

National and Trans-national Agendas in Antarctic Research Since the 1950s
Report of the 3rd Workshop of the SCAR Action Group on the History of Antarctic Research
25–26 October 2007
Byrd Polar Research Center, Columbus, Ohio, USA

The 3rd Workshop of the Action Group of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, focused on the history of research in Antarctica, was organized by Cornelia Lüdecke with the local help of Raimund E. Goerler, Assistant Director of the Byrd Polar Research Center (Columbus, Ohio, USA), and his team. Workshop sessions were held on 25 and 26 October 2007. This year's workshop discussed 'National and Trans-national Agendas in Antarctic Research from the 1950s and Beyond.' About twenty participants attended from Australia, Chile, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, and the USA.

After the welcome speeches and a review of the work of the history of the Action Group, which was founded in 2004, the first session started with Peder Roberts (Department of History, Stanford University, USA), who asked the question "What has all of this got to do with Science?" He then presented a commentary on 'Rhetoric of scientific devotion in the planning of the International Geophysical Year (IGY, 1957–1958).' His answer showed that on the surface everything functioned as an emblem of international cooperation in scientific endeavor. However, people have to ask how and why the IGY came to possess that symbolic value, and to consider it as an integral part of a broader political picture.

Jason Kendall Moore (Centro de Estudios Hemisféricos y Polares, Viña del Mar, Chile) then gave a paper on 'Playing Dice: Toward a scientific explanation of U.S. leadership in the formation of the Antarctic Treaty of 1959.' Moore focused on the inconsistency of American leadership, with a number of other factors, that nearly led to the treaty's non-ratification, and which exposed the non-commitment of U.S. officials to their own policy.

In the second session, Rip Bulkeley (Exeter College, Oxford, UK) analyzed 'The role of Antarctic diplomacy in the origins and conduct of the IGY.' He noted that France became the first and still the only country with an Antarctic claim to install a permanent station outside of "its" sector, 46 years after the signing of the Treaty.

After the lunch break, enjoyed outside in the sunshine, Jorge Berguño (Chilean Antarctic Institute, Santiago, Chile) explained 'The search of an organizational framework for Antarctic research (1948–1985).' The course of the IGY demonstrated that binding undertakings and concerted action in scientific programs could be achieved without transferring all the authority to a single scientific Body. In 1958, the International Council of Scientific Unions established the Special (later Scientific) Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). In 1985, SCAR was fully incorporated as a permanent observer in the mainstream of the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS).

In this context, M. Consuelo León Wöppe (Universidad Marítima, Chile) presented an interpretive analysis of 'The state of Chilean science before and during the International Geophysical Year.'—before the Chilean emphasis shifted to the role of political and scientific elites in shaping public opinion.

Cornelia Lüdecke (University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany) referred to a country that did not actively take part with polar expeditions in what is today called the 3rd International Polar Year, as she spoke about 'The International Polar Year (1957–1958) as reflected in German media.' The time of the Cold War was characterized by the use of military terms to describe interests in Antarctica. This was clearly visible in the analyses of western German newspapers, and even in popular books on Antarctic research of the 1950s.

Ann M. Dozier (University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, USA) gave a lively report on her investigation of 'Getting the Science Done: perspectives from McMurdo,' during three austral summers between 2002 and 2005. She observed how organizational bureaucracy and the scientists' professional autonomy created inherent tensions, and how these were exacerbated by the uncertainties of conducting science in a polar environment.

The first day finished with a workshop dinner and a pleasant after-dinner speech by Tim H. Baughman (University of Central Oklahoma, USA) on 'Amundsen, Cook, and the *Belgica*, the first international scientific and multi-national expedition to the Antarctic.'

The third session, on the next day, started with Jason David (The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA), who dealt with 'The development of biology as a discipline in Antarctica.' He discussed the growth of biology in the amount of research undertaken, particularly on the Antarctic continent, and its connection to larger trends in both the history of biology and the context of Antarctic science.

Adrian Howkins (University of Texas, Austin, Texas, USA) talked about 'British Antarctic science, 1944–1959,' which first was increased on the Antarctic Peninsula before it cooperated with international research efforts. Finally, Britain sought to harness the scientific goodwill generated by the IGY to bring about political change in Antarctica, leading to the Antarctic Treaty of 1959.

Then John C. Behrendt (University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, USA), a veteran of IGY, reminded us of the 'First (1957–1958) Geophysical Investigation of the Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf (FRIS).' He discussed the results including the determination of maximum ice thickness (1,300 meters) of the southern-most area of the FRIS, which was in significant contrast to re-measurement of this area in the 1990s, when only 1,100 meters were found, suggesting significant melting during the interval.

In a paper on 'The shaping of a European effort in paleoclimatology,' Aant Elzinga (University of Göteborg, Göteborg, Sweden) focused on the discussion of the European Antarctic Project (EAP), abandoned in 1975, and the multi-national European Project for Ice Coring in Antarctica (EPICA), which started up in 1995.

After lunch break in the Polar Institute's library, the fourth session included a paper by Irina Gan (University of Tasmania, Australia) on 'To the Great Unknown: Soviet IGY Antarctic Expeditions of 1955–1958.' The setbacks and obstacles encountered by the 2nd Russian Antarctic Expedition in particular almost resulted in failure of the whole Soviet IGY commitment. Nevertheless, obstacles were overcome and plans finally concluded successfully.

The last paper was given by Lisbeth Lewander (University of Göteborg, Göteborg, Sweden) on 'Swedish polar politics, 1955–1970,' when Cold War developments in the Far North were severe concerns, which had an impact on Swedish undertakings in polar areas. Archive studies showed that occasionally decision makers were hesitant about what course of action to take, such as in the case of the political status of Antarctica in the 1950s.

After the workshop, participants left for home with very good memories of interesting discussions and exchanges on various aspects of the history of polar research surrounding the IGY. The Proceedings of the 3rd SCAR workshop on history of Antarctic research will be published in the electronic series of the Byrd Polar Research Center, as part of the Digital Repository of the Knowledge Bank of The Ohio State University.

The next presentations of the SCAR History AG will be in session 5.7 on 'Polar History and Institutionalization of Polar Research—The International Polar Years,' during the SCAR/IASC Open Science Conference in St. Petersburg, Russia, 8-11 July 2008.

The 3rd SCAR workshop was supported by the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, Cambridge, UK; the Byrd Polar Research Center and the Friends of the Byrd Polar Research Center, Columbus, Ohio, USA; the Frederick A. Cook Society (USA); and Deutsches Zentrum für Luft und Raumfahrt, Oberpfaffenhofen (Germany).

Cornelia Lüdecke, Munich