

IMPACTS OF SECOND HOME TOURISM ON SHAPING REGIONAL IDENTITY IN THE REGIONS WITH SIGNIFICANT RECREATIONAL FUNCTION

Jiří Vágner

PhD, Assistant Professor, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development
vagner@natur.cuni.cz

Dana Fialová

PhD, Assistant Professor, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development
danafi@natur.cuni.cz

ABSTRACT

This contribution represents a theoretical and methodological entrance into the research of impacts of second home tourism on shaping regional identity. It consists of a summary of international multidisciplinary theoretical concepts concerned second home tourism – transformation theory, territorial organization, suburbanization, de-urbanization, leisure and amenity migration concepts, spatial and hierarchical diffusion, tourist area life cycle, irritation theory, shift from tourist society to leisure society, residential tourism and lifestyle migration concepts, demographical change concepts, sense of home theory, behavioral concepts of shaping identity which arise from “new” regional and cultural geographies. The empirical part follows the latter theoretical concepts and is focused on analyses of the process of shaping regional identity and identity of regions in the areas with considerable concentration of settlements and municipalities with prevailing tourist function. It deals with identification of the inner development potential of localities and regions from socioeconomic and socio-cultural views. The analyses emphasize both identity of regions and belonging of residents and tourists with the territory. Informants of the field, questionnaire survey and structured interviews were residents and second home owners and users. Conclusions indicate small differences in residents/second home owners’ opinions. Both groups performed strong local identity. Second home users are highly involved in public life and social events. Final part outlines further research directions.

KEYWORDS

Second Home, Tourism, Recreation, Regional Identity, Czechia.

1. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

The main objective of the article is to discuss theoretical and methodological concepts of interdisciplinary research on second home tourism. Concepts of shaping regional identity are proved in an empirical study in Czechia.

Second homes are understood not only as a total number of buildings of individual owners or users which are exploited for recreational purposes predominantly, but also as a complex of associated phenomena and processes (Author1 1999; Author2 2000).

The second home tourism represents a typical element of multidisciplinary research. Besides geographers, focused mostly on research of socio-spatial aspects (Gardavský 1968; Coppock, Duffield 1975; Vystoupil 1981; Kowalczyk 1994; Bičík et al. 2001; Hall, Müller 2004; Author1, Author2 et al. 2004), the authors were inspired in the second home agenda with surveys by psychologists and sociologists (Ruppert 1973; Musil 1977; Jaakson 1986; Dingsdale 1986; Williams, Montanami 1995; Librová 1997, 2003; Keller 2000; Duffková 2002), environmental scientists (Weaver 2001; Staňková 2006; Jehlička, Smith 2007), economists (Wolfe 1977; Kostecký, Nedomová, Vajdová 1998; Gallent, Tewdr-Jones 2000), urbanists (Kotačka 1993; Mejsnarová 2004; Horská, Maur, Musil 2002), architects (Škabrada 2005; Švácha 2007), specialist in historical approaches (Bačvarov 1996; Trypesová 2004). The second home tourism in Czechia was developed in several stages since the early 1920s. The crucial processes of recent two transformation decades have been a) generation exchange of original owners, b) conversion to permanent dwelling – amenity migration process (Moos 1993, cit. Pásková 2003), c) boom of new forms approaching commercial tourism – lease of second homes, new recreational apartment houses (mostly demanded by rich national urbanites), holiday villages for foreign (Dutch) clients, time-sharing (Author2, Kadlecová 2007; Author2, Kadlecová, Nožičková, Author1 2009).

The concept of residential tourism as one of the most important sub-sectors of the nowadays tourist industry matches the second home tourism well. Second home users are visitors who stay many nights more than other types of tourists, use owned, rented or time-shared properties in the place chosen for spending their time off, they come to enjoy a lifestyle that they are already used to, their funds come from their place of origin (Seseňa 2004). Distinction between second home tourism and residential tourism involves consideration of the reasons why second home tourists become residential tourists. Geographical, economic, political, social and cultural factors influencing the demand for second homes are defined by A. Pedro (2005). Anthropological interests were brought by Nash, Smith (1991). McWatters (2009) sets residential tourism into historical and geographical contexts, calls for new understandings and rethinking of the concept with stress on international dimension - relationship between national and foreigners, which seems to become topical relevant also for newly built recreational apartments and holiday villages in Czechia.

As concerned the demand, second home tourism participants and time accessibility have been systematically assessed as well as models of spatial diffusion of suburban recreation have been constructed (Gardavský 1968; Vystoupil 1981). As for the offer, destinations and tourist and leisure regions have been surveyed. The analysis of spatial (territorial) organization of second homes enables to reveal and define spaces, centers, regions of interest (source regions of leisure demand) as well as natural (landscape) attractiveness of the targets (destinations). The shaping recreational hinterland is a spatial reflection of the above mentioned factors (Vystoupil 1981; Vystoupil et al. 2006).

Settlements/municipalities/regions with dominant tourist function either based on second homes or commercial tourism forms are defined tourist destinations (Pásková, Zelenka 2002), playing an important role in the identity of regions. Time (stage of evolution of destinations) is the major component of the TALC – the tourist area lifecycle model (Butler 1980). A destination follows stages of exploration, engagement, consolidation, stagnation and post-stagnation with options of rejuvenalization, stabilization or decrease (Butler 1980). This concept offers four basic functions which are applied in practice in destination management but are also used at both theoretical and applied level. According to the destination position in the TALC model, the Doxey irritation index was derived, demonstrating internal relations in the complex of space users (Doxey 1975). Attitudes of residents to visitors (second homes owners included) were surveyed, related to the type of their mutual interaction (euphoria, apathy, disgust, antagonism). These attitudes are often regularly changing in the course of the destination lifecycle (Pásková, Zelenka 2002) and considerably influence at both the intensity of regional identity and mostly at identity of the regions (Author2 et al. 2010).

The interest in second homes has also been acknowledged in other researches (Coppock 1977). Second home tourists demonstrate great knowledge, loyalty and appreciation of the destination (Hall, Müller 2004). The problems of transient population (lifestyle migrants) with high place loyalty were explained by T. Mazón (2006). Accordingly, second homes can be found primarily in countries with major tourist amenities and in countries with an extensive territory, low population density and late urbanization (Kowalczyk 1994). For the latter, second homes provide a link not only to the countryside, but also to a rural heritage. Significant contributions to the European and world second home research, focused mostly on the role of individual recreation in local rural development, were published by Gallent, Tewdwr-Jones (2000) and by Hall, Müller (2004), drawing a picture of leisure mobility with the evidences from the Anglo-Saxon countries, Spain, Scandinavia. (Author1, Müller, Author2, Author1 et al).

Traditional relationship to nature and boom of urbanization processes were major factors for the second home appeal in Czechia, too. Nowadays, the shift from tourist society to leisure society and lifestyle changes in rural areas are under discussion (Flognfeldt 2004). Second home tourism is considered a part of de-urbanization trends, differences between permanent, seasonal, second home and job address are disappearing due to increasing mobility. Flognfeldt (2004) defines second home commuting the “semi-migration” process. Progress in mobility and technology, along with negative demographic development, and globalization processes in general have caused many people to turn their thoughts towards less complicated, more understandable and personified local environments. Due to increasing mobility, the “sense of home” has been losing its unique, singular location. Homes are disintegrated and transferred into multiple places. This shift should be reflected with attempts to more deeply comprehend socio-cultural changes in the framework of the expansion of urban lifestyle and new leisure patterns (Author1, Müller, Author2 2011). Second home users are often returning to the places of their childhood which copes to lifestyle migration and tourism-informed mobility concepts (Benson, O’Reilly 2009). Not only “trip to adulthood” but also nostalgic moves backwards in the family lifecycle shape an important part of second home mobility.

Our empirical study attempts at proving the concept of shaping regional identity by residents and second home users. Identity is a reflexive project of the self in which the individual bears a high degree of responsibility for the outcome in the era of modernity process (Giddens 1991). Identity is “a process of becoming, rather than being in which the choices that we make define who we are and who we become” (Hall 1996: 4). Identity becomes something that we make, rather than discover within ourselves (Hall, du Gay 1996). Regional identity is shaped by tourist consumption (Urry 1990).

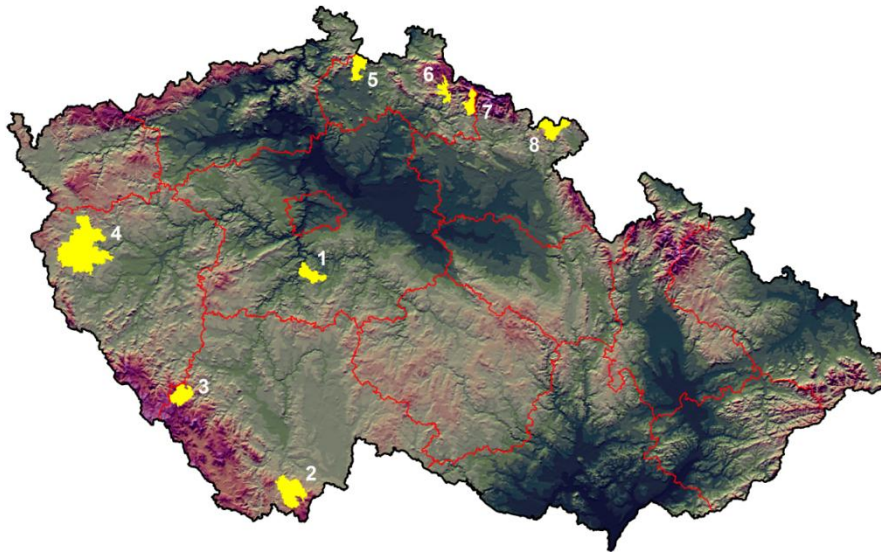
When analyzing the definition of the territorial identity (Passi 1986), proper understanding of key term „a complex of population in the particular territory“ is essential. It is evident this complex mostly made up of residents with different roles (self-government representatives, entrepreneurs, civic association members, common citizens...). On the other side there are regions where this complex is supplied (with different intensity, periodicity, seasonally, over weekends and holidays) with temporary dwellers with strong regional bonds and identification. A typical group is represented in our country by owners and users of second homes (Bičík et al. 2001, Author1, Author2 et al. 2004), with strong relationship and heritage bonds to the dwellings and sites of their ancestors. Second homes tradition has influenced many generations and some second home dwellers feel deeper relations and identification with the place of leisure activities than with their place of residence, even deeper than autochthons. Second home tourism frequently represent a crucial share of tourist function of some settlements and even whole regions – Defert tourist function – a relation between visitors and residents (Pearce 1987).

2. METHODS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY IN CZECHIA

Model regions (a set of municipalities) for field and questionnaire survey on the impacts of second home owners and users on shaping regional identity were selected with respect to homogenous coverage of the area of Bohemia and high share of cottages – a type of second homes whose users should perform the strongest territorial relations and regional identity (Fig. 1).

The informants of the questionnaire surveys were residents and second home users in selected model municipalities. The method of random choice was used, total number of 100 informants in each municipality was structured to the share of second homes and permanent dwellings. The initial questions in the questionnaire concerned type, length and frequency of stays, emotional and generation relations, uniqueness, symbols and function of the region. The other part focused on problems, relations between residents and second home users, their involvement in public life followed with satisfaction and potential future use of the areas. The conclusive questions enable sorting of the responses by gender and age groups. The field surveys also consisted of interviews with mayors and municipality representatives and field observation.

Figure 1: Selection of model regions



Source: own elaboration

3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The informants characterized themselves as concerned their relations to the model municipalities. It was quite a surprising finding that one third of second home owners considered themselves locals. As early as here tight relations to the localities were stated.

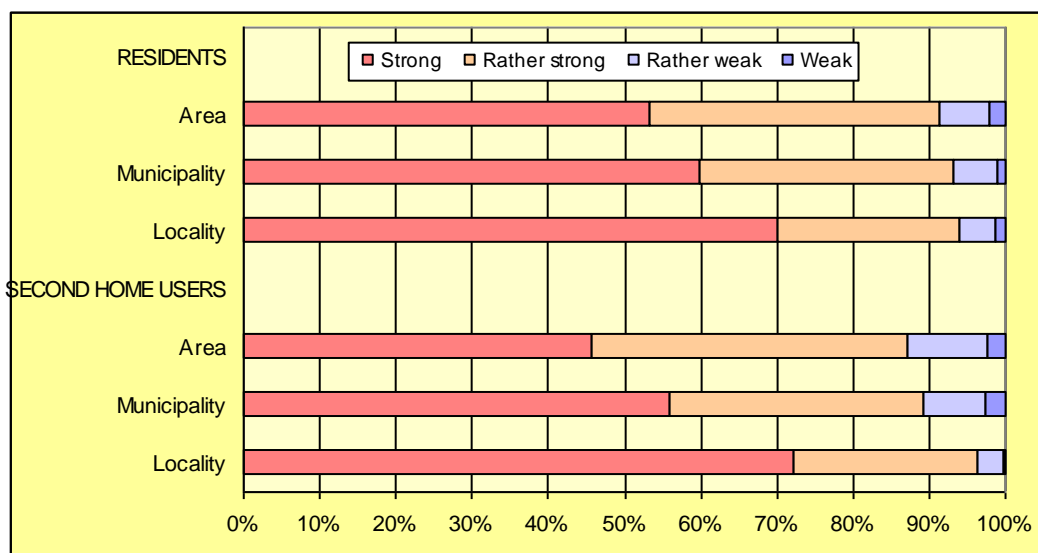
80 % residents and 65 % second home users have stayed in the municipality over 20 years, it means more than for one generation period. Thus, the questionnaire survey concerned quite a stable population with 30 % origins in the same area. All informants were of Czech origin, at the border regions with some roots in German-speaking families.

The presence of second home users in the area is not negligible. The summer season from May till September is dominant. 40 % informants declared no visit between November and February. The

prevailing reasons for stays of residents are influences by ancestors and other family relationships, similarly for second home users – 30 % has known the place of second home since their childhood. Friendship tights are represented by 40 %.

Informants declared their territorial relations in the scale strong, rather strong, rather weak, weak related to three hierarchical levels of space – fig. 2. The area was defined as larger neighbourhood of the place of living/second home – the whole model region. The municipality was considered as the whole village and place or locality was considered the close neighbourhood of the place of living/second home (settlement). Both groups of informants (second home owners even more distinctly) declared stronger relations towards closer area.

Figure 2: Relations to different territorial levels



Source: Own questionnaire survey, summer 2010, Nres = 433, Nshu = 294

Informants declared their territorial relations related to three hierarchical levels of space. The area was defined as a larger neighbourhood of the place of living/second home – the whole model region. Municipality was considered the whole village and place or locality were considered the close neighbourhood of the place of living/second home (settlement). Both groups of informants (second home owners even more distinctly) declared stronger relations towards the closest areas. Both groups of informants stated the regions are unique because of their environmental quality, landscape, nature, calmness. They are also proud of these categories. Second home users declared the area appropriate for recreation and also a place where people have closer relation to each other, similarly by residents. Their dominant statement was, however, comfortable living. It is very positive from the social climate point of view both groups perceive the area as “a place with closer inter-personal contacts and where people help each other”. It is quite natural both groups declared rather different problems in the region, however also common trouble issues were gathered (see fig. 3).

Figure 3: Declared problems in model regions

Residents and second home users	Residents	Second home users
Worse accessibility, public transport service and infrastructure Bad state and poor maintenance of roads Unsatisfactory public services (shops, health care, high prices) and technical infrastructure	Unemployment, shortage of job vacancies Dissatisfaction with work of municipality authorities and public government	Consequences of climate hazards (floods, high snow layer) state of public greenery and estate, environmental destruction

(sewage, electricity) Criminality, problems with socially excluded groups	Mayors – lack of finance, unfair tax re-distribution	
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Source: Own questionnaire survey, summer 2010, Nres = 433, Nshu = 294

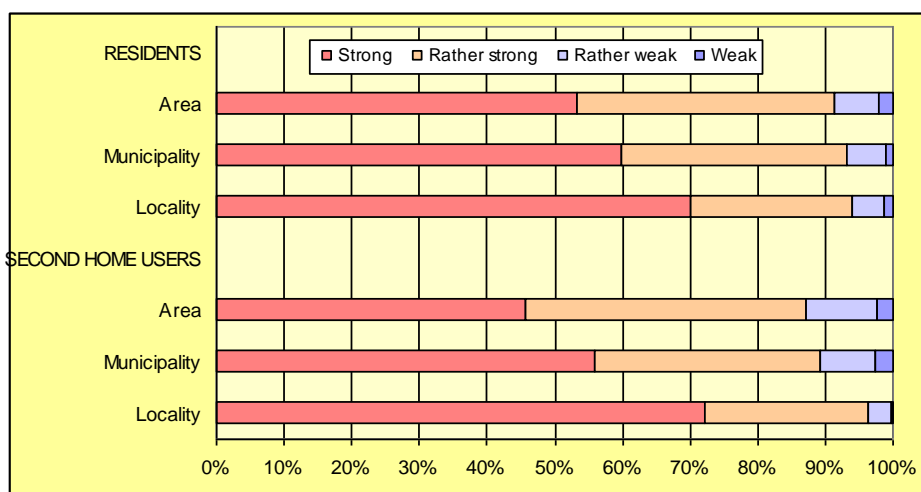
Second home users are often thought a heavy burden for municipality. 40 % of mayors agreed, mostly in municipalities with the highest concentrations of second homes and with a new form – holiday apartments. This opinion was not confirmed by neither second home users nor by 80 % residents which was rather a surprising finding.

The questionnaire enabled to receive opinions at social relation quality among residents, second home users and between those two groups (fig. 4). Opinions from both „inside“ and „outside“ the groups were searched. Generally, relations appear more positive by second home owners. The final results seem very optimistic because two thirds of population declared good relations. However, a part of informants feel the worsening trend of relations which could be seen as a potential trouble.

Residents and second home owners declared similar interests in traditional social events as funfairs, balls, sport events. A busy public life is essential for a good social climate.

The chief organizers of social events are traditional clubs and associations – voluntary firemen brigades, soccer teams and game-keepers in Czech countryside.

Figure 4: Quality of social relations



Source: Own questionnaire survey, summer 2010, Nres = 433, Nshu = 294

Second home owners should have a chance to become members of municipal councils – a half of respondents declared, residents included. 95 % residents were (rather) satisfied with the life in the region – no ideas about moving out. 98 % second home users were (rather) satisfied and a third even thinks about permanent dwelling. There has been a long-term research at our university on citizens' belonging to regions at different hierarchical levels. Results in our survey confirmed recent conclusions – the lower hierarchical level (smaller territory) the higher belonging feelings.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Our survey tested the relevance of including second home users into surveys on regional identity in the areas with significant recreational function. Rather small differences in residents/second home owners

opinions were revealed. Both groups performed strong local identity. There is a big interest of second home owners in future permanent dwelling and also potential membership in local councils, which was not refused even by residents. Second home users are highly involved in public life and social events.

Though the generalization of results would be troublesome, in fact the only joint community of residents and second home users has been found, especially in regions with a higher share of cottages with longer tradition of stays of the second home users. The second home owners not only contribute to the shaping regional identity but in some specific areas with their high concentration and involvement in public activities create a major part of regional awareness and identity of regions.

Further research on second home tourism is prepared concerning impacts of second homes and their influence on functional changes of settlements in Czechia. The crucial objectives should definition and evaluation of changes in second home tourism in recent twenty years, an analysis of their impact on spatial, economic and environmental phenomena and processes and typology of the changes from the time perspective (permanent, long-term, temporary), specification of dominant current and perspective trends.

Second home tourism seems to continue as a major form of residential tourism in the Czech Republic. Compared to Western countries, there has been no tradition of time-sharing and the credibility of this product was lost in the beginning of the 1990s because of unfair and cheating performance of some weird business subjects. The better-off Czechs have already revealed the time-share offers at the Mediterranean and other warm seashores, in the Alps for winter sport amusements. On the other hand foreigners frequently ask for stays at holiday parks and villages (Dutch) or use the chances of rents of second homes in Bohemian border hills or at the lakes (German, Austrian, Danes...) which can be also seen at the offers of the realty agencies. However, the uttermost of native Czech families, couples in later productive age and retirees use their own second homes (often inherited from their ancestors). Second home tourism in Czechia is a significant element of family lifecycle mobility patterns and in the last two decades has already partly converted towards one of the most important processes in lifestyle migration and de-urbanization trends.

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