

NEW TRENDS IN SECOND HOUSING IN CZECHIA

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Abstract: The introductory part of the contribution gives essential information on second housing – individual short-time recreation of population in Czechia, with main focus on its structure and localization. A brief outline of the research history is given, as well as essential comparison with second housing in Slovakia. The empirical part analyses broad field and questionnaire survey on regional differentiation of the phenomenon in model region within Czechia and concludes in topical and more general trends and perspectives.

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Key words: second housing, Czechia, regional differentiation

1. INTRODUCTION

In our research second housing is defined as a complex of phenomena and processes joined with a building, which is a temporary place of stay for owners or users who exploit the building for recreational purpose above all. The main features are (besides the exploitation for mainly recreational purpose) location of the building out of permanent residential address and individual heterogeneity of in time and periodicity of commuting. Second housing has become an inseparable element of the urbanization (deurbanization) process and settlement structure. It also forms a specific part of a dynamically developing sector of the world economy – tourism and participates in international spatial population mobility. Second housing research deals mostly with two groups of problems:

- a) terms for existence and development of second housing (decisive factors of demand for second home ownership, decisive factors for localization)
- b) second housing consequences (general, social, economic, environmental).

The research has been based on rather weak theoretical and methodological foundations. It is essential to involve sociological and behavioral concepts as well as

ecologic and economic approaches. Second housing should not only be a part of the classic sector division of geography (human and tourism geography) above all, but also a subject studied under rural and urban geography with an emphasis on suburban issues. An increase of interest should be seen of applied disciplines – master planning, local and regional policy and economy (tax policy etc.). There were some attempts to create a basis of second housing geography with specific methodology and theoretical concepts (Gardavský, 1983). Up-to-date research should be conducted in the framework of geography of leisure as a part of the studies sheltered under life-style geography concepts. Interdisciplinary and applied geographic concepts with the assistance of concepts and methods of psychology, sociology, economy, ecology, planning, law and policy seem to be crucial for the future. Our contribution to general aspects of second housing, its history, methodical approaches and their applications as well as detailed results of regional differentiation in Czechia was presented in a special volume (Vágner, Fialová et al., 2004).

2. DEVELOPMENT AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SECOND HOMES IN CZECHIA

When discussing foundation and development of second housing, general terms and circumstances are necessary to be mentioned. Offer and demand are the key words. The offer can be joined to settlement structure development filed and demand is associated closely with societal activities. Second homes represent about 20 % of all inhabited buildings in Czechia. One half is recreational cottages – buildings originally used for residential function and transformed to recreational function. The other part consists of cabins, huts, logs and recreational houses built primarily for recreational purpose. Numbers of second homes and potential numbers of recreants help to determine the significance of recreational function in settlements. Urbanization processes in different evolutionary eras were decisive factors in changes and creation of the areas with recreational functions, Cabin localities formed completely new elements of settlement structure. Abandoned country cottages (after Germans, people moved to the cities) at the border areas or in the inner periphery contributed highly to potential for recreational activities. Cottage users have been still helping to maintain the traditional settlement structure and architectural outlook of rural houses. The socialist legislative influences a lot at settlement structure. At least one quarter of Czech population has a regular personal experience with second housing which is reflected in the settlement pattern as well. People are affected with "psychological schizophrenia" when spend a lot of time out of their residential addresses in second homes. Loads on environment can be seen as one of the negative factors. Terms for foundation and development of second housing in Czechia were identified as whole-social with the time-space differentiation of their effects.

The census data from 1991 (topical accurate data can't be obtained for latest census) should be illustrative enough for a general assessment of the spatial distribution of second homes in Czechia. About one half of nearly 0.5 mil. second homes are recreational houses and wooden cabins. The other half consists of cottages excluded or still included in the residential housing fund. The number of the latter group has been

increasing rapidly (about 1/3 increase between 1991 – 2001). Second homes represent about 20 % of all dwellings in Czechia. The outskirts of big cities, river valleys, lake shores, edges of woods, bottom parts of the mountain ranges and higher locations were identified as the major areas for second homes locations. The quality of the environment, access by cars and public transport, infrastructure, and services play significant roles as well. About one quarter of second homes are located in the Central Bohemian recreational region, followed by the Krkonoše and Jizerské hory Mts., the Plzeň hinterland (6 %) and Brno region and the Beskydy Mts. (3 %). Recreational commuting covers a very significant part of spatial population mobility and carries strong demands to the quality of the transport network, even with its frequent use and periodicity with more than 1.5 mil people taking part.

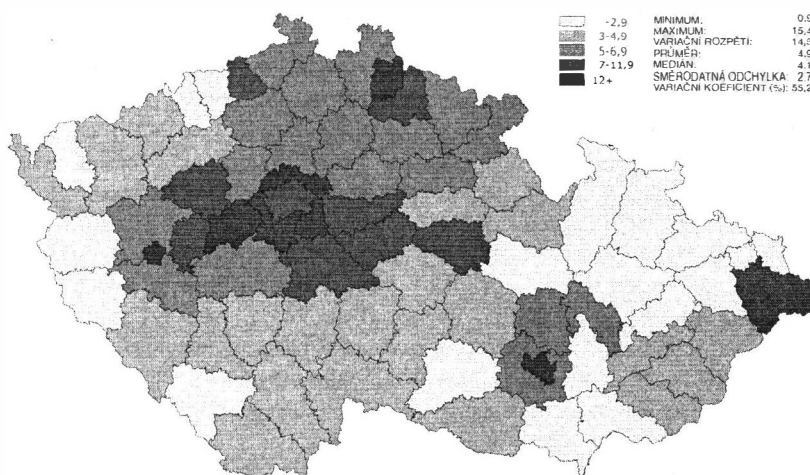


Figure 1 Density of second homes (by districts). Source: Fialová, 2000

3. SECOND HOUSING IN SLOVAKIA

When comparing the situation in Slovakia after Census 1991 (Kučera, 1992) 47,600 individual recreation houses were put into evidence, 47 % of cabins and recreational houses and the rest of cottages primarily used for non-recreational purposes. 88,000 household units, however, admitted ownership or regular use of a weekend house. Estimation methods used for Czechia would show in case of Slovakia at least 75 – 80,000 second homes, which was proved also by Otrubová (1996) or at a map in the Atlas of Landscape SR 2002. Research on mobility of urban and suburban population was conducted by Ira (1999), in line with the perception of second housing as a spatial and hierarchical diffusive process (Hägerstrand, 1967), which can influence at local development (cf. Müller, 2004).

Generally lower extensity and intensity of second housing movement in Slovakia, even despite of large areas with big recreational activity, could be possibly explained by shortage of deeper tradition (e. g. tramping), lower share of urban population in earlier

periods of the 20th century but higher part of population dwelling in family houses etc. General factors for second housing ownership, also focused on increasing importance of subjective factors, are discussed by Jaakson 1986. (Central European specifics taken into account cf. Vágner, 2003.) The non-central location of Bratislava, shape and accessibility throughout Slovakia (narrow valleys, peripheral regions), lower ownership of private cars in history and other aspects should be taken into consideration as well. For more detailed explanation see Mariot (1976) and Otrubová (1980).

4. FIELD AND QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Research of second housing at the micro-level is not possible using only official statistical data because this type of information does not usually reflect an up-to-date number of second homes, their state, second housing activities and does not provide detailed information about owners and users. Field research is essential, joined with standardized questionnaire survey which gives the ability to make quantification and referred conclusions. The structure of the questionnaire consists of questions that make possible a quite complex second housing survey. The questionnaires were filled out during a series of interviews conducted by trained personnel. The selection of model regions (Figure 2) responded to the territorial activity range of participant regional universities (Table 1.) and, in an exact way, on the basis of absolute and relative data (number, density, share of second homes at the cadastre unit level). The respondents at the units were chosen by random selection. The first stage of sorting was analyzed to get the distribution of the values and find prevailing trends.

Table 1 Participant universities and model regions

University – Geography department	Model region	Survey Term	% share of respondents
UK PřF KSGRR Praha	1 Central Bohemia	1991 – 1999	(25,4)
	All Bohemian regions	2001	7.3
	2 Kokofínsko	2002	3.3
	3 Kutnohorsko	2002	2.3
JČU PF KG, ZF KMI České Budějovice	4 South Bohemia (Třeboňsko)	1997 – 2001	3.5
		2001	7.1
ZČU PF KG Plzeň	5 Plzeňsko	2001 – 2002	7.7
UJEP PF KG Ústí nad Labem	6 Ústecko	2001 – 2002	5.9
TU PF KG Liberec	7 Liberecko	2001 – 2002	2.2
MU PřF GU Brno	8 Brněnsko	2001 – 2002	4
UP PřF KG Olomouc	11 Olomoucko	2001	9.7
	12 Prostějovsko	2001	9.2
	9 Jičínsko	2002	4.3
	10 Chrudimsko	2002	5.6
	13 Jeseníky	2001 – 2002	7.0
OU PřF KSGRR Ostrava	14 Beskydy	2001 – 2002	20.9

4,153 questionnaires (1.1 % of second homes in Czechia) were analyzed altogether with about 2/3 in the framework of the last project (2001 – 2003). The rest were done during the 1990s in the Prague environs by researchers and students of Charles University. Both groups of results made possible a comparison of trends in the first

decade after the changes of political, economic and social conditions, and in the first years of the new millennium. The regional differentiation was analyzed with data obtained by regional universities surveys.

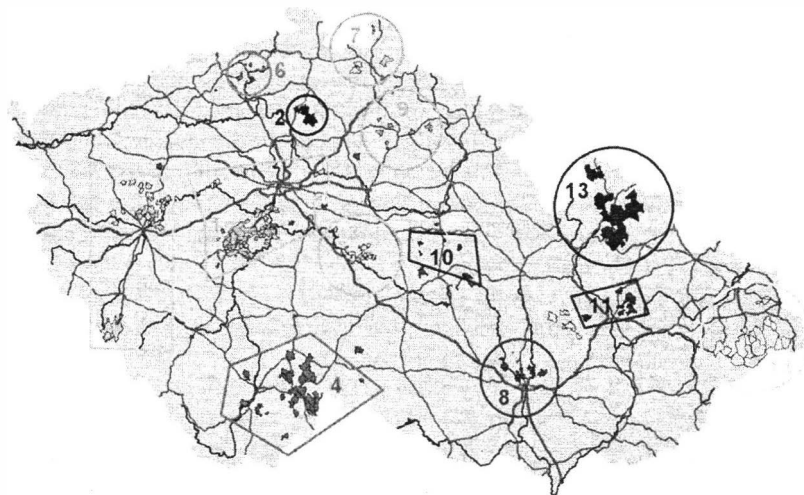


Figure 2 Model regions with field and questionnaire surveys. Source: Vágner, Fialová et al. 2004

5. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS

Second housing after 1989 began another significant phase of its evolution. Former periods were characterized with quantitative changes and permanent growth in numbers of second homes above all (WW II as an exception):

- ♦ Pre-war recreation of the most wealthy people as a component of early suburbanization of the biggest cities and, on the other side, rise of tramping log-cabins as a specific root
- ♦ Post-war cottage-style second housing due to abandonment of the rural countryside; partly as a result of expelled Germans, not only from border regions, but also due to industrialization, urbanization, and later demographic growing age of rural areas
- ♦ The biggest boom of second housing and concentrations of cabins in the 1970s and first part of the 1980s due, mainly, to limited possibilities for self-realization and traveling in the totalitarian normalization period

General results in long-term research from the last decade of the 20 century and the start of the third millennium seem to be characterized by the following:

- ♦ Stagnation in the total number of second homes and their new constructions (with some regional exceptions)
- ♦ The development was determined, mostly, with qualitative changes of recreation and with transforming second homes functions – probable, in perspective, as a continuing trend and with an increasing amount of changes

- ◆ New qualitative changes are spread similarly to previous quantitative trends, mostly with hierarchical and spatial diffusion; social diffusion has been rising up on the contrary to previous social equalization of second housing processes.

Some partial aspects have been clearly regionally differentiated (construction of new recreational houses); other aspects, following, may be considered crucial for the perspective development of second housing in Czechia as a whole:

- ◆ Regarding the differences among cabins, recreational houses and cottages: the present average second home covers a 70 m² built-up area situated on a 1000 m² plot; furnished with 5 beds; occupied by 5 – 6 members of mostly two generations with prevailing seniors and adults – 2/3 higher educated; the second home has been used for 30 years; 2/3 of them are located within 30 km of the residential address
- ◆ Continuous spatial diffusion of second housing to more distant and peripheral regions (western border, Vysočina region etc.)
- ◆ Perspective internationalization of second housing – purchases, renting or time-sparing in the Mediterranean, the Alps etc; interest of foreigners in use of second houses in Czechia (also new constructions see Figure 3).



Figure 3 New recreational houses in the style of old cottages built by Dutch investors for Dutch clients (Čistá v Podkrkonoší). Photo: J. Vorel 2004

- ◆ Almost 1/5 of owners seriously consider a transformation to permanent living; this process has already been realized or the homes are exploited all over warm season (housing situation in big cities – substitution to multi-generation households, possible earnings from renting the flat). These trends have been growing since the early 1990s.
- ◆ 60 % of owners do not expel the possibility of permanent living in the future, especially if the house is well furnished with at least basic infrastructure and good access. These perspective trends have also been growing in the last decade.

- ♦ The last decade can also be featured with a clear increase of owners (up to 20 %) who do not refuse future commercial exploitation of second home – transformation to a tourist facility, renting, and sale.
- ♦ Increasing taxes of second homes and plots.
- ♦ Lower level of education corresponds with increasing age of the owners. The later recreational region the higher the social selection of the owners (later boom in highly industrialized regions, luxurious summer villas in the most attractive and accessible hinterland of the biggest agglomerations). The economically weaker and more peripheral region the bigger interest in transformation to commercial exploitation.
- ♦ The older recreational region the less interest of young generations in perspectives on threats of degradation in the area. Young people prefer regions with a wide choice of leisure, sport, and seasonal activities. The hierarchically more developed areas have less of an interest in multi-generation exploitation and are more likely change to permanent living due to good infrastructure and access. Localities with a higher share of seniors and a low interest from younger generations can face degradation and destruction.
- ♦ The smaller centre, the closer the recreational hinterland, the higher the share of cabins, smaller plots, younger owners, similarity to recreation and activities in garden plot localities, and one day recreation. In perspectives increasing share of cottages also in close hinterland because of abandoning of the space and possible return to the address of ancestors through recreational activities at first, however with perspective permanent living (deurbanization trends)

6. CONCLUSION

The Project 2001 – 2003 (Vágner, Fialová et al., 2004) attempted to form some general conclusions from long-term research on second housing. The evolution of the phenomenon was discussed thoroughly with a focus on tramping activities. Less attention was paid to summer villas in the beginning of the 20th c. and tramping movements after the Second World War. Some eras of the evolution of cottage activities offer a chance for more detailed research possibly using deeper sociological, economic, and ecological approaches. Joining activities can be seen in surveys of garden allotment recreation. Also, the problem of legislation and taxation should be tackled with the assistance of research experts. Research on the function of suburban areas in co-ordinance with housing policy seems to be especially essential and should be reflected in master and strategic planning. Commercialization of the second homes market became a significant trend. Promotion of renting, time-sharing and sales, transformation towards tourist facilities, destruction of the articulated tourism system, construction of new second houses, and internationalization of the market could be topics for other research. A general theoretical and methodological base for second housing research is still quite weak and should be oriented towards the evolution of lifestyle and leisure patterns using behavioral principles. The architects could participate in occupancy surveys; references to master planning legislation, delimitation of the recreational potential, chances are wide open for land use research. Field surveys should be enriched by tightening the collaboration between self government, entrepreneurs and other subjects.

While regional specifics tried to be pointed out, the quantitative and qualitative proportion could be worked out more properly. The Prague recreational hinterland has been surveyed thoroughly in last decades; however, spatial diffusion to more faraway areas out of central Bohemia could be examined. Lipno and Šumava areas seem to be model regions for internationalization and commercialization of second housing as well as the neglected Western Bohemian border regions and Krušné hory Mts. Research on the vast recreational area in the Vysočina Region would also be of great interest due to a mixture of sources from different core regions. Brno region would deserve deeper research in a broader hinterland as well – Podyjí region, Eastern and Southeastern Moravia with Zlín hinterland. Comparisons with trends in Slovakia would be fruitful and border regions cooperation (Ostravsko vs. Katowice environs) could verify the effects of EU subsidizing funds. International comparisons have shown a necessity for an interest in the role of municipalities, environmental planning, focus on foreign clients, and time-sharing.

GIS and remote sensing methods could verify real numbers of second homes in the landscape with possible correlations to other strata. Land use databases should enlarge landscape approaches. A very detailed typology of cabins in South Bohemia could be verified in other regions and enriched with cottage typology. Indexes of recreativeness could be used for other tourist forms as well. A bigger emphasis on the structural characteristics of recreants and generations approaches would reflect global trends. Coexistence of recreants, tourists, and residents could become an important topic for sociological surveys. ČÚZK data would give the ability to find out addresses of the second home owners and analyze the commuting process in regional detail. The shift from general quantitative analyzes towards partial deep model qualitative surveys is clear due to lack of data.

Interdisciplinary approaches seem to be essential, with an emphasis on applied landscape science and the commercialization of space. Despite the transformation of second housing in Czechia during the last 15 years, which became a new phase of the evolution, supposition about a significant decrease of second housing due to the rise of new leisure and other activities was not confirmed. Second housing seems to be a firm component of lifestyle and value system of Czechs regardless to the changes in political, economic, and social systems.

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Nové trendy v druhém bydlení v Česku

Resume

Příspěvek podává v úvodních částech základní informace o druhém bydlení – individuální krátkodobé rekreaci obyvatel v Česku se zaměřením na jeho strukturu a rozmístění. Je podána krátká charakteristika historie výzkumů i základní srovnání se situací na Slovensku. Empirická část seznamuje s terénním a dotazníkovým výzkumem regionální diferenciace jevu v modelových oblastech celého Česka a vyúsťuje v pokus o typologii oblastí druhého bydlení a v obecnější závěry o hlavních aktuálních trendech a perspektivách.

Všeobecné výsledky dlouhodobého výzkumu v posledním desetiletí 20. století a na začátku třetího milénia poukazují na následující charakteristiky:

- ♦ vývoj celkového počtu a výstavba nových objektů druhého bydlení stagnuje (s některými regionálními specifikacemi),
- ♦ vývoj byl ovlivněn především kvalitativními změnami v rekreaci a přeměnou funkce objektů druhého bydlení – pravděpodobně se jedná o perspektivní pokračující trend s nárůstem objemu takovýchto přeměn,
- ♦ kvalitativní změny jsou rozloženy podobně předcházejícím kvantitativním trendem, s hierarchickou a prostorovou difuzí; v protikladě k předešlé sociální ekvalizaci procesů druhého bydlení byl zaznamenán vzestup sociální difuze.

Příspěvek využívá výsledky projektu, podpořeného GAČR č. 403/01/0726 „Regionální diferenciace druhého bydlení v ČR a vztah k jiným formám cestovního ruchu“. Další výzkum v této oblasti je podpořen i prostřednictvím Výzkumného záměru MSM 0021620831 „Geografické systémy a rizikové procesy v kontextu globálních změn a evropské integrace“.