



# SCAR 2020

Antarctic Science -  
Global Connections

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SESSION 47

**ANTARCTIC FUTURES**



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## Antarctic Futures: Is it worth looking for what is happening in the Arctic? Antarctic and Arctic, convergences & divergences of two international legal systems

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In times of Climate Change, the two poles look closer than ever. In the media and the public discussion, regularly they are covered together and sometimes mistakenly mixed. Nevertheless, of course, they are very different from each other. The Antarctic is a continent covered by ice and surrounded by oceans, while the Arctic is an ocean covered by ice and surrounded by continents. In political and legal terms, although the Antarctic Treaty System is much more developed as international regimen than the Arctic governance agreements, the Arctic seems to be ahead, at least in the sense of the settlements of the geopolitical and economics' controversies between the States that participate in this arena. Even have been proposed that the Antarctic countries should look at what happens with the Svalbard Treaty as an example. Are the Arctic's political and legal present an Antarctic's future? To answer this question, it is necessary to explore the convergences and divergences between the two international legal systems. The presentation will analyse the main elements of this comparison to establish in which sense both poles could evolve in a similar way (and the current Antarctic or Arctic discussions and solutions would be a kind of future to the other) and in which matters they will go necessarily apart. The presentation is bases in and research project done as Research Fellow at the Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales (Spain) during January-March 2020, which is being edited to its publication later this year.

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## Political realism, political idealism and Antarctic futures

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What should the proper task of a political philosopher be when looking at Antarctica? Should she praise how well the Antarctic Treaty has functioned during 60 years and celebrate it as an exemplar of international cooperation? Should she consider the limitations posed by the claimant states as an in-built factor of Antarctic politics and governance? Should she be looking at the continent as the site of inevitable future confrontations between the “traditional 12” and emerging global geopolitical powers? Or should the political philosopher, instead, criticize the failings of the ATS in becoming a truly global regime? Should she aspire to make Antarctica fit into a larger account of what global justice should look like, enticing her to revisit seemingly “non-negotiable” features of the Antarctic Treaty like frozen sovereignty, and the science criterion for decision-making power?

The question of whether politics should be tackled by philosophers from a realist or an idealist perspective (the first and second above, roughly) has come to the fore in recent years, but no one has yet explored what holding each position implies when thinking about Antarctica’s future. In this presentation, I sketch a preliminary answer and point to my favorite.

## Intersecting Voyages: Inhabitation of Antarctica and Outer Space

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Over the previous two decades, architects have had considerably increased involvement in Antarctica due predominantly to the rise in the number of new stations and the redevelopment of existing stations. Architectural scholarship into the continent has been focused on architecturally historic research and the building performance of stations. Within the emergent and transdisciplinary field of Antarctic futures however a spatial approach from an architectural perspective has been, so far, largely absent. Our speculative research draws from 'design futures' as an architectural practice that moves between spatial design, futures, and fiction. This practice provides a way to think and narrate, or to navigate, Antarctic futures by critically investigating the ground conditions of present human settlement in Antarctica and applying future scenarios informed by extra-terrestrial inhabitation. Speculative storylines of journeys through Antarctica and Outer Space guide our creative exploration into the spatio-temporal parallels and intersections of the two non-sedentary extreme environments including geopolitics and the human body. The presentation of this research takes the form of a hybrid performance space enacted by two individuals and interlaces multiple aspects of storytelling into a singular performance. Antarctic fieldwork and audio-visual media – the real and the imagined, the present and the future – becomes productively intertwined. This performative lecture reveals how a spatial perspective combined with an architectural mode of thinking can break new ground for Antarctic humanities as it proposes a transdisciplinary methodology and creatively contributes to future scenarios of the continent.

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