SECOND HOMES AS AN OPPORTUNITY IN DEMOGRAPHICALLY DECLINING REGIONS?

An Analysis of the Match between the Demand for Second Homes and the Supply of Vacant Dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

Ronald van Leeuwen

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Colophon

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PREFACE

Before you is my Master's thesis on the opportunities for second homes in demographically declining regions. This thesis has been written as the completion of the Master's degree in Spatial Planning at the Radboud University Nijmegen and was commissioned by the Province of Zeeland.

This thesis would not have been possible if it was not for the help of the three municipalities in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst), the interview partners and all the second home owners who were kind enough to respond to my questionnaire. Especially gratifying was the genuine interest that many of these second home owners showed and it was great to hear the stories of the people of which this thesis is actually about.

I also would like to thank all my colleagues at the Province of Zeeland for their support. In particular, I would like to thank Danny for his help with many of the maps in this thesis and Bea and Erik for their help with the questionnaires. In Mathieu, Léon and Arjen, I had great supervisors at the Province of Zeeland. They gave me a great opportunity to do my research and really helped me with their experience and expertise. Most of all however, I am thankful for their enthusiasm and I will never forget how excited three grown-ups can be at the sight of an interesting map. Tamy, my supervisor at Radboud University Nijmegen, also stands out because of her expertise and enthusiasm. I have really enjoyed our discussions throughout the different stages of my research. They did not only help me to write a better thesis, but also helped me to develop my personal enthusiasm for doing research. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and my partner Merel for their endless support and patience throughout my entire education.

Middelburg, May 2012

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Second homes. Traditionally locals and policy-makers rather considered them as a threat than as an opportunity. Second homes are often assumed to displace local housing searchers and to threaten the liveability in towns (e.g. Coppock, 1977a; Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2005; Marjavaara, 2008). In demographically declining regions as Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, this perspective on second homes is changing however. Regions of which the number of households is declining are increasingly dealing with housing vacancy and therefore it is argued it is "always better to have houses only occupied during a couple of weeks a year than not occupied at all" (PZC, 2011, own translation). Recently, this has for instance led to discussions about possibly revising the second home policy of the municipality of Sluis in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, where second homes are traditionally prohibited inside towns (Municipality of Sluis, 2011b). Jan Latten (2010), professor at the University of Amsterdam, has even presented second homes as an important opportunity for shrinking regions. Latten argues there is a growing need for "*part-time dwelling*" (18, own translation), in which people for instance combine a work week from Monday till Thursday in the *Randstad*[1] with life at the countryside in the weekends. Shrinking regions in particular can meet this demand because of their relatively low housing prices, space and tranquillity, claims Latten. Opposed to the ideas of Jan Latten is the view of the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010) and the Recreation Expertise Centre (Van de Laar, 2010). They claim the opportunities for second homes in shrinking regions are limited. First, because the future demand for second homes is highly uncertain and second, because they claim there is a mismatch between what (potential) second home owners demand and what shrinking regions have to offer. In this study it has been tested to what extent such a mismatch exists in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.

Research Approach

The extent to which the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings match, has been investigated through a comparison of the locations and basic characteristics (building periods, dwellings types and dwelling values) of these dwellings in a single embedded case study. Central in this study is the Dutch shrinking region Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and within this case four specific types of towns have been analysed:

(i) A town approximate to the shore with a highly assessed residential environment (*Retranchement*);
(ii) A town approximate to the shore with a lowly assessed residential environment (*Breskens*);
(iii) Towns distant from the shore with a highly assessed residential environment (*Graauw and Hoek*);
(iv) Towns distant from the shore with a lowly assessed residential environment (*Oostburg and Schoondijke*).

[1] The term Randstad refers to the polycentric agglomeration of the four largest cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht).

In these towns demand and supply have been compared with each other by using a combination of different data collection methods, namely: literature study, a questionnaire with current second home owners, interviews with local real estate agents, observation of the towns, and quantitative data from the three municipalities in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst).

The second home market is a complex market, which is quite different from the market for permanent dwelling. As a tool to capture as much of the complexity of the second home market as possible, a theoretical framework of different types of second home use has been formulated. This framework distinguishes five different ways in which a second home can be used:

(i) *Investment properties*
(which are primarily used for investment purposes and are not used by their owner)
(ii) *Vacation homes*
(which are visited a couple times a year for relatively long visits as a vacation accommodation)
(iii) *Weekend homes*
(which are frequently visited for relatively short visits during weekends and/or vacations)
(iv) *Pied-à-terre*
(which are primarily used for working purposes)
(v) *Full alternatives to the first home*
(which are frequently visited for relatively long visits and of which the visits are not restricted to weekends or vacations)

Mismatch between Demand and Supply

Of the total housing supply in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, 4,67 percent are vacant dwellings and 7,77 percent are second homes. The majority of the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are *recreational dwellings*[2] (2.610), but the number of non-recreational dwellings which are being used as second homes (1.588) is also notable. Although there is some overlap between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, this study predominantly shows a mismatch between demand and supply. First, there is a spatial mismatch. Locations of current second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and the questionnaire with second home owners show the proximity to *amenities* as the shore is by far the most important spatial determinant in the choice for a second home in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. A relatively strong negative correlation exists between the number of second homes and the proximity of towns to the shore (Pearson's correlation coefficient = -0,625 and R squared value = 0,391), and for all five types of second home users the proximity of the shore has been the most important consideration in the second home decision-making process. In other words: the closer a town is to the shore, the larger the number of second homes generally gets. The scope of amenities as the shore is limited however, and notably less second homes were found in towns at more than 6 kilometres from the shore than in towns closer to the shore.

Moreover, there is an important distinction between approximate to the shore and *walking distance* (less than 1,5 kilometres) of the shore. The majority of the current second home owners explicitly

[2] A recreational dwelling is a dwelling, which in the land-use plan has been assigned a recreational function instead of a residential function. 98,16 percent of the recreational dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are located at vacation parks.

chose for a dwelling at walking distance of the shore. These people almost all possess a property on a vacation park, whilst 85,82 percent of the current second home owners have stated they prefer having a second home inside or around an existing town over a second home at a vacation park. For those people the location at walking distance of the shore is suggested to have been decisive. This especially goes for second homes that are used as investment properties or as vacation homes, since these locations have a larger and more stable leasing potential. The current supply of vacant dwellings however, is generally not found at these locations, and this thus represents a spatial mismatch between demand and supply.

Second, there is a mismatch between demand and supply because second home owners seem to prefer other kinds of dwellings than the dwellings which are generally vacant. To some extent there is an overlap between what second home owners demand and what is currently vacant: second home owners generally purchase relatively small and simple dwellings which are also relatively inexpensive (< € 200.000), and this is basically the same price segment many of the vacant dwellings are in. However, the vacancy is predominantly concentrated in town houses (i.e. row houses), apartments (without a direct view of the sea) and dwellings which have been built between 1945 and 1979, whilst the second home demand is predominantly concentrated in dwellings which have been built before 1945 and in detached dwellings. The observation of the different sub cases revealed that especially the building periods of the dwellings are important in the difference between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings. Illustrative are pre-war built town/end houses in comparison with town/end houses which have been built between 1945 and 1979. The latter generally are larger and more modern than the former, but are monotonous and not unique since these kinds of dwelling can be found all over the Netherlands. Therefore, these vacant dwellings insufficiently meet the demands of (potential) second home owners.

Future Developments

The size of the future demand for second homes is extremely difficult to predict. Jan Latten argues a sociocultural development as part-time dwelling can lead to new demand, but local real estate agents stress that macro-economic developments and tax regimes have a much greater influence on the second home market. Qualitative developments on the second home market on the other hand are more evident: both the literature (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003; VROM-raad, 2009) and local real estate agents suggest the distinction between first and second homes is increasingly getting smaller since second home standards are increasingly getting higher. Based on these developments it is expected the mentioned mismatch between demand and supply will only grow larger in the future. Up till now the standards for second homes have generally been lower than those for permanent dwellings, and therefore some less attractive dwellings were able to function as second homes. However, it is questionable whether future second home owners will also be prepared to purchase these kinds of dwellings.

This is basically already manifesting itself: second homes are not only found at the demand side of the market, but also at the supply side of the market and local real estate agents are already dealing with difficult to sell former second homes. Since the current second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are predominantly retirees (41,15 percent of the owners are older than 65 years of age),

it is expected many of these dwellings eventually become for sale. Many of these dwellings will probably find a new owner (either through sale or heritage), but it is expected a relatively large part of these dwellings will in the future be vacant because of the higher standards of modern second home searchers.

Recommendations

This study concludes there is a relatively large mismatch between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Hence, the opportunities for second homes as a solution for housing vacancy are limited, and policy-makers are therefore not advised to actively stimulate second home ownership. Facilitating second homes in the sense of taking away barriers is advised, but it is unrealistic to expect this will solve the housing vacancy or soften the demographic decline. Policy-makers should avoid falling back into futile attempts to *deny* or *challenge* demographic decline, and are recommended to focus on strategies which aim to *accompany* demographic decline (e.g. Hollander, 2010; Hospers, 2010; Klinkers & Hovens, 2011; Lindsey, 2007; Popper & Popper, 2002; ROB & RFV, 2008; Verwest & Van Dam, 2010).

CONTENT

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | Context

Starting from the 1960's, there occasionally have been debates about the (socioeconomic) impacts of second homes on host regions (Hall & Müller, 2004). Oftentimes, presumed negative impacts, such as second homes pushing up housing prices or threatening the social climate and liveability, have ruled the debate (Gallent, 2007). In for instance the United Kingdom (Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2001), Sweden (Müller, 2004), Norway (Overvåg, 2009) Australia (Frost, 2004) and the Netherlands (e.g. Adriaansens, 2011; Municipality of Sluis, 2005 and Municipality of Veere, 1998), policies have been designed to either discourage or prohibit second home ownership. In the Netherlands however, demographic decline is slowly becoming reality in specific regions and is offering a different context to these debates. The municipality of Sluis for instance, which has had a prohibition on non-permanent dwelling inside its towns since 1994 (Municipality of Sluis, 2005), has recently discussed a potential revision of its policy in order to allow second home ownership in the majority of its towns (Municipality of Sluis, 2011b) (section 6.1.3). The following quotation illustrates the current stance of policy-makers in Sluis:

> *[It is] always better to have houses only occupied during a couple of weeks a year, than not being occupied at all*. (PZC, 2011, own translation)

Although demographic decline certainly is not a new phenomenon in the Netherlands, the current demographic changes do have a structural character (SER, 2011). The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Dutch: *Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving*) has made a distinction between three forms of demographic decline: (i) depopulation; (ii) decline of the number of households and (iii) decline of the (potential) labour force (Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006). Demographic statistics and prognoses show there are strong regional differences in this respect. The number of households is declining in the peripheral regions Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, South-Eastern Limburg (Parkstad Limburg) and North-Eastern Groningen, whilst in the rest of the country the number of households is not expected to shrink on the short term because of the trend towards smaller households (Verwest & Van Dam, 2010). Demographic decline in itself does not have to be problematic, but it can have problematic consequences with which society has to deal. On the housing market for instance, demographic decline can lead to two potential problems (Hollander, 2010; Koopman, 2010; Lindsey, 2007; Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009; SER, 2011; Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). First, when structural vacancy on the housing market occurs, this can lead to decay and have a negative impact on the liveability in the area. Second, private home owners can get into considerable financial problems when the housing prices drop.

Several scientists, policy-makers and advisors are trying to find a way to deal with these potential problems. Policy strategies which focus on *accompanying* demographic decline (Dutch: *krimp begeleiden*) are increasingly being advocated instead of policies which focus on *challenging* demographic decline (Dutch: *krimp bestrijden*) (Hollander, 2010; Hospers, 2010; Klinkers & Hovens,

2011; Lindsey, 2007; Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009; Popper & Popper, 2002; ROB & RFV, 2008; Verwest & Van Dam, 2010). Second home ownership has also been put forward as an opportunity to deal with the potential problems on the housing markets in demographically declining regions (Latten, 2010; NVM, 2010; RLG, 2009). Jan Latten (2010) of the University of Amsterdam for instance, claims there will be a strong demand for second homes in the Netherlands because of new lifestyles and mobility patterns. Latten further argues demographically declining regions can offer peace, tranquillity, safety and relatively low housing prices to people in search of a second home.

Opposed to the view of Jan Latten are investigators of the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010), who are quite sceptical about the opportunities for second homes in demographically declining regions. Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen question the future demand for second homes, which they think is overrated. They also claim there is a mismatch between the demand for second homes and the current supply in shrinking regions, since they believe these regions usually possess little scenic quality and because vacancy predominantly occurs in the least attractive dwellings and in the (social) rental sector. Van de Laar (2010), who explicitly explored the opportunities for second home ownership in Dutch demographically declining regions, furthermore argued the possibilities for second homes are promising in theory, but are limited in practice. In line with the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, she argues demand and supply do not match particularly well.

It is striking that Latten on the one hand claims demographically declining regions have everything to offer to (potential) second home owners, whilst Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen and Van de Laar on the other hand use the mismatch between demand and supply, which they believe there is, as an argument against the opportunities for second homes. However, neither the 'believers' in second homes as an opportunity in shrinking regions, nor the 'sceptics' have based their arguments on extensive empirical evidence.[3] Thus, here remains a gap in current knowledge, which this study aims to fill. This is done by the analysis of different towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen in the Netherlands, in which both the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings are analysed. Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has been chosen as the case of this study, since of the three Dutch shrinking regions Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is considered the most promising for second homes as a policy strategy. This is because Zeeuws-Vlaanderen currently has the largest number of second homes of the shrinking regions and because the region in the past seems to have had the most success in attracting residents from outside the region (section 5.4.1).

1.2 | Research Goal and Question

The goal of this study is to analyse to what extent the demand for second homes and the supply in demographically declining regions match. This study is part of the larger debate about whether second homes serve as an opportunity for demographically declining regions or not. Although this study is not able to take away all uncertainties within this debate, it contributes to the debate by

[3] Van de Laar (2010) did conduct some expert interviews in order to investigate the opportunities for second homes in shrinking regions. For Zeeuws-Vlaanderen however, Van de Laar does not really give much insight in the actual opportunities for second homes, since she mainly focuses on the policy changes this would require.

examining a specific part on which proponents and opponents do not agree: namely, whether the supply in demographically declining regions is actually suited for second home use or not. On the supply side, the market for second homes is investigated by analysing the characteristics of the vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. The context of demographic decline suggests second homes are especially welcome in currently vacant dwellings, since the occupation of vacant dwellings can serve as a direct solution for these buildings. On the demand side on the other hand, it is argued not all second homes are used for the same purposes and are not always used in the same way (Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2004; Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004; RPB & RIGO, 2003; Van de Laar, 2010).

Furthermore, different forms of use can lead to different demands concerning the environment and the dwellings (Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004). Therefore, in the analysis of the demand for second homes different types of second home use are being distinguished and different kinds of motivations for having a second home are taken into account. In the empirical part of the study, the preferences and motivations of second home owners are measured for each type of second home use and are compared with the supply of vacant dwellings. Thus, it might for instance happen that a certain dwelling does not meet the demands of people looking for an investment property, whilst it does gather interest of people looking for a weekend home (section 4.2.2). The following research questions are answered in this study:

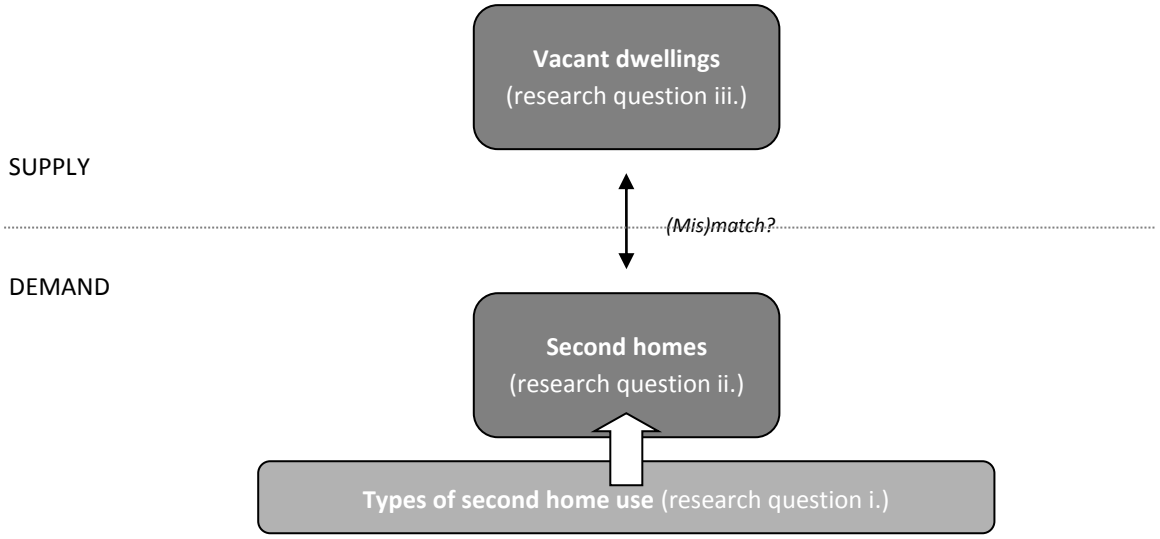
To what extent does the demand for second homes match the supply of vacant dwellings in the demographically declining region Zeeuws-Vlaanderen?

i. *What are the differences in preferences for different types of second home use?*
ii. *What are the characteristics of the current demand for second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen?*
iii. *What are the characteristics of the current supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen?*

How the different research questions relate to each other is illustrated in a conceptual model (figure 1.1).[4] In different sub questions the characteristics of existing second homes and vacant dwellings are analysed. By focusing on the relationship between these two variables, insight is gained on whether there is a match or not between vacant dwellings and what second home owners are looking for. Furthermore, the first research question adds an extra dimension to these questions by distinguishing different types of second home use. In this way, the variable of second home demand is seen as a heterogeneous group.

[4] In section 5.2.1 an operationalised version of the conceptual model is given.

Figure 1.1
Conceptual model



1.3 | Scientific and Societal Relevance

1.3.1 | Scientific Relevance

As has been mentioned in section 1.1, there has been a scientific debate going on about the possible opportunities created by second home ownership in demographically declining regions. There however remains a knowledge gap on the (mis)match between the demand for second homes and the supply in shrinking regions. This study tries to fill this gap and contributes to the current debates on the opportunities of second homes in shrinking regions. This is done by offering empirical data on the demand and supply side of the market for second homes. In other words: this study empirically tests the hypothesis which states shrinking regions can meet the demands of (potential) second home owners (Latten, 2010). By doing so, its *rival* hypothesis – which argues shrinking regions and its real estate are not very attractive and have little appeal for second home owners – is also tested (Van de Laar, 2010; Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010). Furthermore, this study aims to contribute to the development of theory on the motivations and preferences of second home users (chapter 4). Therewith, the study contributes to understanding the dynamics of the second home market.

There are some international findings which suggest shrinking regions can appeal to second home owners and suggest the supply of vacant dwellings can be able to meet this demand (Coppock, 1977b; Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2000; Hall & Müller, 2004; Keen & Hall, 2004; Müller, 1999; 2004; McIntyre, 2006; Overvåg & Gunnerrud Berg, 2011; Shucksmith, 1983; Weekley, 1988). However, none of these studies explicitly investigated the match between the demand and supply of second homes in shrinking regions. These studies predominantly focused on the impacts of second homes and therefore the studied cases were all chosen because they had a significant number of second homes. Some of these cases have also dealt with demographic decline and showed that depopulated areas and cheap vacant dwellings were able to meet the needs of second home owners. However, this does not automatically mean all shrinking regions are able to appeal to second home owners

(section 2.6). This study does explicitly focus on second home ownership in the context of a demographically declining region, and enables analytical generalisation (section 5.1 and 5.4) to other shrinking regions.

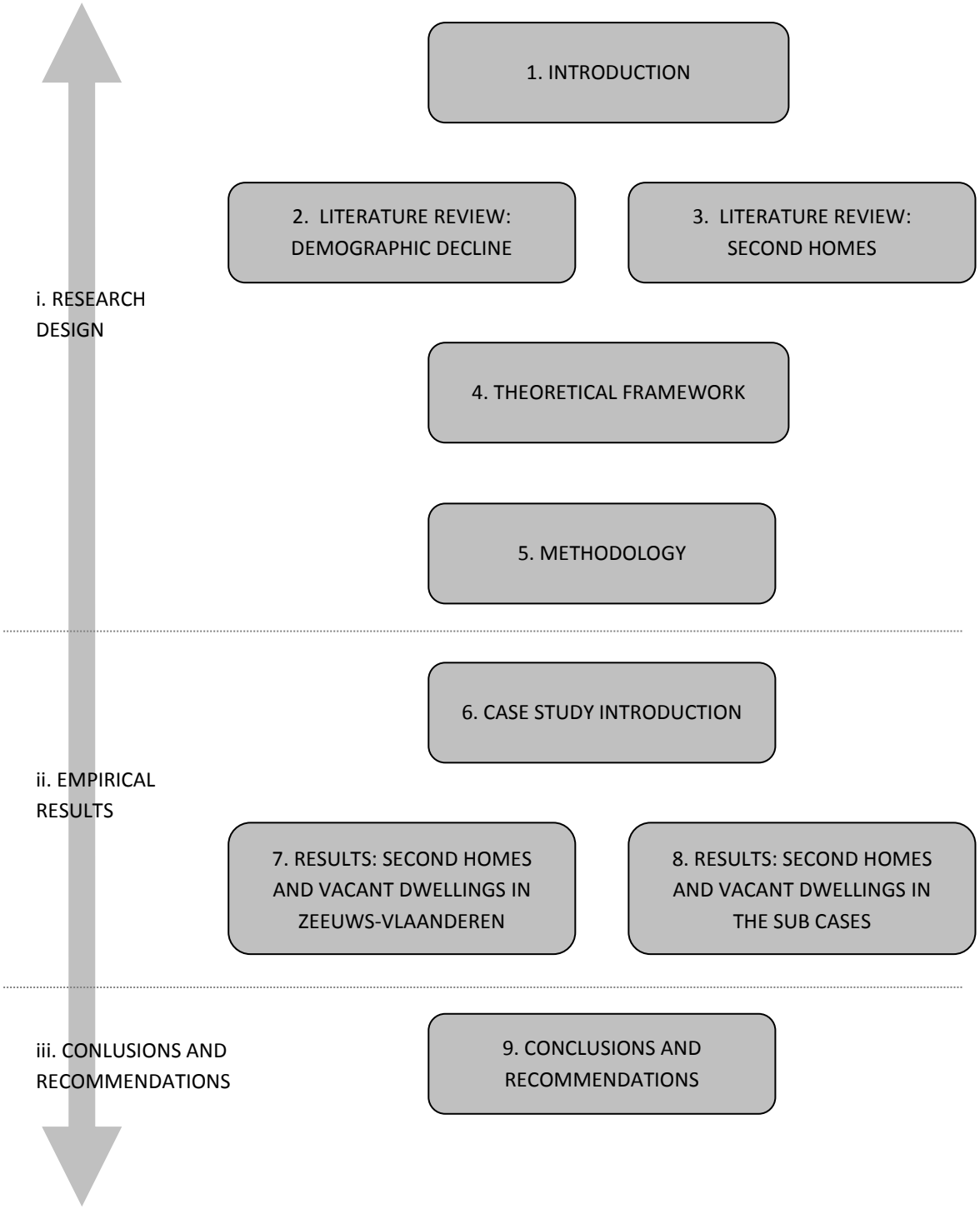
1.3.2 | Societal Relevance

The consequences of demographic decline in the Netherlands are already felt in the regions Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, South-Eastern Limburg and North-Eastern Groningen. As has been mentioned in section 1.1, demographic decline can lead to (i) vacant and decayed dwellings, which can be a threat for the liveability and the spatial quality in the area, and can lead to (ii) significant financial problems for private home owners (Koopman, 2010; Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009; SER, 2011; Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). Therefore, society has interest in a healthier housing market in these regions and these regions are hence faced with a reconstruction and/or a demolition task on the housing market. Second home ownership should be seen within this context, since it is being mentioned as a possible opportunity to bring dynamics into stagnated housing markets (Latten, 2010; NVM, 2010; RLG, 2009). Before governments embrace the idea of second home ownership and treat it as a possible solution to the problems on the housing market in shrinking regions, this study aims to provide them with empirical data about both the demand and supply side of the market for second homes and therewith fill existing knowledge gaps. In other words: this study aims to contribute to 'good' decision-making, by showing governments in demographically declining regions what the opportunities of the second home market are.

1.4 | Content

Figure 1.2 illustrates the structure of this thesis. The thesis can be divided in three parts: (i) the research design (chapter 1 - 5), (ii) the empirical results (chapter 6 - 8) and (iii) the conclusions and recommendations (chapter 9). The research design consists of this introductory chapter, a literature review, a theoretical framework and a methodological chapter. In chapter 2 and 3, the literature on demographic decline and second homes respectively is reviewed. The literature on demographic decline mainly provides the context of this study, and introduces second homes as a policy strategy. Chapter 3 explores existing theories on second home ownership, and forms the basis for the operationalisation of the study. In chapter 4 the theoretical framework of this study is given. The theoretical framework provides a typology of second home use, which serves as a key dimension in the analysis of second home demand. The methodological considerations behind this study are elaborated on in chapter 5: the chapter describes the chosen research strategy, the operationalisation of the key variables in the study, the data collection methods and the case selection criteria. In chapter 6, 7 and 8 the empirical results of the study are elaborated on. Chapter 6 introduces the selected case study area (Zeeuws-Vlaanderen) and also introduces the four sub cases, which are towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen that have been selected for further analysis. In chapter 7 the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is analysed at a general regional level and in chapter 8 a more detailed analysis at the level of the sub cases is presented. Finally, the conclusions and recommendations of this study are presented in chapter 9.

Figure 1.2
Thesis structure



2 | LITERATURE REVIEW: DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE

This chapter focuses on the potential problematic consequences of demographic decline (section 2.4) and on different policy strategies of dealing with these consequences (section 2.5), including second homes as a specific policy strategy (section 2.6). However, first a brief elaboration is given of the definition of demographic decline (section 2.1), existing prognoses (section 2.2) and the causes of demographic decline (section 2.3). The main goal of this chapter is to provide the right theoretical context of this study and to introduce the idea of second homes as a policy strategy in demographic declining regions (section 2.6).

2.1 | Definitional Issues

Demographic decline is usually defined as decline of the total number of inhabitants (within a certain time frame and within a certain geographic entity).[5] The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Dutch: *Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving*) however, stress that demographic decline has more than one appearance (Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006). They speak of the following three distinctive forms of demographic decline: (i) decline of the population number (i.e. depopulation); (ii) decline of the number of households and (iii) decline of the (potential) labour force. Obviously, these three forms are heavily related to each other. The distinction is important since misconceptions about demographic decline might occur when the different natures of these forms of shrinkage are not recognized. For example, a common misconception is that demographic decline automatically leads to less demand on the housing market. However, this is not necessarily true since it is not the population number, but the number of households which determines the demand side (both quantitative and qualitative) of the housing market (Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006). Analyses and prognoses on demographic decline in the Netherlands also show that the three forms of demographic decline do not develop simultaneously (section 2.2). Whilst the labour force has already started declining in the majority of the Dutch municipalities, the number of households is expected to continue to grow in the majority of the country until at least 2025 (De Jong & Van Duin, 2010).

Apart from the general definition of demographic decline, it is also important to keep in mind that its operational definitions often differ. In measuring demographic decline, choices are made on what geographical entity (e.g. national, provincial, regional or local level) and over what time spam (e.g. one, five, ten or twenty years) the phenomenon is measured. Theoretically, demographic decline can be applied to any geographic entity, which can obviously lead to huge differences. When the national averages of the demographic statistics for instance show growth, then this does not necessarily mean there is no demographic decline at all in that country. Existing analyses and prognoses show

[5] Oftentimes authors also use the terms *shrinkage*, which refers to the exact same phenomenon. In this study, both the terms demographic decline and shrinkage are used.

strong regional differences in this respect (De Jong & Van Duin, 2010). In practice, regional disparities show how growth and shrinkage can go hand in hand (Hospers, 2010).

In the choice of a time span of the measurement, the focus should be on the long term since demographic decline in the context of this study is seen as a structural development instead of an incidental event (SER, 2011). In this study, demographic decline is studied at a regional scale and since it is seen as a structural development, only demographic statistics and prognoses which have a scope of at least twenty years are used.

2.2 | Demographic Decline in Numbers

> *Detroit's population has shrunk so much that as of 2003 there are more people buried in the city (1,022,000) than live in the city (921,000).* (Lindsey, 2007: 20)

The studied shrinking region in this study, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, is a sparsely populated rural region in the Netherlands. The quotation above illustrates however, that also densely populated and urban regions can at some point decline (also see Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006; Van Dam, Galjaard, Harkink, McCann & Van Wissen, 2010). Although the world population continues to grow rapidly, specific cities and regions all over the world are dealing with demographic decline. In the Netherlands, the national government labelled three regions as *top shrinking regions* (Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, South-Eastern Limburg and North-Eastern Groningen) and ten *anticipating regions* (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009).[6] It should be noted however, that the size of demographic decline in the Netherlands is very modest in comparison with other countries. When the shrinkage in Dutch municipalities is for instance compared with former East German or American cities, it appears that the shrinkage in the Netherlands is small, both in relative and absolute terms (Verwest, 2011). Hospers (2010) therefore argues demographic decline in the Netherlands should never be a problem, especially because the distances in the Netherlands are relatively short whereby no place in the country can really be called peripheral.

Next to the fact that demographic decline is an international phenomenon, Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest (2006) also remark that it is not a new phenomenon. In the Netherlands, the societal and scientific attention for the phenomenon grew since the publication of a study by Derks, Hovens & Klinkers in 2006: *Structural Depopulation. An urgent new Perspective for Policy-makers* (own translation). Previously, cities like Rotterdam and Hilversum also experienced demographic decline. The difference with the newfound interest for the topic is probably the expectation that demographic decline will in the future be structural and that it will happen in the majority of the country. In the past, shrinkage occurred in specific areas and other towns/regions grew at the expense of these areas. To a certain extent this will still be the case in the future, but prognoses show the Netherlands will eventually experience nationwide shrinkage (see below).

[6] Anticipating regions are regions which are not yet shrinking, but which will experience shrinkage on short term. It is therefore stated these regions should anticipate on the demographic developments ahead. The anticipating regions in the Netherlands are: Middle- and North-Limburg, the Achterhoek, Eastern-Drenthe, Twente, Groene Hart, Western-Brabant, Goeree-Overflakkee, North-Eastern Friesland, Schouwen-Duiveland and the top of Noord Holland.

The expectations on future demographic developments are based on prognoses. Although the Dutch prognoses are quite advanced (Venhorst & Van Wissen, 2007), it should be noted that prognoses should always be treated with caution. This is because every prognosis is based on certain assumptions about the future, whilst it is difficult to predict developments in technology, culture and the socioeconomic conditions (Verwest, 2011). In the Netherlands, there are three commonly accepted models to predict future demographic developments: (i) the PEARL model from Statistics Netherlands (Dutch: *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*) and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency; (ii) the PRIMOS model from ABF Research and (iii) the IPB model applied by provinces.[7] The PEARL and PRIMOS model both give nationwide results per municipality. The IPB model differs per province and is in fact a provincial elaboration of the PRIMOS model (Venhorst & Van Wissen, 2007). Based on their local expertise, provinces can add assumptions in the IPB model. The Province of Zeeland for instance, argues the national prognoses fluctuate too much and that these models are not really suited for sparsely populated areas (in Dijkstal & Mans, 2009a). This shows a provincial elaboration can on the one hand enrich prognoses. The provincial prognoses on the other hand leave more room for opportunism, because a more 'optimistic' prognosis might be in the interest of administrators. Venhorst & Van Wissen (2007) have empirically confirmed this effect for the northern provinces in the Netherlands. They claim the lower the scale level is of the institution making the prognosis, the higher the prognosis is (i.e. the higher the growth of the number of people and households is predicted or the longer decline is denied). This is especially visible in prognoses by municipalities. Below, there will be briefly elaborated on the expected demographic developments in the Netherlands, based on PEARL and PRIMOS. Later, section 6.1.2 zooms in on the specific developments in the studied case, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.

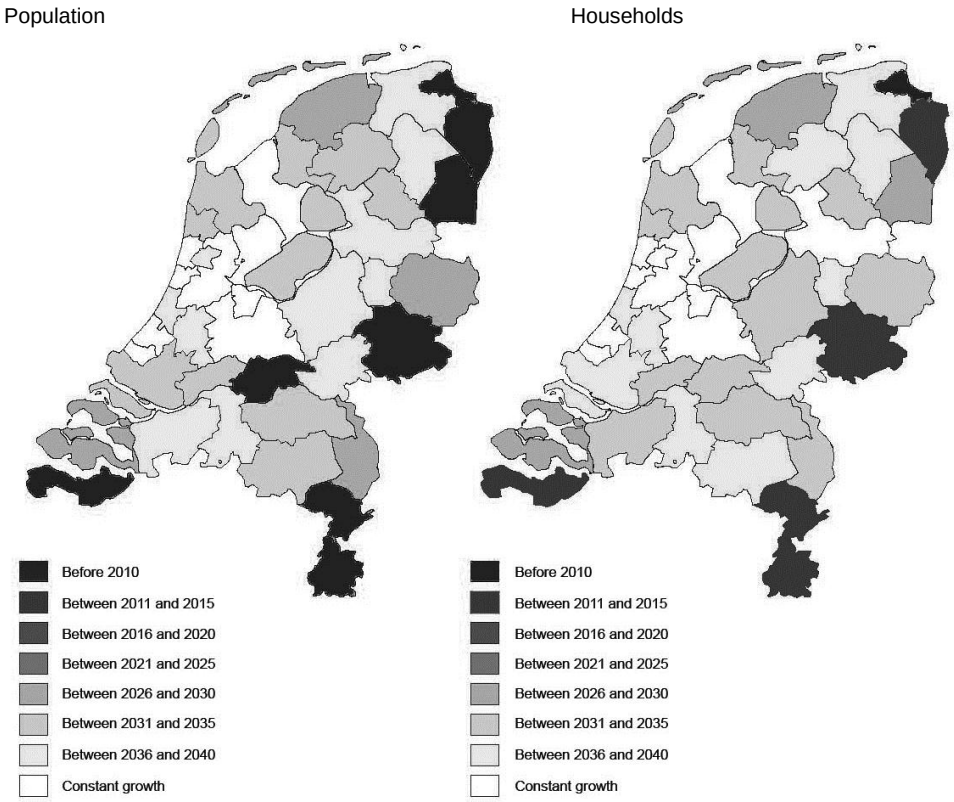
There are some differences between the results from PEARL and PRIMOS. The two models for instance do not always agree on when specific regions will stop to grow or start to decline. The general image the two demographic prognoses give however, is quite similar. The economic centre of the country – the *Randstad* – is expected to experience very strong growth at least until 2025, but it is thought this growth will stagnate on the long term. On the other hand, it is expected one out of the three Dutch municipalities will experience depopulation before 2040, one out of ten will experience decline in the number of households and almost all municipalities will have a declining (potential) labour force (also see Verwest & Van Dam, 2010). The municipalities which will experience shrinkage first are predominantly rural municipalities in the edges of the country. Verwest & Van Dam (2010) have illustrated this in maps which show when regions are expected to make the shift from growth to decline (figure 2.1). It shows that Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, South-Eastern Limburg and North-Eastern Groningen are indeed the 'forerunners' in demographic decline, but also that many other regions will experience depopulation and household decline in the near future.

Figure 2.1 also shows the decline of households does not automatically follow from the population development since they do not develop simultaneously. This can mainly be explained by the trend towards smaller households. The average number of people per dwelling has declined over the last decennia and is expected to further decline, which means household numbers grow faster (or shrink slower) than population numbers. This trend is the result of population ageing, the trend of fewer children per family and an increasing number of divorces. For the coming decennia, this trends

[7] It should be mentioned that the different Dutch government levels have based their joint national policy programme on depopulation (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009) on the PEARL prognosis from 2009.

enhances the growth (and slows the shrinkage) of household numbers, but it is expected this effect will be exhausted by 2040 (De Jong & Van Duin, 2010).

Figure 2.1
Shift to decline



Source: Verwest & Van Dam, 2010: 15

2.3 | Causes of Demographic Decline

The development of the population can be determined through the following equitation:

> *Current population number + (birth rate - death rate) + (immigration number - emigration number).*
> (Hospers, 2010: 18, own translation)

Thus, depopulation can be the result of more deaths than births, outmigration or a combination of both. In most prosperous countries the birth rate is at about the same level (or lower) as the death rate (Höhn, Mai & Micheel, 2008; Klinkers & Hovens, 2011). Early demographic transition theory has suggested the relationship between fertility (birth rate) and mortality (death rate) changes over time and societies go through different stages of demographic development (in Knox & Marston, 2007; in Potter, Binns, Elliot & Smith, 2008). In the last stage of this demographic transition model – which most Western countries are currently in – the death rate is at its lowest level and since fertility steadily declines, so is the rate of population growth. In some instances this can also result in depopulation. Reasons for declining birth rates can be found in technological developments in birth control, economic developments, and major sociocultural developments as emancipation,

individualisation and secularisation (Klinkers & Hovens, 2011; Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006). Low birth rates can explain depopulation and more so the decline of the (potential) labour force. Namely, both population ageing and dejuvenation[8] are the result of relatively low birth rates in combination with low death rates (Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006). Population ageing and dejuvenation also enhance themselves: structurally less children are born because of the relatively small number of potential parents and more people die because of the relatively high number of elderly. Decline of the number of households follows out of the depopulation, but as has been mentioned in section 2.2, this development is being slowed down by the trend towards smaller households.

Next to low birth rates, depopulation can be explained by outmigration. Phenomena as epidemics, natural and environmental disasters, war and water scarcity can all serve as causes for outmigration and thus depopulation (Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006). In most Western countries however, economic developments and residential preferences serve as the primary causes for outmigration. The relationship between the regional economy and the regional demography is highly complex and hence is the dominant question in the literature: *do people follow jobs or do jobs follow people*? (e.g. Hoogstra, Florax & Van Dijk, 2005; Partridge & Rickman, 2003; Steinnes, 1982). The lack of consensus on this issue means the effects of economic development on the demography and vice versa cannot be predicted beforehand. Whatever the relationship between economy and demography might be, migration studies of both residents (De Groot, Manting & Boschman, 2008) and companies (Van Oort et al., 2007) show the vast majority of migration movements occur over relatively short distances. This suggests certain towns within regions will grow at the expense of its surrounding towns and that people and companies in demographically declining regions will not emigrate on large scale.[9] However, the emigration movements are selective: especially highly educated people (*brain drain*) and young people emigrate (Höhn, Mai, Micheel, 2008; Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006; Van Iersel, Buys, Scheels & Smeulders, 2011). The danger of outmigration then lies in the possible downwards spiral it might cause or be part of: for instance, people leave, jobs leave and therefore even more people leave because of the lack of job opportunities and even more jobs leave because of a shortage of potential suitable employees etc. (section 2.4).

All in all, it should be concluded that demographic decline can have many different (combinations of) causes which lie both in macro (technological, economic and sociocultural) developments and regional/local developments. No appearance of shrinkage is exactly the same and as Von Hayek (in Hospers, 2010: 18) stated: every appearance is the result of "the particular circumstances of time and place". In South-Eastern Limburg for instance the decline can predominantly be explained by the lack of economic perspectives because of the collapse of its mining industry. On the other hand, Het Gooi – a prosperous region approximate to the growing regions of Amsterdam and Utrecht – is depopulating mainly because of spatial limitations (SER, 2011).

[8] The term dejuvenation has been adopted from the Dutch term *ontgroening* and points to a relative decrease of the number of young people (people between 0 and 19 years old) in a certain region. Population ageing on the other hand, points to a relative increase of the number of elderly (people older than 65 years of age) (Klinkers, Derks & Hovens, 2009).

[9] In some instances, large scale outmigration does appear. Most notable are examples of areas that quickly got depopulated because of environmental disasters or war (Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006). However, economic collapses of industrialised cities like Liverpool, Manchester, Dortmund, Leipzig and the Rust Belt in the United States also led to large scale outmigration. When a region declines without one specific cause, it is expected flows of outmigration are modest, because most migration movements occur over relatively short distances.

2.4 | Consequences of Demographic Decline

Several scientific studies (e.g. Derks, Hovens & Klinkers, 2006; Hamm, Seitz & Werding, 2008; ROB & RFV, 2008; SER, 2011; Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006) and policy reports (Dijkstal & Mans, 2009a, b and c; Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009; Province of Zeeland, 2008) have systematically given an overview of the consequences of demographic decline on a variety of fields: including housing, education, mobility, economy, governance and liveability. Because of the focus on the market for second homes in this study, especially the consequences on housing are relevant. However, the consequences of shrinkage on housing cannot be seen independently from other fields. Therefore, this section starts with a brief overview of how the different fields are related, by explaining the common idea of a downward spiral of decline. Next, this section zooms in on the specific consequences for the housing market and argues why decline of the number of households can be problematic. For more extensive analyses on the consequences for other fields than housing, this study refers to the reports mentioned above.

2.4.1 | Fear for a Downward Spiral of Decline

Demographic decline is often associated with economic decline, vacancy, the disappearance of local services and liveability problems. Although these associations are certainly legitimate to some extent, the main argument here is that demographic decline usually is just one of many factors causing those effects. Section 2.3 for instance, already showed that the relation between demography and economy is anything but straightforward. Furthermore, the impact of demographic changes on the demand for and supply of local services is probably not as big as the impact of changing consumer behaviour, digitalisation, mobility and the trend towards up scaling of services (Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006).[10] Again, causalities here are fuzzy since demographic decline can both be cause and effect of disappearing services. Also, it is often suggested the loss of services puts pressure on the *liveability* of towns. However, the absence of services and facilities in a town does not automatically mean a town is experienced as less liveable (Gardenier, Nanninga, Van Rijn & Weijer, 2011; Thissen & Droogleever Fortuyn, 1998; Van der Wouw, Walrave, Bakker & Van Sluijs, 2009). It is essential for inhabitants to be able to reach quality services and facilities in a certain time (accessibility), but the studies showed the presence of services in towns itself is not a necessary condition for liveability. All in all, the different assumptions about demographic decline can be seen as part of a potential downward spiral of decline (figure 2.2). The complexity and fuzziness of many of the relationships mean it is difficult to predict the exact consequences of demographic decline. However, the theoretical idea of a potential downward spiral of decline does show that different fields cannot be seen independently from each other.

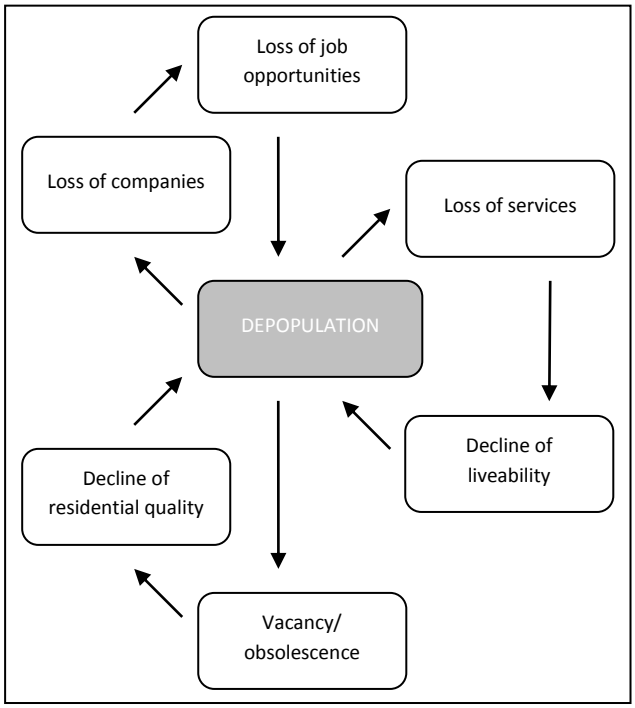
The theory of *cumulative causation* (Myrdal, 1957) connects growth and shrinkage: a certain area grows, but at the expense of surrounding areas (*backwash effects*). On the other hand, growth can at some point expand to surrounding areas and also have some positive effects on these areas (*spread effects*). Backwash effects can strengthen each other and peripheral areas can find themselves in a

[10] In fact, the same thing is claimed for the impact of second homes on local services (section 3.4.3). Thus, both demographic decline and the arrival of second home owners are commonly blamed for the loss of local services, whilst the key drivers for this development are changing consumer behaviour, digitalisation, mobility and the trend towards up scaling of services.

(difficult to break) downward spiral. The feared scenario is that depopulation leads to the loss of companies and therewith to the loss of job opportunities and thus even more depopulation because of outmigration. This might be accompanied by vacancy and obsolescence, which can further reduce the attractiveness of the area and lead to even more outmigration. This might also go hand in hand with the loss of services and in turn the lack of services can further enhance outmigration. All in all, these effects have the tendency to strengthen each other and can continually lead to further decline (figure 2.2). Thus, developments on the housing market – which are central in this study – have influence on and are influenced by developments in other fields.

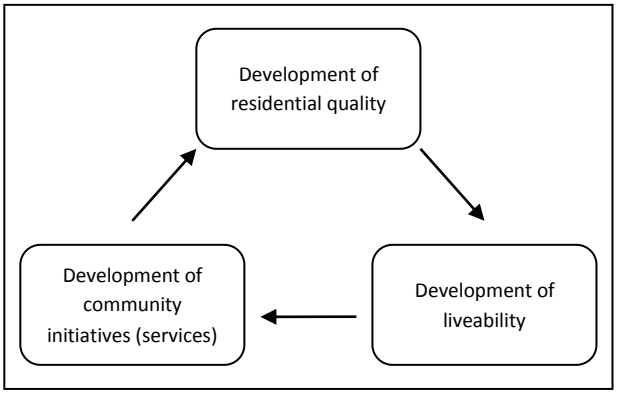
Frans Thissen (2010) also connects the consequences of demographic changes in different fields. However, Thissen does this by challenging the idea of a downward spiral and by proposing an upward spiral (figure 2.3). The starting points of his view are the earlier mentioned misconceptions about the concept liveability. It is often suggested the loss of services automatically has a negative impact on the liveability in an area. Thissen (in Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010: 43) states this idea is based on the image of an autonomous village, whilst modern mobility patterns do not restrict themselves to village boundaries. Liveability and services are therefore not causally linked (also see Gardenier, Nanninga, Van Rijn & Weijer, 2011; Thissen & Droogleever Fortuyn, 1998 and Van der Wouw, Walrave, Bakker & Van Sluijs, 2009). Thissen (2010) further argues the residential quality (housing and public space), the community spirit and the social capital of an area are the real keys to liveability. From that perspective, qualitative improvements on the housing market can thus contribute to the liveability in the area.

Figure 2.2
Hypothetical downward spiral of decline



Source: own work, based on Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest (2006)

Figure 2.3
Hypothetical upward spiral of liveability



Source: own work, based on Thissen (2010)

2.4.2 | Consequences for the Housing Market

For the housing market, changes in population numbers are less relevant than developments in the number of households (section 2.1). When the number of households declines, the demand for housing will decrease (Couch, Karecha, Nuissl & Rink, 2005; Francke, 2010b; Glock and Häussermann, 2004; Müller & Siedentop, 2004; Strohmeier & Bader, 2004; Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008).[11] This faces shrinking regions with an oversupply of dwellings and a relatively high vacancy rate (Lindsey, 2007; NVM, 2010; Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest (2006) argue the vacancy will concentrate in the least attractive dwellings and neighbourhoods: especially neighbourhoods with many dwellings in the rented social housing stock and early post-war dwellings. This is because consumers have more opportunities to fulfil their residential needs[12] and this has been empirically confirmed in both Germany (Franz, 2001) as the Netherlands (Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). As a consequence of less demand and vacancy, housing *prices* are likely to drop (Eichholtz & Lindenthal, 2009; Francke, 2010b; Glaeser & Gyourko, 2005). Francke for example, showed an increase of vacancy rates with 1 percent led to an average decline of housing prices of 1,1 percent. On top of that, the *values* of the dwellings might in reality be even lower than the administrated prices, because sellers might refuse to drop the asking price (Genesove and Mayer, 2001).

Less demand and lower housing prices are advantageous to consumers looking to purchase a dwelling. However, there are two issues related to this situation of oversupply, which make it problematic (Hollander, 2010; Koopman, 2010; Lindsey, 2007; Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009; SER, 2011; Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). First, vacancy can lead to decay and have a negative impact on the liveability of the area. In this impact lies the danger of a downward spiral (section 2.4.1), because the unattractive living conditions – triggered by vacancy and decay – might lead to even more demographic decline by increasing outmigration.
Second, private home owners can get into considerable financial problems when the housing prices drop. In that case, sale of the dwelling would not cover the entire mortgage debt. Many private home owners would not be able to take this financial loss and would therefore 'get stuck' in their dwelling (Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). This is especially true for private home owners looking for a house in a region with a housing shortage, because of the significant gap between the average housing prices. Hence, the entire flow on the housing market in shrinking regions is stagnated.

Although decline of the number of households can have problematic consequences, undoing these problems and creating a 'healthier' housing market is not an easy task. Important characteristics of real estate are its durability and its relatively long production time (Schütte, Schoonhoven & Dolmans-Budé, 2002). Therefore, in real estate markets the supply side cannot easily adapt to the demand side. In a situation of structurally less demand, demand and supply can only get in balance when dwellings are demolished/reconstructed and when not too many new dwellings are built. There however are two central problems which make this difficult (Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). First, shrinking regions have a difficult time financing the reconstruction/demolition 'task' which is ahead of them. Both the reconstruction and demolition of dwellings are expensive. Although the

[11] Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest (2006) and Eichholtz & Lindenthal (2008) add that changes in housing demand are not only affected by the number of households, but also by changes in income levels and mortgage rules.
[12] Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest (2006) thus state the housing market in shrinking regions evolves from a "supply led market" to a "demand led market" (74, own translation).

costs of demolishing dwellings are – in theory – exceeded by the societal benefits to the liveability in the area and to the values of other dwellings (Francke, 2010b),[13] these costs and benefits do not apply to the same actors and the benefits are not always self-evident (Koopman, 2010). Moreover, demolition often leads to resistance and is often seen as capital destruction (Hospers, 2010; Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008).

Second, both in the reconstruction/demolition task and the objective to moderate building plans, shrinking regions are faced with coordination problems. When dwellings are reconstructed/ demolished, then the entire neighbourhood benefits from this intervention. Therefore, it is rational for individual actors not to handle (*prisoner's dilemma*) (Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). For shrinking regions to successfully reconstruct/demolish, coordination and agreements between different actors are crucial. The same goes for moderation of building plans, because coordination between different municipalities is essential (Klinkers & Hovens, 2011; Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). Without proper coordination, municipalities get into competition with each other over new residents.[14] Although this would lead to even more vacancy, the rational thing to do for each individual municipality is to keep striving for building. This is on the one hand because administrators might aim to attract new residents and on the other hand because the construction of new dwellings can have significant financial benefits for municipalities. This last point is typical for the Netherlands, because of its unique tradition of land provision. In the Netherlands, governments have a tradition of being actively involved in the development of land (Dutch: *actief grondbeleid*) (Buitelaar, 2010). In this system, municipalities actively pursue land, prepare it for construction and then sell it to developers. Although this procedure entails major financial risks, Dutch municipalities have made significant profit with it. For municipalities this tradition basically works as a hidden financial incentive for striving for the construction of new dwellings and thus makes the moderation of building plans painful.[15] Coordination is essential to share this pain.

2.5 | Policy strategies towards Demographic Decline

In practice, several policies have been designed in order to cope with demographic decline (e.g. Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009; Parkstad Limburg, 2010a; Province of Zeeland, 2009) and several experiments have been supported (e.g. Parkstad Limburg, 2010b; Van Schijndel & Rutherglen, 2010; Van Vliet, Van Roost, Brouwer & Zunderdorp, 2011). Academically, there seems to be a growing consensus that policies should focus on *accompanying* demographic decline rather than focussing on *challenging* demographic decline (Hollander, 2010; Hospers, 2010; Klinkers & Hovens, 2011; Lindsey, 2007; Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009; Popper & Popper, 2002; ROB & RFV, 2008; Verwest & Van Dam, 2010).[16] This section does not

[13] Francke (2010b) showed the demolition of dwellings can have a positive financial effect on surrounding dwellings. Large scale demolition of dwellings however, leads to financial losses.
[14] In Germany this inter-municipal competition is known as "*Einwohnerkannibalismus*" ('resident cannibalism') (Van der Heijde & Netsch, 2010: 521).
[15] Buitelaar (2010) argues active land policy is still often applied by Dutch municipalities, although the revision of the national planning act (Dutch: *Wet ruimtelijke ordening*) in 2008 has made pursuing an active land policy less of a necessity for achieving spatial policy goals.
[16] In American literature (Hollander, 2010; Lindsey, 2007; Popper & Popper, 2002) the shift from policies which focus on challenging demographic decline to accompanying demographic decline is often called 'smart decline' or 'planned shrinkage'.

elaborate on all possible policy interventions since these are numerous and are in a lot of cases still experimental. Instead, this section focuses on the different general perspectives from which demographic decline can be treated. This is done by the elaboration of four types of policy strategies, which are adopted from the work of Gert-Jan Hospers (2010).

> *Denying demographic decline*
This perspective is often illustrated by reactions of administrators who literally deny the existence of demographic decline in their municipality. Administrators might point to inaccuracies and uncertainties of demographic prognoses. One reason for this is that the acceptance and designation of demographic decline is often seen as the beginning of a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Hospers, 2010: 36). On the one hand, it should be encouraged to put shrinkage into perspective. For instance because shrinkage is rarely the sole driver of undesired developments (section 2.4.1). On the other hand, shrinkage has become reality in specific regions and denying this is dangerous because continuing traditional policies will only enhance the potential problems.

> *Challenging demographic decline*
When demographic decline is not denied anymore, the first natural reaction is to try to reverse the entire process of demographic decline. For instance, between 1960 and 1980 the Dutch national government actively tried to stimulate an even distribution of welfare. Therefore, several government (related) institutions were transferred to peripheral regions. More recent forms of trying to undo shrinkage can be found in the intensive city and region marketing of shrinking areas or by projects such as the *Blauwestad* ('The Blue City'). The Blauwestad was a major housing project which was intended to attract wealthy and highly educated people to North-Eastern Groningen. However, the lot sales have been extremely disappointing (Hospers, 2010). Hospers therefore pleads for *warm* instead of *cold* city and region marketing. Warm city and region marketing focuses on keeping current inhabitants satisfied, whilst cold city and region marketing tries to attract people from outside the region (but often without much result).

> *Accompanying demographic decline*
Given the idea that challenging demographic decline usually works counterproductive, accompanying demographic decline is advocated by an increasing group of scholars and professionals (e.g. Popper & Popper, 2002; ROB & RFV, 2008; Verwest & Van Dam, 2010). The main argument is that shrinking regions should anticipate on demographic changes and should accompany these changes as much as possible since ignoring or challenging and trying to reverse these changes does not work. For example: if municipalities try to challenge demographic decline they might decide to build large housing projects and then competition between municipalities over residents would occur. Accompanying demographic decline would here mean moderation of the building plans and regional cooperation (section 2.4.2). What also characterises this approach is that demographic decline in itself is not seen as problematic, but demographic decline can lead to problematic consequences which have to be accommodated.

> *Utilizing demographic decline*
The idea of this final strategy is that shrinkage is accepted and is actually turned into a positive characteristic of a region. Nature, peace, tranquillity and space for instance are often mentioned as qualities of shrinking regions. The Cittaslow network is an example of a network which tries to

apply this strategy. Cittaslow focuses on how small towns can improve living conditions, whilst not focussing on growth (Knox & Mayer, 2009). Although, there is no roadmap which directs how this can be done, crucial ingredients are that regions should focus on existing inhabitants and that a bottom-up approach should be taken.

2.6 | Second Homes as an Opportunity?

2.6.1 | Second Homes as a Policy Strategy

Within many of the debates on possible solutions of how to deny, challenge, accompany or utilize demographic decline, stimulating second home ownership in shrinking regions is one possible policy strategy. At first sight, the idea of second homes looks to aim to attract new inhabitants and might therefore seem to challenge demographic decline (Verwest, in Vermue, 2011: 44). However, second homes should not be seen as an opportunity because they might inverse the process of demographic decline, but because they can serve as an opportunity to reduce the problems on the housing market (section 2.4.2). In this view, this strategy fits both with accompanying demographic decline as utilizing demographic decline.

The idea is that second home searchers occupy dwellings which are currently vacant.[17] The vacancy rate then decreases and therefore the obsolescence and negative effects on the liveability, which vacancy has (section 2.4.2), are expected to be reduced. Oftentimes second homes are associated with negative impacts on liveability (section 3.4). In the case of demographic decline the second home users do not replace permanent residents, but they occupy dwellings which would otherwise be unoccupied. Therefore, the impacts of second homes in demographically declining regions are expected to be predominantly positive (section 3.4). Second home users can especially have a positive impact because they generally take good care of their property and often restore obsolete dwellings (Paris, 2006; RLG, 2009). Second homes can thus help improve the residential quality, which according to Frans Thissen (2010) is more important to keep villages liveable than for instance the maintenance of services (section 2.4.1). Furthermore, section 2.4.2 showed how a declining number of households can lead to significant financial problems for private home owners. The arrival of second home owners could also help solve this problem, because it can lead to increasing housing prices and can thus limit the loss of value by private home owners (RLG, 2009). This is ironic since this effect on housing prices is often used as one of the primary arguments against second homes (section 3.4). Namely, second homes pushing up housing prices are traditionally argued to limit the housing market opportunities of low-income groups. In the case of oversupply however, increasing housing prices can suddenly be seen as a positive development.[18]

Second homes are also mentioned as an opportunity in existing policy documents. The Province of Zeeland (2009: 15; 2011: 23) for instance, mentions the stimulation of "*part-time dwelling*" (own translation) (see section 2.6.2 and 4.2.2) as a possible contributor in dealing with demographic

[17] Second home searchers can also decide to build new dwellings (purpose-built dwellings). However, in order to contribute to dealing with the problems on the housing market in shrinking regions, the exploitation of these purpose-built dwellings should be financially connected to the reconstruction and/or demolition task on the housing market (section 9.2.2).
[18] However, it should be remarked it is very difficult to predict the exact effect of second homes on the housing prices (section 3.4.2).

decline. They state that the traditional objections against second homes (section 3.4) do not really apply for part-time dwellers, since they spend more time in their second home than pure recreational users do (section 4.2.2). The Province of Zeeland states it tries to take away barriers which hinder second home ownership, although the primary responsibility remains at the municipal level. Furthermore, Jan Latten (2010) of the University of Amsterdam has stated government incentives are necessary to stimulate second home ownership in shrinking regions. He for example brings up the idea of reintroducing mortgage deduction for second homes in certain areas or making it possible for residents to register on more than one address.

2.6.2 | Plausibility of the Policy Strategy

Jan Latten has presented second homes as a promising policy strategy in shrinking regions. He claims there is a strong demand for second homes in the Netherlands because of new lifestyles and mobility patterns, especially by highly educated people. Digitalisation is the key driver behind these changing lifestyles and mobility patterns, since it makes it easier for people to work from home or elsewhere. Keers (2002) also argues there is an increase in second homes in the Netherlands, but he claims the key driver is people putting higher demands on their residential needs. Keers further argues it is getting increasingly difficult to meet these high needs in urban areas where the employment is and that this fuels the number of second homes in rural areas. Both Latten and Keers for instance describe people who live in the Randstad for a couple of days a week (in a pied-à-terre) and who spend the rest of the week in a dwelling in the countryside. Latten calls this “bi-local dwelling” or “part-time dwelling” (18, own translation) (section 4.2.2). The idea of part-time dwelling is also endorsed by the VROM-raad (2009), which labelled having multiple dwellings as one of three important sociocultural trends in dwelling. Latten further argues demographically declining regions can offer exactly what these people are looking for, including peace, tranquillity and safety. The Dutch Association of Real Estate Brokers (NVM, 2010) has also labelled second homes as a promising strategy in shrinking regions, in particular because of the relatively low housing prices in these regions.

There are quite some studies on second homes which suggest shrinking regions can appeal to second home owners and suggest vacant dwellings can be utilized as second homes. Shucksmith (1983) for instance found that British areas with large numbers of second homes are the very same areas which in the past have dealt with a relatively large vacancy rate. Moreover, Coppock (1977b), Keen & Hall (2004), Selwood & Tonts (2004), Weekley (1988), Müller (1999; 2004) and Marjavaara (2008) all found evidence of second homes which were previously obsolete dwellings in shrinking areas or which were relatively unattractive dwellings within the local housing market (in Wales, New Zealand, Australia, England’s East Midlands, Germany and Sweden respectively). Müller (2004) adds that dwellings in demographically declining regions can also be converted to second homes, when households outside the area inherit a property which they are not planning to use. In weak housing markets like in shrinking regions these households might fail to sell the property and decide to convert it into a second home. Furthermore, Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg (2011) add that demographic decline does not only free up dwellings, but also land for new purpose-built second homes. In Norway and Sweden (Müller, 2004), most second homes are purpose-built. Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones (2000), Hall & Müller (2004), McIntyre (2006) and Shucksmith (1983) even argue the relatively low land and housing prices in rural shrinking regions have been one of the key drivers of the demand for

second homes. It is controversial however, to what extent low housing prices are actually able to attract second home owners.

On the basis of the findings above it is difficult to ascertain the opportunities for second homes in demographically declining regions. The literature certainly consists of quite some 'good practices'. Most of these findings were found in general studies on second homes, which predominantly focused on the impacts of second homes. In order to analyse the impacts of second homes, these studies obviously had to choose cases with significant numbers of second homes. Some of these cases then showed that depopulated areas with cheap vacant dwellings attracted second home owners. However, the findings do not represent shrinking regions in general and probably not all shrinking regions have the potential to attract second home owners (also see Marjavaara, 2008). In this study, also only one case is studied (section 5.1). However, this study does explicitly focus on the relation between second homes on the one hand and demographic decline and housing vacancy on the other hand. The results of this study can thus be analytically generalised (section 5.1), for instance by generalising the conditions for popular second home locations or the characteristics of the housing vacancy.

In contrast to the authors above, investigators of the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010) and the Recreation Expertise Centre (Van de Laar, 2010) believe the opportunities for second homes in demographically declining regions are limited. Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen both question the size of the market for second homes in general as they question whether shrinking regions meet the needs of (potential) second home owners. They have come up with the following four arguments. First, they question if shrinking regions appeal to second home owners, because these regions usually possess little scenic quality and are geographically located in the country's periphery. Second, they claim the vacant real estate in those regions does not appeal to second home owners, since the vacancy on the housing market mostly occurs in the least attractive dwellings and in the (social) rental sector. Third, it is unknown how many second home owners search for a second home in the Netherlands and how large the competition from other countries is. Finally, it is uncertain how the entire demand for second homes in the Netherlands will develop. Based on the work of Tracy Metz (2010), Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen believe the market for second homes is saturated because the phenomenon of having a second home particularly fits with the lifestyle of the *baby boom generation*. Metz claims the recreational behaviour of younger generations proves that they prefer a nomadic existence and are probably not interested in purchasing a second home. Both Tuulentie (2007) and the RPB & RIGO (2003) have in this respect shown that people from the baby boom generation form the largest group of second home owners. Although Metz' argument can be challenged, it does pose the fair question whether having a second home fits with future lifestyles and whether second home demand will continue growing or not. In fact, Latten (2010) asked the same question (see above), but he argues the second home demand will only increase with new lifestyles.

Van de Laar (2010) has explicitly explored the opportunities for second home ownership in shrinking regions in the Netherlands. Her main conclusion is that the possibilities for second homes are promising in theory, but limited in practice. In line with the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, she argues the demand for second homes and the supply in shrinking regions do not match particularly well. These conclusions are based on interviews with experts in each region. In North-

Eastern Groningen and South-Eastern Limburg it is claimed the majority of the vacant dwellings are rental houses in typical Dutch rental streets without many detached dwellings. Also, for South-Eastern Limburg it is argued the opportunities for second homes are considered to be limited because of the relatively urban character of the region. However, for Zeeuws-Vlaanderen Van de Laar does not really give much insight in the actual opportunities for second homes, since she mainly focuses on the policy changes this would require. Van de Laar does remark the vacant dwellings probably are not the most attractive ones, but that those dwellings have in the past often functioned as second homes for German recreationists. Furthermore, she remarks Zeeuws-Vlaanderen might also be interesting for Flemish second home owners.

Thus, Latten and the Dutch Association of Real Estate Brokers on the one hand claim shrinking regions can meet the demands of (potential) second home owners, whilst Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen and Van de Laar on the other hand point at a mismatch between demand and supply as an argument against the opportunities for second homes. Chapter 6, 7 and 8 empirically investigate to what extent demand and supply match in the case of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.

3 | LITERATURE REVIEW: SECOND HOMES

This chapter elaborates on the literature on second homes. Second homes as an explicit policy strategy in demographically declining regions has already been discussed in section 2.6. In the current chapter, first, definitional issues on second homes are discussed (section 3.1). Second, based on the scarce data of the second home market in the Netherlands, indications of the size and future perspectives of this market are given and a brief comparison with other countries is made (section 3.2). Third, some qualitative characteristics of second homes are discussed (section 3.3). This section forms the basis of the operationalisation of the study (section 5.2), and thus serves as a reference for the empirical investigation (chapter 6 - 8). Finally, section 3.4 elaborates on the possible impacts of second homes and also briefly takes the context of demographic decline into account.

3.1 | Definitional Issues

Many different authors on second homes have dealt with definitional and conceptual issues (e.g. Coppock, 1977a; Hall & Müller, 2004; Shucksmith, 1983). However, there is no commonly acknowledged definition of a second home. As a consequence of these definitional issues there is a lack of comparable data, which makes it difficult to give an indication of the size of the market for second homes. In his classic overview on second home issues – *Second Homes: Curse or Blessing?* – J.T. Coppock (1977a) argued the following:

> *Problems of definition arise primarily from the fact that second homes do not constitute a discrete type, sharply distinguished from other kinds of accommodation, but form a somewhat arbitrarily identified group within a continuum. The dynamic character of the second home, in particular the changing relationship between the first and second home, also makes identification and measurement difficult.* (2)

Thus, defining second homes is difficult since it can take many different forms and it cannot easily be distinguished from other types of dwellings. Strictly speaking, the term second home does not refer to a certain type of dwelling or usage, but only to the fact that a household 'dwells' in multiple dwellings (Gallent, 2007; Marjavaara, 2008; McIntyre, 2006). Hall & Müller (2004) therefore suggest the term second home should be interpreted as an umbrella for different types of forms and uses. Below, there will be elaborated on some of the common misconceptions on second homes. This will be illustrated by challenging the second home stereotype, namely a luxurious villa in a rural area which is used primarily for recreational purposes during vacations.

- *No spatial limitations*
  It is often suggested second homes are always located in rural areas. However, this is not necessarily true since second homes can also be found in urban areas (Hoogendoorn & Visser,

2004; Paris, 2006). Hall & Müller (2004) on the other hand claim this is because urban second homes are relatively few in number. In the Netherlands, reliable data on the number of urban second homes (pied-à-terre) are missing (VROM-raad, 2009). Also, the number of urban versus rural second homes is related to what dwellers label as their primary residence and what they label as their second home (also see section 4.2.2). This is entirely the decision of the owner (Hall & Müller, 2004). Herewith, especially local taxation rates or rules can be decisive. Williams & Kaltenborn (1999) and Müller (in Hall & Müller, 2004: 6) suggest however, that most owners are hardly aware of the consequences of this decision. Finally, there can also be a discrepancy between which dwelling the owner emotionally considers as his first home and which dwelling is registered as the first home (McIntyre, 2006).

> *No usage limitations*

Section 4.2 shows there are many different ways in which a second home can be used. Hence, it should be stressed not all second homes are used purely recreationally (Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2004; RPB & RIGO, 2003). Different usages primarily differ in the motivations of the owners, the frequency of use and the length of visits (section 4.2.2). Therewith, the demands of the dwellings and the environment can also differ. In this study, different types of second home use are all included within the definition of second homes. Simultaneously, these differences are taken into account in analyses by applying the theoretical framework (chapter 4). This is not only important because demands can differ, but also because impacts (section 3.4) differ for different types of second homes.

> *No tenure limitations*

Although ownership is often implied as a criterion for second homes, not all second homes are owned by those who use them frequently (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2004). When a household for instance rents a second home from a real estate agency on a long lease and uses this dwelling in weekends, should not they also be considered as second home owners? When ownership is seen as a necessary criterion for a second home, then this group is overlooked whilst the size of this group might be significant (Huang & Yi, 2011; Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2004; RPB & RIGO, 2003). In this study however, rented second homes are not included since the commuter tax does apply ownership as a criterion (section 5.2.2).

> *No physical appearance limitations*

A second home does not necessarily have to be a luxurious villa. Strictly speaking, second homes can take the form of apartments, cottages, chalets, mobile homes, allotment gardens with overnight accommodation and according to some definitions even the form of tents, caravans or sailing boats (Hall & Müller, 2004). Hall & Müller distinguish stationary (e.g. houses and apartments), semi-mobile (e.g. trailers/mobile homes) and mobile types of second homes (e.g. sailing boats). These different forms of dwellings are interesting, because it can be argued second home users move through different phases of a 'housing/tourist career' (Tuulentie, 2007). For instance, they might start with a caravan which they use as a second home, later move to a chalet, purchase a stationary dwelling a couple years later and eventually, they might even decide to make this their first home. However, because of practicalities regarding data collection, measurements are usually confined to stationary second homes (McIntyre, 2006). This investigation also limits itself to stationary second homes, because it focuses on second homes

from the context of housing problems in shrinking regions and because of data collection considerations.

With the aim of covering all of the issues above, the following definition is adopted:

> *A second home is a stationary property owned as the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere*.

In this definition, for a dwelling to be a second home it does not matter where it is located or how it is used. As has been stated earlier, the main characteristic of a second home is that the household using it dwells in multiple dwellings. Although the chosen definition is certainly open to debate, it is a workable definition which is suited for the aim of this study (section 1.2).

Finally, a remark needs to be made about the term *home*. As the definition above shows, a home here is seen as a property. However, the term home not only has a physical dimension, but also a mental one. For instance, definition wise a second home can refer to any place – next to the first home – where somebody feels at home. A home is then a (inherently positive) feeling which clings to a certain geographical location (McIntyre, 2006). In this study, second homes are restricted to properties, since it focuses on the (mis)match between the supply of vacant dwellings and the demand for second homes. However, this does not mean the mental and emotional dimensions of homes, which play in the decision-making process of second home owners, are overlooked.

3.2 | Size of the Second Home Market

3.2.1 | Estimations of the Size of the Second Home Market

Although section 3.1 ended with a suitable definition of a second home for this study, the definitions used in practice by many different authorities and scholars are ambiguous, which makes it difficult to determine the exact size of the market for second homes. This section gives an indication of the size of the second home market by giving an overview of existing estimations. The focus is primarily on second homes in the Netherlands, although a brief international perspective is given. Table 3.1 gives an overview of different estimations for the Netherlands.

First, Statistics Netherlands collects data on *recreational dwellings*.[19] Statistics Netherlands registered 105.880 recreational dwellings in 2011. The supply of recreational dwellings has grown every year (with an average annual growth of 2 percent) since 1992, when Statistics Netherlands started collecting these data. However, not all recreational dwellings can be considered as second homes (since they can also be owned by companies and be used for commercial purposes only) and not all second homes are recreational dwellings (since second home owners can also occupy *regular dwellings*, which are administrated differently from recreational dwellings). The data should therefore not be treated as more than an indicative predictor of the number of second homes.

[19] Statistics Netherlands annually collects data on recreational dwellings per Dutch municipality. A recreational dwelling is a dwelling, which in the land-use plan has been assigned a recreational function instead of a residential function.

Second, the Dutch Tax Administration (Dutch: *Belastingdienst*) (in NRIT Onderzoek, 2010: 18) registers Dutch private ownership of second homes in the Netherlands. Second homes with foreign owners are thus excluded in this registration, which makes this registration also not entirely accurate. In 2000, the Dutch Tax Administration estimated there are 105.000 second homes in the Netherlands, but more recent public data from the Dutch Tax Administration is missing.

Third, RPB & RIGO (2003) made an estimation of the number of second homes in the Netherlands. They used a combination of different sources and applied a broad definition of second homes. RPB & RIGO estimated the total supply of second homes in the Netherlands is between the 373.000 and 388.000 dwellings. The majority of those dwellings are mobile homes (220.000), around 31.000 are allotment gardens with overnight accommodation, between 113.200 and 128.200 are recreational dwellings and approximately 8.800 of the second homes are regular dwellings, which are used as second homes.

Fourth, NRIT Onderzoek (2010) bases itself on the results of the Dutch Housing Research (*WoON 2006*). WoON is a large scale survey investigation which focuses on the residential preferences and conditions of Dutch residents and has been conducted by the former Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (Dutch: *Ministerie van Volkhuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer*) and Statistics Netherlands. Based on the WoON investigation of 2006, it is estimated there were approximately 92.860 second homes in the Netherlands in 2006 and 118.720 mobile homes and chalets. According to the WoON research, 60.490 Dutch people owned a second home abroad. Results can also be compared with the WoON investigation of 2002. This suggests the number of second homes slowly increased between 2002 and 2006. The number of mobile homes/chalets on the other hand has dropped.

Finally, from an international perspective the number of second homes in the Netherlands seems limited. Based on the estimations of RPB & RIGO, the VROM-raad (2009) notes approximately 5 percent of the Dutch housing supply is used as a second home. In Belgium this is about 8 percent and in Spain, Italy and Sweden respectively 17, 19 and 20 percent of the housing supply are second homes (Gordijn & De Vries, 2004; Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg, 2011). Also, the share of Dutch households owning a second home – either in the Netherlands or abroad – is relatively small. NRIT Onderzoek (2010) states approximately 2 percent of the Dutch households own a second home. In other countries the percentage of second home owners is usually a lot higher. In France for instance, approximately 14 percent of the households own a second home and in Finland, Sweden and Spain this goes for more than 20 percent of the households (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010). In fact, it can be argued that having a second home is not as culturally embedded in Dutch society as it is in many other countries. Berg & Forsberg (2003) for instance describe the second-home tradition in Norway and Sweden, in which second homes are much more common.

Table 3.1
Estimations of the size of the second home market in the Netherlands

	Year	Estimated number of second homes	Data collection method	Applied definition of second homes
Statistics Netherlands	2011	105.880	Registration	Stationary recreational homes (as marked in land use plans)
Dutch Tax Administration	2000	105.000	Registration	Stationary second homes in ownership of Dutch civilians
RPB & RIGO	2003	122.000 - 137.000	Registration and survey	Stationary second homes (in accordance with the definition used in this study)
WoON Investigation (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and Statistics Netherlands)	2006	92.860	Survey	Stationary second homes in ownership of Dutch civilians

Source: Statistics Netherlands, 2011; Van de Laar, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003; NRIT Onderzoek, 2010

3.2.2 | Future Demand

It is extremely difficult to predict the future demand for second homes, because it depends on many uncertainties. Especially economic and demographic developments are important to second home demand (RPB & RIGO, 2003). Also, future mobility patterns and lifestyles have a large influence on second home demand, whilst they are uncertain. Latten (2010) for instance, claims especially highly educated people become increasingly *footloose*, leading to a large demand for second homes as "*part-time dwellings*" (18, own translation) in peripheral regions (also see Keers, 2002). Others however, note the possession of a second home might also be a fashion trend, which can possibly disappear in the future (Metz, 2010; Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010; VROM-raad, 2009). Moreover, the second home market is extremely sensitive for conjuncture changes (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010), which can have a huge impact on future demand. The (limited) data on the development of second homes in the past suggest the number of second homes in the Netherlands has steadily increased over time (section 3.2.1). However, it is uncertain to what extent these data can be extrapolated for future demand.

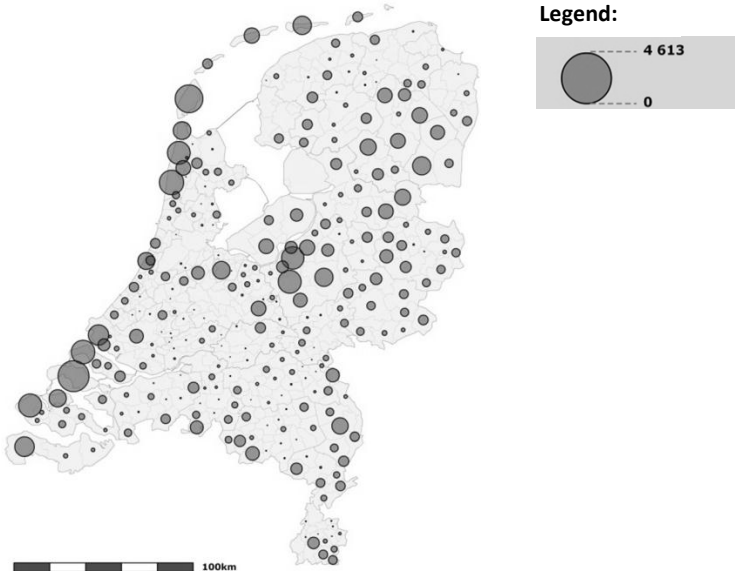
In 2003, RPB & RIGO made a prognosis of the future demand for second homes based on different economic and demographic scenarios. However, given the definitional issues surrounding second homes (section 3.1), it is difficult to check the accuracy of this prognosis. RPB & RIGO predicted growth of the national second home demand, even in the most pessimistic scenarios. Due to the lack of studies on the future demand for second homes, no further claims about the quantitative development of the second home market are made in this study. Instead, the study mainly focuses on the qualitative features and developments on the second home market (section 3.3).

3.3 | Qualitative Features of the Second Home Market in the Netherlands

3.3.1 | Spatial Distribution

How second homes are spatially distributed over the Netherlands is not easy to answer given the definitional issues (section 3.1). RPB & RIGO (2003) however, claim the data on recreational dwellings can give a fairly good insight in the spatial distribution of second homes (also see Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit, 2005). The data of Statistics Netherlands (2011b) show most recreational dwellings are located in the coastal regions and the Veluwe (a large wooded area in the province of Gelderland) (figure 3.1). When divided to provinces, the provinces of Gelderland, North-Holland, Zuid-Holland and Zeeland possess the most recreational dwellings. Another useful predictor of the spatial distribution of second homes in the Netherlands is the survey by NRIT Onderzoek (2010). They found most second homes are owned in the provinces Gelderland, Friesland and Zeeland. Furthermore, the survey also explicitly questioned second home *searchers* and they predominantly expressed preferences for the provinces Friesland, Zeeland, Drenthe and Overijssel.

Figure 3.1
Distribution of recreation dwellings in the Netherlands per municipality



Source: Statistics Netherlands, 2011b

When the distribution of recreational dwellings in figure 3.1 is compared with the locations of water or forest, it can be argued the vast majority of the recreational dwellings are located in proximity of these (also see RPB & RIGO, 2003). Hall & Müller (2004) endorse this in more general terms since they speak of "amenity-rich landscapes" (9) (also see McIntyre, 2006; Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg, 2011). This for instance includes mountain areas, which the Netherlands does not really possess.
In his dissertation, Marjavaara (2008) explicitly investigated the determinants of attractive second home locations (in Sweden) and concluded that "an attractive second home landscape can be read in the existing second home distribution" (35). In other words: the areas which already have a large demand for second homes are also the areas with the most potential of attracting more second home owners. Marjavaara confirmed these areas are often coastal areas and stated that "areas with a long tradition of recreation and tourism phenomena have an advantage in attracting potential

second home owners" (36). Although increased mobility makes it possible for second home owners to reach alternative destinations, Marjavaara observed that people still move to places where other second home owners and tourists already are.

Furthermore, RPB & RIGO speak of a clustering of second homes in the Netherlands. This is partly because of the Dutch planning system, which has traditionally concentrated recreational dwellings, mobile homes and allotment gardens in specific areas. The clustering of second homes primarily manifests itself on vacation parks, were a relatively large part of the second homes in the Netherlands are located. The RPB & RIGO (2003) state that 45 percent of the second homes are located on vacation parks, whilst 55 percent is located outside parks. Moreover, NRIT Onderzoek claim 85 percent of the second home owners in the Netherlands own a second home on a park[20] and the NVRM (in Van de Laar, 2010: 10) claim this percentage is about 90 percent. According to RPB & RIGO, the observation that a relatively large part of the second homes are located on vacation parks is quite specific for the Netherlands. Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg (2011) show there is also a strong spatial separation between second homes and permanent dwellings in Norway, but they also add this is not the case in most other countries.

3.3.2 | Second Home Characteristics

The survey conducted by NRIT Onderzoek (2010) also questioned (potential) second home owners about what type of second home they (would like to) own. 52 percent of the second home owners in the Netherlands owned a detached dwelling, whilst 72 percent of the people in search of a second home preferred to purchase a detached dwelling. It has already been stated the majority of second homes in the Netherlands are located on vacation parks. RPB & RIGO claim regular dwellings on the other hand are not often used as second homes. From their case studies follows that out of the small amount of regular dwellings which are being used as second homes, the majority is located in old (picturesque) villages. It was further found that former agricultural buildings are also barely used as second homes. However, the demand for former agricultural buildings might be larger under less planning restrictions and in a more 'relaxed' housing market. Bielckus (1977) for instance mentions that in the 1960's in Sweden it in particular were farmhouses which became available for the second home market.

Furthermore, NRIT Onderzoek showed most second home owners/searchers own/search dwellings which are suited for 5 or 6 persons. Half of those second homes have 3 bedrooms. The presence of multiple bedrooms, a garden or balcony and a garage are seen as the most important facilities in a second home. Related to this, a trend of second homes getting more luxurious has been mentioned (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003). It is stated second home owners/searchers increasingly put higher demands on second homes and dwelling types like mobile homes are getting less popular. Furthermore, the current second homes of the respondents mainly had a value of between € 200.000 and € 350.000 (43 percent). 28 percent of the respondents owned a second home with a value of between € 100.000 and € 200.000 and 14 percent a dwelling of between € 350.000 and

[20] NRIT Onderzoek (2010) however, mention they believe the number of respondents with a second home on a vacation park is overrepresented. This is because respondents were found through a specific real estate agency with a network related to vacation parks.

€ 500.000. The second home searchers on the other hand, expect to purchase relatively cheaper dwellings than the current second home owners possess.

Respondents of the survey by NRIT Onderzoek were also asked how important certain criteria were/are in the choice of a second home and the region. The most important motivations to choose a region are the scenic quality of the region, its accessibility and the presence of sports facilities. At the same time, the scenic quality of the location around the second home was the most important criterion determining the dwelling choice. To a lesser extent, the price and investment expectations were often mentioned as important selection criteria. Van de Laar (2010) summarised the findings by NRIT Onderzoek in the following table:

Table 3.2
Importance of second home characteristics to second home owners and searchers

Characteristics	**Second home *owners* in the Netherlands**	**Second home *searchers* in the Netherlands**
Region	1. Scenic quality 2. Accessibility 3. Sports facilities 4. Water recreation facilities 5. Recreational facilities 6. Cultural facilities 7. Family/friends in region	1. Scenic quality 2. Accessibility 3. Sports facilities 4. Water recreation facilities 5. Recreational facilities 6. Own experiences in region 7. Golf facilities
Location of dwelling	Recreational park (85 %) Solitary (15 %)	Recreational park (69 %) Solitary (31 %)
Features of dwelling	1. Own garden/terrace/balcony 2. Multiple bedrooms 3. Parking space/garage	1. Own garden/terrace/balcony 2. Multiple bedrooms 3. Parking space/garage
Nearby facilities	1. Own parking spot 2. Catering facilities 3. Water recreation facilities 4. Playground 5. Retail facilities	1. Own parking spot 2. Catering facilities 3. Indoor swimming pool 4. Retail facilities 5. Water recreation facilities
Type of dwelling	1. Detached dwelling (53 %) 2. Townhouse (19 %) 3. Apartment (17 %) 4. Luxurious villa (8 %) 5. Miscellaneous (4 %)	1. Detached dwelling (72 %) 2. Townhouse (11 %) 3. Apartment (14 %) 4. Luxurious villa (0 %) 5. Miscellaneous (4 %)
Size of the dwelling (expressed in number of people)	1. 5-6 persons (54 %) 2. 3-4 persons (27 %) 3. 7-8 persons (7 %) 1-2 persons (7 %)	1. 5-6 persons (67 %) 2. 3-4 persons (20 %) 3. 7-8 persons (10 %)
Value of the dwelling	Average: € 275.000 1. 200.000 - 350.000 (43 %) 2. 100.000 - 200.000 (28 %) 3. 350.000 - 500.000 (15 %)	Average: € 190.000 1. 100.000 - 200.000 (55 %) 2. 200.000 - 350.000 (36 %) 3. 50.000 - 100.000 (9 %)

Source: NRIT Onderzoek in Van de Laar, 2010: 14 (own translation)

3.3.3 | Characteristics of Second Home Owners

Several studies (e.g. Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit, 2005; Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2004; NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; Paris 2008; RPB & RIGO, 2003) have questioned second home owners and/or searchers and gathered quantitative data, in order to get more insight in the socioeconomic profiles of second home owners. This section briefly elaborates on the findings of these studies regarding the income, age and locations of the primary residence of second home owners.

The above mentioned empirical studies on second homes all confirm second homes are predominantly a luxurious good and that second home owners generally are more affluent than average households. Berg & Forsberg (2003) argued the relatively low land prices in rural Norwegian en Swedish areas also make second homes affordable for the middle class (also see Marjavaara, 2007). Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg (2011) contest this however. They state that "although second home ownership is quite widespread, there is a clear connection between income and second home ownership, and second home owners have higher incomes than the average population" (436). In the Netherlands, it is notable that 22 percent of the second home owners have a below average income (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010). Like Berg & Forsberg's statement, this seems to suggest second homes are not really a luxurious good and that they are affordable for middle incomes. However, there are two important side notes to this number (RPB & RIGO, 2003). First, the WoON survey (also see section 3.2.1) on which these results are based, applies a very broad definition of second homes and includes forms which are financially accessible to more people than stationary second homes (i.e. trailers, mobile homes and sailing boats). Second, part of the second home owners are retired (see below) and might now have a relatively low annual income. However, this group might have had a relatively high income in the past and possess a lot of capital.

Second home owners are on average older than first home owners (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010). Second home owners predominantly are between the 45 and 65 years old of age 65 years or older. 43 percent of the second home owners are families with children, 3 percent are single households and 54 percent are childless families (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010). This suggests the groups owning second homes are mainly *empty nesters*,[21] nuclear middle aged families and to a lesser extent retired households. Also, NRIT Onderzoek (2010) and Paris (2008) remark that second home owners are getting relatively younger, because purchasing a second home becomes financially feasible at an earlier age.

Research has also been done on the locations of the primary residence of second home owners. Hoogendoorn & Visser (2004) found that second homes are predominantly located within easy commuting distance. In this context, Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg (2011: 428) speak of a "weekend recreation zone" around cities. Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit (2005) add that what is interpreted as an 'easy commuting distance' differs per country. They found that the average distances between first and second homes were a lot longer in Germany than in the Netherlands. They explained this by arguing that "in a larger country the inhabitants are familiar with more travel opportunities than in a smaller country, which creates larger travel distances to second homes" (145).

[21] An empty nester is a parent whose child/children is/are grown up and who have already moved out to live by themselves.

Furthermore, Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit and RPB & RIGO empirically tested the *compensation hypothesis* (section 4.2.1), but did not find sufficient evidence to endorse this hypothesis. The compensation hypothesis states the purpose of a second home is to compensate for the first home, so that people can get the 'best of both worlds': usually a busy and dynamic urban life on the one hand and a quiet and relaxed rural life on the other hand. Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit distinguished high and low urbanised first home areas and expected to find more second home owners from highly than lowly urbanised areas. RPB & RIGO on the other hand, also looked at the dwelling types of the primary residence. It was expected people primarily living in apartments would more often own second homes than people living in single-family houses. Both studies did not get the expected results, which might be because there is also a correlation between income and the characteristics of first homes. In other words: households living in apartments in highly urbanised areas might theoretically have the most need to compensate. However, these households usually are not the households which are affluent enough to actually purchase second homes.

3.4 | Possible Impacts of Second Homes

The title of Coppock's (1977a) pioneering work – *Second Homes: Curse or Blessing* – perfectly illustrates the primary interest of many of the academic work on second homes, namely the possible impacts on the host area.[22] Below, the most important (economic, social and environmental) impacts which are mentioned in the scientific literature are being elaborated on.

3.4.1 | Local Economy

Second home development can have notable economic benefits for host communities. Given the decline of employment in the primary sector, second home development can help diversify the economy and generate income and employment in rural areas (Fleischer and Tchetchik, 2005; Marjavaara, 2008; Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004; Paris, 2006). Especially "enterprises providing building material, furniture, household equipment and everyday commodities benefit from second home tourism" (Asgary, Rezvani & Mehregan, 2011: 35). Asgary, Rezvani & Mehregan, hence, state that second home users mainly contribute to the local economy by maintaining local markets and to a lesser extent by stimulating new business development. The exact economic impacts however, remain difficult to predict. Important variables for instance are the income of the users, the frequency of visits, the distance between the first and second home and the structure of the local economy. Furthermore, a presumed positive impact of second home owners on host municipalities is that they contribute to local tax revenues, whilst they make relatively little use of municipal services (Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004; Paris, 2006).[23]

[22] It should be noted this brief review focuses on the impacts of second homes on their destination (the host area). Like each geographical relationship though, second home ownership also affects its origin (the environment of the first home) (Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004). However, the impacts of second homes are important in this research as part of the context of the debate about the opportunities of second homes in demographically declining regions. Therefore, the impacts on the shrinking host region are relevant, whilst the impacts on the origin do not fall within the scope of this research.

[23] This effect is extremely country-specific. In the Netherlands for instance, second home owners are not obliged to register in the host municipality, which means they do not have to pay certain municipal taxes. However, Dutch municipalities can force a commuter tax (section 5.2.2) upon second home owners in order to make them pay for the use of general municipal services (e.g. the maintenance of public spaces).

Müller, Hall & Keen (2004: 17) add an important condition to the assumptions about economic impacts, namely: second home users need to occupy “hitherto-unoccupied housing” in order to produce net gains for the local economy. In contrast, when second homes displace permanent homes, then economic effects will likely be negative. Asgary, Rezvani & Mehregan (2011: 35) therefore remark second home users are “not able to compensate for the spending power of permanent residents lost through rural depopulation”. Hence, several shrinking regions, which are dealing with a lot of vacant dwellings (Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006), hope to attract potential second home owners. In several rural shrinking regions, which are undergoing a "transition from a rural economy based on primary production to a more service-oriented economy", tourism and second home developments are even seen as the most promising contributors for the local economy (Overvåg & Gunnerurd Berg, 2011: 419).

3.4.2 | Housing Affordability and Access

One of the most important objections to second homes is the assumption that second homes push up housing prices (section 2.6.1). The general argumentation is that housing prices increase with the arrival of second homes and that this makes dwellings unaffordable for local households, who are looking to purchase a dwelling in their home region. Thus, local inhabitants are then displaced by second home owners. However, Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones (2005) argue these negative impacts are dependent on whether the demand for second and permanent homes is targeted at the same housing stock. They also argue second homes are rarely the only factor affecting housing affordability (also see Marjavaara, 2007; Paris, 2006). Other factors which make it difficult for local households to find affordable housing can for instance be shortages of low-cost housing supply (Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004) or pressures from external housing demand by commuters or retirees (Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2001). Furthermore, when young people leave rural areas with many second homes and relatively high housing prices, this does not necessarily mean the housing prices are the main cause of the outmigration (RPB & RIGO, 2003). In many cases, the vulnerability of the local economy serves as a better explanation for the outmigration. In this context, Müller, Hall & Keen (2004) argued that "behind every property that is sold to a second homeowner there is usually a household that decided not to live in the countryside". Marjavaara (2008) therefore claims the idea of second homes causing outmigration of local residents (displacement) is a myth.

In demographically declining areas the pressure on the housing market is usually limited. Displacement issues on the housing market therefore barely occur in these areas. Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg (2011) for instance confirm that second homes in depopulating areas in Eastern-Norway were therefore quite uncontroversial. Furthermore, when the arrival of second home owners leads to increasing housing prices in these areas, then this might actually be a desirable development since second homes can limit the loss of value by private home owners (RLG, 2009; Ryan, 2003).

3.4.3 | Local Services

It is often suggested second homes make the preservation of local services[24] more difficult, since second home owners do not make permanent use of these dwellings (Van de Laar, 2010). However, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent disappearing services are the result of permanent dwellings changing into second homes. The demand for local services is for a large part being determined by macro developments like increasing digitalisation and mobility, changing consumer behaviour and a trend towards up scaling of services. Müller, Hall & Keen (2004) remark that second homes can nevertheless contribute to the preservation of local services since they tend to favour small rural shops. Furthermore, the exact impact of second homes on local services is mostly dependent of how and how frequent second homes are used (Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2004). Moreover, the impacts differ for different types of services: whilst second homes tend to favour small shops, second homes contribute little to the preservation of for instance a school. All in all, it should be concluded the impacts of second homes on local services cannot easily be predicted, since "the cause-effect relationships are highly complex" (Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2004: 305).

In the context of demographic decline, local services are already under pressure (section 2.4.1). It speaks for itself that when vacant dwellings are replaced by second homes, the net impact on local services can only be positive (compared to the situation before).[25] However, this does not mean second homes are able to 'save' many services because so many other factors are in play.

3.4.4 | Social Life

In the literature, attention is also being paid to the sociocultural impacts of second homes on the host community. Several authors have suggested that the lifestyles, mentalities and values of second home users can conflict with those of the local community (e.g. Asgary, Rezvani & Mehregan, 2011; Marjavaara, 2008; Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004; Phillips, 1998; RPB & RIGO, 2003). This is strengthened by the fact that rural communities are often "understood as communities in which everyone takes care of and knows one another" (Overvåg & Gunnerurd Berg, 2011: 419). Furthermore, the different socioeconomic backgrounds of second home owners and local residents can also form a basis for conflicts (Marjavaara, 2008). However, these social impacts do not only apply to second home users, but also to permanent inhabitants from 'outside' like commuters (RPB & RIGO, 2003). Overvåg & Gunnerurd Berg (2011) argue that conflicts between local inhabitants and second home users are typically related to how the rural areas should further develop. Most second home owners in rural areas explicitly seek to escape from (urban) everyday life and are eager "to prevent local developments that may spoil their new-found rural lifestyle" (417). This might cause tension with local inhabitants, who do live their everyday life in these rural areas. These impacts are not in the last place dependent of the type of users of second homes and the scale of second home developments in the region. Social impacts are also less of an issue when second homes and permanent homes represent separate markets and are spatially separated (Overvåg & Gunnerurd Berg, 2011).

[24] There are many different types of local services. In this study, the term local service can for example point to: cultural services, educational services, retail, sports facilities, health care services and community services.

[25] Thus, here goes the same condition as for the impacts on the local economy: impacts are predominantly positive, only when second home users occupy "hitherto-unoccupied housing" (Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004: 17).

Next to the direct relationship between second home users and the host community, second home use also indirectly influences social life in host towns. This is because second home owners do not use the dwellings permanently, which means towns with many second home owners run the risk of becoming 'ghost towns' during the offseason (Simms, Oram, MacGillivray & Drury, 2002). In this way, second homes can also impact social life and have a negative effect on the liveability in host towns. The nature and size of this impact is again dependent of how and how frequent second homes are being used.

In the context of demographic decline it seems the impact of second homes is predominantly positive, in comparison with the current situation of large scale vacancy on the housing market. Even when second homes would barely be used, these dwellings would probably be in a better state then they are currently in, since second home owners generally take good care of their property (RLG, 2009). Furthermore, Müller (1999) argues depopulation makes room for newcomers in the sense that cultural differences are easier bridged (also see Marjavaara, 2007). Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones (2000) on the other hand, note that communities and political representatives oftentimes interpret second homes as a factor responsible for causing depopulation and might therefore still have a negative perception of second home owners. There is also evidence of second home owners who restored vacant/obsolete dwellings in shrinking regions, but who were vilified by locals (Paris, 2006). Again, the type of second home use and the scale of the developments seem important.

3.4.5 | Pressure on Nature and the Environment

The development of second homes can put pressure on nature, in particular because these homes are often located in proximity of nature (Van de Laar, 2010: 15). Especially when second homes are developed on a large scale, the pressure on nature increases, and so does the fear of urbanisation of rural areas (VROM-raad, 2009). The presence of investors (real estate developers or recreational entrepreneurs) can on the other hand support the development or preservation of nature (RPB & RIGO, 2003). Furthermore, the inhabitants of second homes can also contribute to the scenic quality of locations (VROM-raad, 2009). This is because second home owners are usually more committed to the physical qualities of the environment then local residents are (Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004). Moreover, second home owners are usually opposed to further large-scale developments and might therefore dedicate themselves to the preservation of nature (Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004).

In demographically declining regions it is often argued there are less 'contested space issues'. It has for instance already been stated that displacement on the housing market is less of an issue in these regions. However, second homes can also compete over land use with agriculture, forestry and environmental purposes (Overvåg & Gunnerurd Berg, 2011).

3.4.6 | Overall Impacts

All in all, it can be concluded that second home use and the presumed (economic, social and environmental) impacts are not the result of simple causal relationships. The descriptions of the different possible impacts above show it is often difficult to ascertain if second homes are to be ‘blamed’ for certain undesirable developments. Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones (2004: 304) even

argue many of the commonly understood impacts are little more than “educated guesswork”.
In contrast to many inconspicuous developments which influence rural life, second home tourism is probably more controversial because it is very visible, which makes it a "convenient scapegoat" (Dower, in Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2005: 148). It is also important to note that impacts are heavily dependent of how, how frequent, on what scale and by whom the second homes are being used. Thus, the impacts cannot be understood without a proper understanding of the heterogeneity of second home usage (chapter 4). Finally, the way in which second home owners influence areas are "highly place dependent and diverse, and also vary between different countries and regions" (Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg, 2011: 420).

In political and societal debates however, the impacts of second homes to host regions are seen in “overwhelmingly negative terms” (Asgary, Rezvani & Mehregan, 2011: 33). In practice, there have hence been designed several policies to either discourage or prohibit second home use (e.g. Adriaansens, 2011; Frost, 2004; Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Müller, 2004; Municipality of Sluis, 2005; Municipality of Veere, 1998; Overvåg, 2009). Demographic decline puts the impacts of second homes in a different context. It is then understood that second home users occupy dwellings which would otherwise be vacant, whilst in situations of growth second home users might displace permanent inhabitants. Although the literature contains examples in which negative impacts dominate, second homes in shrinking regions are expected to have mainly positive impacts on the host region and community (Latten, 2010; Müller, Hall & Keen 2004; Marjavaara, 2008; NVM, 2010; Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg, 2011; RLG, 2009; Van de Laar, 2010).

4 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter builds on the theoretical insights on second homes from chapter 3. In chapter 3, a broad review of the second home literature was given, whilst the current chapter specifically focuses on the heterogeneity of second home use. Figure 1.1 (in section 1.2) showed that second home use is a key dimension in the analysis of the second home demand in this study. Section 4.1 elaborates on the importance of this dimension in relation to the research goal and question (section 1.2), and section 4.2 provides a typology of five different types of second home use. In the empirical part of this study, this typology serves as a tool to better understand and capture the complexity of the demand side of the market for second homes.

4.1 | Use of Theory

Second homes are not always used in the same way or for the same purpose (e.g. Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones, 2004; Müller, Hall & Keen 2004; RPB & RIGO, 2003; Van de Laar, 2010). For instance compare a dwelling on a vacation park which is leased to different users as a vacation accommodation with a dwelling in the historic centre of a small rural town, which is used during weekends to escape from the hectic environment of the urban first home. Müller, Hall & Keen in this respect, suggest a relationship between the way second homes are used and the characteristics of the dwellings and the environment. In other words: they claim different forms of second home use lead to different demands concerning the environment and the dwellings. This suggests that in an analysis of the demand for and supply of second homes, second homes users should not be treated as a homogenous group. Furthermore, Hall & Page (2002) state investigators of second homes need to understand the motivations behind the decision to have a second home. They claim that “second home owners are motivated by a number of reasons, many of which have to do with the specific characteristics of a location including distance from primary residence, physical and social characteristics of the area and availability of recreational opportunities” (222). It is therefore important in this study to take different motivations and different types of second home use into account.

In section 4.2.2 a typology of different types of second home use is given. This typology serves as a tool to better understand the demand side of the market for second homes. Each of the identified forms of second home use has a couple of characteristics by which it can be recognised. In the empirical part of the study, the residential preferences of second home users are measured and the typology makes is possible to break down the results to different categories of second home users. The main goal of this study is to compare the results of the demand for second homes with the characteristics of the supply of vacant dwellings. Given the typology of second home use, it might for instance happen that a certain dwelling does not meet the demands of people looking for a second home as an investment property, whilst it does gather interest of people looking for a weekend home. Thus, this theoretical framework aims to capture the complexity of the second home market, and thus guarantee a valid analysis of the case study results.

4.2 | A Typology of Second Home Use

4.2.1 | Existing Typologies

The different ways in which second homes can be used, are predominantly related to the motivations that users have for using a second home. Although motivations for second home use can be very personal, certain basic motives can be recognised: second homes are usually used for living, work, recreation, as an investment or any combination of these (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010). It should hence be stressed that not all second homes are purely recreational. Gallent, Mace & Tewdwr-Jones (2004) for instance, have showed that for twenty percent of the second home owners in England the main reason for having a second home was work. The RPB & RIGO (2003) and the VROM-raad (2009) also notice a trend of second homes being increasingly used as workplaces. Other often mentioned reasons for purchasing a second home are investment reasons. In a study on Dutch second home owners and searchers (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010), investment reasons even came forward as the most important motivation for second home ownership. However, the researchers believe these survey results are misleading, since owners rather present their purchase to other people as an investment than as a 'getaway' from the first home environment. Herewith, owners suppress their emotions and their actual need for freedom, tranquillity and space (Hormann, 2004). This need for freedom, tranquillity and space – which in these cases is not met enough by the first home – is expressed in the *compensation hypothesis*, in which the second home compensates for the limitations of the first home (Coppock, 1977a; Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit, 2005; Huang & Yi, 2011; McIntyre, 2006; NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003; Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999) (section 3.3.3).

Given the that fact second homes and their owners are not homogenous, several authors have made typologies of second homes in the past (e.g. Barendregt & Smit in Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit, 2005: 148-149; Marsden, 1969; Müller in Hall & Müller, 2004: 8; Paris, 2008). First, Marsden (1969) made a distinction between (i) comprised private homes; (ii) intermittently comprised private holiday homes; (iii) intermittently comprised commercial holiday homes and (iv) commercial holiday homes. Although this distinction is somewhat outdated (for instance because it does not take working purposes into account), it is valuable because Marsden notes the frequency of visits is important. The lesser second homes are used by their owners, the more important commercial use generally becomes to defray costs. The frequency of visits is also a key variable in Müller's typology (in Hall & Müller, 2004: 8) since he distinguishes "weekend homes" from "vacation homes". Weekend homes are used often for short visits, whilst vacation homes are only used occasionally but for relatively long visits. Paris (2008) also mentions another type of second home: the pied-à-terre (also see Latten, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003; VROM-raad, 2009). Pied-à-terre are "dwellings owned in addition to primary residences, used mainly as a base for work distant from primary residences" (Paris, 2008: 10). Finally, Barendregt & Smit (in Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit, 2005: 148-149) made a distinction between (i) "holidayers"; (ii) "escapers" and (iii) "enjoyers". The weakness of this typology is that these three groups are not mutually exclusive. However, the typology is fruitful since it shows second homes are not always owned out of dissatisfaction with the first home. In other words: the compensation hypothesis does not apply to every second home. Vacation homes of the group they call holidayers are usually bought because of attachment to a certain area or because of investment purposes, but not to compensate for the first home since these dwellings are only used occasionally.

4.2.2 | Five Types of Second Home Use

Based on a combination of the typologies mentioned in section 4.2.1, this study makes a distinction between (i) investment properties, (ii) vacation homes; (iii) weekend homes, (iv) pied-à-terre and (v) second homes which are used as a full alternative to the first home. This section elaborates on the characteristics of these five forms and table 4.1 gives an overview of this typology.

Table 4.1
Typology of second home use

	Investment property	**Vacation home**	**Weekend home**	**Pied-à-terre**	**Full alternative to first home**
Main motivation	Investment purposes	Recreational purposes and/ or investment purposes	Recreational and/or residential purposes	Working purposes	Residential purposes
Frequency of visits	Never	Low (or high through lease)	High	High	High
Length of visits	-	Long	Short	Short	Long
Lease	Yes	Yes/no	Yes/no	No	No

> *Investment properties*
In contrast to the other types of second homes use, investment properties are not occupied at all by their owners (Marsden, 1969; Paris, 2008). These properties are purely owned for commercial reasons and therefore are generally leased as much as possible to yield income. Because of the importance of lease potential, personal preferences are inferior to the preferences of tenants. In other words: the dwelling not only has to meet the needs of the owner, but also the needs of tourists in general. This can for instance mean presence and proximity of recreational services are relatively important with these dwellings. Also, maintenance friendliness of the dwelling is a relatively important consideration in the purchase of an investment property (SER, 2011). Thus, it is expected investment properties are mainly located at the better locations in relatively good dwellings for which the number of potential tenants is relatively high. Finally, owners of investment properties which own more than one 'second home' are also not rare (Paris, 2008). In that case owners have multiple real estate investments from which they yield income.

> *Vacation homes*
Vacations homes are usually purchased because of recreational motivations and are characterised by relatively few but long visits (Müller in Hall & Müller, 2004: 8). Because of its rare use, the distance between the vacation home and the primary residence is not really important, which leads to higher average distances than weekend homes (Müller in Hall & Müller, 2004: 8). Vacation homes are often leased to defray costs (Marsden, 1969) and therefore investment purposes usually play a large role in the purchase of vacation homes. The difference

with pure investment properties however, is that vacation homes are also used by their owners whilst the former are not. Vacation homes are usually located in rural areas and are often, especially in the Netherlands (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010), located on vacation parks. Since vacation homes are predominantly used for recreational and investment purposes, the presence and proximity of recreational services is important. Finally, in contrast with weekend homes, vacation homes usually are not the result of dissatisfaction with the first home (in Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit, 2005: 148-149). In fact, given its occasional use, vacation homes are probably barely able to compensate for first home dissatisfaction.

> *Weekend homes*

Motives behind weekend home ownership can usually be found in needs for peace, tranquillity and space, in combination with a lack of these qualities in the primary residence. In other words: the compensation hypothesis (section 3.3.3 and 4.2.1) might often apply to weekend homes. In this respect, weekend homes are usually used for recreational purposes, although they are argued to be increasingly used for working purposes (RPB & RIGO, 2003; VROM-raad, 2009). Also, weekends do not only have to refer to Saturdays and Sundays, since digitalisation and increasing mobility make it easier to work from the second home (Latten, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003). Latten for instance, describes people who live in the *Randstad*[26] for three or four days a week and who spend the rest of the week in a house in the countryside. He calls these forms of dwelling "*part-time dwelling*" or "bi-local dwelling" (Latten, 2010: 18, own translation). What distinguishes weekend homes from vacation homes is that weekend homes are used frequently for relatively short visits, instead of occasionally for relatively long visits (Marsden, 1969; Müller in Hall & Müller, 2004: 8). Therefore, weekend homes are generally leased less than vacation homes[27] and the location of the second home is more dependent of the primary residence, because the distance between the dwellings needs to be acceptable for frequent use. Second homes abroad are therefore almost always vacation homes instead of weekend homes (NIRT Onderzoek, 2010). Furthermore, weekend homes are usually found in rural areas. Finally, the presence and proximity of recreational services can be important for users of weekend homes, but because of the broader use of functions recreational services are expected to be less important for weekend homes than they are for vacation homes.

> *Pied-à-terre*

Pied-à-terre differ from weekend and vacation homes, because they are usually found in urban areas and are predominantly used for working purposes (Paris, 2008). Just like weekend homes, pied-à-terre are used frequently for relatively short visits and are almost never leased. Although the distance between a pied-à-terre and the primary residence can be considerable (Paris for instance, describes European Parliament members from Northern Ireland who occupy a pied-à-terre in Brussels), this distance is usually shorter than the distance between a vacation home and the primary residence. As with weekend homes, distances are relatively short because of the high frequency of visits. The compensation hypothesis can also be applied to pied-à-terre: although the first home usually has more attractive living conditions, the pied-à-terre

[26] The polycentric agglomeration of the four largest cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) is often called the Randstad.

[27] The lease of weekend homes can obviously have financial benefits for the owners. However, since weekend homes are used more frequent than vacation homes, leasing weekend homes is less practical and necessary than leasing the latter.

compensates for the large distance between the first home and work. Finally, this 'reversed interpretation' of the compensation hypothesis implies the demands for the size, quality, aesthetic value and the environment of the pied-à-terre are inferior to the location and are therefore probably lower than the demands for vacation and weekend homes (SER, 2011). In this way, a pied-à-terre and a weekend home can complement each other.[28]

> *Full alternative to first home*
In this last type of second home use, the difference between the use of the first home and the use of the second home is less obvious than with the other types of use. The visits to the second home are not restricted to weekends and/or vacations since these second home are visited year round. Second homes which are considered as full alternatives to their first homes are especially owned by retirees, since they do not dependent on the accessibility of work locations and have the freedom to visit their second homes any time they like to. This type of second home can in the past have been used as one of the other types and is expected to be the result of a process in which owners get increasingly connected to the host region (section 3.1). Also, second home ownership can eventually develop into permanent residence (Müller in Hall & Müller, 2004: 8), but in the case of a full alternative to the first home both dwellings are kept and are used equally. Because this type of second home is used equally to the first home, it is expected the demands for these dwellings are relatively higher than for other second homes since the standards of permanent dwellings generally are also higher than those of second homes (Marjavaara, 2007).

Finally, it should be noted different forms of second home use have different impacts on their host regions. Section 3.4 has dealt with the impacts of second homes in detail and most of all has showed the complexity of the impacts of second homes. For this section, it is important to ascertain that weekend homes, pied-à-terre and full alternatives to the first home in general have more benefits to host regions than vacation homes and investment properties. This is because the former are generally used more frequently than the latter, which brings more potential positive effects on the local economy, local services and social life. Vacation homes and investment properties can also be used frequently through lease. However, the majority of the vacation homes and investment properties are not leased year round and when a dwelling is constantly used by different people, the positive effects on social life are less than with second homes which are regularly used by stable residents. Stable residents have a higher potential of care and involvement with the region and therefore, it is generally understood that weekend homes, pied-à-terre and full alternatives to the first home have more benefits to host regions than vacation homes and investment properties. Thus, when second homes are seen as an opportunity to improve the living conditions in shrinking regions, especially weekend homes, pied-à-terre and full alternatives to second homes seem promising. In practice, this has also been picked up by policy-makers. The Province of Zeeland (2006; 2009) for instance, has described the weekly use of a weekend home (part-time dwelling) as different and more desirable than the use of vacation homes.

[28] Which of the two is labelled as the first home however, is entirely the owner's decision (Hall & Müller, 2004).

5 | METHODOLOGY

5.1 | Research Strategy

This study has investigated to what extent the demand for second homes matches with the supply in shrinking regions (section 1.2). It has chosen to do so by doing case study research, in which a *single embedded case* has been analysed in detail. The choice for case study research has been made, because this study explicitly preferred an in depth analysis. It is argued the research goal (section 1.2) could not have been adequately answered in for instance a broad but more superficial survey study, because much (qualitative) data needed to be collected to judge the (mis)match between demand and supply. Furthermore, it is especially important to be able to judge these findings within the proper context, and case study research enables this.

Within the choice for a case study, a decision has been made to focus on a single case. Again, this decision has been made to capture as much of the complexity of the housing market as possible. In a multiple case study it would have been more difficult to take differences within regions into account. This is at the same time the criticism of the study by Van de Laar (2010), who has compared the opportunities for second homes in different Dutch shrinking regions, but did this with limited depth. Van de Laar's general exploratory study has failed to come up with valid and reliable empirical evidence and those research results can thus be doubted. In contrast, this study explicitly attempts to capture the diversity of a single case. Therefore, a choice has been made for an embedded case study in which multiple sub cases within the case (section 5.4.2) are studied. All in all, it can be argued that – in relation to the research goal – a single case study has the advantage that it can provide the necessary detailed data, while still keeping the data collection and analysis feasible. As case of this study, the region Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has been selected, and this selection is further elaborated on in section 5.4.1.

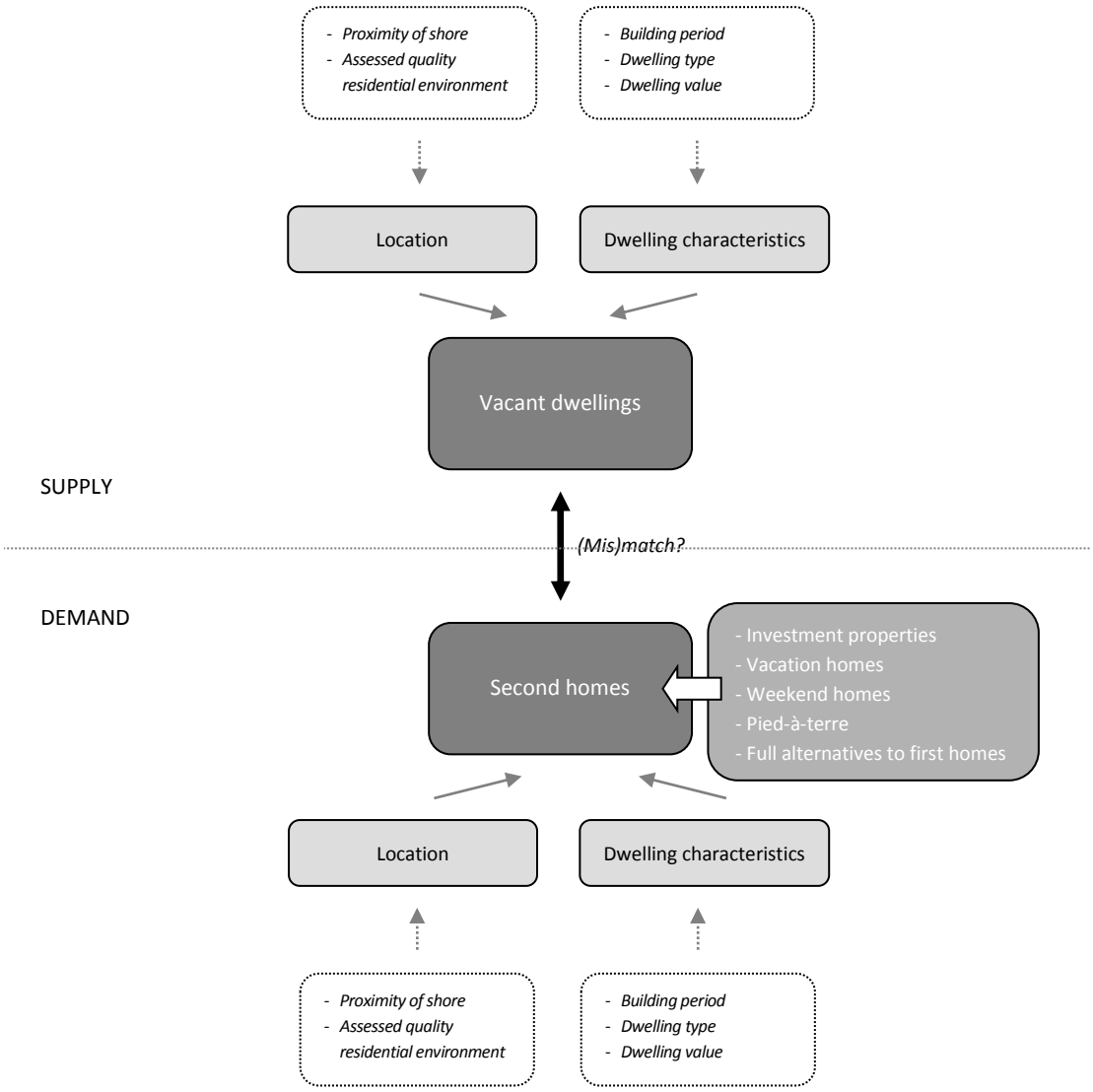
A common misconception about case study research is that its results are not generalisable. Yin (2003) however, argues this misconception is often made, because people confuse the level at which the generalisation is made. He states that case studies, in contrast to survey research, cannot be statistically generalised. For case study research however, the mode of generalisation is “analytic generalisation” (32). In analytic generalisation the empirical results of case studies are being used to test existing theoretical propositions. In this study, the case study has empirically tested the theoretical proposition which has stated that shrinking regions have plenty to offer to (potential) second home owners (Latten, 2010). By doing so the *rival* theory (Van de Laar, 2010; Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010), which has stated there is a mismatch between demand and supply, has also been tested (section 1.3.1).

5.2 | Operationalisation

5.2.1 | Operationalisation of the Conceptual Model

Figure 5.1 shows how the conceptual model from section 1.2 has been operationalised. Central in the conceptual model are two dependent variables: (i) the demand for *second homes* and (ii) the supply of *vacant dwellings*. As section 1.2 has elaborated on, the main goal of this research is to analyse to what extent these two variables match in demographically declining regions. Section 5.2.2 describes how these dependent variables have been measured. The theoretical framework (chapter 4) has been used as a tool to capture the complexity of the demand for second homes and this has been done by the distinction of five different types of second home use (investment properties, vacation homes, weekend homes, pied-à-terre and full alternatives to first homes). Furthermore, figure 5.1 shows the two dependent variables are both explained by two dimensions of independent variables: (i) the *location* of the dwellings and (ii) their *dwelling characteristics*. Finally, figure 5.1 shows of which independent variables these dimensions consist and this is further elaborated on in section 5.2.3.

Figure 5.1
Operationalised conceptual model



As figure 5.1 has showed, both the demand for second homes as the supply of vacant dwellings are dependent variables in this study. This is because the explicit goal of this research (section 1.2) is to compare the differences and similarities between demand and supply.[29] For the purpose of a valid comparison, the exact same independent variables and sources are applied for both dependent variables. In this way, vacant dwellings and second homes can directly be compared, which would not have been the case if different independent variables would have been applied.

5.2.2 | Operationalisation of the Dependent Variables

As section 5.2.1 showed, (i) the demand for *second homes* and (ii) the supply of *vacant dwellings* are the two dependent variables which are central in this study. Table 5.1 summarises how these variables have been translated to measurable units in operational definitions and from which sources these have been adopted. Below, both variables are further elaborated on.

Table 5.1
Operationalisation dependent variables

	Operational definition	**Source**
Second home	A furnished dwelling of which the owner does not have a permanent residence in the municipality	Municipal commuter tax (Dutch: *forensenbelasting*)
Vacant dwelling	Dwelling of which no owner is registered in the basic municipal registration, with the exception of other types of use like second homes and commercial use	Municipal basic registration (Dutch: *GBA*) and commuter tax (*forensenbelasting*)

> *Second homes*

First of all, it is important to note that the demand for second homes in this study is based on the *revealed behaviour* of current second home owners. In other words: this study assumes the characteristics of the current second home supply serve as a proper predictor for the future demand. Strictly speaking, this is not entirely valid. NRIT Onderzoek (2010) for instance, has shown minor differences between the second homes of current second home owners (revealed behaviour) and the preferences of second home searchers (*expressed behaviour*).[30] However, predicting future behaviour is always based on certain assumptions and in this study a choice has been made to use revealed behaviour to predict the demand for second homes. It is argued this gives more valid results than expressed behaviour, since especially on the housing market there can be a large discrepancy between what people state to prefer and to what extent people are actually able to fulfil these preferences (De Groot, Manting & Boschman, 2008; Floor & Van Kempen, 1994). Also, the problem in questioning second home searchers is that it is difficult to find out which people truly are in search of a second home, because there is a long road between the desire for a second home and the actual purchase of one.

[29] In an entirely different research context these variables could be independent, but in this study the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings are the main objects of study.
[30] In the study by NRIT Onderzoek (2010), second home searchers were people who had expressed interest to a specific real estate agency for purchasing a second home, but who currently did not own a second home.

It is not easy to define what a second home is (section 3.1 further elaborates on definitional issues from the literature). In this study a second home is considered a "[*stationary*] *property owned as the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere*" (based on Dower, in Coppock 1977a: 3). In the Netherlands, second homes are registered in accordance with this definition when municipalities decide to collect a commuter tax (Dutch: *forensenbelasting*). This tax is collected from people who have a furnished dwelling in a certain municipality, but who do not have their primarily residence in that municipality.[31] This tax is meant to make second home owners contribute to the municipal services, since they are not obliged to register in the municipality and since they therefore do not pay for the regular municipal taxes. Thus, a second home is a furnished dwelling which does not serve as a permanent residence and the data is collected from the municipal registration of this tax. Analytically it is also interesting to make the theoretical distinction between different kinds of second home *use* (section 4.2.2). This distinction cannot be made from this municipal registration, but has been collected through a questionnaire with current second home owners, in which they have been questioned about their use of the second home. A special category which can be extracted from the municipal registration are *recreational dwellings* (dwellings which in the land-use plan have been given a recreational function instead of a residential function). Recreational dwellings can be used in different ways, but because recreational dwellings are mostly clustered on vacation parks it might in some analyses be interesting to separate these from the other second homes.

> *Vacant dwellings*
A vacant dwelling in this study is a dwelling of which no owner is registered in the basic municipal registration (Dutch: *gemeentelijke basisadministratie persoonsgegevens*), but second homes are excluded from this. This is because second home owners are not obliged to register in the host municipality. Statistics Netherlands for instance, has in the past collected data on vacancy by looking at dwellings without registered owners. Statistics Netherlands has been criticised for this (e.g. Van der Wouw, Bakker, Van Overbeeke - Van Sluijs, 2010), because municipalities with large numbers of second homes had extremely high vacancy rates. Therefore Statistics Netherlands has recently adjusted its registration: housing vacancy now consists of dwellings without registered owners, minus 'other types of use' (G. van Daalen, personal communication, 2011). Other types of use are mainly commercial use and (assumed) second home use. In line with the recent changes from Statistics Netherlands and the *Vacancy Monitor* from South-Eastern Limburg (Vaessens & Van de Ven, 2010), this study has also corrected the data set on dwellings without registered owners, by removing the other types of use from the data set.

5.2.3 | Operationalisation of the Independent Variables

In this study, for each second home and vacant dwelling, data has been collected on (i) the *location* of the dwelling and (ii) its *dwelling characteristics*. The location of the dwelling is expressed in the (i) the *proximity of the shore* and (ii) the *assessed quality of the residential environment*. The dwelling characteristics which have been measured for each dwelling are (i) the building period, (ii) the

[31] As a consequence of this definition, second homes of which the owner has a primary residence in the same municipality are not included in this study. It was not feasible to include this group through other data collection methods. However, this does not significantly hurt the validity of this study since this group is relatively small according to the municipality of Sluis (J. Gerrits, personal communication, 2011).

dwelling type (e.g. a detached dwelling, a semi-detached dwelling or an apartment) and (iii) the assessed value of the dwelling (Dutch: *WOZ-waarde*). Table 5.2 summarises how the different variables are operationalised.

The table shows the locations of the dwellings have been measured on the scale of separate towns. This is because it was not feasible to collect data on the distance to the shore and the assessment of the residential environment per separate dwelling. The measurement of whether the residential environment of a town is attractive or not easily becomes normative. Therefore, the established study of Van der Wouw (2011) has been used. In that study, inhabitants of each town in Zeeland have been questioned to assess the quality of the residential environment in their town.[32] To verify the results from Van der Wouw (2011), the assessment of the residential environment per town has been discussed in personal communication with policy advisors of the Province of Zeeland and in interviews with real estate agents. Also, the majority of the towns has been observed. This has led to some minor adjustments in the data by Van der Wouw and this is elaborated on in annex 2. Furthermore, the three dwelling characteristics which have been measured for all second homes and vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen have all been adopted from the municipal real estate tax (Dutch: *onroendezaak-belasting*). The operational definitions of these variables are thus in accordance with this tax.

Table 5.2
Operationalisation independent variables

	Variable	Operational definition	Source	Level of measurement
Location	**Proximity to shore (per town)**	Shortest distance (in kilometres) from built-up area of the town to the closest shore[33]	Own measurement	Ratio
	Assessed quality of the residential environment (per town)	The average grade which inhabitants give to their residential environment (taking into account the buildings, the public spaces, the rural environment and the appropriateness of their residential environment for children to grow up in)	Van der Wouw (2011); with the addition of De Klerk (1994), observations and expert opinions (personal communication Province of Zeeland and interviews with real estate agents)	Ratio

[32] The assessment of the residential environment concerns a total assessment by inhabitants on the buildings, the public spaces, the rural environment and the appropriateness of their residential environment for children to grow up in (Van der Wouw, 2011: 16).
[33] The map of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (see figure 6.1 in section 6.1.1) might suggest there is a shore in both the Western and the Northern part of the region. However, the Northern part adjacent to the Westerschelde estuary is not considered as a shore, because there are no significant beaches there. The distance to the shore is therefore always measured as the distance to the coastal zone in the western part of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.

	Building period (per dwelling)	The period in which the building of the dwelling was finished (with later renovations excluded)	Municipal real estate tax (Dutch: *onroendezaak-belasting*)	Ratio
Dwelling characteristics	**Dwelling type (per dwelling)**	Type of dwelling according to the Valuation of Real Estate Act (Dutch: *WOZ*)	Municipal real estate tax (Dutch: *onroendezaak-belasting*	Nominal
	Assessed dwelling value (Dutch: *WOZ-waarde*) (per dwelling)	The valuation of a dwelling according to the Valuation of Real Estate Act (Dutch: *WOZ*)	Municipal real estate tax (Dutch: *onroendezaak-belasting*)	Ratio

5.3 | Data Collection

In this study, data has been collected through literature study, a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, observations and by requesting primary data from the municipalities in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. The data collection can be divided in five steps, which are elaborated on below.

> *Literature study demographic decline and second homes*
Literature on demographic decline and second homes from different countries has been studied. The literature on demographic decline has framed the broader context in which the research results are seen (chapter 2). The literature on second homes has provided data from earlier studies on where and in what kinds of dwellings second homes are currently located, what the expectations of the future demand for second homes are and what the possible impacts of second homes are (chapter 3). Also, literature on how second homes are used, has functioned as a starting point in the formulation of the theoretical framework (section 4.2.1). Finally, literature has been used for compiling the questionnaire in further steps of the data collection.

> *Primary data collection second homes and vacant dwellings*
An inventory has been made of the current second homes and vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (chapter 7 and 8). The inventory has focused on how many second homes/vacant dwellings there currently are in the region, where these are located and in what kinds of dwellings. Section 5.2 has shown how this has been operationalised. The primary data have been requested from the three municipalities in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst). These municipalities normally keep track of these data for tax purposes and it should be remarked that the sought after data is very privacy sensitive, which in practice made the primary data rather difficult to collect.

> *Questionnaire second home owners*
A questionnaire with second home owners has been conducted (annex 3). The questionnaire has been used to get further insight in the demand for second homes by questioning second home owners on how they currently use their second home (e.g. as a vacation home or weekend home; section 4.2.2). Also, the questionnaire has questioned how owners chose their second home. This in addition to the primary data which represents the revealed behaviour of the

second home demand. As has been mentioned in section 5.2.2, there can be a large discrepancy between what people state to prefer and to what extent people are actually able to fulfil these preferences. With the collection of primary data on the revealed behaviour on the one hand and by asking these owners about their preferences on the other hand, insight has been gain in the discrepancy between these two.

The questionnaire has been distributed to second homeowners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen in three languages: Dutch, German and English. The questionnaire has only been distributed to second home owners in the municipality of Sluis. This is because the addresses of second home owners in the municipalities of Terneuzen and Hulst could not be collected in time. When the addresses were collected, the recreational season in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen had already ended. In combination with the fact that the number of second homes in these two municipalities is small in absolute terms, a valid response which could represent the demand for second homes in these municipalities could thus not be expected. The addresses of the primary residences of the second home owners were not available and therefore the questionnaire was sent to the second home addresses. The questionnaire was distributed in the autumn of 2011. It would probably have been better for the response rate if the questionnaire had been distributed during the summer and also to the first homes, but this was not feasible.

One further crucial methodological consideration in the questionnaire should be mentioned: The ambition with the questionnaire was to not only ask people about their 'ideal' second home (which is usually done in questionnaires on residential preferences), but to especially gain insight in the different trade-offs in the entire decision-making process of purchasing a second home. Thus, a connection needed to be made between the preferences of consumers on the one hand and their limitations on the other hand: "It is not only about the question of what the ideal residential situation would be for respondents, but also about the question of what they would be willing to accept under which conditions" (Floor & Van Kempen, 1994: 51, own translation). Some authors have for instance tried to overcome this by using *Decision Plan Nets* in depth-interviews with consumers (e.g. Floor & Van Kempen, 1994; Goetgeluk, 1997; Heins, 2002). This study however, has used a questionnaire to reach as many respondents as possible. In the questionnaire, it has been tried to gain insight in trade-offs by presenting four propositions to the respondents. In these propositions the respondents were basically asked to choose between two dwellings. In each proposition the two dwellings differ from each other on one or two variables, whilst all else is kept constant (ceteris paribus). In this way, trade-offs between the main variables have been questioned.

> *Interviews with real estate agents*
Interviews with real estate agents have been used to explicitly question the opportunities for second homes in the region with local experts. With these semi-structured interviews, information has been gathered about their thoughts on vacant dwellings, the demand for second homes and the future expectations for this market.

> *Observation of towns*
The four selected sub cases (section 6.2) have also been observed. Address lists of second homes and vacant dwellings in the towns have been adopted from the primary data and have been used

to check in practice whether these data were accurate and to gain additional qualitative information about the exact locations and characteristics of these dwellings. Also, during the observation photos of the dwellings have been made in order to visualise what kinds of dwellings this thesis is actually writing about.

The different data collection steps above all contribute differently to the answering of the research questions (section 1.2). Table 5.3 shows with which data collection methods each research question has been answered.

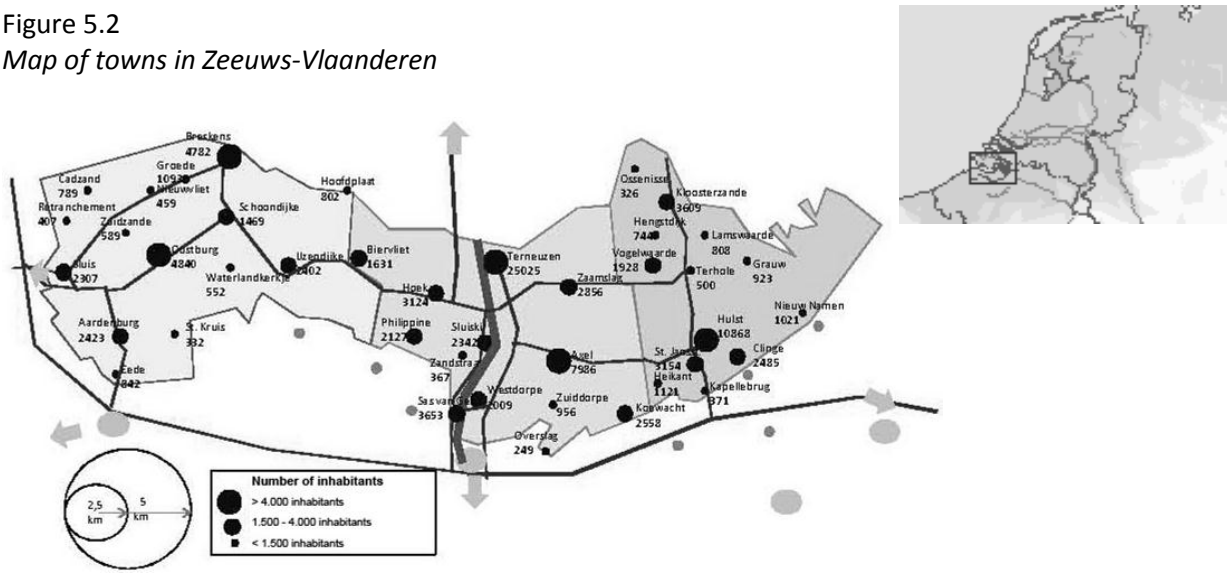
Table 5.3
Data collection methods per research question

Research questions	Data collection methods
i. What are the differences in preferences for different types of second home use?	- Literature study - Questionnaire second home owners
ii. What are the characteristics of the current demand for second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen?	- Literature study - Primary data collection - Questionnaire second home owners - Interviews real estate agents - Observation
iii. What are the characteristics of the current supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen?	- Literature study - Primary data collection - Interviews real estate agents - Observation

5.4 | Case Selection

Section 5.1 stated that given the research goal, a detailed analysis of a single embedded case was preferred over an analysis of multiple cases. *Embedded* means there are multiple sub cases (or 'units of analysis') within one case, which in this context means that different towns within a certain region have been studied (also see Yin, 2003). This study focuses on one specific shrinking region in the Netherlands, namely Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (figure 5.2) and has analysed the heterogeneity of the different towns within this specific region. Section 5.4.1 elaborates on the selection of this case, section 5.4.2 describes how the different sub cases within this case are selected, and section 5.4.3 elaborates on the relationship between these two levels of analysis.

Figure 5.2
Map of towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



Source: Thönissen, Icking, Vermeer, Van der Wouw & Bakker, 2011: 11

5.4.1 | Selection of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

The first criterion in the case selection was obviously that the studied region needed to be a shrinking region. As section 2.2 showed, there are three regions in the Netherlands of which the population number is structurally declining and of which the number of households has also started to decline or is expected to shrink on short-term: Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, South-Eastern Limburg and North-Eastern Groningen (Verwest & Van Dam, 2010; Verwest, 2011).[34] Therefore, these three regions have been labelled as *top shrinking regions* by the Dutch national government (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, IPO & VNG, 2009; 2011).

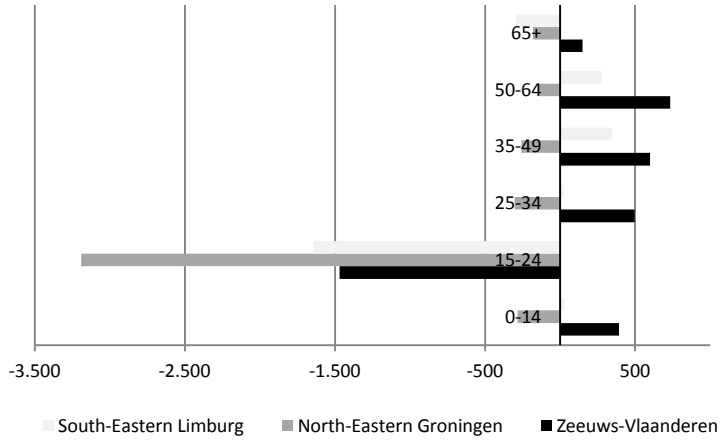
Second, this study has aimed to investigate the case in which second homes as a policy strategy (section 2.6.1) is most likely to succeed. Section 2.6.2 showed there has been some discussion in the literature on the plausibility of this policy strategy to succeed. By selecting the most 'promising' case in this regard, this single embedded case study was ought to also be useful for other shrinking regions (external validity). In other words: when this study for instance reveals the opportunities for second homes are limited in the most promising case, then it would be legitimate to assume the opportunities are even more limited in the other Dutch shrinking regions. On the other hand, when the study reveals many opportunities, this would not automatically mean second homes are also a plausible research strategy in other shrinking regions and further research would be necessary.

Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is considered the most promising case, since of the three Dutch shrinking regions Zeeuws-Vlaanderen seems to have had the most success in attracting residents from outside the region (figure 5.3), and because the region already has the largest number of second homes (figure 5.4) and the most developed recreational sector of the three regions (Van de Laar, 2010). Figure 5.3 shows the migration change between 2004 and 2008 in the three Dutch shrinking regions. Although

[34] In section 2.2 it was mentioned the Dutch national government has also labelled ten regions which are currently anticipating demographic decline. A choice has been made to select one of the *top shrinking regions* instead of one of the *anticipating regions*. This is because in the latter not much vacancy has occurred yet due to demographic changes, whilst this study for a large part focuses on the current vacancy in the case study area.

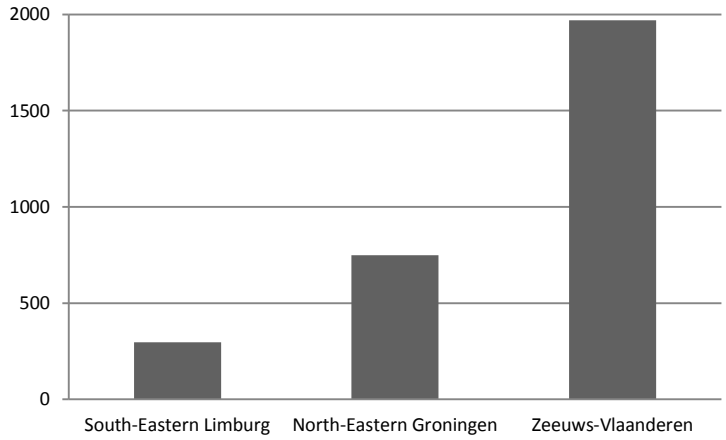
all three regions are dealing with an extremely large out flux of young people (15 -24 years) (also see section 6.1.2), it is notable that in all other age groups more people have moved to Zeeuws-Vlaanderen than that have left the region between 2004 and 2008. Furthermore, Marjavaara (2008) and Hospers (personal communication, 2011) both argue the regions which already have a significant second home market are also the regions with the most opportunities for second homes in the future. Because of the lack of comparable and reliable data on second homes at the regional level, the current number of second homes in the different shrinking regions cannot be compared (also see section 3.1 and 3.2). The data on recreational dwellings in figure 5.4 however, give an indication on the current number of second homes in the three shrinking regions (also see section 3.3.1). The data suggest the number of second homes in South-Eastern Limburg and North-Eastern Groningen is modest, whilst the number of second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is significant.

Figure 5.3
Migration change in the Dutch shrinking regions per age group (2004-2008)



Source: Statistics Netherlands (2009)

Figure 5.4
Absolute number of recreational dwellings in the Dutch shrinking regions



Source: Statistics Netherlands (2011b)

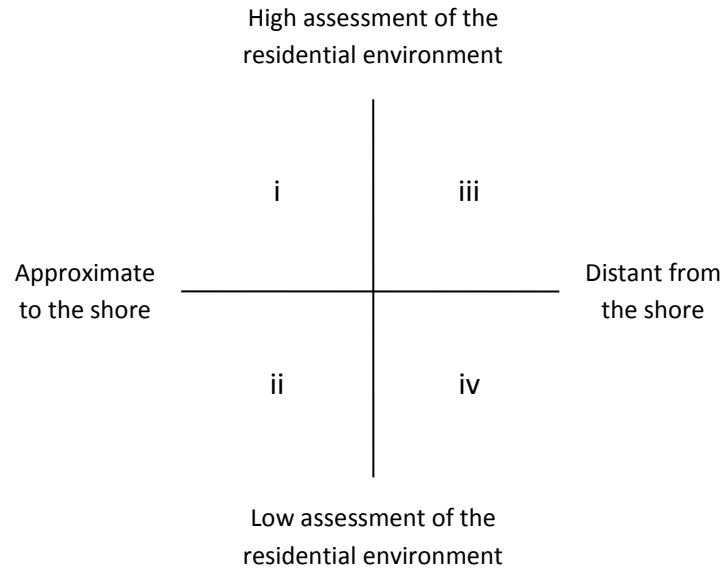
5.4.2 | Selection of the Sub Cases

Within the region of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, four specific types of towns (sub cases) have been analysed. These towns have been selected on the basis of two dimensions. First, a distinction has been made of the proximity of towns to the shore. Second, towns have been ranked on the assessment of their residential environment. This assessment has been adopted from Van der Wouw (2011), who has surveyed people to assess the quality of their own residential environment (section 5.2.3). When these two dimensions are combined over two axes (figure 5.5), four extremes can be distinguished:

(i) towns relatively close to the shore with a highly assessed residential environment;
(ii) towns relatively close to the shore with a lowly assessed residential environment;
(iii) towns relatively far from the shore with a highly assessed residential environment;
(iv) towns relatively far from the shore with a lowly assessed residential environment.

In section 6.2.1 a preliminary data analysis is presented and on the basis of this analysis specific towns have been selected to represent the different quadrants of the typology in figure 5.5. The distinction of these four types of towns enables research results to be analytically generalised to other cases in different shrinking regions and different countries. Obviously, every case is unique. However, because the selection of the sub cases is directly linked to certain spatial characteristics, the results can be interpreted to other cases with the same characteristics (or with the influence of these characteristics in mind).

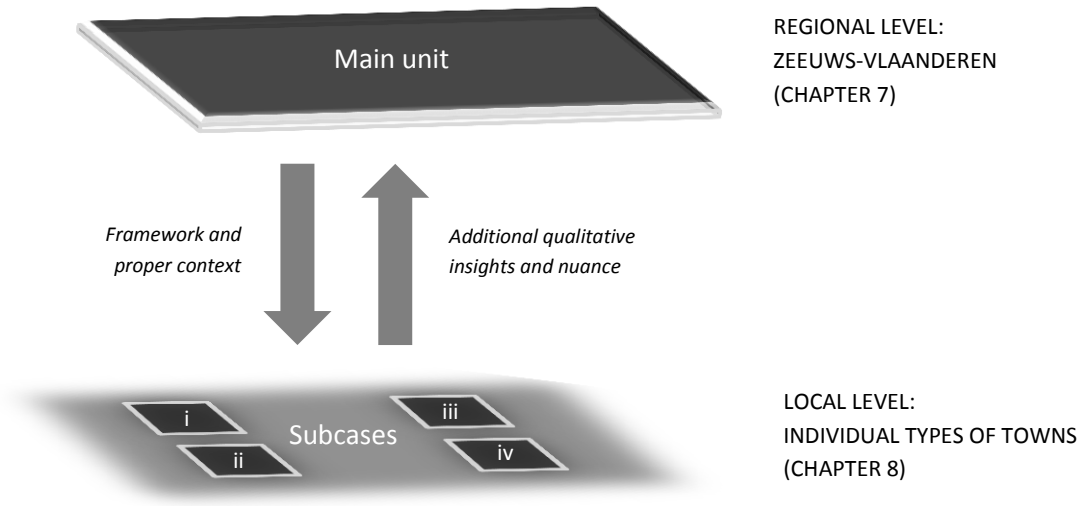
Figure 5.5
Distinguished type of towns
(divided to proximity to the shore and the assessment of the residential environment)



5.4.3 | Relationship between Main Unit and Sub Cases

Section 5.1 elaborated on the decision for a single embedded case study. One specific case, namely the Dutch shrinking region Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (section 5.4.1), have been studied and within that case multiple sub cases have been analysed, i.e. four types of towns according to the typology from section 5.4.2. These sub cases are embedded in the general case (also called the 'main unit'). The main unit represents an analysis at the regional level, whilst the sub cases have a local focus at the scale of individual towns. Embedded means these two analyses cannot exist without each other: (i) the analysis of the main unit provides the proper context for the sub cases analyses. If only the sub cases were studied it would not be clear how the data results need to be interpreted. Such a study would basically result in four independent and incoherent stories, from which no general conclusions could be drawn (Yin, 2003); (ii) on the other hand, the sub cases provide more detailed and qualitative information than the main unit. This tests whether the conclusions from the regional scale also apply to different local settings. If only the main unit would have been analysed, this would lead to a very broad and general study. Such a study would have done less justice to the diversity of the region and would have been less nuanced. Figure 5.6 illustrates how the analysis of the main unit and analyses of the sub cases are related.

Figure 5.6
Relationship between Main Unit and Sub Cases



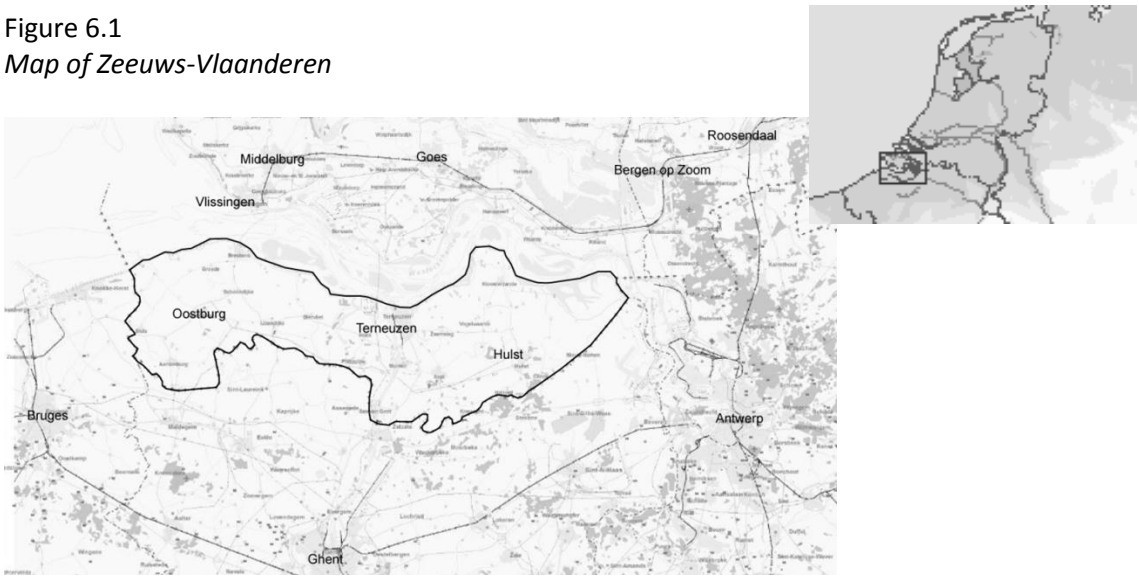
6 | CASE STUDY INTRODUCTION

6.1 | Case Description

6.1.1 | General Introduction to Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is a peripheral region in the south-western corner of the Netherlands. On the west side the region borders on the North Sea, on the north side on the Westerschelde estuary and both the south and east side border on Belgium (figure 6.1). The region is part of the province of Zeeland. Zeeland exists of different islands, which are connected to each other and the mainland through a combination of dams, tunnels and bridges. Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is also one of the forty COROP regions[35] in the Netherlands and consists of three municipalities (Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst). It is a sparsely populated rural region which is demographically declining (section 6.1.2). The total surface area of the region (733,19 km^2) is comparable to that of New York City. However, the total population of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (106.521 inhabitants), does not surpass the population of Dutch middle-size cities like Leiden, Ede or Dordrecht. Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is peripheral in its orientation towards the rest of the Netherlands, because its only direct connection is through the Westerscheltunnel (and otherwise in a bypass through Belgium).[36] The Belgian cities of Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp are all approximate to the region, and the region therefore has a cross-border orientation. However, the border in some instances still exists as a 'hard' cultural and institutional boundary (e.g. Drijgers & Kaagman, 2010; Putman, 2010; Van Vliet, Van Roost, Brouwer & Zunderdorp, 2011).

Figure 6.1
Map of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



Source: Province of Zeeland, 2011

[35] There are forty COROP regions in the Netherlands, these regions are distinguished for analytical purposes and extensive statistical data at the scale of these regions is collected by, among others, Statistics Netherlands.
[36] The Westerscheldetunnel was opened in March of 2003 and has replaced the two car ferries which previously connected Zeeuws-Vlaanderen to the north. There is currently still a ferry between Breskens and Vlissingen, but only slow traffic (pedestrians and cyclists) has access to this ferry.

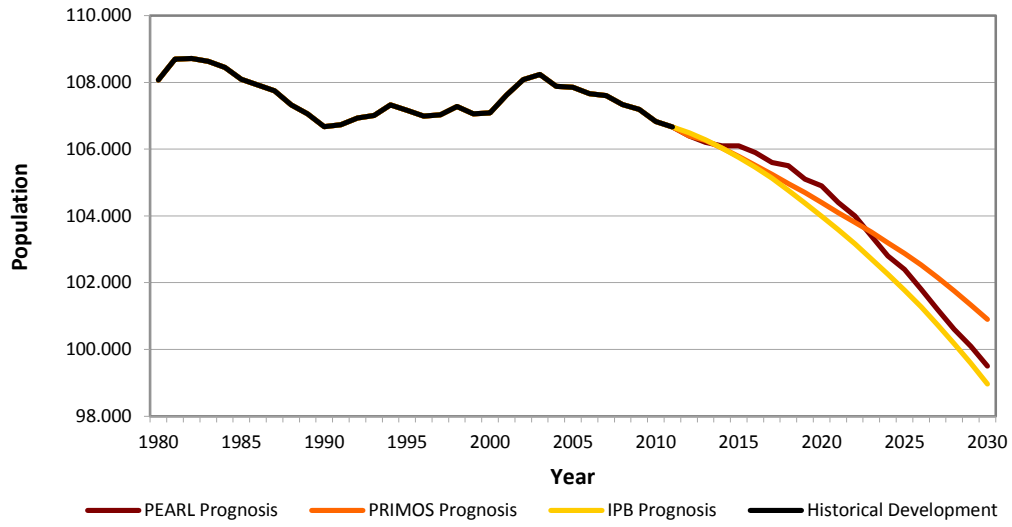
For the most part, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen consists of a typical Dutch open and flat *polder* landscape. The western part of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has the status of a national landscape (Dutch: *Nationaal Landschap*), which means it is protected because its landscape and cultural heritage are claimed to be vital to the Dutch history and scenic quality. Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is predominantly made up of villages, of which the majority has less than 2.500 inhabitants. The region has two larger towns which function as local centres – Oostburg (4.840 inhabitants) and Hulst (10.868 inhabitants) – and one middle size city with a supra-regional catchment area (Terneuzen; 25.025 inhabitants) (figure 6.1). In contrast to the polder landscape in the majority of the region, the middle area of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen consists of an industrial zone around the Ghent-Terneuzen Canal (also known as the *Kanaalzone*).

In the Kanaalzone, chemical industry, agribusiness and logistics are concentrated (Stuurgroep Zeeuws-Vlaamse Kanaalzone, 2011). These sectors are the main determinants of the regional economy, but also have a supra-regional function. The multinationals Dow Chemical, Cargill and Yara are for instance located in the Kanaalzone. Next to the industrial economy in the Kanaalzone, the regional economy for a large part drives on tourism and recreation, which is especially developed in western Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Furthermore, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen predominantly has a history as an agricultural area and although its importance has diminished, agriculture remains an important source of income in the region. Also, the region has strong economic relations with the industrial clusters in Belgium (Port of Bruges-Zeebrugge, Ostend, Ghent and Antwerp.). This one the one hand means that many companies in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen operate both in Belgium and the Netherlands and on the other hand that many inhabitants of the region work in these Belgian industrial clusters. An important weakness of the regional economy of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is its shortage of highly educated jobs and educational opportunities. Because of the peripheral position of the region, it is also difficult for highly educated people to commute from Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.

6.1.2 | Demographic Developments in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

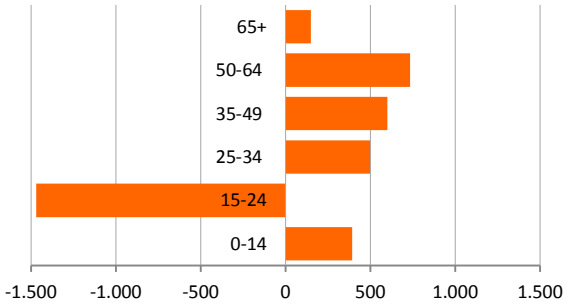
As has been stated in section 5.4.1, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has been chosen as case of this study, since it is one of the forerunners in the demographic developments in Dutch peripheral regions. This section shows the population number of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is structurally declining and the number of households is expected to shrink on short-term. The population developments are illustrated in figure 6.2. It shows the population number in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has basically started declining since 1982. The influx of asylum seekers in the '90s provided a small temporal growth of the population (L.G. Kaagman, personal communication, 2011), but the structure of the population favours decline: the number of deaths strongly exceeds the number of births because of its ageing population (De Jong & Garssen, 2009; Drijgers & Kaagman, 2010) and the region deals with an extremely large out flux of young people (figure 6.3). Over the last decade the net migration change in the region has been positive, but was not large enough to compensate for the negative natural growth. Moreover, the net migration change is expected to become negative in the coming years (Province of Zeeland, 2008). Finally, it should be noted the depopulation in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is smaller in size than in South-Eastern Limburg and North-Eastern Groningen (Verwest, 2011) (section 5.4.1).

Figure 6.2
Development and prognosis of the population number of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



Source: ABF Research, 2011; Statistics Netherlands/Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, 2011b; Province of Zeeland, 2011

Figure 6.3
Migration change in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen per age group (2004-2008)



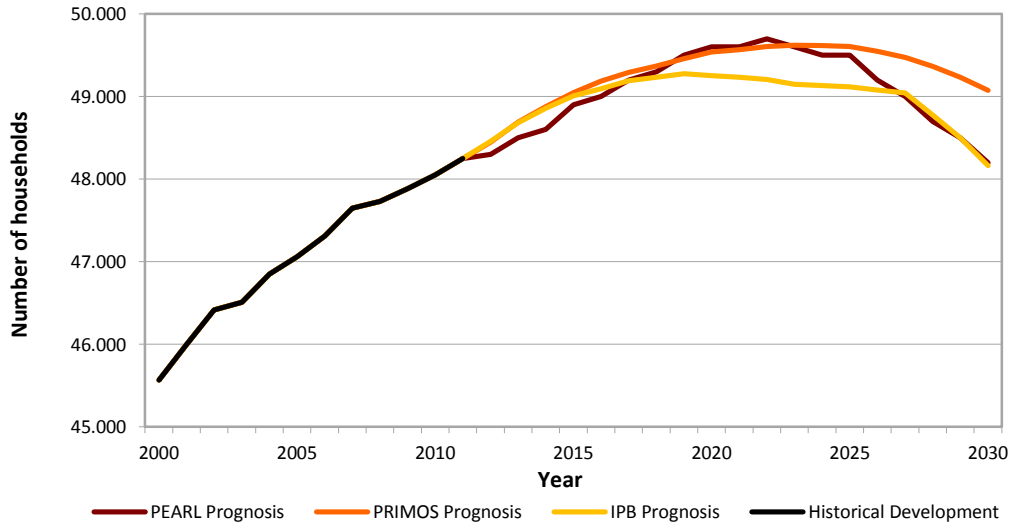
Source: Statistics Netherlands, 2009

As has been stated in section 2.4.2, not the population size but the number of households is most relevant in this study. This is because it has great influence on the housing market and does not always develop simultaneously with the population developments (section 2.1 and 2.2). Figure 6.4 on the one hand shows how the number of households has developed since 2000 and on the other hand shows what future developments the different prognoses predict. Although the different prognoses do not exactly agree on when the number of households will start to decline, they do agree this will happen within ten, fifteen years from now. This means there will be less housing demand in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen in the future and that not many new dwellings need to be built in order to meet this demand. Obviously, regions which already deal with a declining number of households (like South-Eastern Limburg and North-Eastern Groningen in the Netherlands) do not need a quantitative expansion of the housing supply at all.[37] Even though Zeeuws-Vlaanderen thus does not yet deal with

[37] This does not necessarily mean that no new dwellings need to be built, since there can still be an unfulfilled qualitative housing demand in shrinking regions (Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). These regions can for instance deal with a shortage of dwellings suited for elderly, whereby replacement of obsolete dwellings with purpose-built dwellings can be necessary.

a declining number of households, there are two important factors which make the short-term need for new dwellings rather small. First, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen already deals with an oversupply of dwellings (which means there are more dwellings than households) (ABF Research, 2011).[38] Second, it is often argued that if new dwellings are built in shrinking regions this should be accompanied by the demolition of other (qualitatively inadequate) dwellings (e.g. Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen however, the reconstruction/demolition 'task' is even more difficult compared to other shrinking regions, which offers little margin for the construction of new dwellings. This is because the demolition task in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is frustrated by the relatively high number of private homeownership in the region (70 percent) (figure 6.5). Demolishing privately owned dwellings is much more complex than demolition of dwellings owned by housing associations (KEI, 2009; Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). First of all, this is because housing associations in the Netherlands ought to act in a socially responsible manner. Second, properties of associations are usually clustered, which makes an approach possible on the scale of neighbourhoods (whilst with privately owned dwellings the focus is usually limited to individual dwellings). Moreover, the supply owned by housing associations has for a large part already been reduced and their remaining supply is in a relatively good condition (L.G. Kaagman, personal communication, 2011). Thus, although the number of households has not yet started to decline in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, the regional need for the construction of new dwellings is minimal as is it is in other shrinking regions.

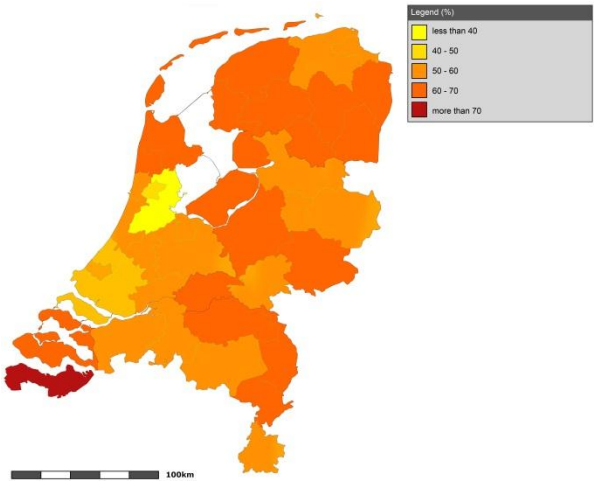
Figure 6.4
Development and prognoses of the number of households in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



Source: ABF Research, 2011; Statistics Netherlands/Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, 2011a; Province of Zeeland, 2011

[38] In this measurement, the housing supply number has been corrected for second homes. Thus, the oversupply is not explained by the presence of second homes in particular parts of the region, but by an excess of residential developments.

Figure 6.5
Private home ownership in the Netherlands per COROP region

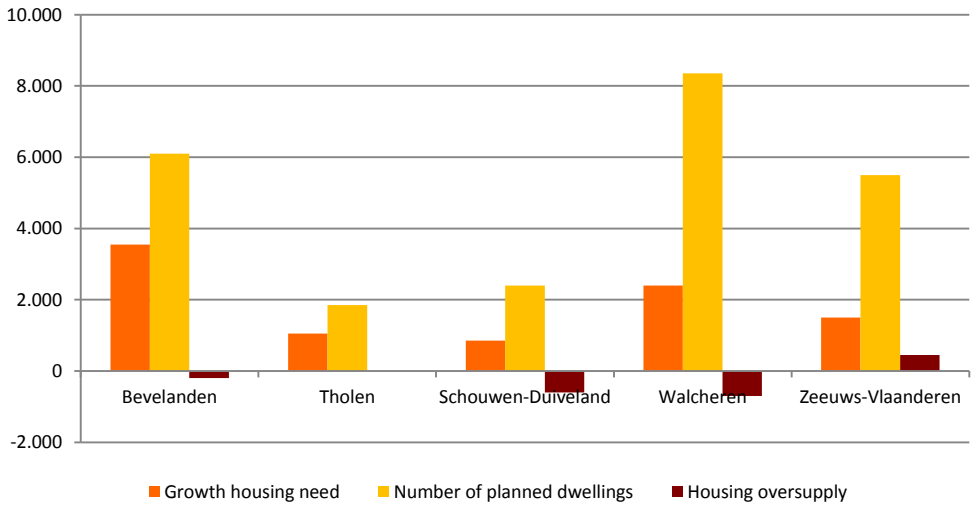


Source: Statistics Netherlands, 2010b

6.1.3 | Policies in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

A brief elaboration of some of the policies relevant to this study is made in this section. First of all, dealing with demographic decline in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has been actively picked-up by the three municipalities in the region, the Province of Zeeland and the housing associations in the region. In policy documents from the Province of Zeeland (Province of Zeeland, 2008; Province of Zeeland, 2009) the shift from an approach of *challenging* demographic decline to *accompanying* demographic decline (section 2.5) seems to have been made. In practice however, path dependency forms an important obstruction for policy changes in the region (Francke, 2010a). Francke states the ratio of the municipalities is in many ways still determined by an ingrained desire for growth and therefore inter-municipal cooperation does not come naturally. The struggle to moderate building plans in the region is illustrative for this. As has been stated in section 2.4.2, moderation of building plans is necessary to prevent oversupply and thus vacancy. Figure 6.6 however, shows that even though Zeeuws-Vlaanderen already deals with an oversupply of dwellings and the housing need is small, the number of dwellings that are planned to be constructed is significant. On the other hand, good policy examples from Zeeuws-Vlaanderen also exist: for instance, the different municipalities and the Province of Zeeland have made a joint vision on the future supply of services in the region and on the necessary changes which come with this (Thönissen, Icking, Vermeer, Van der Wouw & Bakker, 2011). Again, a sceptic might claim the most painful decisions in this respect still have not been made, but the process of collective effort which has been started should on the other hand be reason for optimism.

Figure 6.6
Growth of the housing need opposed to the number of planned dwellings and the housing oversupply per region in Zeeland (2007-2017)



Source: Province of Zeeland, 2008: 47

While the different actors in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are (slowly) learning how to deal with demographic decline in practice, second homes and especially the phenomenon of *part-time dwelling* are increasingly being mentioned as an opportunity to deal with the problems on the housing market (section 2.6.1). As has been stated before, this is ironic since traditionally second homes have often been blamed for disturbing local housing markets and threatening the liveability in host regions (section 3.4). In section 3.4.6 it was mentioned municipalities from different countries have hence designed policies to discourage or prohibit second home use. In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, the municipality of Sluis for instance has had a prohibition on non-permanent dwelling inside villages since 1994 (Municipality of Sluis, 2005). However, under the new context of demographic decline and large numbers of housing vacancy, the municipality has recently discussed a potential revision of this policy in order to allow second home ownership in the majority of its towns (Municipality of Sluis, 2011b). The Municipal Executive (Dutch: *college van burgemeester en wethouders*) proposed to limit the current prohibition on non-permanent dwelling to the five largest towns only, and thus abolish the prohibition for all other towns in the municipality. For more than a year the municipality explored and discussed this potential policy change. However, in March 2012 the Municipal Council (Dutch: *gemeenteraad*) eventually decided not to revise the second home policy, because they still fear this would have a negative impact on the liveability in the towns (BN De Stem, 2012). Finally, the Province of Zeeland has also picked up this topic and in the current program of the Provincial Executive (Province of Zeeland; 2011) it is stated the province will try to take away barriers which frustrate second home ownership, whilst the primary responsibility for this will remain at the municipal level.

6.2 | Introduction to the Sub Cases

6.2.1 | Sub Case Selection

Section 5.4.2 described that within the studied case, namely the region of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, four specific types of towns (sub cases)[39] are analysed. These towns are selected on the basis of two dimensions: (i) the proximity of towns to the shore and (ii) the assessed quality of the residential environment (section 5.2.3). For each of the four types of towns which can be distinguished on these two dimensions (section 5.4.2), one or more representative town(s) have been chosen and this section elaborates on how these sub cases have been selected. There have been two main criteria in this selection. First, the position of towns in the town typology. This means a town needs to score 'extreme' enough on the two dimensions, which is necessary to understand the influence of the study dimensions and therewith is necessary for analytical generalisation (section 5.1 and 5.4.2). Therefore, it has been tried to select towns from the four corners of the typology. Second, towns need to have a sufficient number of second homes (both in absolute and relative terms) in order to be suited for further analysis on the qualitative characteristics of these second homes.

In figure 6.7 all towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (with more than 400 inhabitants) are applied to the typology of towns. For each town, the position in the figure shows its proximity to the shore (x-axis) and the assessed quality of its residential environment (y-axis). Furthermore, the colour of the towns in the figure shows how many percent of the total housing supply consists of second homes. The exact quantitative measures on the study dimensions can be found in annex 1 and the measurement of the assessments of the residential environment of towns is further elaborated on in annex 2.

Figure 6.8 shows which towns have been selected for each corner of the typology. The choices for Retranchement (relatively close to the shore with a highly assessed residential environment) and Breskens (relatively close to the shore with a lowly assessed residential environment) are evident. Both towns have a large number of second homes and they are the only two towns extremely close to the shore, which have an obvious highly/lowly assessed residential environment.

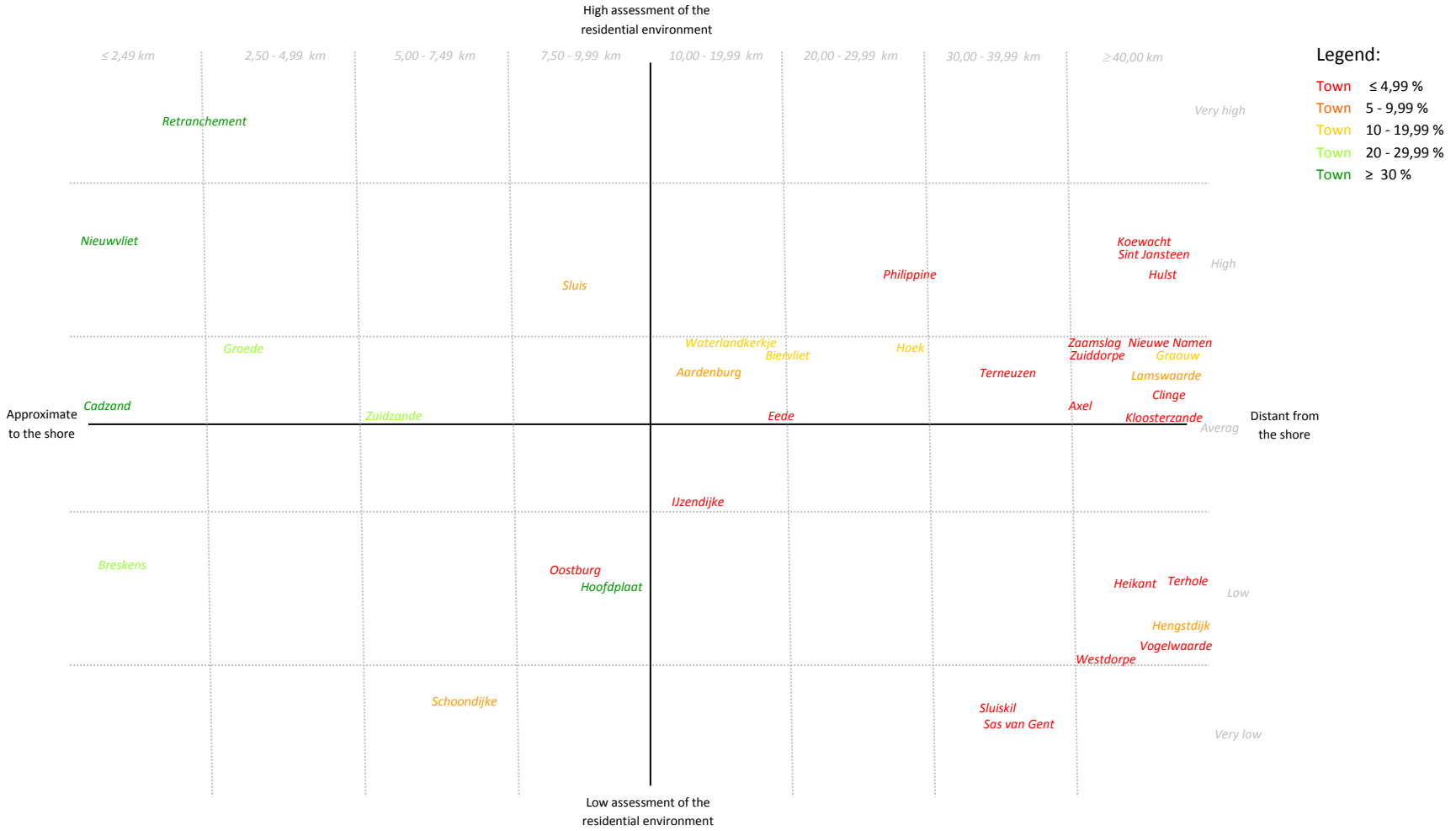
The other two corners are less evident, mostly because most towns distant from the shore only have a small number of second homes (both in absolute and relative terms) (figure 6.7; annex 1). This in itself is already an interesting finding and this is further elaborated on in section 7.3. For now, this most of all means the majority of the towns in eastern Zeeuws-Vlaanderen do not qualify for a further in-depth analysis. Therefore, several towns distant from the shore have been grouped. Hoek and Graauw represent towns relatively far from the shore with a highly assessed residential environment. Strictly speaking, none of these towns have an outspoken high assessed residential environment. However, the number of second homes in the towns distant from the shore, which do have a relatively high assessment (Philippine, Koewacht, Sint Jansteen and Hulst), is too low for valid analyses.

Finally, figure 6.7 shows second homes also barely occur (both in absolute and relative terms) in towns which are relatively far from the shore and which have a lowly assessed residential

[39] In this study, a sub case thus refers to one or more towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. The four studied types of towns are summarised in figure 6.8.

environment. These types of towns are represented by Oostburg and Schoondijke (Hoofdplaat is excluded from this group because, in contrast to Oostburg and Schoondijke, most of the second homes in Hoofdplaat are *recreational dwellings* on a vacation park). It can be claimed these towns are located relatively close to the shore. However, as section 7.3.2 will further elaborate on, towns are in practice relatively quickly labelled as 'distant' from the shore. The preliminary data analysis also showed the second home types in Oostburg and Schoondijke are quite different from those in Breskens, which makes it legitimate to select these towns as towns with a lowly assessed residential environment which are distant from the shore so that differences with the other towns can be better understood. All the selected sub cases are shown on a map in figure 6.9.

Figure 6.7
Number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) per town
(divided to proximity to the shore and the assessed quality of the residential environment)



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011; Van der Wouw, 2011 (and De Klerk, 1994; interviews; personal communication; observation: annex 2)

Figure 6.8
Selected sub cases
(divided to proximity to the shore and the assessed quality of the residential environment)

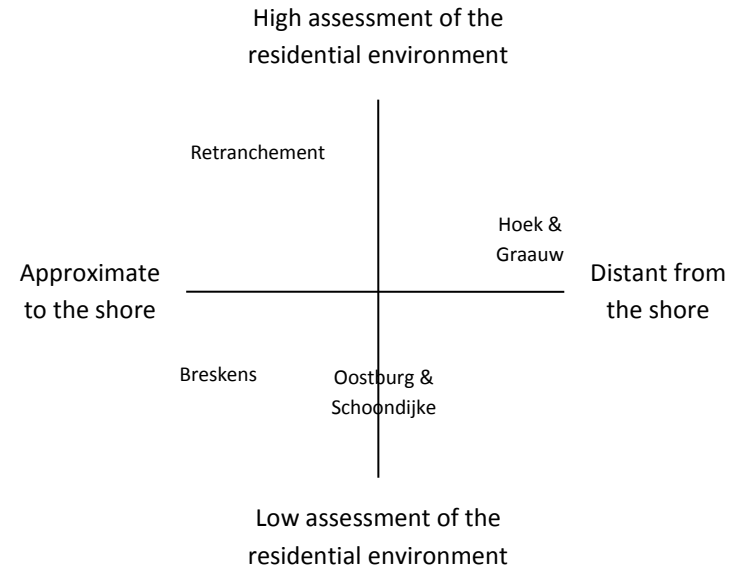
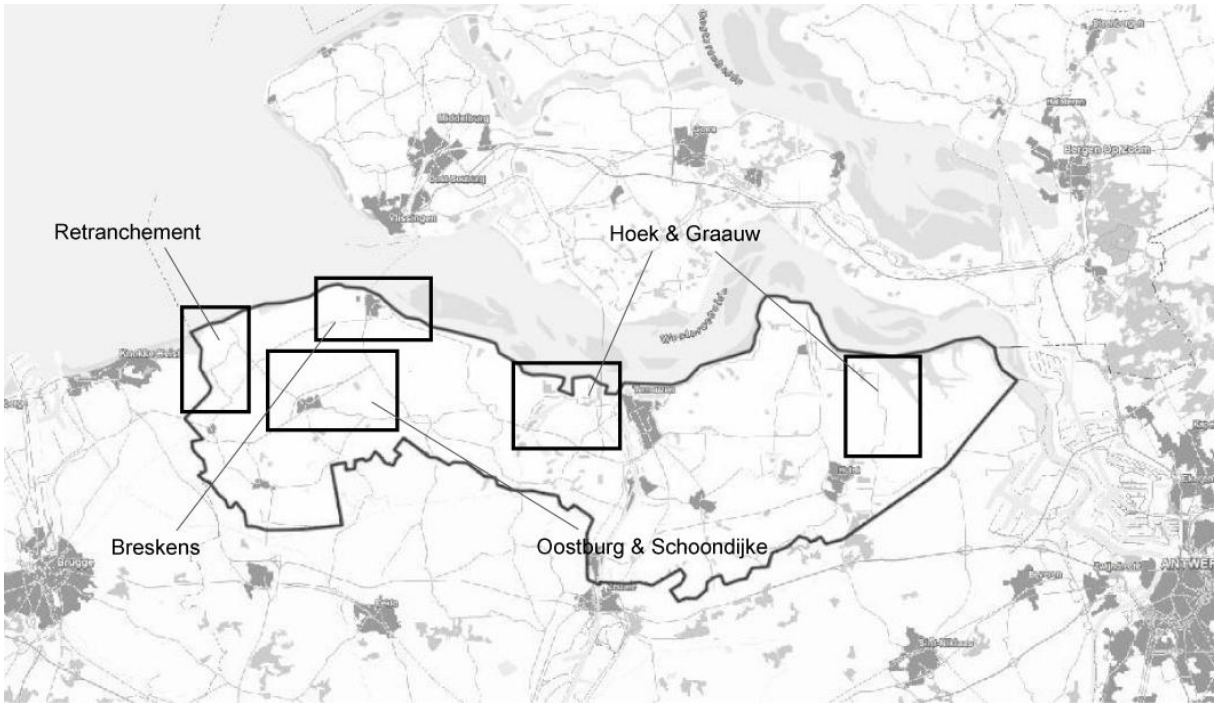


Figure 6.9
Map of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen with the selected sub cases



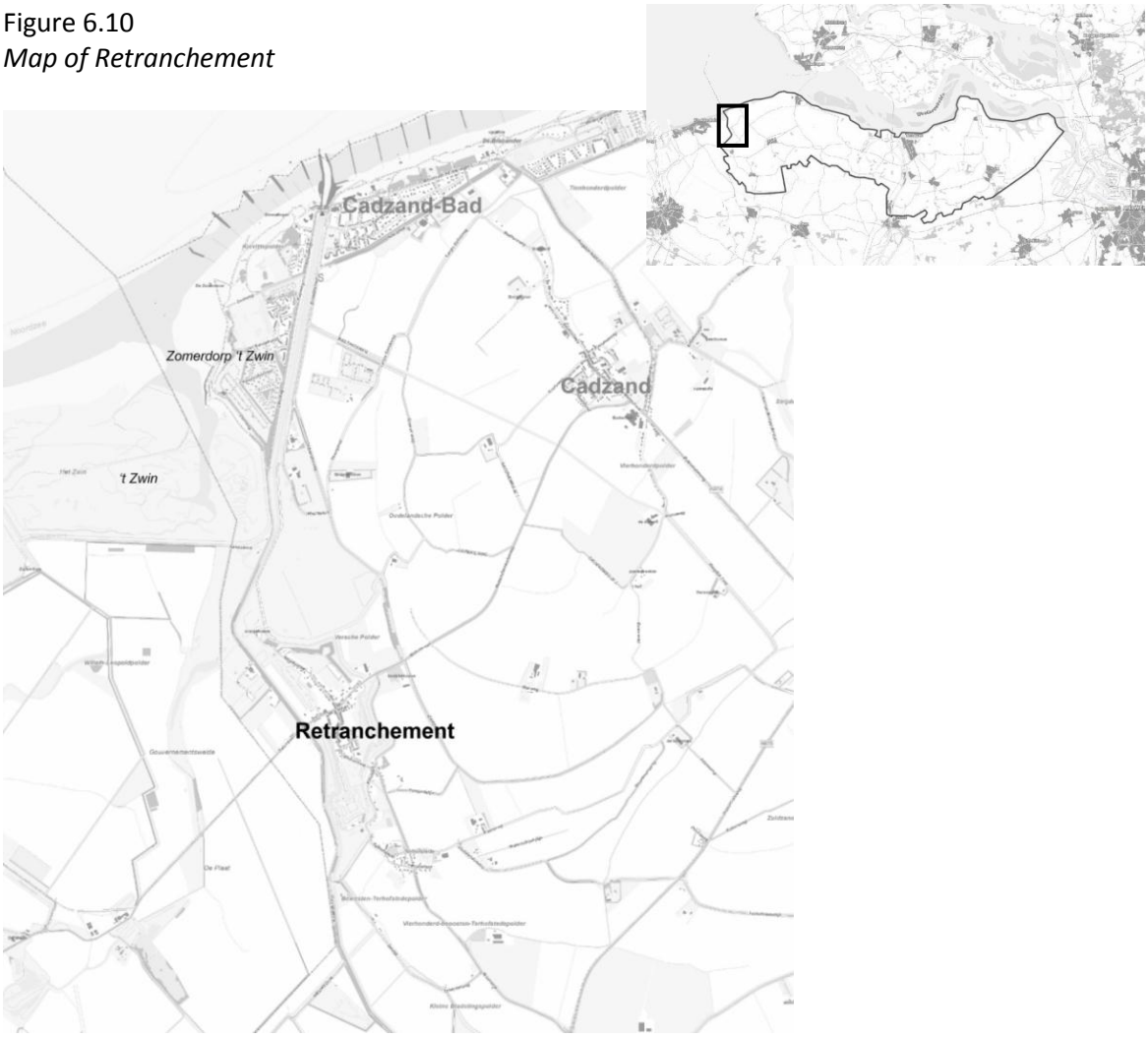
6.2.2 | Sub Case Descriptions

Figure 6.8 and 6.9 have shown which towns have been selected for further in-depth analysis. In this section the different sub cases are briefly introduced.

> *Retranchement*

Retranchement is a small historical village in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen which borders on Belgium. The village was founded in 1604 as a vesting town (Dutch: *vestingsstad*)[40] and is still structured by its original ramparts. On the west side of Retranchement are the shore (within 5 kilometres), 'nature reserve 't Zwin' and the seaside resorts Cadzand-Bad (the Netherlands) and Knokke-Heist (Belgium). Especially Knokke-Heist is well-known for its allure and the average housing prices in Knokke-Heist are extremely high for Belgian and Dutch standards (Surkyn, 2010). Furthermore, the prominent historical city Bruges is also approximate to Retranchement. Retranchement has approximately 400 inhabitants of which an increasing part is Belgian. Part of Retranchement are township Terhofstede and a large vacation park located north of the town ('Zomerdorp 't Zwin').

Figure 6.10
Map of Retranchement



[40] Vesting towns are towns in the Netherlands which were fortified between the fifteenth and eighteenth century. These towns are characterised by (traces of) protective walls, ramparts and other sorts of defensive systems.

Just as Breskens, Oostburg and Schoondijke, Retranchement is located in the municipality of Sluis, which over the last fifteen years has had a prohibition on non-permanent dwelling inside the built-up area of towns. As has been mentioned in section 6.1.3, the municipality has discussed the revision of this policy in order to allow second home ownership in the majority of its towns. This discussion was started because demographic decline and housing vacancy in the region have become reality and it is argued it is "always better if houses are only occupied during a couple of weeks a year, than not being occupied at all" (PZC, 2011, own translation). The village council of Retranchement however, has heavily opposed this policy change because they fear for the loss of services and a declining liveability in the town (De Koning, 2011). Also, the village council has argued revision of the second home policy in order to reduce housing vacancy does not apply to Retranchement, since no housing vacancy problems are experienced and dwellings are sold relatively quickly and for relatively expensive prices.

> *Breskens*

Breskens traditionally is a fishing town, located next to the North Sea shore and the mouth of the Westerschelde estuary. The town was heavily damaged during World War II and during the 1950s and '60s large parts of the town were rebuilt. Together with Oostburg, Breskens is one of the larger towns in western Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (4.782 inhabitants) and just as Retranchement, Breskens has a large amount of recreational dwellings next to the town itself ('Zeebad Breskens', 'Schoneveld', 'Het Heem' and 'Napoleonhoeve'). Breskens traditionally formed an important connection to the north with its ferry connection with Vlissingen. With the realisation of the Westerscheldetunnel in 2003 however, the car ferry from Breskens was replaced by a ferry for slow transport only.

Figure 6.11
Map of Breskens

> *Hoek and Graauw*

Graauw is a small village in eastern Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (923 inhabitants). The village is completely surrounded by large scale *polder* landscape, by which most of the territory of the municipality of Hulst is characterised. On the south-west of Graauw is the town Hulst, which functions as the local centre of the eastern part of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Furthermore, on the northeast of Graauw is nature reserve 'The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe' (Dutch: *Het Verdronken Land van Saeftinghe*). Especially the township Paal, which has a tidal port adjacent to The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe, is of recreational importance. Hoek is a larger town than Graauw (3.124 inhabitants) and is located between the city of Terneuzen and natural landscape 'The Braakman'. Part of The Braakman area is used for recreational purposes and there is a vacation park located in the area ('Vakantie-Eiland Braakman'). North of Hoek is a large scale harbour and industrial area. However, in contrast to towns as Sluiskil and Sas van Gent, in the town Hoek the polder landscape is more experienced than the industrial landscape. Although Hoek and Graauw are quite different towns, both towns have an above average assessed residential environment, are distant to the shore and are approximate to a natural landscape. It should be noted however, that the natural landscape next to Graauw is of much greater recreational importance than The Braakman next to Hoek (P. Smits, personal communication, 2011).

Hoek and Graauw are part of the municipalities of Terneuzen and Hulst respectively. In Terneuzen there is a prohibition on non-permanent dwelling inside the built-up area of towns, which is comparable to the ordinance of the municipality of Sluis. In the municipality of Terneuzen however, no public discussion on whether to revise the policy or not has been started. Because the number of second homes in the towns in the municipality of Terneuzen is significantly lower than in the towns in the municipality of Sluis (section 7.3), public discussions about the impacts of second homes are far less common. The same goes for the municipality of Hulst, which is the only municipality in the region without a prohibition on non-permanent dwelling.

Figure 6.12
Map of Hoek

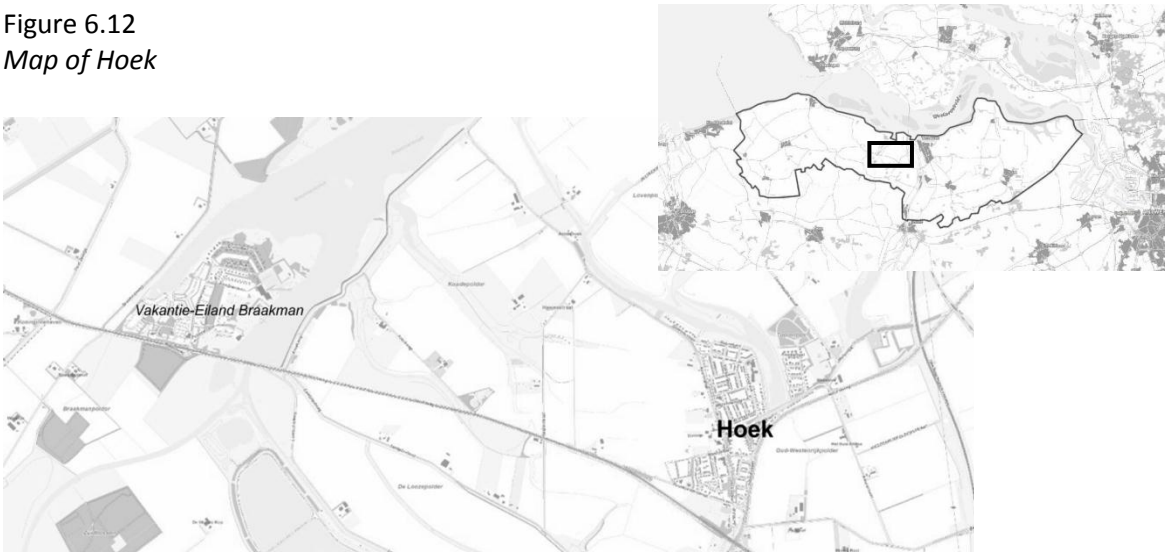
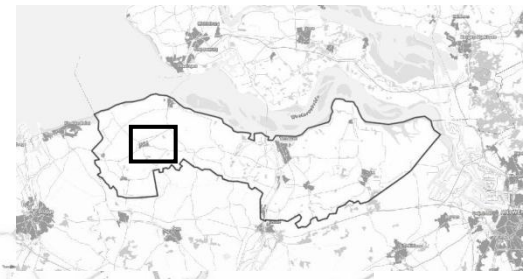


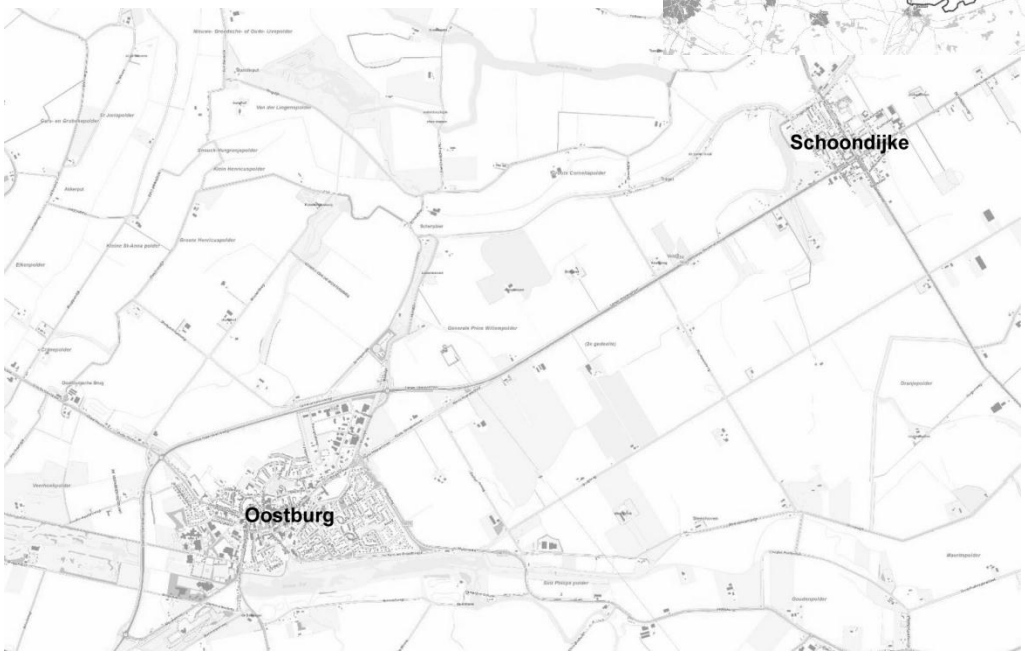
Figure 6.13
Map of Graauw

> *Oostburg and Schoondijke*

Oostburg and Schoondijke have respectively 4.840 and 1.469 inhabitants. Therewith, Oostburg is the largest town of western Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and it also functions as the most central town in the area. It for instance is the only town in western Zeeuws-Vlaanderen with a secondary school. Schoondijke traditionally drove on agricultural activities. These towns share a relatively lowly assessed residential environment and similar to Breskens, these towns have been heavily damaged during World War II. A relatively large part of the housing supply of these towns is monotonous and of low quality, since these dwellings where rapidly built during the first post-war years (also see Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). Finally, the towns are located at between 5 and 10 kilometres distance of the shore.

Figure 6.14
Map of Oostburg and Schoondijke





7 | RESULTS: SECOND HOMES AND VACANT DWELLINGS IN ZEEUWS-VLAANDEREN

This chapter elaborates on the characteristics of the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. This is done at the regional scale, therewith providing the proper context for the further in-depth analyses of the sub cases (chapter 8). First, an elaboration of how second homes are currently used is given (section 7.1). This directly connects the theoretical framework from chapter 4 with the results of the questionnaire with second home owners. Next, section 7.2 provides some background characteristics of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, which helps better understand the demand side of the market for second homes. Section 7.3 and 7.4 are the core of the empirical analysis at the regional scale: they give a comparison of demand and supply on the spatial distribution and the general characteristics of the dwellings respectively. Furthermore, section 7.5 takes a look at future expectations of the demand for second homes and section 7.6 sums up the conclusions from this chapter.

7.1 | Second Home Use

The theoretical framework of this study (chapter 4) focuses on different types of second home use, with the assumption different types of second home use entail different demands concerning the environment and the dwellings. The framework serves as a tool to capture the complexity of the demand for second homes and this is done by the distinction of five different types of second homes: investment properties, vacation homes, weekend homes, pied-à-terre and second homes which are used as full alternatives to the first home. From the primary data collection – in which primary data on the locations and characteristics of second homes and vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen were collected from the three municipalities in the region (section 5.3) – it is not possible to distinguish different forms of second home use. Therefore, a questionnaire with second home owners in the region has been executed (section 5.3). This section elaborates on how the second home owners in the region are divided over different usage types. In the rest of the chapter this distinction is used in several analyses, whereby the relationship between type of use and type of demand is investigated.

The questionnaire had a sample size of 3.039 and 872 people returned a completed form. Thus, the questionnaire has had a sufficient response, both in absolute and relative terms (response rate = 28,69 percent). As annex 4 elaborates on in detail, the respondents can be considered representative for the entire population (i.e. all second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen): for instance because the nationalities of the owners, the locations of the second homes and the characteristics of the dwellings generally show the same diversity and composition as in the primary data. In regard to the different types of second home use, it cannot be verified whether the response is representative or

not due to the lack of data on this subject. On the frequency of visits to the second homes however, data from the latest Dutch Housing Research (*WoON 2009*) can be used as a reference (table 7.1).

Table 7.1 suggests the frequency of use of the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen on some points differs from the use in the rest of the province and the rest of the country: the number of second homes which are barely used (less than three times a year) seems much lower in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, but at the same time the weekly use of second homes also seems much lower. These differences have two possible methodological explanations. First, the number of barely used second homes might be underrepresented in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen because the questionnaires were distributed after the touristic peak season and were not distributed at the addresses of the primary residences (section 5.3). Second, the relatively low number of weekly used second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen might be explained by the fact this study applies a 'smaller' definition of a second home than the Dutch Housing Research does. In the latter, allotment gardens with overnight accommodation are for instance also included. Also, the number of pied-à-terre is probably smaller in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (see below) than in the rest of the province and country. Both of allotment gardens with overnight accommodations and pied-à-terre it is plausible to assume they are more often visited on a weekly basis than other types of second homes (RPB & RIGO, 2003).

Table 7.1
Frequency of visits of second homes in the Netherlands, Zeeland and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	The Netherlands (WoON 2009)	**Zeeland (WoON 2009)**	**Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (Questionnaire)**
Less than once a year	8,71 %	15,80 %	1,5 %
1 or 2 times a year	16,28 %	15,66 %	2,9 %
3 or more times a year, but less than monthly	24,96 %	28,66 %	38,4 %
Monthly	7,07 %	2,06 %	25,0 %
Not weekly, but more often than monthly	11,55 %	21,22 %	25,6 %
Weekly	31,44 %	16,13 %	6,5 %

Source: WoON 2009; Questionnaire second home owners

Table 7.2 shows the number of respondents per usage type. The distinguished usage types have been elaborated on in section 4.2.2. The usage types differ from each other on (i) the main motivations behind the purchase of the second home (e.g. investment purposes, recreational purposes or working purposes), (ii) the frequency of visits (as in table 7.1), (iii) the length of the visits and (iv) the extent to which the dwellings are leased or not.

From table 7.2 it can be concluded the majority of the respondents use their second home as a weekend home (used frequently, but for relatively short visits) or as a vacation home (used only a couple times a year, but for relatively long visits). As has been stated however, for the different types of second home use it cannot be verified whether the response is representative for the total population or not. Thus, from the results in table 7.2 no valid conclusions can be drawn about the relative size of the different usage types. Especially investment properties (and to a lesser extent vacations homes) are expected to be underrepresented in the questionnaire, since the questionnaires were not distributed at the addresses of the primary residences. Also, the number of pied-à-terre could be underrepresented since no questionnaires were distributed in the city of Terneuzen (in which much of the employment of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is concentrated). However, the underrepresentation of pied-à-terre is expected to be insignificant, since the primary data on second homes show there are only 40 second homes in Terneuzen (which represents 0,34 percent of the total housing supply in Terneuzen). Also, the real estate agents which have been interviewed (see annex 5 for an overview of the interview partners) claim the number of pied-à-terre in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is extremely small. Due to the extremely small number of pied-à-terre in the questionnaire response, no further analyses for this usage type have been made in the remainder of this study.

Table 7.2
Types of use of second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
Investment property	30	3,5 %
Vacation home	288	33,8 %
Weekend home	470	55,0 %
Pied-à-terre	3	0,4 %
Full alternative to first home	62	7,3 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked how many days a year their second home is occupied (either by themselves, tenants or others). These results are shown in table 7.3 and have been broken down per type of second home use. Table 7.3 suggests that second homes which are used as a full alternative to the first home are occupied the most, and are followed by investment properties. Although vacation homes are visited less frequently than weekend homes (section 4.2.2), they are generally occupied for as many days a year as the weekend homes. This can be explained by the fact that vacation homes are generally used for relatively longer periods and are more often used by tenants. The crucial difference is that weekend homes are more often used by their owners themselves and are visited more frequently in a more stable pattern throughout the year.

Table 7.3
Number of days a year second homes are occupied (by owners, tenants or others), per type of use

	Investment property	Vacation home	Weekend home	Full alternative to first home	Total
Less than 50 days a year	17,2%	11,2%	8,8%	0,0%	9,3%
50 - 99 days a year	10,3%	45,3%	45,6%	19,4%	41,9%
100 - 199 days a year	48,3%	35,2%	37,7%	50,0%	38,2%
200 - 299 days a year	13,8%	7,7%	7,4%	17,7%	8,6%
More than 300 days a year	10,3%	0,7%	0,6%	12,9%	2,1%

Source: Questionnaire second home owners

7.2 | Second Home Owners

This section elaborates on the socioeconomic profiles of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. In the questionnaire, owners were asked about their age, marital status (section 7.2.1), income (section 7.2.2) and their ties with the region (i.e. whether they previously worked or lived in the region and how many vacations they have spent in the region before the purchase of the second home) (section 7.2.3). Furthermore, data from the municipal taxes have been gathered on the origin of the second home owners (section 7.2.3).

7.2.1 | Age and Marital Status

Table 7.4 is a crosstab on the age and marital status of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. One the one hand, the distribution of the owners over age groups and over marital status categories can be read from the table. On the other hand, the cross tab also matches these two variables, whereby insight can be gain into the life phase the second home owners are in. First, from the totals per age group it stands out the vast majority of the second home owners (77,17 percent) are older than 55 years of age. This confirms the findings from the literature (section 3.3.3). The group of 65 years or older (*retirees*) however, is heavily overrepresented in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. In the study by NRIT Onderzoek (2010) 13 percent of the owners in the Netherlands were 65 years or older and in the Dutch Housing Research from 2006 (*WoON 2006*) this was 20 percent. In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen however, 41,15 percent of the owners are 65 or older. Especially owners who use their second home as a full alternative to the first home are often older than 65 (68,33 percent). With their retirement, these owners are not dependent of vacations or weekends to visit their second home and can therefore visit their second home any time they like to. Simultaneously, owners younger than 45 are quite unique in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (6,47 percent), whilst the Dutch Housing Research (in NRIT Onderzoek, 2010: 25) suggests this group is a lot larger in the rest of the Netherlands (24 percent).

Furthermore, the totals per marital status in table 7.4 show only a relatively small part of the second home owners are single-headed households (12,23 percent). In the Dutch Housing Research (in NRIT Onderzoek, 2010: 25) this group was significantly smaller (3 percent). The overrepresentation of single-headed second home households in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen might be explained by the overrepresentation of owners older than 65 years (51,49 percent of the single-headed households are 65 or older). Namely, it can be carefully presumed part of this age group are single-headed households because they are widow(er)s.

All in all, the largest groups of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are retired people (65 or older) (41,15 percent), nuclear middle aged families (couples of 35 - 64 years of age with children) (26,62 percent) and *empty nesters* (couples of 55 - 64 years of age without children, which in the most cases are without children because their children have moved out to live independently) (20,51 percent). In the literature, these three groups also stand out (section 3.3.3). As has been stated above however, the questionnaire results suggest the group of retired second home owners is a lot larger in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen than in the rest of the Netherlands.

Table 7.4
Crosstab age and marital status of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

		Age						
		≤ 34 years	**35 - 44 years**	**45 - 54 years**	**55 - 64 years**	**≥ 65 years**	**Missing values**	**Total**
Marital status	**Single, without children**[41]	0 (0,00 %)	0 (0,00 %)	9 (1,10 %)	32 (3,91 %)	42 (5,13 %)	0 (0,00 %)	83 (10,13 %)
	Single, with children	0 (0,00 %)	0 (0,00 %)	2 (0,24 %)	6 (0,73 %)	10 (1,22 %)	0 (0,00 %)	18 (2,20 %)
	Married/living together, without children	1 (0,12 %)	9 (1,10 %)	28 (3,42 %)	168 (20,51 %)	236 (28,82 %)	2 (0,24 %)	444 (54,21 %)
	Married/living together, with children	1 (0,12 %)	41 (5,01 %)	89 (10,87 %)	88 (10,74 %)	44 (5,37 %)	0 (0,00 %)	263 (32,11 %)
	Missing values	0 (0,00 %)	1 (0,12 %)	4 (0,49 %)	1 (0,12 %)	5 (0,61 %)	0 (0,00 %)	11 (1,34 %)
	Total	2 (0,24 %)	51 (6,23 %)	132 (16,12 %)	295 (36,02 %)	337 (41,15 %)	2 (0,24 %)	819 (100,00 %)

Source: Questionnaire second home owners

7.2.2 | Household Income

Several empirical studies have already shown that second homes are predominantly a luxurious good and that second home owners generally are more affluent than average households (section 3.3.3). The literature review also elaborated on some studies which tried to contest this by arguing second

[41] Households without children in this table also include households with children which are living independently.

homes are largely affordable for households with a(n) (below) average income. These studies failed to convince on this however (section 3.3.3), and in figure 7.1 it is again confirmed second home ownership requires a relatively high income. The left bar in figure 7.1 represents the second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen divided over different income categories and the right bar represents all private households in the Netherlands. Of the latter, 32,52 percent have an income lower than € 30.000 a year, whilst only 5,36 percent of the second home owners have an income from this category. In contrast, only 12,02 percent of the Dutch households are of the highest income category (€ 100.000 or more a year), opposed to 30,75 percent of the second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.

On the other hand, figure 7.1 also shows 44,40 percent of the Dutch households have an annual income of € 50.000 or more. This income category covers 69,11 percent of the second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Thus, in theory a relatively large part of the Dutch households have a sufficient annual gross household income to purchase a second home in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. However, it should be stressed the annual gross household income does not entirely cover whether a household is financially capable to purchase a second home or not. The relatively low housing prices in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (also see section 7.4.3) can be helpful in this regard, but the real estate agents in the region which have been interviewed argue that second homes will predominantly remain a luxurious good and that the affordability of second homes more than anything depends on macro-economic developments and tax regimes.

In relation to the differences in the financial resources of households, there are also different housing market segments (section 7.4.3). In theory, there are different segments which match the financials of different income groups. However, several interviewees note that the lower segments of the second home market also have the least rental potential. In other words: the relatively expensive second homes become affordable at an earlier point because of their rental potential (whereby they generate income, which compensates for some of the costs), whilst most dwellings in the lower segments do not have this potential and are therefore relatively less affordable. Of the extremely high incomes on the other hand, a relatively large part does not lease their second home since they do not need the financial benefits of lease: only 33,18 percent of the owners with an annual income of € 100.000 or more lease their second home (opposed to 55,00 percent of the other owners). This has also been confirmed by interviewed real estate agents in the region.

Figure 7.1
Annual gross household income of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen per income category, in comparison with the incomes of all private households in the Netherlands [42]

Source: Questionnaire second home owners; Statistics Netherlands, 2010a

7.2.3 | Origin of Second Home Owners

In table 7.5 the nationality of the second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is given. The Dutch owners represent the largest group on the second home market in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (45,10 percent), but the majority of the owners is non-Dutch. Although the region borders on Belgium, there currently are more owners in the region from Germany (34,32 percent) than from Belgium (18,29 percent). This is remarkable and might be explained by the lack of 'intervening opportunities' for the German owners, and/or might suggest that distance from the primary residence is relatively unimportant for certain types of second home use (section 7.3.1).

The share of owners from other countries is very small (2,29 percent). Of that group the majority of the owners (46 of 90) are from Luxembourg. Since longitudinal data on second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is missing, developments in the origin of the second home owners cannot be empirically investigated. All the interviewed real estate agents however, argued the demand from Germans has largely disappeared over the decade. The questionnaire results seem to confirm this: only 25,00 percent of the second homes owned by Germans were purchased after the year 2000, whilst for other nationalities this was 56,34 percent. The demand from Belgians on the other hand, has

[42] The annual gross household income represents the primary income of the household, plus all government benefits.

increased over the last years according to the interviewees. The increased housing demand in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen from Belgians also manifests itself in permanent housing (Van der Werf, 2011).

Table 7.5
Nationality of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
Dutch	1.775	45,10 %
German	1.351	34,32 %
Belgian	720	18,29 %
Other	90	2,29 %

Source: Municipalities of Sluis and Terneuzen, 2011[43]

In figure 7.2 the towns of the primary residence of people with a second home in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are displayed.[44] The map shows the vast majority of the German owners are from the state North Rhine-Westphalia. North Rhine-Westphalia, which contains cities as Cologne, Düsseldorf, Dortmund and Essen, borders on the south-eastern part of the Netherlands and is the most populous region in Germany. Of the Belgian owners, most households have their primary residence in the western part of Flanders (the Dutch speaking part of Belgium) and in and around the cities of Antwerp and Brussels. Of the Dutch owners, a very large part is from the province of North-Brabant, with towns like Breda, Tilburg and Eindhoven. The number of owners with a primary residence in the western part of the *Randstad* (which is the polycentric agglomeration of the four largest Dutch cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) is relatively small. Presumably this is because of the relatively large number of intervening opportunities for this area, since the Randstad has its own coastal areas and since many other rural areas are easily accessible from the Randstad.

In the questionnaire, owners were asked about the distance between their second home and their primary residence (table 7.6). A relatively small number of the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is owned by people of whom their primary residence is within 100 kilometres (12,7 percent). Part of this group are people who also have their primary residence within Zeeuws-Vlaanderen itself (from the primary data of the municipalities it was found 7,41 percent of the second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen consist of this group).[45] Furthermore, the number of second home owners

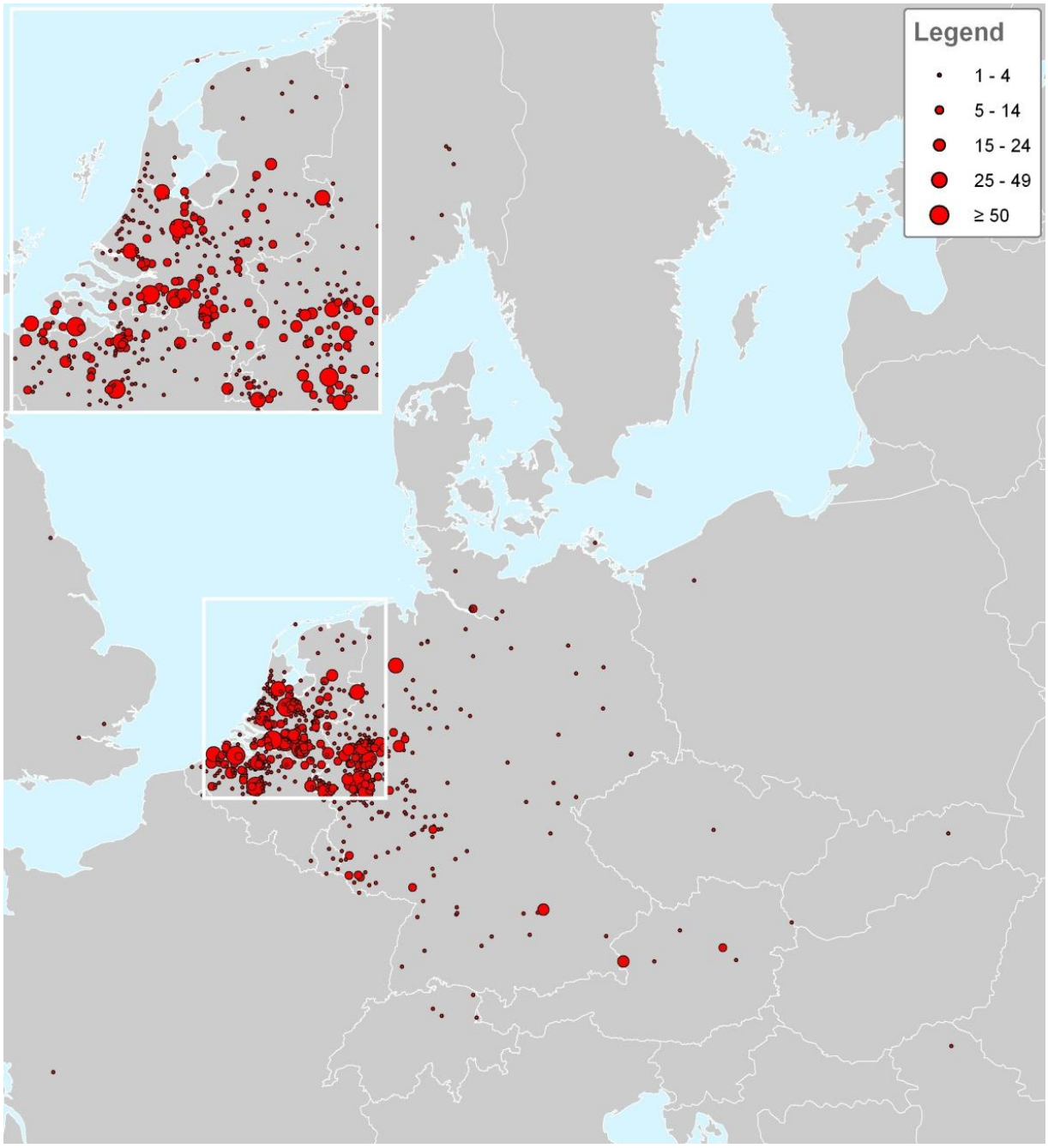
[43] Data on the origin of second home owners in the municipality of Hulst are missing. The municipality decided not to provide this data because of privacy reasons.
[44] It should be noted that what is labelled as the primary residence and what as a second home is entirely the owner's decision (section 3.1), which means the data in figure 7.2 can be disturbed. The second homes that are distinguished in this study are owners who have not subscribed in the municipality in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and who are therefore obliged to pay commuter taxes (section 5.2.2). It is plausible almost all of these are in practice really used as second homes (instead of as primary residences), since only 6,5 percent of the owners reported to use the dwelling weekly (table 7.1).
[45] In practice this group is probably slightly larger, since in this study second homes have been adopted from the commuter tax registration of the three municipalities in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (section 5.2.2). People who both have their second home and primary residence in the same municipality are not obliged to pay this tax and are therefore not included in this study. An earlier inventory by the municipality of Sluis however, showed this group in total remains relatively small (J. Gerrits, personal communication, 2011).

declines from distances longer than 350 kilometres: only 7,2 percent has a second home at 350 kilometres or more distance of the primary residence. This suggests 350 kilometres is about the commonly accepted maximum distance people are prepared to travel to a second home. Although it is difficult to compare these findings with the scarce findings from the literature, comparisons with results from Germany and South-Africa (Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit, 2005; Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2004) suggest inhabitants in larger countries are prepared to travel longer distances to their second homes. Dijst, Lanzendorf, Barendregt & Smit claim this might be explained by the fact that inhabitants in lager countries are more familiar with longer travel distances than people in smaller countries.

In section 4.2.2 it was argued that owners of vacation homes generally travel further to their second home than owners of weekend homes. The questionnaire results confirm this: 39,2 percent of the vacation home owners travel more than 300 kilometres to their second home, whilst this goes for only 16,0 percent of the weekend home owners. This can be explained by the relatively low frequency of use of vacation homes, which makes the distance between the first and second home less relevant. Also, it is notable the owners of investment properties appear to have relatively smaller travel distances than other types of users: 41,4 percent of the owners of investment properties in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen have their second home within 100 kilometres of their primary residence (for all other users this is 11,7 percent). Just as vacation homes, investment properties are barely visited by its owners and therefore accessibility of the second home from the primary residence was assumed to be relatively unimportant to these owners (also see table 7.9 in section 7.3.1). Thus, travel distances of owners of investment properties were not expected to be relatively short. Also, the number of investment property owners which have worked or lived in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen before the purchase of the second home (35,7 percent) is significantly larger than with the other types of second home use (16,7 percent) (also see table 7.7). It is not certain how this can be explained, but it could suggest that local acquaintance plays an important role for investors in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Obviously, investors want to know if their investments are 'safe' and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen might be relatively uncertain for investors who are less familiar with the region.

Figure 7.2

Origin of owners of second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (expressed in absolute number of owners per town) [46]



Source: Municipalities of Sluis and Terneuzen, 2011

[46] The validity of figure 7.2 is not optimal. This is because data from the municipality of Hulst are missing (also see table 7.5) and because the map is the result of a GIS analysis which is vulnerable to inaccuracies. In the analysis a match needed to be made between town names in two separate datasets, whereby missing values easily occur (e.g. because parts of the datasets were incomplete or incompatible). All in all, 69,39 percent of the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen have been covered in the map (the origin towns of 2.913 second homes were matched, whilst in total there are 4.198 second homes in the region). Of the second homes in Sluis and Terneuzen (3.936 second homes in total) 74,01 percent has been covered. Furthermore, the figure shows a map of western Europe, but there also are owners of which the primary residence is outside western Europe. This number is marginal however (0,46 percent).

Table 7.6
Distance between primary residences and second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
≤ 49 km	50	5,8 %
50 - 99 km	60	6,9 %
100 - 149 km	105	12,1 %
150 - 199 km	138	15,9 %
200 - 249 km	177	20,4 %
250 - 299 km	143	16,5 %
300 - 349 km	133	15,3 %
350 - 399 km	22	2,5 %
≥ 400 km	41	4,7 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners

Furthermore, respondents were asked whether they previously worked or lived in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. 17,3 percent did and 82,7 percent of the respondents did not work or live in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen before the purchase of the second home (table 7.7). This is remarkable, because it suggests second homes can literally draw people from outside the region. This is completely different from the permanent housing demand, in which the majority of the migration moves are inner regional (De Groot, Manting & Boschman, 2008). Beforehand, it was expected a large part of the second home owners would also already have some kind of connection with the region by earlier working or residential experiences. The questionnaire results thus suggest this is not the case, but suggest this 'connection' is predominantly developed through recreational experiences: in line with the findings by NRIT Onderzoek (2010), table 7.7 displays three quarters of the current second home owners have spent at least one vacation in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen before they decided to purchase a second home in the region. Moreover, 41,1 percent previously spent more than five vacations in the region. Of the group which has never spent a vacation in the region, 180 respondents have also not previously worked or lived in the region. This group represents 22,44 percent of the total number of respondents. Thus, more than one fifth of the second home owners had no working, living or recreational experiences in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen before they decided to purchase a second home in the region. No explanations for this could be found from the questionnaire results, except for a very small group (3,02 percent of this group) which added in their response they did not previously spent a vacation in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, but did spent a vacation in other parts of Zeeland. Another possible explanation could be that these are people who live approximate to Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (for instance just across the border in Belgium) and who are acquainted with the region, but have never worked, lived or spent a vacation there. Table 7.6 however, showed the number of owners who have their primary residence within 100 kilometres is small and as has been mentioned most of this group lives in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen itself. Hence, this explanation can also only cover a small part of this group.

Table 7.7

Crosstab working/residential experiences and recreational experiences in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen before the purchase of the current second home

		Previously worked or lived in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen		
		Yes	**No**	**Total**
Number of vacations spent in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen before purchase of second home	**None**	19 (2,4 %)	180 (22,4 %)	199 (24,8 %)
	1 vacation	9 (1,1 %)	67 (8,4 %)	76 (9,5 %)
	2 or 3 vacations	16 (2,0 %)	116 (14,5 %)	132 (16,5 %)
	4 or 5 vacations	13 (1,6 %)	52 (6,5 %)	65 (8,1 %)
	More than 5 vacations	82 (10,2 %)	248 (30,9 %)	330 (41,1 %)
	Total	139 (17,3 %)	663 (82,7 %)	802 (100,0 %)

Source: Questionnaire second home owners

7.3 | Spatial Distribution

7.3.1 | Spatial Distribution of Second Homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

This section elaborates on how second homes and vacant dwellings are spatially distributed over Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. First however, table 7.8 shows the total number of second homes and vacant dwellings in the region.[47] In the outer right column, the number of second homes and vacant dwellings relative to the total housing supply are shown. Thus, 7,77 percent of the dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are currently being used as second homes, whilst 4,67 percent of the total housing supply is currently vacant. Furthermore, the second homes in table 7.8 are separated into (i) *recreational dwellings* that are used as second homes and (ii) *regular dwellings* that function as second homes. A recreational dwelling is a dwelling which has a recreational function (instead of a residential function) in the land-use plan, and in practice are predominantly vacation parks of which the dwellings are privately and individually owned. Table 7.8 shows the majority of the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are recreational dwellings (2.610), but the number of non-recreational dwellings which are being used as second homes (1.588) is also notable. When recreational dwellings are excluded, the number of second homes relative to the total housing supply in the region is modest (2,94 percent). As this section will show however, the second homes are not evenly distributed across the region and therefore the number of second homes in specific towns (also with the exclusion of recreational dwellings) is significant.

[47] In annex 1, the data from table 7.8 is specified per town.

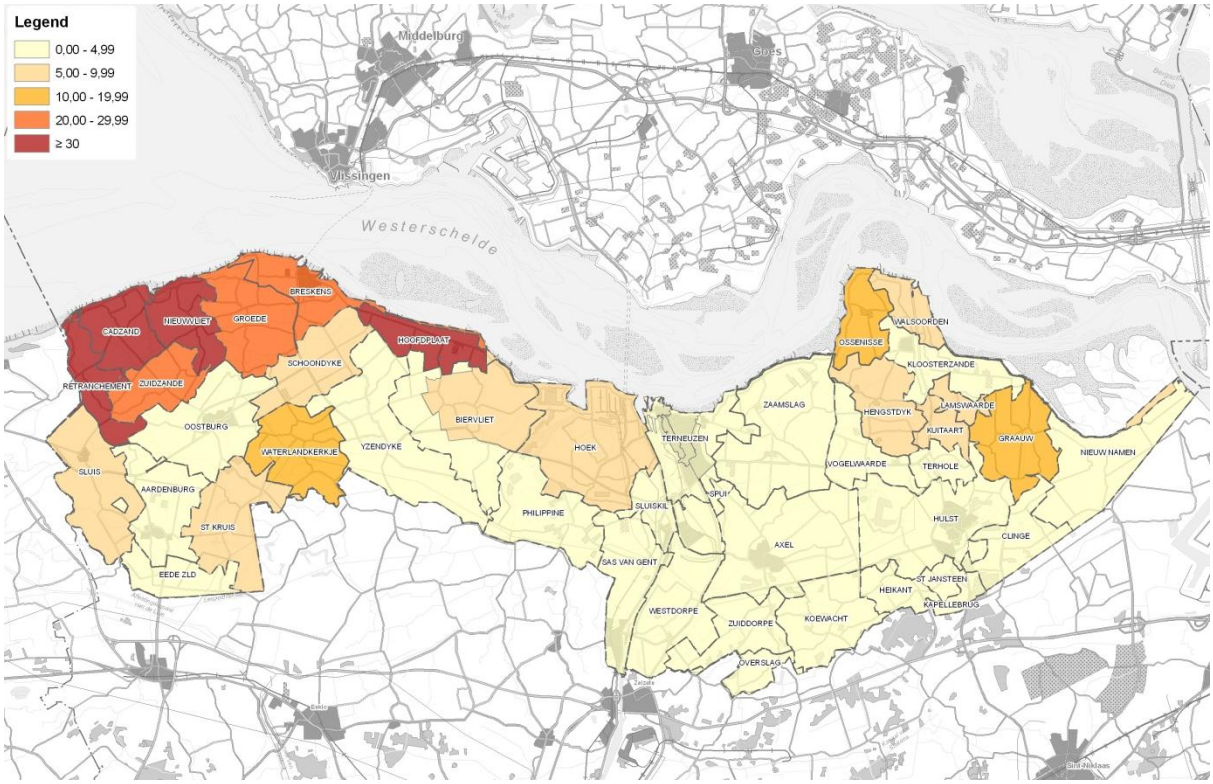
Table 7.8
Overview of the current housing supply in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	Absolute	***Relative***
Number of second homes	4.198	7,77 %
Number of second homes (recreational dwellings only)	2.610	4,83 %
Number of second homes (recreational dwellings excluded)	1.588	2,94 %
Number of vacant dwellings	2.524	4,67 %
Total housing stock size	54.061	100,00 %

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Figure 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 are all maps which show how the second homes are currently distributed over Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. In each of the maps the number of second homes relative to the total housing supply is displayed. Figure 7.3 shows this for all the second homes in the region, in figure 7.4 only the recreational dwellings which are being used as second homes are shown, whilst in figure 7.5 these recreational dwellings are excluded and only the regular second homes are shown. More detailed maps on the spatial distribution of second homes can be found in annex 6.

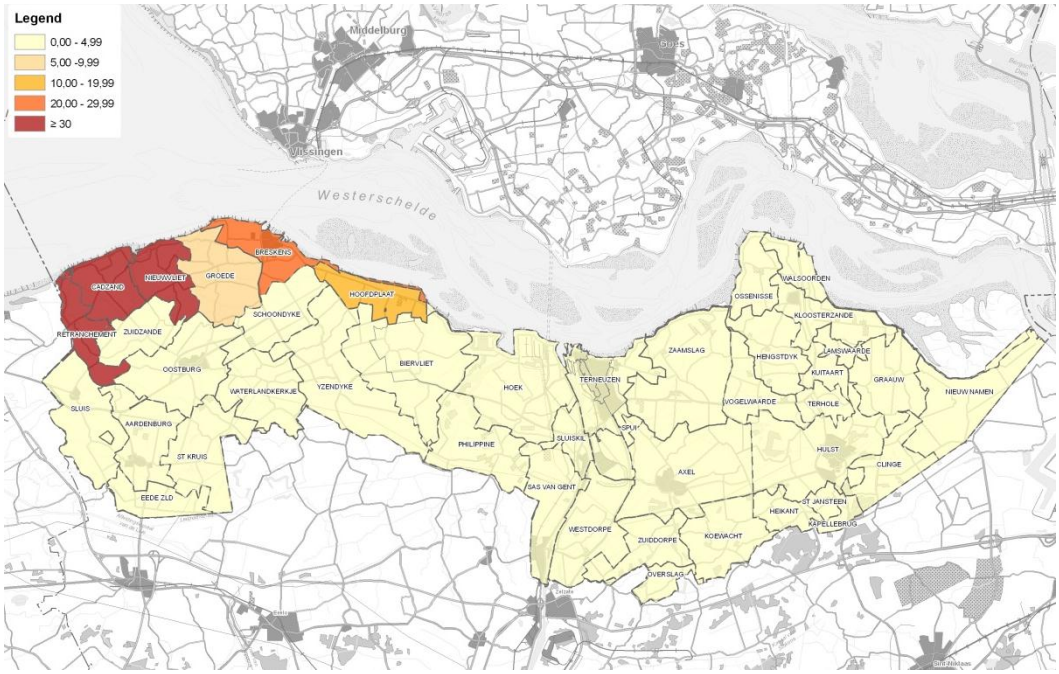
Figure 7.3
Percentage of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) per town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Figure 7.4

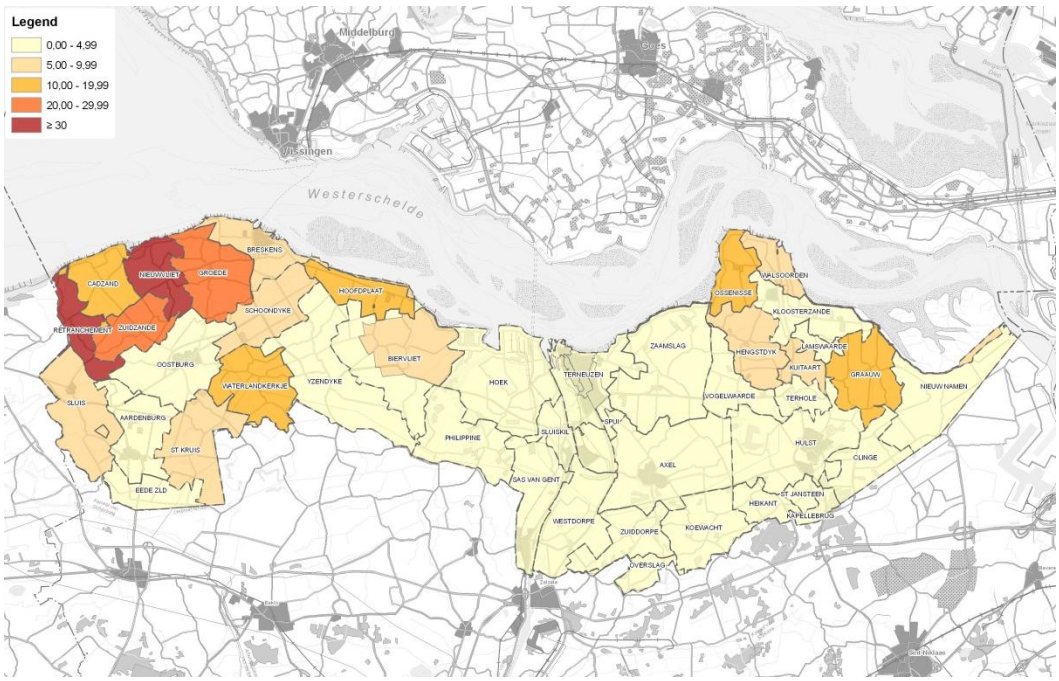
Percentage of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) per town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, recreational dwellings only



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Figure 7.5

Percentage of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) per town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, recreational dwellings excluded

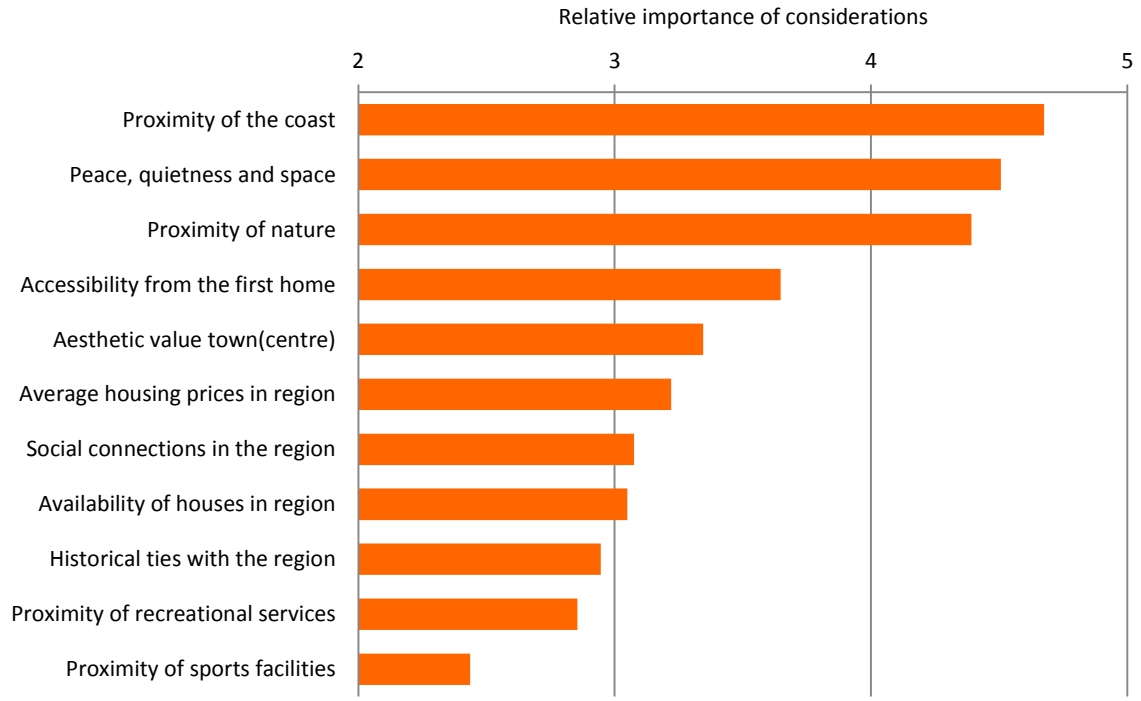


Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

The first thing which stands out in figure 7.3 - 7.5 is the large number of second homes near the shore. In the literature review (section 3.3.1) it has also been concluded that large concentrations of second homes exist in coastal areas. In fact, in the literature the term “amenity-rich landscapes” (Hall & Müller, 2004: 9) is often used to typify attractive second home locations (also see McIntyre, 2006; Overvåg & Gunnerud Berg, 2011). The term amenity-rich landscape however, refers to more than only the shore. Mountains, forests and water in general can for instance all serve as *amenities*. The relatively large number of second homes in Graauw (section 8.3) might also be explained by this, since the town borders on nature reserve 'The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe' (Dutch: *Het Verdronken Land van Saeftinghe*). Several interviewees confirmed this and argued the The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe is one of the main forces behind the relatively large number of second homes in Graauw. Furthermore, in the questionnaire respondents were asked to rate how important different considerations were in the choice for Zeeuws-Vlaanderen as a second home destination (figure 7.6). The proximity to the shore and nature both stand out as very important considerations. In table 7.9, the relative importance of the different considerations is specified per type of second home use. The impact of the shore on the demand for second homes is further elaborated on in section 7.3.2 and the differences in preferences of different second home users are elaborated on below.

Figure 7.6

Average importance of considerations in the choice for Zeeuws-Vlaanderen as second home destination [48]



Source: Questionnaire second home owners

[48] In the assessment of the importance of considerations, respondents were able to choose between the following grades: 1 (very unimportant), 2 (unimportant), 3 (neutral), 4 (important) and 5 (very important). Thus, the maximum value in figure 7.6 is 5.

Table 7.9
Average importance of considerations in the choice for Zeeuws-Vlaanderen as second home destination, per type of use

	Investment property	Vacation home	Weekend home	Full alternative to first home	Total
Proximity of the coast	4,7778	4,7580	4,6438	4,5968	4,6752
Peace, quietness and space	4,7308	4,3978	4,5796	4,4237	4,5060
Proximity of nature	4,3333	4,4075	4,3853	4,5000	4,3911
Accessibility from the first home	2,9167	3,5840	3,7478	3,6034	3,6473
Aesthetic value town(centre)	2,8696	3,3828	3,3395	3,4364	3,3449
Average housing prices in region	2,9167	3,2605	3,2225	3,2143	3,2204
Social connections in the region	2,6667	3,0973	3,0595	3,2679	3,0761
Availability of houses in region	2,6250	3,1142	3,0423	3,0769	3,0492
Historical ties with the region	2,8261	2,9144	2,9514	3,0727	2,9452
Proximity of recreational services	3,2917	2,9163	2,8091	2,8113	2,8543
Proximity of sports facilities	2,3478	2,4528	2,4316	2,4630	2,4358

Source: Questionnaire second home owners

Figure 7.6 and table 7.9 show peace, tranquillity and space are also considered very important considerations in the second home decision-making process. Jan Latten (2010) of the University of Amsterdam argued peace, tranquillity and space are the primary qualities that shrinking regions have and which are attractive to second home owners (section 2.6.2). The questionnaire results thus confirm these qualities play an important role in the decision of people to purchase a second home in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. However, peace, tranquillity and space are not easily measurable and it is difficult for towns to distinguish themselves in this from other towns. In other words: although it is given peace, tranquillity and space are an important factor in second home demand, this does not really teach us much about the spatial distribution within Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, except for that second homes are probably more promising in rural areas than in urban areas. In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, peace, tranquillity and space are probably the least found in the city of Terneuzen and industrial towns like Sluiskil and Sas van Gent, but for the other towns it is not clear to what extent they differ on these qualities. Thus, the value of peace, tranquillity and space as explaining variables for the differences in the number of second homes in towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, is limited. However, these variables might be useful in other shrinking regions. Van de Laar (2010) for instance argued large parts of South-Eastern Limburg are built in high densities and barely have peace, tranquillity and space to offer. Other parts of the region do have these qualities and it would be interesting to investigate whether those areas have a relatively larger number of second homes than the urbanised areas.

It is notable the respondents do not really rate the proximity of recreational services as an important consideration in the second home decision-making process (table 7.9). However, for second home

owners who predominantly use their second home as an investment property, the proximity of recreational services plays a relatively larger role in the decision-making process. On the other considerations, investment properties also differ from the other types of second home use: the accessibility from the first home and the aesthetic value of the town are for instance rated as significantly less important by owners of investment properties than by other owners. Although the proximity to the shore is the most important consideration for all types of second home use, the proximity to the shore is relatively more important to investment properties than to other types of use. This is also illustrated by an extremely large overrepresentation of investment properties in the seaside resorts Cadzand-Bad and Nieuwvliet-Bad: 43,8 percent of all respondents have a second home in Cadzand-Bad or Nieuwvliet-Bad, whilst 80,0 percent of the investment properties are located at these locations (which are at *walking distance* – less than 1,5 kilometres – of the shore).

Furthermore, it is notable the preferences of owners of vacation homes and weekend homes do not differ extremely much. What does differ is that the proximity of the shore and recreational services play a relatively larger role in the decision-making process for vacation homes, whilst peace, tranquillity and space are more important to owners of weekend homes. Also, as expected the accessibility from the first home is more important for owners of weekend homes than vacation homes, which is probably explained by the higher frequency of use of weekend homes (section 4.2.2). Vacation homes are overrepresented in Cadzand-Bad (26,8 percent of the vacation home owners), whilst weekend homes are underrepresented there (15,8 percent). At the same time, weekend homes are slightly overrepresented in Groede, Hoofdplaat, IJzendijke and Retranchement. This illustrates the small differences in above mentioned spatial preferences: namely, the proximity of the shore and recreational services are relatively more important to vacation homes than to weekend homes.

All in all, for all types of second home use the three most important considerations are by far the (i) proximity to the shore, (ii) peace, tranquillity and space, and (iii) proximity to nature. The different types of second home use do not show extremely large differences in their spatial preferences, hence second home use (section 4.2.2) (just as peace, tranquillity and space) has only limited value as an explaining variable in the spatial distribution of second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (also see section 9.4). One definite spatial conclusion which can be drawn from this theoretical framework, is the overrepresentation of investment properties on vacation parks, plus their even larger reliance on the proximity to the shore. According to the local real estate agents which have been interviewed, this can be explained by the fact that investment homes are solely used for commercial purposes, whilst the leasing potential is the largest and the most stable at locations within walking distance of the shore (also see Heijstek, 2001). Vacation homes also show an above average reliance on the proximity to the shore, but this effect is smaller than with investment properties.

Table 7.8 already revealed that the majority of the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are recreational dwellings and it was suggested most of these were located at vacation parks. Table 7.10 confirms this: there are 2.562 second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen on vacation parks, whilst the region has 2.610 recreational dwellings in total (98,16 percent). Table 7.10 thus shows a relatively large part of the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are located on vacation parks and thus this is in line with the findings from earlier studies on second homes in the Netherlands (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; NVRM in Van de Laar, 2010: 10; RPB & RIGO, 2003). However, results from the questionnaire

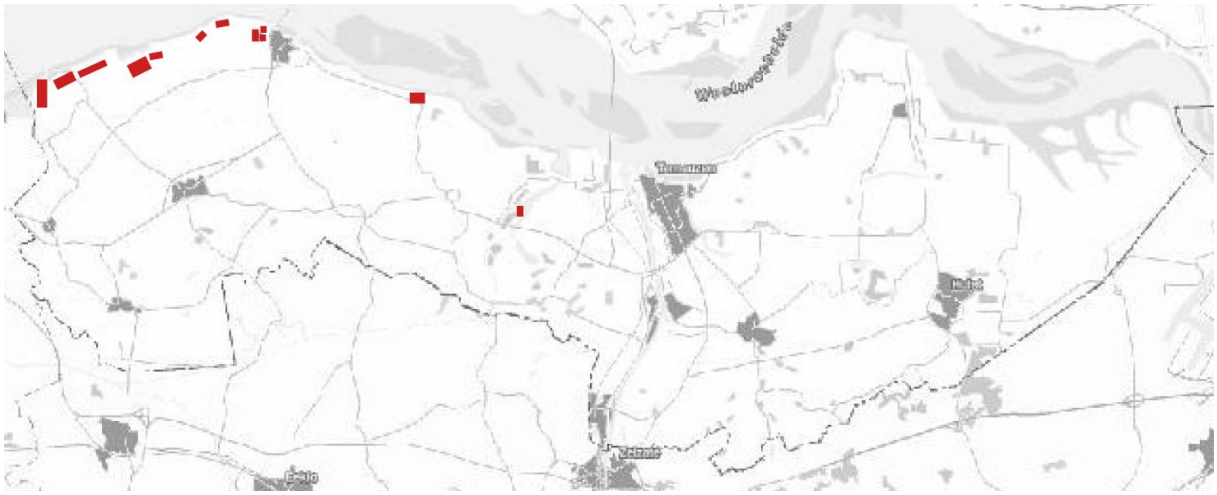
reveal vacation parks are seldom preferred by people in search of a second home: 85,8 percent of the respondents have stated they prefer a second home inside or around an existing village over a second home on a vacation park. This shows a discrepancy between *revealed behaviour* (where the second homes are currently located) and the original *intentions* (preferences) of current second home owners. Thus, the large number of second homes on vacation parks does not indicate a preference for vacation parks, but as the interviewees argue this can probably largely be explained by the fact these vacation parks are generally located at walking distance of the shore (figure 7.7). 93,2 percent of the owners which use their second home as a full alternative to the first home have stated not to prefer a second home at a vacation park and so did 90,0 percent of the weekend home owners and 86,0 percent of the vacation home owners. This suggests that the more frequent a second home is used, the less attractive having a second on a vacation park becomes. At the same time, the results suggest that the more frequent a second home is used, the more attractive having a second home outside the built-up area is. Especially, second homes which are used as a full alternative to the first home are overrepresented outside the built-up area (37,1 percent of the full alternatives are located outside the built-up area).

Table 7.10
Location types of second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	Number of second homes	
	Absolute	***Relative***
Inside the built-up area	1.125	26,74 %
Outside the built-up area	521	12,38 %
Vacation park	2.562	60,88 %

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Figure 7.7
Vacation parks in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



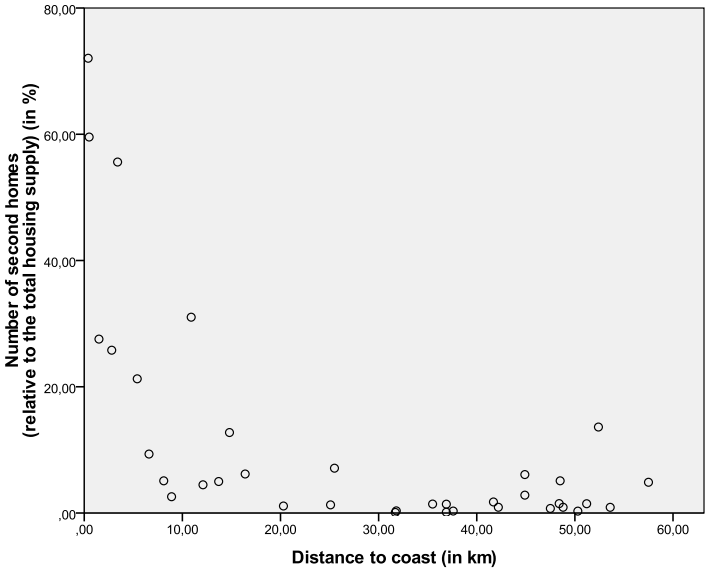
Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

It should be remarked that in the towns which are part of the municipality of Sluis and Terneuzen, a prohibition on second homes in the built-up area has been operational (section 6.2.2). In theory, this would suggest there are barely second homes in the built-up area of the towns in these two municipalities. However, table 7.10 shows this is not the case (with the exclusion of second homes on vacation parks, 68,35 percent of the second homes are located inside the built-up area of towns and 31,65 percent are located outside the built-up area). A possible explanation of this is that the enforcement of these policies has never been given priority (Municipality of Sluis, 2011a; Interviews). The exact effect of the prohibition is not clear. According to the interviewees, it is probably safe to assume the prohibition has not blocked the purchase of second homes in the municipality, but does have had a small inhibitory effect. Finally, the municipality of Sluis (2011b) has planned to revise its second home policy in order to allow second homes in the majority of the towns (section 6.1.3).

7.3.2 | Explaining the Spatial Distribution of Second Homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

In explaining the spatial distribution of the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen two variables deserve further analysis: (i) the proximity of towns to the shore and (ii) the assessed quality of the residential environment of towns (section 5.2.3). As has been stated in section 7.3.1, the maps on the relative number of second homes per town (figure 7.3 - 7.5) strongly suggest a strong attractive force of the shore. In all towns within 6 kilometres of the shore (Retranchement, Cadzand, Nieuwvliet, Zuidzande, Groede and Breskens) more than 20 percent of the housing stock is currently used as a second home (annex 1). Section 7.3.1 showed that 60,88 percent of the current second homes are recreational dwellings, which are predominantly located on vacation parks at walking distance of the shore. However, figure 7.5 shows that also when recreational dwellings are excluded, the largest concentrations of second homes are in the towns near the shore. How the relative number of second homes is exactly related to the proximity of towns to the shore is displayed in the scatter plot below:

Figure 7.8
Scatter plot of the number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) and the proximity to the shore per town



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Figure 7.8 illustrates how the relative number of second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen declines when towns are further from the shore. Also, the curve is very steep: in the left part of the graph, the relative number of second homes strongly declines and in almost none of the towns further than 20 kilometres from the shore more than 5 percent of the housing stock is being used as a second home. As table 7.11 reveals, a statistical correlation between the two variables exists (up to a confidence interval of 99 percent).[49] The correlation is negative, which means there is a statistical connection in which the longer the distance between a town and the shore is, the smaller the relative number of second homes generally is in that town. The statistical correlation between the two variables is relatively strong (Pearson's correlation coefficient = -0,625) and the explained variance (R squared value) of the relation between the two variables is 0,391. This means 39,1 percent of the variation in the relative number of second homes per town is explained by the proximity of towns to the shore.

Table 7.11
Correlation between the number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) and the proximity to the shore of towns

		Number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply)	Proximity to coast
Number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply)	Pearson Correlation	1	-,625**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	36	36
Proximity to coast	Pearson Correlation	-,625**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	36	36

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

In figure 7.8 there is also a notable difference in the number of second homes in towns which are within 6 kilometres of the shore and towns which are between 6 and 20 kilometres distance. The number of second homes in the latter is notably lower than in the former (but generally still higher than the average town in eastern Zeeuws-Vlaanderen). This suggests the demand for second homes strongly declines with the proximity of the shore and it also suggests 6 kilometres is already experienced as relatively 'distant' or at least as a lot less attractive for second home destinations. This effect was confirmed by the interviewees, who argued the effect of the shore on housing markets quickly diminishes as dwellings get further from the shore. Towns around 5 kilometres distance from the shore are already much less attractive than towns closer to the shore, but still have a notable attractive force. Towns further than 10 kilometres however, generally are considerably less attractive as second home destinations according to the interviewees. An exception to the above is the town Hoofdplaat, which can partially be explained by its vacation park (Village Scaldia) and its direct position next to the Westerschelde. The Westerschelde might also be considered an amenity,

[49] When the recreational dwellings which are being used as second homes are excluded (as in figure 7.5), there remains a significant correlation between the number of second homes and the proximity of towns to the shore (Pearson's correlation coefficient = -0,627 and R squared value = 0,393).

but Hoofdplaat is one of the few towns approximate to the Westerschelde in which the water is actually experienced in the landscape.

The findings above on the locations of current second homes suggest the proximity to the shore has a very dominant position in the considerations of people in search of a second home. Strictly speaking, the findings from the current second home supply (*revealed behaviour*) could also be the result of the availability of dwellings and does not necessarily point to the preferences (*intentions*) of second home owners. However, table 7.9 showed the dominance of the preference for a destination approximate to the shore was also confirmed in the questionnaire, in which the proximity to the shore was ranked as the most important consideration in the second home choice. Furthermore, table 7.12 shows how the proximity to the shore outweighs other considerations in the second home decision-making process. The table shows three propositions which were presented in the questionnaire and in which respondents were asked to choose between two dwellings which differ from each other on two variables.[50] Table 7.12 suggests the vast majority of the owners feel the proximity of the shore can compensate for an unattractive dwelling (proposition 1), a relatively high dwelling price (proposition 2) and for an unattractive town (proposition 3).

Table 7.12
Propositions on trade-offs in the choice for a second home

	Agree	Disagree
1. I prefer a less attractive house nearby the coast (< 5 km distance), over a larger and more attractive house further from the coast (> 15 km distance).	72,8 %	27,2 %
2. I prefer a relatively expensive house nearby the coast (< 5 km distance), over a cheaper house further from the coast (> 15 km distance).	68,5 %	31,5 %
3. I prefer a house in an attractive village further from the coast (> 15 km distance), over a house in a less attractive village nearby the coast (< 5 km distance).	25,5 %	74,5 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners

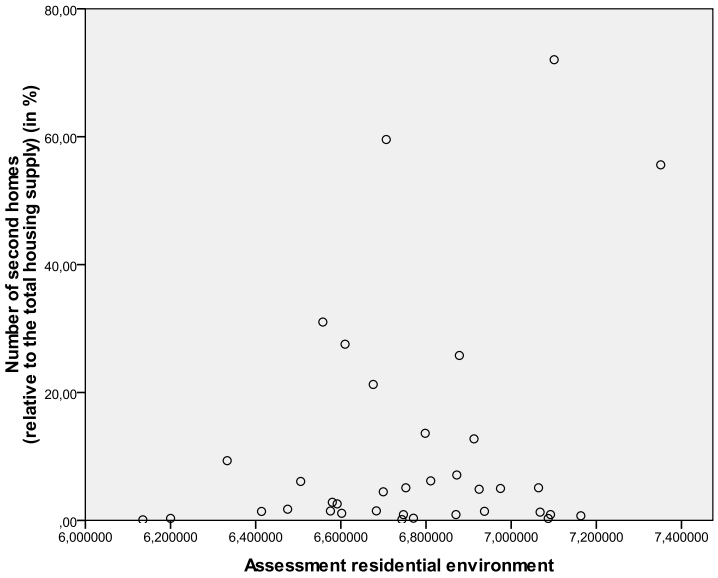
An analysis of table 7.12 broken down to different types of second home use, confirms the suggestions from section 7.3.1 which stated the proximity to the shore is extra important to investment properties. This is because investors generally strive for dwellings at walking distance of the shore, since these locations generally have higher leasing potential. 76,0 percent of the owners of investment properties have stated they are prepared to pay extra to get a second home closer to the shore. This goes for 71,3 percent of the vacation home owners, 70,7 percent of the full alternative owners and 64,6 percent of the weekend home owners. Thus, although the proximity to amenities as the shore in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is extremely important to all types of second home use, differences can be found in different usage types. To investment properties, the proximity to the shore (especially at walking distance) is suggested to be even more decisive than to the other types of second home use. This results to an overrepresentation of investment properties on vacation parks/seaside resorts. Vacation homes are also overrepresented on vacation parks/seaside resorts, but to a lesser extent than investment properties.

[50] To the propositions in the questionnaire it was added that all other variables were kept constant (ceteris paribus).

Although a correlation exists between the relative number of second homes in towns and the proximity of towns to the shore (figure 7.8; table 7.11), no correlation was found between the relative number of second homes and the assessed quality of the residential environment of towns (figure 7.9; table 7.13). Thus, the locations of current second homes suggest the attractiveness of the residential environment of towns does not play a decisive role in the second home decision-making process. This is confirmed by table 7.8, in which respondents did not rate the aesthetic value of towns as an especially important consideration in the decision-making process (this goes for all types of users). Also, the third proposition in table 7.12 shows the aesthetic quality of towns is inferior to the proximity of towns to the shore for most owners. This on the one hand reveals the number of second homes is not significantly higher in towns distant from the shore with a highly assessed residential environment than towns distant from the shore with a lowly assessed residential environment. For towns approximate to the shore on the other hand, the number of second homes also was not significantly higher in highly assessed towns than in lowly assessed towns (also see figure 6.7 in section 6.2.1). The relations between these dimensions are further studied with the analysis of the four sub cases (chapter 8).

Figure 7.9

Scatter plot of the number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) and the assessed quality of the residential environment



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table 7.13

Correlation between the number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) and the assessed quality of the residential environment of towns [51]

		Number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply)	Assessment residential environment
Number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply)	Pearson Correlation	1	,273
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,107
	N	36	36
Assessment residential environment	Pearson Correlation	,273	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,107	
	N	36	36

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

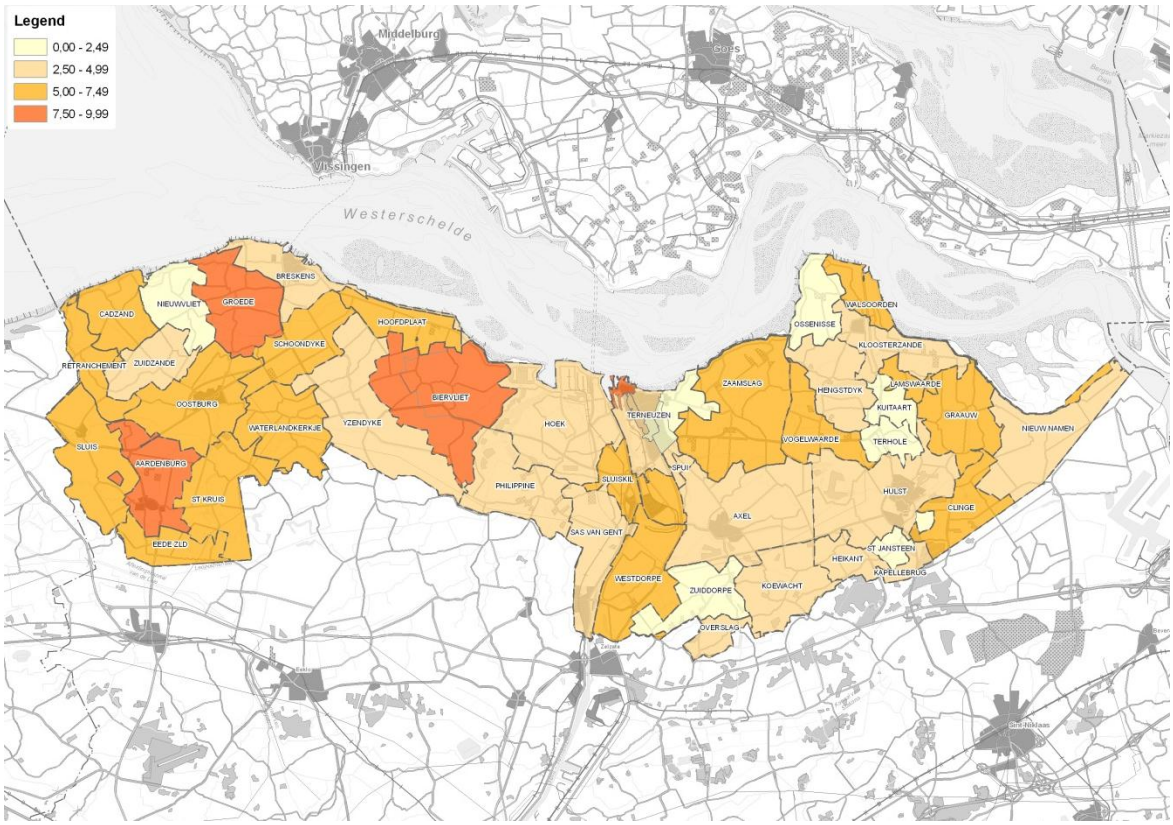
7.3.3 | Spatial Distribution of Vacant Dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

In summary, section 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 suggested the proximity of towns to the shore (or other amenities) is by far the most important spatial determinant in the demand for second homes. The quality of the residential environment on the other hand, seems to play only a marginal role in the decision-making process of purchasing a second home. Peace, tranquillity and space also came forward as a very important need of people in search of a second home. However, this quality barley differentiates between towns within Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and therefore it did not prove very useful in explaining the spatial distribution of second homes in the region. Finally, different types of second home use (section 4.2.2) can partially help explain the spatial distribution of second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. In this section, the spatial distribution of the vacant dwellings in the region is elaborated on. Figure 7.10 shows the relative number of vacant dwellings per town.

[51] When the recreational dwellings which are being used as second homes are excluded (as in figure 7.5), the statistical connection between the number of second homes and the assessed quality of the residential environment of towns is stronger than in table 7.13 (Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0,309 and R squared value = 0,095), but again no significant statistical correlation could be found.

Figure 7.10

Percentage of vacant dwellings (relative to the total housing supply) per town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

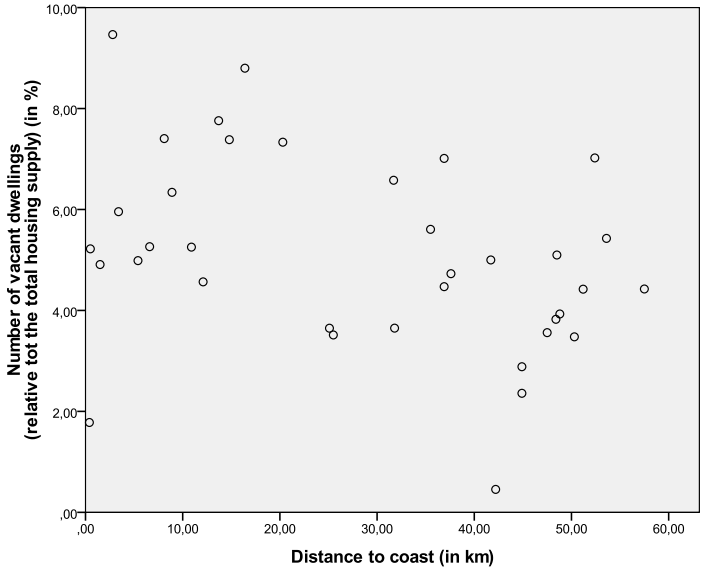


Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

The explanation of the results in figure 7.10 is not straight forward. No correlation was found between the assessed quality of the residential environment and the relative number of vacant dwellings. Just as the relative number of second homes in towns however, the relative number of dwellings does show a significant negative correlation with the proximity of towns to the shore (up to a confidence interval of 95 percent) (table 7.14). As the scatter plot of these two variables shows (figure 7.11), towns approximate to the shore generally have a higher vacancy rate than towns distant from the shore. However, this correlation is not very strong (Pearson's correlation coefficient = -0,362), and the same goes for the explained variance of the proximity to the shore as a predictor for the number of vacant dwellings (R squared value = 0,131). Although the negative correlation between proximity to the shore and the number of second homes can be explained by a strong preference of second home owners for dwellings approximate to the shore (section 7.3.2), the statistical correlation with the number of vacant dwellings is probably the result of the relatively peripheral position of western Zeeuws-Vlaanderen towards the rest of the Netherlands.

Figure 7.11

Scatter plot of the number of vacant dwellings (relative to the total housing supply) and the proximity to the shore per town



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table 7.14

Correlation between the number of vacant dwellings (relative to the total housing supply) and the proximity to the shore of towns

		Number of vacant dwellings (relative to the total housing supply)	Distance to coast
Number of vacant dwellings (relative to the total housing supply)	Pearson Correlation	1	-,362*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,030
	N	36	36
Distance to coast	Pearson Correlation	-,362*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,030	
	N	36	36

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

What figure 7.10 and 7.11 do not show is where exactly the vacant dwellings are located in the towns. In annex 7 more detailed maps on the spatial distribution of the vacancy can be found and table 7.15 reveals 88,91 percent of the vacant dwellings are located inside the built-up area of towns. Thus, the current vacancy is predominantly concentrated within the towns itself, whilst this goes for only one quarter of the second homes. As has been mentioned in section 7.3.1 however, it is uncertain whether the number of second homes within the built-up area of towns would have been significantly larger without the current prohibition on second homes in the municipalities of Sluis and Terneuzen. In other words: it is unfair to speak of a definite mismatch here, since the revealed behaviour here is not necessarily the result of consumer preferences, but also of availability (which is influenced by municipal policies on second homes). One certain mismatch which can be found however, is the large demand for second homes on vacation parks (60,88 percent of the revealed second home demand) which cannot be met by the current supply of vacant dwellings. In section 7.3.1 it was argued the large number of second homes on vacation parks is more the result of the extremely short distance of these parks to the shore (walking distance) than of a consumer preference for living on vacation parks. Still, this represents a spatial mismatch between demand and supply, because the supply of vacant dwellings at walking distance of the shore is extremely small (both in absolute and relative terms) (annex 7).

Table 7.15
Location types of second homes and vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	Number of second homes		**Number of vacant dwellings**	
	Absolute	***Relative***	***Absolute***	***Relative***
Inside the built-up area	1.125	26,74 %	2244	88,91 %
Outside the built-up area	521	12,38 %	227	8,99 %
Vacation park	2.562	60,88 %	53	2,10 %

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

In the literature (e.g. Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006) it has been argued the vacancy in shrinking regions will concentrate in the least attractive neighbourhoods, since on a 'relaxed' housing market people have more opportunities to fulfil their consumer preferences. The least attractive neighbourhoods especially are neighbourhoods with many dwellings from the early post-war period and with many dwellings (which formerly were) in the rented social housing stock. The maps in annex 7 show the largest concentrations of vacant dwellings are in specific areas in towns as Breskens, Oostburg, Terneuzen, Sluikskil and Axel. An exploration of the zip code areas with the largest vacancy rate revealed these are all areas which completely exist of early post-war (with dwelling which have been built between 1945 and 1964) town/end houses, large scale apartment buildings, or a combination of these. The number of second homes in these zip code areas on the other hand, is extremely small.

7.4 | Dwelling Characteristics

The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010) and the Recreation Expertise Centre (Van de Laar, 2010) claim there is a mismatch between the sorts of dwellings (potential) second home owners seek and the sorts of dwellings which are currently vacant (section 2.6.2). This section empirically tests this hypothesis by comparing the dwelling characteristics of the current vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen with the second home demand in the region. Three dwelling characteristics are compared: (i) the building periods of the dwellings (section 7.4.1), (ii) the dwellings types (section 7.4.2) and (iii) the assessed dwelling values (section 7.4.3).

All recreational dwellings are excluded from the analyses in this section. This is because the market of recreational dwellings is quite different from the regular housing market (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003; interviews). Not excluding the recreational dwellings would have had a large influence on the results, since the number of recreational dwellings which are used as second homes is significant whilst the number of vacant recreational dwellings is extremely small (section 7.3). Since this study explicitly investigates the opportunities for reducing the housing vacancy with the demand for second homes, especially the second home demand in regular dwellings is relevant. It should be stressed however, that the demand for second homes on vacation parks at walking distance of the shore already represents an important mismatch with the supply of vacant dwellings (section 7.3.3).

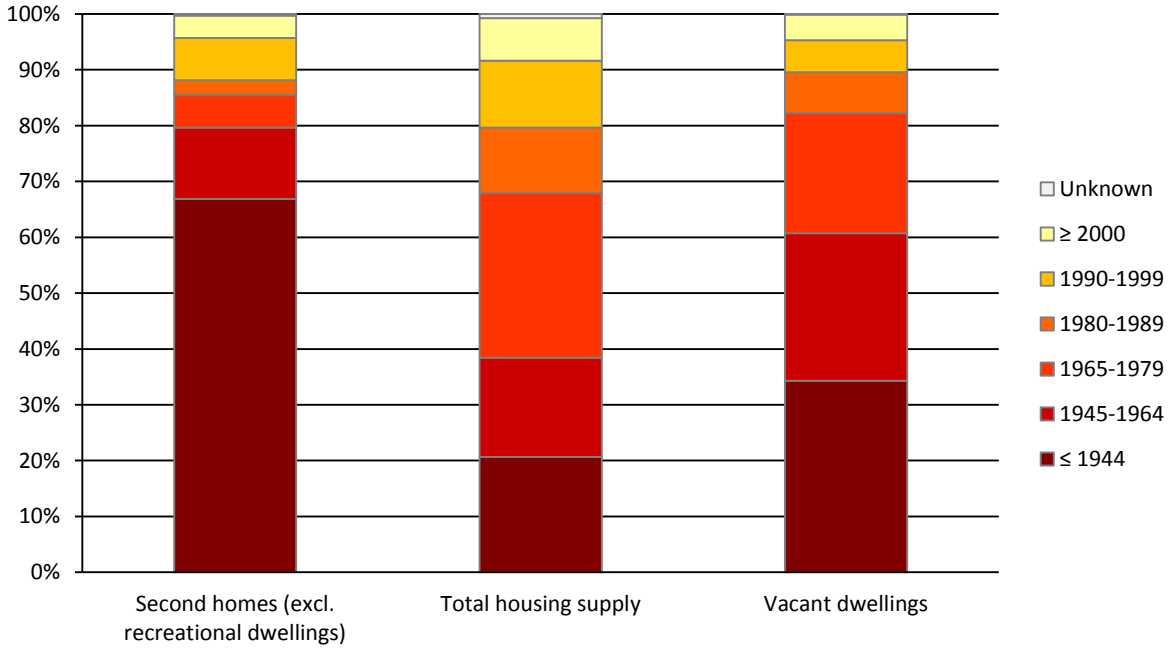
7.4.1 | Building Periods

Figure 7.12 shows the distribution of second homes and vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen over six building periods. Both are compared to the total housing supply, which is represented by the bar in the middle of the chart. Figure 7.12 shows a very strong overrepresentation of second homes in the pre-war period: 20,63 percent of the total housing supply in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has been built before 1945, whilst this goes for 66,88 percent of the dwellings which are used as second homes. Given the very strong overrepresentation in the category from before 1945, second homes are underrepresented in all other building periods. These findings might suggest second home owners have a preference for pre-war built dwellings and an aversion especially to dwellings built between 1945 and 1979. However, it is unknown to what extent this overrepresentation can be explained by a preference for dwellings from certain building periods instead of availability or other characteristics of these dwellings (e.g. dwelling types, section 7.4.2; dwelling values, section 7.4.3).

Figure 7.12 also shows in what building periods the vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen have been built. The chart suggests vacancy mostly occurs in older dwellings. Vacant dwellings are overrepresented in the building periods before 1965 and underrepresented in the other building periods. Thus, the housing vacancy in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is to a certain extent concentrated in pre-war built dwellings, whilst the current second home ownership in the region shows a very strong concentration in pre-war built dwellings. On the other hand, the vacancy is also largely concentrated in dwellings built between 1945 and 1979, whilst the number of second homes from these periods is relatively small. In the Netherlands, especially early post-war built dwellings are often regarded as unattractive and thus are most likely to get vacant as the result of consumer preferences (Van Dam,

De Groot & Verwest, 2006). This is because dwellings from this period (Dutch: *wederopbouw periode*) were built in a time of economic recovery and large housing shortages and therefore building quantities were prioritised over the quality of these buildings (Van der Kammen & De Klerk, 2006).

Figure 7.12
Composition of the second home demand (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen over building periods, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

7.4.2 | Dwelling Types

Next to the building periods of the second homes and vacant dwellings, it is also interesting to study to what extent the dwelling types of these differ. Figure 7.13 shows the distribution of second homes and vacant dwellings over different dwelling types and these are again compared to the total housing supply. The majority of the second home demand in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen exists of detached dwellings and town houses. In comparison to the composition of the total housing supply, detached dwellings are strongly overrepresented in the second home demand, whilst town houses are actually underrepresented (21,03 percent of the second homes are town houses, opposed to 26,59 percent of the total housing supply). It is important to note that town houses in the Dutch context predominantly refer to the typically Dutch row houses (Dutch: *rijtjeshuizen*) (Van der Kammen & De Klerk, 2006). The data seems to suggest a preference for detached dwellings, which is in line with the findings by NRIT Onderzoek (2010) (section 3.3.2). NRIT Onderzoek found that the majority (52 percent) of the second homes in the Netherlands are detached dwellings and that 72 percent of the people actively in search of a second home prefer to purchase a detached dwelling. In the study by NRIT Onderzoek 19 percent of the respondents owned a town house, whilst only 11 percent of the second home searchers intended to purchase a town house. This might suggest an unpopularity of town houses with second home searchers, which might be explained by the relatively low amount of

privacy these dwellings have to offer and because of their lack of uniqueness and character, since these row houses are uniform across the Netherlands in terms of appearance.

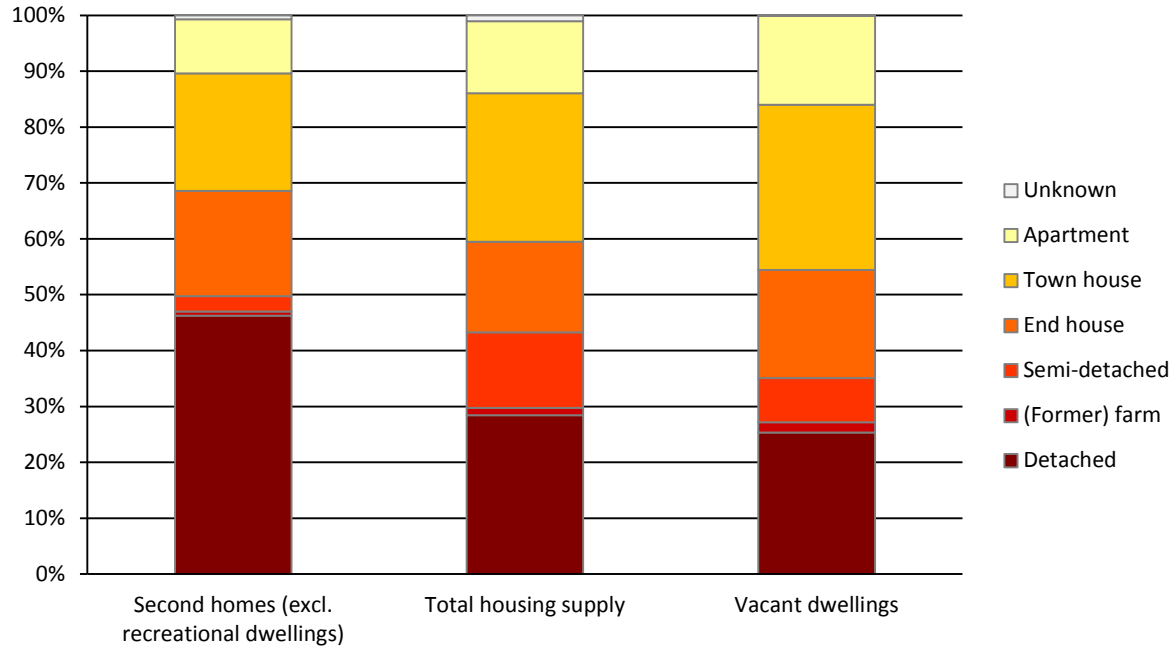
Furthermore, second homes are also underrepresented in semi-detached dwellings, apartments and (former) farms. Semi-detached dwellings are barely used by second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Possible explanations for this might be relatively high prices of semi-detached dwellings and a lack of availability because of popularity of the dwellings with permanent residents. Apartments are also underrepresented, but should be divided in apartments with and without a direct view of the sea: 71,25 percent of the apartments used as second homes have a direct view of the sea.[52] Without the apartments with a direct view of the sea, the underrepresentation of second home apartments would be a lot larger. In that case only 1,13 percent of the second homes would be an apartment, whilst 12,51 percent of the total housing supply consists of apartments. This suggests apartments in general barely appeal to second home owners. Figure 7.13 also shows (former) farms are barely used as second homes. This has also been stated in the literature (section 3.3.2), but it was questioned whether this demand would increase significantly under less strict planning restrictions and in a more 'relaxed' housing market. The interviewed real estate agents argue this will probably not be the case, because of the relatively large amount of maintenance and the relatively high value of (former) farms. The relatively high value of (former) farms is confirmed by the primary data: the average assessed dwelling value of (former) farms in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is € 369.037, whilst the average assessed dwelling value of the entire housing stock in the region is € 175.860 (also see table 7.16 in section 7.4.3).

An analysis of the dwelling types of the vacant dwellings in the region reveals some findings opposite to those of the second homes. Whilst there is a strong overrepresentation of detached second homes in the region, detached dwellings are underrepresented in the housing vacancy. Apartments and town houses on the other hand are underrepresented in the second home supply, whilst these dwelling types are both overrepresented in the housing vacancy. It has been mentioned that apartments with a direct view of the sea are an exception, since they do seem to appeal to second home owners. In contrast to 71,25 percent of the second home apartments however, only 23,18 percent of the vacant apartments in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen have a direct view of the sea. Moreover, almost all of these dwellings regard vacant apartments in large scale apartment blocks in Terneuzen, which have a direct view of the Westerschelde. It can be questioned whether a middle size city like Terneuzen appeals to second home owners. The findings suggest it does not, since there are only 40 second homes in the entire city (which represents 0,34 percent of the total housing supply). With the exclusion of the vacant apartments in Terneuzen, only 1,30 percent of the vacant apartments in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen have a direct view of the sea.

[52] These apartments are predominantly located in Cadzand-Bad and Breskens (Port Scaldis) (section 8.2).

Figure 7.13

Composition of the second home demand (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen over dwelling types, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

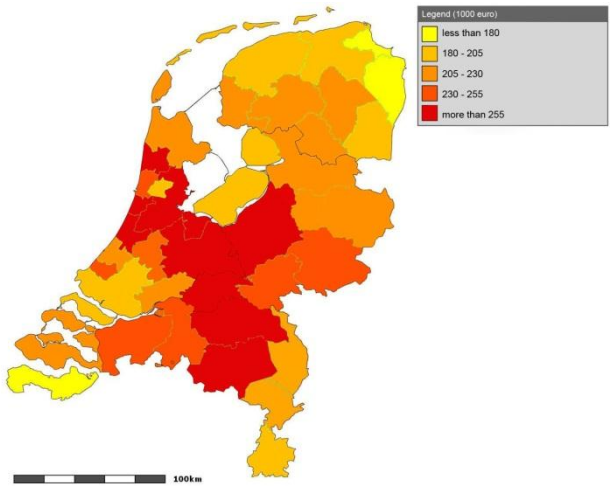
7.4.3 | Assessed Dwelling Values

Figure 7.14 shows the average assessed dwelling value per COROP region and it can be concluded the dwelling values in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are extremely low compared to the rest of the Netherlands. The average dwelling value in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is also significantly lower than in the rest of the province of Zeeland. The figure also shows that the three *top shrinking regions* in the Netherlands (Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, South-Eastern Limburg[53] and North-Eastern Groningen) have the lowest average dwelling values in the country. Assuming the assessed dwelling values (Dutch: *WOZ-waarden*) serve as a valid predictor of housing prices, figure 7.14 confirms the statement by the Dutch Association of Real Estate Brokers (NVM, 2010) that shrinking regions have relatively low housing prices to offer. Furthermore, it seems the relatively low dwelling values in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen also result in relatively inexpensive second homes (in comparison with the value of second homes in the rest of the country). NRIT Onderzoek (2010) for instance gathered data on the housing prices of second homes in the Netherlands and found an average value of € 275.000, whilst the average assessed value of a second home in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is € 159.404.[54]

[53] In figure 7.14 South-Limburg is shown as one COROP region with an average assessed dwelling value of € 183.00. In South-Eastern Limburg (Parkstad Limburg) however, the average assessed dwelling value is only € 155.00.

[54] The housing prices found by NRIT Onderzoek (2010) cannot be entirely compared with the dwelling values in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen which have been found in this study. This is because the data by NRIT Onderzoek is the result of a questionnaire and focuses on housing *prices*, whilst this study has used municipal data on assessed dwelling *values*. The housing prices expressed in the questionnaire by NRIT Onderzoek are probably higher than the actual values of the dwellings, since it is assumed people rather overestimate the value of their dwelling than underestimate it. However, even when this is taken into account, the difference between the average dwelling values in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and the rest of the Netherlands remains relatively large.

Figure 7.14
Average assessed dwelling value per COROP region



Source: Statistics Netherlands, 2011

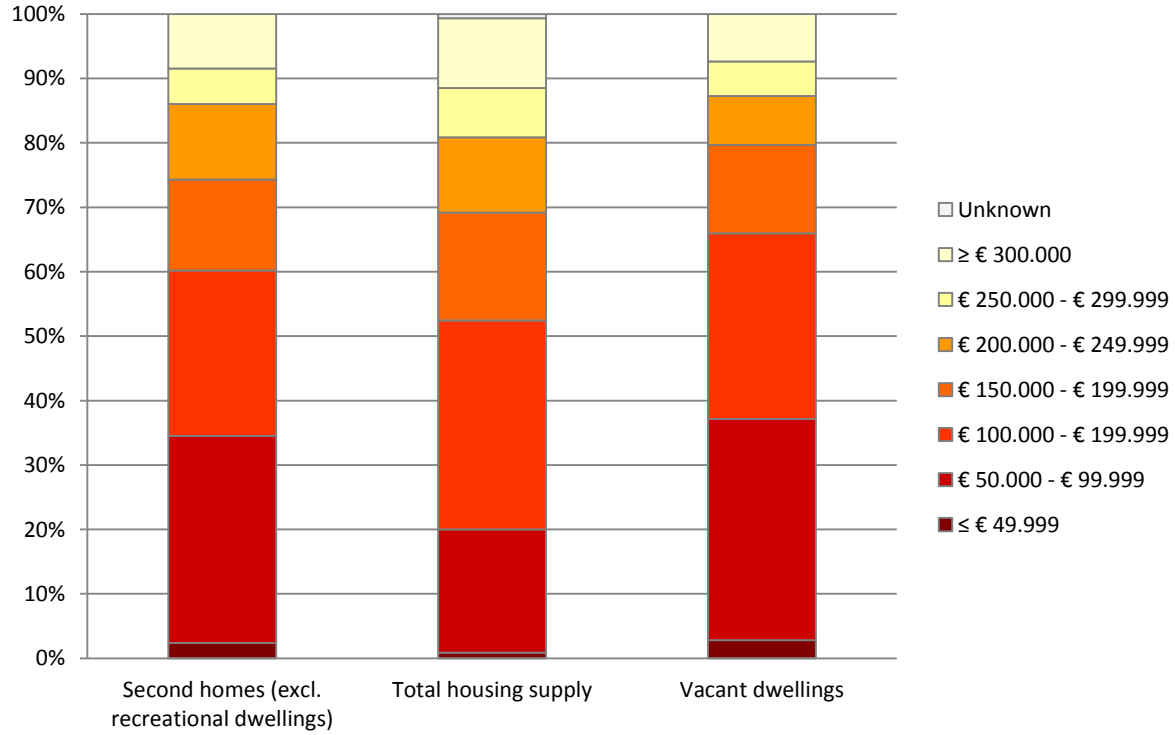
Figure 7.15 shows the distribution of second homes and vacant dwellings over several dwelling value categories. The dwelling values in figure 7.15 have been adopted from the municipal real estate tax (Dutch: *onroendezaak-belasting*), for which the value of each dwelling in the Netherlands is assessed. The figure reveals the assessed values of second homes are in general higher than the assessed values of vacant dwellings, but the dwelling values are for a large part quite comparable. In comparison with the total housing supply, second homes and vacant dwellings are both overrepresented in the less expensive segments of the housing market (dwellings with an assessed value below € 100.000) and on average have a lower assessed value than the average of the regional housing stock (table 7.16). The interviewed real estate agents confirmed the majority of the second homes are from the lesser expensive segments of the housing market. The financial limitations of second home owners and the lower standard for second homes in comparison with permanent dwellings were given as explanations. The latter has been confirmed in the literature, Marjavaara (2007: 307) for instance stated: "Permanent dwellings generally have a higher standard, which is expressed in assessed property value". Furthermore, it is likely the higher segments of the housing market contain an overrepresentation of relatively large dwellings. The interviewees claim the extra size of these dwellings does not compensate for the extra costs second home owners have to make. Moreover, extra size also entails extra maintenance, which second home owners might find undesirable. The questionnaire results also seem to confirm the second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are generally not notably large: only 10,1 percent of the respondents owned a second home with 4 or more bedrooms (table 7.17). About half of the second homes have 3 bedrooms, which is in line with the findings of NRIT Onderzoek (2010) (section 3.3.2).

When the dwelling values are broken down to different types of second home use, the values of investment properties stand out: investment properties are both underrepresented in the lower segments (10,3 percent has a value of less than € 100.000, opposed to 15,9 percent of the other types of second homes) as in the higher segments of the housing market (6,9 percent has a value of more than € 250.000, opposed to 21,4 percent of the other types of second homes). The locations of the investment properties (generally at walking distance of the shore; see section 7.3.1 - 7.3.2) are

probably too expensive for the lower segments, but at the same time dwellings with a value of more than € 250.000 are barely used as investment properties. This might be explained by the fact that the really affluent owners (with an annual gross household income of € 100.000 or more) not often use their second home for commercial purposes since they do not necessarily need these financial benefits (section 7.2.2). Vacation homes (14,9 percent), weekend homes (14,4 percent) and full alternatives (21,3 percent) all occur in the lower segments and especially weekend homes (25,5 percent) and full alternatives (21,3 percent) are often located in dwellings with a value of more than € 250.000.

Figure 7.15

Composition of the second home demand (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen over categories of assessed dwelling values, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table 7.16

Average assessed dwelling values Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (excl. recreational dwellings)

	Average assessed dwelling value
Vacant dwellings	€ 146.694
Second homes	€ 159.404
Total housing supply	€ 175.860

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table 7.17
Number of bedrooms in second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
1 or 2 bedroom(s)	358	41,1 %
3 bedrooms	424	48,7 %
4 bedrooms	74	8,5 %
5 or more bedrooms	14	1,6 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners

7.4.4 | (Mis)match between Demand and Supply

The data on the dwelling characteristics of second homes and vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen for a large part suggest a mismatch between what second home owners seek and what the vacant supply has to offer. The revealed behaviour of second home owners in the region shows second homes are predominantly concentrated in relatively inexpensive pre-war built dwellings. The vacancy in the region is for a large part also concentrated in inexpensive and old dwellings. Although there might be a certain match here, the vacant dwellings are in general in a slightly lower segment and for a large part are also dwellings from the early post-war period (Dutch: *wederopbouw periode*). The findings from the municipal data and the interviews however suggest early post war dwellings are unpopular with second home owners, which is also related to the dwelling types. In comparison with the housing stock in general, the vacancy is especially concentrated in town houses (row houses) and apartments. In contrast, the revealed behaviour of second home owners suggests a strong preference for detached dwellings, whilst second homes are underrepresented in town houses and apartments (with the exception of apartments with a direct view of the sea).

In the literature (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003) a trend of second homes getting more luxurious has been mentioned (section 3.3.2). It is stated that second home owners and searchers increasingly put higher demands on second homes. The VROM-raad (2009) argues housing demands have increased in general, thus also for permanent dwellings. This trend of higher demands has also been confirmed by the interviewed real estate agents. As a result of this trend, the mismatch between the supply of vacant dwellings and the demands of second home searchers is expected to only grow larger in the future. This is because the willingness of second home searchers to occupy obsolete dwellings (which is suggested to already be limited) will probably further decrease with this development (section 9.3).

As a consequence of demographic decline, housing prices in the Dutch shrinking regions are expected to further decline (relative to the dwelling prices in the rest of the Netherlands) (Eichholtz & Lindenthal, 2009). This can on the one hand enhance more demand for second homes in the region because it might be an important advantage opposed to other regions and because second homes get affordable to a larger group of people (NVM, 2010). On the other hand, relatively lower housing

prices can also enhance the qualitative demands of second home searchers. In other words: people who currently can only afford a small early post-war row house as a second home, might in the future also be affluent enough to purchase a detached dwelling of higher quality. Thus, it is doubtful whether a relative decrease in housing prices will actually increase the plausibility of vacant dwellings to be converted into second homes.

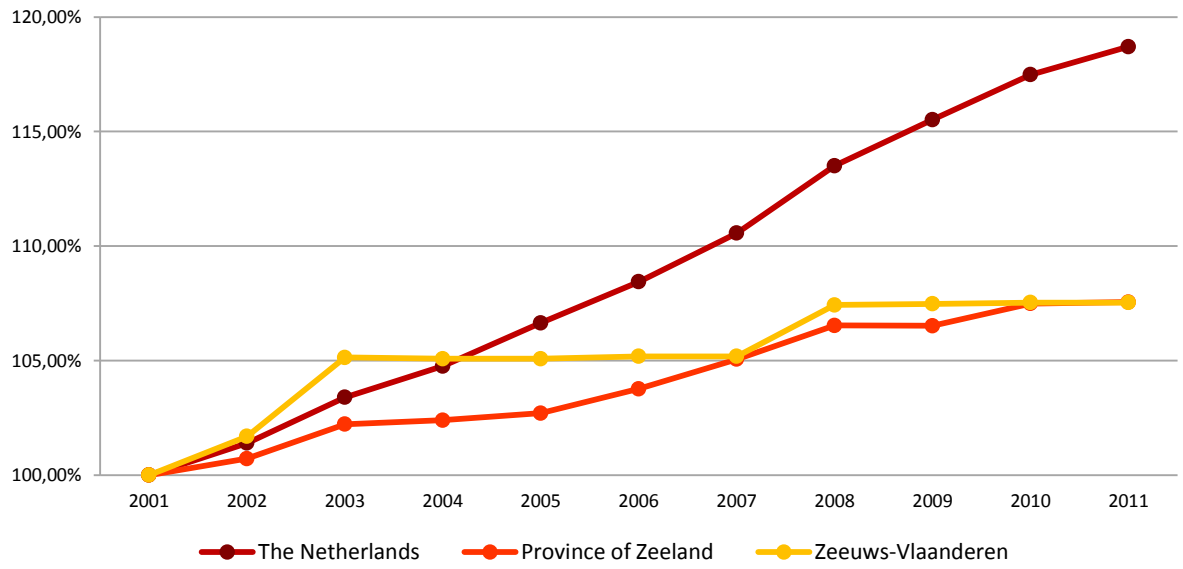
7.5 | Future Demand for Second Homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

Both from the literature (section 3.2.2) and the interviews with real estate agents it can be concluded the future demand for second homes is highly uncertain. Latten (2010) argues future demand will grow because of an increasing need for part-time dwelling (section 2.6.2). However, this phenomenon is currently barely recognised by the interviewed real estate agents from Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Several interviewees argued they feel part-time dwelling is rare in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen because the accessibility of the region from the Randstad is limited. Thus, this peripheral position not only makes Zeeuws-Vlaanderen relatively unattractive for permanent dwelling, but might also be an obstruction for part-time dwelling. Still, this does not prove part-time dwelling cannot be a growing phenomenon. However, even when it is assumed there is a growing need for part-time dwelling in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, it should be noted that the interviewees stress the size of the demand for second homes is predominantly determined by macro-economic developments and tax regimes.

Notwithstanding the mentioned uncertainties on the market for second homes, Van der Reest and Beukers (2011) recently tried to predict the developments on the market for recreational dwellings. Section 7.3.1 showed the majority of the current second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are recreational dwellings, hence the developments on the market for recreational dwellings can serve as an indication for the market for second homes (also see RPB & RIGO, 2003). Van der Reest and Beukers claim the market for recreational dwellings in the province of Zeeland is saturated: they observe an outdated supply of recreational dwellings and an oversupply. Figure 7.16 shows the number of recreational dwellings in the Netherlands has substantially grown over the last ten years, whilst in Zeeland and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen the number of recreational dwellings has experienced a more limited growth. Whilst the supply of recreational dwellings in Zeeland and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has thus grown, the number of overnight stays has stabilised which means the average occupancy of the dwellings is declining. Van der Reest and Beukers conclude they believe only unique and large scale developments of recreational dwellings (larger than 300 dwellings) are promising. They also state however, that such projects will probably be at the expense of the outdated supply.

Several large scale recreational projects in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are currently being developed. In the seaside resort of Cadzand-Bad a new large scale vacation park (Cavelot; 450 recreational dwellings) and an apartment building (Duinhof; 131 apartments) – in which both permanent and recreational use are allowed – are currently under construction. Furthermore, plans have been made to develop 200 part-time dwellings in Perkpolder in the municipality of Hulst (on the location of the former ferry terminal to Zuid-Beveland). In absolute numbers, there currently are 1.970 recreational dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (Statistics Netherlands, 2011). Thus, the supply of recreational dwellings is expected to heavily increase in the coming years. Whether these developments will come at the expense of the outdated supply or not remains to be seen.

Figure 7.16
Development of the number of recreational dwellings in index numbers (base year: 2001)



Source: Statistics Netherlands, 2011b

7.6 | Conclusions

In this chapter the match between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings in the shrinking region Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has been analysed on a regional scale. In chapter 8 this is analysed on a lower and more detailed scale, namely on the scale of four specific types of towns within the region. Thus, in chapter 8 the results from this chapter are tested in different local settings, therewith doing as much justice as possible to the diversity of the region and the complexity of the housing market (see section 5.4.3 for an elaboration on the relation between chapter 7 and 8).

First, some background characteristics of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen have been analysed in order to better understand the demand side of the market for second homes. Findings from the literature were mostly confirmed: second home owners are on average more affluent than average Dutch households and the largest groups of second home owners are nuclear middle aged families, empty nesters and retired people (the latter is significantly overrepresented in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen however). The second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen predominantly have their primary residence in the province of North-Brabant, the eastern and southern part of the *Randstad*, the German state North Rhine-Westphalia and the western part of Flanders, Belgium.

In section 7.3 it was shown the proximity of towns to the shore (or other *amenities* like nature reserve 'The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe') is by far the most important spatial determinant in the demand for second homes, and a relatively strong negative correlation was found between the distance to the shore and the number of second homes in towns (Pearson's correlation coefficient = -0,625 and R squared value = 0,391). Also, the effect of the shore appeared to diminish quickly: notably less second homes were found in towns at more than 6 kilometres from the shore than in

towns closer to the shore. Results from the questionnaire with second home owners suggest proximity to the shore can generally compensate for having a less attractive dwelling, a higher dwelling price or having a dwelling in a less attractive town. Furthermore, the assessed quality of the residential environment of towns has been investigated, but this appeared to play only a marginal role in the decision-making process of a second home purchase, and no significant correlation was found. Next to proximity to amenities like the shore, peace, tranquillity and space were also mentioned as very important needs of people in search of a second home. However, it is argued these variables barely differentiate between towns within Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, since almost all towns in the region are able to offer sufficient peace, tranquillity and space. Furthermore, the analysis of the spatial distribution of the vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen showed the vacancy is just as the second home demand predominantly concentrated in the western part of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. In several towns in western Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, both the number of vacant dwellings and the number of second homes are large. However, the specific demand for second homes at vacation parks at *walking distance* of the shore cannot be met by currently vacant dwellings, because the supply of vacant dwellings within walking distance of the shore is extremely small.

Next to the spatial match between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings it has also been analysed to what extent the characteristics of those dwellings match. Although some similarities were found between the demand and supply side (e.g. both second homes and vacancy are concentrated in relatively old and inexpensive dwellings), it is argued the dwellings which second home owners seek mostly do not match with the dwellings which are currently vacant. The vacancy in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is predominantly concentrated in town houses (i.e. row houses), apartments (without a direct view of the sea) and dwellings which have been built between 1945 and 1979, whilst the findings from municipal data and interviewed real estate agents suggest these kinds of dwellings are not popular with second home owners. Moreover, literature (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003; VROM-raad, 2009) and interviewees suggest a trend of second home searchers putting increasingly higher demands on second homes. As a result of this trend it can be assumed the mismatch between the supply of vacant dwellings and the demands of second home searchers is expected to only grow larger in the future (also see section 9.3). How the demand for second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen will develop in quantitative terms is highly uncertain. A sociocultural development as *part-time dwelling*, like Jan Latten (2010) suggests, might enhance the demand for second homes. However, this phenomenon currently is barely recognised by local real estate agents and the demand for second is not only determined by sociocultural developments, but more so by macro-economic developments and tax regimes.

Throughout the entire chapter different types of second home users have been distinguished. In section 4.2.2 five types of second home use have been elaborated on (investment properties, vacation homes, weekend homes, pied-à-terre and second homes which are used as a full alternative to the first home) and the differences in the demands of these were analysed in this chapter. The preferences of the different types of users appeared to be quite similar for the most part. However, the demand for investment properties notably diverges from the demand for the other usage types. Investment properties are heavily overrepresented at locations within walking distance of the shore and vacation parks, presumably because of the larger and more stable leasing potential of these locations (Heijstek, 2001). To a lesser extent vacation homes are also overrepresented at these locations. Although, the majority of all types of users stated not to prefer to own a dwelling on a

vacation park, 60,88 percent of the current second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are located on vacation parks. Interviewees argue this is mainly because almost all of the vacation parks in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are located at walking distance of the shore.

All in all, the analysis of demand and supply on the regional scale concludes there is a significant mismatch between the dwellings second home searchers demand and the vacant dwellings Zeeuws-Vlaanderen currently has to offer. However, the question remains whether this goes for all of the towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, and why some towns might have a larger (mis)match than others. In order to answer these remaining questions, four sub cases are analysed in the next chapter. Those sub cases test these regional conclusions, by reflecting at the findings from four different local settings. Also, the sub cases elaborate on the extent of the (mis)match in different towns, and therewith aim to explain how the (mis)match between demand and supply is constituted. This helps explain why some towns have a larger (mis)match than others.

8 | RESULTS: SECOND HOMES AND VACANT DWELLINGS IN THE SUB CASES

In the previous chapter, the second home demand and the supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen were analysed at the regional scale. Those findings provide the proper context for the more detailed analysis in the current chapter of four sub cases within the region. The sub case analyses test whether the regional findings from chapter 7 also apply to different local settings. The four sub cases are: Retranchement (section 8.1), Breskens (section 8.2), Graauw and Hoek (section 8.3), and Oostburg and Schoondijke (section 8.4). The selection of these four sub cases has been elaborated on in section 6.2.1 and the sub cases have been introduced in section 6.2.2. This chapter analyses each sub case independently and in section 8.5 the results from the four sub cases are compared.

8.1 | Retranchement

8.1.1 | Introduction

In the selection of the sub cases (section 6.2.1), Retranchement was chosen because of its proximity to the shore and its highly assessed residential environment. The number of second homes in Retranchement is extremely large: 55,60 percent of the total housing supply in Retranchement are second homes. Only Nieuwvliet (72,04 percent) and Cadzand (59,56 percent) have higher percentages of second homes.[55] The majority of the second homes in Retranchement (72,40 percent) are *recreational dwellings* on vacation park 'Zomerdorp 't Zwin', which is at *walking distance* (less than 1,5 kilometres) of the shore. When the recreational dwellings at Zomerdorp 't Zwin are excluded from the housing supply, still 30,04 percent of the dwellings in Retranchement are currently being used as second homes.[56]

The vacancy rate in Retranchement is 5,96 percent. This means the number of vacant dwellings relative to the total housing supply is slightly above the regional (4,67 percent) and the municipal average (5,80 percent). However, the observation of Retranchement suggests the housing vacancy data in Retranchement is unreliable. An address list of vacant dwellings was used during the observation, and the majority of the dwellings which were listed as vacant were occupied instead of vacant. From the observation it is estimated less than 2 percent of the dwellings in Retranchement is vacant. An earlier inventory by the village council (in Gerards, Van Wetten, Raymakers & Van Gendt,

[55] Both Nieuwvliet and Cadzand exist of an original settlement (Nieuwvliet-Dorp and Cadzand-Dorp) and a seaside resort of vacation parks and other recreational services (Nieuwvliet Bad and Cadzand-Bad).
[56] In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, only Nieuwvliet has a higher percentage of second homes which do not have a recreational function in the land-use plan (33,87 percent).

2012) confirms the vacancy rate in Retranchement is relatively low. It is uncertain how the inaccuracy of the vacancy rate of Retranchement in the primary data can exactly be explained, especially since the housing vacancy data in the other sub cases (section 8.2 - 8.4) was extremely accurate. It should be remarked the measurement of vacancy is static in this study (section 9.4). Hence, it represents a 'snapshot' of the vacancy at a certain point in time, whilst the occupancy of dwellings in practice is dynamic. The observation was conducted three months later than the snapshot of the primary data, which might explain the discrepancies. Still, it is remarkable how the vacancy rate in Retranchement is suggested to have undergone such significant changes in a relatively short period.

Furthermore, a relatively high vacancy rate – which the primary data suggest – is usually expected to be an expression of undesirability of a town and its dwellings (Verwest, Sorel & Buitelaar, 2008). However, the majority of the current vacant dwellings in Retranchement should not be considered unwanted or unattractive. The observation of the vacant dwellings in the town suggests the majority of the current vacant dwellings are predominantly relatively highly valued dwellings (see figure 8.10 in section 8.1.3). The primary data confirm this: in total contrast to the findings at the regional level (section 7.4), detached dwellings are heavily overrepresented in the vacancy in Retranchement (figure 8.4 in section 8.1.3), town houses are underrepresented and the vacancy is heavily overrepresented in the higher segments of the housing market (dwellings with an assessed dwelling value of € 250.000 or more) (figure 8.5 in section 8.1.3). Since the characteristics of these vacant dwellings are in such contrast to the characteristics of vacant dwellings in the rest of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, and since both scholars (e.g. Van der Wouw, 2011) and local real estate agents characterise Retranchement as one of the most attractive towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, it is legitimate to assume most of the current vacancy cannot be labelled as *structural vacancy*. Structural vacancy does not refer to dwellings which are only vacant on short term, but to dwellings which are vacant on the long term because they insufficiently meet the preferences of consumers. Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest (2006) argue that regions which have a declining number of households are confronted with structural vacancy, and that the vacancy concentrates in the least attractive dwellings and neighbourhoods. The current vacant dwellings in Retranchement certainly are not the least attractive dwellings, and given the possibility of price corrections it is not expected the vacancy will on the long term concentrate in these kinds of dwellings.

Finally, some remarks on the background characteristics of the second home owners in Retranchement can be made. The results from section 7.2 have been specified to owners in Retranchement. Generally, second home owners in Retranchement have the same socioeconomic profile as second home owners elsewhere in the region. However, the annual gross household income of second home owners in Retranchement is notably higher than the regional average: in Retranchement 47,6 percent of the owners have an annual gross household income of more than € 100.000, whilst at the regional scale this is 30,75 percent. Although not investigated, these relatively high incomes in Retranchement are probably related to the relatively high dwelling values in the town. Furthermore, the number of Belgian owners in Retranchement (30,52 percent) is relatively high in comparison with the regional average (18,29 percent), whilst the number of German owners is relatively low (21,10 percent opposed to 34,32 percent) (table 8.1). The number of Dutch owners (47,08 percent) is comparable to the regional average (45,10 percent). This can probably be explained by the location of Retranchement, which is right at the Dutch-Belgian border.

Table 8.1
Nationality of second home owners in Retranchement

	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
Dutch	145	47,08 %
German	65	21,10 %
Belgian	94	30,52 %
Other	4	1,30 %

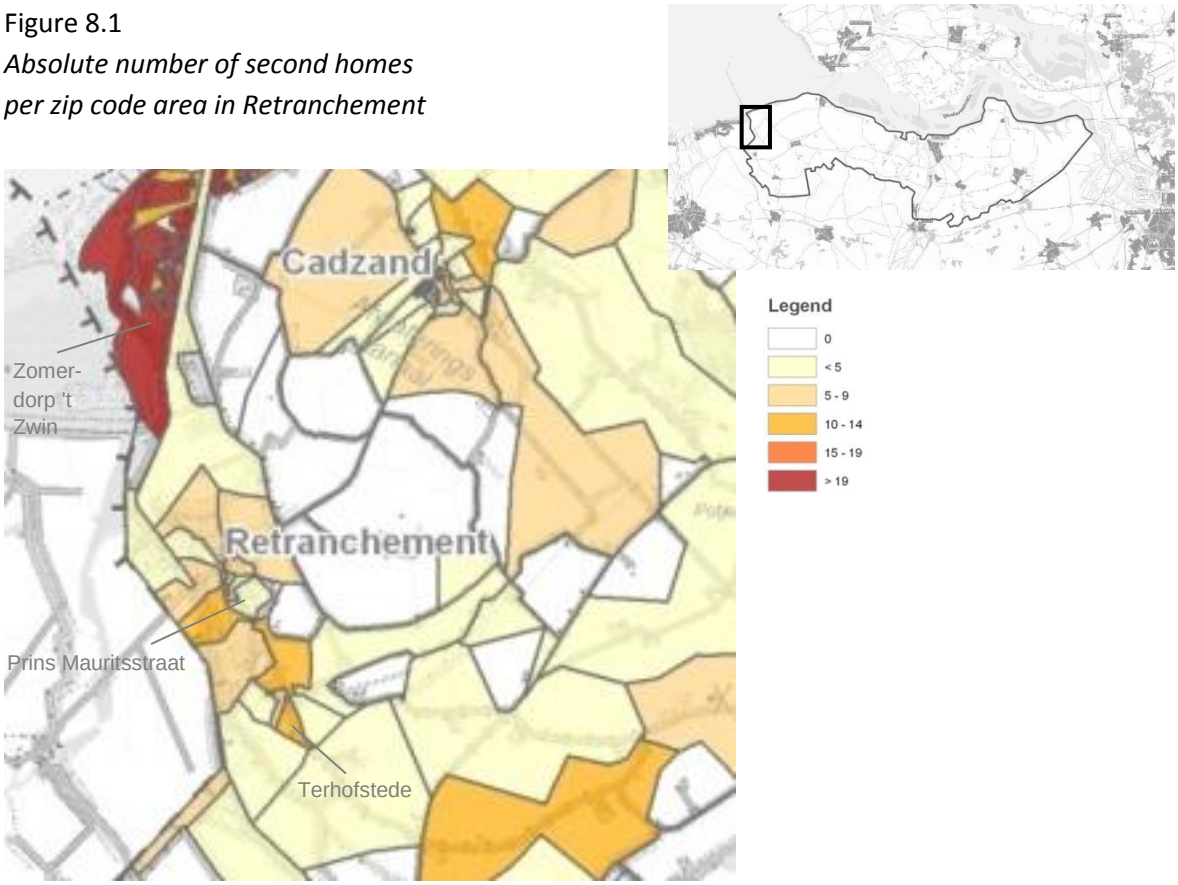
Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

8.1.2 | Spatial Distribution

As has been mentioned above, the majority of the second homes in Retranchement are located at vacation park Zomerdorp 't Zwin (72,40 percent). All dwellings at Zomerdorp 't Zwin function as second homes and the park has a recreational function in the land-use plan. In chapter 7 it was concluded that dwellings on vacation parks which are at walking distance from the shore more often function as investment properties or vacation homes than *regular second homes* do. However, whether investment properties and vacation homes are also overrepresented in Zomerdorp 't Zwin cannot be verified by the questionnaire results due to the relatively small number (34) of respondents at this location.

Of the second homes in Retranchement 10,71 percent are located outside the built-up area and 16,88 percent inside the built-up area of the village Retranchement itself (including the township Terhofstede). Especially in Terhofstede the relative number of second homes is significant: 45,71 percent of the dwellings in the township are currently being used as second homes. Within the village of Retranchement, it is notable that the second homes are clearly present in basically all streets, except for the Prins Mauritsstraat which forms the southern part of the village (figure 8.1). The Prins Mauritsstraat predominantly consists of simple and small town/end houses with an assessed dwelling value below € 150.000 (this goes for 80,33 percent of the dwellings in the Prins Mauritsstraat) (figure 8.2). In an earlier study on Retranchement, in which depth interviews with inhabitants were conducted, it was concluded inhabitants experience the Prins Mauritsstraat as a relatively unattractive residential area (Van Troost, 2011) and the revealed behaviour of second home owners suggests this area currently is also not popular with second home owners.

Figure 8.1
Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in Retranchement



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.2
Photo of the average dwelling in the Prins Mauritsstraat in Retranchement

8.1.3 | Dwelling Characteristics

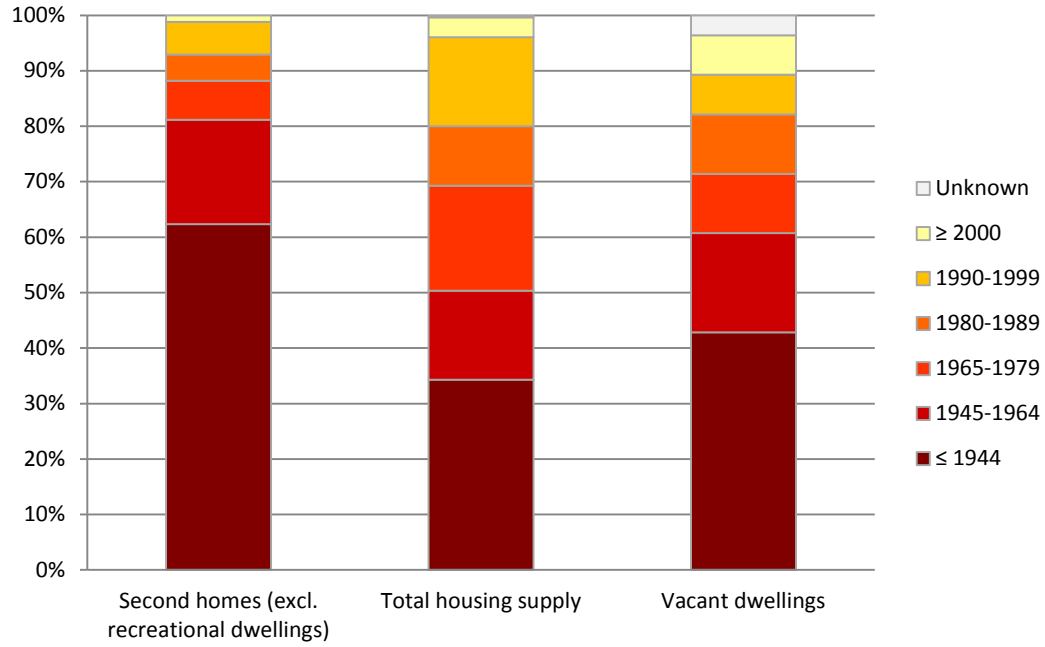
In section 8.1.1 it has already been mentioned that the characteristics of the current vacant dwellings in Retranchement are in total contrast with the general findings from chapter 7. The characteristics of the second homes in Retranchement however, do endorse the regional image: the second homes are heavily overrepresented in pre-war built dwellings (dwellings which have been built before 1945) (figure 8.3), overrepresented in detached dwellings and underrepresented in town houses (figure 8.4). In contrast to the regional findings however, the second homes in Retranchement are not concentrated in the lower segments of the housing market (dwellings with an assessed value below € 100.000) (figure 8.5). This can be explained by the relatively high dwelling values in Retranchement: Retranchement has an average assessed dwelling value of € 251.964, which is well above the regional average (€ 175.860).[57] The assessed dwelling values in Retranchement are not only high in comparison with the rest of the Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, but for Dutch standards in general (figure 7.14 in section 7.4.3). Figure 8.6 shows the average assessed dwelling value per town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. The relatively high dwelling values in Retranchement are probably the result of both its location (near the shore and near Knokke-Heist)[58] and its highly assessed residential environment. Interviewees and inhabitants (in Gerards, Van Wetten, Raymakers & Van Gendt, 2012) especially praise the uniqueness of the town, private character and its structure of historical ramparts. A relatively strong correlation between the assessment of the residential environment and the average assessed dwelling value per town exists (Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0,557 and R squared value = 0,310). This suggests the dwelling values in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are largely an expression of the quality of the residential environment in towns, but it should be stressed that many other variables can be in play and that explaining dwelling values is highly complex (e.g. Hoekstra, Meijers & Spaans, 2011).

Photos of the second homes in Retranchement are shown in figure 8.7 - figure 8.9. Figure 8.7 shows average second homes outside the built-up area, which generally are large and luxurious dwellings. Figure 8.8 shows the appearance of average second homes in Retranchement itself and figure 8.9 shows dwellings from Zomerdorp 't Zwin. Finally, figure 8.10 shows photos of the average vacant dwelling in Retranchement. As has been mentioned in section 8.1.1, these are predominantly relatively attractive and highly valued dwellings, which is in total contrast with the other sub cases.

[57] In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, only the town Sint Kruis has a higher average assessed dwelling value than Retranchement (annex 1).
[58] Knokke-Heist is well-known for its allure and the average housing prices in Knokke-Heist are extremely high for Belgian and Dutch standards (Surkyn, 2010).

Figure 8.3

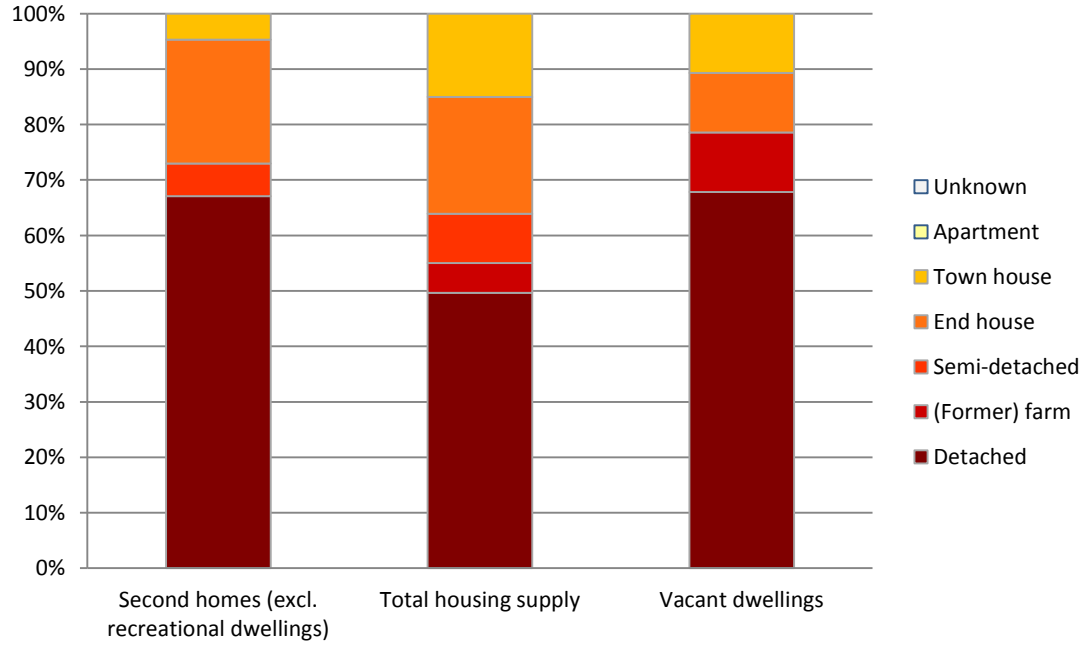
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Retranchement over building periods, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.4

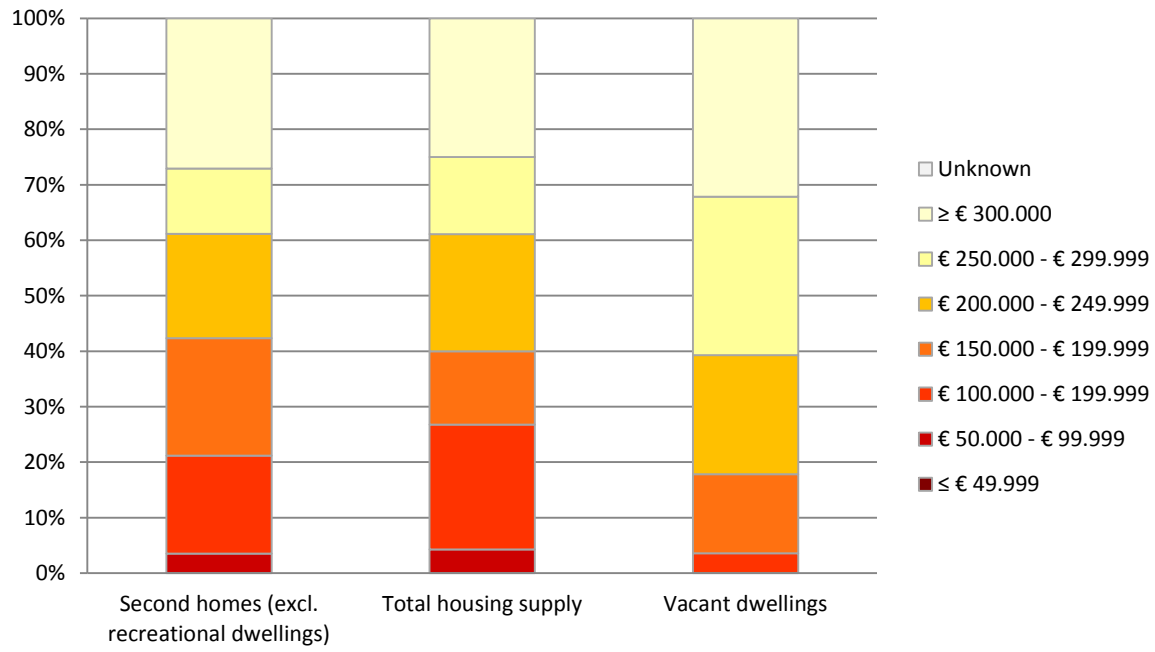
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Retranchement over dwelling types, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.5

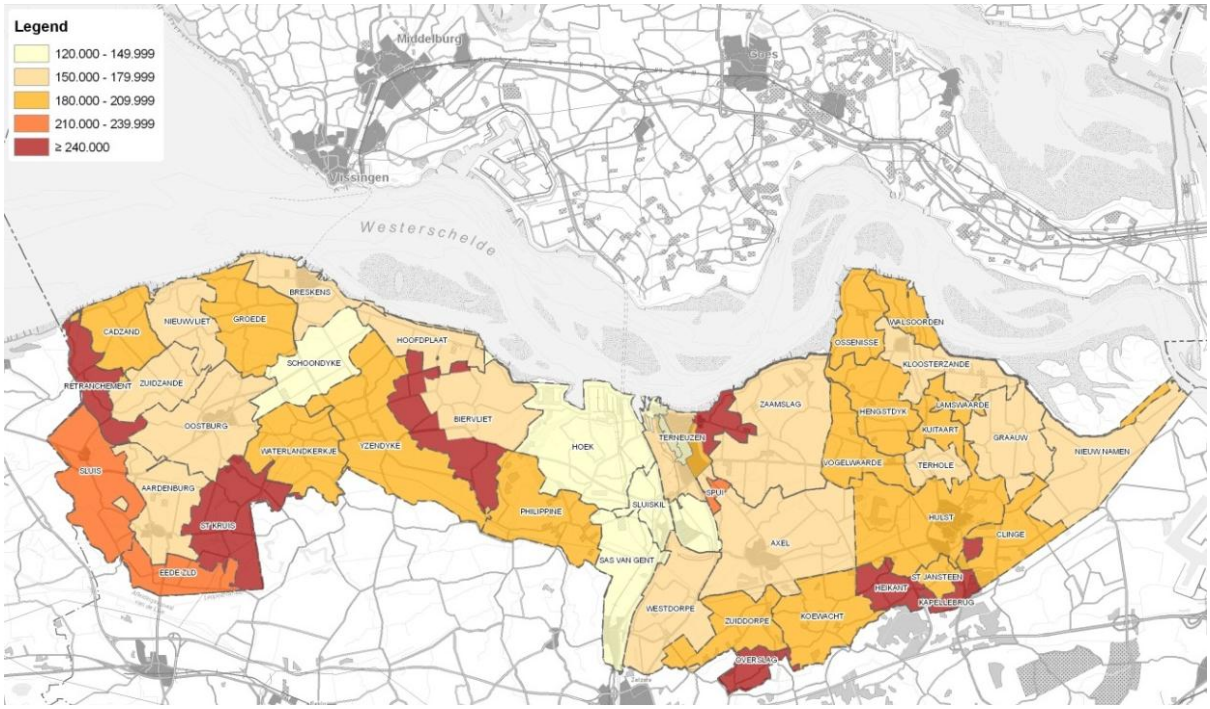
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Retranchement over categories of assessed dwelling values, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.6

Average assessed dwelling value per town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Figure 8.7
Photos of average second homes outside the built-up area of Retranchement

Figure 8.8
Photos of averages second homes inside the built-up area of Retranchement

Figure 8.9
Photos of average second homes at vacation park Zomerdorp 't Zwin next to Retranchement

Source: Verhuurbedrijf Neptunus Cadzand, 2012; Roompot, 2012

Figure 8.10
Photos of average vacant dwellings in Retranchement

8.1.4 | Conclusions

Retranchement is generally considered a very attractive town and it has an extremely attractive location, both near the shore, nature reserve ‘t Zwin and Knokke-Heist. Retranchement has one of the highest numbers of second homes in in the region. The majority of these second homes are located at vacation park Zomerdorp ‘t Zwin, but a relatively large part of the regular housing supply (30,04 percent) is also being used as a second home. At the same time, the number of vacant

dwellings in Retranchement is very small (the vacancy rate is estimated to be less than 2 percent). The primary data suggests an above average vacancy rate, but the observation of the town and an earlier study (Gerards, Van Wetten, Raymakers & Van Gendt, 2012) contest this. The current vacancy in Retranchement manifests itself in relatively attractive dwellings (figure 8.10) of which it can be assumed they are not *structurally vacant*: these dwelling are considered to be vacant on short term because of its current price-quality ratio, but are not expected to be vacant on long term since price corrections are expected to eventually cause the vacancy to concentrate in the least attractive dwellings (Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest, 2006).

In line with the regional findings from chapter 7, second homes in Retranchement are heavily overrepresented in pre-war built dwellings and detached dwellings, and underrepresented in town houses. The relatively large number of second homes, the relatively low vacancy rate and the similarities between the dwelling characteristics of these, suggest demand and supply match fairly well in Retranchement. What is notable however, is that although second homes are distributed all over Retranchement (figure 8.1), there barely are second homes in the relatively unattractive Prins Mauritsstraat (figure 8.2), which predominantly consists of relatively simple and inexpensive townhouses/end houses. This suggests there is a mismatch between demand and supply in the Prins Mauritsstraat.

The combination of the relatively high dwelling values in Retranchement, its relatively low rate of structural vacancy and its high demand for second homes, make Retranchement a very special case within the shrinking region of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Traditionally, second homes were considered undesirable by policy-makers because of their potential negative effects on for instance liveability and housing affordability (section 3.4). As has been mentioned earlier, today's context of demographic decline in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has provoked a different perspective on these debates and this for instance has led to discussions about possibly revising the second home policy of the municipality of Sluis (section 6.1.3). However, in contrast to most parts of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (in which the housing market is 'relaxed'), Retranchement still experiences notable pressure on its local housing market. From earlier studies on Retranchement (Gerards, Van Wetten, Raymakers & Van Gendt, 2012; Van Troost, 2011) and interviews with local real estate agents, it can be concluded Retranchement not only experiences a relatively large second home demand, but also a large demand from Belgians who seek a permanent residence in Retranchement. These pressures on the housing market of Retranchement might explain why the local village council is heavily against the suggested revision of the municipal prohibition on non-permanent dwelling (section 6.2.2). The village council claims an increase in second homes will lead to the loss of services and a declining liveability (De Koning, 2011) and in interviews with inhabitants much concern was expressed about the affordability of dwellings for young local households (Van Troost, 2011). Thus, although the context of demographic decline has shed new light on the second home phenomenon in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen at a regional level, traditional objections against second homes (section 3.4) are still endorsed in the popular town of Retranchement.

8.2 | Breskens

8.2.1 | Introduction

Just as Retranchement, Breskens is located approximate to the shore. Its vacation parks are within walking distance of the shore and the town itself is not only close to the shore, but also borders on the Westerschelde estuary at the north side of the town. In contrast to Retranchement however, Breskens has a relatively lowly assessed residential environment. Whilst Retranchement has remained its historical attraction, Breskens was heavily damaged during World War II and was largely rebuilt during the 1950s and '60s (section 6.2.2). These dwellings are often considered unattractive, since in that period building quantities were prioritised over the quality of these buildings (Van der Kammen & De Klerk, 2006).

Breskens has a vacancy rate of 4,91 percent, which is slightly above the regional average (4,67 percent). Furthermore, 27,55 percent of the housing supply in Breskens is currently being used as a second home, which is well above the regional average (7,77 percent). However, the number of second homes in Breskens is significantly lower than in the higher assessed towns which are located at a comparable distance (within 2,5 kilometres) of the shore: Retranchement (55,60 percent), Cadzand (59,56 percent) and Nieuwvliet (72,04 percent).[59] Moreover, with the exclusion of the recreational dwellings on the vacation parks only 8,30 percent of the housing supply in Breskens are second homes. This again is significantly lower than the other towns which are approximate to the shore: Retranchement (30,04 percent), Cadzand (16,09 percent), Nieuwvliet (33,87 percent). Also, it is lower than in some highly assessed towns further from the shore: Zuidzande (22,95 percent), Groede (20,69 percent), Waterlandkerkje (13,62 percent) and Graauw (13,62 percent) (section 8.3). This seems to suggest Breskens' relatively lowly assessed residential environment has a negative effect on the demand from second home owners. However, at the regional level (section 7.3.2) no significant correlation between the assessment of the residential environment and the number of second homes per town was found. Also, it is uncertain to what extent the number of regular second homes in Breskens has been limited by its large supply of recreational dwellings next to the town. With regular second homes, recreational dwellings are excluded, but these recreational dwellings are still related to the regular second home demand, because these can 'compete' with each other. Thus, it is uncertain to what extent the relatively low number of regular second homes in Breskens actually is the result of its relatively lowly assessed residential environment.

From the questionnaire results, no notable differences on the background characteristics of the second home owners in Breskens were found. Table 8.2 shows the nationality of the owners in Breskens: the number of German owners (33,66 percent) is comparable to the regional average (34,32 percent), whilst there are relatively much Dutch owners (53,47 percent opposed to 45,10 percent) and relatively few Belgian owners (11,44 percent opposed to 18,29 percent) in Breskens.

[59] Given its average vacancy rate and its much lower number of second homes than its neighbouring towns, it can be argued Breskens is actually in a better state than some other towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. This is because most people probably prefer a second home owner over a vacant dwelling, but a permanent resident over a second home owner (section 3.4).

Table 8.2
Nationality of second home owners in Breskens

	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
Dutch	486	53,47 %
German	306	33,66 %
Belgian	104	11,44 %
Other	13	1,43 %

Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

8.2.2 | Spatial Distribution

Just as in Retranchement, the majority (77,01 percent) of the second homes in Breskens are located on vacation parks. On the west side of the town Breskens itself, there are four vacation parks which are represented by the large red areas in the left part of figure 8.11: 'Zeebad Breskens', 'Schoneveld', 'Het Heem' and 'Napoleonhoeve' (also see section 6.2.2). For an impression of these parks, figure 8.12 shows some photos of the second homes located there. As has been mentioned in section 8.2.1, the number of second homes in the town Breskens itself is not as large as in the other towns which are approximate to the shore. Also, the number of second homes outside the built-up area is extremely small in Breskens (only 0,77 percent of the second homes are located outside the built-up area).

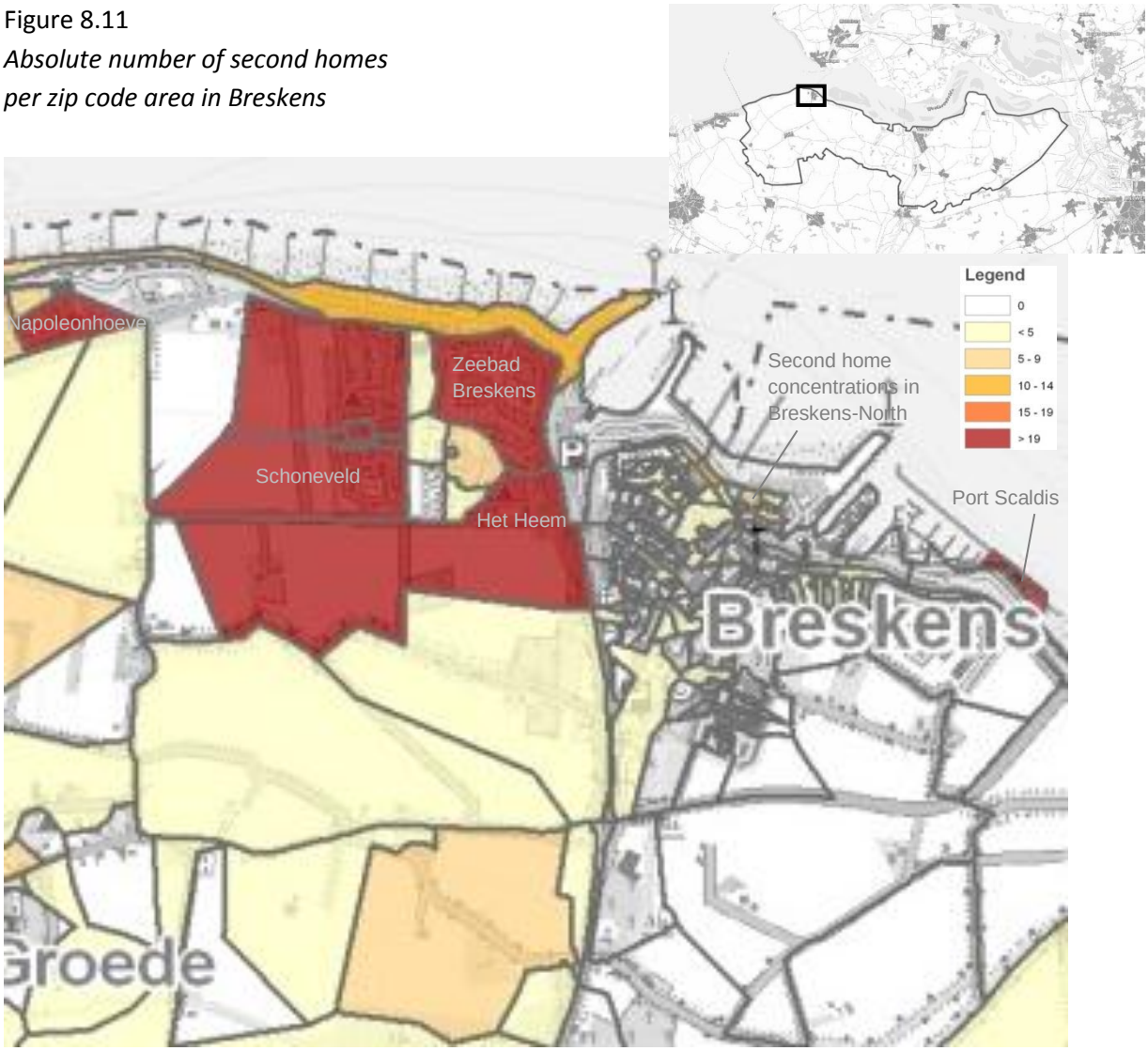
In the town Breskens itself, a large concentration of second homes exists in *Port Scaldis* on the far east side of the town (figure 8.11). Port Scaldis exists of three relatively large apartment buildings (figure 8.13) and is located adjacent to the Westerschelde, which means most of these apartments have a direct view of the sea. There is also a small tidal port next to these buildings. Although Port Scaldis has a residential function in the land-use plan instead of a recreational function, these apartments are explicitly aimed at recreationists and the majority of the apartments currently function as second homes. A significant part of the regular second homes in Breskens are located at Port Scaldis (the second home apartments in Port Scaldis represent 44,02 percent of the regular second homes in Breskens). Port Scaldis has been criticised because of its lack of integration with the existing landscape (e.g. Van Es, 2004), especially since Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and Zeeland as a whole mainly consist of open landscapes and do not have a tradition of high-rise buildings (Province of Zeeland, 2003). Also, the architectural quality of its buildings is often criticized. Many inhabitants therefore cynically call the three buildings of Port Scaldis 'monkey rocks'. Despite of these criticisms, there is a notable demand for these apartments as second homes. This can probably be explained by the fact that these apartments are directly located next to the water with a direct view of the sea and since they are relatively luxurious (with an assessed dwelling value of € 200.000 or more).

Next to its vacation parks and Port Scaldis, Breskens' second homes are not evenly divided over the town. Most of the other second homes in Breskens are concentrated in the northern part of

Breskens. These concentrations exist in relatively old streets (from before 1945), which are directly located next to the dike which protects Breskens from the Westerschelde (streets as: Boulevard, Scheldestraat, 1e Zandstraat, 2e Zandstraat and 3e Zandstraat) (see figure 8.18 in section 8.2.3).

The vacancy in Breskens is not concentrated in specific areas, but is quite evenly distributed over the town (annex 7). One exception is a concentration of vacant apartments at the Burgemeester van Zuijenstraat (figure 8.14), which is planned to be demolished since these apartments from the early post-war period (1945 - 1964) do not longer meet the requirements of modern residents.

Figure 8.11
Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in Breskens



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.12
Photos of average second homes on the vacation parks next to Breskens

Source: Verhuurcentrum Breskens, 2012; Bungalow Booker B.V., 2012; Roompot, 2012; Mitula, 2012

Figure 8.13
Photo of Port Scaldis in Breskens

Source: Heidelbach, 2006

Figure 8.14
Photos of vacant apartments at the Burgemeester van Zuijenstraat in Breskens

8.2.3 | Dwelling Characteristics

The dwelling characteristics of the second homes in Breskens (figure 8.15 - 8.17) are somewhat disturbed by the large number of second homes at Port Scaldis (section 8.2.2). Two of the buildings of Port Scaldis have been developed in 1996 and the third building was developed in 2004. Furthermore, these apartments are predominantly part of the higher segments of the housing market (dwellings with an assessed dwelling value of € 200.000 or more). Since 44,02 percent of the second homes (excl. recreational dwellings) in Breskens are located at Port Scaldis, they have a very large influence on the composition of the second home demand in Breskens. Hence, dwellings built after 1990 (figure 8.15), apartments (figure 8.16) and dwellings with a value of more than € 200.000 (figure 8.17) are all heavily overrepresented in the second home demand.

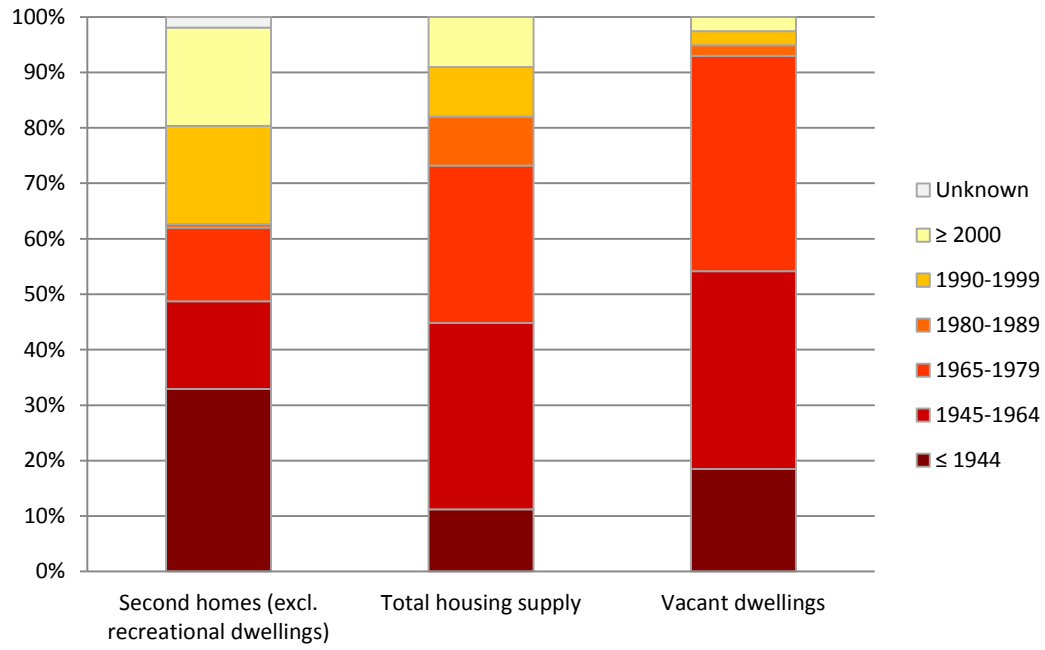
With the exception of the obvious presence of Port Scaldis in the second home demand in Breskens, the building periods of the dwellings generally are in line with the findings at the regional level (section 7.4): second homes are heavily overrepresented in the pre-war period and underrepresented in the early post-war period and 1970's, whilst vacant dwellings are overrepresented in the period between 1945 and 1979 (figure 8.15). The observation confirms the dwellings built between 1945 and 1979 are mainly monotonous and less characteristic than pre-war built dwellings (also see Van der Kammen & De Klerk, 2006). Van Dam, De Groot & Verwest (2006) therefore argued these kinds of dwellings are most likely to get vacant as the result of consumer preferences.

Furthermore, the vacancy is predominantly concentrated in apartments and town houses (figure 8.16). In contrast to the majority of the second home apartments in Port Scaldis, the vacant apartments do not have a direct view of the sea (also see section 7.4.2). With the exclusion of Port Scaldis, the relative number of detached dwellings in the second home demand is larger than the relative number of detached dwellings in the total housing supply. However, this overrepresentation is not as obvious as the overrepresentation at the regional scale (section 7.4.2). A plausible explanation for this seems that the location of the second homes within the town overshadows the dwelling characteristics in the second home decision-making process. Section 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 elaborated on the importance of proximity to amenities like water in the second home decision-

making process and section 8.2.2 showed how all notable second home concentrations in Breskens are at locations adjacent to the Westerschelde. Questionnaire data in section 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 have revealed this is an explicit preference of second home owners and it is suggested that a particular location within a certain town (in this case: a location adjacent to the Westerschelde in the town of Breskens) can compensate for a less attractive dwelling. 72,8 percent of the respondents have for instance stated that they prefer a less attractive dwelling near the water over a more attractive dwelling further from the water (table 7.12 in section 7.3.2). Figure 8.18 shows photos of the average second home at these locations (Boulevard, Scheldestraat, 1e Zandstraat, 2e Zandstraat and 3e Zandstraat). Most of these are relatively small pre-war built town houses. The observation shows the vacant dwellings in these areas are basically the same kinds of dwellings as these (figure 8.19). Hence, at these locations the supply of vacant dwellings seems to match fairly well with the demand for second homes. However, this only represents a relatively small part of the supply of vacant dwellings. Figure 8.15 shows only 18,24 percent of the dwellings have been built before 1945. Figure 8.20 shows what the average vacant dwelling in the rest of the town looks like, and these are predominantly town/end houses which have been built between 1945 and 1979 (figure 8.15 - 8.16). Moreover, in most of the town there is suggested to be a spatial mismatch since the revealed behaviour of second home owners in Breskens shows strong concentrations adjacent to the Westerschelde.

Figure 8.15

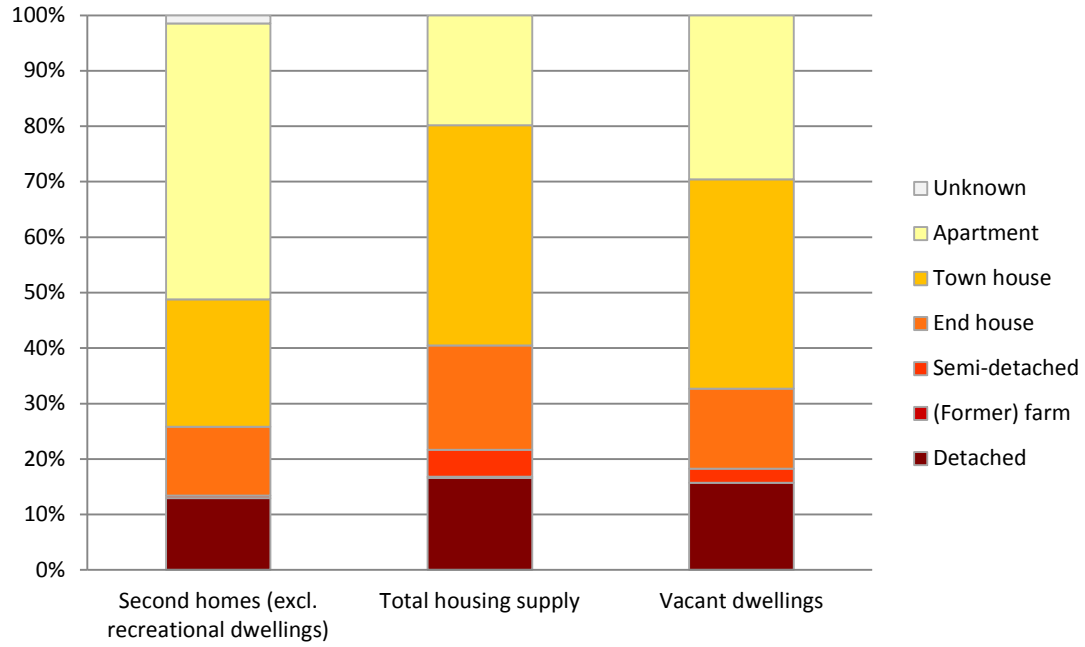
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Breskens over building periods, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.16

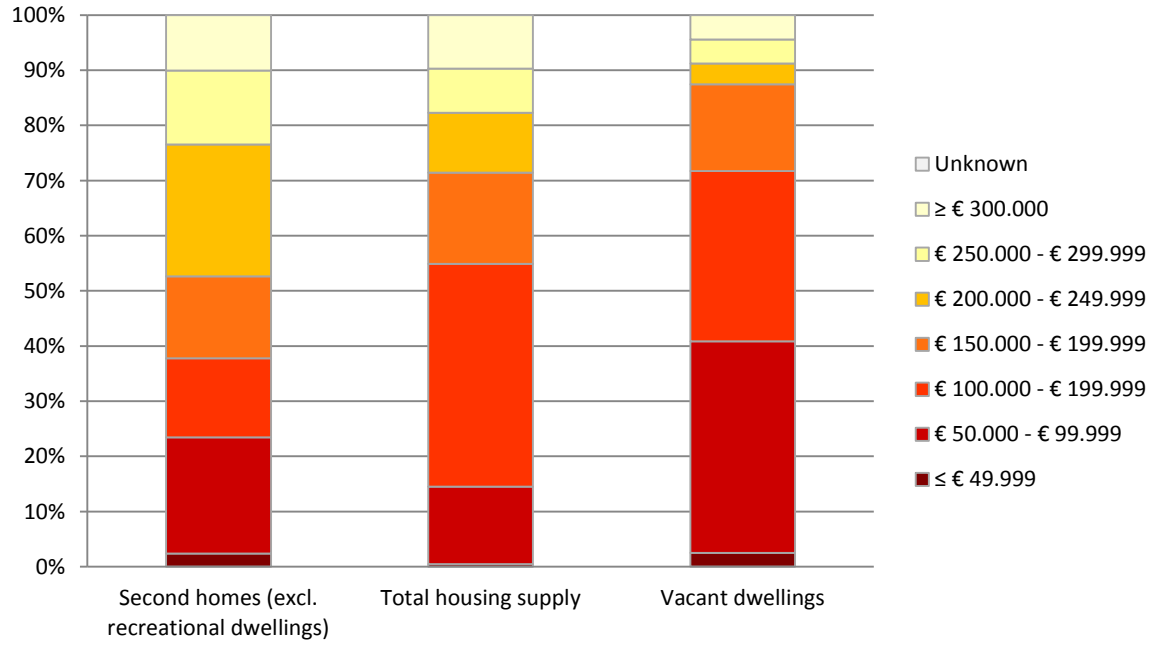
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Breskens over dwelling types, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.17

Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Breskens over categories of assessed dwelling values, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.18
Photos of average second homes inside the built-up area of Breskens (at locations adjacent to the Westerschelde)

Figure 8.19
Photos of average vacant dwellings inside the built-up area of Breskens (at locations adjacent to the Westerschelde)

Figure 8.20
Photos of average vacant dwellings inside the built-up area of Breskens (at locations distant from the Westerschelde)

8.2.4 | Conclusions

In comparison to other towns approximate to the shore which have a higher assessed residential environment, the number of second homes in Breskens is relatively small (27,55 percent of the housing supply is currently used as a second home, which is still well above the regional average of 7,77 percent). Breskens has a relatively large supply of recreational dwellings which is divided over four vacation parks (figure 8.11 - 8.12), but the number of second homes in the town Breskens itself and outside the built-up area is relatively small (8,30 percent). To what extent the relatively low number of regular second homes in Breskens is the result of its relatively lowly assessed residential environment is uncertain.

The second homes in Breskens are more spatially concentrated than in the other sub cases. Obviously the majority of the second homes are located at vacation parks within walking distance of the shore. Within the town Breskens itself second homes are concentrated in Port Scaldis (three large apartment buildings adjacent to the Westerschelde) (figure 8.13) and in some specific old streets (with dwellings built before 1945) which also are adjacent to the Westerschelde or only separated from the water by a dike. Section 7.3 showed the proximity of amenities was by far the most important determinant of the second home demand in different towns in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. The findings in this sub case analysis again confirm the importance of the proximity of amenities (section 7.3), by showing how this is decisive for the spatial distribution of the second homes at a micro level (i.e. at the scale of Breskens only).

The analysis of the dwelling characteristics is somewhat disturbed by the large number of second homes in Port Scaldis, since it exists of relatively new (built after 1990) and relatively expensive (with an assessed dwelling value of € 200.000 or more) apartments with a direct view of the sea, which (except for Cadzand) no other town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen has. With a correction for the second homes at Port Scaldis, the findings in Breskens are largely in line with the findings of the dwelling characteristics at the regional level (section 7.4): second homes and vacant dwellings generally are in the same price segment, but second homes are largely concentrated in pre-war built dwellings

and underrepresented in dwellings which have been built between 1945 and 1979, whilst the vacancy is overrepresented in the latter. The overrepresentation of second homes in detached dwellings however, is not as obvious as at the regional level. Finally, the observation of the town showed the second homes in the old streets adjacent to the Westerschelde (figure 8.18) barely differ from the vacant dwellings in these streets (figure 8.19). In other words, in those areas the supply of vacant dwellings seems to match fairly well with the demand for second homes. However, this potential match seems to only apply for those specific areas. In the parts of Breskens which are not in the direct influence of the water, there barely are second homes, and the vacant dwelling supply in the rest of Breskens is mainly concentrated in dwellings built between 1945 and 1979.

All in all, the findings from Breskens generally confirm the findings at the regional level: even at a micro level, the proximity of amenities is by far the most important spatial determinant for the demand for second homes, and second home searchers generally prefer other kinds of dwellings than the dwellings that are generally vacant.

8.3 | Hoek and Graauw

8.3.1 | Introduction

In contrast to Retranchement and Breskens, Hoek and Graauw are not located approximate to the shore. In section 7.3.1 however, it was already mentioned that nature reserve 'The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe', which borders on Graauw, can also be considered an amenity. Local real estate agents confirm this and argue The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe is one of the main forces behind the relatively large number of second homes in Graauw (13,62 percent of the total housing supply). Near Hoek is natural landscape 'The Braakman' at which a significant part (32,99 percent) of the second homes in Hoek are located. As has been mentioned in section 6.2.2, The Braakman certainly does not have the same scope as an amenity as The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe (P. Smits, personal communication, 2011), but it is suggested to explain a significant part of the second home demand in Hoek. Although Hoek and Graauw both have an above average assessed residential environment (section 6.2.1), their amenities seem to be more important explanations for the relatively large second home demand in these towns.[60]

The vacancy rates of the two towns are opposite from each other: Graauw has a very high vacancy rate (7,02 percent) and Hoek has a relatively low vacancy rate (3,51 percent). It is uncertain how this can exactly be explained, but it emphasizes the quality of the residential environment (which is comparable in both towns) is just one of many predictors of the vacancy rate of towns. From an economic perspective, Graauw has a more peripheral location than Hoek, since Hoek is located approximate to the Ghent-Terneuzen Canal. Both towns have a relatively high number of second homes (Graauw: 13,62 percent; Hoek: 7,10 percent), especially in comparison with other towns in

[60] The proximity to amenities is suggested to be a far more important predictor for second home demand than the quality of the residential environment of towns (section 7.3.2). In the original sub case selection (section 5.4.2), the intention was to also select towns which attract second home owners purely because of its attractive residential environment. The findings in chapter 6 and 7 have shown such a town basically does not exist in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen: towns with a relatively highly assessed residential environment, but which are not approximate to amenities (i.e. Koewacht, Sint Jansteen, Hulst and Philippine), all have a very small number of second homes (figure 6.7 in section 6.2.1). Hoek and Graauw also have an above average assessed residential environment, but not an extremely highly assessed one (section 6.2.1).

eastern Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (in the municipalities of Terneuzen and Hulst only 1,37 percent of the dwellings are second homes). The number of second homes in Graauw is notably larger than in Hoek. Moreover, a large part of the second homes in Hoek have a recreational function in the land-use plan and the number of regular second homes (relative to the total housing supply) is only 4,13 percent. Graauw on the other hand, has no recreational dwellings, which means all second homes in Graauw are regular dwellings. The above mentioned difference in the recreational value of the amenities of these towns is expected to be the main explanation for the difference in the number of second homes in these two towns. However, the lower second home percentage in Hoek might in theory also be the result of a higher demand for permanent housing in Hoek, since Hoek has a much lower vacancy rate than Graauw.

Since the questionnaire for second home owners was not distributed in the municipalities of Terneuzen and Hulst, no questionnaire data on Hoek and Graauw are available (section 5.3). The only available background characteristics of the owners are data on the nationalities of second home owners in Hoek (table 8.3). Table 8.3 shows a very large overrepresentation of German owners in Hoek (51,55 percent, opposed to the regional average of 34,32 percent) and a large underrepresentation of Dutch owners (31,96 percent, opposed to the regional average of 45,10 percent). Data on the nationalities of second home owners in Graauw are missing, since the municipality of Hulst decided not to provide these data for privacy reasons. Interviewees however argued a relatively large part of the second home owners in Graauw are expected to be from the Belgian hinterland and mainly Antwerp.

Table 8.3
Nationality of second home owners in Hoek

	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
Dutch	31	31,96 %
German	50	51,55 %
Belgian	16	16,49 %
Other	0	0,00 %

Source: Municipality of Terneuzen, 2011

8.3.2 | Spatial Distribution

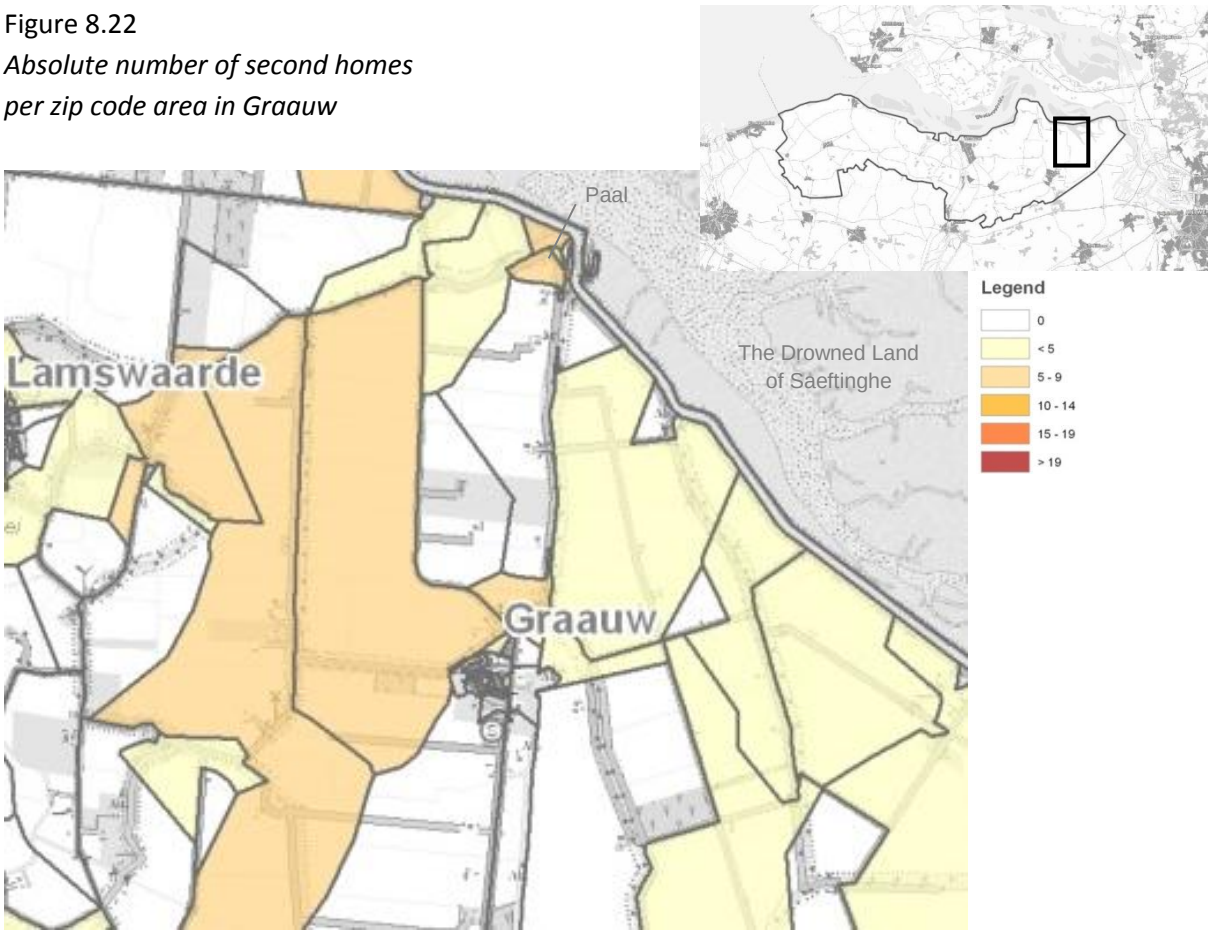
Just as in Breskens, the second homes in Hoek are very much concentrated at specific locations, namely: at vacation park 'Vakantie-Eiland Braakman' (32,99 percent) (figure 8.27 in section 8.3.3), in specific old (from before 1945) streets around the centre of the town (streets as the Keijzerstraat, Langestraat, Molendijk, Noordstraat, Oud Vlissingen, Sint Hubrechtstraat, Tramstraat and Willem-straat) (53,61 percent), and outside the built-up area (11,34 percent). Part of the second homes which are located outside the built-up area are located at the township Mauritsfort. 5,15 percent of the second home demand is located at Mauritsfort, which is located southern of Hoek (figure 8.21).

Figure 8.21
Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in Hoek

Source: Municipality of Terneuzen, 2011

Graauw (923 inhabitants) is a much smaller town than Hoek (3.124 inhabitants), and the second homes in Graauw are much more evenly distributed over the town (figure 8.22). Except for some relatively new streets (street with dwellings built after 1990 as the Irisstraat and Begoniastraat), second homes are located all over Graauw. Furthermore, a large part of the second homes is located at the township Paal (31,25 percent) and outside the built-up area (23,44 percent). The number of dwellings located outside the built-up area is significantly larger than in Retranchement (10,71 percent) and Breskens (0,77 percent).

Figure 8.22
Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in Graauw



Source: Municipality of Hulst, 2011

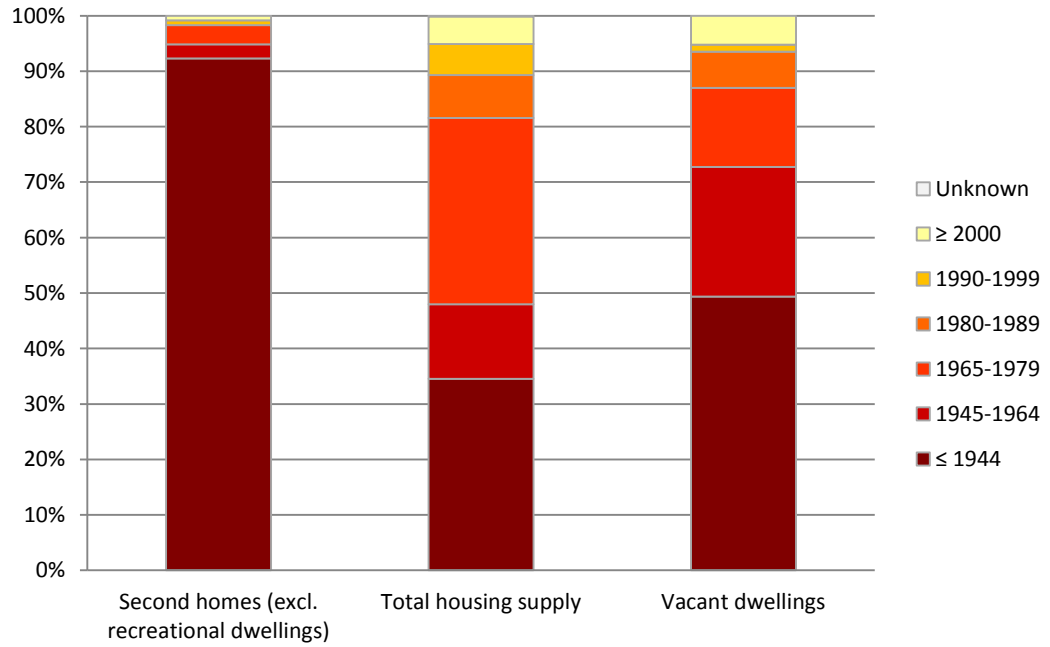
8.3.3 | Dwelling Characteristics

Figure 8.23 - 8.25 show the dwelling characteristics of second homes and vacant dwellings in Hoek and Graauw. In these graphs the two towns have been combined for practical purposes. This can be justified since no major differences between the dwelling characteristics of the two towns exist. There is one notable difference between the two towns however: 75,76 percent of the vacant dwellings in Graauw are pre-war built dwellings, whilst in Hoek this is 29,17 percent. Just as in the rest of the region (section 7.4.1), the majority of the vacant dwellings in Hoek are dwellings which have been built between 1945 and 1979 (52,09 percent). Photos of the average vacant dwellings in these towns illustrate this difference (figure 8.28 and 8.30). This difference is important in the potential match between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings and is further elaborated on in section 8.3.4. Namely, just as in the rest of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (section 7.4.1), second homes which have been built before 1945 are overrepresented. Moreover, in Hoek and Graauw this overrepresentation is extremely large (92,31 percent of the second homes are pre-war built dwellings, opposed to 34,55 percent of the total housing supply) (figure 8.26 and 8.29). Also, in line with the findings at the regional level, second homes are heavily underrepresented in the early post-war period.

Just as the rest of the region, the second homes in Hoek and Graauw are overrepresented in detached dwellings (figure 8.24). Notable is the large overrepresentation of end houses in the second home demand in Hoek and Graauw. A further analysis of these end houses shows these are predominantly located at the township Paal and in the old streets around the centre of Hoek. 97,67 percent of the end houses in Hoek and Graauw which are used as second homes have been built before 1945. Most vacant dwellings in Hoek and Graauw are detached dwellings (37,66 percent). However, this is related to the fact that there are relatively many detached dwellings in these towns (36,37 percent), and this is still significantly lower than the number of detached second homes (47,86 percent). The opposite goes for town houses: 20,78 percent of the vacant dwellings are town houses, whilst this goes for only 11,97 percent of the second homes. Apartments are also present in the vacant dwelling supply, but not in the second home demand.

Also notable is that the vacant dwellings in Hoek and Graauw on average have a higher assessed dwelling value than the second homes (figure 8.25). The observation of the towns suggests this might be because the vacant dwellings generally are larger than the second homes. Many of the vacant dwellings (especially in Hoek) are town houses which have been built between 1945 and 1979, and these generally are larger and more modern than the dwellings built before 1945 (which goes for 92,31 percent of the second homes) (also see section 8.4.3). This certainly does not make these vacant dwellings more attractive as second homes (section 7.4.3), but generally does lead to higher dwelling values. Both the second homes as the vacant dwellings in Hoek and Graauw generally have a lower assessed dwelling value than the total housing supply. In comparison with the rest of the region, the assessed dwelling values in Hoek and Graauw are relatively low (see figure 8.6 in section 8.1.3). This seems to have translated to the vacant dwelling supply and the demand for second homes.

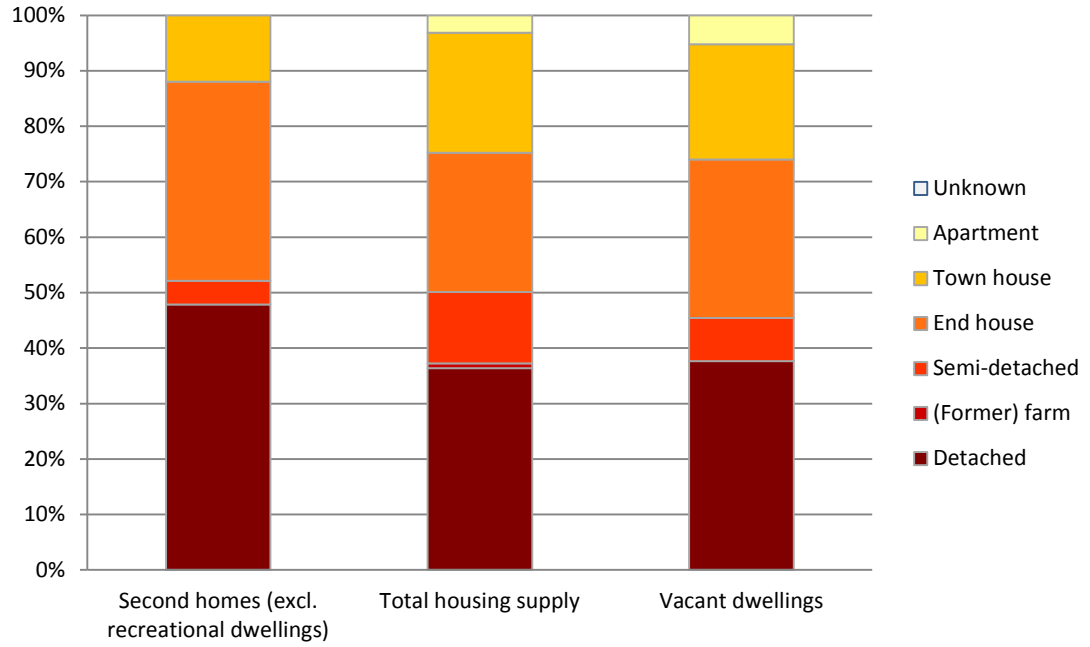
Figure 8.23
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Hoek & Graauw over building periods, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipalities of Terneuzen & Hulst, 2011

Figure 8.24

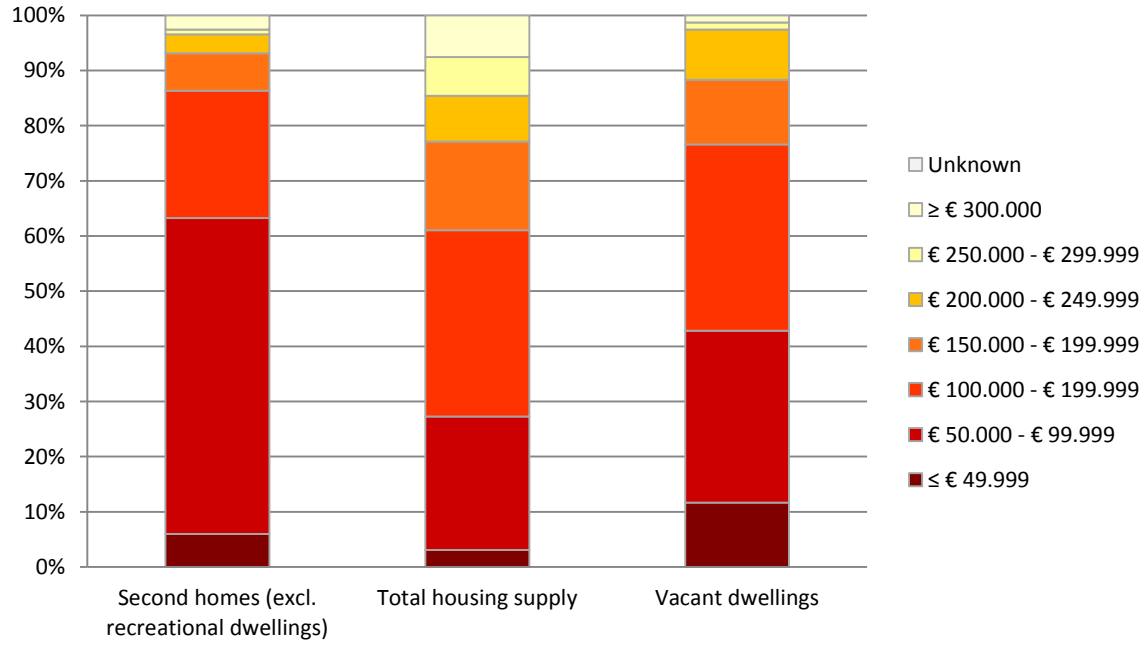
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Hoek & Graauw over dwelling types, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipalities of Terneuzen & Hulst, 2011

Figure 8.25

Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Hoek & Graauw over categories of assessed dwelling values, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipalities of Terneuzen & Hulst, 2011

Figure 8.26
Photos of average second homes in Hoek

Figure 8.27
Photos of average second home at vacation park Vakantie-Eiland Braakman next to Hoek

Source: Van Hoeve Makelaars, 2012

Figure 8.28
Photos of average vacant dwellings in Hoek

Figure 8.29
Photos of average second homes in Graauw

Figure 8.30
Photos of average vacant dwellings in Graauw

8.3.4 | Conclusions

The analysis of Hoek and Graauw began with the remark that this sub case is especially interesting since these towns are not located approximate to the shore, but approximate to other amenities (i.e. The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe and The Braakman). Therewith, they prove that other amenities can compensate at locations distant from the shore (section 7.3.1). Within this sub case analysis, some notable differences between the two selected towns were found. The number of second homes in Graauw (13,62 percent) is notably higher than in Hoek (7,10 percent) (especially given the fact that with the exclusion of recreational dwellings, only 4,13 percent of the housing supply in Hoek are second homes). This difference is assumed to be the result because of the relatively large difference in the recreational value of the amenities of these towns. It is generally argued the natural landscape next to Graauw is of much greater recreational importance than The Braakman next to Hoek (P. Smits, personal communication, 2011). Because of this (and also because of the notable difference in the size of these towns), second homes are distributed all over Graauw, whilst in Hoek there are some specific concentrations. Also, in Graauw relatively many second homes are located outside the built-up area (23,44 percent of the second home demand).

The dwelling characteristics of the second homes and vacant dwellings are very much in line with the regional image (section 7.4). The only thing which really stands out is the extremely large overrepresentation of second homes in pre-war built dwellings (92,31 percent of the second homes in Hoek and Graauw are pre-war built dwellings, opposed to 34,55 percent of the total housing supply). Furthermore, pre-war built dwellings are also heavily overrepresented in the vacant dwelling supply (49,35 percent of the vacant dwellings are pre-war built dwellings). Of all sub cases, the largest match between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings is expected to be in Hoek and Graauw. Especially in Graauw, second homes and vacant dwellings are

concentrated in the same streets and in comparable dwellings. Of the different dwelling characteristics which have been analysed in this study, the observation suggests the smaller mismatch in Hoek and Graauw is especially explained by the building periods of the dwellings. In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen as a whole 34,31 percent of the vacant dwellings have been built before 1945, whilst in Hoek and Graauw respectively 29,17 and 75,76 percent of the vacant dwelling supply are pre-war built dwellings.

It should not be mistaken that just as most of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, Hoek and Graauw deal with a mismatch between demand and supply. The vacant dwelling supply still consists of apartments without a direct view of the sea and town houses which have been built between 1945 and 1979. As section 7.4 already showed, those types of dwellings generally do not meet the demands of second home owners. The most important difference with the other sub cases is that a relatively large part of the vacant dwelling supply in Hoek and Graauw are pre-war built dwellings, of which the observation suggests many are comparable with the current second homes in these towns.

8.4 | Oostburg and Schoondijke

8.4.1 | Introduction

As the last sub case, Oostburg and Schoondijke have been selected because they are not approximate to the shore and because they have a relatively lowly assessed residential environment. Just as in Breskens, the relatively lowly assessed residential environment in Oostburg and Schoondijke is assumed to be related to the damages of the towns during World War II (section 6.2.2). It has also been noted that Oostburg and Schoondijke are not as distant from the shore as Hoek and Graauw (section 6.2.1).[61] However, in comparison with Retranchement or Breskens these towns are located relatively distant from the shore, and in the second home demand there is a notable difference between walking distance of the shore and distances between 5 and 10 kilometres distance of the shore (section 7.3).

Both towns deal with an above average vacancy rate (Oostburg: 6,34 percent; Schoondijke: 5,36 percent). The number of second homes in Oostburg is smaller than in any of the other sub cases (2,58 percent), but the number of second homes in Schoondijke is relatively large (9,34 percent). Neither Oostburg nor Schoondijke have a vacation park, but the number of second homes which are located outside the built up area (34,33 percent) is significant in comparison to the other sub cases (section 8.4.2).

Just as in Hoek (section 8.3.1), German owners are heavily overrepresented in Oostburg (table 8.4) and Schoondijke (table 8.5): respectively 50,79 and 49,30 percent of the second home owners in these towns are German, opposed to 34,32 percent of the owners in the entire region. On the other hand there is a strong underrepresentation of Belgian owners in Oostburg and Schoondijke: respectively 4,76 and 7,04 percent, opposed to 18,29 percent of the second homes owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen as a whole. Further data on the second home owners from the questionnaire

[61] Oostburg and Schoondijke are located at respectively 8,9 and 6,6 kilometres from the shore, whilst Hoek and Graauw are located at 25,5 and 52,4 kilometres of the shore.

could not be applied, due to the relatively small number of respondents in these towns (Oostburg: 17; Schoondijke: 21).

Table 8.4
Nationality of second home owners in Oostburg

	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
Dutch	28	44,44 %
German	32	50,79 %
Belgian	3	4,76 %
Other	0	0,00 %

Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Table 8.5
Nationality of second home owners in Schoondijke

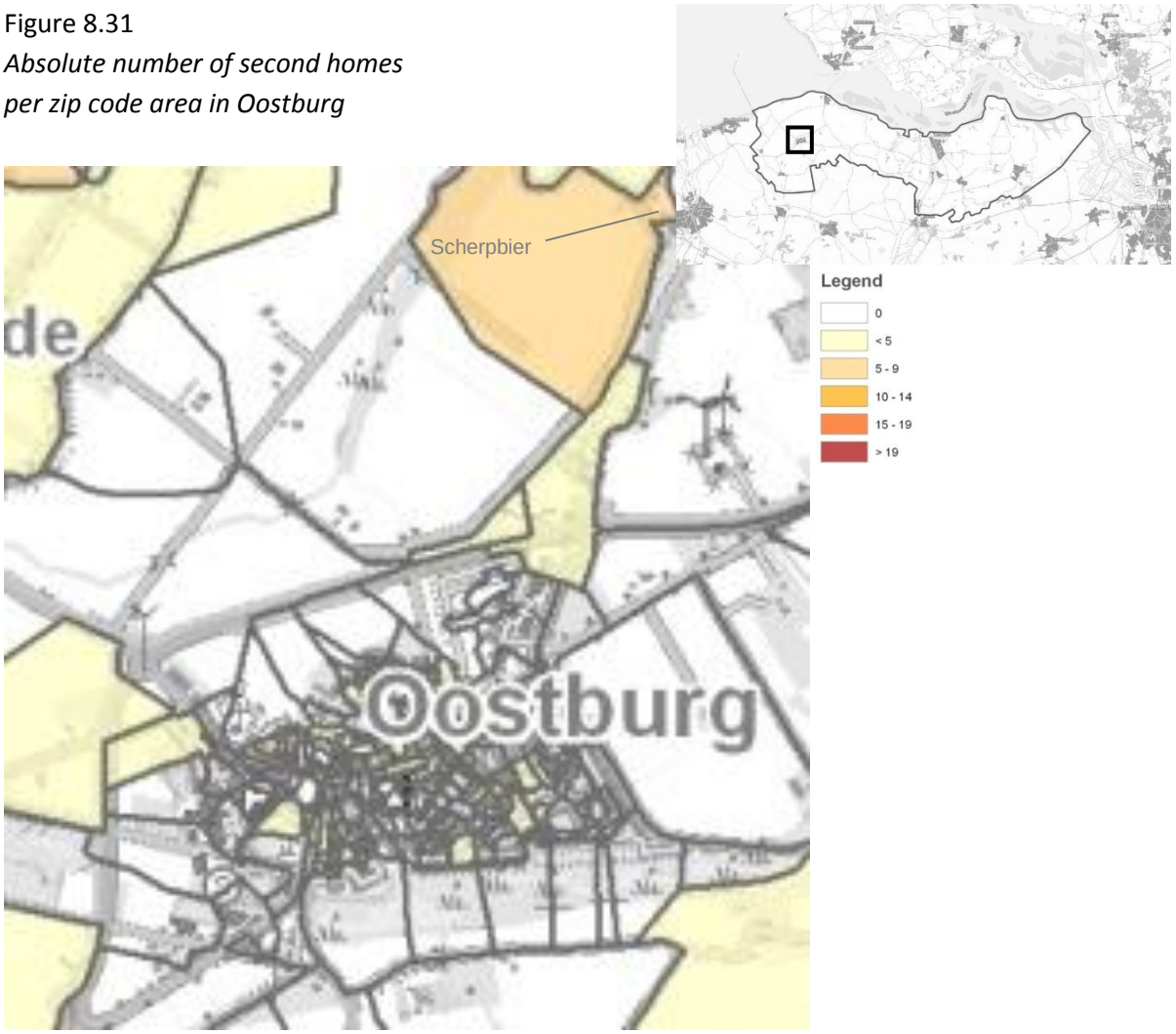
	Number of second home owners	
	Absolute	***Relative***
Dutch	30	42,25 %
German	35	49,30 %
Belgian	5	7,04 %
Other	1	1,41 %

Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

8.4.2 | Spatial Distribution

In contrast to for instance Breskens, the second homes are not really concentrated at specific locations in the town Oostburg. What is notable is that 23,81 percent of the second homes in Oostburg are located outside the built-up area, especially in the small township Scherpbier (where 11,11 percent of the second homes from Oostburg are located) (figure 8.36). The rest of the second homes are quite evenly distributed over the town (figure 8.31). Only in the Tragelwijk (the south-eastern part of Oostburg of which the dwellings have been built after 1970) notably few second homes are found. Although vacant dwellings are also located all over Oostburg, a large concentration of vacant dwellings exists in the upper northern part of Oostburg. Part of this area is the Van Ostadestraat, which completely consists of early post-war town and end houses. These dwellings are owned by the local housing association Woongoed Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and are planned to be demolished (Municipality of Sluis, 2011c). The Finlandstraat, next to the Van Ostadestraat, also deals with a high vacancy rate (29,17 percent of the dwellings in the Finlandstraat are currently vacant). Inhabitants have already expressed their concerns about the Finlandstraat with the municipality and the housing association, but currently no concrete plans exist for this neighbourhood (Kroonwijk) (Municipality of Sluis, 2011c). Finally, it should be mentioned that only 5,81 percent of the vacant dwellings are located outside the built-up area.

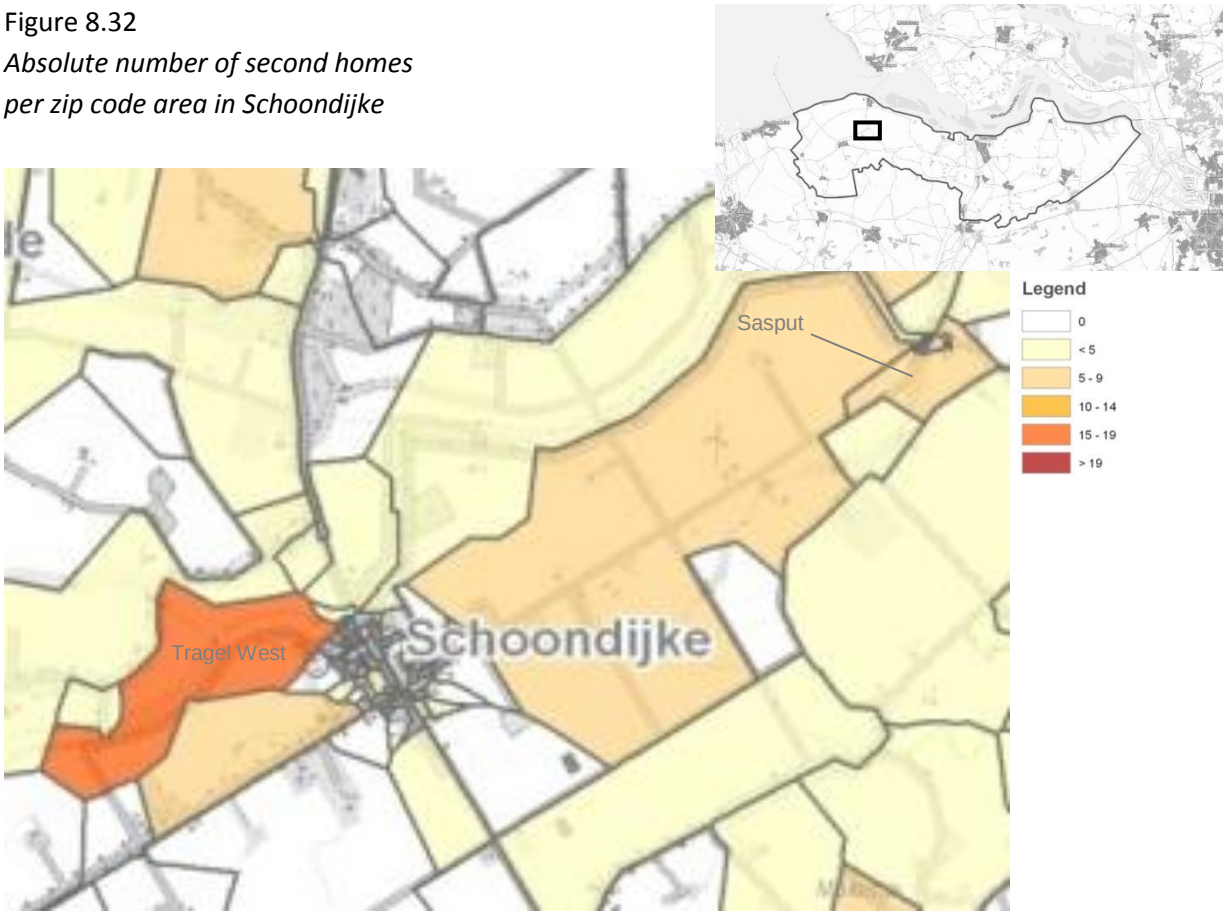
Figure 8.31
Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in Oostburg



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

The number of second homes located outside the built-up area in Schoondijke is even larger than in Oostburg, namely 43,66 percent (whilst only 12,38 percent of all second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are located outside the built-up area; section 7.3.1). 25,35 percent of the second homes at Schoondijke are located at Tragel West (figure 8.32), which is an old rural road which runs next to a small waterway (figure 8.37). Another concentration of second homes can be found in Sasput, which is a small township eastern of Schoondijke, where 19,72 percent of the second homes from Schoondijke can be found. As has been mentioned, Schoondijke has a relatively lowly assessed residential environment. This was confirmed in the observation of the town. However, Tragel West and Sasput have a completely different residential environment than the town Schoondijke itself, and based on the observation the quality of the residential environment of these areas is expected to have a relatively high assessment. The number of second homes in the lowly assessed town of Schoondijke itself hence is lower than the primary data at first sight suggests: inside the built-up area of Schoondijke 6,38 percent of the dwellings are second homes.

Figure 8.32
Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in Schoondijke



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

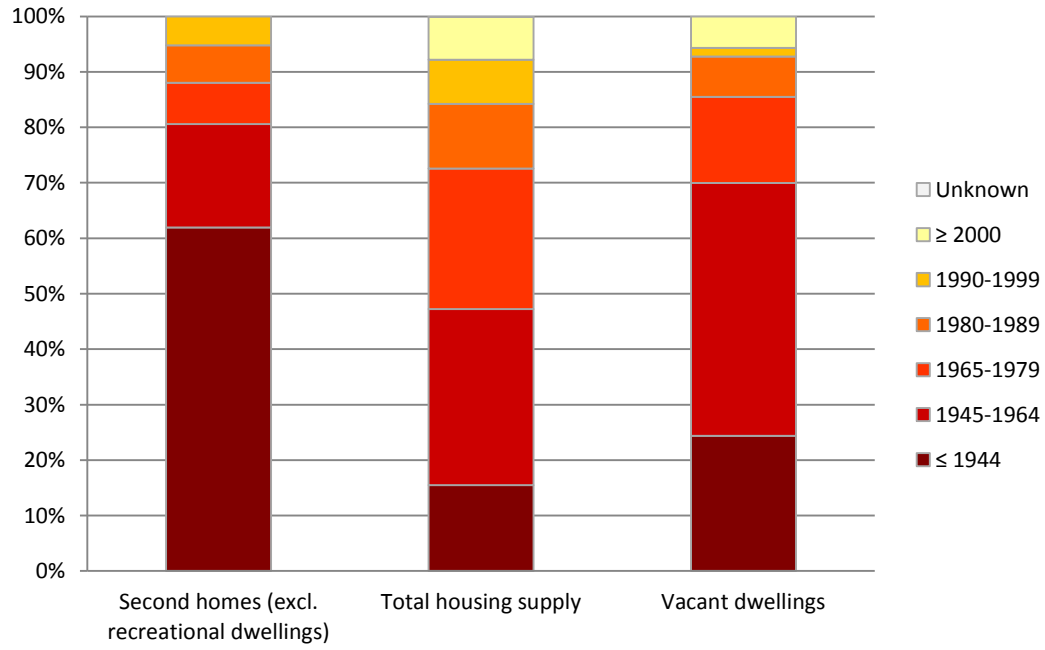
8.4.3 | Dwelling Characteristics

The dwelling characteristics of the second homes and vacant dwellings in Oostburg and Schoondijke echo the regional image (section 7.4): second homes are heavily overrepresented in pre-war built dwellings (figure 8.33) and detached dwellings (figure 8.34), and underrepresented in town houses, apartments and dwellings built between 1945 and 1979, whilst the vacant dwelling supply shows the opposite. Just as in the rest of the region, second homes and vacant dwellings are concentrated in the lower segments of the housing market (dwellings with an assessed value below € 150.000) (figure 8.35). These dwellings are on average less expensive than the regional averages (section 7.4.3), which is probably directly related to the relatively low dwelling values in Oostburg and Schoondijke (see figure 8.6 in section 8.1.3).

The observation of Oostburg and Schoondijke especially confirms the differences in building periods. Although town houses and end houses are underrepresented in the second home demand and overrepresented in the vacant dwelling supply, still 44,78 percent of the second homes are town/end houses. However, there is an important difference between town/end houses which have been built before 1945 and those which have been built between 1945 and 1979. 51,67 percent of town/end houses which function as second homes in Oostburg and Schoondijke have been built before 1945, and 78,07 percent of the vacant town/end houses have been built between 1945 and 1979. The observation shows these are very different kinds of dwellings: figure 8.38 shows pre-war town/end

houses. These generally are small but characteristic and suit the needs of second home owners. Figure 8.39 shows vacant town/end houses which have been built between 1945 and 1979. These dwellings generally are larger and more modern than the pre-war built dwellings, but are monotonous and not unique in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, since these kinds of dwelling can be found all over the Netherlands.

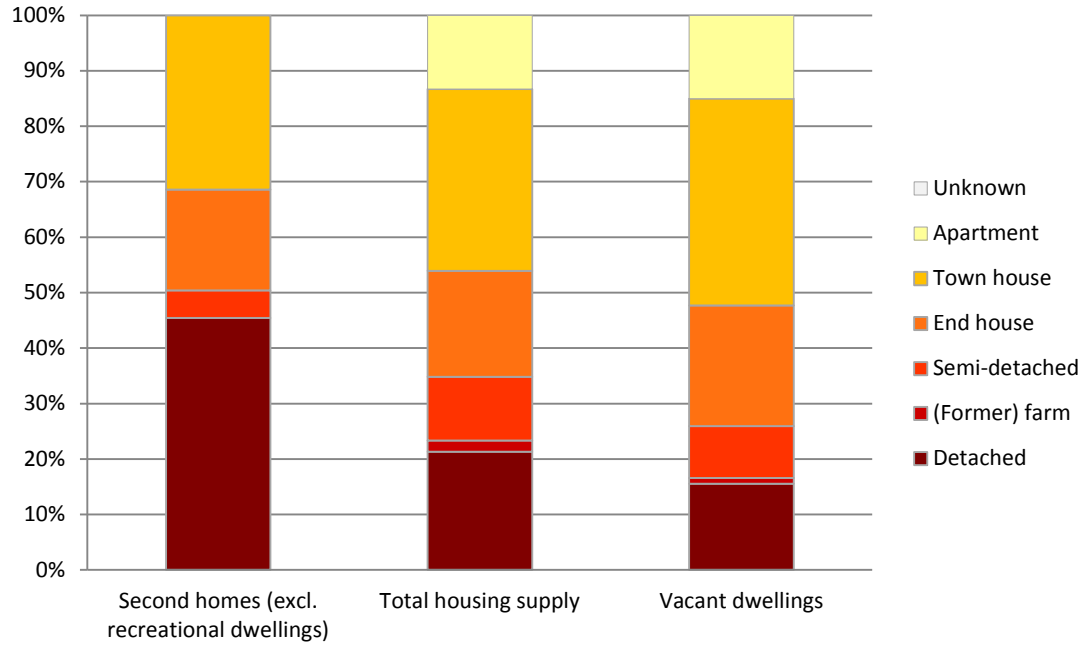
Figure 8.33
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply dwellings in Oostburg & Schoondijke over building periods, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.34

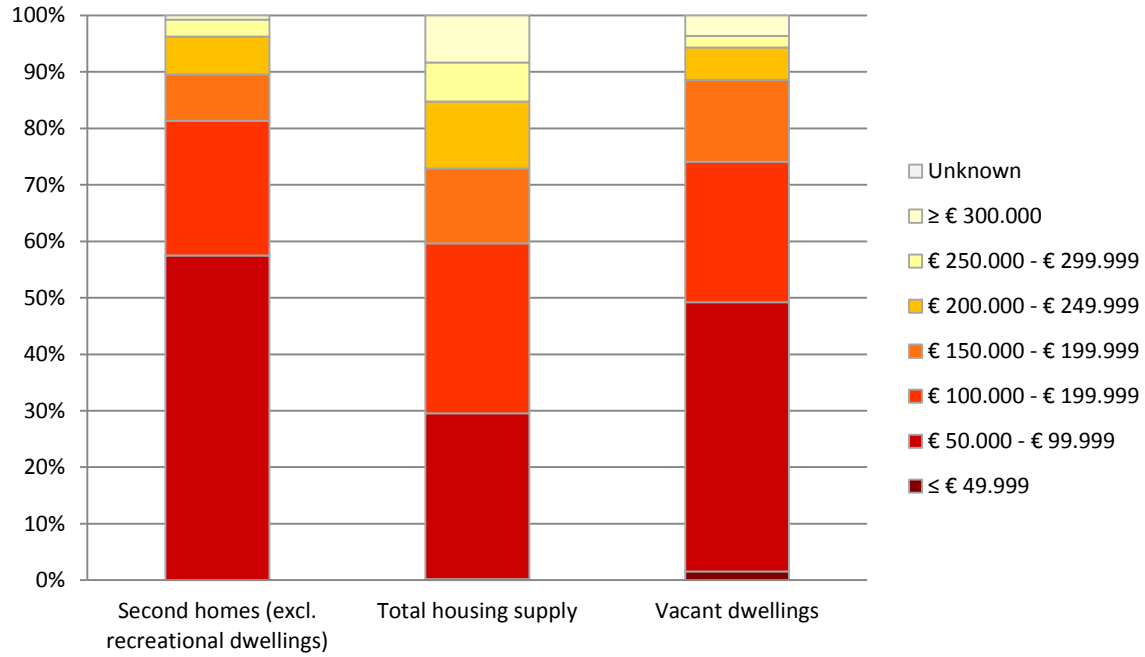
Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Oostburg & Schoondijke over dwelling types, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.35

Composition of second home (excl. recreational dwellings) and vacant dwelling supply in Oostburg & Schoondijke over categories of assessed dwelling values, in comparison with the composition of the total housing supply



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure 8.36
Photos of average second homes outside the built-up area of Oostburg (Scherpbier)

Source: Zeelandhome, 2012

Figure 8.37
Photos of average second homes outside the built-up area of Schoondijke (Tragel West)

Figure 8.38
Photos of average non-detached second homes in Oostburg and Schoondijke

Figure 8.39
Photos of average vacant town/end houses in Oostburg and Schoondijke

8.4.4 | Conclusions

There are fewer second homes in Oostburg and Schoondijke than in the other sub cases. This was expected, since these towns have a relatively lowly assessed residential environment and are relatively distant from the shore. As has been remarked, Oostburg and Schoondijke are distant from the shore in comparison with Retranchement or Breskens, but are still within 10 kilometres of the shore. In lowly assessed towns which are 'really' distant from the shore (more than 20 kilometres from the shore), second homes are barely found. What is notable about the second home demand in Oostburg and Schoondijke is that a relatively large part is located outside the built-up area (34,33 percent). Thus, a significant part of the second homes is actually not located in these lowly assessed towns itself.

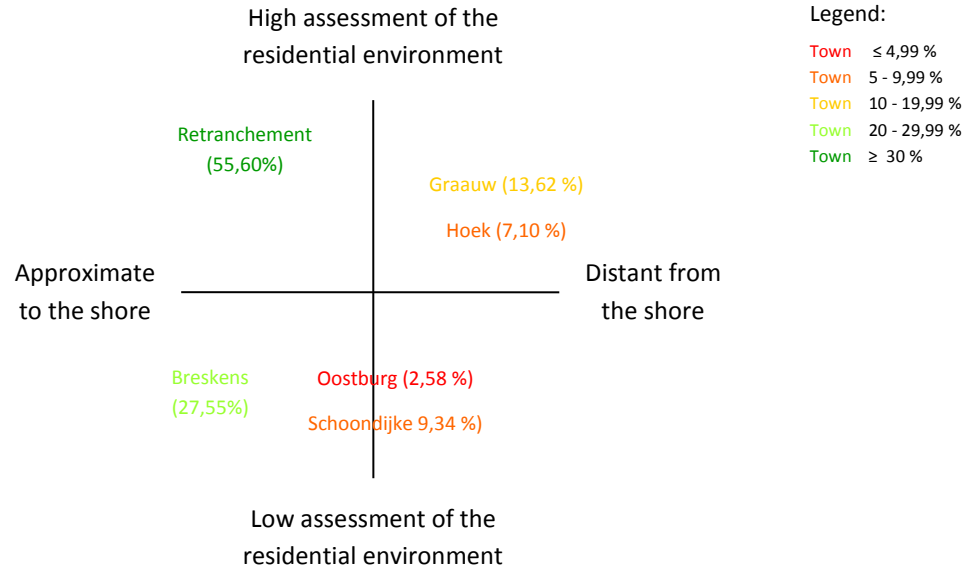
Both towns have an above average vacancy rate (Oostburg: 6,34 percent; Schoondijke: 5,36 percent). In Oostburg the vacancy is for a large part concentrated in one specific area, namely Kroonwijk at the northern part of the town. This concentration completely exists of early post-war town/end houses and part of the area is planned to be demolished. In the rest of Oostburg and Schoondijke the vacancy is also predominantly concentrated in early post-war town/end houses, and also in apartments. This is in line with the findings at the regional level (section 7.4).

In Oostburg and Schoondijke a relatively large part of the second home demand consists of town/end houses. The majority of those have been built before 1945, whilst 78,07 percent of the vacant town/end houses have been built between 1945 and 1979. The sub case perfectly illustrates the differences between town/end houses from different building periods, and how this represents a mismatch between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings. This particular mismatch can also be found in the other sub cases and at the regional level.

8.5 | Sub Case Comparison

In this section the four sub cases are compared and some general conclusions are drawn. First, in the different sub cases the number of second homes has been described. Retranchement has by far the highest percentage of second homes (55,60 percent of the total housing supply). Figure 8.40 shows the percentage of second homes per sub case, in relation to the proximity to the shore and the assessed quality of the residential environment. Section 7.3 elaborated in detail on the relationship of these dimensions with the number of second homes per town, and concluded there is strong negative correlation with the proximity to the shore, but no significant correlation with the assessed quality of the residential environment. The qualitative analysis of the sub cases adds some extra explanatory variables to this: Retranchement for instance also seems to profit from its proximity to Knokke-Heist and Bruges. Also, the number of second homes in towns distant from the shore is extremely small. Graauw and Hoek are two exceptions to this because of their proximity to other amenities than the shore. The scope of amenities is not always the same: 'The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe' next to Graauw is observed to have a much higher recreational value than 'The Braakman', at which the vacation park from Hoek is located.

Figure 8.40
Number of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) per sub case (divided to proximity to the shore and the assessed quality of the residential environment)



A significant part of the second homes in Retranchement (72,40 percent) and Breskens (77,01 percent) are located at vacation parks at *walking distance* of the shore, and especially in Oostburg and Schoondijke many second homes are located outside the built-up area (34,33 percent) (table 8.6). The latter is expected to be related to the relatively lowly assessed residential environment of these towns. Although, the towns Oostburg and Schoondijke itself have a lowly assessed residential environment, the areas outside the built-up area (where a significant number of second homes are located) have a completely different appearance and are expected to possess a relatively higher assessed residential environment. This is important because the vast majority of the vacant dwellings is located inside the built-up area (table 8.7; also see table 7.15 in section 7.3.3). In Breskens this effect could not be confirmed, since the area around the built-up area of Breskens for the most part

consists of vacation parks. What does characterise Breskens is that its second homes are strongly concentrated at locations approximate to the water of the Westerschelde. Just as the locations outside the towns of Oostburg and Schoondijke, these specific locations in Breskens also seem to compensate for the relatively lowly assessed residential environment of the town.

Table 8.6
Location types of second homes per town

	Retranchement		Breskens		Hoek & Graauw		Oostburg & Schoondijke	
	Absolute	***Relative***	***Absolute***	***Relative***	***Absolute***	***Relative***	***Absolute***	***Relative***
Inside the built-up area	52	16,88 %	202	22,22 %	103	63,98 %	88	65,67 %
Outside the built-up area	33	10,71 %	7	0,77 %	26	16,15 %	46	34,33 %
Vacation park	223	72,40 %	700	77,01 %	32	19,88 %	0	0,00 %

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table 8.7
Location types of vacant dwellings per town

	Retranchement		Breskens		Hoek & Graauw		Oostburg & Schoondijke	
	Absolute	***Relative***	***Absolute***	***Relative***	***Absolute***	***Relative***	***Absolute***	***Relative***
Inside the built-up area	25	75,76 %	144	88,89 %	69	85,19 %	173	88,72 %
Outside the built-up area	7	21,21 %	12	7,41 %	9	11,11 %	22	11,28 %
Vacation park	1	3,03 %	6	3,70 %	3	3,70 %	0	0,00 %

Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

In each of the sub cases the characteristics of both the second homes and vacant dwellings have been analysed. Besides the primary data about these dwellings, observations of the towns were also used to get additional insights in the dwelling characteristics. Unfortunately the analysis of Retranchement had some limitations. This is because the housing vacancy data of Retranchement appeared to be unreliable, and the observation in Retranchement suggests its vacancy rate is extremely small. With the exception of the vacant dwellings in Retranchement, each of the sub cases confirms the findings from the regional level (section 7.4): both second homes and vacant dwellings are concentrated in the lower segments of the housing market. Furthermore, second homes are heavily overrepresented in pre-war built dwellings (dwellings which have been built before 1945), overrepresented in detached dwellings and underrepresented in town houses and apartments (without a direct view of the sea). The vacant dwelling supply on the other hand is especially concentrated in dwellings which have been built between 1945 and 1979, and in town houses. In Retranchement it is notable that second homes are distributed all over the town, except for in the

Prins Mauritsstraat which predominantly consists of relatively simple and inexpensive townhouses/end houses. Thus, in each of the sub cases a mismatch between the second home demand and the vacant dwelling supply has been suggested.

The observation of the different sub cases revealed that especially the building periods of the dwellings are important in the difference between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings. Illustrative are pre-war built town/end houses in comparison with town/end houses which have been built between 1945 and 1979 (figure 8.38 and 8.39). Dwellings which have been built between 1945 and 1979 generally are larger and more modern than pre-war built dwellings, but are monotonous and not unique since these kinds of dwellings can be found all over the Netherlands. In Hoek and especially in Graauw however, a relatively large part of the vacant dwelling supply has been built before 1945 and in Graauw second homes and vacant dwellings are concentrated in the same streets and in comparable dwellings. The observed mismatch between demand and supply is smaller in Hoek and Graauw than in the other sub cases, which thus is suggested to especially be related to the large supply of pre-war built vacant dwellings in these towns.

All in all, the sub cases generally confirm the arguments which have been made in chapter 7 about a mismatch between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings. This is illustrated in figure 8.41 and 8.42: the former is an overview of photos of average second homes in the four sub cases, and the latter of the vacant dwelling supply. Also, the sub cases reveal some of the diversity of the region and specific components of the second home demand in the different towns. Illustrative for this diversity is the position of Retranchement in the second home discussions. This study has been conducted because demographic decline has provoked a different perspective on second homes, and because second homes have been presented as a promising policy strategy in reducing the housing vacancy in demographically declining regions. Retranchement however, barely deals with housing vacancy and still experiences notable pressure on its local housing market. Therefore traditional objections against second homes are still endorsed in Retranchement, and in this town the entire relevance of this new perspective on second homes is heavily questioned.

Figure 8.41
Photos of average second homes (excl. recreational dwellings) in the four sub cases

Figure 8.42
Photos of average vacant dwellings in the four sub cases

9 | CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 | Conclusions

This study has analysed to what extent the demand for second homes and the supply in demographically declining regions match. This has been done by the comparison of the locations and characteristics of second homes and vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. First, the analysis has been made at the regional level. Second, within the framework of the proper regional context, more detailed and qualitative analyses have been made at the level of four individual types of towns (sub cases). This section elaborates on the findings of these analyses and gives insight in the extent to which the demand for second homes matches with the supply of vacant dwellings in the demographically declining region of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen.

In line with the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Verwest, Van Dam & Daalhuizen, 2010), this study concludes there is a relatively large mismatch between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. This mismatch is most of all a spatial mismatch. The study has shown the proximity of *amenities* as the shore is by far the most important spatial determinant in the choice for a second home in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. If a town is not approximate to the shore, its second home demand can be partially compensated with a proximity to other amenities like The Drowned Land of Saeftinghe for instance. However, the scope of these amenities is only limited to a relatively small part of the region and moreover, there is an important distinction between approximate to the shore and *walking distance* (less than 1,5 kilometres) of the shore. The majority of the current second homes are found within walking distance of the shore. This especially goes for second homes which are used as investment properties or vacation homes, since these locations have a larger and more stable leasing potential. Since the current supply of vacant dwellings is generally not found at these locations, this represents a spatial mismatch between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings.

Second, there is also a mismatch between demand and supply because second home owners prefer other kinds of dwellings than the dwellings which are generally vacant. Both second homes and vacant dwellings are largely concentrated in relatively old and inexpensive dwellings. However, the vacancy is predominantly concentrated in town houses (i.e. row houses), apartments (without a direct view of the sea) and dwellings which have been built between 1945 and 1979, whilst the second home demand is predominantly concentrated in dwellings which have been built before 1945 and in detached dwellings. Especially the building periods of these dwellings pose an important difference between demand and supply. Illustrative are pre-war built town/end houses in comparison with town/end houses which have been built between 1945 and 1979. The sub case analyses suggest the latter insufficiently meet the demands of second home owners.

This study thus concludes the opportunities for second homes as a direct solution for the housing vacancy in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are limited. Whether the opportunities in other shrinking regions are also limited has not been empirically investigated in this study. However, the results suggest the opportunities in other Dutch shrinking regions as North-Eastern Groningen and South-Eastern Limburg are even smaller than in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Namely, the study shows two crucial conditions in order for shrining regions to be able to reduce their housing vacancy through second homes. First, the region needs to possess amenities which cover a significant part of the region and second, the housing supply needs to be suited for the second home market (which means it should certainly not exist of large numbers of early post-war town houses and/or apartment blocks). Neither North-Eastern Groningen, nor South-Eastern Limburg possess amenities of the scale of the shore of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. South-Eastern Limburg might have the *Heuvelland* as a potential amenity for the region, but is expected to have a much greater mismatch because of its urban structure and current vacancy (Vaessens & Van de Ven, 2010; Van de Laar, 2010). The number of current recreational dwellings in these regions is also notably lower than in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Of these three Dutch shrinking regions, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is thus considered the most promising for second homes. This means the expectations for second homes as a direct solution for the housing vacancy presumably have to be even lower for North-Eastern Groningen and South-Eastern Limburg.

9.2 | Recommendations

9.2.1 | Policy Recommendations

This study shows there is a relatively large mismatch between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Hence, the opportunities for second homes as a direct solution for housing vacancy are limited, and policy-makers are therefore not advised to actively stimulate second home ownership. *Facilitating* second homes in the sense of taking away barriers on the other hand is advised however. This can for instance be done by revising existing policies on non-permanent dwellings, as has been recently discussed in the municipality of Sluis (2011b). As this study shows however, it is unrealistic to expect this will solve the housing vacancy. Furthermore, second homes as a policy strategy tends to be interpreted as a possible solution to reverse the entire process of demographic decline. This is because second homes can attract new people from outside the region. As the results in this study suggest, it is an illusion to expect the arrival of new second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen will reverse the entire process of demographic decline. This is because the demand for second homes is highly uncertain, the housing supply in the region does not match with this demand, and especially because demographic decline in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is not primarily caused by outmigration, but more so because its population structure favours decline: the number of deaths strongly exceeds the number of births because of its ageing population (De Jong & Garssen, 2009; Drijgers & Kaagman, 2010). Thus, policy-makers are cautioned to avoid falling back into futile attempts to *deny* or *challenge* demographic decline, and are recommended to stay focused on strategies which aim to *accompany* demographic decline (e.g. Hollander, 2010; Hospers, 2010; Klinkers & Hovens, 2011; Lindsey, 2007; Popper & Popper, 2002; ROB & RFV, 2008; Verwest & Van Dam, 2010).

Furthermore, the study has shown the diversity of the region of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Especially the sub case of Retranchement proved to be remarkable. This study has been conducted in the first place because demographic decline has led to a different perspective on second homes. Since Retranchement barely deals with housing vacancy and still experiences notable pressure on its local housing market, the entire relevance of this new perspective on second homes is questioned in this town. Thus, policy-makers are called up to remain cautious for such inner regional differences.

9.2.2 | Recommendations for Future Study

This empirical study has shown the potential of second homes as a direct solution to the housing vacancy in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is limited. However, does this mean there are no opportunities for second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen at all? The literature on the impacts of second homes on host regions has revealed it is highly complex to predict these impacts (section 3.4). One certain conclusion was that the net impacts of second homes in "hitherto-unoccupied" dwellings are predominantly positive (Müller, Hall & Keen, 2004: 17). The empirically confirmed mismatch shows the potential in such unoccupied dwellings is limited, and suggests the second home demand can rather be met by using existing occupied dwellings or newly-purpose built dwellings. However, in the last two instances the impacts of the second homes are uncertain and the argument of rather having "houses only occupied during a couple of weeks a year than not occupied at all" (PZC, 2011, own translation) no longer applies in these instances. Thus, when the second home demand is met by existing occupied dwellings and newly-purpose built dwellings, it is doubtful whether these second homes will constructively help the region to accompany it in its demographic changes.

A possibility to make the second home demand contribute to the challenges in the region, is to connect the demand for newly-purpose built dwellings to the reconstruction and/or demolition 'task' on the housing market. The housing market in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is an extremely 'relaxed' market, but in this way the modest dynamics which the housing market does have (i.e. the second home demand) are used to handle the least attractive dwellings in the region. This could be achieved with the introduction of a *reconstruction/demolition fund* (Dutch: *herstructurerings-/sloopfonds*). Such a fund has also been mentioned by Klinkers, Hovens & Derks (2009), the Dutch Association of Real Estate Brokers (NVM, 2010), Renooy, Oude Ophuis, Aarninkhof & Brouwer (2011) and the Housing Experiments Steering Group (SEV in VNG, 2009). With a reconstruction/demolition fund, developers of new dwellings are obliged to make a financial contribution to the reconstruction/demolition of dwellings elsewhere in the region. This would be helpful in accompanying the housing market in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, since shrinking regions are currently struggling to find the financial resources for the reconstruction/demolition of obsolete dwellings (section 2.4.2). The drawback of this fund would be that it would be financially less attractive to purchase a newly purpose-built second home in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. This on the hand might improve the chances for these second home searchers to occupy a vacant dwelling, but on the other hand these second home searchers might as well search for a second home in other regions. The crucial question with such a fund is how high this mandatory contribution should be (in order to make a significant contribution to the reconstruction/demolition task, whilst not ruining all second home demand). Further study on the possibilities for such a reconstruction/demolition fund in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is recommended.

9.3 | Discussion

As has been mentioned, this study concludes there is a relatively large mismatch between the demand for second homes and the supply of vacant dwellings. There are however three developments which suggest this mismatch will only grow larger in the future.

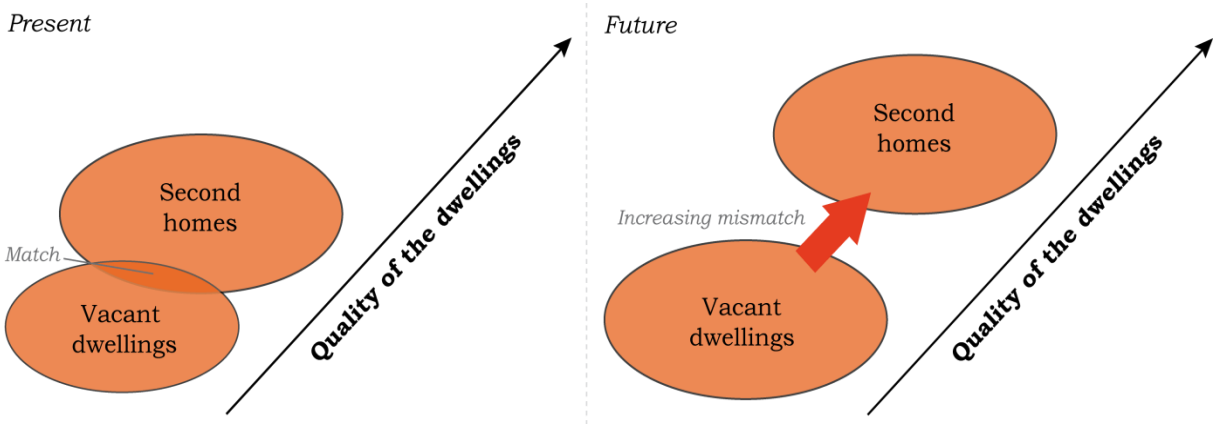
First, both in the literature (NRIT Onderzoek, 2010; RPB & RIGO, 2003; VROM-raad, 2009) and in interviews with real estate agents it has been argued second home owners and searchers are increasingly putting higher demands on second homes (section 7.4.4). This development implies that the willingness of second home searchers to occupy obsolete dwellings (which is suggested to already be limited) will probably further decrease.

Second, as has been mentioned in section 7.2.3, the second home demand from Germans seems to have largely disappeared over the last decade. This is expected to enhance the mismatch between demand and supply, because many German owners have in the past purchased less attractive dwellings which generally do not meet the demands of the average second home owner (Interviews; Van de Laar, 2010). Thus, the German demand is suggested to have softened the current mismatch between demand and supply, but this effect is absent with the loss of the German demand. The German demand suggests the demand for second homes is partially culturally dependent. This variable has not been studied, but is expected to be influential in the generalisation of the results of this study to other countries.

Third, 41,15 percent of the current second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen are older than 65 years of age (section 7.2.1). Although second homes are often associated with retirees, this percentage appeared to be extremely high in comparison to second home owners in the rest of the Netherlands. What will happen with these second homes when these people become too old to travel to their second home or when they have passed away? Some of these might be sold, others are probably inherited by family, but part of these dwellings might also remain vacant. In this study, second homes have especially been analysed from the demand side of the market. However, second homes can thus also be found at the supply side of the market. Second homes have been analysed as a potential solution for the housing vacancy in the region, but it should not be overlooked that current second homes can also become vacant. Some of the interviewed real estate agents already gave examples of vacant former second homes, which have proved to be very difficult to sell.

Figure 9.1 illustrates this discussion: the left part of the figure shows that second homes and vacant dwellings are predominantly different kinds of dwellings, and the right part of the figure suggests this mismatch will increase in the future because of the above mentioned reasons.

Figure 9.1
Hypothetical development of the mismatch between demand and supply



9.4 | Reflection

This section reflects on some of the decisions which have been made in this study. This reflection reflects on three specific parts of the study. First, it reflects on the theoretical framework that has been applied. Second, on the consequences of the chosen research strategy and third, on the consequences of definitional choices which have been made.

> *Theoretical framework*
In this study, a theoretical framework on different types of second home use has been used in order to better understand the complexity of the second home market (section 4.1). This framework followed out of the assumption that different types of second home users have different demands concerning the environment and the dwellings (Müller, Hall & Keen 2004). This assumption generally was proved to be right during this study, but for the most part the preferences of different types of users appeared to be quite comparable. Only the demands for investment properties notably diverged from the other usage types. All in all, the theoretical framework proved to be necessary to do justice to the complexity of the second home market, but had less explanatory value as an independent variable than was expected at the beginning of the study.

> *Research strategy*
The decision on which research strategy is going to be used is always a crucial decision in the design of a research. The decision to do a single embedded case study was made over for instance a survey study. This decision was made out of dissatisfaction with earlier studies on the topic and because an in depth analysis of less research units was explicitly preferred over a more superficial analysis of more research units (section 5.1). Looking back at the study, it is clear this decision has paid off. The data collection and analysis proved to be very labour intensive. When for instance a choice would have been made to analyse four different shrinking regions, the data collection and analysis should have been much more limited to keep the study feasible. Moreover, the study not only proved shrinking regions are very different from each other, but

also that one region alone can already be very diverse (chapter 8). It is therefore expected that answering the research questions with for instance a survey study, would not have led to satisfactory results.

> *Operationalisation*

Finally, decisions about how to define key variables also have many consequences on the outcomes of studies (section 5.2). The data on second homes and vacant dwellings in this study are predominantly based on *revealed behaviour*. Although revealed behaviour is expected to be a valid predictor of future demand, it is always uncertain to what extent this is in accordance with future behaviour. Also, revealed behaviour on the housing market is a combination of both consumer preferences and availability. This however, has been tackled as much as possible through triangulation of different data sources (primary data, questionnaire data and interview data). Furthermore, a weakness of the primary data which have been collected on second homes and vacant dwellings in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, is the static (instead of dynamic) character of the data. Therefore, insufficient insight in how demand and supply have developed in the past was gain and it was not feasible to really separate *structural vacancy* from short-term vacancy. Also, the definition of a second home always remains open to debate (section 3.1), but the definition used in this study was sufficient given its research goal.

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ANNEX 1: OVERVIEW PRIMARY DATA PER TOWN

Town	Distance to shore (in km)	Assessed quality residential environment	Average assessed dwelling value (in €)	Total housing stock	Number of vacant dwellings		Number of second homes		Number of second homes (recreational dwellings only)		Number of second homes (excl. recreational dwellings)	
					Absolute	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*
Aardenburg	13,7	6,97494	175.585	1.263	98	7,76%	63	4,99%	9	0,71%	54	4,33%
Axel	36,9	6,74335	153.610	3.713	166	4,47%	5	0,13%	3	0,08%	2	0,05%
Biervliet (Sluis)	16,4	6,81105	306.235	98	9	9,18 %	3	3,06%	0	0,00%	3	3,23%
Biervliet (Terneuzen)	16,4	6,81105	161.069	743	65	8,75%	49	6,59%	3	0,40%	46	6,22%
Breskens	1,5	6,60993	168.958	3.300	162	4,91%	909	27,55%	700	21,21%	209	8,30%
Cadzand	0,5	6,70665	191.105	1.590	83	5,22%	947	59,56%	858	53,96%	89	16,09%
Clinge	53,6	6,74697	180.660	995	54	5,43%	9	0,90%	0	0,00%	9	0,90%
Eede	20,3	6,90199	217.560	450	33	7,33%	5	1,11%	0	0,00%	5	1,12%
Graauw	52,4	6,79816	168.738	470	33	7,02%	64	13,62%	0	0,00%	64	13,62%
Groede	2,8	6,87837	192.945	729	69	9,47%	188	25,79%	50	6,86%	138	20,69%
Heikant	51,2	6,57557	249.103	475	21	4,42%	7	1,47%	0	0,00%	7	1,47%
Hengstdijk	44,9	6,50567	191.474	312	9	2,88%	19	6,09%	0	0,00%	19	6,09%
Hoek	25,5	6,87230	146.191	1.366	48	3,51%	97	7,10%	44	3,22%	53	4,13%
Hoofdplaat	10,9	6,55772	163.342	590	31	5,25%	183	31,02%	116	19,66%	67	15,09%
Hulst	47,5	7,16361	192.151	5.028	179	3,56%	36	0,72%	0	0,00%	36	0,76%

Town	Distance to shore (in km)	Assessed quality residential environment	Average assessed dwelling value (in €)	Total housing stock	Number of vacant dwellings		Number of second homes		Number of second homes (recreational dwellings only)		Number of second homes (excl. recreational dwellings)	
					Absolute	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*
IJzendijke	12,1	6,69968	184.727	1.095	50	4,57%	49	4,47%	0	0,00%	49	4,54%
Kapellebrug	51,9	6,68862	243.639	147	5	3,40%	2	1,36%	0	0,00%	2	1,36%
Kloosterzande	48,4	6,68339	172.535	1.412	54	3,82%	21	1,49%	0	0,00%	21	1,49%
Koewacht	48,8	7,09243	208.164	1.425	56	3,93%	13	0,91%	5	0,35%	8	0,56%
Kuitaart	46,8	-	203.509	106	2	1,89%	10	9,43%	0	0,00%	10	9,43%
Lamswaarde	48,5	6,75261	191.533	255	13	5,10%	13	5,10%	4	1,57%	9	3,59%
Nieuwe Namen	57,5	6,92485	179.697	452	20	4,42%	22	4,87%	0	0,00%	22	4,87%
Nieuwvliet	0,4	7,10098	170.179	955	17	1,78%	688	72,04%	583	61,05%	105	33,87%
Oostburg	8,9	6,59139	164.244	2.445	155	6,34%	63	2,58%	0	0,00%	63	2,58%
Ossenisse	47,4	6,31562	203.460	139	3	2,16%	20	14,39%	3	2,16%	17	12,50%
Overslag	49,9	6,64574	251.908	98	3	3,06%	4	4,08%	2	2,04%	2	2,08%
Philippine	25,1	7,06797	185.877	932	34	3,65%	12	1,29%	0	0,00%	12	1,29%
Retranchement	3,4	7,35124	251.964	554	33	5,96%	308	55,60%	223	40,25%	85	30,04%
Sas van Gent	37,6	6,20012	123.338	1.967	93	4,73%	6	0,31%	0	0,00%	6	0,31%
Schoondijke	6,6	6,33309	149.436	760	40	5,26%	71	9,34%	0	0,00%	71	9,34%
Sint Jansteen	50,3	7,08707	199.594	1.323	46	3,48%	4	0,30%	0	0,00%	4	0,30%
Sint Kruis	18,3	7,04092	281.672	174	10	5,75%	15	8,62%	0	0,00%	15	9,26%
Sluis	8,1	7,06428	211.389	1.256	93	7,40%	64	5,10%	0	0,00%	64	5,15%
Sluiskil	31,7	6,13492	127.190	1.140	75	6,58%	1	0,09%	0	0,00%	1	0,09%

Town	Distance to shore (in km)	Assessed quality residential environment	Average assessed dwelling value (in €)	Total housing stock	Number of vacant dwellings		Number of second homes		Number of second homes (recreational dwellings only)		Number of second homes (excl. recreational dwellings)	
					Absolute	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*	*Absolute*	*Relative*
Terhole	44,9	6,57995	176.844	212	5	2,36%	6	2,83%	0	0,00%	6	2,83%
Terneuzen	31,8	6,77052	170.066	11.893	434	3,65%	40	0,34%	7	0,24%	33	0,61%
Vogelwaarde	41,7	6,47504	184.471	800	40	5,00%	14	1,75%	0	0,00%	14	1,75%
Walsoorden	50,1	6,68339	189.772	158	8	5,06%	15	9,49%	3	1,90%	12	7,74%
Waterlandkerkje	14,8	6,91274	206.681	298	22	7,38%	38	12,75%	0	0,00%	38	13,62%
Westdorpe	36,9	6,41372	156.991	927	65	7,01%	13	1,40%	0	0,00%	13	1,40%
Zaamslag	35,5	6,93735	172.777	1.195	67	5,61%	17	1,42%	5	0,42%	12	1,01%
Zuiddorpe	42,2	6,87036	184.237	440	2	0,45%	4	0,91%	1	0,23%	3	3,95%
Zuidzande	5,4	6,67607	178.068	381	19	4,99%	81	21,26%	0	0,00%	81	22,95%
TOTAL	-	-	175.860	54.061	2.524	4,67%	4.198	7,77%	2.610	4,83%	1.588	2,94%

ANNEX 2: ASSESSED QUALITY OF THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT OF TOWNS IN ZEEUWS-VLAANDEREN

Table A2.1 shows the original results from Van der Wouw (2011), in which inhabitants from all towns in Zeeland were asked to assess the quality of the residential environment in their town. The quantitative measure of the quality of the residential environment in table A2.1 represents a total score of responses on questions in which respondents were asked to assess the quality of the buildings, the public spaces, the rural environment and the appropriateness of their residential environment for children to grow up in (Van der Wouw, 2011: 16).

Since the measurement of the quality of the residential environment of towns easily becomes normative, the accuracy of the results by Van der Wouw has been investigated. First, the results have been discussed in personal communication with policy advisors of the Province of Zeeland (A. Drijgers, L.G. Kaagman, P. Smit & M. Woerkom, personal communication, 2011). Second, the interviewed real estate agents (annex 5) were asked about the extent to which they agree or disagree with the results. Third, the majority of the towns were observed and fourth, the results were compared with the results of a study on the cultural historical attractiveness of towns in Zeeland (De Klerk, 1994).

Based on the four methods above which have been used to verify the results by Van der Wouw, it can be concluded the results generally are very accurate for the town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. Therefore, it was legitimate to adopt this data as a measurement of the assessed quality of the residential environment of towns. However, the following minor adjustments have been made:

(i) *Aardenburg's assessment has been increased with 0,3*
(based on the relatively high ranking of the town in De Klerk's study and on the expert opinions of real estate agents in the area and policy advisors of the Province of Zeeland)

(ii) *Hulst's assessment has been increased with 0,3*
(based on the extremely high ranking of the town in De Klerk's study and on the expert opinions of policy advisors of the Province of Zeeland)

(iii) *IJzendijke's assessment has been increased with 0,3*
(based on observation and the expert opinions of real estate agents in the area and policy advisors of the Province of Zeeland)

(iv) Sluiskil's assessment has been lowered with 0,3
(based on observation, expert opinions of policy advisors of the Province of Zeeland and the extremely low ranking of the town in De Klerk's study)

(v) *Westdorpe's assessment has been increased with 0,3*
(based on observation and the expert opinions of policy advisors of the Province of Zeeland)

Table A2.1

Assessed quality of the residential environment per town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (unedited data)

Town	Assessment (quantitative)	Assessment (qualitative)	Town	Assessment (quantitative)	Assessment (qualitative)
Retranchement	7,3512	Very high	Cadzand	6,7067	Average
Nieuwvliet	7,1010	High	Kapellebrug	6,6886	Average
Koewacht	7,0924	High	Kloosterzande	6,6834	Average
Sint Jansteen	7,0871	High	Zuidzande	6,6761	Average
Philippine	7,0680	High	Aardenburg	6,6750	Average
Sluis	7,0643	High	Overslag	6,6457	Average
Sint Kruis	7,0409	High	Breskens	6,6099	Low
Zaamslag	6,9373	Average	Oostburg	6,5914	Low
Nieuw Namen	6,9248	Average	Terhole	6,5710	Low
Waterlandkerkje	6,9127	Average	Heikant	6,5756	Low
Eede	6,9020	Average	Hoofdplaat	6,5577	Low
Groede	6,8784	Average	Zandstraat	6,5142	Low
Hoek	6,8723	Average	Hengstdijk	6,5057	Low
Zuiddorpe	6,8704	Average	Vogelwaarde	6,4750	Low
Hulst	6,8636	Average	Sluiskil	6,4349	Low
Biervliet	6,8111	Average	IJzendijke	6,3997	Low
Graauw	6,7982	Average	Schoondijke	6,3331	Very low
Terneuzen	6,7705	Average	Ossenisse	6,3156	Very low
Lamswaarde	6,7526	Average	Sas van Gent	6,2001	Very low
Clinge	6,7470	Average	Westdorpe	6,1137	Very low
Axel	6,7433	Average			

Source: Van der Wouw, 2011

ANNEX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE SECOND HOME OWNERS

Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

Provincie Zeeland

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am conducting a survey on second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen for my study Spatial Planning at the Radboud University Nijmegen and my internship at the Province of Zeeland. The goal of this survey is gaining insight in the opportunities for second homes in demographically declining regions and this questionnaire is a part of this survey.

I would kindly like to request you to fill in the attached questionnaire. Filling in the questionnaire will take you about ten minutes and the questionnaire results will be processed entirely anonymous. The results of this survey are expected at the end of 2011.

You can return your completed questionnaire till **31 October 2011** via the attached return envelope (for which you do not need a stamp). Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Thank you in advance.

With kind regards,

Ronald van Leeuwen

1. About your second home

A. In which town is your second home located?

- □ Aardenburg
- □ Breskens
- □ Cadzand-Bad
- □ Cadzand-Dorp
- □ Eede
- □ Groede
- □ Hoofdplaat
- □ IJzendijke
- □ Nieuwvliet-Bad
- □ Nieuwvliet-Dorp
- □ Oostburg
- □ Retranchement
- □ Schoondijke
- □ Sint Kruis
- □ Sluis (including Sint Anna ter Muiden)
- □ Waterlandkerkje
- □ Zuidzande
- □ Other: ……..

B. At what type of location is your second home located?

- □ Inside the built-up area
- □ Outside the built-up area
- □ On a recreational park

C. What type of house is your second home?

- □ Detached house
- □ (Former) farm
- □ Semi-detached house
- □ Town house/row house
- □ End house
- □ Apartment
- □ Chalet
- □ Other: ……..

D. In what period was your second home built?

- □ Before 1945
- □ 1945 - 1964
- □ 1965 - 1979
- □ 1980 - 1989
- □ 1990 - 1999
- □ After 2000

E. How many bedrooms does your second home have?

- □ 1 or 2 bedroom(s)
- □ 3 bedrooms
- □ 4 bedrooms
- □ More than 5 bedrooms

F. Can you give an estimation of the value of your second home?

- □ Less than € 50.000
- □ € 50.000 - € 99.999
- □ € 100.000 - € 149.999
- □ € 150.000 - € 199.999
- □ € 200.000 - € 249.999
- □ € 250.000 - € 299.999
- □ More than € 300.000

G. What is the estimated distance between your second home and your primary residence?

- □ Less than 50 kilometres
- □ 50 - 99 kilometres
- □ 100 - 149 kilometres
- □ 150 - 199 kilometres
- □ 200 - 249 kilometres
- □ 250 - 299 kilometres
- □ 300 - 349 kilometres
- □ 350 - 399 kilometres
- □ More than 400 kilometres

2. Choice of the second home

A. How important have the following reasons been for you in choosing a second home in *this specific region*?

	Very unimportant	*Unimportant*	*Neutral*	*Important*	*Very important*
Proximity of the coast	0	0	0	0	0
Proximity of nature	0	0	0	0	0
Proximity of recreational services	0	0	0	0	0
Proximity of sports facilities	0	0	0	0	0
Aesthetic value town(centre)	0	0	0	0	0
Peace, quietness and space	0	0	0	0	0
Social connections in region	0	0	0	0	0
Historical ties with the region	0	0	0	0	0
Accessibility from the first home	0	0	0	0	0
Average housing prices in region	0	0	0	0	0
Availability of houses in region	0	0	0	0	0

B. How important have the following reasons been for you in choosing in *this specific second home*?

	Very unimportant	*Unimportant*	*Neutral*	*Important*	*Very important*
Price of the house	0	0	0	0	0
Size of the house	0	0	0	0	0
Type of house	0	0	0	0	0
Presence of a garden	0	0	0	0	0
Location of the house	0	0	0	0	0

Below are some propositions and in each of these propositions two houses are compared with each other. In question 2C - 2F you are asked to fill in whether you agree or disagree with each proposition.

C. I prefer a less attractive house nearby the coast (< 5 kilometres distance), over a larger and more attractive house further from the coast (> 15 kilometres distance).
(given that the prices - including renovation costs - are even)
□ Agree □ Disagree

D. I prefer a relatively expensive house nearby the coast (< 5 kilometres distance), over a cheaper house further from the coast (> 15 kilometres distance).
(given that the houses itself are of the same quality)
□ Agree □ Disagree

E. I prefer a second home on a recreational park, over a second home inside or around an existing village.
(*given that the prices and the quality of the houses are even and that in both situations the distance to the coast is the same)*
□ Agree □ Disagree

F. I prefer a house in an attractive village further from the coast (> 15 kilometres distance), over a house in a less attractive village nearby the coast (< 5 kilometres distance).
(given that the prices and the quality of the houses are even)
□ Agree □ Disagree

3. About the use of the second home

A. How often do you use your second home?

□ Never
□ 1 or 2 times a year
□ 3 or more times a year, but less than monthly
□ Monthly
□ Not weekly, but more often than monthly
□ Weekly

B. Which of the following characterisations applies most to your use of the second home?

□ I do not use the second home for own use
□ I predominantly use the second home during holidays
□ I predominantly use the second home during weekends
□ I predominantly use the second home during weekends, but in combination with weekdays (for instance a visit to the second home from Thursday evening till Sunday evening)
□ Other: ……..

C. Do you sometimes lease your second home?

□ Yes, the house is leased during the majority of the year
□ Yes, the house is leased during (parts of) the peak season
□ Yes, but barely
□ No

D. How many days a year is your second home being used (by yourself, by others and by tenants all together)?

□ Less than 50 days
□ 50 days - 99 days
□ 100 days - 199 days
□ 200 days - 299 days
□ More than 300 days

4. About yourself (optional)

A. What is your age?
- □ Younger than 35 years
- □ 35 - 44 years
- □ 45 - 54 years
- □ 55 - 64 years
- □ Older than 65 years

B. What is your marital status?
- □ Single, without children (also when your children are living independently)
- □ Single, with children
- □ Married/living together, without children (also when your children are living independently)
- □ Married/living together, with children

C. Can you give an estimation of the annual gross income of your household? (when you are retired, please fill in the annual gross income during your working years)
- □ Less than € 30.000
- □ € 30.000 - € 34.999
- □ € 35.000 - € 39.999
- □ € 40.000 - € 44.999
- □ € 45.000 - € 49.999
- □ € 50.000 - € 74.999
- □ € 75.000 - € 99.999
- □ More than € 100.000

D. In what year did you purchase your second home?

……..……..……..

E. Did you previously work or live in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen before you have purchased this second home?
- □ Yes
- □ No

F. How many vacations did you spend in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen before you have purchased this second home?
- □ None
- □ 1 vacation
- □ 2 or 3 vacations
- □ 4 or 5 vacations
- □ More than 5 vacations

G. Remarks:

……..……..……..

……..……..……..

……..……..……..

When you like to be informed about the results of the survey, you can fill in your address and email address. According to the current planning, you will then receive a message about the research results in the end of 2011.

Address: ……

……

Email address: ……

ANNEX 4: REPRESENTATIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRE SECOND HOME OWNERS

The different considerations which were taken into account with the distribution of the questionnaire have been elaborated on in section 5.3. This annex merely focuses on how representative the questionnaire results are for the total population (i.e. all current second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen). This is done by the comparison of the questionnaire results with the primary data on second homes, which have been collected from the three municipalities in the region. In table A4.2 - A4.7 the questionnaire results and the primary data are compared on the following characteristics: the nationality of the owners, the locations of the second homes, the building years of the second homes, the dwelling types of the second homes and the assessed values of the second homes. First however, table A4.1 shows the number of distributed/returned questionnaires and the number of the total population of second home owners.

Table A4.1
Number of distributed and returned questionnaires

Population	4.198
Sample size	3.660
Valid sample size[62]	3.039
Response	872
Response rate	28,69 %

Table A4.2 - A4.7 suggest the questionnaire response can be considered representative for the entire population of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. However, one group of second homes is heavily underrepresented in the response: i.e. second homes on the vacation parks around Breskens. The majority of the second homes without a mailbox are located on vacation parks around Breskens, which can explain the underrepresentation of response from Breskens (table A4.3) and the large underrepresentation of dwellings located at vacation parks (table A4.4).

Also, the number of second homes in eastern Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (table A4.3) is underrepresented since the questionnaire was only distributed in towns within the municipality of Sluis (section 5.3). Since the number of second homes in eastern Zeeuws-Vlaanderen is relatively small, the bias in the questionnaire response remains limited. Where necessary, input from the interviews with real estate agents has compensated for missing questionnaire results.

[62] Of the distributed questionnaires, 621 were returned by the mail company since the addresses of these questionnaires had no mail box.

Table A4.2

Nationality of second home owners in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

	Questionnaire	Primary data	Differential
Dutch[63]	65,4 %	45,1 %	2,0 %
Belgian		18,3 %	
German	32,8 %	34,3 %	- 1,5 %
Other	1,7 %	2,3 %	- 0,6 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners; Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table A4.3

Number of second homes per town

	Questionnaire	Primary data	Differential
Aardenburg	2,6 %	1,5 %	1,1 %
Breskens	10,8 %	21,7 %	- 10,9 %
Cadzand	27,1 %	22,6 %	4,5 %
Eede	0,1 %	0,1 %	0,0 %
Groede	8,3 %	4,5 %	3,8 %
Hoofdplaat	3,0 %	4,4 %	- 1,4 %
IJzendijke	1,7 %	1,2 %	0,5 %
Nieuwvliet	25,4 %	16,4 %	9,0 %
Oostburg	2,0 %	1,5 %	0,5 %
Retranchement	9,8 %	7,3 %	2,5 %
Schoondijke	2,4 %	1,7 %	0,7 %
Sint Kruis	0,7 %	0,4 %	0,3 %
Sluis	1,7 %	1,5 %	0,2 %
Waterlandkerkje	1,3 %	0,9 %	0,4 %
Zuidzande	3,0 %	1,9 %	1,1 %
Other	0,1 %	12,5 %	- 12 ,40 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners; Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

[63] From the questionnaire results is was not possible to distinguish Dutch from Belgian respondents.

Table A4.4
Number of second homes per location type

	Questionnaire	Primary data	Differential
Inside the built-up area	42,4 %	26,7 %	15,7 %
Outside the built-up area	29,2 %	12,4 %	16,8 %
Vacation park	28,5 %	60,9 %	- 32,4 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners; Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table A4.5
Number of second homes per building period

	Questionnaire	Primary data	Differential
≤ 1945	29,8 %	27,2 %	2,6 %
1945 - 1964	10,4 %	8,9 %	1,5 %
1965 - 1979	20,2 %	20,3 %	- 0,1 %
1980 - 1989	22,2 %	16,3 %	5,9 %
1990 - 1999	12,4 %	19,7 %	- 7,3 %
≥ 2000	4,5 %	7,4 %	- 2,9 %
Unknown	0,5 %	0,3 %	0,2 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners; Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table A4.6
Number of second homes per dwelling type

	Questionnaire	Primary data	Differential
Detached	34,2 %	36,3 %	- 2,1 %
(Former) farm	1,1 %	0,3 %	0,8 %
Semi-detached	12,4 %	10,2 %	2,2 %
End house	11,0 %	14,7 %	- 3,7 %
Town house	24,4 %	20,1 %	4,3 %
Apartment	13,4 %	14,6 %	- 1,2 %
Chalet	2,2 %	3,9 %	- 1,7 %
Unknown	0,3 %	0,0 %	-,3 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners; Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Table A4.7

Number of second homes per dwelling value category

	Questionnaire	Primary data	Differential
≤ € 49.999	1,5 %	1,4 %	- 0,1 %
€ 50.000 - € 99.999	13,5 %	20,7 %	- 7,2 %
€ 100.000 - € 149.999	29,4 %	31,4 %	- 2,0 %
€ 150.000 - € 199.999	22,8 %	23,3 %	- 0,5 %
€ 200.000 - € 249.999	13,1 %	11,5 %	1,6 %
€ 250.000 - € 299.999	6,7 %	4,8 %	1,9 %
≥ € 300.000	11,5 %	7,0 %	4,5 %
Unknown	1,6 %	0,0 %	1,6 %

Source: Questionnaire second home owners; Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

ANNEX 5: INTERVIEW PARTNERS AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

1 | Interview Partners

	Real Estate Agency	Interviewee
1.	Versluijs Makelaardij	B. Tetteroo
2.	De Dobbelaere Makelaars	J.F.H. de Dobbelaere
3.	Van Akker Makelaars	W.P. van Akker
4.	Reham Vastgoed	F. du Puy
5.	Kindt & Biesbroeck	J. Verstraeten
6.	Eigen Huis Makelaar Hulst	T. Schauwaert
7.	Immo de Nijs	J. de Nijs

2 | Interview Guide

Introduction

1. Objections against audio recording?

2. Short introduction context and research goal.

Questions

1. Could you give a short characterisation of your real estate agency?
   (geographical working area, specialisations)

2. To what extent and how do you deal with second homes in your daily work?

3. What are your clients' main motivations for purchasing a second home?
   (e.g. investment, recreational and working purposes: relate to second home use typology)

   How often are the second homes generally visited?

4. What are the characteristics of your clients that search a second home?
   (age, marital status, life phase, income, origin region)

5. What characterises the demand for second homes?
   (locations, dwelling types: trade-offs)
   (what is 'distant' from the coast? remarks on assessments Van der Wouw, 2011?)

6. To what extent can your clients fulfil their second home needs in the current housing supply in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen?

   Are these also the dwellings that local inhabitants are looking for?

   What are your experiences with vacant dwellings being used as second homes?

   What role can purpose-built dwellings play?

7. How has the demand for second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen developed over the last ten years?

   Do you expect an increase in the demand for second homes in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen in the future?

   What are your thoughts on the phenomenon of *part-time dwelling*?

Propositions

1. Second home owners generally take good care of their dwelling.

2. (Former) farms are promising as second homes.

3. The number of second homes on vacation parks is relatively large in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, because this is an explicit preference of second home searchers.

Location specific sub themes

1. *Western Zeeuws-Vlaanderen*
   Policy changes municipality of Sluis
   Knokke-Heist
   Retranchement
   Breskens
   Schoondijke/Oostburg
   Cadzand-Bad (Cavelot, Duinhof)

2. *Eastern Zeeuws-Vlaanderen*
   Hoek (Braakman)
   Hulst
   Graauw (Paal, Drowned Land of Saeftinghe)
   Perkpolder

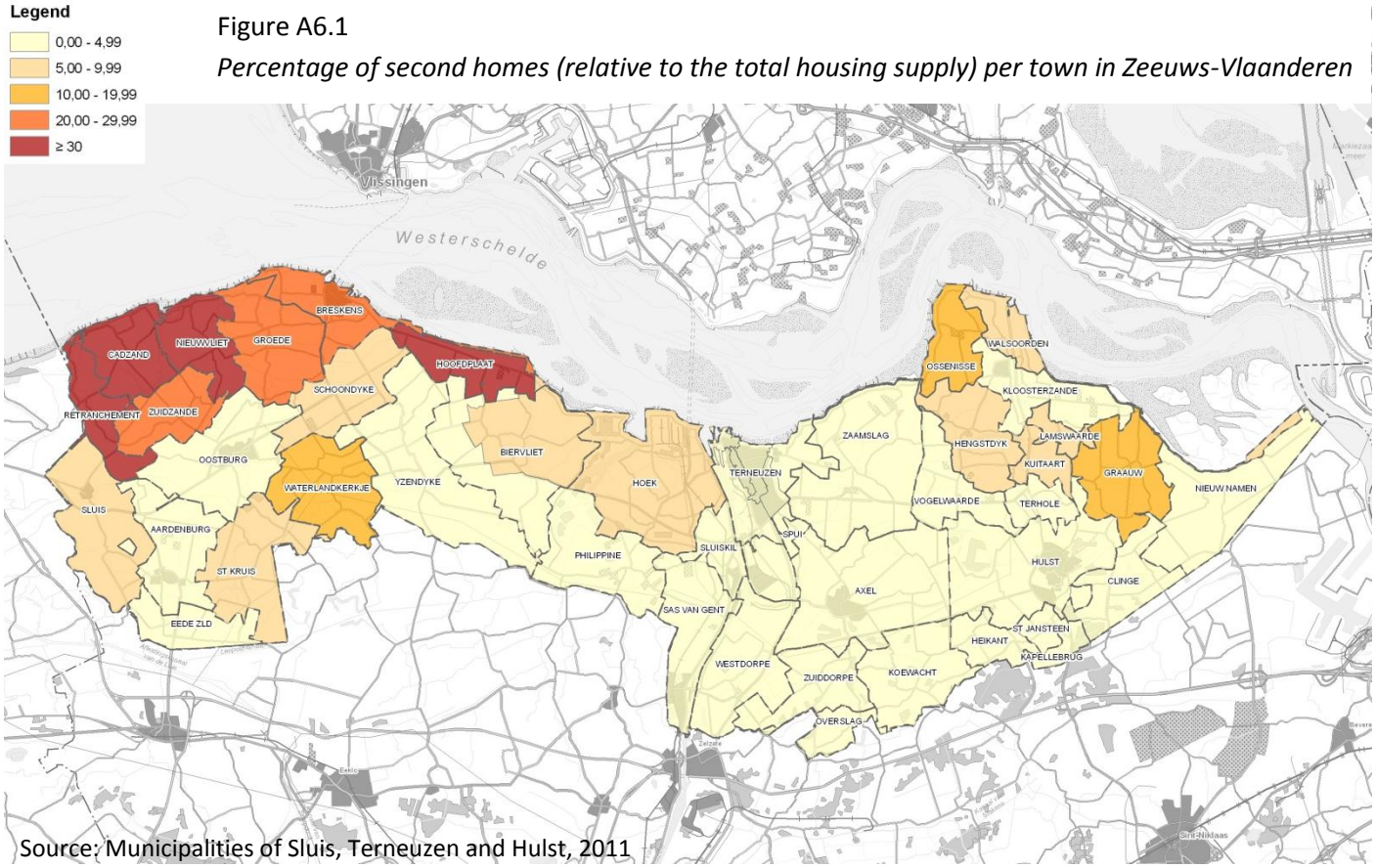
End

1. Agreements of feedback results et cetera.

ANNEX 6: SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SECOND HOMES IN ZEEUWS-VLAANDEREN

Figure A6.1

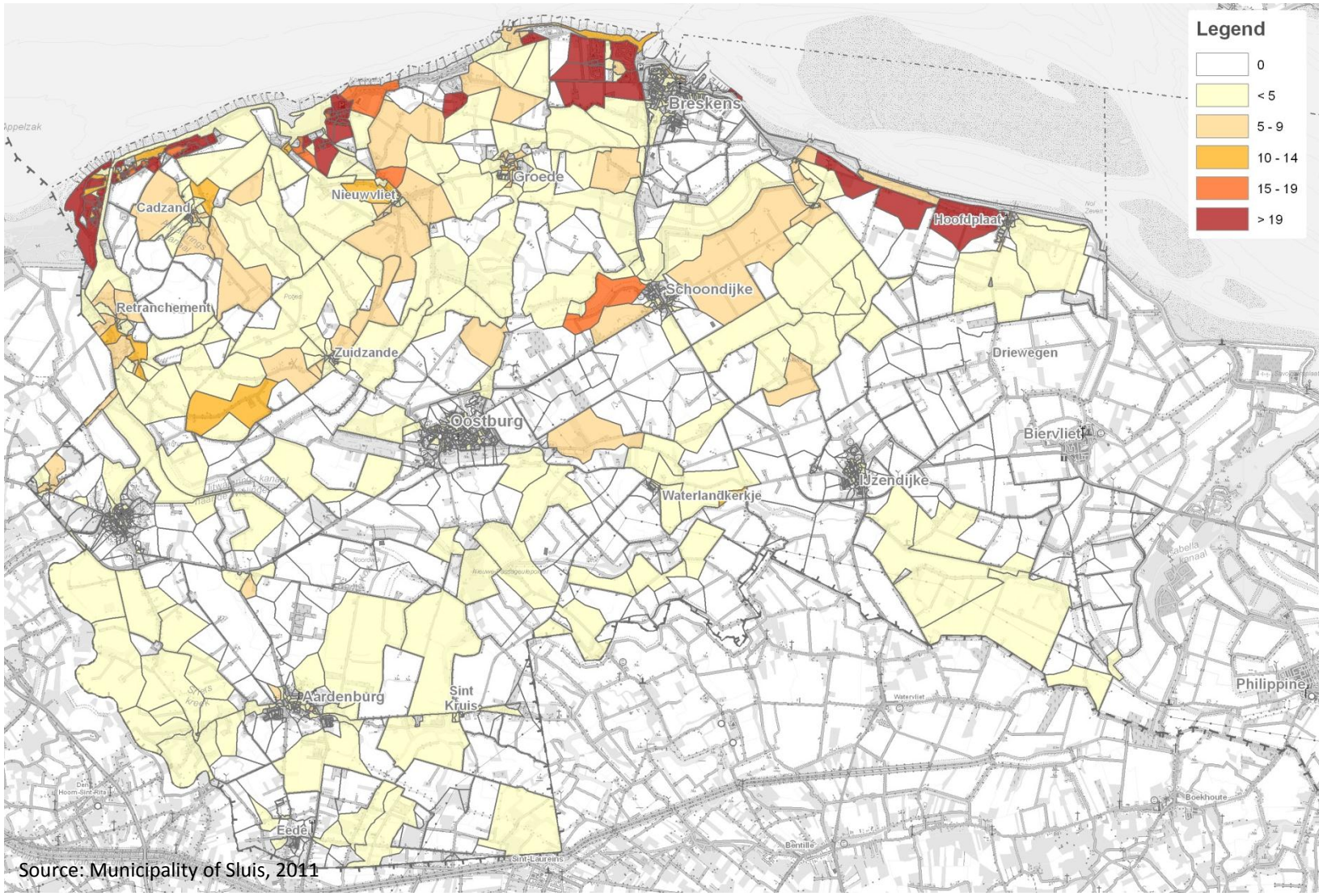
Percentage of second homes (relative to the total housing supply) per town in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Figure A6.2

Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in the municipality of Sluis



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

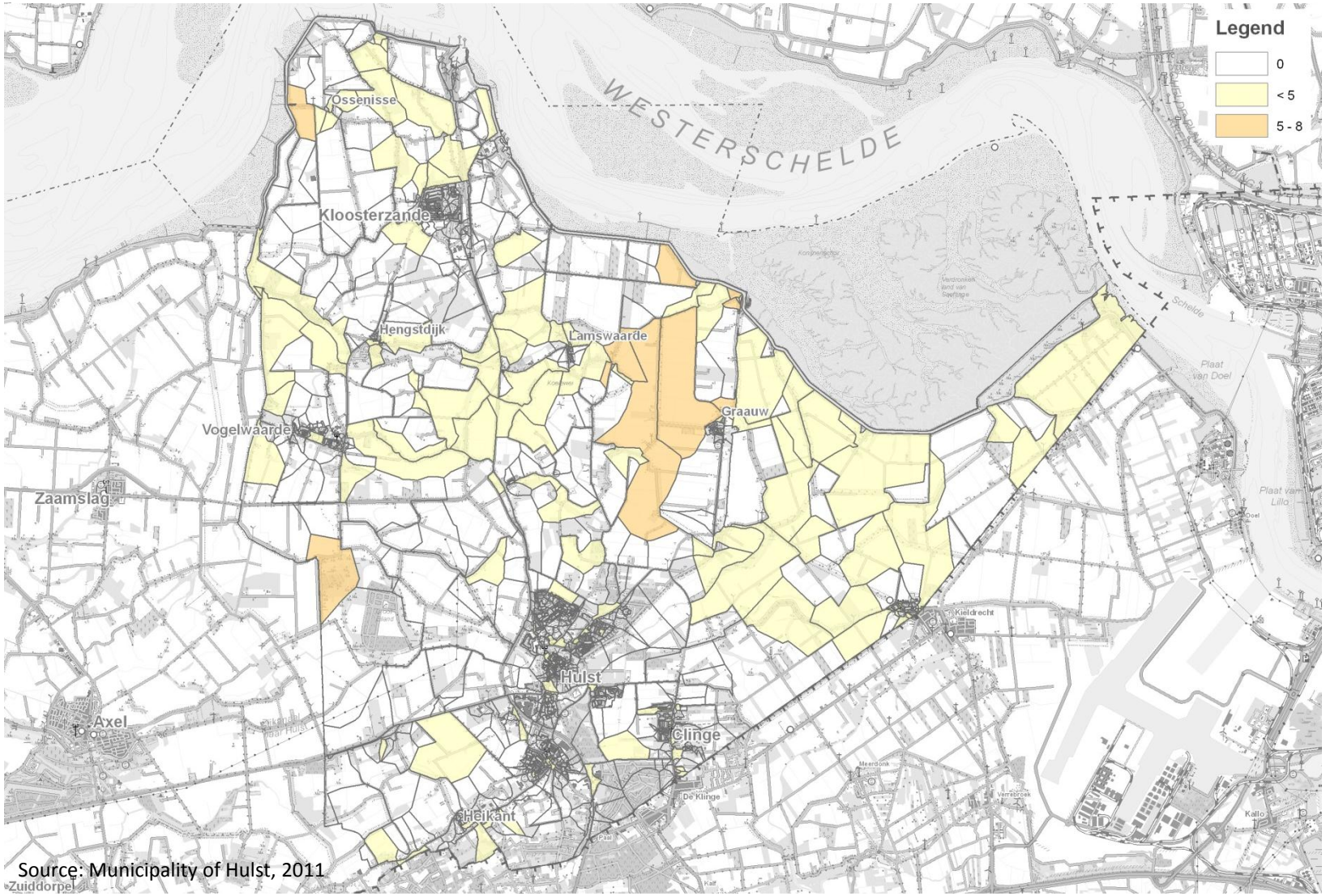
Figure A6.3

Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in the municipality of Terneuzen

Source: Municipality of Terneuzen, 2011

Figure A6.4

Absolute number of second homes per zip code area in the municipality of Hulst

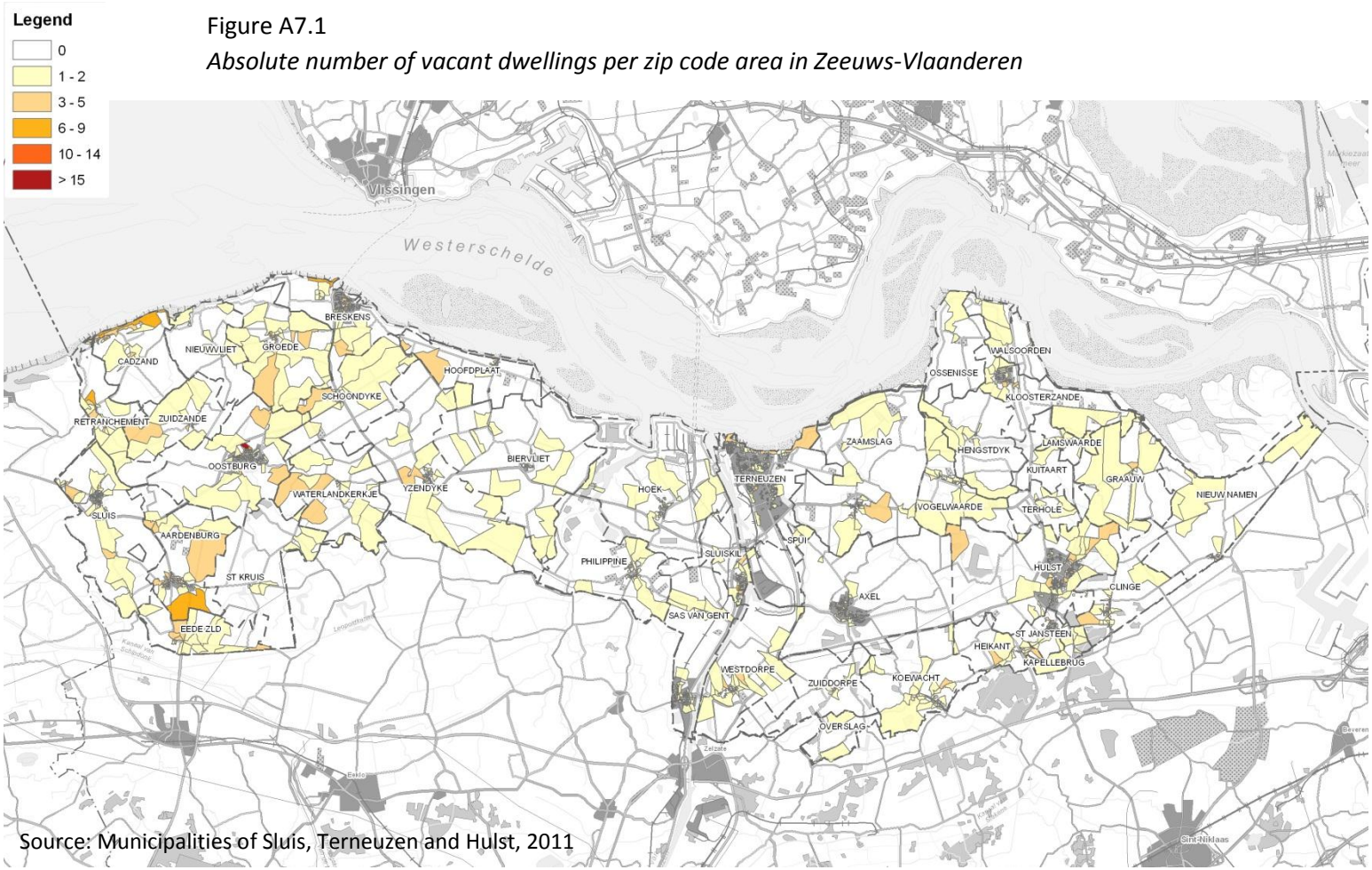


Source: Municipality of Hulst, 2011

ANNEX 7: SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF VACANT DWELLINGS IN ZEEUWS-VLAANDEREN

Figure A7.1

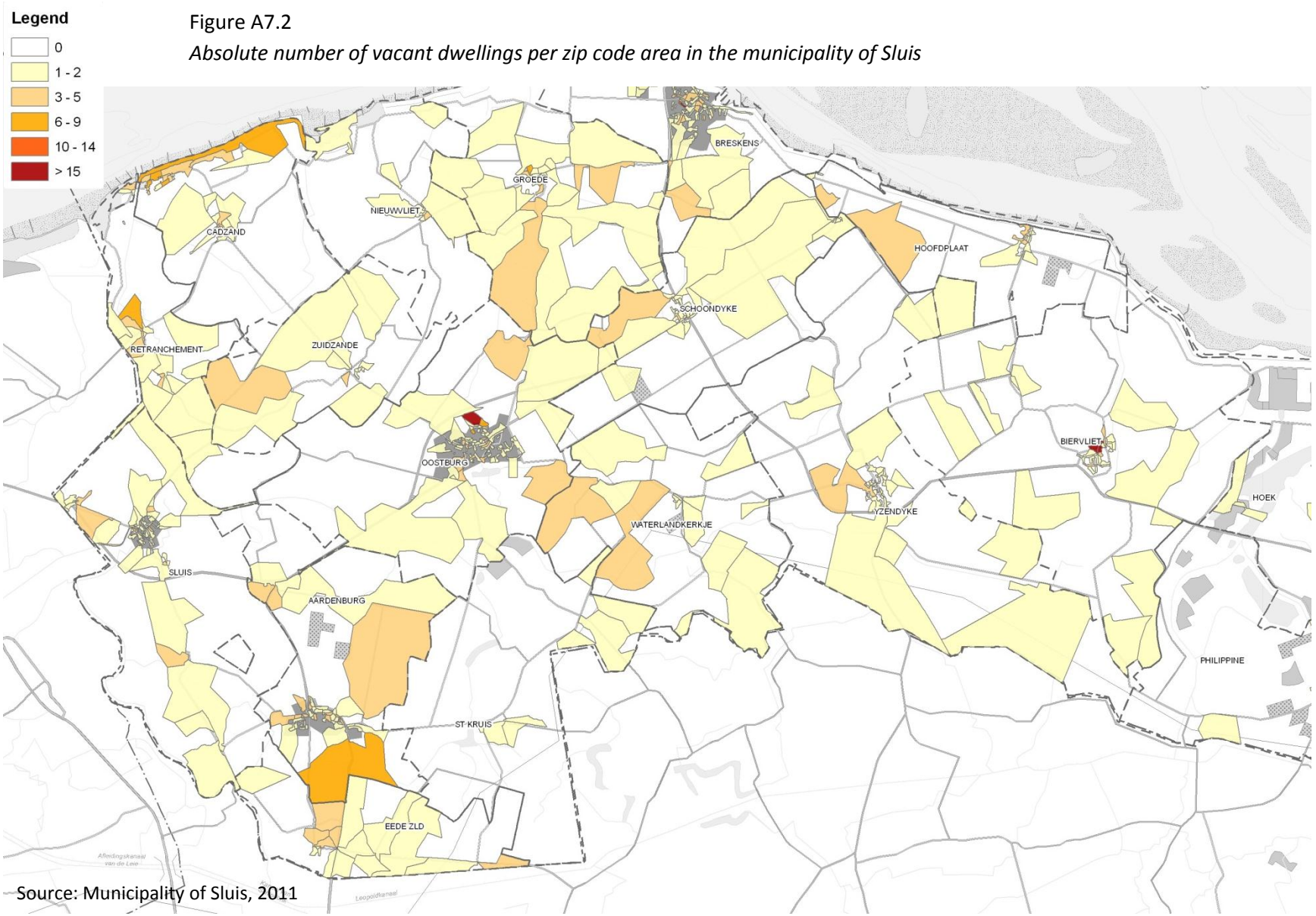
Absolute number of vacant dwellings per zip code area in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen



Source: Municipalities of Sluis, Terneuzen and Hulst, 2011

Figure A7.2

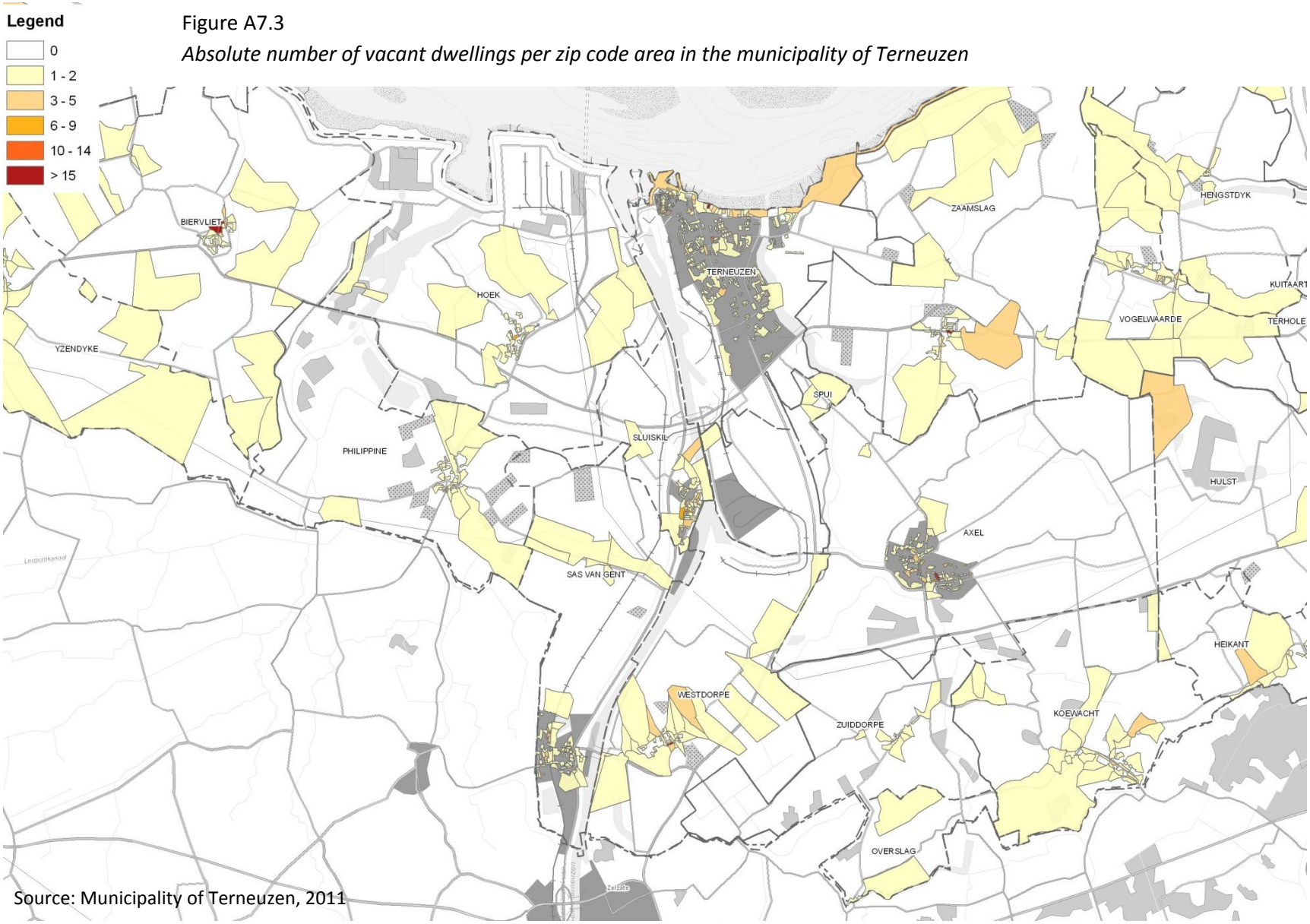
Absolute number of vacant dwellings per zip code area in the municipality of Sluis



Source: Municipality of Sluis, 2011

Figure A7.3

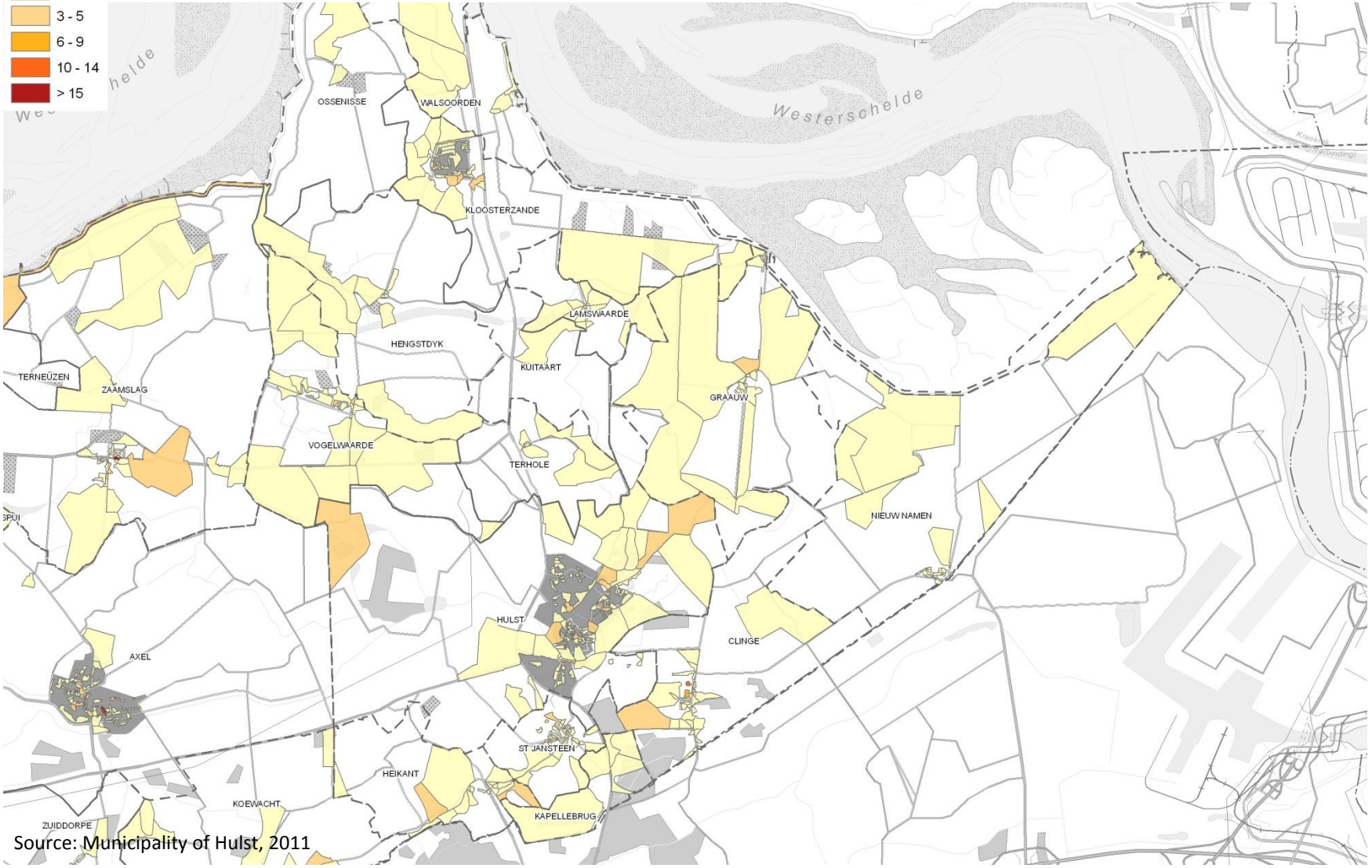
Absolute number of vacant dwellings per zip code area in the municipality of Terneuzen



Source: Municipality of Terneuzen, 2011

Figure A7.4

Absolute number of vacant dwellings per zip code area in the municipality of Hulst



Source: Municipality of Hulst, 2011