The development of environmental protection and local governance

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Content of today’s lecture

1st half: • The environmental protection regime
  – Impacts of human activity
  – The environment protection «coup» 1973
  – Modern developments

2nd half: • Norwegian governance on Svalbard
  – Designing an administration
  – The Governor: Sysselmannen
  – Self-determination and local governance

Problem: • Man & nature on Svalbard – a conflict?
  • How effective has governance on Svalbard been?

Today’s Cultural Heritage Quiz

What and where is this?
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Impacts of human activity

- What is an environmental impact?
  - An (observable) effect on, or change in the environment caused by an activity or process
  - Good or bad? Human impacts vs. natural processes
- Impacts of harvesting bio-resources
  - 17th and 18th Century vs. modern whaling
  - Sealing, hunting and trapping
- Impacts of mineral extraction
  - Local pollution, littering, landscape damages
- A sustainable development?

Svalbard and the “oil boom”

- Intensive and extensive exploration in the 1960s and early '70s
- Created a (potential) environmental problem and a question of governance
- 17 wells drilled (so far); impacts are probably modest
- Why would oil and gas on Svalbard be of interest?

Nature conservation concerns

- Early whaling: regulation by monopoly
- The rise of nature conservation awareness
- Conflicts between trappers and tourists
- Early protection initiatives; the Svalbard Treaty and hunting regulation
  - Reindeer 1925
  - Two small plant reserves in the 1930s
  - Walrus 1952
  - Goose 1955
  - Eider duck 1963
  - Polar bear (1970) 1972
A modern environmental regime

- Background: the petroleum exploration and environmentalism
- The protection “coup” of 1973: environmental vs. legal/political concerns
  - Nature conservation
  - Cultural heritage
  - Restrictions on human activity
- The Svalbard environment law 2002
- New national parks 2003–05; development of management plans

15 minutes break

A part of the kingdom of Norway?

- The Svalbard Treaty (1920) and the question of administration
- Governance by remote control? Legal and political considerations 1920–25
- Economic crisis and tight budgets: limitations on ambition
- Second thoughts: the making of the Svalbard Law
- Annexation or integration? National self-esteem and pragmatic solutions
The birth and rise of a Sysselmann

- Economic restraints and political indecisiveness 1925–35
- Reorganization 1935: A permanent sysselmann
- The lone sheriff: state authority in a company town
- Peaceful co-existence: Soviet-Norwegian relations on Svalbard
- Post-war developments: new challenges for the local government
- An amazing expansion from the 1970s

Local self-determination

- In the periphery of Norwegian democracy
- Sysselmann vs. Store Norske: the Welfare Council (1948)
- The Svalbard Council (1971): power to the people?
- Normalization in a cold war context
- The 1990s: Towards a real local democracy – but only in Longyearbyen
- The watershed: Establishing Longyearbyen lokalstyre (2002)

Governance in the long perspective

- A «minimum regime» 1925–1965
- Tightening the grip: Expansion from the 1970s and normalization
- The significance of environmental protection in a governance perspective
- The long way to local democracy
- Svalbard today: still "underregulated"?
Next time on HOS...

King of the hill
How and why Norway snatched Svalbard

End of 8th lecture