

### Last reminder

- Exam on Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 12:00-15:00 (meet early)
  - Check approved exercise (> 66 %)
  - Check access to WISEflow (digital exam system)
- Prepare for exam
  - See course page on Canvas for instructions, solution examples of previous exams, and tips
  - Read curriculum, lecture slides, and summaries
  - Prepare whatever printed material you intend to bring to the exam
- Course evaluation
  - Please answer the evaluation you receive on email
- Any questions?
  - Study advisers Kine Stiberg and Karolina Dwojak

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SH-201 THE HISTORY OF SVALBARD

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### The development of settlements and the history of Longyearbyen

Thor Bjørn Arlov, NTNU &amp; UNIS 2023



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### Content of today's lecture

- 1<sup>st</sup> half:
- The growth of permanent settlements
    - Settlements: from camps to communities
    - The development of mining settlements
    - Company towns: for better or worse?
- 2<sup>nd</sup> half:
- The modern Longyearbyen
    - White Paper no. 39 (1974–75)
    - 'Normalization': creation of a family community
    - The modernization of Longyearbyen
- Problem:
- How and why did local communities develop?
  - How 'normal' are the Svalbard communities?

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## Today's Cultural Heritage Quiz

What is this?

© Svalbard Museum



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## From camps to communities

- What does it take to be a local community?
  - Permanent or semi-permanent settlement
  - A minimum of physical and social infrastructure
  - Social composition of the community, demographical characteristics
- Some short-lived settlements on Svalbard
  - Advent City 1905-1908
  - Hiorthamn 1917-1926, 1938-1940
  - Sveagruvan (Swedish) 1917-1925
  - Tunheim on Bjørnøya 1915-1925
  - Grumantbyen (British-Russian) 1919-1926
  - Barentsburg (Dutch) 1920-1926



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## The early mining camps

- Advent City – a pretentious name?
  - Established 1905 by Spitsbergen Coal & Trading Co.
  - 1905–06: 30 winterers; 1906–07: 70
  - Advent City reborn in Hiorthamn 1917
- Longyear City
  - The American period 1905–15
  - An (almost) all male, multi-ethnic community
  - Working and living conditions
  - Labour conflicts and strikes
  - The Norwegian take-over in 1916: did the conditions really improve?



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## Ny-Ålesund

- Established 1917 as a mining camp. 150 people wintered in 1918–19
- First production period 1920–29
- Fishery station 1935–39; hotel 1938–39
- Reopening of coal mining in 1945
- Modernization and investments after accidents in 1952–53; mining until 1963
- The Kings Bay accident 5 November 1962 and its aftermath
- The ESRO-period 1965–74 and development of Ny-Ålesund as a research base



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## The Russian settlements

- The Anglo-Russian Grumant Co. in Grumant 1919–26
- Soviet Trust Arktikugol bought Barentsburg from NESPICO, took over Grumant and bought the Pyramiden property in 1931–32
- Evacuation 1941, settlements bombed and destroyed in 1943
- Rebuilding after World War II; Pyramiden established 1949–56
- Grumant closed in 1962, Pyramiden in 1998
- Community structure and standards; post-soviet development



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15 minutes break

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### Longyearbyen – the company town

- Store Norske: more than a company
  - The requirements of the Mining Code
  - Social, medical and spiritual (!) services
  - Caretaker of Norwegian sovereignty?
- The physical lay-out of Longyearbyen
  - Local development: the needs of the company
  - Living standards and welfare
- A class-conscious and controlled society
  - Privileges and benefits
  - Recruitment practice; seasonal contracts
  - Labour rights and local democracy



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### “Normalization” in the 1970s and ‘80s

- Parliament White Paper 39 (1974–75)
  - Nationalization of Store Norske in 1976
  - Housing; construction of a family community
  - Expansion of public services, infrastructure and local administration
- The airport opened in 1975: a watershed in the local development
- Social and demographical structure in the 1980s: how did Longyearbyen change?
- Cross-cultural contacts; gradual opening of the Russian settlements from 1986



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### Modern Longyearbyen

- The economic development
  - A new role for Store Norske: reorganization 1989-90
  - Diversifying the economic structure: White Paper no. 50 (1990–91)
  - Rebuilding the local community – an unexpected success story?
- Demography and social structure
  - A stable or unstable community?
  - Living standards and quality of life
  - Local democracy 2002 – another watershed
  - Effects of globalization: > 35% foreign citizens, > 40 nationalities (2020)



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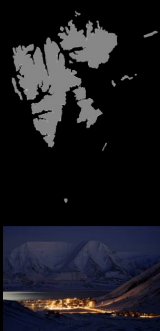
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## Summing up: past, present – future?

- A slow, gradual development from mining camps to local communities
- Permanent or temporary settlement? Average mobility is still high (4-5 years)
- Svalbard communities are fundamentally different from the mainland. Can they ever become 'normal'?
- Longyearbyen: from instrument of Norwegian policy to a goal by itself – and back?
- Towards a post-industrial Svalbard



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End of 10<sup>th</sup> lecture  
and end of the course

Thank you, and good luck!

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