

The University Centre in Svalbard
Written exam SH-201 The History of Svalbard (re-sit)
Tuesday 9th of April 2019, hours: XX.00-YY.00

Permitted aids: *none, except dictionary between English and mother tongue.*

*The exam is a 3-hour written test. It consists of two parts: Part I is a multiple-choice test of factual knowledge. **This sheet with answers to part I shall be handed in.** Part II (see below) is an essay part where you write extensively about one of two alternative subjects. You may answer in English, Norwegian, Swedish or Danish.*

Part I counts approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ and part II counts $\frac{2}{3}$ of the grade at the evaluation, but adjustment may take place. Both parts must be passed in order to pass the whole exam.

Part I: Multiple choice test. Make only one cross for each question.

1.	Who was captain on Barentsz' ship in 1596?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heemskerk	<input type="checkbox"/> Rijp	<input type="checkbox"/> De Veer
2.	Who started whaling on Svalbard in 1610?	<input type="checkbox"/> Basques	<input type="checkbox"/> Dutch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> British
3.	Which whale species was <i>not</i> hunted at Svalbard before 1900?	<input type="checkbox"/> Bowhead	<input type="checkbox"/> Beluga	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blue
4.	What is a Russian <i>lodya</i> , used by the Pomors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hut, house	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Boat	<input type="checkbox"/> Spear
5.	When was reindeer protected by law?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1925	<input type="checkbox"/> 1956	<input type="checkbox"/> 1972
6.	Who attempted to reach the North Pole from Svalbard in 1773?	<input type="checkbox"/> Chichagov	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phipps	<input type="checkbox"/> Parry
7.	The first International Polar Year was in...?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1882-83	<input type="checkbox"/> 1932-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 1957-58
8.	Where was coal mining closed down in 1963?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ny-Ålesund	<input type="checkbox"/> Pyramiden	<input type="checkbox"/> Sveagruva
9.	When did commercial passenger flights to Svalbard begin?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1960s	<input type="checkbox"/> 1970s	<input type="checkbox"/> 1980s
10.	Approximately, how many Soviet citizens lived on Svalbard around 1980?	<input type="checkbox"/> Ca. 1000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ca. 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> Ca. 3000
11.	When was the local Svalbard Council ('Svalbardrådet') in Longyearbyen established?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1948	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1971	<input type="checkbox"/> 2002
12.	This scientific infrastructure opened in 1996:	<input type="checkbox"/> UNIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EISCAT	<input type="checkbox"/> SvalSat

Part II: Choose and answer one of the following questions:

A. Wintering hunters and trappers

Describe the development of winter hunting and trapping on Svalbard from its beginning to the present day with regard to participation, organization, and geographical distribution. Discuss to what extent the activity was economically and environmentally sustainable throughout the period.

To answer this question adequately you must describe the development of both the Russian wintering activity and that of the other hunters and trappers who wintered on Svalbard, first and foremost the Norwegian. Although the question of when the Pomors first arrived may be discussed, it is fully adequate to concentrate on the period after ca. 1700. With regard to Norwegians and other nationalities it will suffice to describe the development since the early 19th century.

The first arrival of Russian hunters, the Pomors, on Svalbard is a disputed question. Russian archaeologists and historians maintain that they came before Barentsz' discovery in 1596, possibly in the mid-16th century. Western scientists generally agree that they arrived at a later stage, after the whaling period. Certainly, the Pomors were hunting and trapping from the early 18th century on.

There were both summer and winter expeditions fitted out by local merchants, townships and sometimes also monasteries. Chartered companies were involved in periods. The winter hunting and trapping probably numbered fewer men, but the activity was extensive. Remains of Pomor trapping stations are found all over Svalbard, but not all were in use simultaneously. While the summer expeditions primarily hunted sea mammals, the winterers could also hunt or trap fur animals and collect eider-down and eggs. Although a few trappers stayed voluntarily or by mishap for more years, the regular pattern was seasonal. The winterers were collected by the summer expedition the following year. The size of the parties varied, and they were normally led by a captain – a *kormschik*. Normally, a main station would be used throughout the season, whereas smaller by-stations could be in use for periods of time by two or three members of the party. The wintering Pomors exploited all available resources – fish, birds and mammals. They also engaged in handicrafts during the polar night. It seems Pomor hunting peaked before 1800, and the last expedition returned in 1852. There are numerous possible explanations as to why the activity stopped, but probably structural changes in the Pomor economy are important. Fishing and trade received more attention in the 19th century. Also, there were a number of ill-fated expeditions that gave the activity a bad reputation.

Norway was slow in taking part in hunting and trapping. After a few unsuccessful attempts in the late 18th century, activity picked up from the 1820s. Hammerfest was the first town to engage; later (around 1850) Tromsø became the leading Arctic port. There were many accidents during the first wintering expeditions, and eventually summer expeditions became the favoured form. A more important activity, however, was sealing in the West Ice and East Ice – compared to these hunting grounds, Svalbard played a modest role.

From the 1890s winter trapping picked up again, but this time usually by smaller parties of 2–4 people. Svalbard was in practice divided into different hunting fields to reduce competition. Some of the trappers were fitted out by merchants who in return secured a part of the catch. Others were individual entrepreneurs who from time to time had to take other jobs to be able to afford a hunting expedition. In the beginning of the 20th century Svalbard was in practice divided into trapping areas, some 40 in all, that were occupied by a party of winterers. Only a handful were professional trappers in the sense that they had this activity as their main career. More than half of the trappers spent only 1–2 seasons on Svalbard. After World War II only a handful of trappers continued the activity, mostly polar bear hunting until the ban in 1973. During the last decades, just a couple of trappers have continued the tradition, most of them for one or a few seasons.

The economic significance of winter hunting and trapping was small on a national scale, but probably larger on a local and even regional scale in the White Sea area and Northern Norway, at least in periods. Compared to the fisheries in the Barents Sea and sealing in the East and West Ice, as well as to summer catching, winter hunting and trapping comprised far fewer people and yielded less revenue. Also, the prices of furs varied greatly, and even good catches did not guarantee a stable income. In general, the trappers were economically poor people – and remained so.

The ecological consequences of winter hunting and trapping are hard to assess as we lack good statistics. Walrus were caught by the whalers in the 17th century and later by the Russians on summer and winter expeditions. The population came under severe pressure in the 19th century. Norwegian winterers caught relatively few. In 1952 the species was totally protected, at a point when it was close to becoming extinct. Reindeer were protected in 1925 but was hardly threatened by the wintering hunters and trappers throughout the period. With regard to polar bears it seems that primarily Norwegian hunters and sealers as well as international tourists took the greatest toll in the 20th century. The winterers took some 25 % of the bears. Polar foxes, though, were harvested by the winterers alone. The fox population varies notoriously from one year to another and it is not likely that the trappers threatened it in the long run. Neither could the relatively few winterers alone have overtaxed seabirds or

geese, but some species came under threat as a result of extensive hunting and egg collection by summer expeditions.

B. The “normalization” of Longyearbyen

In the mid-1970s the Norwegian government wanted to “normalize” Longyearbyen. Discuss the meaning of the term ‘normalization’ in this context. Describe the structure of the local community before the 1970s and the changes that took place afterwards during the following decades. Did Longyearbyen become “normal” and if so – how and when?

Since its foundation in 1906, Longyearbyen was a single-sided community in the sense that it was completely based on coalmining. Apart from a few public services that were introduced in the inter-war period, virtually all activity was directly or indirectly connected to the production and shipping of coal. Nearly everybody were employees of the private mining company, which from 1916 was Store Norske Spitsbergen Kulkompani (Store Norske). The company, and hence the local community, was overwhelmingly male dominated. There were few women and children, most of whom were families of the management and administrative staff of Store Norske. The class differences were very visible. Workers lived in barracks, typically four men to the room, and took their meals in common messes. Their living conditions and welfare were simple, but the company paid good wages and there were few labour conflicts and little social unrest in the 1920s and 1930s – a period of high unemployment on the Norwegian mainland.

The societal structure did not change much during the first few decades after the Second World War. Store Norske remained a private company, although economically dependent upon state subsidies, and public services were few. Thus, well into the 1970s, Longyearbyen was a ‘company town’ run by – and for – Store Norske. There are a number of reasons why the Norwegian authorities wanted to change this situation.

First, coal mining was not profitable, and as mentioned above, the state had to support Store Norske to keep up the activity. It was, and is, considered politically important to have a viable Norwegian community on Svalbard, not least in light of Russian presence. During the Cold War the government wanted and needed a firm grip on the development. There were few alternatives to coalmining, so the government decided to nationalize Store Norske to gain control. This happened in 1976. Second, the differences between the general welfare and prosperity expansion on mainland Norway in the 1970s and the rather primitive conditions in Longyearbyen were striking, to the extent that it became both a social and political problem. There was much criticism of working and living conditions and a growing demand that the government take action and improve them.

It was in this phase, when the government was preparing a White Paper (Stortingsmelding nr. 39, 1974-75) on Svalbard policy, that the term ‘normalization’ appeared. In this context it meant bringing the local community in Longyearbyen up to normal mainland standards – as far as possible. This would require increasing welfare, improve housing and living conditions, better communications and public services and, gradually, transform the social structure, not least by encouraging family settlement.

The government did all these things, partly by direct action and investments, partly through the now state-owned Store Norske. An airport was built and opened in 1975, ending isolation during the winter. Telecommunications were much improved. The school and the hospital were taken over by the state. Family housing was built and both Store Norske and state employees were encouraged to bring families to Longyearbyen. Gradually, during the 1980s and 1990s, the local community became more ‘normal’ with regard to living standards and services. The social composition, however, still differed from comparably mainland communities. Still, there were twice as many men as women, relatively few children and old people, and on average a young population. A main reason for this was that the coalmining company remained the predominant employer throughout this period.

This changed around 1990. Store Norske experienced severe economic problems and a resource crisis. There were lay-offs and a lot of pessimism regarding the future in the small town of a little more than a thousand inhabitants. Again, the government took action. An economic transformation process was initiated. Private enterprise was encouraged, particularly service industries. Hotels were built to accommodate tourists, shops and small businesses sprang up. Research and education were stimulated – the establishment of UNIS in 1993 and EISCAT in 1996 are two examples. Within 15 years the population doubled, and the local community became significantly more varied, both socially and economically. But did it really become ‘normal’?

The changes that have taken place during the 1990s and 2000s are profound, but rather than ‘normalization’ we can perhaps speak of a ‘modernization’. Compared to mainland towns of the same size, Longyearbyen is without doubt much more modern regarding services and communications. It has become normalized in the sense that most laws and regulations that apply on the mainland now also apply to Svalbard. Even local democracy was finally introduced in 2002. On the other hand, the demographic composition still differs from mainland Norway: the population is young, there is still a male surplus, turn-over is high and the international component big – more than 35 %.

In the 1970s the primary objective of ‘normalization’ was to reduce the differences between life on Svalbard and Norwegian standards. It can be argued that this has indeed happened, but that Longyearbyen today is far from ‘normal’ by many indicators.

SH-201 Guideline for examiners

Grade	Part I (ca. 33%)	Part II (ca. 66%)
A	12 points (100%)	Very good overview over history and main lines of development, correct and relevant facts. Few mistakes. Critical and independent discussion of causal relations and contexts. Extensive, complete, and well-structured answer.
B	10-11 points (83-93%)	Good overview over history and main lines of development, generally correct facts. Relevant discussion of causal relations and contexts, with a reasonable level of independence. Complete, well-structured answer.
C	8-9 points (67-75%)	Adequate overview over history and main lines of development. A few factual mistakes are tolerated, if not grave. Good attempts at discussion of the central questions, but not necessarily a high level of independent interpretation. Orderly answer.
D	6-7 points (50-58%)	Knows the main lines and the most significant historical facts. May contain some mistakes. Some attempts at discussion of the main questions are expected, but not a high level of independent interpretation.
E	4-5 points (33-42%)	Lacks main lines and important elements or contains several grave mistakes. Inadequate discussion. Short, but does answer the main questions. A minimum of factual knowledge about the topic is required.
F (Fail)	0-3 points (0-25%)	Does not answer the questions. Lacks main lines of development or contains many grave mistakes. No discussion.

Part I accounts for ca. 1/3 of the average grade, Part II for ca. 2/3. Adjustments may be made to make the average grade fair and representative of the effort. Both parts must be passed, i.e. receive E or better. Grade F on one part means average F = fail. In calculation, A=5, B=4 and so on, using standard rules of rounding decimals. The table on the right shows all possible combinations of Part I and II grades prior to adjustment.

		Part II					
		A	B	C	D	E	F
Part I	A	A	B	B	C	D	F
	B	A	B	C	C	D	F
	C	B	B	C	D	D	F
	D	B	C	C	D	E	F
	E	B	C	D	D	E	F
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F