In conjunction with the programme and with the financial support of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the programme director, Natalia Loukacheva, solicited and collated these articles from leading academics, practitioners, politicians and indigenous peoples working in associated disciplines to compile the first ever "textbook" in Polar Law. The four designated aims of the textbook are to promote interdisciplinary education; to disseminate current research and developments; to improve Nordic and Arctic cooperation; to facilitate long-distance education on Polar Law and to encourage Nordic and Arctic collaboration in education (Summary).

Polar Law as a concept requires some working definition, even if it is constantly evolving and taking on new fields of inquiry as it matures. This definition is provided by Loukacheva in the introduction who advises us that, "broadly speaking, 'polar law' is a developing field of law that deals with the international and domestic legal regimes that are applicable to the Arctic or the Antarctic or both" while also taking into account the normative force of "soft-law" instruments (13).

One immediate question that springs to mind is "why polar law?" What is special about the polar regions that justifies such specialized attention? And despite some superficial similarities between the Arctic and the Antarctic, geologically, politically, sociologically and economically they are, if one will pardon the expression, "poles apart." Loukacheva raises these questions in her introduction, drawing attention to the most significant differences between the two regions as well as areas of common concern and lessons that one region might have for the other.

On reading the textbook, it becomes apparent that these areas are of ever increasing strategic and political importance and facing challenges of governance and deployment that have serious consequences in much more temperate climates. The focus on polar *law* suggests a preference for legal regulation to solve problems, but in reality, the approaches taken are all interdisciplinary to greater or lesser extents. Only the chapters on the law of the sea and on human rights and indigenous peoples rely principally on legal sources and even in these chapters, the law is explained in social and environmental context. In other words, whilst to some extent it is assumed that law is one useful tool to address the relevant

issues, it is nowhere assumed that law is the only tool, nor even the preferred one.

Although marketed as a “textbook”, the essays do not provide a superficial account of the issues they each address. Instead, the book is packed with information, providing knowledge and analysis that will serve well scholars, scientists and policy-makers in, *inter alia*, international law, international relations, development, governance, natural resources law and climate change, whether or not they seek a specific focus on the polar regions. Where it shares a “textbook” approach is in the inclusion at the end of each chapter of suggested material for further reading (useful to researchers at all levels) and a pedagogically-focussed list of questions for reflection by the reader.

The content is weighted towards the Arctic, which can be understood to the extent that there is a necessary focus on the social sciences (*e.g.,* economics, Arctic governance) and emphasis is rightly put on indigenous peoples (4 of 11 chapters). The human issues pertaining to the Arctic have no equivalent in Antarctica. There would be scope, however, for further development of Antarctic issues in a future volume, such as questions of governance of the South Pole, legal and political claims to territory, potential exploitation of non-living resources, and other economic interests.

The textbook taps into the most contemporary information available, containing numerous references to developments in 2010. However, the effort to publish the state of the art developments in polar law have come with some editorial costs that might be rectified in a second edition, or a future second volume with new essays dealing with yet to be identified topics. First of all, a non-specialist approaching this textbook may feel at times bombarded by acronyms and it can become difficult to keep these all in focus. Furthermore, the acronyms are not consistently used by different authors, for example, the Law of the Sea Convention is abbreviated to LOSC (45) and later as UNCLOS (214). The inclusion of a simple table of acronyms could make it much simpler for authors to use the same acronyms and for readers to check these quickly when memory fails. The styles of the questions also vary between chapters, with some being answerable by reflection of the contained text alone and others requiring further research. There are formatting inconsistencies, with most chapters listing questions at the end of the text, but chapter six including these after subsections within chapters, and some typographical and layout errors. Ultimately, however, the technical detractions of the textbook should not detract from its innovative

content.

Finally mention should be made of the open-access nature of the project and the willingness to make this content available to as wide an audience as possible without the barrier of cost. The book is available for purchase in hard copy, but can be downloaded in its entirety in pdf form free of charge, something that cash-strapped students and universities in developed and developing countries alike will no doubt embrace enthusiastically.

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