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The Roles of Local Grocery Store for the Rural Community

– Considering Sustainable Community Development:
A case study in Västerfärnebo, Sweden

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sense of community, third place

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Abstract

Accessibility to different services like food, education, health and culture, etc. within a community is important to the quality of life of the inhabitants. However, there is a decreasing number of services in rural communities at different part of the world, including Sweden, because of the economic unsustainability. Even though many of the rural inhabitants in Sweden have high mobility and can travel to the other towns to access services, it still brings problems and is inconvenient to many of them. This study specifically focused on one kind of service, rural grocery store. The decreasing number of rural grocery store means many of the rural inhabitants lose their access to food in the local rural community. A qualitative case study compiled of nine interviews was carried out in a rural community, Västerfärnebo in Sweden. It was initiated to investigate the importance of a local grocery store in a rural community. The results of the study are presented with an operational resources framework (PEBOSCA framework), which is usually used for site analysis and construction of sustainability strategies for community development. The results suggested that the stores could be act as different types of resources to the community. The connections between the store and the concepts of third place (a social meeting place beyond work or home) and sense of community were being discussed for sustainable community development. A potential way to develop the store to becoming a better third place was also discussed, so to expand its roles in the community, thus the store could have a higher chance for a better economic income for sustaining itself.

Keywords: rural grocery store, rural community, community development, PEBOSCA framework, sense of community, third place

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1. Introduction

Sweden is a Nordic country traditionally depending on agriculture for its economy long time ago, which employed more than half of the population. However, according to Ivanova (2010), due to mechanization, it reduced the employment rate in the agriculture and forestry industry (as cited in Isacson, 2008; Johansson, 1998). The employment rate in the agriculture sector reduced from more than half at the beginning of the 20th century to about 20% in 1950 (Nations Encyclopedia, retrieved in 2016), and to about 2% in 2013 (Swedish Board of Agriculture, 2014).

Therefore, people needed to look for job opportunities in other industry. Meanwhile, more job vacancies were available in urban area. This encouraged people to migrate to the bigger towns, instead of staying in a small community. Today, Sweden is a country with mixed economy with different industries, like mining, forestry, telecommunication and motor vehicle, etc.

Nevertheless, there are still people staying in those small communities.

Sweden, with the size of 438 576 km², has 78 % rural area (European Commission, 2015).

Hedström & Littke (2011) point out that the small communities are usually situated in a rural setting, which have less service provision. There is also a decreasing number of grocery stores in rural area with decreasing population within the community. Therefore, there is a common problem in rural Sweden that people living in rural communities have problem with accessing services locally (Hedström, & Littke, 2011), including grocery stores.

Since this problem is not only happening in rural Sweden (Amcoff, et.al, 2011), but all over the world, every country would have its policy to deal with rural problems, so to help the rural development with the provision of public as well as private services. The European Union (EU) also has set of rural development policy for its members to follow, while Sweden is one of the members of EU. The rural development policy of the EU usually renew every 7 years. Even though the Swedish rural development program 2007-2013 had put efforts into establishing grocery stores with different partners in rural area, there are still large amount of small community lacking a local grocery store. The latest rural development policy 2014-2020 has the aim to help the rural areas of the EU to “*meet the wide range of challenges and opportunities that face them in the 21st century*” (ENRD, 2015). The policy basically focuses on a sustainable balance between environmental, social and economic development in rural area, and connection to the urban area. The 3 main focuses for 2014- 2020 are: “*improving the competitiveness of*

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agriculture; the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action; and a balanced territorial development of rural areas” (ENRD, 2015). There are also 6 priorities under the 3 focuses, which guide the member countries to establish their specific rural development program. The aims of the rural development policy from EU focus explicitly on the environmental, and agribusiness issues, but not so much on improving the rural life (ENRD, 2015).

In addition, according to European Commission (2015), the Swedish rural development program 2014-2020 priorities € 4.3 billion of public money in 7-year period between 2014 and 2020. In addition, € 558 million will be allocated to the basic services and village renewal in rural areas. This aims to increase the job market and improve the public services and infrastructure issues. However, it would only benefit about 50% of the rural population (European Commission, 2015). As mentioned before, there are still many issues fall into same aspect besides from the issue of rural grocery store. This could mean that the accessibility to local grocery store and food in rural community would still be a problem in the near further, and influence the rural inhabitants to fulfill their basic needs of food.

1.1. Problem Statement

Accessing services, including grocery store in some of the rural Swedish community could be a challenge. This gives impacts on the inhabitants' daily life (Amcoff, et.al, 2011), not only to the aspect of accessing different services, but also it could affect the social life of the inhabitants within the community. Lacking of social interactions between inhabitants within the community could affect their quality of life (Jocabs, 1993; Bridger & Luloff, 1999). This could even reduce the inhabitants' sense of community and lower the chance of improving the community (Kim & Kapla, 2004), thus hinders the community to develop towards a sustainable mode (see section 3.2). According to the 2014-2020 Swedish Rural Development Program, the efforts put into addressing the grocery store problem in rural area may not be enough.

Local grocery store in rural community provides the rural inhabitants access to human's very basic need- food, locally. The decreasing number of grocery store in rural area affect the inhabitants in different ways (Amcoff, et.al, 2011). By taking a closer look into one of the services in rural community, local grocery store, it would help to explore the connections between the local services like local grocery store and the community development.

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1.2. Research Question

How does a rural grocery store contribute to rural community development?

1.2.1. Sub- questions

- What are the roles of a local grocery store for rural inhabitants?
- How do the inhabitants perceive the problem of lacking grocery store?

1.3. Literatures review

The problem of lacking rural grocery store is being discussed in different parts of the world, for instance, the scholars in America. There is a decreasing trend of the number of rural grocery stores. The reasons behind this trend may be because of the decreasing population in rural communities, higher mobility so people combine work and shopping patterns, the increased chain grocery store facilities in bigger cities, etc. (Bailey, 2010). The researchers found out that the reduction pattern of rural grocery store would not only affect the people's willingness to stay in a community without food access, but also affect their purchasing patterns, their health, and creates social problem (Amcoff, et.al, 2011). In particular, the elderly and the villagers without personal car and low incomers would be affected the most since their mobility are lower (Bitto et. al. 2003; Bailey, 2010).

In Scotland, the villagers purchase the fresh food in the village stores about once a week (Scarpello et al. 2009). Whilst, some of the village stores provide postal and pharmaceutical service, so these village stores are actually important to the villagers for daily convenience. Woods (2005) and Scarpello et al. (2009) found out that village stores could not only act as a service provider that provide access to food and alternative food like locally produced, it also act as an "icon" so to give identity to a community. This could understand with the concept of sense of community, which use to characterize the relationship between individual and the social structure (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). In addition, "*Participants felt that the village store was an important meeting place, especially for isolated individuals, in particular older people and young mothers.* (Scarpello et al., 2009, p.111)" What is more, according to Basmanji & Rodriguez (2013), municipality of Kronoberg in Sweden admitted that "*grocery store is an important social meeting place that fulfills an essential function for the rural society*".

The village stores in Scotland have already "proved" that they have a social role to the villagers, and the municipality of Kronoberg in Sweden also admitted the grocery stores act as an important social meeting place. Even though the social function of a rural grocery store have

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been identified by different researchers, those works, including Basmanji & Rodriguez (2013) and Scarpello et al., (2009) did not put much emphasize and explanations about that role. Therefore, it could be necessary to carry out a study about the roles of rural grocery store in much more details analysis and explanation.

1.4. Objectives

- 1) To explore the roles a local grocery store plays to sustainable rural community development;
- 2) To provide details analysis on the social roles of the local grocery store for the community from the angle of third place, a place beyond home and work (see section 3.3);
- 3) To explore the connections between the roles of rural grocery store and the sense of community for sustainable community development.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

This study has to achieve open-ends research question, therefore, a design that include more qualitative research methods would be considered.

When working with case, it is important to be very careful in the choice of case for addressing the research problem. Creswell (2014) pointed out that case study is being adopted in different fields, and it allows researcher to do an in-depth study of an event with the boundaries of time and activities. Meanwhile Silverman (2014, p. 127) said that it could help “to investigate some general phenomenon”. Therefore, selecting a case for study would not only help to narrow down the geographical boundary, but also provide chances to evaluate the importance of local grocery store to a village, and how the community perceives the problem thoroughly. Bryman (2012) considered that different research method could be used for case study, for instance, qualitative methods like observation and interviews, which could provide details examination of a case; and quantitative methods like questionnaires. Also, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed method) could also be used for a case study (Bryman, 2012). With the time constraint, a case study was carried out with qualitative research methods, which could help to find out detailed explanations for each research question under a short period of time.

2.1.1. Case study

The case study was carried out in two parts. The first part was preliminary study, which aimed to become more familiarize with the topic, the location and the rural development program. It included research of related materials, e.g. literatures on the topic as well as the articles on newspaper and on websites. In the preliminary study, a local organization was found and was willing to give a first interview. The second part was the field study for collecting information, which included interviews and observations.

2.1.1.1. Sampling size and methods

The first field visit was carried out with a villager, and the first interview was done with a member of staff from the local organization, Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling, on the same day. Totally eight tape-recorded and transcribed semi-structured interviews have been done throughout the field study period. Seven of them were mainly in English, and one of them was in Swedish. In addition, one short informal interview without tape-recorded was done. The first few interviews were carried out with the snow ball sampling method, asking the interviewees to

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name others that could be identified as key informants. The remaining interview targets were met by talking to the community users in the center of Västerfärnebo, so as to understand real life in the area.

2.1.1.2. Interviews

The eight semi-structured interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. A set of interview questions was generated with the help of PEBOSCA framework (section 3.1), and also with reference third place, TP (section 3.3). The aims of the interview were to understand the views of interviewees on the local grocery store, their life in the community, and the links between their life and the store. The interview questions were being reviewed and edited after each field study if necessary, so as to create more accurate questions for the next interviews

Table 1 The code name of the interviews

Code name for the interview	Description
Interviewee 1	Member of a staff at Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling who does not live in the community.
Interviewee 2	59-year-old female resident who works in the village and lives with husband and two cats
Interviewee 3	29-year-old female resident who works in Västerås and lives with husband and two kids.
Interviewee 4	35-year-old male resident who works in Heby and lives alone.
Interviewee 5	28-year-old male resident who study in Sala and lives with his relatives
Interviewee 6	A man who dropped by the grocery store in Västerfärnebo from work (Uppsala) to home (Norberg).
Interviewee 7	The manager of the local grocery store
Interviewee 8	30-year-old male resident who lives alone, worked at the old grocery store for 7 years, and is now working in Sala.
Interviewee 9	A retired priest who lived in Västerfärnebo for few years and works in the Västerfärnebo-Fläckebo Congregation (VF Congregation) as part time.
Interviewee 10	The informal interview with a kid resident.

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2.1.1.3. Observation

During each field visit, observation method was adopted. The main observation locations were inside and outside the grocery store, and outside the Svartådalens café och service. The aims of the observations were to understand how the inhabitants use their community, and their habits when they use those places. Field notes were written down for recording. The data from the observations mainly contributed to the discussion with third place (section 6.2)

2.2. Literature study

Besides from reading the materials for preliminary research of the case, other set of literature research was done. The aims of the literature research were, to explore possible relationships between rural services to community development, and look for set of theories to analyze and discuss the connections between rural grocery store and sustainable community development. PEBOSCA framework which was used in sustainable community development (section 3.1), third place which focus on the social roles of a place (section 3.3), and sense of community which focuses on the experience of community (section 3.2) were identified as framework and concepts for this study. The literature research was carried out during the whole process of study, but most of the readings were finished before writing the discussion part.

2.3. Data Analysis

The analysis of collected information was carried out after the field study period. Meanwhile, the tape recordings were being transcribed right after each of the field visit.

This study adopted the analysis method with reference to the method stated in Graneheim & Lundman (2004). It starts by reading the transcription for few times, in order to get a sense of the whole material. Then units of analysis would be extracted out to comprise texts according to the units. These should then be condensed and labeled with codes. The various codes would be compared based on differences and similarities and sorted into different categories.

In this study, the transcriptions were being read for few times in order to familiarize with each case. Since the result would be presented with the PEBOSCA framework (section 3.1 and 5), seven aspects of PEBOSCA framework were used as codes to distinguish and extract the related materials. The extracted materials were put to the corresponding aspect. After that, those materials in each aspect were being further compared, so to find out the differences and similarities, thus to divide them into different sub-units under each aspect and to comprise the results.

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The results in PEBOSCA framework would be further discussed from the angles of TP (section 6.2.3) and sense of community, SOC (section 6.1).

2.4. Limitations

Language is one of the limitations for this study. Not all of the interviewees can speak English, but only Swedish. The interviewer can speak English, and only little Swedish, this affected the sampling. Also, the owner of the grocery store could only speak Swedish. The interviewer did the best to communicate with him in Swedish during interview. Some information may be missed due to the language problem. The interviewer could not formulate follow-up questions in Swedish as efficient as in English. One of the interviews was done with a villager who did the translation. However, it is possible that some of the information and explanations were missed during the translation process. Therefore tape recording is very important for not missing out on information. The interviewer could translate it during transcription.

A segment of the target groups could not be reached, the elderly, and the owner of the meat company who provide the grocery store with one of the popular items- good quality of locally produced meat. The reason for missing representatives from elderly is because the interviewer did not meet elderly on the street; and no one could refer the interviewer to an elderly who could speak English during snow-ball sampling. Therefore, the stories told by older villagers were missed. In order to fill this gap, the interviewer got the story from other interviewees about the situation of the elderly in the community.

3. Conceptual and theoretical framework

Three main frameworks were adopted in this study. In this section, the corresponding frameworks would be presented, discussed and related to the case.

3.1. Sustainable community development

Nowadays, when it comes to development, people tend to consider sustainable development. In the most well-known sustainable development framework, three dimensions would be considered: the environmental, the social and the economic, which was established in Rio de Janeiro 1992 (Berg, 2009). However, there could have a variety of interpretations to these three dimensions, which leads to a challenge to produce concrete policies for sustainable development according to Berg (2009, p22). When it comes to sustainable community development (SCD), the three dimensions could be too simplified framework that makes the three dimensions become vaguer, and it appears difficult to find an appropriate aspect for each dimension (Berg, 2009, p. 22). Furthermore, the focus of the SCD should be on the quality life of community, for instance, accessing to food, water and public services, sustainable local economy and living cost, etc. Therefore, the traditional sustainable development framework could not be ideal to produce SCD policies.

When comparing the traditional framework with the operational resources framework, which also called PEBOSCA framework (Berg, 2009, p.29), it considers variety angles for SCD with clearer distinction between each aspect. It is a framework that converting the Habitat Agenda in Habitat II conference 1996 to measurable resources. It contains seven equally important resources for consideration, instead of three. They are, physical, economic, biological, organizational, social, cultural and aesthetic (Berg, 2009).

Resource category	Examples
Physical resources	Clean water, air, energy, matter and land available to the residents of the community
Economic resources	Houses, roads, tools, knowledge, formal and informal economic services of importance to residents in the community.
Biological resources	Species, biotopes and ecosystems services in natural and culturally molded sites & landscapes in or connected to the community

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Organizational resources	Plans, orders, laws, infrastructures, services, formal and informal rules organizing the community
Social resources	Relationships, communication and cooperation between community inhabitants. Health status and level of well-being in community
Cultural resources	Shared knowledge of older and younger history and cultured patterns. Existence and shared appreciation of fine arts, traditions and ceremonies and of a common spirit or atmosphere, within or of specific significance to the community
Aesthetic resources	Sensuous (e.g. visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile or kin esthetical) impressions, influencing individuals' mood and well-being in the community

Berg (2009, p.30).

PEBOSCA framework aims for the usages of place and situation analysis and the creation of sustainability strategies for the communities (Berg, 2009, p.29). In this study, PEBOSCA framework was used in a different way. It was used to organize the roles of a local grocery store for sustainable community development as an interpretation tool. PEBOSCA framework was also used to develop questions for the interview together with the concept of third place, TP (section 3.3). The data collected from the field work was then being matched with the seven aspects in PEBOSCA framework and constituted the results (section 5) so to explore the roles of local grocery store for a sustainable rural community development.

A local grocery store in rural community could have other roles besides from the aspects stated in PEBOSCA framework for SCD. A local grocery store may also be regarded as a TP in the community (section 3.3), it could even increase the sense of community, SOC (section 3.2) with its function. Whiles, TP and SOC are also important to SCD.

3.2. Sense of Community (SOC)

Sense of community (SOC) is mainly used in sociological, psychological and urbanism studies. There is no lack of literatures and definitions on SOC (Kim & Kapla, 2004). The available literatures gave similar notions about SOC, but they gave different elements to define SOC for different purpose. The definition of SOC with four elements by McMillan & Chavis (1986) is the widely used one, “*Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be*

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met through their commitment to be together” (p. 9). McMillan & Chavis (1986) explained four elements that it proposed, i.e. (a) membership, (b) influences, (c) integration and fulfillment of needs, and (d) shared emotion connection. This definition tends to contribute to the psychological SOC (Xu, 2011).

Unger & Wandersman (1985) also gave related concept to SOC, which was neighboring (Plas & Lewis, 1996). However, it should be noticed that one of the differences between the concepts of neighboring and SOC is, neighboring has its geographically requirement, but SOC does not. In other words, SOC does not have to be geographically close.

Unger & Wandersman (1985) pointed out that neighbors often serve as support systems for individuals that provide emotional and material aid (p. 140). In addition, neighbors can be joined together to solve problems and create a better quality of life (Unger & Wandersman, 1985), which has a same consequence as the SOC, i.e. higher SOC could lead to a better chance of solving the community problem and improve the community. This is because a higher SOC could lead to a higher level of participation, and a higher motivation gathering together to solve problems; and in turn, more participation would lead to higher SOC (Levine and Perkins, 1997; Mannarini & Fedi, 2009). Therefore, SOC could be one of the important elements for a SCD as inhabitants have higher motive to participate in the community issues and to share their perspective.

Unger & Wandersman (1985) proposed three components for neighboring: (1) social interaction, includes social support and social networks; (2) neighboring cognition, includes cognitive mapping, symbolic communication, and the physical environment; and (3) affective bonding, includes sense of mutual aid, sense of community, and attachment to place. Furthermore, the social support in the components of (1) social interaction includes personal- emotional support, which means the relationship between inhabitants; instrumental support, which means inhabitants serve as informal helpers for one another; and provide informational support, which means inhabitants interact and exchange information. The cognitive mapping in (2) neighboring cognition means the map of the physical environment created by the inhabitants' knowledge and experiences, which could help to address the feeling of safe and fear within the community. The explanations of neighboring by Unger & Wandersman (1985) could be a better choice than that of McMillan & Chavis (1986) when it comes to the physical environment to SOC, especially the second and third components.

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Kim & Kaplan (2004) offered another model for SOC with four domains, which emphasized the roles of physical features in the community. The four domains are described in the table below:

Table 2 Four Domains of SOC by Kim & Kaplan (2004)

Domains	Sub-components
Community (or place) attachment	<p><i>(a) community satisfaction— when local residents find their homes and community satisfactory, they are likely to experience a strong community attachment;</i></p> <p><i>(b) sense of connectedness— residents feel attached to their community when it reminds them of their personal and community history and tradition and familiar environmental characteristics;</i></p> <p><i>(c) sense of ownership— when local residents feel they have a sense of control over their homes or community, such a sense of ownership can increase community attachment ; and</i></p> <p><i>(d) Long-term integration— long-term residence helps lead to long-term social integration into the local area, and such integration creates an emotional bond between residents and their homes and community.</i></p> <p>(Kim & Kaplan, 2004, p. 315).</p>
Community identity	<p><i>(a) uniqueness or distinctiveness— “being different” from others through associating with a group or a place;</i></p> <p><i>(b) continuity—physical properties of community maintain a link between residents’ past and present environments, which in turn helps preserve their own and community identities;</i></p> <p><i>(c) significance—self-esteem, pride, referring to a positive evaluation of oneself, the group, or the place with which one identifies;</i></p> <p><i>(d) congruence or compatibility—a “good” fit (i.e., “This is my kind of community”) exists when the environment facilitates people’s everyday lifestyle and when they can perform well in that environment; and</i></p> <p><i>(e) cohesiveness—the strong character of community expressed by a sense of homogeneity, intimacy, and compactness.</i></p> <p>(Kim & Kaplan, 2004, p. 316).</p>

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Social interaction	<p><i>(a) neighboring—interactions with residents living next door or on the same block;</i></p> <p><i>(b) casual social encounters—informal social contact between residents who do not know each other and are not neighbors;</i></p> <p><i>(c) community participation—interactions about community issues or engagement in community problems and related activities;</i></p> <p><i>(d) social support—friendship networks and the development of small groups that foster feelings of caring for each other.</i></p> <p>(Kim & Kaplan, 2004, p. 316).</p>
Pedestrianism	<p><i>(a) walkability—in a walkable community, the community’s physical environment is conducive to more walking and less driving;</i></p> <p><i>(b) pedestrian propinquity—residents may feel a sense of community if their community has necessary services within easy walking distance;</i></p> <p><i>(c) public transit—when the community center, workplaces, and other communities are reachable by public transportation, a community is likely to experience a sense of community and to promote less automobile dependency; and</i></p> <p><i>(d) pedestrian-scale and streetside activity—if a streetscape is designed to human scale to create a high-quality street environment, it can help residents to feel comfortable in engaging in streetside activities.</i></p> <p>(Kim & Kaplan, 2004, p. 317).</p>

There are different sets of elements to define SOC, none of the sets could be used to explain a situation thoroughly as SOC is a complex concept that can link to different issues. Each set of model has its advantages and disadvantages for each of a specific study. Since the most used set by McMillan & Chavis (1986) tends to study the psychological SOC, meanwhile this study is studying the roles of local grocery store, a physical item, to SOC, therefore the four elements by McMillan & Chavis (1986) could not work efficiently in this study.

The model by Kim & Kaplan (2004) is developed to focus on the roles played by the physical environment in fostering SOC (p.314), the local grocery store is a physical building that play different roles in the community, even to SOC. The model by Kim & Kaplan (2004) could be better suited for this study when compare with the most used model by McMillan & Chavis

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(1986). However, there are still some weaknesses in the model of Kim & Kaplan (2004). For instance, it defined social support just as friendship and network, which only focus on psychological feeling of human. Unger & Wandersman (1985) divided social support into three sub-items, which gives a more variety of angles to the item of social support. In addition, Unger & Wandersman (1985) considered the community cognition, which could relate to the safety issue that could affect the inhabitants' satisfactory with the place. Therefore, the model by Kim & Kaplan (2004) was used and complemented by the model by Unger & Wandersman (1985) for this study.

3.3. Third place (TP)

According to Urry, J. (2012) and Oldenburg (1999), the places beyond work and households are third places (TPs). By carrying out conversation at TP, it could help to develop human relationships and understand the society, thus filling the human need of “intimacy and affiliation” (Oldenburg, 1999). Therefore TP could make a community come into being, and neighborhood life can be sustained (Urry, 2012). It could also help to strengthen the SOC of the inhabitants as a local platform for them to develop their social network, which could assist the social interaction within the community and satisfy the inhabitants' needs thus higher their community satisfaction. Oldenburg (1999) mentioned eight characters of a TP: on neutral ground; leveler; conversation is the main activity; accessibility and accommodation; the regular; the mood is playful, and; a home away from home.

Table 3 Brief description of the 8 characters of a third place by Oldenburg (1999)

Characters	Description
On a neutral ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -None is required to act as host for gathering. -People can develop informal and intimate relations. -Important to the unity of neighborhood. -People can feel they can escape from life at that place.
Leveler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An inclusive place that general public can access. - Individual can learn their workmates in different aspect. - Acceptance of everyone, even people failing in life.
Conversation is the main activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conversation help the leveling process, e.g. the upper class talk with the working class at the place. - Interruption of conversation is annoying, e.g. music.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combination of conversation and other activity, e.g. worship.
Accessibility and accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High accessibility that people can go almost anytime, with long opening hour to accommodate people with long working days. - Presence of acquaintance. - Ready to serve people's needs for sociability and relaxation
Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having basic lures, e.g. seating capacity, parking, price, etc. - Having the right people coming to give the place characters and make it alive is the most important lure. - New comer would be suspected by the group of frequent visitors, and new comer would take time to be in the "group".
Low profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unimpressive looking for most part and not elegant. - Not advertised. - Not built with the aim of providing socializing function, but people make it as a third place - No need to dress up to visit the place
The mood is playful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serious topic would be out of place - Magic elements exist to warm the insiders, and remind the outsiders that they are not yet part of the group
A home away home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A comfortable home with congenial environment in a public setting - Hosts people with similar characters - Offering fewer activities than at real home - Existence of freedom so people can come and leave

Although most of the examples given by Oldenburg (1999) for explanations are bars and coffee shops, a rural grocery store could also carry some of these characters. As mentioned in section 1.3, the social function of a rural store has been accepted by municipality of Kronoberg (Basmanji& Rodriguez, 2013) and in Scotland (Scarpello et al.,2009), and it is also a place beyond home or work to many villagers, therefore the rural grocery store could act as a TP in the community.

What is more, every TP attracts different types of people in the community according to the characters of "regular" and "a home away home". Therefore, even if there are 1-2 TPs available

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in a rural community, since these TPs gather different people, the local grocery store in rural community could still fill the role to host other types of people that other TPs are missed.

The concept of TP would be used to analyze the results that presented by PEBSOCA framework, and the data that obtained from field observation. The materials would further utilize to discuss the potential ways of the rural local grocery store to become a better TP in the community, thus to enrich its social role. The social interactions carried out in the TP may help the inhabitants achieve a higher identity to the community and security (Berg, 2009, p. 156), and hence to SOC. The connections between the grocery store as TP and the inhabitants' SOC would be elaborated.

4. Area of Study- Västerfärnebo

Västerfärnebo is a very old village in Sweden. Interviewee 8 mentioned there were people living in the area since the Stone Age. It was an agricultural village where most of the population was engaged in local farming activities. Nowadays, most of the villagers no longer depend on the agricultural industry. People now travel to other town, like Sala, Avesta and Västerås for work or school (interviewee 9). Villagers leave the village in the early morning, and come back home after work and after finishing other errands. The population has a very high mobility.

4.1. Geography and Demography

Västerfärnebo is situated in Västmanland County of central Sweden, and belongs to Sala municipality. It is about 23km away from the town- Sala; about 31km away from Avesta; and about 43km away from Västerås.



Figure 1|Location of Västerfärnebo. Retrieved from GSD-Översiktskartan © Lantmäteriet.

Västerfärnebo has a total area of 96 hectares. According to Statistics Sweden (2011), there were 477 people who lived in the village in 2010. 250 were female and 227 were male. 86 female and 56 male were older than 65 years old (Statistics Sweden, 2011).

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4.2. Community

There are a few main buildings in the village, a café, a church and its building for assembly (Västerfärnebo-Fläckebo Congregation (VF Congregation)), a pizzeria, a school up to Grade 6 and a grocery store.

4.2.1. Svartådalens café och service

In this small rural village, there is a local organization called Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling which locates in the community center. The building of this office offers pharmaceutical services, a tourist information center, a counter for postal service, and a small café. Generally, the building is being called Svartådalens café och service. It has its own website for the organization, tourist information and a Facebook page for the café. It has regular opening hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 11am- 4pm; Tuesday and Thursday, 11am- 6pm; and Saturday, 10am-2pm. There are usually not much people being in this place. Many of them leave the place right after they have finished their errands, like getting the package, or buying everyday fresh baked bread. Some of them may stay a bit longer for coffee and chatting with friends. In addition, Svartådalens café och service is the venue for village meetings, and Svartådalens café has organized knitting interest group meeting.



Figure 2 The building with café, postal counter, tourist information center and a local organization- Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling. By Kit Wa Lai, 2016.

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Figure 3 Inside of the building: tourist information center. By Kit Wa Lai, 2016.



Figure 4 Inside of the building: cafe and postal counter. By Kit Wa Lai, 2016.

4.2.2. VF Congregation

VF Congregation is established for holding religious activities. It is an inclusive place for people to meet with religious atmosphere, it welcomes all the people. It locates in the center of Västerfärnebo, opposite to the grocery store. Therefore the inhabitants of Västerfärnebo can walk to the place. There are also a lot of people coming from Fläckebo and Salbohed to visit the place. It offers different activities and advertises them on the local newspapers and internet. Thus, people have chances to gather, for instance, the children's choir, soup lunch on every Wednesday, worship, etc. People usually go there only when there is activity, not at other times. Each of the activity organized by the VF Congregation has its target people.



Figure 5 the Church. By Kit Wa Lai, 2016.

4.2.3. The School

The school in Västerfärnebo offers education from Grade 1 to 6 (for the kids at 7-12 year old). It organized classes up to grade 9 (the corresponding age of the kid is 16) before. However, in 2012, the school cancelled the classes of grade 7-9. According to interviewee 9, this act reduced the number of pupils going to this school. Their parents would rather send them to the school in Sala or Avesta. Therefore many kids and young teenagers also need to travel for schooling, and would not spend a lot time in the village.



Figure 6 the map of the main community services. Retrieved from GSD-Fastighetskartan © Lantmäteriet.

4.2.4. The Grocery store

The information of the following paragraph was provided by interviewees 4 and 8.

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There were a few grocery stores in the village of Västerfärnebo long time ago, Konsum in Västerfärnebo owned by Coop was one of the stores. It lasted for the longest time. The building is still remaining in the village and used as a grocery store but with different owners. Konsum in Västerfärnebo was established in 1915. It was a chained grocery store. Coop owned a lot of supermarkets in cities and small stores in the countryside. The strategy of Coop at that time was sharing profit. For instance, the stores that had more profits would compensate and support the stores with less profit. However, until 2004, the strategy was changed, each store should make its own profit. Meanwhile, a lot of small grocery stores in the countryside did not make a lot of profit. Therefore a lot of small stores owned by Coop in countryside had to shut down. Konsum in Västerfärnebo was one of them that was forced to close since it could not make enough profit. After that, there was a private person continuing the grocery store right after Konsum had shut down. It was being renamed to “Handlar’n”. The villagers did not face the problem of lacking grocery store in the village during that time. However in March 2006, the shop was bankrupted and had to shut down. This was because it did not have enough customers and no profit. The villagers experienced the life without a grocery store in village for a year.

In March 2007, a group of local people reopened the shop with mortgage from the bank. The store was named “Västerfärnebo Handelsbod”. The strategy used by this store was running like Konsum with membership system. It had over 100 members, some of them were living in Stockholm and had a summer house in this area. However, the grocery store did not hold for a very long period since there were inadequate customers and with high loan needing to be repaid. It shut down again in February 2015.

The villagers had to experience again the life without a local grocery store. Interviewee 1 mentioned the local organization- Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling was planning to open a smaller grocery store. However, there was another person who would like to reopen the store, so Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling withdrew the plan (Interviewee 1). In October 2015, the grocery store- Västerfärnebo Livs reopened by a non-local person who has experience running the small grocery store. This is also the only grocery store that surviving in Västerfärnebo today.

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Figure 7 Västerfärnebo Livs in February 2016. By Kit Wa Lai, 2016.

Besides from the bigger grocery stores in other town like Avesta, Västerås and Sala, the nearest grocery store to Västerfärnebo is in Salbohed, which is about 6.5 km away from Västerfärnebo. The grocery store there is chained, with the name “ICA Nära Köplusten”. This is also a small scale grocery store.

4.3. Rationale of choosing this location

In Västerfärnebo, most of the inhabitants have experienced the life with and without a local grocery store for at least once. Therefore, the inhabitants know the differences between life with and without a local grocery store and would be able to narrate how their life is being changed with the availability of a local grocery store. This would help to investigate what a local grocery store means to the rural population.

Even though the service provided by the grocery store now is only selling groceries, with no extra roles like postal service or tourist service since they are available at other place. The differences between past and now would be important to identify the roles of a grocery store for the community.

5. Results

Västerfärnebo is a small community. According to the field work, the inhabitants have a high motive to overcome problems with the help of a local organization, Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling. The inhabitants usually gather together and actively discuss possible solutions to tackle problems in the community. For example, during the research period, they had discussed problems with the postal and pharmaceutical services, the local school and choice of internet provider. A public meeting was held with the assistance of Svartådalens Bygdeutveckling. There were more than 100 people attending, some of them were from other neighborhood areas like Salbohed. During the meeting, there were people explaining each problem with active communication with the audiences (inhabitants). After that, all the participants separated into small groups to discuss their views and possible solutions for each problem. The community in Västerfärnebo has an atmosphere that encourages people to solve problems, instead of living with problems.

The results of the study are being presented using the PEBOSCA framework.

5.1. PEBOSCA framework

5.1.1. Physical

For the physical aspect of the PEBOSCA framework, Berg (2009) considered the availability of water, air, land, food, etc. to the community. These help to nourish the community with secure sustainable life support. Particularly, the food availability focuses on primary local production to considerate sustainability to the community. However, most of the food, including the primary production, is industrialized and produced in large scale. In Sweden, and other developed countries, importing food from other countries, and other regions is usually inevitable. Therefore, in this section, the food availability in the community would be considered as the local accessibility to food, rather than production of food locally.

Access to food

The store studied in this project is a grocery store, a retailer of food and commodities. The store obviously increases the accessibility of food for the inhabitants in the village. Although the store is a small shop, it can still satisfy many residents' needs in terms of food and commodities.

“When I go there, I can buy cat food, milk, meat, potatoes, vegetables, they have.. I think they have lot.” Interviewee 2.

“The store maybe missing some part in the freezer, but I can live with that.” Interviewee 3.

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In this community, some of the people seldom do their grocery shopping in the local store. It is because they travel to other towns like Sala and Västerås for work every day. Their habit is shopping grocery after their works. Even though they do not use the store at all, they still agree that the shop is an important resource to get food locally. For instance, the store is located in the center of the community, therefore it is especially important to the elderly who do not travel daily, sick people who cannot travel and people who have no car to travel to other towns.

“The effects mainly to those people who are not able to drive, without their car”, and “for me, I own a car, I can go whenever I want to wherever I want. So to me, it’s not a problem like that.....To other people who don’t have a car, it can be difficult.” Interviewee 4

“It’s most important for the elderly people. When we take away and they... maybe they don’t have a car to drive, so something like that. It’s important I believe.” Interviewee 1

During the period that the store closed, people usually need to access grocery stores in other towns, where the nearest grocery store is in Salbohed, which is 6.5 km away from Västerfärnebo.

5.1.2. Economic

According to Berg (2009), the decisions and the rules made by the state and other public organizations have the leading roles to affect the economy of the whole society, or the nation, which is the macro-economy. This would also indirectly affect the community and its functions (Berg, 2009, p.58). Generally, a small scale local shop cannot contribute to the macro-economy. But it could affect the micro-economy. The locals and private players affect the organization and function of local community (Berg, 2009, p.60). The grocery store in Västerfärnebo could affect the microeconomic in the village (local economy) in three ways as follow.

Direct stimulation to local economic

Money, like blood, has to flow around in order to make the body (community) alive. Inhabitants spend their money to buy groceries in local grocery store could help the money stay in the community, rather than to the chain supermarket, or somewhere else which could not benefit the locality at all. Thus, other businesses in the community could also benefit and keep their business going. For instance, the grocery store sells locally produced meat according to interviewee 7.

When the consumers come to access their grocery and meat, it could also help the meat production company since the store would keep purchasing meat from them. That is the idea of the blood flow within the community.

In addition, many of the interviewees think that the meat offered by this store is very good. This

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attracts not only the locals for consumption, but also people in other areas. For instance, interviewee 6 who lives in Norberg is attracted by the meat offered there. He works in Uppsala, and he usually drives through to the store to get the meat on his way home from work. The day that the interviewer met him, he also purchased other things from the shop, like ice-cream. This lure (selling good meat) helps to attract the non-local money to flow into the local economy. The money may also help to sustain the business of the store itself, which would maintain the local accessibility to food and commodities. Therefore, purchasing groceries at local store is actually helping the inhabitants themselves to continue the local accessibility to groceries, and boost the local economy.

Indirect stimulation to local economic

In Västerfärnebo, there are not many places for people to socialize. When there was no grocery store, people would not go from home to the community center so frequently according to interviewee 2 and 3. This is because they may have no reasons to get out, unless they needed to go to the Svartådalens café och service to get mail, or to the church for different activities. The existence of grocery store gives another reason for the people to go out to the community center. Hence, this could probably increase the usage of the café. For instance, interviewee 4 suggested a possible situation that, when people go and get groceries, they may also think of going to the café and grabbing a cup of coffee since he/she is already here. This act stimulates the economy of other businesses within the community.

The grocery store, together with other business in the community provided a variety of services within the locality. The multifunctional market that has established in the community could be an incentive to other business and establish themselves in the community (Berg, 2009). “The establishment of shops and other commercial services strongly affect the practical function and everyday life of community” (Berg, 2009, p.60). The establishment of new business could enrich the economic situation with new innovation for the community, and increase the job availability in the community. The everyday life of the community could be also changed and create other new economic opportunities.

Price of the property

The price of the property, like housing, could be affected in different ways. The accessibility to different services and availability infrastructures in local area play roles on it. In Sweden, the price of the housing is usually lower in small town, and even cheaper in most of the rural

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villages. This is because there are less infrastructures and lower accessibility to services within the community. Therefore the price of property would usually become lower if there are less/no services within the community, vice versa. Since the grocery store provides access to food as mentioned before, therefore the price of the housing in Västerfärnebo could be fluctuated with the existence of a store.

5.1.3. Biological

In this study, the biological aspect of the store is not prominent on PEBOSCA framework. There is no evidence that the store acts as a biological resource for the community.

5.1.4. Organizational

It is important for sustainable community to create a nice commercial atmosphere and to obtain enough services in order to fulfill the residents' needs (Xu, 2011, p.24; Berg, 2009, p. 151).

Therefore accessibility to resources and services could affect the willingness of people to live in a place regards to the convenient issue. For instance, if people want to move in a small community with the size like Västerfärnebo, they would also consider if they can access different services, including a grocery store locally.

Daily Convenience

The presence of grocery store brings convenience to the inhabitants. When they are missing some ingredients for cooking, they do not have to spend almost an hour for travelling and getting the things that they need. Rather, they can just walk to the store, which is located at the center of the community, right opposite to the bus stop. One of the observations during field study could help to illustrate the situation: There was a grandmother going to the shop with her grandchildren on a weekday afternoon. They walked to the cemetery from their home, and then walk to the store for baking ingredients. If there was no grocery store in Västerfärnebo, either they could not bake, or had to travel to other community for the ingredients.

Also, interviewee 2 pointed out that she can get the ingredients that she missed without driving when she is cooking.

Shopping Pattern

When the local grocery store in Västerfärnebo was closed, it brought changes to the inhabitants' life. The people who have no car, sick people, elderly, and the people who do not travel so often experienced the most significant impacts. They had to travel to the other communities, like Salbohed, or Sala to do the grocery shopping. According to interviewee 4, some of them had to

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travel with the public transport which do not provide frequent services; some of them traveled with people who have a car. For instance, 2-4 of them gathered on a day, and travelled with a resident who have a car to Sala to do the shopping. Some of them made order from the grocery store in Salbohed, which offers delivery service. These were the possible ways for the community to overcome the challenge.

However, these solutions had lots of constraints since those inhabitants could not control all the things. They could not shop whenever they wanted; they could not get the things whenever they need. So they might need to buy a very large amount of groceries every time for security purpose. For instance, people may need to buy extra potatoes, or salt since they may not sure when would they do grocery shopping again. Therefore, the frequency of doing shopping and the amount of each shopping could be affected regards to the existence of a local grocery store.

Movement pattern

According to Hjort, S., & Malmberg, G. (2006), there is a new pattern of migration. In the old time, people used to move to the place that is near to their work. Nowadays, fewer people move nearer their workplace, and more people move for other reasons. The housing conditions, living environments and social conditions would always be the concerns whenever people want to migrate to either rural or urban areas (Garvill et al., 2002; Lundholm et al., 2004; Hjort, S. & Malmberg, G, 2006). Hedström, & Littke (2011, p. 54). Services supply (including grocery store) would affect the migration trends.

“If there is no grocery store in a community, there would be less chance to move there if you are looking for a new place to live. You will see that you don’t have these everyday services that you need. Then you might have to live in somewhere else that these services are provided.”

Interviewee 6

This indicates that the existence of a grocery store in a local community could affect the immigration and emigration rate of the community as mentioned at the beginning of this section.

5.1.5. Social

Contribution to the inhabitants’ social relationship with community

According to Berg (2009), one of the criteria of establishing a good life for inhabitants in a community, is making it a nice place to live with production, consumption and culture.

Additionally, different services provided in the community, including a store could enrich the life in community (Berg, 2009). A store is a public place to the community where everyone can

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access. Eriksson (2010) suggested that a shop is one of the places that can meet people and neighbors in public.

The local grocery store in Västerfärnebo is a place for the community to maintain their relationships with other inhabitants, particularly it contributes to the elderly's social life. Interviewee 3 moved to the community in August 2015. She doesn't have so much social connections in the community. She thinks the store is important for her social life, since it offers her a chance to meet the inhabitants in the local store within the community.

The store could help the inhabitants to expand their social life in the community. This place could be the platform for the strangers evolve their relationship to acquaintance as it increase the daily possibility for them to encounter. Thus it may help to build their social relationship gradually by meeting in the store.

Besides from establishing relationship between stranger inhabitants, it could also help to maintain the relationship between inhabitants.

“People know each other quite a lot here. If you go in (the store), there is someone else in the shop, of course you have to chat with them. Also, you get to know people work in the shop, and it's nice to go.” Interviewee 9. Interviewee 9 also gave an example with elderly who grew up in the community, instead of sitting at home for the whole day, they can at least talk with the staff at the shop.

“People get there and get the groceries, they can just stop and talk about things.” Interviewee 8. *“My father is an example. He has a shopping list to shop the groceries. Maybe it can take 10 minutes to shop. But it could be long for an hour because he met a lot of people there and talk with them.”* Interviewee 4.

“I think it's more important for the older people that don't meet so many people. It's important. I have my social life here (the work at the church). But if I don't have this, the shop would be important, because in the shop, I can talk to people, and see people” Interviewee 2.

The store not only offers a public arena for people to meet, but also offers daily possibility for people to meet within the community. A few of interviewees, including Interviewee 2, 3 and 7, pointed out the area around the shop was very empty and dead when the store was closed. Residents did not come out as often as the time when the local grocery store was open. Once the store reopened, there are more people walking on street since they are going for grocery

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shopping, this increases the daily possibility for the residents to bump into each other on the street.

“It is good to have a local store, so you can have more chance to go around.” Interviewee 3.

5.1.6. Cultural

Berg (2009) mentioned that traditions of a community could be transferred between generations by different activities, like celebrations of seasons.

Local tradition

The store has been existing in Västerfärnebo for a very long time. Interviewee 4 responded as follow when the interviewer asked him why the people wanted the store to reopen: *“Tradition, many people feel like we always have the shop here, we must have one.”* The inhabitants who have long rooted in village would think the store is the sign of their community, or even a tradition.

In addition, the old Konsum was operated like a union with strong attachment to the inhabitants. So some of the inhabitants today still feel like they have the obligations to save and keep the store.

“The history of the Konsum is like an underground movement at the beginning. The history of Konsum was like a movement, a lot of people was gotten united.” Interviewee 4.

In brief, the inhabitants think that the presence of the store is a tradition for Västerfärnebo and it should not be gone. Even though the store has changed few owners, the store is still being attached to the community since the Konsum period.

Sustaining the national tradition

Lanthandelns dag, in English is “Village Shop Day”. The village shops would usually celebrate that day on the last Saturday of July. During that day, the shops would invite inhabitants for coffee and cake. In old days, the Konsum in Västerfärnebo would also hold party outside the area of the shop. People would gather together, drink coffee, chat and listen to music. However, when Konsum closed, this culture no longer exist in Västerfärnebo according to interviewee 8. Rather, some of the interviewees suggested that it is still being celebrated in other village. Therefore, a rural grocery store, could have traditional meaning to a community.

Lördagsgodis means Saturday Sweets in English. This is a tradition and important to every Swede, especially the kids. People eat sweets on Saturday. This is a day they are always looking forward to. This tradition is being followed by many families in Sweden. Parents only allow their

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kids to buy and eat sweets on Saturday. The grocery store in Västerfärnebo also offers sweets. Hence, the kids and other inhabitants could also buy sweets on Saturday without leaving the community. Interviewee 10 said he was sad when the store was closed because he couldn't get the sweets and hang out with friends. Therefore the presence of the local grocery store offers a chance for the community to participate in different traditional activities, and hence sustaining the tradition.

5.1.7. Aesthetic

Aesthetic is a multisensory concern, which could include see, hear, feel, smell, etc. In this study, the results in aesthetic aspect is tending to the prospective of feeling.

An image of a vital community

Many of the interviewees think that the operation of the grocery store makes the community become more energetic since there are more people coming out to the community.

“It's important for a village to have a shop, and have things, which make it possible to live here. To get the live going out, that mean, you need a shop, you need a school, and you need the church. You need all these.” Interviewee 9

At the same time, some of the inhabitants who do not use the store so often, including interviewee 4 also agree with that it is important to have store here so to make Västerfärnebo more like a community.

“They (the young) also think it's important. They think that it's important to get the school back, they think that it's important to have the church. But they don't use it.” Interviewee 9.

In short, the store is one of the important items to structure the image of Västerfärnebo as a complete, vital, and lively community.

5.2. Summary

The results shows that the local grocery store in Västerfärnebo can play the roles as six types of resources to the community, i.e. physical, economical, organizational, social, cultural and aesthetical resources. In addition, the local grocery store act as a physical resource that provides food accessibility is widely accepted by the inhabitants. It provides daily convenient for accessing food, and act as an organizational resource for the convenient and give affection to shopping pattern. Also, the social role of the local grocery store is one of the frequent mentioned points. Interviewees think the store could assist the socially interaction within the community by increasing the daily possibility to meet in community. But the interviewees mentioned that it is

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mainly valid to the retired inhabitants. What is more, the inhabitants believe that local grocery store gives the community acted as a symbol that it is a vital completed community, with more people walking in the community and provides basic services. The results of this study match with the literatures reviews in section 1.3 that the store has an important social role in community and acts as an “icon” to give identity to a community. However, the store does not contribute to the biological aspect in PEBOSCA framework. To sum up, with the results from different available studies, in general, a local grocery store could have that six roles to a rural community, or even could be applied to a small community. But in each specific case, the details of each roles could be varied slightly, especially the cultural aspect, for instance, the length of existence of the grocery store in the community could influence the result.

6. Interdisciplinary analysis and discussion

In the previous chapter, it was already mentioned that the local grocery store plays cultural and aesthetic roles to the community. The findings could be understood by the concept of sense of community (SOC). SOC is important for sustainable community development, as it act as foundation for strengthening and preserving community (McMillan & Chavis (1986). This chapter would discuss how the store contributes to the SOC with the findings available. Besides, the social role of the grocery store and the possibility to enhance its social role would be further discussed with the concept of third place (TP), for instance, turning it to a better TP. In turn, it could contribute to SOC, and hence the community development.

6.1. Sense of Community (SOC)

6.1.1. The store is being attached to the SOC in Västerfärnebo

Community is an affective place, where inhabitants usually develop emotional bonding with it (Mannarini & Fedi, 2009). According to interviewee 4, some of the inhabitants in Västerfärnebo bonded with the local grocery store, even when it has changed few owners in recent ten years. The store assists the building of SOC of the inhabitants in Västerfärnebo, for instance, the connectedness of the community identity, and the continuity of the community identity, according to the concept of SOC by Kim & Kaplan (2004).

Community Attachment- Sense of Connectedness

In the result of cultural aspect, it's mentioned that the store means tradition to the inhabitants since it has been in the community for a long time, where some of them think they have obligations to protect the store. The store is a physical building that the community familiarized with. They feel comfortable with its present; they feel the community is gone when it is closed (interviewee 9); and they would feel safe when they go around the community with a familiarized physical environment according to the idea of neighboring cognition by Unger & Wandersman (1985). Interviewee 4 claimed, it could also remind the inhabitants, especially those inhabitants who have long rootedness in Västerfärnebo, about their old days, the history and the tradition of Västerfärnebo. The store is being a mediator to bond the inhabitants and community emotionally, which could be understood by the idea of the sense of connectedness in community attachment aspect of SOC by Kim & Kaplan (2004).

Community Cognition- Cognitive Mapping

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In the organization aspect of the result, it mentioned the existence of the store could influence the movement pattern. For instance, people may move in when there is a local grocery store, vice versa. This kind of movement could affect the inhabitants' knowledge about the community. People may not feel familiar with the faces in the community with the move out of the intimate neighbors, and move in of exotic faces, or even no new comers. "The sense of familiarity that is derived from perceiving community as the background for daily routines" (Mannarini & Fedi, 2009, p. 219). Inhabitants may feel insecure with those changes, and no longer feel familiar with the community. Thus it could decrease their SOC. This could particular give larger effects to the elderly who have longer residency in the community, higher community attachment, and lack of social circle outside the community, than a normal middle age person who has shorter residency and higher mobility. The move out of a neighbor could mean losing a friendship to them. To conclude, the existence of a local grocery store would be one of the causes that affect the inhabitants to their community cognition, which would also affect the SOC according to Unger & Wandersman (1985).

Community identity- Continuity

Interviewee 9 pointed out that the inhabitants, including the non-frequent users, do not want the store being shut down. They want the store to continue to run. One of the reasons is, they think it would no longer be a community when there is no store, which has been mentioned in aesthetical section (section 5.1.7). According to the SOC by Kim & Kaplan (2004), this is because the store is being bonded to the community identity of the inhabitants. The operating store could maintain the link between inhabitants' past and present environmental, and hence preserving their own and community identity (Kim & Kaplan 2004; Alexander, Ishikawa, & Silverstein, 1977; Giuliani, 1991; Lalli, 1992; Mumford, 1961; Rowles, 1983; Suttles, 1984). For instance, interviewee 2 mentioned that the old Västerfärnebo was a very nice community with few grocery stores, bank and medical station. However, these services are almost all gone now, with only the church and one grocery store, which we are studying left. The continuous operation of the remaining grocery store that the inhabitants bonded could sustain the nice community identity. In addition, keeping the grocery store that the inhabitants attached to could also contribute back to the sense of connectedness. Since the physical environment of the community being unchanged, the inhabitants know it very well, inhabitants would keep feeling comfortable with the operation of the community.

6.1.2. The store contribute to SOC in Västerfärnebo

The previous section discussed the store contributes to SOC in a more passive way that inhabitants attached to the store, and hence the community. This section would focus on discussing its functions which contribute to the SOC in relatively more active way, i.e., how its functions contribute to the inhabitants' SOC.

Community Attachment- Community satisfaction

Providing access to food within community is the main function of the store, and most of the interviewees agreed that it is the most important reason that the store should be kept in the village. The store is especially important for the elderly, people do not travel every day and daily convenient. The store satisfies their needs for food, which is very important for daily life (section 5.1.1). This satisfaction would strengthen the inhabitants' attachment to the community according to Kim & Kaplan (2004).

Pedestrianism: Walkability & Public Transit

The store is located at the community center, and opposite to the bus stop, therefore it is convenient to access as mentioned before. People could get there easily, for instance, once they get off from the bus, after using of post service, after going to church, and walk to the store from home. The convenience promotes less automobile dependency (examples in section 5.1.4). When a service is available with easy accessibility, like short walking distance, and accessible with public transport, it would contribute to the aspect of pedestrianism of SOC Kim & Kaplan (2004). That means the store assists the organization of the community, in which the community is designed for walking. This could also increase the SOC of the inhabitant.

Social interaction – Casual social encounters

According to the section 5.1.5, the grocery store is one of the resources for the inhabitants' social interaction. Social interaction within the community is important to build the SOC (Mannarini & Fedi, 2009). The presence of the grocery store could increase the possibility of casual social encounter within the community. The results shows that it provides one more reasons for the inhabitants go into the community from home, which may lead to have more people walk on the street, thus increase the chances for the informal social contact between the inhabitants within the community. It may help to develop the relationship between inhabitants to the level of acquaintanceship and reduce their suspicions to one and other. So the inhabitants could continue

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socializing with each other in different sets of causal social encounter. Thus, it could lead to increase their community cognition mentioned in previous paragraph, and increase the SOC.

Social interaction – Social support

With the assistance of the grocery store, the establishment of social relationship between inhabitants provides different supports to themselves. They could share information or act as informal helper through interacting with each other. For instance, they can ask for advices when they need to build their garden; they can borrow salt when they are cooking and lacking of it, etc. This kind of relationship could even extend to become a social network. When there are more people participate in the relationships, more information could be communicated. These actions could contribute to SOC because they would feel there is a media in the community could fulfill their needs of socializing and link one to another, and exchanging information. To sum up, the local grocery store is one of the mediators to assist the establishment of the SOC with the social terms.

6.2. Third places in Västerfärnebo

In Västerfärnebo, there are a few TPs for the community to meet. For instance, the Västerfärnebo-Fläckebo Congregation (VF Congregation), Svartådalens café och service, and other interest groups, etc. Particularly, the VF Congregation and Svartådalens café och service are the two place with higher accessibility to the public. In first part, we would briefly describe how VF Congregation and Svartådalens café och service act as a TP to community with the eight characteristics by Oldenburg, R. (1999). In the second part, we would analysis the local grocery store and discuss how the local grocery store can act as a better TP for the locals also according to the eight characteristics by Oldenburg, R. (1999).

6.2.1. Västerfärnebo-Fläckebo Congregation (VF Congregation)

The VF Congregation is setting on neutral ground, therefore no residents needs to pay host for gathering. All people are welcome to this place. Whenever people go there for different events, talking is one of the main activities. However, when people go there during the time with no event is holding, they could not see their friends except the staffs. Its limited opening time leads to a low accessibility. Regard to its regular, it offers different activities as lures to attract people to participate. The main lure is the visitors, only right people come to the place make the place alive (Oldenburg, 1999). As each activity has its target group, therefore each time it could attract the right people, no one would feel strange in the place. When there is stranger coming for an

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activity, some of the frequent visitors may suspect them. But this place accommodates the people who are opening to meet new friend, so everyone could probably feel like home after few visits. It does not have a high profile without a catchy appearance and do not require people to dress up. The mood there would change according to the activities, sometimes is joyful like during soup lunch, sometimes is serious like during worship. Last but not the least, it is definitely a home away from home for the frequent users. The users usually share similar characteristics, for instance, with the belief of God.

To conclude, this is a place that could almost fulfill all the eight characters of TP listed in Oldenburg (1999). However, even though this place is “all are welcome”, some people who are not Christians may still feel reluctance to go to the place because of the religious. The limitation of the opening time is another important issue that prevents the place from becoming a very outstanding TP that can host the inhabitants all the time.

6.2.2. Svartådalens Café och Service

This place operates on the neutral ground that no one has to pay host for gathering, and all are welcome to the place. Conversation is not the main activity at this place. It has high accessibility and high potential to accommodate people with the availability of seats for the café and the regular and longer opening hours. The lures of this place are the services and the new baked bread, but not people. It does not attract large amount of people as the VF Congregation. This place does not have a high profile either. The mood at this place is very calm, people come and go. But still, sometime laughing can be heard because some of the consumers are drinking and chatting with friends. For many inhabitants, this may not be a place that feels like a home away from home to them. During the field study period, there was usually only one staff there, from time to time, there were few people coming for the postal service, or having coffee. To sum up, even though it has a longer and regular opening hours, it does not work well as a TP to the community. The main reason for that could probably related to the lures, which are not able make the users stay longer. Thus, the people have less chance to meet another person at this place, and start conversation.

6.2.3. The local grocery store

The store is a public place that setting on a neutral ground and everyone can go. People can gather at the shop with none of them playing host. Everyone is welcome to go there, for instance, the summer visitors, the residents in other towns, the local residents. It is a place offers a chance

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for people to know more each other besides from work, like their cooking and eating habits. However, conversation is not the main activity to most of the consumers. Many of them would just go in and get what they want, and then go. But, customers would talk to others there when they meet someone they know; and when they are at the cashier and talk little bit with the staff of the store. Particularly, elderly and the retired residents who have longer residency in the village and usually go to the shop during day time, they could stay in the store up to an hour to talk with the people even they can finish shopping within 15 minutes, like the example mentioned in section 5.1.5

The store has a relatively higher accessibility in terms of location and open hours. It is also located in the center just like the two places mentioned above. In addition, it has a relatively longer opening hours than those of two. It opens at 10am to 7pm during weekdays, 10am to 3pm on Saturday and 11am to 3pm on Sunday. Its longer opening hours allows people to go there when they want, so they can do shopping, or even maybe seeing someone. With the longer opening hours, it could accommodate people when they release from responsibility, like work. During the field study, it found out that there are more consumers at store at around 5pm- 7pm than during the day time. However, the store has no seats, so keeping people in the store for longer times is difficult unless they meet some other people.

Regarding to the regular, the lure of the place is the grocery, in particular the good locally produced meat. The regular arrival of locally produced meat usually attracts more people to go to the store on those days. However, in this study, it seems that the people do not act as a lure of this store. No interviewees in this study mentioned that they go to the store because they aim to meet people or talk to people. Meeting and talking with other inhabitants in store is a chance that cannot be assured, since the store does not have customers all the time. It has a low profile as it has no attractive appearance and is not a chain store. It has little amount of advertisements on its Facebook page.

The store is not filled with the atmosphere of stress or serious, rather it is calm, or a relaxing and warm that people could see the familiar faces of the staffs. It could be a joyful place if people meet and talk with their neighbors while they are doing shopping. But the playful and joyful moods are not the persistent moods in the store, they would be gone with the people. Also, it seems that it is not a home away from home to many of the users.

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To sum up, the store is important for residents to buy food as mentioned in 5.1.1. But it is relatively poor at accommodate without offering seats and appropriate lures, for example, people, for attracting the users to stay longer, unless people meet someone they know. Therefore it is not working as a TP efficiently. However, it has its potential to become a TP to the residents since most of the residents would need to use the store to buy food and other commodities in terms of convenience.

6.3. Potential ways for the local grocery store to become a better TP in the community

The store is one of the important elements to SCD with the result shown in the PEBOSCA framework and according to the discussion in section 6.1. However, the previous owners had to close the store because of the economic problem that did not have enough profit to sustain the store with limited amount of consumers. In order to resolve the financial problem of the store, it may need to rearrange itself. For instance, besides from providing food accessibility to the community, the store could extend its social roles and act as a better TP in the community. It could increase the inhabitants' attachment to the store, and attracts more people to go and spend their money there. Becoming one of the important TP could not only satisfy the inhabitants' need in terms of getting food, but also their social needs by acting as one of the arenas for habitants to carry out informal social interaction. Hence, the SOC of inhabitants could be increased in terms of satisfying their needs and increasing their community attachment.

In the following, some suggestions for the store to turn into a better TP are presented.

The lures of the store could increase in order to attract more people to come for consumption and socializing in the store. The store could offer more variety of services, this could give more reasons for the people going to the store instead of only getting groceries. Thus, it leads to a higher chance that people could meet one another, and talk to each other at the place. For example, the store could sell lottery and ticket for betting horse race, so people would stay in the store a bit longer as they need to fill the tickets.

The store could also set up a coffee corner for selling coffee and buns so that the residents can take a seat and grab a cup of coffee when they meet their friends in store while they are doing shopping. When the next customer come for shopping, who maybe a friend of one of them, he/she could also join the chat. This could increase the accommodation of the store.

However, these two suggestions could mainly target on the people who spend lots of time in the community, like the elderly. The store could do something else like offering different events or

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activities with reference to the VF Congregation. For instance, it can hold party on the Village Shop Day which is a tradition event of a countryside store. This act could not only attract people to use the store on that day, but also increase their sense of community (SOC) through social interacting with the others, and the resident would be more attached to the store since it gives them joyful moment and recalls some of their memories. It could also offer activities for different festivals, like Easter egg hunting in the store. These may plant an image to the inhabitants' mind that the store is a playful place instead of a place just for shopping grocery. The store should also increase the communication with the consumers, and look into their needs and opinions. This could enhance the consumers' attachment to the store, for instance, they feel they have influence to the store, and may have to feeling they are important to the store, thus become more attached to the store. With a higher level of attachment to the store, they may consume at the store more often. At the end, it would increase the chances for social interactions in the store, and make the store livelier. In the other words, when the store becomes an important TP in the community, it could increase the SOC of the inhabitants in terms of the social interaction and community attachment mentioned by Kim & Kaplan (2004).

7. Conclusion

7.1. Alternative approach for the study

The research approach for this study gave a result that fulfilled the aims of the study. However, it could give a more significant result with the adoption of ethnographical research design, instead of a basic qualitative case study. Ethnographical research design could help to investigate the perceptions of a community about the lack of access to grocery store, through “understanding the shared patterns of behaviors, language, and actions of the intact cultural group in a natural setting” (Creswell, 2014, p.14). This design relies more on the researcher’s observation and participation, and requires a lot more of time to stay at the field. More underlying behaviors of the community could be observed by the researcher, instead of heavily relying on the information given by the interviewees. Although it fits very well to the research questions aforementioned, for instance, understanding the patterns of behaviors of the villagers that without the grocery store, there was time limitation about the study. Therefore, this method was not adopted. What is more, a mixed method could be used for this study, instead of a solely qualitative method. Adopting mixed method case study for this study could help to reach a higher confident result. Questionnaires, individual and group interviews could be carried out, so as to triangulate the data received from different stages. For instance, individual interviews could be carried out first, questions for questionnaire could be created with the references from the results of individual interviews, so as to verify the data. Group interviews could be carried out based on questionnaires. To conclude, the research method that adopted in this study functioned well and able to achieve the objectives of this study. However, a more in depth study could be carried out with case study, providing the time limitation is looser.

PEBOSCA framework is used to present the result. It is supposed to provide a clearer distinguish between each aspects, instead of only environmental, economic and social dimension. However, the distinctions between the aspects of PEBOSCA framework were still not clear enough and have some overlapping when it came to practical for this study. For example, the daily convenient mentioned in organizational aspect, which could actually be mentioned in physical aspects that the store provides food accessibility to the community. These unclear and overlapping could be due to the alternative usage of the framework that, fitting one physical item to those seven aspects. But when it applies to a community and distinguishes the resources of the community into the seven aspects, it could have a better outcome. Nevertheless, the adoption of

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PEBOSCA framework provided a guidance so that the results of this study could be organized systematically.

7.2. Other issues raised in this study

At the beginning of the result, it has already mentioned that the study area, Västerfärnebo is a community that is more active to solve problem, for instance, when there was absence of local grocery store, inhabitants who had no car would do the grocery shopping in Sala as a group with an inhabitant who owned a car. In section 5.2, it mentioned that a local grocery store in small community could share similar roles as the rural grocery store in this study. But the details would be slightly different in different case. It is advisable to carry out a same research in a Swedish community that is less active to challenge. It would be able to see if a local grocery store has other meanings in that kind community. It is also important to understand how the inhabitants perceive and cope with problems. Thus it could enrich the information about the problem of lacking grocery store in rural community for comparison and contrast. The government can reference to those information when it has to develop rural development program, so as to generate different curriculums to tackle the problem in different case.

Besides from doing study in rural community, it is also worthwhile to carry out study at the government level. The government may not perceive the problem (lacking of grocery store in rural community) same as the inhabitants in a rural community. The government may have other interpretations about the problem. By understanding and comparing the views of both parties, it could help to identify an efficient way to address the problem. The Swedish government had put affords to the problem about rural grocery store in the last rural development program. For instance, the government strategize the rural store partnership program, but the final outcome was not as good as expected, since many of the grocery stores could not sustained themselves in a long run (The Swedish Ministry of Agriculture, 2008). Therefore, there is a need to understand the problem perceived by different parties, and thus to explore the possible ways for the government involving in the problem and improving the life of rural community.

In the result part, it have been mentioned for few times that lacking of grocery store in rural community affects the elderly the most, this is because they have lower mobility, and smaller social circle. Therefore, it is recommendable to investigate the life of elderly in a rural community particularly, and understand how the environment that lacking of infrastructure would affect their health, in terms of the physical and psychological health. Specifically, the

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effects of lacking local grocery store in rural community to the health of the elderly is recommended to investigate. By addressing this knowledge gap, it would be able to provide references for the actors who are willing to develop program to improve the life and health of rural elderly.

7.3. Conclusion

This study was aimed to investigate the roles of a local grocery store for a rural community by considering the concept of sustainable community development (SCD), sense of community (SOC), and third place (TP) in Västerfärnebo, Sweden. This study also put extra focus on the social roles of the rural grocery store since there is lacking of study provide an in depth discussion on the social aspects, which is important to notice. The PEBOSCA framework was used to outline the result of the study, and suggested that the local grocery store in Västerfärnebo could act as six resources to the inhabitants (not the biological aspect), which could also contribute to SCD. In addition, the social role of the local grocery store in Västerfärnebo is matched with the cases in Scotland and Municipality of Kronoberg that mentioned in the literature reviews. Also the inhabitants agreed the store contribute to the identity of a completed community. Based on this study, it was found that the presence of the store could increase the SOC of the inhabitants in the theoretical terms. SOC is important for the community-self-improvement, hence it is also important to the SDC. The social role of the store was studied with the concept of TP. The local grocery store in Västerfärnebo could not fulfill all the eight characters of a TP mentioned by Oldenburg (1999). However, it has its potentials to develop itself to a better TP. Rural grocery store could not always escape from the fate of being shut down because of financial problem. Therefore if a rural grocery store could become a better TP in the community, but not solely as a food provider, it could have a better chance of survival in the community with more consumers spend money at the store for different items and services. A successful transformation of a local grocery store to a better TP would contribute back to the SOC according to the idea of place attachment by Kim & Kaplan (2004). In other words, a local grocery store could be one of the important resources for SCD.

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