'Cultural icons': media representations of second homes in New Zealand

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Abstract

New Zealanders have a long history of second home ownership, and the second home landscape is an important part of the New Zealand culture. Traditional second homes are known colloquially as the 'bach' or 'crib', and it is part of the New Zealand psyche to 'escape to the bach' for the weekend, especially over the summer months. However, since the 1960s these traditional second homes have been replaced in many areas by second homes that are indistinguishable from urban homes. They have become much larger, are often architecturally designed and with more modern conveniences and technology than the traditional bach. Over the last two decades, perhaps as a response to these changes, the media has valorized traditional second homes, and the 'bach' has been increasingly constructed as a form of 'cultural icon'. This study utilises a thematic discourse analysis of popular media articles on second homes to examine how the notion of the bach as a cultural icon has been constructed. Findings show that the media utilises the idea of a (collective) great New Zealand dream as the basis for its construction, with three identifiable themes coming through in the discourse; living the dream, losing the dream, and clinging to the dream. Each is examined in turn. This study shows that popular media provides a rich source of empirical material for research into second home culture and thus also has relevance for other countries where second homes are imbued with cultural significance.

Keywords: second home, bach, New Zealand, cultural icon, media discourse, thematic analysis

Introduction

This paper presents the results of an investigation into how the popular media constructs the New Zealand second home, the 'bach', as a 'cultural icon', by way of a thematic analysis of media discourse from 2000-2012. New Zealand second homes have traditionally been known colloquially as 'baches' or 'cribs' in southern New Zealand (Male, 2001) and in the last two decades, the popular media has repeatedly constructed the bach as a cultural icon (Clark & Walker, 2000; Grigor, 2008; Keen & Hall, 2004; Male, 2001; Mitchell & Chaplin, 1984; Peart, 2009). The term 'cultural icon' is highly ambiguous, stemming from the variety of ways it is used in the media and in academic literature – indeed, the latter often assumes the reader understands the term and does not seek to define it at all (Parker, 2012). Yet despite the difficulties in identifying what constitutes a cultural icon, there seems to

be a number of commonalities in their designation; they represent something distinct in a culture or way of life, they are recognisable as such, they are durable, they reside in the collective memory of a large group of people, they provoke nostalgia and are seductive, and are filled with meaning which may vary between people (D. R. Hall, 2008; Parker, 2012; Scott & Tomaselli, 2009). While it can be argued that the popular media primarily use it as an adjective and form of journalistic tool, the significance of the media as a vehicle for the social construction of cultural icons cannot be underestimated (Parker, 2012; Scott & Tomaselli, 2009).

Goodale and Godbey (1988) noted that the power of the press was established as early as the 1500s when Martin Luther, a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation, published and disseminated his works to his followers. However, the media provides more than a mere tool for the distribution of ideas, it is also a means of enabling the (re)production of cultural practices and values (Crouch, Jackson, & Thompson, 2005; Long & Robinson, 2009). As such, it has been recognised that the mass media may have a significant influence on public perception and provides a rich resource for scholars (C. M. Hall & Valentin, 2005; Timothy, 2012). In the field of tourism, much of the research into the media has involved the interpretation of the signs and symbolic representations found in tourism promotional material such as brochures, guidebooks, and more recently websites and blogs (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2002; Crouch et al., 2005; Long & Robinson, 2009).

Analysis of media discourse about second homes is less common, although there have been some recent studies examining various aspects of the iconic image of the second home landscape in Finland (Pitkänen, 2011; Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen, 2008; Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen, 2010). More often, researchers have simply noted in passing the influence of the media on the construction of the second home as an iconic part of a (real or imagined) national identity (Harrison, 2008; Luka, 2007; Periäinen, 2006). There are also instances where the social construction about second homes in the media is negative, such as in the UK where tension has existed for decades (Halfacree, 2011; Monbiot, 2006). Little attention has been paid to the media as an important and rich source of data for analysis of second home culture in the New Zealand. Nevertheless, there has been some useful work focusing on the importance of design and lifestyle magazines in influencing the decision-making

process about the building, design and decoration of one's home. These studies found that the print media discourse in New Zealand plays a significant role in conjuring and perpetuating images and tastes for the readers to aspire to, thereby (re)producing cultural practices and values (Leonard, Perkins, & Thorns, 2004; Perkins, Thorns, & Winstanley, 2008; Shaw & Brookes, 1999). This study aims to contribute to the knowledge gap in New Zealand second home cultural practices and values through an analysis of the media discourse that constructs the bach as a manifestation of 'New Zealandness' and a form of 'cultural icon'.

Second homes in New Zealand

New Zealanders have identified with second home culture for over 100 years and bach ownership has been perceived by many as a part of a great New Zealand dream and as a symbol of a (mythical) egalitarian society (Clark & Walker, 2000; Collins & Kearns, 2008; Flognfeldt, 2004; Freeman & Cheyne, 2008; Keen & Hall, 2004; Müller, 2007; Periäinen, 2006; Pitkänen, 2008, 2011). Indeed, a recent book about baches states that they are part of "an iconic New Zealand way of life" (Grigor, 2008, back cover). Yet only a small percentage of New Zealanders have ever owned a second home - while official records are no longer kept, no more than 4.3% of New Zealand households in the period 1926-1986 were second homes (Keen & Hall, 2004).

New Zealand's earliest second homes were the domain of men, very basic huts built from whatever building materials could be found, often on public land near the coast (Keen & Hall, 2004; Peart, 2009). They lacked electricity, sanitation or running water; indeed, some were little more than elaborately boarded up caves in the cliffs (Keen, 2003; Peart, 2009; Wood, 2000; Yoffe, 2000). As there was no need to purchase land, and no restrictions on building processes or materials, these basic baches of the late 1880s were cheap and were built chiefly by working- or middle-class men to serve as a base for recreation pursuits such as hunting or fishing (Peart, 2009; Wood, 2000).

After World War II ended, a new form of second home was born, reflecting social and economic changes. As with many countries overseas, increased national prosperity and full employment following the war had led to a level of disposable

income not seen before for much of the New Zealand populace. This, combined with a heady combination of optimism, increasing mobility and access to the coast through car ownership and better roads, cheap land prices and a two week paid holiday each year, led to a proliferation of beach baches (Heeringa, 2001; Mitchell & Chaplin, 1984). Built on privately owned rather than public land, they were more expensive than in the past, but were still built by the owners from whatever cheap building materials they could source. They were somewhat larger than their predecessors, and included basic sanitary facilities, often with rainwater being collected off the roof in corrugated iron tanks for drinking and bathing (Keen & Hall, 2004; Peart, 2009).

These baches, built up until about the mid-1960s, have a particular style of architecture that tends to typify to many New Zealanders how a second home should look, and are often referred to in the academic literature as vernacular second homes (Keen, 2003; Peart, 2009; Skinner, 2008; Wood, 2000). They tended to have a simple, lean-to form with a roof that sloped towards the back, and large picture windows in the lounge to appreciate the sea or beach view (Mitchell & Chaplin, 1984; Peart, 2009) (Figure 1, below). It is this phase and form of second home development that the popular media is generally referring to when they speak of the 'bach'.

Plate 1. An example of a vernacular New Zealand second home.

Source: Author photo.

In the late 1960s local government attention began to focus on the poor construction of some earlier second homes, and the lack of effective sanitation; they had previously often taken a more lenient approach to baches (Keen & Hall, 2004; Peart, 2009). As a result, new building codes were more stringently enforced in many places and as the cost of building increased, so the baches built after this time began to more closely resemble urban homes (Mitchell & Chaplin, 1984; Peart, 2009). Indeed, in the last decade or so, large architecturally designed and professionally landscaped second homes have appeared in many popular holiday locations in New Zealand. Such second homes are often larger and more luxuriously appointed than the permanent homes of local residents (Collins & Kearns, 2008; Peart, 2009). Freeman and Cheyne (2008, p.34) have called it '…arguably one of the most significant social and economic shifts in New Zealand's coastal landscape.' The following excerpts from New Zealand's largest Sunday and daily newspapers, the Sunday Star Times and the New Zealand Herald respectively, are illustrative of the media commentary surrounding these developments:

> Fabulous million dollar holiday homes have hit Auckland's Hauraki Gulf like a tidal wave. Ageing weekend [baches] with [outside toilets] have been swept away by swank architect-designed mansions with Italian porcelain toilets...The days of the bach are numbered...It is not unusual to see $1 million holiday homes being built in these areas,...That would be almost unheard of 10 years ago. The luxury New Zealand bach now is commonplace. ('Bach gives way to seaside opulence,' Sunday Star Times 1999, p.8)

> Once, the Kiwi bach was little more than a dilapidated, sun-bleached shack. But now, for a few, it is a multi-million dollar luxury mansion. While you're slumming it this summer, others are living it up. (Gillies & Carroll, 2011, p.A20)

The changing nature of second homes in New Zealand seems to have precipitated the valorization of the post-World War II bach and the bach landscape, with the media romanticising them and attributing to them an intangible heritage value (Foster, 2003; Foster & Perkins, 2005). There has been a proliferation of magazine articles and books that have both illustrated and perpetuated a nostalgia for an apparently idyllic, simple life lived there (Barnett & Wolfe, 1993; Cox, 1995; Grigor, 2008; Heeringa, 2001; Kearns & Collins, 2006; Keen & Hall, 2004; Male, 2001; Peart, 2009;

Thompson, 1985). Baches are mentioned in passing in newspaper articles as the setting for inspiration of fashion designers and artists, they have featured in movies and theatre (Kearns & Collins, 2006; Peart, 2009), in television advertising for vehicles and tomato sauce (Bell, 1996; Matthewman, 2004), on stamps, local phonecards, and even in the theme of the Air New Zealand international business lounge in Christchurch (Peart, 2009). In a 1990s Bank of New Zealand television advertising campaign, there was an explicit link made between bach ownership and being a New Zealander (Matthewman, 2004).

Summer holidays at the bach have likewise been described in passing in the academic literature as a quintessentially New Zealand experience and an iconic part of the New Zealand beach landscape (Cheyne & Freeman, 2006; Foster, 2003; Kearns & Collins, 2006; Keen & Hall, 2004; Muir, 2010; Peart, 2009; Yoffe, 2000). Yet despite the increasing media commentary, there has been scant academic consideration of the notion of the iconicity of the second home in New Zealand. Perhaps, as in Finland (Periäinen, 2006), the traditional New Zealand second home has been so 'taken for granted' in the past that it has been largely invisible to researchers (Freeman & Cheyne, 2008; Keen, 2003). This paper therefore seeks to recognise and address this gap in the knowledge of the social construction of second homes as a 'cultural icon' in New Zealand.

In this paper the term 'bach' will be used interchangeably with second home, reflecting the context in which it is used. While there are a multiplicity of definitions of second homes, for the purposes of this paper they are defined as a privately owned, detached, non-mobile property used by the owner primarily for leisure and recreation (Coppock, 1977; C.M. Hall & Müller, 2004; Keen, 2003; Muir, 2010). This reflects the nature and characteristics of the New Zealand second home as discussed in the media commentary. The term 'Kiwi' as used in this paper, after the name of a small flightless native bird, is a colloquial term commonly used to describe New Zealanders in the media discourse.

Thematic Analysis.

To address the research aim, a thematic discourse analysis of popular media articles on New Zealand second homes was carried out. Three styles of media commentary

(social, architectural and lifestyle) were used as sources of empirical material (Table 1). Each approached the subject of second homes through a different lens and was written for a particular audience, thereby providing a broad, rich data set for analysis. A variety of newspapers, periodicals and magazines were available, therefore research material was drawn from the most representative, readily available and widely read examples in these categories (Table 1 below.).

While it could be argued that the choice of media commentary in each category reflects a selective reading of the discourse, it is more correctly a reflection of the predominant sources in the construction of second homes as cultural icons in the New Zealand popular media. The newspapers, periodicals and magazines were read through and copies made of articles that focused on second homes. Articles that provided social, architectural and/or lifestyle commentary on second homes in New Zealand were selected for analysis.

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The period 2000-2012 was chosen for the analysis as it covers the period in which the New Zealand property market experienced a classic and yet unprecedented boom from approximately 2003-2007 in many areas, particularly along the coast in what had been traditional second home communities, where values often doubled or even trebled (Barber, 2005; Freeman & Cheyne, 2008; Kearns & Collins, 2006; Peart, 2009; REINZ, 2012). The global financial crisis then lead to a period of consolidation in property prices from around 2008 (Peart, 2009; REINZ, 2012). Closely linked to this rise in property prices, the period 2000-2012 saw a proliferation of popular media

Table 1. Name commentary, demographic, category and readership of popular media publications used in the study.

Name of publication	Commentary (and demographic) [a]	Category	No. of articles used in analysis	Readership [b]
NZ Herald (*Herald)*	Social (all NZ)	Daily newspaper	75	500,000+
NZ Listener (*Listener*)	Social (upper middle NZ)	Weekly periodical	8	287,000
North & South (*N&S*)	Social (upper middle NZ)	Monthly periodical	7	269,000
Houses New Zealand (*Houses*)	Architectural (upper middle NZ)	Quarterly magazine	27	10,000 (distribution)
Home New Zealand [c] (*HomeNZ*)	Architectural (upper NZ)	Bimonthly magazine	105	54,000
NZ Life & Leisure (*NZL&L*)	Lifestyle (upper middle NZ)	Bimonthly magazine	11	117,000
NZ House & Garden (*NZH&G*)	Lifestyle (upper middle NZ)	Monthly magazine	25	543,000
Your Home & Garden (*YH&G*)	Lifestyle (middle NZ)	Monthly magazine	6	303,000

[a] Demographic as stated or inferred from socio-economic information given on the publisher's website in Nov 2012
[b] Readership figures were obtained from the publisher's websites in Oct 2012
[c] Home New Zealand has been in circulation since 1936 under different titles; the latest change was in 2007 when it was renamed from NZ Home & Entertaining (*NZH&E*)

commentary on the commonplace nature of the so-called luxury second home phenomenon and the romanticising of the bach as evidenced in the newspaper extracts above (Clement, 2007; Freeman & Cheyne, 2008; Peart, 2009). In addition, in mid-2012 the government announced changes in income tax deductions that second home owners could claim, effectively reducing the tax write-off of those who used their second homes as income-generating assets (PwC, 2012).

A total of 264 articles were selected for use in the analysis. This material was examined using a thematic discourse analysis technique (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Early thoughts and preliminary points of interest around the notion of the bach as a cultural icon were noted down during the initial reading, and sentences and words underlined simply because they seemed to make some sort of intuitive 'sense' (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In the coding phase of the analysis, articles were examined for similarities and differences with previous articles and recurring words and phrases were noted (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Anomalies, missing elements, contradictions and discrepancies were also considered to be valuable data, and were coded accordingly (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Repeated readings were conducted to ensure as many initial codes as possible were generated across the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

In order to summarise the data succinctly and provide a more manageable data set to work with, the codes were first amalgamated into basic themes. A latent rather than semantic approach was taken, whereby the themes were examined for their deeper meanings and underlying assumptions, the final analysis sought to be interpretive rather than descriptive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These basic themes were checked for coherence by reviewing the data extracts and examples for each code that made up the theme, and were then condensed into higher level organising themes based on shared (and increasingly abstract) concepts (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Three internally homogenous and mutually exclusive organising themes were identified as important in the construction of the bach as a cultural icon in the media discourse (Figure 2, below) and each will be examined in turn in the following discussion.

 Living the Great Kiwi Dream The predominant means of construction of the bach as a cultural icon occurred through references to a great New Zealand (or Kiwi) dream. The three organising themes are therefore titled living the dream, losing the dream, and clinging to the dream (Figure 1). In the media discourse, the other components of the dream go undefined and comprehension of the meaning of the amorphous dream by the reader is therefore assumed.

Figure 1. Thematic network for 'The Bach as a Cultural Icon', showing the three organising themes and the basic themes that contribute to them
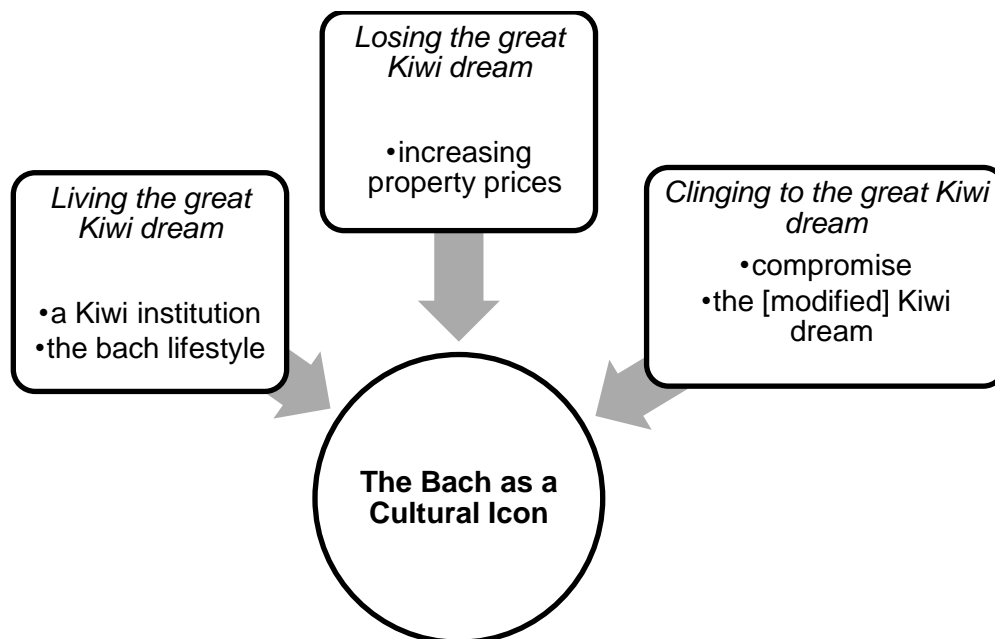
In the media discourse, the second home (and second home ownership in particular) was frequently portrayed as a classic New Zealand institution and part of the great New Zealand dream. This was either explicitly stated, or, more commonly, was an implicit assumption denoting the taken-for-grantedness of the concept:

> The summer bach is a Kiwi institution and generations of New Zealanders have grown up spending weekends and Christmas at their family's beach house. (Herald 10 Jan 2011, p.B14)
>
> Many New Zealanders dream of having a bach by the beach. (NZH&G Jan 2001, p.34)
>
> Do all New Zealanders crave their own bach by the sea? My cravings began when I was very young, visiting our cousins' bach... (NZL&L Jul/Aug 2006, p.111)

Harrison (2008) notes a similar phenomenon in Ontario, Canada, where the media portrays second home ownership (or unlimited access to one) as the normative experience, this despite less than ten percent of Ontarians owning a second home.

Both Periäinen (2006) and Pitkänen (2011) also mention the normalising of second home ownership as part of the Finnish national identity by the media.

In addition to the second home as a beloved New Zealand institution, the lifestyle enabled by second home ownership was also depicted in the media discourse as an important part of living the great New Zealand dream, typified by images of long summer holidays spent at the second home at the beach:

> one of the main things luring her home [from overseas] was the Kiwi lifestyle: the golden summer in the sands, the beach holiday and the bach by the sea. (Listener 9 Jan 2010, p.14)

> Summer: the sun, the sea, the beach. Flopping about in wet togs [swimsuits] or covered in sand. It doesn't matter – we're on holiday and we're at the bach. (NZH&G Jan 2001, p.38)

In many ways, New Zealanders' attachment to the beach and the coast is hardly surprising as the country has a disproportionately long coastline for its small size, five out of six of the main urban centres are located on the coast, and nowhere is far from the sea (Barnett & Wolfe, 1993; Collins & Kearns, 2008; Freeman & Cheyne, 2008) yet it is portrayed as unique.

A report on research conducted into the distinctive qualities of New Zealanders served to further construct the notion of the bach as a Kiwi cultural icon in the popular media:

> A favourite anecdote...was a respondent who spoke admiringly of a Chinese immigrant whose first action – even before learning to speak English – was to buy a bach by the sea. "He 'got it'. He was 'one of us!' (Listener 3 July 2010, p.16)

By purchasing a second home, this immigrant demonstrated his understanding of the significance of the bach as an icon of New Zealand-ness and thus he belonged, he was accepted. However, despite the three largest ethnic minority groups (Maori, Pacific Islanders and Asian) comprising almost 30 per cent of the New Zealand

population in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006), this was the only article that mentioned bach ownership by anyone other than Anglo-Saxon New Zealanders. The lack of inclusion of articles about bach ownership by other cultures in the media discourse may simply reflect the readership and target demographic of the publications, but there may also be underlying latent meanings. For example, Pitkänen (2011) noted that in Finland, where the second home culture is also very strong, imagined second home landscapes are a means of asserting national identity and Finnish values in response to increasing foreign ownership of second homes in recent years. The issue of racial inequality has also been raised in recent research in both Canada and Norway, suggesting that the unadulterated monoculture at the cottage may provide a welcome respite from the multicultural nature of the cities where most second home owners live (Ellingsen & Hidle, 2013; Luka, 2007).

In regards to New Zealand, Bell (2004) argues that symbols of (Anglo-Saxon) New Zealand culture and national identity, such as the bach, are a means of asserting dominance in a society open to the influences of globalisation (Bell, 2004). Less subversively perhaps, in this context Anglo-Saxon New Zealanders may merely be both those who possess and perpetuate the collective memory associated with the second home as a cultural icon, and the receptive community for such representations (Parker, 2012). Certainly the underlying motivation for such constructions is an area that deserves further exploration.

The notion of the bach as a (collective) representation of the great New Zealand dream may be a myth for three reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, only a small percentage of New Zealanders have ever owned a bach (Bell, 1996; Mitchell & Chaplin, 1984). Second, early research carried out in New Zealand mirrored the findings from overseas that even 30 years ago second home owners were likely to have higher levels of education and income than the national average (Lister, 1977; McMillan, 1982; Ragatz, 1970; Wolfe, 1977). In the media discourse examined in this study, it is noteworthy is that where the occupations of the bach owners were mentioned, the majority were professionals rather than white collar workers, which also seems to indicate a more elite and less egalitarian landscape of bach ownership than (imagined) in the past (Mitchell & Chaplin, 1984). Thirdly, second home ownership by those of the working class or ethnic minorities is not evident in the

media discourse in the current study, and even the middle classes appear to be under-represented. Here then, the portrayal of a (mythical) egalitarian second home landscape in New Zealand conveniently masks racial and socio-economic inequalities, and conveys a sanitised version of New Zealand life to the readers (Bell, 1996). Similarly Pitkänen (2011) comments on the masking of socio-economic inequality in the Finnish second home landscape, again a supposedly egalitarian society. Despite these anomalies though, the New Zealand media uses the notion of collective memory as a journalistic tool to construct the bach as a cultural icon.

Losing the great Kiwi dream

Reinforcing notions of the romanticised images of egalitarian New Zealand society, second home ownership and living the great New Zealand dream, much commentary focused on the ability (or rather, inability) of the 'average' New Zealander to achieve the dream. This discourse was particularly evident from 2004-2007, when property values increased sharply in many parts of the country. There was a general change in the tone of the media commentary around this time, from a sense of wonder at the prices traditional older baches were fetching, to a sense of anguish:

> when a beachfront bach sold [at Mt Mauganui, a popular holiday spot] for just over $3 million in February, the news reports were almost mournful, perhaps articulating a collective grief that for many New Zealanders the dream has gone. (N&S May 2005, p.52)

> Keeping the Kiwi bach mentality alive is a bit of a tall order. With even modest…baches selling for as much as $1 million, how does the ordinary family get a look in? (Herald 4 April 2007, online edition)

> …he real point here is the diminishing availability of that paragon of Kiwi lifestyle; the bach. Increasingly the only way to make lazy summers at the beach possible is to spend the larger part of the year in bleak servitude to corporate capitalism. (HomeNZ Dec/Jan 2008, p.89)

The reasons for the increase in property prices in New Zealand since 2000 are complex, but good economic growth, low interest rates, the willingness of banks to

lend money and of borrowers to increase their level of personal debt, demand by migrants and New Zealanders returning from overseas, increasing personal wealth and changing population demographics have been cited as contributing factors (Freeman & Cheyne, 2008; Peart, 2009). Second home tourism has been identified as an important driver of escalating property prices in coastal areas (Collins & Kearns, 2010; Peart, 2009).

While the implications of increasing property prices are far-reaching, much of the media commentary revolved around the (in)ability of middle-income New Zealanders to afford a second home at the beach. Access to the coast is becoming increasingly dependent on economic status. Those who are resident in these coastal areas, and their (in)ability to afford a first home, are largely ignored (Collins & Kearns, 2010; Freeman & Cheyne, 2008). There are also other serious social ramifications. As the thematic discourse analysis reveals, the beach and the coastline is becoming an elite landscape, with only the wealthy able to gain access in many parts of New Zealand:

> if you drive through [the suburb], you reach – but, unless you're a resident, cannot enter – a headland occupied by a holiday home development. (Houses, Issue 3, March 2007, p.40-41)

> I wanted something on the water, something on its own block of land with no neighbours. And I couldn't find anything unless I had an unlimited budget. (NZL&L Issue 29, Jan/Feb 2010, p.29)

Recent academic literature also notes this and voices concern over the subtle exerting of exclusivity of use, particularly through the power of second home ownership (Collins & Kearns, 2010; Freeman & Cheyne, 2008; Kearns & Collins, 2006; Peart, 2009).

The discourse therefore suggests that while the great New Zealand dream is still alive, there is also evidence of a change in the dream. The ability to achieve the dream is gone for all but the wealthy – unless you are fortunate enough to have a second home that has been in the family for generations (Heeringa, 2001; Keen & Hall, 2004). The contentious myth of the egalitarian society (Consedine, 1989), in

which the New Zealand dream of second home ownership played a part, is being dispelled as socio-economic differences are made visible in the media commentary (Freeman & Cheyne, 2008; Keen & Hall, 2004). The notion of a classless society has also been challenged recently in Finland, where it has been suggested that second home ownership is not as widely spread across the socio-economic spectrum as is commonly held (Pitkänen, 2011). In Norway too, it has been observed that media discourse on the increasing price, size and standard of second homes has become more frequent, thus challenging the norms of second home life and what is appropriate and acceptable (Vittersø, 2007).

Clinging to the great Kiwi dream

At the same time at the media discourse were lamenting the loss of the great New Zealand dream, they were also constructing an apparent yearning for it in the New Zealand psyche, and reported on the creativity that enabled some New Zealanders to cling to the dream. This included multiple ownership, renting, purchasing in a less desirable area or purchasing a leasehold rather than freehold property.

Multiple ownership with friends, family members or even complete strangers, was not uncommon in the media discourse, as a means of making not only the purchase of a second home more affordable, but also sharing the ongoing maintenance, insurance and government property tax costs:

> [The friends] pooled their resources to buy the bach. (NZH&G May 2008, p.80)

> [You could] band together with like-minded people or family members to afford a patch by the sea. These collectives are increasingly common as reality stings [potential] bach owners. (N&S May 2005, p.56)

Another method of recouping some of the ongoing costs of second home ownership was to rent it out to others:

> It seems a good idea to earn some income from a holiday home sitting vacant most of the year ... perhaps covering [government taxes], power and insurance payments. (Herald 6 November 2010, p.G81)

Indeed, renting a second home has become a popular option for an increasing number of New Zealanders who do not have access to the baches of friends and

family as in the past (or who cannot afford to purchase one) but wish to experience the lifestyle (Keen & Hall, 2004; Peart, 2009):

> We could have been any group of families on any bach holiday in the past half-century or so - except that we weren't slumming it. Our two rented holiday homes had nine bedrooms and six bathrooms between them. The kitchens were kitted out better than those in our own homes and there were large-screen tellies, push-button automatic blinds and sea views. (Herald 18 Sept 2010, p.D12)

> The baches [available for rent in the Auckland Regional Parks] have been an outstanding success for the council...They fill a need for people who cannot afford a holiday bach. (Herald 23 Jan 2012, p.A6)

If multiple ownership or renting a second home were not an attractive or viable course of action, the media discourse noted two further suggestions for those hoping to cling to the great New Zealand dream:

> Another option is to shift your sights away from the hotspots...[where] you'll find the prices drop substantially...[or] there's always village life. (N&S May 2005, p.57)

> [the property they wanted] fetched a very pretty price so they moved their sights to something cheaper – and wilder. (NZL&L Issue 35 Jan/Feb 2011, p.30)

> One of the most common ways to buy a "cheap bach" is to buy one on leasehold land. This means that you don't own the land, but you do buy the building. (Herald 4 April 2007, online edition)

However, the language used here indicates that each of these is a compromise, the option is to be far from the coast or other popular second home destinations, or to have the uncertainty of a leasehold tenure with no guarantee of renewal at the expiration of the lease period. The implication is that a second home in a rural or inland area is lesser in a cultural sense than a 'bach at the beach', and likewise a rented or leasehold second home is lesser than owning one. In some ways, this

notion of compromise in order to secure second home ownership further enhances the perception of the supposed depth of attachment to the great New Zealand dream, and to the status of the bach as a cultural icon.

Conclusions

The media discourse constructs the New Zealand bach as a cultural icon through recurring themes associating the notion of summer holidays at the 'bach by the beach' with the great Kiwi dream and an integral facet of 'New Zealand-ness'. However this dream is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve for many and the discourse alludes to the wealth of those who now own second homes. A type of collective grief evidently exists among middle class New Zealand at the apparent loss of the dream, particularly due to the unprecedented increase in property prices along the coast where most second homes have traditionally been located. The media portrays the idea that the great New Zealand dream of the Anglo-Saxon middle class is now the great New Zealand reality of the upper class.

Despite this, the media discourse perpetuates desire and aspiration for the dream and shows that it is possible to find alternative ways to own a second home and cling to the dream. There seems to be a geographical shift in the culture of the second home, away from the coast to inland rural areas, and a cultural shift away from sole ownership to multiple ownership, leasehold land or renting. Nevertheless, the media discourse implies that such second homes are 'less than', and they are viewed as a compromise and not truly part of living the great Kiwi dream. These changes in second home ownership in New Zealand reflect the new economic and social conditions of the twenty-first century. Yet the second home continues to be constructed in the media as a cultural icon, perhaps now more than ever as second home ownership is perceived to be under threat.

Finally, , it appears that the bach as a cultural icon, representative of 'New Zealand-ness' and emblematic of the great New Zealand dream, is a social construction held and perpetuated by only some. Bach ownership has, over the last one hundred years, worked to exclude various sectors of society including other ethnic groups and the working class. This has been achieved through changes in the nature of land ownership and property prices, through changes in building materials, processes and

legislation, and more recently through the language and imagery used in the media to construct the bach as an upper class Anglo-Saxon cultural icon.

This paper has shown that popular media articles can be used to provide valuable insights into changes in second home culture, as they are specific to a particular place, culture and time. It therefore has implications and relevance to identify societal and cultural changes in other countries where second homes are similarly imbued with cultural significance such as Norway, Finland and Canada. However, not only does it enable an investigation into mediated images of national culture as shown here, it can also be applied to an examination of cultural similarities and differences in second home lifestyles, and be used in longitudinal studies to map ongoing societal change.

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