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SMART SHRINKING PRACTICES IN SAVONRANTA AND PALMSE



Nordplus

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1. INTRODUCTION

- Smart shrinking is defined by making quality of life better in the area, not growing the population;
- Our understanding of smart shrinking: how smart shrinking has been used or can be used in two study areas. One in Savonranta village in Finland and the other in Palmse village in Estonia;



The research questions for this analysis:

1. What is the social atmosphere in Savonranta and Palmse like?
2. What is the physical atmosphere in Savonranta and Palmse like?
3. How do they promote smart shrinking?

1.1 THEORY ACCORDING TO ARTICLES

- In Europe depopulation is seen as a process that must be handled quickly- limiting community services and infrastructure while maintaining social equity and good life. (Peters et al., 2018);
- Most important indicator of shrinkage is population loss followed by vacant residential houses and abandoned houses (Vujičić & Đukić, 2015);
- Different challenges like maintaining community services, businesses, and infrastructure are difficult when population declines, because areas get less tax money (Meijer & Syssner, 2017)

1.2 OUR THEORY

Accepting shrinkage;

Planning around it not against
it;

One must accommodate
shrinkage, not combat it.

2. METHODS OF WORK



Literature review;



Historical
analysis;



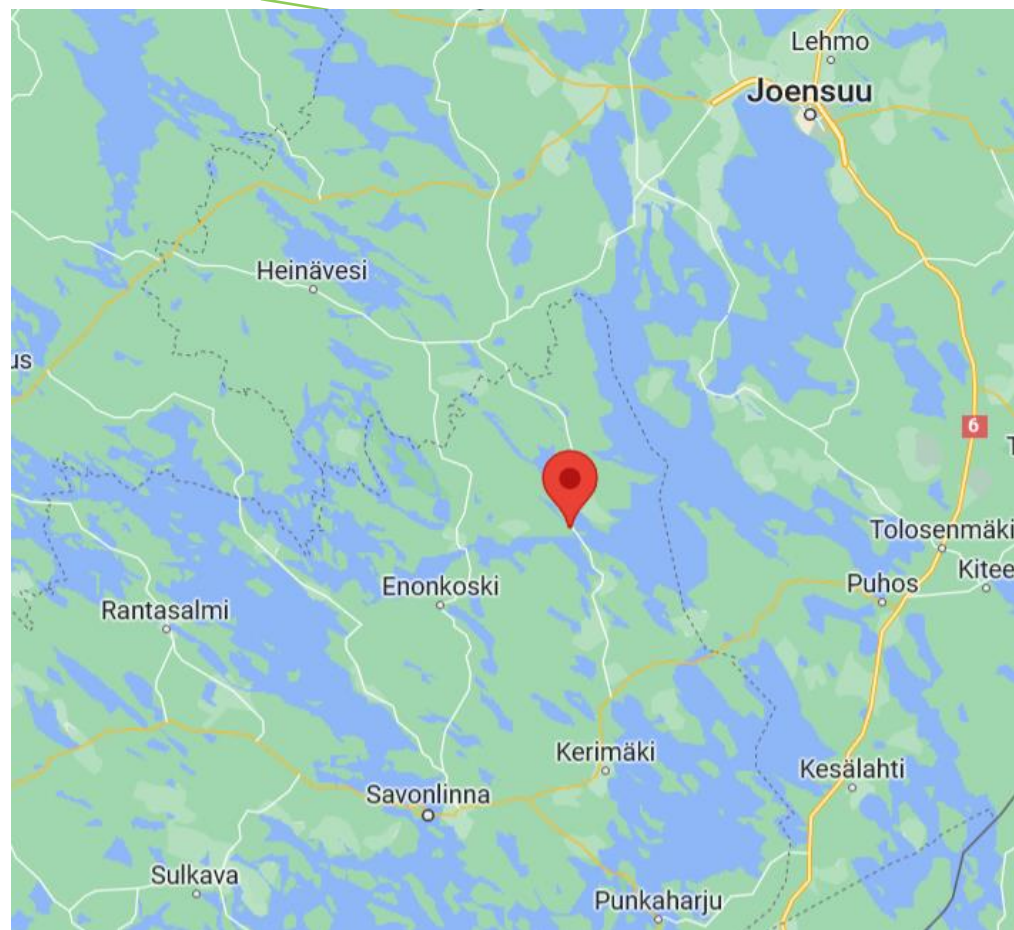
Visual
observation;



Interviews.

3. DATA

3.1 SAVONRANTA



1x1 km	Men	Women	0-14 y.o.	15-64 y.o.	65+ y.o.	Total
Total	223	209	39	207	188	432
5x5 km	Men	Women	0-14 y.o.	15-64 y.o.	65+ y.o.	Total
Total	263	238	46	241	214	501

Table 1: Savonranta population by sex and age in 2020 (Liiteri-tietopalvelu)

3.2 PALMSE

Men	Women	Age	Total
10	2	0-18 y.o.	12
21	15	19-64 y.o.	37
8	5	65+ y.o.	13
			62

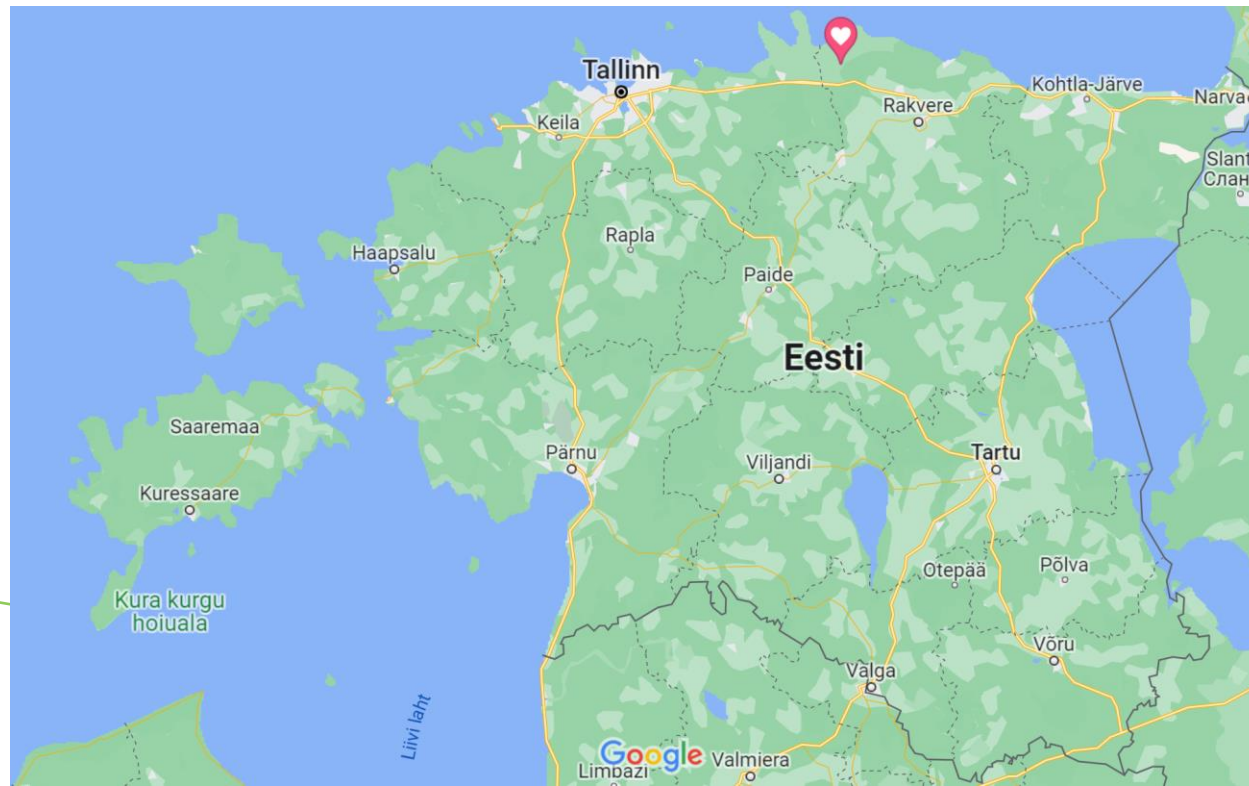
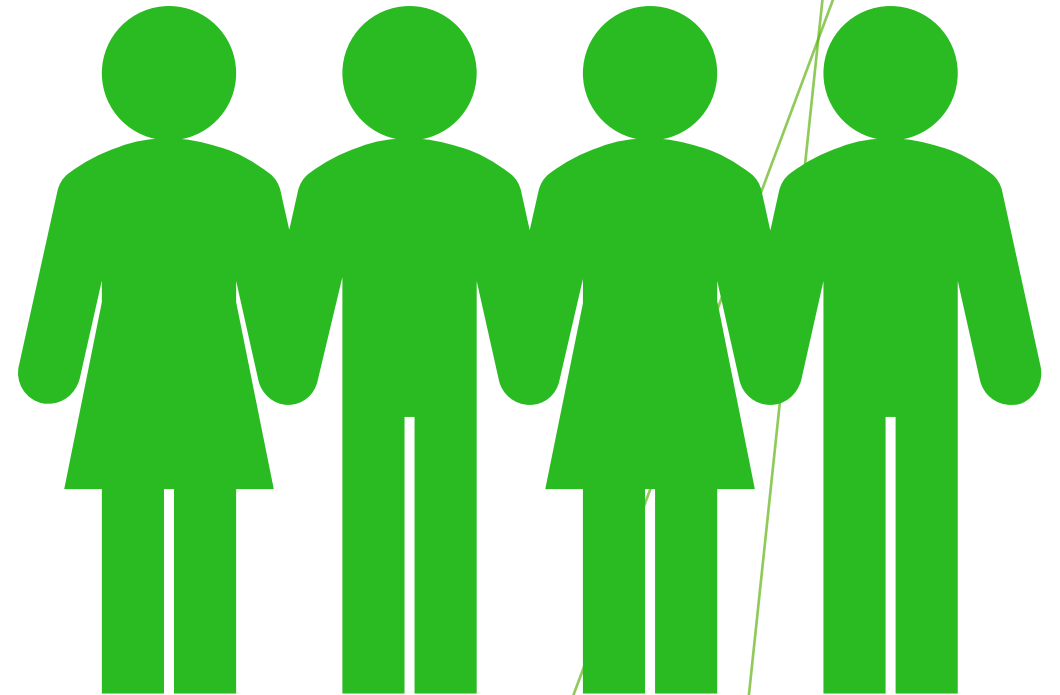


Table 2: Palmse population by sex and age in 2022
(<https://www.haljala.ee/elanikud-kulades-ja-kantides>)

3.3 VOLUNTEER WORK AND EVENTS

- Savonranta relies on a select few that are willing to put in the effort to organize events in the town;
- It's hard to find others to participate because people want to be paid;
- In Palmse the community is very tight, with almost every resident participating in events;
- They have a townhome that hosts choir, dance, theatre and instrument playing.





1,2,3 ex. Museum part, arts and crafts shop part, the building from outside in Savonranta



4,5,6,7 ex. Various places in Savonranta



8,9,10 ex. Photo wall of various events, a double bass, theatre performance hall in Palmse

3.4 UKRANIAN REFUGEES IN SAVONRANTA

45 people from contacts in Poland live in Savonranta;

They get donations from locals and food stamps from Savonlinna;

They occupy the former abandoned homes behind the fire station;

The women contribute to the arts and crafts shop.



11,12,13 Abandoned spaces in Savonranta

3.5 INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLACES



14,15,16 ex. Abandoned cow farm, grain factory, manor with surrounding properties in Palmse



3.6 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Both towns rely on personal cars to get them where they need to be;
- It's not cost effective or good for the environment;
- Savonranta has a bus that goes to Savonlinna twice a day;
- Palmse has a bus that comes once a day to Rakvere;
- There are no plans to expand public transportation in both towns.

3.7 GOOGLE STREET VIEW HISTORICAL COMPARISON

SAVONRANTA SHOP

2011



2022



SAVONRANTA GAS STATION

2011



2022



SAVONRANTA INDUSTRIAL BUILDING

2011

2022



PALMSE COW FARM

2019



2022



4. ANALYSIS

- The case study areas share very different so their take on smart shrinking is different - Savonranta is facing further decay and shrinking and Palmse seems to be maintaining its population and job base.
- In the table below are the main attributes of each village's social and physical atmosphere and the possibilities there are for smart shrinking.



Savonranta

Palmse

Social atmosphere

- Finnish mythology and stories
- Graying village
- Artists and jouhikko¹
- Handicraft shop
- Small active group

- Young workers
- Children
- Manor
- Active community hall

Physical atmosphere

- Savonranta-house
- Sports stadium
- Harbor
- Meteorite lake
- Caves

- Manor
- Metal factories
- Kindergarten
- Community hall

Smart shrinking

- Building multi-use
- Summer events
- Story marketing and events
- Professional coordination

- Building multi-use
- Community hall
- Playground

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SAVONRANTA



Increase social media activity and marketing;



Tourism should be focused more on heritage sights;



Give the old gas station a new life once back in municipal hands.

5.2 PALMSE



Create affordable spaces for new inhabitants;



Sell the cow farm to Palms OÜ so they can expand;



Rent out the most attractive spaces of the grain factory, demolish the rest and build anew.

6. *CONCLUSIONS*

Both study areas are quite different:

Tourism in Palmse flourishes whilst Savonranta could work on their tourism sector;

Unemployment rates differ – Savonranta suffers from its location and a small job market, but Palmse has a very low unemployment rate and a good location for job reach;

But are also similar in some ways:

Both areas are tainted with abandoned buildings that ruin the towns image;

They have a pretty tight knit communities that make living in the small town's fun and eventful.

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NO THANKS, QUESTIONS?

