

Title: Retreating sea ice and regulating doughnut wholes in the Arctic Ocean: Arctic coastal state-Asian fishing state collaboration

There is a “doughnut whole” in the middle of the Arctic Ocean beyond the 200nm eez of the coastal states. Because of permanent sea ice, this has not been a marine ressource governance issue so far. The retreat of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean is pronounced at the Bering Strait end. This retreat may expose fishing resources in waters beyond 200nm EEZ. The Bering Strait connects these possible unregulated fishing grounds to some of the largest population centers in the world, in East Asian, China, Japan, South Korea and further away. These are countries with large protein needs and large long distance fishing fleets. Regulating fisheries in such an Arctic Ocean “doughnut whole” is therefore a first test of boundaries and balances of power between Arctic (coastal) states and large Asian states over the inclusion of outside states in Arctic ressource governance. Because of the retreat of sea ice and the availability of fishing fleets and technology, this is an acute issue rather than much more speculative deep sea drilling and mining questions. This presentation will analyze Arctic coastal state-Asian competition and cooperation in governing and regulating Arctic Ocean high seas fisheries in a context of global power transitions.