

Same but different: looking at the human history in Svalbard through different disciplinary lenses

Dr. Frigga Kruse

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1778-1010>



Suggested citation: Kruse, F. (2021) Same but different: looking at the human history in Svalbard through different disciplinary lenses. Timeless Arctic Presentation Series No. 2103. Kiel: Kiel University.

zenodo

The benchmarks of human history...

1,302 • #1 of 9 things to do in Longyearbyen • Speciality Museums

Closed now • 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM [Visit website](#) [Call](#) [Email](#)

About

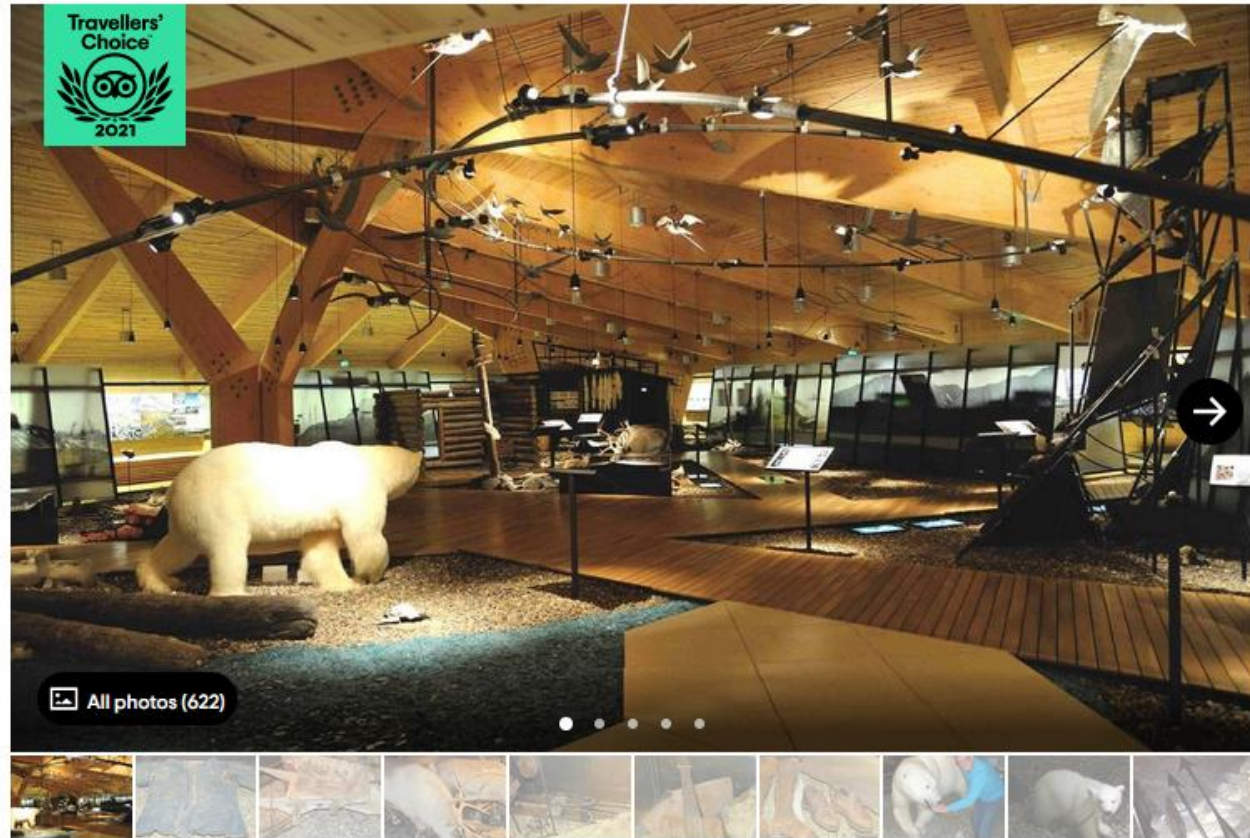
The exhibition presents fragments of Svalbard's 400-year history and describes factors that help support life and the activities taking place here, which together reveal the close relationship between sea and land, nature and cultural history.

Suggested duration

1-2 hours

[Suggest edits to improve what we show.](#)

[Improve this listing](#)



Source: www.tripadvisor.com, 30.10.2021

... are imperfectly understood.

The screenshot shows the website for the Svalbard Museum. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the following items: a Norwegian flag, "Exhibitions", "Culture and history" (with a dropdown arrow), "Nature" (with a dropdown arrow), "Science" (with a dropdown arrow), "Collections" (with a dropdown arrow), "About" (with a dropdown arrow), and "Opening hours". Below the navigation bar, there is a main content area. On the left, there is a vertical menu with the following items: "The Discovery", "Whaling in the Arctic", "The Pomors", "Hunters and Trappers", "Mining Communities", "The Svalbard Treaty", "2nd World War", "Drilling for Gas and Oil", "From mining camp to family society", and "Present day tourism". To the right of the menu, there is a large image of a wooden structure, possibly a whaling station, with a blue banner below it that reads "Åpningsdager 10:00-17:00 – Velkommen!". Below the banner, there is a section titled "Å MUSEETS INNSIDE" with a smaller image of a wooden structure. On the far left, there is a section titled "NYHETER" with a sub-section "Covid-19 Ir" and a link "ur-og-historie/".

- „Eras“ often lack empirical evidence.
- Anecdotes and descriptions often ignore underlying drivers of past coming and going.
- Not easy to discern modern relevance and future implications

Source: svalbardmuseum.no, 30.10.2021

The Timeless Arctic Project

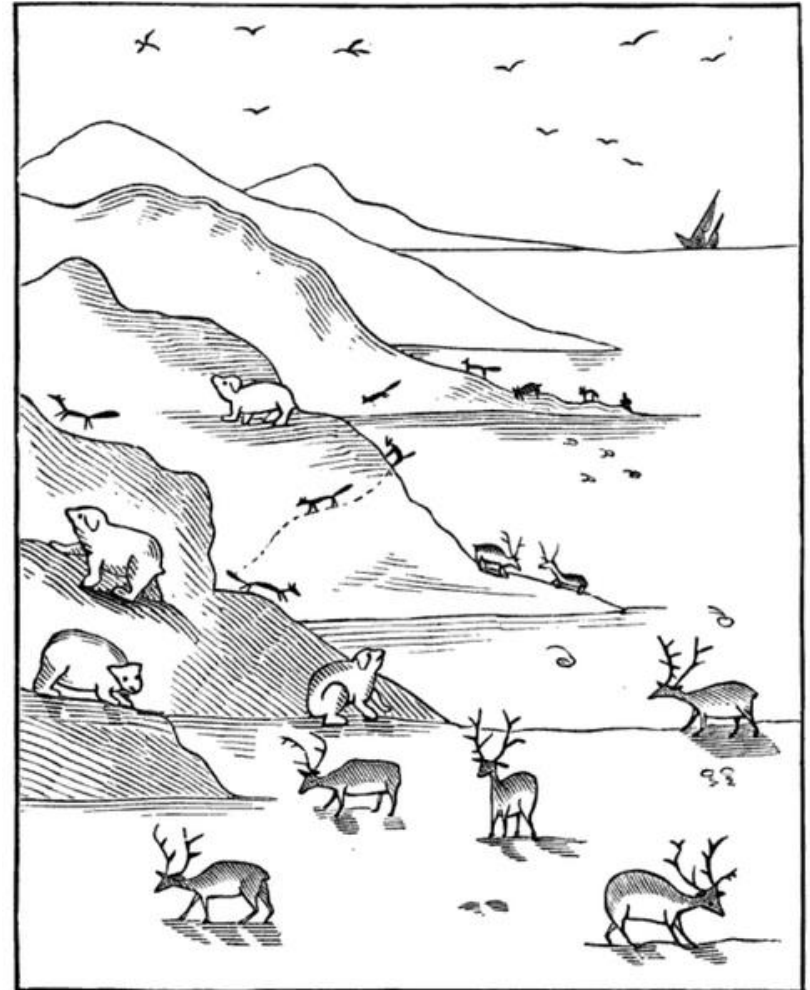
looks at commercial hunting in the reconstruction of human impact in Svalbard.

“**Historical Archaeology** is the study of the **material remains** of past societies that also left behind **documentary and oral histories**. This subfield of archaeology studies the emergence, transformation, and nature of the Modern World.”

Source: sha.org; my highlights

“**Historical ecology** is a research program concerned with the **interactions** through time between **societies and environments** and the **consequences** of these interactions for understanding the formation of contemporary and past cultures and landscapes.”

Source: Balée (2006); my highlights



Source: Fotherby 1860: 1

The Timeless Arctic Project

“**Zooarchaeology** (or archaeozoology), also known as faunal analysis, is a branch of archaeology that studies remains of animals from archaeological sites..”

Source: Wikipedia; my highlights



© Frigga Kruse

Walrus slaughter site at Dolerittneset, Edgeøya:

We can all clearly see this surface bone assemblage, but how much do we actually *know* about it?

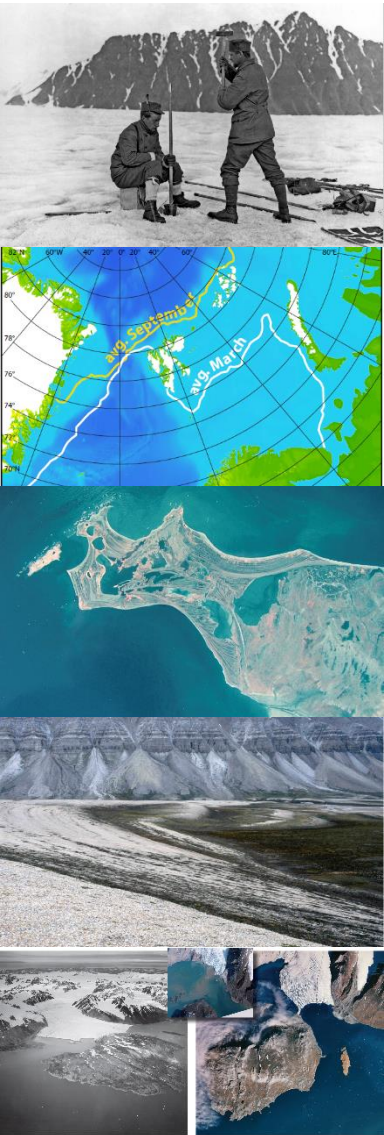
How does the site fit into the ***bigger picture*** of natural-resource exploitation and near-extinction in Svalbard?

This is where all of YOU come in.



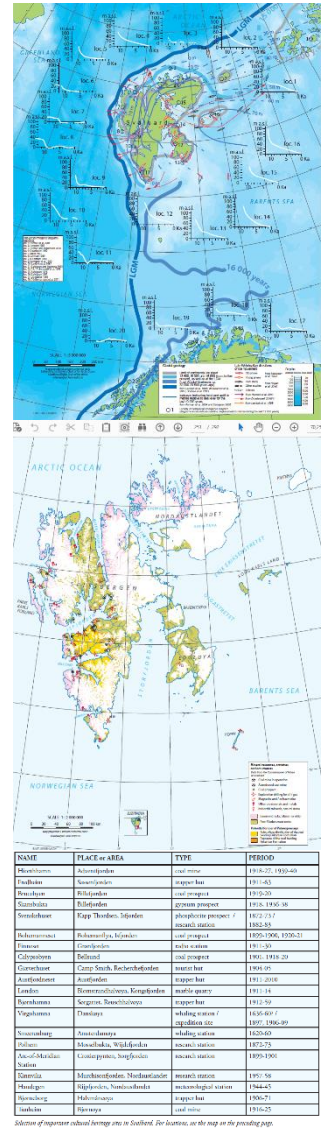
Adapted from: socialventurepartners.org, 31.10.2021

e.g. *Geoscience atlas of Svalbard*



My geoscientific *shopping list*:

- History of geoscientific exploration
- Bathymetry
- Physical geography
- Ocean currents and water masses
- Sea ice
- Glaciers
- Landscapes
- Bedrock geology
- Geophysics
- Geochemistry
- History of resource exploitation



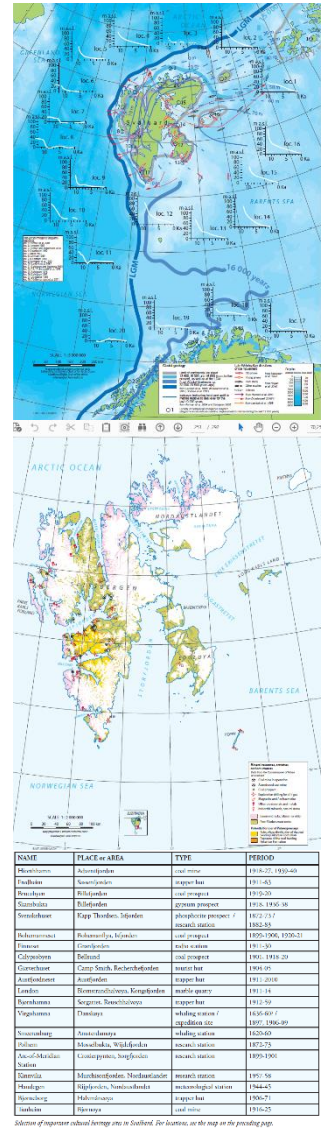
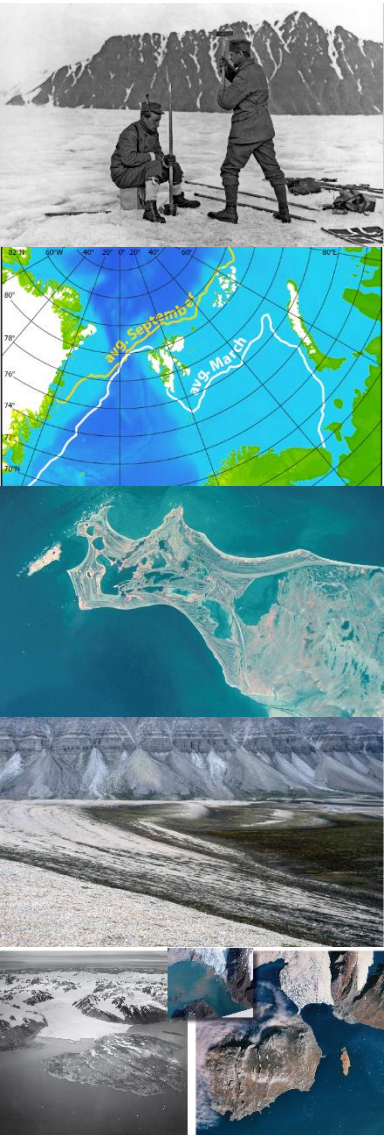
NAME	PLACE/AREA	TYPE	PERIOD
Barents	Arctic Ocean	ocean basin	195-71, 1959-66
Foulfah	Svalbard	ocean basin	191-83
Prudhoe	Alaska	ocean basin	1979-20
Siberian	Alaska	ocean basin	1918, 1918-36
Soviet	East Siberia, Siberia	ocean basin	1972-77
Soviet	East Siberia, Siberia	ocean basin	1982-85
Siberian	East Siberia, Siberia	ocean basin	1990-2000, 2000-01
Finnes	Finland	ocean basin	191-30
Galveston	Galveston	ocean basin	190, 191, 20
Greenland	East Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	190-99
Arctic	Arctic	ocean basin	191-2016
Lovén	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	191-14
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	191-20
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	1916-80 / 1917, 196-99
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	1916-80
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	1973-75
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	1979-190
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	191-56
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	1944-45
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	1944-45
Greenland	Greenland, East Greenland	ocean basin	191-25

Selection of important natural features in Svalbard. See location on the map on the preceding page.

Kruse (2021) Same but different

Insights from the geoscientists

- SCALE AND RESOLUTION!
- BEGINNING WITH BARENTS IN 1596
- COVERING THE LAST 500 YEARS
- AT FJORD, STRAIT OR VALLEY LEVEL



Kruse (2021) Same but different

e.g. Trygghamna on RiS

RIS-ID: 10443 GLACIAL HISTORY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY OF TRYGGHAMNA, WESTERN SPITSBERGEN

The aim of the project is to gain a better understanding of the former glacial dynamics in Trygghamna trough studies of glacial geomorphology and sediments. A landsystem model for both terrestrial and marine environments will be presented and the difference between them discussed.

Duration 2015-08-06 - 2017-06-30

Institutions UiT, UNIS



RIS-ID: 11292 TIMELESS TRYGGHAMNA - COMMERCIAL HUNTING AND HUMAN IMPACT IN TRYGGHAMNA AND AT ALKEPYNTEN

In August 2019, a team of archaeologists will investigate several features related to historical hunting of different animals in and around Trygghamna. These features include a 1) walrus slaughter site, 2) blubber ovens, 3) fox traps and a likely bear trap, and 4) a ship wreck. Drone reconnaissance and environmental sampling are key methods.

Duration 2019-05-15 - 2021-07-27

Institutions UNI-KIEL, RUG AC, UT



RIS-ID: 11688 HUMAN IMPACT ON HISTORICAL GAME ANIMAL ABUNDANCE IN SVALBARD

Marine and terrestrial game animals were hunted in search of commercial profit, yet our knowledge of the extent of the hunt and the consequent changes in animal populations is limited. We investigate animal bone scatters on the surface of former hunting and slaughter sites, to further unravel Arctic human-animal-interactions.

Duration 2021-08-08 - 2021-08-28

Institutions UNI-KIEL, RUG AC, UB

Source: www.researchinsvalbard.no, 31.10.2021

„Climate *for* change“

- A phrase heard in a side event at the Arctic Frontiers conference, Tromsø, 2014
- How can Svalbard’s researchers help create a climate for change?

“We humans urgently need to develop our thinking skills and habits in at least eight respects

These include big picture thinking, joined up thinking, future thinking, critical thinking, dedication to truth, self-awareness, global empathy, and a better appreciation of the small things in this beautiful world that we live in.“

Source: Berners-Lee 2019: 197

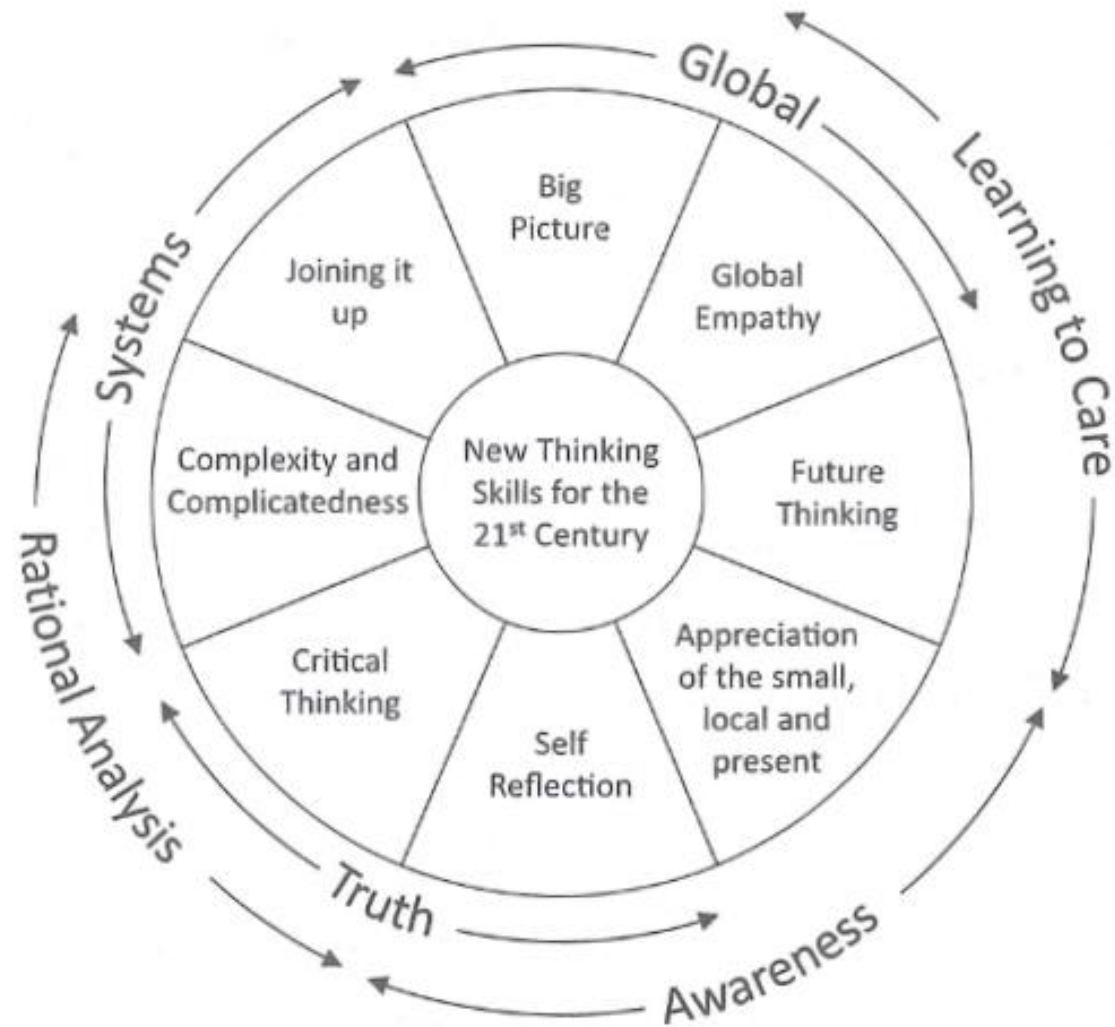


Figure 9.1. New thinking skills for the twenty-first century.

Source: Berners-Lee 2019: 190

Invitation to Svalbard's researchers

and other humans

- 1) Contribute to a joint paper (**atlas?**) between the disciplines to explore and/or establish a pre-1596 baseline and subsequent trends relevant to **historical ecology**
- 2) Contribute to a questionnaire about facilitating a climate *for* change
- 3) Contribute to a joint **paper** on “developing our **thinking skills**”

Contact fkruise@ecology.uni-kiel.de

Sources

Publications:

Balée, W. (2006). The Research Program of Historical Ecology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 35(1), 75–98. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.35.081705.123231>

Berners-Lee, M. (2019) *There is no planet B*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://theresnoplanetb.net/>.

Dallmann, W. K. (ed.) (2015) *Geoscience atlas of Svalbard*. Tromsø: Norsk Polarinstitutt

Fotherby, R. (1860). *Narrative of a voyage to Spitzbergen in the year 1613, at the charge of the fellowship of English merchants for the discovery of new trades. etc. With an introduction and notes by S. F. Haven.* (S. F. Haven, Ed.). Boston: John Wilson and Son.

Websites:

ORCID, <https://orcid.org/>

RiS Portal, www.researchinsvabard.no

Social Venture Partners (for image only), <https://socialventurepartners.org>

Society for Historical Archaeology, <https://sha.org>

Svalbard Museum, <https://svalbardmuseum.no>

Timeless Arctic, <https://timelessarctic.org>

Tripadvisor, www.tripadvisor.com

Zenodo, <https://zenodo.org/>

Presentation given in Parallel Session 7.1 (Back to the future) at the Svalbard Science Conference held at the Scandic Hotel in Fornebu, Oslo on 3 November 2021.

Photograph of Longyearbyen in the morning of October 29, 2021.



Kruse (2021) Same but different



zenodo