

100 The second home industry in Norway - management and sustainability

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Norway, like the other Nordic countries, has long holiday-cabin traditions (see e.g. Müller, 2007). Until a few decades ago cabins were built scattered throughout large mountainous areas and were mostly without electricity, water supply, and car road connection. Since the 80s, urbanization, growing average income, increased mobility, flexible working hours, and digitalization have caused an increasing demand for second homes with a standard that roughly equals first homes. This has changed both the landscapes and the ways in which people are using their second homes.

The increase in the number of second homes should also be seen in the context of the continuous depopulation of Norway's mountain municipalities. The growing tourism industry is often viewed as the lifeline in these communities. This has contributed significantly to the boom in second home industry, especially in areas easily accessible from the metropolitan areas. While offering economic advantages for landowners and developers, local businesses, and municipalities, the second home industry encounters several sustainability challenges, which has resulted in resentments and conflicts among several kinds of stakeholders (Overvåg & Berg, 2011).

This paper is based on a study of sustainability issues that has emerged in the wake of the recent second home developments in the popular mountainous area of Sjusjøen (south-eastern Norway). Sjusjøen makes a prominent example of developments characterised by a sharp increase in densely built high standard second homes (both detached houses and apartments) that have occurred several places in Norway. Based on interviews with key stakeholders and documents studies (including newspapers and social media), the overarching aim of the study has been to explore various social effects of the expansive second home development and how diverse stakeholders relate to sustainability issues.

The new second homes are built in dense clusters below the timberline. Several benefits are associated with this policy. The development of infrastructures becomes more efficient, less land areas are seized, and the ecologically vulnerable mountain area above the timberline is spared.

Despite the advantages of the densification policy, several voices are maintaining that the current development is unsustainable and must be halted. Owners of the existing, less-exclusive second homes that were constructed some decades ago, as well as local outdoor recreationists, express their concerns about the deterioration of the landscape caused by the buildings and the extensive infrastructures (Breiby et al., 2021). It is maintained that what is perceived as an authentic landscape is transformed into something that is experienced as incompatible with their own preferred ways of engaging with the surrounding nature, the landscape, and the place. Furthermore, it is argued that neither landowners nor the municipality takes peoples' concerns into consideration (Breiby et al., 2021). In news reports and op-eds in the national and regional media, Sjusjøen is referred to as an example of how the second home industry is part of a larger process of unsustainable use of nature, such as growing areas of spur plantations, constructions of high-ways through protected areas, the construction windmill parks.

Tourism development is becoming increasingly subject to policymaking, legislation, and regulation (Ruhanen, 2013). Despite this, public authorities continue to see tourism primarily as a tool for economic growth and employment. Holistic long-term coordination and planning are often inadequate, relevant stakeholders of both public and private sectors tend to be left out of these processes, and governments rarely take a leading role in securing environmental and social sustainability (Hall, 2015; Overvåg & Berg, 2011). One unfortunate effect with respect to the second home industry is that owners of second homes tend to become an

invisible population for local authorities. Consequently, infrastructures and public services are rarely dimensioned in accordance with the actual number of people using them (Paris, 2014: Overvåg & Berg, 2011). While this represents challenges for the municipalities and its inhabitants, it also raises the issue of the political rights of the owners of second home as part-time residents (Åkerlund et al., 2015)

Due to the high standard, the growing mobility, and the multi-residential practices (Ellingsen, 2017), second homes in Sjusjøen are visited all year round, during oval weekends and holidays, but even in the midweek (Ericsson & Flognfeldt, 2018). During the pandemic, second homes have increasingly been taken into use as peoples' home office. Thus, the pandemic may contribute to further increase in both frequency and length of the stay. In that case, the distinction between the two categories of homes will become even more blurred, and the function of the second homes even more equivalent to those of the first home.

Furthermore, it's likely that this will strengthen the attachment to and sense of the place where their second home is located (see Kaltenborn et al., 2009). This may influence their sustainability concerns considerably (Brehm et al., 2011). Hence, as part-time residents second home owners can be inclined, in the same manner as local recreationist, to engage with the landscapes in ways that make them think of land properties as public goods rather as economic resources for the landowners and the local communities (see Øian & Skogen, 2016).

With respect to the current second home developments in Norway, we will explore in what ways several conflicts of interests arise from the relative irreconcilability of perceiving the landscape as an economic resource on the one hand and on the other hand the landscape as an asset for recreation in nature, and how this has ramifications for in what ways sustainability issues are viewed by stakeholders with differing interests.

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