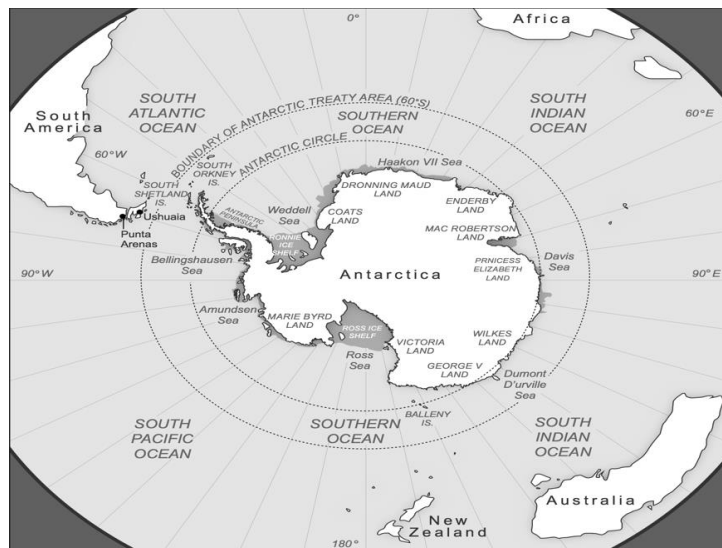


# Who Owns Antarctica?

## The Geopolitics of the Seventh Continent

Conference at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Room S8, Maison de la Paix  
Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2A, Geneva, Switzerland  
5 April 2022, 12pm to 2pm CET



## Conference Synopsis

Antarctica, the world's seventh continent, is seldom in the news. In popular imagination, it is a remote and inaccessible continent that is completely covered in ice. While Antarctica is occasionally reported on for its melting glaciers, no one hears of its natural resources or the hundreds of scientific research stations carefully positioned by some of the world's most powerful nations along its shores.

The continent is governed by the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), which is widely celebrated by legal scholars as being one of the most successful international legal regimes. Born in 1959, the Antarctic Treaty demilitarized the continent, dedicated it to peace and scientific inquiry, and later introduced a ban on mining and a series of environmental regulations through its Environment Protocol.



The notion that there could one day be a battle for Antarctica, therefore, seems outlandish to many—a theory peddled by scaremongers with a limited understanding of Antarctica’s ‘exceptionalism.’ An exceptionalism derived from the uniqueness of the legal regime governing the continent and its geographic isolation.

This conference will challenge this conventional wisdom, arguing that it ignores not just current developments in Antarctica, but also its history. Commercial exploitation was, after all, at the origin of Antarctica’s discovery, with sealers and whalers being the first to chart the continent. The conference will explore the geopolitics of Antarctica, and the race to claim its land and resources against a background of a rapidly warming climate. Comparisons with the Arctic will be drawn.

### Speakers:

**Alan Hemmings**, Associate Professor, University of Canterbury  
*‘The Antarctic Treaty System, Will it Survive the Test of Time?’*

**Elisabeth Buchanan**, Lecturer of Strategic Studies, Deakin University, Australian War College  
*‘The Claims Race in Antarctica; Is Antarctica on the Brink of a Major Geopolitical Conflict?’*

**Sanjay Chaturvedi**, Professor of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi  
*‘Can we De-colonize Antarctica?’*

**Rasmus Bertelsen**, Professor of Northern Studies, The Arctic University of Norway  
*‘Antarctica and the Arctic; Are there Parallels to Draw from the High North?’*

**Nong Hong**, Executive Director & Senior Fellow, Institute for China-America Studies  
*‘Will China Compete for the Poles?’*

### Moderator:

**Doaa Abdel-Motaal**, Author of *‘Antarctica; the Battle for the Seventh Continent’* and lecturer at The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies