However, this study also highlights that conflicts may arise between family members when the authority over the second home is being transferred between generations. Regarding this issue, new conclusions are only possible through fieldwork in a future study.

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