

Abstract

Energy security is an important phenomenon of the contemporary world. A significant number of oil and gas reserves are located on the seabed. Expansion of oil and gas drilling to deeper and from shore more remote locations can again raise the question of ownership of these deposits. On one hand, there are regions of the world where these disputes over borders of maritime territories escalate into a series of clashes and incidents. On the other hand, there are other areas where states can settle their disputes and cooperate on drilling.

The goal of this study is to determine which factors lead to the fact that particularly in the South China Sea disagreement about the boundaries of maritime territories results in the escalation of disputes in comparison with the regions of the North Sea and the Caribbean Sea, where disputes are solved or minimized. These factors are represented by six variables, which are based on three theories: a realist, idealist and constructivist theory of international relations.

The first part of this study describes the historical development of current international maritime law with regard to the territorial division of the world's oceans. It is followed by a description of three case areas. The second part deals with the theoretical foundations of the examined factors. In the following section, these factors/variables are analyzed in specific cases and values are assigned. At the conclusion of the study Mill's methods are used to determine from values of variables which factor most likely contributes to the escalation of disputes in the South China Sea region.