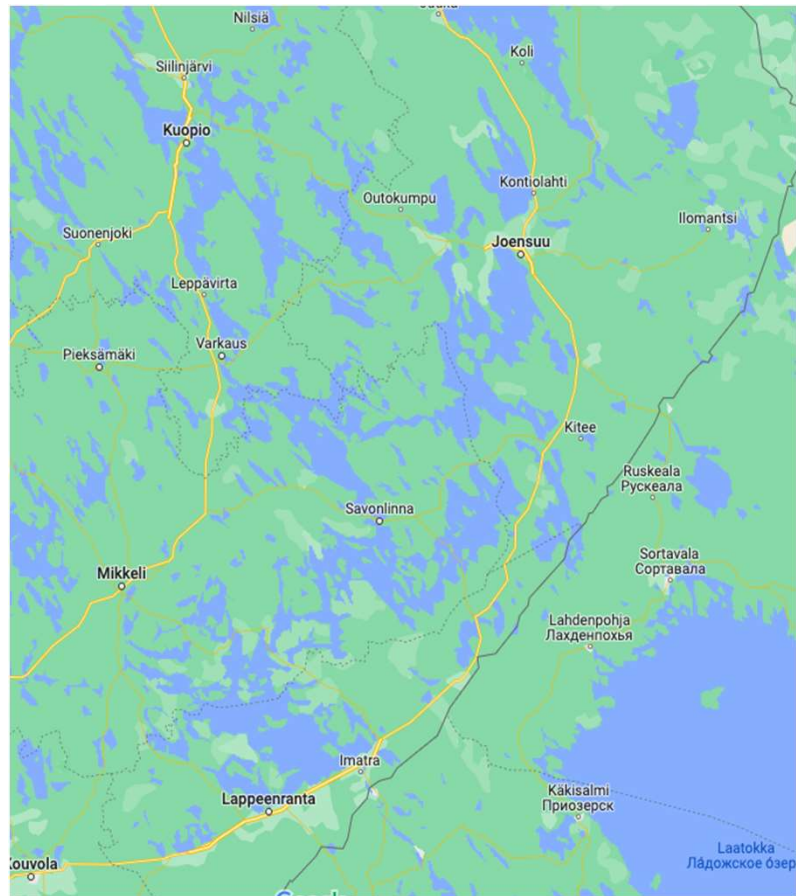


Savonlinna – an inner periphery?



Eastern Finland



NUTS3 regions



Periphery.....Inner Periphery

- Periphery; general connotations:
 - distance, differences, dependency; asymmetrical relationships and disparities of regional systems
- Positioning of Savonlinna?
 - The second oldest inland town in Finland; geographically in the middle of eastern Finland; established (in Swedish: Nyslott) in 1639. Russia occupied it for some years, but it was granted city rights/privileges again in 1784
 - in a long run it has gradually lost its relative standing in comparison to other main centres (towns) in eastern Finland
 - > Inner periphery?

Five largest urban areas in Eastern Finland: population (1000), 1880-2004

	1880	1950	2004
Kuopio	33	71	118
Joensuu	49	105	115
Mikkeli	52	75	71
Lappeenranta	109	51	70
Savonlinna	35	61	48

(FUR 2004)

Peripheralization

- The process through which the role of the place such as Savonlinna weakens in the activities and networks which really matter for its development
- Savonlinna has gradually found itself increasingly in the shadow of surrounding centres: not benefiting from their growth but competing with them in the conditions of institutional, technological etc. changes

Drivers of decline

- *Infrastructure technology: weakening role of water transport, location outside the main transport routes undermines its competitive position
- *WW2: In the beginning of the 20th century the railway line St. Petersburg, Vyborg, Elisenvaara, Savonlinna, Vaasa was ready; location near the closed border (without a crossing point) since WW2
- * No role as a regional capital with such service functions in relation to its surrounding areas as Kuopio/North Savo, Mikkeli/South Savo, Joensuu/North Karelia, Lappeenranta/South Karelia
- *Development strategy? Savonlinna would have been a compromise as the location of the "UEF" in the 1960s, but local decision-makers focused on industrial jobs.

Higher education in Savonlinna

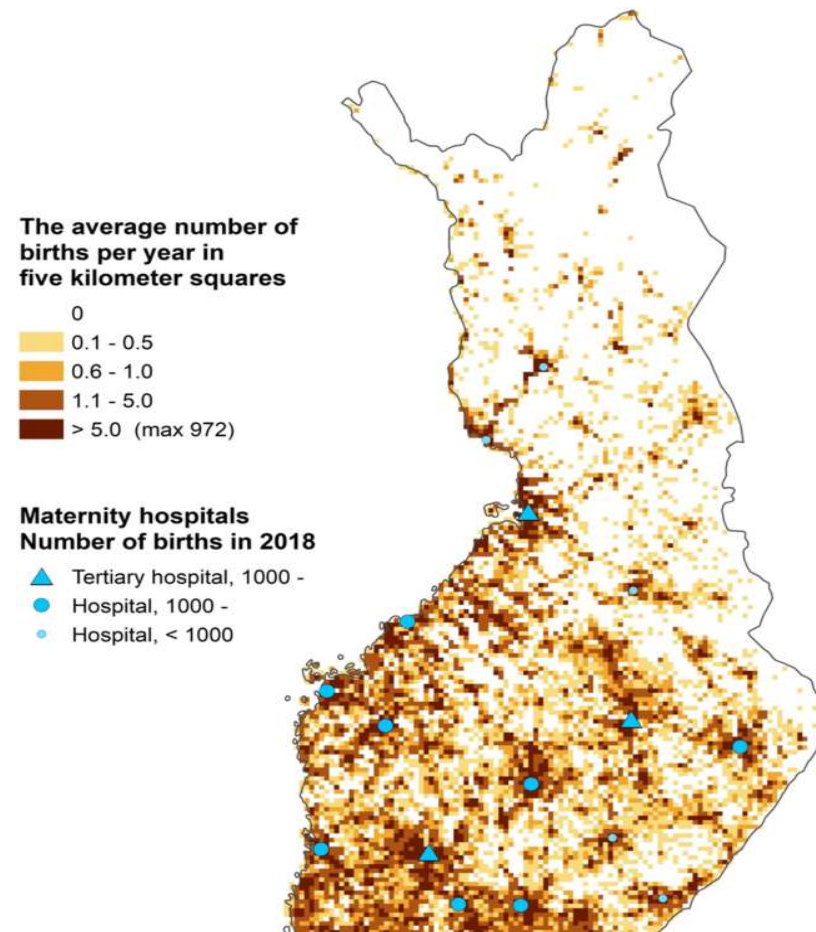
- UEF?
- The first initiative to establish a teacher training institute in Savonlinna in the 1870s, but Sortavala won the competition
- * The next initiative in the 1920s, but its realisation was postponed until the 1950s; it was linked to Joensuu in 1973

Language Institute

The second campus of the University of Joensuu in Savonlinna was closed from the beginning of 2010

Provision of public services

An example: "Savonlinna is not your birth place"



Savonlinna Opera Festival

- Instead of concentration in space, concentration in time
 - The first "tests" in 1912-1917
 - Since 1967 this has grown into a major international event; the visitors include, among others,
[Mariinsky \(Kirov\) Theatre \(St. Petersburg\)](#), [Covent Garden \(London\)](#), [Opéra national du Rhin \(Strasbourg\)](#), [Los Angeles Opera](#), [Deutsche Oper am Rhein](#), [Welsh National Opera](#)
- The festival takes place at the Olavinlinna Castle in July; the audience (around 60 000 visitors annually) is motivated by the heritage attributes of Savonlinna

“Saimaa Phenomenon 2026”

- A **European Capital of Culture** is a city designated by the [European Union](#) (EU) for a period of one calendar year during which it organises a series of cultural events with a strong pan-European dimension. (Being a European Capital of Culture can be an opportunity for a city to generate considerable cultural, social and economic benefits and it can help foster [urban regeneration](#), change the city's image and raise its visibility and profile on an international scale. Multiple cities can be a European Capital of Culture simultaneously.)
- The regions of eastern Finland and their central cities nominated the city of Savonlinna as their candidate for the title of European Capital of Culture 2026. “We need to articulate the uniqueness of our region and spread the word. The decade of ambition has dawned on Saimaa, join us!” This proposal did not win the prestigious title, unfortunately.