



Northernmost Senses of Place

*A study about community satisfaction, by means of people and
place bonds in Longyearbyen*



View from the kitchen window, during my stay in Longyearbyen

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My Svalbard

How less is more, in northernmost
How heat your friend and cold the host
How white brings colour to grey stone rocks
How wind carries clouds over mountain tops
How hours can pass, but shadows don't grow
How I felt safe in the Svalbard snow.
People who call the nothingness home
Away from it all, but never alone

Nothingness knows no words
Still I tried

Marije, January 2018

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1. Introduction

1.1 Geopolitics in the Arctic

The interest in the Arctic is increasing. Even countries that are not geographically close to the region, such as China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and India, are developing strategies concerning this area (Arctic Council 2015). Currently, global warming is one of the key driving forces behind the economic and political developments in the Arctic. The decrease of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean opens up new shipping routes, which means more shipping possibilities between Asia and North America or Western Europe (Grydehøj 2013). Potential new trade routes are of great interest for export dependent countries, although these new possibilities can either help or hurt their economies (ISAB 2016).

Besides the developments for the Northern Sea Route, Northwest Passage and the potential Transpolar Sea Route, mineral and petroleum deposits are getting more accessible for exploitation due to the ongoing climate change (AIV 2014; Grydehøj 2013). The natural resources of the Arctic can help Asian countries to meet their energy demands, which will allow them to be less dependent of energy suppliers like Russia. The economic growth of China, the expansion of NATO - including countries bordering Russia - and the oil market are therefore all important factors regarding the Arctic (AIV 2014).

Spitsbergen is the main hub of human activities in the Arctic arena of geopolitics (Paglia 2016). The island is the subject of numerous research projects on climate change and arctic ecology, the safe haven of the world's largest collection of crop diversity and a tourist destination that is becoming more and more popular. The reason that Spitsbergen became the main hub in the Arctic can be traced back to the Paris Convention in 1920. During this conference, the Svalbard Treaty was signed, giving Norway the sovereignty over Svalbard, an archipelago with Spitsbergen as its biggest island. Before the convention, Svalbard was an international free-for-all zone, meaning that there were no rules or regulations, and no tribunals to solve conflicts. The situation was maintainable as long as activities were limited to whaling and research, however, with the implementation of the mining industry, rules became necessary (Sysselmannen 2016). Thus, Norway got the sovereignty, under the condition that all signatory countries could carry out economic activities on Svalbard (Misund 2017; Grydehøj 2013). Considering the growing value of the Arctic, the overwhelming global interest for this area and the easy economic accessibility to

Spitsbergen, Norway benefits from a sustainable and resilient community legitimizing Norway's presence in the High North (Paglia 2016).

1.2 Svalbard policy of Norway

That the Norwegian State is well aware of their major role in the Arctic is reflected in the history of Spitsbergen of the last four decades. All this time it has been the main goal of the Svalbard policy to maintain a Norwegian society on the archipelago. This goal has primarily been fulfilled through developing and maintaining the community of Longyearbyen; the main settlement of Svalbard. Before the 1970's Longyearbyen was a one-sided industrial society, with the sole purpose of coal production. As a company town all properties were owned by the mining company Store Norske. The population consisted of mineworkers who worked in Longyearbyen in shifts; commuting between the mining town and their families on the mainland. But at the beginning of the 1970's Store Norske found itself in a crisis. The company needed high funds from the Norwegian State to survive the decreasing coal prices on the global market. Funds alone were not enough; The Norwegian State saw no other choice than nationalising the mining company to sustain the Norwegian settlement on Svalbard. The Norwegian State also decided to 'normalise' the society, hoping for a more resilient framework. Longyearbyen was nothing like the normal Norwegian municipalities on the mainland. Mainly, because it was a working place rather than a home. Making it possible for mineworkers to live together with their families in Longyearbyen, was the first step towards normalisation. The Norwegian State started to facilitate family housing and improved the public services and welfare. Even though the population stayed male-dominated, the percentage of women and children started to grow. Gradually the character of Longyearbyen changed from a company town to a family society. But at the end of the 1980's another crisis hit the coal industry of Longyearbyen. The Norwegian state was already subsidizing the mining industry with over 100 million kroner a year. Obviously, the society that had developed in the last decades still showed a lack of resilience; Longyearbyen needed more than one leg to stand on. This was the reason that in the early 1990s the economic diversification kicked off. The development of private businesses was supported by the Norwegian state: the service industry, tourism and research activities expanded greatly. Additionally, the introduction of local democracy (represented by a local council) was a part

of building a strong foundation for Longyearbyen's society (Arlov et al. 2017; Grydehøj et al. 2012; Norwegian Ministry of Justice 2008).

Although the Norwegian State promotes Longyearbyen nowadays as a modern family community with well-developed public infrastructure and a relatively good public service offer, they also expressed their concern about the continuation of a strong presence in the archipelago, especially now that the strategic value of the Arctic is rapidly increasing. Mining activities continue to decrease in importance and the demographics show a decrease of Norwegian residents (Statistics Norway 2016). According to the most recent White paper regarding the future of Svalbard (published in 2016), the normalisation process has to be continued. This means that the Norwegian government will facilitate further developments (like improved family housing) of the community to ensure a viable local environment attractive to families (Norwegian Ministry of Justice 2016). The Norwegian State believes that Longyearbyen is at the beginning of a new chapter; moving away from the mining industry towards a 'greener' and more attractive community (Lokalstyre 2017). The local government of Longyearbyen (called the: Lokalstyre) already developed a new area plan for the town. This plan provides a framework for future urban development in Longyearbyen until 2026 (Norwegian Ministry of Justice 2016). The main goal for urban development is to further facilitate the development of Longyearbyen as a robust and viable community, with an emphasis on creating a place that is attractive to live in (Lokalstyre 2017).

1.3 Objective and research question

Until, the main focus of Longyearbyen's normalisation process was based on an economic and political perspective: industrial diversification, local governance, family housing, improved infrastructure and clear legislation to make Longyearbyen robust and viable (Lokalstyre 2017; Norwegian Ministry of Justice 2016; 2008). However, little attention has been paid to community perspectives and how local residents perceive the continuing process of normalisation. There are only a few studies on community perspectives like "*Fra company town til folkestyre: Samfunnsbygging i Longyearbyen på 78° Nord*" from Arlov & Holm (2001). Even though, a good understanding of the community's perceptions is as important for the robustness of the community, as a well fitted economic and political framework. It is not for nothing that people and place bonds have been discovered to play an important role in community involvement and place satisfaction (Anton & Lawrence 2014). During a

consultation with the planning department of the Lokaltstyre, it was decided that this better understanding of the community perspective was a desired objective for the local planning processes. Getting a better insight into the community perspectives helps to assess possible social effects in relation to spatial consequences of governmental interventions (Vanclay 2015). It was thus decided that explorative research on the sense of place of the residents was the appropriate approach to provide insight to the planning department into the local community and its attitude towards spatial changes. This particular study focused on the community their satisfaction of life in Longyearbyen. The level of satisfaction was reviewed by specifying residents their senses of place regarding Longyearbyen. Exploring possible relationships, allowed to generate a better understanding about the residents' satisfaction of Longyearbyen; an insight that can be of great importance in light of the normalisation process. Based on the findings the following research question was answered:

How satisfied are residents of Longyearbyen with community life, and can this level of satisfaction be explained by (or does it relate to) the senses of place and socio demographics of the residents?

The following sub questions are answered in the analyses, by means of descriptive and inferential statistics, observations and interview results:

- *How satisfied are residents of Longyearbyen with community life?*
- *Do the socio demographics play a significant role in the satisfaction rate?*
- *Which senses of place can be identified in Longyearbyen?*
- *How do satisfaction and senses of place relate (positively and/or negatively)?*

1.4 Relevance

With 2210 inhabitants, Longyearbyen is a clear example of a growing settlement in the Arctic. There are several other places in the Arctic that are expected to grow in the coming years, like the municipality Hammerfest (Norway) or the mining town Kiruna (Sweden). Similar to Longyearbyen, these places are heading towards developments like economic diversification and the continuing process of urbanization (Bridger 2017). Like Longyearbyen, many of these places have a cultural or geopolitical significance. And most of them need help reorganizing the community life now industries and interests start to shift

(Bridger 2017). The way the Norwegian State is trying to reinvent Longyearbyen and to complete the transition from a company town to a sustainable and resilient society can thus be used as an example for other settlements in the Arctic. However, this can only work if the community dynamics in Longyearbyen itself are understood. Leena Cho, co-founder of the Arctic Design Group (ADG), emphasizes the need for “better-integrated understandings of life and settlements in the Arctic” (Bridger 2017). ADG published several studies about urban development in the High North, but Leena Cho argues that more research involving the community will contribute to a more holistic approach, which is needed in the discussion on modern societies in the Arctic (Cho & Jullis 2013). “Arctic settlement is circumscribed by climate, motivated and mediated by the deep pragmatism of economic and political forces” (Bridger 2017, p. 87). Nevertheless, expansion and renewal of our idea of community perceptions in relation to the built environment of modern Arctic societies is needed. The current Arctic discourse is focused on politics and economics, while the human settlement potential of Arctic places should also be explored via the lens of human geography. Whatever the geopolitical significance of these places are, it should not be overlooked that for many people it is their home, where they live their day-to-day life. This research will help to expand notions of the relationship between people and place in modern Arctic life, by exploring the community perspective in Longyearbyen; and thus contribute to the current Arctic discourse.

2. Theoretical Framework

Before exploring the community perspective of Longyearbyen, there are two key concepts to be discussed in this chapter. These key concepts will be addressed by elaborating on two questions based on the main objective of this study. The aim of this chapter is therefore to parse the research question, in order to fully comprehend the results of this study.

How satisfied are residents of Longyearbyen with community life, and can this level of satisfaction be explained by (or does it relate to) the senses of place and socio demographics of the residents?

1. Who forms the community of Longyearbyen?

With this question I will discuss the first key concept of this research: community. This concept has changed throughout the years and has multiple meanings. It is therefore important to put it into context.

2. What forms these senses of place?

Following Acedo et al. (2017), I identified three dimensions within 'senses of place': 1) the affective dimension (place attachment); 2) the cognitive dimension (place identity); 3) the behavioural dimension (place dependence). All three dimensions will be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter concludes with a conceptual model, where both key concepts are illustrated. The model acts as a link between the theoretical framework and the results of the data analyses.

2.1 Who forms the community of Longyearbyen?

When I discussed the desire of the Lokalstyre to get a better insight of the community perspective with two employees of the planning department, the following question arose: which community are we talking about? Especially in policymaking the word *community* is quite popular, while the word itself is never properly conceptualized. A very basic definition we all agreed upon is that a community implies a group of people that have something in common; assuming that this shared good, interest or place creates social ties between the members of the group. The problem is that this assumption does not necessarily mean that

there is indeed interaction between the people of the community. In practice, a community often only indicates a group of people living in close proximity; e.g. the residents of a village or town. In such a case, the only precondition that needs to be met in order to be labeled as part of that community is place of residence. Such a community does not necessarily refer to a group of people bound by social interaction. Of course, there is the assumption that bonds between people will be developed based on the fact that the members of the community live alongside each other in a shared space. However, it is questionable if this assumption is actually met in practice. According to another definition by James (2014) people have to mutually define their relationship as: “important to their social identity and social practice” in order to form a community (James 2014, p. 32). Thus, a place can play a large part in a community, but in that case it entails more than simply sharing the same postal code. The members socially relate to each other through a shared identity, in which the location of their community plays a fundamental role (James 2014).

The second dilemma then is: is the consensus of every potential member needed to form a community? According to Bartle (2012), a community is more than the relationship between the current members. It is a construct, a model that goes beyond the individuals that identify as members. Bartle argues that a community functions as a socio-cultural system; composed of certain indicators, like shared values or a shared space. The members of a community will change over time, but the community itself will not (Bartle 2012). From this perspective it could be argued that a community is only a framework that facilitates interaction; not dependent on the mutual understanding of its current members as James (2014) stated. This is in line with the way the concept is approached in practice; especially when we step aside from trying to define the exact lexical meaning of the word and simply look for its *use* (Cohen 1985). In planning projects, policy papers and even in social studies, the concept is mainly used to set boundaries; based on the indicators that form the community framework, individuals can be included or excluded from the system. In this way, an indication can be made of which actors are involved and should be part of a certain process (Leidelmeijer & Kamp 2003). One single conceptual and operational definition of community seems not necessary, as it is the way the concept is *used* to improve, differentiate, understand, and design, that will serve the common purpose. It has been argued that certain concepts in the social/spatial sciences cannot be covered by a single definition; they are multidimensional concepts, which cannot be described by a single entity, as there are multiple aspects involved, while at the same time the concept is used to indicate all these aspects as a whole:

“It’s like describing an onion. It appears simple on the outside, but it’s deceptive, for it has many layers. If it is cut apart there are just onion skins left and the original form has disappeared. If each layer is described separately, we lose sight of the whole. The layers are transparent so that when we look at the whole onion, we see not just the surface but also something of the interior” (Rybczynski 1986; cited by Leidelmeijer & Kamp 2003).

Especially Rybczynski’s (1986) point of losing sight of the whole is an important aspect of conceptualizing ‘community’. By defining a community, a group of individuals becomes one, but only in theory. In practice, all these individuals have their own experiences with the community and interact with other members in different ways. Their sense of community is mostly subjective and will differ from person to person. But as Bartle (2012) argued, a community goes beyond the individuals that identify as members; although the social identity and social practice of all members is an important component in the community framework (James 2014). This is why Rybczynski (1986) notes that we should not only see the surface, but also the layers that are beneath it. For example, when looking at a community as a whole, it should always be taken into account what the community relations are, on which the specific community is based and which people were involved in defining the community. If there are, for instance, *grounded community relations*, the place where the people live plays a big part in their community; the place is fundamental for their shared identity (James 2014). These kind of relations are often associated with, or arise from *lifestyle community relations*; people came together because they were all interested in a place, or because it was convenient to group together, because of the place. However, it is also possible that a group of people fits the community framework in a certain context, but seems to have no interaction or shared values in another context. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that the group that is included is not as homogeneous in other respects. This means that smaller communities can be defined within the community that was specified in the first place. In addition, as mentioned above, the concept of community is also influenced by the person who defined the term ‘community’. Questions arise whether there is a subjective or objective approach, if the community framework is based on assumptions, or if there is evidence that there is indeed interaction based on the community relations. These are all important questions to ask oneself when encountering this concept in White papers, academic studies, planning reports, and other literature.

All this brings us back to the question: to which community does the research question of this study refer to? Here, I define community to be the people who live their day to day life in Longyearbyen and share their living environment with each other. I placed those people in this community 'framework' based on the assumption that this group is tied by *grounded community relations*. I am assuming that the location of Longyearbyen plays a big role in the lives of the people who live their daily lives here, because of the remoteness of their living environment and the exceptional climate conditions of the Arctic. I expect that these grounded community relations facilitate interaction between this group of people.

2.2 What forms the Senses of Place?

In this study I follow the argument of political geographer John Agnew (2011), who stated that places are spaces that people made meaningful. Agnew (2011) argues that the sense of place (SOP) is one of the three fundamental aspects necessary to create a place. The other two are location and locale (as shown in Figure 1). The *location* aspect is met by answering

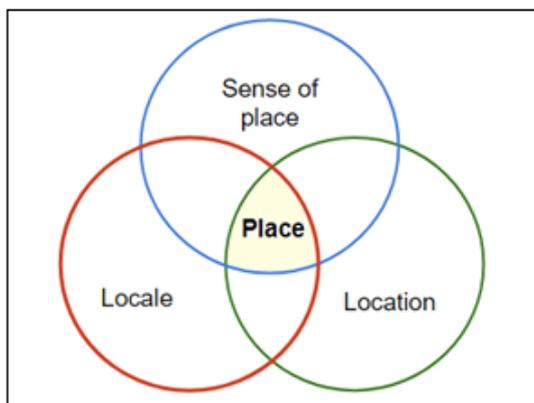


Figure 1: the three fundamental aspects of place.

the question: 'where is this place, in relation to everywhere else?'. This refers to more than only its physical positioning (eg. GPS coordinates or an address), it also includes the embeddedness of the place in a network of many other places; all interconnected and part of a bigger picture in terms of economy, politics or culture. The *locale* is the actual setting of a place, both informal and institutional; a set of social arrangements which within people live their lives and

interact. Both aspects are part of the objective approach when defining a place (Agnew 2011).

2.2.1 The Dimensions of the Senses of Place

SOP is a subjective approach; It explains the affective, cognitive and behavioural dimension of the relationship that an individual has with a place (Jorgensen & Stedman 2001). These three dimensions are represented by three concepts as shown in Figure 1.

Dimensions of SOP	Definitions
Place attachment (The affective dimension)	“Feelings and emotions towards a place” (Acedo et al , p 505), “[Describing] the emotional bonds which people develop with various places” (Lewicka, 2011b, p. 219).
Place identity (The cognitive dimension)	Including the values, attitudes and beliefs held by individuals according a place they relate to. This place affirms their identity (that is, their sense of who they are and what defines them) (Bell et al 2015). Such as “this place is part of my identity [...] this place is part of how I want others to think of me” (Trentelman, 2009 p. 200, in Acedo 2017).
Place dependency (The behavioural dimension)	“Acts and behaves toward a place” (Acedo et al , p 505), “[T]he useful value (services, aesthetic) that a place has in comparison to other places to satisfy an individual’s specific goals and desired activities” (Acedo 2017).

Table 1: The three dimensions of Sense of place (based on a figure in: Acedo et al. 2017, p. 506)

A more elaborate description of the three dimensions and the involving concepts is beyond the scope of this thesis research, but it is important to be aware that they do not simply derive from acknowledging the distinctiveness of a certain place. They are a result of a deeper understanding and appreciation of a place its locale. The reason that people develop SOP is due to the meanings they associate with a place. These meanings can be related to a place’s physical features, its role in history, religious or cultural reasons and to personal experiences at this place. Let’s illustrate this with an example. The Sami are one of the northernmost indigenous people, inhabiting Sápmi in the far north of Fennoscandia. They have several sacred sites in the Arctic, like Suttésája: a natural spring in Finland, shown in Figure 2. Sami people developed strong SOP with Suttésája. They feel certain emotions towards this place, because of the meaning Suttésája has for their people; these feelings are part of the affective dimension of Sami their SOP at this spring. Besides that, this place affirms their identity as Sami, as it is part of their culture, history and religion, this represents the cognitive dimension as place identity. And then there is the behavioural dimension, where we look at the place dependency. As a sacred site there are certain rituals that can only be done at places like Suttésája. It is the value that this place has in comparison to other places, and the behaviour involved that creates the place dependency.



Figure 2: Suttésája, a sacred site of the Sami in the Finnish part of Sápmi

Place attachment, identity and dependence held by this group of people are based on the meanings they gave to the place. Also, although all the Sami seem to share the same SOP, there is always a personal aspect that makes the SOP of every individual different from that of other people. SOP are as diverse as all those who have ever experienced or interacted with the place in question. Someone can hold a strong SOP towards a place that has no significant meaning to other (groups of) people, and which has no distinctive physical features. An example of this is the house where people grew up, or the bar where they met their best friend. What I want to emphasize is Agnew's argument that it is people who are holding an SOP and not the place itself. Even if one's SOP derives from the way a place looks like, it is the meanings that a person links to the physical setting that creates emotions towards a place.

2.2.2 SOP on a community level

Although senses of place are *experienced* on an individual level, their effects are also visible on a community level. Therefore SOP can also be placed in a more social context. Anton & Lawrence (2014), for example, highlighted the positive effects of place attachment (the affective dimension of SOP) on the social and political involvement of residents in place-based communities. They state that communities comprised of people who are highly attached to their place of residence are more likely to work together (Anton & Lawrence 2014). Acedo et al. (2017) presented a literature review on studies that are also suggesting a strong relationship between SOP and the social ties in a community. They use the term Social Capital (SC); referring to the structures of social networks and social bonding, enabling people to cooperate (Acedo 2017). Table 2 shows how SC can be conceptualized the same way as SOP, also using the affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimension as the SC framework; and again represented by three different concepts (Acedo et al. 2017).

Dimensions of SC	Definitions
Sense of community (The affective dimension)	The feeling of membership or belongingness to a group, containing possible emotional connection on a shared history, common interests, or concerns (Perkins & Long 2002)
Collective efficacy/Empowerment (The cognitive dimension)	“trust in the effectiveness of organized community action” (Perkins & Long 2002, p.295).
Neighbouring & Citizen participation (The behavioural dimension)	[They] enclose the actions and behaviours of citizens to a group or society (Acedo 2017, p. 506). Including for example the help we receive and provide from neighbour to neighbor (Mihaylov & Perkins, 2013)

Table 2: The three dimensions of Social capital (based on a figure in: Acedo et al. 2017, p. 506)

Acedo et al. (2017) show the connection between the social bonds between people to the bonds between people and place as illustrated in Figure 3. Place attachment can be influenced by a sense of community, but also vice versa. For instance, if a resident has a strong sense of community in Longyearbyen; a feeling of belonging to the group. It can affect the emotion that the resident has towards the place. He or she has a positive experience of belonging to this place, and thus associates the place with this positive experience. Also, this place meets the need of the residents to belong to a group, which also affects the level of place dependence. Thinking along these lines helps to understand the value that SOP can have on a community level.

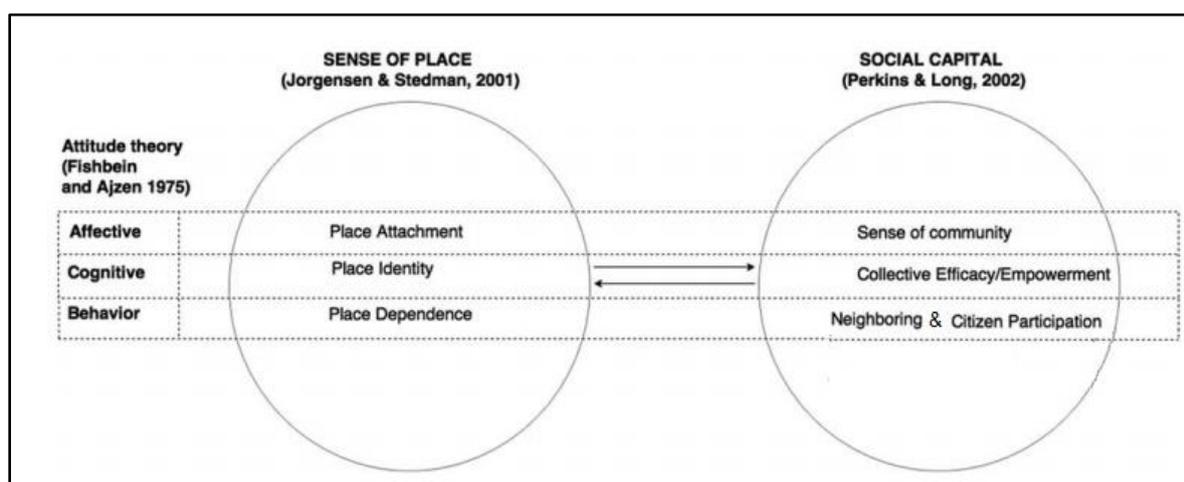


Figure 3: The spatial relationship between SOP & SC (based on a figure in: Acedo et al. 2017, p. 505)

2.2.3 Senses of Place in planning processes

Taking the normalisation process of the Norwegian government in consideration, I will shortly reflect on the consequences of SOP regarding the planning process in a place. While strong positive SOP among the members of a community can be very positive in terms of citizen participation or environmentally responsible behaviour, it can also have some dysfunctional effects regarding spatial changes (Anton & Lawrence 2014). It can hinder people from considering new planning projects and future adjustments in the locale. A strong place attachment can make people resistant to plans of a local government, because they feel emotionally engaged with the way the place is in that very moment. If people feel that 'their' place is threatened, they could act negatively towards the company, government, or organizations which is responsible for the changes. People can even feel detached from their homes, because they cannot identify themselves anymore with the physical- or social environment. The resulting distress by environmental change is called solastalgia; mourning for the place they felt attached to, identified with, and/or were dependent on. However, although environmental changes can have a negative influence on the SOP, it can also help to create more positive SOP among the people; making them participate more and stay longer (Anton & Lawrence 2014). In order to avoid the negative effects and to strengthen the bonds people have with a place, it is essential to understand the starting point. Before making any changes, the affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimension of SOP has to be assessed (Vanclay 2015). Also, the role of SOP on a community level has to be reviewed in context of each project. It is impossible to base decisions about environmental changes on the SOP of every single resident. Instead, by comparing the different SOP, it is possible to find patterns and similarities between the different bonds of different people inside a community. This also applies to this study. The research question refers to the SOP of Longyearbyen's community; all those who are included in this community have different SOP and are not contributing in the same way to the SC of Longyearbyen, but I am trying here to find patterns and similarities between the experiences of different people and their connections with Longyearbyen and its community. Along these lines I use the collected data of the individual respondents to reflect on the SOP on a community level.

2.2.3 Conceptual model

Figure 4 shows the conceptual model of this study. The three concepts regarding people-place bonds are illustrated on the left, together with the corresponding dimensions. They form the senses of place; one of the independent variables in this study. The other independent variable are the socio demographics. The assumption is that both the SOP and the Socio demographics are influencing the satisfaction rate; the dependent variable in this study. A possible indirect influence of the socio demographics is also being looked at, because they may influence the SOP. This whole system takes place into the context of the Longyearbyen community, illustrated with the circle.

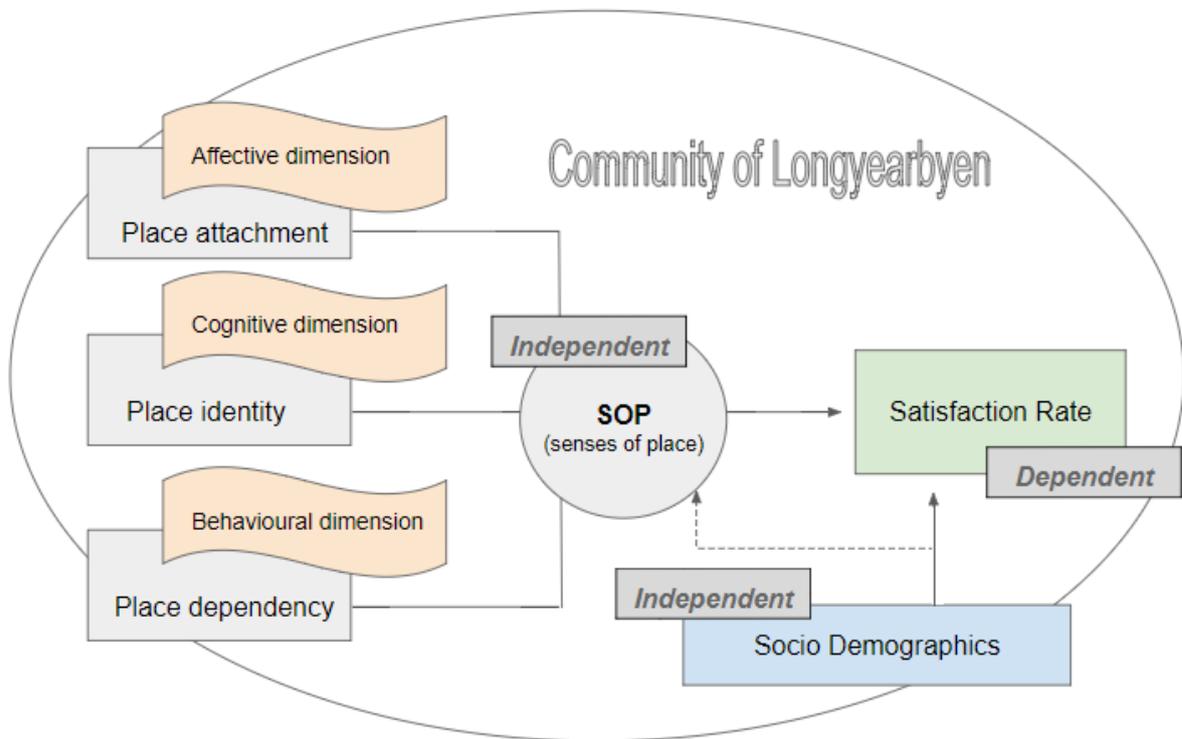


Figure 4: conceptual model

3. Methodology

3.1 The research method

This research is based on a mixed methods approach; the discussion and conclusions are based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses. All research methods have their own strength, but also shortcomings. By combining different methods, the validity of the data is increased. After all, the strength of both methods are combined to overcome their shortcomings. In social and spatial sciences complex research topics are generally not as comprehensible when only one method is used. For instance, the results from quantitative data analyses can be very sensitive to different interpretations. Detection of an association between a particular group and a certain opinion using quantitative analyses, does not yet explain *why* this relationship exists, such an explanation cannot always be found in the quantitative data. In this case, qualitative data collection can help to fill those gaps (Christensen et al 2011). In this research, the main approach is still quantitative data collection by means of a survey, as the aim is to get an image of the community satisfaction in general. Qualitative data is used in the form of interview results and observations, but to a lesser extent; the outcomes of this explorative research could, however, form the basis of a more comprehensive qualitative research. Furthermore I want to emphasize the explorative character of this research. This means that I was looking for the right questions to ask just as much as looking for answers. Understanding the community also means: knowing what to ask and whom to ask. In the interests of the normalization process, I hope to help formulate better questions, based on a better understanding of Longyearbyen's community.

3.2 The research and sample population

The research population was determined based on the conclusions made in the theoretical framework; where the community was defined as the people who live their day to day life in Longyearbyen and share their living environment with each other. In order to remain a clear focus, there was the need to delimit the boundaries of the research population; thus, all residents younger than 18 were excluded from this research, the sample was only drawn from the adult population. The respondents were targeted by random sampling, by means of conducting door-to-door surveys. The choice of this particular method is based on the study of Hillier et al. (2014). According to the conclusions of Hillier et al (2014), it is the most

appropriate and valuable method in light of the research context of this study; considering that both spending time in the community and conducting observations are key for to the goals and results of this study. The downside of conducting door-to-door surveys is the fact that it often results in a smaller sample size, especially when it is a solo project. Due to a limited amount of time and resources, plus extreme weather conditions, it was decided that a sample size of 80 respondent was sufficient for the goal of this research. In theory an N of 80 is not large enough to represent the entire research population, even though the adult population of Svalbard is not more than ca. 1760 people. It is therefore important to keep this small N into account when any inferences about the research population are made. Apart from the small N , the sample population corresponds quite well with the research population, regarding the contribution of age, gender and nationality. Also other sociodemographic features are corresponding with the real situation in Longyearbyen. Thus, despite the size of the sample it is a sufficient representation of the research population.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of age and gender in the research population anno 2016. More than half of the research population was between the age of 25 and 50 years. The sample population shows a similar pattern: highly represented by people aged between 20 and 50 years old. Gender is nicely distributed and shows also a similar pattern, although the female population is slightly overrepresented in the sample population; Longyearbyen is to a lesser extent than before a male-dominated society, but still 55 % of the adult residents are men.

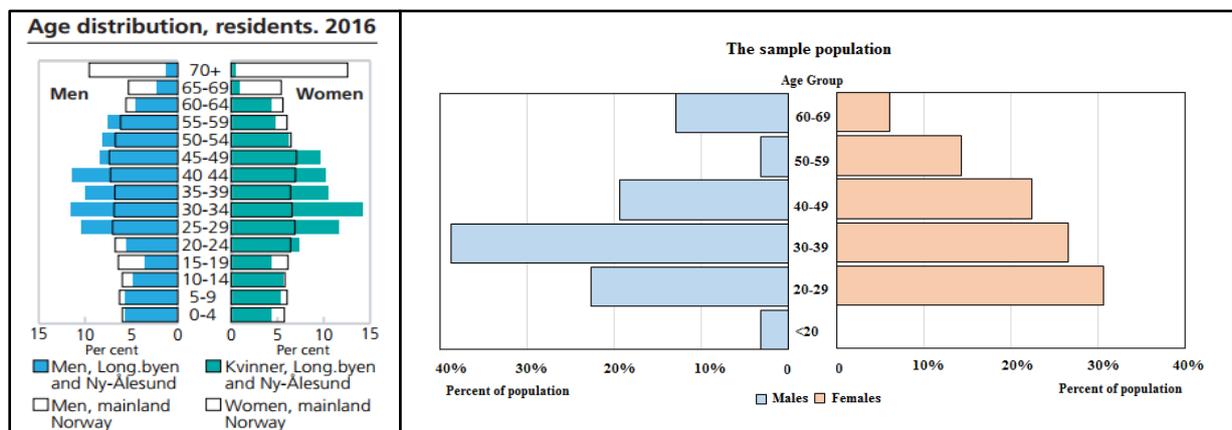


Figure 5: Left: age distribution of the residents from Longyearbyen and Ny-Alesund. Right: population pyramid of sample, showing age and gender of the respondents.

The aim was to represent both Norwegians and other nationalities in the sample population, since this can be useful for further analyses. As Figure 6 shows, most respondents have a Norwegian nationality. But there is still a distribution that corresponds with the actual population. Thailand and Sweden are also in the sample population the two largest groups of non-Norwegian nationalities. And although the representation of ‘foreigners’ in the sample population looks rather small, it is a relatively bigger group than we see in the research population. 25 % Of the residents in Longyearbyen is non-Norwegian, in the sample population this is 35 % .

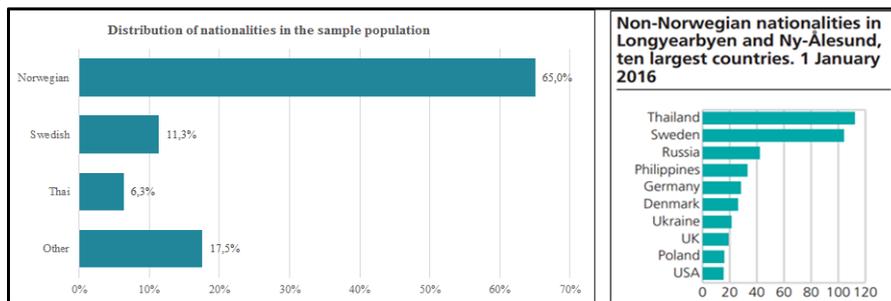


Figure 6: Distribution of nationalities in sample population compared to the distribution of non-Norwegian nationalities in the real population.

The other socio demographics are shown in Figure 7.

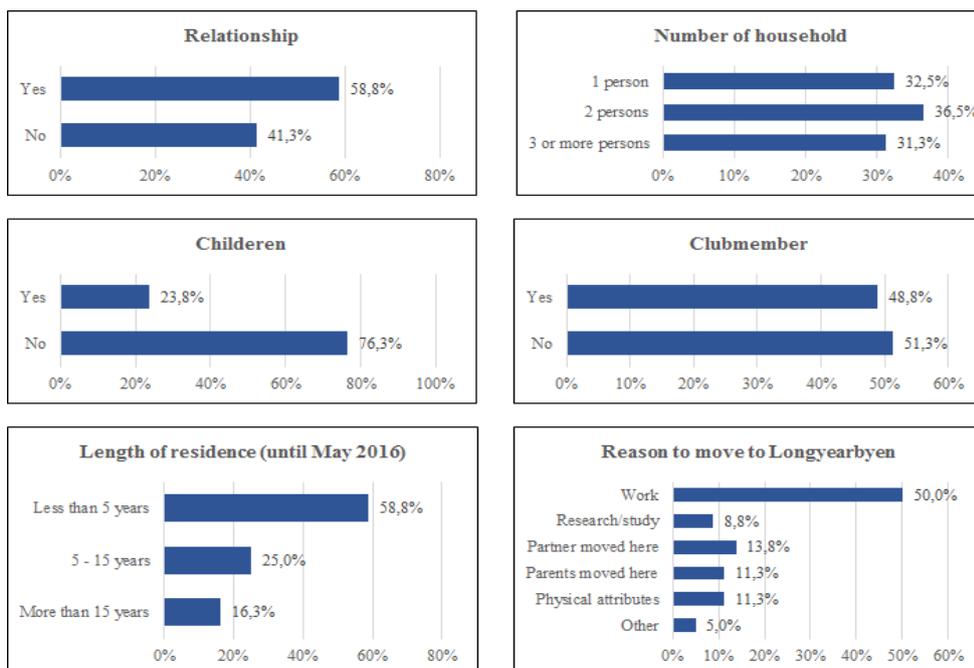


Figure 7: Descriptive statistics about socio demographic characteristics of community in Longyearbyen

3.2 Methods of data collection

3.2.1 The fieldwork

All the data was collected on location in Longyearbyen during two stays in April 2016 (4 weeks) and May 2017 (2 weeks).

3.2.2 The survey

The main approach of this research was a survey. The strength of collecting data by using a survey is the quantity of the data. It gives an insight about the attitudes and behavior of a group of people (McLafferty 2012; Christensen et al. 2011). This is in line with the desire of the planning department to get a better understanding about the community and its attitude towards the normalization process. The respondents were asked two kinds of questions.

First they had to answer several questions to identify their socio demographic profile. These questions were important to find out if the sample population corresponded with the population of Longyearbyen. Additionally, this set of questions was important to explore possible relationships between respondents based on their sociodemographic characteristics and the other findings. The Lokalstyre were, for example, curious about differences and similarities between the Norwegian population and the foreign population. The other socio demographic questions were chosen because they could help to understand the way people identify with Longyearbyen. It is for example assumed that the residents who have lived long in a place feel more rooted than people who have lived there for a short period of time (Qingjiu, Maliki 2013; Cuba, Hummon 1993). Additional socio demographic questions were discarded as they were not focused on the community satisfaction and since I tried to keep the survey as short as possible to not scare prospective respondents away.

The second kind of questions were used to get a better understanding of the respondents' SOP. The three concepts place attachment, - identity and - dependency, were examined in relation to four categories: identity, community, government and future. These categories served as a tool to group variables and find patterns in both the quantitative and the qualitative data. They also served as a bridge between the sometimes more concrete perceptions and behaviour of the respondents and the more abstract definition of SOP. This appeared to be useful during the analyses of the data.

First the respondents were asked about their identity towards Longyearbyen. There were two types of questions in the survey to identify this. Respondents were first asked how they would label themselves. They had to choose between local and newcomer and also between permanent and temporary resident. These questions were based on a study by Adam Grydehøj in 2010. He discussed the community of Longyearbyen and their ties with the town; noting that despite the transient nature of the community, people do feel connected to local traditions and heritage. Additionally, Grydehøj (2010) found that residents, including short-term residents, clearly distinct themselves from tourists. It was this quote by Holm's (2001) research that Grydehøj (2010) used to describe the transitory lives of Longyearbyen's residents:

Do we know who we are? Of course not, except that we are just visiting, that the situation is temporary, that no matter how happily life is described in questionnaires, it is nevertheless a life in transit. A life where the question of when you are going to travel back south is just as everyday as a child's question of what's for dinner. ... Longyearbyen is not a permanent place. (Holm 2001, pp. 128–129; in Grydehøj 2010)

Longyearbyen is still no cradle to grave community, but a lot has happened since 2001. The planning department is thus interested in knowing how residents perceive themselves now. What are their beliefs and thoughts about themselves regarding the place where they live; how do they identify themselves in relation to Longyearbyen?

Also, they were asked with which places they identified most, including *Longyearbyen*. The terms used in the questions were first clarified, to make sure that the respondent and researcher were on the same page. It was emphasized that there was no right or wrong; it is not wrong to identify yourself as a local, despite having lived in Longyearbyen only for a short period of time. The second question was explained to the respondents in the following way: identifying with a place means in this context that, for example, Longyearbyen plays a role in how you see yourself. It is not a wrong answer if your nationality is Norwegian, but you do not identify yourself with Norway.

To examine the other three categories in relation to the SOP, the respondents were asked about their level of agreement with a number of statements; ranging from 'strongly disagree'

to ‘strongly agree’ (See Figure 8). Resulting in a better insight about the emotions and behaviour towards the community, governance and the future in Longyearbyen:

Statements
1. I feel part of a community in Longyearbyen.
2. There is a strong sense of community in Longyearbyen.
3. There is a clear division of different communities in Longyearbyen.
4. The sense of community makes me feel more safe.
5. I feel more dependent on the community life than elsewhere.
6. There is active involvement of the local government in the community.
7. I think there is a great shared interest for nature among the residents of Longyearbyen.
8. The only temporary stay of many residents motivates me to get more involved in community life.
9. The isolated geographical location motivates me to get more involved in community life.
10. I often think about leaving Longyearbyen.
11. I like to be more involved in the future planning of Longyearbyen.
12. I see myself as a part of Longyearbyen’s future.
13. I would like more involvement of the local government in improving the community.

Figure 8: survey statements and related dimensions

3.2.3 The observations

By using observations it is possible to put quantitative data results into context, create a better understanding of the situation at hand. Two types of observations were used during this research. First there were the ‘Naturalistic observations’. These are unstructured observations where the spontaneous behaviour of the population in their own setting is being observed. Simply spending time in Longyearbyen, instead of sending a survey by mail, allows to give the whole study a greater ecological validity (McLeod 2015; Kawulich 2005). A research based on observations alone is unlikely to be very reliable, which is why it is only one part of the methodology applied. The same is true for the participatory observations that were made. For such observations, the researcher becomes a part of the study subjects. These observations can be either overt or covert; a decision of revealing your own identity and purpose, or not (McLeod 2015; de Walt & de Walt 2002). In this research all the participatory observations were overt, Although people were not constantly aware of the participatory

observations that were being made. For example, as an observer I joined the daily life of the residents of Longyearbyen, not constantly telling everyone that I was observing their daily routines. But because of my door to door survey research, many people knew that I was observing life in this place. However, I never got the idea that people would act differently around me, especially because it was over a timespan of one month (McLeod 2015).

3.2.4 Semi-structured interviews

Besides observations, twelve semi-structured interviews were held to help interpret the results of the quantitative data analyses. All the participants were survey respondents who agreed to a follow-up interview. The submitted surveys were used as a framework for the interviews, allowing a more detailed setup. The strength of these interviews was the way they helped to identify the insights into the attitudes and behavior of residents, from their own perspectives. By discussing the past, the present and the future with these residents a foundation was created for further research. Personal experiences of the participants were used to explain relationships between various variables and to confirm or reject certain interpretations derived from the statistic outcomes of the quantitative data (Zorn 2010; Bernard 2012).

3.2.5 Positionality & ethical objections

Doing participatory research requires to critically reflect on one's own thoughts and observations. If one becomes too involved as a researcher, the objectivity towards the subject of study may be lost. It is important to remain critical at all times and not to trick oneself in simply seeing the things one would expect, or want to see (McLeod 2015). In this research the collected data is evidently conducted on a very small scale and is potentially biased in relation to the researcher's own age, gender and social background. It is therefore important to acknowledge your own role during long term fieldwork (Kawulich 2005). Asking yourself questions like:

- when do I consider myself as an objective social geographer and when not?
- What is my role as a researcher during daily routines like grocery shopping's?
- What is the role of the conversations I have with people about Longyearbyen outside the context of an interview? Do they influence my thinking process?

Besides taking one's positionality into account, it is important to consider possible ethical objections in relationship to the study. A consent process during the door-to-door surveying

and at the beginning of every interview, ensured that the respondents were participating voluntarily and were aware of the goals of the research and the cooperation of the Lokalstyre. Besides that they knew that their participation was anonymous. During preliminary research it became clear that an English questionnaire would be sufficient to reach most of the residents, but that a Thai translation of the questionnaire was needed, in order to involve also the Thai population of Longyearbyen in the research.

3.3 Methods of data analyses

3.3.1 Quantitative data analysis

This explorative study about the senses of place (SOP) of the community in Longyearbyen, is classified following Johnsons (2001) proposal of characterizing non experimental research. The primary focus of the study is to examine any possible relationships between the level of satisfaction, the SOP of the community and the socio demographics of the residents. The data was collected at one point in time, in order to compare different types of respondents in the present state of the community. According to Johnson (2001), the nonexperimental study that was conducted should be classified as both explanatory and descriptive cross-sectional research. Because the data of this study is based on nonexperimental research, it is not possible to assure any causal relationships between the variables; since none of the independent variables were manipulated. But a correlational research can explore possible causal relationships among the various variables by using a multiple regression. As Price et al. (2015) concludes:

“[it] can show patterns of relationships that are consistent with some causal interpretations and inconsistent with others, but they cannot unambiguously establish that one variable causes another”.

Since this is a nonexperimental study, it is important to treat the outcomes of the multiple regression with caution (Belli 2008). It is not possible to be as certain as in experimental research, that the observed differences and patterns are caused by the independent variable used in the analysis. Therefore other alternative explanations will be considered and no definitive causal statements will be made (Price et al. 2015). Instead the conclusions of this research can be used as the bases of future experimental studies in Longyearbyen.

Thus, the statistical measurement that is used in this research to determine any relationships between the variables of the survey, is the *multiple Regression*. One of the assumptions for a multiple regression is the fact that all variables have to be measured on a ratio or interval scale. In case this assumption is not met, it is not appropriate to use this measurement (Belli 2008). This study involves both categorical and continuous variables. The perceptions and attitudes of the respondents in the categories *community*, *government*, *future* and *identity* are all measured on a 5 points Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Although the scale is presented as a range of numbers (1 till 5), it also remains a set of ordered categories. This gives the data both continuous as categorical characteristics. Many times the use of Likert scale data in a Pearson's correlation was legitimized, by arguing that the variables could be referred to as interval data. The spaces between the various alternatives on the Likert scale in this study, are equally distributed and therefore it was decided to treat the Likert scale variables as interval data; justifying the use of the multiple regression (Sweet & Grace-Martin 2008).

3.3.2 Qualitative data analysis

In addition to the statistical analyses that examine the survey outcomes, the interview results and the observations were also analyzed. The twelve interview reports, that are based on the semi-structured interviews with twelve different respondents, are analyzed by using four different codes: *community*, *identity*, *government* and *future*. It helped to find certain patterns and variabilities in the attitudes of the respondents. The results of these analyses are used to further explore the relationships that were found by means of the inferential statistics. The codes are based on the same categories as used in the quantitative data analyses; allowing us to easily compare the qualitative data with the quantitative data results.

4. The results

4.1 The satisfaction rate

Figure 9 shows that the level of satisfaction with the community life has a mean grade of 7.4. On a scale of 10, 7.4 is well above the mean. Therefore I consider this community as well satisfied with their community life. Further analyses will show if there are any relationships between the satisfaction rate and the SOP of the residents in Longyearbyen.

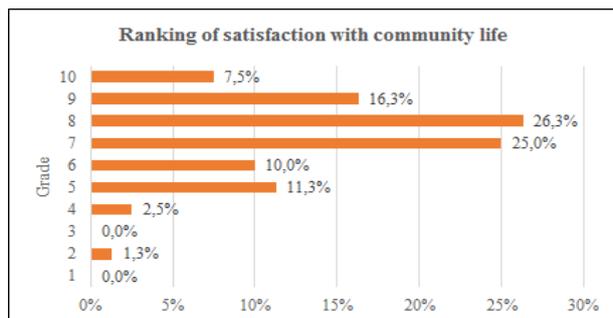


Figure 9: Results on the question: How satisfied are you with the community life in Longyearbyen?

4.2 The senses of place in Longyearbyen

The quantitative and qualitative results on the SOP of the residents are presented in this paragraph, categorized under the three concepts that represent the dimensions of SOP: place attachment, place identity and place dependency.

4.2.1 Place attachment

As shown in figure 10, the descriptive statistics show that in general the respondents have a positive attitude regarding the community related statements. It is surprising to see how many people feel part of a community and experience a strong sense of community, while the majority has not been living in Longyearbyen for a long period of time.

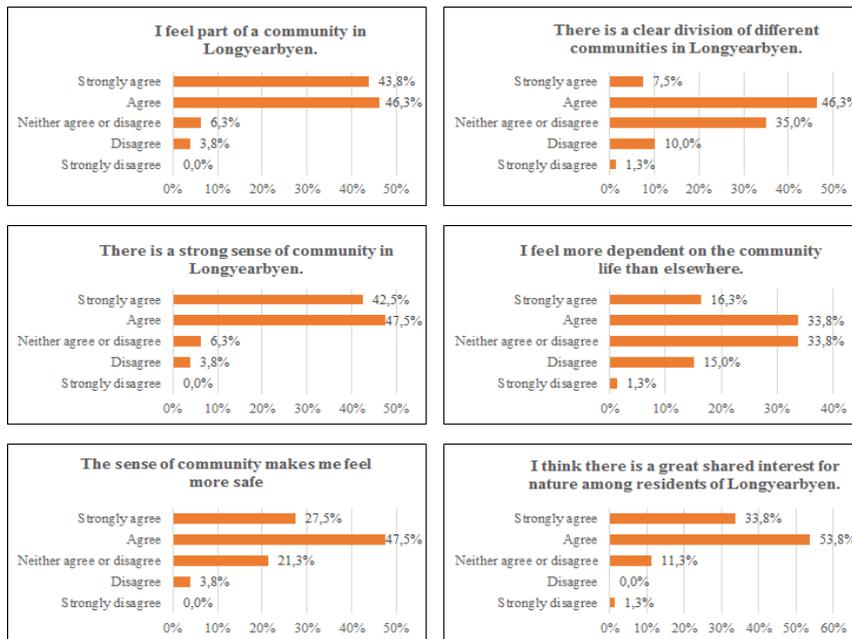


Figure 10: overview of the SOP measured in the category community.

This could be related to the fact that ‘traditional’ role of a community is still important for the respondents. Half of the respondents admits that they feel more dependent on the community life than elsewhere and that the sense of community makes many respondents feel more safe:

You are not afraid here, I don't lock my doors you know. I think it is because of the culture here. You feel so safe here (respondent 4, appendix I)

~

I feel a little bit privileged and proud to be part of the society here. Of being part of this community. I feel safe here, because of the trust here. People feel included here you know (respondent 6, appendix I).

Also, although only 11,3 % of the respondents came to Longyearbyen with nature as the biggest pull factor, 87,6 % thinks that there is a great shared interest for nature among residents. And even though there is no evidence that this is actually the case, the thought alone can work as a bonding factor between residents. The results of the statement about different communities is also interesting to mention here. 35% Wasn't sure whether to agree or disagree, but still 53,8 % thinks there is a clear division between different communities. That so many people agree with this statement, shows that it is presumably that they notice this in their daily lives. Using my own observations, I would strongly agree with the statement myself. In my experience I noticed that there were many different groups, who lived their daily lives in separate social environments. The students, for example, have their own traditions and social activities; like the ‘Friday gatherings’ at the Unis canteen, or the

annual 'Winter Olympics'. Also the Thai residents of Longyearbyen, seems to form their own community. I visited a building where the majority of the residents was Thai. They would cook together and visit each other often. In the interviews people acknowledged this divisions in community, but again, it was not perceived as something negative, you see that back in the way the respondents describe the different groups of people that they notice in daily life:

You do see that people from some nationalities form a bit there own communities, but it is not closed. It is just that, when someone new will come up here from Sweden, the Swedish guys will take care of him or her, before everyone else. I think that is pretty normal, because of language and background (respondent 4, appendix I).

~

There are definitely cliques of people, some of the cliques are defined by language; the Russians will stick with each other, the Thai will stick to each other. The town has like 47 official languages or something. Being such an international place, drives also people sometimes together I think, to what they know. [...] But so yes, sometimes it is driven by language, but also sometimes by mutual love for activities. The guys who love to run up mountains will sit together (respondent 9, appendix I).

It seems not such a problem because residents tend to rationalize the existence of these groups. They seem to understand why those different groups exist. Nobody feels offended, it is just practical. And like respondent 9 mentioned, not only nationality, but also shared interest for certain activities in the town are the basis of grouping. Respondent 5 admits that this is a big advantage compared to other places:

You have different groups indeed, but it doesn't matter. Because those groups are based on similar interests; not so much on age or sekse. So here I have friends who are in their twenties you know. On the mainland it is much more ordered in age groups I think (respondent 5, appendix I).

Residents also seem to like the fact that Longyearbyen is not one big melting pot, all those people with their own backgrounds are sharing their own culture with others. The subcommunities are not closed, residents like to share their heritage according to the respondents. Like respondent 11 argues, it is important to nourish your own culture in order to share it:

If you are a larger group of people from the same origin, you in a way want to take care of your own background, your own culture. Nourish it a bit. You want to share it with others, but you can't share it if you lost it. So you need to be aware of yourself, if you want to share

something with the community. Like the Thai community here, they cherish their Thai culture, but every Thai thing they do is open to others; if you want to, you can join. And you also have the Russian community, they nourish the Russian traditions, but they also want to present it to people. In order to share something, you have to have it (respondent 11, appendix I).

4.2.2 Place identity

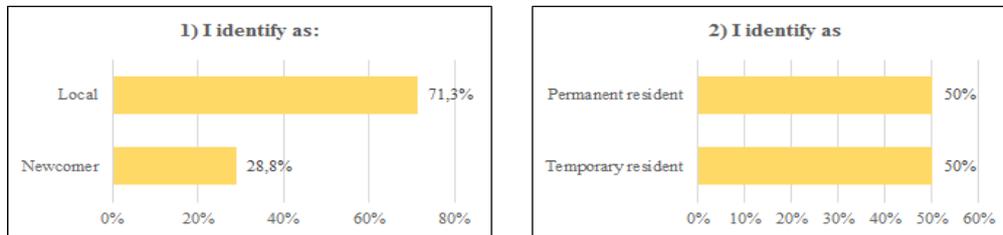


Figure 11: Percentage of the respondents that identify as local or newcomer and permanent or temporary resident.

Although 50 % of the respondents identify themselves as a temporary resident, 71.3 % sees themselves as a local rather than a newcomer. Also, from the people who lived for less than 5 years in Longyearbyen, 53.2 % feels like a local in Longyearbyen (see Figure 11). The respondents dropped more than once the word home, they explained to me that it became easier allowing yourself to call Longyearbyen a home. Respondent 1 explained it like this:

[...] I feel also a bit home here, more than in Switzerland. I think it is more possible now to see this place as your home, because it became more than a company town. It is now a normal town, where people can built on a future (respondent 1, appendix I)

Furthermore, 68.8 % of the respondents feels that Longyearbyen is part of their identity, as shown in figure 12.

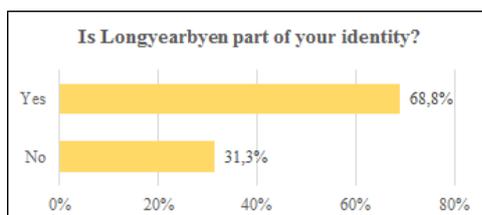


Figure 12: Percentage of the respondents that do or do not identify themselves with Longyearbyen

You this in the way they describe the people here. Residents seem to belief that only a certain kind of people come to Longyearbyen:

Very strong people coming here, with a lot of skills. There is a lot more energy with people coming and leaving, it's a good thing for the community (respondent 5, appendix I).

~

You know this is not a normal society, you are not living here if you are sick, or have mental disease. Everyone here is capable of doing something. I think that's very special. It's strong people living here (respondent 3, appendix I).

4.2.3 Place dependency

The last concept about SOP in Longyearbyen that we discuss is place dependency. By means of observations and the interview results it became clear that there is a general perception that Longyearbyen offers a unique way of living. There is the believe that Longyearbyen as a place, as a community, fulfills certain needs that other places cannot fulfill; Longyearbyen offers a unique way of life. It is just very different from other places, due to the geographical location, the locale (like many activities) and at the end just because of the idea of Longyearbyen. The following quotes from various respondents confirm this perspective on the place dependency among Longyearbyen its residents:

But you know up here it is very special. I can't really point it out and tell what is so special. Just the thought about where it is on the earth, already makes it special for me. Maybe it is just psychological (respondent 4, appendix I).

~

First I lived in Oslo, I came here for the adventure. I wanted to try something quite different. The nature was the most important thing. The idea of the wilderness, the snowmobile, the guns. It was so different from where I lived before (respondent 5, appendix I).

~

You know what I like to see? It is so different from anywhere I lived. [...] [I]t is very very special, very unique (respondent 9, appendix I)

From my own observations I noticed the dependency towards others, caused by the location and locale of the place. One of the main factors is indeed safety; as an individual you can't just go wherever you want to go. It is not allowed to cross the official town ines, without a rifle to protect yourself for polar bears. If you are not in the possession of a rifle and a permit,

you depend on others when it comes to exploring the surroundings of Longyearbyen. But I also observed the interdependence inside the town limits. There is only one hairdresser, one vet, one library and one doctor, etc. You can't simply choose to drive to another hairdresser; it makes you dependent on each other's skills. Interview-respondent 5 mentioned the dependency in relation to the transient society:

You know when there was a man who could do karate, we had karate classes, but when he moved down [meaning: back to the mainland], there was no karate anymore, but it was replaced for something else. There is always something new, depending on the people living here (respondent 5, appendix I)

She did not experience this kind of dependency as a negative side effect of the transient society; in the contrary, she saw it as a gift, every time someone new would bring new skills and talents to the town.

Besides that, the residents are actually very positive about the wide range of activities and facilities in Longyearbyen. They consider Longyearbyen as a much more vibrant community, than communities with a similar size on the mainland:

I could never live in any other remote town in Norway or Iceland you know. I mean those places are so beautiful, but I think there is much less community and action than what we have here (respondent 1, appendix I).

~

The community is nice, because it is very easy and everything is close. It is a small town, but there are many things to do. It is not the same small town idea as at the mainland. You have everything here what you need (respondent 12, appendix I).

~

A good place to live and work, they are taking care of you. And everything is here close. Like we have our own hospital. On the mainland we lived very remote, it was 120 km to the closest hospital (respondent 8, appendix I).

4.3 The role of socio demographics

As shown in Table 3, the regression with the satisfaction rate as the outcome and the socio demographics as the predictors, shows no significant relationships between the variables.

Both the p-value of the whole model, as the p-values of the individual independent variables are greater than 0.05

Dependent variable: The satisfaction rate

Category (model)	p-value	Predictors	p-value
Sociodemographics	.979	Age	.160
		Gender	.737
		Nationality	.664
		Relationship status	.135
		Children on Svalbard	.307
		Length of residence	.780
		Reason of residence	.546
		Number of household	.130
		Club membership	.311

Table 3: Outcomes of linear regression, with *satisfaction rate* as the dependent variable. Predictors: the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.

Thus, the socio demographics have no significant direct role in the satisfaction rate of the respondents, but they can still indirectly influence the level of satisfaction, in case they play a big role in the SOP of the respondents. If it appears that various attitudes of the respondents are influencing the satisfaction rate, another regression with the socio demographics as the predictors will be performed to see if they influence these particular SOP.

4.4 The role of the SOP in the satisfaction rate

4.4.1 Significant predictors

To examine the relationship between the satisfaction rate of the residents and their SOP, both quantitative and qualitative data were used. First several regressions were conducted, with the perceptions forming the SOP as the predictors and the satisfaction rate as the outcome variable. The predictors were categorized as four different models: predictors concerning community, government, future or identity. The results of the regressions are shown in Table 4.

Dependent variable: The satisfaction rate

Category (model)	p-value	R Square	Predictors	Beta	p-value
Community	.0001	.380	I feel part of a community	-	.196
			There is a strong sense of community	.329	.025
			The sense of community makes me feel more safe	-	.518
			Division between different communities	-	.188
			I feel more dependent on community life than elsewhere	-	.682
			There is a great shared interest for nature among residents	-	.647
Government	.008	.118	There is active involvement of the local government	.301	.006
			More involvement of local government	-	.100
Future	.061	-	I am part of Longyearbyen's future	.327	.023
			I like to be more involved in the future planning	-	.773
			I have concrete plans to leave	-	.522
Identity	.031	.110	I identify as a newcomer or local	-	.787
			I identify as a temporary- or permanent resident	-.316	.012
			Longyearbyen is part of personal identity	-	.737

Table 4: Outcomes of linear regressions, with *satisfaction rate* as the dependent variable. Predictors: the level of agreement with the statements about community, governments, future and identity.

There are four predictors that show a p-value smaller than **0.05**. These four predictors have influence on the satisfaction rate of the residents. The positive Beta values of the first three significant predictors indicate that the stronger someone agrees with these statements, the higher they grade the community life in Longyearbyen. If residents experience a stronger sense of community, notice an active involvement of the local government or feel they are part of Longyearbyen's future, then they tend to be more satisfied with Longyearbyen as a community to live. It also appears that the respondents who identify themselves as only a temporary resident are less likely to give a high grade to the community life than the respondents who identify themselves as permanent residents.

4.4.2 The indirect role of socio demographics

In paragraph 4.3 none of the socio demographics turned out to be significant predictors for the satisfaction rate. But it is possible that they play a significant role in the SOP that do have influence on the level of satisfaction. In this case they indirectly influence the satisfaction

rate. This is why another statistical analysis was conducted. The outcomes show that one socio demographic characteristic has indeed a significant influence on two of the SOP statements. A linear regression shows that if a resident lived in Longyearbyen for a longer amount of time, he or she tends to agree more strongly with the statement: ‘I am part of the future’.

Dependent variable: I am part of the future

Predictor	p-value	R Square	Beta
Length of residence (until May 2016)	.003	.109	.330

Table 5: Outcome of linear regression, with *I am part of the future* as the dependent variable. Predictors: the length of residence (until May 2016).

If the regression, with the satisfaction rate as the outcome and feeling part of Longyearbyen’s future as the predictor, is conducted with only the cases selected of respondents who lived in Longyearbyen for less than 5 years, it results in no significant relationship between the outcome variable and the predictor. However, if this regression is repeated with only the cases of respondents who lived in Longyearbyen for longer than 5 years there is in fact a significant relationship between the outcome and the predictor.

A logistic regression shows that if a resident lived in Longyearbyen for a longer amount of time, he or she is more likely to identify themselves as a permanent resident. Again, there is no significant relationship between the predictor ‘I identify as a temporary residents’ and the level of satisfaction, if only the cases are selected of respondents that lived in Longyearbyen for less than 5 years.

Dependent variable: I identify as temporary resident

Predictor	p-value	Nagelkerke R Square	Exp(B)
Length of residence (until May 2016)	.001	.239	.869

Table 6: Outcomes of logistic regression, with *I identify as temporary resident* as the dependent variable. Predictors: the length of residence (until May 2016).

4.4.3 SOP in light of the normalization process

The descriptive statistics show that the respondents are aware of the involvement of the government (see Figure 13). However those results alone cannot say if the residents actually experience this as positive. But combined with the results of the qualitative data it seems that the respondents are positive about the active involvement that they observe.

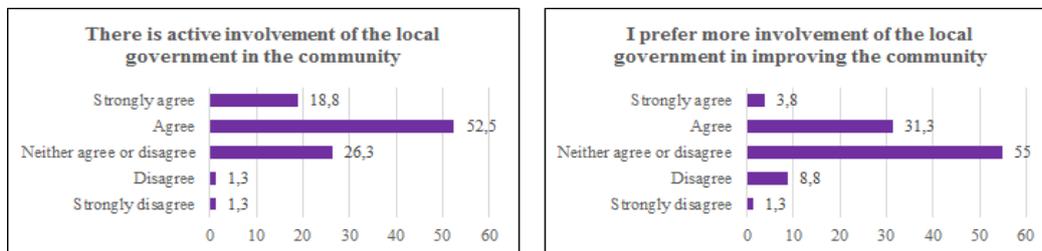


Figure 13: Percentages of the level of agreement with the SOP regarding the local government involvement.

Especially the wide range of activities facilitated by the Lokalstyre, do not go unnoticed and are very much appreciated, like this respondent put into words:

I think that the government is trying very hard to make social activities accessible for everybody, like English stand-up comedian etc. They have an extraordinary arranged activities offered (respondent 2, appendix I).

Nevertheless, there appears to be doubt when it comes to more involvement of the local government. Two reasons for this attitude were found while analyzing the qualitative data. First, it seems that residents do not see the need of more involvement in improving the community. They emphasize the fact that there is already a lot going on in Longyearbyen and that the sometimes harsh and isolated lifestyle is also part of the Arctic lifestyle that the people chose:

For a place that is so extreme, it is remarkably normal at times. I think there is already a big focus on people their quality of life by the government (respondent 9, appendix I)

Secondly, there is the fear that Longyearbyen will change if the government will try too much to improve the community, referring to the normalisation process. Residents are afraid to lose their own connection with Longyearbyen and therefore the connection between each other:

[Y]ou know everybody has always this one thing in common. They are all prepared to go to the end of the world, because this is the end of the world. We are thousand miles away from the nearest tree, cats are illegal and you don't see the sun for a third of the

year. And all of these very unique things that are unique to this place, attracts a sort of unique kind of character (respondent 9, appendix I)

Respondents argue that changing the town too much, will lead to a detachment between people and place. And that not only residents will feel detached from their home environment; a normalised Longyearbyen will not stroke with the expectations of the tourists, who expect to experience some of the rough lifestyle at the last frontier of civilization. The following quotes are from respondents who are very clear about their concerns, also the text block below shows a reaction from one of the respondents on the normalisation process:

The government placed a fence, so people wouldn't park their car in front of those stores. It made people very upset, they didn't understand: this was Longyearbyen. They are regulating too much, making it too normal. I'm scared that they will destroy Longyearbyen if they want to normalize it too much. Tourists also come up here with certain expectations you know (respondent 3, appendix I)

~

They shouldn't try to make it look like mainland, this is an arctic environment with arctic features. [...] If we normalize too much we will lose the real Longyearbyen you know. It is already much more urbanized (respondent 8, appendix I).

Refurnishing Longyearbyen

There was a lot of talk about "refurnishing" the town and to look how everything is planned now. They're looking at the shoreline, because it looks so industrial and not nice. But I think this is actually against Longyearbyen's existence. Because Longyearbyen was founded in the way of its needs. Nobody thought "oh this is a nice place to live". It was a mining town. The miners had to sleep some place, they had to eat some place, they had to shit some place and they needed an airplane to get away. Then they got their wives here and children, so yes sure they needed bigger houses and kindergartens. But all this grew in a historical way. Now, if you want to rearrange everything, it would lose its history, it is the way it is with a reason, it came from a mining tradition. Of course some parts of the shoreline look ugly with all the steel garbage. But I know there is a history behind this garbage. There is history behind everything, a reason why it's there. And if you rearrange the town, the history will lose its meaning. It will be so strange to read about Longyearbyen if you don't recognize anything anymore from the outside. It's not a design town and it's never meant to be a design town. Some things should be functional in the first place, not beautiful. (Respondent 11, 2016)

Text block 1:: one of the respondents reactions on the normalisation process.

The dissatisfaction that drives from their SOP also influences their stand on the future. Although it is remarkable how many people of Longyearbyen’s transient community, are seeing themselves as part of Longyearbyen’s future. Which is in line with the results that most of the respondents have no concrete plans to leave Longyearbyen (see Figure 14 &15).

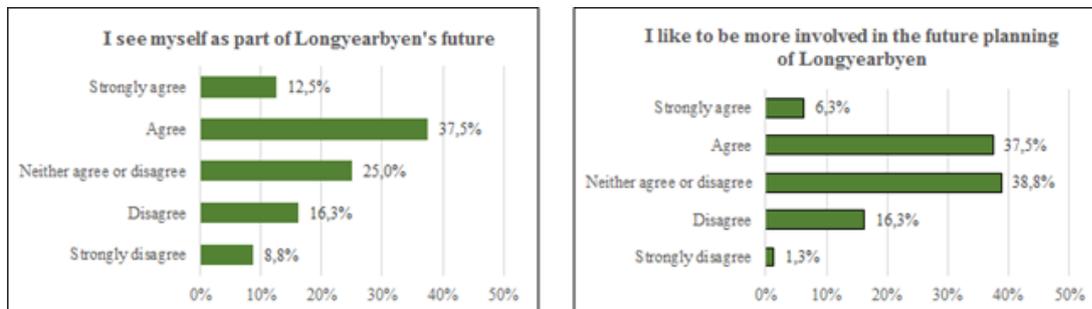


Figure 14: Percentages of the level of agreement with the SOP regarding the future.

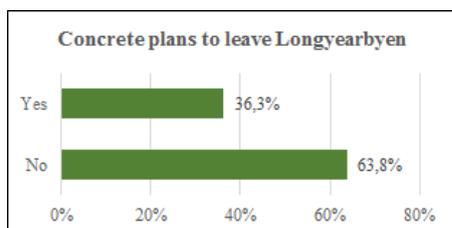


Figure 15: Percentages of respondents their concrete plans to leave Longyearbyen.

There is also a big percentage of people who are undecided. You also see this when it comes to more involvement in the future planning. Most of the respondents neither agree or disagree with the statement about this matter. Based on the observations I made during the door to door surveying, it seems that these results are often due to the fact that people don’t really think about the future. Like one of the respondents said: “we take one year at the time” (respondent 12). There is not really the need to think of a long term future, because people have a back up. That was something I heard often during my stay in Longyearbyen, and what also came back during the interviews:

People always belong to somewhere else. It’s very few people just belonging to Longyearbyen; they have a place at the mainland. And I think that most people think here: Well I can always move back (respondent 3, appendix I).

Still, if you start to ask people to think about it, they all start to formulate concerns or wishes regarding Longyearbyen and its future. So they do have thoughts about the developments in their town. Several respondents shared their frustration about the decision making in

Longyearbyen. They said they did not know if they want to be more involved in the future, because it will not lead to anything:

For the future it would be nice if we, as the residents, will get a bigger voice in what is decided by the government you know. We don't really have anything to say. The Sysselmannen can do whatever they want. I would like it when it is more open, it would be nice to see what they are working on more. Now we can say something, give input, but we are not involved in the decision making. (Respondent 1)

Another respondent who works at Norway Innovative, was also aware of this lack of resident engagement in the future planning and said the following:

The Lokalstyre is very engaged, but the residents are less engaged. But you know the people of the lokalstyre are trying to make people more engaged. It was not long ago that the planning and governance, was much more closed. But now they present plans in the hall, people can walk in and look at it. (Respondent 3)

The government is already trying to engage the residents more, but it seems that there is not yet the trust of the residents that their voice will be heard. But what are the concerns and ideas that residents have about the future of Longyearbyen? According to the observations and the interview results there is one major subject: the changing face of Longyearbyen, due to the increase of tourism and the decrease of Store Norske Kulkompani. Residents are aware of the changes that are inevitable:

In the future we will have more tourists coming here, this means that we will have more rules and more rules will affect the community as well. I am not a fan of much more rules, but I think they will be needed. I think that the mining period is ending and that we move on to the tourist period (respondent 1, appendix I).

~

You know when the town was more focused on mining the things that were built, were built because of the mining activities. They needed accommodation for the miners, so that is what they built. Now the focus is towards tourism, so I think it will just work the same and they need to focus on what you need for the tourism. That's how it works (respondent 9, appendix I).

However, many resident are of the opinion that Longyearbyen its mining history and the growing tourism industry should be much more aligned in the future:

We have to accept that the tourists are very important for us. But we should not try to fix this place, because of the tourists; so that everything looks neat and beautiful. I think it is important that you can see it is a mining town. Not getting rid of things that are typical for a mining town (respondent 8, appendix I).

~

I think the history of the mining, will always provide a path towards tourism. People are always interested in doing the mining tours, to see how the place became this way (respondent 9, appendix I)

~

[T]he old coal company should have a more active role to open up. That's what big companies do at the mainland, they open up and are interested to listen to new ideas. I don't feel that's happening here (respondent 3, appendix I).

~

Most of the guides are very young, they tell 'their truth', but it seems that they are not always that interested in the history of Longyearbyen: the mining history (respondent 3, appendix I)

5. Conclusion

5.1 Sub-questions

In light of the normalisation process and the economic changes in Longyearbyen there was the need for a better understanding of the residents their attitude towards the town. Several insights on the community were found, by the means of an explorative research on the relationship between the satisfaction rate of the residents and their senses of place.

In the theoretical framework it was concluded that the senses of place exist of three dimensions: the affective-, cognitive-, and behavioural dimension. Represented by the concepts: place attachment, place identity and place dependency. According to the results of this research there is a strong place attachment among most of the residents. These emotional bonds with Longyearbyen seem to be strongly related to the positive way they perceive the community: there is a lot of trust, and there are many different kinds of activities and events due to the diverse and transient character of the community. It also seems that people are allowing themselves to see the town more as their home, which makes it also easier to get attached.

Based on the findings it appears that besides from having a strong place attachment, residents also experience a strong place identity in relation to Longyearbyen. The majority claims that Longyearbyen is part of their identity. In chapter 2 Trentelman (2009) was cited regarding the concept of place identity, stating that place identity also entails statements like: *“this place is part of how I want others to think of me”* (Trentelman, 2009 p. 200, in Acedo 2017). You see this back in the way residents describe the type of people moving to the town. There is this belief that the people coming to Longyearbyen are strong and independent, all deliberately choosing for the harsh lifestyle of the Arctic. This belief creates a shared identity based on the place where they all live. It also seems that the mining history of Longyearbyen plays a big role in the place identity of the residents. They appear to value the mining history very much, in response of feeling related to Longyearbyen and its cultural heritage.

The last dimension that was discussed is the behavioural dimension, represented by the concept of place dependency: *“[T]he useful value (services, aesthetic) that a place has in comparison to other places to satisfy an individual’s specific goals and desired activities”*

(Acedo 2017). Longyearbyen was described by many respondents as unique, like a place you have nowhere else. It became clear that the *vibrant* community that offers such a wide range of activities was, in combination with the aesthetics of the Arctic environment and the lifestyle that comes with it, perceived as a unique way of living that cannot be found in any other place.

According to the results of a linear regression, the socio demographic characteristics of the residents would not act as good predictors to foresee the satisfaction about Longyearbyen. There were no causal relationships found between the satisfaction rate and the socio demographics. However, there is a relationship between the length of residence and several perceptions that are part of the residents their place identity. The people who lived in Longyearbyen for a longer amount of time are more likely to feel they are part of Longyearbyen its future and are more likely to identify themselves as local residents of Longyearbyen. Those perceptions are also significant predictors of the satisfaction rate. Thus, there is a bigger chance of a strong place identity if the residents in question lived on Svalbard for a longtime. And because of this strong place identity it is more likely that these particular residents will rate the community higher. As will be further explained in the next paragraph.

5.2 Research question

After concretizing the general SOP of Longyearbyen its residents and excluding a possible, direct role of the socio demographics in the satisfaction rate, the research question: *How satisfied are residents of Longyearbyen with community life, and can this level of satisfaction be explained by (or does it relate to) the senses of place and socio demographics of the residents?*, can be answered. The inferential statistics of the quantitative data showed the importance of various SOP in relation to the satisfaction rate. Experiencing a strong sense of community has a positive influence on the satisfaction rate of the residents. Also the residents who notice an active involvement of the local government are more likely to rate Longyearbyen as community higher. Both these perceptions are part of why people are attached to Longyearbyen. So it appears that in a smaller extent there is a positive relationship between the affective dimension of the SOP and the way Longyearbyen is appreciated. Also the cognitive dimension seems to play a significant role in the satisfaction

rate. Perceiving yourself as part of Longyearbyen its future and identifying yourself as a permanent resident, has a positive effect on the satisfaction rate. Any relationships between the behavioural dimension and the level of satisfaction did not become clear in the inferential statistics. But the results of the qualitative data are rather clear about this; the unique way of life that residents cannot experience anywhere else, makes them very positive about Longyearbyen.

Another relationship between the SOP of the residents and their level of satisfaction is the fear that Longyearbyen is changing too much. As discussed in chapter 2, a strong positive SOP can cause dissatisfaction when people feel that 'their' place is threatened. According to the qualitative data analyses, the residents are concerned that Longyearbyen will change too much, due to the consequences of the normalization process. In this perspective there is instead of a positive relationship, a negative relationship between the SOP and the satisfaction rate; because the residents feel emotionally engaged to Longyearbyen, they feel more dissatisfied if any changes occur where they disagree with.

Thus, various aspects of the strong and positive SOP of Longyearbyen its residents, are in the first place positive influencers on the satisfaction rate. But in light of the normalization process, the SOP can start to play a negative role in the level of satisfaction, due to the feeling that changes will negatively affect the place they feel engaged with.

5.3 Discussion

The local government wanted to have a better understanding of the community. They wanted to know how the bonds that residents have with Longyearbyen, influences the level of satisfaction about life in town. With the results that this explorative study provided, it is now important to formulate new questions based on those insights. In light of the future developments that the local government has planned, it could be useful to explore how a strong and positive SOP can be used in favour of the normalisation process. After all, instead of causing feelings of resistance and detachment regarding Longyearbyen, positive SOP could actually be beneficial for normalising the town. As discussed in chapter 2, SOP can be the engine behind citizen participation in the planning process and the source of social capital in Longyearbyen. Experimental research about citizen participation can be helpful in making the residents more involved with the normalisation process. On the other hand, it should be

considered whether a normalisation process is the solution for Longyearbyen its future. What are the actual benefits of being normal, for a place that is praised for its uniqueness? Moreover, is the term *normalisation* not outdated, in a time where place-based policies like *smart specialization* are in the rise? Instead of trying to change Longyearbyen into a replicate of small Norwegian towns on the mainland, it seems more appropriate to have a better look at the qualities Longyearbyen has to offer. Rather than moving away from the mining activities, because it lost economic value, it could be important to look at the cultural and social value of the mining activities. How can, for example, its history be integrated in the tourism sector? By making changes, based on the heritage, the history and the social capital that Longyearbyen already has, the observed SOP of the community will maybe work as an advantage instead of an obstacle.

5.4 Reflection

Reflecting on this research there are several issues that should be considered, in order to place the final results into context.

5.4.1 Less validity because of small N

In chapter 3.2 I discussed the small N of this research. I emphasized that it is important to keep this small N into account. Because of the small N, the conclusions of this research lose part of their validity. This could have been avoided if more questionnaires were collected. Many residents did not get the chance to be involved in this research, while there is a big chance that many of them would have participated, if you consider the fact that most people I approached were willing to fill out a questionnaire.

5.4.2 Challenging Positionality

As expected, the positionality for me appeared to be a challenge, because I realized that I became indeed very involved as a researcher. I was constantly involved with my study objective, as I was living in Longyearbyen. I realized that not only my respondents had their SOP in relation to Longyearbyen, but that I also developed bonds with this place. I constantly had to be aware of my objective role in this research. I noticed that especially during interviews, I sometimes forgot to ask further, because I already thought that I understood the

respondent, because I was feeling the same way. Also during my fieldwork it was not always easy to separate my research from my daily routines. I tried to consider my role as researcher in many daily situations . When I had dinner with a friend someone would join us and share experiences about life in Svalbard. On the one hand these experiences were relevant for my study, but on the other hand, it was just me sitting in a bar with friends, talking. It was not me as a researcher, talking to my study subjects. I soon realized that my research did not have an on/off switch and that my stay in Longyearbyen was a chain of experiences: formal or informal, conducting an interview, or doing grocery shopping's for dinner. I just needed to stay aware of my own position in the process.

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The APPENDIX

I. Interview reports

Interview report: Respondent #1

I am from Switzerland, I came here twice for holiday. I love the nature here and actually also the community. Back in Switzerland I was a little bit bored of the 0815 life (routines, mediocre life). I wanted something different, wanted some adventure. And that's when Svalbard crossed my mind. But I didn't speak any English or Norwegian at the time, so I wasn't really counting on a job. I bought a ticket to Longyearbyen and I said to myself, okay if you find a job in two weeks you will stay, if not you will go back to Switzerland. You know, I also had a job here in Switzerland. So it wasn't that I needed a job, for me it was just adventure. But then I got stuck and now I'm still here; five and a half years later. I just really love the Svalbard lifestyle; you work and when you're off you meet the other people living here. But I think life also really depends on what you do here for a living. I started as a waiter, then I became a guide for Spitsbergen travel and now I have my own tour company. You know, it is really funny. I think in Switzerland there is so much more stress. I work here much more than in Switzerland, but with less stress, what makes the life easier. I don't think it's because we are cut off from the rest of the world, because I think that Svalbard is not an isolated place. Yes, it is pretty far away from the closest city on the mainland, but go to the mainland and you find much more isolated places. I mean we have daily flights coming and leaving here. Yes we are a small community, when you look at the really permanent residents, but we have much more action than many other places. And of course although we have everything here, there is not much to choose, you can't go the next village or town if you want something else for a day. And the community is very small, so everybody knows everything from each other. But I don't mind, I actually like this, but I know some people see this as a problem. Of course the community is changing all the time, with new people coming in. I think that makes the community interesting as well.

I feel like I belong to more than one community here on Svalbard. You really have all those different activities that match different people. Together with the tour operators I discuss the tourism on Svalbard. But I am also a team with my hockey friends. But that's what I like, we have so many different and interesting people, that's what I like. We have not just one

community. But this kind of stuff you have everywhere. Everything is maybe a little bit smaller, but I think it works the same as communities in other places.

Sometimes I think it will be hard to keep the economy and law so separated. Because the tourism has to be regulated, but more and more countries are getting interested in the possibilities of the tourism industry on Svalbard. Maybe it will not be a problem, but it is definitely a challenge for the future. Tourism is growing like hell, that means that the nature will maybe suffer because of the tourism. The snow is already melting a bit, but tours will probably go on for two more weeks. The chance is big that the snow scooters will leave tracks in the tundra ground. And that needs like 25 till 50 years to recover. So there should definitely be some kind of regulation in the future. But it will be hard, because you have so many different actors, and different companies from different countries. More tourists are coming and more individuals go out in the fields. You have those tour operators that call themselves 'green', but their customers will still come by airplane and be picked up by car. That's just how it works. I always say, if you really want to protect the Arctic, you have to leave.

In the future we will have more tourists coming here, this means that we will have more rules and more rules will affect the community as well. I am not a fan of much more rules, but I think they will be needed. I think that the mining period is ending and that we move on to the tourist period. And you always have people complain when the big cruise boats come, but we live from the people on those cruise boats. We have to understand that the community where everybody knows everybody is changing into a small town. That our community will look more a more like a normal community on the mainland. And it is changing fast, the community, very fast. But I like the tourists and I like how everybody is just mixed in the local pubs and stuff.

After a few years I felt like I had seen it all, so I had to make it more interesting for myself again. That is why I started my own company, it was a new challenge. But it meant that I could stay here, because I feel also a bit home here, more than in Switzerland I think. I think it is more possible now to see this place as your home, because it became more than a company town. It is now a normal town, where people can built on a future. But is just funny, I could never live in any other remote town in Norway or Iceland you know. I mean those places are so beautiful, but I think there is much less community and action than what we

have here. And this action is probably due to the tourism, if the tourism was not here now, Longyearbyen would be empty. There would still be people here, because it is a political strategic thing. We are here for tourism and all that, but actually it is just nothing else than politics. You don't really feel the politics here, as a resident you don't feel it. I don't feel as a tool because the thing is I am not even a Norwegian you know. The thing I know is that Norway has to be here, to preserve things from changing. But for now it is okay I guess. As long as there are not more Russians than other nationalities, I think Norway is happy. And All the different nationalities blend in very good. Everyone is behaving. If you don't behave and you do drugs, it means you'll be send to the mainland. I like this, because we have almost no criminality. It will probably increase a bit if we have more tourists coming, because where more people are, stuff is getting stolen. Maybe the guns could be a problem, if the community is growing you know. I mean there are guns everywhere. It is not hard to get a gun; and a bigger community means more people who maybe have some kind of social problem. But I think they are regulating this also more. For the future it would be nice if we, as the residents, will get a bigger voice in what is decided by the government you know. We don't really have anything to say. The Sysselmannen can do whatever they want. I would like it when it is more open, it would be nice to see what they are working on more. Now we can say something, give input, but we are not involved in the decision making.

Interview report: Respondent #2

It is a specific type of people coming here, they must like the small community and the isolation. You know, I like small communities, but not this type of small community. I would like to live in a community with different visions. Here, we're not building towards something as a community together. It feels more hierarchic here, I guess. Also here, it's more that the government decides things. I think that most people are drawn here for work. It's just you're not really in Norway here, there are other rules. There are people starting to built up something here, but it's more a place of passing through. Of course it is kind of attractive to live here, because you know that Norway puts a lot of money in this community. I think there are many bubbles. People who lived here longer, students, people who work at UNIS. And also you have the Thai group living here, and for me it seems that Norwegians are extremely xenophobic. And it's just that Norwegians have the feeling that they are in Norway, so sometimes I think they're annoyed when you don't speak Norwegian.

I don't think people interact more, because they have to go to the same places to get their coffee or food. I do think there is some kind of sense of community, but you only really feel this when something happens, like the avalanche. I do think you are more dependent here on the community than elsewhere, but I don't really think it is a social thing. When you look at the Facebook pages here, you see that it is more practical stuff; people talk about their equipment. There are also some groups like knitting or the choir, but I have to say that those things are mainly Norwegian things, so it is also in Norwegian.

For me it was very easy to arrange my own yoga class. I got a space very easily and when I offered the Yoga class on Facebook, I got many reactions.

I think that the government is trying very hard to make social activities accessible for everybody, like English stand up comedian etc. They have an extraordinary arranged activities offer.

People have an interest for the nature, but I do have the feeling that there is a big difference in approach. Being interested because of sports or because of research is totally different. I

really hope that everyone will keep this a natural reserve and that they will restrict the ski tourism.

I think this is a strange community because they are not necessarily dependent on their industries. The community is now mainly designed for tourism, the industry and all that. But I don't really think they have to. Because I think that Norway has to pump in money here anyways, because it is a very political choice for them. So, it's very strange.

I also think it is very hard to get a sense of community here, because it is all really meant to be temporary. I really think so. For me, I identify community with keeping things together, like a garden for example, or taking care of each other's children. But it's very strictly regulated here, with jobs and daycare. And it is all very well organized, but therefore also more formal.

I really think that shared community spaces, where people work together towards something would help, to feel more connected. But because it is still a natural reserve, with a very fragile eco system I wonder how much initiatives you can really push through. But yes I do think that a greenhouse or something like that would really serve the community.

Tourism: It is a love hate relationship. They know that when they come, they can sell them stuff and that they are often really interested in the place. But there is this kind of cockiness among locals, that they feel better than the people who are not locals you know.

The community was for me not welcoming. in UNIS they are more welcoming I think, because they are more internationally focused I think. Well you know, they are open to you, but it really feels that not being Norwegian and not speaking Norwegian is an obstacle to be embraced by the community.

I would like to have theatre schooling or music schooling.

Interview report: Respondent #3

I'm in love with the place. Not specially Longyearbyen, but Svalbard. I created this job myself. I told my boss that we should be present in Longyearbyen right now, because they're

struggling with the oil. We give grants and loans to start up companies. We help actually all companies. We help the industry here, so it shall continue to be a society. And not only students and tourists, but a more normal society. Otherwise it will get hard to get qualified people up here.

The local government is doing a great job. I have a very good relationship with the local government. You know, and now I'm not blaming anybody, but if you've been living in a place for so long, you fall into a pattern. And the pattern here is the oil company. And even now Unis is growing, they're going into a pattern. And then it's hard to think different. But people here are so relaxed, because they're used to having this coal company doing everything for them. They don't think about how to make their own working place here. It's different from the place I came from. The oil industry back home started to innovate right away, looking for different ways in different branches. But I don't feel it that much here. My impression is that very few of the people that lived here many years that think new. It's mostly the young people coming up that see things completely different. I've been talking to many tourist agencies here, there are so many, all scattered around. But they don't move into the new thinking. It's actually very old fashioned here. Many old residents are not open to new ideas. There are some that are very eager to get something new going on. And then you have the people that don't care. And that brings us to the community in Longyearbyen. People always belong to somewhere else. It's very few people just belonging to Longyearbyen; they have a place at the mainland. And I think that most people think here: Well I can always move back.

For me it's the nature that made me fall in love with Svalbard. I wouldn't have moved here for the social factor. You know, I think it's very different when you move up here as a student to Unis, then when you move up here completely alone and you are not 18 anymore. Because there are not many "old" people here. It's a bit traditional here you know. I love knitting, but I don't want to go to a knitting club. So for people like me, I'm around 60, it is different here. It's different life when you have kids. It's different, more modern on the mainland, in the cities.

It's old fashioned place, but that's also because of the coal company. All controlled by man. When I lived here before, I was just the wife of the geologist of the mining company. Nobody ever mentioned my name.

Now, I sometimes have the feeling that people are not always trying to get to know you. It seems to me that they think: “oh it’s just another one, coming and leaving, coming and leaving. The small groups are tight you know. People are very close, but more with their own groups.

It’s not my impression that people share a great interest for nature. Well, okay I think that there is a shared interest maybe, but they don’t use it. Many people don’t go out. They don’t go out Longyearbyen. My impression is that people have more interaction with the social environment than with the physical environment.

You can’t take the car and drive to the next town. But you know you have to make the contact yourself. Maybe you see those small groups more clear here in Longyearbyen, because everything around them is changing, so they cling more tight to each other.

I don’t hear much negative things about tourists coming here. We should bring them closer to Longyearbyen. Shorter trips would be better. Regulations for the tourist industry are mostly made in Oslo. It is very political, everything has to be reviewed by the government.

I think that Longyearbyen is turning into a tourist attraction. They are trying to make the town more normal, but it will destroy something of Longyearbyen. People come up here, you make your own fortune. They plan that Longyearbyen is more regular in two or three years.

The government placed a fence, so people wouldn’t park their car in front of those stores. It made people very upset, they didn’t understand: this was Longyearbyen. They are regulating too much, making it too normal. I’m scared that they will destroy Longyearbyen if they want to normalize it too much. Tourists also come up here with certain expectations you know.

People are now and were previously very into ‘things’ (materialistic). They don’t really talk about the future. The Lokalstyre is very engaged, but the residents are less engaged. But you know the people of the lokalstyre are trying to make people more engaged. It was not long ago that the planning and governance, was much more closed. But now they present plans in the hall, people can walk in and look at it.

But you know, most people who come up here with new ideas, haven't been in Longyearbyen for that long. They haven't seen all of Longyearbyen. They come sometimes straight from university with all their new initiatives. And I see that they haven't understand yet how the coal company had influenced the city. You see it also back in the tourism. Most of the guides are very young, they tell 'their truth', but it seems that they are not always that interested in the history of Longyearbyen: the mining history. Those young people are representing Longyearbyen to all those tourists from all over the world. They need to have some kind of right feeling about for it, for its history.

You know those guides, they're a community on themselves, which is completely different from others.

I'm trying to get a space, where people with new ideas can meet. Brainstorm together, share their visions. Where creative people meet. But it's so hard! People are doubting it a lot, but I tell them: If it's not a success we stop it! But let's just try it. I think people are a bit scared. But I think that if people want to meet they can meet. You know, people will find places to meet and do their things. I follow yoga classes now in a free room in the hospital.

There is a new Sysselman, she is very good to make people feel they live as a community. But I think that the old kulcompany should have a more active role to open up. That's what big companies do at the mainland, they open up and are interested to listen to new ideas. I don't feel that's happening here. I only hear 'tourism', but that's not new. I have tried, but it's like you're talking Star Wars or something.

You know this is not a normal society, you are not living here if you are sick, or have mental disease. Everyone here is capable of doing something. I think that's very special. It's strong people living here. They come up here to experience Svalbard. But you know when you have troubles, when you are struggling it is part of the life you choose here. And if it becomes a problem, you are send to the mainland. It's more up to yourself here.

Interview report: Respondent #4

I decided to come here, because I really wanted to be here. I decided to first see if I really liked it here. So I came up here and I liked it a lot. I started to ask people how it was to work here and then I walked into this cafe Fruene, and I told the manager that I like Longyearbyen and she told me she had a job for me. So two days later, I was already working. It went all so fast. At the end, I didn't really had the time to think about it, about how it was up here in detail.

I'm not a super nature guy, but I like it a lot out here. But it is as good for me as living in a city. But you know up here it is very special. I can't really point it out and tell what is so special. Just the thought about where it is on the earth, already makes it special for me. Maybe it is just psychological.

The community is the best thing up here. It is really good, I didn't know before I came up here. I had some imaginations, but I was totally wrong. The community up here is good, really good. I have never seen a community like this, while I've been in many countries. I've never seen a community that works so good. It is just as that simple, and that good. So many different nationalities here, but there is no difference between all those people. And especially, I think, when you lived up here for more than one year. You start to feel family of those people. You see each other everyday, that's why I feel so connected to everyone.

You do see that people from some nationalities form a bit there own communities, but is not closed. It is just that, when someone new will come up here from Sweden, the Swedish guys will take care of him or her, before everyone else. I think that is pretty normal, because of language and background.

I think it is very important to be able to speak Norwegian when you are here. Well language is always important I think, when you are up here you need Norwegian language. So it is good to know Norwegian, but English is also good, you know.

I think that if you stay here for just a few months, it is too short to really connect, to really know people. You would maybe see me everyday. But you wouldn't really know me.

What you see is that the people that study here, and the people who really live here, they don't connect very good. I think that many people are looking down at the students, if you know what I mean. I don't really know why this is, I just observe it. It is weird to me.

You know there is the opportunity here to get involved, but there is also the opportunity to don't. Some prefer to do, and some prefer to do not.

The places facilitated by the government really works to connect people, like the sporthal you know. Or the Kulturhuset.

It is quite up here, no stress. You have time up here.

The tourist industry is growing very fast, you can literally see it grow. But is good I think, even if you don't like tourists, you need them up here. But I don't really think there is a connection between tourists and the locals here. But I think it is not different than other places. Just a normal tourist/local relationship.

Two things are very important to me: safety and freedom. And those two you have here. You are not afraid here, I don't lock my doors you know. I think it is because of the culture here. You feel so safe here. And besides that you have completely the freedom to do what you want to do.

Interview report: Respondent #5

First lived in Oslo, came here for the adventure. I wanted to try something quite different. The nature was the most important thing. The idea of the wilderness, the snowmobile, the guns. It was so different from where I lived before. I started looking for a job here in the eighties. But I couldn't find a job. But when I got divorced and my youngest daughter moved out, I thought "Now I can do it". When I came here, I didn't know how the social environment was, well I heard a lot about it. It's a special community, it's nothing like a little place in Norway. So much more happening here and you know almost everybody is new. I've never dreamed of living in another place than here. Because it's such a special community. And I think you also have a very rich culture, in terms of concerts, restaurants, pub life. That's also why I wanted to go exactly here, not only the nature.

And it's also very important here, because of darkness and many of us don't have family up here. So it's very important that you can do here a lot. That they organize cultural activities here and have facilities here. And a lot people are volunteering here, more than I see at the mainland. And you can try a lot of new things here. I had so much choice here, and I chose to go dancing. I'm in an Irish dance group! I never danced before, but I love it. And it's not only training we are also performing; on the mainland and next week we go to Barentsburg. It's very important for me to get involved in community here. Not everyone here does that, but for me it's very important to get involved. I was moving here alone and I'm a social person, so I had to do something to get in contact with other people. People have so many different skills who come up here. You have many musicians here for example! Many local bands. You know when there was a man who could do karate, we had karate classes, but when he moved down, there was no karate anymore, but it was replaced for something else. There is always something new, depending on the people living here. Very strong people coming here, with a lot skills. There is a lot more energy with people coming and leaving, it's a good thing for the community. I had to work hard to integrate, but I think you have that with smaller places, because there are less people.

In the autumn the governance organizes social events to help people integrate. Because then a lot new people arrived, like teachers. They organize dinners and so on. But when I came here there was not much.

You have different groups indeed, but it doesn't matter. Because those groups are based on similar interests. Not so much on age or sekse. So here I have friends who are in their twenties you know. On the mainland it is much more ordered in age groups I think.

Interview report: Respondent #6

Some people thought it didn't have to offer enough. I came back here to work and my girlfriend could work here as well. I grew up here and now I already lived here, so I want to built my future somewhere else. I have lived on the mainland for a while now and I also belong there to a community. I have everything there, so that's why my stay here is now just temporary.

This is no place to move as I see it. I do not want to move here. For me this is a place full of limitations. Of course it can be good here, you make it good for yourself if you want to be here, you can go hiking, you can go and join a club. But I spent most of my time here now, listening to the radio and drinking my coffee.

I have the feeling that I can talk to anyone here, whoever I approach it will be good; safe to start a conversation.

It was weird for me as a child when we went back to the mainland, to see that life can also not work out for you. I saw people who fall out of society, who are not having jobs and having problems you know. You do not see that back here, I did not really learn that as a child. So after I knew that, My view on Longyearbyen changed, it felt more as an artificial community. It is only created as a working place, I do not think it will last long like a real community. You can not really be here if you need a lot of medical care or if you are convicted for a crime. That gives me the feeling it is all a little bit fake. Another thing is that many people are just not related. As a kid all our grandparents lived on the mainland.

When I came to the mainland as a kid, I was so surprised. Everybody spoke the same dialect and many kids knew each other's families. I think they were much more bonded together, because of these kind of things.

For me as a kid, it was very difficult when we left to live in Norway. I did not tell any of my friends. We just went on our summer holiday to Norway, but this time we did not go back to Spitsbergen.

It is so much easier to stay here than it was before.

I feel home here, I really do. I still see many familiar faces you know. It really has to do with the people I think. If all those familiar faces would not be here, It would have been really crazy.

The isolation of the place is making it necessary to get along with the people here. You kind of have to be nice to your neighbour.

It is my home place you know, but it is not an interesting place.

People focus a lot on preserving the nature in the summer. everyone is picking garbage.

More playgrounds for the children. More benches and bins you know. Just to sit down and have a nice view. That is also important for the tourists I think. And I think that will also encourage the locals to go out and leave the cars for what it is.

I think I will always stay engaged, even if I do not live here anymore. I will always be connected.

I feel a little bit privileged and proud to be part of the society here. Of being part of this community. I feel safe here, because of the trust here. People feel included here you know. Everybody is part of the community and contributes you know and that is why it works so well. But that is because we are a working society you know. Only people who work are needed. If you would change this system, we have to think, who's going to take care of them? **Normalizing will also mean social problems you know. Because that is normal in a society.**

Interview report: Respondent #7

I lived in Thailand, but I got a job offer from the restaurant here. I thought that I would work in Norway you know. In Oslo or something, just a high class city, I didn't know it was here. But then when I came here I was so shocked. It was so cold here and there were no trees, only

mountains. I thought how can I live here? For three months I was so homesick, I just wanted to go home. I did not have any internet or phone at first, nothing. And yes it was hard to make contact with people when I came here. I do not speak Norwegian and on top of that my English was not that good either. Now I understand Norwegian and my English is much better, but first it was very bad. It felt very different from home, here people do not say hello on the streets. And there is also kind of a hierarchy between the Thai people, if you earn less, they do not really talk to you much. But I have friends now and I go out to dance and to have some drinks. But not too much, I am not alcoholic like some people really are. I do not just think that, it is true. People drink a lot here. It is because it is so cheap here, compared to the mainland. Besides hanging with friends, I sometimes go to the sport club, or the swimming pool. You meet people from everywhere, many countries.

I have to follow you know, I live here now in Longyearbyen. I follow the local people, because I'm with the Thai people. We just follow the system. It is not easy to get connected, the only thing we can do is adjust to this way of life. Scandinavians are nice people, we respect the country, we respect the place where we live. If new people arrive I help them, because I have the experience.

The housing is getting more and more expensive every year. It gets harder to live here, we have to find extra jobs and work hard. Everything is getting more expensive; the food in the shop is also getting more expensive.

I want to move from this place, but the problem is the visum. I want to go the mainland. Here is nothing, everyday I do the same things. Thai people come here to work, the tax is much lower, so we earn more money, that we can send to our families in Thailand.

I sometimes go on a trip, but I have to work a lot, the restaurant is full everyday.

Interview report: Respondent #8

Several reasons why I came here, I know a lot of people who worked here. It was interesting for work. We knew a lot about the community already from friends and we read a lot about it. We connected very quickly with the people here. A lot of common interests, same activities, but also because we had kids from the same age. After ten year we went back to the mainland. So the children could meet their grandparents more often. We wanted to show the

kids the place where they have their roots, because here the people are moving up and down. A friend of us who grew up here told us that it would be good for the kids. She told us that she didn't feel at home when she was in Norway, because she never went to the mainland. After a few years we went back to Longyearbyen, for work. The children left home by then. It was both the way of living and the nature that we were missing. The company asked me back, I got a good offer, so we did.

Back in the days the mining town was really in Longyearbyen, it was both your working place as your living place. But the second time that we came here it was different. I worked at Svea during the weeks and only in the weekends I came home to Longyearbyen. So the whole social life was different from my point of view. I was less connected with the community. The first years I was connected with the folks dance group and the choir, but it was hard to combine this with the work at Svea, so I dropped out.

In Svea we had our own community, there are a lot of activities there. There is a gym for example and a shooting place.

A lot of my colleagues had no connection with the community in Longyearbyen. For them it was only a place of transit, they had their community back home you know. They were not at all connected with Longyearbyen, they only had to go there because they needed to go to the airport. Those people didn't have any family back in Longyearbyen.

I think that people are mixed, like people who stayed here for a shorter and longer time. Mostly through work.

You get really used to the people leaving and coming. You never know. Suddenly they leave.

I think the people here are very open, we care about the people. You try to help the people.

When we came here for the first time we were more interested in getting to know people you know, we were more laid back. But now we are less engaged in getting new contacts. I think the first time when we were new, you feel more dependent on other people here. You want new contacts. For us it was easier, because we had relatives here, but if you don't know anyone here, you are really more dependent on the way you can get contact here,

But you know we did it very often, we invited people and then they are leaving again after three or four years and then you get new contacts again. That's doing something with you, you get more laid back.

We really think that people feel connected in the way they care here about the nature. We talk about it and share our ideas and concerns about the nature on Facebook. And we tell each other to take care, like not throwing cigarettes on the ground and clean up the dog poop. Don't let the engine run.

You can also follow a lot of small courses about for example the wildlife. People organize this themselves or sometimes UNIS offers this kind of courses.

I think that the Lokalstyre is doing a lot of things to integrate people. Like activities with the sporthall and creating meeting places.

A lot of my friends have to leave, because the mining industry is going down. I'm sorry about that. More people leaving every day, every week.

I think now you don't really see the effect of those people leaving on the community, but I think we will see more effects in like two or three years. For the shops and all. So I think it is very important to get more working places in other industries.

They have a lot of ideas for new industries, but I don't know they can replace the mines. I think the scientific research and the education is also a very important thing to focus on.

I really think that mining is part of the community feeling, absolutely. It is part of the heritage you know. I think it is important to remember the role of mining in this community. They started a museum in mine 3 and that is good. But now they should take this even a step further and really present the history. And also in Svea we have to take care of the history and I'm sure that we can get working places out of it. They could arrange more facilities around the history. More trips for example. Instead of only focussing on the nature, also focus on the history and also maybe in combination with the scientific world. The same as the nature is being linked to scientific research.

I think that taking care of the downtown area is an important step in making it more representative as a real town. And to invite the people to feel more welcome.

We have to expect that the tourists are very important for us. But we should not try to fix this place, because of the tourists; so that everything looks neat and beautiful. I think it is important that you can see it is a mining town. Not getting rid of things that are typical for a mining town.

They shouldn't try to make it look like mainland, this is an arctic environment with arctic features.

Big changes since we came up here the first time, 1996. There were only two planes a week. The planes were also much more expensive. So you were actually much more isolated.

There is not much to find back about the way of life in the nineties, in the museum.

If we normalize too much we will lose the real Longyearbyen you know. It is already much more urbanized.

A good place to live and work, they are taking care of you. And everything is here close. Like we have our own hospital. On the mainland we lived very remote, it was 120 km to the closest hospital.

Now they should develop the new industries, but they really have to take care of the tourist industries, I think that there is a lot of underpayment.

I like winter and no trees.

When it is getting too expensive, people have to leave. And although a lot of things improved, the company town system had very cheap housing.

It would be good if Store Norsk had more contact with the Lokalstyre.

Interview report: Respondent #9

This is a place where you are forced to step up a little bit. But the transition to come and live up here was kind of easy for me. One of my best friends was already living here and also my little brother was already working here. He facilitated a place for me to stay and arranged a trial at the job where I now work. All those things made the transition a lot easier for me. Truth be told, it was still hard you know in the dark season for example, when there is literally not much to see, you have to find ways to occupy yourself.

Another expectations was that I wanted time alone, I play guitar, I write and I wanted a little bit more time to focus on that. It wasn't a really big part of my life before, not as big as I wanted it to be back in Australia and New Zealand.

There is an incredible sense of community here. I remember hearing somebody say that it is a small town for big city people. You've got a small town mentality and big city personalities. And I think that is kind of true. The sense of community here is amazing, once you're here for two months, you know everyone in town. You can't walk ten feet without not bumping in somebody you know. And that is kind of nice. There is no anonymity here or whatsoever. Everybody knows everybody's business for sure. And you know everybody has always this one thing in common. They are all prepared to go to the end of the world, because this is the end of the world. We are thousand miles away from the nearest tree, cats are illegal and you don't see the sun for a third of the year. And all of these very unique things that are unique to this place, attracts a sort of unique kind of character. A bigger percentage of the people here have been to Asia or Australia you know, like the backpack locations. This is the kind of frontier that is different, it is of the beaten track. So you already feel you have all that in common with the other people up here. I think you are a lot quicker accepted into the community, because you have that part in you in common. You have often the feeling you can skip the introductions. It is a very transient place, of people coming and going all the time, that definitely does happen. Which means the towns has kind of an ever changing kind of face. But I think due to that and due to the people you're surrounded by, everything just seems to click.

There are definitely cliques of people, some of the cliques are defined by language; the Russians will stick with each other, the Thai will stick to each other. The town has like 47

official languages or something. Being such an international place, drives also people sometimes together I think, to what they know. But still, because of that universal acceptance, you can just sit around the table and have drinks with everybody here, because you still know the whole town. But so yes, sometimes is driven by language, but also sometimes by mutual love for activities. The guys who love to run up mountains will sit together. And then occupations also matters. The dog guides sit all together for example.

You know what I like to see? It is so different from anywhere I lived. There is no commercial competition here. I say, you go to one of the guiding companies and they are full, they are happy to call to one of the other companies to ask if they have space left. They just want people to enjoy. And I understand because it is a very very special, very unique place.

I don't think I will be part of the ever changing face of Longyearbyen in the future. You know Norway is really proud of this place. It is a perfect little community, everybody is kind of rich here, because we don't pay regular taxes. There is no crime, no poverty, no homelessness. And I have to say it is like a bubble completely. Everybody knows, everybody's business and when you slip, you get kicked out. But you know on the other hand it is good, there are no problems with drugs here, no problems with violence. I understand why Norway is so proud of this place. It is rich, not only in money, but in more things; nature, personalities, you know. The general day to day life and the way of living here is good. It is a great place to live.

But it is true that with the changing industry, it can be so that Longyearbyen loses its appeal to come and work here you know. You do see many people coming here, also partly because they pay almost no taxes and make a lot of money. They should find new ways to keep that revenue coming in. But the good thing is that the tourist sector can apply to a wide range of things here. There are many possibilities for various activities.

Tourist are necessary. If you get annoyed because of the tourist, you should remind yourself that if they wouldn't be here, we wouldn't be here either. But sometimes it can get annoying, when tourists drink a lot. It is very cheap here you know. But you see that also in other places. Yes it's hard to say there is one general attitude towards tourists.

And about the drinking culture in general, yes there is absolutely a lot of drinking going on sometimes. But what I've heard from Norwegians who come from the mainland, it is kind of a Norwegian thing. They just drink till they pass out.

I came to spend time with myself you know, time to be selfish. My own cocoon of self improvement. I wanted to be away of distractions that come with much bigger, transient communities. I needed to regroup and find the quietness and solitude of this place. While still having a new experience, doing something I would never be able to do anywhere else in the world.

You see that people get accepted real fast, because it is not the case that you have all people living here for ten years and then someone news comes right. So it is always, always, coming and going. People leaving for the dark season, or coming back for the dark season you know. There is just this universal acceptance, completely.

As far as activities go, if you're not leaving town it is kind of limited. The bars are good, but if you don't want to eat or drink, there are not a lot of places to go. I don't want to Americanize the place, but a bowling place or something would be nice. The sporthall is amazing, you can do many sports there. But not everyone wants to do athletic things. So maybe it would be nice to have something to bring people together that does not involve being in a bar you know. Like we have a pool table at the bar, so many people come to use it.

In many places locals and tourists sit side by side, you can always see them. Tourists also bring a kind of atmosphere to this place. They sometimes up the energy level a bit you know. And you know the tourists are of course not the same kind of tourist who go to Tenerife and just party or something. So maybe that also contributes.

The local planning department should not make any differentiation between keeping tourist entertained and keeping locals entertained, because everybody up here has the shared interest of being up here, for the nature, for the experience. Where people are okay with the idea that they are in the last frontiers where you can still live normal. The last place where people built a town you know. So that itself will keep people entertained and I don't think that the locals are craving something what the tourists don't want or the other way around.

Every time the Kulturhuset has something planned it tends to be busy, for movies or stand up comedian shows, you know. People enjoy these kind of things. For a place that is so extreme, it is remarkable normal at times. I think there is already a big focus on people their quality of life by the government. The fact that you live in a place like this.

You know when the town was more focused on mining the things that were built, were built because of the mining activities. They needed accommodation for the miners, so that is what they built. Now the focus is toward tourism, so I think it will just work the same and they need to focus on what you need for the tourism. That's how it works. You know mine 3 is now open for tourists, you can get a tour there. Everything will now be more in the name of tourism, instead of in the name of mining. I think the history of the mining, will always provide a path towards tourism. People are always interested in doing the mining tours, to see how the place became this way. The unique nature of this place will always draw people towards it.

Interview report: Respondent #10

I lived in Ukraine, I worked there; had my own life there. Now because of the problems in Ukraine I can't go back. I feel stuck in Longyearbyen. I came here, because it was the only place to go in Europe without any visa to work. I didn't come here because of any pull factors. I don't like anything here. There are no factors that make me wanna stay here any longer then needed. I think it's because I'm not Norwegian. I don't understand the beauty of the remote area. Everybody is just drinking here you know.

I don't think I can develop myself here in any kind of way. I don't understand why the Russian choir can't come to perform, while the Thai people can. It is not right. I have the feeling Norwegians have better jobs, while they are lower educated. And I think that for Norwegians all the doors are open. But because I am from Ukraine I don't get the same opportunities. It's like a prison sentence. I'm just here for five more years, so I get a visa for Norway.

It is some kind of fantastic bubble; if you don't belong to the society here, there is no support. And I do think that people are very materialistic. In theory it all looks so good, but in practical way it doesn't work at all. Like the garbage, they don't really sort it out, it is just an idea. It's like communism: the idea is so idyllic, but in practice it sucks.

For me this is no nature, for me trees are nature.

Interview report: Respondent #11

Area with a lot of snow and lively community. Didn't like living in Oslo; noisy, busy, no peace for myself.

Friend lived here, studied here. I visited my friend a lot. I did guiding and realized that I was 'stuck' to the arctic. I loved the cold weather, storms, darkness. I wanted to live here from the beginning that I was here. But I had to find out what I would do for a job.

People here don't interfere, they help when you ask for help. You can have contact if you want contact. It's easy to integrate here. Everybody is in the same situation. You have to get stuff done here.

The place where I lived before was also very remote like Svalbard. In many small villages people are concerned with keeping their borders. But in an area like this you don't need that; you have natural borders. And many people here are very open, because nobody has its roots here. In the tiny villages I lived you had families who lived there for ages, who are therefore better than others. You don't have that in Longyearbyen. People who lived here for more generations are the minority and it doesn't matter.

Who is the institution here? It's us. Nobody else is doing the job. You form your own life up here in the way you engage. You chose to live here. You know the people behind the position, when you need help from the Lokalstyre. You ask a person for help. It's not the institutional title, but the faces behind them. It's so easy to see here, that it's not just an authority, they are human beings from flesh and blood. It is possible to have a personal relation with people. You look at how you behave, it's a small community. It's all more informal.

We don't only restrict ourselves to our positions, our administrative hierarchies. We relate to the persons. If stuff happens here, everybody needs to help. People often talk about them and us; but here you hear: "we". And people who come here to visit, they are guests. We like getting visitors, to host them.

If visitors come, sometimes they have trouble paying. Someone else in line will just pay. I never noticed that on the mainland.

After the first storms up here, you find out what is important. You don't fight with weather.

The tourist industry is growing, it brings a lot of Thai people.

If you are a larger group of people from the same origin, you in a way want to take care of your own background, your own culture. Nourish it a bit. You want to share it with other, but you can't share it if you lost it. You need to be aware of yourself, if you want to share something with the community. Like the Thai community here, they cherish their Thai culture, but every Thai thing they do is open to others; if you want to, you can join. And you also have the Russian community, they nourish the Russian traditions, but they also want to present it to people. In order to share something, you have to have it.. You have workshops, handcrafting. You have more Russian guides coming up here and they're just like us.

You need to get involved, or you have to invest a lot in equipment. To get around as much as you want. You need to interact with people. The shorter time you are here, the more you need help to get around.

People use Facebook pages a lot. If you want to go hiking you ask in the groups.

People want to be here in the first place, that's why they look for a job.

Sometimes the darkness can be a problem.

Funny contradiction. On the one side we caring about environment, but on the other side we have so many cars and garbage. And everybody drives the kids to school, instead of carpooling more; I mean every kid goes to the same school here..

You have some kind of lottery and each year they pick some people and they go on a boat to clean up the shorelines.

Do you think that the government can make people more pro-environmental? Well not so much the rules and policies, but the people behind it, can make it possible. To get people involved and all that. (43.42). To reach people their heart you know. I don't really care which political party is telling me to turn out my engine. For me it's more important that there is a person telling me not to do it.

The shorter the distances are, the more people get late with being on time (45.11). And then you take the car to make it on time.

Traffic seems more dangerous than polar bears (46.57). In front of the school and intersection at Unis.

(51:50), people don't need to steal, everybody has a job.

Tourists do sometimes weird things; sit on the snowmobiles and make pictures.

Spatial planning (55:50); More of a special place, you have everything close by.

Communication is not easy here, so you need facilities here. There is so much here to do. It's not a human right to have everything here. It's surprising how many restaurants we have here.

I don't understand why we have such a cheap Tobacco and alcohol. It doesn't do good for anybody.

There was a lot of talk about "refurnishing" the town and to look how everything is planned now. They're looking at the shoreline, because it looks so industrial and not nice. But I think this is actually against Longyearbyen's existence. Because Longyearbyen was founded in the way of its needs. Nobody thought "oh this is a nice place to live. It was a mining town. The miners had to sleep some place, they had to eat some place, they had to shit some place and they needed an airplane to get away. Then they got their wives here and children, so yes sure they needed bigger houses and kindergartens. But all this grew in a historical way. Now, if you want to rearrange everything, it would lose its history, it is the way it is with a reason, it came from a mining tradition. Of course some parts of the shoreline look ugly with all the steel garbage. But I know there is a history behind this garbage. There is history behind everything, a reason why it's there. And if you rearrange the town, the history will lose its meaning. It will be so strange to read about Longyearbyen if you don't recognize anything anymore from the outside. It's not a design town and it's never meant to be a design town. Some things should be functional in the first place, not beautiful. Should there be something to empathize the history?

There is actually nothing. There is for example a sign telling you the directions to the museum. But the museum moved long ago. So the sign is useless. Some public buildings are not saying what there actually are, it can be very confusing for tourists.

Group on Facebook; The Old Svalbard; some kind of forum..

I wish we can inform tourists maybe more, to let them know that we also have cultural activities here. We could be a little bit more observing.

Interview report: Respondent #12

I grew up in a small town, traveled around a lot; lived in many places. Left Trondheim, because I wanted to do something new. I got a job here for three months in the summer, but I thought it was nice and now it's been 16 years. I have been here twice before as a tourist, but when I came to live here I really came because of the job. I worked as a chef at the Spitsbergen hotel. The social part of Longyearbyen was very nice and really one of the things that made me wanna stay. But also the nature; three months wasn't enough to see the nature. So I wanted to explore longer. The community was nice, because it is very easy and everything is close. It is a small town, but there are many things to do. It is not the same small town idea as at the mainland. You have everything here what you need.

Not everyone is connected, there are definitely different groups of people. When I came up here I didn't have any family up here, so than you are like together with the other people who have no family here. When I got kids I started to integrate in this new type of people.

It was no problem to get involved and accepted as a newcomer. There are always so many new people all the time, you're not the only newcomer in town you know. Of course when you come somewhere new, you have to try to get involved, people will not be knocking on your door. But you can join a club or something if you want. You also have groups on Facebook, like there is this group of women on Facebook, they go on hikes every Wednesday.

I think it is a very nice community, you need each other for help, so if you need help and you want it than you'll get it.

I have the feeling that it was more safe, when I came here 16 years ago, I do lock my doors now. I don't know, maybe it's just because there are more people now. But it is very safe to have kids up here you know. Everything is very close and you know for example the people working at the kindergarten.

I do think people are very aware here about the nature and pro environmental behaviour. You are for example not allowed to pick flowers. The kids learn much about in the schools.

A lot of people are saying "we take one year at the time"

For me this is home. Our kids grew up here, I met my boyfriend here.

The government is very open minded about new ideas, they want the input of the people living here.

It's more cleaner than 16 years before, they really try to make it nicer.

There are many people who are very active in the politics

New teachers every year, people who get stuck here.

It's the hard part for the kids, they see people leaving.

Sometimes hard to connect sometimes with new people coming every year.

II. The survey

Questionnaire Cultural Geography – Community life in Longyearbyen

My name is Marije Tempel, I'm a master student at the University of Groningen. For my master Cultural Geography, I'm spending a month in Longyearbyen to collect data for my thesis. The following questionnaire is designed to measure and analyse the way people feel about life in Longyearbyen. The information gathered through this questionnaire will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purpose. **Thank you for your time and effort!!**

1. **Your gender:** Male Female

2. **Year of birth** _____

3. **What is your nationality:** _____

4. **With which place(s) do you identify? (multiple answers possible)**

Longyearbyen / Svalbard / Norway / Thailand / Germany / Denmark / Sweden / Russia / Philippines / Europe/ Other _____

5. **How long have you been living in Longyearbyen (months or years)?
Staying all year round (except from maybe holidays and short trips)**

6. **Why did you come to live in Longyearbyen (circle your answer)?**

Work My partner moved here The physical attributes (nature)

Research/study My parents moved here Other, namely:

7. **Do you identify yourself as (circle your answer):** A local A newcomer

8. **Do you identify yourself as (circle your answer):** A permanent resident A temporary resident

9. **Are you currently (circle your answer):**

Married in a relationship Divorced

Single Separated Widowed

10. **How many people are in your household here in Longyearbyen (including yourself)?** _____

11. **Do you have children? (circle your answer)** Yes No (go to question 14)

12. **How many children do you have?** _____

13. **How many of your children live on Svalbard?** _____

14. **Are you a house-owner? (circle your answer)** Yes No

15. **Are you a member of a club or social organization in Longyearbyen? (circle your answer)** Yes No

16. **If yes, which club(s) or organization(s):**

17. **What was your biggest motivation to get involved in this club(s) or organization(s)?**

18. **Are you employed? (circle your answer)** Yes No

19. If yes, in what industry/company are you employed?

20. Are you a student at UNIS? (circle your answer) Yes No

21. Please give your level of agreement with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I feel part of a community in Longyearbyen.					
2. There is a strong sense of community in Longyearbyen.					
3. There is a clear division of different communities in Longyearbyen.					
4. The sense of community makes me feel more safe.					
5. I feel more dependent on the community life than elsewhere.					
6. There is active involvement of the local government in the community.					
7. I think there is a great shared interest for nature among the residents of Longyearbyen.					
8. The only temporary stay of many residents motivates me to get more involved in community life.					
9. The isolated geographical location motivates me to get more involved in community life.					
10. I often think about leaving Longyearbyen.					
11. I like to be more involved in the future planning of Longyearbyen.					
12. I see myself as a part of Longyearbyen's future.					
13. I would like more involvement of the local government in improving the community.					

22. How would you characterize the community of Longyearbyen?

23. What do you find attractive about community life in Longyearbyen?

24. What do you find unattractive about community life in Longyearbyen?

25. How satisfied are you with community life in Longyearbyen? Please rank your level of satisfaction (circle your answer).

1 (lowest) 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (highest)

26. Do you have concrete plans to leave? (circle your answer) Yes No (survey is finished)

27. When are you planning to leave?

28. Why are you planning to leave?
