

**Joint conference of the History EG and Humanities and Social Sciences EG
"Antarctic Wilderness: Perspectives from History, the Humanities and the Social
Sciences"
Colorado State University, Fort Collins (USA), 20 - 23 May 2015**

A joint conference of the History Expert Group and the Humanities and Social Sciences Expert Group on "Antarctic Wilderness: Perspectives from History, the Humanities and the Social Sciences" was held at Colorado State University in Fort Collins (USA) on 20-23 May 2015.

On Wednesday (20 May) we started with an excursion to the Rocky Mountain National Park close to Estes. A hike of two hours took us along a former golf course that had been remodelled as a natural plain, and served as a fitting site for a discussion with park staff on "comparative wilderness" given the different connotations of that term in isolated Antarctica and comparatively accessible Colorado.

After our return to Fort Collins we met a group of members of APECS (Association of Polar Early Career Scientists), with whom we had a tour through the New Belgium Brewery. The evening concluded with a screening of the film "Nightfall on Gaia" by the anthropologist Juan Francisco Salazar (Australia), which provides an insight into current social interactions on King George Island and connections to the natural and political complexities of the sixth continent.

The conference itself was opened by on Thursday (21 May) by Diana Wall, head of the School of Global Environmental Sustainability at the Colorado State University (CSU). Andres Zarankin (Brazil) opened the first session on narratives and counter narratives from Antarctica with his talk on sealers, marginality, and official narratives in Antarctic history. Elizabeth Leane (Australia) looked at Antarctic spatiality and the conventions of the action thriller in Hammond Innes's novel "The White South". Hanne Nielsen (New Zealand) explored the role of advertising during the Heroic Era of Antarctic research. Victoria Nuviala (Argentina) discussed her ideas on "I, We, They and the Other," to reconsider how human identities were produced in Antarctica during the 20th century.

During the second session on histories of Antarctic science Daniella McCahey (USA) presented research into Alexander Dalrymple, James Cook, and changing Ideas about the nature of the Antarctic Circle. Cornelia Lüdecke (Germany) addressed magnetism as a trigger of German polar research. Alessandro Antonello (Australia) explored the concept of the "Deep South" in terms of measures such as volumes and depths of the Antarctic in the 1970s. Ignacio Cardone (Brazil) referred to political shifts fostered by science when examining changes in Brazilian policy toward Antarctica before and after the Madrid Protocol.

The third session on methodologies and approaches in Antarctic studies was introduced by Ximena Senatore (Argentina), explaining why whaling in Antarctica in the mid-nineteenth century connected new people, new places and capitalism on a global scale. Poppie Gullett (USA) studied oral history as a methodology in Antarctic Studies, while Carol Devine (CAN) used the concepts of appearance and disappearance to draw attention to the role of women in constructions of Antarctica as a known space or a wilderness. Ursula Rack (New Zealand) introduced a range of issues regarding how barriers to the accessibility of historic material in polar research might be overcome, leading to better information exchange.

During the fourth session on geopolitics and the environment Ryan Musto (USA) focussed on the United States and the creation of the Antarctic Nuclear-Free Zone. Nelson Llanos (Chile) considered challenges to Antarctica's international status in the 1970s and how they related to conceptions of wilderness, while Jørgen Alnæs (Norway) explored the intersections of nationalism and cartography through a study of Antarctic maps in Norwegian newspapers. Juan Lucci (Argentina) concluded the session with a study of how populations at Antarctic bases have been considered in censuses.

In the evening Alan Hemmings (Australia) gave a keynote lecture on wilderness in a time of increasing Antarctic nationalism, which was open to public. On Friday morning (22 May) we drove to Boulder to address members of the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research in the fifth session on national perspectives on Antarctic science and the environment. Akiho Shibata (Japan) set the scene by discussing the Antarctic Horizon Scan and the Japanese Antarctic Research Expeditions (JARE) within the context of international law. Ria Olivier (South Africa) introduced the South African Antarctic Legacy Project and how to tame the wilderness of South Africa's Antarctic involvement with the aid of information. M. Consuelo León Wöppke (Chile) looked back on Chilean perceptions of the Antarctic Peninsula wilderness in the period of 1947-1958. Rohani Mohd Shah (Malaysia) wanted to add perspectives from the Malaysian community on Antarctic wilderness, unfortunately she could not travel to the conference

The "Wilderness Panel" after lunch was also open to the public. Daniela Liggett and Michael Hall (both New Zealand) defined and assessed wilderness in the Antarctic Treaty System as protected but not understood. Pablo Fontana (Argentina) gave a fascinating history of Argentinian attempts to introduce animals and even trees to Antarctica, as a means of domesticating a national space. Roald Berg (Norway) presented a comparative analysis of the Spitsbergen Treaty and the Antarctic Treaty in terms of wilderness and economic exploitation. Rupert Summerson (Australia) considered wilderness values in Antarctica within the context of the surprisingly high level of existing human infrastructure on the continent. Peder Roberts (Sweden) gave the annual Lewander Lecture in honor of Lisbeth Lewander (1956-2012), a much-missed founding member of the Group. Roberts explored the curious history of bipolar animal transfers, notably the attempts to settle penguins in Norway during the 1930s and the well-publicized settlement (and most recently eradication) of reindeer introduced to South Georgia.

The sixth session on Sunday morning (23 May) dealt with cultures of the Heroic Era. Carolyn Philpott and Elizabeth Leane (both from Australia) shared their ideas about the creation and performance of sledging songs during the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration. Anne Melgård (Norway) presented an analysis of remains of Roald Amundsen's South Pole tent "Polheim," and Andrew Atkin (New Zealand) discussed critically the crossing of Antarctic wilderness in the interests of science.

Pablo Wainschenker (Argentine) started the seventh session on Tourism, Governance, and Wilderness in Antarctica with an analysis of how participants in one of the first tourist cruises to Antarctica, in 1958, were selected as representatives of particular national values. Susan Lewis (USA) focussed on eco-tourism in Antarctica and Antje Neumann (The Netherlands) examined how the concepts of science and wilderness have been used within the Antarctic Treaty System.

During the eighth and last session short presentations from non-attendees were read. Sira Engelbertz (New Zealand) evaluated conceptual frameworks to evaluate nature and Antarctic policy. Waldemar Fontes (Uruguay) presented a historical point of view from the Latin American perspective on Antarctic wilderness. Daniela Portella Sampaio (Brazil) examined Antarctic cooperative practices in respect to dynamics and effects on the institutionalization of the region's governance.

At the end of the conference concurrent History and Humanities and Social Science Expert Group meetings were followed by a joint meeting of both Expert groups to discuss future plans, including publication of the papers from this conference and the next SCAR OSC in Kuala Lumpur.

In summary the conference had 80 attendees, and 37 oral papers were presented by speakers from 15 countries: Argentina (5), Australia (5), Brazil (3), Canada (1), Chile (2), Germany (1), Japan (1), Malaysia (1), New Zealand (5), The Netherlands (1), Norway (3), South Africa (1), Sweden (1), Uruguay (1), USA (4). The conference contributed to a growing awareness that the concept of wilderness cannot be usefully deployed without simultaneously considering the material legacies of human presence in Antarctica. These issues are particularly important given the pressing importance of environmental management in the present moment, and the unique expectations that the Madrid Protocol has placed upon human actors. It was felt that the History EG has an important role to play in terms of these issues, particularly given the overlap between its membership and that of the International Polar Heritage Committee.

Programme and abstracts are available under:

http://www.scar.org/scar_media/documents/humanities/Humanities_Workshop_2015_Abstracts.pdf