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FORESEEING THE FUTURE OF SECOND HOME TOURISM. THE CASE OF FINNISH MEDIA AND POLICY DISCOURSE

KATI PITKÄNEN & MIA VEPSÄLÄINEN

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ABSTRACT Second homes have been interpreted as a significant indicator of the development of new patterns of mobility and dwelling in Western countries. However, changes in population distribution, population composition, family structures and tourism preferences pose a reason to challenge the general assumption that second home tourism would continue unchanged in the future. This paper reviews representations of the future of second home tourism in the Finnish media and policy discourse. Mainstream trends and emerging weak signals are recognized and further analysed in reference to the international context. As a result of the analysis four distinctive themes related to the future of second home tourism are distinguished: dual dwelling, internationalization, alternative forms and regional differentiation. These themes suggest a change in the traditional Finnish second home culture, often portrayed as a personal and national utopia. With the exception of dual dwelling, all the themes have so far been overlooked in the official policy discourse. The paper addresses a new theme in Finnish as well as international second home literature as so far only little has been published on the long term future of second home tourism.

KEY WORDS: Second home tourism, trends, weak signals, media discourse, policy discourse

Introduction

The last few decades have witnessed a rapid second home development in many western countries. This has been interpreted as a sign of the development of new patterns of mobility and dwelling (Müller & Hall, 2004). Traditional ties of time and place as an organizing factor of people’s lives are diminishing. In a time of globalization, temporary migration and multiple dwelling people have social networks and meaningful places beyond their home area (see e.g. Urry, 2000). People increasingly choose their life environments according to amenity values instead of closeness to work (Perkins & Thorns, 2006). Second homes have become...
increasingly important in people's pursuit of simple life forms and meaningful place affiliations (Kaltenborn, 1998; Williams & Van Patten, 2006). These developments problematize the traditional notions of place, home and identity.

Recent international research literature on second homes has been active and covers a range of research focuses from the distribution and use of second homes to their economic, environmental and social impacts and cultural significance (Kaltenborn, 1998; McIntyre, 2006; Hiltunen, 2007; Marjavaara, 2007). Second homes are the interest of a variety of subjects and disciplines which is reflected in the inconsistency of the terminology used (Hall & Müller, 2004b; Pitkänen, 2008). However, the most widely applied and interdisciplinary is perhaps the term “second home”. The concept is ambiguous, and in the words of McIntyre (2006) comprises an arbitrarily defined continuum of different classes of accommodation. However, widely applied in research is the definition which characterizes second homes as “non-mobile properties owned or rented on a long lease as the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere” (e.g. Coppock, 1977; McIntyre, 2006; Visser, 2006). Without strictly subscribing to this definition, the term second home is also applied in this paper. Also the term “cottage” is used to refer to the Finnish equivalent “mökki” which is a culturally laden expression that refers to certain images of traditional second homes and life in them (see Karisto, 2006; Pitkänen, 2008).

Traditional second homes are a core component of domestic tourism especially in the Nordic countries (e.g. Müller, 2007). The origins of Finnish second home culture dates back to the 18th century after which Vuori (1966) distinguishes three phases of second home ownership. In the early stages, the landed gentry, under Swedish influence, adopted a rhythm of seasonal migration to their country mansions. In a similar vein, acquiring summer villas near coastal towns became common among the upper classes and bourgeoisie (Vuori, 1966; Kauppinen, 1991; Kuva, 1996). The institutionalization of second home tourism took place after the First World War. Due to the overall economic growth and urbanization, the second home stock multiplied and spread further inland (Vuori, 1966; Kuva, 1996). After the Second World War second home tourism became a mass phenomenon. This was a reflection of the post-war reconstruction which led to the democratizing of society. Growth of welfare in the lower social classes as well as new holiday entitlement legislation and increased car ownership enabled middle class people to acquire and spend time at second homes. The urbanization of society was fast and second homes provided the desired opportunity to return to their former homesteads and countryside (Periäinen, 2006). The building of new second homes was extensive especially in the 1950s and 1960s (Vuori, 1966; Kauppinen, 1991; Kuva, 1996).

In the beginning of the new century, interest in second homes is still high. Today there are over 470,000 second homes and Statistics Finland (2007) reports nearly 5000 new ones annually. According to EU statistics Finland is among the leading second home countries measured by the number of second homes per capita within the EU (Reijo, 2002). The popularity of second homes has brought them increasingly under the public gaze (internationally see McIntyre, 2006; Vittersø, 2007). The recent springing up of second home-related magazines, websites and fairs suggest that second homes are becoming a lifestyle trend (see Island Committee, 2006). Second
home development is actively managed by national and regional planning projects and political intervention (e.g. Jokinen, 2002; Hall & Müller, 2004b).

In Finland as well as internationally, it is widely believed that the popularity and growth of second home tourism is continuous. However, as Jansson and Müller (2004) note, changes in the population distribution, population composition, family structures and tourism preferences pose a reason to challenge the general assumption that second home tourism would continue unchanged. Besides adding to the overall popularity of second homes, increased mobility and welfare have an affect on what kind of place affiliations people desire and what is wanted from a stay at the second home. Problematizing the future development is also politically important to provide better opportunities to respond to the development. However, despite the unfolding changes these themes have so far been overlooked in the official policy discourse. Similarly, there is only little published on the long term future of second home tourism. Rather than foreseeing future trends, researchers usually confine themselves to listing observable trends and impacts of second home tourism (see e.g. Jansson & Müller, 2004; Müller & Hall, 2004; Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2005).

This paper discusses the future of second home tourism in Finland. The paper is based on a study of Finnish media and policy discourse. In addition, it builds on international examples and research literature on second homes. By reviewing media content and policy documents the paper looks for representations of the future of second home tourism in Finland. Relying on media and international examples, the study tracks down weak signals, early indicators of new and surprising trends that may be overlooked in the policy discourse. Hence, the aim of the paper is to identify factors affecting the future of second home tourism in Finland and thereby bring out issues that may not have been sufficiently recognized before.

**Research Methods and Material**

In the terminology of future studies, the research frame can be described as (futures) scanning the operational environment of second home tourism and its variables. Environmental scanning is often used as part of issues-management, a foresight tool aiming at identifying emerging issues before they become mainstream and reach critical proportions (May, 1996). Environmental scanning aims at detecting trends and events in an institution’s external environment in order to define potential threats and opportunities (Morrison, 1992). External environment refers to both the microenvironment (e.g. customers, competitors, related policies etc.) and the macroenvironment of the institution (social, technological, economic, environmental and political environments) (Morrison, 1992). Indicators of emerging issues in turn can be anything from statistical trends to weak signals, scientific breakthroughs and expert forecasts, important is searching out new issues previously missed or overlooked (May, 1996).

This study focuses on early detection of medium- to long-range developments in Finnish second home tourism. This is done by identifying trends and weak signals related to second home development. Trends are long-range social tendencies that grow slowly and appear to have profound basis. They come in different sizes ranging from over-generational mega-trends to new and emerging trends (Coffman, 1997).
Weak signals (sometimes also wild cards, emerging issues, early warnings, early indicators or germs) are ideas and emerging trends that are new and surprising from the signal receiver’s vantage point. Because they do not have a history and they often seem irrational and uncertain they are difficult to identify (Uskali, 2005). However, if they materialize as trends they will bring about considerable changes and therefore are worth tracking down as early as possible (Coffman, 1997; Mannermaa, 2004).

In this study, selected media content and policy documents are used as sources for the scanning. Media content covers all articles related to second homes published in a selection of the leading Finnish newspapers in 2006. The study reviews media content with wide publicity and influence on public opinion, and thus, scans the macroenvironment. The policy documents, in turn, represent the official view on second home tourism and its future in Finland and are part of the national microenvironment of second home development. The media and policy discourses are partially overlapping as the official view is communicated through national media.

The study presupposes that the mainstream media and policy discourse highlight the impact of patent (mega)trends in second home development, such as the aging of society, whereas weak signals are missed or overlooked. In particular, the policy discourse is based on the enhancement of the social and economic benefits and reduction of problems evident in the contemporary second home tourism. This emphasizes the need for systematic analysis of unexpected and surprising weak signals. These are scanned from the media content and international examples.

There is no established methodology to scan journalistic texts in order to identify weak signals. According to Uskali (2005) most previous studies have focused on scanning the news headlines, which he finds deficient. In his study on weak signals on business journalism, Uskali (2005) argues that uncertain signals in news items mostly appeared “inbetween the lines” in the form of reporters feelings or hunches and in the endings. The exact, already established signals, in turn, appear also in the headlines. Following Uskali’s (2005) example, in this study the whole news items are scanned in order to give attention to uncertain signals and the feelings/hunches of reporters.

The media content analysed for the study was acquired from an electronic newspaper archive, ARKISTO (http://www.helsinginsanomat.fi/yritykset/sanoma-arkisto) maintained by the leading newspaper publisher in Finland, Sanoma Corporation. The analysed data forms an extensive cross-section of the Finnish media discourse including both “serious” and tabloid journalism. The limitation of the electronic archive, and thereby also the analysed data, is the lack of visual material connected to the original articles and items. The archive comprises of the content of the following newspapers:

- **Helsingin Sanomat** is Finland’s leading national paper, which is read by more than three-fourths of the residents of the Helsinki metropolitan area and by a quarter of all Finns. The paper is independent and non-aligned. The average daily circulation of the paper in 2006 was 426,117 copies.
- **Ilta-Sanomat** is the Finland’s leading tabloid (60% share of the market) and second biggest newspaper in Finland. The paper is read by 905,000 people daily. In 2006, the average audited circulation of the paper was 186,462 copies.
**Taloussanomat** is a financial newspaper published five times a week. The circulation of the paper was 35,900 in 2006.

In addition, the archive contains summaries provided by Esmerk Oy. It is a company providing media analysis and summary as well as information services, with special focus on customized collection and mediation of news. Esmerk monitors almost all Finnish national and local newspapers and leading periodicals (http://www.esmerk.fi/).

The archive search was limited to second home-related content published between 1 January 2006 and 31 December 2006. Articles and items were searched using a variety of search words that extensively covered the synonyms of second home (tourism/tourist) in Finnish language. Altogether 8 different core words that can be modified with different suffixes were used (translations/connotations by authors based on word elicitation conducted on a small group of colleagues):

- mökki (most common, colloquial and culturally laden expression, close to terms summer cottage/sommarstuga/hytte, in rural/tourism centre location)
- kesäpaikka (‘’summer place’’, place of family roots, rural location)
- kesäkoti (‘’summer home’’, rural/urban location)
- huvila (‘’villa’’/country house, elitist connotation, seaside/rural location)
- loma-asunto (‘’vacation home’’, often rented e.g. timeshare, rural/urban/tourism centre location also abroad)
- vapaa-ajan asunto (‘’recreational residence’’, formal term, rural/urban/tourism centre location)
- kakkosasunto/-koti (‘’dual residence’’, well-equipped rural second home or work-related urban residence).

The final data comprised of 863 articles and news items which were read through several times by both of the authors. Most of the articles were published in *Helsingin Sanomat* (366) and *Ilta-Sanomat* (286). In *Taloussanomat* there were 56 articles. Also, 149 summaries of articles from 49 different newspapers were derived from the Esmerk information service. All in all, articles about or referring to second homes were published throughout the year. The largest number of articles, however, was published during the summer months of June, July and August.

In the initial stage of the analysis the articles were categorized according to their type and content. Altogether 22 categories were derived from the data and each article was coded into one or more of the categories. In the next stage the categories were scrutinized and compared with each other to find possible overlaps and thematic consistencies. The data was rearranged into 13 new categories which were then further examined from the point of view of trends and weak signals. As a result four key processes of change in second home development were distinguished. Out of these “new and alternative forms”, “internationalization” and “rising prices and shortage of properties/plots” describe factors and processes changing second home tourism internally. In the fourth theme “environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts” the focus is on the external impacts of the phenomenon, which was a reason to exclude it from the analysis. The analysis is illustrated in more detail in Table 1.

The analysis of the policy documents covered the latest publications of different ministries that define policies and strategies related to second home development.
Table 1. The analysis of the media content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First stage (number of articles coded in the category*)</th>
<th>Second stage (*)</th>
<th>Third stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrities (219)</td>
<td>Spent time</td>
<td>Internally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time (199)</td>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td>Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New and alternative forms (140)</td>
<td>Accidents</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents (122)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values (118)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts (104)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business opportunities (85)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial cottages (79)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalization (73)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired locations/landscapes (65)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase and prices of the property/plot (58)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulations (49)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/regional development (49)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance work (46)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental impacts (36)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History (24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel to second home (22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging of the second home owners (22)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and construction (20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and cultural impacts (18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal memories (11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative attitude (4)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Each article appears in one or more of the categories
The primary sources for policy definitions in Finland are rural and island policies. The Island Development Programme, for instance, sets second home development as one of its main objectives. The Island Committee working under the Ministry of the Interior and the cross-sectoral Rural Policy Committee are the principal actors in national second home development. Besides these, references to second homes were found from the policy definitions of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Trade and Industry. In addition, second homes were discussed in the decisions of the Council of State. The analysed policy documents are listed at the end of the article.

The statements in the policy documents were listed and compared to the three internal processes found in the media analysis (see Table 1). As presupposed there was less diversity in the policy than in the media discourse. Whereas the media dealt with a variety of perspectives, the policy statements took the viewpoint of rural development. Moreover, the policy documents strongly focused on management and strategy issues related to dual dwelling and all-year round use second homes which was assumed to increase in the future. In the final stage of the analysis the results of the media and policy document analysis were complemented by a comparison to international examples and key issues in second home research literature. As a result, four key themes related to the future of second home tourism in Finland were distinguished and dual dwelling, internationalization, regional differentiation and alternative forms (see Table 2).

These themes and their position in the Finnish media and policy discourse are further discussed in the following sections.

**Results**

**Dual Dwelling**

The first and also the most predominant theme in the policy documents was dual dwelling. Dual dwelling and increasing standard of equipment of second homes was also a constant topic in the media discourse. In Finland the utilization rate of second homes has been on the increase and the standard of the properties is changing from...
simple summer cottages into well-equipped villas (Nieminen, 2004; Statistics Finland, 2007). In the public discourse this change is illustrated by baptizing “mökki” (summer cottage) as “kakkosasunto” (dual residence). Because there is no English equivalent to the Finnish term, in this paper, dual residence and dual dwelling were chosen to reflect upon the role of second home as something more than merely a place to spend one’s holiday. In the Finnish public discourse the term is used to refer to winterized and well-equipped frequently visited second homes. These are seen to have become a trend and, especially in the Finnish policy discourse, is the underlying assumption that this trend will also continue in the future.

The media content on dual dwelling is very positive and highlights the substantial growth in expenditure related to second homes as well as the role of cottage life in the individual consumption patterns. Indicative to the trend is also the marginalization of simple, less equipped cottages that used to be the norm in the 1960s and 1970s. Typical to the data are countless media articles on the luxurious second homes displayed on cottage fairs and those belonging to Finnish celebrities. Cottage life, despite being surrounded by modern conveniences and look of the house, is pictured as relaxing and a close-to-nature counterbalance to the hectic lifestyle in the artificial urban environment. The second home provides a place to spend time with the family, express oneself and experience meaningful place affiliations (see Venäläinen, 1989; Hirvonen, 1992; Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen, 2005). For instance, cottage life of a famous TV chef was portrayed in Ilta-Sanomat in the fall of 2006 under the title “Modern hideaway” the following way:

The family cottage of the chef Aki Wahlman – if one can call the dual residence used year-round as a cottage – is by the open sea…
The children, Frans, 12, and Rosa-Maria, 9, and wife Nina are attached to the place and long for nowhere while being there in the summer…
Wahlman…as a child, used to spend his summers at his grandma’s cottage in Uusikaupunki archipelago. The sea is in his blood…
Wahlman is interested in architecture and he knew instantly that his cottage was meant to be modern…
One of the living room walls is made entirely of glass – why to hide the magnificent sea view! The house is 120 square meters with a living room, kitchen, bedrooms for the children and parents, bathroom and a detached sauna. It has electric heating, hidden in the roof…
In their summer paradise, the chef’s family savours a variety of seafood. – “Fishing is our hobby, sometimes we cast a net in the sea with reasonably good luck…” (Ilta-Sanomat, 19 August 2006).

The increasing use and standard of equipment of second homes and seasonal cottages has also been recognized internationally (e.g. Kaltenborn, 1998; Vittersø, 2007). According to Sandell (2006) completely new types of rural residence have developed. Second home owners living more or less permanently in their second homes are new “locals” that are not personally involved in traditional rural industries like farming or forestry, even though their residence status might indicate such involvement. The emergence of these new locals is often seen as positive, supporting local private and public services and providing employment
opportunities in rural areas (Müller & Hall, 2004; Sandell, 2006). In particular, the growing quantity of retirees in the Western world with disposable spare time and consuming power have been seen as an important factor in certain destinations. In fact, many authors emphasize that second home ownership often follows a path of cyclical migration beginning from holiday visits to a destination progressing towards acquiring a second home and later to an extended residence upon retirement (Müller & Hall, 2004; Quinn, 2004; Timothy, 2004). In Finland the retirement of the post-war baby boom generation and general growth of welfare has especially contributed to the growing popularity of year-round use of second homes (Juntto & Vilkko, 2005; Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen, 2005).

However, second homes and multiple dwellings are not only the privilege of the retired. New forms and patterns of production and consumption enable an increasing number of households to spend time away from traditional working and production environments in urban areas. This is seen to lead to the popularization of new and mobile lifestyles in which people flexibly combine dwelling in urban and rural environments (see Pitkänen & Kokki, 2005). Recognizing these developments many authors agree that the share of households that try to combine work and leisure in their second home will increase and as a consequence the difference between first and second homes will become blurred (Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit, 2004; Flognfeldt Jr., 2004; Müller & Hall, 2004; McIntyre, 2006; Sandell, 2006).

These views are echoed in the analysed policy documents. It is thought that, besides retirement migration, also distance work at the second home will become more common and thereby prolong the stays in the countryside. These beliefs have also been reflected in a discussion on the second home owners’ role as service users and in local politics. Many municipalities have opted to establish special second home owners’ committees to improve their political influence. Even the possibility of double residence in two different municipalities has been brought in to the discussion with the reservation that most second home owners, however, are content with their present role. For now Finnish citizens have to register their primary place of residence into which public services (also taxation and democratic rights) are confined.

The media discourse takes the second home owners’ perspective to the same issue. Even if there are numerous items on telecommunication and other infrastructure prerequisites, the media also reports on the reluctance of second home owners to engage in work at their second home. Besides distance work, dual residence is discussed through the problems of residing in two separate homes. Especially highlighted in the discussion are the rights to use health services in the second home municipality and the collection of common charges. The discussion is partly attributed to the policy discourse so that interviewed or cited in these news items are often civil servants or municipal authorities rather than second home owners. Interestingly, some articles also take a wider perspective on dual residence referring to the adjustments extensive use of the rural second home might require from the urban home:

After retirement Kaija and Erkki Nyrhin moved to Lutakko [city centre of Jyväskylä] in 2002 to a flat on the top floor – the eighth – of a new apartment
block by the lake. They have not regretted their decision. The bedroom, living room and glazed balcony command a view of the lake. From the terrace one can see the centre of the town. When the Nyhinens feel like visiting their second home in Savonranta (provincial municipality) or travelling to the Canary Islands it is easier to leave the city flat unattended than their previous home, a detached house in Keljonkangas (suburb of Jyväskylä) (Helsingin Sanomat, 26 February 2006).

All in all, both the Finnish media and policy discourse take a very positive stand on the increasing use of second homes. It is hoped that the popularity of second home tourism will endure or even grow and bring economic benefits to rural areas. Therefore, the national politics aim at actively promoting and removing obstacles from converting traditional cottages into year-round use. However, the practices and problems attached to dual residences evident in the media discourse reveal that the current administrative practices are insufficient to consider the interest of the mobile lifestyler. Similar problems have also been recognized internationally. For instance, McIntyre, Williams and McHugh (2006) state that institutional and political arrangements are based on a domicentric view of place in which people are ascribed to one fixed place of “usual” residence. This view does not correspond to the contemporary scene and the prevalence of multiple dwelling and cyclical movements (McIntyre et al., 2006; see also Müller & Hall, 2004). Hence, the new mobile lifestyles as well as dual residence pose a challenge to the development of new legislation and regulation concerning, for instance, place of residence, land use planning, building instructions, provision of public services and collection and allocation of taxes and other charges.

Internationalization

The second theme distinguishable especially in the media discourse is internationalization of Finnish second home tourism. The history of second home ownership in Finland has witnessed different stages of internationalization. The very first second homes in the 18th century were seaside villas owned by Swedish-speaking urban elite. Later the Russian occupation at the beginning of the 19th century made Finland a destination for the Russians. The middle and upper classes of St. Petersburg built second homes on the eastern coast of the Gulf of Finland (Lovell, 2003; Kostiainen, 2006). Since independence in 1917, however, second home ownership has been almost entirely a domestic phenomenon and second homes have come to possess a strong cultural significance to Finns (Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen, 2005; Karisto, 2006; Pitkänen, 2008).

When Finland acceded to EEA in 1994 and the EU in 1995 it thereby also agreed on a greater freedom of movement for people, services and capital, including the right to buy property inside the Union area. The new regulations attracted enormous media attention and before the accession it was feared that rich foreigners (especially Germans) would buy up all the best lakeside plots and second homes (e.g. PKT 122/1999). Until today, however, the share of foreign second home owners has remained small. There are no statistics available on the actual figures, but it is estimated that annually the value of the foreign purchases is only a couple of percents of the total value of all real estate business (Koskinen, 2007). Because of the seeming marginality
of the phenomenon, foreign property purchases have not been raised as an issue on any level of administration or policy discourse. The policy documents analysed for this study do not include a single notion on foreign second home ownership. Foreigners are only referred to as potential customers of commercial cottages.

In contrast, the media content reveals a different kind of reality which emphasizes the fact that second home tourism can no longer be regarded only as a domestic phenomenon. On one hand, the data includes articles referring to increasing foreign interest in renting or purchasing second homes and investing in real estate or holiday cottage business in Finland (inbound). On the other hand, there are articles on Finns buying second homes abroad (outbound) and the internationalization of the Finnish log cabin industry.

In the case of inbound second home tourism are, for instance, the Norwegians and Brits interest in buying second homes and timeshares in Lapland. However, especially emphasized in the media discourse, are Russians’ growing interest in second homes and the commercial cottage business in Finland. In the tourism statistics Russians are the biggest group of foreign visitors in Finland with about 1.7 million visitors and half a million overnight stays annually (Finnish Tourist Board, 2006; Statistics Finland, 2006). In the media, Finland is described as a trendy second home tourism destination to the Russians. Russian second home owners and investors are greeted with pleasure: “Welcome our Russian brothers!” (Ilta-Sanomat, 26 October 2006). The articles hardly ever refer to possible external impacts and if they do the impacts are considered positive. The articles report on wealthy Russians investing in high quality properties and services. Often the properties are situated near other Russian-owned second homes or in holiday villages built especially to accommodate Russian taste which can contribute to the creation of small ethnic enclaves, areas that are characterized by distinct and identifiable population clusters different from the majority (see Timothy, 2002):

For the Russians big is beautiful. When Finns are satisfied with 100 square meters, Russians’ datsas can be easily 200 square meters…

If they can afford it, the Russians like to buy several plots next to each other to have their peace. In Ruokolahti [rural municipality in eastern Finland] the record is seven plots that have changed hands at once…

Not all of the buyers are newly-rich Russians, but most of them belong to the middle classes of St. Petersburg and Moscow… (Helsingin Sanomat, 10 December 2006b).

This optimism is remarkable considering the strong feelings the mutual past of the countries still awakes in people. The two countries have frequently been on opposite sides in wars, and Finland has been part of Russia several times during her history. The last war between the two countries ended in 1944 and the traces of the war are still visible in eastern Finland, where some of the Russians’ most desired second home areas are also located.

Though not (yet) apparent in the analysed media content, there are other media examples that indicate that the growing interest of the Russians is not seen merely as positive. During and after the time period of the study the phenomenon was discussed in a less positive manner on national TV (54 minuuttia; A Zoom), in the
context of parliamentary elections in March 2007 and in articles in local newspapers in eastern Finland (e.g. Itä-Savo in Savonlinna region). The critical media debate seems to have picked up especially since the beginning of 2007. In the media the fears of wealthy foreigners replacing Finns in land trading have been revived. Introducing new tightened regulation on foreign property purchases has been brought into discussion:

During the summer there has been indignant debate in South Carelia [province at the Russian border near St. Petersburg] on how the Russians are buying more and more cottages on the shores of Lake Saimaa. This year the real estate purchases have increased so much that local politician Suna Kymäläinen from Ruokolahti started an online petition. The goal is to have a law that would restrict the rights of non-EU citizens to buy land or properties in Finland. The petition has been signed by a couple of thousand people (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 22 July 2007).

Similarly well represented in the media discourse is Finns’ growing interest in purchasing second homes abroad. The phenomenon itself is not new as seasonal migration, especially to Spain, has been increasingly popular since the 1950s and the contemporary estimations amount to 20,000 seasonal migrants (Karisto, 2000; Väisänen, 2006). Besides Spain, the analysed media articles also refer to Finns buying second homes in other “warm-weather countries” such as Italy, Thailand, France, Portugal, Greece and Bulgaria. The articles are mostly real estate agent interviews with speculations on the future growth of seasonal migration.

Besides pensioners’ seasonal migration to warm-weather countries, noteworthy in the media discourse is the Finns’ interest in buying second home properties in Estonia. Estonia’s growing popularity is accounted for by the favourable location and lower price level than in Finland. The relative distance from Helsinki to Estonia, is in fact shorter than from Helsinki to reasonably priced domestic second home areas. The most popular second home areas in Estonia seem to be located on the western coast and on the islands of Saarenmaa and Hidenmaa:

Only twenty years ago Saarenmaa was part of the Soviet border-zone, where Finns had no access to even in tourist buses. Nowadays, approximately a thousand Finns have a second home in there. Finns own especially waterfront plots (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 24 July 2006).

In a couple of articles the Finns’ outbound second home tourism, however, also gets more negative nuances. Finns’ growing demand for second homes in Estonia, is seen to cause negative impacts to the local communities. For instance, the softer land use and building regulations in Estonia have enabled building too close to the shoreline and have also had other undesirable results.

Finns’ growing interest in Estonian second homes as well as the mushrooming of Russian properties in Finland can be placed in the wider context of globalization and internationalization of second home tourism (see Dijst et al., 2004; Duval, 2004; Müller & Hall, 2004; Williams, King & Warnes, 2004). Globalization has meant improved access to communication and transportation and has led to a time–space
compression. General opening of borders has extended the range of second home acquisition. Trans-border purchases of second homes in warmer areas or less populous and natural areas have become more general (e.g. Timothy, 2004). Reacting to and rejecting the pressures of modernity, people increasingly seek idyllic and nostalgic environments that can be located further away than ever before (Buller & Hoggart, 1994; Müller, 2002; Williams & Van Patten, 2006). Also other comparative advantages, such as lower prices, available housing stock, cheap air travel and weaker regulation can lure the prospective second home buyer to decide in favour of a foreign destination.

Regional Differentiation

Another theme distinguishable in the media discourse, but rather absent in the policy discourse is regional differentiation. This means that the distribution of second homes is not geographically even, but the highest demand tends to focus on particular regions and even on particular settlements (Gallent et al., 2005). To a potential second home owner the most attractive areas are often those close to urban centres within a weekend travel zone from the primary residence (Vuori, 1966; Müller, 2004; Gallent et al., 2005; Hiltunen, 2005). Additionally attractive are areas with special amenity values and opportunities for certain activities (Jaakson, 1986; Löfgren, 1999; Müller, 2004; Gallent et al., 2005). High demand in certain areas affects the prices and availability of properties resulting in regional patterns of second home tourism.

Rising prices of second home properties are also the reality in Finland. According to the National Land Survey of Finland (2006) the increase in second home prices has continued for 10 years. For example, in 2006 the prices of second home properties on zoned waterfront land rose 11%. Especially pronounced was the rise in areas near Helsinki region (National Land Survey of Finland, 2006). Notwithstanding the persistency of the rise, it is not acknowledged in the contemporary policy discourse. Regional differentiation is referred to only in the context of land use planning. It is stated that the increase in the popularity of second home tourism and dual residence leads to the overburdening of the shores and restricting their public access. New measures are required especially on areas at urban fringes. Contrary to the policy discourse, the rising prices are one of the most visible future themes in the media discourse. The media usually takes the second home buyer’s perspective and focuses on the effects of the high demand. Finding a reasonably priced property in southern Finland is reported to have become very difficult:

...Living out cottage dreams is becoming more difficult year after year... In the most desired areas, such as Uusimaa [the southernmost province in the Finnish mainland] dream spots are out of reach even with pots of money. The busiest second home market is moving ever further off from the metropolitan area. Similarly, the metropolitans’ demand keeps on raising prices further and further north (Taloussanomat, 11 February 2006).

Besides areas near the metropolitan region, the recent development in Finland suggests an emergence of certain “hotspots” (Müller, 2004) also in other areas.
Tuulentie (2006) noticed that in Finland the growth in the number of second homes has been the fastest in Lapland. Second homes in Lapland differ from the traditional cottage development in that the buildings are concentrated in tourist centres whereas in southern Finland they are more scattered on lake and sea shores. Besides traditional second homes, Lapland and the vicinity of tourist centres are also characterized by rental cottages and timeshares.

In addition to the impact on prices, the high demand affects also the local communities. According to Gallent et al. (2005) tensions may arise especially where the demand is focussed on certain types of properties which brings second home owners into direct competition with local people. According to Müller (2004) in such areas second home development facilitates rural change in terms of the socio-cultural composition of the countryside, the rural property market, and the landscape. It can be seen as straining infrastructure and negatively impacting on the availability and cost of local housing, the environment and amenities (Müller & Hall, 2004; McIntyre, 2006; Sandell, 2006).

In Finland neither the policy nor mainstream media discourse take a clear stand on how the local communities are affected by the rising prices of second home properties. Concern for future development, however, is to be found between the lines in some of the media articles. It appears that the high price level and limited availability of properties is moving the demand further and further north and has also contributed to the popularity of Estonia as a second home destination. On the other hand, Russians are seen to cause problems in eastern Finland:

In one respect, however, the Russian newcomers have caused resentment. Jari Willman, municipal leader of Taipalsaari [provincial municipality near Russian border], frets over new second homes that have been built on plots zoned for permanent residence. Willman has little to commend on the situation, the municipality has far too few plots to sell compared to the demand. “One of the basic tasks of a municipality is to provide building land for permanent residence. Basic task is not to sell land for second home construction” he says (Helsingin Sanomat, 10 December 2006a).

One of the reasons for the absence of the displacement debate familiar in many other countries (see e.g. Coppock, 1977; Hall & Müller, 2004a; Gallent et al., 2005) is that the demand of second homes concentrates on totally different types of plots and properties than the local demand. Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones (2000, cited in McIntyre, 2006) point out that concerns for displacement arise only when the second home market reaches maturity. When all “surplus housing” is used up, the market turns to mainstream housing or purpose-built developments to satisfy continuing demand (cited in McIntyre, 2006). Unlike in most of the other European countries, purpose built second homes in Finland are usually detached from the rural community structure and placed in the middle of nature on lake and sea shores. Converted second homes, on the other hand, are often properties left vacant by “normal” rural out-migration (see also Müller, 2004; Gallent et al., 2005). According to Müller (2004) in such cases or generally in peripheral areas without any specific amenities the perception of second home owners displacing the traditional countryside population is far from being realistic.
Alternative and New Forms of Second Home Tourism

The media analysis uncovered a set of emerging issues that are here put together under the title alternative and new forms of second home tourism. Alternatives to traditional second homes are a rather unexplored theme in the literature. For example, Hall and Müller (2004b) recognize three groups of second homes: stationary (traditional), semi-mobile, and mobile, but in the same context state that the researchers’ focus has traditionally been on stationary second homes. Also, Perkins and Thorns (2006) note that second home literature emphasizes “modest vernacular second homes set in wilderness or other remote and physically attractive places”, at the expense of a great diversity in types, forms, styles and locations. According to Hall and Müller (2004b) this is partly because of difficulties in data accession or relative insignificance of non-traditional compared to traditional second homes.

The Finnish policy discourse emphasizes traditional second homes. In contrast, the relevance of non-traditional second homes in the media discourse proves that they cannot be overlooked when considering the future of second home tourism. Different types of mobile, urban and commercial second homes as well as timeshares are presented as alternatives for stationary privately owned cottages. This section introduces these alternatives and their current potential in more detail.

Commercial second homes, such as rental cottages and cottages in holiday villages, constitute a significant theme in the media discourse. There are a number of new holiday village plans all over the country and the popularity of commercial second homes is reported to be increasing. At present Statistics Finland (2006) counts approximately 12,000 rental cottages in Finland. In addition, 13% of private owners are considering the possibility of renting out their second homes (Nieminen, 2004; Työtehoseura, 2006). In the media discourse commercial second homes are seen as real alternatives for traditional second homes especially among younger generations:

“Cottage rentals are here to stay and the business is growing. Finnish city-generation does not want to bind itself with cottage ownership any longer, but rather rents one” says the executive director of Lomarengas [Finland’s leading rental cottage agency] Juha-Pekka Olkkola (Helsingin Sanomat, 11 August 2006).

A worldwide example of the growth of an established alternative form of second home ownership is timeshare. According to the Timeshare Consumers Association (TCA, 2005), Finland is among the leading timeshare countries in the world. There are over 62,000 timeshare holders and 38 timeshare resorts and whereas, for example, in Sweden and Norway, less than 20% of the timeshares are domestic, 80% of the timeshare holders’ destination is domestic. The Finnish timeshare holders are typically younger than second home owners and according to Sorsa and Bona Sánchez (2004) their average age is decreasing. Timeshares are also recognized as a growing industry in the media and the articles refer to a number of new timeshare resort plans all over the country. Despite the relatively significant amount of timeshare owners, they are overlooked in the policy discourse.

Besides the shared forms of ownership, different semi-mobile and mobile forms of second homes can be seen as an alternative to traditional second homes (see Hall & Müller, 2004b). Timothy (2004) points out that owning or renting recreational vehicles
RVs such as campers and trailers or houseboats have become increasingly popular because they are more moveable, versatile and also less expensive than traditional second homes. RVs are relatively popular in Finland. According to statistics there are approximately 62,000 trailers and 27,000 campers and 6.5% of Finns are estimated to use one (Pouta & Sievänen, 2001; Statistics Finland, 2006). There are no statistics on the exact number of houseboats, but sail and motor boats that are also habitable are popular. Pouta and Sievänen (2001) estimate that 7% of Finns have access to a habitable motor boat and 3% are engaged in sailing. According to statistics of the Finnish Maritime Administration (2005) a total of 55,000 boats are used for overnight trips and boaters’ overnight stays in marinas total in 100,000.

Mobile or semi-mobile RVs and habitable boats are not equated to traditional second homes in the Finnish policy discourse. The media content, however, includes some articles in which the mobile forms are regarded as cheaper and more flexible than non-mobile second homes. Interestingly, the data contains several articles on new cottage innovations, such as moveable or floating second homes:

Sito Inc. from Espoo is planning to build a floating marina village inshore of Reposaari for the 2008 cottage fair in Pori (Esmerk, 9 November 2006).

Luoma group is launching the production of mobile summer cottages at its factory in Ylistaro... the cottages can, for example, be parked on the beach during the summer and in the winter be moved close to ski slopes (Esmerk, 14 December 2006).

Another form of second home tourism that is rarely noticed in second home literature is urban second homes (Hall & Müller, 2004b). Hall and Müller (2004b) estimate the number of second homes located in urban surroundings to be relatively few. Timothy (2004), however, sees it as a growing trend and has noticed that more and more rural residents have opted to purchase second homes in and near urban areas to be close to nightlife and cultural attractions. Besides flats or houses acquired for recreational purposes, second homes from urban locations are often purchased to avoid uncomfortably long commuting distances to work. Often the intensified use of and remote work at a rural second home may lead to the change of roles of the “homes” so that the second home becomes a primary residence while keeping small flats in cities (Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Flognfeldt Jr., 2004).

Tuulentie (2006) sees urban second homes as a rather novel phenomenon in Finland. In the media content the topic is referred to in the context of Lapland, where out-migration has left houses empty in rural small towns and they have been marketed as cheap second homes to people from southern Finland. Besides these recreational apartments used as second or third homes, there are articles on work-related second homes acquired in urban centres.

Discussion: Future Trends and Weak Signals as a Challenge for Research and Policymaking

Based on Finnish media and policy discourse as well as international second home literature this paper has distinguished key themes connected to second home
development in Finland. The themes, related future trends and weak signals are summarized in Table 3. The table emphasizes emerging issues that are overlooked in the contemporary Finnish policy discourse, but are likely to be manifested as separate policy issues in the future. These policy issues are also summarized in Table 3, besides which the last column lists a set of related research questions/themes.

The public image of second home development in Finland seems to be covered by a belief in the cultural sustainability of the phenomenon. In the public discourse second homes appear as a timeless Finnish utopia, a significant contributor to people’s happiness as well as the development of the countryside. The Finnish policy discourse in particular is strongly dominated by the belief in the benefits that an increasing number of second homes and dual residences will bring to rural areas. This view is supported also by the media discourse, which represents winterized and well-equipped second homes as self-evident. In this context, the emerging issues in second home development recognized in this article; internationalization, regional differentiation and alternative forms of second homes, pose a real challenge to the management of the development.

Crucial, for example, is how second homes are defined in the policy definitions and official statistics. At the moment the official definitions of a second home in Finland are inflexible to the alternative forms observable in the media discourse. Statistics Finland (2007) defines second homes as non-mobile recreational or other residential buildings used as second homes. Commercial second homes, cottage villages, timeshares, allotment gardens, mobile and semi-mobile homes, urban second homes or second homes owned by commuters in urban locations are not counted as second homes and are thus excluded from the official statistics. The Finnish policy discourse applies the same narrow definition which limits the issues dealt with in the policy definitions. Based on the media discourse, however, the scope of second home tourism is wider and, for example, the growing attractiveness of commercial second homes and timeshares cannot be ignored in the future.

In a broader context, the overall increase in welfare and disposable income enables people to acquire not only two homes, but multiple dwellings. Less equipped cottages in the wilderness can, thus, also be obtained as “third homes” (Tuulentie, 2006). Alternatively third homes can be purchased near ski or other activity centres to ensure easy access to desired activities. Tuulentie (2007) has called this modern people’s possibility to have a third home a weak signal of something that may become more common in the future. Besides purchasing multiple dwellings, also rental cottages, timeshares or RVs can be used as occasional third homes. Interest in more flexible patterns is growing, especially among younger generations. This predicts a change in traditional second home ownership. Instead of committing oneself to the maintenance and use of a single second home, people want to keep their options open (see Müller, 2004; Pitkänen & Vepsäläinen, 2005).

A related weak signal can be recognized from how the growing interest in prolonging stays in the second home affects primary residences. The media discourse contains articles on how people make adjustments in their life environments to be able to stay longer in the second home. Some people, for example, move closer to their second home or move from a detached house in the suburbs to a flat in the
centre to use less time for managing the property. On the other hand, there are examples on how people arrange their lives between two or multiple second homes spending, for instance, winters in Spain and summers at the cottage in Finland.

These new ways of life and overall increase in mobility is bound to reflect as an internationalization of second home tourism also in Finland. Based on the media

Table 3. Future trends and weak signals in second home development.

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Downloaded by [University of Eastern Finland] at 03:50 07 April 2014
discourse it is evident that foreigners’ interest in Finland and the interest of Finns to buy properties abroad are growing trends. Even if most of the articles are neutral or positive towards the changes, there are few examples on how foreign estate purchases raise problems and conflicts related to, for instance, raising price levels, differences in construction and other regulations, as well as cultural confrontation and ethnic clustering. In this respect, focal issues are especially Russians in Finland and Finns in Estonia. The contemporary policy discourse, however, does not recognize internationalization, not to mention its consequences. Also research on Finnish second home tourism has so far failed to deal with internationalization, which therefore constitutes an important national research focus in the future.

The future of second home tourism in Finland is also likely to face increasing regional differentiation. Some areas are more attractive to potential second home owners than others, which leads to differences in demand and price level. Whereas second homes on peripheral areas may become less used or completely desolated, certain areas become accessible only to the wealthier, which contributes to the creation of elite landscape (see Halseth, 2004; Müller, 2004; Gallent et al., 2005). In Nordic countries where second homes have traditionally been seen as an important achievement of the welfare state and accessible to all these changes challenge the whole basis of second home ownership (Jansson & Müller, 2004; see also Müller & Hall, 2004). In the Finnish media discourse, the regional differentiation is referred to in the context of rising prices and crowding of certain areas especially in the southern Finland. The lack of availability of properties and building sites can make favourably located permanent rural dwellings or areas zoned for permanent residence increasingly attractive. This is the case, for example in eastern Finland where growing demand from Russians causes nascent concern on the availability of building sites for permanent residence. These observations, even if categorized only as a weak signal, emphasize the importance of keeping watch on future development as well as contextualizing the idea of displacement in Finland.

**Conclusion**

One of the overarching factors in all the emerging issues in Finnish second home development is that they, in one way or another, involve a change of values attached to second homes. Even if divergent opinions emphasize the role of second homes as the only stable place, foundational grounding (Kaltenborn, 1998; Stedman, 2006) or emotional home (Löfgren, 1999; Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999) it is noticeable that modernization and commodification (Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999) as well as new generations (Jansson & Müller, 2004; Pitkänen, 2008) inevitably induce changes in the valuation of second homes. Müller (2004) for example, points out that there has been a turn towards a more touristic validation of second homes (see also Tuulentie, 2007). Sandell (2006) on the other hand, talks about de-contextualization of leisure meaning that various leisure activities have moved indoors (e.g. climbing, swimming) or into landscapes that have been rebuilt to suit recreational purposes (ski slopes, golf courses). Whereas one of the main attractions of contemporary owners is to keep up a contact with childhood landscape and its social contacts, the heirs do not have this direct connection and consequently as strong a place attachment (Jansson
& Müller 2004). This increases the popularity of areas that are better suited in relation to primary residences as well as areas with special amenity and activity values. The popularity of new kinds of locations and second home activities allude to the growing importance of second homes as a social space, providing possibilities for desired activities and to spend time in congenial company.

Similarly, the recurrent mobility between multiple residences can be seen as a modern expression of established place ties with more than one locale (McHugh, Hogan & Happel, 1995). Williams and Kaltenborn (1999) stress that the practice of owning multiple residences is a concrete manifestation of a segmented, isolated self living in more than one place (see also Löfgren, 1999). Rather than being opposites, primary and additional homes present a continuum of an experience and a way of life (see McHugh et al., 1995; Perkins & Thorns, 2006; Stedman, 2006; Tuulentie, 2006). Therefore, the ownership and use of a second home should be seen as an important aspect of an individual’s “self-identity” (Gallent, 2007). In the future it is therefore important to raise questions on multiple place attachment in the context of modern life; on the roles and meanings different places and residences have during an individual’s life cycle. On the other hand, the life cycle of second homes is also important, i.e. how the role of a house/apartment changes from second home to primary residence and vice versa and what these changes mean.

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