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CTS Dubrovnik 2005 Touristic Transcendence

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Touristic Transcendence

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Research aims: This study aims to explore the experience of transition of the tourist as s/he transits between ordinary non-tourist life and tourist life, in the case of the second homeowner. Research approach: An emic approach employing an interpretive, ethnographic methodology was deemed to be particularly appropriate to these aims.

Irish second home owners were identified as being relatively under researched in a consumer behaviour context. It is a group that is affluent, growing and heterogeneous (Mottiar & Quinn, 2003). The first phase of the field research, conducted during the summer of 2004, employed depth interviews with nine tourist consumers. All participants returned on a regular basis to a second/holiday home 45 minutes to two hours from their primary home.

There has been a dearth of post positivistic methodology in the field of tourism consumer behaviour (Ryan, 2002; McCabe & Stokoe, 2004; Mattila, 2004). The overall research orientation in this study is one of non-participant observation and the dataset in question will comprise interview transcripts, field notes, observations and methodological diaries. To this end a flexible, iterative approach was adopted in order to understand the nature and experience of this transition.

Key arguments and findings:

- The literature on post modernism would suggest that the contemporary consumer eschews a sense of rootedness and belongingness (Urry, 2001; Bauman, 2001). This research will problematise this contention by asked whether second home owners are seeking a sanctuary away from home as opposed to a disconnected series of random destinations.
- The findings will also address the possibility of a degree of hybridisation where second home owners simultaneously strive for rootedness and belongingness in their second homes, yet still continue to relish a diverse range of travel experiences.
- This study will probe the second home owner's awareness of nuances of experience in the transition from primary to secondary home and, perhaps more crucially, if such a difference does exist, how this transition differs from that which occurs in the conventional two week vacation scenario.