

NORDPLUS intensive course | 2024

Smart Shrinking in

PÓRSHÖFN



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CONTENTS

1. Research questions
2. Theories and concepts
3. Historical background
4. Methods
5. Results
6. Discussion
7. Sources



Fig. 1. Þórshöfn's harbour. Source: [mlb.is/Líney Sigurðardóttir](https://mlb.is/Líney_Sigurðardóttir)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What possibilities exist for right-sizing in Þórshöfn?

Which socio-economic path dependencies affect the town's development?

How is the place attachment of the community created?

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

Right sizing >



Quality of life >



Makkonen & Inkinen, [2023], Rybczynski & Linneman, [1999] >

Path dependencies >



Pathways of change >



Wilson, [2012], Nelson & Winter [1982] >

Place attachment >



Social infrastructure >



Tomaney et al. [2023], Bowlby [1999] >

METHODS



Desktop analysis

- Theoretical basis
- Maps
- Media analysis

Survey

- Facebook groups

Observation - walking

- Naturalistic
- Spontaneous

Interviews

- Semi-structured
- Snowball sampling



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

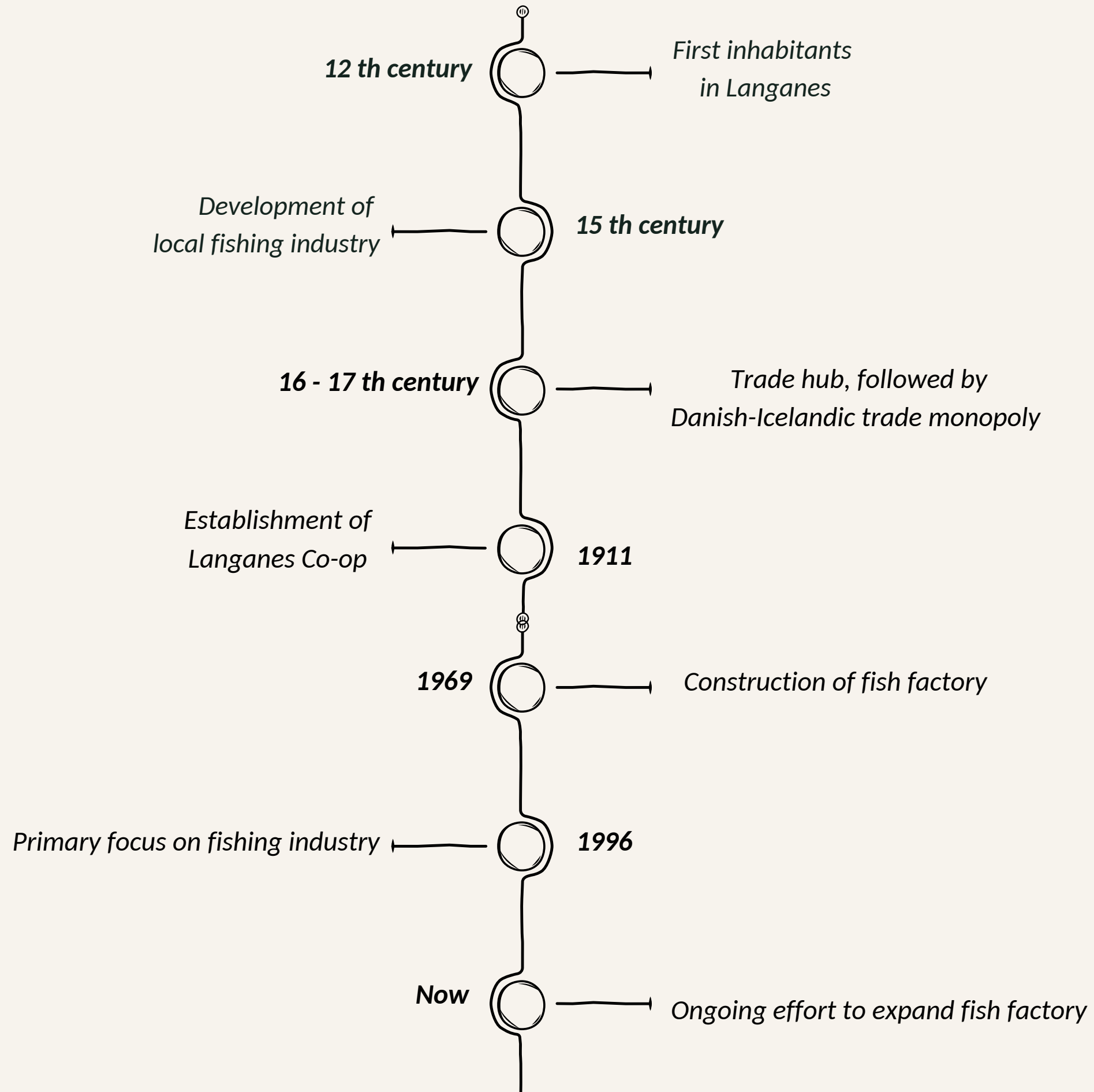
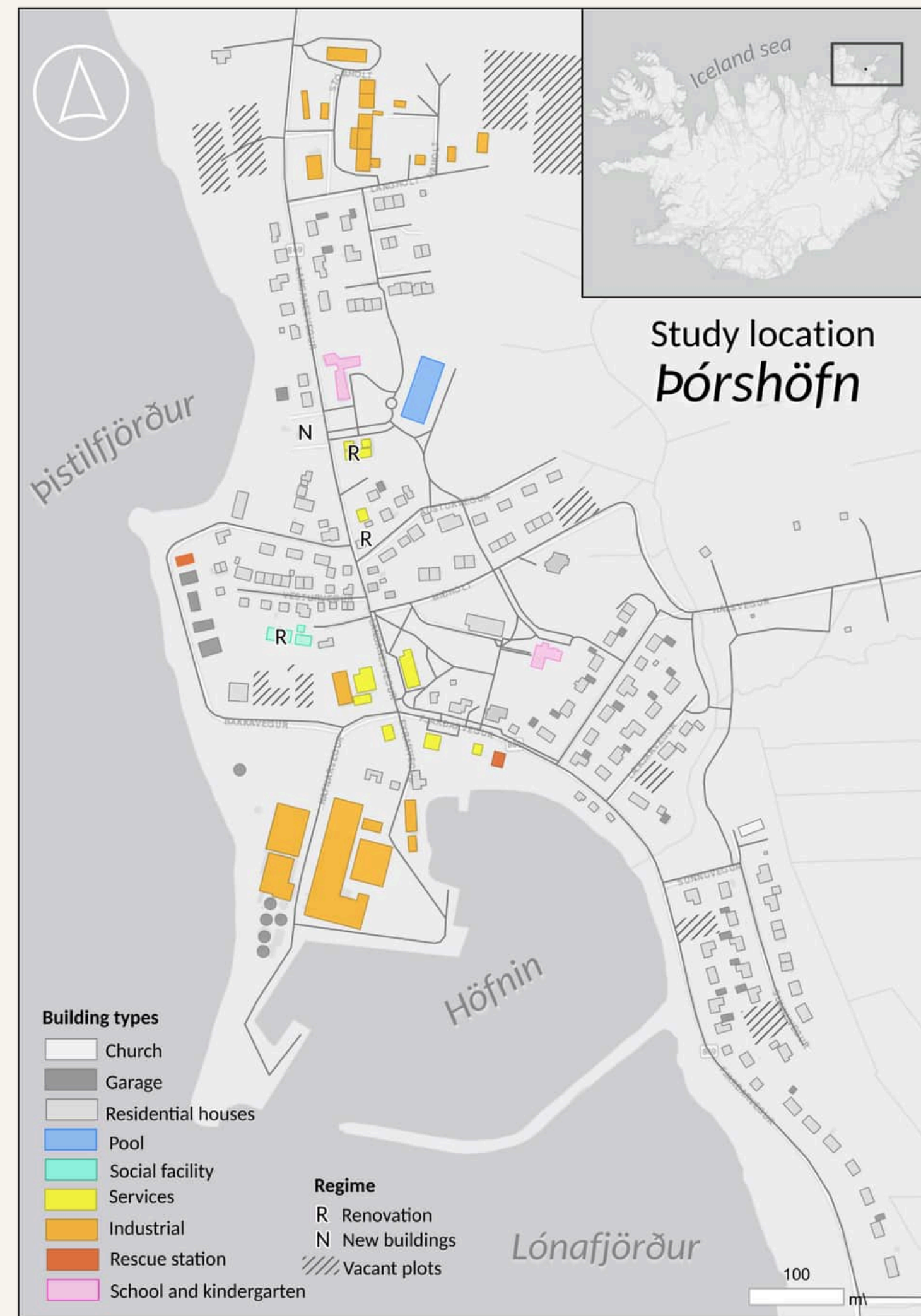


Fig 2. Location of the study site (Data: OSM, 2024)



RESULTS

ECONOMY: FISHING INDUSTRY



Quotas were kept in town

Rich history in fisheries

Biggest employer in the municipality



Fig 3. Image of a port (Canva, 2024)



High dependency on one big fishing company

Vulnerability of fisheries

Low wages, little attractiveness for Icelanders



Fig 4. Image of a port (Canva, 2024)

RESULTS

ECONOMY: AGRICULTURE



Population density is low and the terrain flat

Cooperation in the sector is common

Relatively good soil for livestock farming



Low motivation of young people to run a farm

Foreign import of food

Availability and cost of fertilizer

Soil degradation



Second most important economic sector in Langanesbyggð

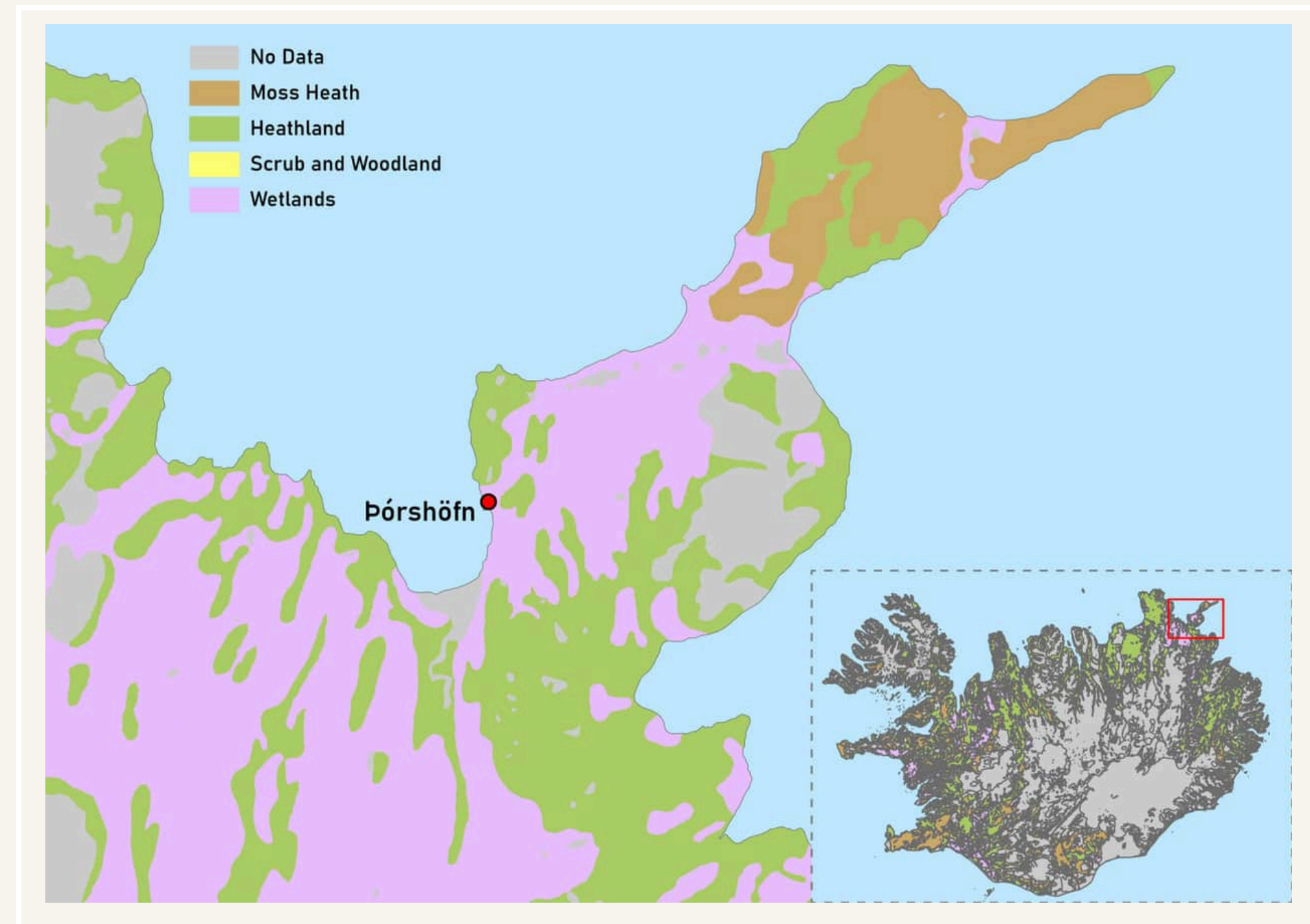


Fig 5. Vegetation types in the area surrounding Þórshöfn (Data: Icelandic Institute of Natural History, 2024)

RESULTS TOURISM

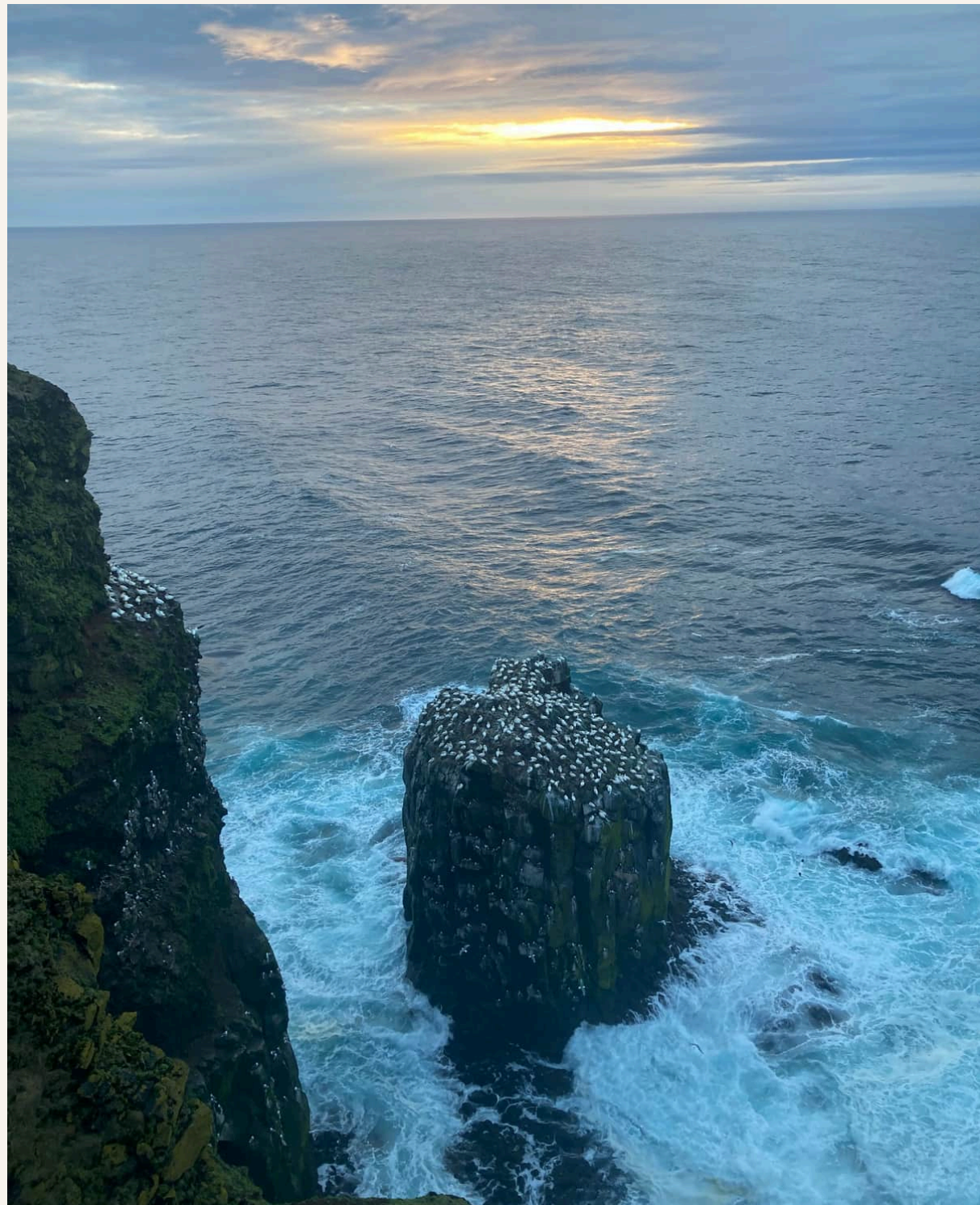


Fig 6. The Langanes cliff shore

TAIWAN. Thank you!
Karen Hay
Pennsylvania
Daniel Heimirson
Telma Heimirsdottir
Guani Þor Ólafsson
Takk fyrir Okkur

A steady incline of tourism in Þórshöfn can be expected



Overall tourism boom in Iceland

Importance of the environmental footprint of tourism

The social benefits of tourism

The place to make a short stop

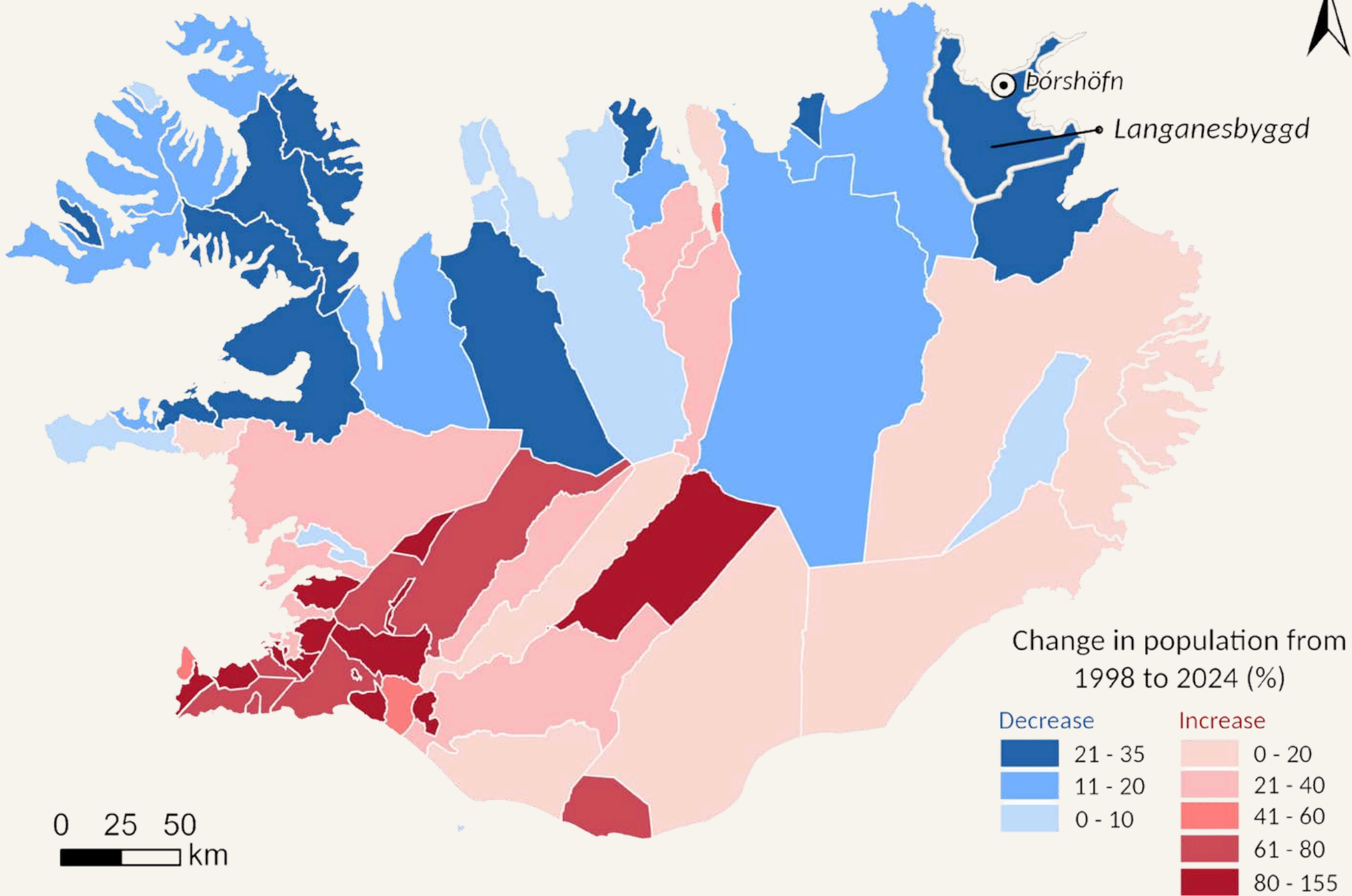
Development towards environmentally friendly tourism



RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE BY MUNICIPALITIES FROM 1998 TO 2024



POPULATION OF ÞÓRSHÖFN (1998 - 2024)

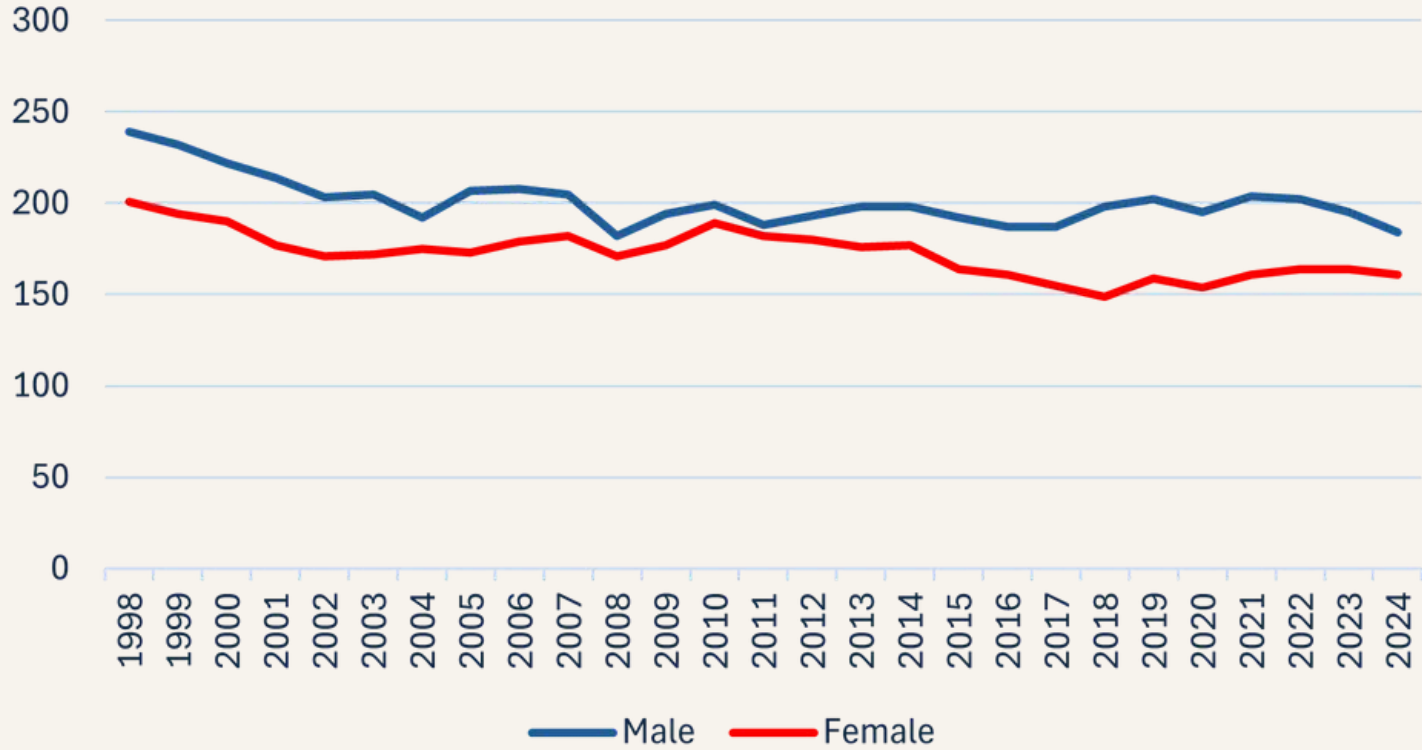


Fig 8. Male and female population in Þórshöfn from 1998 to 2024 (Statistics Iceland, 2024)

Fig 7. Population change by municipalities from 1998 to 2024 (Data: Statistics Iceland, 2024)

RESULTS

SOCIAL GROUPS

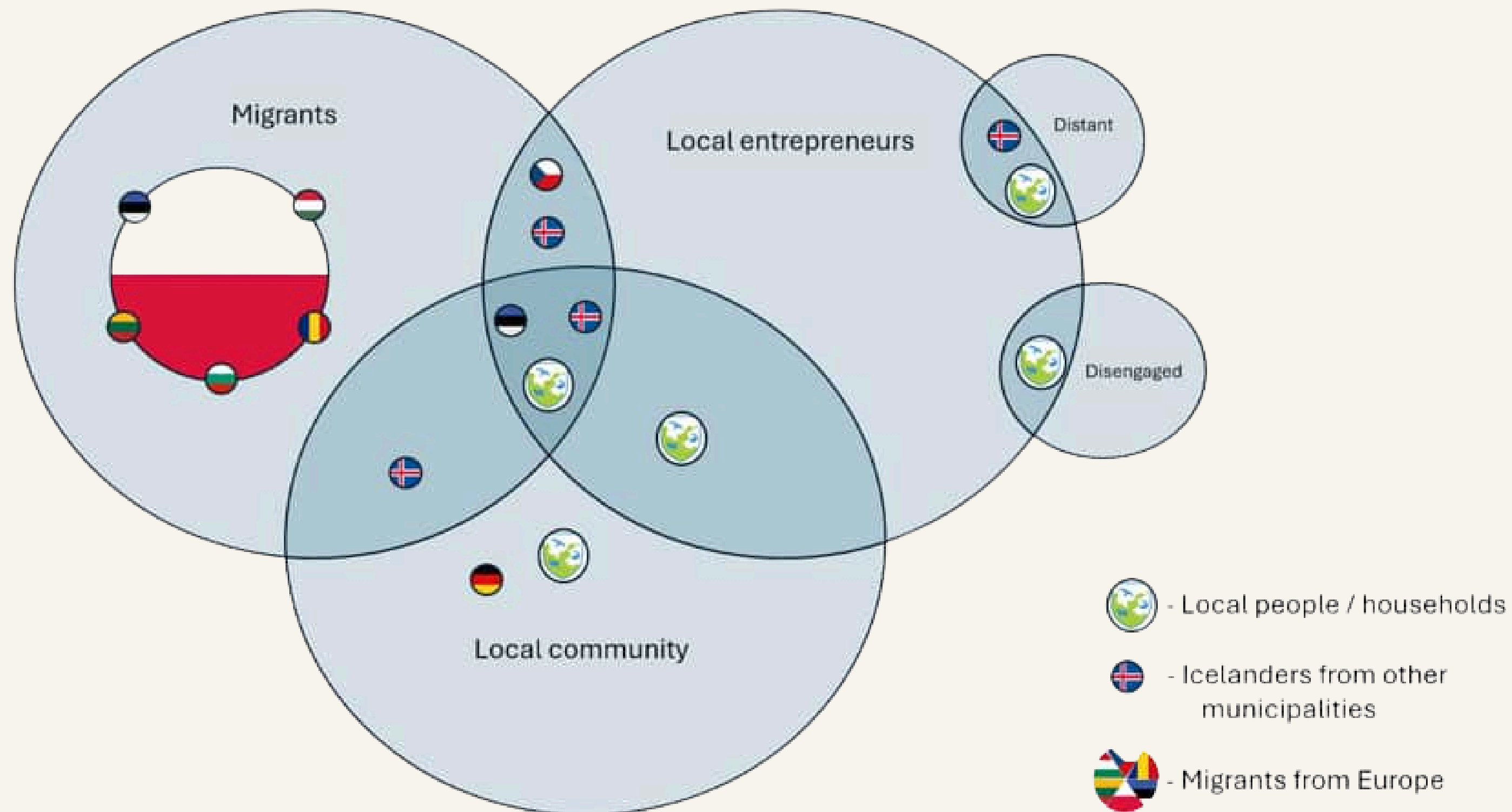


Fig 8. Venn diagram of Þórshöfn's community subgroups.

RESULTS MIGRATION

Þórshöfn has both internal and external migration patterns affecting the possibilities of right-sizing in the area.

Both the immigration and the emigration patterns have seen yearly fluctuations.

Possibilities of right-sizing in Þórshöfn are greatly influenced by the emigration from the town and the immigration to the town.

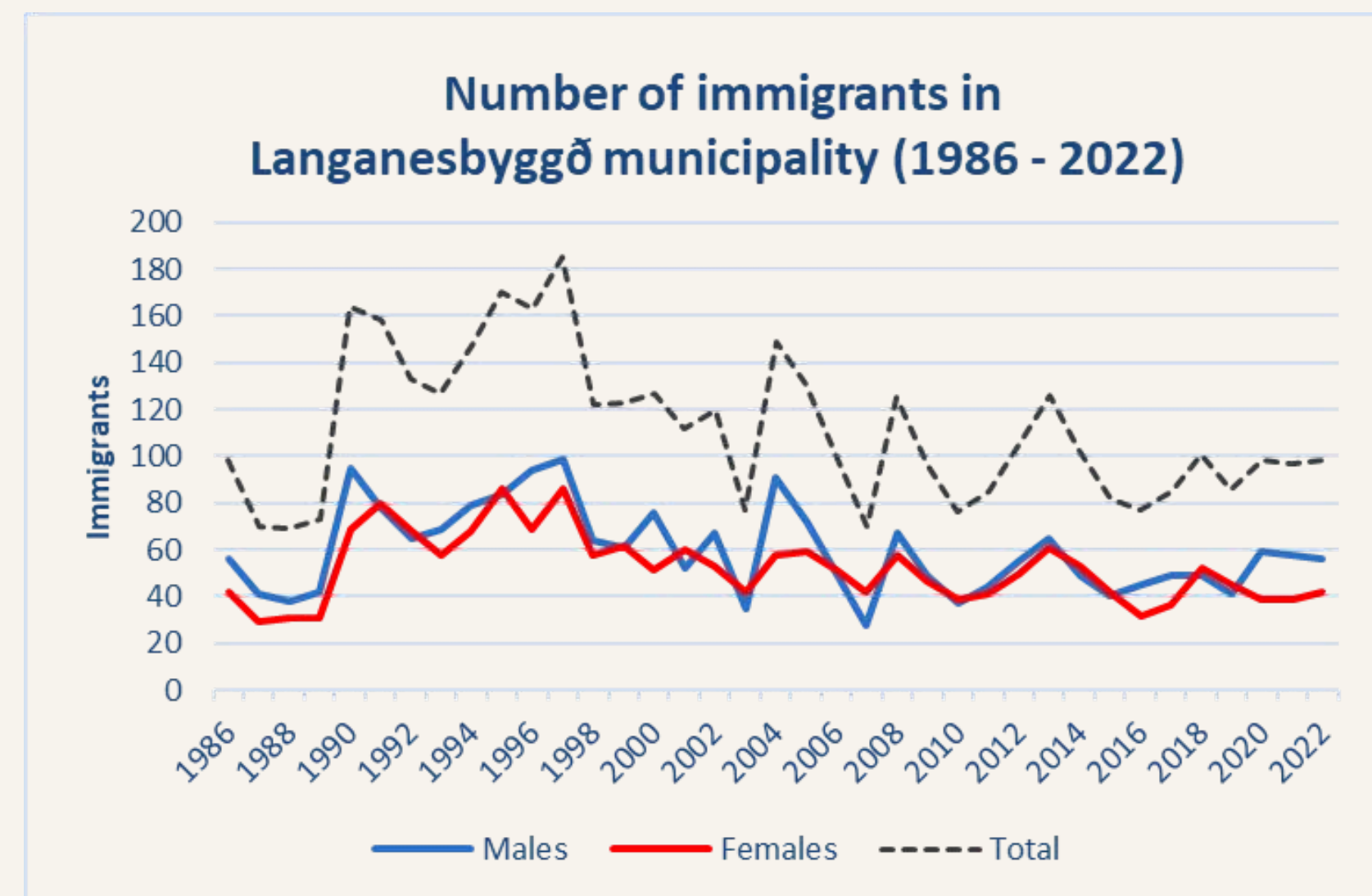


Fig. 9. Number of immigrants in the whole municipality of Langesbyggð.

RESULTS

LOCAL PERSPECTIVES: ÞÓRSHÖFN SURVEY

5. Hvernig ert þú tengdur þessum stað? Veldu eins marga og þú vilt *
How are you attached to this place? Choose as many as you want.

- Landslag / Landscape
- Friðsælt líf / Peaceful life
- Lágur íbúafjöldi / Low population
- Er með eign hér / Have property here
- Job / Job
- Fjölskylda / Family

Questions



Answers

5. Hvernig ert þú tengdur þessum stað? Veldu eins marga og þú vilt *
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5. Hvernig ert þú tengdur þessum stað? Veldu eins marga og þú vilt
How are you attached to this place? Choose as many as you want.

30 responses



Figures



DISCUSSION

Place attachment is formed in a strong relation with earlier residency in Þórshöfn and the municipality of Langesbyggð.

Movement of people to and from Þórshöfn creates a strong affective factor for right sizing rural development in the area.

Making decisions which concentrate on creating sustainable future pathways for all resident groups in the town would make right sizing a stronger reality in Þórshöfn.

Challenges for stable pathways of change as a slowly decreasing pool of residents is engaging in decision-making currently.

DISCUSSION

The existing population has to lead by example

Diversification of the economic sectors

Right sizing

Sustainable pathways of development



SCENARIOS

1

A slow shrinkage of Þórshöfn

2

A slow growth of Þórshöfn

3

Peripheralization of
Þórshöfn

SOURCES

Academic sources:

- Bowlby, J. (1997) *Attachment and loss*. Volume 1, Attachment. Pimlico ed. London: Pimlico.
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- Tomaney et al. (2023) Social infrastructure and 'left-behind places', *Regional Studies*. DOI: 10-1080/00343404.2023.2224828.
- Wilson, G. A. (2012) *Community resilience and environmental transitions*. Abingdon, Oxon; Routledge.

Figures:

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