

Recreation and the making of the multi-house home.

Emergence of new relations between the urban and the rural.

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Abstract

*We argue that the growing number of second home agglomerations in city hinterlands and the weekend traffic accompanying these new housing areas represents a change where the institution of home is evolving a new “species”: The **multi-house home**. The configuration we address is a (multi-house) home comprised of a household having a house in urban regions for everyday life functions and a recreational house (rather than a second 'home') dedicated to recreational functions in rural regions. It is stitched together by **recreational commuting**, a regularized logistical pattern seen as households commute for recreational purposes on elongated weekends and extended holidays to their rural recreational house. The multi-house home trend is feed i.a. by flexible working arrangements, a change in household size and composition, prosperous household economy, growth in mobility and the development of recreational houses of high technical standard - this criteria being a watershed in the development and identification of multi-house homes. In terms of new developments of recreational housing this segment of high standard structures serving the function of recreational motives and functions are dominating, and thus creating a characteristic development pattern we call **urban recreational sprawl**.*

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to put the debate on second homes in a broader societal context. We aim at understanding these objects in a functional perspective where households are the main. It is households who own or have access to these objects, and it is their demand, preferences and decisions in interaction with the supply side that ultimately materialises in where we find them, their design, layout and standard, their use and how they relate to the rural communities. But while households may be the “engines” in the second home phenomenon as it unfolds in contemporary society, this “engine” is again fuelled by basic societal dynamics, such as economy, technology, infrastructure development and work life arrangements.

A quick-look at the concepts applied here

In order to focus on the function of second home function in a household context, we need to address conceptual issues.

With a second home we understand a purpose built building or a building dedicated to recreation by a household having another building located elsewhere fulfilling daily life functions.

The literature on second homes discuss from various perspectives how second homes integrates into a household dwelling pattern. Distance is one factor. In this article we primarily address the situation or framing where second homes are accessible for weekend use and not second homes as seasonal homes accessible at a large distance, e.g. as with the so called ‘sunbirds’ in USA with a seasonal migration of elderly adults to Florida (S. K. Smith & House 2006). Hiltunen (Hiltunen 2007) looked at how dwelling patterns between second and first home are dependent on distance. He found that accessibility within a weekend use is decisive for frequency of use. Flognfeldt (Flognfeldt 2002) applies a concept of “semi-migration” to capture the dwelling pattern in modern second home developments. Overvåg (Overvåg 2010) argues that rather than applying a tweaked migration concept, second home mobility patterns express a **circulation** between permanent dwelling locations, here a first and second home accessible within a weekend use. This is though, relevant even in a seasonal home framing where concepts like “multiple residence and cyclical migration” (McHugh mfl 1995) has been suggested to better understand dwelling patterns.

A households dwelling pattern between a first or daily and a second home is not static throughout

the life span of a given household. I.a. Godbey and Bevins (Godbey & Bevins 1987) and Tuulentie (Tuulentie 2007) looked at life cycles in second home ownership. Several contributions in Hall and Muller (Hall & Müller (eds) 2004) approach the issue of dwelling patterns in a life cycle perspective (household use change over a lifespan of the household) and structurally (a household with several houses used frequently to fulfil home function, where one house is dedicated to recreation). Paris (Paris 2006) analyses how a household having multiple ‘homes’ express new dwelling trends that feed on hyper-mobility and he (Paris 2009) calls for a re-positioning of second homes within housing studies as such. We agree to that.

A step towards conceptualising the dwelling pattern involving a second home, is to critically focus on the concepts of ‘house’ and ‘home’. We argue that what is called a ‘second home’ more suitably should be called a ‘recreational house’ in a home – *a multi-house home*. The argument exploits a separation by definition between the house as a tangible object and the home as a functional unit and thus something intangible.

The configuration we will highlight here is a household owning a house dedicated to recreational functions – a recreational purpose built house, or simply a recreational house - in addition to a house for daily life and work functions – a daily house, and where the recreational house in *the multi-house home* is located in amenity rich urban hinterlands comfortably within the reach for weekend and extended periods from the daily house. The dwelling pattern between the two houses expresses itself as an *intra-home circulation* between daily and recreational house areas. This circulation we label *recreational commuting*. The land use pattern supporting this configuration of multi-house homes can be seen an *urban recreational sprawl*, where second housing areas are penetrating ever deeper into amenity rich hinterlands of major urban areas, but still remains within the distance of week end use.

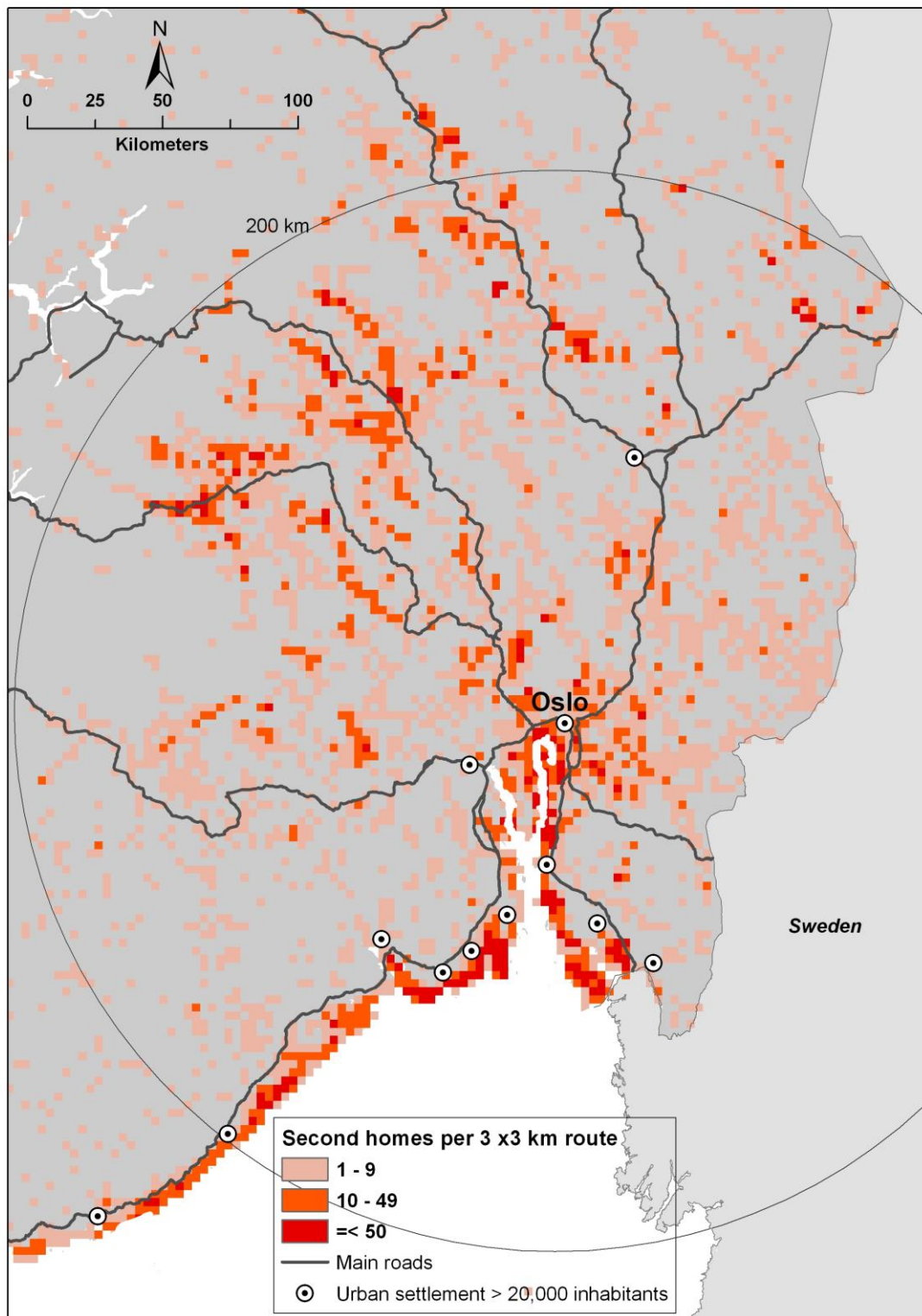
Recreational houses in Norway

Rural hinterlands, rich in nature amenities, extending as far as 4 hours drive from major urban areas in Norway have over the last couple of decades seen a substantial growth of agglomerations of modern houses dedicated to leisure time usage (Overvåg & Arnesen 2007). As a good approximation (we will comment on this below) we may assume that the standard of these new structures are on par with any modern house in terms of accessibility, water and sewage facilities,

energy, telecommunication, roads, comfort etc. The new dwelling trends we discuss here are carried by these modern recreational house structures, rather than the more primitive cottage or “hytte”. The old style cottage or “hytte” - often with no road access, no water supply and sewage and not hooked to the electricity grid etc - did and do not support the dwelling patterns we outline here. Thus, what we are observing is no less an evolution in dwelling trends that may be seen as originating from the tradition earlier “species” of (low-standard) “hytte” or cottage, but overstepping it and creating a new “species”, the (high-standard) recreational house. And while the new ‘species’ – the recreational house - is gregarious and form agglomerations or recreational housing condensed areas; the old ‘hytte’ lives a life preferably scattered and in seclusion from its “kins”.

In Norway this trend of recreational houses potentially supporting a multi-house home life style emerged throughout the late 1980ties. The trend became dominant through the 1990-ties until this day where extent of development of the “old style” low standard “hytte” is negligible. Today the stock of recreational houses are recruited along two tracks, (1) new built units and (2) a technical upgrading or a renovation of “old style” low standard “hytte” to a high standard house, a recreational house.

Looking at numbers is a challenge. National property and housing data, the cadastre, is imperfect and inadequate in registering the standard of these types of houses and “hytte”. The cadastre has only been gradually improved on these parameters since 1995, but even today remains imperfect and inadequate. The growth in numbers of new buildings is known and, the physical development pattern in the area that has had the most prolific growth in number of units is illustrated in Figure 1.



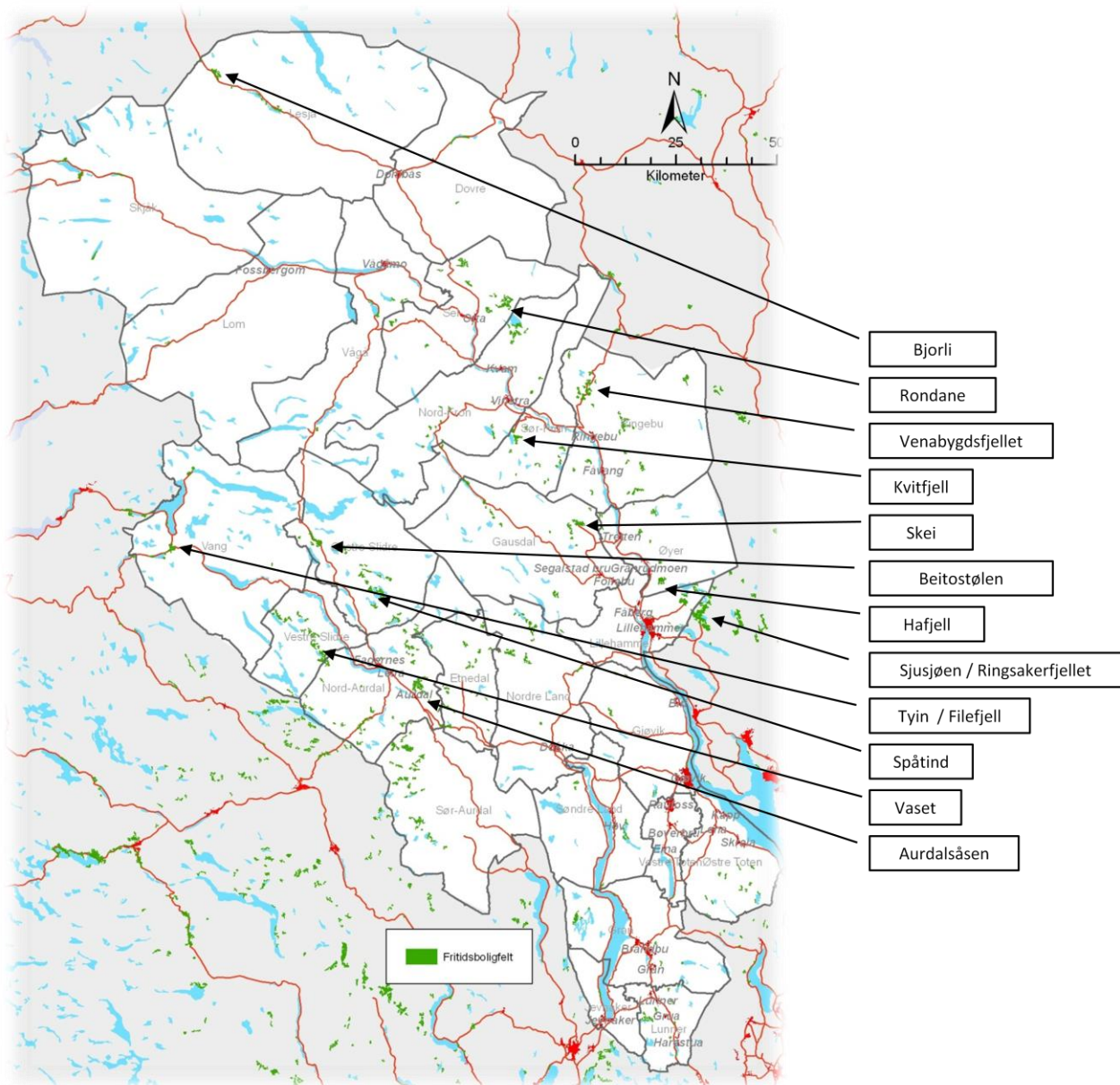
Figur 1: Recreational houses in owned by inhabitants in the Oslo region.

The figure shows a circle centred in Oslo with a radius of 200 km as the crow flies. This amounts to

a driving distance of approx maximum 3 hours from the centre to the periphery. The figure then shows in 3x3 kilometres squares jointly the density and distribution of the old style “hytte” and the modern recreational houses, and only those owned by households in Oslo. In this area our analysis shows that the content of the growth has decisively shifted from old style cottage or “hytte” in the 70ties and declining into the 80ties, to recreational houses emerging in late 1980-ties to become absolutely dominant from mid 1990-ties. Today a reasonable assumption is that recreational houses potentially supporting a multi-house home life style in the hinterland of Oslo makes up 40% – 50% of the total stock and virtually all of the ongoing developments (Overvåg & Arnesen 2007).

Developments since early 1990ties all have been established in agglomerations. These are for the most part to be found in the deepest red colours in the figure above (Overvåg & Arnesen 2007). Figur 2 shows in more detail how these agglomerations are located in Oppland County. A feature to be noted is that they do not grow as extensions of traditional rural centres, but in adjacent mountain areas – often “in the penthouse” of the valleys offering easy access to the mountains and to the traditional centres located in the bottom of the valley.

Figur 1 and Figur 2 illustrates how the coastal and rural mountainous amenity rich hinterland of Oslo has been enclosed in recreational aspirations for city dwellers, and how multi-house home households are exercising its command over space.

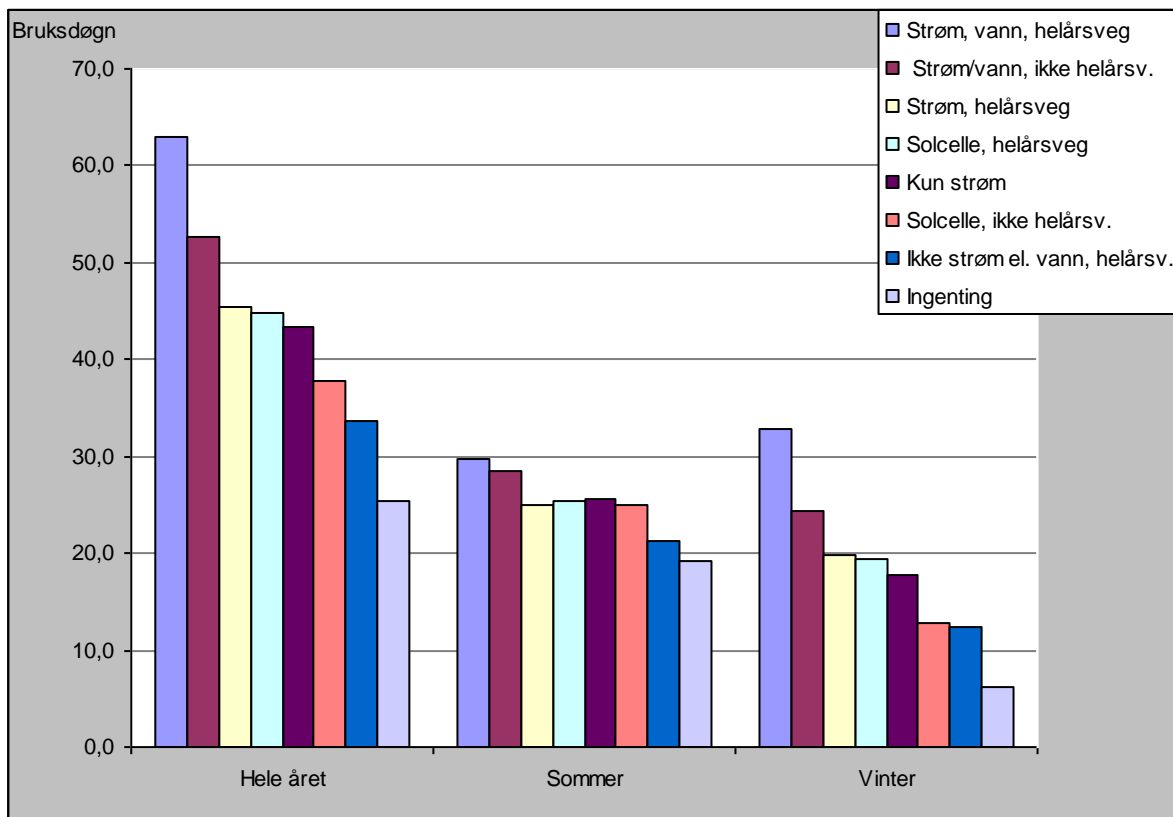


Figur 2: Agglomerations of recreational houses in Oppland County. An agglomeration is defined as more than 20 units not separated by more than 200 meters between units.

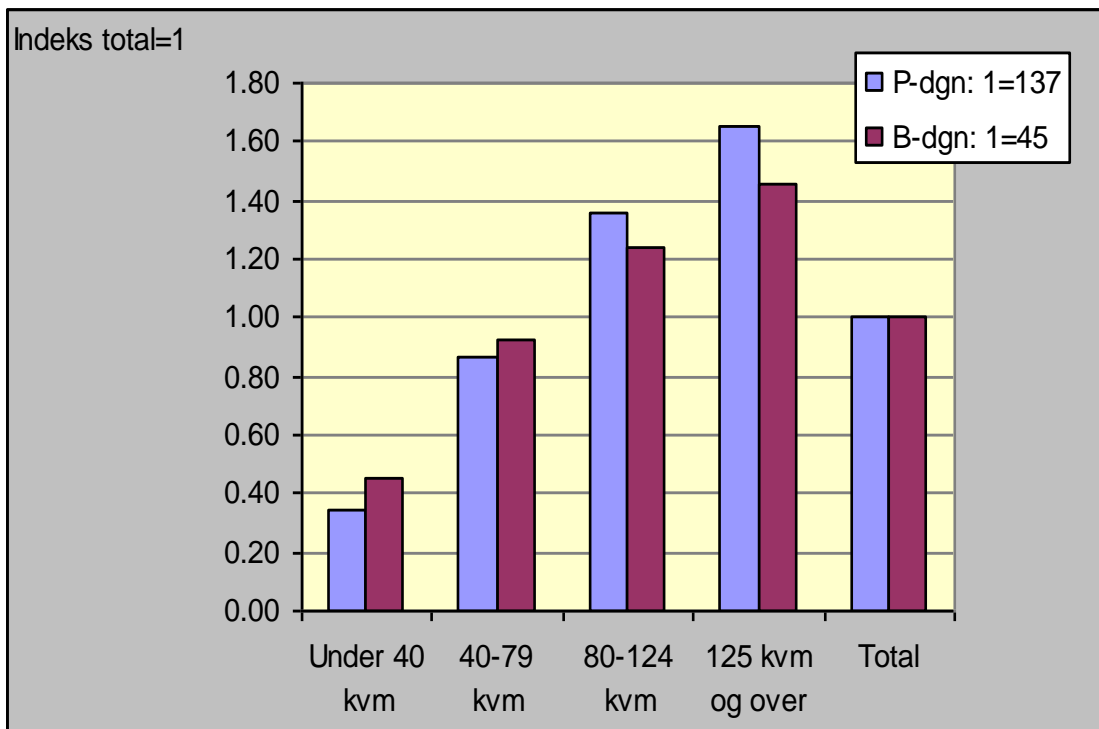
What we know about frequency of use

Analysis shows quite indisputable that frequency of use of recreational houses is dependant of technical standard. This is illustrated in the next figures (Figur 3, Figur 4) taken from an analysis made in a selected number of municipalities in Oppland County. The figures show that the most important factor regulating frequency of use is technical standard – and that recreational houses that

are on par with a normal residential house is being used at least three times as much than the opposite, the very basic traditional “hytte”, and that in between these extremes increased use is dependent on increasing technical standard.



Figur 3: Nights used by technical standards, accessibility and season. Technical standards and accessibility is decisive for levels of use.



Figur 4: Nights used and bed nights by floor space (average numbers). Whole year. Use intensity also depends on size, but not so much as technical standards.

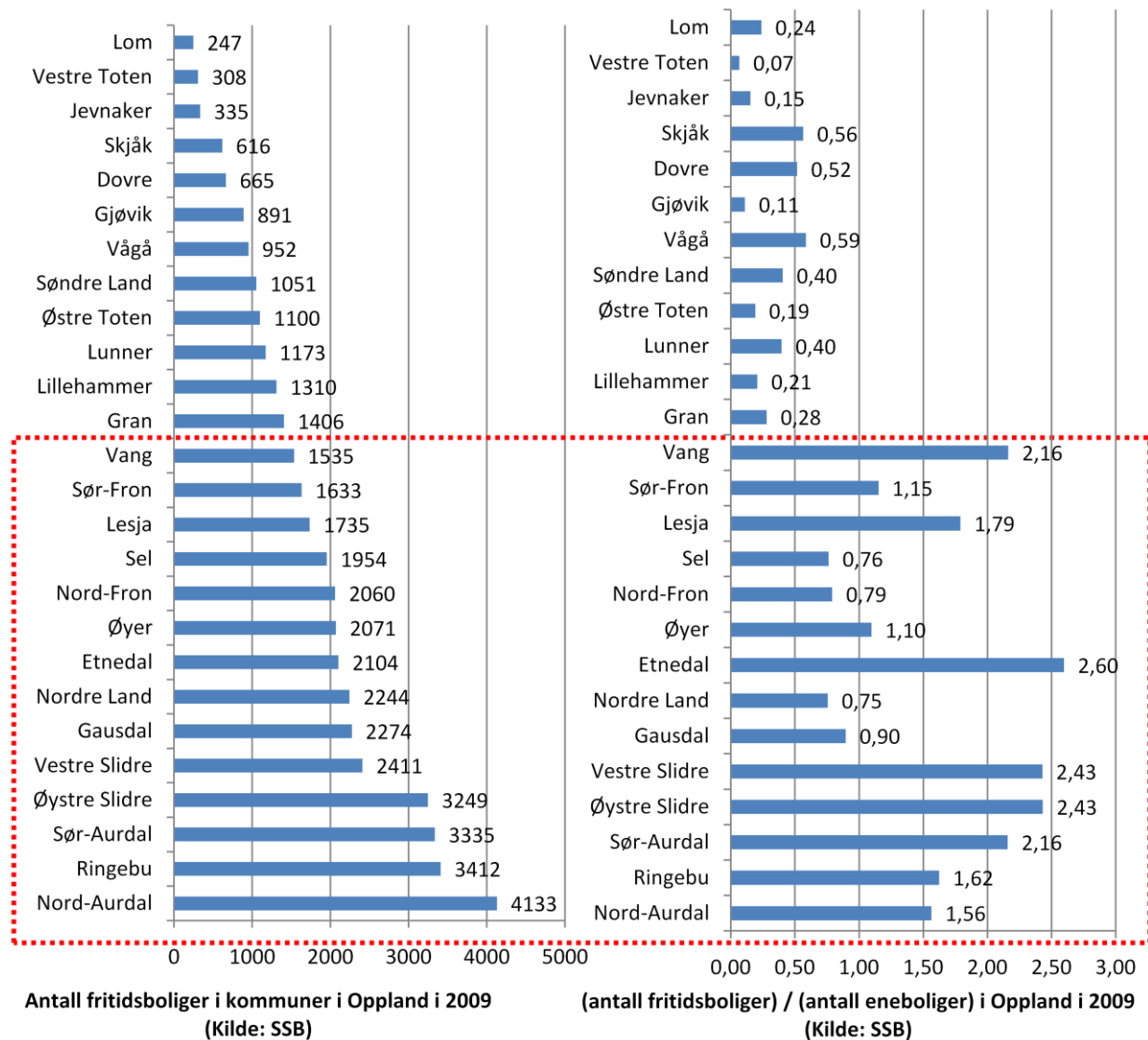
This pattern of use is consistent with the emergence of the multi-house home. As defined here they are high standard units and they are used more frequent, features being addressed below.

Urbanization and urban recreational sprawl

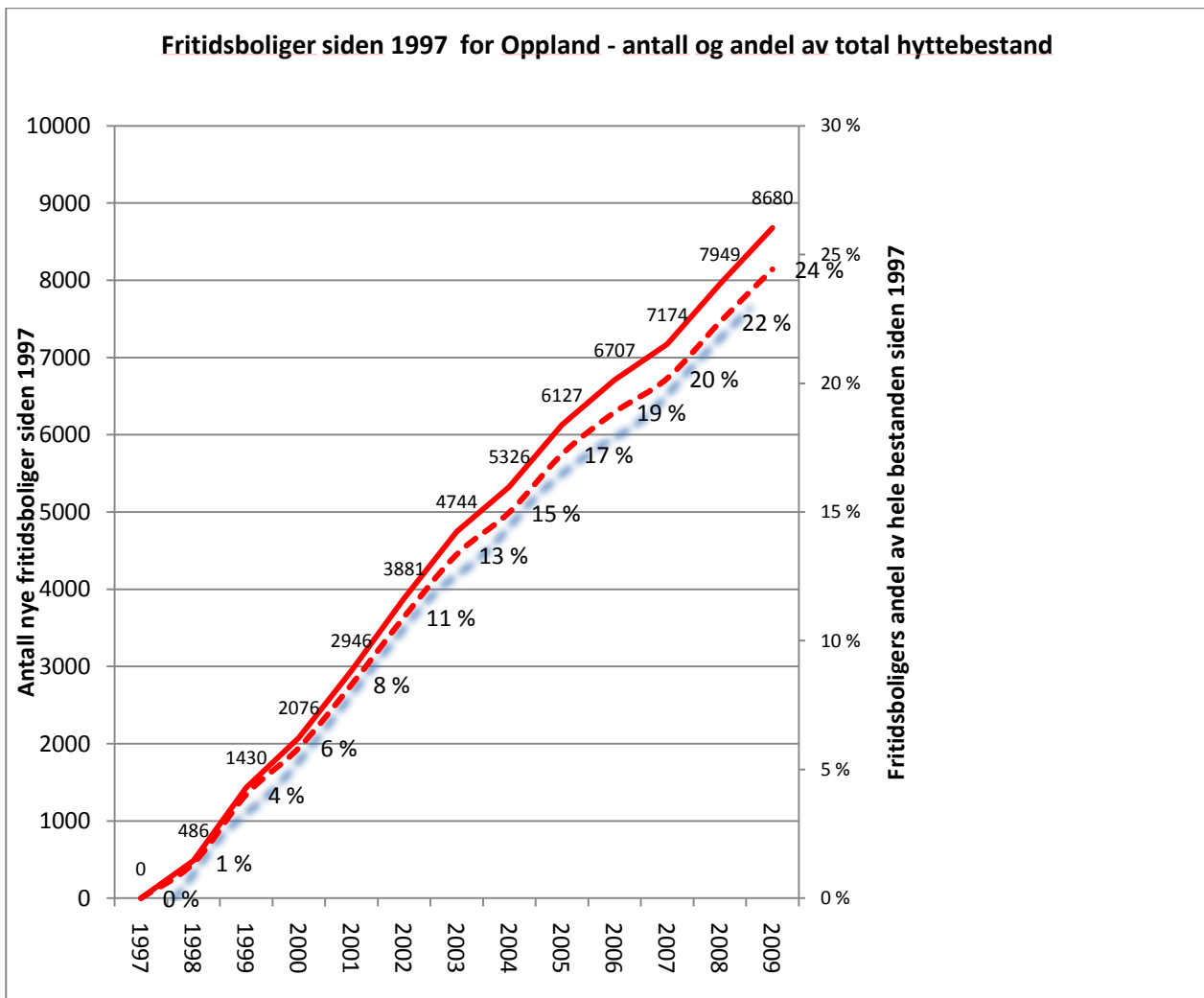
The municipalities, especially in the mountain belt of the rural hinterland of major urbanizations have experienced a sustained decrease in permanent population. Urbanization and modernization has lead to declining employment in traditional rural industries, primarily in agriculture and forestry, and consequently in resident population. Simultaneously, the highest growth in modern recreational house agglomerations is experienced precisely in a number of these mountainous rural regions (Overvåg & Arnesen 2007). Recreational houses constitute a considerable, and rising, share of the total housing stock in these rural regions and communities. This is illustrated in Figur 5. The figure shows the number of recreational houses and houses in the municipalities in Oppland County, and the ratio between the two. As can be seen, for more than half of the municipalities – all located within the 200 km circle from Oslo (see Figur 1) – the number of recreational houses (both old style “hytte” and modern high standard units included) exceeds the number of single family houses

(Figur 5).

As is illustrated in Figur 6 the share of high standard recreational houses able to serve the multi-house home life style is rapidly growing in Oppland county.



Figur 5: Number of recreational houses in municipalities in Oppland is shown in the left figure and to the right the corresponding ratio [no. of recreational houses]/[no. of single family house]. One third of the municipalities have a larger stock of recreational houses than single family houses.



Figur 6: Increase in numbers of recreational houses in Oppland since 1997 (solid line, left hand y-axis), and relative increase in Oppland since 1997 (dotted line, right hand y-axis).. As a good approximation all units built since 1997 support multi-house home lifestyle.

Simultaneously with this growth of agglomerations of recreational houses in rural areas, migration patterns in Norway have been dominated by urbanization and net migration of people from rural to urban areas. There is little evidence of a shift in these migration trends in the years to come. On the contrary, the urbanisation process in Norway picked up during the 90s and is continuing into this decade. This contrasts Norway to some other western countries, which has experienced a net migration from urban to rural areas, often called counter-urbanization (Kontuly 1998; Grimsrud 2009). This development leads to a situation where there is an peculiar dichotomy to be observed in amenity rich rural hinterlands extending to a 3- 4 hours driving from major urban areas: In terms of resident population these regions decline in the national registry but actually grow in terms of

attached population and housing capacity.

Though a remarkable feat in itself even more remarkable is the otherwise numerically well informed state's blindness for this process: The rural population declining is seen because population is equated with a person's address in the national register. But the national register in Norway as in many other countries are per definition myopic: Only one home address is allowed for any one person, supposedly where the person lives. Registration of a multi-house home is excluded per system, and so is the trend that households split their home functions to more than one house and thus in more than one location. Only by looking at the phenomena with depth vision, we can obtain a more balanced view where dwelling traditions themselves change and the census data framework stands out like a misfit. A similar argument has been made in Sweden (Müller & Marjavaara 2004).

Driving forces

In a Norwegian context – shared by many western developed societies - four factors are driving the advent of the multi-house home lifestyle:

1. *Growth in household wealth:* Households have seen a marked growth in wealth both in terms of income and assets. A household income has roughly doubled in the period 1980 – 2002 (SSB 2004). Growth has been most pronounced in well established households with grown up or no kids. A substantial growth in disposable household assets followed not least from rapidly rising housing prices back from the 1990ties, which give grounds for loan financing and substantial higher bequest fortunes. The growth in household wealth is primarily a surplus phenomenon in middle and upper classes.
2. *Growth in household command of space:* An increasingly mobile society, including a growth in the personal command of space, are the general trend that foremost benefit developments of middle class households institutions and the niche of multi-house home lifestyles. While in contemporary Norway average travel per capita is peaking just below 50 km per day or approx 18 000 km a year - work travel and recreation taken together - corresponding distances in 1970 was approx 25 km per day. The picture is much the same in all western societies. Our personal command of space is exercised at huge numbers, and it is growing. This is characterized by some as a “flow and network society” (Aronson 2004). The way modern highly transport-intensive people attach to places and find themselves “at home” and “at ease” in a multiple spots

in space is remarkable.

3. Growth in *household command of time*: Working time banking is an arrangement of flexible daily working hours. One third of Norwegian employees have flexible working time arrangements and the opportunity to choose when to start and finish outside their core working hours. Such arrangements are most common among employees in public administration (70 per cent) as well as financial activities (57 per cent); in general most widespread in “white collar” professions that require higher education (Bø 2004). These typically belong to the middle class and above where an accompanied personal command of time is developed. Significant is also increase in holiday arrangements regulated by law, which now is fully five weeks. As a result of these developments, time consumed for recreational activity has increased for all age groups and for both men and women over the last 30 years. Statistics shows that the time¹ spent in a recreational house has on average grown with 52 per cent from 1990 to 2000 in the age group 16 – 74 years. Distributed on week days, growth from Monday to Thursday has been 118 per cent, 149 per cent on an average Friday, and 33 per cent on an average Saturday – clearly mirroring the elongation of recreational weekends (SSB 2002).
4. Growth in *the number of households*: The household is the major agent in house and home affairs. In Norway the number of households has approximately doubled since 1970, other things being equal this means a doubling the market potential for recreational house developments. The share of Norwegian households owning one of the approx. 200.000 houses for recreational functions in 1970 was then 22 per cent, while corresponding share of the approx 2,1 million households owning the approx. 410.000 units still, in 2009, is 22 per cent (SSB 2009). The relative growth in number of units seems to have kept pace with the relative growth in number of households.

Home, house and dwellers

Undoubtedly, acquiring a recreational house is in principle not an entirely new thing, but has been part of a life style in aristocratic quarters of society and in wealthy upper classes life. Even in a

¹ Time spent in a recreational house (“hytte” included) for cohorts between 16-74 years of age - Period 1980/1990-2000

country like Norway with almost no aristocratic traditions, acquiring a country side villa to enjoy more informal and casual social gatherings for family and friends became very much in vogue among a growing and wealthy bourgeoisie - industrialists, merchants etc - throughout late 19th and through 20th century (Sørensen 2004). Emulation in life style generally propagates from upper classes through society as function of wealth creation and distribution (Veblen 1899). This mechanism alone does not accounts for the current trends in recreational houses in Norway or other countries, there are other and different blends of factors as well relevant to understand the current evolution in dwelling across countries and cultures. The “old style” “hytte” trend emerged in Norway primo 20th century and rose to around 1970 – not least among town and city people - to acquire a modestly priced simple construction located in scenic and undeveloped landscapes on the coast, in the woods or mountain regions. As discussed above, current trend is one of changes in scale and pursuant to expansion, and eventually of scope: Today, the growing middle class households – in terms of wealth, numbers and influence - finds a multi-house home lifestyle with a high standard recreational house worthy of emulation - in accordance, it might be argued, with a Veblenian type process of institutional evolution the institution of home.

‘Home’ is often seen conceived as a house and residence of a household. But a distinction between ‘house’ and ‘home’ opens a needed perspective on dwelling, work and recreation. A house is a tangible object. Home as institution is comprised of domestic and repetitive functions performed by members of households as dwellers, typically paid work, education, feeding, sleeping, child rearing, shelter, personal property storage and recreation. These home functions are located in something tangible, namely one or more houses, but should not itself be reduced to something tangible. A simple reason for this is the growing mobility which enables access to areas attractive for leisure and recreation activities, and to perform household functions on several localities. The institution of home, and thus home functions, may embrace several houses for one household.

These modern recreational housing structures described above represent alternate houses that together makes up a home by serving as places for different household functions in one integrated life style – and where one (or more) has main function to serve recreation or leisure in time slots from a day or two, to longer holidays. Reuschke (Reuschke 2006) discuss “multilocational households” i.a. in second homes much along these lines. Contributions in McIntyre et al (McIntyre mfl 2006a) discuss the several aspects of a general phenomenon of multiple dwelling in tourism –

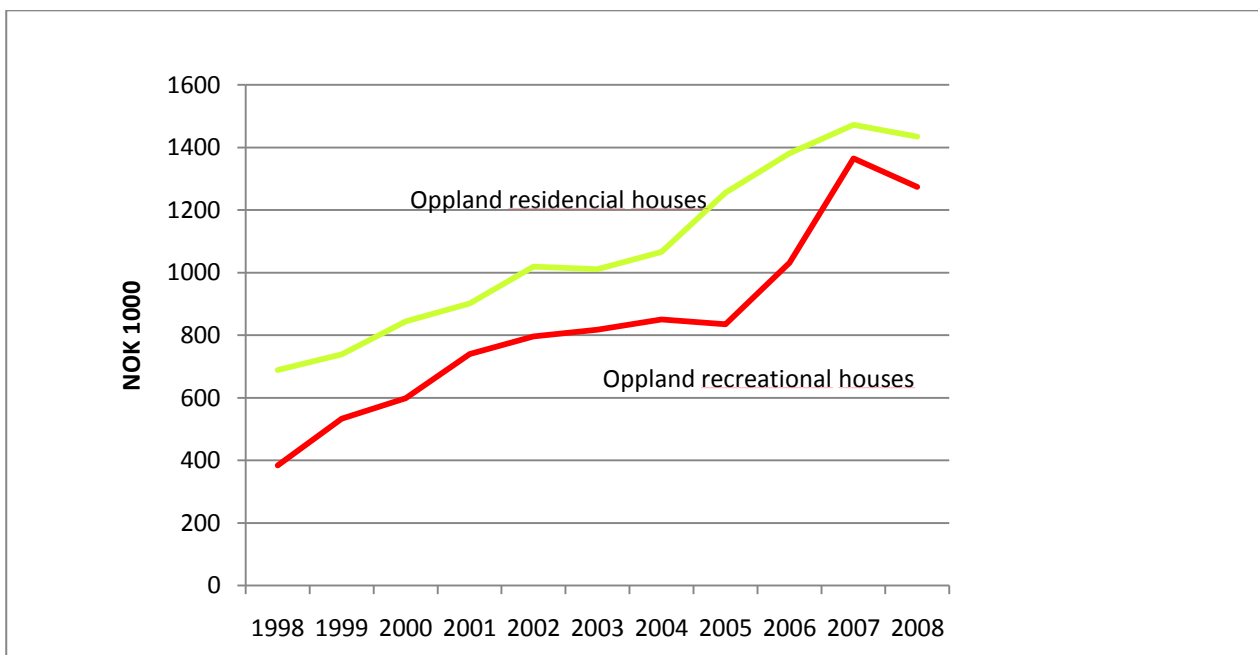
second home users included - and the concepts of place, home and identities. Mallet (Mallett 2004) makes an interesting observation: "... *home is not confined to the house, but "locates lived time and space"*". Rapoport (Rapoport 1995) has made a similar argument of the importance of not to conflate home to the physical house, though of course relying on houses. Perkins and Thorns stresses a similar point of view: "*Rather than seeing the primary and secondary (house) as separate we need to see them as linked spaces that together constitute a 'home' and a continuum of experience*" (Perkins and Thorns 2006). The similar point is made by McIntyre (McIntyre mfl 2006b): "*The reality for many is a multi-centred lifestyle where work, home and play are separated in time and place, and meanings and identity are structured around not one, but several places and associated circulation among them*". Karjalainen (Karjalainen 1993) analyse the difference between house and home. He sees the house as something made, as a "*referential complex*". References are created in the encounter(s) between the dweller and the house, and "*if fused with emotions, the house becomes a home*". Stedman (Stedman 2006) concludes in his analysis of place attachment in a typical recreational rural area that seasonal residents in fact exhibit higher levels of attachment than year-round residents, a conclusion that vouch for the presence of sufficient emotional references to make a recreational house a home. This is in accordance with the conclusions drawn by Williams and kaltenborn (Williams & Kaltenborn 1999) that "*the modern identity is no longer firmly rooted in a singular local place*", and – we add- may well extend to embrace more places and could well include recreational house places. Blunt and Dowling (Blunt & Dowling 2006) also stresses the point that "*since the connections between house and home are made, analysis needs to demonstrate those connections rather than assume them*".

It is reasonable to conclude that as a connection made, a home may well embrace more than one house. Houses integrated in a multi-house home may fulfil different or overlapping functions in a coherent functional unit called home. And this is precisely the point we wish to make, that a regularized dwelling pattern split between multiple houses (multiple, but fixed dwelling locations) in concert makes up a home for a household. As a phenomenon, a similar concept of a multi-house home is also observed among migrations scholars (Green mfl 1999; Padoch mfl 2008).

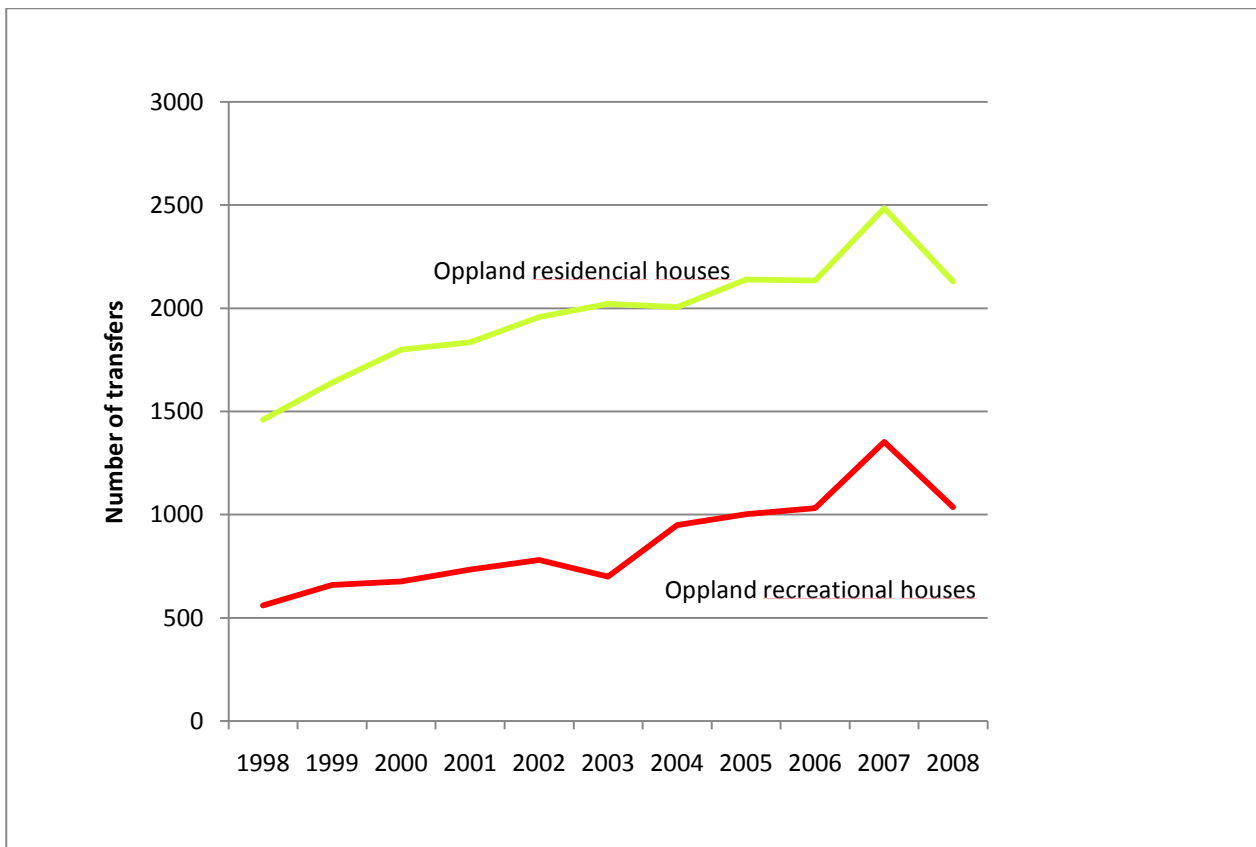
The multi-house home lifestyle we have in mind is when urban dwellers establish a permanent relation with rural based societies and participate in rural–urban networks and in rural land-use decisions. "Our" processes are driven by a desire and possibility to consume nature and cultural

amenities in time slots dedicated to leisure and recreation with a recreational house as base. What is gained in this stricter conceptual separation of 'home' vs 'house' is making a distinction required in leisure research between the concrete and physical structure of buildings with special functional allocations, and the abstract structure of a home and a lifestyle.

Another indication of the emergence of the multi-house home can be found in the realm of economics. Regarded as a financial object the modern high standard recreational house is an autonomous mortgaged object on par with a residential house. Banks offer the same terms for financing recreational houses as residential houses, again an indicator that the recreational housing market functions pretty much as the rest of the housing markets. Figur 7 and Figur 8 gives a nice illustration of how normalized recreational houses are in the housing market. More or less recreational houses follow the same behaviour as the housing market in general – understandably at a slightly lower investment level, though still surprisingly high (Figur 7). The number of transfers are – again understandably – lower than for the residential housing market, but still both high and displaying the same behaviour as the residential housing market.



Figur 7: Price development. Transfers on the free market of residential and holiday properties with building. Oppland county. Average price pr. transfer (NOK 1 000)



Figur 8: Transfers on the free market of residential and holiday properties with building. Oppland county. Number of transfers. Recreational house market shows the same pattern as residential buildings, but at a slightly higher speed.

This market behavior certainly is what would be expected within a multi-house home trend.

Recreational commuting – intra-home circulation – extra-home circulation

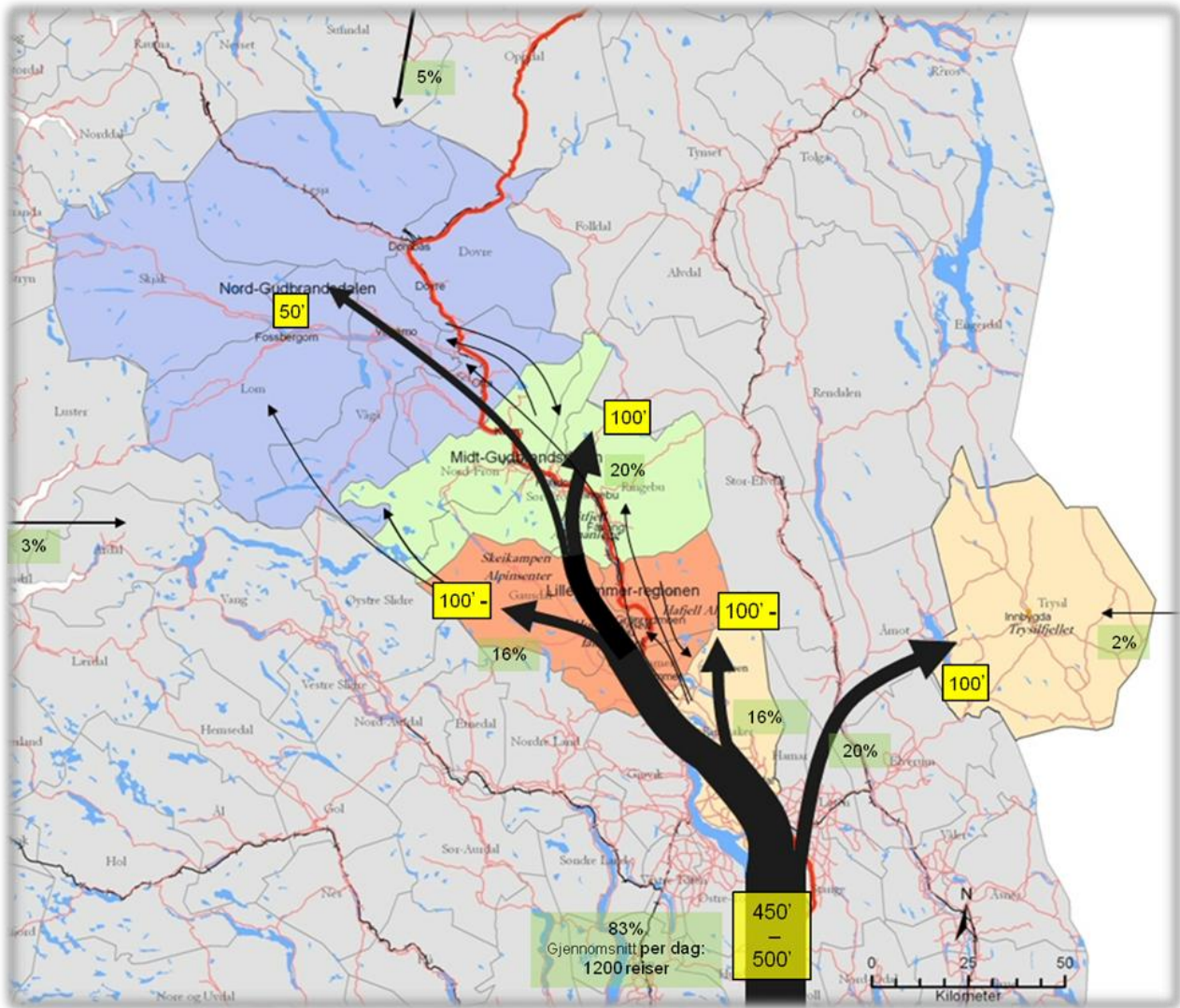
(Urry 2000) claims that mobility now is at the centre of modern life and that people live in constantly changing landscapes of “*scapes and flows*”. How could we characterize the kind of mobility associated with multi-house homes, and what scapes and what flows are to be associated with the multi-house phenomena? Both touristic and multi-house home mobility involves travelling from one dwelling to recreate in another, but where they differ is that multi-house homes are based on a recurring pattern of mobility between a first and a recreational house. Hall and Williams (Hall & Williams 2002) have discussed how this has created an unusual forms of mobility allocated at the intersection of migration and tourism.

What we define below as *recreational commuting* between first and recreational houses in a multi-

house home is a category of mobility to be associated with multi-house homes. Circulation is short-term repetitive or cyclical movement, and where the intention is not to change the place of residence (Johnsen mfl 1994). This does comply with (Müller 2002) as well as (Overvåg 2010) for whom circulation is a mobility that should be associated with recreational houses can be reached comfortably on a weekend basis. This category of circulation does not involve migration in its orthodox form – as migration is a concept that usually is applied when a household permanently long distance shifts in domicile location for daily house functions, if you will. In our terminology that means the relocation of household functions as work, education and in general daily family life. Thus, given the concept of multi-house homes it follows that it involves a circulation embedded in household functions as *an intra-home* circulation – see Figur 10. This separates it from tourism as circulation which is an *extra-home* circulation, a circulation that involves dwelling in non-home houses etc.

Hence, there is a new geographical division of scapes of work and scapes of leisure inducing new flows and spatial relationships between functionally different but complementing areas. These leisure scapes and flows represent a form of circulation conceptually distinct from tourism. They are populated by multi-house home household members, and not tourists.

Recreational commuting creates a new type of pressure on roads and traffic patterns. In Norway this type of commuting has been receiving some attention. In a study of one of the main roads in the zone between Oslo urban core and its recreational hinterland in eastern Norway it was estimated that recreational commuting constituted approx. 10 % of all traffic levelled over a year (Overvåg & Ericsson 2007). Since recreational commuting mostly pile up around weekends this means that it makes up a substantial share of weekend traffic.



Figur 9: The use of recreational houses generates considerable amount of traffic – here illustrated with the situation in Hedmark and Oppland. (Kilde: Overvåg, K & B.Ericsson: Trafikk på E6 generert av reiselivet og fritidsboliger i Gudbrandsdalen, Ringsaker og Trysil, ØF-notat 14/2007, Østlandsforskning)

The national transport planning instruments has however been criticised for not addressing the traffic patterns created by recreational commuting. A new National Transport Plan for Norway was presented spring 2009. There is but one reference to what we here have labelled recreational commuting. Here it is laconically stated that what we call recreational commuting leads to “*long traffic jams ... primarily on the roads leading into Oslo*” and thereby creating “*considerable delays.*” (SD 2008).

There is an information gap applied to the effects of recreational commuting on rural societies and

not least on transport systems. But it is important and intriguing to discuss the principle at work here as the multi-house homes generate recreational commuting: The traditional border between the core and the marginal is being punctuated in new ways. However, discussing this may benefit from making another distinction, a distinction between recreational commuting and *urban recreational sprawl*. While commuting is movement, sprawl is material growth.

Urban recreational sprawl

Urban sprawl is in this perspective the spreading of housing functions of a city into suburbs in rural land fringes of an urban area - often into amenity rich city zones (typically hills, lake- and river banks, coastal areas). Characteristics are single-use zoning, low-density land use and car-dependent communities. These developments are in Europe allegedly rooted in the desire to realise new lifestyles in suburban environments, outside the inner city (EEA 2006). The traditional urban sprawl costs are e.g. lost farmland, daily commuting and putting public financing under pressure (Sjøquist 2003).

Recreational activities have “always” sprawled into the hinterlands of towns and cities (Lundgren 1974; Richardson mfl 2004; Overvaag 2009). The extension and characteristics of a recreational area influenced by urban structures on their hinterland are at any time dependent on a set of highly dynamic factors – including a changing institution of home as discussed above. We suggest the concept '*urban recreational sprawl*' to describe the process when urban located households invest resources in a recreational house for recreational functions in amenity rich rural hinterlands of their urban region at a leap-frog distance of between 2 and 4 hours driving from city cores, cf. Figure 1. This is in accordance with (Müller & Marjavaara 2004), who argues that this process play a role in urban growth contributing to the diffusion of urban space. Urban recreational sprawl is a less studied phenomenon than traditional urban sprawl, but issues like land use, aesthetics, transport and economy should be addressed in this context too. Urban sprawl may in itself be an indicator of less compact living, but whether modern patterns of multi-house homes development in an urban recreational sprawl process should be conceived likewise, is debatable (Buckley mfl 2004; Clayton 2004). One might suspect that the option to perform an urban recreational sprawl into the hinterland in itself has effects on development patterns in urban cores. It is possible that households accept or even prefer a more compact living and housing conditions in city cores in exchange for a recreational house in the rural hinterland – but this is an another debate.

The issue raised here is that a recreational version of urban sprawl has in itself become an important agent of change in many rural areas, as well in physical structures when materialized in recreational house development as in economic and social life when multi-house households regularly dwell as part time inhabitants. While urban sprawl usually denotes how work, living and industrial areas emanate from urban centres, seize and imprint an expanding area (Galster mfl 2000), urban demands for recreational areas shows a similar sprawl with its own spatial dynamics and characteristics. The multi-house home lifestyle is dependent on the high and apparently growing mobility, making it quite reasonable to expect that the frontier of urban recreational sprawl structures will penetrate ever deeper into the rural hinterland of urban centres and make a lasting physical and social imprint on affected rural societies.

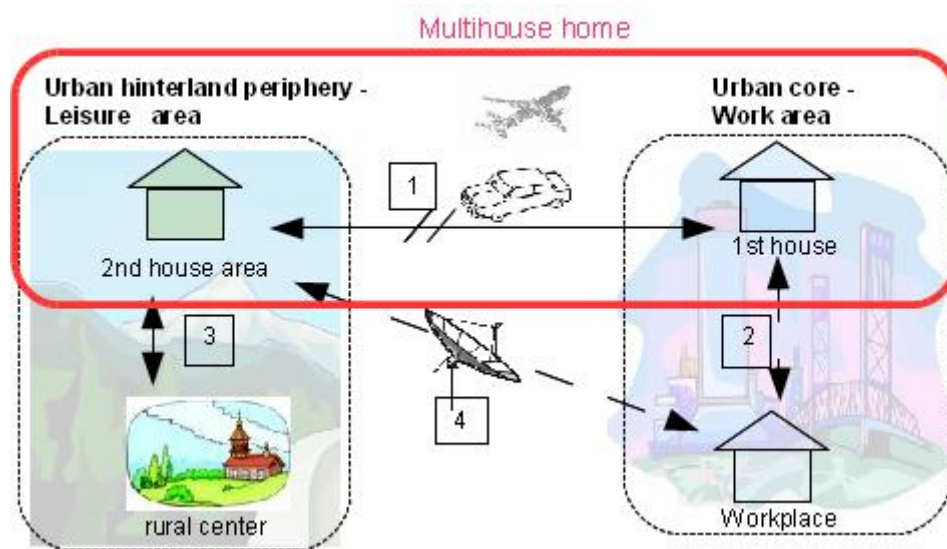


Figure 10: An ideographic illustration of the multi-house home configuration. [1] illustrates recreational commuting as an intra-home circulation. [2] illustrates urban core everyday life. [3] illustrates the part of the home located in rural hinterland and its recreational relation to rural communities. [4] illustrates that the multi-house home very often have access to internet and thus can both perform work from the recreational house as a base, and also in general keep in contact with their urban base.

Conclusions

‘Multi-house home’, ‘recreational commuting’ (as an intra-home circulation) and ‘urban recreational sprawl’ provides us with needed conceptual tools to better describe and analyze the current evolution in housing trends as they are unfolding in Norway. Household resources, their command over space and time and the tradition of seeking recreation in nature amenity rich regions

outside the urban core will most probably remain a driving force for the making of more multi-house homes. These three concepts in concert indicate that this lifestyle evolution in principle may have significant and interesting influences on society. They also offer an integration of second home research into main issues in societal development discussions.

That said, considerable work remains to improve the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this evolution. It also raises policy challenges that should be addressed, i.a environmental issues that related to the consumption pattern that the multi-house home lifestyle implies. There may also be distribution policy issues lurking here, as acquiring a second house may be an aspiration for many but the at the same time is costly and may contribute to a new divide between have and have-nots in society.

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