

189 Tradition and destination: Socio-ecological sustainability and the host-visitor interface in second-home development in Norway

Marianne Singsaas¹, Vegard Gundersen², ¹Telemark Research Institute, Norway. ²Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Norway

Introduction

Second homes (SH) are a major form of domestic tourism in many countries, especially the Nordic countries. Nearly 50% of Norway's population have access to at least one SH. Over the last 20–30 years, the average SH size has increased significantly (62.2 m² in 1983 to 96.2 m² in 2019) and a typical SH now holds very high material standard. Moreover, four times as many SHs were built in 2019 compared to 1983 (6455 versus 1600). In this period, the majority of the second home growth in Norway has taken place in the rural mountain areas (Skjeggedal et al. 2016), placing these areas under a multitude of interrelated pressures; Buildings and activities place local nature and biodiversity under pressure, but in addition the modern SHD trend also places pressure on the host-visitor relationships and land management systems, as well as altering local economies.

Compared to other forms of recreation and tourism, Second home developments (SHD) poses particular challenges. SH owners are tourists, and exert similar impact on hosting communities, however, the dwelling use (Paris, 2014) of SHs, characterized by extended and repeated visits, sometimes spanning generations, implies different social, economic and ecological impacts than from other forms of tourism.

Covering 39% of the total Norwegian area and 70% of Norway's protected land, mountain municipalities are facing negative population trends, decreasing economic opportunities in the traditional industries and low accessibility to important public services. Since the 1990s rural areas have increasingly been portrayed as arenas for post-productivist amenity and leisure production for a growing urban population (Perkins 2006; Overvåg 2010; Rønningen & Flemsæter 2016). With widespread second home developments, intensive tourism developments, and other recreational use, new actors are claiming a stake in the outfields and in local governance (Overvåg et al. 2016).

Existing research tends not to have dealt holistically with SH pressures. Despite a growing literature on the challenges mountain communities face (e.g. Arnesen et al. 2010) and the commodification's of rural resources (Perkins 2006, Rønningen & Flemsæter 2016), descriptions and analyses of local inhabitants and SH owners land use practices, experiences and meanings are still scarce. Without a better understanding of the increasing and transforming SH developments and its competing interests, values and practices, the pressures related to SH is likely to intensify, leading to conflicts and hampering ecological as well as economic and social sustainability.

As the SH transforms to year-round use and even as a primary residence, the changed and increased recreational practices have put pressure on ecosystems (e.g. wild reindeer habitats), sheep and reindeer herding practices and local nature practices such as hunting and berry picking (e.g. Arnesen et al. 2019). Thus, recent SHD has increased tensions between nature users and nature conservationists and between hosts carrying out traditional local practices and visitors challenging these.

While an array of branding and visitation strategies, initiated by national government, are being developed in protected areas throughout Norway, there is a lack of national policies and institutional support for SH management in local communities surrounding protected areas. While protected areas area managed by the State, SH planning lies within the realm of local government. Local authorities are thus in a strong position to guide development, however, as Hall and Müller (2004) points out, it can also result in a lack of regional and national consistency in planning guidelines. The double challenge local councils face; few formal tools for visitation regulations outside protected areas, and the distinctive impacts from dwelling SH users, highlights the need for transgressing the current focus on building



regulation, to a wider comprehensive planning for social sustainability in addition to economical and ecological sustainability. We therefore look at how SH are incorporated into the strategic planning process at local and regional levels, in ensuring sustainable development of SH in a broad sense. To better understand the degree and implications of these tensions and pressures, there is need to take a bottom-up perspective, looking at the SHD phenomenon by investigating different groups of people's nature-based practices, their values and expressed attitudes and meanings, to further develop insights of relevance to local as well as national decision-making processes enabling a more sustainable second home development.

Methods

We have selected three municipalities where local growth management will most likely be required to handle effects of SHD (Table 1).

We are in the process of conducting interviews in the two case regions, to explore the connection between self, practice and place. We have also conducted a document analysis to examine policies and regulations with relevance to sustainable SHD. To answer questions related to barriers for sustainable SHD, we will do 40 individual interviews with local villagers and SH owners, managers and policy-makers at the local level. Workshops with key stakeholders will be arranged in the case areas, early and late in the project, to explore the insights gained through the interviews and document analysis.

Table 1. The two case study areas in "Tradition and destination" including three municipalities.

	SHD information from:	Building on existing knowledge:
	The Hardangervidda region: South-central Norway. Hardangervidda national park (3422 km ²). Main industries; tourism, agriculture. 10 municipalities: Study area Vinje: 3 rd highest number of SH in Norway, 5278 cabins, more SH than permanent dwellings, with a cabin surplus of over 2,500 units.	R&D project wild reindeer (since 2001, n>200 GPS collared ind. reindeer), comprehensive data on human use. Vulnerability analyses, vegetation wear, wildlife disturbance. NINA: A broad local Stakeholder Group.
	The Rondane region: South-central Norway. Rondane national park (963 km ²). Main industries; tourism, agriculture. 8 municipalities: Study area Ringebu and Stor-Elvdal. Tremendous increase in SHD the last decades.	R&D project wild reindeer and comprehensive data on human use (since 2009, n>40 GPS ind. reindeer). Vulnerability analyses, vegetation wear, wildlife disturbance. NINA: A broad local Stakeholder Group.