HOLIDAY HOMES: THE UNSPOKEN CRISIS

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Abstract. This paper addresses the concerns of a growing minority of people who live in the peripheral regions of Britain, attracting tourists and those in search of holiday homes. Taking as its focus West Cornwall, the paper explores the impact of economic and social change on the lives of local people excluded from the property market. The authors take a novel approach by examining the effects of the interaction of the property market and ethnographic accounts from local people.

Keywords: Cornwall, gift exchange, kinship, holiday homes, predatory behaviour, and self-catering accommodation

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the dislocation from their own communities of the growing minority of people affected by the distorted market for holiday homes. Using Sennen Cove in West Cornwall, U.K. as the location of the study we employ ethnographic methods to give a voice to the concerns of local people who are unable or unwilling to express their plight regarding the contradiction that exists between the need for housing stock and tourism development in the form of holiday home ownership. We pay particular attention to the social processes that are involved in the establishment of a dependent relationship between indigenous people and holiday home owners. The point we are making in this paper is that the local voice that has not been heard – referring to the subtitle of the paper 'the unspoken crisis' – is that of the indigenous people who have become obligated to the holiday home owners by economic necessity and not through choice. We achieve these aims by adopting an interpretive framework drawing on the disciplines of social policy, economics and social anthropology.

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Counter to this process of process of exclusion, this paper illustrates how the manage-ment of property as a resource controlled by kinship groups can stem the predatory and acquisitive behaviour of incoming developers. Fieldwork shows that the female members of these groups with a stake in tenure wield increasing informal power in an economy that has come to be dominated by tourism. Through the sentiment of attachment, they are able to influence the local market in holiday accommodation by retaining property thereby making a scarce resource scarcer.

We also show that the transfer of power from the patrilineal to a matrilineal system of management within these kin groups takes place in the hereditary transmission of property. This is significant because it demonstrates the process of intervention and negotiation that underpins the continuity of the indigenous people's cultural survival. In the penultimate section of the paper it is argued that socially excluded and marginalized people are in fact necessary for those seeking to invest in holiday homes in Cornwall.

Holiday home is a generic term used in this paper to indicate housing stock that for all or part of the year falls outside the accommodation available to local people to rent or buy in a tourist area. Embedded within this generic definition is the more familiar concept of the second home. Second homes are a very specialised form of self-catering accommodation. They are not usually thought of in the same way as the traditional holiday lets rented for one or two weeks each year by a succession of visitors to English seaside resorts. Second homes offer no 'in house' staff to provide hospitality services to their occasional residents, they are in every respect self-catering units. What differs from the traditional self-catering unit is the form of tenure and its use as a vehicle for short-term economic return and long-term investment.

Second home owners purchase their properties with very different motivations, and this will determine use made of the premises as self-catering units. The usage and motiva-tion can best be understood as a continuum. At one end is the owner who buys a property exclusively for their own use, visiting at weekends, school holidays and for extended summer breaks. They bring much of their own food and drink to cater for the break and other leisure and lifestyle goods. Their intention is to use the second home for personal use with other residents being restricted to close friends and family. At the notional centre point of the continuum are those who buy a second home for their personal use, but in addition let the property as conventional self-catering accommodation when not being used by the owner. The management of the letting for self-catering accommodation is usually undertaken by regional or national agencies specialising in 'holiday cottages'. At the other end of the continuum is the second home owner who buys the property primarily for investment purposes. Personal use may be restricted to one or two weeks a year, with the remainder of the time 'to let' as self-catering accommodation. Whatever the mix of tenure what is common to second home owners is the privatised lifestyle this form of self--catering accommodation offers them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

We are aware that the issue of holiday homes / second homes has been discussed by people in rural and tourist areas for over twenty years [Bollom 1978; Coppock 1977; Countryside Agency 2002]. Housing has now become a major strand of government

policy with initiatives such as the Sustainable Communities Plan for the South West [Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003]. One of the aims is to provide affordable housing and address the problem of redundant and empty properties. These approaches are essentially interventions by the National State at a local level, in the housing market. The conventional approach to the issue of the imbalance in the housing stock between holiday homes and other forms of accommodation is through the planning system and policy response [Purbeck District Council, 2005]. Hall and Muller [2004] set out reasons why there has been a 're-emergence in interest in second home research'. In doing so they rather understate the issue, saying second homes have been used as a economic development tool leading to the 're-emergence of conflict between second home developers and the permanent population in some localities, making second homes a significant policy issue'. An examination of the literature would have shown that second homes have been a continual source of conflict in the Celtic periphery of Britain [Ireland 1987]. Hall and Muller [2004] claim that 'In contrast to other forms of tourism mobility, such as day tripping, second home tourism is covered relatively well in census data and national statistics'. This is not our understanding of the accuracy of the enumeration of second homes in the British 2001 Census [Brown 2004].

At the local level another type of response to the unspoken crisis involves written protest and public debate in the form of letters to the local newspaper, The Cornishman (30.10.2003; 18.12.2003 & 23.12.2003). To understand this process in West Cornwall we have utilized concepts advanced by Jordan [1996] of 'communities of fate' and 'communities of choice'. The latter are opportunistic and predatory, a phenomenon that has already been noted in operation in Sennen Cove [Ireland 1987]. What has not been fully documented is the process by which the 'communities of fate' that have been excluded respond to increasing marginalisation. This paper demonstrates the 'economics of human collectivities' [Jordan 1996]. Jordan argues that when individuals are most vulnerable and lack personal and material resources 'they enjoy the protection afforded by membership of an inclusive group that cooperates productively to re-distribute its product' [Jordan 1996].

At the level of Government policy-making there seems to be broad agreement with the view expressed by Jordan [1996] that in the last two decades the worse off in society have actually seen their standard of living fall further. This is in sharp contrast to the dominant paradigm of 'free market utopianism as a political creed' [Jordan 1996]. The problem of increasing poverty outlined by Jordan is particularly acute in rural areas of Britain. Hirsch [2003] reporting for BBC News highlights the problem. He says, 'The Government has frankly admitted that its system of giving help to rural areas and communities is confusing and bureaucratic'. This lack of clarity on policies to respond to rural crisis was evident in the recent 'foot and mouth' outbreak [Ireland and Vetier 2002]. Hirsch [2003] concludes that rural policy has amounted to little more than 'rearranging the bureaucratic deckchairs'. For example MAFF has now been replaced with DERFA and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is now responsible for policy on sustainable communities.

Andrew George (MP for St Ives and Isles of Scilly) introduced a debate in the House of Commons on Rural Housing [Hansard 2003]. George explained the problem in Cornwall. He said:

When we are talking in terms of generalities, sometimes we miss significant points about local areas. I will talk about my constituency, which includes west Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly where there is a significant and large private housing market. I call it that because I do not like using the phrase "open" housing market. The market is not open to all local people. It is important to call it a private housing market. It is a bit like a golf club: one can enter only if one has certain credentials and can pay the membership fee [Hansard 2003, Col. 31WH].

What George highlights in this quotation is the criteria of membership for what Jordan [1996] terms 'communities of choice'. Membership is determined by the ability to pay for housing in this private market. In contrast George characterizes the plight of those who belong to the 'communities of fate' [Jordan 1996]. George says, 'For people who cannot even begin to look at the private market, which is the vast majority of people on ordinary local wages, the question is where else to look'. On this theme George's remarks confirm what our research has found in Sennen Cove. 'Many properties are lost to the holiday trade because one can get a far better income. The private sector therefore affords little opportunity for people looking for accommodation' [Hansard 2003].

Nationalist parties and Celtic pressure groups are even more vociferous in their criticism of the housing crisis, which they link to tourism and in-migration. Mebyon Kernow – the party for Cornwall attributes the low wage problem cited by George to an over-dependence on tourism. Linking tourism to the housing market Mebyon Kernow agrees with George that 'the housing market is not working for the good of local communities in Cornwall'. The result, as our research in Sennen Cove demonstrates, is that 'many coastal villages have become little more than havens for holiday makers' [Mebyon Kernow 2003]. In response, one of Mebyon Kernow's policies is an 'immediate imposition of 200% council tax on second homes' [Mebyon Kernow 2003].

The issue of holiday homes is a Pan Celtic concern. This is clear from an alliance formed between CYMUNED a Welsh pressure group campaigning for the 'right of local people to have housing, the right of an indigenous culture to survive'. At a meeting in Penzance in March 2002, CYMUNED formed an alliance with Cornish Solidarity to campaign against unaffordable housing prices. Estimates of the scale of the housing crisis vary; however, a recent BBC News report in June, 2003, citing figures collected by the GMB Union, stated that there were in Cornwall '6.000 empty houses and nearly 11.000 second homes'. Our view is that holiday homes have social and political consequences that must be acknowledged and in so doing challenge the dominant agenda of the hospitality and tourism industries [Botterill 2000]. Having summarised the housing crisis the question has to be asked: What is the nature of the social and economic processes at work in local communities affected and can knowledge of them influence the policy response?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

For ethnographic research to have any relevance the qualitative examples from the field have to be capable of interpretation within a conceptual framework. This section of the paper outlines the concepts used to provide a framework for the fieldwork. There are five interrelated concepts within the framework: social policy, market principle, social

exclusion, kinship and cultural identity. To understand the dynamic process between the operation of market principle, in relation to housing, and the effect of state intervention, we need to add to the conceptual framework a theory of social exclusion. The redistribution of scarce resources by those excluded from the formal economic system helps us understand how local families use their self-catering accommodation in a special way and therefore carefully orchestrate cultural continuity while adapting to change in peripheral communities.

Market principle can be understood as operating in a perfect market were there are large numbers of buyers and sellers who agree to exchange goods at a price, without reference outside the market [Jordan 1996]. Holiday homes are traded between buyers and sellers in this way. Into this equation we need to build the reaction of groups and communities to the increasing scarcity of local housing stock. One group becomes impotent in the market place, those without the financial means to compete either from earnings or using capital from inherited property. The findings of our research will demonstrate that the dominant kinship groups in Sennen Cove act collectively 'excluding outsiders from the goods [housing used for self-catering accommodation] that they supply to each other' [Jordan 1996].

What is of interest here is why should kin groups combine to act against market principle? The answer to this question leads us to conclude that the 'communities of fate', that mirror closely the local kinship network, share social characteristics that are absent in the 'communities of choice', that is, a shared consciousness derived from membership of a kinship group that provides a unique cultural identity. In Sennen Cove identity is derived from residence, kin ties and occupation. 'Covers' [pronounced to rhyme with Dover] is the collective name given to people born in Sennen Cove who belong to one of the main kinship networks and who are associated with fishing. Those people who share these characteristics have a shared consciousness of not just being Cornish, but of being a Cover.

METHODOLOGY

The economic and social processes we describe here at work in the local housing market are not mere apt illustrations but as part of a systematic collection of ethnographic data over a period of twenty years. Ireland began with the study of the impact of tourism on Sennen Cove by undertaking two years fieldwork between 1981 and 1983. In common with many anthropologists he did not lose contact with the field in the intervening years, more recently working with Ellis to maintain and update an ethnographic record of social change in Sennen Cove [Ireland 2004; Ireland and Ellis 2005].

Ellis's position in Sennen Cove is unusual as an indigenous person and academic giving her 'the ability to observe events on a daily basis, especially within the family and reflect on their significance, using informal conversations and chance exchanges to build an ethnography' [Monaghan and Just 2000]. Ellis has acknowledged the sensitivity of this position as family member and ethnographer. Other researchers have adopted the inclusion of a more autobiographical style of presentation, in which like Ellis 'the ethnographers background and relations with his or her subjects becomes a central topic

of the ethnography' [Monaghan and Just 2000]. The sensitive nature of this research and the close proximity to key informants does raise ethical considerations. It is important to note that neither author has a personal antipathy against the developer of self-catering second home accommodation who appears in findings of our ethnography. However, by virtue of undertaking this study, the authors by default become advocates for the minority of people affected by the distorted market for holiday homes. This is a consequence of the fact that 'the peoples anthropologists study have often been among the most vulnerable' [Monaghan and Just 2000].

The data gathered provides the building blocks for the extended case method and situational analysis [Mitchell 1956; Van Velsen 1964; Shokeid 1971]. We have adapted the method of presenting data pioneered by Shokeid [1971]. The data collected consists of four kinds. First there are normative descriptions from observations of interaction between locals and the second home developer. Secondly, there are the extended case studies that demonstrate the processes of decision making over property among the Covers. We present thirdly the analysis of social situations that focus on tensions between the Covers and the developer, and finally statistical data from the village property Census and official sources.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT FOR THE RESEARCH

To enable comparison to be made with other rural and maritime communities a demographic and geographical sketch of the context for the field research is given. The parish of Sennen is situated in the extreme Southwest of England within the administrative district of Penwith, one of the six local authorities in Cornwall. Cornwall has a higher than average concentration of holiday accommodation, much of which is located in the coastal communities, as indicated by the 2001 Census.

Figure 1 clearly indicates the concentration of holiday/second homes in the Penwith District. Sennen Parish is approximately eight miles from Penzance and 290 miles from London. The parish covers approximately 2.300 acres of predominantly plateau land between 250 and 300 feet above sea level. The North and North-Western boundary is formed by Whitesand Bay, which comprises the beach of Sennen Cove and the granite cliffs eventually extending to Land's End [Ireland 2004]. Sennen Cove is an occupational community that owes its reason for existence to the pilchard fishing of the 18th and 19th centuries. In the last century Sennen Cove made the transition from a community dependent on fishing to one relying increasingly on income from tourism [Ireland 1987, 1996]. As a result of this transition a local census of self-catering accommodation in Sennen Cove carried out by the authors show a more complex picture of tenure. Table 1 shows the distribution of tenure in Sennen Cove in 2003, with tenure-type generated from the field.

Table 1 shows two types of second home tenure. Pure second homes are those properties exclusively for the owners' recreational use that represent an extension of the owners' private household. Another type of tenure, Second homes & Let, is used by owners for their own recreation but this activity is secondary to the property's use as income-generation through holiday letting.
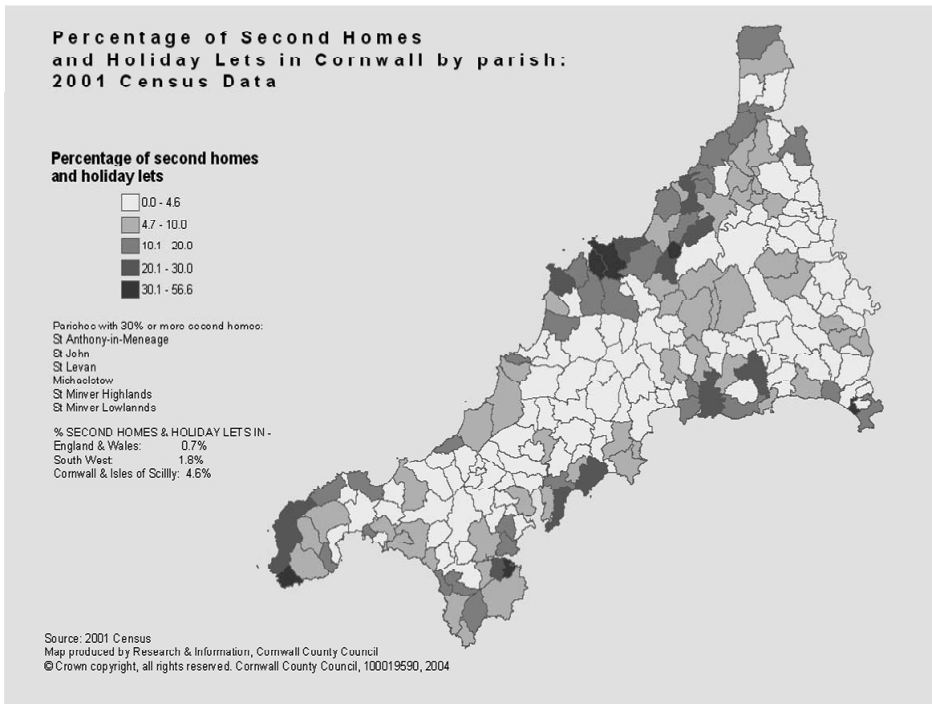
Fig. 1.   Percentage of Second Homes and Holiday Lets in Cornwall
Rys. 1.   Udział procentowy "drugich domów" oraz "domów wakacyjnych" w Kornwalii
Source: Parish: 2001 Census Data.
Źródło: Parish: 2001 Census Data.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of tenure Sennen Cove, 2003
Tabela 1. Rozkład procentowy praw własności w Sennen Cove, 2003

Non-holiday accommodation tenure-type 42% N = 60	Holiday accommodation tenure-type 58% N = 84			
Full-time occupation	Lets: local	Lets: non-local	Second homes & let	Pure second homes
42%	13%	8%	19%	18%

Source: Own research.
Źródło: Badania własne.

The other two categories Lets: local and Lets: non-local are not for the owners' personal recreation at all but are wholly for the holiday trade. What the table does not submit is the importance of the former tenure-type, Lets: local, mainly reserved for inherited property within indigenous kin sets. Fieldwork has shown a complex state of affairs in terms of the management and use of these surplus properties with local families themselves engaged in the holiday homes industry to protect their cultural heritage.

FINDINGS

The social and market forces we have described in the previous section, outlining the conceptual framework, are played out as a social drama between two families in Sennen Cove, the Penders and the 'Palmers'.

The Pender kin group

We take as our case study William Pender and his family and chart the allocation process of William's seven properties to his sons and daughters as it unfolds at the time of writing. William's property is the result of approximately three centuries of transmission through the male line. 'The Cove was full of them [Penders] at one time'. This comment by a member of William's kin groups needs to be understood in the context of a contemporary Cove where second homes and holiday lets dominate.

William has four children, one son and three daughters aged between their mid-forties to mid-sixties. Members of the family reside in some properties and others are used as holiday lets. A third-share of one property is owned by a cousin. The eldest, unmarried son will inherit the main family house. He has lived with his parents all his life and is known for a talismanic, although fatalistic, Cover identity. His income derives from various building and grass-cutting jobs around the Parish. Family members are concerned about his future in the large family house 'How will he pay the 'lectric (electricity bill) for that great house?' One daughter also lives in the Cove occupying one of William's properties (which she will inherit). She has three grown-up children, one of whom herself [Ellis] lives in the Cove with her four year old son in one of the properties.

The other two daughters of William live in different parishes within the district of Penwith. Both have experienced career and social mobility since they left the Cove. Although neither of them lives in the Cove they both retain a firm attachment to it with the prospect of selling the property they will inherit, out of the question. Four of William's seven properties were, in recent years, 'informally inherited' between these sisters within the lifetime of their father in order to offset death duties, but more importantly to enable the substantial refurbishment of them by those in a financial position to do so. William can be colloquially described as 'asset rich but cash poor'. This 'pre-inheritance inheritance' involves a complex financial arrangement whereby the considerably enhanced revenue from the letting is divided between the daughters and their parents.

We can interpret this account of William's kin group through the concept of differential inheritance [Delphy and Leonard 1986]. The advantage of this is the provision of a structure for understanding the allocation and re-distribution of cultural roles. Delphy and Leonard consider the most interesting cases of differential inheritance, where resources cannot or are not equally distributed, those 'where accession is at stake – not succession to the father's actual position, but rather to a status similar to his – and where this is tied not (as classically) to material inheritance, but to cultural inheritance'. This relates to our fieldwork in that the unmarried son is not transformed by the inheritance process. The lineage ends with the son, who places a high value on local culture, yet is powerless to sustain it, despite the considerable material assets he will inherit.

Kinship, as with any other social institution, is a cultural construct with rules of behaviour and interaction between members. Kinship in Sennen Cove has traditionally been patrilineal with naming systems and the transmission of property and other resources

through the male line. The ethnography has shown the adaptive nature of culture with in Sennen Cove from patrilineal to matrilineal power and the inheritance of property. The inheritance by the females represents the power of attachment, a sentiment characteristic of the 'communities of fate'. The investment made by the female members of William's kin set is not purely for economic returns. It is often remarked by member of the set that 'They'll never see the money they put into those places [for refurbishment] back'. Their investment serves to underline the duality of their status as professional women who have had, and in some cases continue to pursue, a career outside the Cove and their strong identification with their kin. This identification is not merely symbolic, it enables the daughters of the patriarch, William, to exercise important pre-inheritance controls over property. It is these controls that present barriers to entry into the local property market for two groups of potential buyers. The first are indigenous people who, although members of the kinship system of the Cove, are perceived as not at the centre, having their claim to property diluted by exogamy. The second group is the subject of this paper. These are the prospective second home owners. The paper now turns to examine the strategies they adopt to try and circumvent indigenous control mechanisms over the sale of property.

The 'Palmer' Family

The 'Palmer' family (pseudonym), in Sennen Cove, consists of a husband and wife and children who are away at school in term time. Mr Palmer is a property developer for self-catering holiday accommodation in Devon and Cornwall. The Palmers fit closely one of the five distinct types of ideologies of home ownership identified by Gurney [2000] 'petty tycoons...strong believers in the home as an investment in their own financial acumen.'(Cited in Darke and Gurney 2000:89–90). The Palmers have been coming to Sennen Cove for about twenty years and now become local residents. In conceptual terms William and his kin group are representative of the 'community of fate' while the Palmers are indicative of the 'community of choice'. We direct our attention to the examination of ethnographic data that charts the strategies the Palmers adopt in an attempt to circumvent indigenous controls over the sale of property.

Strategies to gain entry to the local property market

Overcoming cultural barriers to the purchase of holiday accommodation is not an easy process; it can take a considerable period of time and the investment of social capital, with risk on both sides. The following case study details the subtle process involved in acquiring property in Sennen Cove. The extended case material gathered by Ellis shows a familiar cycle which begins with holidays in Sennen and ends with the acquisition of a property for use as holiday accommodation. The case centres on the Palmers, a family who have followed a familiar pattern leading to eventual entry into the local property market and their relationship with a carpenter related to the William's kinship group by marriage. The cycle of predatory behaviour has five key moments over a twenty year period (Fig. 2).

The five key moments are: cultivating friendships with the locals; setting up social obligations through gift exchange; 'getting in' with the community of fate; recruiting a service class; property acquisition and, finally, an increase in social distance from the indigenous people leading to rejection. The events described here take place over a period from the 1980s to the present day (2005).
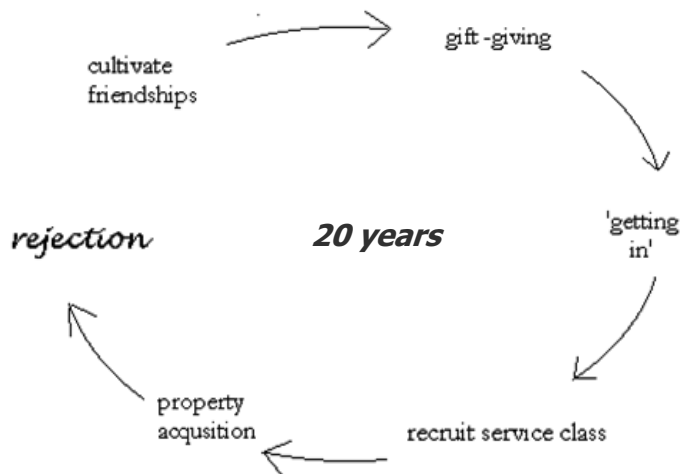
Fig 2.   Cycle of Predatory Behaviour in Sennen Cove
Rys. 2.   Cykl nieuczciwego zachowania w Sennen Cove
Source: Own research.
Źródło: Badania własne.

The first stage in this process is to build social capital with indigenous people that can later be exchanged for information and services to assist the Palmers in the purchase and maintenance of property in Sennen Cove. The first step involves building up social relations with indigenous people with a very different culture and socio-economic status to their own. The Palmers begin cultivating friendships when taking family holidays in Sennen Cove and soon decide to buy a house in the village for use as self-catering holiday accommodation. The house they buy is strategically placed opposite one of the heads of a main kinship group in Sennen Cove, William. Ellis, as a member of this group, becomes aware of the Palmers' strategies to gain acceptance. She recalls how the family responded to the Palmers' planned encounters designed to cultivate friendships. William, the head of the kin set, would comment on Mrs Palmer's enthusiasm for catching him up while he was out walking the dog on the sand dunes. 'She got some tongue on her' [she talks a lot], he would remark. Information on the functioning of the local community is essential to success in the local market. Therefore, some form of acceptance, however superficial, is essential if the in-migrants are to obtain the support of locals for their ventures [the Palmers were planning to buy further property in the Cove]. This leads to the second stage in the cycle: setting up social obligations through gift giving.

Gift Giving. Ellis recalls that the Palmers have been giving gifts to William and his wife over a long period of time, perhaps twenty years.

'The most notable gifts have been things such as paintings or hand-made pottery given at birthdays. They are items of good quality intended to be put on display in the 'front room' perhaps becoming heirlooms. The gifts are usually items that would be beyond the purse of William to buy. However, these items exist in a sort of front-stage competition with the genuine heirlooms of William's kin set which came into existence not in the form of bought gifts but by centuries of hereditary transmission. An expensive

oil painting of a famous ship in a gilt frame (probably costing up to a hundred pounds) finds its place amongst William's own paintings of the Cove and Land's End fashioned from off-cuts of hardboard and household emulsion and gloss [William was a carpenter and part-time fisherman]. Similarly, maritime-inspired ornaments that have been given sit on sideboards next to cutlery and a jug salvaged from the wrecks in the Cove such as the Trifolium and the Bomeor in the William's parents' time. It is noteworthy that one hand-thrown pot given by the Palmers was bought at the annual Cape Cornwall Arts and Crafts exhibition, where William himself regularly exhibited his paintings and carvings. In addition to birthdays and anniversaries, gifts are normally given to William and his wife when the Palmers (amongst several other families from 'up-country') arrive at their holiday homes and when they leave to go back home. On these occasions the gifts are usually less expensive, mainly consumable/perishable items such as flowers or chocolates. William's wife, Honor, has always been interested in growing plants and so these gifts are always met with enthusiasm. It is safe to say that at every family celebratory event there will be at least a card and often a gift from the Palmers'.

In Ellis' account, these examples of gift giving between the two families are the source of mixed reactions from the recipients, from superficial appreciation, hidden embarrassment (evident only to fellow kin) and most importantly, a sense of social obligation to the givers. The gifts serve to symbolise the originating cultures of givers and recipients. The expensive items given by the Palmers only have a worth in a culture that increasingly attributes high exchange values to antiques and collectables [Bedford and Mackay 1977]. In contrast, displayed along side these items is ethnic art and historic artefacts from shipwrecks, that form part of the cultural heritage of the Covers. By taking gifts from a very different cultural milieu into their home, William has accepted and to some extent validated the Palmers' existence, thus forming a bond of social obligation between the families. For this bond to continue it has to be constantly renewed through the giving of gifts on entry and exit to Sennen Cove.

The gifts 'give the donor [Palmers] a mystic and dangerous hold over the recipients [Sahlins 1974]. To repay the obligation of the gift William and his wife invite the Palmers to become fictive kin. Being present at a rite of passage, signified by a wedding, gave the Palmers privileged access to the community, this process is referred to locally as 'getting in'. For the real purpose of property development and improvement the Palmers needed access to the local service class.

By attending family events the Palmers were able to build relationships with kin who would be later recruited to service property development. Ellis charts this process of getting in, essential for the Palmers' plans to develop self-catering holiday accommodation.

Getting in Ellis notes that her first real awareness of the Palmers as linked to her family came when her sister got married in the late 1990s.

'I was aware of some background discussion of their presence at the ceremony and reception afterwards in the Queen's Hotel in Penzance. The discussion that ensued revolved around my sister's parents and grandparents being very keen to include the Palmers and this was eventually honoured. The routine was always the same; firstly the grandparents raised the idea of the Palmers being invited. My mother and older Aunt then took responsibility for breaking this news to the person whose event it was (e.g. wedding or christening). The person was usually annoyed at first and then they relented (they had

no choice in reality, the older members of the family would not know of the arguments behind the scenes)'. This example illustrates a link between gift giving and the extension of social tolerance ('getting in') to other spheres. Marshall (1961, cited in Sahlins 1974) concludes, 'The worse thing is not giving presents. If people do not like each other but one gives gifts and the other must accept, this brings a peace between them'.

The second incident took place when Ellis's mother's sister's first child was christened in the winter of 1998 in Sennen church.

'During the church ceremony I remember seeing the Palmers standing up in the pews, looking forwards and thinking 'how come they are here?' until my mind processed the connection with the family. I remember their faces did not look particularly relaxed perhaps because they knew no-one at these gathering other than the older members of the family. I particularly remember Mrs Palmer's face having a startled expression. The day of the Christening was very windy with a stiff, cold North-Westerly coming in across the bay, 'right in' as we call it. Afterwards there was a small reception upstairs in the Old Success hotel. I remember the Palmers standing by the door quite a lot looking awkward and I had a very brief exchange with them, more of a greeting than a conversation. My sisters and I left that to the older members of the family who always do the right thing by them. I remember hearing family members' voices changing into a sort of stilted, high-pitched careful articulation when talking with them. Later on in the reception I noticed they took position on one of the comfortable settees, I suppose they couldn't do any other seeing as they couldn't 'mingle'. My mother would be sitting on the arm of the settee talking to them. Looking back these must have been awkward occasions for the Palmers.'

These incidents show inauthentic people in authentic settings [Pearce and Moscardo 1986] to which they have no cultural ties, only those that have been constructed for them. The accounts imply a great deal of psychological and social discomfort for the Palmers in their role as fictive kin. This raises the question: Why did they continue to play this role in William's kin group over such a long period of time? Above all the Palmers wanted social acceptance in Sennen Cove and minimal hostility to their plans to develop holiday properties. There is also a more pragmatic reason, the need for local labour to undertake improvements to their properties that we have termed a service class.

Service class. In this context a local service class is meant to signify indigenous people who have traditionally been recruited by incomers to Sennen Cove to undertake the maintenance of their holiday accommodation and tend to their personal needs when on holiday. The growth of this form of labour is common. Hennessy [1994] notes in a study of Looe, South-East Cornwall, the growth of a pool of workers within the 'informal economy'. The services provided range from cleaning and looking after the keys of properties for a small retainer, to artisan and trades skills such as carpentry and building work. To fulfil this role the Palmers recruited Ronnie, (a pseudonym) a local carpenter and relation by marriage to the William's kin group, to undertake improvements to their second home and other properties. Over the years a bond of trust developed between Ronnie and Mr Palmer. This is important because this trust was later to be betrayed. Mr Palmer had told Ronnie some years ago that he would never develop properties in Sennen, because of the potential difficulties of undertaking such a venture in a village of which he felt a part.

Property acquisition. The penultimate stage of the process involves the acquisition and development of property. Ellis details the case of some old garages close to the Land's End cliff being bought for development as a 'backpacker hostel'.

'Local people were confident that this was unsuitable for development due to the proximity to the Land's End cliff line. It was also thought that the National Trust would never allow it. Sennen Parish Council refused planning permission as did Penwith District Council. Over the next few months it transpires that it has been passed 'higher up', with a certain sense of inevitability with widespread acknowledgement that Palmer must be a 'Mason'. The residents of Marias Lane formed a protest group prior to it being passed. Once it had been passed a notice was posted up at the garages thanking everyone for their efforts and deploring this state of affairs. Some time later, everyone was lifted by the news that the National Trust was to challenge the development. A few weeks later it was learnt that the National Trust apparently ran out of time in which to submit a legal challenge.'

Rejection Ellis provides an ethnographic account of changes in social interaction with the Palmers that lead them to become ostracised from the community. The first indication of a change in relations between the Palmers and local families comes from the matriarch, Honor, over the construction of a car park. Ellis notes:

'Things began to change between the older members of my family and the Palmers when they started to build those places up Marias Lane [purpose built self-catering units]…in fact it was before that, because of the row about the planning permission. Just before all of this, they built a car park in front of their house with quite a high wall facing the road. 'Now we got to look at that' said Honor who has a good view of it from the downstairs windows. This was the first negative thing I'd heard her say about the Palmers, although I'm sure there were many thoughts of the same kind.'

The process of social rejection from the community becomes reaffirmed through comments and reaction to minor acts of hostility toward the Palmers as the next example shows. Ellis says: 'It was a difficult time for my parents and grandparents when they were building those places in Marias Lane because they kept trying to turn the conversation around to 'the site' and 'how we had so-and-so at the site the other day'. My mother said 'we don't say nothing about it, we just say 'oh yeah' and talk about something else'. I was told with some enthusiasm about the time they had the bumper of their mini [their 'runaround car'] kicked in on the site. Everyone assumed it was someone from the Marias Lane protest group which was formed when they were trying to get planning. My Mother said 'They are quite open about it really, she [Mrs Palmer] said that they've taken some stick over building they places'.

For developers like the Palmers, rejection by local communities is a price they are prepared to pay for profit. Their way of coping with rejection in one community is to turn attention to another. This process is evident from a recent conversation about the Palmers between Ellis and her mother. She asked her mother, 'If she sees much of the Palmers now? Her mother replied, 'No, they are away at their other places aren't they?' (other homes around the South West of England).

The tenure of property gives identity and cultural continuity in communities like Sennen Cove. It is for this reason that main kin groups guard their inheritance. For the Palmers the ownership of property has a different meaning, it is a marker of success in the dominant capitalism economy. Ellis demonstrates the tension between these two

positions and the personal effect the development of self-catering accommodation units by the Palmers has had on her. She tells us: 'There is a plaque above the Palmers' house saying 'Sennen Cove Limited' I saw Palmer polishing it one day and it was the first time I'd saw it, it made me feel sick. I realised then that it referred to the places up Marias Lane. The owner of the car garage in Sennen had seen the self-catering units in Marias Lane up for sale on the internet'.

CONCLUSION

This paper has had one overriding aim, to show through the social drama played out between the Penders and the Palmers the social processes involved in acquiring property for development as self-catering accommodation. The ethnographic data presented binds together social situations into an extended case study that charts a cycle of predatory behaviour. Social interactions between these families have been shown to have the intention of gaining access to local property and the labour to service and maintain them. This cycle of behaviour has been illuminated by fieldwork involving one author [Ellis] in the observation and reflection on daily events and their significance. The sensitivity of this position has been acknowledged and data gathered without prejudice.

A review of the literature indicates the tension that exists in the market between buyers and those for whom their property is a marker of cultural identity in Sennen Cove. In summary the property market does not function for local people, making them vulnerable because of the lack of personal and material resources. The ethnographic account detailed through our fieldwork has elucidated the conceptual framework adopted. The Penders and the Palmers are respectively indicative of the 'communities of fate' and 'communities of choice'. Detailed insight has been gained into the strategies and social interactions engaged in by both groups to either gain access to, or retain property in Sennen Cove. We have argued that anthropologists often find themselves as advocates for marginalised and vulnerable groups. This we believe is the significance of our research, because not a great deal is known about the social processes and tensions manifest in communities subject to demands for holiday accommodation. Accounts are more often documented from the point of view of the 'communities of choice', in U.K. television programmes such as 'A Place in the Sun' and 'Location, Location, Location'.

In conclusion, there should be no doubt in the mind of the reader as to the 'storyline' or the point of the argument. This paper is a response to an acknowledged void in research on British coastal communities engaged in providing hospitality; that is, a detailed 'ethnographic examination of social structure, processes and relationships' [Boissevain and Selwyn 2004]. The modus operandi for change and cultural continuity in Sennen Cove has centred on the ownership of self-catering accommodation.

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DOMY WAKACYJNE: MILCZĄCY KRYZYS

Streszczenie. Artykuł przedstawia obawy osób zamieszkałych w regionach peryferyjnych Wielkiej Brytanii, zachęcających turystów, którzy poszukują domów wakacyjnych. Na przykładzie Zachodniej Kornwalii, artykuł prezentuje wpływ zmian ekonomicznych i spo- łecznych na życie lokalnej ludności wyłączonej z rynku nieruchomości. Autorzy zastoso- wali nowe podejście, badając efekty interakcji rynku nieruchomości oraz postawy lokalnej społeczności.

Słowa kluczowe: Cornwall, wymiana prezentów, pokrewieństwo, dom wakacyjny, nieuczciwe zachowanie, zakwaterowanie z możliwością korzystania z kuchni