
13. Antarctic geopolitics

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INTRODUCTION

In 1957, a writer called John Andrews stole my proverbial thunder. He published an article called ‘Antarctic geopolitics’ in the journal, *Australian Outlook*, and it makes for intriguing reading some six decades later.¹ I never had the pleasure of meeting Andrews but it would have been instructive, for me at least, to talk with him about how our mutual understandings of both geopolitics and Antarctica might have aligned with one another or not. Assuming he was writing in 1956 or early 1957, he was writing at an interesting time for both subject areas.

In the case of geopolitics, for example, established scholars such as Richard Hartshorne were urging a new generation of political geographers to avoid the term ‘geopolitics’, positing the claim that it was an ‘intellectual poison’. What poisoned this academic field was a deeply felt unease that an association with Nazi Germany and Nazism had forever tainted geopolitics as both thought and practice. Hartshorne urged his fellow geographers to seek solace in mainstream political geography, and the emerging scholarly fields of quantitative and behavioural geography.² What was interesting, however, was that non-geographers were still willing to use the term ‘geopolitics’ in their analyses of world affairs – and that in Latin America geopolitics was widely taught in military colleges and universities.³

Andrews was also writing at an interesting time in Antarctic history. In 1957, the Soviet satellite Sputnik and the onset of the International Geophysical Year (IGY 1957–8) manifested a new era of scientific inquiry.⁴ The IGY was an extraordinary and intense period of international scientific investigation in Antarctica and other areas such as the oceans and the upper atmosphere, which transformed understanding of the polar continent and its relationship to planet Earth and the planetary system. It was as if the earth itself was placed under scientific scrutiny and surveillance.⁵ Andrews sensed that change was afoot and that the geopolitical and the geophysical were co-constituted.⁶ As he remarked, ‘The discovery of any deposits that exist may not be an impossible task by geophysical methods even through considerable thicknesses of ice, and the success of methods of mining in north polar latitudes, as in Alaska and Spitsbergen, suggests that it may not be impossible to develop methods that would be technically successful in Antarctica.’⁷ Was strategic interest in Antarctica (and its resources) rising among interested nations because scientific understanding of the ice sheet, underlying geology, and marine biology of the Southern Ocean was expanding? Did this help explain why twelve countries were involved in IGY Antarctic programmes on the one hand and on the other hand account for why India raised the ‘Question of Antarctica’ in the UN in 1956?⁸ Was there a need for a new political regime for Antarctica in the face of an uncertain future?⁹

In his summation, Andrews posited an interesting aside about what we might think of as *anticipatory* Antarctic geopolitics:

The political geography of Antarctica is, therefore, a very short story in terms of time, but it is a story which is rapidly becoming more complicated and *demanding* more attention in international circles . . . interests being affirmed today in case the economic, scientific, political or strategic importance of the continent should substantially increase in the future. Much of the present discussion, therefore, is in terms of what '*might be*' rather than '*what is*'.¹⁰

His use of words such as 'might be' and 'what is' raise interesting questions about possible futures for Antarctica – some desirable and some perhaps to be best avoided. Some might in turn be more *demanding* in Andrews's words of political and popular attention, while others barely register.

In this chapter, I offer a dialogue with three different forms of 'Antarctic geopolitics'. The first one I term an *anticipatory* Antarctic geopolitics, which peaked just before the negotiations leading to the 1959 Antarctic Treaty. A further manifestation *deferring* Antarctic geopolitics is my second strand and finally, a more contemporary variant, of what I suggest is *resilient* Antarctic geopolitics. Where I find overlap, and this is developed in the concluding section, is a series of anticipatory logics (for example, pre-emption, preparedness, resilience) and the manner in which the Antarctic is subject to a series of 'demanding geopolitics'.¹¹ The 'demands' may be varied but what unites them is a portfolio of demands placed on the continent and surrounding oceans by claimant, semi-claimant, and non-claimant states, environmental organizations, fishing syndicates, and international governmental organizations such as the UN. The implications are to bring to the fore not only how the Antarctic is understood geographically, but also the kind of governance projects it is enrolled in.

ANTICIPATING ANTARCTIC GEOPOLITICS

In his 1957 essay, Andrews does not offer a definition of geopolitics, and nor does he dwell much on why the term might have intellectual and political purchase. In fact, the terms 'geopolitics' and 'political geography' are used inter-changeably. It is assumed, I think, that the 'geopolitical' and the 'political geographical' refer to things and themes such as resources, strategy, and access to the Antarctic. In that sense, his insights chime with a longer tradition of classical geopolitical thought. From its earliest inception in the 1890s, geopolitical writers were concerned with the power of the 'geo', the role of the physical geographies of the earth, such as land, sea, and ice, to shape political power.¹² Another classical geopolitical theme that finds favour in Andrews's article is the sense in which states compete with one another to secure strategic advantage, including through control of material resources, even in and over areas that might be considered to be quite remote from the dominant centres of population and political-economic power.

However, one thing that is worth noting at this stage is that Andrews was an Australian citizen and a branch president of the New South Wales section of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. As an Australian writer, his geographical outlook was profoundly shaped by a sense of geographical proximity of Australia to the polar continent and its seas.¹³ As he opined, 'It is not always remembered that it is only a little over two thousand miles from Sydney to the nearest Antarctic coast, very little further from Sydney to Darwin. So far as the main concentration of the Australian population is concerned, those living south-east of a line joining Brisbane and Adelaide, Antarctica is a closer

neighbour than Asia.¹⁴ This sense of nearness was replicated elsewhere in the southern hemisphere, especially in the public and political cultures of three other claimant states: Argentina, Chile, and New Zealand. But it also serves as a cultural as well as a geographical register. Serving one might argue to divorce Australia and Australians from Asia and Asians, and indirectly extenuating the connections, both imaginative and genealogical, with Britain and its dominions.

As was well understood by the mid- to late 1950s, the geopolitics of the Antarctic was contested.¹⁵ This was not just a representational struggle – a battle of rival geopolitical imaginations and lines on the polar map. It was also a battle over things and practices. In the 1940s, Britain, Argentina, Chile, and the United States were undertaking a series of activities that required men and objects – such as ~~aircraft~~ planes, flags, base huts, and helicopters – to perform mapping, charting, photographing, and dwelling in the Antarctic. Antarctic geopolitics was embodied, performance-based, and affective in the sense that those actions and movements across polar land, sea, and sky were designed to inspire and reassure distant capitals that their respective countries' interests were being enhanced in the process.¹⁶ Antarctic geopolitics, therefore, was something that was made and re-made, and the capacity for surprise and uncertainty was never far away. The physical agency of the Antarctic itself meant that ships got lost, planes were grounded due to bad weather, and signs of human 'effective occupation' could be literally blown away by wind and snow.¹⁷

In 1948, a British civil servant based in Argentina named Bill Hunter Christie published a book called *The Antarctic Problem*.¹⁸ Apart from an apt title, it captured the polar zeitgeist, reviewing the past in order to speculate on a possible polar future punctuated by rising tension and territorial competition. By the late 1940s, seven states were claimants to the polar continent and surrounding ocean – Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the UK. As the list suggests, on the face of it some states were considerably closer in geodetic terms to the Antarctic than others. For the four 'southern' states, their Antarctic territories were represented as integral parts of their national territory with ports and cities, such as Adelaide, Punta Arenas, Ushuaia, and Wellington, imagined as polar 'gateways'. Argentina, Britain, and Chile were overlapping claimants.

In the same year that Hunter Christie penned his reflections on Antarctic sovereignty politics, President Gabriel González Videla of Chile made a visit to the Chilean Antarctic Territory in the midst of the first Chilean Antarctic Expedition (1947–8). He went there explicitly to endorse a Chilean Antarctic claim and officially opened the recently constructed base, the General Bernardo O'Higgins station. As he noted in his inauguration speech, 'To all in Chile, which I am certain is dwelling on this memorable act, I award this *land of tomorrow*, sure that its people will know how to maintain energetically the sovereignty and unity of our territory from Arica [in the far north of Chile close to the Bolivian/Peru borderlands] to the South Pole.'¹⁹ In so doing, he became the world's first head of state to visit Antarctica and the first to urge his fellow citizens to commit to the task of protecting Chilean Antarctic territory in the name of *tomorrow*. Named after the hero of nineteenth-century Chilean independence, the O'Higgins station was a reminder of how the Chilean political and military establishment viewed Antarctica as a frontier space of Chilean territorial nationalism, and one that had an anticipatory geopolitical dimension. Starting with legal and political decrees, Chilean authorities assembled documents, speeches, books, maps, materials, scientists, infrastructure, and even the body

of the president to anticipate possible challenges to their polar sovereignty. Ever since a presidential decree from November 1940, the Chilean national territory was defined as the area between 53 degrees longitude west and 90 degrees longitude west including 'all lands, islands, reefs, glaciers, and pack ice, and others, known or unknown, and the respective territorial sea'. The Chilean Antarctic Territory was enrolled into the provincial administrative structure and said to be part of 'Magellan and Chilean Antarctica' with the capital based in Port Williams. And new generations of school children were educated, via geography and history lessons, into understanding that their country inherited its southerly territories from imperial Spain and a fifteenth-century papal decree, and thus it was reasonable for the country to extend beyond the southerly point of South America.

Chilean military geographers such as Canas Montalva vigorously advanced this new Chilean geopolitical imagination, which envisioned a country no longer constrained by the mountainous geographies of the Andes and the South American coastline with the Pacific Ocean. In the Chilean journal, *Revista Geografía de Chile*, Montalva and colleagues such as Pedro Ihl were tireless advocates of Chilean Antarctic Territory and the role that Chile must play in defending its interests, albeit in a Cold War era where the United States and its Latin American allies were ever eager to strengthen hemispheric solidarity in the face of anxieties about the challenge posed by the Soviet Union. In the view expressed by the Chilean Foreign Minister Alberto Sepulveda in February 1958, 'There is an American Antarctica, which is an integral part of the western hemisphere . . . The Antarctic territory of Chile is part of the security zone [as defined by the 1947 Rio Treaty of Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance] . . . Our country holds the oldest rights of sovereignty on this territory, as established in the first place by repeated provisions and mandates from Spain and then later, through our life as a Republic.'²⁰

In this more expansive era, Chile was a self-declared 'maritime and polar state' whereby its outer limits would stretch over vast areas of the Pacific and the Antarctic continent. In this new vista, Chile would extend all the way to the South Pole itself mindful of how that geographical stretching fitted into Cold War regional security architectures. As Article 4 of the 1947 Rio Treaty notes:

The region to which this Treaty refers is bounded as follows: beginning at the North Pole; thence due south to a point 74 degrees north latitude, 10 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 47 degrees 30 minutes north latitude, 50 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 35 degrees north latitude, 60 degrees west longitude; thence due south to a point in 20 degrees north latitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 5 degrees north latitude, 24 degrees west longitude; thence due south to the South Pole; thence due north to a point 30 degrees south latitude, 90 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point on the Equator at 97 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 15 degrees north latitude, 120 degrees west longitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 50 degrees north latitude, 170 degrees east longitude; thence due north to a point in 54 degrees north latitude; thence by a rhumb line to a point 65 degrees 30 minutes north latitude, 168 degrees 58 minutes 5 seconds west longitude; thence due north to the North Pole.

So, in short, a combination of imperial inheritance, geographical proximity, and Cold War geopolitical alliance-building combined to inculcate a passionate commitment to the notion that Chile extended southwards and eastwards.

These appeals to geographical proximity and geological continuity, which Argentine geopolitical thinkers also noted approvingly, were powerful factors in making this vision

compelling, at least to Chilean and Argentine citizens. Argentina and Chile found common geopolitical cause when it came to their polar territories and advocated a distinct sector called the 'South American Antarctic' in 1948, which could usefully distinguish itself from their counter-claimant and imperial rival, the UK. It also helped to solidify Antarctic geopolitics. Maps and books, coupled with claims to proximity and continuity helped to buttress the inherently lively and unpredictable qualities of living and working let alone claiming territory in the Antarctic itself – one might describe that as a particular 'Antarctic problem'.²¹

But the 'Antarctic problem' that Hunter Christie posited pivoted around the notion that three states claimed the same area of the Antarctic as part of their national territory (Argentina, Chile, and the UK), and others such as the United States and then later the Soviet Union were not inclined to grant any recognition to those prior claims. It is worth noting that the UK could also appeal to geographical proximity as well as past historical connections. If Chile and Argentina could point to an 'imperial inheritance' from Spain, a papal decree that declared that half of the world could be explored and conquered by the Spanish monarchy, then Britain could point to a historical association with Antarctica stretching over two centuries. If Argentina and Chile could point to geographical proximity then the UK could look to its occupation of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and cite these islands as 'polar gateways'.

What gave Antarctic geopolitics zest in the 1950s, moreover, as Andrews recognized, was that other southern hemispheric countries (namely Australia and New Zealand) were also eager to capitalize and materialize upon their national visions of incorporated polar domains. Australia (1933) and New Zealand (1923) were claimants to extensive polar territories, the Australian Antarctic Territory (AAT) and the Ross Dependency respectively. All four southern countries invoked terms such as geographical proximity, geographical fate, geographical fact, polar gateway and geological connection to make manifest their sense of themselves as natural and durable polar nations, and all four were committed to ensuring that their citizens were enrolled in these national visions.

For Australia, the decade leading up to Andrews's ruminations on 'Antarctic geopolitics' was a busy one. In 1947, the Department of External Affairs established an Antarctic Division.²² The decision to create the new division was more than simply an administrative indulgence. It was predicated on the appreciation that Australia's substantial polar claim had not been strengthened since the introduction of an administrative act of formal incorporation in 1933. As with other claimants, the post-1945 era ushered into existence a great need to perform 'Antarctic geopolitics'. In other words, articulating territorial visions while necessary would have to be matched increasingly by active labour and deeds. If Chile could muster expeditions and a presidential visit then what might others have to offer in their quest to find ways to consolidate territorial claims. The Australian cabinet agreed in 1947 to fund new expeditions and base building projects incorporating sub-Antarctic islands and the AAT. Even in 1948, Australian officials were already warning government ministers that the southern fringes of Australia might be vulnerable to rocket attacks by hostile forces.

Antarctic geopolitics in this rendition were changing, and changing fast. Cold War geopolitical imaginations were transforming Antarctica. Growing interest from the superpowers in the governance arrangements for the polar continent, in combination with the imaginative and material power of rockets and missiles, helped to transform and

complicate the meaning of words like 'proximity'. For southern hemispheric nationalists, it was a term to imprint into the imaginations of citizens who needed to know and feel an affinity for these southerly territories – recognizing them as part of their national territories even if they never visited them.²³ While proximity offered connection and integration, it also raised the less appealing prospect of how others might take advantage if they could establish themselves in comparatively nearby Antarctic spaces. Richard Casey, the Australian Foreign Minister, confided to the Canadian High Commissioner in Canberra that 'We do not want the Russians to mount installations in the Antarctic from which they can drop missiles on Melbourne or Sydney.'²⁴ That remark was made in 1957 the same year Andrews was penning his thoughts on Antarctic geopolitics. Timing was everything.

The period between 1947 and 1957 was highly significant in shaping an anticipatory Antarctic geopolitics. Claimant states, southern and northern hemispheric alike, watched anxiously as others mustered their imaginative and material resources. The role of the superpowers was foundational as they had the resources to move about, to settle in and even to imagine different Antarctic futures. The United States was instrumental in proposing the IGY and in leading the negotiations over the future governance of the Antarctic. The Soviet Union (and in a more modest role India) was resolute in ensuring that it was not excluded from any international scientific and political enterprises affecting the polar continent. Australian anxieties only increased when it became apparent that the Soviet Union, as part of its IGY polar programme, was determined to establish scientific stations in the AAT. Whatever its private reservations, the Australian government was in no position to protest about this concentration of scientific power. Under the terms and conditions of the IGY, this veritable 'scientific Olympics' was to be devoid of concerns about who claimed which part of the Antarctic as their national territory.

Painful as it might have been, the latest iteration of Antarctic geopolitics in 1957 was one in which scientific internationalism, Cold War geopolitics and territorial nationalism made for awkward bedfellows. As a physical setting for all of this, the material geographies of the Antarctic were anything but inert. The ice and snow themselves were enrolled in these geopolitical articulations. What could be buried under ice? Could rockets be secretly installed and launched? Were submarines secretly patrolling the ice-filled waters off the polar continent? As with the Arctic region, journalists and politicians alike were quite capable of investing tremendous possibilities for intrigue and suspicion. It was not just charlatans and conspiracy theorists at work here. Respectable newspapers, such as the *New York Times* in September 1959, were quite capable of imagining a world where the Soviet Union would need to be prevented from turning the Antarctic into a 'Soviet Albania' and using it to establish launch pads which might imperil the entire southern hemisphere.²⁵ Andrews, by way of contrast, was quite modest when it came to imagining what geopolitical future might materialize in Antarctica.

The negotiations leading to the 1959 Antarctic Treaty were painstaking and, at times, verged on collapse because of competing futures. Cold War fears of Soviet intrigue combined with claimant state intransigence were prominent in this, as was suspicion of the United States and what it 'wanted' from the Antarctic. In other words, a variety of geopolitical 'demands' were being hastily assembled in the late 1950s – there were demanding actors who did not want to be excluded from any governance negotiations, there were demanding issues that were considered to be crucial for some parties, there were imaginative demands, and there were hopeful demands that 'science' would provide

a necessary consensus. As the US State Department official Henry Dater noted, 'Because of its leadership in the Free World, it is evident that the United States could not now withdraw from the Antarctic . . . Antarctica simply cannot be separated from the global matrix. Science is the shield behind which these activities are carried out.'²⁶ The Antarctic Treaty negotiations were as much a scientific-legal intervention as they were geopolitical and future-orientated. At stake was something both imaginative and material – how to imagine what the polar continent could be like, and how to practice geopolitics in the face of an uncertain future? What could be anticipated and could unwelcome futures (for example, the Antarctic as Cold War battleground, as nuclear testing site, as resource free-for-all) be avoided?

DEFERRING ANTARCTIC GEOPOLITICS

The signing of the Antarctic Treaty on 1 December 1959 is often taken to be a landmark event that transformed Antarctic geopolitics in the sense that it provided an overall framework for the original signatories to find a way forward through territorial accommodation and scientific exchange. The period of ratification was not straightforward, however. Claimant states such as Argentina and Chile were slower to endorse than others and, in large part, this revolved around a reluctance to embrace a treaty regime that appeared to defer their territorial nationalisms.²⁷ The treaty intervened in the 'foreseeable future' and the negotiators in Washington DC determined which things and objects could be foreseen. Article 4 of the Antarctic Treaty, which places to one side the thorny issue of the territorial sovereignty of Antarctica, was designed to defer an unwelcome future – a future whereby the superpowers and claimant states contested, perhaps violently, matters of possession, dispossession, and non-possession. The apparent neglect of natural resources in the treaty negotiations was deliberate in the sense that the issue itself was considered to be politically toxic and likely to inflame the already sensitive issue of sovereignty. So by intervening in one area (deferring conflict over territorial sovereignty) it was hoped that another area (conflict over resources both living and non-living) could be avoided.

Thus what is interesting about the Antarctic Treaty and what followed from it is its relationship to 'Antarctic futures'. The role of anticipation was crucial as signatories were engaged in various mechanisms to defer, to prepare, and even pre-empt uncertainties and threats to the treaty and to Antarctica itself. Acting in anticipatory ways was, and indeed still is, an integral part of Antarctic geopolitics, as a way of shaping that very future. In the face of persistent uncertainty over territorial sovereignty, such active anticipation is a necessary pre-condition for regime survival. But addressing those qualms, including future uncertainties, has not always been a shared project. Claimant states, for example, held views of Antarctica conditioned by their senses of geographical proximity, historic connections, and inalienable legal rights. When the original signatories assembled a preamble to the Antarctic Treaty, it appealed to a recent past and a shared future vision prefaced by the use of the words 'shall' and 'will':

Recognizing that it is in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord;

Acknowledging the substantial contributions to scientific knowledge resulting from international cooperation in scientific investigation in Antarctica;

Convinced that the establishment of a firm foundation for the continuation and development of such cooperation on the basis of freedom of scientific investigation in Antarctica as applied during the International Geophysical Year accords with the interests of science and the progress of all mankind;

Convinced also that a treaty ensuring the use of Antarctica for peaceful purposes only and the continuance of international harmony in Antarctica will further the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.²⁸

The deferral of the Antarctic geopolitics of the 1950s was achieved by two primary mechanisms – regime development and ‘treaty sovereignty’. The first was achieved through the regime development epitomized of the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS). As the treaty parties developed a basic governing architecture, including a future-facing assemblage of biennial meetings, scientific networks, and regular interchange between officials, it helped to order spatially and manage temporally the Antarctic region. Legal instruments such as conventions and shared agreements over resources (such as seals, fish, and even a deferred one on mineral resources) helped to consolidate claims to solidarities and articulations of authority, as well as generating shared understandings of the Antarctic itself. A growing membership, including representatives from China, India, and Brazil, in a short period of time in the 1980s, was a particularly important development in deferring visions of a continent caught up in a new era of resource-driven geopolitical intrigue.

Geographical understandings of Antarctica were significant in this context. In the immediate aftermath of the Antarctic Treaty negotiations, it was not uncommon to regard the polar continent as a ‘frozen laboratory’. A conceit that not only under-estimated the physical agency of the Antarctic but also viewed science as an overwhelmingly palliative presence – an assemblage of agents, ideas, objects, and practices, which enabled international goodwill and exchange.²⁹ Former British scientist and director of the British Antarctic Survey Richard Laws was not untypical in claiming that ‘Scientific activities are relatively non-controversial as had been demonstrated during the International Geophysical Year to defuse sovereignty issues.’³⁰ There was a presumption that science in the post-Antarctic Treaty era would be able to defuse and indeed defer the more dystopian variants of future Antarctic geopolitics.

This sense of defusing sovereignty issues was sorely tested in the 1960s and 1970s when it became clear that the Antarctic was not a ‘frozen laboratory’ per se. It was, for many parties, a lively place filled with potential both in the here and now and in the future. Interest in the region’s resource potential led to new regime developments including the Convention on the Conservation on Marine Living Resources (CCMALT, 1980) and the deferred Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities (CRAMRA 1982–1988), which ultimately failed to secure the necessary support of the Treaty Consultative Parties. Regardless of their fate, these conventions coupled with growing interest from third parties in the ‘future of Antarctica’ revealed the challenges facing the ATS itself.

While it had proven adept at deferring the Antarctic geopolitics of the 1950s, the ATS was facing unprecedented challenges about how to respond to the future. It was, of course, impossible to predict future outcomes precisely. But for those interested parties, seeking to consolidate and indeed preserve the ATS, the awareness of contingency, shock, and

uncertainty underwrote calls to develop these new conventions in the hope of providing a framework for regulating a resourceful rather than scientific Antarctica. The introduction of the conventions was indicative of strategic calculation and imagination; an attempt to anticipate and defer possible conflict in the future. While the CRAMRA negotiations (1982–1988) ultimately floundered because two of the lead negotiators (Australia and France) abandoned plans to develop a future-orientated regime for resource exploitation and revenue sharing, the then New Zealand-based chief negotiator, Chris Beeby, was clear in his own mind what was at stake:

The single most important stimulus towards agreed rules was the common judgment that their absence might one day lead to a revival, in a very acute and unmanageable form, of the dispute about sovereignty put aside by Article IV of and that this could in turn severely undermine the Treaty and even lead to its collapse. That judgment – that rules are needed, that the gap in the Treaty should be filled – still represents common ground.³¹

So the revival of an earlier form of Antarctic geopolitics was the stimulus, in Beeby's judgment at least, for CRAMRA as a future-orientated intervention – a measure designed to defer the worst possible future (for example, unregulated mining and inter-state conflict) by invoking one where resource exploitation would unfold in a rules-based and pacific framework. For others, of course, this future vision was anything but hopeful. Environmental organizations, such as Greenpeace, were highly active in contesting this vision of the Antarctic as resource space and mobilized geographical counter-imaginaries emphasizing a future based on Antarctic wilderness. Their vision was one of permanent deferral, in other words, where mineral resource exploitation would never occur in the future. Creative practices and interventions such as images of rusty oil drums, scenario planning, and public protesting were vital in moving and mobilizing others to embrace their future visions. In the midst of that turmoil, growing interest by Third World states such as China, India, and Malaysia further inflamed the representational struggles over how to understand Antarctica – was it a world park, a resource base, a scientific laboratory, a fishing ground, or a legacy of past colonialisms and imperialisms?

The introduction and eventual entry into force of the Protocol on Environmental Protection in 1998 was an instrument of deferral. As with the Antarctic Treaty, the ban was a mechanism for deferring and blocking unwanted futures. While the measures agreed under the Protocol can be revisited and possibly rescinded if there is sufficient support from the parties concerned, the specific ban on mining activities, under Article 7, was intended to defer a more immediate and unwelcome future – the collapse of the ATS itself. The decision by Australia and France to walk away from the CRAMRA negotiations was widely 'felt' to be ushering into existence possible ruination of the ATS. Eager to rebuild political consensus and revitalize the governance architecture, the Protocol negotiations were some of the most testing in the system's history.

For the seven claimant states and the two semi-claimants (the Soviet Union and the United States), Article IV was a deferral and not a denial of their future sovereign interests in Antarctica. The term 'treaty sovereignty' was used to describe a situation whereby the parties concerned explored a variety of agents, sites, and objects to consolidate their national imaginaries. In Argentina and Chile, for example, in the midst of speculation about Antarctica's growing resource potential, pregnant women were flown down to Antarctic bases so that they could give birth to children in Antarctica. Building genealogical and

geopolitical connections with the continent, one might say, in the natal and post-natal process. The use of pregnant women as geopolitical agents was a notable intervention in a place where women had largely been excluded and marginalized.³² The sites of Antarctic geopolitics extended beyond the Antarctic. While the research station helped to consolidate an occupying presence, the school, the museum, and the library were also noteworthy in archiving, educating, and displaying Antarctic nationalisms. In 1992, Chile exported a piece of Antarctic ice to the EXPO in Seville as part of a national exhibition about the country and its diverse ecosystems and landscapes. As one author noted:

The decision to search for ice from Antarctica reflects nationalist pride in the territory that dates back to the late 1940s. In February 1948, President Gabriel González Videla refused to minimize the importance of the claimed land and stated that it was necessary to 'defend the sovereignty and unity of our territory, from Arica to the South Pole'. On May 10 of the previous year, to commemorate the claim and reinforce expressions of national identity to celebrate Chile's ice-covered noncontiguous territory, Correos de Chile issued two postage stamps that depicted the country's Antarctic terrain.

The stamps conveyed a simple yet powerful message: Despite the ongoing territorial disputes, Chile owned a piece of Antarctica according to Decree No. 1747, issued on November 6, 1940.³³

As scholars such as Jack Child remind us, postage stamps in South America and beyond were important geopolitical objects, as banal reminders of Antarctic territories past, present, and also future.³⁴

What 'treaty sovereignty' allowed for was a spatial and temporal deferral. On one hand, it meant that claimant states such as Australia, Chile, and the UK deferred anxieties of dispossession by re-possessing their territories in the realm of the imaginative and material; by incorporating them into the realm of public education on the one hand and on the other by building and maintaining scientific stations. It also facilitated a future-orientated intervention with one of the most obvious being the education of young children in the public education system, thus ensuring that as adults they were inculcated with a sense of how important it was to understand their respective nations as 'polar'. The work of the Argentine political scientist, Carlos Escudé, remains invaluable in highlighting how forms of 'patriotic education' doctrines combined with map drawing, scrapbook making and the collection of stamps contributed to the making of the young Argentine citizen in the here and now and the 'geographically informed' citizen of the future.³⁵

RESILIENT ANTARCTIC GEOPOLITICS

Resilience, used frequently in national security planning and disaster management, is in the eyes of many analysts one of the most important contemporary political categories. With its roots in ecological thought, resilience implies a capacity to 'bounce back' from a current (and possibly unwelcome) state to a previous state. The catalyst for such resilience is often said to be evident in the aftermath of a crisis or trauma such as a natural disaster or terrorist attack. What makes resilience appealing to political leaders, moreover, is the sense that it stands in contra-distinction to fragility. Resilience is also an imaginative process. It embraces a strategic culture of preparedness, which embraces the prospect of the emergency in order to better prepare for something that might happen, but also might not. As Mark Neocleous contends,

Resilience is nothing if not an apprehension of the future, but a future imagined as disaster and then, more importantly, recovery from the disaster. In this task resilience plays heavily on its origins in systems thinking, explicitly linking security with urban planning, civil contingency measures, public health, financial institutions, corporate risk and the environment in a way that had previously been incredibly hard for the state to do.³⁶

For the seven claimant states, the future imagined as disaster might be a world where their territorial claims were dismissed with little to no thought for the apparent consequences. In a world where the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty no longer applied, the geopolitical holding pattern of the last six decades would be no more. Semi-claimants such as Russia and the United States might formally articulate and implement *de facto* territorial claims and third parties, state and non-state alike, might decide that existing prohibitions on mining might no longer apply. A new colonizing impulse might be unleashed with a variety of actors engaging in their own space-making projects, oblivious to calls for consensus and restraint in mineral resource activities, fishing, military testing, and so on.

While popular authors such as Kim Stanley Robinson and Matthew Reilly have imagined an Antarctica punctured by mining operations and/or riddled by conflict, claimant states frequently invoke the prospect of disaster or crisis to provoke domestic and international audiences.³⁷ In Australia, for example, Chinese research stations being established in the AAT in conjunction with Japanese whaling in the Southern Ocean has provoked commentators to claim that sovereignty over the AAT is in jeopardy. In both cases, notwithstanding the presence of the ATS and relevant actors such as the International Whaling Commission, well-placed Australian writers were not shy in imagining disastrous futures. Ellie Fogarty of the Lowy Institute for International Policy speculated on the following in 2011:

Major powers such as China and Russia have voiced their interest in the continent's resource potential, strongly suggesting the current prohibition of resource exploitation will be revisited after 2048. These developments pose a potential threat to the longevity of the Antarctic Treaty System as well as Australia's dormant claim to 42% of the continent. Australia has limited Antarctic presence and capability, and posits its policy in terms of science and environmental management rather than national security. This raises questions about its ability to preserve its sovereignty claim.³⁸

In other words, the last sentence of the quote frames it as a question of resilience. What can the claimant state do to 'preserve its sovereignty claim' in the face of a looming disaster? The disaster being, presumably, Russia and China's decision to revoke the prohibition on mining in 2048 onwards – the point when the provisions of the Protocol on Environmental Protection could be reviewed and possibly annulled. More worryingly, however, is the implicit suggestion that major powers such as China might just 'walk away' if the ATS no longer suited their purposes.

Other Australian authors have considered the consequences that might follow if countries such as China continue to expand their presence in the Antarctic. As Bergin and Press contend:

Australia is a major player in Antarctic affairs, but others' efforts might overtake us soon. If we're to maintain our significant influence on the frozen continent, it's essential that we expand our ability to conduct high quality science, extend the presence that allows for that science to be

supported, and grow the logistic capability to deliver and support science . . . Other countries have superior capacity to penetrate our territory, and so they do.³⁹

This fear of ‘penetration’, with all its fears of unwanted and gendered violation, is a recurring motif in contemporary Australian geopolitical imagination, provoking in turn a cultural reaction that has been termed ‘frontier vigilantism’.⁴⁰ As Ellie Fogarty noted, ‘Greater occupation, and the ability to access all of its claimed territory will make it less difficult for Australia to argue its case for sovereignty in the future.’⁴¹

One response by claimant states such as Australia has been to invest in a more resilient form of Antarctic geopolitics by promoting themselves as coastal states and advocating greater resourcing to extending their presence both above and below sea level.⁴² Drawing inspiration from Article 76 and 77 of the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS) and provisions for extended continental shelf delimitation, Australia and others have invested considerably in mapping and charting the continental shelf regions of their territorial claims in Antarctica and surrounding sub-Antarctic islands. It is a contentious business, as the vast majority of the international community would not register the presence of coastal states in Antarctica. The relationship between UNCLOS (which came into force in 1994) and the Antarctic Treaty is a work in progress.⁴³ It has created opportunities for states with claims to Antarctic coastline, such as Australia, Argentina, and the UK, to collect scientific data about their continental shelf regions and consider submitting materials to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), which in turn helps to adjudicate on whether a coastal state enjoys further sovereign rights over the seabed pertaining to the extended continental shelf. This is a complex, time-consuming, and expensive business; and thus far none of the claimant/coastal states concerned (with the exception of Argentina) have asked the CLCS to consider their respective Antarctic extended continental shelves. Their deferral is rooted in caution – a concern that to take an active position would be seen as provocative to other parties to the ATS which believe that land and sea-based claims to territory should be deferred for the duration of the treaty and its provisions.⁴⁴

This deferral, however, is complicit with a resilient Antarctic geopolitics. In other words, there is a conviction that any collapse in the ATS can be mitigated and even recovered from if information on extended continental shelves is archived and stored. When Australia presented its submission in 2004 to the CLCS, it was publicly noted that they asked the UN body not to consider their materials pertaining to the AAT. It was a deliberate partial submission, but one which reserved the right to submit further materials in due course. As with other claimant states such as Chile, New Zealand, and the UK, this partial submission strategy was an exercise in preparedness. What might the claimant/coastal state do in the event of the collapse of the ATS? The answer appeared to be it would submit further materials to the CLCS in the hope, if not expectation, that this UN body might issue non-binding ‘recommendations’ which would help to bolster a sense of de facto territorial sovereignty over the Antarctic seabed. In reality, the CLCS is a scientific–technical body with no legal competence, but, nonetheless, the hope appears to lie in this body to grant an imprimatur of sorts.⁴⁵

A further vignette illustrative of another form of resilient Antarctic geopolitics lies in the bilateral relationship between Argentina and Britain. Both countries have faced the prospect of the relationship turning towards disaster, never more so than from April

to June 1982 when the fate of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands hung in the balance. Since those hostilities, both countries have been engaged in a 'proxy war' in and around the sub-Antarctic islands of the Falklands and South Georgia, clashing over defence, fishing, oil and gas exploration, and tourism. The 2013 referendum in the Falkland Islands was another moment of geopolitical tension as voters overwhelmingly expressed support for a political future shaped by a constitutional relationship with the UK. Both countries have invested strongly in building and maintaining political relationships with other South American states such as Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay.

In 2012, a situation of a different kind that many took as a looming disaster provoked a renewed interest in how resilient the UK's Antarctic presence might be in the future. The source of this anxiety was the decision by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), a major British funding body, to propose a merger between the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and the National Oceanography Centre. What followed was an intense period of media and parliamentary scrutiny, with supporters of BAS contending that any merger would weaken the UK's capacity not only to conduct polar science (as a result of rationalization of resources) but also to act as a high-profile geopolitical agent in a contested region of Antarctica. The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee concluded that the proposed merger was misguided. The merger was subsequently abandoned and the future of BAS as a stand-alone institution reaffirmed by the then Science Minister, David Willetts. Two months later, the then Foreign Secretary, William Hague, stood in front of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and announced that a large part of British Antarctic Territory would be renamed Queen Elizabeth Land in honour of the Queen's fiftieth Jubilee Year.⁴⁶

While the objects of anxiety vary from Australian worries about Chinese activities on the polar continent to the naming practices of the UK in the face of geopolitical competition from Argentina, these vignettes hint at a collective concern for preparedness and resilience. How can the claimant state make itself more resilient in a world where Antarctic geopolitics appears to be more riddled with arguments over scientific whaling, fisheries management, and the establishment of marine protection areas in the Southern Ocean?⁴⁷ China, Russia, and the Ukraine are routinely cited as examples of non-claimant states who are eager to exploit Antarctica in the here and now (fish) and in the future (minerals). In Australia, the government released an independent plan for Australia's policy options over the next twenty years in Antarctica in late 2014. For two Australian academics, the report was welcome because,

As explained above, others countries do have their eyes focused on Antarctica. Should a non-party to the Treaty arrive on the continent with non-scientific or non-peaceful intentions, then it is likely politics and international customary law will be used to prevent that non-party taking any actions that were contrary to the spirit and intent of the Treaty. *In the most unlikely event that the Treaty should end*, then any rival claimant will need to submit to a competitive process with Australia, bettering its long-standing history of effective occupation. Broader, untested arguments of common heritage aside, it is unlikely that another country could defeat Australia's claim.⁴⁸

Or so it is hoped, at least.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has considered how Antarctic geopolitics might be considered explicitly through the logic of anticipation and whether it might be possible to imagine three variants – characterized by anticipation, deferral, and resilience. In each case, the relationship to the future is critical in driving ideas and actions in the proverbial here and now.⁴⁹ For interested parties in the 1950s, there was a hopeful future in which international collaboration might be possible through science and scientists; which if sufficiently robust might anticipate another possible future involving further territorial claiming by the superpowers, nuclear testing and dumping, secret Soviet missile launch sites and the intensification of Cold War geopolitics, and conflict over strategic stores of minerals such as uranium.⁵⁰ Contemporaries had imagined that all of these scenarios were *eminently* possible. The Antarctic Treaty was about deferring those aforementioned futures and deliberately did not seek to resolve the toughest issues, such as ownership of natural resources and territory. Finally, the chapter identified a resilient form of Antarctic geopolitics, with an attendant interest in how the ATS has coped with ‘shocks’ and its capacity to ‘bounce back’ from hints of unwelcome futures including conflict over fishing, marine management, and scientific whaling. As the Antarctic becomes subject to ever greater demands to better manage, regulate, and understand it, so too will it become ever more important to understand how Antarctic geopolitics mutates in the present and in the future.

NOTES

1. Andrews 1957.
2. Hartshorne 1954.
3. Roucek 1951; Child 1979.
4. Howkins 2008; 2011.
5. Rozwadowski 2012; Turchetti and Roberts 2014.
6. Naylor et al 2008.
7. Andrews 1957, 4.
8. Chaturvedi 1990; 2013.
9. Joyner 1992; 2008.
10. Andrews 1957, 3 (emphasis added).
11. Dodds and Nuttall 2015.
12. Toal 1996.
13. Swan 1961, but also compare Griffiths 2008.
14. Andrews 1957, 6.
15. Chaturvedi 1996; Rothwell 1996; and Brady 2014.
16. Dodds 2002.
17. Cosgrove and della Dora 2008.
18. Hunter Christie 1951.
19. Dodds 1997, 115 (emphasis added).
20. Dodds 1997, 116.
21. Escude 1992.
22. Swan 1961.
23. As Collis (2009) reminds us, vistingation was profoundly gendered; women were excluded from Antarctic national programmes in the 1950s and 1960s.
24. Dodds 1997.
25. Beck 1986.
26. Beck 1986, 64–5.
27. Howkins 2008.
28. Antarctic Treaty 1959.

29. Herr and Hall 1989.
30. Laws 1987, 250.
31. Beeby 1991, 18–19.
32. Collis 2009.
33. Korowin 2010, 53.
34. Child 2008.
35. Escude 1992.
36. Neocleous 2013, 3.
37. Robinson (1997) and O'Reilly (2008) and more generally Leane (2015).
38. Fogarty 2011.
39. Bergin and Press 2011.
40. Dodds and Hemmings 2009.
41. Fogarty 2011, 11.
42. Kriwoken, Jabour, and Hemmings 2007.
43. Hemmings, Rothwell, and Scott 2012.
44. Powell and Dodds 2014.
45. Saul and Stephens 2015.
46. Dodds 2014.
47. Hemmings, Rothwell and Scott 2012.
48. Hodgson-Johnstone and Jabour 2014.
49. Ali and Pincus 2015.
50. Watt 2013.

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