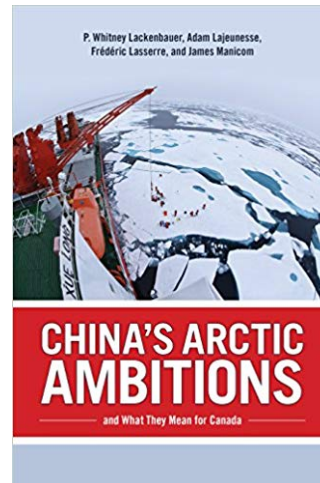
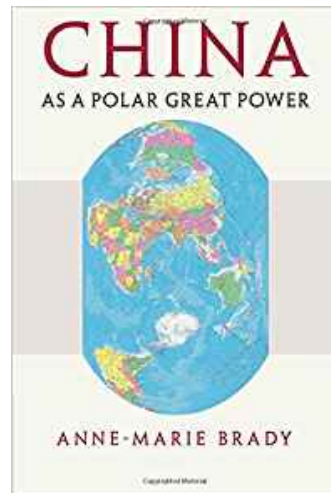

China in the Arctic: Polarized Visions of Polar Concerns



Anne-Marie Brady. *China as a Polar Great Power*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Whitney Lackenbauer, Adam Lajeunesse, James Manicom, and Frédéric Lasserre. *China's Arctic Ambitions and What They Mean for Canada*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press, 2018.

David Curtis Wright, University of Calgary

The question of where Europe ends and Asia begins has troubled many people over the years, but here's a rule of thumb: if someone can pose as an expert on the country in question without knowledge of the relevant language, it's part of Asia.

–Brian Myers¹

Two important books on China's interests and ambitions in the Arctic have appeared in as many years: Anne-Marie Brady's *China as a Polar Great Power*, published in 2017 by Cambridge University Press, and *China's Arctic Ambitions and What They Mean for Canada* by P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Adam Lajeunesse, James Manicom, and Frédéric Lasserre, published this year by the University of Calgary Press. The authors never saw each other's volumes as they were preparing their own, and the two are very different books. The work by Lackenbauer et al. is addressed to Canadians and the Canadian government, whereas Brady addresses the international community in general about the rise of China and how its increasing activities in the Arctic are concomitant to that rise. Lackenbauer et al. are not apprehensive about China's growing interest and ambition in the Arctic and thus do not focus on geopolitics, geostrategy, or hard security; Brady is, and so she does. Lackenbauer et al. consider future possibilities and horizons in short- to medium-run terms, whereas Brady concentrates more on the medium to long terms. Lackenbauer et al. have, as far as I know, never been threatened or harassed by Chinese intelligence services in their own country; Brady has. Lackenbauer et al. seem to know no Chinese (although they did, after their writing was completed, hire a Chinese graduate student to go over some Chinese-language articles on China in the Arctic for them²); Brady reads and speaks Chinese fluently and has a good command of the Chinese-language literature on the topic. And that makes all the difference.

¹ B. R. Myers, "Mother of All Mothers: The Leadership Secrets of Kim Jong II," *The Atlantic* (September 2004), <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/09/mother-of-all-mothers/303403/>, accessed 8 January 2018.

² My son Timothy Curtis Wright also helped with a bit of research for the book. I smile at the thought of him being hired to do research for a volume critical of the Arctic perspectives of his father and of his graduate school advisor, Rob Huebert. I remain very proud of Timmy and his accomplishments, including the citations of his scholarship at several points in the book.

Lackenbauer et al.

Brady points to a significant and telling weakness of the overwhelming majority of Western scholars who write on China and the Arctic—their inability to read Chinese:

...in materials aimed at foreign audiences China's polar officials scrupulously avoid mentioning China's strong interest in exploiting polar resources whereas in Chinese-language materials it is continually highlighted as the main reason for China's investment in polar activities. The assumption is that foreigners will not be able to read Chinese, and so they will not know what Chinese officials and commentators are saying in Chinese about the polar regions—and mostly, they are right.³

Indeed, one assumption among Western scholars who write on China and the Arctic yet read no Chinese seems to be that in order to understand China's ambitions and interests in the Arctic, one really need only understand the Arctic and not China (which, among other things, means its language, history, and culture.) Such scholars possess an excellent understanding of exactly one half of the problem: the Arctic half. Another cognate assumption of theirs seems to be that what the Chinese themselves have to say or write about the topic is ultimately mostly unimportant or, at any rate, inaccessible. Brady, on the other hand, is and deserves to be *the* preeminent international scholarly authority on China's Arctic ambitions because she reads (and also speaks) Chinese well. Among many other things, her linguistic abilities give her the advantage of being able to peak in on Chinese-language publications on the topic that are not intended for consumption by non-Sinophone readerships, and these can at times be quite revealing.⁴

³ Anne-Marie Brady, *China as a Polar Great Power* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 38.

⁴ Here is one example I have translated of what some Chinese Arctic scholars sometimes write and publish among themselves when, it seems, they think no foreigner will be looking on:

The most prominent manifestation of Canadian interests in the Arctic is the livelihood of the Inuit people in the region. The indigenes who live in the neighborhood of the Arctic – the Inuit – are members of the yellow race through and through. Thousands of years ago the last mass migration of humankind set out from Asia, crossed the Bering Strait, and proceeded into the hinterlands of the Americas. They did not anticipate that before them awaited beleaguering interception and cruel butchery by the American Indians! The Inuit fought as they retreated and ultimately withdrew to within the frigid Arctic Circle. The Indians thought the Inuit would freeze to death there and so stopped pursuing them.

Koreanist B. R. Myers (of Dongseo University in Busan, South Korea) takes the measure of scholars who write on Asian topics but read no Asian languages: “The question of where Europe ends and Asia begins has troubled many people over the years, but here's a rule of thumb: if someone can pose as an expert on the country in question without knowledge of the relevant language, it's part of Asia.”⁵ His point is excellent. Linguistic supineness would be shockingly inappropriate for any branch of European studies, or even Canadian studies for that matter. (What would Canadian historians think of a monolingual Anglophone history professor who finished writing up a history of Québec and then, at the last minute, hired a graduate student to read over and translate some French-language materials for him or her?)

Lackenbauer et al.'s lackadaisical approach to Chinese shows up in numerous little ways that add up to a major point: their lack of language skills and their resultant inability to do primary research in anything written in Chinese. Of the thirty-five Chinese-language entries in the volume's bibliography (225-53), fully nineteen (half!) of them are given incorrectly, usually with erroneous transpositions of the authors' surnames and given names.⁶ It would have taken someone who knew Chinese no more than thirty minutes to glance over the bibliography and highlight all these errors for them:⁷

Who knew that the Inuit would miraculously survive there? They created their own miracle of human survival.

Although the Inuit came from Asia, they differ somewhat from the yellow race of Asia because of the long time they have lived in the Arctic environment. In physical stature they are squat, crude, and stout, their eyes long and narrow, their noses big and broad, their noses sharp and bent downward, their facial features soft and broad, and they have thick pods of fat underneath their skin. Their crude and squat physical stature enables them to resist the cold, and their narrow eyes guard against the strong rays of the sun which are reflected by ice and snow and which can over-stimulate the eyes. These types of physical features give them surprising abilities to withstand the cold.

MEI Hong and WANG Zengzhen, “The Dispute over the Legal Status of Arctic Territorial Waters and its Solution,” 中國海洋大學學報 (*Journal of Ocean University of China*) 1 (2010), 23. I emphasize that these words are Mei's and Wang's, not mine.

⁵ B. R. Myers, “The Mother of All Mothers.”

⁶ For some reason, Chinese characters are given in the bibliography for the titles of the pieces, but not for the names of the authors. I have given what I could find of these on my own.

⁷ For the convenience and reference of people who read no Chinese I have, throughout this review article, capitalised the surnames of Chinese scholars writing in Chinese.

Name as given	Page number	Correct name and name order, with surname in capital letters
Aibo, Dong	230	DONG Aibo
Deming, Huang	231	HUANG Deming
Fangqi, Liu	232	LIU Fangqi
Jianmin, Shou	234	SHOU Jianmin
Jing, Lu	234	LU Jing
Jun, Wu	234	WU Jun
Lanjun, Gao	236	GAO Lanjun
Leilei, Zhou	236	ZOU ⁸ Leilei
Mingya, Zhu	237	ZHU Mingya
Q, Li	238	LI Qingping
Weibing, Wu	239	WU Weibing
Zhenfu, Li (2 entries)	240	LI Zhenfu
Zhen, Guo	240	GUO Zhen
Zhenrong, Meng	240	MENG Zhenrong
Fangyuan, Guo	243	GUO Fangyuan
Jiansong, Zhang	245	ZHANG Jiansong
Shan, Lei	248	LEI Shan
Xiaolei, Zhu	250	ZHU Xiaolei

Errors of transposition of surnames and given names appear in the English-language text, notes, and bibliography of the book as well. On page 44 they refer to LI Zhenfu as "Zhenfu," as if that were his surname. On pages 100 and 202 n. 6 they misspell the name of Taiwanese researcher WANG Kuan-Hsiung as "Wang Kuan-Hsung" and misattribute to him a statement of mine to boot.⁹ Poor pity old Admiral YIN Zhuo of the oddly-named (in English) *People's Liberation Army Navy* for his onomastic avatars; on

⁸ The bibliography in Lackenbauer et al. erroneously gives the pronunciation for the surname 鄒 as "Zhou."

⁹ On page 100 they credit to Wang my statement about "China's nightmare scenario" in the Arctic, a statement Wendell Minnick of *Defense News* was quoting in Minnick (2011), the article they cite. Reading the third paragraph from the bottom of Minnick's article in context will quickly and clearly indicate this.

page 42 he is “Admiral Yin Zhou;” on page 77 he appears (in drag?) as “Admiral Zhuo,” as if Zhuo were his surname (which would be like referring to Canadian Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Kingsmill {1885-1935} as “Rear-Admiral Charles”); and on page 123 he is “Vice-Admiral Yin Zhou.” (Three different ranks and three versions of his name!) This is particularly odd because Lackenbauer et al. do at times get YIN Zhuo's name right, as in “...Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo's quip...” (170). The director of the infelicitously acronymed PRIC (Polar Research Institute of China) appears as “Yang Huigen” on pages 56, 66, and 67 and as “Huigen Yang” on pages 48, 64, and 88. On pages 69-70 Lackenbauer et al. refer to, cite, and quote an article by “Jakobson and Jingchao”¹⁰ as if “Jingchao” were the surname of Jingchao PENG (PENG Jingchao in the Chinese word order of his name), Jakobson's co-author. (The article is also erroneously cited as “Jakobson and Jingchao” on 195, nn. 97 and 99.) In the book's citation of PENG and Wegge 2015¹¹ on page 189, n. 5, PENG's name appears as “Jingchao Pen,” and in the bibliographical entry on page 237 it is “Pen, Jinchao”!

Are these just nits? Do they matter? Perhaps the authors might consider for a moment what their reactions and impressions would be if someone were to refer to them as Mr. Whitney, Mr. Adam, or Mr. Frédéric. At any rate it does seem, alas, that such sloppiness and inconsistency in the spelling of names is, for whatever reason, more tolerable or forgivable (or maybe somehow less important?) when the names are Chinese.

Lackenbauer et al. (hereafter LEA) cover China's engagements with the Arctic as they relate to science, environment, sovereignty, shipping, natural resources, and governance. In their Introduction they dismiss strategic and security concerns with a mere half paragraph:

Readers may be surprised that we have not included a chapter on defence or “hard” security issues. After all, the extent to which the Arctic is becoming “militarized” and whether we should expect international

¹⁰ Linda Jakobson and Jingchao PENG, “China's Arctic Aspirations,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Policy Paper* No. 34 (2012), <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2012/sipri-policy-papers/chinas-arctic-aspirations>.

¹¹ Jingchao PENG and Njord Wegge, “China's Bilateral Diplomacy in the Arctic,” *Polar Geography* 38/3 (2015): 233-249.

conflict or cooperation in the region has been hotly debated in the twenty-first century. Although most experts now downplay the probability of Arctic armed conflict, a few prominent commentators continue to pose questions and frame popular debates that get picked up in non-Arctic states. Thus, when Chinese commentators suggest the Arctic's potential military value, they tend to simply echo Russian and Western statements. Indeed, it is remarkable how few Chinese officials have made public statements on Arctic defence issues (24).

So then if Chinese officials don't say much about security issues in the Arctic, there aren't any? Have LEA never considered the possibility that the Chinese may not be talking much about such issues because they are sensitive in nature and usually to be kept under wraps? Denying or belittling geostrategic and security issues in the Arctic will not make them go away; they are too real and pressing to have suffered such blithe dismissal, and excluding them from a book on "China's Arctic ambitions" is quite unfortunate. Further, China's understanding of how Russia and the West regard the Arctic in strategic and military terms does not, in and of itself, establish that China's strategic and military views of the region are somehow incomplete or derivative. What is more, the statement "most experts now downplay the probability of Arctic armed conflict" smacks of logically fallacious "appeal to authority" (*argumentum ad verecundiam*)¹² or "appeal to majority opinion" (*argumentum ad populum*),¹³ or even both.

A brief look at the table of contents in LEA quickly indicates what the reader is in for: chapters on the Arctic in China's (mostly non-military) strategy and its activities in the Arctic involving science, the environment, sovereignty, shipping, resources, and governance—in sum and in general, the sunny and roseate *hakuna matata* prospects for China's increasing involvement in Arctic affairs. The volume's selective content thus anticipates and reflects its overall conclusion and thesis:

While drawing heavily upon the invaluable translations of Chinese studies and documents by David [Curtis] Wright up to 2011, this study differs substantively in its overall analysis of what the myriad of Chinese statements about the North actually mean when placed into a broader

¹² On which see David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Towards a Logic of Historical Thought* (London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 283-90.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 51-53.

context. Our own assessment of Chinese academic and media articles on the Arctic suggests a growing awareness of potential opportunities associated with emerging shipping routes, resources, and polar science...Accordingly, we arrive at a different assessment than that of the “Conflict School,” which anticipates Chinese activism and even aggression to pursue its Arctic interests. Rather, we feel that if managed properly, the relationship between China and the circumpolar states can be a productive and cordial one, with benefits for every partner over the longer term.¹⁴

LEA explain who the two (!) members of the “Conflict School”¹⁵ are and then take pains to distinguish between themselves and the Conflict School “alarmists”:

On the one hand, alarmists—centred around what we will label the “Conflict School” of David [Curtis] Wright and Rob Huebert—suggest that Canadians should be wary of East Asian states (particularly China) as revisionist actors with interests counter to those of Canada. On the other hand, commentators like ourselves argue that Canada’s national interests in the Arctic are generally compatible with those of East Asian countries and see opportunities for collaboration and mutual benefit.¹⁶

But I am not concerned about “East Asian countries”; I have reservations about the Arctic interests of exactly *one* East Asian country: China. The rest I see as anodyne. (I do not know whether Huebert has reservations about other East Asian countries in the Arctic.¹⁷)

¹⁴ Whitney Lackenbauer, Adam Lajeunesse, James Manicom and Frédéric Lassere, *China’s Arctic Ambitions and What They Mean for Canada* (Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press, 2018).

¹⁵ The authors had originally used the term “Calgary School” but changed it when University of Calgary Press editors wisely objected to it, wanting to avoid confusion between it and the *real* Calgary School, an informal grouping of conservative-leaning academics and former students from the University of Calgary’s Political Science and Economics departments.

¹⁶ Lackenbauer et al., *China’s Arctic Ambitions*, 9. “Amplifying the voices of the most aggressive Chinese analysts,” they continue, “Wright pointed to China’s perceived [sense of] entitlement to the resource riches of the Arctic as the world’s most populous country...” (pages 9-10) But I zeroed in on the publications of Li Zhenfu (certainly among the “most aggressive Chinese analyst”) and others not because of their aggressiveness or stridency, but because they were, at the time, among the very most prominent and prolific of Chinese scholars writing on China’s interests in the Arctic.

¹⁷ Further, it is not at all apparent to me what manner of coherent or discreet “school” is made up of *two* professors in different disciplines and departments at the University of Calgary who are not completely

Geopolitics and future horizons

At several points LEA talk about short-term and medium-term observable trends. It seems that their point is, implicitly if not always explicitly, that they are engaging in empirical rather than speculative analysis. It does seem to me that those who are more concerned about China's ambitions in the Arctic tend to think more in terms of long-term geopolitical considerations, while those who take a more benign view of China's ambitions make mostly short- and medium-term arguments, and most of them economic. Inherent in these two different perspectives, then, are differences in chronological horizon. Geopolitics necessarily entails some element of analyzing possible future trends, and one working and fairly conventional definition of geopolitics (there are several¹⁸) is simply "a method for analyzing foreign policy which seeks to understand, explain, and predict international political behavior."¹⁹ That is to say, politics might extend a few years and of the future, whereas geopolitics and geopolitical trends and analysis might extend decades into the future.

LEA's book is an implicit exhortation to limit the chronological horizon of our thinking about China in the Arctic, to think in short-term and medium-term gains much more than in terms of medium- to long-term geostrategic developments and dangers. It seems that when LEA do think of farther horizons, it is usually more or less in terms of

sanguine about China's burgeoning interests in the Arctic. This is, indeed, about all the two of us have in common. Hubert knows more about Chinese military assets and hardware than I do, but he and I have never collaborated on any scholarly work or project and do not contemplate any for the future; we have only ever attended one conference together; we do not share our work with each other; we do not socialize with each other; we have rarely exchange emails until I started working on this article; we never speak on the telephone; we go for months at a stretch without even seeing each other; and I am often surprised by Huebert's publications and comments on China and the Arctic. (He neither tells me about his upcoming publications on the topic nor notifies me that he will be speaking, or has spoken, with media outlets about it – but not that I have ever asked him to.)

¹⁸ On various definitions see John Baylis, James J. Wirtz and Colin S. Gray, *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, 5th edition (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 301, and Leonhardt van Efferink, "The Definition of Geopolitics: The Classical, French and Critical Traditions," *Exploring Geopolitics: The Academic Faces in the Geopolitical Debate*, January 2009,

http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/publication_efferink_van_leonhardt_the_definition_of_geopolitics_classical_french_critical/, accessed 19 February 2018.

¹⁹ Irina Zeleneva, "Geopolitical and Geostrategic Approaches to the Study of International Relations," in *Russia and the World: Understanding International Relations*, ed. Natalia Tsvetkova (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), 47.

potential missed economic opportunities. And thinking primarily in economic terms is precisely what the Chinese government wants its own people to do internally and the international community to do externally.

But given China's long-term planning and strategizing horizons, it is not unreasonable for free and democratic states to have some long-term concerns about how nondemocratic and even anti-democratic states with truly execrable records of oppressing their own people and threatening and bullying their neighbours near and far might behave and posture in the Arctic. In this way the book is short-sighted and is not a comprehensive case for learning how to stop worrying about China's Arctic ambitions and love the Snow Dragon.

The chapters

Chapter One, "Situating the Arctic in China's Strategy," covers the nature of Chinese foreign policy (which it sees as largely benign, at least as far as the Arctic region is concerned), devotes four or five pages to Beijing's military strategy, and considers some short- and medium-term geopolitical issues but few if any long-term ones. One of its main points is that many analysts see China's current belligerence and assertiveness in its own region as broadly portending or pointing out its future course in the Arctic:

Arctic scholars often look to China's posture on maritime boundary disputes in its own backyard as an indication of its expectations for the circumpolar world. China's decision to use its influence in regional institutions like the East Asian Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum to bully rival claimants does not sit well with commentators concerned about the current state of Arctic governance (35).

The chapter then argues that Beijing's present regional hegemonic tendencies in its own immediate region are not predictive or prescient of its future course in the Arctic: "...this chapter illustrates the disconnect between the common assumption that China's behaviour towards its own neighbours is, in any way, a bellwether for its behaviour towards Arctic countries" (28); "While China has clearly demonstrated belligerent behaviour in its own coastal seas, and the pursuit of natural resource [sic] is

undoubtedly a critical dimension of China's overall orientation, these facts alone imply neither a revisionist nor even an aggressive stance in Arctic affairs" (37); and "...there are considerable limits to China's ability to adopt a strategy in the Arctic similar to that in its 'near seas'" (42).

But these come across as straw-man arguments. One does not need to point out or search for analogues in China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea or elsewhere in its immediate region in order to be concerned about its potential future actions in the Arctic; these concerns have an ontological integrality all their own and do not necessarily require external or analogical referent. Predicting or anticipating Beijing's future international behaviour need not merely proceed synchronically by analogy; it can also be done diachronically by extension through time, tracing and detecting discreet trends, developments, and expansions over defined periods (which is the way historians think). Put another way, in attempting to anticipate or speculate on Beijing's Arctic intentions, one need not necessarily attempt to connect the dots between its present course in its own backyard or "near abroad" (29) and its possible future actions in the Arctic. This is because, figuratively speaking (and certainly not literally in terms of geography), there exists partway between China's own immediate region and the Arctic a significant waypoint: the Antipodes. The course from Beijing on the one hand to Canberra and Wellington on the other may well partially illuminate or at least adumbrate a possible future trajectory between Beijing and the Arctic. Beijing's recent pattern of meddlesome interference in politics and political systems down under has received extensive attention in Australia²⁰ and New Zealand,²¹ where it is neither necessary nor prudent for Beijing to resort to crude militarily manoeuvres and

²⁰ For several detailed and in-depth articles on the Chinese Communist Party's covert campaign of soft-power influence in Australia, see the *Sydney Morning Herald*, <http://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2017/chinas-operation-australia/>, accessed 24 January 2018. See also the nonpareil Clive Hamilton, *Silent Invasion: China's Influence in Australia* (Richmond, AU: Hardie Grant, 2018).

²¹ On which see Anne-Marie Brady, "Magic Weapons: China's Political Influence Activities Under Xi Jinping," *Kissinger Institute on China and the United States* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2017). China has even also begun tentatively challenging and interfering with political freedoms in Germany; on this see Didi Kirsten Tatlow, "China Reaches into the Heart of Europe," *The International New York Times* (25 January 2018) <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2018/01/25/opinion/china-germany-tech-manufacturing.html>, accessed 25 January 2018.

intimidation in order to be an officious bully. There it can throw its weight around and make its presence acutely felt through less starkly precipitous, more subtle and refined ways that do not entail vulgar displays or deployments of brute military might.

On page 43 of Chapter One Li Zhenfu, of all people, is quoted as wanting China to abide by the current international order and become a responsible major power within it. But this is startling, given that Li is in fact a strong long-term revisionist who wants China to play by the rules of the international order *for now*. Li clearly foresees a time in the future when it may well be possible for China to achieve global hegemony and, as a result, require international norms to bend to *its* own national interests:²²

Li seems to feel that increased Chinese participation in international mechanisms pertaining to Arctic affairs will somehow prevent Canada from exercising sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. There are, according to him, three possible options for Chinese participation in these mechanisms: *hegemonic dominance*, in which China requires the formulations, alterations, and improvements of these mechanisms to conform with its national interests; *passive receptivity*, in which China accepts formulations arrived at by these mechanisms under the influence of other countries, thereby assuming the resulting obligations and enjoying the relevant rights and interests; and *active participation* in said international mechanisms, for the benefit of both China and the rights and interests of most other countries.

Li does not consider the first option to be viable, because China “*has not yet met* the demands to become a leading state in international mechanisms and *at present* has neither the real power nor the strategic will to act as a leading state.”²³

It should also be born in mind that Li Zhenfu is none other than the Chinese Arctic scholar who once, in a very noteworthy but apparently isolated and outlying statement, actually suggested that China could make its *own* territorial claims in the

²² The quotations of Li Zhenfu are from my translations. See David Curtis Wright, “The Dragon Eyes the Top of the World: Arctic Policy Debate and Discussion in China,” *Naval War College China Maritime Studies Institute*, Number 8 (Newport, RI: China Maritime Studies Institute, US Naval War College, 2011), 18-20. <http://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-red-books/2/>.

²³ *Ibid.*, 17-18. Emphasis added.

Arctic: “At one point, while discussing Chinese scientific investigations and polar explorations, Li even speaks of ‘the possibility of our country’s open declarations of sovereignty over the Arctic and Arctic sea routes, as well as territorial claims.’”²⁴

In Chapter Two, “The Snow Dragon: China, Polar Science, and the Environment,” LEA cover Chinese Arctic science, but not as thoroughly as Brady does in pages 138-76 of her book, in which she dismisses much of China’s Arctic scientific research as largely second-hand and derivative. LEA do not much evaluate the actual quality of Chinese Arctic science, opting instead to argue that concerns about the scale of Canada’s scientific efforts in the Arctic as compared with China’s are “poor fodder for alarmist narratives,” (51) that “Canada should shake its insecurity complex in the scientific domain [in the Arctic],” (70) and that “Canada need not feel insecure in its Arctic research, and China better represents a potential partner on specific projects rather than a nefarious rival deploying science as a Trojan horse.” (71) These could be straw-man tactics, but they do seem to make a point: Strategic and security concerns about China’s burgeoning Arctic presence should not be significantly based on the conduct of Chinese scientific research there.

The strategic context of China’s Arctic science is (or ought to be) important, but Lackenbauer et al. neglect it almost completely. They swallow the official Chinese line that “China’s primary Arctic concern relates to climate change and associated scientific research efforts” (48) hook, line, and sinker and do not mention that many Chinese officials and scholars have often said one thing to international audiences regarding China’s engagement in Arctic affairs and quite another to domestic audiences.²⁵ These include many instances of Chinese officials and scholars acknowledging to domestic audiences that Chinese science in the Arctic is quite secondary or tributary to China’s economic or strategic interests in the region and primarily plays a supportive role in

²⁴ Ibid., 9. See pages 22-23, where this statement is in translated context. See also page 40 n. 25, where I provide context for the extreme and unlikely scenarios under which Li foresaw the possibility of China making its own territorial claim in the Arctic. I neglected to give the Chinese-language title of Li’s article “Research into the Unique Complex Network Features of Arctic Sea Route Geopolitics” in my “The Dragon Eyes the Top of the World” (see 40 n. 25; 41 n. 66; and 41. 66.) and include it here: “Beiji hangxian diyuan zhengzhi geju di fuza wangluo texing yanjiu 北極航線地緣政治格局的複雜網絡特性研究,” in *Jidi Yanjiu 極地研究 (Chinese Journal of Polar Research)* 23/2 (2011): 122-27.

<http://journal.polar.org.cn/CN/abstract/abstract9993.shtml>, accessed 22 February 2018. See also Li, *infra*.

²⁵ Brady, *China as a Polar Great Power*, 38, 87, 249.

establishing and advancing these interests.²⁶ (But to clue in on this duplicity one must, of course, know Chinese.)

Chapter 3, “Sovereignty and Shipping,” is one of the more interesting and informative and less problematic chapters in the volume. One of its major and essential points is one that deserves to be much more widely known: China will in the foreseeable future be using the Northern Sea Route through Russian territorial waters rather than the Northwest Passage through Canadian waters. Because of problems with dangerous ice and inadequate depths in much of the NWP, it will be a very long time before it will be open to significant non-destinational maritime traffic, and what little Chinese shipping does go through it will not challenge Canadian sovereignty and may even bolster it to some extent:

...neither the viability of the Northwest Passage nor the alleged threat to Canadian sovereignty live up to their hype. In the short to medium term China is much more likely to pursue whatever Arctic shipping interests it has through Russia’s Northern Sea Route (NSR), which is better supported and more easily navigable. What’s more, what little Chinese shipping does place through the Northwest Passage is likely to be in compliance with Canadian rules and regulations, and more likely to strengthen Canada’s sovereignty than to threaten it (73).

Despite some wild and irresponsible comments (written and spoken) from Li Zhenfu and Yin Zhuo, the chapter argues, China is not out to challenge or water down Canadian sovereignty over its Northwest Passage: “As scholar Timothy Wright points out, both Admiral Zhuo [sic; Admiral Yin] and Li Zhenfu—whose provocative statements are widely quoted by Western analysts as demonstrating nefarious intentions—have decided to stop (or been told to stop) their impolitic statements” (77). Here the citation is to page 55 of my son’s 2014 master’s thesis for the University of Calgary’s Centre for Military and Strategic Studies. This is something I told Timmy, and for a time I did believe it. But in the event, I had been deceived. In 2015 LI Zhenfu and two co-authors wrote and published an article as wild and outré and revisionist as ever, one that argues strongly for establishing a robust Chinese military (particularly PLAN)

²⁶ Ibid., 102-03, 131, 139-40, 152-53, 163, 172-73, 262.

military in the Arctic, complete with strong warfighting capabilities.²⁷ Another scholar named YANG Zhirong was even more pugnacious and revisionist, foreseeing and endorsing the eventual achievement of Chinese naval domination of the Arctic, where the Chinese navy would be free to roam.²⁸

Destinational, rather than international, shipping will be the most likely to pass through the NWP, and it will likely not harm Canadian sovereignty in any significant way:

Rather than international shipping, which has the choice of various different routes, current trends point to destinational shipping as the most likely user of the Arctic sea routes (and particularly the Northwest Passage). Destinational traffic, which is defined by vessels travelling into or out of the Arctic, includes ships servicing local communities and natural resource exploitation activities from arctic sites like Deception Bay, Kirkenes, Vitino, or Murmansk... Even if Chinese ships are involved in this destinational traffic, that activity is unlikely to damage Canadian sovereignty in any way. Because their stopover in a Canadian port immediately triggers the regulations of the state (Canada) that owns the port, the ships involved would have to obey Canadian law and shipping regulations (85).

The chapter then makes the solid and common-sense point that Beijing's continuing conundrum about how its extremely controversial maritime claims in the South China Sea would make any contemplated challenges to Canadian sovereignty over the NWP quite problematic: "China's own maritime claims make it unlikely that Beijing would see any advantage to disputing Canada's sovereignty position in the Arctic. As such, it is difficult to see the Chinese government challenging that sovereignty on behalf of a Chinese flagged merchant vessel" (93-94). Thus, "...while China has not publically [sic; publicly] accepted the Canadian government's position that the waters of the Arctic Archipelago constitute historic internal waters, it has not

²⁷David Curtis Wright, "The Dragon and Great Power Rivalry at the Top of the World: China's Hawkish, Revisionist Voices Within Mainstream Discourse on Arctic Affairs," *Canadian Global Affairs Institute*, September 2018, 16-19, 44-49.

https://www.cgai.ca/the_dragon_and_great_power_rivalry_at_the_top_of_the_world (Accessed 25 October 2018.)

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 12-16, 39-43.

denied this position either. Given Chinese claims to the Qiongzhou Strait and the entire South China Sea, it is simply not in Beijing's interest to challenge the Canadian claim" (97).

So far so good, but the chapter also makes this startling statement: "China, for reasons discussed and for simple convenience, is more likely to accept Canadian sovereignty and jurisdiction than to officially side with the Americans" (94). But China accepting Canadian sovereignty seems quite improbable to me. My best guess is that China will at most remain courteously and tactfully silent and agnostic on the question. China will in fact likely neither challenge nor affirm Canada's sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. All seeming Chinese recognitions of the sovereignty will likely have wiggle or weasel room and be symbolic, soft-pedaled, and implied.

Chapter Four ("Arctic Resources and China's Rising Demand") attempts, and largely succeeds, to allay short-term fears about China's Arctic ambitions eventually amounting to a gargantuan and uncontrollable resource grab. It does this through showing that Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are, at least at present, reluctant to commit massive investments to resource extraction in the Arctic when resource prices are low and the regulatory environment strict. Mining in Greenland is still largely unprofitable:

In spite of China's obvious interest in Greenlandic resources, and the reciprocal Greenlandic interest in Chinese money, fears of a flood of Chinese workers and influence into Greenland are unwarranted *thus far*. While Chinese companies have financed some projects, the vast majority of investment in the island still comes from North American and European sources (108; emphasis added).

The size and staffing of China's "super embassy" in Reykjavik is overhyped (113), as were fears over the plans of eccentric Chinese businessman and polar keener Huang Nubo to buy massive tracts of land in northern Iceland (114). (The chapter, however, offers no account of what in the world Huang really *was* up to. Golf course in northern Iceland, indeed!) Chinese money continues to be pumped into Russian resource extraction projects. As far as Canada is concerned,

...popular fears of a Chinese resource grab in the Arctic are unfounded, particularly *in the short to medium term*. China cannot simply move into the Arctic and begin exploiting Canadian resources...Chinese participation will thus occur under Canadian law and at the pleasure of the Canadian government ... Canadian Arctic reserves have not been proven economically viable, and bringing them into production will take *at least a decade* (119-20; emphases added).

Resource prices are currently too low for there to be extensive development in the Arctic in general: "In this low-price environment there are serious doubts that development in the region will occur" (121). China has not currently expressed any immediate interest in fishing in Arctic waters (122).

The chapter spins YIN Zhuo's infamous Arctic global commons comments to refer not to the Arctic in general but only to the area in the central Arctic left over after all maritime boundaries and extended continental shelf claims have been definitively adjudicated. Thus, "Chinese commentators expect that there will be (or should be) an area of seafloor in the Arctic Ocean basin that is beyond the limits of national jurisdiction of any adjacent state when all the shelf claims have been resolved" (124).

In general, the chapter concludes, China is not in a rush to enter the gold rush for Arctic resources because the numbers do not currently add up:

...the country's overseas investments have become increasingly strategic and market-driven. Chinese SOEs have demonstrated a willingness to forego or delay projects if the economics are not enticing, and to concentrate resources where they are. As such, there appears to be no Chinese rush into the Arctic....Only in Russia has China jumped into the Arctic with both feet (126).

But then there is Greenland, which under the right circumstances China might latch onto like an opportunistic virus: "The one possible exception to this general outlook is Greenland, which, if it achieves full independence from Denmark, may lack the regulatory oversight of a developed state. With weak institutions in place, a 'resource curse' could make the island ripe for Chinese exploitation" (127).

The single most striking thing about the chapter is that it does not pause to consider even for a moment the likelihood that despite its apparent dearth of strong

short-term economic prospects, the Arctic could still have significant medium- and long-term strategic value to China. But of course, this would require long-range thinking in non-economic terms.

The main point of the discursive Chapter Five, “China and Arctic Governance: Uncertainty and Potential Friction,” is now well established and axiomatic: allowing China observer status on the Arctic Council was a good thing. (On its way to this point, the chapter gives some interesting historical background to China’s ultimate admission.) Doing so has afforded the Arctic region the opportunity to socialise and acclimatise the Dragon to the norms and mores of the Arctic, thereby preventing it from directing its energies outward, beyond the constraints and purviews of the Council:

...rather than being concerned about China joining the Arctic Council as an accredited observer, member states should embrace this opportunity to enmesh China into their way of thinking about Arctic issues...Although China seeks a more prominent role in Arctic affairs, there is no evidence that its observer status in the Arctic Council will allow it to pursue an agenda that is inconsistent with the spirit of the Nuuk Declaration. Rather, as a function of the global nature of many Arctic challenges, there is increasing scope for China to pursue its Arctic interests outside the Arctic Council through other multilateral bodies and assemblies. These interests could certainly challenge Arctic state interests if China perceives itself as excluded from the key mechanisms of Arctic governance and chooses to sidestep the Council—and the Arctic states—in pursuit of its interests. In many ways exclusion of China on the pretext that it is hostile to Arctic states’ interests will become a self-fulfilling prophecy (153).

Chapter Six, “The Way Ahead,” expresses discernible relief that Justin Trudeau ousted Stephen Harper from power in the Canadian federal election of 2015. It repeatedly argues that since dealing with China is inevitable and necessary, Canada might as well deal and engage with it constructively and cordially. “We argue that, on balance, China is unlikely to pose a threat to Canadian Arctic interests or those of any Arctic state. Rather... China’s interest in the Arctic presents a tremendous opportunity” (154), especially since

...given the maritime characteristics of the Arctic Ocean, excluding China entirely from the region would be impossible—from both a legal and a practical perspective. Attempting to do so would damage East-West relations to little purpose and ultimately end in failure. Rather, China's rise as an Arctic power can be managed, first, by robust international cooperation that includes Chinese input and, second, by strong domestic regulatory and investment institutions, many of which are already in place in Canada (154).

The chapter sums up the book's earlier contentions. China is unlikely to threaten Arctic regional security because

Its Arctic military capabilities are limited, in both quantity and quality, and it has no reason to enhance them. China possesses few aircraft with the range necessary to threaten the region, and there would be little to threaten if it were to try. Its nuclear submarine fleet, while technically capable of under-ice travel, is small and ill-equipped for Arctic operations. In short, China's ability to project military power into the region is minimal at best... (165)

Chinese shipping through the Northwest Passage will almost certainly request permission to do so (166). Canada should be calm if and when Chinese SOEs begin eyeing Canadian Arctic resources:

Although Chinese corporations are likely to place a higher priority on more easily accessible resources in other parts of the world, it is possible that well capitalized Chinese SOEs with long investment timeframes will continue to make strategic investments in the northern energy and mining sectors. Vigilance is required—not panic. If Canada aspires to feed Asian markets, and if Northern communities aspire to participate in the global economy, dealing with China is a must (167).

Canadian need not be alarmed at claims that China's Arctic science is outstripping Canada's; it isn't (168). Some Chinese scholars and commentators have complained about the Arctic Council, but China's successful application for observer status at the Council in 2013 indicates a basic acceptance of it (169). China will not challenge Arctic littoral states' territorial jurisdictions, and they claim this is what YIN Zhuo meant in his infamous, off-the-cuff global commons comments. (170) Canada's best way forward

with China in the Arctic is “a combination of engagement and hedging” (171), meaning constructive engagement with China whenever possible and relying ultimately on Canada’s alliance with the United States when necessary to prevent China from gaining too much influence over smaller Arctic states. The role for Canada’s armed forces regarding China’s presence and activities in the Arctic is soft, not hard:

Preparing to defend the Canadian Arctic from Chinese naval incursions (or those of any state for that matter) is simply not an immediate or realistic requirement. Preparing for Chinese-backed shipping or resource activities and attendant “soft” security challenges is a matter of more immediate concern. For example, Canadian Armed Forces assets may be useful in monitoring Chinese scientific research and resource development activities in the region as part of the government’s broader public safety and security efforts—but they will have little value in defending either sovereignty or security (173).

This is because “The Arctic is not a core Chinese interest. Its value to China is potential, not actual. As such, Beijing is unlikely to endanger any of its actual core interests or relationships while seeking greater influence in the Arctic region” (173).

Nowhere does this concluding chapter indicate the time horizon for any of its analyses and predictions, but it is manifestly obvious that the horizon is short- and, at most, medium term. The chapter simply fails or declines to discuss long-term geopolitical and geostrategic possibilities and contingencies in the Arctic.

Tilting at the windmills of the mind

On the final page of this chapter (and of the book), LEA sum up their perspectives and arguments in terms of what would seem, at first glance, to be a tidy and apt Chinese proverb:

In his 2014 study of China’s emerging Arctic strategies, Marc Lanteigne highlights an old Chinese proverb: “When the wind of change blows, some build walls, while others build windmills.”²⁹ It is felicitous advice

²⁹ Lackenbauer, et al. reference Marc Lanteigne, “China’s Emerging Arctic Strategies: Economics and Institutions,” *Reykjavik: Institute of International Affairs* (2014), [accessed 1 February 2018](#),

for Arctic powers struggling to adjust to China's expanding global interests. In matters of shipping, resource development, science, and even governance, Chinese interest in the region can be harnessed and turned to productive purposes and, with careful attention, may contribute constructively and substantively to positive circumpolar development (174).

But why would they conclude their book with something that is not real, something that does not exist? The "felicitous advice" of this "Chinese" proverb is, it turns out, not Chinese at all. (One may wonder why this windmills gaffe was necessary in the first place. Knowing little if any Chinese themselves, might the book's authors have done just a wee bit of due diligence like, say, maybe asking a native Sinophone about it?) The windmills in question here are Quixotic dragons – illusory and elusive phantoms, phantoms of the Chinese opera of engagement in Arctic affairs, phantoms of the ethereal windmills of Xanadu.³⁰

<https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/handle/11250/285164>, p. ii as their source for this supposedly Chinese proverb, and there it is, incredibly, given in Chinese as if it really *were* authentically Chinese. (There is naturally no citation given for it; the Chinese here is, of course, a translation of an apparently *European* proverb.) The Chinese translation of the "old Chinese proverb" given at the front of Lanteigne is, in authentic (i.e., traditional or complex, not simplified) Chinese characters, "*Fengxiang zhuanbian shi, you ren zhu qiang, you ren zao fengche* 風向轉變時, 有人筑牆, 有人造風車."

³⁰ I had never heard of this "proverb" in Chinese before and so was immediately suspicious of it. My initial impression of it, later confirmed, was that it just didn't... *feel* very Chinese at all; instead, to my ears and eyes it seemed quite foreign or Western. I ran it by some sharp and very well-educated native Sinophone Chinese, all of them PhDs, to verify my suspicions, and none of them had ever even heard of it. When some of them commented that the proverb seemed distinctly "foreign" (i.e., not Chinese), I decided to do a little due diligence on my own. A quick Chinese- and English-language Google search (!) established that the windmill trope is in fact apparently a *European* saying. As of this writing (January 2018), many Chinese-language discussion groups on the Internet still contain plaintive and frustrated appeals by native Chinese speakers for help in finding the Chinese form and *locus classicus* of this putatively Chinese proverb. But, as an *authentic* Chinese idiom says, searching for it would be about as useful as "climbing a tree in search of fish" because neither the "proverb" nor its *locus classicus* even exist in Chinese. In fact, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang quoted this proverb as a *European* saying in his speech at the annual meeting of the World Economic forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2015. The relevant passage is as follows: "An [sic] European proverb says, 'When the wind of change blows, some build walls, while others build windmills.' We need to act along the trend of our time, firmly advance free trade, resolutely reject protectionism, and actively expand regional economic cooperation." (The full text in English of Li's speech can be viewed on the World Economic Forum website at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/01/chinese-premier-li-keqiangs-speech-at-davos-2015>, accessed 20 December 2017. The bilingual version of the speech is viewable at

Two iterations of the phantom windmills trope form a pair of bookends for two studies of China's Arctic ambitions: one at the front of an occasional paper³¹ by Marc Lanteigne (who apparently reads at least some Chinese³² and should probably therefore know better) and the other at the back of the much more substantial book under review here by Lackenbauer et al.³³ It is curiously fitting that between these two gossamer bookends are two relatively dovish works that consider China's engagement in Arctic affairs in mostly short-horizon economic terms.

LEA's contributions

In sum, in spite of its shortcomings and short-sightedness, the book by LEA is still quite important and valuable as a substantive contribution to the field (or the topic if it is not quite yet a field.) Even though some of their conclusions are problematic and questionable, their volume is a fairly definitive statement of the optimistic and dovish point of view regarding China's ambitions in the Arctic. Its contributions include its very useful information and corrective insights. (LEA have convinced me that Canada's Arctic sovereignty will not be threatened by future Chinese use of the Northwest Passage and that in the short and medium terms at least, China will not be an ungovernable, resource-devouring juggernaut in the Arctic, and I think they will convince others of these points as well.) Further, it is of course desirable and useful to have a more dovish book published only a few months after Brady's to serve as a counterpart and counterweight to her more wary and hawkish perspectives. The empirical approaches and shorter-term perspectives of LEA are useful, informative, and serve as important reminders that so far, nobody has said the final and definitive word on China's Arctic ambitions.

http://language.chinadaily.com.cn/news/2015-01/23/content_19387864.htm, accessed 20 December 2017, where it is designated *in Chinese* as a *European* proverb.)

³¹ Marc Lanteigne, "China's Emerging Arctic Strategies." Lanteigne discusses China's interests in the Arctic largely in economic (resource extraction) and maritime transit terms and also covers China's entry as an observer state in the Arctic Council.

³² Lanteigne unnecessarily clutters his piece with way too many Chinese characters. These actually help nobody; they are useless to readers who do not know Chinese and unnecessary for those who do.

³³ Lackenbauer repeated the windmill trope orally on 18 December 2017 at the University of Calgary in a presentation on his book entitled "China's Arctic Ambitions and What They Mean for Canada."

Brady

Brady's book is a creature of her training as both a polar scholar and a China scholar, one who takes geopolitical, strategic, and security concerns in the Arctic seriously. Her understanding of how most mainland Chinese Arctic scholars think and operate affords her penetrating insight into their behaviour:

Rather than recognizing that foreign reporting and analysis on China's polar interests reflects individual views and analysis, Chinese analysis erroneously assumes foreign scholars and journalists who write on China's polar activities write for their governments or publish within frames set by their governments in much the same way Chinese scholars and journalists do. China's *2013-2014 Annual Report on Polar Research* lists a number of foreign scholars who have written on China's polar interests—including myself—and says that if their 'China threat' coverage is not dealt with "appropriately," then it will not only affect China's polar interests but also negatively affect the nation's global strategy.

As China has expanded its polar program, Chinese polar officials have dealt with critical coverage of China's polar activities by making use of long-standing CCP techniques to win friends and neutralize enemies. The CCP had an extensive tradition of building positive relationships with influential foreign elites who will speak up for China's interests. These individuals are officially described as 'friends of China.' Foreign non-Chinese-speaking polar scientists, scientists, politicians, and business interests friendly to China's agenda are the usual targets to be designated "friends of China," and polar affairs are no different. In the past five to ten years, China has only had to dangle the carrot of lucrative polar research funding partnerships and investment projects—or threaten to withdraw cooperation—to silence many potential critics and buy powerful friends among Arctic and Antarctic states.³⁴

From personal experience I can attest that the situation Brady describes above is true. Many, perhaps not all, Chinese scholars working on their country's Arctic interests seem to make unwarranted and uncritically examined assumptions that Western scholars researching and writing on the same topic are doing what they themselves are actually tasked with: acting at the direction of their government to influence

³⁴ Anne-Marie Brady, *China as a Polar Great Power*, 40-41.

international public opinion about China's engagement in Arctic affairs. These tactics have been directed at me, at first positive and cordial and later strongly negative and hostile, and I know I am by no means the only Westerner working on China and the Arctic who has experienced them.³⁵

The chapters

Brady's introduction begins on its very first page with China's military interest in the Arctic. Her point is, of course, that China's rise as a great power entails Arctic interests, which in turn entail military interests. China is emerging as an extra-regional armed player in the region. "In setting its sights on the polar regions now, China is looking to the mid- to long term and planning for its future economic, political, and strategic needs" (5). "As Xi Jinping pointed out...the Arctic and Antarctic are ripe with economic, political, and military-strategic potential" (6). A sobering beginning to a sobering and eye-opening book.

Chapter One, "Polar Governance," discusses China's sense of entitlement to participate in polar affairs. It also covers pending Arctic boundary disputes, the Spitsbergen Treaty, and Antarctic governance and has a fine analysis of exactly what China's rights in the polar regions are and are not.

Chapter Two, "The Polar Regions in China's National Narrative," covers how China conceals and frames its polar interests (interests it differentially narrates to domestic and international audiences), its extreme sensitivity to foreign analysis of its polar activities, and its attempts to co-opt foreign critics. It also includes a brief and interesting history of China's polar engagement.

Chapter Three, "China's Geostrategic Interests in the Polar Regions," covers the reasons China is interested in polar affairs: economic, politic, military, strategic, national resource access, transit routes, and scientific research. Brady claims "China's core interests in the polar regions connect to, and are part of the justification for, the Chinese government's increased investment in military spending in the last twenty years,

³⁵ I have been the recipient of a vicious and vituperative email from a Chinese scholar working on China's interests in the Arctic.

particularly on naval forces” (61). It also includes the full translated context of YIN Zhuo’s infamous statement about the Arctic and Antarctic being the common heritage of mankind (77-79) and discusses the strategic value of the Arctic for China in the placement of its nuclear submarines:

According to the *Global Times*, “If we launch our DF 31A ICBMs over the North Pole, we can easily destroy a whole list of metropolises on the East Coast and the New England region of the United States, including Annapolis, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Portland, Baltimore, and Norfolk, whose population accounts for about one-eighth of America’s total residents.” In 2012, an unnamed “Beijing-based military expert” told China’s *Global Times*, “If China could put a nuclear submarine in the Arctic, it would pose a threat to Europe, Russia, and the United States.” In 2014, China’s nuclear-powered submarines traveled into the high seas for the first time...*Global Times* triumphantly reported that PLAN submarines had successfully broken through the first island chain and predicted that accessing the Arctic Ocean would be the next breakthrough in access for Chinese submarine forces (80).

It then covers China’s interest in Arctic resource extraction, fishing, scientific research, space science, and even tourism.

Chapter Four, “The Party-State-Military-Market Nexus in China’s Polar Policymaking,” includes a meticulously detailed sketch of China’s state polar bureaucracies and the role of the PLA and Chinese SOEs in polar affairs. What ambitions China may have for building nuclear icebreakers are on hold, at least for now: “Developing a nuclear icebreaker for operations in the Arctic would be a sign that China’s ambitions there were reaching a whole new level. So for now, due to “political, social, and environmental” considerations, China will not build a polar nuclear icebreaker” (135).

Chapter Five, “Evaluating China as a Polar Power,” observes that China “now has more money than any other polar state to spend on new infrastructure such as bases, planes, and icebreakers” (138). It covers Chinese Arctic and Antarctic research stations extensively and shows how polar scientific research is conducted not simply for the sake of science per se but for China’s interests:

China has had few polar scientific breakthroughs to date. And as recent studies of scientific outputs for the Arctic and Antarctic have demonstrated, China is quite weak in terms of polar science outputs. Beijing is making a major investment in polar research capacity and trying to encourage more Chinese scientists to engage in polar science. Yet despite thirty years of solid effort, China's Antarctic research output is relatively small compared to that of other Antarctic Treaty consultative parties, even smaller than Italy's or South Africa's scientific contribution, and its Arctic research is still in early stages. This is not simply from lack of resources. According to Chinese Antarctic international law specialist Zou Keyuan, China's early Antarctic research was "symbolic," meaning that it mostly served political ends rather than scientific ones. Chinese polar officials repeatedly emphasize that their country's Antarctic program is not just about answering scientific questions, it is as much, if not more, about China's national interests...Chinese Antarctic scientist Dong Zhiquan, who led China's first Antarctic expedition in 1983, stated in 2004 that because of such problems, most of his nation's Antarctic research had been derivative. Polar politics scholar Guo Peiqing notes that regardless of the scientific significance of research in Antarctica, engaging in this research and launching expeditions are ways for China (and other nations) to maintain a political presence on the continent (171-72).

The chapter also ends with a good discussion of China's polar strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter Six, "Cooperation or Conflict? China's Position on Points of Contention in the Polar Regions," was written and published prior to China's issuance of its Arctic policy white paper in late January 2018, But in this chapter, Brady was spot on in her analysis of why China was making the global commons argument regarding the Arctic: "China's politicking to raise the issue of the Arctic Ocean as the "common heritage of humanity" and Arctic resources as "global resources" can be seen as lobbying the court of international public opinion for the time when a political decision is made to delineate the territory" (195). China has also attempted to resolve the optics problem of its bullying in the South China Sea as contrasted with what it maintains about the Arctic:

To some observers, China's position on the Arctic contradicts its position on its South China Sea territorial claims. However, according to a 2013 Chinese government internal report, there is no contradiction at all between China's policies on the two regions: China has sovereign rights (*zhuquan quanli*) in the South China Sea and expects other states to respect this; similarly, it respects the sovereign rights of the Arctic littoral states in the Arctic Ocean (196).

The rest of the chapter pertains to polar resources and environmental protection and is best updated by reference to China's Arctic policy white paper.

Chapter Seven, "From Polar Great Power to Global Power? Global Governance Implications of China's Polar Interests," notes that "China is playing a long game in the polar regions. Keeping other states guessing about [what?] its true intentions and interests are [sic] part of its strategy" (220). In keeping with its long-term planning horizon, essential parts of its polar strategy had already been mapped out and implemented almost a decade ago:

The core themes of China's short- to mid-term polar strategy (*jidi fazhan zhanlue*) were actually released as early as October 2009...The first phase would focus on building up knowledge and understanding of the Arctic and Antarctic...In the second phase, China would expand its presence in the Arctic and Antarctic, particularly through scientific activities; and in the third phase, China will strengthen both its polar "soft" and "hard" power (221).

Brady predicts that China, which "fears that being transparent to foreign audiences about its full polar agenda will lead to even more international resistance towards its polar interests" (222), would need to issue its own Arctic policy since so many other states have already done so. In this she was, once again, right on the money. Brady then comes through magnificently with a timetable for China's polar policymaking, with near-term goals to 2021, mid-term goals 2021 to 2048, and long-term goals to 2049 and beyond. She cares and dares to look where LEA will not: the long term. Indeed, "China's current polar activities are sowing the seeds for long-term interests, some of which will not come into fruition for another thirty to fifty years" (235). It all adds up to eventual tension and possibly conflict: "As China's economic, political, and military

power grows, it will threaten the interests of other states—and it is preparing for this eventual scenario” (253).

The concluding Chapter 8, “The Rise of a New Great Power,” develops further and reiterates the point that China is a rising world power that has strong and definite polar interests. The Chinese military is, in turn, one of the prime motivating forces behind China’s Arctic drive:

“The CCP’s ideological message and legitimacy to rule is bolstered by the promotion of China’s existing polar activities and plans for the future. The PLA is a core driver of China’s polar policies; polar security, resources, and strategic science interests all reflect PLA priorities” (258). Ultimately, China’s successful accomplishment of its polar goals will be an important barometer of its status as a great power: “If China succeeds in its core goals at the poles, then its ascendance as a new global great power will be certain. A new global order is emerging and China aims to be at the heart of it” (267).

Brady’s contributions

Lackenbauer et al. and Brady are fundamentally different books because they bring such divergent concerns and topics to their examinations of China’s activities and ambitions in the Arctic. Brady allows us to know much more than LEA do about what the Chinese are thinking and saying about the Arctic in domestic and international contexts. Her extensive discussions of Arctic strategic and security issues, which are real and pressing, fill a crying need. She is uniquely qualified to write on this topic because from the ground floor up, she is trained and educated as both a polar specialist and a China specialist. (In the West, such scholars can be counted on the fingers, and maybe even the thumbs, of one hand.) For this reason alone, anything she writes about China’s polar interests and ambitions should be top priority reading among anyone interested in the topic.

Because of the sober (and sobering) realism of her geopolitical and geostrategic methodological approaches, the influence and prestige of her publisher, and (above all) the breadth and depth of her research in both Chinese and Western sources, Brady

overall is and will remain for now the authoritative, go-to international authority on China's interests and ambitions in the Arctic (and of course the Antarctic as well). Even so, not even Brady has said the last word on China and the Arctic. Now that these two books are out, there is a unique opportunity to use them as starting points for more dialogue between people with concerns over strategic issues (with their long-term horizons) and over economic opportunities (with their near- and mid-term horizons). Such dialogue is now a pressing necessity and should be undertaken soon and in earnest, lest the two sides continue to talk past and about each other rather than *to* each other.

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