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Introduction: Quo Vadis? The Arctic between nationalism and globalism

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In his introductory article for the special issue of the *Polar Journal* (2016, vol. 6, No. 2), Sanjay Chaturvedi, referring to the geopolitical situation in the world and, in particular, to the victory of Donald Trump in the 2016 US presidential election, predicted: ‘Speculations are rife, for example, that there might be a reversal of “protective” Arctic policies adopted by the outgoing administration in the USA along with outright scepticism, bordering rejection, of both climate science knowledge and November 4 Paris Agreement’.¹

In addition to the Trump administration’s rise to power in the United States, with its protectionist foreign trade policies, distrust of international institutions, neglect of arms control regimes, and the withdrawal from the 2015 Paris agreement on climate change, a whole host of other factors have contributed to the rise of nationalism in world politics, including the Arctic, and the weakening of globalisation and multilateral diplomacy in the High North.

Russia’s relations with other Arctic states have been complicated by a series of international crises (the Ukrainian and Syrian ones, Moscow’s accusations of meddling in the 2016 US election campaign, the Skripal affair, etc.), which in one way or another had a negative impact on the situation in the Arctic.

Western Arctic countries, being the EU and/or NATO member-states, have imposed economic and political sanctions against Russia, which has led to the suspension of a number of energy projects in the Russian Arctic (especially of the offshore ones). Cooperation between the Russian and Western militaries has been completely discontinued since 2014. Instead, the US and NATO have increased their military presence in the Arctic, including deploying new troops and weapons and conducting large-scale military exercises in the region. Russia has taken retaliatory measures, including its own military exercises, upgrading military infrastructure, and training and rearming troops stationed in the Russian Arctic.² In general, trust between Russia and other Arctic countries has been seriously undermined.

Many strategists and policymakers started to perceive the Arctic as a region of potential conflict and insecurity rather than an area of peace and stability. For example,

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¹Chaturvedi, “The Circumpolar ‘Social Natural Sciences’ Laboratories,” *The Polar Journal* 6, no. 2 (2016): 201–08.

²Konyshv et al., “Russia’s Arctic Strategies in the Context of the Ukrainian Crisis.” *The Polar Journal* 7, no. 1 (2017): 104–24.

the former Director of the US National Intelligence Daniel Coats stated in his testimony to the US Senate Intelligence Committee in May 2017: ‘As the Arctic becomes more open to shipping and commercial exploitation, we assess that risk of competition over access to sea routes and resources, including fish, will include countries traditionally active in the Arctic as well as other countries that do not border on the region but increasingly look to advance their economic interests there.’³

The recent US Army Arctic strategy (January 2021) clearly states: ‘The Arctic has the potential to become a contested space where United States’ great power rivals, Russia and China, seek to use military and economic power to gain and maintain access to the region at the expense of US interests’.⁴ The document identifies four drivers of great power competition in the Arctic: (1) military developments, (2) energy resources and minerals, (3) transportation, and (4) food security.

Similar assessments can be found in the Russian national security community. For example, in August 2018, at a meeting of the Defence Ministry’s board the head of this agency Sergei Shoigu said that the Arctic ‘has become an object of territorial resource and military-strategic interests of a number of states’, which, in turn, can lead to an increase in the conflict potential in the region.⁵

The US and some of its European allies are concerned about China’s growing geo-economic and geopolitical presence in the Arctic. For example, they were wary of the Chinese *Polar Silk Road* doctrine and Beijing’s attempts to invest in strategically important sectors of the Russian, Greenlandic, Icelandic and other northern countries’ economies. They are particularly concerned about the Sino-Russian rapprochement in the Arctic. Western countries are afraid that Sino-Russian cooperation will not be limited only to the economy and will spill-over to the military sphere. Recent US strategic documents explicitly state that Russia and China pose a threat to US national interests in the Arctic. For example, the 2021 US Army Arctic strategy notes: ‘... America’s great power competitors – Russia and China – have developed Arctic strategies with geopolitical goals contrary to U.S. interests. Russia seeks to consolidate sovereign claims and control access to the region. China aims to gain access to Arctic resources and sea routes to secure and bolster its military, economic, and scientific rise.’⁶

Due to Russia’s confrontation with Western countries, the activities of the Arctic multilateral institutions have been slowed down or frozen. Even the Arctic Council, which has always been known for its strong cooperative potential, has been unable to work effectively in recent years. For example, at the ministerial meeting of the Council in Rovaniemi (May 2019), for the first time in its history, the Council was unable to adopt the final declaration due to the disagreement of the American delegation to include a reference to climate change.

³Sputnik, “US Anticipates Increased Competition in Arctic - Head of National Intelligence.” May 11, 2017. <https://sputniknews.com/world/201705111053515159-us-arctic-intelligence/>(accessed April 30, 2021).

⁴Department of the Army, *Regaining Arctic Dominance. The U.S. Army in the Arctic* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army Headquarters, January 19, 2021). https://verumreactor.ru/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/regaining_arctic_dominance_us_army_in_the_arctic_19_january_2021.pdf (accessed April 30, 2021), 15.

⁵TASS, “Shoigu: Arktika Stala Tsentrom Interesov Ryada Gosudarstv, Chto Mozhet Privesti K Konfliktam [Shoigu: The Arctic Has Become the Center of Interests of a Number of States, Which Can Lead to Conflicts].” August 31, 2018. <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/5509944> (accessed April 30, 2021).

⁶Department of the Army, *Regaining Arctic Dominance*, 15–16.

The trend towards the renationalisation of the northern countries' regional policies is exemplified by the strategic documents adopted by these states in recent years: all of them focus on the protection of their sovereignty and/or sovereign rights in the Arctic, rather than on international cooperation and the preservation of this region as a common human heritage. For example, Canada's 2019 Arctic and Northern Policy Framework underlines:

The Government of Canada is firmly asserting its presence in the North. Canada's Arctic sovereignty is longstanding and well established. Every day, through a wide range of activities, governments, Indigenous peoples, and local communities all express Canada's enduring sovereignty over its Arctic lands and waters. Canada will continue to exercise the full extent of its rights and sovereignty over its land territory and its Arctic waters, including the Northwest Passage.⁷

The 2019 US Department of Defence Arctic strategy notes: 'The United States is an Arctic nation with sovereign territory and maritime claims in the region. Its interests include defending U.S. sovereignty and the homeland, including through early warning and missile defence; protecting U.S. critical infrastructure; and achieving domain awareness to protect U.S. security interests in the region.'⁸

According to the 2017 Norwegian Arctic strategy, the government's important priority is to 'Continue to exercise authority and sovereignty in the northern sea areas in a predictable, consistent and unambiguous way.'⁹

The 2020 Russian strategy echoes similar Western documents by saying that one of the main Moscow's national interests in the Arctic is '... ensuring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation.'¹⁰

It is not surprising that the result of such an increased attention of the Arctic states to the protection of their national sovereignty and security in the region has become an aggravation of competition between them on the division of the Arctic continental shelf. Three coastal states – Denmark, Russia and Canada – have submitted applications for the extension of their continental shelf to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (in 2014, 2015 and 2019, respectively). All three claims overlap with each other. Despite the fact that all the applicants promised to resolve their disputes peacefully, on the basis of the principles and norms of international law, these conflicts further complicate the already difficult situation in the region.

Even the Western Arctic countries, which normally prefer to cooperate with each other in the High North, were unable to make progress in solving sovereignty-related conflicts in the region: the US-Canadian disputes on the delimitation of the Beaufort Sea and the freedom of navigation *via* the Northwest Passage, as well as the Canadian-Danish

⁷Government of Canada, "Arctic and Northern Policy Framework International Chapter." October 22, 2019. <https://www.rcaanc-cimac.gc.ca/eng/1562867415721/1562867459588>.

⁸US Department of Defense, *Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy* (Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, June 2019). <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jun/06/2002141657/-1/-1/1/2019-DOD-ARCTIC-STRATEGY.PDF> (accessed May 23, 2021).

⁹Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, "Norway's Arctic Strategy – Between Geopolitics and Social Development." 2017. <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/fad46f0404e14b2a9b551ca7359c1000/arctic-strategy.pdf> (accessed May 23, 2021).

¹⁰Putin, "Osnovi Gosudarstvennoy Politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii Na Period Do 2035 Goda ["the Basic Principles of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic until 2035"]." Approved by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on March 5, 2020, Order 164, <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/f8ZpjhpAaQ0WB1zjywN04OgKil1mAvAM.pdf> (accessed May 23, 2021).

disputes on the delimitation of the Lincoln Sea, sovereignty over the Hans Island and introduction of fishery zones by Ottawa in the Arctic seas.

The coronavirus pandemic has also complicated the situation in the Arctic. The borders were closed, which led to an almost complete cessation of the movement of people between the northern countries, complicated the flow of goods between them, as well as the implementation of joint industrial and infrastructure projects. Most political, business, scientific, educational, and cultural events have been transformed into an online format. Paradoxically, with the advent of coronavirus vaccines and the beginning of mass vaccination of the population, the situation in the region has not improved. On the contrary, competition between Russian, European and American vaccines has created new dividing lines between the Arctic countries. Western countries do not permit the use of the Russian vaccines on their territories although they proved their effectiveness. Moreover, they do not allow Russian citizens vaccinated at home to enter their territory. The world mass media started to talk about 'vaccine diplomacy' or even 'vaccine warfare' between vaccine-producing nations. In other words, instead of fighting together against the COVID-19 pandemic, the Arctic countries have chosen a strategy of isolation and non-cooperation.

However, it would be simplistic to assume that the trends of renationalisation and securitisation of Arctic politics that have emerged in recent years have completely reversed the trends towards globalisation and international cooperation in the region.

For example, Western sanctions against Russia did not isolate Moscow either regionally or globally. With exception of offshore projects, most Russia's onshore energy projects were successfully implemented. For example, the Yamal LNG plant was constructed in Sabetta with the help of the French gas company Total (and Chinese financial contribution). A new Arctic-2 LNG plant (with participation of Total, Chinese and Japanese companies and banks) is under construction to be operational since 2023. In 2018, Novatek (the Russian gas company which owns the above plants) started LNG shipments to its customers both in East Asia and Europe. Currently, Novatek builds two terminals (one is near Murmansk and another on the Kamchatka Peninsula) for reloading LNG from ice-strengthened carriers to regular LNG tankers. The Novatek LNG projects boosted the development of both the Northern Sea Route (NSR) infrastructure and Russian shipbuilding industry. In 2011–2020, the volume of the NSR cargo traffic increased from 3,935 million tons (including 0,835 million tons of international transit) to 30,859 million tons (including 1,281 million tons of transit).¹¹

In 2014–2015, the International Maritime Organization (with the help of the Arctic Council's working group on Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment) has developed and approved a Polar Code regulating the safety and environmental aspects of Arctic shipping. The Code entered into force on 1 January 2017. Remarkably, all Arctic and non-Arctic states that use the Arctic sea routes actively cooperate in the implementation of the Polar Code and discuss ways and means to improve it.¹²

It should be noted that even under the Trump administration with its reluctance to adhere any new international accords, the US agreed to conclude the 2017 Agreement on

¹¹*Razvitie Severnogo Morskogo Puti; and Ob'em Perevozok po Severnomu Morskomu Puti.*

¹²See for details *The Polar Journal* Special Issue (vol. 10, no. 2, 2020).

Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation¹³ and 2018 Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (CAO).¹⁴ The former document was prepared and signed under the Arctic Council's auspices and was quite helpful in developing Arctic science diplomacy. The latter one was first initiated by the A5 (five Arctic coastal states – Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the US) and then negotiated with other nations with global fishery interests (China, Iceland, Japan, South Korea) and the EU. This agreement created a new multilateral fishery regime which, on the one hand, protected the CAO fish stocks from depletion and, on the other, demonstrated the possibility of cooperation between regional players with different (often competing) interests.¹⁵

Even after the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, the Arctic regional institution-building has continued in a rather dynamic way. Since September 2014, the Arctic Economic Council has been functioning, whose main task is to develop cooperation between the Arctic countries' business communities. In October 2015, the eight Arctic Council member-states established the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, which aims to increase Arctic shipping safety, conduct search and rescue operations and curb transnational illegal activities, including poaching, smuggling, drug trafficking, illegal migration and so on.

After coming to power, the Biden administration announced its intention to return to the Paris Climate Agreement and plans to conclude an agreement to reduce black carbon and methane emissions, which are one of the main sources of the greenhouse effect.

Washington's new turn towards Arctic cooperation has made it possible to revive the work of the Arctic Council. In particular, the Icelandic presidency was able to adopt the long-awaited, but blocked by the Trump administration, Council's Strategic Plan. This plan aims at long-term planning of the Arctic Council's work, which allows the member states to set larger and more ambitious tasks and ensure better continuity between the rotating presidencies.¹⁶

Taking into account these recent positive trends, Russia, which became the chairman of the Arctic Council for 2021–2023, expects that other Council members will support its presidential programme and thereby contribute to the sustainable development of the Arctic region in the foreseeable future.

Moscow also expects to revive not only the Arctic Council, but also other regional structures, including the Arctic Economic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Northern Forum and University of the Arctic. Russia also believes that there should be a renewed discussion of soft and hard security issues within institutions such as the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, Arctic Chiefs of Defence Staff Conferences, and Arctic Security Forces Roundtable.¹⁷

¹³ *Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation* (Fairbanks, Alaska, May 11, 2017). <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271057.pdf> (accessed March 28, 2021).

¹⁴ "Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean." (October 3, 2018). <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/international/agreement-accord-eng.htm> (accessed May 23, 2021).

¹⁵ Liu et al., *Governing Marine Living Resources in the Polar Regions* (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc, 2019).

¹⁶ *Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030* (Reykjavik, May 20, 2021). https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/2601/MMIS12_2021_REYKJAVIK_Strategic-Plan_2021-2030.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed May 23, 2021).

¹⁷ Arctic Council, "Russian Chairmanship 2021-2023. Responsible Governance for a Sustainable Arctic." (May 20, 2021). <https://arctic-council.org/en/about/russian-chairmanship-2/> (accessed May 23, 2021).

Summing up, the Arctic's present-day development is characterised by two opposite trends. On the one hand, the leading regional players' policies clearly show a tendency towards nationalism (sometimes even isolationism), securitisation and remilitarisation of the Arctic. On the other hand, after a certain break, the region is once again experiencing a trend towards globalisation, the revival of multilateral diplomacy and various types of cooperation, ranging from joint economic and infrastructure projects to climate action, conservation of biodiversity, indigenous peoples and Arctic science diplomacy. Apparently, the combination of these two contradictory trends will form the content of Arctic politics in the foreseeable future. Hopefully, the constructive/cooperative trend will prevail over the destructive/confrontational one.

In this issue

As the Guest Editor of this issue of *The Polar Journal*, I feel privileged to introduce this rich and diverse collection, comprising theoretically robust, conceptually innovative and thought-provoking contributions, in the light of the observations made above. There are three categories of articles in this issue.

The first and largest category includes papers on the Arctic Council member states' national strategies in the High North. They examine how the above-mentioned nationalism vs. globalism debate is reflected in the Arctic countries strategic documents and policies.

Margrét Cela and Pia Hansson discuss the challenges the Icelandic chairmanship has faced during these unprecedented and turbulent times, identify major obstacles to fulfilling the priorities set forth and discover lessons to be learned. They note that chairing the Arctic Council was a serious challenge for a small state like Iceland with its limited foreign service while the effects of a world-wide pandemic limiting in person communications and creating new technical and economic challenges, on top of the increased tension and the return of big power politics made it even harder. However, Reykjavik managed to cope with these challenges. During its Chairmanship, Iceland emphasised work on the Arctic marine environment, climate and green energy solutions, people and communities in the Arctic, and strengthening the Arctic Council. The accomplishments of the Council during the Icelandic Chairmanship include the first Council's Strategic Plan, Arctic Climate Change Update 2021, the State of the Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity Report, a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in the Arctic, Gender Equality in the Arctic report, the Summary of Progress and Recommendations from the Council's Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane.

Andreas Østhagen explores Norway's recent Arctic policies. Focusing on the foreign and security policy aspects of Norway's Arctic approach, this article defines Norway's Northern engagement and how this engagement has evolved since 2005. The author believes that as an Arctic 'middle power' Norway is likely to make use of their advantageous geographic positions to influence the near abroad. Oslo is concerned with upholding regional and global governance mechanisms that ensure stability and cooperation in the North and is eager to avoid the Arctic getting dragged into global rivalries or conflicts originating elsewhere. The paper argues that Norway will continue to pursue an active role in the North, regardless of changes in government or further deterioration of Arctic regional relations. Due to its role as both a NATO member and Russia's neighbour, Norway in particular has a special responsibility to convey a cooler message while also continuing to encourage cooperative measures in the North, especially in the domain of security politics.

Troy J. Bouffard and Lindsay L. Rodman argue that the US Arctic approach is mostly geostrategically focused, to the exclusion of operational and tactical considerations. The authors believe that the US should seek more balance between strategic imperatives and operational requirements and activities. This study discusses theory and doctrine addressing the relationship between the operational and strategic levels. It also reviews various US strategic documents, seeking to find guidance that would inform both the American strategic approach to Arctic security and operational requirements that result from the strategic approach. The authors conclude that prioritisation of the Arctic will become apparent when and if the US indicates this priority in the National Security Strategy and subsequently establishes clear defence and fiscal mandates in support of stable, programmatic requirements towards operationally defined missions and capabilities.

Maria Lagutina studies the evolution of Russia's policies in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) and the Arctic region at large from the early 2000s to the present. Particularly, the author examines whether Russia has radically changed its regional policy in the aftermath of the Ukrainian and other international crises or not? This study also explores Russia's motivations, main interests, strategic priorities and new challenges to Russia's policies in the AZRF and the region at large. The author believes that Russia's policy in the High North is evolutionary and consistent: Russia focuses on sustainable socioeconomic and environmental development of the AZRF and tries to promote peace and stability in the entire Arctic region. The paper also analyzes priorities and prospects of Russia's chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2021–2023. The author concludes that in its Arctic policies Russia seeks to balance international cooperation with national security needs.

Aleksey Fadeev, Svetlana Lipina and Konstantin Zaikov aim to examine Russia's and other countries' innovative approaches to the implementation of hydrocarbon development projects on the Arctic shelf. Particularly, they study best practices of subsurface management in foreign countries with the aim to use innovative, social and technological experiences and knowledge in the development of hydrocarbon deposits in the Russian Arctic. This paper produces a comparative analysis of various models of natural resources management suggested by different states, including assessment of their effectiveness and applicability to other countries. The authors also seek the ways of harmonising the interests of major stakeholders, including the state, oil and gas business, indigenous peoples and civil society institutions in order to develop an effective strategy for managing hydrocarbon resources development on the Arctic shelf.

The second category of articles is devoted to the Arctic Council observer states' Arctic strategies and Russia's relations with these countries.

For example, Yana Leksyutina analyzes commercial cooperation between Russia and five Asian countries (China, India, Japan, Singapore and South Korea) in the development of Arctic natural resources and the Northern Sea Route in the years of 2013–2020. The author aims to demonstrate how Moscow finds the balance between the need to protect its national interests in the Arctic and the necessity to cooperate with foreign countries capable of providing Russia with investment and advanced technologies for further Arctic exploration and development. The study describes Moscow's approach to cooperation with the five Asian states in the High North as cautious pragmatism. On the one hand, Russia wants to develop beneficial partnerships with Asian countries, but, on the other hand, this cooperation has certain limits, which are determined by Russia's

national security concerns. The author underlines that despite widely publicised cooperative plans, Moscow's actual cooperation with Asian states in the High North is still quite modest. In real terms, the most successful cooperation between them was (and is) in the sphere of Arctic LNG projects and related fields, such as shipbuilding.

In their article Gao Tianming and Vasili Erokhin focus on priorities and objectives of China and Russia in research and education agenda in the Arctic and reveal promising areas for the two countries to collaborate in multidisciplinary areas of Arctic studies. The latter include research areas, such as environment and climate change, ecosystems and ecology, geology and geophysics, hydrology and sea ice dynamics. The authors also identify opportunities and gaps in Sino-Russian collaboration in economic, social, and regional development studies, as well as maritime engineering, shipbuilding technologies, and the studies on natural resources. Finally, they discuss current capacities, potential opportunities, and major challenges to China and Russia in terms of further progress in joint research and education projects for the benefit of development and exploration of the High North.

Natalia Eremina's focus is on the UK-Russian relations in the Arctic in the post-Ukraine crisis era. This study's more specific research objectives include a comparative analysis of Russian and British strategic documents on the Arctic in order to identify similarities and dissimilarities between the two countries' approaches to the High North and shed light on the question whether they promote bilateral and international cooperation in the Arctic or not? The author also examines the UK-Russian cooperation prior to the Ukrainian crisis when the British-Russian relations were relatively good and the UK companies and academic community were willing to cooperate with Russian partners in the AZRF. According to the author, the energy and science sectors were and are the most dynamic and promising areas for the UK-Russia bilateral cooperation in the High North. The author draws a conclusion that any radical progress in the British-Russian Arctic cooperation is hardly possible, at least in the near future. However, Dr. Eremina underlines that this cooperation has managed to survive numerous crises in relations between London and Moscow and it is safe to assume that now some gradual progress in the UK-Russia Arctic cooperation is possible.

Eunji Kim and Anna Stenport examine Republic of Korea's Arctic strategies. They note that, being one of the Arctic Council's observers, South Korea pursues quite active policies in the North despite its significant geographical and cultural distance from this region. The authors point out that most scholarship devoted to the ROK Arctic strategies is focused on its economic interests and activities in the region and, at the same time, it pays little attention to the political aspects of South Korea's Arctic policy. The authors argue that ROK's international influence as a middle power state needs to be recognised, and that the High North has served as an arena for Seoul to assert its influence on regional and global issues. The paper aims to assess whether South Korea's policies of globalisation and soft power were helpful in achieving the ROK's geopolitical goals in the Arctic and elevating its general international status.

The third, final, category of articles in this issue is about the IMO's Polar Code implementation by Russia and Canada.

Andrey Todorov discusses several aspects of the implementation process in the Russian Federation. First, he examines how Russia tried to harmonise its national legislation with the provisions of the Polar Code, including changes both in Arctic

shipping regulations and Russia's decision-making system. Second, the author analyzes how the Russian competent authorities managed to cope with violations of the Code in the NSR water area. He notes that a relatively small number of registered violations can be explained by the fact that the bulk of navigation *via* the NSR falls out of the scope of the Polar Code. Moreover, Russia continues to enforce its national navigation rules *via* the NSR, which in some respects impose stricter requirements than those of the Polar Code. Dr. Todorov, however, points out that potential risks related to the navigation of vessels in violation of the Polar Code in Arctic waters should not be underestimated. The author proposes the establishment of an Arctic Port State Control mechanism to address potential challenges associated with the implementation of the Code in the future.

A group of Canadian scholars (Pauline Pic, Julie Babin, Frédéric Lasserre, Linyan Huang and Kristin Bartenstein) analyse how Canada implements the IMO Polar Code. Particularly, the authors examine how new Canadian regulations on navigation in the Canadian Arctic are perceived by shipping companies from North America, Europe and Asia. The study, based on 99 questionnaires, came to the conclusion that companies not active in the Arctic are largely unaware of the Polar Code, showing a limited interest in the Arctic shipping market. On the other hand, companies active in the Arctic and well aware of the issues of safety of navigation and environmental protection generally welcomed the Polar Code. The authors conclude that although there is a substantial difference between the more developed Russian NSR and the far less developed Northwest Passage, it appears that shipping companies predominantly perceive the general Arctic market as not yet ripe.

To conclude, taken together, contributions to this issue, provide ample basis for hope that cooperative trend in the Arctic will prevail and key regional players will be able to pool their efforts to address most pressing needs in the Arctic region.

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