

THE OWNERS OF SECOND HOMES AS USERS OF RURAL SPACE IN CZECHIA

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ABSTRACT

Although the second home tourism is considered to be an element of the lifestyle of a predominantly urban population, it has a strong influence on rural life. Thus, research on the relations within both urban and rural communities that share the transforming space seems crucial for future rural development. This article focuses on second home owners and users as significant agents in the transformation of the Czech countryside. Available statistical data indicates a high number of second homes with an uneven location pattern in the landscape. Primary data, based on our own field surveys, in-depth interviews and observations, show the significant social impact of second home tourism on the local social environment. The models of conflicts, coexistence and cooperation are investigated in selected peripheral areas in Czechia. Our own contribution to the research is in the specific focus on community development in municipalities with a significant tourist and recreational function. The major aim is to demonstrate and discuss linkages between second home owners and users and territorial identity with the use of empirical data. Our crucial findings contradict statements about conflicts in relations between the local population and incomers from cities. Especially long-term cottage users are no longer considered as outside invaders in rural areas, which used to cause social conflicts. The differences between second homes and primary residences seem to be more blurred than in the past. The conclusion outlines the possible future directions of research with focus on social capital, multiple dwelling and semi-migration concepts.

Keywords: second homes, rural space, territorial identity, recreation, tourism, Czechia

1. Introduction

Our research follows the concept of community development elaborated by Giddens (1991) and Wellman (1996), where the local community is perceived as a potential collective agent. There are two aspects of the community development: development within the community and development of the community as a whole. The development of communication and cooperation inside local communities was studied for instance by Gans (1968), Wellman (2001) and Day (2006) where potential conflicts between traditional rural local community and incomers from cities bringing features of urban lifestyle were described. Mutual relations between residents and tourists can be conditioned also by their relations to the territory used. As far as the local community structure is concerned, crucial actors are traditionally defined as the residents, the local authorities, entrepreneurs and civic associations. Various actors have different visions of the use of the area, its function and future development. They also perceive diverse territorial identities which also differ in their formation process.

Reconceptualisation of the territorial identities has been introduced to contemporary geographical discourse in the 1980s and has been strongly accented in the world (e.g. Knight 1982; Paasi 1986; 2009; Giddens 1991; Raagmaa 2002; Fukuyama 2006) as well as in Czech scientific literature (Vencálek 1998; Chromý 2003; Zich 2003; Chromý et al. 2009; Semian 2012). The territorial identity can be conceptualised as two complementary

parts (Paasi 1986; 2009): 1) the territorial consciousness of inhabitants, their sense of belonging to a territory and their perception of it and 2) territorial images formulated and reproduced by various agents. Territorial identity is thus continuously reproduced through socio-spatial, politico-economic and cultural changes. In contemporary discourse, territorial identities are often related to the territorial development of various areas (Antonsich 2010), sometimes accenting tourist potential for development (Kneafsey 2000; Light 2001). Territorial identities in development strategies are often seen as narratives reinterpreted for different purposes by different actors of regional development (Frisvoll, Rye 2009). Nevertheless, the importance of the reshaping of territorial identity by different actors (residents versus second home owners and users versus organised and individual tourists versus municipality representatives, etc.) has not been studied sufficiently.

The relations of people to a territory are a natural component of life. The areas with changing environmental, socio-economical and socio-cultural conditions and areas with specific historical development play different roles in the processes of the shaping the peoples' territorial identity. The different spatial relations are mostly supposed for two groups of identity creators: the residents and the second home users. The different relations are influenced not only by the length of stay but also different values and behaviour/performance of the groups.

Recent research on territorial identity in rural areas of Czechia (Chromý et al. 2009; Chromý, Skála 2010;

Chromý et al. 2010) has been focused on the opinions of members of local authorities and on the residents. However, second home users have been rather neglected despite the fact their being significant or even dominant agents. This required the acquisition also of primary data for the survey, described in the next chapter.

Our own contribution to the research is in the specific focus on community development in the municipalities with a significant tourist and recreational function. The major aim is to demonstrate and discuss linkages between second homes owners and users and territorial identity with the use of empirical data.

The Czech countryside has been transforming into a multifunctional environment in which the recreational function, significantly represented by second homes, prevails in many localities and even regions (Frantál, Martínát 2013). Therefore, several research questions have been formulated: Whether at all and how second home users affect the countryside, how they perceive it, whether and how they participate in the creation of the social capital, whether they identify themselves with the place they use and how they form its territorial identity? The issue also is whether second home users are significant agents that have to be considered in the research into the rural areas with a high concentration of second homes. It should further be determined what their relation with the other agents is and what methods may be used to study this situation.

The text below outlines the methods of the identification of regions with the high concentration of second homes, with respect to the specificities of Czechia. This is followed by a detailed description of the actual survey in the selected regions, whose results make it possible to answer the key questions in the conclusion.

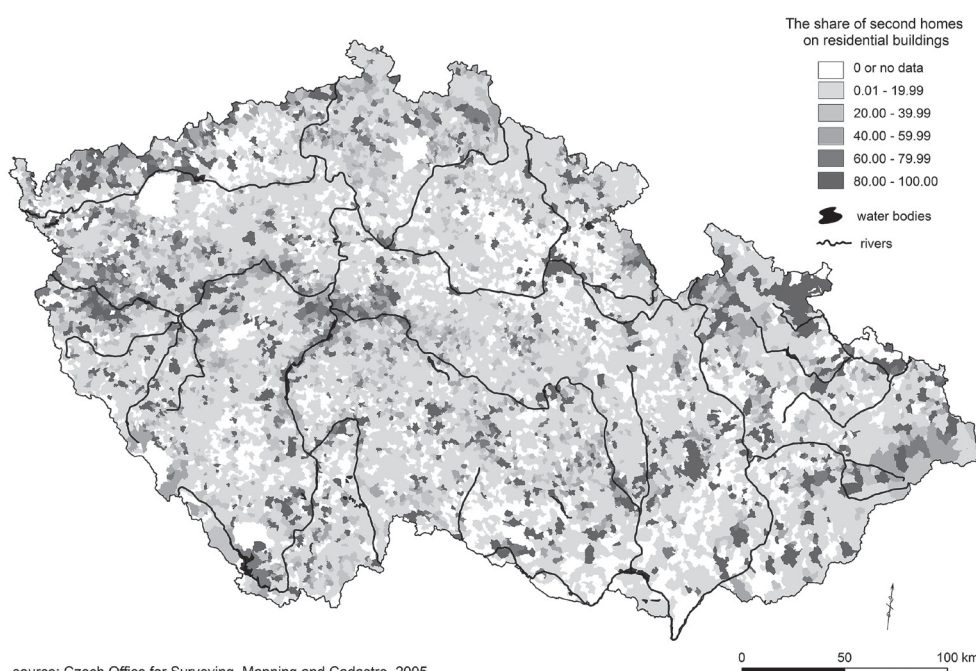
2. Methods

2.1 Selection and description of the areas surveyed

Second home tourism in Czechia has traditionally been a significant phenomenon. 12% of households own a second home (with the number of the owners being twice as high in big cities); a quarter of population uses a second home regularly. Second homes cover 20% of all dwellings in Czechia. The data have been provided by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre (ČÚZK), which keeps records of all real estates, classified by functional usage. We focused on residential dwellings as well as second homes, labelled as individual recreation dwellings in the register (Bičík et al. 2001). The smallest units registered are the cadastre units (c. u.); the whole area of Czechia is covered by over 13,000 c. u. (Kuba, Olivová 2005).

Our emphasis was placed on second home users who regularly exploit the space (see Figure 1). The darker the colour, the higher the share of second homes (i.e. the higher the share of second home users as compared to residents). The second homes significantly prevail in the southern hinterland of Prague, mountainous regions (Krušné hory, Jizerské hory, Jeseníky, Beskydy), and at water reservoirs (Lipno, Hracholusky, Orlik, Vranov) which confirmed the results by Vystoupil et al. (2006).

In different numbers and at varying intensity, second homes are practically spread all over Czechia. Nevertheless, the concentration of second homes may be measured by the auto-correlation method (LISA). The main zones of concentration include the southern hinterland of Prague (for a detailed survey, see e.g. Fialová 2012), Plzeň outskirts, the western part of the Krušné hory Region, the



source: Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre, 2005

Fig. 1 The share of second homes in the number of residential dwellings. Source: Vágner, Fialová 2009

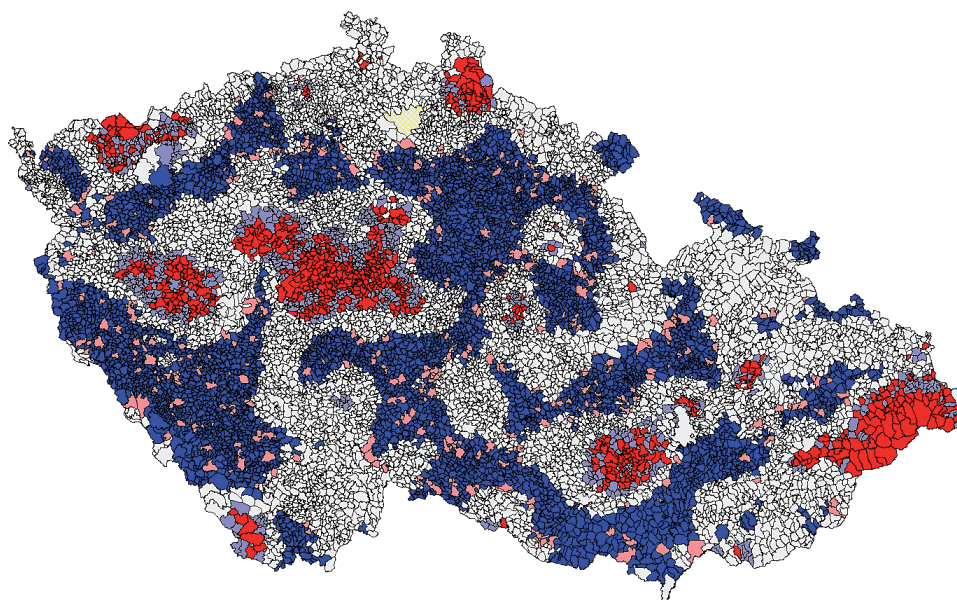


Fig. 2 The main concentrations of second homes identified by auto-correlation method (LISA). Note: The autocorrelation method enables to measure similarity of neighbouring cadastre units according to values of the share of total amount of second homes on all dwellings (Novák, Netrdová 2011).

Source: own elaboration, data from ČÚZK 2010

Liberec Region, Brno outskirts, the Beskydy. Secondary zones are represented e.g. by the banks of water reservoirs (Lipno, Seč). The concentration of municipalities with a dominant second home function (in red colour) is very clear in such areas (Figure 2).

The first research stage proceeded from the quantitative statistical data on the population, second homes and residential dwellings provided by the ČÚZK and the Czech Statistical Office (Census). The absolute data were relativized to the area, population and dwellings (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Subsequently, case-study regions for a deeper survey were selected. This was followed by qualitative field research, predominantly in the form of questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews with the agents.

Eight case-study regions were selected for a detailed field survey based on the share of second homes in the number of residential dwellings (Figure 3). Second homes in Czechia are classified as a) cabins and recreational homes – buildings built primarily for recreational purposes; b) cottages – primarily built for another, mostly residential, function (Fialová, Vágner 2005a). Long-term non-occupied flats used for recreational purposes were taken into account, too.

During the selection of case-study regions the geographic position was also considered. Case-study region No. 1 represents an area in the inner periphery in the amenity-rich hinterland of Prague with sparse settlement, which had been depopulated during the Second World War, with a subsequent large-scale population exchange.

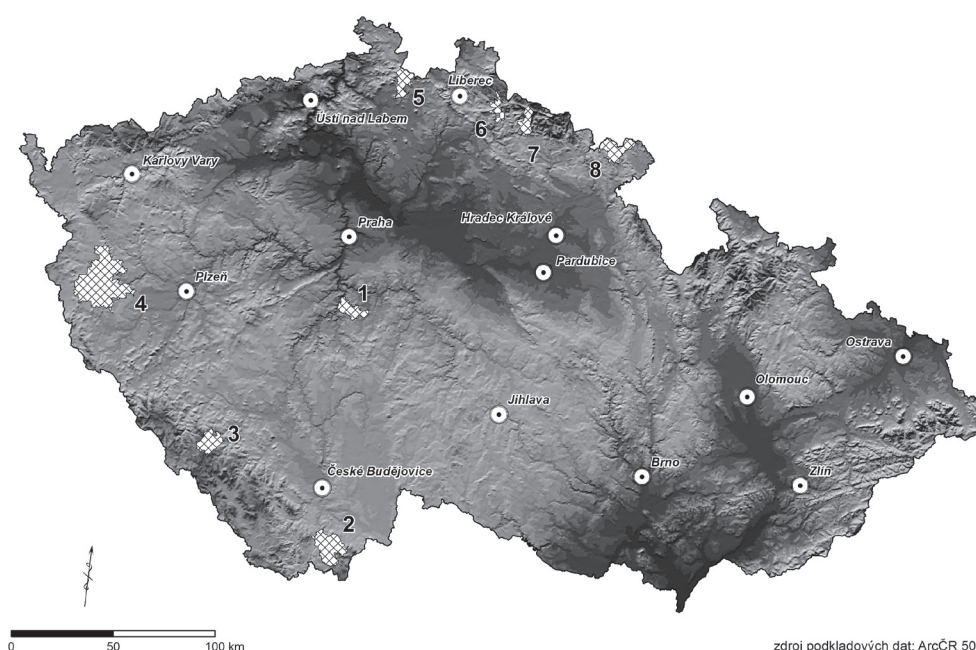


Fig. 3 The case-study regions for the field research and questionnaire surveys.

Note: Numbers of case-study regions: 1 – Neveklovsko, 2 – Kaplicko, 3 – Vacovsko, 4 – Borsko, 5 – Cvikovsko, 6 – Tanvaldsko, 7 – Benecko, 8 – Teplicko n. M.

Case-study regions Nos. 2, 4, 5, 8 are peripheral areas with worse accessibility, weaker economic power and not fully exploited recreational potential, which are, however, very valuable from the environmental point of view (amenity-rich areas). Case-study regions Nos. 3, 6, 7 represent attractive hilly and mountainous regions visited by a high number of tourists.

2.2 Research in case-study regions

Our focus was placed on the opinions of the local representatives (mayors), residents but predominantly second home users, obtained from in-depth interviews and questionnaire surveys.

One hundred respondents were interviewed in each case-study region; the ratio of the residents and second home users reflected the share of second homes. The surveys were conducted in 2010 and 2011, mostly in the summer recreation season (when the frequency of second home use is the highest) in the form of structured interviews by qualified questioners trained by the authors. The questions asked focused on perceived identity to three hierarchical levels of the territory (methodologically based on recent research Chromý 2004; Fialová et al. 2010). The highest level was represented by the case-study region as the whole, i.e. (larger) neighbourhood of the residence/second home, the second level by the municipality (village) and the lowest level by the place (locality) which means the close neighbourhood of the resident/second home (settlement, a part of the municipality). The emotional relations to the territory and generation ties were surveyed as well as the identification of the singularity of the territory, their symbols and functions. The respondents were asked about the most painful problems, in the residents versus second home users relations especially, and about their involvement in rural life. They also expressed on their satisfaction and potential future use of the territory. The basic identifiers as gender and age group concluded the surveys.

The structure of the respondents was the following: a total of 734 questionnaires were obtained from 440 residents (60%) and from 294 second home users. Both men (47%) and women (53%) were interviewed. More than 60% people were above 46 years of age. The closed questions in the questionnaire were analysed with simple descriptive statistics and complemented with an analysis of the open questions and with other findings obtained from the analysis of the interviews.

3. Discussion

The respondents in the case-study regions evaluated their own perceived identity to the different hierarchical levels of the territory commonly used in their everyday lives routine. As far as the municipality level is concerned, an important finding emerged, namely that one-third of

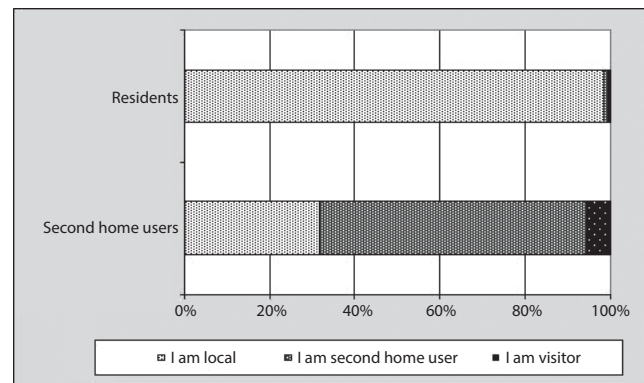


Fig. 4 The perceived identification of the respondents with the territory.

Source: the authors' own surveys in 2010, 2011

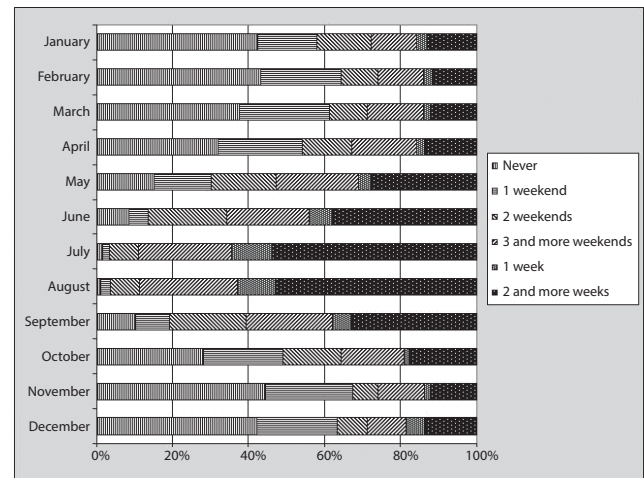


Fig. 5 The frequency of the use of second homes during the calendar year.

Source: the author's own surveys in 2010, 2011

second home users consider themselves as locals (Fig. 4). This is caused by the fact that there is a high share of long-term cottage users with close ties (80% of the residents and 65% of the second home users have visited the municipality more or less regularly for at least 20 years, which means for more than one generation) to the local life in the case-study regions. The questionnaire survey revealed quite a stable population with 30% people born locally with little variation among the case-study areas.

The Figure 5 indicates the frequency, the length of stays of second home users and their distribution within a year. The summer season from May until September is dominant. No visit between November and February was declared by 40% respondents.

The residents live in the area mainly because of their ancestors, family roots and relationships. A big share of the second home users (30%) have also known the place of second home since their childhood. The importance of friendship was declared by 40% respondents. Social and family ties belong to the most important factors of the ownership, use and location of second homes.

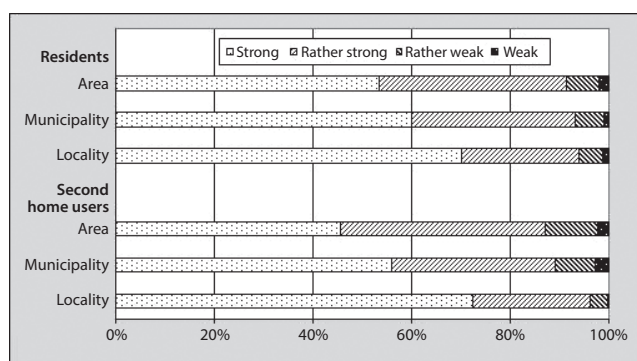


Fig. 6 The perceived identity of the respondents to three hierarchical levels of territory.

Source: the authors' own surveys in 2010, 2011

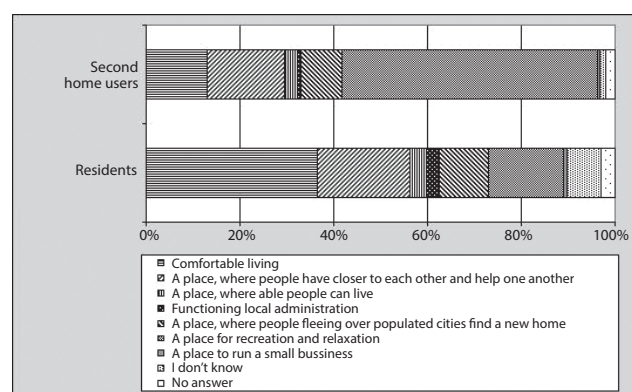


Fig. 7 The characteristics of the residence/second home territory and opinions on it.

Source: own surveys in 2010, 2011

The respondents explained their spatial ties on the scale: strong, rather strong, rather weak, weak, related to three hierarchical levels of territory. Both groups of respondents (second home users even more clearly) have declared stronger relations to closer and smaller-area units (Figure 6).

Both groups of informants declared that the regions are unique because of their environmental quality, landscape, nature and calmness. They are also proud of these features of the regions.

The respondents were also asked to characterize and give their opinions on their residence/second home territory (Figure 7). The second home users mostly declared that the area is appropriate for recreation (55%) and also a place where people have closer relations to each other (20%). The residents had similar opinions. However, their main reason for presence was comfortable living (36%). Closer inter-personal contacts where people help each other were mentioned as the highest value by 20% of the respondents in both groups which indicates the high importance of good social climate for living and recreation.

Second home users used to be considered as a burden for the municipality (Gallent, Tewdwr-Jones 2000; Fialová, Vágner 2005b). This statement was agreed by 40% of the mayors, mostly in the municipalities with extremely high concentrations of second homes and with some new forms close to commercial tourism – e.g. holiday apartments in mountain resorts. In our survey, however, this negative opinion was neither confirmed by second home

users nor by 80% of the residents, which was rather surprising. A half of the respondents (as well as a half of the residents) declared that long-term second home owners should also obtain a chance to become representatives of municipal councils!

The questionnaire made it possible to receive opinions on the quality of social relations among residents, second home users and between those two groups. Generally, the relations seem to be perceived more positively by second home owners. The final results appear very optimistic, because more than two-thirds of the population declared good relations and only about 5% of locals feel bad relations between residents and also between residents and second home owners (Table 1). However, a part of the respondents feel a trend of worsening relations, which may be seen as a potential problem.

The residents and second home owners declared similar interests in the participation in traditional social events as funfairs, balls and sport events.

The chief organisers of social events are traditional clubs and associations – volunteer fire brigades, soccer teams and game-keepers in Czech countryside (Kůsová 2013). Our survey indicated high activity of second home users not only in participation but also in organization of social events in cooperation with active local residents.

4. Conclusions

As stated in the introduction, mutual relations between residents and tourists can be conditioned also

Tab. 1 The social relations among residents, second home owners and between the groups (%).

Social relations	Opinions of residents			Opinions of second home owners		
	residents vs. residents	residents vs. SHO	SHO vs. SHO	residents vs. residents	residents vs. SHO	SHO vs. SHO
very good and good	68.8	69.8	71.8	76.2	72.7	77.5
rather bad and very bad	5.5	4.4	1.0	1.4	4.5	0.7

Note: SHO – second home owners. Source: own surveys in 2010, 2011

by their relations to the territory used. As far as the local community structure is concerned, crucial actors are traditionally defined as the residents, the local authorities, entrepreneurs and civic associations. Various actors have different visions of the use of the area, its function and future development. They also perceive diverse territorial identities, which also differ in their formation process.

Our research pointed out that second home owners and users are additional significant agents with a considerable influence especially on social life in the rural space and local community and it is necessary to take them into account, especially in areas with a higher concentration of second homes. The quantitative data have indicated specific territories where detailed field surveys have been conducted in the form of interviews with the agents and questionnaire surveys. The data have been analysed and explained with using both quantitative and qualitative methods with respect to their characteristics. Although the generalization of the results is rather problematic, in fact the only one (i.e. joint) community of residents and second home users together has been found in most surveyed regions, not separated groups of the residents and second home users with strongly different interests. The similarity of social behaviour and perceived identity to the territory was high especially in regions with a higher share of cottages with long-term stays of the second home users.

Therefore our results contradict general statements (frequently shown in the media) about antagonistic relations between the local population and the 'invaders from cities'. Likewise, social conflicts between the rural hosting and the visiting second home populations were expected according to key researchers on this issue (Doxey 1975; Farstad, Rye 2013). Similar conflict results were obtained also from with users of more or less separated cabin and recreational home localities or holiday villages (Fialová, Horáková 2013). Our research has shown that the long-term cottage users are mostly no longer considered as allochthonous elements in the rural space, which used to bring social conflicts.

Further research should focus on those regions where second home users are less involved in the local and rural life (cabin and recreational home users). Other studies might explore the formation of social capital in the various types of countryside (as defined by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) or Putnam (1993)), following the pilot studies elaborated by Pileček (2010); Pileček, Jančák (2010) in the Czech countryside.

Importantly the differences between second homes and primary residences seem to be more blurred than in the past. Therefore the concept of multiple dwellings (McIntyre, Pavlovich 2006) becomes common in developed societies. Second home commuting is replaced with semi-migration or circulation processes (Flognfeldt 2004; Overvåg 2011). These principles as well as the theory of heterolocal identities as described by Halfacree (2012) have not been surveyed in the rural space of Czechia yet and, therefore, become challenges for future research.

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RESUMÉ**Vlastníci druhého bydlení jako uživatelé venkovského prostoru v Česku**

Druhé bydlení je obecně považováno za prvek životního stylu především městského obyvatelstva. Důležitý je však vliv aktivit, spjatých s druhým bydlením, působících silně na venkovský prostor a ovlivňující život obyvatel na venkově. Proto výzkum vztahů mezi městskou a venkovskou komunitou, které sdílejí a přeměňují společný prostor, je významný i pro budoucí rozvoj venkova. Článek klade důraz na vlastníky a uživatele druhého bydlení jako na důležité aktéry při transformaci českého venkova. Statistická data ukazují vysoký počet druhých domů se značně nerovnoměrným rozložením v krajině. Primární data, založená na vlastním terénním výzkumu, hloubkových rozhovorech a pozorováních, dokládají

významný sociální vliv druhého bydlení na místní prostředí. Ve vybraných modelových územích Česka je ověřován koncept konfliktu, rivality, koexistence a kooperace. Naším vlastním příspěvkem k výzkumu je specifický zájem o rozvoj komunit v obcích s významnou turistickou a rekreační funkcí. Cílem je, s využitím empirických dat, prokázat a diskutovat vztahy mezi vlastníky a uživateli druhého bydlení a lokální populací, a analyzovat specifika rekreatantů při vytváření teritoriální identity. Hlavní výsledky popírají tvrzení o převážně konfliktních vztazích mezi venkovskou populací a dojíždějícími rekreatanty z měst. Především chalupáři s dlouhodobým pobytem a rodinnými kořeny v lokalitě již nejsou považováni za cizorodé a negativní prvky, přinášející do venkovského prostředí sociální konflikty. Nejsou jen pasivními účastníky, ale často přebírají i roli organizátorů lokálního rozvoje. Stále intenzivněji dochází ke stírání rozdílů mezi prvním a druhým bydlením. Závěry též naznačují další možné směry výzkumu s orientací na sociální kapitál, koncepty vícečetného bydliště a semi-migrace.

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