SECOND HOME TOURISM IN RURAL ITALY
Spatial patterns and social practices towards community resilience

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1.1 Multiple aspects of a glocal phenomenon

Globalization processes and the effects of a hypermobile society are every day more visible and become even harder to be handled both by national governments and civil society, especially when they intersect with the consequences of shocking events, natural disasters, or a global economic crisis. In the academic field, governance and planning issues are tackled in the attempt to find new approaches and policies to mitigate such impacts on the economy, society, and environment. At the same time, prevention is still a priority of few strategic action plans at a national and local level. Global North and South, both the urban areas and the countryside, are affected by similar worldwide phenomena, with fundamental differences in re-action capabilities based on diverse political, institutional, economic, and social contexts and strategies to cope with them.

Owing a second home for leisure purposes is a common and widespread global practice that might have a relevant impact on places, highly depending on local conditions regarding landscape, environmental context, climatic conditions, social networks, economic assets, and taxation. Therefore, the form of tourism resulting from owing or renting a second house has been acknowledged to be a heterogeneous **glocal phenomenon**, where secondary dwellings have **multiple roles** that are *finally visible* (Müller, 2021) after the different meanings and functions they hosted during the worldwide pandemic emergency (Pitkänen, et al., 2020).

Consequently, it seems appropriate to address the issue of second homes by referring rather to **multiple second home tourisms**, where the global phenomenon varies among places, historical circumstances and humans involved.

But who are these privileged owners of second homes, what are the motivations behind their choices and what is their role in the local host community? Recorded by hundreds of local empirical studies and as first stated by Coppock (1977, 9), the significant reasons for individual human beings to acquire a second home are: (a) to escape from urban daily life; (b) to access to rural activities and amenities; (c) to go back to rural roots and family ties; (d) to search for a place for vacations; (e) as a housing investment; (f) as a status symbol; (g) to find a place for later retirement. Second home owners have been defined as an *invisible population* (Müller, 2011) and are sometimes considered secondary inhabitants in local policies and initiatives, as individuals are often institutionally required to belong to only one place at a time, accordingly to the **presumed dichotomy between the concepts of place attachment and mobility** (Gustafson, 2006, p. 30). This formal assumption clashes with the results from empirical research about the notion of home and the construction of the sense of place, meant as a

meaningful spatial unit, where diverse identities and bonds may be reflected in **multiple patterns of living** in a *continuum of experience* (Perkins & Thorns, 2006, p. 81).

Furthermore, a more sociological question should be posed about second homeowners right to integration and participation in the local life of places. Nonetheless, Gallent warns against the concept of ***dwelling as a process,*** a path to acceptability (Gallent, 2007), which excludes those with a low extent of engaging, participating, and interacting with the community. This implies a hierarchy among first and secondary citizens, with second home dwellers being perceived as partial members of the community (Hall & Müller, 2004). In some regions, this might also lead to restrictive policies, set to protect the host community from adverse effects on their daily lives and the economic, cultural, and social processes occurring in their local and territorial contexts. The nexus between **second homes and planning strategies** have been inquired since the 1970s (Shucksmith, 1981; Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Gallent et al., 2003; Gallent et al., 2019; Gallent, Mace, & Tewdwr-Jones, 2003; Brida et al., 2011). Where the phenomenon of second dwellings is evident, that is where a higher concentration of second homes is documented, concerns rapidly arise among local governments and communities about the establishment of dedicated new policies and regulations on land use. Regardless of whether second homes are purchased for recreational activities or as investments, they are part of the housing stock, thus entering the self-regulated market system with possible impacts on accessibility and affordability by locals. Furthermore, issues about environmental and landscape protection and infrastructural and services provision require relevant middle and long-term solutions, both public and private entities may set that up through proper strategies at different scales.

Indeed, second home regulatory systems differ according to each Country's legislation. Explorations about planning schemes and applications of recommendations have been carried out, especially in Northern Europe (e.g., UK, Norway, Sweden, Denmark), to preserve the specificity of rural landscape and to support the right to access the housing market by young locals (Pacione, 1993). Those cases show how priority to local needs may carry out restrictions (e.g., purchasing restrictions but also financial measures, such as additional taxation), that in some cases lead to unexpected results, such as benefitting local owners, displacing housing developers in closer areas and raising property values (Gallent et al., 2019). Moreover, supposing that the legal framework is already complex in domestic second home tourism (as in the case of the right to vote or to be involved in decision-making processes), it gets even more complicated when international tourists choose to be temporal or permanent dwellers, posing new challenges to democracy issues and participatory instances (Hall, 2015). Lastly, it is necessary to highlight that continuous adjustments to planning strategies related to the second

home tourism are often required, as tourism, migration and local economic and social relations are dynamic and subject to global trends (Brida et al., 2011).

Eventually, it may be argued then that dealing with second homes, both in terms of a sociological investigation and a subject of territorial planning, means tackling a multi-stakeholder and multi-layered complexity, linked, among many other factors, to infrastructures, services provision, land use, the housing market, financial tools, environment protection, politics: as some recent academic contributions suggest (Hall & Müller, 2018), in the contemporary neoliberal discourse second homes planning policies should be investigated through the lens of **governance**, also because of the **growing participation and engagement** of second home owners in local causes.

1.2 Second home tourism literature in the international framework

National studies about second homes date back officially to the **1930s**, when empirical research first appears in the Nordic countries of Europe and America. At the end of the **1960s**, a renewed academic interest in secondary dwellings rises again as clear implications of the secondary houses show up in the Mediterranean area, addressing the patterns of this undetected and unveiled tourism. In that historical context, the topic of second homes comes again to the attention of academics and policy makers as some evidences of the second homes phenomenon in rural and coastal areas emerged, mostly due to the visible physical implications of new vacation houses in natural contexts. The flows of citizens moving from the city to depopulated but almost unspoiled countryside areas, seen as a ***process of temporary or seasonal suburbanization*** (Clout, 1971), were a source of concern for the friction directly generated between city-dwellers and locals. The growing numbers of vacational homes around the globe, fuelled by the spreading of car ownership fostering their growth (Müller & Hoogendoorn, 2013), and a **new political awareness** about impacts and threats to local hosting communities suggest the necessity of a continuous monitoring, in order to identify patterns of use (i.e. amount of time spent and the activities performed by second home owners: Breuer, 2005) and spatial changes.

In fact, in the last decades, a rich literature about second homes has been produced. Nowadays, the phenomenon has been investigated worldwide, reaching the attention of scholars in countries like South Africa and China. Looking at the literature, it can be argued that the topic has a robust **transdisciplinary positioning** at the crossroads of urban and regional planning, housing, migration, mobility, tourism, and social sciences studies. However, second homes have been part of the field of tourism geography since its very early stages in the 1950s (Wolfe, 1951). As emphasized by Müller, nowadays, tourism is undoubtedly one of the major

forces driving urban change worldwide. Hence tourism geographies should be considered pillars in creating valuable knowledge about how societies are changing in this hyper-mobile era (Müller, 2019).

The academic boundaries that enclose the topic have constantly been blurring since the first attempt at an accurate and shared definition by Coppock, the reference author who extensively dealt with holiday homes in his famous book *Second Homes: Curse or Blessing?* and who first sought to grasp the dynamic character of the second homes (Coppock, 1977, p. 2). Even today the Coppock's book is considered a pillar in the field, because of its wide theoretical and empirical analysis. The book offers some smart predictions about future social and environmental conflicts and a possible connection between second homes and different aspects of human lifestyles (e.g. retirement), suggesting the necessity of a continued monitoring of changes of the phenomenon, with a special regard for rural areas.

Nevertheless, the **definition** has always been a critical issue and the key problem (Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000, p. 11), due to the considerable fluidity between functions and shapes of the phenomenon that vary between places and over time (Paris, 2009, p. 306). Second home tourism is a **multifaceted phenomenon**, which varies among different areas of the world and depends on the assigned definition and related meanings (Müller, 2014). Therefore, to better understand the spatial distribution, not least the features of the local declinations of this globally known phenomenon, establishing a shared definition is fundamental as it implies theoretical choices at the basis of empirical investigations and operational research activities such as data gathering, categorization, patterns description and mapping. In the academic framework, a shared definition of the phenomenon would have allowed the use of a commonly acknowledged terminology and the investigation of a certain range of second home tourism characteristics. Nonetheless, different available data sets and a consistent variety of national frameworks, prevented researchers from being able to define a multidisciplinary but unique narrative of the phenomenon, opening the necessary quest for local investigations and case studies.

The chaotic use of a heterogeneous terminology and the difficulty in building a shared framework result in a *troubled history* of second home tourism (Müller, 2011). A general definition is that unpinning Coppock's work, provided by Downing and Dower (1973), describing a second home as a *property owned or rented on a long lease as the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere*. The general adoption of this definition let researchers cover a wide range of typologies in the following decades, from mobile caravans to purpose-built resorts, focusing on the amount of time spent and the activities performed by second home owners, better defined as *patterns of use* (Breuer, 2005). In their extensive work

about tourism, migration and mobility, Hall and Müller (2004, 14) added to the definition, based on usage, multiple insights about how second home tourism is deeply inter-related to the **sense of belonging and identity**, the attachment to a place, heritage and amenities consumption. Looking at contemporary human needs, Lanzani points out how houses for vacations and leisure time are complementary to first residences, in a sort of **dual residency experience**, wholly new and radically different from the traditional dwelling formats (Lanzani, 2003, p. 367). In addition, adding complexity to the frame, in the last 50 years significant changes in urban-rural conditions and the rise of new global factors linked to mobility and lifestyle (e.g. globalization of the labour market, the ageing of society, changes in working lives and incomes, transportation improvements (Williams & Hall, 2000)) shape novel and diverse modifications of the secondary dwellings. These mutations show different relationships between time and space, giving origin to new related phenomena of international scope: **international retirement migration (IRM), amenity migration (AM), lifestyle migration (LM), multilocality (ML).**

Starting in 2000s, Williams and Hall pointed out many aspects of consumption-led migration in relation to tourism routes, providing a wide description of national case studies with a stress on the **new forms of mobility**. Mainly related to the **search of the sun** (Williams & Hall, 2002), relationships through communities and spaces are set up between in the global North and South: migration related to retirement from the UK to Southern Europe, particularly Spain, and from US to Mexico has been the subject of studies on **international retirement migration (IRM)**, sharing issues about the social and economic impacts and the behavioural patterns related to second home tourism (Breuer, 2005; O'Reilly, 2003; Sunil, Rojas, & Bradley, 2007).

Retiring migrants are pushed to move internationally due to four main reasons: 1) the increase in longevity; 2) the decline in the legal age of retirement; 3) the increase and polarisation in the lifetime flow of earnings and accumulation of wealth; 4) the changing patterns of lifetime mobility, by reason of an extensive knowledge about foreign destinations (Williams, King, Warnes, & Patterson, 2000).

Likewise, the concept of **amenity migration (AM)** focuses on migrants searching for natural and cultural amenities, moving to places, permanently or part time, principally because of the actual or perceived higher environmental quality and cultural differentiation of the destination (Borsdorf, 2009; Moss, L. A., 2014). As well as second home tourism, contributions on this topic have a role in the rural-urban fringe literature too, as the three topics may sometimes be inter-related (Halseth, 2010). Amenity migration is held responsible for reshaping rural areas (e.g. amenity migrants in the Alps (Perlik, 2009)) and incorporates both benefits and threats derived by its second home component.

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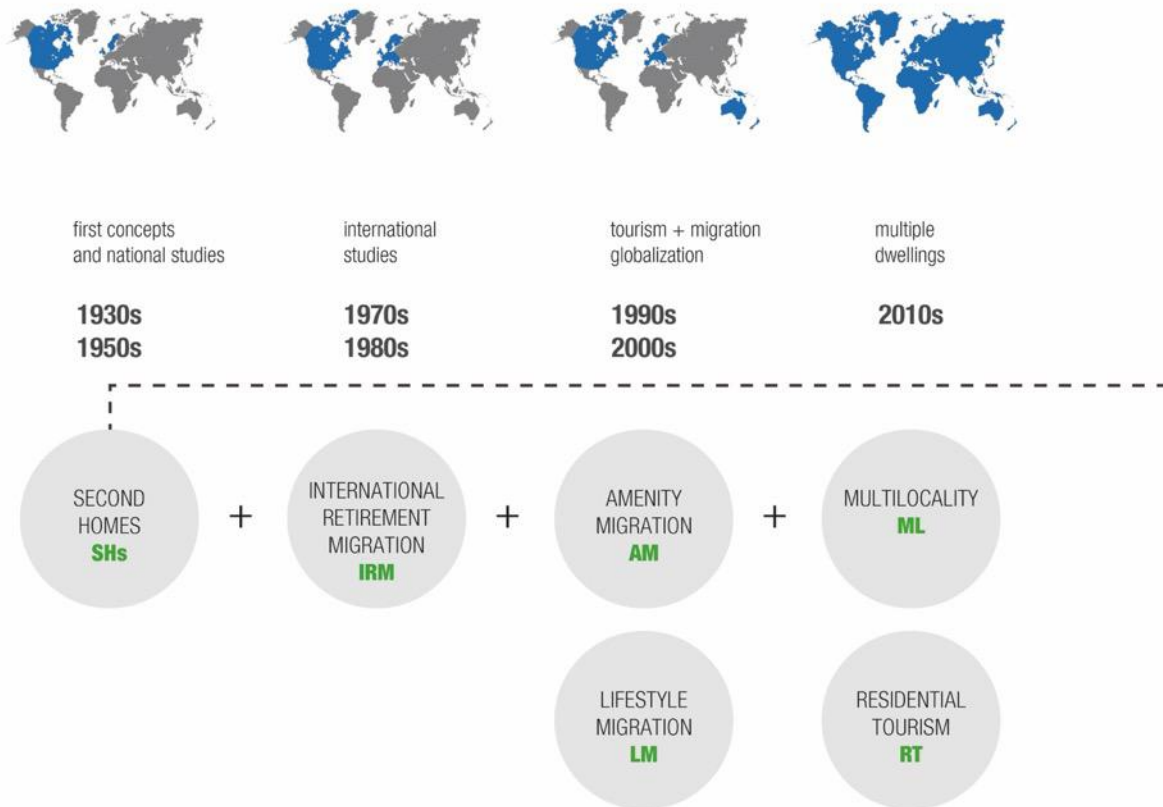
Fig. 1 Variations on the second home tourism related literature from the '30s to present times. Author's elaboration.

Similarly, the following statements about **lifestyle migration (LM)** are also compatible with second homes aspects: (a) LM is a **privileged form of mobility**, as it does not occur to people leaving their home country for economic reasons; (b) LM is strongly connected to the **individualisation of lifestyles** in late capitalism, where consumption is related not only to material goods but also to intangible ones (e.g. landscape, nature, places, experiences); (c) LM might imply conflictive consequences on local communities (not always visible, but sometimes resulting into **contested spatialities**), both from a political (i.e. participation, local development interests, territorial identity protection) and socio-cultural point of view (Janoschka & Haas, 2014).
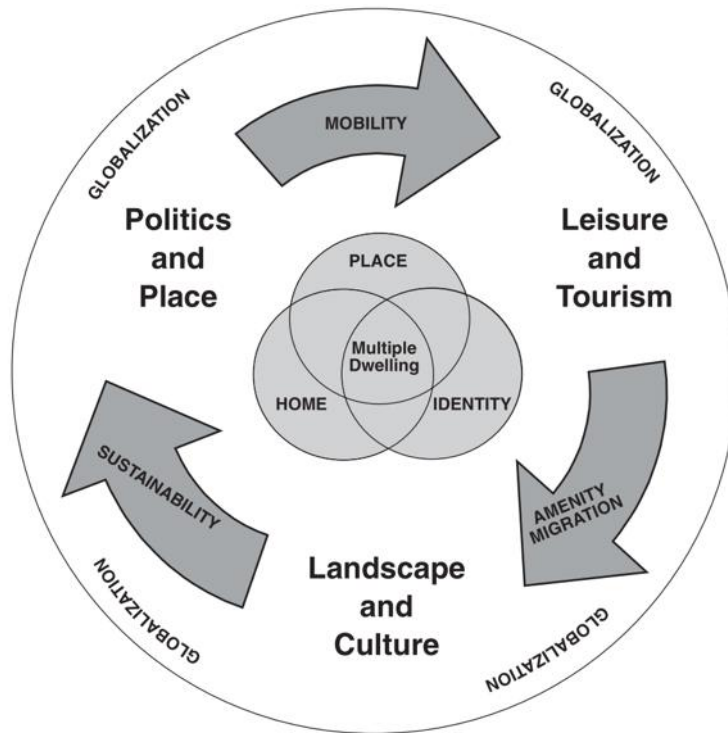
Fig. 2 Multi dwelling and globalization. Source: McIntyre, Williams and McHugh, 2006.

Eventually, a new concept of mobility, based on a polycentric vision of the needs of contemporary mankind, has been introduced in the last years, to investigate new arrangements of daily life in distant multiple places: opposite to the traditional model that pivots on only one permanent residence, **multilocality (ML)** is built upon the possibility to live and work moving between several 'homes', from a physical and not least mental point of view (Nadler, 2011). In the second home tourism literature as well, relations with multi-locality emerge, as people may develop a strong belonging to a multi-local context and build their own identity upon separated places, both nationally and transnationally. Although this concept sounds remote from the second homes tourism topic, it must be acknowledged that space and time are the fundamental variables to explain the new trends in living in a world globally connected by technology and human flows. Thus, owning (or renting) a second home means being involved in a process, *the process of living in multiple places through a variety of contexts and practices* (Fig. 2) *in the increasing complexity of modern living* (McIntyre, Williams, & McHugh, 2006).

These changing patterns of the lifetime mobility, whether related to a search for the sun or for natural and cultural amenities, share issues about social and economic impacts and behaviour patterns with the second home tourism. Thus, in the present research, second homes

will be used as an ***umbrella term*** (Schier, et al., 2015), under which a multitude of experiences of being a second home tourist/owners will be explored in different contexts and realities.

Despite the second homes topic might be considered exhausted, the attention by the international academic world is still on, mainly due to the continue evolution of the phenomenon under diverse conditions and forms. Current research streams about second home tourism in a global framework highlight multiple strands and topics. In the **Nordic European context**, several topics have been investigated as a consequence of a long-lasting and yet ongoing interest in the subject, both by the professionals involved in the academic world and by the governmental planning sectors, being able to rely on an extended and in-depth knowledge about the phenomenon based on relevant quantitative and spatial data. Key topics in the Scandinavian Countries appear to be the specific interest for rural areas, the patterns and impacts of secondary houses and the extent of engagement with the local communities in the overall picture of rural decline (Müller, 2021).

1.3 Second home tourism in the Italian context

Recently two second homes related news jumped to the journals headlines: apparently disconnected, they are actually deeply related, weaving a common thread between Italy and the UK. Cornwall in 2016 voted to ban second homes, after a boom in holiday houses in the recent years; the pretty fishermen traditional buildings turned into luxury properties for households, with average costs 20 times the local salary . In the attempt to pursue amenity protection (and consequent exploitation), a land use plan has been developed with the introduction of a residence restriction in favour of locals, regardless of the unintended consequences of such a planning tool (Gallent et al., 2019). In 2018 the same restriction has been carried on in Italy by the province of Bolzano (South Tyrol), with the aim to support residents to access the house market at reasonable prices, albeit setting up new inequalities towards foreigners as well as Italians. A protectionist drift, that appears wherever the concentration of second homes occurs in addition to the depopulation of small rural, coastal or mountain villages, turning them into ghost towns according to the seasonality of the housing patterns, and, therefore, causing a loss of cultural identity and liveability (Brida et al., 2011; Volo, 2011).

The phenomenon of second homes in Italy has been relatively ignored by academic research for decades, due to **the lack of both national and local data** that could have highlighted features and impact on communities and territories at least over the last century. Second homes for holidays have always existed in Italy, being converted **from an élite prerogative to a mass phenomenon**, starting from the '50s and '60s with a climax in building production during the '70s. Nevertheless, due to the inadequacy of tools for monitoring and

management of the secondary houses, the inner aspects are still unknown. Moreover, in recent years a further development of the phenomenon has been fostered by multiple heterogeneous initiatives (e.g. '1 Euro' homes initiative). Nowadays, Italian policies as well as academic scholars are gradually beginning to deal with the second home tourism topic as both the urban and rural landscapes are manifesting its cultural, economic and social impacts: where these effects are more visible and concentrated, an alternation of negative and positive feelings towards it are expressed by the local host communities and their political representatives through journal articles, reportages on social media and even local protests.

The tradition of a secondary home located in the countryside, away from the urban context, dates back to the Roman times, when it was not uncommon for the super-rich to own more than one extra-property: originated from the productive rural space of the *'villa rustica'* within its agrarian landscape, the *'villa urbana'* embeds the emerging needs of an extremely wealthy social class for whom the 'beautiful landscape' plays a decisive role in the daily enjoyment of the extra-urban life (Sereni, 1961, p. 61). The typology of the **suburban villa** survived through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, linked to the topos of the *locus amoenus*, becoming rooted in the collective imagination like a dream to be pursued within the escape from the urban villages. 'Lieu de loisir' and architectural masterpieces representing the private and family power, suburban villas in the XV century were strongly connected to pastoral and agricultural activities, necessary to its functioning and maintenance. From the Medici villa in Poggio a Caiano to the Palladian 'La Rotonda', the ancient concept of looking at the rural landscape as recreational asset still represents a contemporary attitude, although it has undergone a process of democratization after the II World War and with the economic boom (Sartoretti, 2012). No longer a prerogative of the urban élites, today second homes are rather **the expression of urban needs**, as well as the urban-rural linkage: today their meaning and use are changing as a reflection of the increasingly blurring distinction among primary and secondary dwellings, moving towards being elements of a double-living lifestyle, encouraged by the reduction of working hours and the emerging of flexible workplace modalities (Lanzani, 2003; Pacione, 1993).

After the Second World War, Italy has been characterised by an intense building activity: from 1951 to 1991 the housing stock almost doubled and households condition improved so that 20% of total dwellings were secondary homes by the end of the century. Rural areas were affected by a post war shrinkage, associated with out-migration to cities, and rural decline and deprivation. In the 1970s and 1980s a new growth in terms of population living in rural municipalities or in the so called 'rururban' settlements was enabled by small-scale industrial and service businesses and caused the dissemination of the urban sprawl. From the 1990s a

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turning point occurred: rural areas become synonym of authenticity and traditional identity, gathering **a 'soft' tourism centred on heritage and landscape** (Padovani & Vettoretto, 2003, p. 16). Due to this historical framework and to a differentiated economic development between North and South, the Italian patterns of second homes, and more generally of rural housing, are as diverse as landscape typologies across the whole peninsula: from coastal areas to mountains and inner regions, the geography of second home tourism changes appearance, core features, social impacts and economic benefits, as well as leading actors involved. Second-home tourism in Italy is mainly characterised by internal flows linking the main cities to rural, mountain or coastal contexts, whether temporary or seasonal. Rather than being purpose-built houses, rural second homes in most Italian country villages are old properties, restored and functionally converted for leisure activities. Moreover, many variables locally shape the second home development, a wide range of trends that goes from the **affective ties** that connect second home owners to previous rural roots to the traditional habit to spend weekends and summer vacations away from the city, partly seen as **a showcase for a urban status symbol** (Hall and Müller 2004, p. 14).

In the Italian academic context, the secondary dwellings discourse has more recent contributions in the literature since the first attempts to build up a national frame are traced back to the end of the '90s (Ferrero, 1998; Romita, 1999). In the following paragraphs, a brief survey of the Italian main streams of research is presented to outline the fragmentary state of the art and the gaps in the literature although the topic has recently gathered a renewed academic interest from international scholars.

Romita refers to the second home tourism with the term *residential tourism*, a social phenomenon that is essentially *informal, undeclared and unregulated* performed by the *do-it-yourself tourist* (Romita, 2013, p. 265). These aspects fuelled a spontaneous (and out of control) growth of the private housing sector for vacation, flanked by missing national and local regulations. The first empirical studies and surveys were conducted in the Tyrrhenian Coast, South Italy, by Romita and Perri, who observed the consumption patterns of the residential tourist, analyzing travel and accommodation arrangements, expenses and lifestyle. Perri (Perri, 2013) detected a particular form of residential tourism, the **residential root tourism**, based on flows of tourists spending their holidays back in the villages of origin of their families or where they have been living before they moved to other cities or Countries. Their affection to places, traditions and cultural heritage might be translated into a considerable cultural and economic resource, whose crucial role is still not acknowledged neither by institutions nor by local communities. Cappai, Alvarez and Minchilli (2012) developed a first attempt to build up an information system for the Sardinian coastal land, based on a combination of data from taxes

on a GIS system. As a result, Cappai (Cappai, 2013, p. 174) argues that the shortage in official information about the spatial distribution of holiday homes affects not only the touristic but also the territorial planning tools, giving space to the building speculation and to the informal economy. Similarly, a more quantitative and visual approach has been carried on by Battino (2014), who seeks to map the evolution of the natural landscape of the Nord-East Sardinian coasts, revealing a high degree of land consumption due to the presence of many purpose-built villages. It should not be a surprise that the most visible geographies of private homes for holidays have been studied by several authors along Italian coastal areas that are among the most affected areas in terms of mass tourism. On the opposite side, many critical analysis tackled the issue of **secondary residences in mountain areas**, where policies and regional planning are called upon to calm down the negative effects on landscape and local communities. Ferrero (1998) observed how dwellings owned by secondary inhabitants from cities redefine the physical, economic and cultural landscape of mountain areas in Piedmont with both positive and negative impacts. As a solution, looking at the European context, he suggested a toolkit for second homes management, based on the assessment of local cultural needs and the promotion of the reuse of traditional buildings. South Tyrol is the alpine region that probably has been most investigated in the last decades, after its inscription on the UNESCO world heritage list in 2009. Brida, Osti and Santifaller (2011) outlined how out-migration of local population, in South Tyrol but generally in the Italian alpine context, has converted many depopulated villages in seasonal resorts, that might be abandoned during non-touristic weeks of the year therefore causing a loss of cultural identity and liveability. A regulation and limitation of the phenomenon has been recommended in most of these studies, with suggestions about taking into account also the social fabric factors (Volo, 2011) as key elements to grasp social behaviors and conflicts among locals and second home owners.

On the other hand, multilocal dwellings are also seen as part of the setting of new contemporary positive demographic trends (Perlik, 2009; Elmi & Perlik, 2014), that are linked to heterogeneous settlement practices occurring in mountain regions. However, the strong urban character of the phenomenon of secondary dwellings may led to processes of *alpine gentrification,* where a **commodification of the landscape** may be prevailing on conservation and enhancement logics (Perlik, 2011, 2019).

key authors

COASTAL AREAS	MOUNTAIN AREAS	RURAL AREAS
Romita 1999 Perri 2010 **RRT** Cappai, Alvarez, Minchilli 2012 Cappai 2013 Battino 2014 Gallent 2015 Volo 2018	Ferrero 1998 Ferrario 2009 **AM** Brida, Osti, Santifaller 2011 Macchiavelli 2011 Perlik 2011, 2019 Volo 2011 Armondi 2013 Borsdorf 2013 Elmi & Perlik 2014 Löffler, Walder, Beismann, Warmuth, Steinicke 2016 **AM**	Padovani, Vettoretto 2003 King, Cela, **IRM** Morettini, Fokkema 2019
> purpose-built homes and building speculation > land consumption > concern about planning and tax regulations > positive economic impact > mass tourism with negative social impact on local population	> purpose-built homes and building speculation > issues about conservation of the landscape and of cultural diversity > services provision costs > 'ghost village' risk > tourism territorial management and governance	> re-use of existing traditional buildings > housing shortage and higher costs > social deprivation and depopulation > services provision costs > environmental protection and enhancement

key topics

RRT Residential Root Tourism **AM** Amenity Migration **IRM** International Retirement Migration

Fig. 3 Italian streams of research about second home tourism. Author's elaboration.

To sum up, as indicated in Fig. 3, from the national to the local scale open niches of research are available with a focus on Italian rural and inner areas as well as deeper studies could be developed regarding the following urgent tasks: a) to draw a general picture about existing policies and initiatives fostering or discouraging second homes; b) to provide explorations of the phenomenon in rural and inner areas; c) to develop in-depth local studies embedded in the economic, historical and social fabric; d) to investigate the impacts of the second home tourism on local cultural heritage and local communities.

1.4 The gap about rural second homes

Second homes are not a purely rural issue: today new conflicts originate in big cities worldwide, where empty apartments are often bought as second homes and devoted to become profitable investments for very high rents. This is the case of the City Council of Paris, close to banning vacation rentals of whole apartments in the city center as well as the purchase of second homes; being occupied for few weeks a year, these properties are held responsible of pushing residents to live in outer neighbourhoods, slowly affecting the city center identity and vitality. However, what is peculiar about second home tourism is that it occurs mostly in suburban and rural areas, based on the attraction for the proximity to nature and for the

naturalistic utopia (Claval, 2013, p. 321). Pacione (1993) highlights the relationship between secondary homes and the city: they are not an isolated system, but instead, they are part of the urban system as they are defined as properties in the countryside owned by citizens that are primary living in the urban areas (ibidem, 179).

From the last decades of the past century, at least all over Europe, countryside faced significant changes in its socio-economic paradigma; moreover, from the 1970s relevant flows of citizens moving from the city to depopulated but almost unspoiled countryside areas, in a process of **temporary or seasonal suburbanization** (Clout, 1971), were a source of concern for the friction directly generated between city-dwellers and locals. Despite of that, the connection between the rural and the second home tourism has not been adequately addressed by researchers (Müller 2011, 137). For Gallent et al., second homes are a relatively small component of wider processes affecting rural communities (Gallent et al. 2003, 271), e.g. income deprivation and weaknesses in the local economy, but the phenomenon has become particularly evident in some rural areas to the point of being converted into a political target and a **scapegoat** (ibidem, 281).

Being out of the media, an ***ignored realm*** (Koolhaas, 2019) for at least half a century, now the *places that don't matter* (Rodríguez-Pose, 2017) are back under the lights of academic research and public discourses. Among the several patterns of rural change, the presence and concentration of second homes play a relevant role. The **restructuring process** undergoing in rural landscapes challenges rural communities (Rye, 2011, p. 263) to the point of positively or negatively react to it with political agendas targeting, besides other issues, second home tourism, assessed, according to the perception of its impacts, mainly as a curse, seldom as a blessing.

Globally, impacts on rural spaces have been largely investigated through empirical studies at the micro level: namely they consist of economic, social and environmental modifications on the receiving communities, both in terms of pressures or benefits by second home dwellings and owners. The most critical issue in the scientific debate is whether the second houses are **drivers of economic development**, fostering new demand for food and facilities, or they are responsible for **a shortage in the housing stock**, causing the displacement for rural dwellers. The displacement of rural residents unable to compete with extra local resources, forced to leave their roots for the search of new routes, is sometimes a collective perception, based on political interests in order to veil the failures of poor local or regional development strategies (Gallent 2007, 98) rather than the objective result based on data analysis. Environmental concerns are also at stake as possible effects of the unregulated spread of second homes, with a progressive **deterioration of the rural idyll** and a risk towards the

commodification of the countryside. Recently, second home tourism has also been related to **rural gentrification processes**, mirroring analogue processes occurring in metropolitan areas, that may be triggered by second home owners behaviours in the exploitation of the countryside for leisure purposes. Temporary or permanent second home owners presence may affect local housing prices, land ownership and agricultural practices, thus becoming the main actors of **contested space issues** (Williams and Hall, 2000).

Researchers, policy planners and local communities turned their attention on the second home issue in rural contexts, mainly identified as a *problem* (Gallent, N. and Tewdwr-Jones, M., 2000). This attitude towards the topic of second homes in rural areas led to a wide search for regulations and policies by academics, planners and politicians from the UK to Southern Europe and produced an extended literature about how the phenomenon differs in scale and features, from the local to the regional level (Cloke & Thrift, 1987; Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Gallent et al. 2003; Hiltunen, 2007; Moss, 2008; Borsdorf, 2009; Müller, 2011; Pacione, 1993; Rye, 2011; Moss, L. A. G.; Glorioso, 2014). Nevertheless, second home tourism has never been treated as a fundamental issue of the rural landscape, nor its environmental impacts have been deeply investigated till the 1990s: being neglected for years, second homes gain new attention as the phenomenon becomes internationalized, thus causing the rise of many concerns in rural communities (Müller, 2011, p. 139).

In literature, impacts associated with second homes development are usually accepted as relevant in the rural social, economic and cultural environment, but a deeper understanding is needed on how they affect the rural, both spatially and socially, and to what extent a geography of change is directly or indirectly produced (Hall & Müller 2004, p. 16).

Second home tourism effects on rural spaces namely consist of economic, social and environmental modifications on the receiving communities, both in terms of pressures or benefits of second home dwellings and owners. The main negative outcome of unregulated second home developments in many rural areas is considered to be a shortage in the housing stock, overpriced and, hence, less affordable for young locals entering the housing market for the first time. The displacement of rural dwellers unable to compete with extra local resources, forced to leave their roots for the search of new routes, is sometimes nothing more than a collective perception, built upon political interests in order to veil the failures of poor local or regional development strategies (Gallent, 2007, p. 98). On the contrary, small incomes are provided by second home owners demanding for foods and facilities to shops, restaurants, local activities and to municipalities. Fighting against rural depopulation, municipalities provide basic services coping with scarcity: in this framework, second homes direct and indirect incomes (i.e. taxation on properties, local consumption and taxes on private companies directly

benefitting from second home tourism) may contribute to help the public sector implementing actions to improve quality and efficiency (Larsson & Müller, 2017).

Environmental concerns are also at stake, especially when it comes to purpose-built second homes: land consumption and ecological degradation due to over-crowding are most of the time neglected, but concrete risks. However, second home dwellers as extra-locals are usually conservative and oriented towards landscape and amenities protection, with a less positive attitude towards change (Hall & Müller, 2004). But the leading threat, at least in academic studies, has to do with the displacement of rural population: diverging views on the underlying causes are embedded in different geographical contexts of analysis, resulting in two opposite frameworks where second home tourism is on one side the main cause and on the other one of the key factors of a more complex economic shift. As mentioned, for Gallent et al., second homes are a relatively small component of wider processes affecting rural communities (Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2003, p. 271), i.e. income deprivation and weaknesses in the local economy, but the phenomenon has become particularly evident in some rural areas to the point of being converted into a political target and a scapegoat. However, in some extreme cases second dwellings may be a triggering element of the rural gentrifying process with probable severe, but spatially confined, consequences: higher land prices, fragmented land ownership, progressive deterioration of the rural idyll (if it ever existed) and a restriction of enjoyment of rural landscape, reserved only to second homes élites. Particularly, this occurs when a shortage in the housing stock is already ongoing; on the contrary, a growing number of rural areas are affected by local out-migration, fostered by the magnetic charm of the urban lifestyle for younger people or by the diverse job and education supply in city contexts (Brida, Osti, Santifaller, 2011). It thus result that second home dwellers turn to be the heroic inhabitants of declining ghosts villages.

How are Italian rural areas and peripheral regions handling the massive change occurred in the last decades?

Although rural Italy might be considered as a set of healthy natural contexts where agriculture, tourism and amenities are flourishing under the blessing of a close connection between metropolitan cities and small centres and villages, many rural areas are, in fact, facing tough challenges, passing through an historical phase of decline and a necessary effort of re-invention of their own balance and local identity. Spatial and social transformations are linked to depopulation and industrial and commercial desertification currently in progress, but they are also partially generated or, at least, influenced by the presence of a large number of unoccupied houses and holiday homes. The rural landscape, physical and cultural, undergoes

more or less explicit modifications. High fences, swimming pools, perfect green lawns and silent courtyards in formerly humble farmhouses converted into elegant renovated villas are scattered here and there on the inner hills of the countryside. At the same time, poor quality houses stand abandoned in historical small rural villages where shops doors are shut down and streets are no more safe playgrounds for kids and recreational social centres for elderly. Local traditions, historically handed down from generation to generation, are fading, only randomly commodified through village festivals, whose consumption is only for extra-locals, temporarily participating in rural life. Life of rural communities has been slowly overwhelmed by consequences of global changes related to mobility and lifestyle. Power relations between local actors and international stakeholders are reflected in the several patterns of rural change, assigning new meanings to the countryside and to the concept of rurality itself.

Today Italian rural villages host **multiple typologies of second homes**, expressing diverse touristic activities and attitudes. Attracted by the qualities of the landscape, second homeowners are coming from all over the world, feeding the movement of a new migration (e.g. the international retirement migration, neorurals), that boosts the local economy and seeks to preserve environmental and cultural resources (King et al., 2019).

Moreover, some rural areas faced important shifts from an agricultural-led economy to new assets where culture and tourism are key development drivers beside what can be called the *local foundational economy* (Barbera et al., 2018), providing a decent source of income for the local community. From this point of view, second homes owners may be regarded as economic resources as well as **possible instances of social benefit**, even if the translation from potentiality to concreteness is partly determined by the community dynamics (Gallent, 2015, 108). The process of change is undergoing in rural areas and second home tourism is, whether positively or not, part of it: the concept of rurality itself is under question, with the differentiation of many degrees of rurality based on population patterns in the countryside where social actors and power relations are continuously challenged by the pressures of globalization. The countryside has a new meaning as an **arena for recreation, leisure and tourism** (Müller, 2002): rurality has not disappeared, but it is deeply changing in its features, engendering mutations in the core topics of a **renewed rural sociology** (Osti, 1993).

As remarked by Macchiavelli (2011), in Italy a deep knowledge about holiday homes is still missing, and apparently needed, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Giving the difficulty to socially, economically and environmentally define the impacts produced by second homes in the Italian rural context, also due to the extreme heterogeneity of the typologies of spaces of our territory, it is possible to trace a geography of the modifications occurring at local level, starting from individual case studies that can enrich a wider narrative.

From the empirical observation of second homes patterns in rural Italy, different typologies of tourism linked to secondary houses are given, mainly related to the process that led to their acquisition and subsequent use: a) purchase of an existing rural house (renovated or to be renewed) by non-local urban/rural citizens; b) inheritance of one (two, three, etc…) rural property by urban/rural dwellers from local family members; c) construction of a new purpose-built second house; d) secondary homes acquired as family investment strategy (Paris, 2009) for tourism scopes; e) purchase of a second home as a retirement destination.

Although researchers and policy makers can rely on an extensive literature about second home tourism all over the world, including some efforts to build up a proper theoretical framework (Hall, 2004), in Italy a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon is still missing both at a national and at a local level, thus preventing appropriate spatial policies and the setting of effective planning tools.

Italian data set about numbers and regional distribution of second homes are provided by the Italian official statistics provider (ISTAT) and by the Department of Finance of the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance. Another relevant but indirect source of information is the taxation system: the individual identification Italian system, as in other European Countries, requires a clear distinction between primary and secondary home, thus taxes on properties, waste management and energy supplies deliver detailed information about second homes existence, spatial distribution and use. Statistics and reports about local levies could be valuable in exploring a phenomenon that is partially a ***hidden tourism*** (Battino, 2014, p. 16). In general, real estates' surveys in 2018 second home market showed positive trends on second homes purchasing, both for vacation activities (mainly in coastal areas) and as investment for rental purposes (mainly in cities) (data has to be related with tourists preference to renting rather than paying for hotel accommodation). 74% of people who purchase a second home in Italy are Italian nationals, while the remaining 26% are from other countries; in terms of the profile of these buyers, 16.9% are retirees.

Moreover, according to the Revenue Statistics 2018 by OECD, taxation burden in Italy has a double face. On one hand, tax rate on real estate in Italy is among the lowest compared to other EU Southern countries (6.6 % of total tax revenue in 2016): this may encourage foreigners to prefer buying secondary properties located in Italy. On the other hand, since 2000s the overall taxation burden for inhabitants resident in Italy is among the highest in Europe reaching 42.4% (tax-to-GDP) in 2017, so that Italy has acquired the reputation of being a country of over-taxed citizens (with a relative low services provision level): international retirement candidates (if coming from Countries with a lower total tax rate) may thus be discouraged to move to Italy for later retirement. Eventually, Gate-away.com states that international investors are now

looking for new undiscovered areas in Italy in which to experience a less touristy and more authentic Italian lifestyle.

Investigations about second homes in the Sardinia island have been carried on, to map and survey the economic and social advantages as well as pressures on coastal landscape of massive **touristification** as a consequence of growing demand for beach facilities and recreational seasonal activities (Battino, 2014; Gallent, 2015). Most of researches about the Italian declination of the phenomenon point out a critical look about secondary dwellings (and dwellers) in mountain regions, considered as a secondary territory of the metropolitan living (Ferrero, 1998, p. 61). Valleys have been colonized for many decades by the urban lifestyle as metropolitan peripheries and their physical, economic and cultural landscapes have been modified by second home tourism. Ferrero, in his early work on mountain areas in Piedmont, detects a lack of attention about the second homes issue in Italian spatial and social planning practices; thus, he suggests a toolkit for public policies based on the a) reduction of land consumption, b) enhancement of local needs, c) reuse rather than new buildings stock, d) rationalization of the accommodation local offer, in order to enhance second homes role and heritage. Fifteen years later, gathering data from municipalities in the Dolomiti UNESCO area and analysing demographic dynamics in the Alps, Elmi and Perlik outline the correlation among place-based governance and demographic and living patterns, highlighting the distinction among second homes and multilocal dwellings in the resettlement of some marginalized areas in the transition from traditional touristic models into leisure landscapes (Elmi and Perlik, 2015, p. 12).

Recent perspectives on second homes impacts have been converted from mostly negative to favourable ones, based on studies highlighting how extra-local dwellers may contribute to **rural local development and revitalization**, looking at them as contributors to refresh rural economy rather than burdens for the local community. Under the lens of sociological aspects, it has been argued that there is another side of the coin: that is, visitors from outside bring into local communities different perspectives about rural lifestyle, new forms of knowledge, more connected to urbanity, and **extended social networks** (Rye, 2011, p. 265). These external new elements can be primary source of social conflicts as well as unexpected cultural contaminations that led to new practices and rural-urban collaborations.

As stated by Gallent (2014, 179): seen from this perspective, the social transformation within rural areas, triggered in part by new patterns of residence, is not a 'loss of community', but an overlay of past dense 'person-to-person' interactions with more complex, extended and open networks. He stresses the positive contribution of second home owners, seen as potential source of **bridging social capital** (Gallent, 2014, p. 183) rather than merely consumers of

rural space. In most cases, neo-rurals are eager to be involved in the daily process of community building, thus actively taking part in the construction and management of the rural space. They may sustain and contribute to the local resources enhancement with contrasting mindsets and extra-local social relations, that in some cases can trigger conflicts, but in some others can foster desirable arenas of dialogue and mutual exchange, through **the revitalization of places as a relational systems** (dell'Agnese, 2018).

The debate about the links between the future of rural areas and the second homes impacts and, in general, about rural change is still crucial for current research in terms of economic, social and environmental actions to be implemented in order to improve the quality of life for rural communities, still suffering from having been invisible to the planning system for too many years. Applied studies are required to disentangle controversies about which are the consequences of the second home tourism, aimed at unfolding the relations among planning regulations, place-based governance and the demographic and living patterns in rural areas.

1.5 Project overview and research questions

In the present research, second home tourism will be investigated as ***a process of both dwelling and being*** (as they are closely related), mainly discussing the interactive capacity of the extra-locals with the local environment and community but avoiding looking at these two aspects in exclusionary and hierarchical terms (Gallent, 2007, p. 104).

The present research project investigates how the countryside in the Italian context is responding to global challenges since WWII, with a focus on the contribution provided by a specific category of temporary residents, second homeowners. The final goal is to reveal which pathway better responds to the major global, regional and local *drivers of change*, with a focus on the anthropogenic ones (Wilson, 2012). In doing so, an in-depth incursion into the second home tourism in rural areas is proposed, to contribute to the limited existing literature on the topic.

Recent investigations in the field of tourism studies have detected a growing interest in **destination resilience** towards climate change, disasters, global economic crisis and disruptive events (Amore et al., 2018). After Covid-19 sanitary emergency, the concern about local and global response to catastrophic and fast disturbances is constantly increasing among both institutions and the civil society and mobility human practices have been targeted as multipliers of negative impacts. However, less attention is devoted to community re-action to slow but significant processes of change, such as those occurring in the rural and inner areas since the 1950s. Among those, second home tourism has been investigated as a challenging

phenomenon for local communities, sometimes being the main cause of contested space issues that may vary between places and over time.

Starting from the preliminary insights offered by interviewees participating in the research, the present study aims at framing second homes patterns in rural Italy as individual and community behaviours that may **foster a resilient local attitude towards global and local challenges**, responding to such *disturbances seen as an opportunity for change and development* (Hopkins, 2010).

The final aim of the research project is to assess the contribution of the second home tourism to **community resilience in rural areas**, at different times by looking at population dynamics, policy strategies and societal modifications. In other terms, the research will highlight which are the individual social practices linked to second home tourism that foster the process of building a higher level of community resilience at the local scale, comparing different landscapes of second homes in the same rural region.

According to the gaps in the Italian second home tourism literature, as mentioned above, and following the objectives of the research, three main questions arise about which are the social and spatial dimensions related to the second home tourism patterns in the Italian rural areas.

The following research questions are proposed:

How does second home tourism foster resilience in rural communities? How does place attachment shape second homeowners individual behaviours in rural communities?

Some sub-questions have been set out, grouped by three sub-topics: second home tourism will be investigated as a possible actor for rural revitalisation (a), as an agent in the commodification of landscape process (b) and a potential source of bridging social capital (c) between urban and rural contexts. The following research questions have been subject to periodical review, in accordance with the iterative qualitative research process adopted (see next paragraph about the methodological approach).

The research develops a critical description and a **socio-spatial analysis** of the second homes phenomenon in the Italian rural context, seeking to outline the patterns of change that are linked to it through an in-depth analysis of a representative case study in Piedmont. The purpose is to explore and explain the multifaceted reality of the residential tourism in rural areas, highlighting the positive and negative impacts on the territory and on the host communities. Moreover, in the research new methodological tools will be tested to investigate

about the phenomenon through the use of visuals and mapping processes, so to offer possible new paths in future tourism studies.

The analysis of the current frame of rural second homes will imply a national, regional and local framework of the main policies, initiatives and legal regulations, that favour the tourism related to secondary houses. The present methodology and findings are expected to be relevant in the tourism field as well as in the rural and planning studies, as they could provide new data and theoretical understandings about how second home tourism in rural areas may become a tool of local development to fight deprivation and abandonment, based on a **vital relational system** (dell'Agnese 2018, 158).

Research topic	Research main questions
Second Home Tourism in rural and inner areas	How does second home tourism foster resilience in rural communities?
Research sub-topic	**Research sub-questions**
Place attachment	How does place attachment shape second homeowners individual and collective social practices in rural communities?
Resilience	How the patterns of multiple living spatially affect rural landscape?
	How is community resilience strengthen through second home tourism in rural areas?
	What is the role of social capital linked to second homes patterns in building resilience?
Rural revitalisation	Which resources (knowledge, skills, funding, etc..) do SHT bring into local rural communities?
	How urban-rural linkage may foster a sustainable multicultural tourism?

Table 1 Research questions and sub-questions.

The empirical findings from the selected case study will bring to light, partially or totally, the answers to the research questions, by which a contribution will be given to the Italian gap in the literature.

Understanding the benefits as well as the downsides that might be generated by the second home *users* (Volo, 2017) in terms of resilience building will provide useful insights to inform policies and local agendas for the revitalization of rural destinations.

1.6 The methodological approach

Despite the great effort to conceive a common framework and a shared set of definitions and tools to analyse the present issue, still some divergences regarding the methodological approach that should be applied to second homes studies are in place. As Gallent clearly stated, the key problem lies in the definition of the second home phenomenon and it implies methodologically different paths: from the theoretical point of view, the core concern with the definition of the social phenomenon, both in naming and features, is fundamental in the process of a proper selection of literature and in the selection of the data collection based on reliable sources. If some space is left for uncertainties in one or both of the two phases, the system is open to *inaccuracy* (Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2000, p. 11) and the eventuality of uneven planning or economic measures becomes a concrete risk. To make things even more complicated there is the range of disciplinary approaches to the field of inquiry, that goes from housing studies to rural geography, from regional planning to economics, from tourism to mobility and demographic studies (Hall, 2004).

The main contributions to the topic come from empirical researches, in which data, interviews and questionnaires are aggregated through extensive fieldwork; geographers, sociologists and urban planners turned themselves into ethnographers, in the attempt to explore the articulation of macro-processes in micro-realities (O'Reilly, 2003). Academic researches on second home tourism mainly carried on through qualitative research are based on surveys and interviews at the micro level, in order to better grasp the sentiment of local communities towards extra-locals.

Georeferenced data about the distribution of second homes geographies are usually coming from censuses or data collections for specific purposes, such as tourism. With some data set available about French second homes, Clout was the first to develop a concentration index (Clout, 1971, p. 536) and map the spatial distribution as well as local characteristics of second homes, that were increasing in French rural areas from the 1950s and diverging in equipment and distance from urban areas. Among the variety of factors that determine second homes national and regional patterns, Clout stressed the concept of recreational place utility (Clout, 1971, p. 546), an alternative approach to define how inheritance, regional attachment and cultural attraction (meant as the social environment of a community) are fundamental choice criteria for the location of homes devoted to vacational use. More recently, with his investigation at the national level, Rye too attempts to outline rural populations' perspective on the phenomenon in Norway (Rye, 2011, p. 264), in a quantitative analysis based on statistical data.

However, quantitative and statistical researches are few and depends on the geographical location, due to a high difficulty in gathering and modelling data, often protected rather than shared by municipalities or governmental institutions (Janoschka and Haas, 2014). Nor nationally neither internationally, the spatial mobility of contemporary life has yet being integrated into the administrative system, that is poorly equipped to manage the implications of the new forms of mobility, migration and tourism (Hall, 2015, p. 4).

No specific hypothesis have been considered, giving that residential tourism is a strongly situated phenomenon, responding to diverse economic, political and social mechanisms that differs from state to state, and even from a region to another one (Romita, 2010, p. 31).

In the preliminary phase of the research project design (see Figure 1), an extensive literature review has been produced by the researcher, in order to: (i) gain an overall knowledge of the second home tourism international strands of research, that are traced back to the '30s and had a boost first in the '70s (Clout, 1971; Downing and Dower, 1973; Coppock, 1977) and then in the first decade of the 2000s (Gallent, 2000; Hall and Müller, 2004; Paris, 2009); (ii) critically explore the patterns of the multiple dwelling phenomenon in the rural areas of the world, by tackling controversial issues such as its correlation with the rural restructuring process, rural gentrification, displacement of rural inhabitants and environmental impacts; (iii) map the invisible geographies of holiday homes in Italy, by looking at the informal and unregulated phenomenon of the residential tourism in the Italian academic research field (Ferrero, 1998; Romita, 1999; Perlik, 2009; Volo, 2011, 2018; Perri, 2013; Battino, 2014; King at al., 2019).

From the researcher's understanding, the resulting contemporary picture about the Italian research context is that a critical approach is still missing about the investigation of multifaceted reality of the residential tourism, based on the lack of in-depth local studies embedded in the economic, social and cultural environment.
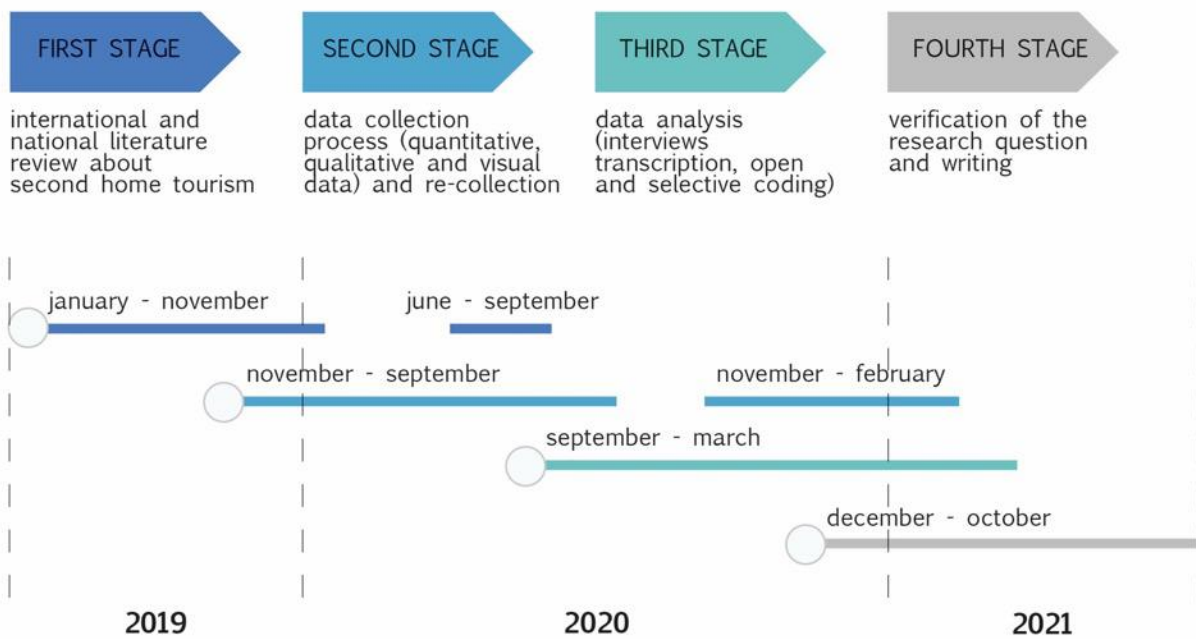
Fig. 4 Research design: stages and deadlines

The topic of the present research has been poorly investigated by Italian scholars. This implies that the researcher is moving blinded out of the scene of the most fruitful researches in the second homes field in a national context could be full of interesting insights. As remarked by Macchiavelli (2011, 21), in Italy a deep knowledge about holiday homes is missing, and apparently needed, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. One of the leading causes of this gap in literature is certainly the shortage of primary and secondary data, followed by a widespread disregard of the topic by politicians and policy makers, with the exception of some isolated cases. Starting from that, the present research project has been set up upon the need for an extensive collection of both primary and secondary data about the phenomenon, with a focus on individual experiences and strategies and related consequences and outcomes at the planning level.

The research strategy here proposed shows a preference on investigating the second homes issue through the lenses of its protagonists (i.e. the second homes owners), within the frame of a qualitative approach applied through a wide set of tools oriented to the exploration and the engagement with empirical facts. From the ontological point of view, the research will be set up on a *interpretative paradigm* (Schwandt, 1994), that leads to a cognitive process based on the direct and fundamental interaction between the researcher and the subject (Corbetta, 2014). The researcher's aim is to gather an in-depth understanding of the

phenomenon of second homes in rural areas, and in doing so a personal process of interpreting and making sense of the second home experience will be carried on, giving evidence of the biography of the researcher (architect with social and cultural commitment, living in the case study area and being personally connected to the local social network). Taking advantage of this privileged condition, the researcher will be hopefully able to make common sense out of individual experiences, comparing the themes emerging from the empirical data with relevant theoretical insights, which are intentionally not fixed in advance (Jordan and Gibson 2004, p. 227).

An ***iterative qualitive research process*** (Gaudet and Robert, 2018, p. 13) will be applied: multiple themes will be revealed in a long-lasting journey of going back and forth from reality to analysis, continuously checking memos and field notes and doing and re-doing interviews accordingly to gradually emerging data. Always having in mind what has been discovered during the last decades thanks to the initial review of the literature, research questions will be tested and reassembled at different stages in order to eventually deliver a novel general understanding of the phenomenon of second homes in rural areas. The theoretical concepts emerging from the literature review, such as the notions of *rural change, shadow tourism, multilocality, bridging social capital, commodification of the landscape*, will be considered as reference paradigms useful to construct the empirical research and to direct the coding activity for the data collected during the field work, providing an informed framework (Bowen 2006, 20). Following the path suggested by Blumer in 1954, these ideas will be considered as ***sensitizing concepts*** as they are key elements in the present research, *giving the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances* (Blumer, 1954, p. 7).

To achieve the goal of the research, i.e. to map the diverse geographies about second home ownership and to deeply understand the patterns of residential tourism in rural areas, a **case study has been chosen by the researcher as the empirical stance** to be observed and from which collect and analyse data about second homes. The selected case study fixes the boundaries for the collection of empirical data, marked by the homogeneity of territorial characteristics (e.g. historical evolution, political assets, cultural heritage, natural resources, landscape).

A secondary analysis will be carried out through the assembling of contents available online and offline. At the **very beginning** of the research, a national and regional framework about laws and policies on second homes in Italy has been traced, as a presentation of all the public and private, top-down and bottom-up initiatives that may foster, encourage or discourage

second home ownership or, more in general, tourism, shaping trends and local concerns through the analysis of newspapers articles and regional reports.

In order to get a first impression of the consistency of the phenomenon, some useful **quantitative data** were gathered from both national and local sources such as the ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics) data warehouse, the Piedmont Region and the local municipalities in the case study area. Statistical data such as unoccupied dwellings, ratio between the total number of dwellings and the total number of families (Macchiavelli, 2011, p. 140), population with secondary residence in the municipality, but also data from taxes on waste collection management and electricity supply were useful in detecting the extent – but not the social and cultural aspects - of this peculiar kind of tourism. However, it must be highlighted how the second home tourism has been defined as a *shadow tourism* (Corbetta 2014, 313; Battino 2014, 16), difficult to be grasped merely through numbers.

Quantitative data has been analysed through the use of **QGIS software**, in order to map demographic dynamics, the percentage of empty and unoccupied dwellings, real second homes numbers from the Water Supply Companies of the case study area (see Map in 6.3 section of the Appendix).

The **second phase** was then based on the data collection process for the **in-depth analysis of a representative case study in Piedmont** (Italy): quantitative, qualitative and visual methods are applied, although in-depth face to face interviews are considered privileged tools among all to investigate situations, processes, attitudes and behaviour of the actors at the core of the research project. Divided into architectural categories ranging from mobile accommodations to fixed luxury buildings, second houses can't be fully understood only through their housing aspects. The existence of a second home doesn't necessarily mean that a touristic activity and a recreative use of it are undergoing: that is why it is suggested not to rely solely on quantitative reports about architectural distribution of second homes, but to go deeper into the inquiry about mobility fluxes and seasonal use of secondary residences. Rather, it is their functional use (mainly recreational) the main criterion to be considered in mapping their existence and distribution, followed by typologies of ownership, amount of time spent and the reasons underneath their use.

Summing up, **primary data** are provided by:
- **semi-structured in-depth interviews** in the case study area (in Italian and English) with subject selection based on the snowball technique, conducted both offline and online, due to Covid-19 ongoing emergency;

- **public discussions in dedicated groups on social networks** (Second Homes Italy, Expats in Langhe and Monferrato) ;
- **visual mapping** through pictures and videos done by both the researchers and the interviewees.

Secondary data are gathered through:
- **statistical data** (ISTAT, regional tourism and commerce observatory);
- **water provision companies data** about non-residents clients;
- online newspapers articles and journals.

Due to **Covid-19 restrictions** during the lockdown occurred from March to early June, meetings and rural festivals were cancelled and face-to-face engaging situations were commonly avoided. Thus, 17 interviews were conducted by phone, skype, WhatsApp and email. No data were collected in terms of observations during group meetings and events, as planned at the beginning of the research.

Interviews have been collected by the researcher in audio-visual format and later **transcribed** throughout the use of the tool called **NVivo transcription**, but the coding activity has been conducted in the original language of the interview (Italian – sometimes Piedmontese dialect too – and English).

The **third phase** has been identified with the analytical stage, based on open and selected **coding**. Patterns of individual and community values, meanings and behaviours emerged from the interviews, integrated with primary and secondary data. During the fourth phase, data coding has been verified to test if data collection and their interpretation has provided a successful answer to the research question. Some extra interviews were collected in the last months of the research journey to supplement missing information.

The core of the data collection phase is based on **57 semi-structured in-depth interviews**, carried out by the researcher in the whole province. Interviewees have been chosen accordingly to the snowballing technique, recruiting participants by direct knowledge or indication by other participants or through dedicated groups on social networks (Facebook and Twitter). Nevertheless, the selection has been directed towards subjects from the following categories: second home users (27), political representatives (8), real estate agents (4), professionals (4), no-profit local associations (2), neorurals (3) and rural inhabitants (9). Interviews were conducted in both Italian and English language, due to the presence of foreigners second home owners and neorurals, coming from different Countries (UK, Norway,

Denmark, Germany and Netherlands). Structured questions were reassembled at different stages of the data collection phase and they were formulated starting from the theoretical concepts emerged from the literature review (some of them are: place attachment, rural change, social capital, rural tourism, participatory planning, landscape commodification).
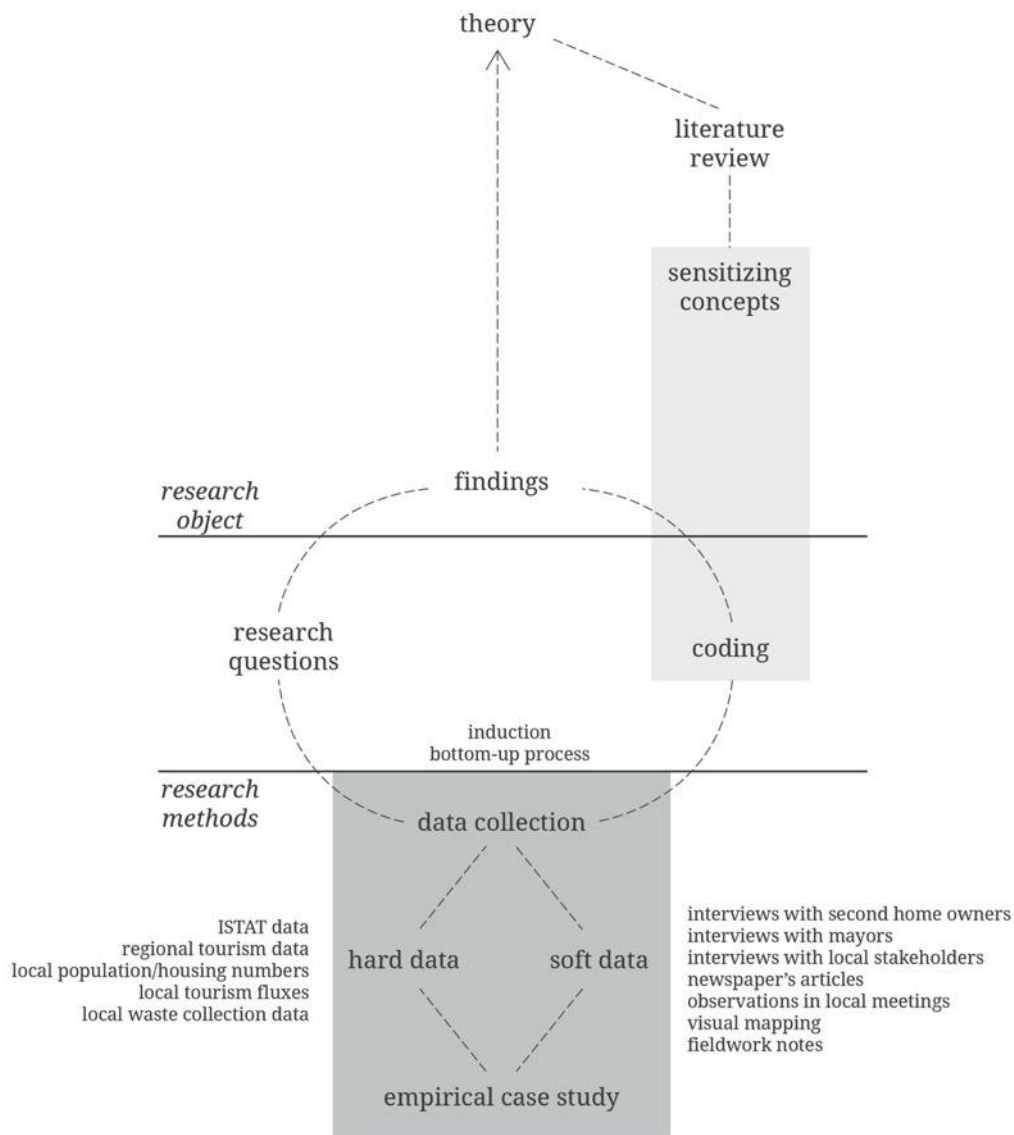
Fig. 5 The Iterative Qualitative Research Process proposed for the present research.

Following the pathway suggested by Blumer, they are considered as sensitizing concepts as they are key elements that give the researcher a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances (Blumer 1954, 7). The semi-structured in-depth interview has been chosen as a flexible technique that relies on vis-à-vis communication, basically on empathy: the researcher is able to freely conduct the interview with an essential guidance that let the interviews be comparable (Jordan and Gibson 2004, 222). Observations during the

interviews will also be part of the research, as a key element to better understand feelings, lifestyles and opinions expressed by the second home owners.
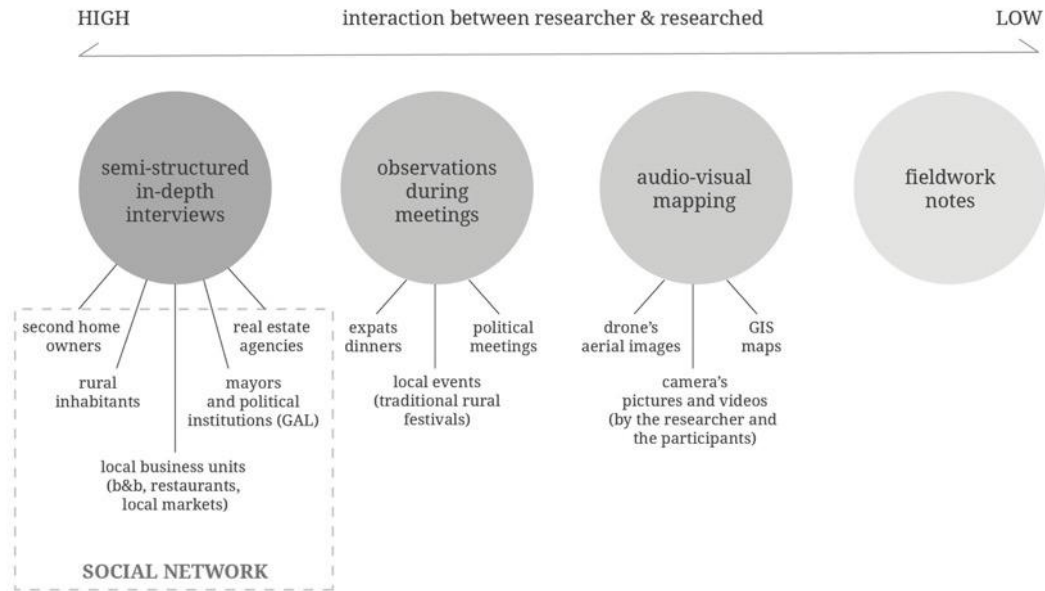
Fig. 6Author's elaboration. Primary data sources.

Underpinned by a renewed interest in visual culture in geography and sociology, the use of visual methodologies appears to be highly useful for the present purposes, especially looking at the results in the kind of knowledge generated. Varies techniques such as the use of both informants' and researchers' photographs for purposes of photo-elicitation and as social actions that might empower the participants involved in the research process (Oldrup and Carstensen, 2012; Anzoise *et al.* 2017, 182) and drone's aerial images have been taken into account to map second homes patterns in the rural environment.

Moreover, a **visual atlas** (see Appendix) has been created to collect qualitative information about the social, cultural and natural environment to better grasp the second home landscapes. Architectural elements as well as landscape features has been captured by the researcher eye and associated with the data coming from the interviews. Some of the interviewees agreed to share pictures and videos of the daily activities they perform when they're at their second homes.

The analysis of the qualitative data collected was carried out using the **Nvivo** software.

2 _____ Place attachment: contemporary theories and concepts

Towards a theoretical framework about place attachment / Does mobility affect place attachment? / What role for the physical environment and why we are not talking about landscape / Place attachment as a paradigm for community resilience / 'Home sweet home': attachment and the experience of at-homeness / Bonding with multiple places as a second homeowner
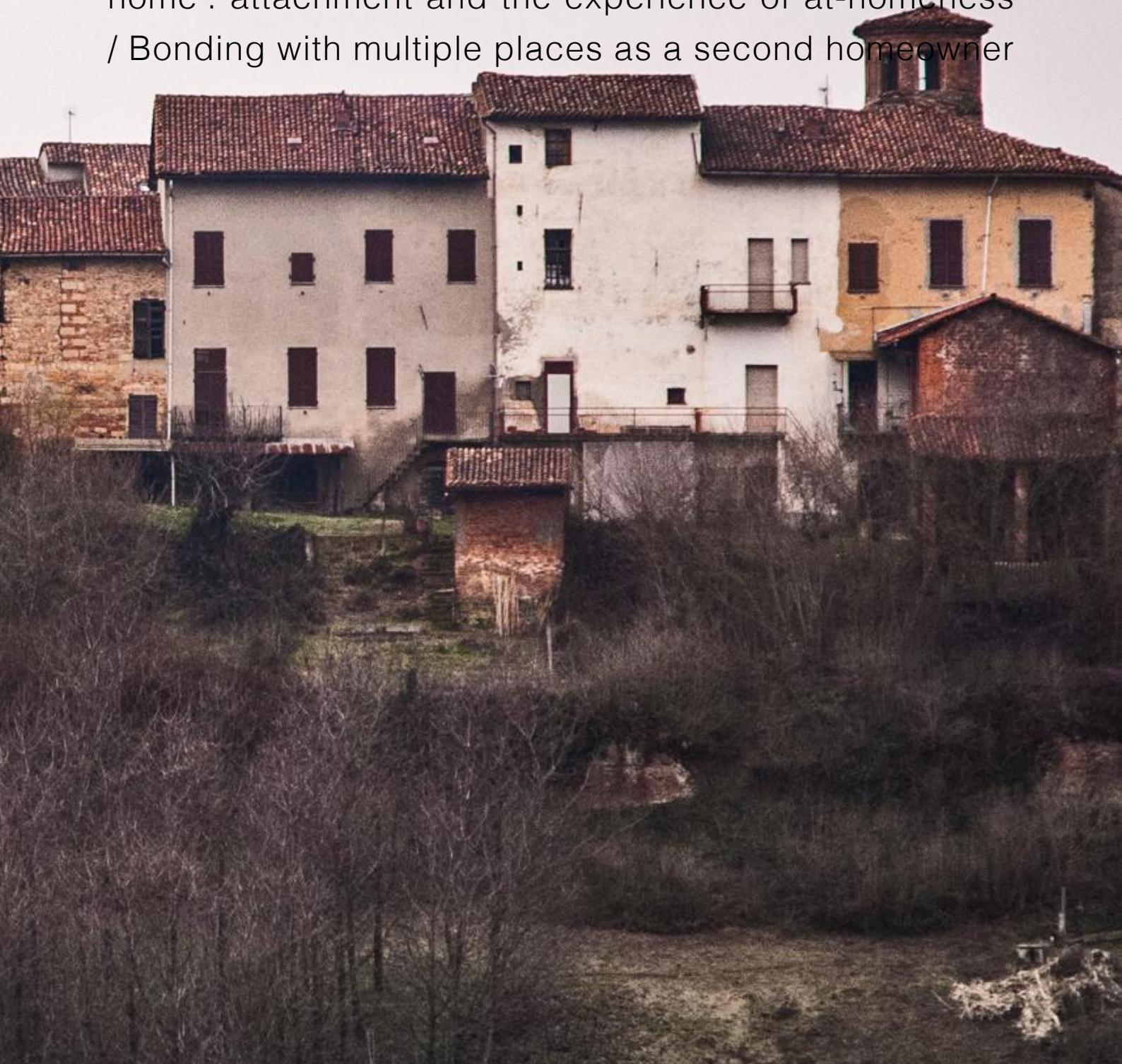
2/ PLACE ATTACHMENT: CONTEMPORARY THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

Resilience has been defined as 'the ability of a system, community or society exposed to slow or fast shocks or disturbances to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from shocks or disturbances including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions' (Wilson, 2012). In Italy investigations around the concept of resilience have been carried out by researchers especially in the academic context of regional sciences, focusing on economic resilience (Faggian et al., 2018; Urso at al., 2019), with only few studies attempting to fill the gap with qualitative analysis that takes into account also relations between actors and socio-cultural drivers (Fiorino, 2015; Kelly at al., 2015). Moreover, much of the literature about community resilience linked to Italian case studies has been produced around natural hazards and catastrophic events such as earthquakes, by which Italy has been severely affected in the last decades with economic, social and political issues that remain unsolved still nowadays (Fantechi et al., 2020).

A conceptualization for destination resilience from a multilevel perspective has been recently proposed by Amore, Prayag and Hall (2018): the tourism system is framed into four different levels, landscape, regime, niche and actors, through which the resilience building process is investigated (Figure 2). In this framework, based on the work of Geels (2002), the impact of individuals actions is highlighted, stressing how the resilience of the whole system depends on interactions and linkages between the levels. Therefore, as individual resilience contributes to the destination resilience, it can be argued that social resilience (Hall and Lamont, 2013) is built upon the individual behaviours as well as the community strategies and power relationships developed by all or some of the stakeholders, e.g. second homeowners or newcomers.

This perspective leads to the concept of social capital, defined as a network of *social relations which binds individual and collective actors* (Trigilia, 2001). Aldrich and Meyer (2015) pointed out how the role of social capital (in its main three types, bonding, bridging and linking capital) is crucial in building the community ability to quickly re-act to catastrophes, being the actual infrastructure that helps individuals both to be prepared and to recover after the crisis occurred. Thus, the quality of life in a given area may highly depend on how the social capital is accumulated and used and the contribution of temporary residents may give access to additional resources and possible instances of social benefit for local communities (Gallent 2014, 2015).

Lastly, a third concept will be integrated in the theoretical framework, to better understand and analyse individual behaviour towards a specific context: place attachment, that is the also process by which second home users usually establish long-lasting relationships with the place and their recreational homes (Kaltenborn, 1997). In the community resilience context, place attachment may positively or negatively affect the decision-making processes by second homeowners, especially towards appropriate disaster mitigation strategies (Adie, 2020).

2.1 Towards a theoretical framework about place attachment

Over the past fifty years, place attachment theoretical studies and related empirical applications have linked place bonding to several contemporary issues such as mobility and multilocal living.

Theoretical assumptions on place attachment are highly dependent on the chosen approach towards the conceptual definition of place and the process through which a place itself is determined, perceived and lived by the human experience. While the general definition of place attachment as the emotional bonding process between people and peculiar places clearly emerges from the existing literature, a further step is often required in the understanding of the meaning of place, as multiple interpretations have been unfolded from different perspectives and disciplines.

From a phenomenological approach, place can't be drawn as the physical context disconnected from individuals that relate with it: on the opposite, it is the phenomenon of people experiencing a specific environment, which, on its turn, reflects that 'lived emplacement' (Seamon, 2014, 13). Places should be investigated looking at the meaning assigned to them by individuals, groups or society (Williams, Roggenbuck, 1989), at the crossroads of the relationship among the self, the others and the environment.

In 1991 the geographer Doreen Massey published the renowned and illuminating article entitled 'A global sense of place' (Massey, 1991) on the journal 'Marxism Today', discussing the concept of locality and proposing an alternative interpretation of the notion of place, in the light of an increasingly mobile world. She pointed out how places have multiple identities, in the same way as individuals do, constructed over a 'constellation of social relations' made up of interactions occurring in a particular locus and changing over time. This alternative concept of place, a 'progressive' one in her own words, implies that places are processes happening in the space, with blurring boundaries, and their specificity and uniqueness are determined by the connections created and re-created over time by human beings, thought as social agents. Therefore, relations, more than places themselves, are affected by globalization by embedding different degrees of inequalities and conflicts. By exploring all the 'layers of peoples' in a certain

place at a certain frame in time, we can manage to investigate about that global sense of place, emerging from the territory, thus intended as a 'bounded portion of relational space' (dell'Agnese, 2013).

However, studies centred on the significance of place in the human experience appeared in the early '70s (Tuan, 1974; Relph, 1976, Agnew and Duncan, 1989), as a direct expression of the collective efforts towards the definition of a theory of place and the demonstration of the relations between place and other key concepts such as space, power, identity and community. Since the concept of place is at the foundations of many research fields, studies and contributions come from different disciplines, including geography, architecture, urban planning, anthropology, and sociology (Hummon, 1992). A place is a space imbued with a meaning (Tuan, 1977, 6), assigned by humans through experiences or through a cultural process (Altman and Low, 1992, 5).

Some previous studies already discussed the 'struggle for place' in relation to modernity, arguing that place attachment processes still persist in modern society 'despite the increased mobility of the population and despite the production of standardized landscapes' (Ley, 1989, 41)

Place attachment is not a static condition of the human being, but rather a constantly evolving process as it changes over time and space. That is to say, following Seamon's interpretation of place processes (2014), that the evolution of place attachment during individuals lives are interconnected with the transitions of places themselves.

As portrayed by Maria Vittoria Giuliani (2003) in her essay about the contribution of place attachment theories to environmental psychology, the first studies about the special bonding between people and places trace back to the sixties, with a strong urban connotation at a neighbourhood scale and involving the concept of identity and self-representation (Fried, 1963; Janowitz and Kasarda, 1974).

After the studies based on place carried out in the late '70s, a renewed attention to people-place relations led to new theoretical and empirical streams of research, in which place attachment and sense of place became the subjects of studies based on both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. Numerous works towards place attachment that were published in the **'80s** also cope with the **concept of home** and its associated meanings, such as rootedness (Seamon, 1979; Buttimer, 1980; Tuan, 1977; 1980) Fried, 1982; Dovey, 1985; Sebba and Churchman, 1986; Sixsmith, 1986) and the psychological bonds that tie residents with specific typologies of settlements, influencing their own identity and mobility choices (Feldman, 1990). Moreover, studies carried on in the 1990s (Shumaker and Taylor, 1983; Kaplan, 1984;

Low and Altman, 1992) stressed the importance of the **emotional sphere** involved in the creation of place attachment, meant as a **people-place bonding that involves affect towards an environment**.

Low and Altman in 1992, American scholars in the environmental psychology field, devoted an entire volume to the conceptual and empirical exploration of place attachment, with contributions from researchers with diverse backgrounds and experiences from different cultural and historical contexts. In this first attempt to develop a wider and deeper understanding of the topic, place attachment has been explored by focusing on the bonding processes between individuals at different stages in life towards landscape, homes, public places and even objects that embody special memories. It revealed a new scientific awareness and an increasing attention to **the processes of attachment and making of places**, by focusing for the first time on the practices and behavioural patterns generated by feelings and cognition towards the environment, often based on social relations that occur in places.
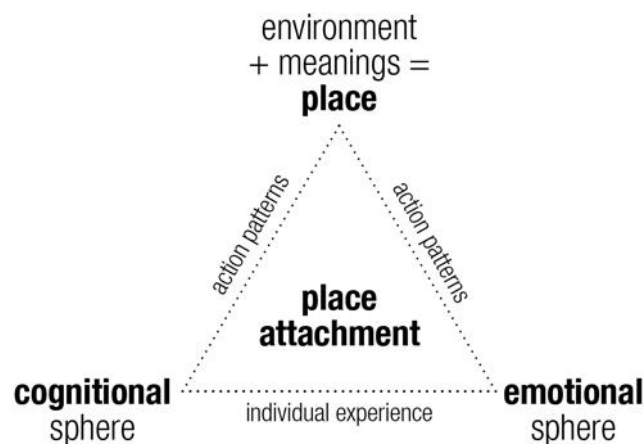
Fig. 7 Diagram based on the three elements of place attachment proposed by Low and Altman (1992)

Several attempts to construct a shared definition of place attachment have been made and efforts go into the direction of organizing a common framework. Scannell and Gifford (2010) structured a tripartite framework based on place attachment different definitions in the literature. The concept is therefore constituted by three dimensions: 1) the individual sphere and the collective and cultural meanings influencing it (**the person dimension**); 2) the cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements that characterize the way people engage with places (**the psychological process dimension**); 3) the physical and social features of the place itself (**the place dimension**).
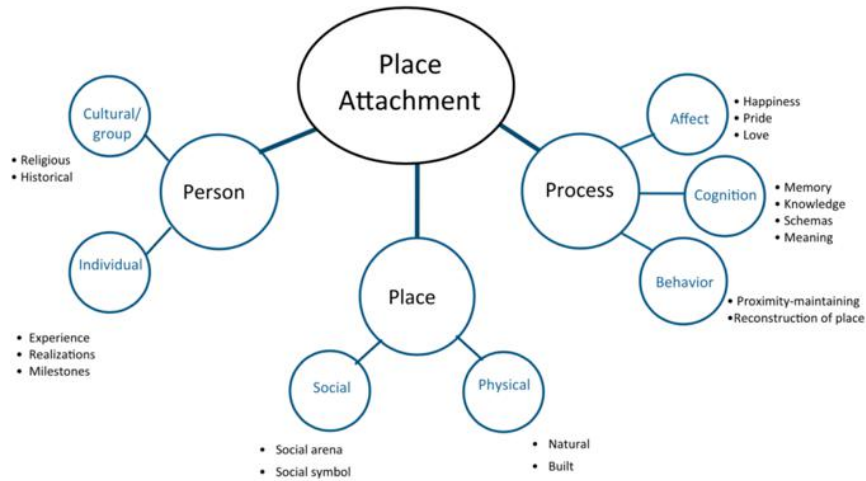
Fig. 8 The tripartite model of place attachment proposed by Scannell and Gifford (2010)

The substantial amount of literature produced in the last fifty years about place attachment often crosses the borders of the topic, by touching multiple adjoining theoretical concepts such as sense of place, place identity or rootedness. It has been argued that sense of place is a broader concept, that includes place attachment and place meanings, although sometimes these two components might be perceived as conflated (Masterson et al., 2017).

2.2 Does mobility affect place attachment?

Contemporary society is no longer based on the condition of being stable in a place (Urry) and beside this, places are continuously changing behind the local effects of global phenomena (e.g. climate change, financialization, populism). 'Place is an organized world of meaning. It is essentially a static concept. If we see the world as process, constantly changing, we should not be able to develop any sense of place': Tuan (1977, 179) acknowledges the complicated relation between mobility and the sense of place, where different places in our life pathways trace an invisible region, they might be familiar to us but their 'feeling of place' is difficult to be grasped.

Patterns of movements

Mobility and place attachment are not two 'mutually exclusive phenomena' (Gustafson, 2006, 24). Yet their analysis in the literature often implies the use of dichotomies, such as those mentioned by Gustafson (2006) - locals versus cosmopolitans and roots versus routes -, which, on the contrary, might be useful conceptual tools to prove the necessary relationship between place attachment and mobility.

Following the flourishing of studies on mobility and on the transformations occurring in the tourism, work and migration sectors with practices affected by a greater fluidity (both

voluntary and forced), many scholars tackled the issue of the **assumed fragility of the person-place bonding** typical of the contemporary man.

Although attachment may occur towards symbolic or imagined places, physical places are the ones deeply investigated in the literature, while processes of bonding may happen through direct or virtual experience. Therefore, places may be considered also as '**medium**' (Riley, 1992), where individual or collective experiences take place

The concept of **'place elasticity'** has also been formulated to prove that 'long-term engagement with a place is maintained regardless of continuous residence in that place' (Barcus and Brunn, 2010, 281), meaning that **place attachment is built upon an intangible relationship with place that goes beyond the actual presence in that place.** According to the two authors Barcus and Brunn work based upon interviews and surveys in rural Appalachian counties in US, with the spreading of new communication technologies and transportation systems places boundaries have been modified to the extent that place bonding processes extend to a new level, based on how the place itself is 'firmly rooted in the psyche of an individual' and on a continuous 'desire to perpetuate an association with the place' (285). They defined three attributes to place elasticity: (1) **strong bonds**, which also includes attachment to land and landscape; (2) **permanence**, that is, either direct or indirect connections to place, e.g. through family reunions; (3) **portability**, that element that allow individuals to carry with them their place attachment in their mobile patterns, e.g. staying updated with local newspapers. In their field research, both permanent and mobile populations showed a deep connection with the home county, providing additional evidence about **migration, mobility and place attachment**.

In his study about residents, out-migrants, holiday homeowners and tourist of the Bank Peninsula in New Zealand, Hay (1998) explores the quality of the sense of place at different stages in life, by focusing on additional aspects other than place attachment, such as the feeling of dwelling and the aesthetic features of places. Among the various results, he points out how tourists and holiday homeowners are believed to be pervaded respectively by a superficial or partial sense of place, due to the limited length of permanence or residence in the area and a lack of involvement in community activities. Despite such conclusions, 70% of holiday homeowners expressed a 'strong attachment to the place', revealing a specific interest in the locale, for different reasons varying from childhood memories to continuous frequentation of the area in decades or through different generations.

2.3 What role for the physical environment and why we are not talking about landscape

For many decades scholars in the environmental psychology field focused their research about attachment and identity on the role of physical environments in shaping both the process of bonding and identification of self. In 1993, Cuba and Hummon were stating that available literature suggested that place identity is a product 'of both the qualities of places and the characteristics and relations of people to places' (Cuba and Hummon, 1993a, 115), implying that individual perspective matters in the shaping of place meanings. Particularly, they proved how place identification is determined by people's interpretation of it, through life experiences and the demographic modifications the community implicitly brings to places (Cuba and Hummon, 1993a, 126).

These place bonds are less about particular attributes of a place, but rather about how an individual perceives those attributes (Barcus and Brunn, 2010). In the era where consumerism and capitalism were the predominant form of society, social scientists and geographers highlighted the growing differences between rural and urban societies, describing the city habitat as a sort space dominated by 'placeness'. People dwelling in the countryside and in rural villages demonstrated to be more attached to their places than people living in bigger cities (Lewicka, 2005): it has also been explored how this reflects into the higher participation to organizations and local groups by rural dwellers, fostering a continuous increase in place attachment community processes (Anton and Lawrence, 2014).

2.4 Place attachment as a paradigm for community resilience

Giuliani (2003) outlined a general framework about the contributions to the theory of place attachment in the environmental psychology literature, highlighting the link with human geography and sociology through the concept of **local community** (148). Research on sense of place has linked its characteristics to the community theory as well, investigating in which forms settings, behaviours and meanings towards a place may affect and be affected by structures and actions by the local community (Stedman, 2006).

Since place meaning is thought to be mainly **'socially constructed'** upon personal experiences by many researchers (Stedman, 2003), the social dimension embedded in the concept of place itself (Tuan, 1974) implies that place attachment relies on the existence and quality of social relationships and networks.

Contributions about the relationship between place attachment and community come from literature in the **community attachment** research field as attachment to place may occur through social bonds (Scannell and Gifford, 2010). Community attachment has been defined as 'the extent and pattern of social participation and integration into community and sentiment or

affect toward the community' (McCool et al., 1994, 30) and many attempts have been made to measure it in vast or circumscribed communities, relying on different variables. Particularly, outcomes about the relevance of social bonds in the attachment towards the local community are explored in **rural sociology**. Local sentiments of the community were studied both in neighbourhoods and hamlets to assess the impact of **contemporary mass society**: larger urban dimensions are not negatively affecting **social ties** neither in urban nor in rural communities (Kasada and Janovits, 1974; Goudy, 1990; Stinner et al., 1990; Theodori and Luloff, 2000), that are rather expanded through geographical distances than contracted in space and time with the help of new communication means. In most of those studies **length of residency** plays a significant role in the development of a local social network and attachment process. Nevertheless, newcomers that choose to move into a specific rural town and environment may develop a strong sense of attachment to the local community in a short period of time, while highly attached long-time residents may show negative attitudes towards the impacts of external agents of change, such as tourism (McCool et al., 1994).

Early works about community attachment were also focused on the evaluation of the **community satisfaction**, mainly based on individual residents' perception about their quality of life in the neighbourhood or in the rural village, stressing the importance of both physical and social features of their environment. On the contrary, late community attachment research has focused on **emotional ties to place**, derived from **processes of local involvement, participation and integration** in the social fabric (Hummon, 1992).

A recent step forward has been made in the research about how sense of place may influence individuals, community and institutional responses to social, ecological, economic and event climate related changes. Masterson at al. (2017), in a study developed upon the outcomes of a Ph.D. course led by Richard Stedman at the Stockholm University, explored the hypothesis about how sense of place, and therefore place attachment, literature can be engaged with **socio-ecological systems studies** to detect place-related actions that lead to **adaptive strategies**. In other words, place attachment may contribute and support a community process of transition as a response to a forthcoming change (e.g. after a threatening event or a natural disaster), fostering a resilient attitude among inhabitants and organizations. In this framework different patterns of place attachment and opposed place meanings can play a role in **resilience processes**, even though social conflict between local actors may arise in the middle of the path. Although fieldworks about the topic are yet to be developed,

In the last 10 years, a flourishing number of studies have been concentrating upon place attachment as a driver for resilience towards climate change.

Among the contemplated actions resulting from a higher risks perception towards climate variations or from relevant losses in the ecosystem due to natural disasters, **migration or temporal relocation** are the ones directly involving place attachment. Bonding to place might play a crucial role in the decision-making process to either migrate away to find another location like home or staying under disrupted environmental conditions (Dandy et al., 2018).

2.5 'Home sweet home': attachment and the experience of at-homeness

"Do you feel at home here?" could be identified as one among the most recurrent open questions when interviewing about place and attachment to place, implying that the process of bonding to a peculiar location is somehow linked to the emotional state of feeling at home. Moreover, first studies on place and processes of attachment departed from the very essential action for human beings towards the environment in which they are immersed: **dwelling**. Therefore, home became the object of environmental, psychological and behavioural studies, as well as the concepts of **'rootedness'** and **'at-homeness'** (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977, 1980; Seamon,1979), while a diffuse concern about 'a growing rupture between people and places' was arising among scholars due to an increasing residential mobility (Feldman, 1990, 184). Theoretical conceptualizations about the emotional state of feeling at home emerged, with related **identity issues** at different scales and geographic levels (Cuba and Hummon, 1993a) as **home settings and environmental tangible contexts** (e.g., settlements in the city or in the suburbs) **were seen as the symbols of self, 'of the continuity of one's experiences'** (Feldman, 1990, 188).

As proposed in the transactional perspective promoted by Werner, Altman and Oxley (1985), homes might be considered as the result of the interaction of three elements, **people, places and psychological processes**, which are strongly influenced by time. They described the **processes through which individuals develop a certain typology of bond to home**: (1) social rules and social relationships; (2) affordances; (3) appropriation, attachment, and identity. While social rules and relationships are related to societal norms and cultural values and imply emotional and interpersonal links, the concept of affordance is based on the assumption that home is a functional space that people build up in order to respond to personal needs, which **may change in time** and through historical periods. In doing so, humans tend to attach meanings to home objects, spaces and to the environment in which the house is located. The framework proposed by the authors stresses the fact that both physical and psychological aspects and dynamic processes related to homes can't be disentangled or separately analysed, while temporal dimensions of homes are related to **meanings, uses and attitudes.**

Thus commonly understood as places that **embody physical, social, psychological and emotional meanings**, homes are to be addressed more as spiritual contexts rather than built spaces, situated in time and dealing with **human wellbeing and identity**. That is also to say that, more than buildings, places called 'home' are **'nodes in networks of social relations'** (Easthope, 2004, 136), and all the conflicts generated because of them should be framed taking into account their social structure. From this perspective, some evidence has been provided about the misleading statement that **homeownership** can be used as a proxy for place attachment to home. Windsong (2010) warns about the fact that in some literature feelings of at-homeness have been directly related to **homeownership** because of a sense of possession and appropriation (Hay, 1998; Stedman, 2006; Lewicka, 2010; Anton and Lawrence, 2014), while avoiding to conflate the concepts of home and house may contribute to enrich the discourse about the strong emotional connection to places.

Today, the notion of 'home' is at the core of the literature in many disciplines (among them housing studies, social and cultural studies, geography), but yet it is an '**essentially contested concept**' (Meers, 2021), also because of its non-neutral essence from a political point of view.

2.6 Bonding with multiple places as a second homeowner

Parallel to the spreading of renovated streams of research about second home tourism and mobility in the late '90s (Casado-Diaz, 1999; Williams and Hall, 2000; Gallent and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Müller, 2002; O'Reilly, 2003), place attachment studies began to focus on the patterns initiated by mobile populations lifestyles and the related processes of bonding to place and communities, in a global context of faster and easier ways to relocate and travel internationally. Specifically, the rising numbers of studies about multiple dwelling experiences examined the possibility of encountering **multiple attachments**, based on the possibility for people to develop **bonding feelings to diverse places simultaneously** and for many different reasons apart from tourism (Gustafson, 2006). This new perspective opened up the road to a fresh debate about **place attachment, mobility and second home tourism**, with second homeowners seen as '**a specific group of tourists with possibly a very strong connection to the place**' (Nouza et al., 2018) . Perkins and Thorns (2006) run a first attempt to **compare primary and secondary homes literature** to spot both similarities and differences between the two in the framework of leisure activities, social relationships and identity processes. They highlighted how literature is centred on how the creation of meaning in second homes deviates from that occurring in the first residences by focusing on the concepts of **escape** and (rediscovered) **sense of community**: despite daily routines may be the same for

both the experiences, escaping to second homes is generally associated with engaging in the search for a more relaxed, genuine, nature-based lifestyle, although temporary, that establishes a break towards the complex, busy and tiring urban life. Instead, the two authors argue that, far from being two 'separate entities', they are rather 'linked spaces that **together constitute a home and a continuum of experience'** (Perkins and Thorns, 2006, 81).

This broad view about dwelling and mobility opens up the research toward a new direction: second homeowners may develop strong feelings of attachment too, and therefore, they might represent **relevant actors in the creation of meaning and value of a place** as well as permanent residents. Stedman (2006) challenged the assumption about the supremacy of year-round residents on the temporary population in Vilas County (US), asserting that the latter shows the same level of place attachment, but set on different values, with a special attention for natural amenities, e.g. the lakes. Similarly, Kelly and Hosking (2008) find that non-permanent residents in a sea community in Western Australia show a deep place attachment, while **supporting local businesses and actively participating in community organizations** activities. Such a level of commitment indicates how relevant could be to investigate and consider interactions and behavioural patterns carried out by temporary population, as many among them 'are **likely to play an ongoing role in the region's evolution**' (Kelly and Hosking, 2008, 591).

Consistent with the previously mentioned works about homes as specific places which are shaped by individual use and experience over time, explorations about attachment to second homes and their environments departed from **the analysis of the recreational uses and of the attributes of place attachment**, such as its nature, its strength and the sociodemographic characteristics of second homeowners. To cite some early contributions about recreational homeowners and place attachment, Kaltenborn studies (1997a, 1997b) seek to investigate the **factors that mainly influence attachment processes** among second homeowners to places, landscapes and local communities in which their recreational homes are located. Some of his findings can be summarized as follows: (1) the perception about the surroundings is dependent on the second **homeowners' recreational uses over time**; (2) place attachment refers not only to environmental settings or social networks in the area but it's also influenced by **historical and cultural processes**; (3) recreational homes might be considered part of **one's life project**, thus requiring consistent efforts and direct involvement. Length of property ownership or residence and multigenerational property have been proven to be hardly significant factors in the place attachment process among second homeowners (Kelly and Hosking, 2008).

Place attachment has been lately investigated in the tourism field research concerning second homes as a meaningful driver for their **behavioural and geographical patterns**: a limited knowledge has been achieved, also due to a restricted number of empirical case studies, and it hasn't been yet proved whether prior bonding to the place plays a determinant role on the activities and choices of holiday homeowners, thus categorizing them into different groups (Nouza et al., 2018).

3 _____ Second homes in the Asti Province

A geographical look: the urban, the rural and the inner areas / Spatial patterns of second homes. Demographic and housing trajectories / Social practices of second home owners
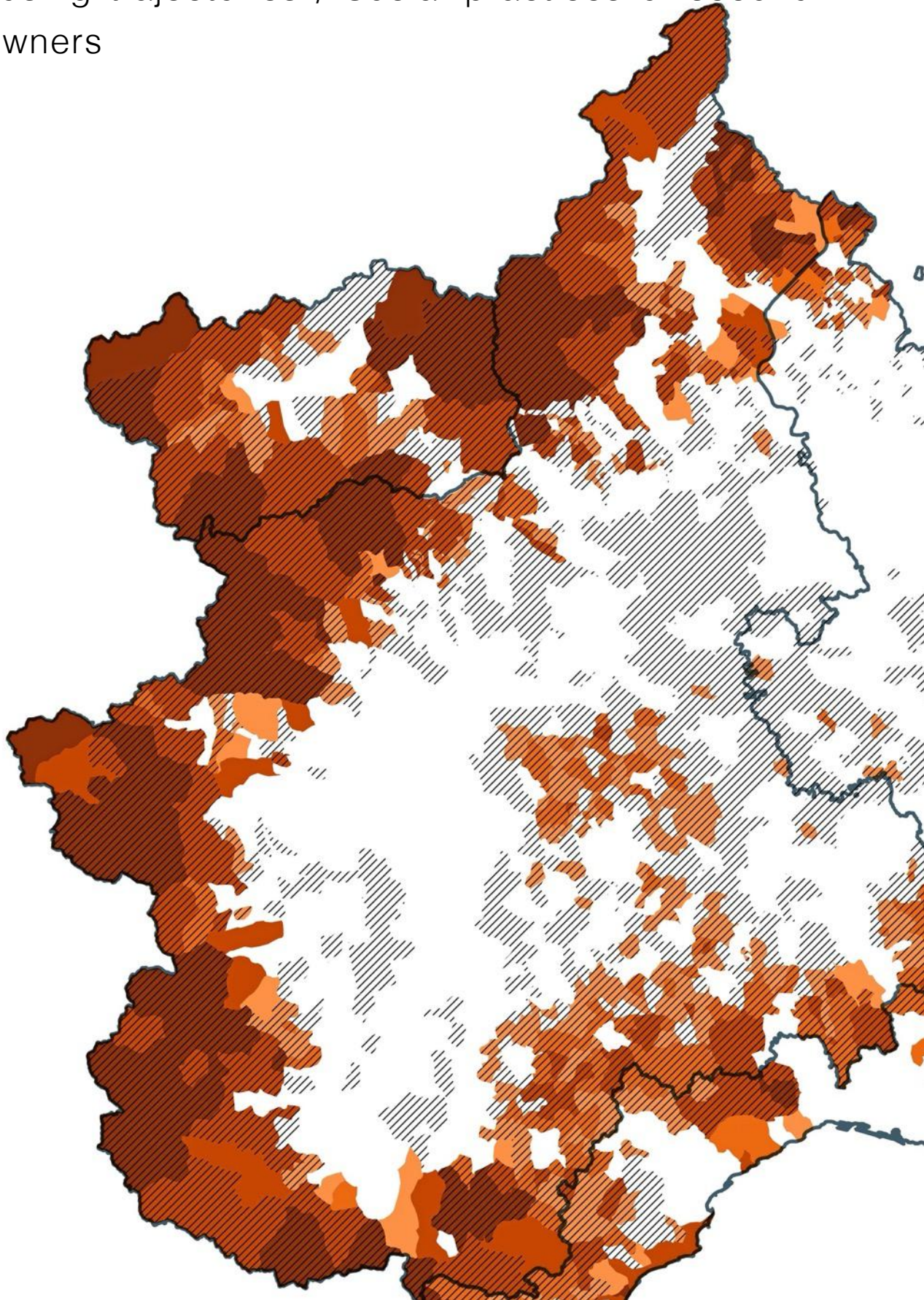
3 / SECOND HOMES IN THE ASTI PROVINCE

3.1 A geographical look: the urban, the rural and the inner areas

According to the proposed methodology and giving the purpose of the present research, a case study has been selected to investigate about both the geographical and social patterns of second homes in rural Italy: the **Asti Province** in the Piedmont Region, a hilly area in Northwest Italy (Fig. 9).

This administrative area has been chosen from the author as a convenient and representative territory through which to conduct the research for the following main reasons:

a) The majority of the Italian studies linked to the second home tourism have been carried out with case studies in Southern Italy or looking at what happens in the Alps, with a focus on peculiar geographical contexts such as the mountains or the coastal touristic destinations. Therefore, there is a real **gap in the national literature regarding rural and inner areas**, where both the features and the impacts of the tourism related to second homes are still to be unveiled;

b) Observing the socio-economic and cultural transformations occurred in Northern Italy from the '50s to the '90s, it is possible to state that the Asti province has been affected by an **exceptional, albeit unevenly distributed growth of the percentage of empty and unoccupied houses**. This phenomenon is particularly evident from the choroplethic maps based on official ISTAT data (

c) Fig. 10) while almost no qualitative research has been conducted to gain an in-depth knowledge about it. Few academic studies are available hitherto about secondary dwellings and their impact on rural areas in Piedmont. In 2008, a regional quantitative study about holidays homes has been commissioned by the Piedmont Region to deliver a general portrait of the second home tourism: in 2007, unoccupied houses on the hills were approximately 80.317, 52,2% of which were used for vacations and 67,7% are private properties owned by the tourists (Piemonte, 2009). Moreover, multiple differences can be noted between the multitude of municipalities in the Asti province, suggesting a wide range of different cultural and economic contexts, eventually resulting in diverse second home landscapes;

d) The author has an **extensive knowledge of the area**, since it includes her hometown, and she was able to rely on and benefit from the **personal network of social relationships**, based on trust and long-term collaborations, that encompasses members from the local political, administrative and professional sectors. This aspect proved to be of particular help in light of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, that prevented the author from the extensive use of some useful investigation tools, e.g. in-person interviews.
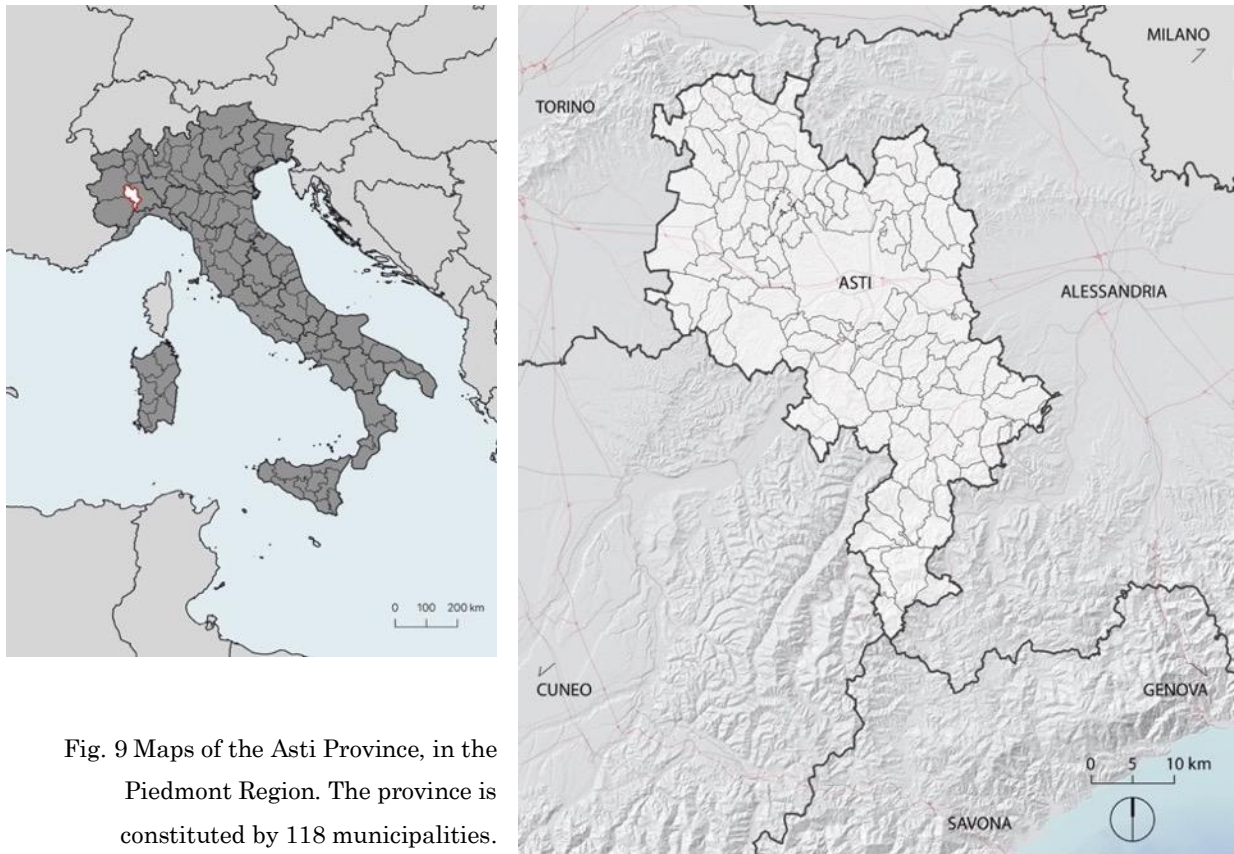
Fig. 9 Maps of the Asti Province, in the Piedmont Region. The province is constituted by 118 municipalities.

In 2017 Piedmont was the region with the **highest depopulation index**, if compared to other regions in Northern Italy, reaching the most intense natural decrease level compared to the rest of Italy (-5,2 per thousand, compared to the Country average of -3,2 per thousand) (Osservatorio Demografico e Territoriale del Piemonte, 2018, p. 8). Hence, as depopulation and ageing are affecting most of the small villages both in the mountain and hilly areas, the second home tourism is gradually becoming more evident, in contrast with scarcity in education, transport and goods providing services. Giving this framework, Piedmont, and the specifically the Asti province, can be considered as a privileged observatory on the rural scene.

In the regional Rural Development Program 2014 - 2020, the Asti province has been categorised into two main different territorial typologies mentioned as **intermediate rural areas** and **intermediate rural areas with natural constraints**: more specifically, one is

vocated to viticulture and the other one is characterized by natural physical constraints that, in some cases, may be paired with socio-economic marginality. A process of progressive commercial desertification is ongoing in many rural municipalities in the Asti area, where demographic trends are drastically negative: the so called '**spiral of marginality**' is only partially balanced by a positive and growing trend in the number of tourism activities in some leading areas (Osservatorio Rurale del Piemonte, 2018, p. 41).

Furthermore, within the provincial context it must be pointed out that marked disparities are in place between neighbouring municipalities and between urban and rural centres. Particularly, the latter suffer from greater **poverty** than the urban areas, and this is also highlighted within the regional framework. The province's municipalities located to the north and south of the main city Asti ("Basso Monferrato Astigiano" and "Alta Langa") are experiencing a considerably higher incidence of declarants with a total income below 15,000 euro per year (Osservatorio Rurale del Piemonte, 2022, p. 31). In the Asti province 33 municipalities[1] are also part of the **SNAI program** (the National Strategy for Inner Areas) as **intermediate or peripheral** rural centres, involving a total population of 38.919 inhabitants and a territorial surface of 418 squared kilometres. The SNAI program is a national place-based strategy that aims at promoting and supporting innovative development local programs, in order to improve the quality of services for the community and stimulate the capability of people living in these areas to imagine and realise new pathways for innovation and change. Among the different lines of intervention, tourism and the enhancement of the tangible and intangible heritage are considered valuable assets for local development, despite the actual missing governance at a local level. Despite the second home tourism flows are invisible to official surveys, it is considered as an important component of local tourist and economic development in inner areas (De Vincenti, 2018, p. 18), where the provision of services for tourists and visitors can become a useful resource for the implementation of services to the local community.

Populated by 207.939 inhabitants (ISTAT data, 2022) with a surface of 1.510 sq. km, the Asti territory is predominately hilly, with the town of Asti (73.539 inhabitants in 2022) as a barycentre, surrounded by small rural villages and hamlets where viticulture has a predominant and historical role in the local economic, cultural and social system (**Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.**). The province has a strategic geographic position, at the core of the former industrial triangle made by the metropolitan areas of Turin, Milan and Genoa.

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[1] Updated data are provided by the national website of the Territorial Cohesion Agency https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/strategia-nazionale-aree-interne/
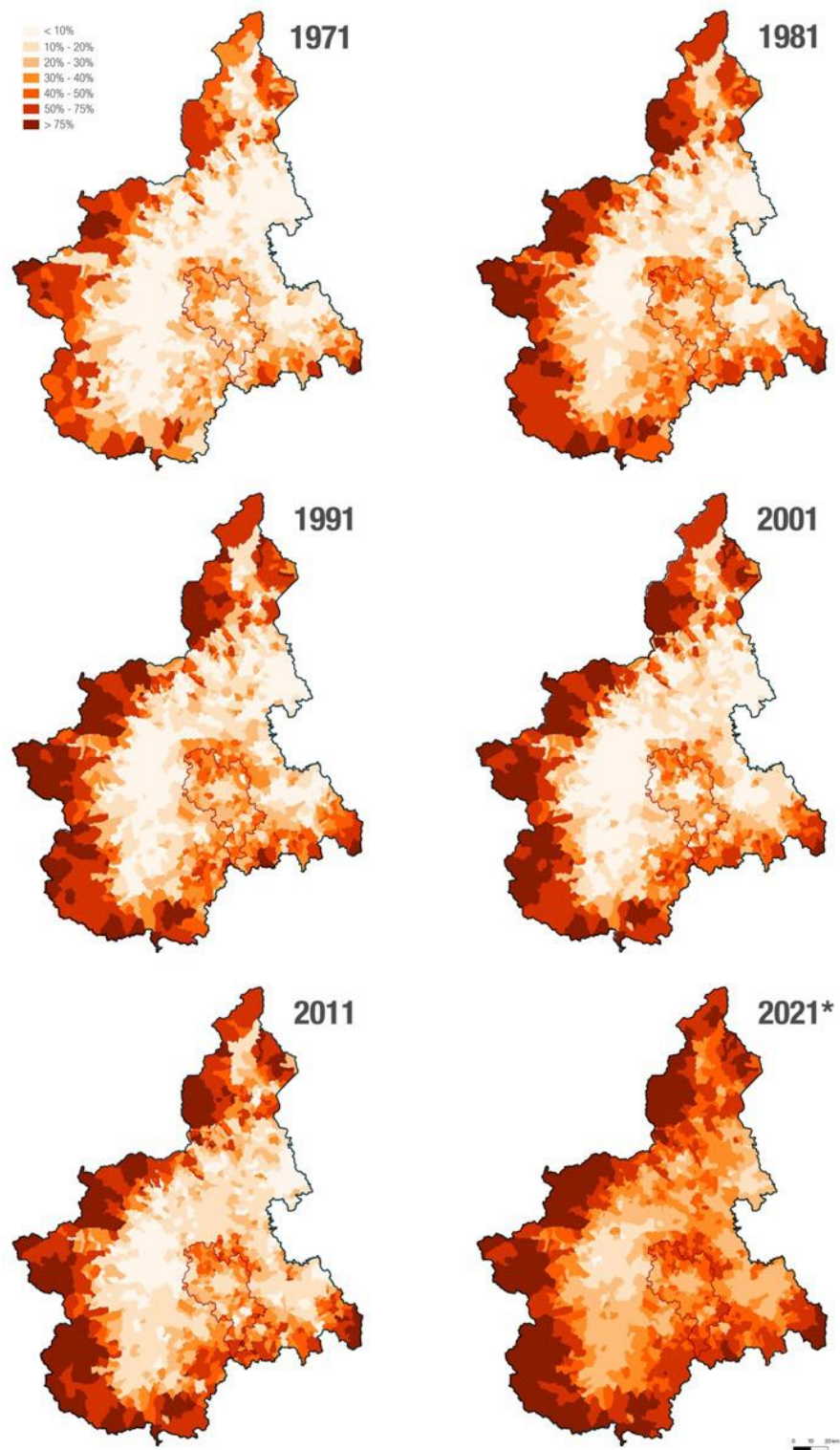
Fig. 10 Choropletic maps about the percentage of empty and unoccupied homes in the Piedmont Region from 1971 to 2021. The Asti Province is highlighted in the middle of the regional territory. Author's elaboration on ISTAT data. *ISTAT data from the 2021 Census for dwellings is referred to 2019 statistics.
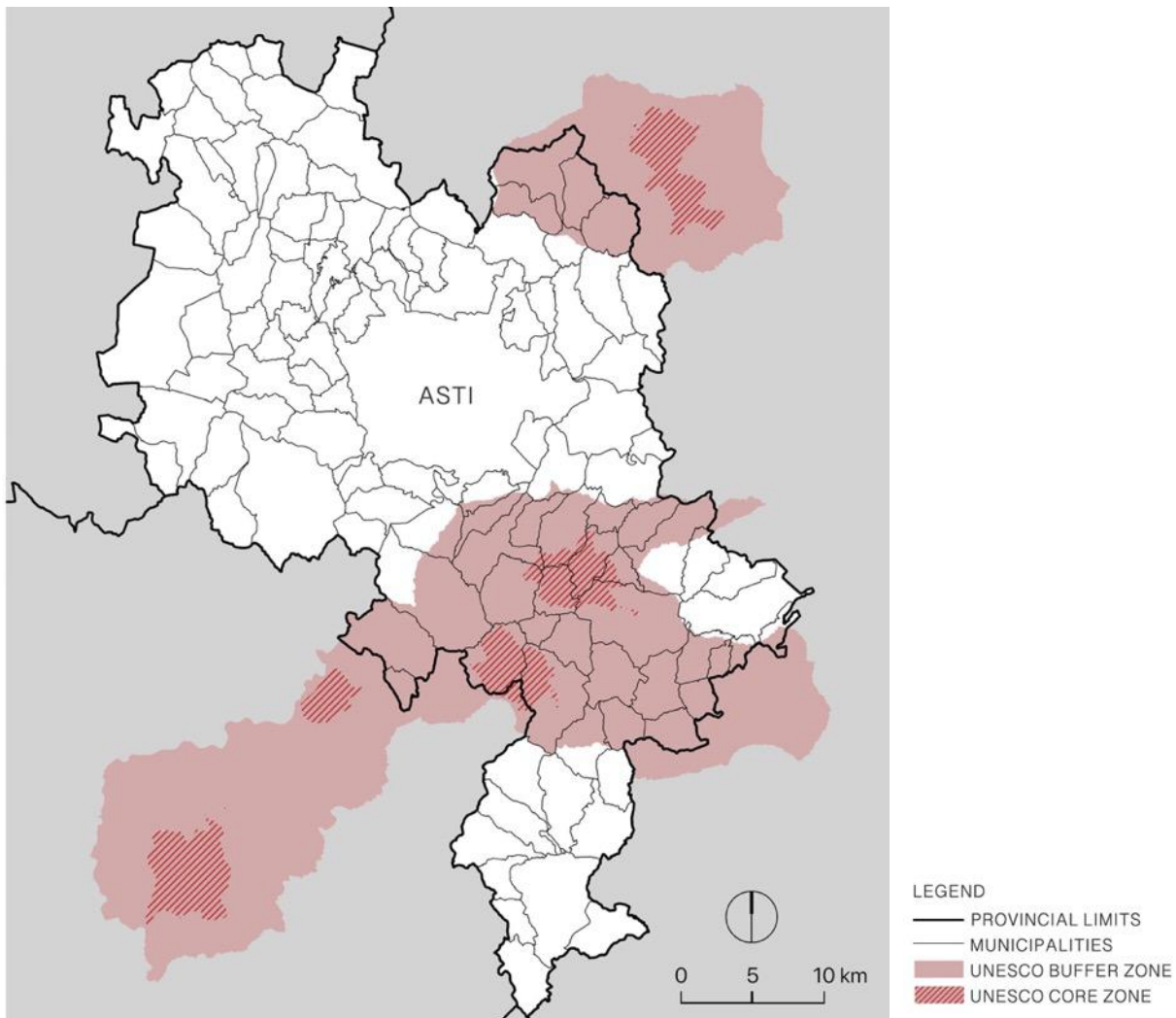
Fig. 11 Map of the case study area - the Asti province - and the World Heritage Site of the Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato. Author's elaboration on Piedmont Region open data.

In the twentieth century the Province of Asti went through a deep transformation, common to several rural areas across Italy and Europe, that caused major modifications in the lifestyles, local economies, settlements and landscapes (Ercole, 2006). The process of **deruralisation** (Lajolo, 2005) of the countryside around the centre of Asti began around the 1950s, in conjunction with the post-war economic boom, which resulted in a revolution in the lifestyles of Italians and in the urban setting of the territories. The image of the Asti area as an agricultural province based on a peasant society model had been wiped out leaving room for culturally hybrid landscapes. The promises of a shift based on the industrial development of the entire province have vanished, and today many municipalities find themselves struggling with an increasingly weak identity and territorial vocation, in a compromised city-countryside relationship.

The political and social fragmentation resulting from the ancient history of the area is reflected on the spatial configuration of present settlements and cultural dynamics, producing

a demographic dispersion characterized by a high number of municipalities below 1000 inhabitants (Bordone, 2006). Administratively, the province consists of 118 municipalities where different degrees of touristic and local development are unevenly distributed. Since 2014, part of the area has been inscribed in the World Heritage List as '**Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato'** for being considered the 'archetypes of European vineyards' for their aesthetic and cultural features (UNESCO, 2014). Nonetheless, structural elements still prevent the area from a balanced development, that should be based on tools such as local identity, social capital, territorial networks and governance (Ercole & Gilli, 2010, p. 100). Among these, a particular impact on the life and well-being of the local community as well as on tourist services is the uneven distribution over the territory of schools and commercial activities, which are predominantly concentrated in the capital to the detriment of the rural context. Some of the realities of province are now true 'food deserts' (Pettenati, 2020) in the hills, where even the small groceries have long since closed.
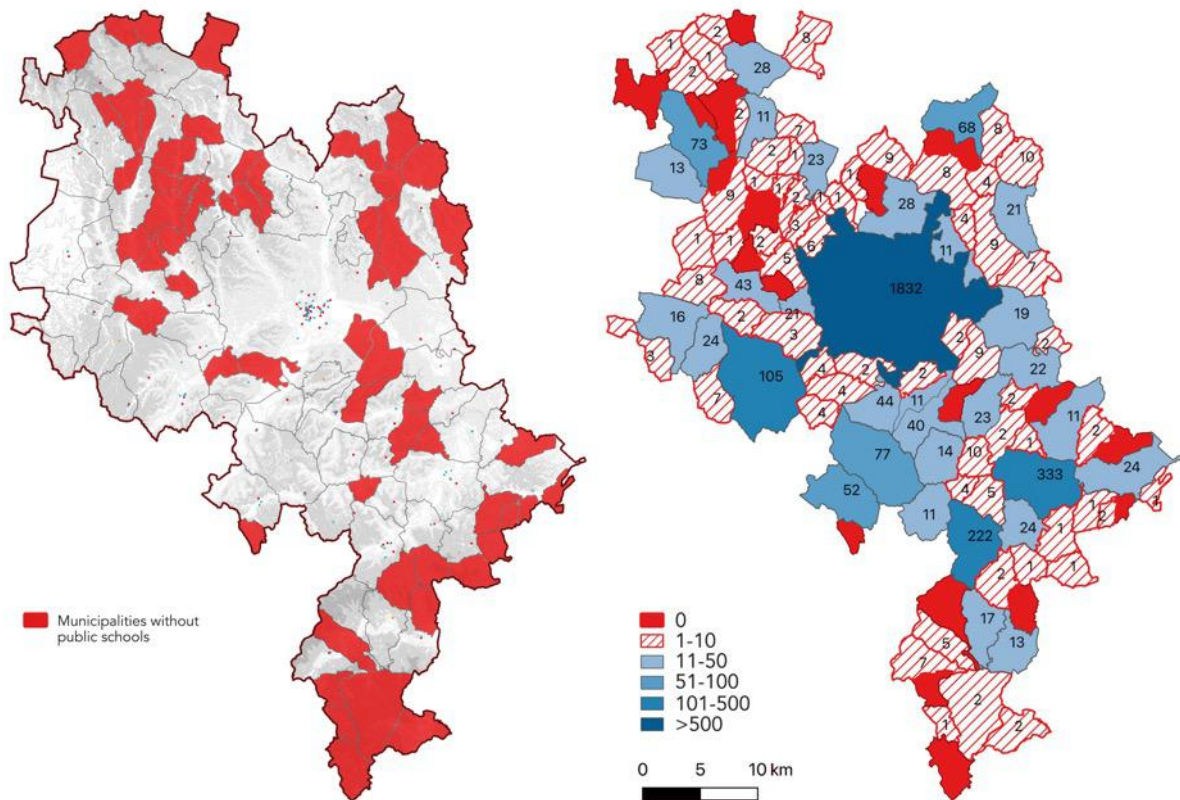
Fig. 12 Maps about the distribution of public schools and commercial activities. Data Source: Piedmont Region, 2018. Author's elaboration.

3.2 Spatial patterns of second homes. Demographic and housing trajectories

In the province of Asti, the amount of empty and holiday dwellings increased from 1951 to 2011, from 13% of the total number of dwellings up to 24% on average, with some municipalities reaching peak of almost 80% in 2011. Municipalities that have accessibility issues and are considered marginal as they are far from fundamental services are also those that suffered the most from processes of depopulation and commercial desertification in the past decades. This rural exodus as well as the radical transformation of the agricultural world are at the root of these phenomena (Lanzani and Curci, 2018), which has led to the availability of numerous traditional rural buildings, in many cases destined for abandonment or conversion into new residences. This particular agricultural landscape and favourable weather conditions, especially during the summer season, supported the transition of empty farms and inherited family houses to holiday homes, whether rented or owned, in those municipalities in the countryside.

Looking at the second homes topic, the Asti province may be divided into two different contexts. The northern area of the province is characterized by an abundance of secondary dwellings, linked with the urban needs of primary residents of the metropolitan area of Turin and with the residential roots tourism produced by the second generation of workers that moved to Turin after the II World War. Here, rural decline and depopulation is more evident as the area deeply suffered from the factors related to the proximity to the metropolitan pole. On the other hand, the southern area of the province benefits from its proximity to the rich area of the Langhe, while still preserving its most authentic character outside the mainstream tourist routes. Here, holiday homes are gradually spreading in the most fancy spots, surrounded by vineyards, where landscape is gradually becoming a commodity. Hints of amenity migration and international retirement migration are also been detected, with a high presence of secondary residents from Northern Europe.

The first analysis phase of the case study has been dedicated to gain a deep understanding of the demographic and social transformations occurred in the study area within an historical perspective, to trace on a timeline how the rural has been affected by anthropogenic disturbances, such as industrialization, depopulation and globalization (Wilson, 2018). The economic, political and cultural environment will be the constant background, an interpretative lens through which assign deeper meaning to quantitative data. The assumption is that an overall comprehension of the evolution of the territorial system (Dematteis, 2003) could be achieved only by looking at the economic, social, cultural and environmental changes over time,

whose effects are still visible today, as well as at the community responses to face challenges and unexpected events.

The analysis has been carried out from ISTAT data related to population and housing census from 1951 to 2011 and has been integrated with the scientific literature locally available and evidences from the interviews. Being in the middle of the 'industrial triangle' (Milan, Turin and Genoa), the rural areas of the province faced huge population mass movements: after a decrease in the '50s and a increase in the next decade thanks to domestic migration from South Italy, the province experienced a constant loss of inhabitants reaching the lowest rate in 1991 (208.332 inhabitants). As pictured in Figure 13, the urban population living in the town of Asti, an attraction pole that hosted a rising presence of industries before their conversion into businesses in the services sector, in 150 years turned from being 15% to 34% on the overall province population.
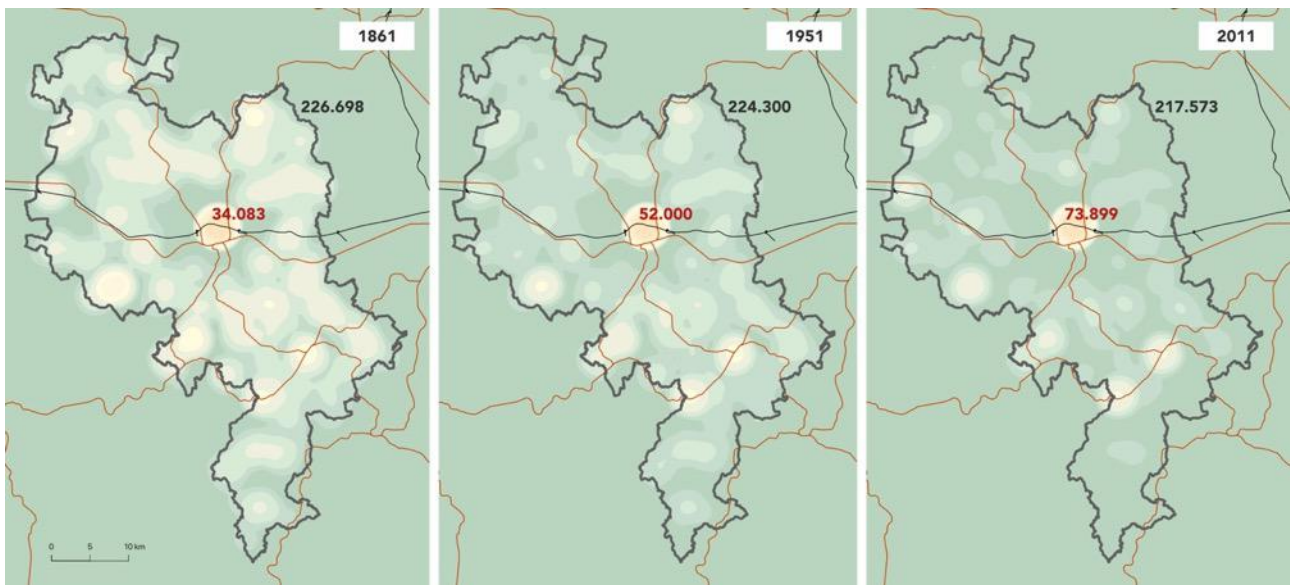
Fig. 13 Kernel map about population distribution in the Asti Province from 1861 to 2011 – Data source: ISTAT. Author's elaboration

But the real shock in terms of population loss and change occurs in the countryside, with a literal collapse of the smaller villages: the '50s marked a deep change as a relevant loss in population coincides with a drastic drop in the number of employees and a progressive ageing in the agricultural sector, leading the youngest to move to the city in search for stable working conditions in the rising car industry, Fiat, and better cultural and social conditions. In 1991 half of the municipalities of the province was populated with 50% of the residents that were living in the area in 1861: to pay the price those in the hilly areas with an almost exclusively agricultural vocation (Virciglio, 2006). That process paves the way to the progressive but unstoppable reform of the 'rural culture', a process quite visible in the separation between the

man and the land, no longer perceived both as the living environment and as the only mean towards subsistence (Renosio, 2006). It is indeed in those decades that the housing market opens up to a new speculative wave in the construction sector, with the transformation of abandoned fields into building plots and the conversion of traditional rural houses into holiday homes.
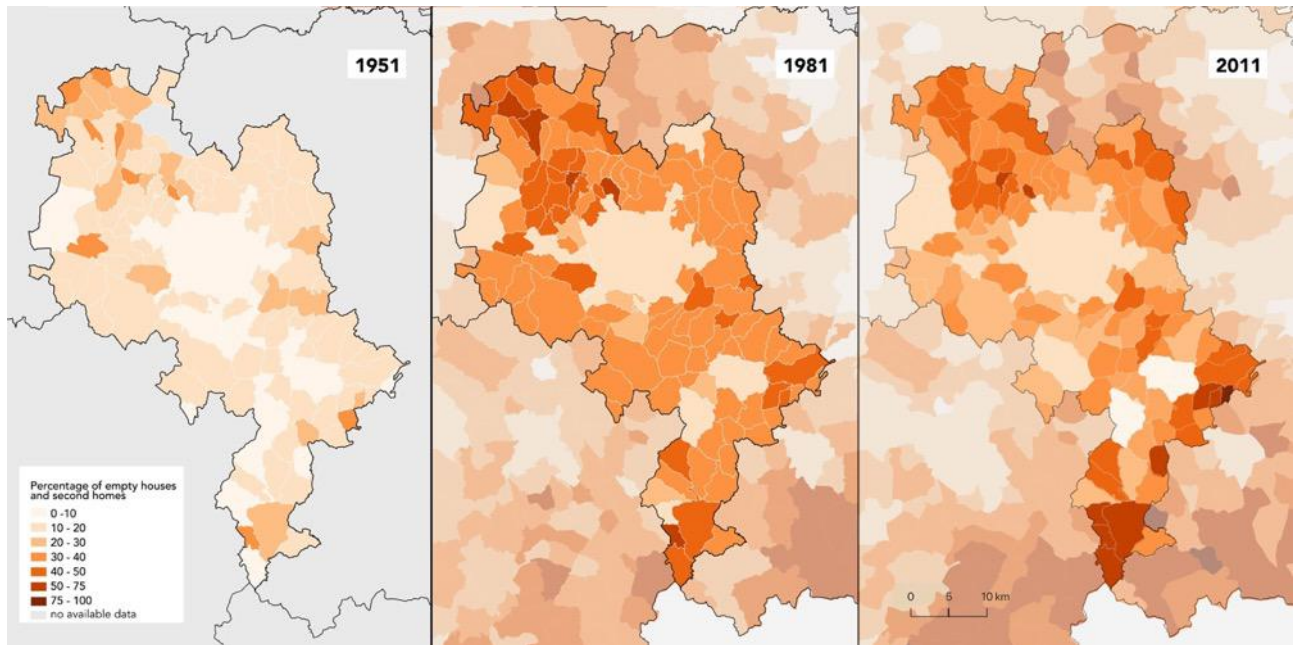
Fig. 14 Percentage of empty and secondary dwellings in the Asti Province from 1951 to 2011 – Data source: ISTAT. Author's elaboration.

From the '50s to the '80s the percentage of population that is able to go on vacations at least once a year went from 13% to 43%, meaning that holidays are assuming a relevance in the common lifestyle and tourism practices begin spreading all over the Country.
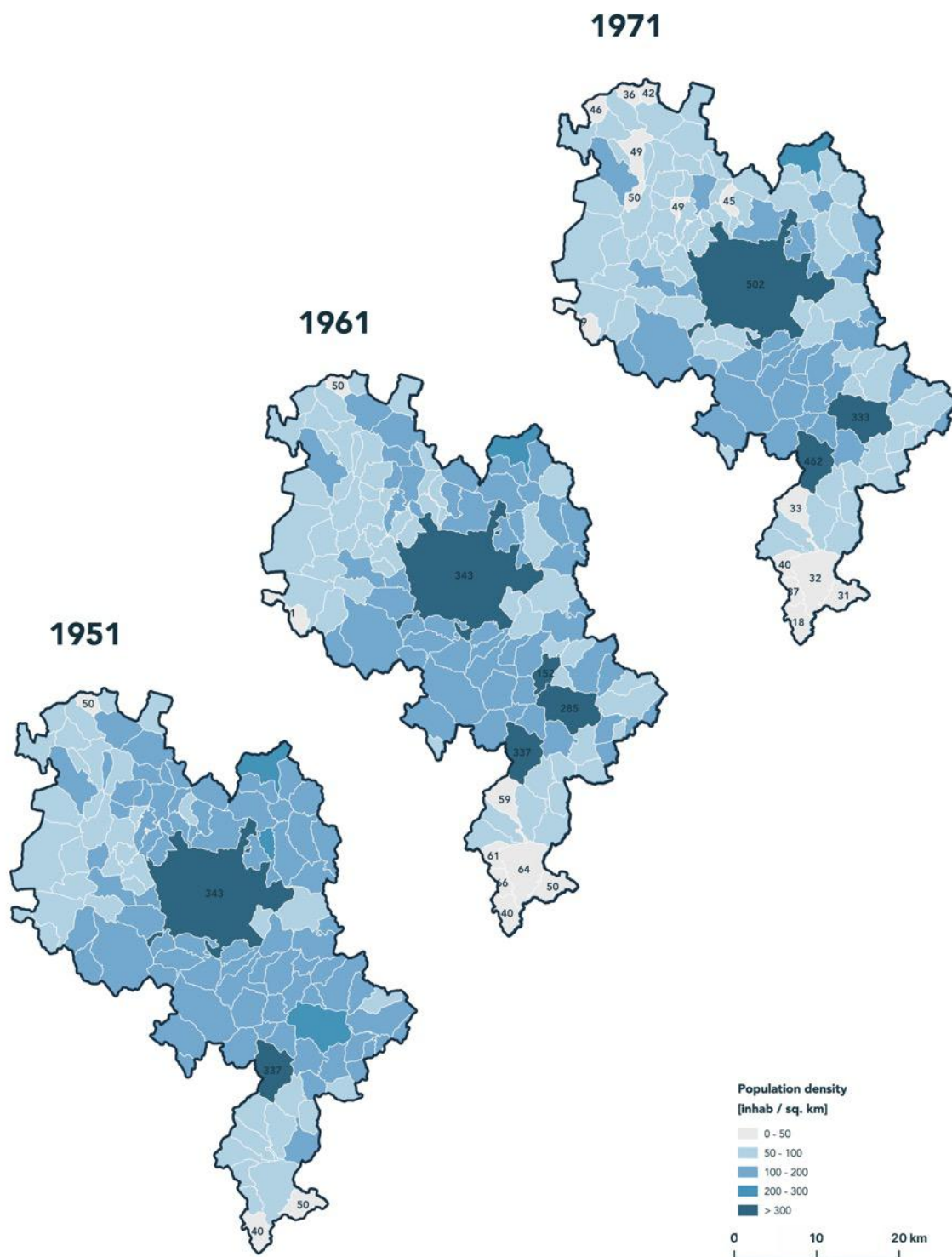
Fig. 15 Maps from 1951 to 1971 on population density in the Asti province. Data source: ISTAT Datawarehouse. Author's elaboration.
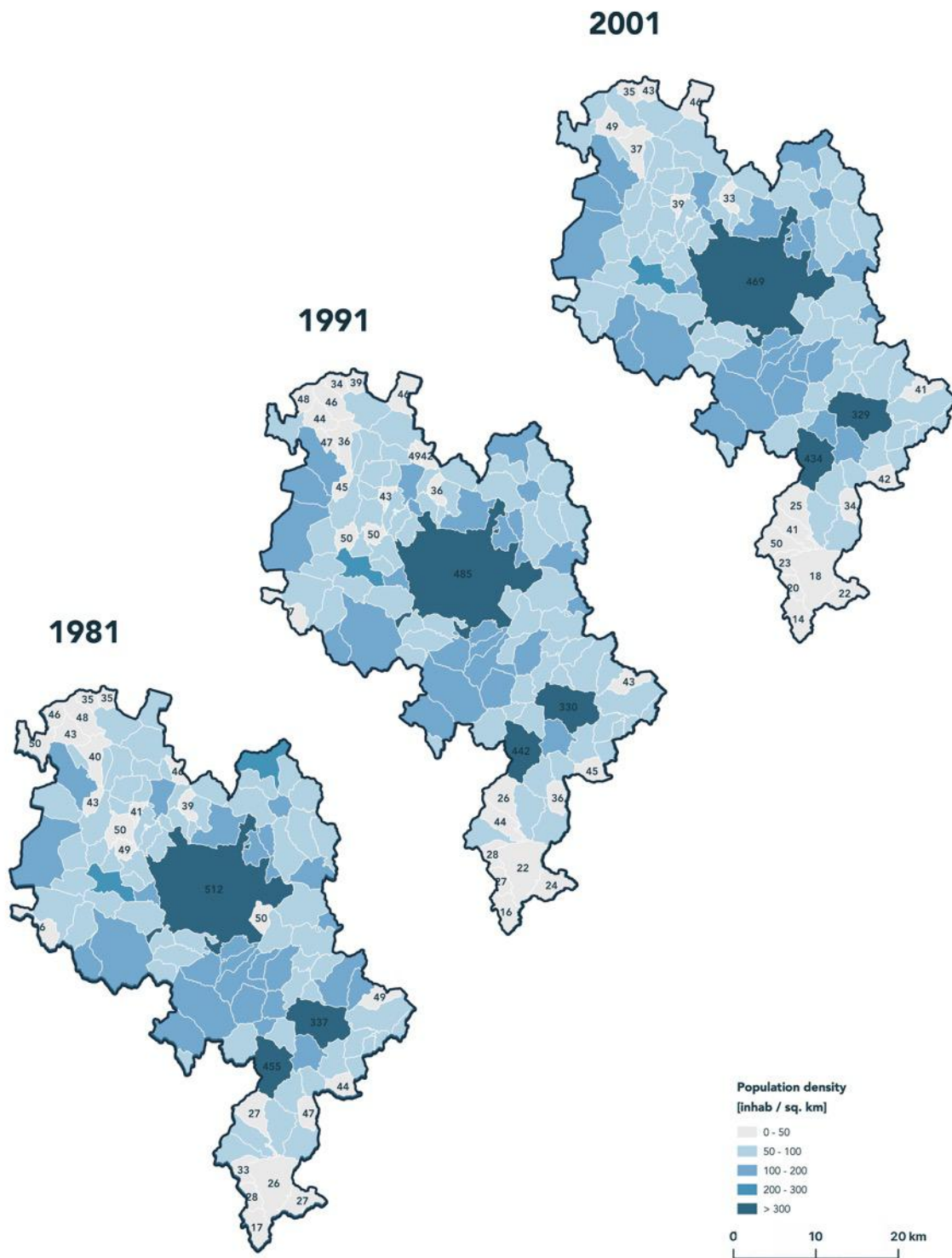
Fig. 16 Maps from 1981 to 2001 on population density in the Asti province. Data source: ISTAT Datawarehouse. Author's elaboration.

1971

1961

1951

Percentage of empty and
second homes in 1961

< 10%
10% - 25%
25% - 50%
50% - 75%
> 75%

0   10   20 km
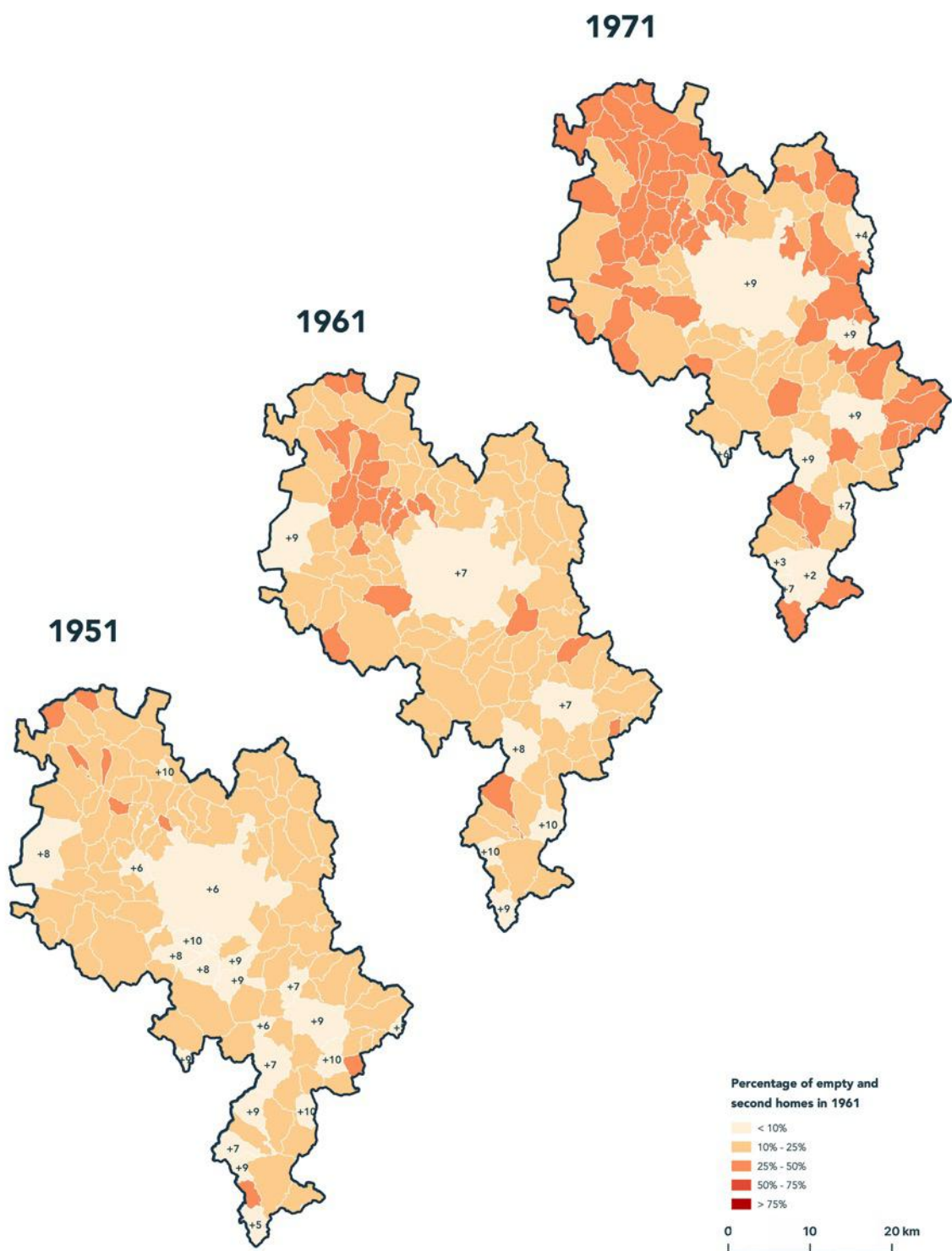
Fig. 17 Maps from 1951 to 1971 on the percentage of empty and secondary dwellings in the Asti province. Data source: ISTAT Datawarehouse. Author's elaboration.
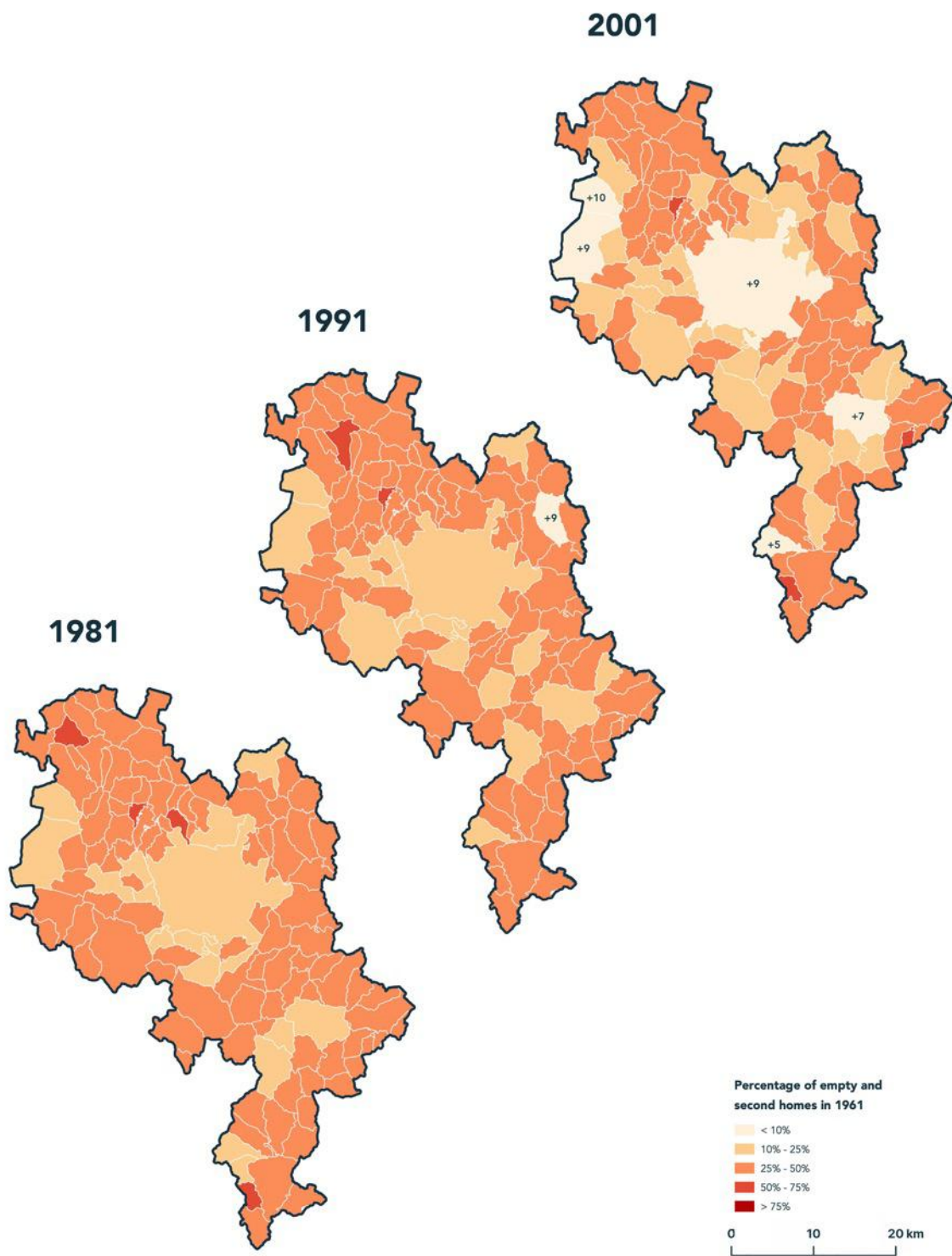
Fig. 18 Maps from 1981 to 2001 on the percentage of empty and secondary dwellings in the Asti province. Data source: ISTAT Datawarehouse. Author's elaboration.
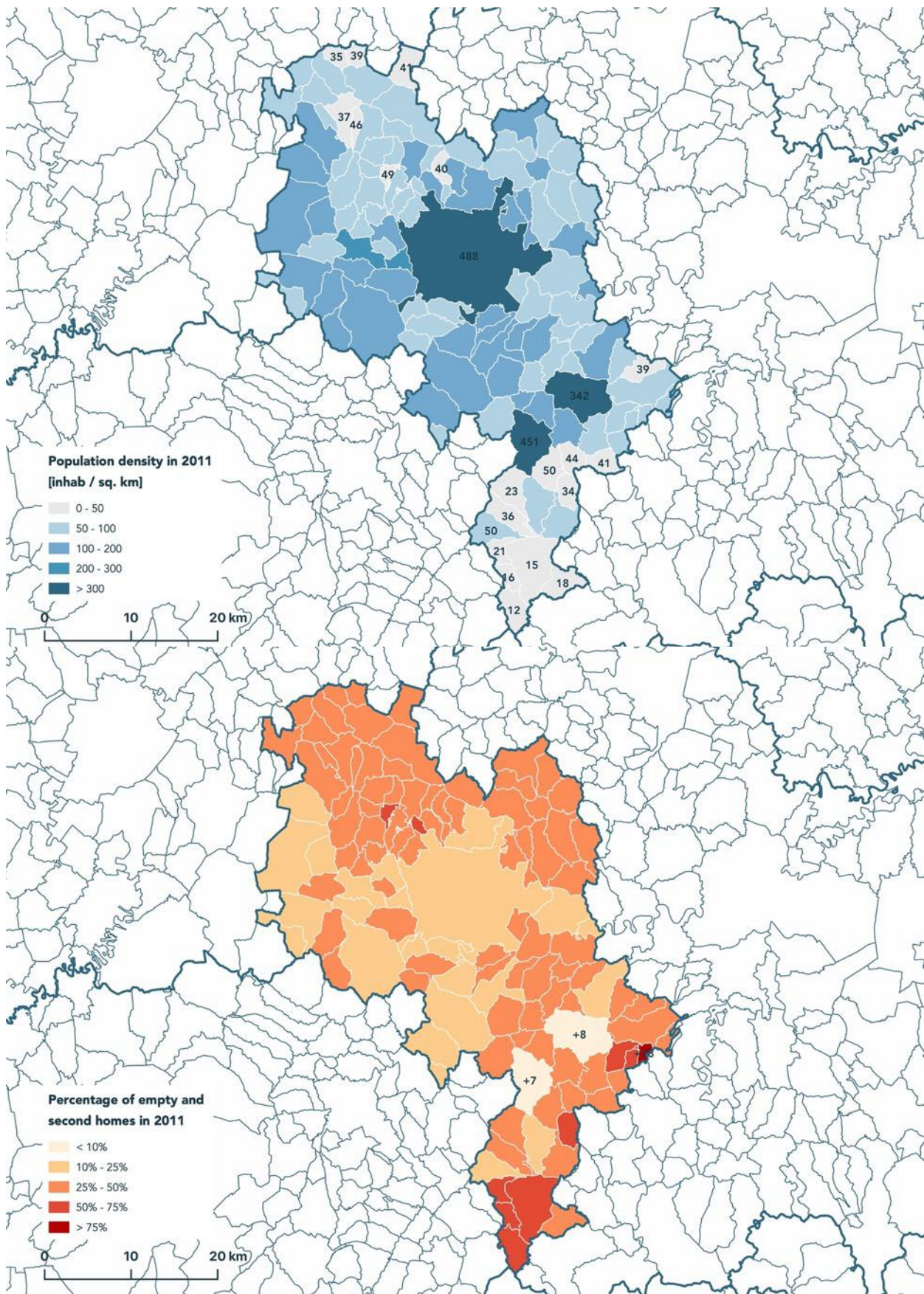
Fig. 19 Maps about the population density and the percentage of empty and secondary dwelling in the Asti province in 2011. Data source: ISTAT Datawarehouse. Author's elaboration.
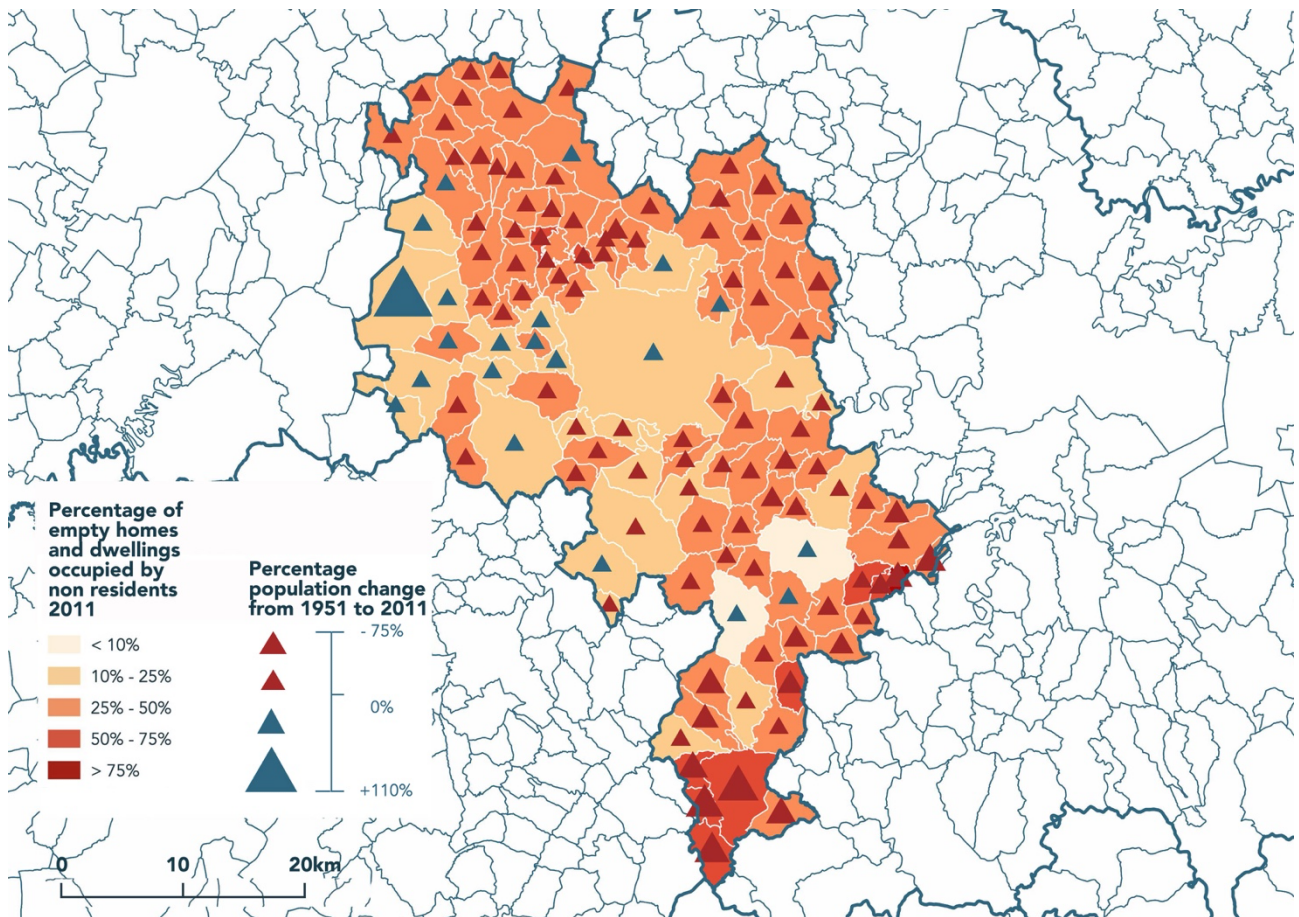
The preliminary analysis based on ISTAT data about the two related phenomena of depopulation and the abandonment of the built heritage or its conversion into secondary houses shows their spatial distribution over time[2].

Supported by the visual data gathered by the researcher, four main areas can be highlighted as different contexts or 'landscapes', as a result of both demographic dynamics and housing trajectories over the last 70 years.

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[2] ISTAT data don't provide a real picture of the second homes percentage over the total of dwellings. The only exceptions were 1981 and 1991 Census, that were capturing the real numbers of second homes used for vacations.

The *first landscape* might be identified as the Northern area of the province, characterized by small villages that went through a deep depopulation phase from the early '50s, mainly as a direct consequence of the absence of job supply in sectors others than the agricultural one. The proximity with the city of Turin determined a consistent and quite fast rural exodus. The numerous villages are still deserted, with only few essential services shared between neighbouring municipalities, mainly based on food provision and health care services for both inhabitants and few tourists, brave explorers in search for the (only apparently) unspoiled wildness.

The *second landscape* is located on the axis that directly links the city of Asti with the Turin urban area (both by train and by highway). Thanks to its territorial position, this is the only sector that is characterized by an increase in population and a restrained number of empty and holiday houses, although a massive concreting impacted the urban development starting from the late '60s. The medium and small centres today are functionally suburban neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area of Turin and of the town of Asti itself, where internationally known companies take advantage of the favourable logistic position and local know-how already in place.

The *third landscape* has been detected in the Southern sector of the province, partly overlapping the core and buffer zones of the Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont, Langhe-Roero and Monferrato, World Heritage Site since 2014. Here the depopulation phenomenon is more complex, with small rural villages hit hard by it and suffering from severe population ageing, while, at the same time, bigger municipalities with more than 10.000 inhabitants are gaining residents according to their function as poles for services and tourism facilities. That peculiar mix has been crucial in the local economic, social and cultural development of the last seventy years: the figure of the farmer, that usually leads a family business, has been reinvented, in the attempt to overcome the cultural effects linked to the deruralization process. The vineyard landscape plays a crucial role as a touristic destination: empty houses in the real estate market make way for touristic accommodations and holiday houses.

Lastly, the *fourth landscape* includes the extreme southern tip of the province, geographically the highest land with circulation and services issues but endowed with an exceptional natural heritage. Being the first to experience a challenging outmigration, the area is today the less populated sector of the province with the highest percentage of second homes and empty houses.

The hereby proposed categorization of the statistical data from 1951 to 2011 has been used as an interpretative lens for the qualitative and visual data, gathered in the fieldwork phase from different sources.

TORINO

MILANO

FIRST S.H.
LANDSCAPE

ASTI

ALESSANDRIA

SECOND S.H.
LANDSCAPE

THIRD S.H.
LANDSCAPE

FOURTH S.H.
LANDSCAPE

CUNEO

GENOVA

0   5   10 km

SAVONA
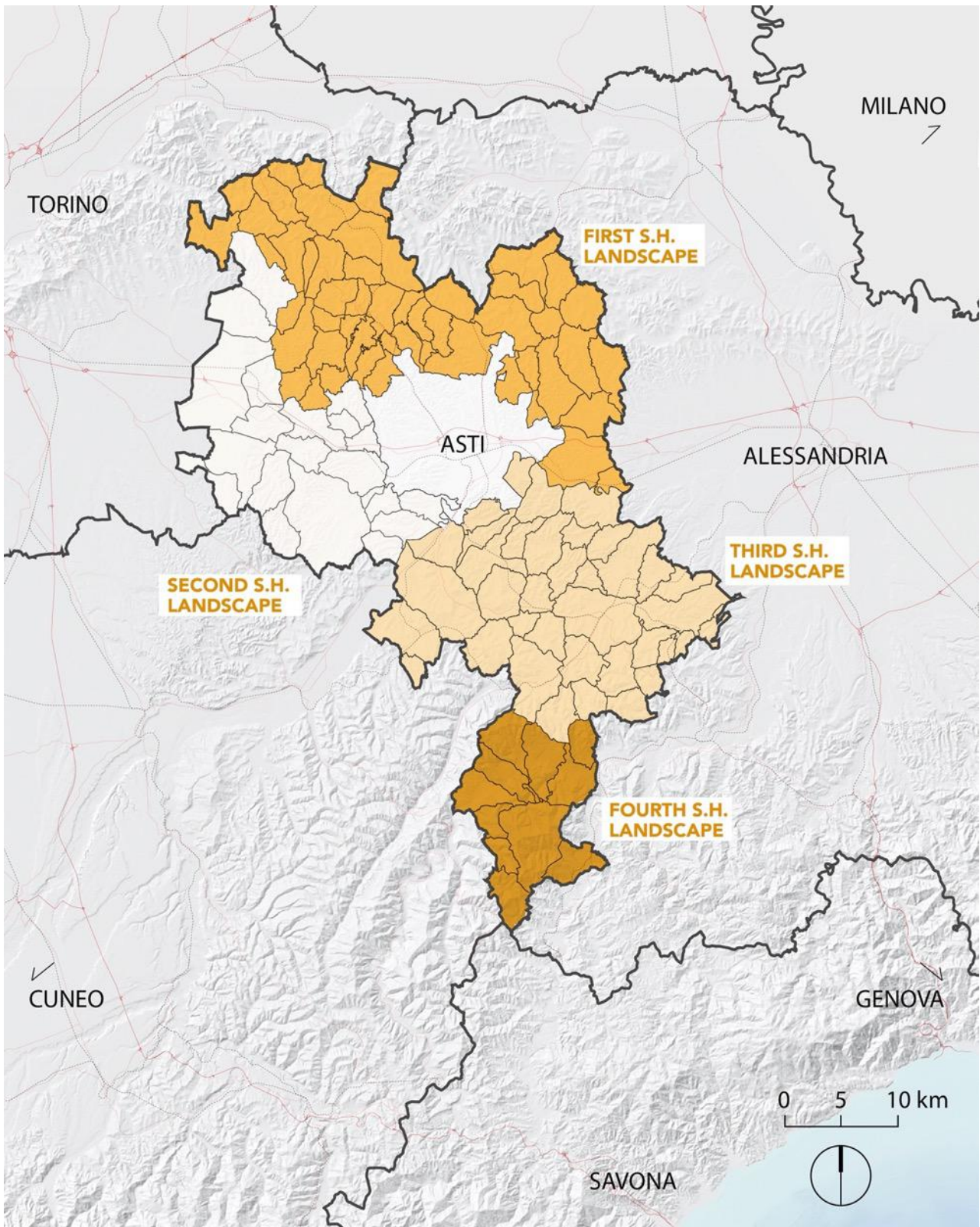
Surrounded by woods and abandoned agricultural fields (1), the small villages are disseminated on the top of the hills (3), connected by an uneven road network. The presence of empty houses, inherited by italian families living in the urban areas, is dominant, while few 'cascine' are humbly restored (5). The few inhabitants whish to keep the place wild and silent (2), not to be disturbed by touristic flows (4).

Identified with the axis that links the town of Asti with the metropolitan area of Turin, villages in the area grew in population and housing (1-5), living the built rural heritage behind (2). Few old rural traditional and indipendent buildings have been kept as holidays homes, with almost no efforts in the renovation (3-4), located in the peripheral lots out of the main historical centres.
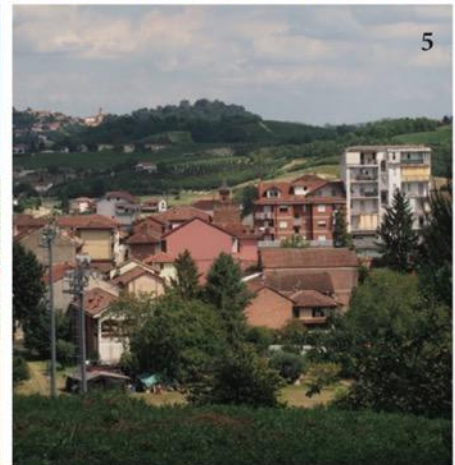
Enlisted in the World Heritage site of Vineyard Landscape of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato (1-3), the area is disseminated with renovated 'cascine'(4), used for wine production or as holiday houses. A strong presence of foreigner second homeowners has been noticed, that has an impact also on local economy (2-3). Nevertheless, few historical centres are abandoned, waiting for newcomers (5).

Located in the highest geographical area of the province (1), the Alta Langa is well known for its stone rural buildings (2) and ancient villages in an unspoiled landscape. Many second houses are owned by Italians living in the urban areas (5) attached to their childhood places. Foreigners are also recently moving in the area, searching for new lifestyles, foster new tourism flows (3-4).

3.3 Social practices of second homeowners

In the subchapter, the results of the **57 interviews and informal talks coding process** are presented, highlighting how they are related to the core topics from the literature and how they can contribute to the theoretical framework of second-home tourism research. Although most issues are intertwined, several **key independent topics** emerged during the coding process.

The interview analysis aims to **detect and collect qualitative data** about the social practices related to second-home tourism: **thick descriptions** about the chronological events, temporal use, personal meanings, and social networks associated with the second home have been arising, providing a rich emotional and relational context around the phenomenon. The focus of the discourse during the interviews has been around the topics of **place attachment** (how it is formed, the connection with the place, the house, and the local community) and **resilience** (in terms of how the second home owners actions stimulate new responses from the local community to global challenges).
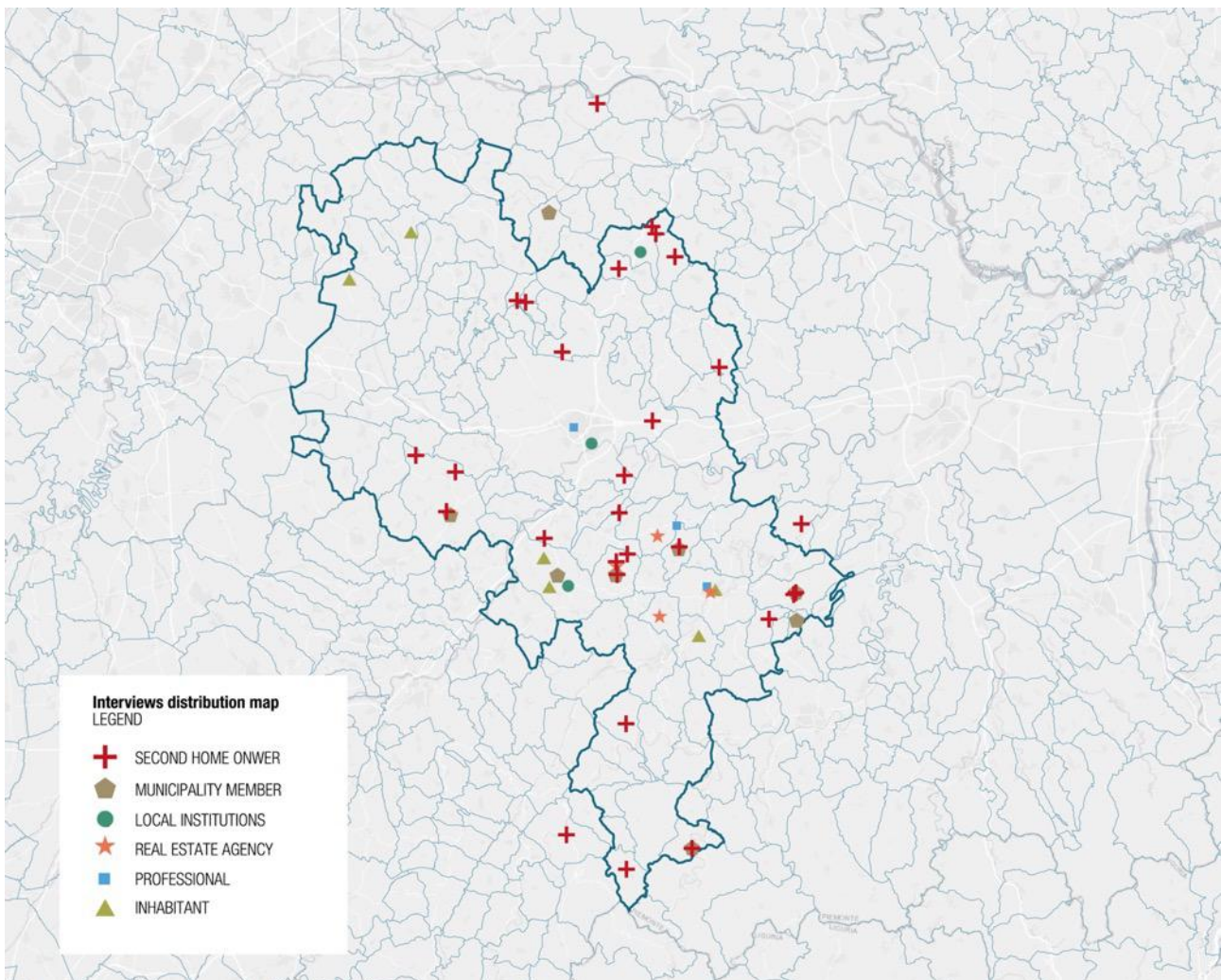
Fig. 20 Map distribution of the semi-structured interviews, categorized by the typology of the interviewee.

The **interviewees' heterogeneity has guaranteed various** insights about second-home tourism, contributing to building a rich picture of both positive and negative impacts with elements regarding cultural, social, economic, and environmental aspects. Furthermore, the geographical distribution of the interviews (Fig. 20) throughout the province territory suggests that data covers a vast territory and helps portray a broad perspective of the phenomenon characteristics. Nonetheless, the researcher is aware of the limited representativeness of the present results about Italian second-home tourism in general. At the same time, they can be considered quite indicative of the Asti area and specific rural areas with similar features in the national context.

Interviewers citations below are categorized, each letter representing the social group the interviewee has been associated to:

- **M** (municipality mayor);
- **IN** (inhabitant);
- **R** (real estate agency);
- **SH** (second homeowner);
- **P** (professional);
- **IS** (institution).

Historical second homes patterns

In the subjective representations of the second home tourism phenomenon, a common narrative can be traced as described both by public administrations and inhabitants referring to the tourism related to holiday homes as being composed of two main 'streams':

a) **Italian second homeowners** living in metropolitan or urban areas, who inherited their properties from members of their families that grew up in the countryside or bought a secondary property mainly during the '60s/'70s;

b) **new second homeowners from abroad**, that bought their holiday houses thanks to a favourable housing market and a consistent number of empty houses left almost abandoned in the countryside.

As outlined by many interviewees, the growth of the number of second homes in the last decades is directly related to the consistent amount of empty houses on sale in the housing market with affordable prices. For a long time after the 50s and 60s outmigration towards the urban centres, many family houses have sporadically served as holiday homes for the younger generations, especially when taxes were not so relevant in the family budget. Today, they are perceived as a financial burden and thus usually they are easily sold in few years after the

original owners left. When the owner of the second home doesn't belong to the local historical families, the ownership is likely to change more frequently, also as a result of the lack of services for the community and for the younger generations.

> *<< In the 70's and 80's in the summer it was full of people from Genoa here, who came to spend their holidays. Now their children still come here, but they don't stay for long during the year. There was a sort of boom, the second homes here were full. People were renting them and built new ones. But these houses no longer meet today's needs, they are small houses>>.*

Most of the second homes in the area are located outside the historic centres, and some hamlets are experiencing a higher concentration of vacation homes than in recent decades. The typology of second-home owners is changing, as a result of a changed picture of the economic situation of Italian families and preferences toward different tourism experiences by younger generations. Italian owners are leaving room for the purchase of vacation homes by foreigners, thanks in part to a renewed positioning of Italy's rural territory in the foreign market.

> *IN5 << The architects of tourism development in these areas are precisely the wine producers. For decades we have been promoting these lands and its excellent product, and this has created an induced industry >>.*

In the research area, **foreigner second home owners** come from different areas all over the world with a prevalence for certain European Countries: it is a common tendency for them to be identified by nationality being labelled by the local community as the 'Norwegians', the 'Dutch', the 'Swiss', and so on. English, Norwegians, Danish, Swiss came to the area starting from 15 years ago, buying abandoned traditional buildings and converting them into holidays retreats and, lately, into temporary residences where they can work remotely. This category of second home users is described by the interviewees as being radically different from the Italian one, especially in the diverse uses of the second homes and in the **different social and cultural practices**. In general, a higher level of flexibility in their private lifetime is noted, with long period stayings alternated with short visits. This prevalent practice during the year is possible thanks to a new **work flexibility** with the tangible chance of working remotely (as long as an internet connection is available in the second home hosting village), which is quite widespread in some foreign countries while, on the contrary, it is still not fully integrated within the Italian labour market.

In the research area, during the **housing boom in the 60s and 70s** it was customary to buy new land adjacent to the primary house and build a secondary one.

Different experiences are also detected: apartments usually located in the historical village centres were bought as **second homes to spend the winter**, with families moving for months from the countryside and rural hamlets to the village for better accessibility to services and milder weather conditions. Today, those second homes are for sale or left empty, contributing to the abandonment and depopulation of the historical centres of rural small villages.

Small villages, especially those conveniently located along the infrastructural axis connected to the biggest urban and metropolitan areas, have experienced **a rise in the number of second houses, due to their easy access to neighbouring urban contexts**, where job and services opportunities are concentrated. Here, rural building that only few decades before were primary residences were quickly converted into vacation homes, used for short periods, during the summer or as weekend retreat locations, frequently closed during the winter season.

> *IN3 << In the most marginal villages the outmigration phenomenon has been more evident, with consistent flows directed to Turin, Milan or Genoa. These villages experienced massive depopulation dynamics, but many families, like ours, kept their family ties and after some decades living in the city, they eventually decided to come back to our land, like we did. >>*

> *IN2 << Here it has always been only us from the "borgata" [i.e. hamlet] and it is the "borgata" that resisted the most. At Annunziata they all move to Turin to work, to make money. Then, little by little, they fixed up the house they left here. There used to be a lot of people from Turin who bought houses here in Costigliole during the 60s and 70s. On the other hand, we bought houses by the sea and in the mountains.>>*

> *M5 << It must be pointed out that many second home tourists do not legally reside here, but live in the territory for long periods during the year. Therefore, it is not accurate to rely solely on administrative data; one must have a direct knowledge of the territory >>.*

Usually, a **monitoring process** about second homes is in place by the local administrations, due to a national law, as in Italy holiday homes are subject to extra taxation (IMU and municipal waste tax). For some small municipalities, **second homes taxation is a relevant income**, that they can't afford to lose due to the limited municipal resources available

for cultural, social and touristic development projects. Despite the need of economic income through taxation, an interest in facilitating new holiday homes is detected among mayors to fight the ongoing growth of abandoned properties, especially in the historical village centres. Some administrators are informally monitoring the second home phenomenon, despite no tools or regulations are offered by the national laws. The main interest for local politicians is to directly track the presence of second homes and their geographical distribution, in order to facilitate the **renovation of abandoned houses** (especially of those located in the historical village centres) or to stimulate the real estate market of empty homes, for the village regeneration and revitalization purpose. They are mainly concerned about the social and economic impacts of having multiple empty and abandoned properties concentrated in the same district or hamlet, leading to a blighted area and discouraging possible newcomers.

M1 << For them our village is at the center of the world!>>

The local community highlight how foreigner second home owners easily move in and out of the village, being able to travel all over Italy using their second home in North Italy as a base for travelling around Europe.

Community life: social networks and relationships with the local community

> *M1 << Here the phenomenon is pretty visible. We organize events so that they can keep coming here with their friends, relatives and families. […] For us, it is first of all a personal relationship. We are probably the only candidates who provided an election program both in Italian and English, to keep them updated and aware of our intentions, although they have no right to vote here.>>*

Some of the villages are experiencing a decrease in the social activities and community services, partly due to the different composition of the newer local families that are perceived to be less interested in the social life of the village.

> *IN3 << There is no community left here. The Pro Loco (the local no profit association for recreational activities in the village) is closing, few members are left. New inhabitants in the village just bought a house, but they don't feel part of the community and don't participate in the village's collective activities>>.*

On the contrary, in some hamlets, second home owners are the only subjects that contribute to keeping the village manned and inhabited.

> M1 <<They want to feel integrated with the local community. There are realities, such as Spain, where English second home owners colonized some districts with almost no contact with the community. Here, on the contrary, they want to participate in local initiatives, with any sort of association, such as the Pro Loco; sometimes they participate more than the local inhabitants themselves!>>

Some second home owners are actively involved in the life of the local community, taking up activist causes or contributing to local **political debates**, demanding improvements in the daily services offered by the municipality. Their commitment to the cause enables them to become a reference voice for the villagers, often enriching and extending the local debate, and facilitates their social and cultural integration.

> SH11 << When we arrived here in 1980, we didn't know anyone. After completing the renovation works, we had a huge party inviting the whole hamlet. Today we are very well integrated and I am the representative of the hamlet, which lacks many services that the municipality does not provide >>.

In some hamlets, the presence of second-home residents supports the maintenance of social relations. It supports the more fragile members of the local community through simple, caring actions typical of community life in the past. Despite the non-permanent presence, the tourist who regularly and steadily visits his second home can choose to be supportive of the permanent inhabitants, recovering the system of values and relationships that were once typical of rural communities. At the same time, he can regain that network and **practice of mutual support** that is often precluded to him in the urban context in which he lives.

> SH5 << A lone woman lives next door. When she needs help, we assist her, for example buying her some groceries from the village. Here we still lend a hand, as we used to do in the old days>>.

> SH8 << We do very little village life, we only attend the annual local festival. But we take great care of our relationship with our neighbours. They often help us take care of the lawn and look after the house when we are not there >>.

M1 << Many of them have become more involved in the local life of the community more than those who have lived here for three generations, especially because they choose this village as a second home! And this is for us a source of deep pride. Some of them even invest in commercial activities and small businesses, in addition to their second homes>>.

M1 <<We are lucky to have a tourist or second home owner who, on average, is a person with some culture, respect for the environment, respect for history, respect for each other. People who have already a job, coming from Northern Europe, who generally have a level of respect for others that we can only dream of, such a courtesy, kindness and politeness. >>

Different voices from the local community convey discordant opinions about the **level of inclusiveness** of foreign second home owners in the local social network. According to many, their preference to buy isolated houses indicates a desire for separation from the local inhabitants and their daily issues about the village life, living in a sort of distant reality, immersed in the landscape and solitude.

IN2 << Many foreigners demand isolated houses, preferably in the middle of the woods. They are not afraid, like us, of being isolated, they do not want to be disturbed, maybe they even have some prejudice against us.>>

IN5 <<Here second home owners from Turin are actually considered as part of the local community. They actively participate in local activities and country festivals >>.

In some cases, the degree of participation in local life is not limited to attendance at village festivals and gatherings, but rather is translated into **political engagement**. The intention is to provide the local community with skills and abilities developed through the professional life pursued in the urban context, in order to contribute to the development of the rural area.

SH11<< When the mayor asked me to join the list, I was happy to be able to contribute with my skills and knowledge. I accepted and was also the top vote-getter. But then they were not able to take full advantage of what I could give them. I would have focused on cooperation and for some projects I would have been inspired by what is happening in France >>.

However, the response from the local community is not always one of full appreciation. It is often difficult for second-home tourists to have a deep understanding of the social, political and

cultural dynamics underlying the village life, and the desire to disrupt the old customs may result in marginalization and obstructionism.

Impacts on local economy and social framework

Positive impacts on local economy include aspects related to the **renovation works** and the management of the building site. Foreigners usually prefer to buy traditional farmhouses that are still **on the market at convenient prices,** due to the large amount of ancient empty houses available in the Monferrato countryside, in order to completely renovate them following their needs and architectural taste and according to their budget. In that process, most of the times **they entrust local workers to carry out the renovation works**, from the project management phase to the execution of the construction works, almost blindly relying on the capabilities, deep and updated knowledge of procedures and national regulations and the know-how about traditional manufacturing of local professionals.

In some villages, there is a consistent business built around the possibility for foreign second home owners and their parents and friends to frequently visit wineries and independent wine producers along the year, close to their second homes. Some family businesses are profiting from foreign second home owners, not only for the economic gains but also for the confidence they helped to regain about the business and the opening of new perspectives towards possible new clients.

The economic impacts can be radically different on neighbouring rural villages, where the initial economic and social conditions are historically different: where a vibrant community is active in the local products and service manufacturing, second home owners can contribute building a stronger network and connections with external territorial contexts, helping strengthening the local economy.

> *M1 <<They definitely helped the local economy and confidence about the business and the local products, especially for those young entrepreneurs. […] There are people who believe in the village. People who make the village grow. I think a little bit of that is also due to the fact that we have them around us, along with their many friends visiting the place.>>*

On the other side, when the rural villages suffer from marginal dynamics the presence of second homes has a minor impact on local economies, rarely constituting the fuse for starting new business activities and for maintaining community services.

IN3 << In the marginal villages like ours their presence is absolutely irrelevant, there is no significant impact on the local economy. On the contrary this can happen where you have a rich rural territory, with local wine producers interested in establishing new relationships for trading purposes>>.

Where a stable second home market is in place for foreigners, **dedicated real estate agents**, both run by Italians and foreigners, are working in order to help foreign second home buyers to follow the long process, complicated by different laws, taxes and professional figures that must be involved. Furthermore, a whole **set of professionals** dedicated to the care and maintenance of the property is supported by the presence of foreign owners or with habitual residence at a considerable distance from the place of the second home: during prolonged periods of absence of the owners, housekeepers and gardeners are hired to manage the property, that is often rented out to friends and relatives.

M5 << I could say that 5-10% of second-home owners, basically the foreign ones, decide to invest in economic activities in the area, mainly agritourism and bed&breakfast. >>.

Landscape: meaning, impacts and modifications

R1 << It's two things they really look for to have around them. One it's the view of the Alps, because that's very special for this area, and then, secondly, also the vineyards. Nice views, basically. Landscape is very important. I think that's what makes them interested in the first place. What catches their interest it's the combination of the beauty of the landscape and the food and the wine and the culture.>>

Landscape, with its peculiar elements resulting both from the geographical and morphological context and from human interaction, is a key factor in the second home market, as real estate agents confirmed: what future second home owners search for is a nice view from the window, combined with the local cultural atmosphere.

Landscape is the central driver, which leads many second-home buying and renting choices: from the **remoteness** from urban centres to the presence of **unspoiled nature**, greenery, wildlife, scenery and vineyards in the surroundings.

often adding a swimming pool in the garden as a fundamental private service for outdoor activities.

> *M1 << It is fundamental for us to keep our identity. Because if you become too nice like Barolo or Barbaresco, eventually you lose your identity. It's right that there should be diversification, there should also be a grove somewhere, a little bit of hazelnuts fields here and there. It's biodiversity, even those with second homes don't want to have the feeling of being in Disneyland. In fact, they want the real thing, the rural, because they put on their boots and go for walks in the woodlands and through the narrow streets of the rural villages. >>*

The landscape is perceived as a matter of individual and collective identity, to be preserved from the impacts of massive touristification, although almost no political nor normative efforts have been put in place in the last decades to prevent uncoherent interventions that could affect local identity elements in the local environment.

> *M1 << They can't stay here without a pool in the house>>*

> *IN3 << Here there hasn't been any attention to preserve local buildings identity. Here you can see flat roofs, chalets like in Switzerland, with no regards for its compatibility with the traditional architectural features >>.*

> *M2 << The elderly in particular notice this: what was once a landscape covered in vines has now turned into a forest, and the forest brings with it beautiful landscapes, but with a different management from that of the vineyard, which can be problematic. >>*

In many cases, land that was once associated with the second home property are usually turned into woods or sold to local farmers, as their use is not related to vacational and recreational activities. Many interviewees mentioned the **landscape gradual transformation**, partially caused by the increase of empty and second houses in rural areas, characterised by growing expanding forests replacing land once occupied by vineyards. Those vineyards were typically cultivated by small independent winemakers or local farmers, supported by the local cooperative winery in the production process (today, in the case study area, very few cooperative wineries are left after a massive failure in the previous decades in the Asti province, as their political and economic power structures affected both the rural society and the Piedmontese viticulture). The **increase in forests and woods surface areas** has been considered the objective sign in the landscape of a relevant economic, social and cultural change: on the one hand a renewed

idyllic scenery has been brought to rural contexts for second home owners to be enjoyed around their holidays properties, while on the other hand the lack of regular maintenance and the absence of human beings lead to an increase in epidemic diseases affecting the grapes spreading through fallow lands and to the intensification of damage caused by the wildlife.

Interviewees report that the second home expansion in several areas started before the UNESCO acknowledgment, although after that a boost occurred to the phenomenon, reaching villages and areas before untouched by the second home wave. Nonetheless, it is remarkably clear for many administrators and inhabitants of the area that being part of the UNESCO heritage had an impact on the **visibility of the area**, with a potential expenditure of the second home market in terms of new possible interested buyers from abroad or other Italian contexts:

> *R1 << When the area became part of the UNESCO's World Heritage, that was a sort of a big boost, in the way that it was written more about Piemonte, it got more publicity in general. […] It is a sort of stamp, a proof of quality, of the excellence, of the uniqueness, which makes people more confident to buy in this area. >>*

Diverse processes of attachments to places

When the holiday house has been inherited by a family member that keeps the ties alive with the local communities, the second home owner develops a strong feeling of attachment to places, people and social habits, to the extent that sometimes there is a tendency to idealize the rural context.

> *SH1 <<We call it 'Contrada', the road where my second home is. We call it like this, because the gates are still open all day long, as in the past times. We can trust each other and everyone is encouraged to enter in your house. Everyone looks after his/her neighbour and provides help if someone is in need. I hold the keys of all the others houses in the courtyard>>.*

> *SH1 <<Every inch of this country makes me feel intimately connected to my family, to those great-grandparents I never knew. I look at the road, the bell tower and the meadows and I see the gaze of my whole family again>>.*

Feeling like a second-home tourist is closely related to practices and lifestyle habits related to time spent outside one's usual residence. However, in some cases it is difficult for respondents

to distinguish their first home from the second one; it is rather a mere label associated with address and location.

> *SH11 << I always give the example of the sugar bowl. Usually the most beautiful sugar bowl is kept in the first house, but we keep the most beautiful ones here in our second house >>.*

> *SH11<<We invested a lot of time and money in our second home; we spent the best years here. We also built true friendships, with the masons who supervised the renovation work to begin with. There are nice people here and there is mutual help. It is so different from the city >>.*

Italian second home owners, in most cases, inherited the house from their parents, for whom the house was the primary residence. They spent their childhood in the village. Thus they had the opportunity over the decades to **develop a meaningful bond with the place, the landscape, the local community, and the house itself**. They invested in property renovation work, leisure activities and time spent.

> *SH16 << Here we used to meet in the village square and it was nice to hang out together, to socialise. We would stay here for extended periods. Today, when our children come down, they don't hang out here anymore and prefer to go to different places for tourism. They come here to see us>>.*

Such a process of attachment does not happen automatically for later generations, who have not necessarily had the opportunity to build the same bond. This weak tie results in sporadic use of the second home, which may even lead to the sale or abandonment of the property.

> *SH16 << I have always felt integrated into the local community. I participate in activities for the organisation of festivals, I am inside the Pro Loco, a member of the local club. But this has always been a difficult village, for people from outside it is not easy to make new friends>>.*

> *SH8 << Compared to when my grandparents were there, the use of the second home today has changed. I no longer spend the whole summer there like when I was a child, we go only on Sundays. That's why we decided to rent it out to tourists or to exchange it through an online platform when we are not there >>.*

A hint of resilience

> *S1 << They helped us open our eyes. For example, an old brick house until 20 years ago it was considered a ruin to us and usually demolished. They came here and did not pull down, but took apart brick by brick instead and rebuilt the farmhouse with those bricks >>.*

Some of the professionals involved in the renovation works or business lead by foreign second home owners are spurred to learn English in order to deal with them.

For foreign second home owner it is common to invite neighbours for a coffee and to get familiar with the neighbourhood community as well.

Although it is not a rule, they usually prefer not to live in complete isolation. In some cases, foreign second home owners bought a house in the village historical centres, thus contributing to **revitalize some empty districts or hamlets**, respecting the aesthetic elements of the traditional rural architecture.

While a multitude of second home owners mainly from Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK are known to be spread throughout the whole province, the first foreign second home owners community officially acknowledged by local inhabitants as a substantial number of temporary residents concentrated around the same territorial area is the informal aggregation grown up around the village of Agliano Terme.

In 2013 they initiated what has been considered by many **a sort of "movement"**, based on the creation of a cohesive network formed by newcomers and second homeowners located in the same territorial area, with common interests and goals. From the beginning, they contributed to the birth of a local non-profit association, named '**Associazione Agliano Barbera'**, constituted by both local and foreign wine producers.

The first event second home owners contributed to organize and launch is called '**Barbera Fish Festival**', a festival dedicated to the unusual combination of the Barbera wine and the Norwegian fresh cod. This unconventional marriage reflects the will to let the two prevailing contemporary cultures in Agliano (the local Italian traditional one and the new Norwegian one growing with increasing numbers of second home owners and visitors) meet each other and generates **a new cultural and social arena**. Ideally, the organizers of the festival suggest a twinning between two different populations and two diverse landscapes, that of the North Sea and the UNESCO hillscape of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato.

The biennial festival takes place in the historical center of Agliano Terme and lasts for three days, usually the second weekend of October. It is the result of the cooperation between the

Barbera Agliano Association and the Norwegian Seafood Council, but it also involves the Agliano Terme municipality, the Cooking School of Agliano Terme, the 'Barbera d'Asti' Consortium and the Langhe Roero and Monferrato Tourist Office, as part of a territorial system of

> *M1 << It's a lot of Norwegians here. I'm Norwegian too and I live here all the time. Agliano it's my village. And I would like to go to the bar but I'm only hearing Norwegians speaking! The problem is that some years ago with the fish festival, a Norwegian television channel made a programme about Agliano. So Agliano is now world famous in Norway. That's why everybody wants a house here because they think Agliano is the best place ever. Thus, now we have a very big community of Norwegians >>.*

4 _____ Second home owners' attachment to places as a driver for resilience

Second home landscapes: implementation of a useful concept / Attachment(s) to places as a non-linear path / New trajectories to boost community resilience / Second homes in the face of climate change

4 / SECOND HOME OWNERS' ATTACHMENT TO PLACES AS A DRIVER FOR RESILIENCE

The research so far has attempted to intersect quantitative and qualitative analysis to obtain the most accurate and exhaustive portrayal of the different spatial patterns and social practices connected to second home tourism in the rural areas of Asti.

On the one hand, the quantitative data analysis highlighted how four different landscapes of second homes emerge by cross-referencing demographic data with the percentage of empty and unoccupied houses. The visual analysis of the landscape of the province of Asti partially supports this picture. Walking through the historical centres and hamlets of the 118 municipalities, it is clear how different types of buildings, natural landscapes and demographic, economic and social dynamics correspond today to variations in second-home tourism. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis from the interviews reveals how different forms of attachment to the place and paths of relationship with the local community mainly determine the dynamics of second home tourism. Despite the significant influence that the physical characteristics of the housing stock, location and landscape context exert on second home tourism patterns, the social processes of inclusion and relationship with the community remain the core element determining the nature of the second home landscape and its related impacts.

These considerations become of particular interest when attempting to answer the original research question: *how do different forms of place attachment shape second home patterns towards resilience in rural communities?*

Before attempting to answer the question in the last chapter, the researcher will try to elaborate on four major issues that emerged strongly from the qualitative analysis and are directly related to the theoretical framework. The first sub-chapter analyses the implications of the research concerning the theoretical concept of the 'second home landscape' by Müller and Hall (2004), expanding on its possible future use in the literature. In the second sub-chapter, the concept of attachment to place by second home dwellers is revisited in light of the ordinary individual experiences expressed by the interviewees, seeking similarities and possible generalisations. In the third chapter, new possible paths towards resilient practices are proposed, aiming to provide some hints for possible development policies in inner and rural areas. Lastly, in the fourth sub-chapter, the way is opened to considerations about resilient practices towards climate change implemented by second-home dwellers and how they, in turn, may be affected shortly.

4.1 Second home landscapes: implementation of a useful concept

The first direct outcome of the quantitative and visual analysis work was the classification of four distinct second-home landscapes in the province of Asti. The usefulness of this classification lies in the possibility of foreseeing different future approaches to the geographical and sociological investigation of the phenomenon and of being able to plan and enable different policies targeted and responsive to the different problems that have emerged for each type of landscape.

The concept of 'second home landscapes' can be traced back to the seminal work by Müller and Hall (2004) about the relationship between second home tourism and mobility. **Müller, Hall and Keen** (2004, p. 16) explored the impacts of second home tourism on the change process in rural areas by investigating the different geographies of second homes. They distinguished four second home landscape typologies through both the differences in the housing stock (converted homes from primary residences versus purpose-built second homes) and their differentiated use (weekend homes versus vacation homes). They argued that **different typologies of second homes occur in diverse landscapes**, along with distinct features and social, economic and environmental impacts: 'ordinary rural landscape in urban hinterlands' (1) and 'extensively used peripheral landscapes' (2) where **converted second homes** prevail; 'amenity-rich hinterlands, coast and mountain landscapes' (3) and 'major vacation areas, coast and mountain landscapes' (4) where purpose-built houses mainly constitute second homes. In the study conclusions, more effective planning about second homes at both local and regional levels is needed to maximize the positive impacts (the so-called blessings) on rural communities, with less fear of corroding that 'rural idyll that never existed' (Müller, Hall and Keen, 2004).

The theoretical model based on these four second home landscape categories has been recently discussed by **Back and Marjavaara (2017)** to acknowledge through empirical data whether the composition of the second home stock influences the impacts on the rural communities in the framework of the rural change. The two authors investigated the **heterogenous geography and composition of second homes** in Sweden, showing the geographical variation among purpose-built and converted second homes with two different use patterns (for vacation or weekend only). Multiple second homes **quantitative features** (age of the buildings, distance between the owner's primary residence, variation in number of second homes in 15 years, change in property values, percentage of detached second homes, density of second homes) have been combined and linked to different areas. Eventually, they draw a Swedish second-home landscapes map, where some patterns emerge. The national distribution of the diverse second home landscapes shows evidence of historical, economic and real estate market processes and social dynamics, such as the inner migration processes that occurred in

the country's rural areas. Results demonstrate that second homes are not a homogeneous category: their **classification is subjected to local contexts,** and the **spatial patterns they trace carry out predictable impacts**. Lately, a further study has been conducted by **Back (2020)**, through additional qualitative data based on semi-structured interviews with officials from twenty Swedish municipalities. Although the interviewees have noted problematic issues related to second home impacts or planning, interview data confirms the different frames associated with the diverse second home landscapes, suggesting that the 'uneven geography of second home tourism's impacts' is actual.

This research seeks to contribute twofold to studies on second-home landscapes in the Italian peculiar context of inner and rural areas and, more in general, in any specific contexts where a lack of data about use and building information occurs.

(a) On the one hand, it proposes using a **mixed methodology**, applying both qualitative and quantitative tools to test hypotheses, in order to provide thick description of the phenomenon. In this case, direct observation of the target settings resulting in the production of visual data and interviews with second-home owners, administrators and inhabitants from the local community being analysed have helped to confirm and, in some cases, refute the hypotheses initially developed through quantitative data.

(b) On the other hand, this research highlights how, in the Italian context of rural and inland areas, second home landscapes are directly connected to demography, requiring **depopulation and repopulation dynamics** to be analysed over several decades. The study of the flows of emigrants and immigrants in the area and of the trend of permanent residents contributes to detecting the dynamics of property occupation, pointing out in which contexts, over time, 'space' has been made for second-home tourists. Over the years, this dynamic has made it possible to make available to new owners traditional rural properties ideal for conversion into second homes or, conversely, has discouraged the construction of holiday homes due to the massive presence of too many empty and derelict houses. A chronological interpretation of these territorial development trajectories captures the intertwined areas between demographic and tourism dynamics, in which the second-home user naturally straddles the two themes.

The geographical patterns that emerge from reading the territory through the typology of second-home landscapes can provide a valuable framework for the spatial interpretation of the phenomenon. It is essential, nonetheless, that this understanding is enriched by accurately listening to the multitude of individual and group trajectories to achieve a more truthful mapping.

4.2 Attachment(s) to place(s) as a non-linear path

From the analysis and coding of the interviews, several notable topics emerged in the study of spatial processes and social dynamics related to second-home tourists. Among them, what seems particularly relevant in the investigation of social practices is the influence that diverse levels of place attachment exert in shaping individual attitudes and group dynamics among second home owners.

Starting from the singular cases identified through the interviews, the following scenarios can be identified:

(1) Second-home owners who grew up where their holiday home is today, once their primary residence, and actively participate in the life of the local community. After spending their childhood in the village, they pursued different life trajectories (usually in urban environments) while maintaining a solid connection with their place of origin. Over time, they consolidated friendships and actively contributed to transforming private and public space, supporting community activities with their direct contribution, to the point of exposing themselves to the front line through political action or activism for causes of collective interest. Time spent in the second home is an essential but not discriminating factor. Whether they spent entire weekends as children or were born in the village, the family's strong connection to the place counts in the process of attachment to the place.

(2) Second home owners who have inherited the family home and hold a connection, albeit sometimes weak, with the local community. Their attachment to place is built based on the historical intergenerational bond. However, the contribution to local life is often less relevant in the social dynamics of the village. Often the bond is based on a sense of nostalgia. In some cases, the owner rebuilds a new bond with the local community, with different meanings from those associated with the second home in the past. In other cases, the place attachment weakens, sometimes to the point of selling or abandoning the house.

(3) New second home owners, who choose to buy (or build) the property in the exact location and have no connection with the area before becoming owners. In some cases, their choice to integrate and be included into the host community allows them to participate in village activities actively, propose modifications and improvements and bring their contribution. Alternatively, their choice is to stay isolated from the social context, taking poor advantage of local services and contributing to the commodification dynamics of the rural landscape.

Second home owners' place attachment has, thus, a role in framing individual and group behaviours aimed at maintaining the well-being of the rural community and, in some cases, improving the local context's economic, cultural and social conditions. Different degrees of place attachment can be identified among the interviewees and can be described (and therefore measured) on two different levels:

(a) place attachment is limited to the individual context that coincides with the own familiar place (the house, the land, the private indoor and outdoor activities) with little or no relationship towards the rural community and the landscape, understood as a system of elements and relations on a territorial scale;

(b) place attachment is related to the personal context and, at the same time, to the local community and social space (the rural community, the landscape, the village, the cultural heritage), through the development of relations of integration, collaboration and active participation in the dynamics and activities of the rural context.

The present study seems to confirm that the strength of the place attachment is directly related to the time spent and the activities carried out in the second home rather than the prior belonging to the local context. Second-home owners interviewed who did not come from the local context and had no previous connection to the local community were nonetheless able to develop a strong sense of rootedness to the place of their second home, in a rather personal and often introspective journey of relating to the local cultural and natural landscape. This thesis is consistent with some of the most recent research on place attachment and second home tourism, pointing out that different levels of place attachment are mainly related to the time spent at the second house and may produce similar attitudes and behaviours (Nouza, Ólafsdóttir, & Sæþórsdóttir, 2018).

However, from the data analysis and coding of the interviews, no evidence was found to establish **a higher or lower level of attachment to the place depending on the path pursued** (the three scenarios mentioned above). That is, in some cases, subjects who have recently purchased a second home in the area have immediately developed a deep attachment to the community and the surrounding landscape for the most diverse reasons (previous and repeated visits over the years to the context of reference or an affective bond with the landscape). However, in other cases, owners who inherited the second house that had belonged to the same family for generations did not develop such an attachment to the place as to trigger virtuous practices with the local community or bring improvements to the economic, social or local context.

Therefore, it is impossible to associate a specific category of second-home landscapes with a range of attitudes and behaviours concerning the level of place attachment.
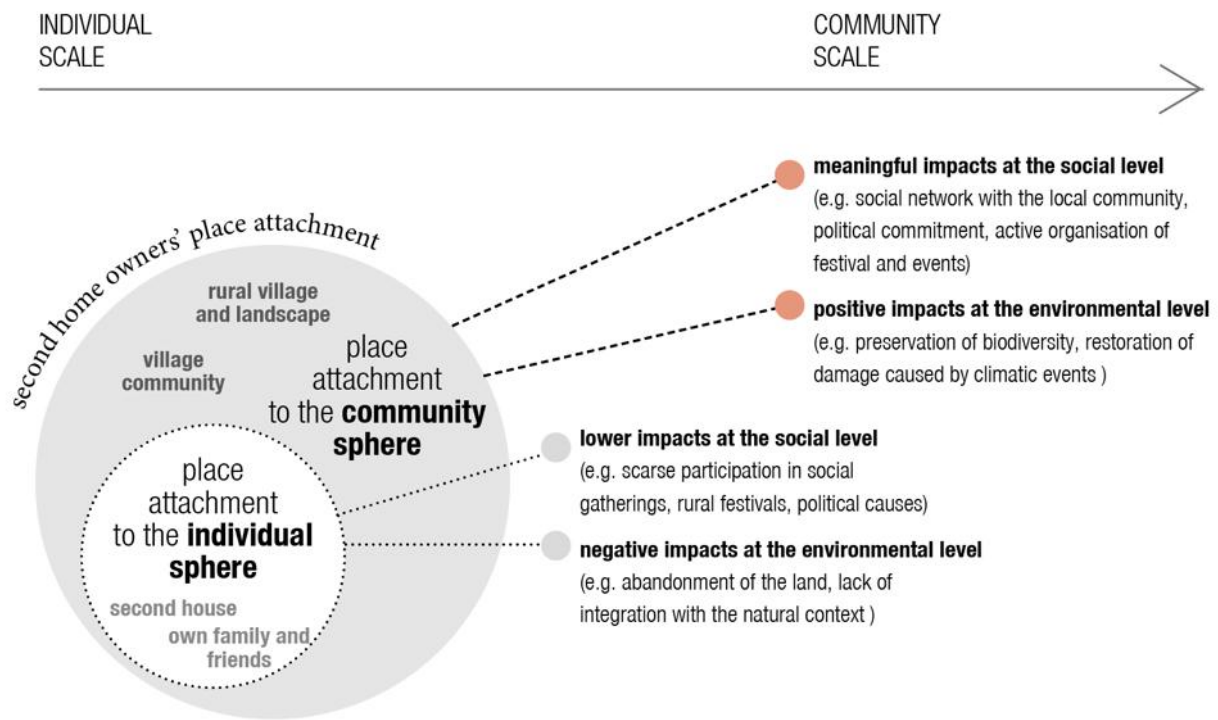
Fig. 21 Diagram about the impacts on a community scale of diverse forms of second home owners' place attachments.

What emerges from the research, however, is that different forms of place attachment by second-home dwellers usually correspond to different trends in behaviour and social practices, which may impact the local community and the economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental development of the rural village. Therefore, although it is not necessarily a rule, it is more likely that the second home user who develops a higher place attachment at the community scale will more likely produce meaningful impacts on the local community, even through disruptive actions or small revolutions. From this perspective, therefore, it will be possible to examine within the case study the different actions related to place attachment that can lead over time to greater resilience of the local community towards the global challenges affecting rural and inland areas of the country.

4.3 New trajectories to boost community resilience

And so, how to answer to the initial research question, how does the place attachment of second home owners help trigger resilience practices in the local rural community? This research suggests that actual resilient actions occur when second home owners' attachment to place is anchored to a strong relationship with the community inhabiting the rural context. In the long term, the potential expressed by second home owners' strong rootedness (e.g. bridging social capital) may lead to innovative solutions and modifications to better adapt to future challenges. Moreover, in the short term, affection by second home users can lead to new social practices that trigger positive spill-over effects on the territory (e.g. social events and rural festivals to enhance the local heritage and build bridges with external communities).

Some of the research conducted to date has already analysed the role of place attachment in adaptation practices, seen as a driver of commitment to building responses to global challenges (e.g. depopulation dynamics, poverty, climate change). However, studies linking place attachment and resilience remain sparse and limited (Devine-Wright, 2013), although experts point out a significant and effective contribution of place bonds for the preparation of adaptive and resilient collective responses (Amundsen, 2015). Moreover, only few contributions attempt to analyse how place attachment can affect community response with a specific focus on the community of second home owners (Ashton Adie, 2020) .

The analysis of the interviews conducted in the case study area led to the identification of some social and cultural practices led by second-home dwellers that are giving rise to processes of renewal, revitalisation and adaptation of Asti's rural communities in an attempt to contribute to the regeneration of some rural villages actively.

Summarised, the most important experiences that have emerged can be expressed as follows:

(a) the presence of foreign second home owners engaged in entrepreneurial activities in the context of the second home has given rise to an association of producers for the valorisation of local products, initiating a **multicultural dialogue** between foreigners and locals. Thanks to the association's social activities, the community of permanent residents and second-home owners also **initiated a local cultural festival** based on the union of the two different cultures, thus creating an **economic and cultural spin-off in the revitalised rural context**.

(b) In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, some second home dwellers began to use their second homes as **teleworking spaces**, spending more time in their second homes. In addition, to support the struggling local community, second home owners sought to

support local businesses, which in turn **revived the door-to-door service** once customary in the countryside to provide a new service adapted to the pandemic needs.

(c) In order to cope with the climatic changes taking place in the area, some second homeowners proposed to local farmers to **plant new crops** not typical of the area (i.e. olive groves) to experiment and observe the results in the years to come, in response to the rising temperatures. However, the proposal on their land broke down the **initial resistance** of local farmers.

(d) In response to the emergence of environmental conflicts in the rural context and the threat of constructing a waste treatment plant, the community of second homeowners and permanent residents banded together to resist the intervention and **organise the struggle**, successfully blocking its implementation. From the periodic moments of confrontation and dialogue with the population, a new association is emerging, intending to **animate the local recreational life** to benefit the extended community.

What is noticeable is that such practices may persist beyond second home ownership once the link between the two populations (the permanent and the temporary) is established. Some of the actions taken thanks to the stimulus and presence of second-home residents may, in time, lead to small revolutions in the local context. The community is stimulated and supported by their presence and will also be able to respond more confidently to future challenges, taking advantage of **the bridging social capital** (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015; Gallent, 2015) fuelled by second home tourists.

An in-depth study of the topic in relation to the relationship between second-home tourism and adaptation to climate change in the province of Asti is proposed below, based on the interviews conducted and the analysis of the quantitative data available to date on the area's winescapes.

4.4 Second homes in the face of climate change

Climate related research and international reports have already announced how Southern European countries around the Mediterranean Sea will face major issues for their tourism destinations in the 21st century (Perri, 2005; Alcamo et al., 2007; Moreno, 2010a; Galeotti and Roson, 2012; Magnan et al., 2013; Dogru at al., 2016; Jacob et al., 2018). In the European context, both winter and summer tourism will be affected by climate change, with different vulnerabilities and impacts dependent on the diverse subnational territories within each country (Damm et al., 2017; Koutroulis et al., 2018). In the Mediterranean basin, heat waves, heavy precipitation events, floods and water scarcity will likely undermine some of the most attractive scenery (Perry, 2005) and will cause severe economic losses (Galeotti and Roson, 2012). Specifically, Southern Europe is expected to be more vulnerable than other European regions in relation to the tourism and agriculture sectors. It has been estimated that they will be highly sensitive economic assets and among the most affected sectors as they are deeply connected to the environment and the climate (Kovats et al., 2014). Moreover, studies on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies have predicted that decision making processes in tourism are already affected by climate variations (UNWTO, 2007, 27) and tourists will likely change the destination, duration and the activities of their vacation trips according to their personal perception of the climate change issue (Nicholls, 2006; Moreno, 2010b; Gössling et al., 2012). Likewise, second homeowners are experiencing the impact of climate change and they are actively adjusting their individual attitudes and actions towards their secondary dwellings, dealing with local inhabitants and public administrations.

According to projections, a decrease in tourist activities and agricultural yields will be significant for Italy, where the two economic sectors are deeply intertwined. In the last decades, the creation of linkages between the agrarian sector and tourism in rural areas generated new occupational opportunities, pivoting around the concepts of diversification and authentic experience. Nowadays, those advantages are counterbalanced by the threat of climate change impacts on agricultural processes and products. In Italy many unique agrarian landscapes that are internationally renowned as touristic destinations could face unprecedented challenges, linked to environmental quality maintenance and cultural identity protection. For instance, that is the case for cultural landscapes, which are the direct result of historical human activities in the natural context: both their tangible and intangible heritage is at risk as climate change is mining those processes that, decade after decade, built the local identity and community self-representation. Consequently, it can be argued that rural areas and activities performed in rural contexts, such as tourism, could face direct and indirect effects of climate variations, 'since they represent unique, fragile, and complex systems sustaining a multitude of functions besides

agricultural production' (Hemming et al., 2013, 72). Explorations about the diversified and place-based linkages between tourism and agriculture have been widely researched (Torres and Momsen, 2011), but less attention has been dedicated to second home tourism and its direct and indirect mutual interaction with the agricultural sector, except for its negative effects. Therefore, the chapter seeks to examine how second home tourism and agriculture are modelling and influencing each other which are simultaneously, and at different levels, impacted by climate change. Second home tourism and agriculture development trajectories are explored in a case study area in the Italian rural context, the cultural landscape of the vineyards of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato in the Piedmont region, north-western Italy. The contribution is traced upon semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in 2020 in the case study area to second homeowners and rural inhabitants, aimed at investigating how second home users will respond to climate change in the next decades, according to their perception of the global issue. Quantitative data are also analyzed and mapped to better frame how modifications to viticulture and to the hydrogeological system could intersect to second home geographies.

Firstly, a framework about the Italian second home patterns is outlined, focusing on their vulnerabilities to climate change; then, cultural landscapes are presented, followed by a methodology and case study introduction. After the quantitative data are examined through thematic maps, evidences from the interviews are described to express second homeowners' perceptions and concerns about climate change. Lastly, final remarks are provided to support further research, suggesting a multidisciplinary approach to define successful future strategies and policies about second homes and climate change.

Due to the historically differentiated economic and political developments between the North and the South, the Italian patterns of second homes are as diverse as the landscape typologies across the whole country. From coastal areas to mountains and inner regions, the geography of second home tourism is shaped by different core features, involved actors and social, economic and cultural impacts. However, second home tourism literature related to the Italian context is scarcely understood, and the phenomenon is insufficiently monitored at the national level due to the lack of data and situated research. Even less attention has been devoted to the extent of the phenomenon in rural and marginal areas of the country, despite the clear evidence of its importance brought to light during the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Although there is limited knowledge about how climate will change at the local level and how vulnerability and resilience of the tourism industry might be assessed at a local scale (Dogru, 2019), it is possible to outline a national framework focused on the different impacts of

and vulnerabilities to climate change that correspond to the variety of second home landscapes in Italy. The national debate and academic research identify three main geographic settings characterized by holiday homes concentrated in climate sensitive contexts: coastal, mountain and rural areas.

1. Secondary homes in densely built coasts suitable for mass tourism *(on the peninsula and islands).* Italian coastal areas are known to be the favoured destination of the majority of national and international summer tourists, but they also are home to 28.4% of the Italian population (17,215,609 inhabitants settled in 43,084 kmq, from ISTAT data, 2016). Erosion, sea level rise, increasing extreme weather events and threats to the marine ecosystem are among the most tangible effects of climate change, and they will affect the heavily anthropized coastline, which has been almost saturated by holiday houses since the 1980s. Local municipalities along the coasts will be forced to deal with environmental sustainability issues, hydraulic risks and tourism management (Romano and Zullo, 2014). Climate change will also cause the loss of renowned beaches and places of interest and a decrease in water resources available for tourism (Breil et al., 2007). Venice and Cinque Terre (Liguria) are recurrently in the spotlight in the international press because of the damages already occurring linked to climate change.

2. Mountain holiday homes in either neglected or renowned touristic destinations. The European Alpine Region has been declared one of most vulnerable areas to climate change and, at the same time, the second most favored destination for vacations in Europe after the Mediterranean region (ESPON, 2013). In the Italian context, declining mountain villages are already suffering from deep depopulation and commercial desertification processes, whether as a result of past catastrophic events (e.g. earthquakes in central Italy) or after a declining phase of their past tourist industry. In some alpine contexts, depopulated villages have been converted into seasonal resorts and concentrated secondary dwellings that might be abandoned during non-touristic weeks of the year therefore causing a loss of cultural identity and liveability (Brida et al., 2011). On the other hand, in wealthier contexts (such as Dolomites) multilocal dwellings are also seen as part of the setting of new contemporary positive demographic trends (Perlik, 2009; Elmi and Perlik, 2014), while a negative outcome may be a process of 'Alpine gentrification' (Perlik 2011). Moreover, mountain aesthetic features, its ecologic values and rural amenities are exploited by the global market economy, turning landscapes into commodities and fostering new inequalities among mountain regions (Perlik, 2019). In this framework, climate change will affect second home tourism in the winter season. With the reduction of the snow cover altering the snow-reliability of the Alps, Alpine

communities will need additional snow management tools and new touristic strategies, which are both financially and environmentally sustainable and less snow-dependent (Abegg, 2007).

3. Rural secondary dwellings in the countryside and in the marginal inner areas. Rural areas were affected by post-war shrinkage, associated with out-migration to cities and rural decline and deprivation. Today, Italian countryside villages host a diversity of rural second homes, old buildings rather than purpose-built homes, with their vernacular architectural elements being restored and functionally converted for leisure activities. Attracted by the landscape quality, second homeowners come from metropolitan areas and beyond national borders, thus fueling a movement that boosts the local economy and seeks to preserve environmental and cultural resources. A recent study conducted by Carrosio and Osti (2019) about the spreading of processes of eco-gentrification in the countryside highlights how the presence of highly mobile populations in rural areas may contribute to fighting depopulation, the same process of abandonment that generated new temporary and permanent residential spaces, leading to an increase in secondary houses starting from the 1960s. A significant portion of Italian rural territory is subject to landslides and hydraulic risks and 91% of municipalities are involved, with more than 3 million households residing in highly vulnerable areas (Trigila et al., 2018). Climate change threats to rural second homes are therefore related to the territorial fragilities of rural landscapes, due to the hydrogeological instability, forest management and extreme events, aggravated by land abandonment and unsustainable agricultural practices. Moreover, many rural areas in Italy are identified by distinctive landscapes, where human interaction with the natural environment has produced exceptional both aesthetic and cultural values. These so-called cultural landscapes are among the main attractive sceneries for Italian and foreign second homeowners, to the extent that their modification due to climate variations and natural hazards may affect future patterns of second home tourism.

Cultural landscapes as fragile ecosystems

The term 'cultural landscape' has been challenged by scholars from various disciplines, including human geography and cultural heritage, and related narratives in both academic and administrative fields have highlighted how borderline the concept is, partly conflated with that of landscape itself (Jones, 2003) as all landscapes are at once natural and cultural (Cosgrove, 1998). Nevertheless, the adoption of such a definition by UNESCO in 1995 stimulated its use, referring to these landscapes as the result of the 'interaction between people and their natural environment over space and time' (Plachter & Rossler, 1995, 15). The emphasis is placed on the quality and features of the mutual influence of human practices and the natural elements

resulting in a distinct landscape. Thus, it is evident that climate change is already affecting cultural landscapes and the activities carried out by humans. Direct damage is expected as a result of the threats posed by extreme weather events and natural disasters on the aesthetic and physical values of cultural landscapes. Indirect, and possibly more profound, upheavals may affect the social and economic context that sustains the cultural landscape (Dastgerdi, 2020, 9). Among the 55 cultural and natural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List in Italy, eight are listed as cultural landscapes. Those landscapes clearly identified by agriculture (such as viticulture) are particularly vulnerable to climate change, as the climate is among the main elements that determines the landscape's morphology, agricultural production and the product itself, as well as all the correlated aspects of local social and cultural life. Their exceptional value resides in the results of man's interaction with the natural environment (criterion V of the UNESCO definition), a process that evolved through the ages based on human adaptation and experimentation in response to the local climate.

The vineyard landscape is a representative case in which tourism and agriculture constitute the two main economic sectors. As a driving source of income for rural inhabitants, their patterns are intertwined as wine production is also the main tourist attraction, together with the experience of the vineyard landscape. Several scholars have already discussed to what extent tourism should be considered a sector vulnerable to climate change (Dogru et al., 2016). Likewise, extensive studies have been carried out to assess the future suitability for grape production in Europe and Italy, building multiple scenarios with different climate variation simulations until 2100 (Fraga et al., 2013; Schultz and Jones, 2010; Teslić et al., 2019). The results highlight that viticulture in Southern Europe will struggle to cope with climate change and that will endanger the wine quality and productivity, modifying the viticultural zoning. Adaptation strategies in the long term will probably include changes in vineyard geography (Fraga, 2019). This scenario would also affect the socio-cultural system with consequences to both international and domestic rural tourism connected to wine places, which includes second homes.

Climate change impacts on cultural landscape and viticulture

The Piedmont region is complex due to its orography, made up of the Alps, the hills and the Po Valley. For that reason, second home tourism takes on multiple varied forms: isolated mountain huts, entire villages specifically built for mass winter tourism during the 1960s and 1970s, renovated ruined buildings in the countryside, and inherited small apartments in medium and large cities. Similarly, the forecasts regarding climate change indicate non-homogeneous consequences for the regional territory. As pointed out by IRES (2019), the alpine

area in Piedmont will become a 'hot spot' of climate change, with the most evident being temperature increases. Heatwaves will most likely lead to an increase in forest fires (forest surface in 2016 in Piedmont amounts to 976.953 ha, and 17% of it is located in hilly areas), while extreme events will alternate with periods of drought. Unexpected and intense precipitation will also increase hydraulic risks and the probability of landslides, exacerbating the already complex geo-hydrological instability (CMCC, 2020), which affects the whole country but is also specific to the case study area (Fig. 4). Most of the second homes located in isolated hamlets or historic countryside villages have been tackling the issues associated with hydrogeological instability in recent years, investing private resources to solve a collective problem. The effect of projected worsening hazards impacts tourism related to holiday homes, which may be discouraged in specific tourist destinations, and tourism linked to the so-called 'borghi' and inner areas.
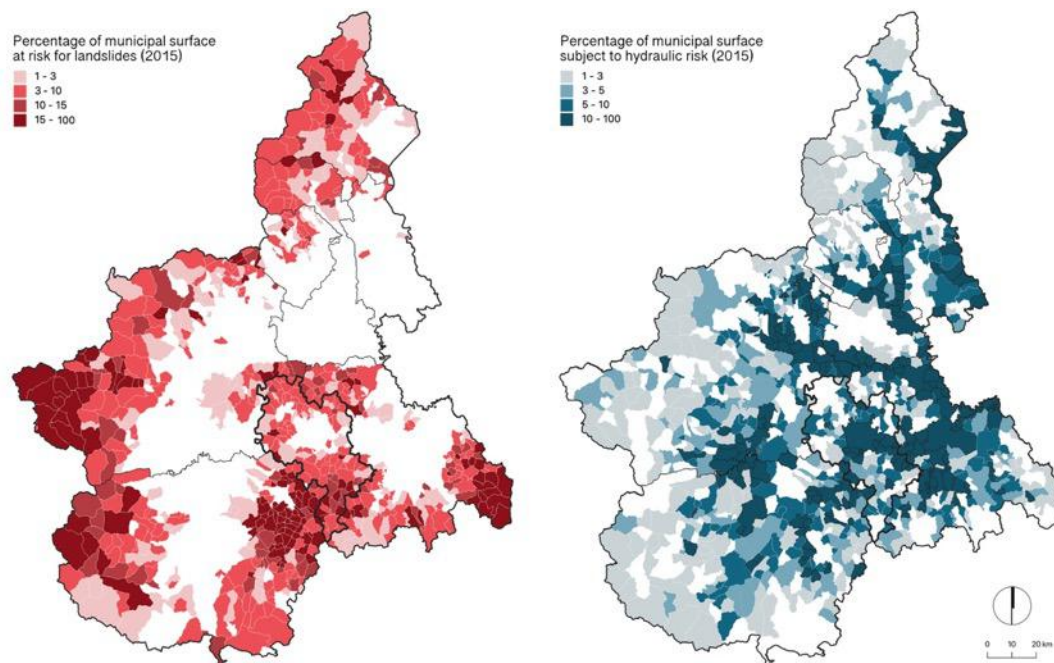
Fig. 22 Percentage of municipal surface subject to landslides and hydraulic risks in 2015 in the regional context. Source: Author's elaboration on Italian government open data data available at www.urbanindex.it.
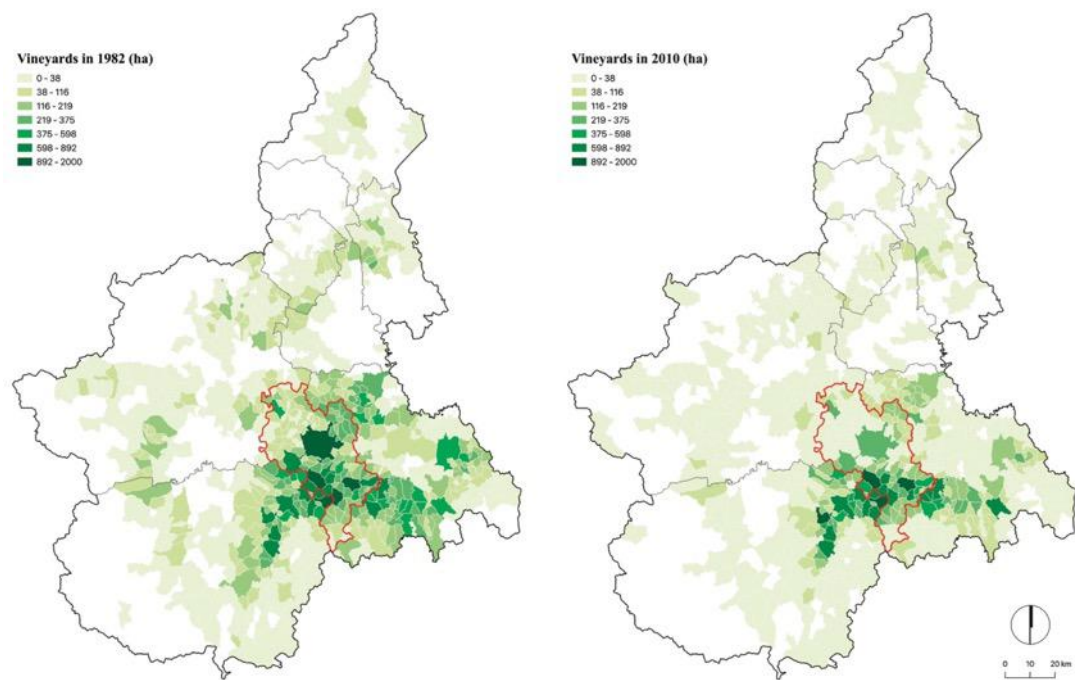
Fig. 23 Vineyards surface (ha) by municipalities in the Piedmont region in 1982 and 2010. Source: Author's elaboration on Piedmont region data available at www.regione.piemonte.it.

Limitations or damages to the local infrastructure (such as roads or water supply services and private internet connection) would be crucial for rural inhabitants and tourists, with disruption peaks in the summer and autumn seasons.

Moreover, the cultural landscape of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato will be subject to variations that will affect wine production and, therefore, the vineyard landscape. The agricultural landscape and high-quality wine production (D.O.C. and D.O.C.G. wines) play a relevant role in the tourist patterns in Southern Piedmont, and it can be argued that significant climate change impacts might cause negative economic impacts on the tourism sector, similarly to what has been estimated for Tuscany (Nunes and Loureiro, 2016). The characteristics and qualities of wine are dependent on climatic aspects of the local region and environment, as well as on the soil, and cultural and management practices. Changes in temperatures and annual precipitation are already affecting the wine cultivation and production process, forcing small and medium producers to search for mitigation and adaptation practices. Studies have been conducted to assess how climate change will affect the identity and quality of some Italian wines, in order to provide adaptation and mitigation strategies and to inform local policies (Bernetti et al., 2012). Results for the Piedmont region show a reduction in the optimal areas by 2100, according to both the scenarios including or excluding mitigation actions (IRES, 2019). While a future shift of vine cultivation towards the Alps is predicted, for the south of the region,

a considerable loss of suitable area for high quality wines is expected. The total area of vineyards in Piedmont is already rapidly decreasing as it has lost 40% of its surface area in only 30 years (Fig. 5), which reflects an international trend shared with all the European countries (OIV, 2020). Thus, the geography of historical wine regions is already changing and will continue to be modified worldwide in the future by climate change, to face variations in the wine style and in the wine production process (Shultz and Jones, 2010). The regional map with the distribution of the vineyards shows that they are expanding closer to mountain and higher hilly areas, taking advantage of a cooler climate during the summer season, but globally less hectares are dedicated to grapevine cultivation. Today the highest density of them are distributed in a smaller number of municipalities in the UNESCO site of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato, where the majority of the quality wine production (D.O.C. and D.O.C.G. wines) is concentrated, but future modifications may put economic and cultural sectors such as tourism at risk.

The landscape is therefore at the centre of the topic of climate change and its effects on second home tourism. The landscape is, on the one hand, the strength of the case study area, as the main attractive element, shaped over time by cultural and social practices, the foundation of local community identity. On the other hand, however, it also represents an element of extreme fragility, vulnerable to climate change, which could disturb not only the physical balance through changes in soil, water and air but which could also influence the evolution of socio-cultural phenomena, through direct and indirect effects on farming activities and on housing and tourist patterns.

Second homeowners' perceptions of climate change

Twentyseven interviews conducted to second homeowners aiming at investigating all the aspect of their individual story about their second home, their engagement with the local community and their relationship with the landscape; while twentyeight interviews were conducted to local inhabitants in order to better understand their perceptions about the second home tourism in the area and the changes occurred in the last decades to the economic, social and cultural ecosystem. In doing so, interviewees reported individual and collective thoughts about climate change impacts on their own properties and activities as well as on the local community in the last several years. Additional six interviews were carried out among local wine producers and second homeowners that started their own wine production business in the research area in order to collect qualitative data about adaptive strategies already in place or scheduled as a future response to climate change.

Evidence from the interviews reveals that the most visible climate change effect perceived by second homeowners in the short term is related to **extreme weather events**, such as storms, continuous heavy rainfall, whirlwinds and floods, mostly occurring during the summer and autumn seasons. Damage to holiday properties affect buildings, rooftops, gardens and vegetable patches, resulting in unforeseen expenses for homeowners (Fig. 6). As more economic effort is required, some homeowners may consider selling the property, especially when they already own multiple second homes and when those dramatic events are recurrent year after year. The extent of the damage is partially correlated to the fact that less extraordinary repairs rather than ordinary architectural maintenance are usually devoted to rural second homes, often old farmhouses converted into holiday retreats by those who inherited them. Moreover, in second homes areas, often those located in small hamlets or isolated in the hills, inadequate attention is usually paid to woods, spontaneous vegetation or common lands, once safely managed by local farmers and today subject to abandonment by second homeowners, thus contributing to the increase of landslides and hydraulic risks. Public infrastructure such as roads, the energy grid and telecommunications are frequently damaged or out of service due to flooding, landslides and storms, altering the regular activities and services available for second homeowners and local inhabitants.

Fig. 24 Damages reported by a interviewee to his holiday house during summer 2020. A violent storm uprooted the historic tree in the courtyard, causing damage to the roof and facade of the building.

In the long run, as scientists have already predicted, climate change impacts on the agricultural sector will affect the cultural landscape of the vineyards, which is the crucial attractive element of the Langhe-Roero and Monferrato UNESCO site. Older vineyards that were more profitable in the past are now experiencing less favourable sun exposure in the summer season, with extreme heat scalding the grapes and leading to severe damage, which is sometimes even more extensive than that caused by storms and extreme weather events, such as hailstorms. Small producers are already experimenting with new strategies that might improve the diversification, and therefore the stability, of their businesses in the future, by replacing some vineyards already affected by grapevine diseases with hazelnut fields, where the fruits are destined for multinational companies in the confectionery field or for local processing and sale. As stated by some interviewees, several second homeowners participate in the wine production sector by cultivating small segments of vineyards around the property or even producing a restricted quantity of wine. Others regularly enjoy rural tourism experiences connected to wine production, e.g. harvest time or sharing it with friends and relatives visiting the holiday property. The majority of second homeowners, as well as local inhabitants, are aware of the changing weather conditions occurring in rural areas. On average, while second homeowners who have family ties to the place tend to be less disposed towards modifications to land use and management, foreigners and owners who bought their second home recently are generally more inclined to experiment with different crops, such as olive trees, and, in so doing, they are directly modifying the cultural landscape. Nevertheless, some of those actions might contribute to building new environmental and cultural conditions for a more resilient landscape and community in the face of climate change.

Ultimately, the increasing rise in heatwaves and higher overall temperatures that mainly affect the vulnerable population living in the metropolitan areas and urban settings during summer (Spano et al., 2020) is driving a significant number of citizens to temporarily but frequently move to their rural second homes, despite the possible and sudden extreme weather events that may occur, according to the interviewees. Holiday homes in rural environments are seen as havens, shelters for households, the elderly, and children. Climate change is mitigated by local strategies and natural assets such as permeable soil and vegetation, with lower pollution concentration levels. Together with the isolated location factor that usually characterizes second homes in rural areas, the restorative value of living in a natural context is highlighted by the interviewees, that showed a new awareness about the potential effects on both mental and physical health as a result of the 2020 pandemic year restrictions on mobility (Pitkänen et al., 2020).

Second homes in the vineyards: a changing geography?

In the Mediterranean, second home tourism's geography is related to the favourable climate, perceived as ideal for vacation periods. Among the most relevant intangible elements, family ties, place attachment, and the vitality of the local community also play a significant role in the buying and selling patterns of second homes, especially in rural areas. However, in rural contexts, the landscape is a crucial determinant that has multiple meanings and cultural discourses attached to it (Pitkänen, 2008). Therefore, the effects of climate change on the landscape will most likely affect behavioural patterns and decision-making processes regarding the geographical location of second homes in the Italian countryside, both through direct and indirect impacts that are differently distributed and consistent.

The chapter presented the evolution of the interconnected relationship between the agricultural landscape and second home tourism in the UNESCO site Langhe-Roero and Monferrato, Piedmont, as well as the climate change perceptions of second homeowners in this area. The study, through qualitative data, outlines three different scenarios of how different weather conditions will influence second home tourism in the coming decades. In the first scenario, some holiday home users will most likely be discouraged by the unpredictable financial resources required to cope with damage from extreme events (landslides, floods, storms). Both Italian and foreign owners will experience actual damage related to climate change during their lifetime as second homeowners, dealing with the stress related to decision-making pathways. Secondly, others are likely to lose interest in the second home market in the area if the historical vineyards become subject to relocation, not only for the changing environment aesthetics but also for the consequent disappearance or weakening of cultural and traditional rural festivals and activities that animate the cultural landscape. As the geography of vineyards will likely change in the following decades, second home tourism will probably follow, as it is linked to the landscape and local cultural features. Lastly, a third opposite trend can be detected. A revival of residential tourism in rural Italy can be predicted, given how unbearable cities and metropolitan areas are projected to be in the future due to increasing summer temperatures. Together with the boost driven by remote working and multilocal living contemporary lifestyles, here lies the chance for a new wave of second home tourism in rural and peripheral areas that may lead to the renovation of abandoned farmhouses or empty second homes built in the 1960s and 1970s and to the recovery and enhancement of cultural traditions and festivals, unfortunately neglected by locals.

These preliminary conclusions are largely transferable to other contexts in the Italian countryside. The research may be relevant for different vineyard landscapes or rural areas

where agriculture has a predominant role in the meaning and physical making of landscape, where the landscape is collectively recognized as a valuable asset to be consumed as a tourist attraction and sold as a territorial marketing brand (e.g. the olive tree landscapes in Apulia, Umbria and Liguria, the historical terraced landscapes in Cinque Terre, Valtellina and in the Amalfi Coast, the apple production landscape in Val di Non, Trentino). It is no coincidence that those territories are also renowned for being privileged destinations in the second homes market.

Even if second home users in rural areas might be seen as detached from their environment, they may be key actors who contribute to rural change (Müller, 2011) and thus influence the local community about both local and global issues, such as climate change. They can bring a 'resource potential' to rural communities (Gallent, 2015), leading the community towards greater resilience, often breaking some traditional customs related to living and agricultural practices. Studying and monitoring the perceptions and actions linked to second homeowners in the coming years could help strengthen tourism and housing policies, shaping adaptation strategies and direct new possible patterns for holiday homes. Although uncertainties around climate change projections must be taken into account and individual and societal responses to it are still unpredictable, some outlines of future scenarios are already in place.

5_____ Future Research Perspectives

5 / FUTURE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

This research seeks to pave the way for academics, independent researchers and practitioners in the tourism and territorial development sectors to fill the gap in the literature on second-home tourism in rural areas. The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted this project's journey, but it has also brought attention back to the national and international public debate on the topic of second homes and their impacts in different contexts. Furthermore, as a result of the **political debate** on the restrictions on second-home owners during the pandemic, it has been evident to the **academic and non-academic public** how Italy is a country studded with second homes and extraordinarily fragmented in the application of policies related to mobility and housing.

Working on the topic of second homes in rural and inner areas means intercepting a multitude of different and, at the same time, related issues. Namely, it means touching on issues such as urban regeneration, revitalisation of historical villages, rural deprivation, cultural and sustainable tourism, demographic and migratory dynamics, human and social capital, and the themes of landscape and sense of place. The most significant difficulty in analysing second-home tourism in the selected case study was staying on the path traced by the research question without being contaminated by other questions and critical issues. **Happily, this was not possible.** On the contrary, the insights offered by the other perspectives on the topic were fundamental in **digging deeper** into specific aspects about the concept of second homes themselves.

What emerged is **a multifaceted portrait** of a phenomenon that is quite visible (invisible is only its monitoring) and that formally, socially and culturally impacts our countryside and cities. The importance of delving into the study of second homes in Italy lies not only in the possibility of monitoring their diffusion (and thus also spatially planning their development) but also in raising the awareness of citizens and institutions regarding that slice of temporary residency that inhabits our territories. The research shows how the contribution of second home users in marginal contexts can be significant and stimulating in the relationship with permanent inhabitants, a confrontation sometimes **marked by change, sometimes by resistance**.

Far from being an exhaustive work, the study highlights some general shortcomings around the issue of second home tourism in Italy:

(a) at national, regional and sometimes local levels, it **is impossible to access reliable and accurate data on the number of second homes** and their uses. This lack leads

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to the impossibility of researchers investigating the topic through coherent quantitative analyses. While building datasets independently would entail too high a cost for research, ISTAT data on empty houses and houses occupied by non-residents are no longer sufficient to describe the extent of the phenomenon.

(b) At the academic level, there is a relatively clear separation between the studies that could deal with second-home tourism, particularly housing studies, tourism and migration studies. This distance and **lack of interdisciplinarity** lead to poor relevance of the few existing studies, making them a niche interest.

(c) the polarisation of the discourse on second-home tourism around the urban context entails neglecting what happens in rural areas, projecting onto them a series of critical issues mainly valid for urban contexts. The result is that **touristification and over-tourism** are the two terms most frequently associated with second-home tourism.

The main limitations of this research work concern:

(a) the **failure to construct a database** on the number of second homes in the different municipalities, an activity that has been made problematic by the ostracism perpetrated by municipal structures, to which a form was initially sent to be filled with the updated data collected for the payment of waste taxes. Similarly, only one of the six water supply companies in the Asti province could provide exact data on second homes in the municipalities under its jurisdiction. Collaboration between authorities and the presence of an open database would have allowed a quantitative analysis more consistent with reality. This type of analysis is only possible at a municipal level, with the cooperation of the institutions involved.

(b) The **limited number of interviews** does not allow a marked generalisation of social practices. Furthermore, the spatial distribution derived from the snowball technique of interviewees does not evenly cover the entire study area.

(c) the **lack of opportunities for direct interaction** with the interviewees, especially at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, did not allow for a complete qualitative investigation of the concept of place attachment through, for example, the request for pictures produced by second-home owners. Their contribution through the production of data, albeit visual, would have more robustly supported the themes that emerged from the video and telephone interviews.

Nevertheless, the research offers some insights that could be better investigated in the next years:

- Second home tourism will gradually coincide in specific contexts with a **multi-local lifestyle** (Nadler, 2011). The owners of second homes today are perceived as privileged, but in the future, perhaps they will be part of the middle class and will be able to choose to spend equal time in the different residences they own, also through possibly sharing their properties with the other tourists and second home owners. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the hints present in contemporary society to grasp the future developments of this new residency, which will not, however, ever fail to develop place attachment processes.

- The exploration of place attachment, its forms and degrees developed by second home owners could be developed further with an in-depth investigation of the link to mobility aspects of second home owners lifestyles. For instance, how much does **mobility influence** the development of place attachment? How do ties to place, landscape and local community change according to the degree of mobility of the second home owner's behavioural patterns?

- Further research could investigate which **policies** have influenced the spread of the second-home tourism and how with an emphasis on the spatial planning strategies implemented by some local governments. Similarly, based on the results of this research, some proposals could be made for formulating and implementing new policies to foster the development of place attachment among second-home owners and more significant interaction between temporary and permanent inhabitants. A further distinction could be drawn between **planned and formal strategies and informal and relational approaches** to identify the different actors (i.e. inhabitants or institutions) in charge of their implementation.

- A comparative study could be developed between the **place attachment developed by permanent inhabitants and temporary inhabitants** (i.e. second home owners) of a place to ascertain the extent to which residence time influences place attachment in the two identified groups and how this determines social practices.

- Lastly, analogous research could be developed in different rural and inner areas of the Country to trace similarities and divergences in rural contexts with different historical, demographic and social developments.

6 / APPENDIX

6.1 Semi-structured interviews: open questions

Open questions to mayors	
Q1	Which kind of second home tourism do you observe in your village?
Q2	What are the impacts of this tourism to the economic, social e cultural local life?
Q3	How do you relate (as administrators) to it? (e.g. taxation, relationships, requests, etc…) / Is there any sort of management of the phenomenon by the municipality?
Q4	Can you trace the beginning of the phenomenon in your municipality?
Q5	Are there activities supported by second homeowners? / Do second homeowners own local businesses?
Q6	Are second homes located in the historical villages or outside/in the hamlets? ('frazioni')
Q7	Are young locals forced to leave the countryside because of the higher house prices?
Q8	What is the impact of the UNESCO site?
Q9	Is the second home tourism really seasonal?
Q10	What is the relationship between second homeowners and the local community?
Q11	Are there any second homeowners that are planning to move here after retirement?
Q12	How many second homes are empty, according to your knowledge?
Q13	Did/does your village suffer from depopulation and commercial desertification?

Open questions to real estate agents	
Q1	What do you know about the second home phenomenon in the area?
Q2	Can you spot some differences in the housing market related to second homes?
Q3	Is the landscape the key factor? To what extent?
Q4	Is there a strong presence of foreigner second home buyers and why, in your opinion?
Q5	Did you experience an increase in the selling of second homes? When did it start?
Q6	How is your network here? Are you supporting the local network in the building industry?
Q7	What are the features second home buyers are looking for in a second home?
Q8	Which are the municipalities most affected by the phenomenon? And why, in your opinion?
Q9	Where are second home buyer coming from (Country/State, small or big cities, well connected to the countryside)?
Q10	What did you noticed in the second home market during the Covid19 pandemic?
Q11	How and why did you started to work as a real estate agent focused on second homes?
Q12	What is the impact of the UNESCO site on your business?

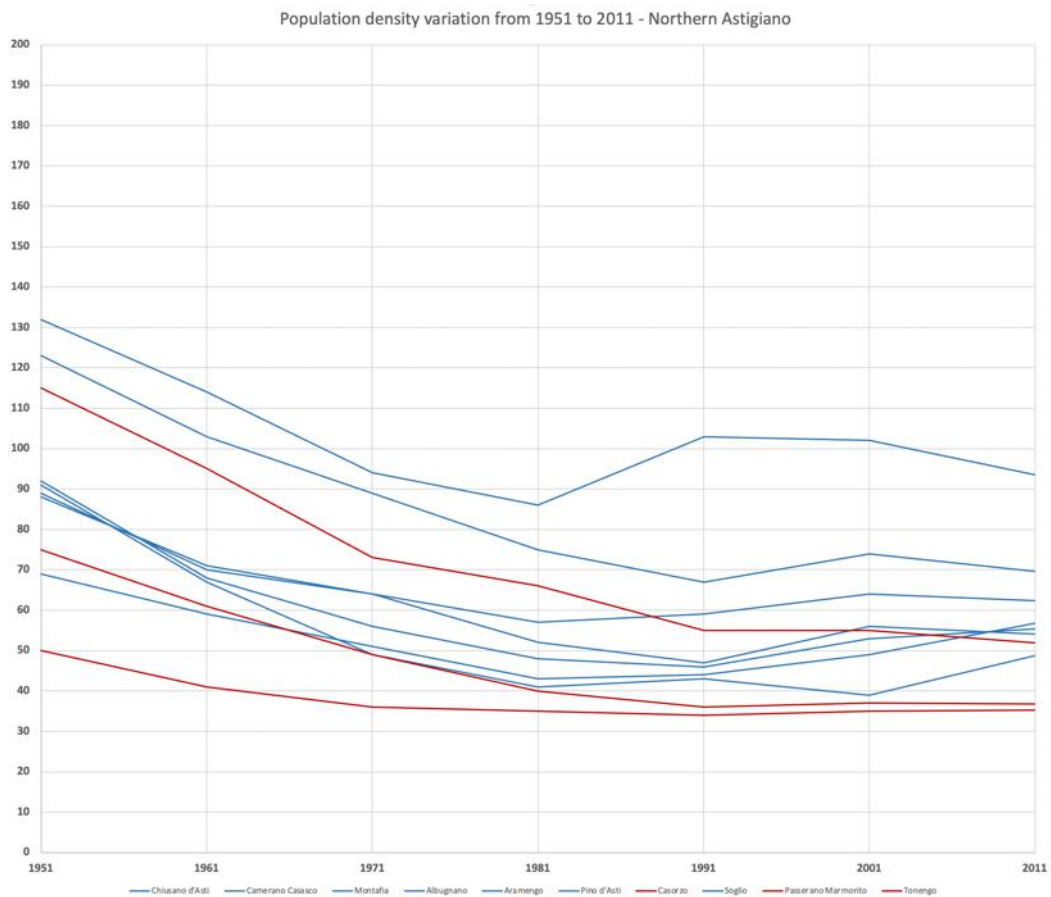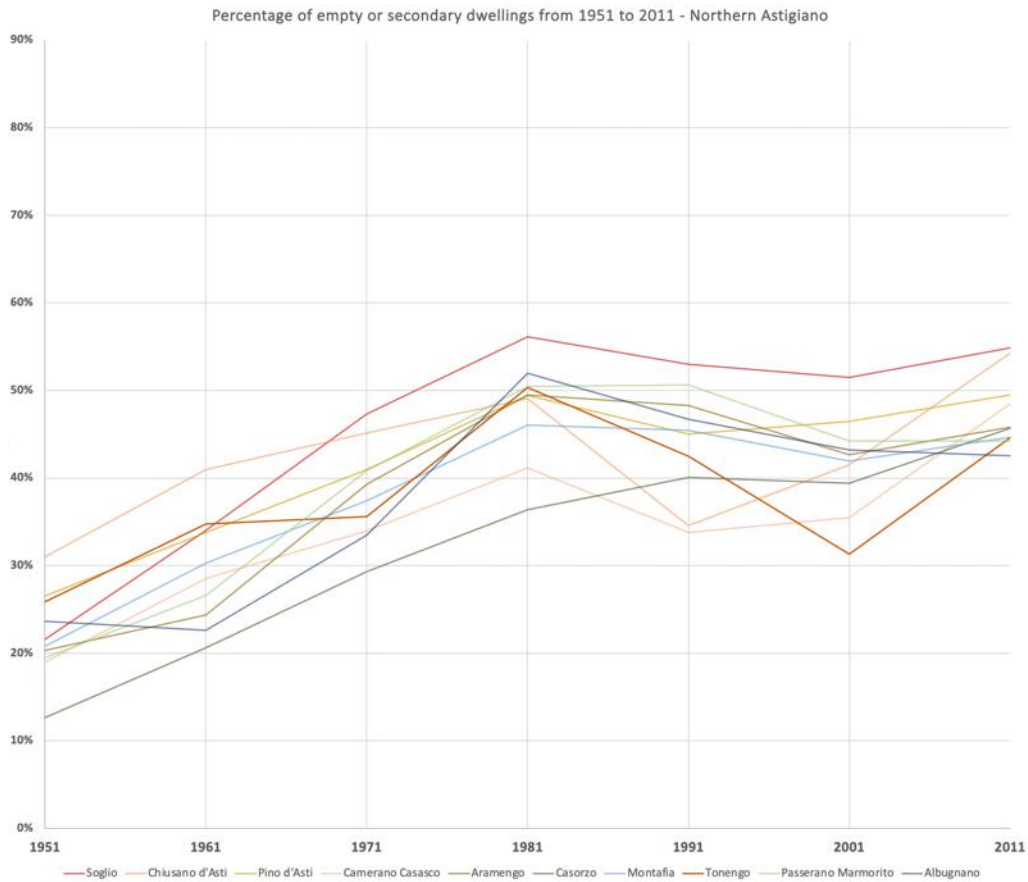| Open questions to rural inhabitants	
Q1	Can you tell me a bit of your life story? When did you settle here?
Q2	Can you describe the changes that occurred in the village starting from the 50s/60s/80s?
Q3	What do you know about the second home phenomenon in the area?
Q4	Are second homes located in the historical villages or outside/in the hamlets? ('frazioni')
Q5	Where are the second homeowners you know from (Country/State, small or big cities)? / How many foreign second homeowners are in this area?

Q6	When did this phenomenon start?
Q7	How many second homes are empty?
Q8	Is the second home tourism really seasonal?
Q9	What is the relationship between second homeowners and the local community?
Q10	Are second homeowners supporting local activities (shops, housekeeper, gardener, etc..)?
Q11	Are there many second homeowners that retired here?

Open questions to second homeowners	
Q1	Can you tell me a bit about the story behind your second home?
Q2	Is it in the historical center or outside/in the hamlets ('frazioni')?
Q3	How is your relationship with the local community? / Do you feel integrated into the community?
Q4	Do you know many second homeowners living in your village or around it?
Q5	How many second homes are now empty, according to your knowledge?
Q6	Is the second home tourism really seasonal?
Q7	Do you have some rituals/traditions linked to your second home?
Q8	How do you live your second home? Do you use it only seasonally?
Q9	Do you support local shops or small businesses while being at your second home?
Q10	Are you planning to sell the house in the future or will you keep it as a second home?
Q11	Do you also own some land linked the house or did you sell it?
Q12	How is the life in the village? (depopulation, commercial desertification, traditional festivals, etc)
Q13	How do you perceive your contribution to the area?
Q14	Which renovation works did you undertake in the house?
Q15	Are you perceiving direct or indirect effects related to climate change?
Q16	What's your relationship with the landscape?
Q17	Can you share some memories?
Q18	Do you volunteer/are you part of any local association?
Q19	Do you have a business here? (mainly for foreign second homeowner)
Q20	What is your relationship with the place?
Q21	Do you think your presence is affecting the territory? (commodification of landscape…)

Table 2 Open questions for the semi-structured interviews

6.2 Diagrams about the four typologies of second home landscapes

FIRST S.H. LANDSCAPE - data

Percentage of empty or secondary dwellings from 1951 to 2011 - Northern Astigiano

Legend: Soglio — Chiusano d'Asti — Pino d'Asti — Camerano Casasco — Aramengo — Casorzo — Montafia — Tonengo — Passerano Marmorito — Albugnano

Population density variation from 1951 to 2011 - Northern Astigiano

Legend: Chiusano d'Asti — Camerano Casasco — Montafia — Albugnano — Aramengo — Pino d'Asti — Casorzo — Soglio — Passerano Marmorito — Tonengo

SECOND S.H. LANDSCAPE - data

Percentage of empty or secondary dwellings from 1951 to 2011 - AT-TO axis

Population density variation from 1951 to 2011 - AT-TO axis

Baldichieri d'Asti — Buttigliera d'Asti — Cantarana — Cellarengo — Ferrere — Monale — San Paolo Solbrito — Valfenera — Villafranca d'Asti — Villanova d'Asti

THIRD S.H. LANDSCAPE - data

Percentage of empty or secondary dwellings from 1951 to 2011 - Southern Astigiano

Population density variation from 1951 to 2011 - Southern Astigiano

FOURTH S.H. LANDSCAPE - data

Percentage of empty or secondary dwellings from 1951 to 2011 - Alta Langa Astigiana

Population density variation from 1951 to 2011 - Alta Langa Astigiana

6.3 Water provision companies map

WATER MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

Consorzio Comuni Acquedotto Monferrato

Asti Servizi Pubblici S.p.A.

Acquedotto della Piana S.p.A.

Acquedotto Valtiglione S.p.A.

AMAG S.p.A.

IRETI S.p.A.
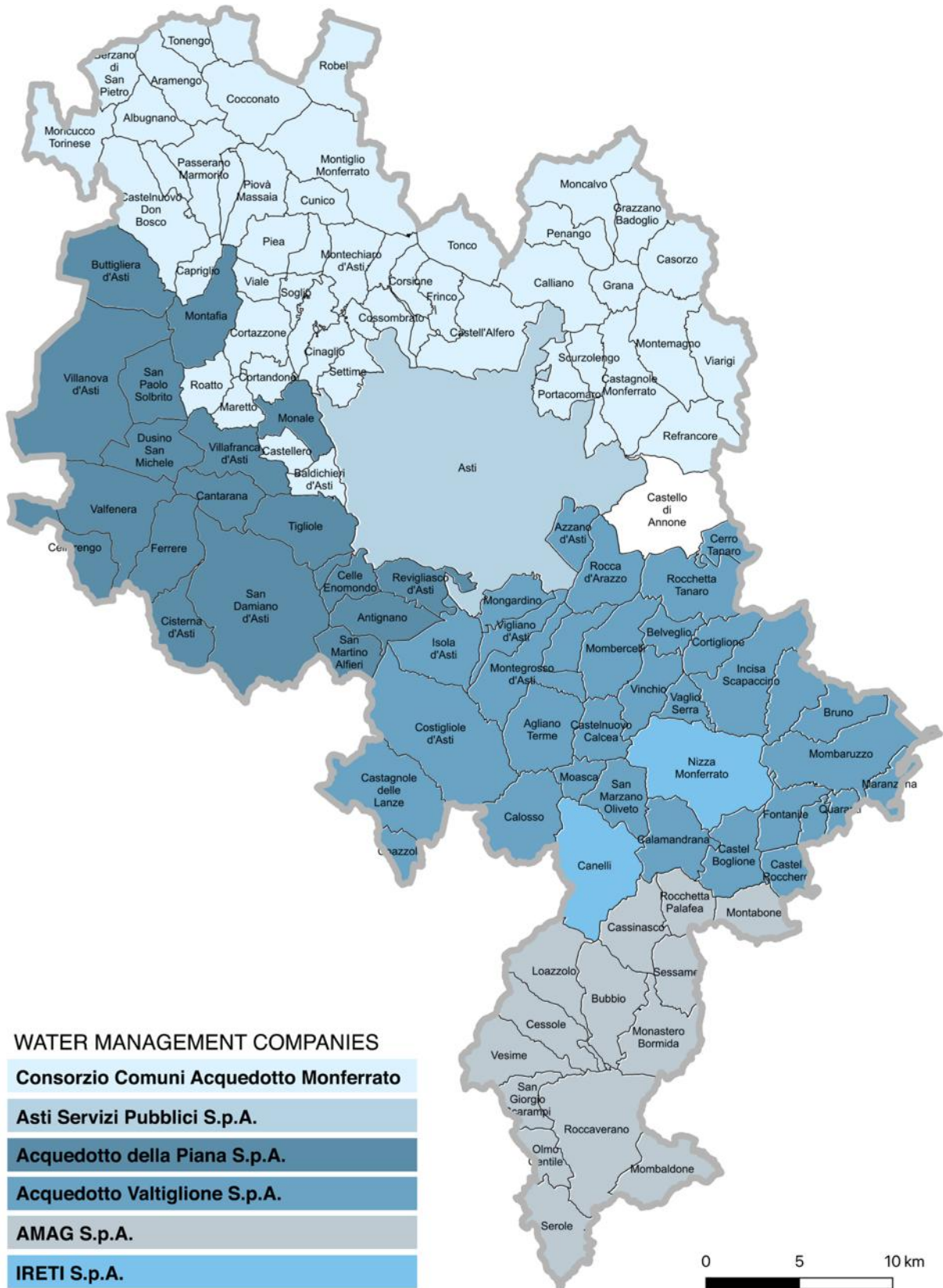
6.4 A Visual Atlas

Hereby a selection of the most meaningful pictures part of the visual atlas is presented. Photos are taken by the researcher and coded using Nvivo software to support the quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Fig. 26 **First SH landscape**. A traditional farmhouse ("cascina") in a state of neglect. Around, the land has been abandoned to forest. The house is located in a hamlet, but not isolated from the town centre. The village, however, lacks community services and suffers a demographic decline.

Fig. 25 **First SH landscape.** Unfulfilled promises of building expansion. The project would consume land and build new housing to meet the modern needs of new families, leaving the town centre abandoned.

Fig. 27 **First SH landscape.** Unfulfilled promises of building expansion. The skeleton of a new building in a state of disrepair. The road, with direct access to the centre of the village, is damaged by hydrogeological instability of the hill above. Nature has taken over the no longer cultivated fields.

Fig. 28 **First SH landscape.** An old farmhouse that has undergone a duplication of its space and now accommodates a primary residence on one side and a second-homeon the other, probably mainly used in the summer months. Located on a busy road axis, it is unattractive on the market for second homes, also because of the shared courtyard.

Fig. 29 **First SH Landscape.** Vineyards have given way to woodland. Second homes perched along the ridge of the hill alternate with empty houses and houses occupied by the last remaining residents. The sequence of traditional architecture is broken up by the architecture of the 1970s and 1980s.

Fig. 30 **First SH Landscape.** Second homes waiting for their owners to come in the next summer season. The garden is left unattended. Basic communication service are in place (TV signal).

Fig. 31 **First SH Landscape.** Second home owner is gardening in the private courtyard. It is probably is favourite activity during the summer. The second home is in the historical centre of the village, with some services still open for local customers.

Fig. 32 **Second SH Landscape.** Condos from the 1990s stand between cultivated land and industrial warehouses.

Fig. 33 **Second SH landscape**. A second house outside the main village, with non-native plants in the garden. The courtyard is protected by an iron fence and bushes. The house is a traditional rural construction, without the addition of contemporary architectural elements. The house is surrounded by other dwellings, second houses and main residence houses.

Fig. 34 **Second SH landscape.** A hamlet: second homes and empty houses, with different construction dates. The road leads directly to the village. The main and second houses have no fences. The building on the right, probably built in the 1960s or 1970s next to the farmstead, was once probably the main residence. Today, the farmstead next to it is uninhabited and in a state of decay.

Fig. 35 Fig. **Second SH landscape**. A hamlet: primary dwellings, second homes, empty houses, with different construction dates. The hamlet is now being repopulated by permanent and temporary residents. The proximity to the village centre is a favourable factor for a direct access to daily services.

Fig. 36 **Third SH landscape.** The vineyards landscape of Langhe, Roero and Monferrato, recognised as a world heritage site. Vine growing and wine production have dominated the countryside for centuries. Today, in addition to the wine-growing sites, there are many farmsteads that have been renovated and converted into valuable second homes, agritourisms or multifunctional farmhouses.

Fig. 37 Fig. **Third SH landscape**. Country roads in a few minutes lead to the valley floors and the main community services. Valuable farmsteads are now almost all restored and inhabited.

Fig. 38 **Second SH landscape.** A small village recreation centre. It provides space for catering and leisure activities for residents and temporary residents. The activity is rooted in the rural context and is one of the few remaining viable centres thanks to its members.

Fig. 39 Fig. **Second SH landscape**. A small grocery shop still survives in the historic centre of the village. Some of these small businesses survived during the pandemic thanks to the contribution of the inhabitants and second home owners. What future for them?

Fig. 40 **Fourth SH Landscape.** The Langa landscape, characterised by forests and higher altitudes, frames the villages perched on the hilltops. The centres are isolated, often connected by a single possible route. Services can be found in the larger centres, half an hour away.

Fig. 41 **Fourth SH Landscape.** The gateway to a village. The central street is populated mostly by second homes of people from Turin and Genoa, a few from Switzerland. Langa stone characterises the façades.

Fig. 42 **Fourth SH Landscape.** Stone façade in a building in the historic centre. The house is in a state of neglect, like many others in the historic centre. despite its central location, it does not have access to basic services, which are not present in the village.

Fig. 43 **Fourth SH Landscape.** Interior of a second home. The owner, from Genoa, proudly explains the effort made over the years to collect tools and utensils from the peasant culture, displayed in a sort of small private museum on two floors. One day he will donate them to the municipality or open the space to the public (as he already does with his friends).

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