



Images of the Periphery Impeding Rural Development?

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Background

Concentrating on the social construction of the center-periphery and urban-rural divide, the project analyses, how rural areas are *constituted* as peripheries within a hegemonic discourse which naturalizes the ascription of development (non)potentials. It shows the crucial role of images and their subjective relevance for peripheralization processes and attempts to overcome them.

Objective

- Deconstructing *how* center-periphery hierarchies are (un)made
- Analysing *who* has the power to speak/be heard in the discourse
- Exploring subjective relevance of ascriptions
- Discussing socio-spatial *consequences*

Contribution to RegPol²

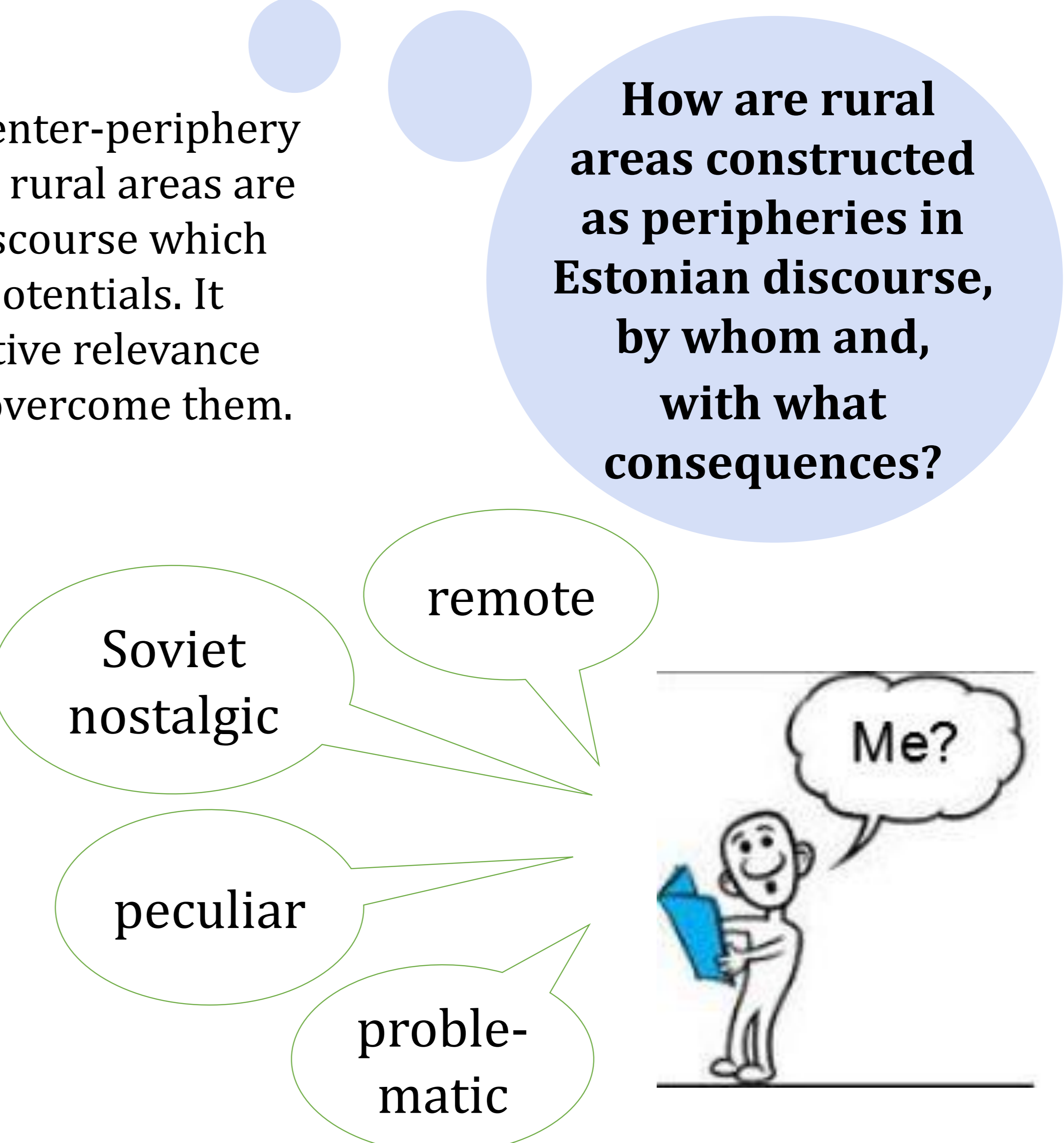
Focusing on the structure and subjective relevance of peripheralization discourses, the project aims to further scrutinize the link between discourses, materialities and practices in (re)producing core-periphery relations.

The question is not to define what and where peripheries are, but how they are constructed

First results

Print Media Analysis

- Association of periphery with deficits, decline, social pathologies, romanticized images of countryside and otherness
- Primarily located in rural areas



How are rural areas constructed as peripheries in Estonian discourse, by whom and, with what consequences?

Methodology

Employing Political Discourse Theory, periphery is treated as empty signifier, being filled with meaning, linked to the rural and subordinated to the urban via chains of equivalence and difference.

- *Discursive Field*: Literature and Statistics Review,, Participatory Observation
- *Public Discourse*: Discourse Analysis of Broadly-Based Text Corpus
- *Subjective Relevance*: Case Studies, Semi-Structured Interviews

Exploratory Case Study

- Local awareness of periphery stigma
- Questioning positive image of best practice example for coping due to
 - local shift of blame causing new marginalizations
 - potential instrumentalization

