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## Svalbard's Arctic Settlements: From Mining Sites to Urbanized Environments

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A century ago, Svalbard became the northernmost permanently inhabited Arctic archipelago when international treaties allowed multiple nations to extract coal and exploit the lands. The first settlements were founded as industrial production bases. Meanwhile, mining has gradually declined, but the previous settlements have become urbanized, which opens wholly new perspectives for Svalbard's present and future: A new university center is thriving; and local media and tourism industries are expanding. Local authorities use these developments to quantify urban growth in the last decades. They hope that this growth will eventually substitute previous mining activities and point towards a future that could make Svalbard a prime example of sustainable urbanization in the Arctic. We integrate novel digital humanities techniques with historical analysis and chemical screening of snowpack, which makes it possible to holistically evaluate the interplay between multiple layers of urbanization, tourism, research initiatives, and mining activities and relics as integral parts of a larger and constantly evolving cultural multifold. From this vantage point of view, a double-phased evolution becomes identifiable. In the 20th century, Svalbard's urban and cultural life diversified. The urban growth observed in the 21st century is a result of this initial diversification. This new perspective may help local authorities manage urban growth. In particular, we attract attention to urban and cultural diversification and suggest that diversity is a source for urban growth, rather than a mere byproduct thereof. In addition, the new results also constitute a further test for our previous work on Svalbard and on cultural diversification. In previous conference contributions, we showed that persistent environmental awareness formed in Svalbard only long after mining activity affected the environment. We now continue along these lines by proposing that the formation of persistent environmental awareness is only part of urban and cultural diversification, which includes the rise of diverse local cultures and identities. Beyond Svalbard, our past and present work may help policy makers and populations around the world understand diversification processes and their impact on urban and cultural growth.