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9.3

Accounting For The Rise Of Bilateral Verses Multilateral Agreements Over International Rivers

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Accounting For The Rise Of Bilateral Verses Multilateral Agreements Over International Rivers

Existing quantitative and qualitative studies have concluded that states are signing bilateral treaties over their international rivers, despite the fact that the majority of these rivers are shared between more than two states. Consider South Asia, where India has signed separate bilateral agreements with Nepal and Bangladesh over the Ganges and Brahmaputra River system. Similarly, Israel has signed separate bilateral agreement with Jordan and the Palestinians over their shared hydrological systems. Israel also selected to negotiation a bilateral agreement with the Syrians over the same hydrological systems. Finally, along the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq have also pursued bilateral agreements. In this paper, I seek to account for the signing of bilateral agreements along multilateral river system. To answer this puzzle, I examine the possible impact of balance of power among riparian states, the degree of interdependence on the international river, the presence of a third party, and the nature of relations between states on the type of treaty signed. This research question is important because bilateral agreements over multilateral rivers can be inherently unstable and fail to lead to long-term behavioral altering cooperation. The paper will use cases from the Middle East and South Asia and it will draw on field research in Israel, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, and India.