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Coping with second home tourism: responses and strategies of private and public service providers in western Sweden

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Second homes have increasingly gained academic attention, not least within tourism research. Nevertheless, most studies have addressed the topic from the perspective of the second home owners, highlighting issues such as motivation for second home ownership, use patterns, geographical location, and meanings of second homes. Even the impacts of second homes have mainly been addressed as the accumulated outcome of their owners’ decisions. Hence, second homes have mainly been conceptualized as personal/family projects. Relatively little research has been done on the ways local communities cope with second home tourism. This is the departure point for this paper, with the purpose of analysing coping strategies among public and private stakeholders regarding second home tourism. It is argued that communities have various ways of coping, ranging from resistance to resource utilization. The proposed conceptual framework is empirically applied to the case of the Swedish West Coast. In an interview survey of public and private service providers, different strategies are identified. The results of the survey indicate that second home owners are increasingly seized on as a resource that can be utilized for business development. Ultimately, institutional preconditions imply that second homes remain a challenge for local municipalities.

Keywords: second homes; tourism impacts; community; coping; Sweden

Introduction

Second homes have increasingly gained academic attention, not least within tourism research. Particularly in the current millennium, various aspects of second homes have been scrutinized (Gallent, Mace, & Tewdwr-Jones, 2005; Hall & Müller, 2004; Müller, 2004a, 2014; Müller & Hoogendoorn, 2013; Paris, 2011; Roca, 2013). Most often, however, studies have addressed the topic from the perspective of the second home owners, highlighting issues such as motivation for second home ownership, use patterns, geographical location, and meanings of second homes, while host communities and their responses to second home tourism have been at the centre of interest more seldom. Moreover, following the historical roots of second home tourism research in the 1970s, second homes have often been considered a threat to and challenge for rural host communities rather than an opportunity (Coppock, 1977a, 1977b; Müller & Hoogendoorn, 2013). This has led to a situation whereby social scientists have lamented the impacts of second

Though there has certainly been a reason for the critical assessment of second homes, perspectives have changed, increasingly highlighting their positive aspects as well. Hence, it has been argued and shown that clear distinctions between primary and second homes as well as permanent and temporary inhabitants are increasingly problematic, not least because of a growing mobility blurring borders between categories (Barnett, 2014; Farstad & Rye, 2013; Gallent, 2007; Jennings & Krannich, 2013; Persson, 2015). Ellingsen (2017) even argues that the study of rural development should always include second home mobility, since it is an integrated part of rural demography and economy. There is also evidence that rural populations perceive second home tourism far more positively than previously anticipated (Rye, 2011). Moreover, it has been indicated that second home owners indeed may imply a revitalization of rural life (Flognfeldt, 2004; Huijbens, 2012; Nordin & Marjavaara, 2012). Gallent (2014), Nordbø (2014), and Robertsson and Marjavaara (2015) also point at the social capital and competences displayed by the second home owners, and identify these as a potential for local development. Local engagement among second home owners is also facilitated by kinship and long-lasting relations to place (Mottiar & Quinn, 2001). Furthermore, even economically, it is argued, second homes make an important contribution to the rural economy (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2010; Mottiar, 2006), even though benefits are not always maximized because of the semi-permanent residential status of their owners (Barnett, 2014). Still, second homes remain marginal in relation to local planning and development efforts (Rinne, Kietäväinen, Tuulentie, & Paloniemi, 2014).

Although these impacts of second home owners have been identified in the literature, it is not known how this stated potential can be realized or how various local stakeholders seize on second homes’ potential use for the local community. This notion is the point of departure for this article. The research aims at analysing responses and strategies of private and public service providers regarding high numbers of second homes in their local arena. The study does this based on a series of interviews in a second home rich area on the Swedish West Coast.

Conceptualizing responses and strategies concerning second homes and their impacts
Local attempts to cope with second home tourism can be seen as responses to increasing mobility and an often decreasing rural population. The notion of rural decline entails a need to attract economic resources to specific localities, or better realize those that are already there, in order to provide services to the rural inhabitants. Historically, this has been achieved through the attraction of in-migrants and a local taxation of incomes, but when population numbers in rural areas are shrinking overall, the tax base grows increasingly volatile and is sometimes significantly eroded. Instead, public benefits have to be generated in an indirect way from a mobile population (Müller & Hall, 2003).

More specifically, when it comes to second homes, municipalities can generate income through a taxation of different aspects: (1) the property, (2) local consumption, and (3) indirectly, through tax income from local firms and their employees benefiting from second home tourism. The extent to which this is possible further depends on national legislation, and it is not self-evident that second home development always leads to a net import.
of economic development (Fritz, 1982; Torres & Domínguez-Menchero, 2006). As Hall (2015, p.4) notes, ‘[y]et while many jurisdictions seek to attract mobility they often appear poorly equipped to govern the implications of mobility.’

Second homes have been blamed for a declining rural population, and indeed it has sometimes been argued that a shrinking population is forced to fund services not only for themselves but also for a growing number of second home households. As Marjavaara (2007, 2009) has demonstrated, second home owners are frequently used as scapegoats for negative rural development, often because of their superior economic position in relation to competition on the housing market (Gallent et al., 2005), and sometimes for their different personal values (Jordan, 1980).

As mentioned, the focus in the scientific literature has long been on the impacts of second home tourism. Without reviewing in detail the large number of studies available, it can be noted that the impacts of second home tourism can be categorized as social, economic, and environmental (cf. Coppock, 1977a, 1977b; Gallent et al., 2005; Müller, Hall, & Keen, 2004). Certainly, most studies have targeted social impacts, while environmental impacts have only recently attained a significant attention. In this context, the scientific literature on second home impacts has not acknowledged the way host communities cope with second home tourism to any greater extent. Instead, policy recommendations are usually derived from interviews with second home owners (e.g. Kelly & Hosking, 2008; Kondo, Rivera, & Rullman, 2012; Nordbø, 2014), rather than being based on surveys among communities and community stakeholders. Exceptions to this include Rye (2011) and Farstad (2011) who, by interviewing local residents, demonstrated a positive relationship between community support and second home development as long as second home owners are perceived as offering benefits to the community. Similarly, Overvåg and Gunnerud Berg (2011) report planners having a positive approach to second homes given an abundant access to recreational land. In contrast, conflict and resentment regarding second home ownership are reported from the Italian Alps, where locals lament on second home owners’ attempts to gain influence over political decisions in destination communities (Brida, Osti, & Santifaller, 2009). Xenophobia in relation to foreign second home ownership is another community response identified in the literature (Pitkänen, 2011). Hence, the reported community responses are often related to economic considerations, but ideas of legitimate citizenship are also asserted as community responses when community members are featured in the studies.

Community responses

Community responses can be ordered along a scale from total rejection to a comprehensive welcoming and integration of second home owners. Not least the early literature offers evidence of a total rejection of second home owners and their entry into rural communities. For example, English second home purchases in rural Wales even caused violent resistance, not least due to a fear of displacement (Coppock, 1977b). Similarly, Jordan (1980) provides evidence of the disturbing impacts of second home owners on a local community in Vermont. Both examples see few positive aspects of second home ownership, and instead highlight negative cultural impacts. However, second homes have also been rejected because of their environmental impacts (Hiltunen, 2007; Langdalen, 1980).

Rejection can be exercised in various ways, by various stakeholders. Obviously, in many countries, the public sector can utilize instruments such as spatial planning (Table 1). Even taxation can be employed to counteract second home development and the conversion of permanent homes into second homes. In some countries, for example Norway and Denmark, mandatory residency has been applied in order to counteract a
conversion of farm properties into second homes (Flemsæter & Setten, 2009; Tress, 2002). However, it has been shown that it is problematic to exercise and police this in practice (Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Persson, 2011). As Persson (2011) shows, this is because permanent and second homes are not always distinguished in planning documents. Moreover, even in practice municipalities seldom have the possibility to actually monitor the use of houses, which implies that second homes may be used as permanent homes and vice versa (Müller, 2011; Müller & Marjavaara, 2012).

Recently, greater focus has been placed on the role of second home owners in local change, and on community responses to their presence. This can be seen in the context of the mobility turn in the social sciences (Müller, 2011). Accordingly, mobility is placed at the centre of interest, which implies that the dichotomy of home and away, and of local and non-local, is increasingly challenged. In such a setting, it is thus not appropriate to see second home owners as the ‘cause’ of various impacts on a local community, but rather to see them as agents in a constantly ongoing change dependent on a plethora of processes on different scales.

Hence, it is argued here that even community responses should be seen in the context of coping with ongoing changes. According to Bærenholdt and Aarsæther (1998, p. 30), ‘[C]oping is mastering of possibilities or how people engage in strategies which make sense to themselves.’ As defined above, coping also requires an agency that accepts change as something unavoidable or even positive. Regarding the relationship of local community stakeholders to second home tourism, this could be understood as different ways of relating to second home tourism in order to optimize individually desired outcomes for the community stakeholders themselves or, in some cases, the community. An example of this is offered by Aronsson (2004), in fact for the current case study area. In order to avoid crowding in the core parts of the fishing villages caused by day visitors and second home owners, the year-round inhabitants used their own secret scenic spots for relaxation rather than competing with others for space.

Furthermore, coping can also imply various strategies for optimizing the positive outcomes of second homes. This is in line with what Overvåg (2010) calls a re-resourcing of the countryside, whereby second home tourism is seen as a way of providing new value to areas previously used for agricultural and other basic production. Fløngfeldt (2002) and Nordbø (2014) argue that second home owners carry a potential for competence inflow into rural areas, and Robertsson and Marjavaara (2015) demonstrate how second home owners support inhabitants in a mountain village in northern Sweden. There is evidence that some municipalities actively work to facilitate greater contact between second home owners and the local community. As shown in Table 1, these efforts can take various forms, ranging from rejection to integration.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rejection</th>
<th>Coping</th>
<th>Integration</th>
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<td>Second homes as problem to be counteracted</td>
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<td>Second homes as non-problem</td>
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<td>Instruments of action</td>
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<td>• Spatial planning</td>
<td>• Spatial adaptation</td>
<td>• Inclusion in decision-making</td>
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<td>• Taxation</td>
<td>• Business and planning strategies in order to utilize potential benefits</td>
<td>• Local vote for second home owners</td>
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<td>• Building permits</td>
<td>• Political activism in order to change legislation</td>
<td>• System adaptations for mobile populations</td>
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owners and the local community (Müller, 1999; Rinne, Paloniemi, Tuulentie, & Kietävänen, 2015) by developing meeting schemes, websites and newsletters in order to establish systematic communication with the second home owners.

In some cases, the perception of second home owners as an unavoidable part of the local community has also implied political action to influence the legal and regulatory preconditions for second homes. Examples of this are lobby activities to acknowledge the presence and influence of second home owners in taxation and national welfare redistribution systems.

A final stage of community response is the total integration of second home owners into the local community. This is not possible everywhere, however, since national legislation constrains the ability of local government to make necessary decisions. Hence, in many countries, voters will only have the right to vote in one local jurisdiction. However, there are exceptions to this. For example, Australia allows voting in multiple jurisdictions (Hosking & Kelly, 2008). In Finland, attempts are being made to allow for second home owners to appoint representatives to be consulted regarding local planning decisions (Rinne et al., 2014, 2015). There are also examples of local jurisdictions adapting their service provision to the second home tourism seasons, since second home owners are recognized as taxpayers contributing to the local development (Müller & Jansson, 2003). However, to date no available examples of second home owners being seen as totally integrated into local communities, with rights and duties equal to those of all other inhabitants.

The typology presented here should not be regarded as a timeline, however. Thus, rejection is not necessarily followed by a coping phase; and indeed, a total integration of second home owners, whereby the community is understood as an assembly of more or less mobile people temporarily attached to a certain place, is not visible anywhere. Instead, the settings presented here could exist simultaneously and be practised by different groups within the same place.

Second homes in Sweden

The geography of second homes in Sweden has been extensively studied and discussed elsewhere (e.g. Müller, 2004b, 2010); hence, only certain relevant information is provided here. Along with the other Nordic countries, Sweden is among the countries in the world with the highest number of second homes per inhabitant (Müller, 2007). For statistical purposes, second homes (‘fritidshus’) in Sweden are defined as semi-detached housing for recreational use. Owners themselves are asked to classify their properties as second homes and there are no tax incentives to register properties for any specific use within the Swedish system (Müller, 2004b). The roots for second home tourism can be found in the late nineteenth century and urbanization created an important precondition for its further development. Left behind properties in the countryside were turned into second homes and more importantly, supported by governmental programmes, new second home settlements were built not least on the outskirts of the cities and in amenity-rich areas (Müller, 2010). This development resembles to a great degree the development in other Nordic states (Adamiak, Pitkänen, Lehtonen, 2016; Müller, 2007), but also elsewhere (Müller, 2014; Müller & Hoogendoorn, 2013; Vágner, Müller, & Fialová, 2011). And although second home tourism development happens without any major objections in many places, a polarization of interest to certain attractive locations has increasingly entailed a contestation of development (Müller, 2002).

Though exact numbers are somewhat uncertain because of statistical definitions, the estimate is about 600,000–650,000 rural properties. Hence, a majority of the population
has access to a second home and they can be found all over the country, though those along
the coast, on the outskirts of urban areas, and at mountain resorts are particularly numerous
and attractive (Marjavaara & Müller, 2007; Müller, 2002, 2006; Persson, 2015).

In the research area for this article, there are about 15,000 second homes that on average
are used more than 100 nights per year (Müller, 2011). Assuming an occupation of three
persons per second home, the number of guest nights in second homes amounts to more
than 4 million each year. The high number of second homes in the area compared to the
total population – in 2012, 48,000 people were registered in the four municipalities com-
bined – implies that during the summer months the number of second home owners and
their families is almost equal to and sometimes outnumber the registered population.
Moreover, since the area is a premier summer destination in Sweden, numerous other tour-
ists using campgrounds or guest harbours – amounting to approximately 500,000 com-
mercial guest nights (Statistics Sweden, 2011) – or simply traveling through, further increase
the temporary–permanent population ratio. This creates competition for recreational land
use between different user groups (Aronsson, 2004).

A considerable share of the second home owners comes from the Oslo area in nearby
Norway, while Swedish owners come not only from the greater Gothenburg area but also
from the entire country. Moreover, numerous Swedish expatriates have second homes in
the area. Thus, the region fulfils several of the categories identified by Müller et al.
(2004): it is an amenity-rich hinterland of Oslo and Gothenburg, and at the same time
a major domestic vacation area and a haven for Swedish families living overseas
(Müller, 2011).

The use patterns of second homes in the area mirror the national situation: like elsewhere in
the country, peak season here is the summer months (Müller, 2011). However, Swedish second
home owners use their properties here for 109 nights annually, which is 30 nights more than
the national average. The main motives for having a second home in the region are access to
amenities, particularly the coastline, as well as social reasons related to family and family
cohesion. On average, second home owners in the area are economically well-off and feel inte-
grated in the local community (Larsson & Robertsson, 2012; Müller, 2011).

Despite a widely acknowledged economic impact, second homes are problematic for
the municipalities. Since the Swedish tax system redistributes money and financial
support to municipalities based on their number of registered citizens, funding for sustain-
ing necessary infrastructure is limited in relation to the actual number of inhabitants during
the summer months (Müller & Hall, 2003).

Finally, although the second home stock in the area mainly comprises purpose-built
homes, the demand for property within the picturesque fishing villages has been high,
affecting property markets and turning villages into seasonal settlements (Nordin, 1993).
This has generated a debate on second home induced displacement as well, though it has
been shown for other amenity-rich areas in Sweden that second home owners are used
as scapegoats for rural decline. Hence, villagers had left for reasons other than the increas-
ing pressure from second homes (Marjavaara, 2009).

All in all, these factors create a situation whereby second homes are perceived as a chal-
lenge. However, since a growing number of municipalities realize that the phenomenon of
second homes is not going to go away, there is an increasing desire to see them and their
owners as a resource and an opportunity rather than merely a burden (Müller, 2011;
Nordbo, 2014). This applies to the research area, where the regional municipal collabor-
ation Fyrbodal engaged in a project to gain better knowledge about the second home
owners in the area. Findings from that project are reported here.
Methodology

The empirical data analysed here form a subset of a wider study, initiated by the inter-municipal collaboration Fyrbodal. Originating in its recognition of the large share of second home owners in the region, Fyrbodal decided to learn more about this group and about how service providers interacted with the second home owners (Larsson & Roberts-son, 2012; Müller, 2011).

Hence, 45 telephone interviews were conducted in 2012 in four municipalities – Strömstad, Tanum, Sotenäs, and Lysekil – in the West Coast region of Bohuslän. The interviewees represented in 37 cases were producers of services and retail. They were selected to represent variation in terms of business activities, size, and independence (e.g. chain, locally owned). The eight interviewees representing public service functions were chosen to have relevance for second home owners, municipal functions excluded. The selection includes hospitals and health centres, ambulance and fire rescue services, police, public transportation, and traffic infrastructure (main roads).

All interviews were conducted immediately before or after the main summer season, i.e. June, late August, and September, in Bohuslän. Second home owners and their impact on the community were expected to be most easily identified then, since many people spend several months beyond the main tourism season in their second homes (Müller, 2011). Indeed, ‘second home owners’ was a meaningful category to local service providers since the latter could answer questions nuanced and without hesitation as will be demonstrated in the Result section.

A first step in the analysis followed a geographical rationale, where interview data were analysed for each municipality. This analysis strived to identifying a wide scope of experiences related to second home owners’ service demands (Larsson & Robertsson, 2012). A next step, reported here, was a qualitative thematic analysis (Åkerlund, 2013; Bergström & Borèus, 2000; Braun & Clarke, 2006) where common traits, themes, in service providers’ responses to second home owners were identified. The analysis produced four categories of responses connected to kinds of business actor:

- 13 grocery stores and retail – from zero to 40 employed off tourism season and from zero to 85 during tourism season, majority of businesses part of retail chain;
- seven restaurants – as a single business or together with complementary functions such as hotels, conference facilities, cafés, or bakeries. From zero to 25 employed off tourism season and from zero to 80 during tourism season;
- 10 services including leisure companies, from zero to 15 employees during off tourism season (mostly small businesses) and from zero to 20 during tourism season; and
- seven construction companies and craftsmen, from zero to 27 employed during off tourism season, numbers remaining the same during tourism season. One business being part of a regional business concern.

Public service functions form a group on its own, since they apply a ubiquitous service provision logic based on their public mandate rather than a business logic.

Results

In the following sections, the results of the telephone survey among service providers in the research area are presented. The focus is first on private companies where particularities within each category are presented, and then we turn to public stakeholders.
Private companies

Grocery stores and retail

Grocery stores are clearly influenced by the tourism-related seasonal variation. The larger the number of tourists, the greater the demand. The tourism season starts on Easter holidays in the spring and ends on All Saints’ Day early November, with its peak during July and early August. Apart from the intense summer weeks with visiting tourists, it is second home owners who contribute to the increased demand for foodstuffs. This pattern is evident, irrespective of a store’s size. The owner of a larger store concludes that turnover doubles during July and early August, whereas the owner of a smaller store in a more isolated location concludes: ‘Variations are extreme. As an example, turnover for the entire month of February is equal to the best day in July.’ Another small store owner is clear about the consequences: ‘Without the summer [visitors], winters would be difficult.’

Not only do the volumes of groceries sold increase; second home owners also demand a greater variety, along with new trends in services or goods or locally produced food. The owner of a home decoration store learned that second home owners have distinctly different requirements than local inhabitants: ‘A couple of years ago rusty things were very popular, which the locals didn’t understand at all.’ Another interviewee states that: ‘The second home owners are from the cities; they’re more enlightened. They’ve developed another kind of understanding about, for example, the environment, and they know better than the locals what they want.’ The smaller grocery stores selling locally produced foodstuffs are almost entirely dependent on second home owners and visiting tourists. They buy niche products and tend to be loyal customers, preferring to buy local products when possible.

Second home owners tend to have more money to spend than local inhabitants, and store owners adjust their supply to match that. Consequently, they try to influence the local market to adopt similar consumption behaviours, since the greater variety of products is already there.

Stores with a large share of second home owners as their customer base find it difficult to maintain a healthy business without them and visiting tourists. The closing down of businesses has consequences, especially in more remote locations, where other services are provided through the local grocery store.

In this category of businesses, it seems that pharmacies are more independent in relation to the second home tourism market. Variations in demand are small during the year, but local variations in the kind of medicines that are prescribed can be noted. The variations in demand vary to a lesser extent in the northern municipalities, due to Norwegians visiting for the cheap shopping. This border-induced commerce is a year-round phenomenon.

In terms of marketing, the larger grocery stores and retail chains have customer loyalty programmes, with local adaptations that include second home owners. Smaller stores have fewer resources for marketing, but utilize local advertisement and information papers. They are produced locally, delivered for free to all households, and widely read. Events, websites, and word of mouth are complementary forms of marketing. However, none of the business owners interviewed told of having a specific marketing strategy directed at second home owners.

Restaurants, hotels, and conference facilities

This category is a more diverse group than the previous one, which influences its exposure to seasonal variations in tourism. Restaurants are generally positively influenced by larger numbers of visiting tourists during the summer months. Particularly dependent are smaller restaurants and cafés, especially if they are located on islands. As one interviewee states:
‘We’re very weather-dependent; that is, beautiful weather is good. Otherwise, the boats won’t come.’ Size and diversity give businesses added resilience, with larger businesses and especially those targeting conference and business visitors not at all dependent on second home tourism. Spring and autumn are important for golfing tourism from Norway, and Christmas provides income through the smorgasbord tradition.

Second home owners are generally wealthier and spend their money on dining to a greater extent than locals do, according to one interviewee: ‘Second home owners have stronger purchasing power. They also bring their friends to our place, which gives us the opportunity to serve larger dinners.’ Local inhabitants tend to rather use restaurants and hotels for larger celebrations, weddings, birthdays, and so on.

**Services and leisure companies**

Summer season and second home tourism are also important for service-oriented businesses. The same kinds of patterns are repeated, with second home owners being ‘more updated on costs of activities like those we offer [swimming, gym]. They’ve been around and can compare. People from here ask about prices and find it difficult to relate to them. Second home owners buy their training cards right away.’ They are important in keeping the demand on a healthy level during school holidays and in early and late season, especially for services oriented towards leisure (sports, activities) and living (maintenance, cleaning, gardening).

All businesses represented here are aware of the need to approach second home owners – or any customer – in a positive way, provide good service, and establish trustful relations: ‘Most importantly, you have to do a good job. Rumours travel quickly in small places like ours. Therefore, it’s really important to do a good job.’ Marketing and information are channelled through the Internet, advertisements in local media, and at fairs, but of greatest importance is word of mouth, which is why nurturing customer relations is essential.

A swimming and gym company has identified second home owners as a customer group with specific needs, and has adjusted its business strategy accordingly:

As an example, we now offer a 15-session training card with no time limit. The price is fair and it suits second home owners perfectly. When we get new customers we try to determine their needs, and if they’re second home owners we try to find solutions for them.

**Construction companies and craftsmen**

Within this category of businesses, the seasonal variation is less related to tourism flows. Designing, building, and repairing houses and buildings takes place throughout the year. Still, though: ‘We’re very busy in the spring. We peak then, because of second home owners hiring us. During the summer we have slightly less to do, since many of our employees leave for vacation.’ Typically, second home owners schedule construction work to spring time in order to supervise and communicate with the construction companies and craftsmen, and to have constructions finished before the summer. One firm offering craftsman services also runs a store selling-related goods. This section of the business is related to changes in tourism flows in the same way other retail businesses are, whereby especially second home owners are important. They own houses that are repaired or rebuilt, which they tend to prefer, while local inhabitants rather opt for completely new houses. Since the trend is towards second homes having a standard similar to that of regular housing, the demand is growing. Rebuilding an existing house is more expensive than building a
new one, though this does not seem to create any problems: ‘The second home owners pay their bills almost before receiving them’, according to one craftsman.

Second home owners are attractive as customers, because they request more demanding construction solutions and have the ability to pay for them. One strategy for tapping this potential is to establish networks around skilled carpenters and over time establish a position whereby the demand is more constant. This situation holds true for those in construction who focus on private housing, while others who are more oriented towards public housing rather hope for growth in the year-round population. Irrespective of business focus, these companies are not entirely dependent on second home tourism. The main reasons mentioned for this are national legislation allowing for rebuilding subsidies to owners of private houses, and having Norway as a strong market in the vicinity.

**Private sector approach to second home owners**

Common to all local business owners who were interviewed in this study is that they appreciate second home tourism because it develops demand. Increased numbers of second home owners scale up demand of goods and services. According to interviewees, second home owners also demand high quality and more diverse services than do locals. New trends are being brought into the area. One business owner expresses the following point of view: ‘If I speak strictly about my own company, then [second home owners] are better. They’re easy and good customers.’ Another business manager notes that ‘[Second home owners], I would argue, give a lot of positive feedback and boost our staff. There’s always – like in any other place – a few bullies, but mostly they give us energy.’ In the selection of businesses studied here, second home owners provide opportunities for businesses and business development that are specific to the group. However, the opposite view is also expressed: ‘Even if second home owners have filled wallets, they’re not a reliable [customer] group.’

Second home owners contribute to a healthy business development. At the same time, service providers are fully aware of and desire the liveliness the second home owners bring to the local communities: ‘The best thing would be if the second home owners could become permanent residents; they have economic resources and can contribute many things’, according to one interviewee. However, in terms of evaluating potential community risks, there are dilemmas that remain unsolved. Second home owners tend to be older and wealthier, which creates an imbalance in relation to the local population: ‘What’s really sad is when [second home owners] buy houses in residential areas. It’s sad for families with children that can’t compete when house prices are rising.’ A result of a large proportion of second home owners might be an unbalanced and segregated social matrix. Further, second home owners are good for us since we can prolong the tourist season. They’re mobile and can work in their second homes. There’s surely a large market. The problem is that they cost us money, since they aren’t registered as inhabitants here. We should get a share of their income tax.

In order to achieve this, the only option today is to make them permanent residents of the region.

**Public sector services**

The public services and functions included in this analysis are healthcare, police, ambulance and rescue services, transportation, and infrastructure. In the following, their views on second home owners are presented. However, according to interviewed representatives,
Singling out this group from permanent residents is not easily done. In comparison with permanent residents and visiting tourists during high season, second home owners are a limited group and are often regarded as part of overall tourism flows.

Police and ambulance services are affected the most among public service actors, with violent crimes in public settings having their absolute peak during July and early August. Almost all of them involve visiting tourists. As a response to this, the police increase their presence during the period, specifically at night and during weekends. An increase in theft is reported once second home owners arrive at their second homes after the winter months, when boats and buildings are left unattended for longer stretches of time.

Ambulance services note the arrival of second home owners during the spring through an increase in accidents involving falls, cuts, and the like. They expect an increase in these accidents over time, since second home owners are spending more time in the region and are getting older. An overall problem is that during peak tourist season (in July and early August) it is sometimes difficult to reach accident scenes since the coastal roads are narrow, winding, and filled with tourists. A larger number of people in the region increase the number of accidents, which often results in long working hours for ambulance staff.

Police and ambulance services are assigned extra resources from regional management to their respective local units, as are healthcare centres. Extra staff is hired in July and early August, while no real need has yet been noticed during shoulder seasons. One exception to this is in the northernmost municipality bordering Norway, where Norwegians come for Easter weekend to celebrate. This is recorded at the local healthcare centres in the increased number of accidents.

The arrival of second home owners brings increased frequencies of ‘summer wounds’ such as abrasions, fractures, and ‘tourism sickness.’ The latter refers to the fact that many visitors discover during the holidays that they don’t feel well, because there’s no time for illness in the everyday rush. Once they get here and things calm down, they discover they’re not well. It’s mainly physical problems, but also mental ones.

These seasonal changes are met by prioritizing unplanned visits and to a greater extent schedule planned visits to off tourism season.

The same dynamics are evident at hospitals in the extended region, where similar organizational changes take place. These adjustments are made with no extra resources provided from overall management. According to the interviewee, permanent residents are aware of the situation and avoid planned visits during the summer months if possible.

Rescue services are less affected by the seasonal changes. Increases in traffic and drowning accidents are noted during July and early August, as are accidents related to alcohol use. Second home owners are regarded as regular residents. Common to the rescue services, police and healthcare providers is their ambition to distribute preventive information in order to reduce the extent of accidents and to enhance the quality of services.

As for public transport, the seasonal changes cause some changes in when, where, and how often buses run. This is especially the case during July and early August. Bus routes are adjusted to include more leisurely destinations, and information is provided in order to guide a larger number of unaccustomed bus travellers. The development of road infrastructure is based on a regular collection of data on traffic flows. Roads are being built and adjusted to the continuous increase in summer traffic, as well as to new developments within housing, retail, and industry. These processes are slow, and do not adjust to seasonal variations in visitors and population numbers per se.
Conclusions

A large number of second home owners reside along the northern Bohuslän coastline during the summer months every year. And as the empirical study indicates, the temporary and large-scale increase in population numbers poses challenges to the permanent residents and the municipalities. According to the proposed conceptual continuum, from rejection through coping to integration, it can be noted that there is no evidence of rejection among the interviewees. Hence, the results presented here do not support ideas of a rejection, as promoted in the early second home tourism literature (Coppock, 1977a, 1977b; Jordan, 1980).

Instead, evidence of an attitude can be noted that acknowledges that second home owners are a group that has multiple resources (Larsson & Robertsson, 2012; Nordbø, 2014; Robertsson & Marjavaara, 2015). Second home owners are appreciated for prolonging the tourist season, scaling up and changing the demand for services, and generally providing a more solid basis for business opportunities. To utilize these opportunities, private service providers apply strategies for improved service delivery and hence increased revenues (Table 2). They communicate and interact with second home owners, and strive to better understand their demands. The strategic and coping responses identified here are new and improved services, sometimes as single service providers and sometimes through the development of business networks. This study has not aimed at comparing strategies towards second home owners and other kinds of tourists, respectively, but certainly this would be a worthwhile undertaking in future research.

Table 2. Applied coping strategies regarding second home development in Bohuslän.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments of action</th>
<th>Private sector</th>
<th>Public sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spatial adaptation</td>
<td>• Businesses in locations that are of interest only during the tourism season such as islands</td>
<td>• Staff moved from elsewhere in the greater region (police, health care)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased city centre presence of police during weekends and evenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adjustment of public bus routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of infrastructure due to new second home developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and planning strategies in order to utilize potential benefits</td>
<td>• Business offers in order to benefit from prolonged tourism season</td>
<td>• Information campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adapting to more complex and greater demand for services and goods</td>
<td>• Increased resources (mainly staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication and interaction with second home owners to gain knowledge on them as customers</td>
<td>• Prioritizing of events (e.g. accidents before planned health interventions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activism in order to change legislation</td>
<td>• No strategy identified</td>
<td>• No strategy identified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public service providers apply coping strategies as well, albeit of a somewhat different kind. Private sector efficiency results in satisfied customers and increased profits, while public sector efficiency results in satisfied citizens and visitors, and sometimes lower costs. Hence, even if the second home owners’ presence influences the kinds of accidents or criminal offences that take place, the providers of public services do not adjust their service provision to the same extent as private sector service providers do. Mostly, though, the high season, with its large numbers of day or short-term tourists, affects the resourcing, planning, and provision of public services. Still, the results confirm the findings by Rinne et al. (2014), who see second homes as a marginal issue for local government.

Signs of integration are nowhere to be found. However, arguments are asserted that the best solution would be for the second home owners to move to the region and become permanent residents, with full integration as a consequence. Second home owners are regarded as contributors to the community development, even though private sector interviewees do express concern regarding the community development, not least regarding the transformation of villages. However, today’s legislation forces second home owners to choose one place of residence, and hence, the desired permanent in-migration remains an option for only a few (Larsson & Robertsson, 2012).

Private and public sector service providers adopt and develop coping strategies for business development and service delivery during the summer months and the high tourism season. Arguably, strategies adopted from either a rejection or an integration perspective would require other resources and positions to act from. Legislative bodies at the national level have a mandate to influence taxation, voting rights, spatial planning legislation, etc., whereas municipal actors can adopt strategies for hindering or promoting second home owners through spatial planning practices or the provision of public services. Influencing these bodies would require political activism from actors coping with second home owners in the region, which is one potential action within a coping framework. There are no signs at all of this approach in this study, however. Hence, it can be concluded that true integration requires action on not only a local level but also a national one. For this to happen, however, it would require a national interest in rural issues and a re-resourcing of the countryside (Overvåg, 2010).

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