

Report: Case Study Palūšė

A shrinking city turned into a second homeowner paradise



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Executive summary

This study examines the new trend of people buying up empty houses as second homes in Palūšė, a small village in Lithuania that has been experiencing a declining population for the past decade. The study focuses on this trend as it appears to be a significant factor in the village's population dynamics. The research used in-person and online surveys to gather data from second homeowners in Palūšė. The study found that most people were happy to live in Palūšė and take advantage of the natural beauty of the national park they live in. Additionally, the study revealed that none of the respondents required extra services, as they could find everything they needed in the district of Ignalina, located three kilometers away. Participants also reported positive or neutral impacts from tourism, and EU funding has helped the community shine. However, since the national park and lake are gaining more infrastructure and tourist activities, Palūšė is turning into a resort town with high seasonality. Overall, this paper provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of rural development in Palūšė in the context of a new trend of second homeownership.

1. Introduction

Palūšė is a small and picturesque village located in the municipality of Ignalina in Lithuania (fig. 1). Over the past few decades, the village has been experiencing depopulation, with the number of inhabitants dropping from 137 in 1989 to 75 in 2023 (The State Data Agency of Lithuania, 2023). The population change of Palūšė is presented in Figure 2 (The State Data Agency of Lithuania, 2023). The depopulation is likely caused by the macro level centralization and the emigration wave of Lithuania after the re-independence in 1991. It is not possible to reliably count how big a share of the population of Palūšė is elderly due to the anonymization of the Census data of the Lithuanian Statistics, but the average age of the population is 56.6 years indicating the majority of the people being over 50-year-olds. In that sense, Palūšė is in line with its surroundings. As can be seen in Figure 3, the North-Eastern part of Lithuania overall has a high share of over 50-year-olds. However, despite its shrinking population, Palūšė is located in the Aukštaitija National Park and boasts a national park and a lake, making it

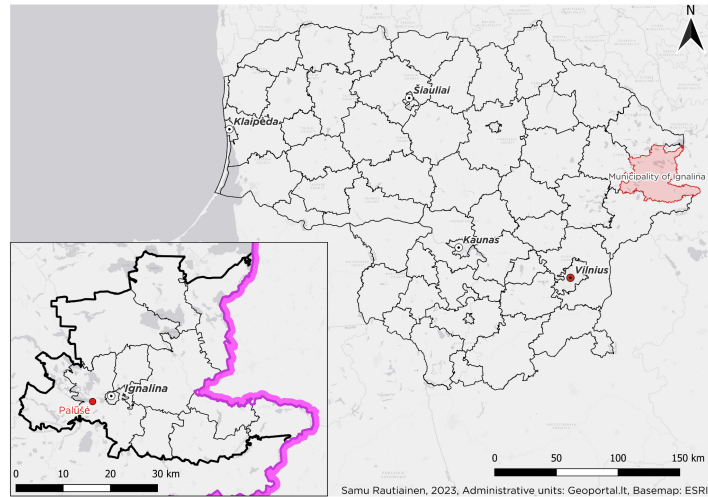


Figure 1. Positioning Palūšė in the municipality of Ignalina.

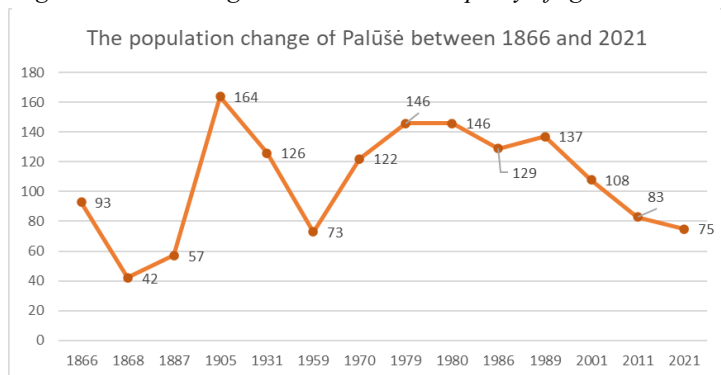


Figure 2. Population development of Palūšė.

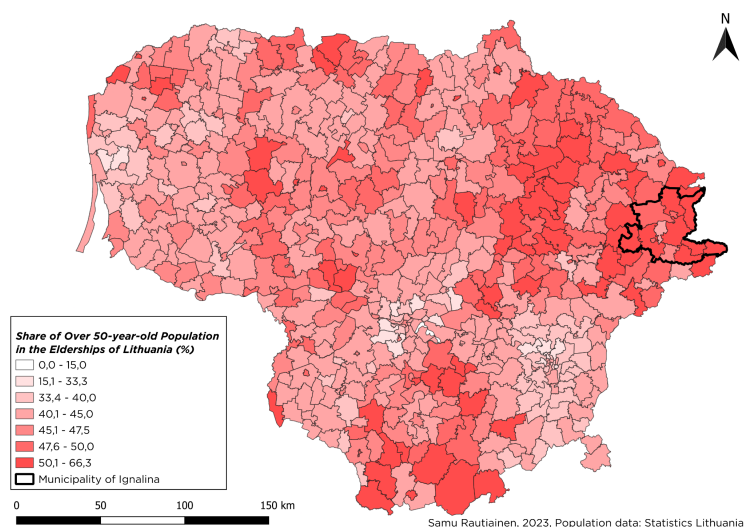


Figure 3. Population over 50-year-old.

an ideal destination for nature lovers. As a result, Palušė has become an increasingly attractive destination for tourists (Palušė, n.d.). Palušė offers a range of cultural and historical sites, including the St. Joseph's Church, which was built in 1757 and restored in 1996. The village also features a tourism center and a local history museum exposition, both of which are popular among both locals and visitors. In recognition of its potential as a tourist destination, Palušė was granted the status of a resort area in 2007 (Palušė, n.d.). In addition, EU-funded projects have optimized the infrastructure around the town (Ignalinos Rajono Vietos Veiklos Grupe, n.d.), further enhancing its appeal to tourists. Despite the challenges posed by depopulation, Palušė has managed to position itself as a unique and attractive destination for tourists seeking a combination of natural beauty and cultural heritage.

In recent years, Palušė has experienced a seasonal influx of population due to its growing popularity among tourists in the summer months. This increased tourism has also transformed the village into a vibrant hub for live music, with some of the most renowned Lithuanian artists from various genres performing during this time (Spaudai, 2022). As a result, Palušė has become an attractive destination not only for those seeking a peaceful vacation, but also for music enthusiasts looking for an immersive cultural experience.

Due to this change, Palušė also gained popularity among second homeowners. Having a strong and active community, this research wants to explore how or if these second homeowners are contributing to the community and how the overall wellbeing is influenced by the national park. To do so, a mixed methods approach is used, in-person surveys, a walking tour and interviews, as well as an online survey on the local Facebook page. Participants initially targeted were locals aged over 50 but expanded due to a limited sample pool. All of this should answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does proximity to a national park affect the social well-being of the elderly population?
2. To what extent do second homeowners affect the functionality of the community?
 - a. Are residents' needs and preferences being met in terms of access to services and amenities in Palušė despite seasonal tourism?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Smart shrinking

Shrinkage, which refers to the decline of urban population and economic activity, results in a range of social problems that go beyond the mere manifestation of economic restructuring and the unevenness of capitalist production. Such problems include vacancy in commercial and residential properties, blight, and deterioration, which can lead to an inadequate municipal service, deteriorating infrastructure, and reduced income and employment opportunities. Moreover, it becomes difficult to maintain an oversized and often aging infrastructure, especially in the face of declining population density, which negatively affects the social fabric of a city and its quality of life. To address these issues, cities have employed a range of measures such as housing demolition and blight reduction, cultural regeneration, urban greening, downtown revitalization, economic development, and initiatives promoting community values and cohesion.

While redevelopment efforts have typically focused on economic redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization, cities have also had to address high rates of vacancy and neighborhood deterioration by relying on strategies such as reinvestment in neighborhoods, demolition, and the curtailment of new housing construction. Despite the challenges of shrinkage, many cities continue to retain a commitment to growth. However, some are shifting towards "shrinking smart," which involves combining economic growth with neighborhood revitalization and stabilizing the city's population in a socially responsible and financially sustainable manner (Rhodes, 2014).

One of the European initiatives that could fit into the 'smart shrinkage policies' are EU support LEADER projects. European countries can take advantage of the Europe's regional development strategy that promotes a bottom-up approach in rural development planning through its initiative LEADER, which stands for 'Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale', meaning 'Links between the rural economy and development actions' (Leader/CLLD, 2021). The LEADER approach was created with the goal of improving local governance by optimizing the interaction of top-down and bottom-up policies.

LEADER created the Local Action Group (LAG) to foster community-level cooperation between institutions, public and private actors. The LAG's purpose is to engage key actors, such as members

of the community and local companies, as active and productive participants in the development of their rural community, rather than only as recipients of aid (European commission, n.d.). The foundation of the program is collaborative governance and policymaking between an institutional body and the local community. Participants engage in the framework's development in a structured and supervised manner that the LEADER program offers during workshops (Irish LEADER Network, n.d.). Additionally, there is a major emphasis on animation and capacity growth. This is intended to encourage and build on local skills and abilities in order to ensure the most effective outcome in the form of strategic planning, funding from a government institution, and engagement and participation of local residents. Thus, it promotes 'development from within' at the local level by supporting new pathways, new forms of development, and bringing together the many parties concerned (Irish LEADER Network, n.d.).

While the focus of LEADER is on rural economic development, in practice this is intertwined with social, cultural, and environmental objectives (Storey, 1999). Ignalina participated in this program with a project called "Keliauti yra atrasti – To travel is to discover". Ignalina District Local Action Group (IDLAG), Tertitskaro LAG (Georgia) together with Vilnius District Local Action Group (VDLAG) implemented this international cooperation project. The primary objective of this LAG project was to design model tourist routes or packages that would stimulate local residents to engage in novel, diverse, and high-quality activities that cater to market demands. This initiative sought to create, refine, and enhance rural products and services while fostering collaborations with the ultimate goal of increasing sales and attracting tourists to the region (Fresh Media, n.d.). By doing so, the project aimed to bolster the appeal of the area, boost tourism, and generate revenue for the local community. This initiative received support from the European Union, which played a pivotal role in promoting regional development by enhancing infrastructure and attracting tourism.

2.2 Economic development of a shrinking area

The occurrence of depopulation often leads to economic challenges in the affected areas. According to Pinilla and Sáez (2017) depopulating areas are usually economically depressed, marginal and non-dynamic. These areas cannot provide enough professional opportunities or attractive salaries and services for their residents - especially young adults and families. These groups are therefore the most common emigrants leaving the depopulating areas (Pinilla & Sáez,

2017). Young adults and families leaving leads to an economic downward spiral of the depopulating areas. The areas lose human capital and thereafter also both public and private investments. The loss of human capital also means that a lower share of the adult population receives salary, meaning that the areas have a poor dependency ratio. This leads to decline of tax incomes and increase of budget cuts on public services, making them less accessible and less affordable (Söderberg, 2015). The downward spiral makes the depopulating areas even less attractive, leading to more emigration and makes it less likely for people to come back or move there.

The depopulation causes, for example, housing prices declining severely and leaves a major part of the dwellings in the area empty. The depopulating areas include therefore abandonment of infrastructure and environmental degradation. (Elshof, 2017.) In addition, the low demand for dwellings might cause economic stress to the emigrants who are unable to sell their property.

Over the past few decades, governmental actors have attempted to address the economic challenges faced by depopulating areas through the implementation of policies and subsidies. These have mostly aimed at diminishing the population decline. However, the effects of these policies and subsidies have remained questionable. For example, regional decentralization policy has been seen as unsuccessful in Spain due to increased competition between regions and the loss of synergy between the governmental sectors that were decentralized (Pinilla & Sáez, 2017). On the other hand, LEADER funding, which aims at improving the rural areas that mostly suffer from depopulation, have not proven to be efficient to account for the problems caused by depopulation either. LEADER funds benefit mostly the rural areas that have dynamic economies and are most populated. They have not helped the most depressed and remote rural areas. (Cañete et al., 2018.) Similar results have also been detected from national subsidy programs (e.g., Serra et al., 2022).

2.3 Tourism and economic development

Many shrinking areas address shrinking and quality of life by developing their tourism. This is understandable, as tourism has positive effects on the local and national economy. Tourism can create jobs in the touristic areas and bring major incomes to the residents who can then use the money for services. It is also known that the growth of tourism encourages both governments and firms to invest in the local infrastructure and services. (Kumar et al., 2015.) For example, the EU

funding might be easier to get to the areas with a tourism boom. Tourism is also one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the World (Suresh & Senthilnathan, 2014).

However, the effects of tourism to the local economy are not unchallenged. Zuo & Huang (2018) noted that the positive relation between tourism and economy is clear only in the areas that are highly specialized in tourism. In the areas of lower specialization, the relationship remains more unclear and uncertain. In addition, when the specialization of tourism is in a level high enough, it does not support economic growth anymore. Tourism does not necessarily reduce poverty or improve social development of the areas. (Gal et al., 2010; Vanegas et al., 2015.) When it comes to shrinking areas, it has been shown that tourism cannot stop the depopulation of the area (Deng et al., 2022). Overall, tourism can have positive effects on the local economy, but it cannot necessarily create growth to shrinking areas nor can an area solely rely their economics on tourism.

2.4 Quality of life

In shrinking and rural areas, the decline in services and the needs of aging populations affect local quality of life and well-being. This may, for instance, lead to the need to travel further to access some services and increase dependency on others, such as family members or the community. (Arslantas ym., 2009.) Quality of life is a complex concept that includes both material and non-material aspects and is widely used in health, politics, and international development (Brauer & Dymitrow, 2014). Specifically, quality of life often refers to environmental factors, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure, social functioning, religious beliefs, security, and freedom (Arslantas ym., 2009; Brauer & Dymitrow, 2014; Singh & Kumar, 2021).

The quality of life of the aging rural population is also a key issue for rural developing policy. Studies have shown that access to basic services, and especially to regularly used services, play an important role in maintaining an adequate quality of life in rural and shrinking areas. (Bonsinelli et al., 2015). EU rural development policy has sought to respond to this and to place quality of life considerations alongside traditional rural principles. Since 2007, quality of life has been one of the main objectives of development policy, after it was recognized that too much emphasis was being placed on agriculture and not enough on people's quality of life. The EU's aim has been to use it to revitalize, particularly in rural areas, and to maintain and improve the social and economical fabric. Efforts have been made to enhance the quality of life in shrinking areas by investing in the economy, improving basic services, infrastructure, and creating a more favorable environment for

communities. (Brauer & Dymitrow, 2014.) Nowadays, quality of life is part of rural development, which is generally seen as the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people in rural areas (Moseley, 2003).

Although quality of life has long been at least an objective of EU policy, it has been difficult to define and measure in policy terms. In particular, it has been criticized for its broad conceptualization, which has made it difficult to incorporate into a specific policy (Brauer & Dymitrow, 2014).

There are challenges in determining which economic indicators should be considered when assessing and monitoring regional development interventions, including those funded by the EU. These indicators need to be relevant to the needs of today's society. In particular, the temporal, local and evaluation implications of the concept have been seen as challenging. (Bonsinelli et al., 2015.) Quality of life would need better measurement tools to be better used in policy and regional development. It could then be used effectively in the development of shrinking and rural areas, ensuring that the quality of life and well-being of locals is also good.

2.5 Second homes

In shrinking areas, tourism is also often built around secondary residences and second homes. A second home can be defined as a housing that is occupied by its owners or other persons for a certain period of time, is bought or rented as a holiday home, a leisure residence and does not have the status of a permanent housing. Second homes are variously referred to as holiday homes, leisure homes, summer homes, cottages, and weekend homes. (Baltaci & Cevirgen, 2020.) After the COVID-19 pandemic rural-urban migration, despite tourism and its economic benefits, is seen as one of the main challenges facing rural areas in Europe (Velvin, 2013). Sometimes, second housing is defended in that it increases the rural economy, vitality and socio-cultural benefits such as new jobs, longer tourist season, new leisure and recreational opportunities and services (Baltaci & Cevirgen, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in individuals being confined to their residences, prompting a heightened desire for rural environments characterized by abundant natural landscapes, open space, and tranquility. This augmented interest in the countryside led to a surge in tourism to rural areas and a corresponding increase in demand for second homes situated in such regions (Åberg & Tondelli, 2021). Aside from bolstering the reputation of the rural town,

the maintenance and aesthetically pleasing appearance of second homes owned by non-residents also contribute to its positive image (Sørensen, 2015).

However, second housing does not only bring benefits to shrinking areas, but can also cause difficulties. Among other things, the construction and redevelopment of second homes has been seen to lead to higher property prices (Velvin, 2013). High housing prices and the resulting challenges can, for instance, lead to the displacement of permanent residents. As housing costs and prices rise, permanent residents may not be able to afford to live in the area or to move within the area if necessary. Also, the growing popularity of second homes may disconnect locals from their own environment, which requires new ways of communication to integrate locals and second home residents (Baltaci & Cevirgen, 2020).

3. Methods

For this study, a mixed methods approach was utilized to investigate the research topic at hand. Given the social nature of the study, all methods employed were qualitative. Initially, a desk research was conducted on the region of Ignalina, focusing on industries, employment, economic situation, and demographic statistics. Upon arriving in the area, a meeting was arranged with a local contact person to identify a specific topic for the study. The individual in question, who holds the position of head of the local development strategy administration, directed our team to Palūšė, a community within the Ignalina region that has experienced a significant decline in population and where over 50% of the inhabitants are elderly. Palūšė is located in a national park, resulting in a substantial seasonal influx of tourists during high season.

Based on this information, our team decided to focus on the social well-being of the elderly population in relation to the national park. The following research question was chosen: To what extent does proximity to a national park affect the social well-being of the elderly population? Our next step was to visit the community, and to facilitate data collection a survey was designed and implemented. The library and a community event were identified by the local contact person as potential areas of high local activity and were incorporated into the survey distribution plan. A total of 5 surveys were finished in person. Additionally, one of the community members provided us with a walking tour to map out the services of Palūšė, as well as providing information on the

history of the town and its current state. To expand the reach of the study, an additional method was selected to increase the likelihood of obtaining a more diverse and representative sample, thereby enhancing the study's generalizability. The additional method included an adapted version of the utilized survey to be posted on the local community facebook page. The survey was online from the evening of the 6th of May until the morning of the 11th of May. By employing this approach, our team aimed to obtain a broader range of data to more accurately support the conclusions. It was decided to close the submission period of the online survey on the 11th of May. This adaptation was needed, given that a significant proportion of respondents were second-home owners, we reoriented the study and modified the research questions for both the interviews and online survey. Thus, following are the research questions for this study:

1. To what extent does proximity to a national park affect the social well-being of the elderly population?

2. To what extent do second homeowners affect the functionality of the community?

- b. Are residents' needs and preferences being met in terms of access to services and amenities in Palūšė despite seasonal tourism?

3.1 Participants

The study initially targeted elderly participants who were local to the area and aged 50 years and above. However, upon arrival in the study case area, it was deemed necessary, due to a limited pool of eligible participants, to expand the survey participants' range to include individuals who are not local residents, but own property in the community of Palūšė. Additionally, it was observed that individuals who own second homes in the community were more readily available for interviews than local residents. This is because of the participation level of second homeowners at the community event. To ensure that a diverse range of perspectives was captured, in-person surveys and interviews with key figures as the mayor and head of local development strategy administration were conducted. Furthermore, to increase the sample size, a survey was also posted on the local social media platform, which is the Facebook page of the community called Palūšės kaimo bendruomenė.

3.2 Materials and Measures

The research study employed a variety of methods, as summarized in Table 1. Desk research was conducted to obtain official population figures, and other relevant variables such as gender, employment, age, immigration, and emigration. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the study area, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key figures, namely, the head of local development strategy administration and the mayor. The interview questions for the head of local development are available in Appendix A, as the questions for the mayor are to be found in Appendix B, as well as the answers that were given. Only two interviews were conducted to avoid overburdening the group's only Lithuanian speaker. To supplement the data gathered, a survey was designed to focus on the social well-being of elderly people in relation to the national park they reside in. The survey questions are based on quality of life standard indicators, including wealth, employment, the environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, social belonging, religious beliefs, safety, security, and freedom. Specifically, the survey focused on mental health, recreation, leisure time, social belonging, safety and security, and a political question was added to gauge participants' perceptions of their voices being heard and respected by local government. The survey questions are available in Appendix C. In order to ensure that the sample was representative of the population of interest, we employed a purposeful sampling technique. This approach involved intentionally selecting individuals who met specific criteria that were relevant to our research question. Specifically, we chose to include participants who were 50 years old or older and were local residents of the community. This method was selected to increase the likelihood of obtaining relevant and meaningful data from the survey respondents. This method was chosen based on information gathered during the initial meeting with the contact person and to provide concrete and usable information to support structured conclusions. During in-person survey administration, additional notes were taken to capture community dynamics, which were also incorporated into the results and considered in the conclusion. Before posting the survey on social media, additional questions were added, which can be found in Appendix D. The study's methods, tools, topics, and participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Methods table.

Method	Tool, topic or participant(s)
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Desk research	Statistic website Lithuania
Interviews with key figures	Head of local development strategy administration, mayor
Survey in person, Survey on social media	People who own property in Palūšė
Walking interview	Community member, service mapping
Literature review	Migration, quality of life in rural area, second homeowners, economic development in a shrinking area, tourism as a economic development

Based on the results of the in-person surveys, it appears that an adjustment in the research focus may be necessary. Given that a majority of the survey responses were provided by second homeowners, it may be more valuable to center the study around their perspectives and contributions to the community of Palūšė. As a result, the forthcoming interviews with key figures will be concentrated on exploring the contributions made by second homeowners to the community.

3.3 Ethical considerations

After analyzing the survey data, it was determined that it would be unethical to refer to Palūšė as a shrinking community since the participants in the study did not perceive it in that way. Given the nature of this project as a non-public coursework study, formal consent forms were not distributed.

3.4 Limitations

Some limitations were observed during the collection of population data for the area. The national statistics data website of Lithuania did not seem to work and regional reports concluded different numbers for the population data. Another limitation to the data collection might be the reason

behind the numbers. For example, second homeowners that chose to put their domicili address in Palūšė, but live elsewhere in the winter time should not be considered in the population number of this area. However, with our limited time, we have no way of finding this out. As for the pool of participants, it is hard to find people on the street to conduct the survey. This is because of the small size of the population of the community as well as people staying in their homes. Knocking on doors is considered rude in Lithuanian culture. The approach could be invasive, leading people to be reluctant to talk to the team and share insightful information. People who did participate in the surveys were mostly second homeowners of Palūšė, which might lead to a bias as they consider Palūšė as a holiday place. This bias might explain the 100% result of 'I am happy to live here'. Since we only had a very limited time to design the survey questions, some questions might have needed a more in depth specification. Since all official texts and reports are in Lithuanian, some data might be mistranslated or misinterpreted. The same goes for the interviews and surveys, where only one person conducts and is responsible for translation of all interviews and surveys. Data , language, domicile, survey notes, As this is a not public course work study project no official consent forms were distributed.

4. Results

The first survey conducted in Palūšė led us to five survey results and a glimpse into the local life in summer as our first respondent invited us to a book presentation and a concert. Another surveyee invited us for a short walk around town to tell us about the local development. We also had an interview with the head of local development strategy administration, who told us about the local development and policy. The last person we had an interview with was the mayor of Ignalina, who pointed out some strategies and future plans for Palūšė. The second survey was conducted over the local community Facebook page. The online survey received 16 answers, of which six were discarded due to the responders being either too young or living outside Palūšė without a second home there. Whereas, all answers from the first survey could be accepted, therefore leading us to a total number of accepted survey answers of 15.

The 15 surveys were conducted with participants ranging from 46 to 78 years old. 11 out of 15 were second homeowners, while one answer was not clear. All respondents were positive when asked if they like living in Palūšė. One responded that they need help with groceries, cleaning or

other services as they all have their own car. Eight respondents use activities proposed in the park, and almost all consider themselves neutrally or positively influenced by tourism. One local resident answered to the online survey that they have been influenced negatively by the tourism. When asked whether they feel if their voice is respected by community leaders or not, 12 said ‘no’ while four answered with ‘yes’. The only person answering in the online survey that their voice is heard by the decision-makers is a local resident, and simultaneously the only local in the online survey that has not felt themselves isolated or unsafe in the community. All information gathered from both surveys and the interviews will be presented with the following framework of factual information on the built environment, services, money, the past and activities as well as subjective information on wellbeing, tourism and business, and the local community. More insight into the answers are the following:

4.1 Factual information received

Factual information that could be gained from the conversation with the surveyees and interviewees can be put into five categories: the built environment, services, money, the past and activities.

4.1.1 Built environment



Figure 4. Empty space where used to be houses.

According to the respondents, the built environment changed a lot over the years. For instance, the number of houses decreases, which can be seen in Figure 4. According to one of the respondents, the area where trees can now be seen used to be full of houses.

Many buildings are now privatized and many are rentals. Most of them are used in summer, but not in winter. The respondents gave us varying numbers on the used houses in each season, but as they vary, and we cannot find

official numbers, these cannot be varied. Also, one interviewee told us that in Lithuania, second homeowners are not kept track of. If they counted second homeowners, the government should give more money to the area for infrastructure, for instance. Combining their answers, we can say that in winter 20-30 percent of the houses are being used, while all of them are used in summer.

One respondent pointed out that there used to be a lot of empty land, but it all got bought last year and is being built upon. They think that people who come back or move there, are coming to stay. They continue, that some of the younger ones come for 'health' reasons, which means, to grow their own food and enjoy nature. Newcomers often have fences around their houses, and renovated houses can be identified by the direction the wood has been processed.

Locals generally view second homeowners' purchases and renovations positively, despite the resulting increase in property values that may make it difficult for some locals to afford. However, according to an interviewee, second homeowners tend to buy properties near lakes, which can force locals to search for alternative swimming spots.

4.1.2 Services

The responses concerning services in Palūšė are very positive. No one expressed a lack or a need for a service, and only one answered in the survey that the tourism season affects the accessibility of the services. During the interviews, it was not revealed that locals desire new services, despite the fact that many are needed due to the high age of the population. Current services mentioned in the survey are the market, which according to the surveyee is mostly for tourists, the police presence, the library and the event spots. One respondent commented that everything needed can be found within a 5 km radius. Only if a bigger hospital than the one in Ignalina is needed, a visit to a bigger city is needed.

Some respondents get occasional visits by their kids to help out with one or the other thing. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Ignalina's government helped out the elderly. In addition to those locals who do not have kids or family who could help, get mostly help with the local community. In the high season, they have a strong police presence, ensuring that noise levels are adequate in the nights. Current meeting spots for the inhabitants are the library and one of the event locations across the street from the library with a view on the lake.

Palūšė used to have its own school, but it was transformed into a library when only a few kids remained. Nowadays, there are two kids living in Palūšė, and they are dropped off in one of the two schools in Ignalina. Other services that vanished are a dance hall that used to be there between 1956 and 1990, an information centre (fig. 5.), a free laundry house and a public lavatory (fig. 6).

According to one of the respondents, the village used to be a tourist center, but that changed. All the previously mentioned buildings used to be part of the town center, whereas now they are located outside, as can be seen in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Previous service building.



Figure 6. Previous service building 2.0.

Current services can be seen in Figure 7. Only services relevant for locals and open during all seasons are indicated. That means that boat rentals are excluded. Parking spaces are excluded as most houses have parking spaces on their own property. The event spaces, although not used all year around, are indicated as they are highly relevant as community meeting spaces. The community center has been funded by the EU, although usage remains unclear. The relevance of the church within the community has not been researched, but could potentially be a meeting spot, especially for year round inhabitants. Further, the church contributes greatly to identity and tradition of the town as it has been finished in 1957 with pine trunks and axes (Ignalina tourism information centre., n.d.). The library has been included as a respondent mentioned it as an important meeting space and the

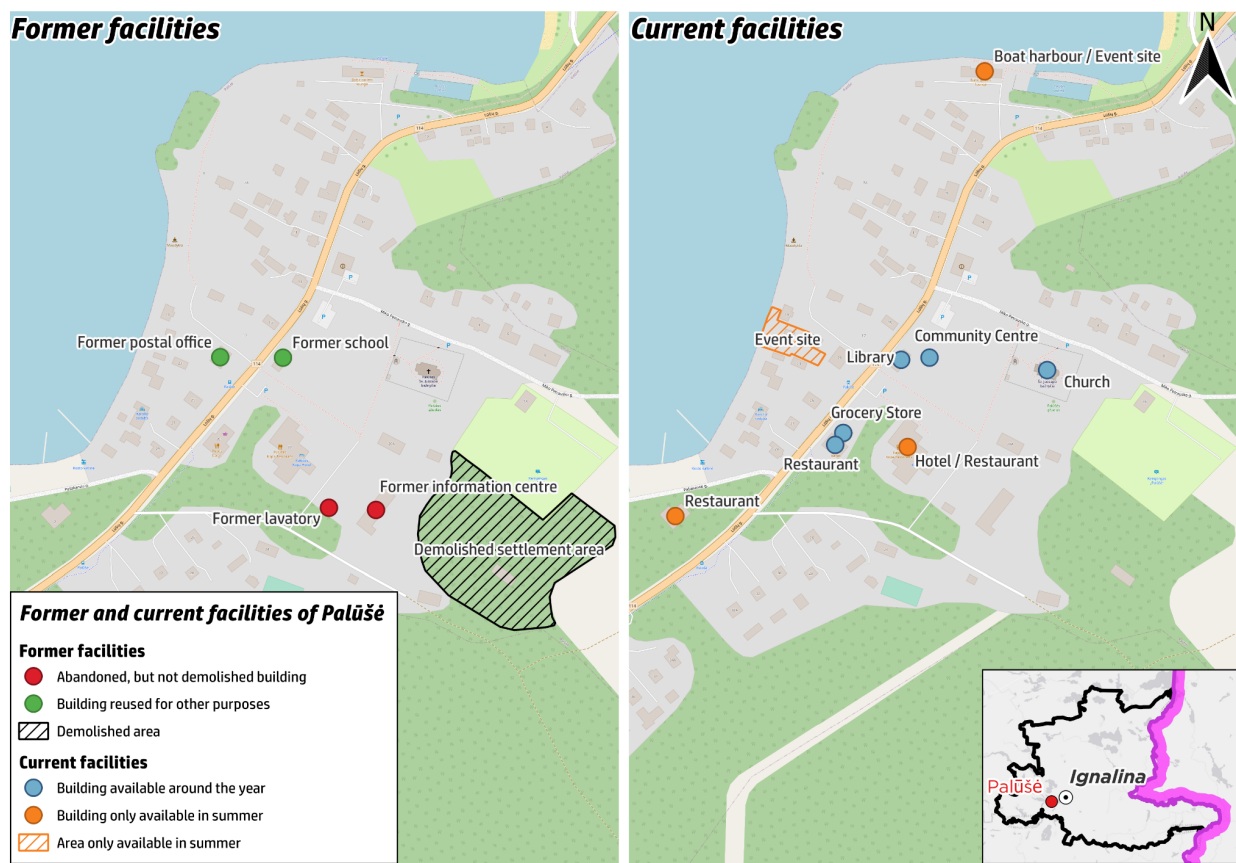


Figure 7. Former and current facilities of Palūšė.

day that the surveys have been conducted the librarian organized a book reading, showing the use of the event sites that have been mentioned likewise.

4.1.3 Money

Generally, the community mentions that tourism helps economic development during summer. One of the respondents would like to prolong the high season. The interviews also revealed a desire to expand the tourist season and the sector. The aim is to develop more peaceful and active leisure tourism for both Lithuanians and foreigners. Still, one of the main challenges is getting local second-home residents to spend more money on tourism and services in Palūšė. Nowadays, they mostly shop and visit other services outside the area, before they arrive in the village. A recent change in the local government, the new mayor, gives respondents hope that the economic situation will further improve. The mayor is, for instance, trying to find ways to attract more people to work remotely from Palūšė. Additionally, the local community is seen as an active group, and

is looking for funds from the European Union to support local projects. One of those projects is a pathway along the lake, including one of the later piers. They have implemented some other projects as well, such as education houses, sculptures, children's playgrounds and the Palūšė festival, and information stands have been built. However, getting funds is not uncomplicated, because they need someone to lead the project and also a certain percentage of local funding.

4.1.4 Past

Besides the shift of the town center, the town is now divided into old and new Palūšė, at least in the respondent's mind. The line is drawn at the library. The library and everything towards the north are part of the old town. Everything from the library towards the south is now part of the new town.

Further, one respondent told us that most of Ignalina's residents worked in the nuclear power plant. Thus, after decommissioning, many young people moved away to find jobs. Someone remembers, that in the beginning only one to two people left a year. Nowadays, population density decreases for the same reasons as in many other areas, for instance many young people move to Vilnius or abroad.

4.1.5 Activities



Figure 8. Activity board of community.

The community offers many activities, as can be seen in Figure 8. Most of the respondents refer to the frequent concerts during summer. At least two concerts per week will be held during summer, depending on how weekends are counted. One on Thursdays in an event location close to the boats and on weekends in a location close to the village entry when one comes from Ignalina. When it comes to physical activities, the close by nature park provides trails for people walking, running or using bikes. Furthermore, the village organizes a sailboat regatta with everyone who wants to participate. It used to be organized by Palūšė but has been given to Ignalina.

4.2 Subjective information received

Subjective information that we got from the respondents concern mostly their wellbeing and level of welcomeness, effects of tourism on their businesses as most of the surveyees had businesses in town and few references to locals.

4.2.1 Wellbeing

Respondents unanimously answered that they liked living in Palūšė in both surveys, equalling 15 positive responses. It is seen as not isolated and “paradise”. The community, as can be seen in one of the following sections, is perceived as very welcoming. Accessibility is not an issue as all except one of the respondents own cars, and they enjoy that it gets fuller in summer.

4.2.2 Tourism and Business

Often they enjoy the tourism in summer, especially because more than half of the respondents are business owners and profit economically. One surveyee believes that the local businesses will bring more infrastructure to Palūšė. Only one of the respondents believes that people will not come back and does not think that there is money for growth. He likes living there nonetheless.

All but two say that the services are not affected but the tourism. One of the exceptions mentions that most services are gone in winter. That person also says that there is currently no money and they do not believe that that is going to change, although 15 years ago the town’s core started to grow due to some of Ignalina’s funding, but that does not seem to be the case at the moment.

4.2.3 Local Community

Only four of the respondents actually live in Palūšė. The others are mostly there during either summer or summer weekends. The people who only live there temporarily remark that locals prefer silence and are older than 65.

When it comes to the overall community, they are content and describe it as very active, welcoming and friendly. Friendly is also used to describe the local government.

5. Analysis and Interpretations

5.1 Old vs current services

Examining the evolution of the Palūšė community, it appears that the Palūšė center has shifted and buildings that were once significant are now situated on the outskirts, with the old settlement now overgrown by trees. This suggests that the village has experienced both periods of growth and decline, and more recently, a decline once again.

The current situation of services is very good based on both surveys and interviews conducted. The first one showed that no one needed help as they all have their own car. In the second survey, results were similar. The same amount of people said that they have a vehicle to get them to relevant services or even their own car. Only one person denied that possibility. Also, one interviewee pointed out that those who do not have family members helping, got help from the local community.

All respondents but one replied that they either do not require assistance or have it when asked about availability of help to get to the store. This leads to the current conclusion that the services are satisfactory. However, the aging population and lack of major initiatives to make the town elder-friendly may result in a deteriorating situation in the future. An indicator for that might be the lack of a pharmacy, which, especially for elder citizens, is important if their help cannot come on a reliable basis.

Furthermore, there are no main businesses for locals in town, which makes it necessary to be mobile enough to occasionally go to Ignalina as essential services can only be found there. For instance, only one market can be found, but it is mostly for tourists as its offers are very restricted. Moreover, most of the services are seasonal, as shown in Figure 7. of the previous section. Only one restaurant remains in winter, and all event sites and the fish stand are closed. The tourism center is closed, too, but not relevant for the citizens of Palūšė. The seasonality of tourism was evident in the survey results. Merely two of the 15 respondents reported being impacted by tourism during winter due to inadequate services. However, it's possible that the rest of the respondents are unaware of this, as they are second homeowners and do not reside in Palūšė during the winter months.

5.2 Money

Money plays a significant role in the development and maintenance of the Palūšė village. The loss of human capital means a lower dependency ratio for regions, leading to lower tax revenues, cuts in public services and reduced access to services (Söderberg, 2015). However, unlike the depopulating areas typically according to Pinilla and Sáez (2017), Palūšė is not an economically depressed or non-dynamic area. It has a rather good level of services and economic activities during the summer time due to its status as a resort. The village gets quieter outside of the tourist season, but according to our survey, the locals do not seem to think that it deteriorates the services of the village that much.

One important source of funding is the EU funding for the LEADER project, which aims to support rural development and promote the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors. It has also sought to improve the vitality of the regions by revitalizing rural areas and the social and economic fabric (Brauer & Dymitrow, 2014). This funding has been instrumental in the development of infrastructure, such as roads and public buildings, which are essential for the village's growth. Tough LEADER funding cannot fully address the challenges of depopulation (Cañete et al., 2018). However, the issue of second homeowners not paying taxes is also significant. While second homeowners contribute to the local economy through their spending, they do not pay property taxes, which are an essential source of revenue for the village. This can lead to a strain on the local budget and make it difficult to provide necessary infrastructure services. However, even if the second homeowners paid property taxes, the tax would be paid for the municipality of Ignalina, and would not necessarily benefit Palūšė. The second homeowners can also cause the property prices to rise and thus decrease the number of people willing to move there (Velvin, 2013). In other words, the sole focus on tourism might be treacherous.

Despite these challenges, the mayor wants to focus on making Palūšė a resort area, which would attract more visitors and bring in additional revenue. Another goal for the mayor was to attract more people to work remotely from Palūšė. Those approaches could help to address the issue of funding for infrastructure services while also creating new economic opportunities for the village. However, it remains to be seen if this approach will be successful, and if it will lead to a sustainable and prosperous future for Palūšė.

5.3 Wellbeing

As mentioned in the literature review, one of the main goals of the LAG project is to engage locals in novel tourist activities as well. Since the survey questions were not exactly aiming at answering the question, an answer is not that easy. However, based on the data that was collected, 8 out of 15 people said that they used activities in the park, that mainly target tourists.

Furthermore, it has been indicated that when considering wellbeing and quality of life, evaluations of the concepts are challenging but necessary (Bonsinelli et al., 2015). While locals and second homeowners alike do reflect on their wellbeing, neither of the interview partners suggested that measurements have been taken in the past or will be in the future.

Additionally, a worry that has been addressed by Baltaci and Cevirgen (2020), is that the increase of second homes within a locality may cause a disconnect between locals and their environment. The authors further suggested that a change of communication might be used to resolve this issue. Our data shows that all three participants that answered that they live in Palūšė also felt isolated within the community, while from the other answers only one respondent felt that way, suggesting, that there is at least a disconnect between second homeowners and locals. Reasons for that may vary and have not been the focus of this research. However, it has been mentioned to us, that newcomers often have fences around their homes, which is not traditional for locals and that an increase in paths and tourism forces locals to change their swimming spots.

5.4 Election

In the recent local elections, people were hopeful that the newly elected mayor would bring positive changes and stimulate economic growth in the village. However, there is a prevailing sense among the population that their voices have not been heard by the authorities previously. When asked about the reasons for his election, the mayor avoided the question, which may suggest a lack of transparency and accountability in the local governance system.

During the survey it became clear that this community received EU funding through Leader projects. One of the projects that was funded in Palūšė was the pathway around lake and dock. Some mentioned the use of the LEADER projects that utilizes a bottom up approach, as an example a Eu funded LAG project was mentioned.

This particular project received support from the European Union, which played a pivotal role in promoting regional development by enhancing infrastructure and attracting tourism. As a result of this trend, more entrepreneurs have entered the community. Vacant houses are being purchased, not necessarily for habitation, but to lease out during the tourist season. Similarly, several plots of land are being sold by non-residents solely for the purpose of tourism, which could potentially further fuel the seasonal population of the area.

The surveys and interviews conducted in this research may have some limitations, such as a small sample size due to the limited population and time frame. It is important to note that the study only captures a momentary snapshot of the community and does not account for possible changes or future developments. Additionally, since there is little information available about the community's past, it may be challenging to place the findings in historical context. Finally, there is a possibility that some individuals may have completed both surveys, which could impact the accuracy of the results.

One of the strengths of this study lies in the unique perspective it offers on second homeowners within the village. As there is no general data available on this group, the study sheds light on a previously understudied population. Another strength is the researchers' ability to physically observe event sites and talk to people in person, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the community. Additionally, the study received a lot of replies from an online service, allowing for a large sample size and diverse range of perspectives to be included in the analysis.

6. Suggestions

In order to develop an effective regional development plan, it is important to engage with local residents and solicit their input on the types of solutions they would like to see implemented. This bottom-up policy approach can help to ensure that the needs and desires of the community are accurately reflected in the development plan.

One key consideration for the regional development plan is whether to include a focus on the elderly or to solely prioritize resort areas. While focusing on resort areas may be appealing, it is worth noting that second-home owners do not contribute as much in taxes as permanent residents. One suggestion to address this issue would be to institute yearly taxes for second-home owners to support the community of Palůšě. On the other hand, focusing on the elderly population presents

its own challenges. Many elderly individuals value their independence and may be reluctant to become fully integrated into the community. One potential solution could be to find common ground between second-home owners and the elderly population, such as setting up a buddy system where second-home owners help out with groceries or gardening.

Furthermore, the municipality is also planning to increase the number of remote workers in the area. By planning for second-home owners and embracing the developments they bring to the community, the advantages of having second-home owners can be highlighted and leveraged in the regional development plan.

Moreover, it would be helpful if data on second homeowners would be collected and analyzed on a national level. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of second homeowners on communities, as well as inform policies and decision-making related to second homeownership. It would also allow for comparisons across regions and identify trends in second homeownership, which could be useful for researchers, policymakers, and communities.

The mayor suggests that the region is considering to transform into a health resort area, making the income based on tourism less seasonal. Due to more local expenses of these tourists that might increase the budget of the affected villages. Further, this could help Palūšė to get more investors and job opportunities that it could use for smart shrinking.

7. Conclusion

Palūšė, a small and picturesque community in Lithuania, has experienced a decline in population over the years, possibly partly due to the decommissioning of the nearby nuclear power plant, but also because of the macro-scale centralization and emigration. Despite this, Palūšė has good accessibility and infrastructure like asphalt roads and a public bus service, as well as a social service to transport people to necessary services. Although most services are centralized in nearby Ignalina, Palūšė is only 5 km away and easily accessible by car.

The Palūšė community has a high percentage of elderly people, as well as numerous second homeowners who visit during the summer months. The influx of visitors, including second homeowners, has turned Palūšė into a vibrant hub for live music during the summer months, which has further enhanced its appeal to tourists.

Palūšė's recognition as a resort area and the EU funding received via LEADER projects have also contributed to its accessibility and attractiveness as a tourist destination. The second homeowners,

who are often business owners, have also contributed to the town's attractiveness by renovating houses and offering activities such as boat rentals. Although they may not bring taxes into the community, their presence contributes to the town's image and attractiveness, which could in turn attract more visitors and even permanent residents. Yet, Palūšē is not the only community in the region that experiences a seasonal influx of visitors. Other communities within the district of Ignalina use the same concept of sleeping winter towns and flourishing in the summer. This concept is known by the administration and the regional planning is set on encouraging tourism as an economic development.

Overall, while Palūšē may face challenges due to its shrinking population and centralized services, its accessibility, attractiveness as a tourist destination, and the involvement of second homeowners in the community all contribute to the town's potential for growth and sustainability. The locals, although preferring silence, also appreciate the quality of life in Palūšē. With the changing landscape of remote work, Palūšē could potentially attract more residents looking for a peaceful and picturesque place to call home.

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Appendix A

Interview questions for the head of local development strategy administration focus on the gaining an understanding of demographics, local economy, contribution of second home owners to the community, Eu funding and smart shrinkage.

1. Can you describe the demographic makeup of Palūšė, including age balance, employment rate, seasonal population fluctuation and second home owners?
2. Have you observed any changes in Palūšė demographics over the past few decades?
3. Are there any specific demographic groups that are particularly vulnerable or at-risk in the community ?
4. How has the local economy been affected by any recent changes or trends, such as the fall of an industry or a decline in employment opportunities?
5. What are/were the major industries in the community and how did/do they contribute to the local economy?
6. Are there any initiatives or programs in place to support and grow local businesses?
7. How do second home owners contribute to the local economy and the overall community?
8. Are there any concerns or challenges associated with a large number of second home owners in the community?
If no, Are there any initiatives or programs in place to encourage second home owners to become more involved in community life?
9. How does the community ensure that the needs of both full-time residents and second home owners are being met?
10. Can you describe any EU-funded projects that have been implemented in Palūšė?
11. Have there been any challenges or obstacles in accessing and utilizing EU funding in Palūšė ?

12. Are there any specific strategies or initiatives in place to manage population decline and its impact on the community?
13. Are there any concerns or potential negative impacts associated with a large number of second home owners in the community, such as seasonal fluctuations in demand for services or unhappiness among local residents?
14. How does the local community appreciate the business and tourism coming in?
15. Is there any additional information that would be relevant to our study?

Translation of the interview question to Lithuanian

1. Galėtumėte apibūdinti bendruomenės demografinį sudėtį, įskaitant amžiaus struktūrą, užimtumo lygį, sezoninę gyventojų kaitą ir antrinių namų savininkus?
2. Pastaraisiais dešimtmečiais pastebėjote kokias nors pokyčius bendruomenės demografijoje?
3. Ar yra kokios nors specifinės demografinės grupės, kurios yra ypač pažeidžiamos ar rizikingos bendruomenėje?
4. Kaip vietos ekonomika paveikta dėl bet kokių pastarųjų pokyčių ar tendencijų, pavyzdžiui, dėl pramonės griūties ar užimtumo galimybių sumažėjimo?
5. Kokie buvo pagrindiniai bendruomenės pramonės sektoriai ir kaip jie prisidėjo / prisideda prie vietinės ekonomikos?
6. Ar yra kokių nors iniciatyvų ar programų, skirtų paramai ir vietinių verslų augimui?
7. Kaip antriniai namų savininkai prisideda prie vietinės ekonomikos ir bendruomenės apskritai?
8. Ar yra kokių nors susirūpinimų ar iššūkių, susijusių su dideliu antrinių namų savininkų skaičiumi bendruomenėje? Jei ne, ar yra kokių nors iniciatyvų ar programų, skirtų skatinti antrinių namų savininkus aktyviau dalyvauti bendruomenės gyvenime?
9. Kaip bendruomenė užtikrina, kad būtų atsižvelgiama į visų visą laiką gyvenančių gyventojų ir antrinių namų savininkų poreikius?
10. Galite apibūdinti kokias nors ES finansuojamas projektus, kurie buvo įgyvendinti bendruomenėje?
11. Ar buvo kokių nors sunkumų ar kliūčių susijusių su ES finansavimu bendruomenėje?

12. Ar yra kokių nors specifinių strategijų ar iniciatyvų, skirtų valdyti gyventojų mažėjimą ir jo poveikį bendruomenei?
13. Ar yra kokių nors susirūpinimų ar potencialių neigiamų poveikių, susijusių su dideliu antrinių namų savininkų skaičiumi bendruomenėje, pavyzdžiui, sezoniškai kintančia paslauga?
14. Kaip vietos bendruomenė vertina atvykstantį verslą ir turizmą?
15. Ar yra papildomos informacijos, kuri galėtų būti svarbi mūsų tyrimui?

Appendix B

Interview questions for the head of local development strategy administration focus on the gaining an understanding of demographics, local economy, contribution of second homeowners to the community, Eu funding and smart shrinkage.

1. What were the election campaign plans for Palūšė ?
2. Why did the people vote for you ? What changes do the people want to see ?
3. Are you aware of the amount of second homeowners in Palūšė?
4. Are there any advantages or challenges that come with having second homeowners in Palūšė?
5. How do you see the future of Palūšė? What are your plans for the region?
6. Will you focus on the local residents that feel isolated, or focus on economic growth via tourism ?

Interview with mayor

What were the campaign plans for Palūšė?

Palūšė was a church village and a Jewish market town, one of the largest in the region until Ignalina and the railway were built. During Soviet times, tourism was developed, and a base was built. Now, Palūšė is looking for its identity, and young people are trying to expand the tourism sector (water, entertainment, nature exploration). We will continue to try to expand the tourism sector.

We aim to develop more peaceful, active leisure tourism. The goal is to create conditions to attract not only Lithuanian tourists but also those from abroad.

Have you noticed any changes in the environment or a decrease in the number of people over the past few years?

(Nothing from this answers the question) We are not only focused on Palūšė; there are also many other tourist towns like Palūšė. Palūšė is not suitable for mass meetings such as the Galapagai music festival because there are simply not enough open spaces to accommodate everyone.

What is your opinion on people who have second homes in Palūšė?

„Ignalina is a donor of young people to Vilnius“. My generation, as well as my children's generation, moved to Vilnius and stayed there. But on the other hand, in the context of Ignalina and Palūšė, it is a leisure destination. Another element is the older generation of people who managed to preserve or acquire real estate in our area, and a significant part of them has developed rental housing services. Also, people who buy homes here return the environment, and the landscape becomes more attractive to others. The pandemic has shown that people today can work not only in contact but also remotely, so there are more people who come here not only to rest but also to work remotely in nature. Many people live deeper in the forests, which are harder to notice, and they want to be isolated, separated from everyday noise. Another thing, young retirees come, who have already lived an active part of their lives, achieved everything, got bored of big cities, so they come here to settle and integrate into the community. They attract other people through their circle, and they live in Vilnius for, say, two days, but as an example, they live in Palūšė for five days, so how can we call it, where do they live?

In your opinion, do second home owners bring more benefits or more harm to Palūšė?

Second home owners are a counterweight to the negative demography that we experience. They come with their own culture, blend into the community, sometimes stay, and these people create jobs because they need all sorts of services, etc.

What do you see as the future of the region, including Palūšė?

Palūšė as a single entity does not function; it functions as a complex together with the Ignalina region. During the summer season, the region is lively, but during the winter, there is not enough activity. We need to think about how to make it a year-round destination, not just for Lithuanians but also for foreigners. We need to develop more unique, personalized, and authentic tourism services. We also need to preserve and maintain our cultural heritage, traditions, and natural beauty. The future of the region and Palūšė depends on the joint efforts of the community, local authorities, and entrepreneurs.

Interview view the head of local development strategy administration

1. Could you describe the demographic makeup of the community, including age structure, employment rate, seasonal population turnover, and second home owners?

Lithuania does not record any second home owners, there are ownership data, but there are no such second home owners. We are the oldest district in Lithuania, the coefficient of old age is the highest in Lithuania (this information is in the strategic plan), but this information fully corresponds to Palūšė itself. Low population density, the highest number of social benefits in Lithuania, a large number of economically inactive people. 2 children live in Palušė. Many old people, only few arriving children and people of working age.

2. Have you noticed any changes in the demographics of the community in recent decades?

Yes, we noticed depopulation.

3. Are there any specific demographic groups that are particularly vulnerable or at risk in Palušė?

Older people who need a variety of services, such as social services.

4. How is the local economy affected by any recent changes or trends, such as the collapse of industry or a reduction in employment opportunities?

Since we didn't have industrial enterprises, only a nuclear power plant in the neighborhood, there were people working there, but after the closure, the state invested a lot of money in employing people so that there would not be a big crisis. There were several monofunctional cities, such as

Didžiasalis (brick factory). Unemployment has been characteristic of this region for many years, low employment, low entrepreneurship. One of the three largest municipalities with small entrepreneurship.

5. What were the main industrial sectors in the Ignalina district and how did they contribute/contribute to the economy not only of Ignalina, but also of Palušės?

Services.

6. Are there any initiatives, programs or support for the growth of local businesses?

There are many levels of support, both external and internal and national and regional and local. The LEADER program, a very specific program, means that the region receives a package of money (1.5 million euros for five years), but if the communities themselves do not show initiative, do not do projects, then they will not be able to absorb that money. Many projects have been implemented in Palušė, educational houses, sculptures, children's playgrounds and the Palušė festival, information stands have been built. The National Park receives money from the EU as well as from the state through its own projects.

7. How do secondary homeowners contribute to the local economy and community in general?

We are very sorry that we are not able to get second home owners out of their homes, because they shop in Vilnius Maxima, come with food, drinks, stay in their homestead and spend the weekend there, and then get in their cars and leave. Our big problem is that people don't know how to somehow offer services that would attract second home owners from their homes. There is a lack of competences to attract them, they bring little money to the budget. A small part stays, invests money and creates a business. The potential is greater than what can be taken from them. Homesteads here are very expensive, the locals themselves do not buy unless they have received it as an inheritance.

8. Are there any concerns or challenges related to the large number of second home owners in the Palušė ward?

They do not cause problems in themselves, we feel that they could help, integrate more into the local community. If we had a system to count them (second home owners), then it would be possible to get more money for services, infrastructure, because the money comes from local residents who live and are registered there.

9. If not, are there any initiatives or programs to encourage second home owners to become more involved in the community?

That money, which is directed to local residents, so that they create jobs for themselves and can provide services to both tourists and second home owners. More seasonal services.

10. How does the local authority, community ensure that the needs of all full-time residents and second home owners are taken into account?

There are various systems. The LEADER program is adapted in such a way that it is mandatory to address the locals, listen to everyone. The municipality also has clear tools, such as public presentations, questionnaires, that they must address to specific and diverse groups of people.

11. Can you describe any EU-funded projects that have been implemented in the ward?

LEADER, national support instruments that go through ministries. Regional development plan, road fund money.

12. Were there any difficulties or obstacles related to EU funding in the community or the ward itself?

Yes, it is very difficult to coordinate everything with everyone, to gather the community, you need competences with documentation, not everyone can do it. Sometimes you need your own money to show that the community is really interested in the project.

13. Are there any specific strategies or initiatives to manage population decline and its impact on the community?

National instruments. European programs like LEADER.

14. Are there any concerns or potential negative impacts associated with a high number of second home owners in the community.

We heard that people like to buy poor, crumbling homesteads, which are renovated and fixed. They just feel that it could be even better if they delved into community activities.

Appendix C

Survey questions focused on the well-being of the elderly (50plus) in relation to living in the park

16. Age

17. Woman/man

18. Living situation - alone
- alone / - with partner / with partner and kids / - with kids

19. How long have you been living in the area
- all my life / - more than 1 year / more than 5 years/ more than 10 years

20. Do you like living here?

21. Do you feel that your current living situation meets your needs and provides you with a sense of security and comfort?

22. Do you have anyone to help you with; groceries, cleaning, .. Yes/no/ I don't need help

23. Do you have access to transportation to get to appointments, groceries, and other necessities?

24. What are your daily activities ? Are there sufficient community activities and resources for you to stay socially engaged and active?

25. Do you use any of the activities in the park ?

26. Does the tourism coming into the park influence your daily life ?

27. Does tourism impact your life positively or negatively?

28. Does the tourism high season impact your accessibility to services such as restaurants, library, supermarket, or other daily activities ?

29. Does the tourism high season impact the accessibility to the park ?

30. Have you ever felt unsafe in your community, especially during tourist season?

31. Have you ever felt isolated or lonely in your current community?

32. Do you feel that your community is welcoming to older adults and values their contributions to the community?
33. Do you feel that your voice is heard and respected by local decision-makers and community leaders?

Survey translated to Lithuanian:

- 1) Amžius
- 2) Moteris / vyras
- 3) Gyvenimo situacija - viena / - vienas / - su partneriu / - su partneriu ir vaikais / - su vaikais
- 4) Kiek laiko jau gyvenate šioje teritorijoje - visą gyvenimą / - daugiau nei 1 metus / - daugiau nei 5 metus / - daugiau nei 10 metų / - persikėliau
- 5) Ar patinka gyventi čia?
- 6) Ar jaučiate, kad dabartinė jūsų gyvenimo situacija atitinka jūsų poreikius ir suteikia jums saugumo ir komforto jausmą?
- 7) Ar turite ką nors, kas padeda jums su apsilankymais parduotuvėje, namų valymu ir kt.?
- 8) Ar turite prieigą prie transporto, kad galėtumėte pasiekti paskirties vietas, pavyzdžiui: parduotuvės ir kitas būtinas vietas?
- 9) Kokie jūsų kasdienė veikla? Ar yra pakankamai bendruomenės veiklų ir išteklių, kad galėtumėte būti socialiai įtraukti ir aktyvus?
- 10) Ar naudojate parke esančiomis veiklomis?
- 11) Ar turizmas parke daro įtaką jūsų kasdieniui gyvenimui?
- 12) Ar turizmas jūsų gyvenimui daro teigiamą ar neigiamą įtaką?
- 13) Ar turizmo sezono dalis daro įtaką jūsų prieinamumui paslaugoms, tokioms kaip restoranai, biblioteka, supermarketas, kiti kasdieniniai veiksmai?
- 14) Ar turizmo sezono dalis daro įtaką parko prieinamumui?
- 15) Ar jaučiatės saugiai savo bendruomenėje, ypač turistų sezono metu?
- 16) Ar jaučiatės izoliuotas ar vienišas savo dabartinėje bendruomenėje?
- 17) Ar manote, kad jūsų bendruomenė gerbia vyresnio amžiaus žmones ir vertina jų indėlį į bendruomenę?

18) Ar jaučiate, kad vietinės sprendimų priėmėjai ir bendruomenės lyderiai gerbia ir klausosi jūsų nuomonės?

Appendix D

Survey questions for the Community FB page

1) Age

2) Woman/man

3) I live in

- Palūšė/ Outside of Palūšė/ I have a second home in Palūšė

4) Living situation

Alone / With partner / With partner and kids / With kids

5) How long have you been living in the area
All my life / More than 1 year / More than 5 years/ More than 10 years / I am a second home owner in Palūšė

6) Do you like living here? Yes/No

7) Do you feel that your current living situation meets your needs and provides you with a sense of security and comfort? Yes/No

8) Do you have anyone to help you with; groceries, cleaning, .. Yes/No/ I do not need help

9) Do you have access to transportation to get to appointments, groceries, and other necessities? Yes/No/ I have my own car

10) What are your daily activities ?(open question)

11) Are there sufficient community activities and resources for you to stay socially engaged and active? Yes/No

12) Do you use any of the activities in the park ? Yes/No

13) Does the tourism coming into the park influence your daily life ? Yes/ No

14) Does tourism impact your life positively or negatively? Yes/No

15) Does the tourism high season impact your accessibility to services such as restaurants, library, supermarket, or other daily activities ? Yes/No

16) Does the tourism high season impact the accessibility to the park ? Yes/No

17) Have you ever felt unsafe in your community, especially during tourist season? Yes/No

18) Have you ever felt isolated or lonely in your current community? Yes/No

19) Do you feel that your community is welcoming to older adults and values their contributions to the community? Yes/No

20) Do you feel that your voice is heard and respected by local decision-makers and community leaders? Yes / No

Survey questions translated to Lithuanian

- 1) Amžius
- 2) Lytis
- 3) Gyvenamoji vieta...
-Palūšė / Gyvenu už Palūšės ribų, tačiau taip pat turiu būstą ir Palūšėje / Gyvenu už Palūšės ribų
- 4) Gyvenu...
-Vienas / Vienas su partneriu/ Kartu su partneriu ir vaikais / Kartu su vaikais
- 5) Kiek laiko gyvenate Palūšėje?
-Visą gyvenimą / Mažiau nei vienerius metus / Daugiau nei metus / Daugiau nei penkerius metus / Daugiau nei dešimt metų / Esu būsto savininkas (-ė) Palūšėje, tačiau čia mano ne pagrindinė gyvenamoji vieta
- 6) Ar jums patinka gyventi čia? Taip / Ne
- 7) Ar manote, kad dabartinė jūsų gyvenamoji situacija atitinka jūsų poreikius ir suteikia jums komforto ir saugumo jausmą? Taip / Ne
- 8) Ar turite ką nors, kas padėtų jums nuvykti į parduotuvę, kitas paslaugų vietas, kurios yra už Palūšės ribų? Taip / Ne / Nemanau, kad man reikia pagalbos
- 9) Ar turite transporto priemones, kad galėtumėte važinėti į paskirties vietas, pirkti maisto produktus ir kitas būtinąsias prekes? Taip / Ne / Aš turiu savo automobilį
- 10) Ar yra pakankamai bendruomenės veiklų ir išteklių, kad galėtumėte būti socialiai aktyvus ir dalyvauti veiklose? Taip / Ne
- 11) Kokie yra jūsų kasdieniai užsiėmimai?
- 12) Ar naudojate nacionalinio parko veiklomis? Taip / Ne
- 13) Ar turizmas, kuris ateina į parką, daro įtaką jūsų kasdieniui gyvenimui?
- 14) Ar turizmas teigiamai ar neigiamai veikia jūsų gyvenimą?

-Labai teigiamai / Teigiamai / Šiek tiek teigiamai / Neutraliai / Šiek tiek neigiamai / Neigiamai / Labai neigiamai

- 15) Ar turizmo sezono metu turite sunkumų pasiekti paslaugas, tokias kaip restoranai, biblioteka, parduotuves ir kitas kasdieninės veiklas? Taip / Ne
- 16) Ar turizmo sezono metu sunkiau pasiekti nacionalinio parko teikiamas paslaugas? Taip / Ne
- 17) Ar jūs kada nors jaučiatės nesaugiai savo bendruomenėje, ypač turizmo sezono metu? Taip / Ne
- 18) Ar jaučiatės izoliuotas ar vienišas savo dabartinėje bendruomenėje? Taip / Ne
- 19) Ar manote, kad jūsų bendruomenė gerbia vyresnio amžiaus žmones ir vertina jų indėlį bendruomenėje? Taip / Ne
- 20) Ar jaučiate, kad vietos valdžios ir bendruomenės lyderiai gerbia ir klausosi jūsų nuomonės? Taip / Ne