

The Role Of Naval Power In Settling Competing Claims About Contested Maritime Areas

Working Paper

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Abstract

Outside factors can induce bargaining asymmetries that influence outcomes of international negotiations. This article focuses, however, on the impact of an inside factor on the willingness to cooperate. Specifically, this study pursues the question "does an increase in naval power increase the likelihood of settling maritime boundaries?" Even though entire books have been dedicated to study the relevance of naval power, we are left with slightly more than intuition and anecdotal evidence to provide some answers to the latter enquiry. Endogeneity issues in particular might make it difficult to untangle the links between developing naval power and settling maritime boundaries. Utilizing an instrument for naval power, data on the "Law of the Sea"-- specifically, maritime boundary settlements across the world between 1960 and 2008--and employing an instrumental variable analysis, I present one of the first large cross-national studies that focuses on the relationship between naval power and a specific type of international negotiation--the settlement of a maritime boundary. The findings might have implications for the future actions of states whose naval strength is growing.

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