

# **New Zealand's Foreign and Security Policy in Antarctica: Small States, Shelter Seeking, and the Changing Polar Landscape**

Joe Burton

New Zealand is one of the southernmost nations in the world. In winter, icebergs have been known to float off the South Island, and Antarctic weather fronts blanket the Southern Alps with snow. Commercial flights leave Christchurch to take tourists to see the Southern Borealis, and the city itself, the largest in the South Island, has become a major hub for Antarctic expeditions, with regular flights to Scott Base, New Zealand's Antarctic research station. New Zealand has strong economic, research, and security interests in the Antarctic region, and this is reflected in recent government policy. But the direction of New Zealand's policy in the Antarctic has become increasingly fraught with risk and contention, especially as China and other powers become more assertive in pursuing their Antarctic interests.

This chapter provides an overview of New Zealand's engagement in Antarctica, and how the government is seeking to manage its interests in an international environment characterized by increasing great power competition in the polar regions and the accelerating effects of climate

change. Drawing on small states international relations theory, the chapter highlights how New Zealand's policy toward Antarctica is changing and becoming more contentious domestically and internationally. The chapter analyzes the range of scholarly and policy perspectives about New Zealand's role in the Antarctic, how Antarctica is reflected and prioritized in New Zealand defence and security policy, and growing concerns in New Zealand about great power competition in the region. The chapter also provides a reflection on how small states in both polar regions can advance their interests through "shelter seeking" in international forums and by building co-operative, human, and environmental security narratives and policies.

The chapter is divided into four parts. First, it introduces a theoretical framework for understanding how small states manage the challenges of being small in an international system characterized by the resurgence of great power competition and conflict (this framework is based on other work by the author on small states and cyber security; see Burton 2013). This section makes the argument that small states face difficult choices about how to engage in contested regions, and that alliance building, international norms, and international institutions present opportunities for states to pursue their interests and seek shelter from the turbulence of twenty-first-century international politics. The second section explores the history of New Zealand's involvement in the Antarctic region, contextualizing New Zealand's current challenges. Third, the chapter examines recent policy documents and scholarly opinions, which suggest increasing security concerns and a firm commitment to protect New Zealand's territorial claim in the Antarctic, including through enhanced defence and intelligence co-operation. The chapter concludes with a summation of key issues and interests for New Zealand in the region and by making the argument that New Zealand and other small states have an opportunity to go beyond shelter seeking and be pivotal advocates for rules-based polar regions that will guard against revisionism and the erosion of existing polar norms.

## **Shelter from the Storm: Small States' Foreign Policy**

New Zealand is a small state. Its population is only 4.5 million people, and while it is a relatively affluent, prosperous, and developed nation, its

international, diplomatic, economic, and security footprint is tiny relative to its much larger and more powerful Five Eyes partners. Smallness is not an insignificant concept in international relations. Many scholars have sought to analyze how being smaller (generally based on population, gross domestic product, geography, and self-perception) affects nations' foreign and security policies. Indeed, the major approaches to international relations offer divergent perspectives on how small states should approach theory security, especially as the great powers now appear to be aggressively asserting their interests in international affairs, and as international security norms, including those relating to contested polar regions, seem to be eroding.

According to the realist framework, smaller states seek to enhance their security in international affairs (and ameliorate their lack of power) by entering formal or informal alliance relationships with larger states. To illustrate, New Zealand's entry, with the United States and Australia, into the ANZUS alliance in 1951 was predicated on enjoying the security benefits of being allied with the United States during a period in which New Zealand officials feared the spread of communism in the Asia Pacific, and particularly Southeast Asia. The ANZUS alliance gave New Zealand an assurance that if it, or its close Australian partners, were attacked by any hostile power (as indeed Australia had been in the Second World War), it would benefit from the defence capabilities of the world's democratic superpower, the United States. Alliances provide many benefits for small states, and the pattern of alignment is repeated elsewhere in the world; the small states on NATO's eastern flank are obvious examples. Conversely, alliances entail costs for small states too. They may become entrapped in conflicts involving larger partners (New Zealand's involvement in the Vietnam and Korean Wars could be seen in this context) and may experience a lesser degree of political autonomy. New Zealand left the ANZUS alliance in 1984 arguably for this reason: it wanted to chart an anti-nuclear international foreign policy that did not align with the interests of the United States, and which led to the United States suspending its alliance commitment (and most intelligence sharing) with the government in Wellington.

A more liberal internationalist and institutionalist assessment of the role of small states in international affairs involves small states looking to

international institutions to provide for their security—most notably toward the United Nations (New Zealand was a prominent founding member and argued for the rights of small states within the UN system), and other regional and sectoral organizations (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the International Monetary Fund, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, etc.). Small liberal states like New Zealand have invested in the creation of international forums in the hope that co-operation and mediation at the international level will help to mitigate the more unilateralist tendencies of the larger, more powerful states, and that dialogue and negotiation can lead to compromise and peaceful relations, even when states are confronted with difficult international issues. The importance that New Zealand and other small states have accorded the regional co-operative mechanism governing relations in the polar regions, including the Arctic Council in the North and the Antarctic Treaty in the South, is an example of this. Smaller states arguably have even greater incentives for the creation of these forums than do the more powerful countries, who more often have the means and capabilities to follow their interests unilaterally.

Although alliances and institutions have been vital international mechanisms for small states to achieve security, small states have also been involved in the negotiation and creation of international norms, broadly defined here as expectations of behaviour. Small states have often acted as “norm entrepreneurs” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998)—the advocacy by small Scandinavian states for bans on cluster munitions and landmines, for example, has been prominent. International norms exist in many different domains, including the polar regions and in maritime security; the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea creates legal norms to which most states adhere concerning the rights of nations in the open seas and in their littoral zones. The norms that govern Antarctica, again created through international mechanisms, have been treated for the most part with respect—that the region would not be militarized, and that it would be used for peaceful scientific purposes. International norms relating to maritime territories are increasingly under pressure, however. Chinese attempts to militarize the South and East China Seas; the erosion of maritime norms, including freedom of navigation in international waters; and norms protecting territorial integrity of other states that have

been broken (such as in the Ukraine, for example) are among many issue areas in which established norms are being contested and eroded. The challenge for small states will be to challenge this behaviour and maintain the norms that protect their interests and security.

Perhaps the most prominent analyst of small states in international affairs, Baldur Thorhallsson (2019), has argued that through alliances, institutions, and norms, small states exhibit shelter-seeking behaviour. Shelter-seeking theory suggests that small states take certain actions in international relations due to their size and corresponding vulnerability. This involves the reduction of risk in the face of possible crises, help from other states in absorbing international and systemic shocks, and assistance in the aftermath of crises. As Thorhallsson has argued, “small states are dependent on the economic, political, and societal shelter provided by large states, as well as regional and international organizations” (2019, 1).

In its pursuit of Antarctic security, New Zealand has utilized its alliances, leaned on international institutions, and tried to bolster international norms of behaviour. Although these aspects of New Zealand foreign policy do not always work together seamlessly (New Zealand allies, including the United States, have been responsible for eroding international norms too), this conceptual model helps us understand the country’s role and foreign and security policy in this region. When analyzing New Zealand’s historic role in the Antarctic, shelter-seeking behaviour (through alliances, institutions, and the promotion of norms) is clearly in evidence, as the chapter will now demonstrate.

## **New Zealand’s Historical Engagement in the Antarctic**

New Zealand has a long history of exploration in the Antarctic. According to recent research, Māori explorers may have visited Antarctic waters and even viewed the continent as early as the seventh century, and Māori were part of a number of European-led missions there in the 1800s (Wehi et al. 2021, 3). In the more modern era, New Zealand’s official engagement in the Antarctic stretches back to 1923, when the New Zealand government co-operated with the United Kingdom on expeditions, and when the Ross Dependency was proclaimed by the British government and entrusted to New Zealand. In this sense, New Zealand’s territorial claims to the Antarctic emerged from its Indigenous connections to the region

dating back centuries, but also to New Zealand's colonial and alliance relationship with the United Kingdom. New Zealand maintains a right of sovereignty over the Ross Dependency, which includes the Ross Ice Shelf, the Balleny Islands, Scott Island, and other adjacent islands.

In 1957, Sir Edmund Hillary established Scott Base, and New Zealand took over the running of the research station, which is still widely used today for a variety of leading polar research. This was followed by the signing of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959. The treaty aims to ensure that Antarctica is used exclusively for scientific and other peaceful purposes and doesn't become the focus of international conflict. New Zealand was one of the original twelve signatories and was the only country to argue that states should surrender their territorial claims in Antarctica (this is evidence of the lengths small states will go to promote norms and international co-operation; Roberts 2012). The treaty, which prohibits military activity and nuclear testing in the Antarctic, was signed at an important juncture for New Zealand, with the country having joined the ANZUS treaty system with Australia and the United States earlier in the decade and having fought in the Korean War alongside American and Australian forces. In this sense, the treaty was part of a wider context of New Zealand's alignment and evolving security relationship with the United States, a country that had previously expressed a preference for using the Antarctic to test nuclear weapons. The treaty also formed part of a wider pattern of advocacy by New Zealand for international norms of disarmament and denuclearization, including the negotiation of the Treaty of Rarotonga, which established a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific.

During the Cold War, New Zealand engaged in the Antarctic regularly, including through scientific and exploratory missions and tourism. Since 1965, The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has helped New Zealand safeguard the region, and New Zealand has hosted meetings of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty. This now includes providing support to the United States Antarctic Program, including search and rescue support, air transport, terminal operations at Harewood (Christchurch) and McMurdo (the US Antarctic base), Scott Base ship offload operations, and support personnel. Now that New Zealand's Provincial Reconstruction Team mission in Afghanistan has ended, the

NZDF's Antarctic missions are the country's largest, involving up to 220 personnel (New Zealand Army n.d.).

In the post-Cold War era, the focus on Antarctica shifted in New Zealand's foreign policy away from geopolitical competition to a more environmental normative outlook. This was because of the waning interest of the former USSR in Antarctica and the reduction in global military footprint on the US side. New Zealand during this period became a more prominent player in advocating for new environmental protections, which, at least for a time, displaced geopolitical concerns. This extended to New Zealand's own territorial claim and to the wider region and included a role in negotiating the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (1991). As the associate minister for foreign affairs said at the time,

New Zealand has been at the forefront of work within the Treaty to prepare for the implementation of the Protocol. We took a strong lead at the Christchurch Consultative Meeting last May in proposing new management plans for areas in the Ross Dependency that require special environmental protection. We have set in place a robust framework and guidelines for the management of activities by all New Zealand visitors to the Ross Dependency. We will continue to show strong leadership and demonstrate the highest standards of environmental stewardship in this most important region of Antarctica. (New Zealand Government 1998)

In 1996, New Zealand recognized the strategic importance of Antarctica, and established Antarctica New Zealand, which coordinates the government's activities in the region and reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Antarctic Policy Unit and the minister of foreign affairs. The agency is housed in the Antarctic Centre in Christchurch, which also hosts the US and Italian Antarctic programs. In more recent years, as the impacts of environmental factors have arguably worsened, including the effects of climate change and overfishing in the region, as well as deteriorating relations between the great powers, New Zealand policy appears to have taken another shift.

## Antarctic Crisis? New Zealand Policy-Maker and Scholarly Views of the Antarctic

New Zealand's security environment is changing. This is a multi-faceted challenge for policy makers in Wellington. First, China is becoming a more active player in the South Pacific. Most recently, this has manifested in a tour by the Chinese foreign minister to Pacific Island nations in May 2022 with a view to securing further economic, political, and security linkages, including with the Solomon Islands (which has caused particular political controversy and concern in Wellington). While Pacific Island leaders subsequently rebuffed a "Common Development Vision" proposed by Beijing, which would have led to increased ties with ten Pacific nations, there is a growing political vacuum in the South Pacific that New Zealand and Australia, as well as the United States, will need to close (McClure 2022). This is not unrelated to the Antarctic region—precedents set in China's relations in the Pacific could affect how China seeks to pursue its interests in the Antarctic too, as well as how Antarctic states respond.

Second, on top of the increasing geopolitical contest in the Pacific, the effects of climate change are posing new challenges to New Zealand's interests and role in the region. In this respect, geopolitical change is combining with environmental change in new and novel ways—the need for the Pacific Islands to secure foreign investments to aid their climate resilience efforts is an obvious example.

Third, and relatedly, regional security dynamics are evolving in a way that may lead to further separation between Wellington and its key allies. Jacinda Ardern, and her governing Labour Party, has placed a premium on Pacific and Antarctic engagement, including a plan to invest in enhanced maritime patrol aircraft and vessels (Greener 2022), which will no doubt benefit regional collective security, but New Zealand has also been on the sidelines of some major developments in regional defence dynamics, including the formation of the trilateral AUKUS defence grouping involving Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. As Robert Ayson has recently argued,

In comparison to Australia, there is less tendency to rely on military influence. Instead, New Zealand presents itself as a



small state with a special understanding of the worldviews of its even smaller neighbours. Rather than a preoccupation with great power competition, which Wellington knows is not the uppermost challenge for many of its Pacific Island partners, that means a focus on other problems, not the least of which is climate change. (2022)

There is increased recognition in New Zealand foreign and security policy of the risks posed by increased great power competition in the South Pacific and Southern Ocean. Alongside the accelerating influence of climate change on New Zealand defence and security missions, this challenge features strongly in recent strategic thinking in New Zealand.

Two of New Zealand's most significant policy statements/frameworks released by the NZDF indicate a strong commitment to maintain capabilities and commitments in the region and present further evidence of New Zealand's shelter-seeking behaviour. *Defence Capability Plan 2019* refers directly to New Zealand's activity in the region, including the "priority placed on the Defence Force's ability to operate in the South Pacific to the same level as New Zealand's territory, the Southern Ocean and Antarctic," noting that "New Zealand has strong ties to Antarctica" and is committed to "maintaining our claim in the region" (New Zealand Government 2019, 9). In practical terms, the plan commits to the delivery of a specialized Southern Ocean patrol vessel with the ability to refuel at sea from HMS *Aotearoa*, with a particular emphasis on patrolling fisheries. The vessel will have minimal military capabilities but will enable missions that are longer in duration with a broader patrol area and will support scientific missions. This follows the decision in 2018 to procure four P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft to retain a common strategic air surveillance capability with partners. Recent plans also include investment in space-based capabilities to enhance maritime and Southern Ocean situational awareness, with New Zealand being one of the smallest nations in the world to invest in such a capability.

Increased investment in Antarctic-relevant military capabilities is mirrored in the NZDF's assessment of the changing strategic environment. The Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018 recognizes that increased pressure on the rules-based order and resource competition will disrupt

New Zealand's neighbourhood (New Zealand Defence Force 2020, 7). The assessment states that it is New Zealand's "highest priority . . . to operate in New Zealand's territory, including its Exclusive Economic Zone, and neighbourhood from the South Pole to the Equator" (7). Supporting New Zealand's presence in the Ross Dependency and working with other agencies to respond to activity in the Southern Ocean is described as one of the NZDF's principal roles, and the need to monitor and protect the Ross Sea Marine Protected Area is referred to directly (8, 11).

The assessment notes that New Zealand has a direct interest in stability on the Antarctic continent, and that it has a responsibility to contribute to that stability. In examining the changing strategic environment, the assessment also notes that

New Zealand's responsibilities in the Southern Ocean include coordination of search and rescue activities in the Ross Sea, as well as detecting and responding to illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. The Defence Force maintains capabilities on behalf of the Government that are able to operate in these distant and harsh environments. The declaration of the Ross Sea Marine Protected Area highlights the importance of Defence Force activities—notably maritime surveillance and patrol—in support of agencies like the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in meeting these responsibilities.

It is further stated that

Interest by both state and non-state actors in Antarctica and its surrounding waters will likely grow over the coming years. This will lead to increased congestion and crowding, as well as pressure on key elements of the Antarctic Treaty System, such as the prohibition on mineral extraction. States are planning and building new facilities. The planned Italian runway in Terra Nova Bay could support broader activities by a range of states interested in the region. Chi-

na has begun work on its fifth base in Antarctica, on Inexpressible Island.

While an evolved treaty system is likely to remain the key framework for governing activities in Antarctica, difficulty in distinguishing between allowed and prohibited activities under the Antarctic Treaty system could be exploited by states seeking to carry out a range of military and other security-related activities. (New Zealand Defence Force 2020, 22)

This is the clearest statement of New Zealand's concerns and interests in Antarctica in recent policy pronouncements by the New Zealand government.

Mirroring the increased focus on Antarctica in New Zealand's defence and security policy making, there have been an increasing number of scholarly accounts by New Zealand academics noting increased concerns about the region. The most prominent polar scholar in New Zealand, Professor Anne-Marie Brady, has noted a variety of concerns in recent publications. First, the presence of the Russian Global Navigation Satellite System and China's installation of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite Station is described as a game changer for those countries' ability to project power in Antarctica. Brady (2019, 253) has also noted the pressure on Antarctic mineral resources, with Bulgaria, Belarus, China, India, Iran, South Korea, Turkey, and Russia all having expressed an interest in accessing them. Given the fundamental nature of these changes, Brady has argued that the New Zealand government's "piecemeal approach" may not be commensurate with the challenges ahead (253).

On China, Brady has stated that it is the only state that has "consistently failed to report the extent of its military activities in Antarctica and the military use of some of its facilities there" (2019, 258). The great powers more broadly, Brady has argued, are using their Antarctic bases "to control offensive weapons systems and relay signals intelligence," (258) which suggests that the very notion of what constitutes territory in the Antarctic may need to be reconsidered in light of emerging technologies. Brady also noted that research into the manipulation of polar magnetic fields (aurora, ionosphere) for information disruption and denial purposes

is also a worrying trend (258). The dual-use satellite facilities already in the Antarctic allow for military functions (command, control, communication, and computers, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) to be derived from civilian infrastructure.

Other scholars have taken a similar view. Patrick Flamm, for example, has noted that scientific projects in the Antarctic have always had a political element to them, arguing that the recent defence statement by New Zealand “is a clear act of Antarctic securitization,” understood as “the manner in which invocations of danger, threat, and risk are used to appeal to the need for political and financial resources” (2018). Flamm also noted that New Zealand’s approach to the Antarctic, including new defence investments, is one issue in New Zealand security that commands widespread and cross-party political support, not least because of the environmental activities that it facilitates, including monitoring climate change. Another key issue highlighted by Flamm is the negotiation of the marine protected area (MPA) in the Ross Sea, which is home to more than 30 per cent of the world’s Adélie penguins, around one-quarter of all emperor penguins, around 30 per cent of Antarctic petrels, and around half of Ross Sea killer whales (New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.). The MPA came into effect in 2017 as a result of a joint NZ–US proposal, but, as Flamm has noted, it will only last for thirty-five years before needing to be renewed, and it comes with a host of issues in relation to sovereignty, enforcement, and monitoring. According to Flamm, contentious relations with other powers in the Arctic can be transformed, as the relationships between South Korea and New Zealand in the region has shown: South Korea established a research station and icebreaker capabilities there in the 2000s, and similarly sees its role as a “small” state in normative terms and as a way to achieve wider international influence. As one scientist interviewed by Flamm said,

We were a small country, but we developed quickly and now the Antarctic programme is a way of gaining a proper international status. It’s also about contributing to the international community in a responsible way. They don’t think about economic resources that can be gained from

Antarctica but about status and our national brand. A good reputation will have economic effects as well. (2021, 3)

Scholarly opinion in New Zealand has also been brought to bear on the economic challenges the country faces in maintaining a presence in the Antarctic. This is a common theme across the small states literature: small states have limited resources and therefore face more difficult choices about how to use them. The reconstruction of Scott Base, New Zealand's home in Antarctica, for example, is set to cost NZ\$344 million. As Lars Brabyn has argued, "the Scott Base rebuild is estimated to generate 45,564 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, which seems ill-advised given the Government's declaration of a climate change emergency, a housing crisis, and a public service wage freeze. Many sustainable homes and jobs could be created back in New Zealand with \$344 million" (2021). These types of pressures are only likely to be accentuated by the challenges wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic on New Zealand's economy.

## **New Zealand's Antarctic Interests**

What are the key issues for New Zealand in Antarctica, and what are New Zealand's key interests? As a small state with limited military power, and one long committed to efforts toward disarmament and the shoring up of international institutions, New Zealand's strong normative and institutional approach to the region appears to be of paramount importance. New Zealand takes the view that many small states in the polar North do: that it does not want the Antarctic (or the Arctic) to become a region where "might is right." With this in mind, the division between military and civilian activities appears to become blurred—both globally and also increasingly in the polar regions. The fact that states can establish what are ostensibly military camps in the region that are used for civilian purposes is a difficult issue that will likely come under greater scrutiny.

New Zealand will need to monitor this consistently and effectively, but it also has wider analytical significance for the shelter-seeking argument advanced in this chapter. The norms that small states have sought to establish are being contested by hybrid activities that blur the lines between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Establishing and protecting norms will be more difficult in this context. New Zealand maintains a strong

commitment to the Antarctic Treaty system, but as recent analyses suggest, the system may need to be updated or amended and strengthened to allow for greater accountability, transparency, and enforcement of the treaty's provisions. As the security environment changes, it should not be assumed that the treaty system will remain fit for purpose.

New Zealand's ability to protect its interests will depend on its partners (and indeed the strength of other alliance relationships, such as between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia). Although New Zealand has not formally been part of an alliance since 1984, its relationship with Australia and the United States will continue to be important. As a small state, New Zealand does not have the military capability or resources to hold or project power in the territory alone. Although New Zealand has invested in its Antarctic vessels and capabilities that will be able to be used to complement the work of other nations in protecting the region, working with Australia and the United States will continue to be a priority.

There is a growing awareness in New Zealand of China's increasingly assertive approach to international affairs. This is based to a significant degree on concerns about China's activities elsewhere, most prominently in the South and East China Seas, but also through its Belt and Road Initiative and its increased level of activity in the Arctic and other regions. China's engagement in Antarctica should be seen by New Zealand policy makers as part of these broader trends. As a small nation with a level of economic dependency on China, New Zealand will be walking a difficult diplomatic line if China's Antarctic activities continue to push the boundaries of acceptability. In this sense, New Zealand, and indeed small states in the Far North, face an increasing security dilemma that stems from their economic dependency on Chinese markets and goods and their desire to have the United States engaged in upholding norms and rules in the polar regions.

Maintaining the Ross Dependency claim and Scott Base will be financially challenging for New Zealand. Small states have small budgets and maintaining overseas commitments is more difficult to justify, especially in the context of the economic hit that the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought on New Zealand. The estimated cost of rebuilding the base, \$250 million, is a tall order for New Zealand policy makers. At the same

time, the economic benefits that New Zealand derives from Antarctica will need to be protected. This includes maintaining New Zealand's status as a gateway to the Antarctic and protecting fishing stocks, especially as depletion of these stocks in the Southern Ocean has a knock-on effect in New Zealand's exclusive economic zone. As Frame et al. have argued, however, while New Zealand's economic interests need to be protected, the gateway cities to the Antarctic (Christchurch, Hobart, Punta Arenas, and Cape Town) should "act [not] as a proxy for national interests" but as part a "connected Antarctic system of access" (2021, 6).

Finally, New Zealand's defence capability developments seem to be geared toward intelligence, reconnaissance, and maritime surveillance functions, allowing them to maintain an adequate situational awareness of the Southern Ocean, countering some of the technological advancements by potential adversaries in the region, but also—especially crucial to the focus on alliances in this chapter—making a contribution to collective efforts to guard against any revisionism or environmental exploitation in the region.

## **Beyond Seeking Shelter: A More Assertive Role for New Zealand in Antarctica?**

This chapter has argued that New Zealand's approach to Antarctica has been integrally related to its smallness: it has sought shelter in alliances, international institutions, and security, maritime, and environmental norms to protect its interests and security in the region. New Zealand's policy has also closely followed the shifting and turbulent patterns of interaction within the international system and has been a response to geopolitical competition and the overarching dynamic of climate change too.

Shelter-seeking theory certainly implies vulnerabilities and risks in small states' foreign policies, and this is no doubt reflected in New Zealand's foreign policy. But New Zealand has also actively tried to shape regional dynamics and has been effective in doing so. Small states do have agency in international relations, as New Zealand's experiences in the Antarctic attest. The chapter has also suggested that although small states might depend on alliances (or at least strategic partnerships), they have a range of tools at their disposal to pursue their interests, which link security with

non-security objectives, and involve asserting influence through a wide range of forums (Steff and Dodd-Parr 2019, 98).

There are opportunities for New Zealand to continue to exert influence. One way this might be achieved is to conduct a more forceful strategic narrative about Antarctica through its defence and security policy: Indigenous connections to the Antarctic could be further emphasized in New Zealand's foreign and security policy statements, and the emphasis should be human and environmental/ecological security concerns, rather than geopolitical ones. The narrative that large states are exploiting the polar regions for their own narrow strategic purposes is a powerful one, and if small states worked collectively across both polar regions, they could form a powerful global advocacy that is both in their interests and protects the regions for their own intrinsic values.

Of course, a different path is also possible, which demonstrates that shelter seeking can happen in multiple ways. This would involve more closely aligning with the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and other powers in the region to take a more alliance-led approach to Antarctic security. Doing so may have consequences for New Zealand's ability to promote normative, non-conflictual approaches to regional security dynamics. But in the environment created by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, small states will need to consider their choices and may decide (as Finland and Sweden have done in respect of their decision to join NATO, for example) that great powers do not pay much regard to laws and norms and that harder balancing options are preferable.

Finally, this chapter provides further evidence to suggest that what goes on in the polar regions does not and will not stay there. Antarctic politics have been closely related to the superpower confrontation of the Cold War, and future geopolitical confrontation between the United States, Russia, and China will have impacts in both polar regions. New Zealand's hardening position on the Antarctic and growing concerns about the region are related to events in Ukraine, the South China Sea, the South Pacific, and the Arctic, suggesting what is becoming a big problem for small states: the impact of increasingly globally connected security dynamics. It is not entirely clear how New Zealand can respond to these dynamics in a way that best advances its Antarctic interests. Emphasizing the issue of connectivity, both between world regions and security realms,



could be one option—including more forcefully enunciating the idea of connectivity in New Zealand defence policy statements. In this way, a broader range of actors might find they have a stake in the future of Antarctic security and stability and lend weight to New Zealand’s efforts to keep Antarctica peaceful and protected.

## REFERENCES

- Ayson, Robert. 2022. “New Zealand’s Foreign Policy Turnaround.” *Incline*, 20 May 2022. <https://www.incline.org.nz/home/new-zealands-foreign-policy-turnaround>.
- Brabyn, Lars. 2021. “\$344m Scott Base Rebuild Wasteful and Unnecessary.” *Stuff*, 23 June 2021. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/science/125524065/344m-scott-base-rebuild-wasteful-and-unnecessary>.
- Brady, Anne-Marie. 2019. “Climate Change: Antarctic Geopolitics and the Implications for New Zealand Foreign Policy.” In *Small States and the Changing Global Order*, edited by Anne-Marie Brady, 253–70. Cham, CH: Springer International Publishing.
- Burton, Joe. 2013. “Small States and Cyber Security: The Case of New Zealand.” *Political Science* 65 (2): 216–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032318713508491>.
- Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change.” *International Organization* 52 (4): 887–917. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898550789>.
- Flamm, Patrick. 2018. “Geopolitics and New Zealand’s Antarctic Presence: New Zealand Is Increasingly Mobilizing Resources to Secure a Share of the Southern Continent.” *The Diplomat*, 25 July 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/07/geopolitics-and-new-zealands-antarctic-presence/>.
- . 2021. “An Unlikely Partnership? New Zealand–South Korea Bilateral Cooperation and Antarctic Order.” *Polar Record* 57 (E4). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247420000479>.
- Frame, Bob, Yelena Yermakova, Patrick Flamm, Germana Nicklin, Gabriel De Paula, Renuka Badhe, and Francisco Tuñez. 2021. “Antarctica’s Gateways and Gatekeepers: Polar Scenarios in a Polarising Anthropocene.” *Anthropocene Review*, 20 June 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F20530196211026341>.
- Greener, Peter. 2022. “Will There Be a Labour Defence White Paper in 2023?” *Incline*, 28 May 2022. <https://www.incline.org.nz/home/will-there-be-a-labour-defence-white-paper-in-2023>.
- McClure, Tess. 2022. “New Zealand and Allies Allowed ‘Vacuum’ to Develop in Pacific, Former Foreign Minister Says.” *The Guardian*, 27 May 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/27/new-zealand-and-allies-allowed-vacuum-to-develop-in-pacific-former-foreign-minister-says>.

- New Zealand Army. n.d. "Antarctica." New Zealand Ministry of Defence, accessed 22 August 2022. <https://www.defence.govt.nz/what-we-do/diplomacy-and-deployments/deployment-map/antarctica>.
- New Zealand Defence Force. 2020. "Strategic Defence Policy Statement." <http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/downloads/pdf/public-docs/2018/strategic-defence-policy-statement-2018.pdf>.
- New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade. n.d. "Ross Sea Region Marine Protected Area." New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed 10 August 2022. <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/environment/antarctica-and-the-southern-ocean/ross-sea-region-marine-protected-area/>.
- New Zealand Government. 1998. "Ratification of Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty." New Zealand Government, 15 January 1998. <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/ratification-environmental-protocol-antarctic-treaty>.
- . 2019. *Defence Capability Plan 2019*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Defence. <https://www.defence.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/03acb8c6aa/Defence-Capability-Plan-2019.pdf>.
- Roberts, Nigel. 2012. "Story: Antarctica and New Zealand." *Te Ara—the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, 20 June 2010. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/antarctica-and-new-zealand>.
- Steff, Reuben, and Francesca Dodd-Parr. 2019. "Examining the Immanent Dilemma of Small States in the Asia-Pacific: The Strategic Triangle between New Zealand, the US and China." *Pacific Review* 32 (1): 90–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2017.1417324>.
- Thorhallsson, Baldur. 2019. "Shelter Theory and Iceland: Options for a Small State." *Middle East Insights* 218:1–5. <https://mei.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Insight-218-Baldur-Thorhalsen-final-online.pdf>.
- Wehi, Priscilla M., Nigel J. Scott, Jacinta Beckwith, Rata Pryor Rodgers, Tasman Gillies, Vincent Van Uitregt, and Krushil Watene. 2021. "A Short Scan of Māori Journeys to Antarctica." *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* (6 June 2021): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2021.1917633>.