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ARCTIC SHIPPING AND ASIAN SHIPPING COMPANIES: A REAL INTEREST?

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With the melting of sea ice in the Arctic, several simulations have been carried to try and assess the profitability of transit Arctic shipping. The results are mixed and depend largely of the chosen parameters (Lasserre 2014), although it appears Arctic shipping remains a costly and risky business (Sarrabezoles et al 2014).

The issue of the potential expansion of transit Arctic shipping thus relies largely on the shipping companies' strategies and perceptions of potential profits versus risks. In 2011, it seemed most shipping companies were still prudent (Lasserre and Pelletier 2011). With the interest from several Asian countries for Arctic issues and the admission to the Arctic Council of China, India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore as observers, the debate as to whether Arctic shipping is attractive for Asian shipping companies has been renewed.

This poster would like to tackle with the interest of Asian shipping companies. It will present preliminary results of a survey conducted with 150 Asian shipping companies between September 2013 and February 2015. It appears Asian shipping companies are no more interested, in large numbers, than European or North American shipping firms. There are a few exceptions, mostly linked to destination traffic linked to the extractive sector in Siberia: some shipping companies see a potential in the exploitation of natural gas, oil or mineral resources in the Arctic, and the logistical needs this will create. However, as for pure transit, most shipping companies quote arguments for their reluctance that are very similar to the survey published in 2011, underlining that Asian shipping companies are globalized and reason the same way as Western shipping firms.

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