

Second homes: from family project to tourist destination – planning and policy issues

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ABSTRACT

Second homes in Norway were traditionally dispersed within amenity-rich landscapes and natural environments. However, as the stock and demand for higher standards and contemporary infrastructure increased, awareness of extensive land use became more intrusive and triggered calls for national policy interventions to restrain and steer further development. This paper delves into the trajectory of second-home development in Norway over recent decades, specifically focusing on nine mountain villages. This paper is based on secondary research data spanning from 1970 to the present derived from national statistics, previous studies, documents and relevant literature and presents the following key findings: **a)** The emergence of new second homes is increasingly evident in well-established tourist destinations, evolving into full-fledged “mountain villages” and occurring in a limited, yet prominently visible number of locations; **b)** Rather than advocating for nationwide restrictions on second-home development and the construction justified with dense development in limited locations, a more effective approach involves placing greater emphasis on the local context resulting in more tailored developments to facilitate benefits while mitigating adverse impacts.

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Introduction

The use of second homes has become an increasingly widespread phenomenon in Nordic and other Western countries (Müller & Hall, 2018), and scholars have emphasised the importance of second homes in rural restructuring (Wu & Gallent, 2021). Second homes have been a significant issue regarding planning and policies in many rural regions (e.g. Clivaz, 2013; Gill, 2000; Overvåg, 2010) in recent decades. During this period, the “second-home phenomenon” changed substantially regarding, among others, location, standards, size, density, use, actors involved, investments and, thus, potential impacts (Dybedal, 2005; Ericsson et al., 2010; Xue et al., 2020). In Norway, this development is

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seen most clearly by the emergence of large “mountain villages” in rural municipalities, often at an established tourist destination, including several hundred and even thousands of second homes with adhered touristic infrastructure and services. In some cases, their frequent visitors, owners and other users outnumber the number of residents in periods throughout the year. Second homes have increasingly become an important part of modern tourist destinations, especially in attractive mountain areas (Clivaz, 2013; Flognfeldt & Tjørve, 2013). Despite this, research regarding second homes’ place within the tourist destination’s ecosystem remains limited (Ismail et al., 2023; Müller, 2007; 2008; 2013). Additionally, in the Norwegian context, it has been claimed that planning and policy approaches predominantly treat second homes as a land-use issue, a perspective rooted in the 1960s, despite changes in the phenomenon (Skjeggedal et al., 2021).

Due to increased awareness of the adverse impacts associated with second-home development, particularly in terms of environmental and social impacts (Ericsson et al., 2022; Xue et al., 2020), a dual impetus has emerged. On the one hand, we can characterise some grassroots initiatives as a “bottom-up call” where locals and longstanding second-home owners advocate for more restrictive steering of the development of second homes. On the other hand, there is an equivalent drive referred to as a “top-down call” for stronger national and regional policies emanating from national and international actors in alignment with the Montreal Agreement (2022) on nature preservation¹ and measures on climate change actions.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: the first is to address the call for a stronger national or regional policy specifically for second homes, while the second is to argue for the need for a more tailored planning approach. To address these purposes, a short literature review is given to provide the state of the field of current knowledge on second homes as part of tourist destinations, followed by a presentation of two approaches to second-home landscapes. Against this backdrop and using Norway as a case, we first present the development of second homes in Norway before scrutinising the development in nine rural municipalities hosting mountain villages for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This, together with a brief overview of the Norwegian planning system, serves as the basis for a discussion of the extent to which the policy and planning of second homes have evolved in response to changes in the phenomenon itself. Furthermore, we consider the necessary policy changes and planning perspectives and explore whether developing a national policy is an adequate and applicable measure to address the challenges outlined.

Second homes as part of tourist destinations

In ski resorts, the hotel and accommodation industry has historically played a central role, serving as a pivotal focal point. However, in recent decades, a noticeable shift has occurred, with second homes progressively gaining importance and becoming integral to these resorts and tourist destinations (Ericsson, 2009; Flognfeldt & Tjørve, 2013). Despite this transformation, and according to Müller (2007; 2008; 2013; 2020; 2011), research on the role of second homes within the ecosystem of tourist destinations appears to be limited. However, a select group of scholars has explored this topic: Strapp (1988) and Warnken et al. (2003) have delved into the implications of second

homes in the context of destination development, as was the case with Flognfeldt and Tjørve (2013) in Norway and Adamiak (2020) in the Nordics. Additionally, Posadas et al. (2023), together with Brida and Boffa (2010) and Candela et al. (2007), have engaged in a discourse concerning the dilemma faced by landowners when deciding between constructing second homes or hotels, especially when available land for accommodation is scarce.

Strapp (1988) noticed a counteracting and stabilising effect on a tourist resort in the decline of conventional tourism when the resort, Sauble Beach (Canada), experienced growth in second homes. This growth was promoted by increased accessibility and interest in new activities, among others. The new accommodation structure also brought new guest segments with longer stays than conventional tourists. Strapp (1988) found this development beneficial for the community, showing the symbiotic relationship between traditional accommodation, tourist infrastructure and second homes:

... the inclusion of the growth of residential development and cottage conversions reveals that, despite its substantial decline in conventional tourism, the area is actually experiencing a revival. Consequently, a refinement to the resort cycle is proposed whereby a decline in tourism is counteracted by a stabilization reaction. (Strapp, 1988, p. 504)

Warnken et al. (2003) investigated the development of condominium-style accommodation to increase accommodation capacity and thus attract more tourists to Australia's Gold Coast. While Strapp (1988) found that second homes counteract decay and decline, Warnken et al. (2003) registered some unforeseen obstacles as destinations reached maturity. One main obstacle was the complexity of owners and other stakeholders, with partly different motivations for investment and thus different views on standards, needs and money to spend on administration, maintenance and repairs, which tended to result in neglect of maintenance and decay instead of rejuvenation or stabilisation. This is equivalent to experiences in the French Alps after implementation of the Snow Plan (Marcelpoil & François, 2009).

However, Flognfeldt and Tjørve (2013), in "The Shift from Hotels and Lodges to Second-Home Villages in Mountain-Resort Accommodation", documented and discussed some of the features behind this shift more generally. In line with Müller's comprehensive reviews (2007; 2008; 2013; 2020), they concluded that "(s)til, the interrelationship between the accommodation industry and the second-home industry has scarcely been touched upon. Knowledge about second homes as part of mountain-resort development and especially the long-term trends are wanting" (Flognfeldt & Tjørve, 2013, p. 334).

Adamiak's (2020) research explores an emerging aspect of the interrelationship between accommodation and second-home industries, as identified by Müller (2020) based on Casado-Diaz et al. (2020) as a gap that has not been sufficiently addressed. Specifically, Adamiak (2020) scrutinises the impact of peer-to-peer accommodation, focusing on the dual role of platforms like Airbnb in commercialising existing accommodations, such as second homes, and creating new capacity. Investigating Airbnb listings at destinations at different stages related to the Tourism Area Life Cycle model (Butler, 2006), Adamiak's (2020) study revealed a concentration of such listings in destinations in the development and consolidation stages. In contrast, these listings play a comparatively minor role in destinations at the exploration and stagnation stages. This suggests that, while Airbnb facilitates tourism growth, it simultaneously contributes to the

concentration of tourism in growing destinations. Additionally, Adamiak (2020) observed an increasing concentration of second homes in the stagnation stage, which is attributed to the shift from hotels to second homes and rental apartments (Flognfeldt & Tjørve, 2013). The nuance of this interplay is underexplored, and the statement of Flognfeldt and Tjørve (2013) seems still to be valid; knowledge is wanting.

Second home landscapes

Based on the development of second homes and the transition of tourism destinations, Müller et al. (2004), and further processed by Kauppila (2009), developed a typology of four different landscapes. The model divides second-home landscapes according to the dimensions “purpose of use” – weekend or holiday – relating to distance from resident area, and “purpose of construction” – converted homes or purpose-built second homes – and their position relative to regional development (Figure 1).

These dimensions transfer the identified types of second homes (Müller et al., 2004) into four ideal second-home landscapes that differ in amenities and use (Back, 2020; Back & Marjavaara, 2017). As a result, the second-home type and corresponding landscape may be used as markers for regional destination development (Kauppila, 2009; Müller, 2004). This heterogeneity requires a context-sensitive approach to both planning and policy development (Back, 2020).

Through an analysis of the characteristics of second homes and their development in Sweden, Back and Marjavaara (2017) show that the largest growth in second homes has been in the two vacation-home landscapes (converted and purpose-built homes), where second homes also constitute the largest share in relation to the total number of detached houses. However, the highest density of second homes is within the two landscapes of purpose-built second homes.

With reference to second homes in Norwegian mountain areas, Skjeggedal et al. (2015) identified three main types of second-home areas or landscapes. The first type is

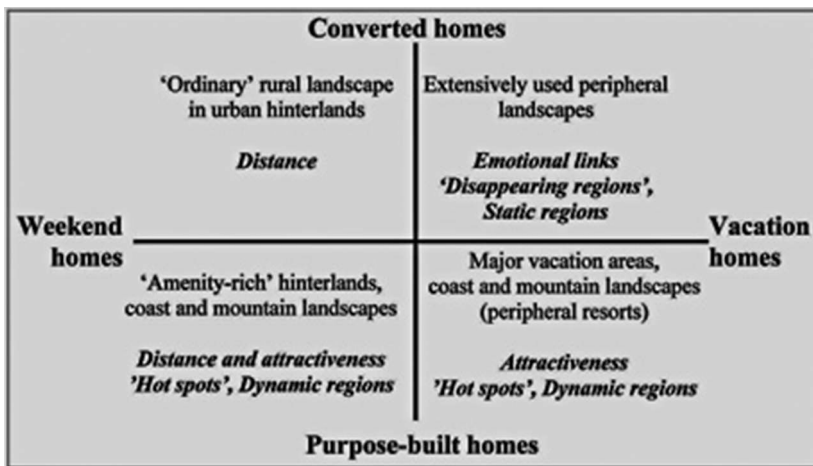


Figure 1. The space-time dimension of second home types and the characteristics of areas (adapted and expanded from Müller et al., 2004:table 2.1.) Source: Kauppila, 2009.

“traditional second-home areas”, including most of the second homes built before the 1980s. These areas are characterised by a scattered development pattern (low density) and relatively simple standards (although upgrading standards and infrastructure may occur). In some of these areas, there have been processes of densification and touristification, which implies that the type of area is not static but may transform into one of the two following types of second-home areas. The second type is “second-home fields”, characterised by newer second homes with higher standards, well-developed infrastructure (water, sewage, electricity, all-year road access) and high density. The third type is “mountain villages”, characterised by large second-home agglomerations in combination with tourism activities (alpine and cross-country skiing, golf courses, mountain bike tracks, etc.), hotels and other commercial accommodations and well-developed services (restaurants, shops, etc.). Related to the development in Norway, the newest second homes are built in second-home fields and mountain villages, and in 2022, 81% of new second homes were built in such areas.

Furthermore, an increasing number of new second homes are built in mountain areas, easily accessible within a 1–3 h driving distance to substantial population agglomerations in and surrounding the capital area, which provides the foundation for the further development of attractive destinations within the weekend zone (Holz & Haagensen, 2018; Overvåg & Arnesen, 2007). Figure 2, a so-called “heat map” for the density of newly built second homes in the period 2014–2018 (Haagensen, 2019b), illustrates this well.

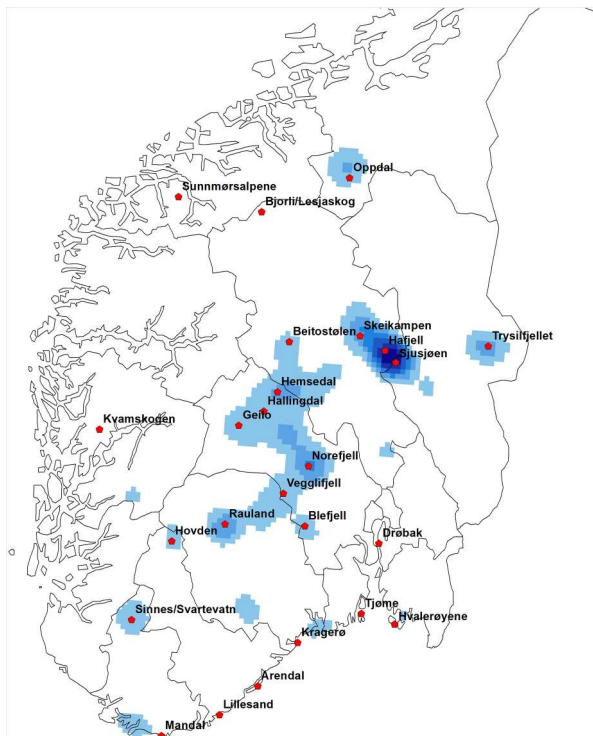


Figure 2. »Heat map»: Mapping concentration and density of new second homes in the period 2014–2015. Norway. Source: Statistics Norway, <https://www.ssb.no/natur-og-miljo/artikler-og-publikasjoner/flere-nye-hytter-i-unike-villreinomrader>.

Compared to Sweden, the situation is different in Norway. First, the growth in second homes has mainly been in weekend-home landscapes and not vacation-home landscapes. Second, more than 90% of second homes in Norway are purpose-built. On average, only 7.3% are converted homes, and the share is significantly less in mountain areas (Statistics Norway, 2023a). Central to the contemporary growth and development of second homes in Norway are the purpose-built weekend home landscapes (lower left square, ref to Figure 1), particularly evident in the expansion and densification of existing mountain tourist destinations, resulting in the development of “hot spots” in mountain areas. Further, in contrast to Sweden, it is in weekend-home and not vacation-home landscapes that the highest share of second homes is found compared to the total number of detached houses (this will be illustrated later in the paper).

Development of second homes in Norway and nine mountain village municipalities

Norway serves as the context for this paper, but similar developments, with substantial growth in the number of second homes, may be seen in other European countries, such as Switzerland (Clivaz, 2013).

The presentation of the development is based on secondary research data covering the period from 1970 to the present. The data are derived from national statistics, previous studies, documents and relevant literature.

From 1970 to 1997, no regular statistics on the number of second homes were published, and there was mostly case-wise evidence of development and scattered observations of total numbers published at irregular intervals, but from 1997, the number and location of second homes were published annually (Statistics Norway, 2023b).

Second homes: national development

In 1970, the number of second homes in Norway was approximately 190,000 (Statistics Norway, 1970), and in 2022, the number had more than doubled to almost 450,000. Despite the abovementioned irregularities in the statistics, observations on the number of second homes indicate an annual growth rate of 2.1% in 1970–1997. From 1997 to 2022, the annual growth rate has been halved to 1.1%. The national growth thus peaked in the period from 1970 to 1997 (with a total increase of 75%), while total growth rates later slowed in the period 1998–2022 (a total increase of 31%).

When restrictions on private car ownership were lifted in 1960, travel distance increased significantly for households, more in distance than in time, and continues to do so. This has contributed to already well-established tourist destinations developing into mountain villages due to extensive second-home development (Haagensen, 2019; Holsen, 2022; Øian et al., n.d.; Ericsson et al., 2011).

High visibility is one consequence of the strong agglomeration of second homes into relatively few well-established and mature destinations, a visibility that forms a foundation for fallacies about the development of second homes “everywhere”. Official statistics disprove this fallacy. Only 13 of Norway’s 356 municipalities started constructing 100 or more second homes in 2022; more than 300 municipalities (84%) started

Second homes construction: Number started in 2022 by municipality

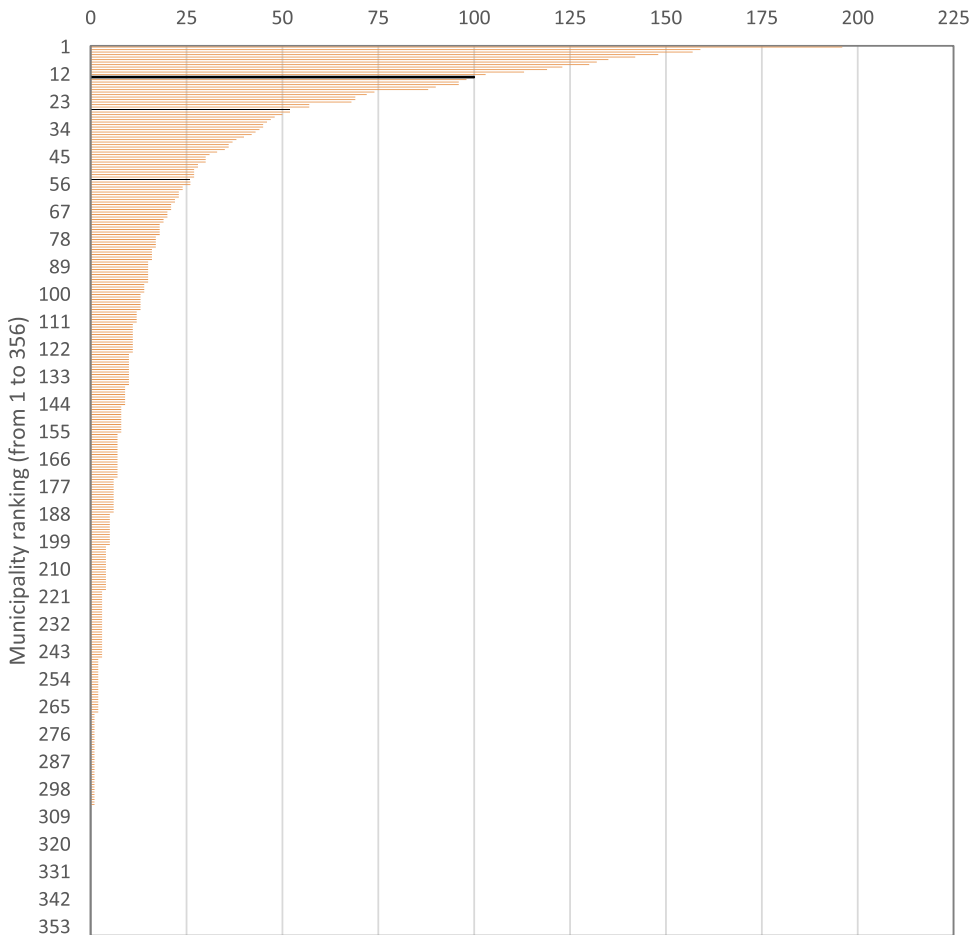


Figure 3. Number of second homes started in 2022 by municipality. Ranking of municipalities. Norway. Source: Statistics Norway <https://www.ssb.no/statbank/table/05939/>.

constructing less than 25 in 2022, and 328 municipalities started constructing less than 50 new second homes in 2022² (Figure 3).

Nine mountain villages

For a more comprehensive understanding, special attention is given to nine selected rural mountain villages, representing 8% of the total Norwegian second-home stock in 2022 and 11% of the total growth of second homes in the period 1970–2022. They are located in the nine municipalities of Hemsedal, Hol, Trysil, Ringebu, Øyer, Øystre Sildre, Bykle, Voss and Oppdal, which all have a history in the traditional tourist industry as established alpine winter sports destinations. These destinations are located within a reasonable commuting distance for weekend and holiday visits. Some vital data on these mountain villages are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of second homes, growth, resident populations, residential buildings and land area in nine Norwegian municipalities and Norway. 2022.

| Mountain village located in municipality | Second homes, no. 2022 | Growth, no. SH 1970–2022 | Growth, pct. | Resident population 2022 | Residential buildings, no. 2022 | Land area km ² |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3042 Hemsedal | 2,265 | 1,266 | 127% | 2,611 | 1,023 | 712 |
| 3044 Hol | 5,832 | 3,507 | 151% | 4,504 | 2,099 | 1,653 |
| 3421 Trysil | 6,926 | 5,914 | 584% | 6,603 | 3,300 | 2,941 |
| 3439 Ringebu | 4,369 | 3,294 | 306% | 4,385 | 2,133 | 1,221 |
| 3440 Øyer | 3,542 | 3,070 | 650% | 5,082 | 2,058 | 616 |
| 3453 Øystre Slidre | 3,605 | 2,249 | 166% | 3,252 | 1,525 | 886 |
| 4222 Bykle | 2,732 | 2,456 | 890% | 935 | 423 | 1,254 |
| 4621 Voss | 3,534 | 2,412 | 215% | 15,875 | 5,859 | 1,958 |
| 5021 Oppdal | 4,142 | 3,296 | 390% | 7,066 | 2,683 | 2,201 |
| Total | 36,947 | 27,464 | 290% | 50,313 | 21,103 | 13,442 |
| Norway | 449,000 | 259,000 | 58% | 5,500,000 | 1,592,000 | 323,806 |

A common characteristic of these destinations is that they have all developed into full-fledged mountain villages with versatile activity facilities. In addition to their already large share, these nine mountain villages account for a very large and increasing proportion of the growth of second homes in Norway (Figure 4). In 2022, the number of new second homes exceeded 100 in six of them (Trysil, Hol, Øyer, Ringebu, Hemsedal and Oppdal), and in three of them, it also exceeded 100 in the years 2020 and 2021 (Øyer, Ringebu

Development of second homes. Norway and nine mountain villages in Norway.

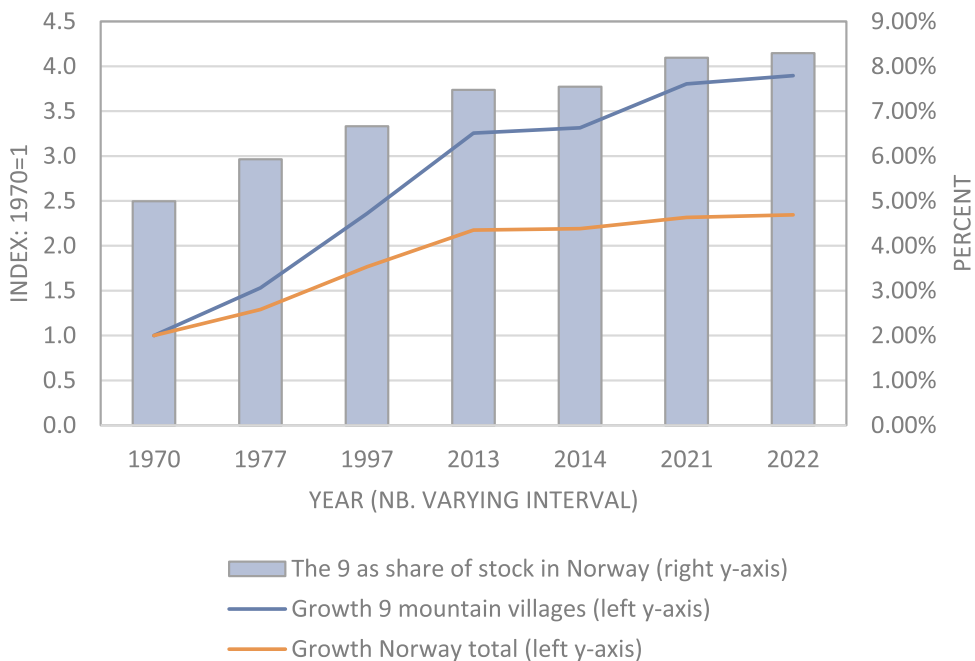
**Figure 4.** Developments of second homes. Norway and nine mountain villages in Norway. 1970–2022. Percent/index: 1970 = 1. Source: Statistics Norway.

Table 2. Second – home essentials in nine mountain villages compared to a national total.

| | 1997 | 2013 | 2022 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Share of population | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Share of land area | 4% | 4% | 4% |
| Share of stock of SH | 7% | 7% | 8% |
| Share of growth (1997–2013 / 2013–2022) | | 11% | 19% |
| SH, pct. of residential buildings | | 124% | 133% |
| Share, transferred SH properties: | | | |
| – number | 12% | 12% | 21% |
| – value | 17% | 19% | 25% |
| Construction activity: | | | |
| – share, building work started, m2 | 15% | 17% | 20% |
| – share, building completed, m2 | 17% | 17% | 23% |

Source: Statistics Norway

and Oppdal). As shown in [Table 2.](#) below, *every fifth new second home constructed in the period 2013–2022 was located in one of these nine mountain villages.*

Public statistics on the mean utility floor space of new second homes indicate a long-lasting increase, and the mean floor space is now at least in line with a town residence or city apartment. This development, together with allegedly generally strong growth, is used to justify the call for a national policy to stop landscape and nature disruptions and mitigate climate effects. In the nine mountain villages, an increasing proportion of second homes are in apartment and condominium buildings, including many separate apartments. In public statistics, these buildings are registered as only one building with its total floor space. Public statistics on mountain village mean floor space for new second homes thus exceed 150, 200 and even 300 m² in the nine mountain villages (Statistics Norway, [2023c](#)). This, of course, is a fallacy when describing the mean size of individual second homes. However, one might claim that an increase in apartment buildings may also be an answer to a call to decrease the footprint of second homes, which coincides with a desire for greater profit in land-use developments (Hjalager et al., [2022](#)).

Despite their similarities, such mountain villages also differ in several issues important for strategic local and destination planning measures. In Ringebu and Trysil, the mountain village is separated from the residential area, while in Hol and Oppdal, second homes are integrated into residential areas, and these mountain villages consist of a genuine mix of residents, second homers and tourists. Trysil and Hemsedal are operated by Skistar and thus examples of a corporate destination management model, as also may apply to Øystre Slidre, while Hol and Oppdal are operated according to a community destination management model (Flagestad & Hope, [2001](#)). Ringebu, Øyer and Voss have a distinct alpine profile, while Trysil and Bykle have a more family-orientated profile with a variety of facilities. Their common market regions are, of course, main city regions, and mostly the capital region of the Greater Oslo Region, but Voss capitalises on the Greater Bergen Region and Oppdal on the Greater Trondheim Region. Hol has a location

alongside the railway line and main road connecting the eastern and western parts of Norway, which allows market appeal from both the Greater Oslo and Greater Bergen regions.

Driving forces towards dense and urbanized development

The driving forces behind the development of second homes are diverse and can be found on the supply and demand sides. In short, the demand for and availability of high technical standards requires dense development, which in turn increases prices and profit potential (Ericsson et al., 2005). Development in agglomerations is further accelerated by the need for professional development and construction expertise, the need for extensive access to capital and high-profit potential, sustainability policies such as less seizure of land and, as mentioned, the demand for high technical standards (Ericsson et al., 2022). Higher technical standards, easily accessible and attractive locations and facilitated landscapes with a variety of activities all indicate higher prices and profit potential fed by the increase in prosperity in Norway in recent decades. In 1997, the property value on transferred second homes in the nine mountain villages represented 17% of the value of all second homes transferred on the free market in Norway; in 2022, the equivalent value was 25%³ (Table 2).

Households' motives for ownership and usage of second homes have been an issue in many surveys (Ericsson & Flognfeldt, 2018; Ericsson & Vonlanthen, 1986; Kaltenborn, 2002; Lurfald & Ericsson, 2019; Statistics Norway, 1971, 1976; Velvin et al., 2013), feeding a more recent discussion on whether second homes are "a dwelling" or "a form of dwelling use" (Paris, 2014) and a notion of second homes as one distributed equivalent to the residence in a "multi-house home" (Arnesen et al., 2010). However, empirical evidence from the surveys mentioned above underlines what should have been a rather obvious fact: a second home represents an opportunity to access amenities not available in everyday life or from permanent residence. Furthermore, from the 1970s until today, it is also apparent that some major changes have taken place in what is considered attractive amenities (Flognfeldt & Tjørve, 2013). Likewise, motivations for ownership have changed from use of landscape and nature mainly free of charge to place greater demands on activities that require special equipment and facilitation of landscape features and consequently often entails user fees.

Access to otherwise unattainable amenities has long been a driving force for the use and ownership of second homes, and access to attractive amenities will thus in many cases overcome distance decay (Hall & Müller, 2004; Kauppila, 2009). However, changes in exercised, preferred and favoured activities, above all the quest for more challenging activities, also require a more facilitated landscape. Thus, second homes represent a form of dwelling use connected to a place and its amenities (Arnesen et al., 2012; Back & Marjavaara, 2017; Ericsson, 2006). The need for facilitation inescapably leads to the development of densification to resorts due to the need for a large-scale and steady influx of (paying) customers to be able to operate demanded activity facilities.

The concentration of second homes in full-fledged mountain villages effectively caters to a specific segment of second-home owners, denoted by Ericsson (2006) as "Advanced Base Campers" (ABCs), and further identified by Xue et al. (2020, p. 476) as embodying a "modern multi-dwelling lifestyle". This segment of recreationists seeks outdoor activities

within a facilitated landscape, appreciating both the functional amenities and the scenic surroundings. They appreciate a modern and easy-care “advanced base camp” (second home) from which to “hit for the summit”, which may be randonnée skiing, climbing, trail cycling, well-groomed alpine or cross-country ski tracks. This aligns with the changing dynamics of second-home usage, moving away from the emphasis on maintenance and tinkering around the property itself (Hiltunen, 2004). The latter was sometimes argued to be one of the main activities when staying at a second home in the 1970s, besides traditional outdoor life and the use of the landscape for hiking, skiing, berry-picking, etc. (Kaltenborn, 2002; Statistics Norway, 1971, 1976). The ABCs also appreciate the supplementary supply of cultural and social events (Ericsson, 2006). This segment answers well to the supply-driven development of mountain villages. Elements of modern, facilitated activities and urban connotations therefore contribute to agglomeration and densification from the demand side. Halseth (2004) has labelled such developments in Canada as “elite landscapes”, a perception influencing especially the Anglosphere literature (Müller & Hoogendoorn, 2013). According to Poikolainen (2022), who investigates the perspectives of young second-home dwellers on modern second-home living, defining modernity as a digitalised hybridisation of second-home environments, a parallel trajectory emerges – a concurrent modernisation in activities necessitating enhanced facilitation and skills. This trajectory is foreseen to intensify with the growing acquisition of such skills among younger generations, especially when coupled with digital access and activities, and thus further feeds agglomerated development.

Improvements in public infrastructure and the anticipated need for enhanced facilitation and touristic infrastructure aligns with the “joint” development interests of land-owners, investors, and local politicians, each with different motivations and expectations regarding the result or impact. This alignment feeds rapid and dense growth (Ericsson et al., 2022; Gill, 2000). Moreover, this development is accelerated by broader societal changes, shifts in working life, and household economy, and, consequently, the inclusion of second homes into the formalised financial market (Skjeggedal et al., 2021). The contemporary characterisation of “a market” marks a significant departure from the post-World War II period, when second homes were considered a surplus phenomenon outside the formal market economy, to now being a well-integrated part of the financial system.

Planning and policy

Planning system in Norway

Municipalities have a multifaceted role, and in addition to their role as political actors and service providers, the developmental role encompasses, among other things, responsibility for land use and societal and spatial planning, including planning for the development of second homes, enforced by the Plan and Building Act (PBA).

While local self-government holds a prominent position in policy at all levels in Norway, it underscores the significance of the specific local context in which any development occurs (Back, 2020; Ericsson et al., 2022). However, this perspective contrasts with the argument that local self-government, as exercised by municipalities in planning

and development matters, could potentially impede efforts to address the perceived proliferation of second-home growth nationwide (Kaltenborn, 2018; Xue, 2020). Consequently, a growing debate has emerged regarding the necessity of national regulations for second-home developments, with some asserting that municipalities prioritise their objectives over national land use and environmental strategies (Hanssen, 2018).

Most large-scale developments of second homes takes place in rural municipalities (Figure 2). Consequently, small permanent populations and limited municipal administrative resources are available for strategic planning and societal development (Ericsson et al., 2022; Frisvoll, 2018). Land is typically privately owned by local landowners (farmers or former farmers), and planning initiatives for the development of second homes are typically promoted in cooperation with real-estate developers and consultants to be included in the land-use objectives plan. The number of initiatives can be extensive, and in many rural municipalities, the actual land use appears as a collection of private standalone initiatives, rather than proposals characterised by strategies and wholeness well anchored in the land use as well as in the social element of the municipal master plan (Ericsson et al., 2022; Hanssen & Aarsæther, 2018). Furthermore, a situation in which private developers have been given responsibility for designing and proposing detailed zoning plans confers enhanced power upon developers, resulting in a shift in the power dynamic at the expense of authorities and other stakeholders (Ericsson et al., 2022; Gerber & Tanner, 2018; Overvåg, 2010). In sum, this indicates that many municipalities do not have or do not take control of development, either strategically or in detail.

Second-home policies in Norway

Since the 1960s, both policy measures and the development of second homes have undergone distinct stages and transitions, as presented in Figure 5, which summarises these developments over a span of five decades from 1960 (Skjeggedal et al., 2015).

In response to growing environmental concerns in the early 2000s, there is now a demand for more comprehensive and long-term municipal and regional planning to safeguard larger contiguous natural areas and prevent habitat fragmentation. However, practical solutions, new planning tools, regulations and instruments have still not been introduced (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2005; Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2016; Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2009).

Some proposals, such as establishing a national mountain border to delineate the altitude at which second homes can be constructed, have been suggested (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2016) but have not gained political traction. Recently, there have been signs of national policies aiming to restrict land use in general and for second homes in particular, as second homes are considered less essential compared to sectors like renewable energy, agriculture and forestry (Barstad, 2023; Norwegian Environment Agency, 2023).

To address these challenges, general tools such as “land-use accounting” and guidelines for developing comprehensive land-use strategies within municipalities have been developed and implemented. In 2022, new guidance for second-home development and planning was published, presenting different examples of “good planning practices”

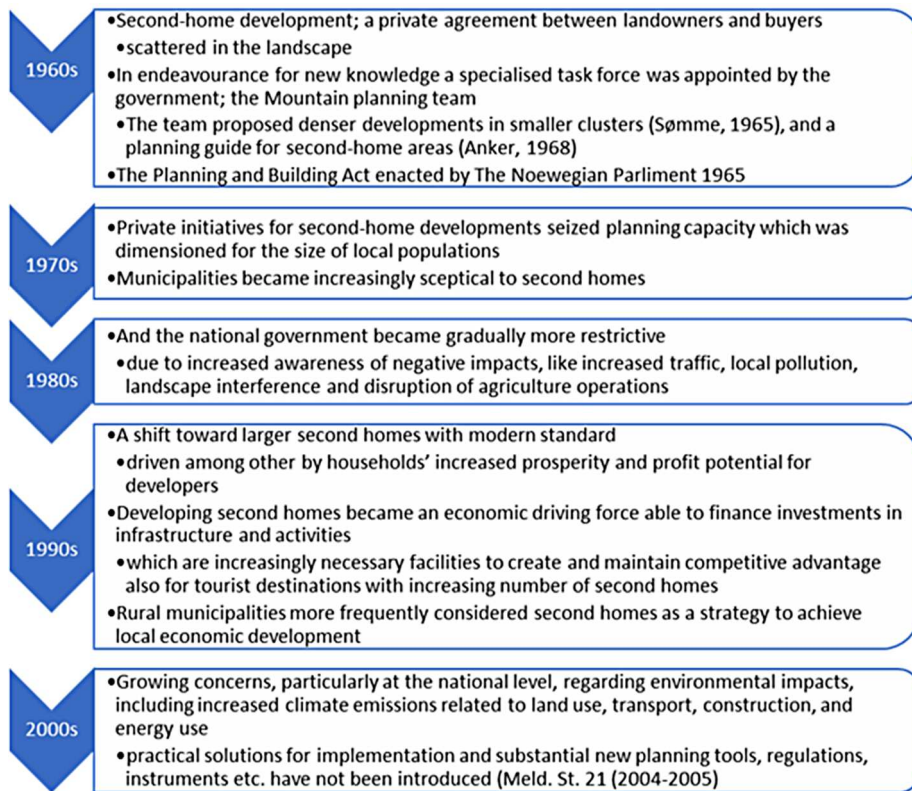


Figure 5. Development of second-home policies over a span of five decades from 1960.

related to zoning, land use, and local community development in various contexts (Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, 2022). While it reflects a desire for greater top-down control of land use, it still underscores the importance of local responsibility for development.

There is growing debate over the need for national rules and regulations for second-home developments, as some argue that municipalities prioritise their own goals over national land use and environmental strategies (Hanssen, 2018). Suggestions have included implementing a national ban on new second-home areas and establishing national rules on size, energy usage and national land-use plans (Aall, 2017; Kaltenborn, 2020; Xue, 2020).

A related but significant challenge for rural policy and planning is the considerable presence of second-home users, which in some places surpasses the number of permanent residents. This challenge is compounded by the fact that second-home owners are invisible in census data grounded in static definitions of residence. These definitions fail to account for a mobile lifestyle (Adamiak et al., 2017). The absence of official statistics on the timing and duration of second home use, as well as the number of occupants, presents a substantial challenge for municipalities, as it impacts their role as service providers to both residents and temporary populations, as well as their responsibility for general infrastructure. This situation poses the risk of generating a planning mismatch (Back &

Marjavaara, 2017; Slätmo et al., 2019), a phenomenon notably evident during the Covid-19 outbreak. In Sweden, second homes were utilised as a refuge to escape the infection pressures prevalent in urban areas (Müller, 2020). Meanwhile, in Norway, stays at second homes were prohibited by the authorities due to fear of overloading the local healthcare system calibrated for residents only.

At the local level, particularly in municipalities experiencing rapid growth and the emergence of large agglomerations, there is an emerging “bottom-up” call from local stakeholders and politicians, questioning whether a saturation point regarding the number of second homes has been reached, considering factors such as land use, traffic and congestion in natural areas in relation to the number of permanent residents. Key considerations include long-term development strategies for second homes and the potential benefits for local development (e.g. Aune et al., 2021; Henriksbø, 2023). It is worth noting that Switzerland has implemented a referendum initiative capping the number of second homes at 20% in relation to permanent homes (Clivaz, 2013).

Discussion

This paper provides an examination of the development of second homes, utilising Norway as a case study to consider the need for enhanced national policies specifically addressing second homes. The analysis draws connections between this development and existing planning and policy frameworks.

Highly concentrated – no need for national policies

A few municipalities are witnessing rapid and dense growth of second homes, although the overall rate has decelerated. Growth is increasingly concentrated in established tourist destinations that have transformed into fully developed mountain villages. This paper illustrates this trend by examining the development of nine mountain villages that hosted every fifth new second home from 2013 to 2022. In these villages, the number of second homes in relation to residential buildings is notably high (Table 1) and has been on the rise from 2013 to 2022 (Table 2). This surge is attributed to sparse and declining populations, coupled with a growing number of second homes, resulting in the share of second homes in relation to residential buildings exceeding 100% in all villages but one.

In contrast, when examining the overall situation, the construction of second homes is of minor scope in most Norwegian municipalities (Figure 3). This is evident as, in 84% of the 356 municipalities, fewer than 25 new second homes were started constructed in 2022, challenging the notion of widespread second home development. Consequently, advocating for national restrictions on second homes appears to be an overly generalised response.

While acknowledging that some second-home developments have been unfavourable from both local and market perspectives, the presented argument posits that these situations do not justify national intervention. Conversely, there are well-integrated developments within landscapes and communities. Nevertheless, it is not contentious to claim that large concentrations of second homes demand greater attention and more targeted, comprehensive planning measures compared to dispersed, smaller-scale developments.

Context-sensitive planning and measures

In general, rural municipalities hosting mountain villages intend to develop the destination together with second homes to foster economic and industrial activities to maintain or increase the population and employment.

There are indications of beneficial and adverse impacts on destinations (Strapp, 1988; Warnken et al., 2003) of second-home development (Czarnecki, 2018; Xue et al., 2020) and at the municipal level (Ellingsen, 2017; Rye, 2011). Development in Norway seems to support evidence from Sauble Beach that the development of second homes has contributed to reshaping existing mountain destinations in decline (Flognfeldt & Tjørve, 2013; Warnken et al., 2003). Furthermore, these mountain villages are gaining market shares in the second-home market, which amplifies the ongoing centralisation of second-home development.

An intensive and agglomerated development, illustrated with the nine mountain villages, has the potential to be successful (as well as disastrous), precisely because they are so visible and may have a great impact on local communities because of their scope, number of second homes and number of users. The impacts will vary depending on the host community's capacity to respond and how the development is organised, whether as a collection of private standalone initiatives or as proposals in line with municipality strategies (Back & Marjavaara, 2017; Dybedal, 2005; Ericsson et al., 2010).

Hence, it is crucial to closely examine the specific context at hand and engage in on-site analyses, as opposed to relying on broader "trends". This emphasises the need for context-specific planning and measures, aligning with the perspectives of numerous scholars (Back, 2020; Ericsson et al., 2022; Müller & Hoogendoorn, 2013; Overvåg & Ericsson, 2016). Vital ingredients in such analysis must be the assessment of landscape features, community needs, location in relation to infrastructural facilities and their capacity, municipal capacity on administrative and public services, markets, and the assessment of visual, physical and social impacts. Measures must rest on a solid fundament of local knowledge based on a destination's location, specific features of local communities, public plans, and available resources (Ericsson et al., 2022). The main challenge will be to identify key advantages and disadvantages, landscape potential and potential market segments, all of which must be derived from each location's specific situation. In addition, from a destination perspective, attention must be paid to the spatial distribution of land use internally to plan and allocate suitable activities and accommodations to facilitate food services, shops, activities, attractions, etc., in central zones, which need a steadier flow of customers than second homes can provide. This is especially important in destinations located spatially separated from residents' areas. In other cases, where second homes are in the vicinity of or more integrated into residents' areas, planning measures suggest a greater emphasis on community and public service perspectives.

Need for more tailored and focused planning

Numerous rural municipalities undergoing significant growth in second homes face challenges in effectively managing this development, both at the strategic level and in specific detail. Additionally, these municipalities tend to perceive and treat their tourist destinations and mountain villages primarily as land-use issues. Consequently, there is a

pressing need for a qualitative expansion and enhancement of strategies employed in the planning and understanding of these destinations' inclusion in local communities and businesses.

The users of second homes located in mountain villages have a dual role: first, as part-time inhabitants who interact with the local community, and second, for the destination and tourism businesses, where they represent a vital market potential. Planning in mountain villages must, therefore, also pay attention to issues usually dealt with in traditional urban planning, while at the same time being a significant part of the tourist destination management perspective. What is the optimal dimensioning of public and private service provision, and do second-home users provide a basis for a more comprehensive cultural programme? Does it matter where second homes are located in relation to service and activities at the destination and residential areas? Another challenge often claimed is the political deficit occurring when second-home users de facto are part-time inhabitants in the municipality but are not included in political matters concerning them (Kietäväinen et al., 2016; Overvåg, 2010).

A consequence of the accommodation mix and the expansion of second homes in mountain villages is the increasing dependence on a tourist infrastructure based on activities rather than attractions. Recurring and long-term stays thus require activities tempting repetition, and where repeat exercise ideally helps to develop skills, i.e. various facilitated sports activities, such as cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, cycling, golf, etc., or challenging nature-based activities, such as climbing, demanding hiking, etc., not necessarily requiring special facilitation, only personal equipment. Often, these facilities are also in favour of a resident population.

Operating a DMO⁴, a non-profit organisation with limited influence on political forces, including many stakeholders, also involves a large degree of complexity. Second homes in a destination imply many private owners, fragmented land ownership and several relevant stakeholders to consider, who may not always have coinciding interests (Warnken et al., 2003). Destinations operated by this community model will be more demanding to operate, manage and maintain and therefore place greater demands on destination management, for example in terms of profiling, etc., than are corporate models with one or a few dominant stakeholders (Flagestad & Hope, 2001; Warnken et al., 2003).

In this respect, the development of second homes in agglomerations like mountain villages implies planning measures beyond just spatial planning and zoning measures. Such a development would also include several issues that are more equal to planning measures dealt with in urban municipalities than in rural municipalities in general. Especially in minor rural municipalities, the development of second-home agglomerations should be regarded and included in efforts to develop ambient and good local communities, while their market potential continues to support the destination's operations.

While planning in urban settings is occupied with community development and public and emergency services to their residents, which should also have a place in rural second-home settings, second-home development does, however, also have some special implications that differ from most urban development. We may just mention great weekly and seasonal fluctuations in visitations, in general greater than in tourism, in addition to difficulties in quantifying their number at times. This impacts the dimensioning of roads, parking lots, public emergency agents (fire brigade, emergency rooms, police), municipal services like water supply, drainage, waste management, health care, etc.

Concluding remarks

We argue that implementing national restrictions on second-home development and construction justified by dense and visible development in a limited number of municipalities appears to be an overly generalised response, as it overlooks the nuanced scope of the phenomenon, contextual variations, and the role of local self-government. Instead, we argue that efforts should be redirected towards better-tailored second-home developments within the in-situ context. Despite having common features regarding growth, density, facilities, service deliveries, etc., the destinations and second-home developments differ significantly, especially regarding site location, distance to and interaction with residential villages, main market segments, destination management and destination structure. Differences in amenities and use require adaption to local context (Back, 2020; Back & Marjavaara, 2017). These differences accentuate the necessity of knowing and analysing second-home development in its local context (Back, 2020). This aligns with Müller and Hoogendoorn's (2013) conclusions, drawn from a review of Coppock's (1977) pioneering work *Second Homes: Curse or Blessing*, emphasising that successful development requires "a sound empirical base and ... thorough analysis of relevant changes in society" (p. 366) in order to further deepen the understanding of the second-homes phenomenon's role in regional development.

In hot spots, local authorities face many stakeholders, including investors and real estate developers, possessing substantial resources in the form of capital, knowledge, competence, and extensive professional networks. Conversely, local authorities may face constraints in resources for strategic planning, often lacking comprehensive professional expertise and the capacity to assess all private initiatives and potential impacts to ensure a development well anchored in the land use as well as in the social element of the municipal master plan (Ericsson et al., 2022). This imbalance must be levelled by giving municipalities opportunities to conduct professionally good and locally tailored site analyses serving as the basis for their planning, which, we believe, is a key element to fostering sustainable and socially anchored second-home development within the dynamic landscape of municipal planning.

Notes

1. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/7a5e/1d9a/f8718d1a5dd9828dba764053/cop-15-item9a-nonpaper-president-en.pdf>
2. Statistics Norway, 2022a. <https://www.ssb.no/statbank/table/13633>
3. Statistics are valid for all second home properties transferred on the free market, independent of location or standard (Statistics Norway, 2022b). The composition of transferred objects may vary from year to year.
4. Destination Management Organisation

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