



Swiss second-home owners' intentions of changing housing patterns

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Abstract

For several decades, second homes have gained popularity across Europe. For various socio-economic reasons, it is important to understand the factors prompting owners to migrate to the destination area or preventing them from doing so. Discussions about “home” and “migration” here consider the emerging explanatory opportunities brought about by the “new mobility paradigm”. The purpose of this work is to examine whether second-home owners are prone to switch their housing pattern, hence permanently move to their second home, or to maintain the status quo, following a more flexible lifestyle by using both homes. An empirical investigation aimed at identifying the key factors fostering second-home owners' intentions of future relocation to a holiday destination is proposed. Individual observations were collected through a survey posted to second-home owners in the Lake Maggiore region (Southern Switzerland). Results show that most of the second-home owners are happy to continue their current flexible housing patterns and enjoy the best of both homes, rather than opting for permanent relocation. This study also demonstrates the importance of the owner's socio-demographic and psychological traits, as well as objective and subjective host-community characteristics, in explaining individuals' future housing intentions.

Keywords: second-home owners; mobility intentions; new mobility paradigm; push-pull factors; place attachment; Southern Switzerland

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1. Introduction

At present, second homes form a very important element in both the housing and tourism markets. This housing segment has a long and established tradition in some destinations, while in others it has gained a popularity only in more recent decades, such that one may talk about “endemic” and “epidemic” countries in this respect (Gallent et al., 2016). Second homes represent a form of investment, the rationale for which may be capital accumulation and/or the creation of a solid asset to be passed on as inheritance.

At the same time, they are traditionally considered as leisure accommodation, and their utilisation generally coincides with spare-time, weekend, vacation and holiday purposes. As a result, in most migration studies, their owners are considered as seasonal, temporary or lifestyle migrants. That said, a very peculiar aspect characterising second housing is its link to the owner's decision concerning a future (actual or potential) permanent relocation to the second-home destination area. It is common sense to see

second-home owners as potential retirement, amenity (Novotná et al., 2013) or return migrants (if they come back to their rural roots and homeland areas). In this sense, Rodriguez (2001, p. 53) points out that “an important issue for many mobile elderly people is the choice between visiting and settling in an area, in other words, between being tourists or residents”. More generally, previous studies in the field of migration have conceptualised the relationship between tourism and later life relocation by analysing their potential complementary role (Truly, 2002). This reciprocal relationship seems to be even more obvious when second-home ownership is involved.

Despite discussions about “home” and “migrations” framed in a long-standing theory of “sedentism” or the “place-fixed paradigm of the modern age” (Rolshoven, 2007), studies on migration inevitably need to take into account the fact that recent decades have witnessed a tremendous change in the pace, scale and patterns of spatial mobilities across the globe (McIntyre, 2006). As stated by Halfacree (2011,

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p. 146): “... humanity has entered an ‘age of mobility’ or ‘era of mobilities’”. These changes have been conceptualised in various disciplines (Turner, 2007). Although extensively debated and tested (Randell, 2018), one which has recently gained much attention in this respect is the “New Mobility Paradigm” (NMP), conceived and proposed by Sheller and Urry (2006).

Even though there are societies or communities that remain relatively immobile (Hall, 2005), the NMP has gained much popularity among academic researchers in explaining contemporary spatial mobility, also with respect to travel and tourism (Hannam et al., 2014), including second-home tourism (Halfacree, 2011). Thus, continuous mobility (without privileging stability and fixed locations (Adey, 2010)), has become central for structuring people’s lives and spatial movements in a global society. As some researchers note, however, “it does not mean that place and location no longer matter, as ‘stillness’ and ‘stuckness’ remain important experiences” (Cresswell, 2012: based on Coulter et al., 2016, p. 358), which are of importance for certain administrative practices concerning payment of local taxes, voting in local elections and supplying public statistics authorities with data. As a result, mobility is to be recognised in regard to various forms of place, stopping, stillness and relative immobility, all of which are enabled by or enable mobilities (Cresswell, 2010).

In summary, traditional approaches in migration studies continue to recognise primary and secondary residences, along with the one-off and definitive relocations of population as meaningful categories. On the contrary, the NMP acknowledges the phenomenological dimensions of being at home and being on the move, as well as the spatial consequences of such emotional anchoring, claiming that the distinction between the previous categories has become increasingly obsolete and thus, of limited capacity to explain the current nature of second-home mobilities. It is, however, even more complex, seeing that the owner’s desire for a permanent relocation or the need to keep following an “intertwining” housing pattern, are also shaped by individual’s feelings and emotions. Among them, the owners’ affections for their dwelling and location, usually intended as a mixture of the physical dimensions of places and social relationships (Stedman, 2006), framed by the social construct of place attachment, are of importance.

In light of the above, the purpose of this work is to examine whether the second-home owners – in their declarations – are prone to follow their housing patterns, recognising the fixed and dichotomous categories of “permanent” and “second” homes, or are more likely to keep the status quo, which means to follow a more flexible and mobile lifestyle by using both homes and having “the best of both places”. Consequently, the research also needs to identify factors that, on one hand, prompt second-home owners to declare a definitive relocation or, on the other hand, to continue the more flexible housing pattern whose core is to have a stake in each home and to make the most of these two lives. Thus, we aim to contribute to the discussion regarding the relationship between home(s) and mobility strategies, focusing on the owners’ psychological traits and their influence on intentions to settle down for good in the holiday

dwelling (Oigenblick and Kirschenbaum, 2002), or to follow a more flexible housing pattern. In a general sense, the goal is to investigate the explanatory power and capacity of the traditional migratory approach and the NMP, with respect to the second-home owner’s mobility (stated) actions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Home and away

Recent perspectives on spatial mobility demonstrate a more complex image of present-day relationship constellations of accepted concepts: ‘home’ and ‘away’; ‘migration’ and ‘tourism’; as well as of ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ residence (Cohen et al., 2015), in which the continuity, fluidity and blurring of the notions and meanings prevail over their permanence, distinctiveness and discreteness (Halfacree, 2011). Shifting the emphasis from statics and constancy (representative for most of the migration studies) towards the mobilities quintessential for NMP, has raised questions and encouraged debate on how to reconsider the basic notions of place, home, living and attachment (Harrison, 2017). Consequently, it has also contributed to a discussion on how to define new mobility phenomena, such as ‘multi-local’ living, in technical terms (by using minimum length of stay, for instance: Duchêne-Lacroix et al., 2013). In addition to the increasingly problematic clear-cut dichotomy between ‘home’ and ‘away’ (Stedman, 2006), largely destabilised by voluntary mobile lifestyles (Cohen et al., 2015) and the complexity of the owners’ life-course (McHugh, 2000), the idea that ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ residences represent distinct worlds is also no longer valid and thus, untenable (Paris, 2009). Besides the NMP assumptions and features, research so far has also successfully challenged and thus undermined the conventional dwelling hierarchy of the ‘primary’ and the ‘second’ home (McHugh, 2000). According to Stedman: “second homes hardly appear to be ‘second’” (2006, p. 142). This has been demonstrated by empirical data on how the second-home owners create identity, what ‘home’ means to them and, finally, how they conduct themselves while at the cottage and at the ‘first’ home (Lewicka, 2011).

Generally, most second-home owners are urban dwellers (Müller, 2013). Hence, second-home ownership has traditionally been considered as a response to disadvantages of urban living or as an escape from stress, compulsive work, routine and alienated employment (Perkins and Thorns, 2006) to a site where “life is lived differently” or as an “escape from modern life ... to seek refuge in nature” (Williams and Kaltenborn, 1999, p. 222)¹. Although the escape itself is often the negation of the primary home experience, the desire to escape constitutes a common theoretical construct when interpreting the second-home ownership (Williams and Kaltenborn, 1999). Since the countryside is usually a natural amenity-rich area, it furnishes the visitors with contrasting environmental characteristics compared to urban attributes (Nagatomo, 2014). Among the attributes, one can mention the landscape and its constitutive category of the “mountain”, which is always relevant for the Alpine context and, at the same time, has been shown to be an important explanatory factor for residential mobility patterns and daily, leisure

¹ In light of the latest events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, one may observe new functions of second- and holiday-homes. The dwellings are not considered as an escape from work anymore, rather they become an alternate workplace or, on the other hand, an opportunity to take refuge away from the owners’ urban neighbours and the difficulties of urban living amid COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (Gallent, 2020).

practices of the Swiss people (Petite, 2014). Consequently, the countryside with the less 'thin' landscape, simplicity and authenticity (Perkins and Thorns, 2006) provides owners with solid comparative advantages and suitable conditions for new lifestyles, routines and an acceptable pace of life. In other words, the escape is to finally feel at home, and thus, according to Crouch: "escape becomes an escape for home, not just from home" (1994, p. 96).

The notion of 'escape', however, may be represented as a continuum of experiences from 'home' to 'away', rather than polar opposites or simply representing the notion of escape as an endpoint (McIntyre et al., 2006). 'Primary' and the 'second' homes function in a dialectical relationship and their meanings are not just closely intertwined by but also co-created by each other (Perkins and Thorns, 2006). The daily practices in both settings are much the same, so that they may petrify the roles and actions undertaken on a daily basis at the 'primary' home. As these authors have stressed – even in terms of equipment, facilities and architectural style – almost everything associated with the primary home today can be found in the second home.

Other studies, however, have shown a rather clear division and differentiation between the activities conducted in the 'primary' and the 'second' home, with the former dominated by maintenance, leisure and building projects, while the latter comprised of leisure, volunteer work and personal development projects (McIntyre et al., 2006). Hence, the 'second' home supplies the owners with the "aspects or dimensions of lifestyle that are not offered in [the] primary home or 'ordinary' life" (Bjerke et al., 2006, p. 88). In other words, the view has become widespread that second-home owners leave their primary residences in order to lead a different life during the holidays, and after satisfying their needs in this respect they "flee" back from second homes to a more demanding and stimulating life for the rest of the time (Halfacree, 2011). Hence, primary and secondary homes are essentially complementary and mutually reinforcing (McIntyre et al., 2006), so that second-home ownership is "an act of connecting rather than an act of distancing" (Rolshoven, 2007, p. 17).

This explains why the previously common view of the home as rooted in one place has been increasingly outdated. On the contrary, under the NMP, the 'geographically elastic' nature of home is recognised (McHugh and Mings, 1996, p. 530), with the suggestion to academics on relaxing assumptions about the importance of a single, fixed residence (McHugh et al., 1995). It has also been echoed in other studies, including those carried out in Switzerland, that home is not necessarily where one physically or legally resides and that for individuals whose mobilities have moored them in multiple places, one place might not take primacy over another as 'home' (Duchêne-Lacroix et al., 2013). 'Home' might be somewhere in-between on the 'primary' → 'second' → 'third' → n-th home continuum, or in each of those (as people can feel "at home" in more than one place': Quinn, 2004) or even grasped by taking those places all together, demonstrating multilocality as a way of life (Rolshoven, 2007) or the so-called 'home-on-the-move' (Germann Molz, 2008).

2.2 Towards permanent re-location or hetero-localism?

The decision-making process is always influenced by personal attributes, as well as environmental and cultural traits that may hinder permanent relocation. These factors were conceptualised and incorporated as the 'intervening

obstacles' to the push-pull model of migration by Lee (1966). As expected, personal attributes act as a mediator to the pros and cons of the individual's intention and ability to relocate and, consequently, the actual move. What needs to be stressed in the context of the geographical setting of this study, however, are policies and regulations and their decisive role as institutional 'intervening obstacles' in limiting the number and the concentration of newly-built holiday homes in rural Switzerland (Schuler and Dessemontet, 2013). Even though some researchers have pointed out the divergences between policy makers and tourism officials in this respect (Clivaz, 2013), a new law, resulting from the so-called Weber initiative, has been implemented into existence. It has imposed real cuts to the spatial expansion of residential tourism and therefore, keeping the growth of newly-built holiday homes in a policy-cap proportion (not exceeding 20% of holiday homes in the municipality's total number of housing resources). As a result, it has streamlined the actions of local and regional tourism marketers from "construction tourism" to "operating tourism" (Clivaz, 2013).

In many countries, second-home owners are usually retired people or those preparing for retirement (Novotná et al., 2013; Norris and Winston, 2009). Thus, their intention to move permanently to the second home can be seen as an exemplification of retirement migration. While being of pre-retirement or early retirement age, individuals have usually accumulated wealth, a combination of various income sources, spare time and "empty nests" – which constitute a solid base for choosing their future place to live independently. Also, given the growing rentier economy under recent low interest rate regimes and property booms in some major cities (Dellepiane et al., 2013), there is a strong incentive for some retirees to capitalise their urban housing assets, up-grade a second home and have a guaranteed pension/income to spend on high-quality life in peaceful and appealing surroundings. Such a combination may result in a "retirement transition" (Bures, 1997), and be reflected in the intention to change the housing strategy.

As stressed for elderly owners, the end of a professional career and weakening work bonds can trigger a definitive move-in to the previously seasonal location (Novotná et al., 2013). With age, declining health and/or other events (e.g. death of a spouse), however, becoming more commonplace, they may act as obstacles for potential housing adjustments (Marjavaara and Lundholm, 2016). As such, these changes might require living rather in urban locations or looking for leisure places with accessible high-quality public services. For younger people, economic factors (e.g. weaknesses of the local labour market) may definitely act as a considerable intervening factor. Thus, the "environmental supportiveness" (Sugiyama and Ward Thompson, 2007) reflecting the local context attributes and constituting "the extent to which environmental constraints and possibilities guide individual and collective decisions to migrate" (Bell et al., 2010, p. 7), largely interfere with the individual's intention to move.

There is a perception that individuals with numerous mobility events in their biographies are more likely to move into second homes on a permanent basis in the future. Previous studies have demonstrated their flexibility and adaptive capacity while also confirming less potential to develop a strong attachment to just one place (Longino Jr. et al., 2002). This logic has also been stressed when pointing out the occurrence of "functional linkages between tourist flows and permanent migration" (Bell and Ward, 2000),

as well as the interdependency between various forms of mobility, especially between temporary mobility and the following permanent migration (Hall and Williams, 2002). This relationship is reflected in a technical adjustment of the secondary into permanent residence, which can be planned far in advance or even seen as a long-term housing strategy, including property acquisition and its consecutive conversion as a part of it after the owner's retirement (Stergiou et al., 2016). Other studies contradict this idea, however, suggesting that "it does not imply that second-home ownership is necessarily a developmental stage between a visitor and permanent resident" (Stedman, 2006, p. 132).

The most recent contribution to this discussion has shown that second-home ownership may significantly influence the location of the new home, since the decision for relocation targets the second-home property rather than changing a permanent dwelling (Marjavaara and Lundholm, 2016, p. 238). At the same time, this relationship is considerably moderated by the second-home location, considered both in terms of distance to the previous home and the characteristics of the place with respect to natural and social amenities (Overvåg, 2011). Other authors have argued that, given the younger generation is more mobile and tends to travel more to different leisure locations than the older generation, the predictions on future moves to the second home may be rather pessimistic (Pitkänen et al., 2014).

It is likely, however, that this discussion might not be fully appropriate in explaining the mobility patterns of the increasingly common group of owners who are 'on the move'. Intriguingly, for most owners the idea of possessing two homes and sharing time between them is more valuable and constitutes the very heart of ownership to the extent that only a minority convert their holiday homes into primary homes (Perkins and Thorns, 2006). The authors have explained this ownership pattern by arguing that the second-home owners "wish only to have a temporary escape, knowing, as do those who have only a primary home, that the wider world of work and engagement with family, friends, economy and society is a fundamentally important and necessary part of life" (Perkins and Thorns, 2006, p. 80). To confirm this trend, it has been discovered that despite the intention to move permanently to the holiday home, this goal very often does not lead to an actual move (Hogan and Steinnes, 1993). Altogether, one might expect that a majority of second-home owners do not want and in fact do not need to decide on a permanent move. Thus, they demonstrate a lifestyle whose core is to have a stake in each home and to enjoy most of the two lives in certain times and certain places. This housing strategy echoes throughout the varied accounts of place attachment, as discussed below.

2.3 Place attachment

Attachment to a place is, in general, defined as a strong, long-lasting affective and identity bond that people develop in relation to a specific place (Bernardo and Palma-Oliveira, 2013), which occurs regardless of the objective qualities of the place (Debenedetti and Oppewal, 2009). It is highly dependent upon individual experiences and emotions (Scannell and Gifford, 2010), thus, being a multidimensional concept rather than a simple cause-effect relationship (Lewicka, 2011).

Although the place attachment has been examined in second-home research (Stedman, 2006), less attention has been paid to the issue with regard to the changing character of individual spatial mobility. This also stems

from the common view on relatively weak affective bonds with place among mobile individuals (Cuba and Hummon, 1993), confronted with the general reluctance towards further re-location among those expressing strong place attachment (Tuulentie and Heimtun, 2014). Since "modernity has changed society to a state of great mobility where people have social networks beyond their local area" (Aronsson, 2004, p. 75), however, the notion of a second home presupposes sharing place attachment in two or more (multiple) distinct locations: permanent and holiday home(s) (Wildish et al., 2016).

According to Stedman (2006), despite the notion that 'escape' is at the core of the holiday-home owners' practices and meanings, these are hardly ever of a radically consumerist nature. Hence, in this respect, the second-home owners share many characteristics with permanent residents, e.g. a degree of place attachment which only slightly differs from that of the locals (Müller, 2011). Then, as stressed by McHugh et al., the "recurrent mobility between multiple residences is often an expression of established place ties" (1995, p. 254). Furthermore, some authors argue that place attachment among the second-home owners may exhibit even higher levels than that of permanent residents (Pitkänen et al., 2011), while some other findings support the idea that even repeat visitors cannot establish a strong sense of place unless they choose to make the location their permanent home (Stedman, 2006).

Again, referring to the above-discussed 'home' and 'away' dichotomy, and especially to the individual's yearning for a 'real' home, earlier studies have shown that owners establish strong attachments with their holiday homes, as well as with the places in which they are situated (Perkins and Thorns, 2006). It is acknowledged that place attachment is largely associated with the owners' search for stability in a fluid world, thus, considered as a substantive opportunity to create a 'real home' and form a sense of (local) community (Perkins and Thorns, 2006). Consequently, mobility within the NMP is an inclusive construct that takes into account other places or homes in the context of place attachment. It has been also argued that mobility itself "may increase the potential for abstraction and reflexivity thus, allowing appreciation of particular places and providing more options" (Stedman, 2006, p. 132), and as a result it may foster greater attachment because people can choose places that best suit them (Stedman, 2006).

There are, however, certain owners' characteristics, as well as their conduct and practices at the second home that have been shown to be important determinants of place attachment, e.g. the length of stay. Owners who stay for a relatively long time at the holiday home over the year, have shown an equal perception of the second-home setting as local residents (Stedman, 2006). Furthermore, in the pre-retirement period, the owners have numerous opportunities to establish emotional linkages with the place, being more familiar with it and understanding the rhythms and routines of life on site (Longino Jr. et al., 2002). It has been demonstrated that the highest dynamics of place attachment are in the first years of residence (Lewicka, 2011), suggesting the consolidation role of time in forming the affective bond in later stages of ownership. The important role of the time factor (e.g. length of stay and number of visits) in shaping residents' and visitor's place attachment was also stressed by others (Stober et al., 2018). Then, this sense of place is also due to the owners' sense of happiness on site, seeing that the meaning-making process of place attachment

unfolds through active use, involvement with a place (Kaltenborn, 1997, p. 196), and the accumulation of everyday experiences and practices (Tuan, 1977).

On the other hand, Norwegian owners' gender and age played a role as place attachment determinants, with young and elder female owners who developed stronger ties with the local community (Kaltenborn, 1997), when compared to their male counterparts. In the same study, the family status, number of home-users and the type of built environment in the 'permanent' place of living, had no significant effect on place attachment. But the owners who had their holiday homes inside the municipality where they lived permanently, expressed a slightly greater attachment to the place than those who lived outside the area (Kaltenborn, 1997). Hence, it seems that there are some other factors negotiating the role of the distance from the 'primary' to the 'second' home in this respect.

In addition, past events in an individual's life-course such as rural roots, previous links to the destination area and second-home ownership itself, have proved to be influential not just in the relocation decision but also in considering the future destination (Müller and Marjavaara, 2012). In this context, strong place attachment induces a more spatially-focused pattern of relocations among returning and/or retired migrants. The returning travellers tend to flow to the immediate environs of a community, where they still have strong affective and cognitive attachments (Li and McKercher, 2016). Interestingly, however, strong attachment to the place and the local social network can be enhanced by more tangible factors, such as the household income (Han and Kim, 2017).

3. Theoretical framework and empirical strategy

3.1 Behavioural assumptions

The second-home owner's intentions to move or to continue combining the best of both worlds, can be represented by a complex interaction between several components. In this work, according to the push-pull concept, it is hypothesised that individuals' intended behaviour is determined by a mix of three sets of factors: contextual factors; individual observable characteristics; and intervening factors. The context is designed as the second-home- and destination-related characteristics (e.g. location and dwelling typology) representing the objective situation the owner refers to when considering the opportunity to relocate. An individual's observable characteristics are the socio-demographic variables (e.g. gender and age), the role of which is to capture observable heterogeneity in behaviour. In this work, the intervening factors are conceptualised as individual psychological characteristics (such as personality, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, emotions and values), that are supposed to be contributing to determining individual choices (Morikawa et al., 2002). The inclusion of the latter factors enriches the analysis in considering individual determinants other than socio-demographic characteristics. In fact, it must be recognised that behaviour and choices are also driven by psychological, emotional and attitudinal mechanisms that are proper to the individual (Walker and Li, 2007). Such components related to the individual's latent sphere cannot be directly observed and have to be properly identified and imputed adopting psychometric data.

Three different latent constructs and their interconnections (the formal definition of which are presented in the next section) are considered in this work:

- a 'pull factor' construct, capturing the subjective perception of the destination's environmental elements to which the home-owner is attracted;
- a 'push factor' construct, collecting the motivations that foster the owners' desire to spend time at their second home; and
- a 'destination attachment' construct, conceptualised as an aggregation of individual feelings concerning ownership satisfaction, membership in the local community and destination enjoyment.

The specificity of our approach lies in the way in which these components relate to an individual's intention to undertake a definitive move: at the first instance in our theoretical model, we hypothesise that push and pull factors are direct determinants of destination attachment. The theoretical assumption here is that push and pull factors are the primary elements characterising the relationship between the individual and the destination, because they represent unfulfilled needs that the individual seeks to satisfy by spending holidays at the second home (Nagatomo, 2014). Meeting those needs generates positive feelings (psychological benefit) that the individual develops towards the destination and enhances the attachment to it (Lewicka, 2011; Scannel and Gifford, 2010). At a lower level, the model considers destination attachment as a direct and positive influence on the decision to relocate on a permanent basis, meaning that individuals showing positive attitudes, emotions and affection (Longino Jr. et al., 2002) towards the leisure destination and the second home itself, are more likely to consider permanent relocation.

The second-home owners' socio-demographic characteristics, as well as the contextual factors, enter the model both as explanatory variables of the intention to relocate and as determinants of the latent constructs. In this sense, the psychological traits are identified with observable variables. The exploration of the specific covariates entering into the model is data-driven and based on econometric estimation, as described in the next section.

3.2 Data and empirical model

3.2.1 Data collection and sample description

The present work builds on a study by the Tourism Observatory (O-Tur) of Ticino Canton in Switzerland (Sarman et al., 2014). The data were collected to explore the second-home phenomenon in the Lake Maggiore region in southern Switzerland (Fig. 1).

In this area, the hotel sector is particularly important for the tourism market, but it is also characterised by a thriving residential tourism segment (the total number of second homes in the region was estimated to be at around 15,000 in 2020). The collected data come from a structured survey conducted in February 2013, with almost 12,000 individuals who owned a second home in the Lake Maggiore region. The survey was sent by post by the local Destination Management Organization (DMO) along with the annual taxation form. Respondents had the opportunity to fill in a paper version of the survey (59.4%), returning it by post or to answer its online version (40.6%). By the end of May 2013, 1,291 questionnaires had been returned, 828 of which have been retained for the purpose of this study. The high amount of discarded observations has two causes: given the low numbers representing non-Swiss residents (15% of respondents), we decided exclusively to consider the Swiss home-owners' data; secondly, many questionnaires were returned with a high share of missing data.



Fig. 1: Map of Canton Ticino and the Lake Maggiore Region (grey area), with its three main municipalities
Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office and authors' elaborations

The original questionnaire covered different aspects of the second-home phenomenon in the region, ranging from owners' habits to feelings towards the dwelling and the region itself. The survey was designed considering the specific interests of the local DMO and following guidelines and examples reported in the literature dedicated to owners' experiences in holiday-home destinations. For the purposes of the present work, we considered only part of the survey questions.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics regarding the sample of second-home owners involved in the survey and the summary statistics regarding their respective second homes. A second home is mostly seen as a vacation property: leisure motivations and the appeal of the destination were the main reasons that led the individuals to buy the dwelling (71.0%). This rationale is reflected by the importance that individuals assign to leisure activities at the destination: second-home owners in the Lake Maggiore region tend to spend time relaxing by themselves at home and by the lake, wandering around towns and villages and hiking in the mountains, as well as enjoying the local food. In fact, hiking trails as well as food-away-from-home are among the most demanded services by this category of users. Also, biking and water sports are regularly pursued by a good share of the population (Sarman et al., 2014). It must be noted that possible ownership reasons in the original survey included the intention to spend retirement at the destination; we removed such observations from our estimation sample to avoid endogeneity issues in the estimation process (circa 6%

of the total number of collected observations). The majority of dwellings are flats (49.6%), followed by detached houses (39.1%) and country cottages (11.2% – the latter are commonly called *rustici* and represent typical dwellings in the region, generally stone-built and located in the valleys). The surveyed municipalities are Locarno, Ascona, Gambarogno, Brissago and Minusio, which are the leading tourism areas in the region.

3.2.2 Empirical model specification

In this article, we adopt a causal model to test our research hypotheses. We apply an Integrated Choice and Latent Variable (ICLV) model in order to assess the role of psychological variables in shaping individual decisions. This approach has been applied in several recent works in various disciplines, such as transport, environmental economics and tourism (Kamargianni et al., 2014; Sarman et al., 2019). In our case, the rationale behind the inclusion of psychological factors is driven by the assumption that the second-home owner's mobility patterns are not only affected by environmental aspects or the owner's socio-demographics, but also by the individual's feelings regarding the seasonal dwelling and the destination itself.

The empirical model is the formal representation of the theoretical framework, thus, the intentions to change (move) or to follow the existing mobility pattern are directly related to a set of variables. The model is based on two components: the main element is a regression model in the form of an ordered logit model adapted to explain the

Gender			Ownership motivation		
male	506	63.50%	inheritance	131	15.80%
female	322	36.50%	investment	27	3.20%
Age			family tradition	45	5.40%
average	60.8		place appeal	589	71.10%
std. dev.	10.4		friends/relatives	30	3.60%
Region of residence			business	6	0.70%
Zurich	282	34.50%	House type		
Central CH	119	13.50%	single house	324	39.10%
North-west CH	174	21.00%	apartment	411	49.60%
Mittelland	98	11.50%	country cottage	93	11.20%
East CH	135	17.00%	House location		
Lake of Geneva	21	2.40%	Locarno	91	11.00%
Marital status			Ascona	107	12.90%
unmarried	51	6.20%	Gambarogno	102	12.30%
married	654	79.00%	Brissago	85	10.20%
divorced	57	6.90%	Minusio	71	8.50%
widowed	59	7.10%	other municipalities	372	44.90%
n.a.	7	0.80%	No. of days spent at destination per year		
Education			average	73.9	
primary school	50	6.00%	Std. dev.	32.7	
middle school	119	14.40%			
secondary school	166	20.00%			
degree	469	56.50%			
n.a.	24	3.00%			
Monthly household income (CHF)					
6,000 or lower	130	15.70%			
6,001–12,000	336	40.60%			
12,001–18,000	150	18.10%			
18,001 or higher	88	10.60%			
n.a.	124	15.00%			

Tab. 1: Individual and second-home descriptive statistics

self-assessed probability of changing the existing housing pattern (dependent variable); the second component is a latent variable model, used to take into account the psychological covariates.

Main component of the model: intention to change the existing housing pattern/arrangement

The explicit indicator representing the dependent variable “change the existing/current housing pattern/arrangement” is the following survey question:

- How likely is it that you will permanently shift your residence to your house in Ticino in the future? (1 = very unlikely, ..., 7 = very likely).

This variable is then related to variables concerning the dwelling and the individual’s socio-demographics and attitudinal constructs. The dependent variable is expressed by ordered levels of likelihood, hence we adopt an ordered logit model to test the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Regarding the latter, after a stepwise

process of non-significant variable elimination, we obtained the best model specification in terms of fit measure. This is formalised as follows:

$$y^* = \beta_1 * TYPE + \beta_2 * \log(DAYS) + \beta_3 * LOCATION + \beta_4 * MOTIVATION + \beta_5 * GENDER + \beta_6 * AGE + \beta_7 * WORK + \beta_8 * ATTACHMENT + \varepsilon$$

in which the β s represent the estimation parameters, while ε is a Gumbel-distributed error term². The explanatory variables are the following (refer to Tab. 1 and Tab. 2 for description):

- TYPE: the type of second home (dwelling type);
- DAYS (taken as natural logarithm): the number of days per year spent by an owner at the second home;
- LOCATION: the municipality the dwelling belongs to;
- MOTIVATION: the motivation for purchasing the property;

² For a general and broad treatment of ordered variables modelling see: Greene and Hensher, 2010.

- GENDER and AGE: the respondent’s gender and age respectively;
- WORK: the respondent’s occupation; and
- ATTACHMENT: the ‘destination attachment’ latent variable.

Second component of the model: latent constructs

The latent variable component of the model is made up of two sets of equations, formally defined as structural and measurement equations. The former relates the latent construct to its determinants, in the same way in which “intention to change the current housing pattern” is related to its covariates. We specify three latent constructs, called “destination attachment”, “push factor” and “pull factor”. Adopting the principle of non-significant variable elimination, the latent constructs are made explicit as follows:

$$ATTACHMENT = \lambda_{ATT1} * LOCATION + \lambda_{ATT2} * REGION + \lambda_{ATT3} * PUSH + \lambda_{ATT4} * PULL + \omega_{ATT}$$

$$PUSH = \lambda_{PUSH1} * AGE + \lambda_{PUSH2} * REGION + \lambda_{PUSH3} * STATUS + \omega_{PUSH}$$

$$PULL = \lambda_{PULL1} * AGE + \lambda_{PULL3} * STATUS + \omega_{PULL}$$

in which:

- REGION: the owner’s Swiss region of permanent residence;
- STATUS: respondent’s marital status;
- PUSH and PULL: “push factor” and “pull factor” latent variables. As explained in the theoretical section, both are hypothesised to be determinants of “destination attachment” and hence, considered as an indirect determinant of intention to move.

The λ s are the parameters to be estimated and the ω s are Gaussian distributed error terms³.

The measurement equations are used to relate the latent variables to a set of indicators represented by survey questions. This formal passage is necessary because, the latent variables cannot be directly observed by the researcher and the only way to include them as independent variables in the model is to infer them adopting a set of indicators (psychographic variables). In particular, the equation

$$I_{k,r} = \theta_{k,r} X_k^* + v_{k,r}$$

expresses the observed indicators $I_{k,r}$ as a function of the k -th latent variable of X_k^* (k marks the specific latent variable, “Push”, “Pull” and “Attachment”), $\theta_{k,r}$ is the latent variable- and indicator-specific parameter to be estimated (r marks

	mean	s.d.
Permanent shift likelihood ¹	3.2	2.1
“Destination attachment” indicators		
ATT1: How much do you feel attached to the region of LMV? ²	6.0	1.0
ATT2: How much do you like the region of LMV as a destination? ²	6.4	0.5
ATT3: How much do you like spending your holidays in the region of LMV? ²	6.0	0.7
ATT4: When you visit LMV region do you feel like a tourist? ³	3.2	1.6
ATT5: How satisfied are you to have a home in the region of LMV? ²	6.3	1.4
ATT6: How is your relationship with your neighbours? ⁴	5.2	0.8
“Pull factors” indicators ²		
PULL1: How much does the opportunity to enjoy a favourable climate influence your decision to go to your home in the region of LMV?	6.2	1.0
PULL2: How much does the opportunity to enjoy landscapes and natural environments influence your decision to go to your home in the region of LMV?	6.4	0.5
PULL3: How much does the opportunity to stay close to nature influence your decision to go to your home in the region of LMV?	6.0	1.2
“Push factors” indicators ²		
PUSH1: How much does the desire to get away from your everyday life influence your decision to go to your home in the region of LMV?	5.8	1.6
PUSH2: How much does the desire to rest influence your decision to go to your home in the region of LMV?	5.4	1.6
PUSH3: How much does the desire to spend more time with your family influence your decision to go to your home in the region of LMV?	4.4	2.0

LMV: Lago Maggiore e Valli

1: 7-point Likert scale: 1 = very unlikely / 7 = very likely

2: 7-point Likert scale: 1 = not at all / 7 = very much

3: 7-point Likert scale: 1 = definitely no / 7 = definitely yes

4: 7-point Likert scale: 1 = very bad / 7 = very good

Tab. 2: Attitudinal indicators descriptive statistics

³ A latent variable is an unobserved object and hence, one cannot know how it is distributed from a probabilistic point of view. Thus, it is common practice in the literature to make the hypothesis that the LV is a continuous variable. From this hypothesis comes the adoption of a normal distribution for the error term. For a general and broad treatment of latent variables modelling see: Walker (2001).

the specific indicator) and $v_{k,r}$ is a Gumbel-distributed error term. In our case, the indicators for the latent constructs are represented by 7-point-Likert-scale items in the survey; given their ordered, non-normal distributed nature, an ordered logit regression is applied to $I_{k,r}$. Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics of the psychographic variables adopted. All the elements of the model converge in the likelihood function, which determines, for a given individual, the joint probability of observing the intention to move and the indicators through which the latent constructs are manifested. The objective function was estimated adopting the maximum simulated likelihood estimation process (Train, 2003).

4. Results and discussion

Table 3 presents the results of the three models: the first is a base model in which no attitudinal constructs are included; in the second we expand the base model including the first layer of latent variables, i.e. the destination attachment construct; and in the third we expand the second specification to include the upper layer in the latent variable dimension, i.e. push and pull factors⁴. Most of the parameters reported in the table relate to categorical variables that must be read with reference to the base category of the variable itself.

4.1 Intention to change the current housing pattern

Owning a single house or a flat in the surveyed region has a positive impact (0.5028) on the intention to move permanently to the second home in the future, compared to owning a country cottage. A possible explanation may be the individual's implicit reluctance to live permanently in the outskirts and the valleys (rustici are commonly located in the countryside and near woods, outside urban centres), or by their preference for urban life and access to public services, which, in the case of the Lake Maggiore region, could be seen as a preference for a location close to the lake, given the proximity of most urban centres to it. Furthermore, it must be considered that the living conditions (in terms of facilities and equipment) in country cottages may not be good enough for year-round stays, and hence, this can be seen as a substantive obstacle. In this regard, the inclusion of the second-home-type variable in the equation of the "destination attachment" construct (see later discussion) was not significant. It means that the influence of the dwelling type operates directly within the intention to change the existing flexible housing pattern, without being mediated by the attitudinal constructs.

The length of stay at the second home (over the year) enhances the intention for a definitive, permanent move (0.4873). This could be interpreted as a sign of affection for the dwelling and the region. It must be considered that southern Switzerland is a very popular destination for Swiss-German residents, given the favourable weather and large number of activities and local events. Our results resemble evidence reported in the literature that the greater the experience at the destination the greater the propensity for a definitive move (Marjavaara and Lundholm, 2016; McHugh, 1990).

As far as the ownership motivation is concerned, we estimated a single parameter, which turned out to be positive and significant (0.3739). People who purchased the

home for the sake of spending free time, for family tradition or because of friends and/or relatives living (permanently or seasonally) in the area, show a greater intention to abandon the current housing pattern and to begin to live permanently in the destination area in the future, if compared to those who inherited or acquired the house for business or investment purposes. This is coherent with some previous studies showing "leisure" and "experience" aspects as particularly important factors in delineating the retirement migration, more than the "family and friends" aspect (Rodriguez et al. 1998). Conversely, McHugh (1990, p. 243) analyses how the "depreciation" of bonds to permanent home (e.g. empty nests and friends moving away) is a push factor towards outmigration, "particularly if [home owners] have family members or close friends living in the seasonal residence".

Concerning the location of the dwelling, the model determined two significant parameters related to specific areas. The first one concerns Locarno, the main municipality in the region: people owning a second home in Locarno are significantly more likely to move in to their residence than those owning a holiday property in any other municipality. The second parameter concerns another municipality, Gambarogno, for which the parameter is negative, meaning that second-home owners express a lower likelihood to move there than to any of the other municipalities in the region. This particular aspect will be elaborated later.

Respondent's gender, age and occupation were found to be significant determinants for the intention to resettle. Female owners stated a lower propensity to change the current mobility pattern (– 0.3514) than men. As far as owner's age, we aggregated the sample of respondents in three different classes, i.e. economic age groups. The parameters related to respondents aged 18–45 and 46–60 must be referenced to the 61+ category: the positive sign and magnitude of parameters (0.8471 and 0.5304) suggest that younger individuals demonstrate higher propensity to move to their second home in the future, and this intention tends to decrease with age. For example, people preparing for retirement or those who have recently retired have already decided on their later life residence. Then, the older they are, the weaker their intention to move elsewhere (Marjavaara and Lundholm, 2016), while, conversely, young individuals have a larger pool of occasions over their lifetime to change their viewpoint. To conclude, no significant results were obtained when considering second-home owners' income.

4.2 Destination attachment latent variable

This construct represents a positive determinant of intention to change the current housing pattern, demonstrating the hypothesis on people's feelings and their role in mobility behaviour. Several interactions between this construct and other model covariates were tested but no significant results were obtained. Determinants of destination attachment are the second-home location and the owner's region of permanent residence. In both models the parameters associated with the Gambarogno area are negative and statistically significant (at 5% in the first and 10% in the second case), implying a negative effect on the latent variable. This result is interesting considering that in the model of intention to move, the parameter is no longer statistically significant at the 10% level, meaning

⁴ Ordered logit regression includes the estimation of peculiar parameters called "thresholds"; these are not reported for the sake of compactness.

	Base		Single LV		Double LV	
Log likelihood 0	– 1,611.214		– 1,611.214		– 1,611.214	
Overall Log likelihood	– 1,482.515		– 8,179.452		– 1,6073.84	
"Intention to move" Log likelihood	– 1,482.515		– 1,482.682		– 1,482.948	
No. of observations	828		828		828	
Parameter	coeff.	t– ratio	coeff.	t– ratio	coeff.	t– ratio
Intention to move						
S-h type: house or apartment	0.5028	2.49	0.4924	2.44	0.4999	2.47
S-h type: country cottage			reference category			
Yearly permanence (logarithm)	0.4873	3.74	0.4273	3.23	0.4218	3.19
S-h location: Locarnese	0.3619	2.59	0.3652	2.61	0.3685	2.63
S-h location: Gambarogno	– 0.3786	– 1.87	– 0.2997	– 1.43	– 0.2912	– 1.39
S-h location: rest of municipalities			reference category			
S-h ownership motivation: place appeal	0.3739	2.33	0.3693	2.28	0.3707	2.28
S-h ownership motivation: inheritance / investment / business			reference category			
Gender: female	– 0.3514	– 2.70	– 0.3962	– 3.01	– 0.4048	– 3.06
Gender: male			reference category			
Age: 18–45 y.o.	0.8471	4.64	0.8250	4.50	0.802	4.36
Age: 46–60 y.o.	0.5304	3.48	0.5084	3.31	0.4926	3.19
Age: 61+ y.o.			reference category			
Working position: independent	0.3515	2.58	0.3559	2.58	0.3567	2.58
Working position: dependent / student			reference category			
Destination attachment	–		0.2551	2.86	0.2376	3.12
Destination attachment: structural parameters						
S-h location: Gambarogno	–		– 0.3723	– 2.65	– 0.2753	– 1.69
S-h location: rest of municipalities	–					
Owner's region of residence: Eastern CH	–		0.1304	1.72	–	
Owner's region of residence: rest of Switzerland	–		reference category			
Pull factor	–		–		0.6244	4.72
Push factor	–		–		0.2412	3.79
Pull factor: structural parameters						
Age: 46–60 y.o.	–		–		0.2386	2.26
Age: 18–45 y.o. / 61+ y.o.	–		reference category			
Marital status: married	–		–		– 0.1898	– 2.85
Marital status: unmarried / divorced / widowed	–		reference category			
Push factor: structural parameters						
Age: 18–45 y.o.	–		–		0.7523	2.75
Age: 46–60 y.o.	–		–		0.5771	5.26
Age: 61+ y.o.	–		reference category			
Owner's region of residence: Zurich	–		–		– 0.1863	– 1.84
Owner's region of residence: rest of Switzerland	–		reference category			
Marital status: married	–		–		– 0.1909	– 2.64
Marital status: unmarried / divorced / widowed	–		reference category			
Destination attachment: measurement parameters						
Place attachment	–		0.6728	9.14	0.5703	11.02
Place attachment (st.dev.)	–		0.8266	22.91	0.8243	24.21
Place appeal	–		0.6449	10.86	0.5214	10.49
Place appeal (st.dev.)	–		0.4896	9.25	0.5173	9.39

..... continuing on the next page

Tab. 3: Model results

	Base	Single LV		Double LV	
<i>.....continuing from previous page.....</i>					
Destination attachment: measurement parameters					
S-h appeal	–	0.5782	7.96	0.4834	8.32
S-h appeal (st.dev.)	–	0.4622	9.57	0.4673	10.64
Feeling tourist	–	– 0.3269	– 4.56	– 0.2745	– 4.45
Feeling tourist (st.dev.)	–	1.5239	44.67	1.5241	44.71
S-h ownership satisfaction	–	0.5287	6.33	0.4483	6.96
S-h ownership satisfaction (st.dev.)	–	1.294	17.06	1.2933	17.04
Neighbours relationship	–	0.2424	3.90	0.202	4.11
Neighbours relationship (st.dev.)	–	1.1998	30.24	1.2003	30.67
Pull factor: measurement parameters					
Favorable climate	–	–	–	0.6884	6.77
Favorable climate (st.dev.)	–	–	–	0.9151	20.86
Scenary and natural landscape	–	–	–	0.9653	9.54
Scenary and natural landscape (st.dev.)	–	–	–	0.5423	16.78
Stay close to nature	–	–	–	1.1977	10.54
Stay close to nature (st.dev.)	–	–	–	0.7844	13.71
Push factor: measurement parameters					
Desire to get away from everyday life	–	–	–	0.965	14.59
Desire to get away from everyday life (st.dev.)	–	–	–	1.2564	23.55
Desire to rest	–	–	–	1.109	15.72
Desire to rest (st.dev.)	–	–	–	1.1009	19.62
Desire to spend time with family	–	–	–	0.8637	9.34
Desire to spend time with family (st.dev.)	–	–	–	1.8392	37.62

Tab. 3: Model results – continuing

that second-home owners in Gambarogno show significantly lower attachment to the destination than their counterparts in the rest of the region and, indirectly, a higher intention to keep combining the best of both homes.

Concerning the region of residence of second-home owners, we separated the observations regarding respondents from Eastern Switzerland, but we obtained mixed results. If we consider the single latent variable model (destination attachment only), we obtain a positive and significant parameter (0.1304), which implies that owners residing in this region show a higher level of destination attachment compared to owners living permanently in the rest of Switzerland. The geographical divide we propose is basically driven by the model fit, and it is difficult to explain the reasons for such a spatial distinction. The geographical separation probably hides some unobserved peculiarities that lead people from the eastern part of Switzerland to be more prone for future relocation than those coming from elsewhere. That said, in the final model (including push-pull factors) the spatial parameter is no longer significant.

4.3 Push-pull latent variables

Model specification accounts for push and pull factors as determinants of destination attachment. Parameter estimates confirm that both constructs have a positive and significant effect on it (0.2412 and 0.6244, respectively). In the pull latent variable specification, age and marital status were found as determinants. Home-owners aged 46–60 show higher levels of this psychological aspect compared

to their younger or older counterparts (0.2386). As far as marital status is concerned, married people report lower levels for the pull latent variable compared to unmarried owners (– 0.1898). In the push latent construct, the homeowner's age, residence and marital status are significant determinants. The push-factor level tends to decrease with age, as the youngest subsample of individuals have the highest associated parameter estimate (0.7523), followed by the middle-aged respondents (0.5771). Married individuals are less affected by push elements compared to the remaining homeowners (– 0.1909) and the same holds for Zurich residents (– 0.1863).

4.4 Latent variable measurement indicators

The final set of estimates refers to the indicators we adopted to identify the latent variables. All the signs of the coefficients are coherent with the behavioural framework, and the parameter estimates are statistically significant, showing that the indicators we considered enter our model in a meaningful way. Concerning the destination attachment construct, the latent factor positively reflects on second-home owners' perceived appeal of place (0.5214), the second home itself (0.4834), ownership satisfaction (0.4483) and relationship with neighbours (0.202).

On the other hand, the closer one is to the destination the less one feels like a tourist when spending time there (– 0.2745). A “pull” feeling toward the destination is manifested in favourable climate (0.6884), the possibility to enjoy natural landscapes (0.9653) and proximity to nature

(1.1977), while “push” feelings are reflected in desire to get away from everyday life (0.965), to rest and relax (1.109) and to spend time with family (0.8637).

5. Discussion and conclusions

The present study relates to the stream of literature linking seasonal and permanent migration and follows the path trodden by several other authors whose works contextualise individuals’ consideration of a future permanent move in a tourist context (see Li and McKercher, 2016). Our work aims at increasing the body of research investigating the role of feelings and emotions in creating a link between the owner, the dwelling and the destination.

First and foremost, this study has shown that the second-home owners surveyed are more prone not to switch their present permanent place of residence for the new one in the host community. In other words, it proves that the owners are more inclined to continue their current flexible and mobile housing pattern (taking advantage of the best of both worlds) rather than making a definitive relocation to the leisure-destination area. In a more general sense, this finding also confirms that the NMP, rather than the traditional migratory approach, is more relevant and effective in explaining and understanding contemporary mobility and the housing strategies followed and implemented by individuals.

This research has shown that some of the owners’ socio-demographics matter with respect to the planned change in a housing strategy. Female owners stated a lower propensity to give up a current housing pattern than male owners, contradicting general logic, as the former group is more prone to migrate than the latter (Ghosh, 2009). Younger owners expressed a greater propensity for a definitive relocation on a permanent basis than their older counterparts. What is more, the same correlation with owners’ age has been found for the push-force construct. These findings are in line with those by Marjavaara and Lundholm (2016), suggesting the older owners’ intention to move elsewhere is weaker than for younger individuals who have a considerably wider range of opportunities to change their residence or change their viewpoint over the lifespan in this respect. From this angle, two aspects are worth mentioning: first, it must be noted that the categories we adopted in our analysis can only somewhat represent the transition between different phases of one’s life-course; and second, it was not possible to clearly disentangle whether important life events such as widowhood, divorce and/or death of a relative influenced the intention to move. The contrasting characteristics between young and old homeowners show that lifestyle – rather than retirement migration – would be the main form of mobility for the second-home owners surveyed. This stated propensity to change the current flexible housing pattern to a more stable one anchored in the host-community, gives some clarity against the pessimistic view of the future move-in predictions for the younger generation, evidenced by other researchers and explained by their considerably higher mobility and frequent travels to different leisure locations (Pitkänen et al., 2014). Hence, in terms of the supplementary role of urban-rural migrations for human and intellectual capital shortages in the host-community, the in-flows of younger owners may be desirable, beneficial and prospective for future local development. Then again, contrary to other studies (McHugh, 1990), further socio-demographic attributes such as household income have not been demonstrated as significant factors with regard to the declared relocation.

Furthermore, several objective and subjective destination-home area characteristics (pull forces) turned out to be significant explanatory factors for housing patterns. Among them was the spatial accessibility to some social amenities (Overvåg, 2011), namely local public services. Its cogent explanatory value was demonstrated in the higher relocation propensity for individuals owning holiday homes in larger urban centres or densely built-up areas of the region surveyed (e.g. the Locarno and Lake Maggiore sub-region) and, simultaneously, in the lower propensity for less-developed and somewhat inaccessible areas with a scattered settlement pattern (e.g. Gambarogno). Bearing in mind that most of the second-home owners are retired people or those who are preparing for retirement (Norris and Winston, 2009), some of the locally accessible public services (health, caregivers, pharmacies, grocery and food deliveries) are undoubtedly a priority. At the same time, this finding has proven the importance of “environmental supportiveness” (Bell et al., 2010; Sugiyama and Ward Thompson, 2007) in making decisions for future housing option choices.

This social aspect of second-home ownership is extended here, by adding relationships with the local community (e.g. ties to neighbours or friends/relatives as holiday-home owners in the area (McHugh, 1990)), as well as the respondent’s previous experiences in the destination area (Marjavaara and Lundholm, 2016). Both facets have revealed their significance for the owner’s housing pattern considerations and, at the same time, proved what was found by Nagatomo (2014) and Overvåg (2011) for the former and, respectively by Marjavaara and Lundholm (2016), Müller and Marjavaara (2012) and McHugh (1990), for the latter. The significance of previous experiences in the destination area has also been enriched by the time factor as the second-home owners surveyed were more prone to give up the current flexible pattern if the cottage usage intensity was relatively high –the longer the stay, the higher the propensity for permanent relocation. This result contributes to previous studies (Marjavaara and Lundholm, 2016; McHugh, 1990) on the role of the time factor, considered as a pull force, and as a component of the destination attachment construct comprising accumulated everyday experiences and practices at the holiday-home area (Stober et al., 2018; Tuan, 1977).

Besides the host-community characteristics, the intention to change the current housing pattern and make a definitive move is determined by the living conditions at a holiday home. It has been revealed through the higher propensity to relocate for the owners of second homes of a solid construction (villas, converted second homes) – rather than for those owning basic country cottages, as the latter would need investments and technical interventions to make the house winterised and adjusted to the whole-year round stays (meaning a permanent home). This finding is to some extent in line with Stergiou et al. (2016), arguing for the possible technical adjustments of the secondary into permanent residence as a part of a long-term housing strategy aiming at eventual permanent relocation. It has been reinforced by Marjavaara and Lundholm’s (2016) findings of the decision for relocation that targets the second-home property rather than changing a permanent dwelling.

In addition to the social characteristics of a destination area, this research has confirmed previous findings (Nagatomo, 2014; Overvåg, 2011; Petite, 2014) stating the importance of the local natural amenities in explaining

individual housing and mobility decision-making. This factor influenced the owner's stated preferences in differentiating his/her housing pattern directly but also indirectly, seeing the perceived appeal of the place, favourable climate, enjoyment of natural landscape and proximity to nature, as main constituents of the pull factor and destination attachment constructs.

There are several practical and conceptual shortcomings affecting this study which will hopefully be taken as starting points for future research in the field. First and foremost, we cannot claim that our sample or our particular respondents is representative of the entire second-home population in the surveyed area. In fact, very little is known about the socio-demographic characteristics of Swiss and foreign second-home owners in the region. Secondly, the proposed theoretical model only considers constructs hypothesised in order to foster the intention to relocate but does not refer to negative determinants. In this sense, the mapping of variables lacks the economic, social and affective bonds that an individual has to her/his primary home, and these should be part of a more comprehensive behavioural model. Another point relates to the consideration of push and pull factors, as these highlighted the aspects that home-owners long for when deciding to spend time at the destination and, ultimately, to migrate. From this point of view, the theoretical model only considers antecedent factors, while there is no assessment of the expectations concerning the future life at the destination. In addition, the decision to relocate originates from a confrontation between the place of a primary residence and the second-home destination, and relevant trade-offs between the attributes characterising both locations are considered by the owner and should, therefore, be investigated.

In this study, the intention to move is considered to be an approximation of the actual decision, and this implies that the empirical framework is based on a hypothetical setting. While it is important to anticipate actual behaviour through the consideration of intention or willingness to perform a choice, the theoretical model should be tested in a different light by comparing individuals who ultimately decided to relocate and individuals who decided differently. Lastly, data limitations mean that investment and real-estate dimensions, as well as the availability of capital, are not considered in this study, though all of these factors are central to the life course of the use of a property, and crucial elements in the decision-making process about an individual's housing strategy.

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