

SH-201 THE HISTORY OF SVALBARD

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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?

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Today's Cultural Heritage Quiz

What and where is this?

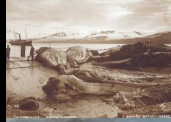
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Impacts of human activity

- 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
 - Fisheries on and around Svalbard
- Impacts of mineral extraction
 - Local pollution, littering, landscape damages
- A sustainable development?



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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
- 18 wells drilled (1961-1994); impacts are probably modest
- Why would oil and gas on Svalbard be of interest?



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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
 - Geese 1955
 - Eider duck 1963
 - Polar bear (1970) 1972



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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
- 8 new national parks 2003–05, incl. Bjørnøya and Hopen; development of management plans



Protected land area 39,800 km²
Including sea area 115,600 km²

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15 minutes break

8

A part of the kingdom of Norway?

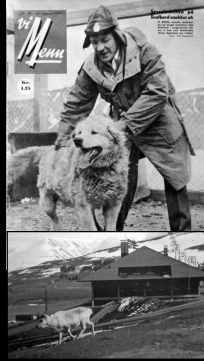
- The Svalbard Treaty (1920) and the question of administration
- Governance by remote control? Legal and political considerations 1920–25
- Economic crisis and tight budgets: limitations on ambition
- Second thoughts: the making of the Svalbard Law
- Annexation or integration? National self-esteem and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



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The birth and rise of a Sysseimann

- Economic restraints and political indecisiveness 1925–35
- Reorganization 1935: A permanent sysseimann
- 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



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Local self-determination

- In the periphery of Norwegian democracy
- Sysseimann 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)



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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”?



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