



Public Leaders Shaping Peripheralization Discourses and Practices?

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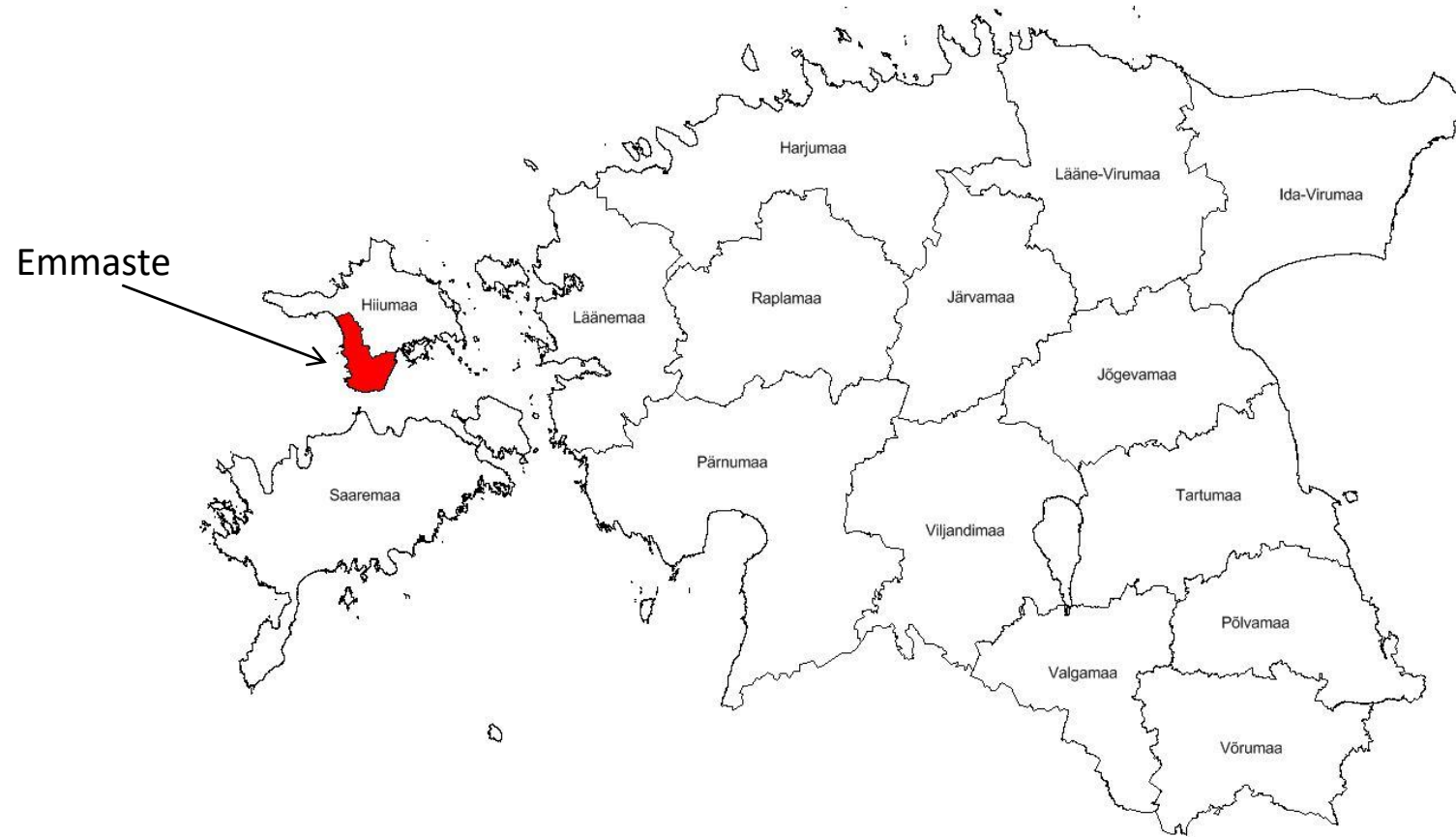
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Fighting Peripheralization through Image-Making?

- **What and Where** did We Research?
- **How** did We Research?

- **What** is Leadership and **Who** are Leaders?
- **In which Context** do Leaders Act?
- **Which Challenges** do Leaders Face When Focusing on Image-Making?
- **Why** do Leaders Focus on Image?

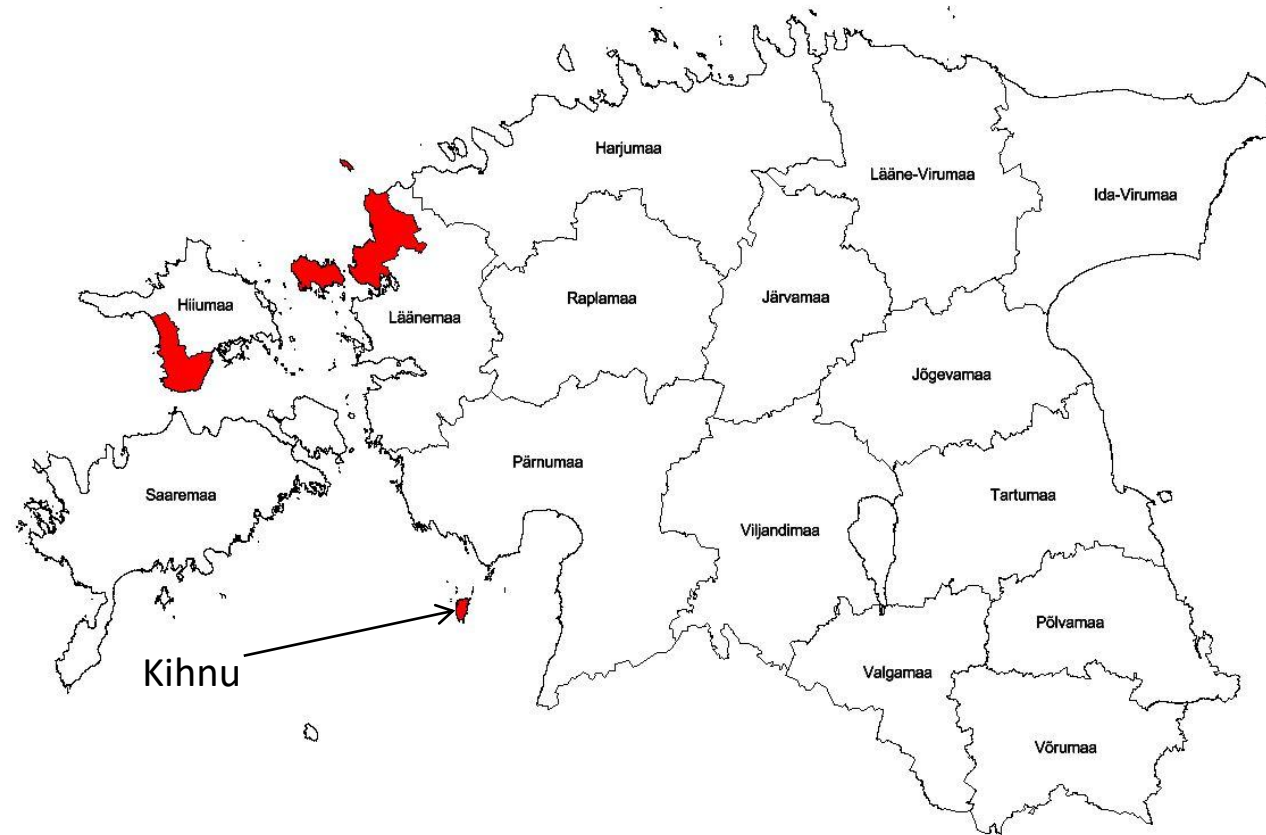
What and Where did We Research? (Grete)



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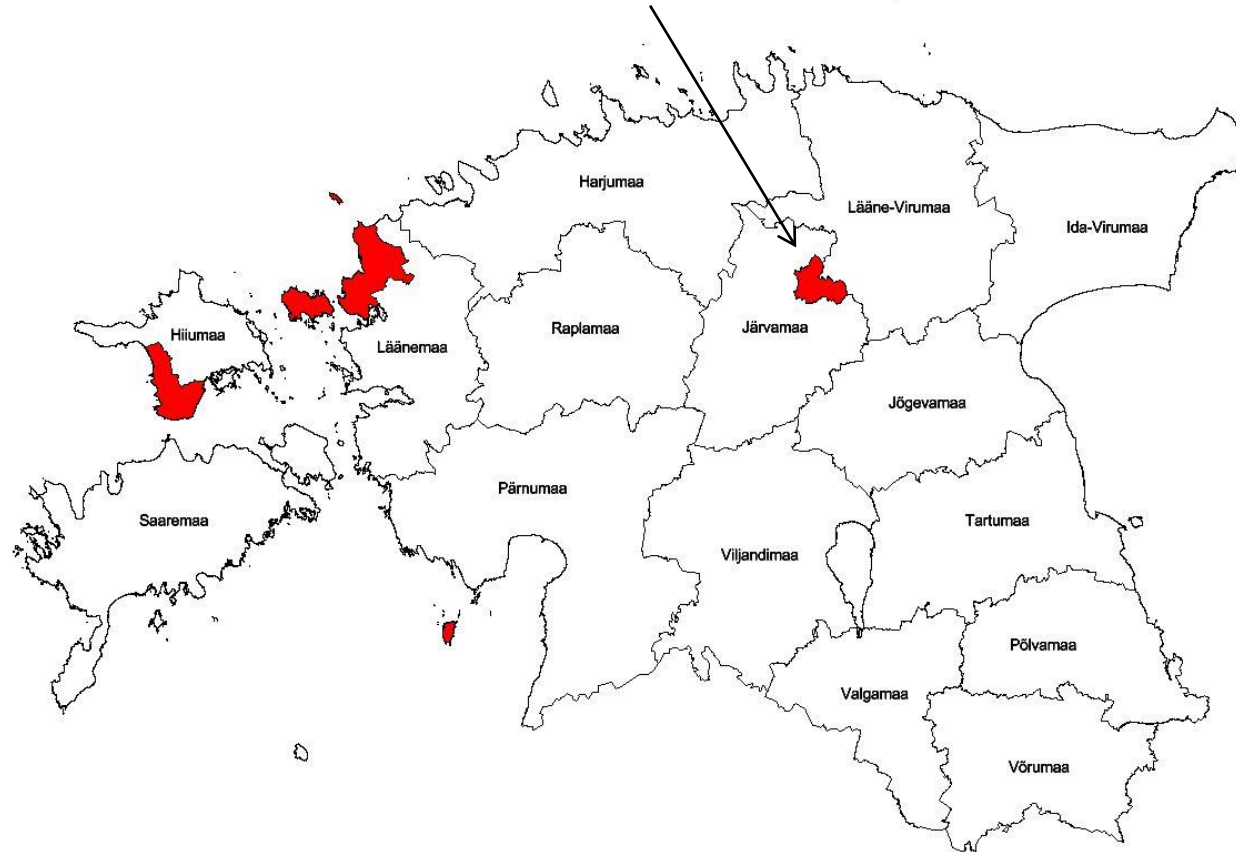


What and Where did We Research? (Martiene)

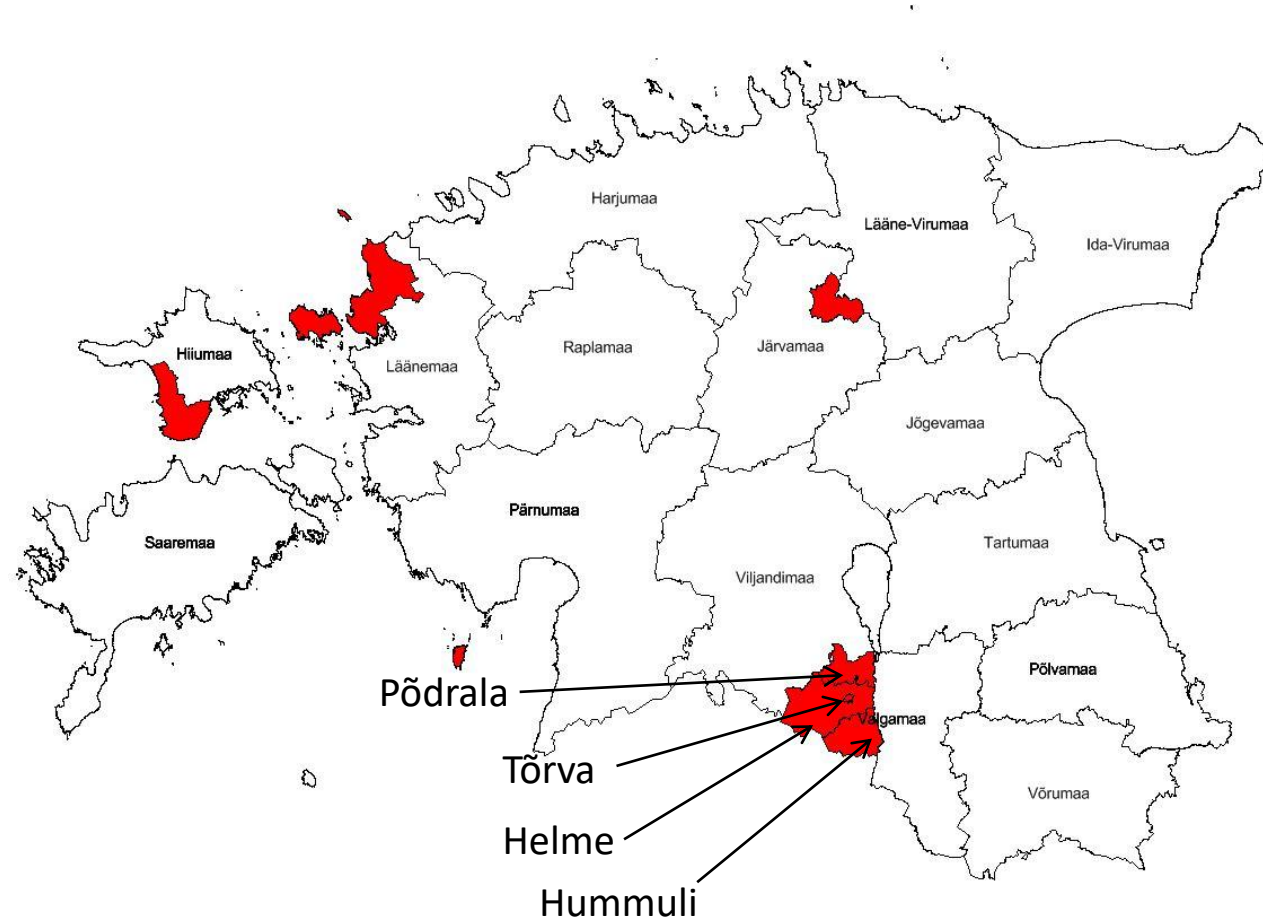


What and Where did We Research? (Martiene)

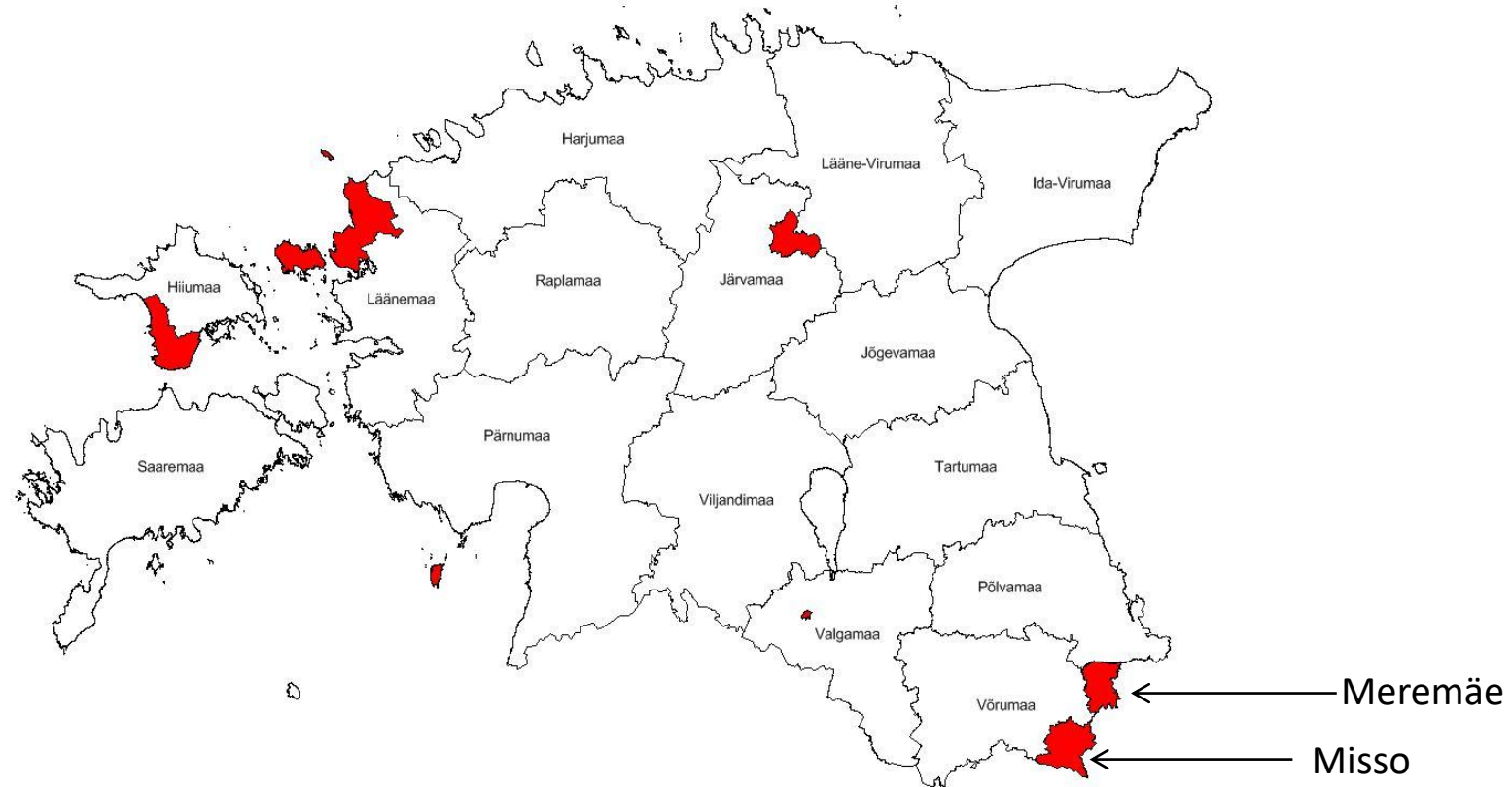
Järva-Jaani



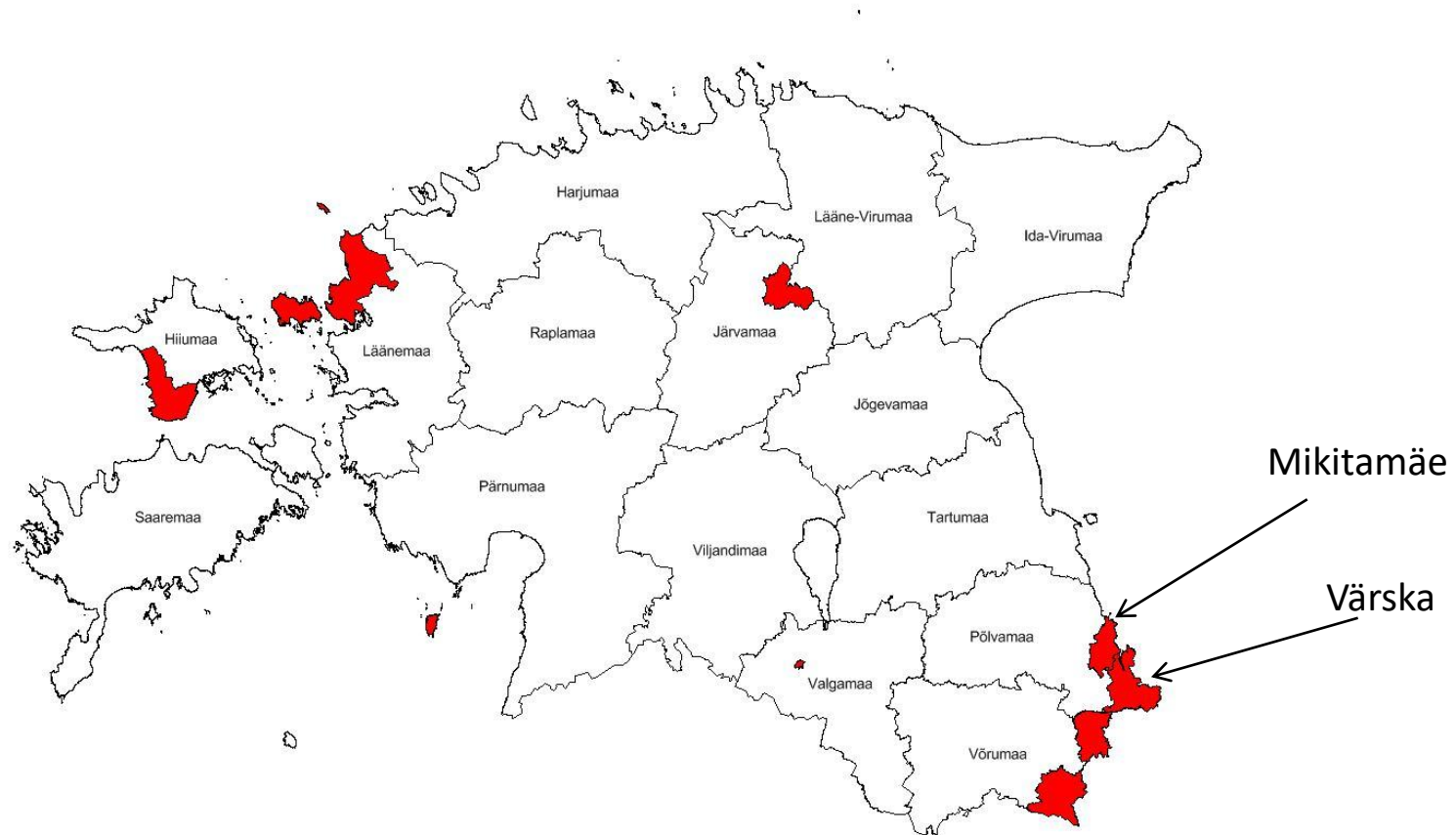
What and Where did We Research? (Bianka)



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How did We Research?

- ❖ **Context analysis** incl. socio-economic statistical data, development plans, former studies
- ❖ **Media analysis** of national and local newspapers
- ❖ **In-depth interviews** with national, county-level and local decision-makers (incl. politicians, opinion-leaders, entrepreneurs, development officers, NGO leaders, activists)
- ❖ **Participatory observation** at local events

What is Leadership and Who are Leaders?

Leadership

- ❖ Relationship between leaders and followers, where leader's role is to lead group of people
 - **Economists'** (enterprise) vs. **Regionalists'** approach (region)
 - Leading **by Doing** & Leading **by Saying**

Leader

- ❖ Anyone who is able to mobilize followers around him/her and who is able to influence followers' thoughts and behavior
 - **formal** and/or **informal**
 - **collaborative** and/or **solo-activity**
- ❖ Place shapers, policy makers, entrepreneurs, opinion leaders, decision-makers etc.

In which Context do Leaders Act?

Material Peripheralization

- ❖ Rural Restructuration
- ❖ Sub-/Urbanization

➤ *Rural, poor, unemployed, empty?*

Socio-communicative Peripheralization

- ❖ Distance to functional and policy networks
- ❖ Invisibility and territorial stigmatization

➤ *Middle of nowhere or no-go area?*

Political Neoliberalization

- ❖ Post-socialist transformation
- ❖ Regional competitiveness vs. redistributive system

➤ *Dependent, responsible?*

Challenge 1: How to be visible?

Emmaste: Community-Building via Place-Marketing

*"It was necessary for people, who were proud that they were from **Emmaste** ... Being famous was useful" (Public servant)*



Kihnu: Danger of Being Constantly in the Picture (Limits of Place-Marketing)

"The attention to **Kihnu** can be positive, but also negative and ruin your mood for the whole day"



Challenge 2: Visibility at all costs?

Järva-Jaani: active town looking for visibility

- ❖ 9 museums/dancing groups/music groups/sports clubs/innovative gymnasium/hostel/fire fighters etc.

Example of Doktor Silva & Naabriplika

- ❖ TV series as an instrument towards visibility

“This shows that Järva-Jaani is willing and Järva-Jaani wants to develop and we are doing whatever it is to be in the big picture, to be in the big plan” It is an instrument how to make yourself visible.”

- ❖ Using this image for developing the place

Naabriplika hostel in Järva-Jaani



Challenge 2: Visibility at all costs?

Putting yourself on the map but...

Danger of stigmatization

- ❖ Portraying a negative image of the place
“Some people think that doctor Silva is not good for Järva Jaani, because all these activities are in Järva-Jaani. The name is Järva-Jaani”
- ❖ Järva-Jaani’s image of bad doctors in Doktor Silva versus an actual qualified doctors’ center
“but in our doctor’s centre, pereartsikeskuses, there are good doctors, very good doctors”

Danger of Hollow Image

- ❖ Proposal to name new unified Tõrva municipality ‘South-Mulgimaa’ met with rejection
*“I feel no connection to that” “**Mulgi** heritage in **Helme** parish is lost”*
 - Challenge: External brand vs. internal identity
 - Practiced solutions: Reconnecting inhabitants to Mulgi culture (Roundtrips, Memorial Days, Publication of Mulgi Primer)

Challenge 3: Visibility through Place Identity?

Vormsi and Noarootsi: How to find one's identity?

- ❖ Invisible identity
"If I arrived here then I was dissapointed, because here is no sign of Estonian-Swedish culture"
(Former mayor)
- ❖ Communication between different subgroups: Estonian-Swedes vs local inhabitants vs second home owners
"If to be true, then they haven't been come back, they got back their land, but they don' live here"
(Local entrepreneur)



Setomaa: How to commodify place identity?

- ❖ Annual Culture Events: Preservation vs. Commodification of Identity
"For whom is the Kingdomday meant to be?"



Challenge 4: Visibility despite Stigmatization?

Image Reversal

- ❖ Positive Revaluation of Peripherality, Rurality and Cultural Peculiarity

Lobbying

- ❖ Establishment of Institutional Framework
- ❖ Institutionalization of Funding Structure
- ❖ Lobbying based on Revised Image

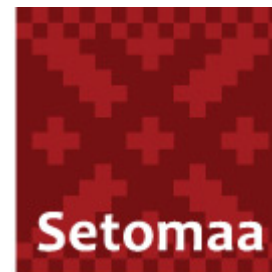
Place-Marketing

- ❖ Commodification of Revised Image

*“We are an island it will make us a peripheral place, but still it will in some way put us, **Kihnu**, in the centre of... everything, sometimes”*

*“**Kihnu**, it is like a business card: I’m from Kihnu, please help.”*

*“The entering of Leelo to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List has given us here locally in **Setomaa**, this kind of trump card so that we can also on the government level always use it as an argument.”*



Yours authentically



Challenge 4: Visibility despite Stigmatization?

Danger of Idealization

- ❖ Disguise of material difficulties by overly positive image
- ❖ Domination of resources and publicity in times of scarcity

Danger of Instrumentalization

- ❖ Neoliberal reinterpretation of Active Coping as Self-Responsibility

*“If we want them to see how poor we are, or how much trouble **Kihnu** has, then it is possible. And then that’s what they see. But no one wants to do that”*

*“From outside we in **Setomaa** seem to be better than we actually are”*

“Try to Eat a Song”

“You are doing so well anyway, hence, we don’t need to support you anymore”

“There should be more such active people as you”

Why do Leaders Focus on Image?

Image making as *an* opportunity and instrument for development

- ❖ Attracting new inhabitants and tourists (Tule Maale initiative)
- ❖ To improve the image of the place internally, in order to keep local residents

Image making as a reaction towards centralization tendencies?

- ❖ As an opportunity to gain recognition
- ❖ As a move away from negative stereotyping of the countryside?

Image making as *thé* thing to do?

- ❖ Following examples from other countries?
- ❖ “Trend” of place marketing?

Thank you!

Acknowledgement

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