

Explaining the role of human geographic factors in states' sea power

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Countries with access or no access to open seas forms the different geographical location of coastal peninsula, island or landlocked state, respectively. Sea and ocean environment is different from land environments in terms of features. An area of ocean is three times larger than the land. Water bodies are spherical cohesion while the land suffers fragmentation of space. Water bodies have an inclusive position and land area has a peripheral one. Sea power is one of the most important aspects of the state's national power. Most of the world powers (past and present) have coastal and sea geographical positions. The sea position provides countries many options in all economic, political, cultural, and social dimensions, which continental countries are deprived of them. Continental and land-based military powers have limited military power. Traditional and modern sea powers have a spherical function, in view of their respective characteristics of the marine environment. Most of these countries have always had a maritime trade approach and have supported open economic policies. The sea powers are present in the seas in economic, military, political and legal forms. Sea power is not considered proper in evaluating national power because it includes different factors. Sea power is the only aspect of national power that can be present in different water bodies, and is not affected land and air power limitations. Many variables and elements affect states' sea power. Various factors such as human, geographical-territorial, technological, economic, political, etc. shape the sea power of the states. These factors interact with each other. This article investigates the role of human geographic factors in the states' sea power.

2. Materials and Methods

This research is a fundamental and descriptive-analytical study in nature This article investigates the role of human geographic factors in the states' sea power using library findings. Data analysis procedure is based on qualitative method. Data collection was carried out using library studies, document and content examinations. In this research, theories and models of maritime power are examined. Presenting the theoretical model, the paper analyses the role of elements of human geography component in sea power of countries such as United States, China, Russia, India, Japan, Portugal, United Kingdom and others.

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3. Results

A variety of geographic-territorial, social, economic, political, diplomatic and military factors contribute to the formation of sea powers. The policies of the state and its human structures are just some of the important elements of the state's sea power. Geographical phenomena with human nature are one of the most important elements in the state's sea power structure. Political and security status of the territory (land and sea borders), coastal population and communities, coastal cities and ports, coastal and naval military bases, interconnection of in-country communication networks with the coastal region are the most important human geographic components of maritime power of the states.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the findings of the study, the theoretical proposition and explanatory theory of the present study is that all elements of the human geographic component somehow affect the maritime power of the countries. The elements of human geography – i.e., population, coastal community, coast and marine military bases, and coastal cities and ports, and communication networks connecting to the coastal areas are affected by controlling factors such as the natural and environmental characteristics of the coast. There are, nonetheless, other controlling factors such as the bureaucratic and administrative structure operating in the country, the political system, national objectives and policies contribute to human geography, but they are not addressed here. Two further elements, that is, developments and domestic political and security tensions, and also marine and land border security influence the sea power. As well, they affect the performance of other human geography elements. That is to say, lack of land security and political stability, and military engagements at borders with neighboring nations hinder the concentrating on the other human geography elements. The elements are also influenced more by the controlling factors of political administration rather than the controlling factors of the natural features of the coast. Independent research has to be carried out to explain these factors. Three elements – developments and domestic political and security tensions, and also marine and land border security–have a greater impact on maritime power. That said, it does not signify that other elements of human geography are less important. Nations not enjoying political stability and vulnerable to the political and security related tensions within their own territories lack the potential to achieve sea power. All sea powers have, since long, managed to expand their fleet and sea power through creating land security and political security within their borders. In other words, the development of sea power depends upon the domestic political stability, lack of which would lead to the authorities' engagement with domestic issues, failure to provide the financial resources necessary for expanding commercial and military fleet and to the underdevelopment and insufficient provision of coastal constructs like ports. Domestic tensions, lack of political stability and military altercations with neighboring nations are impediments to concentrating on the issues related to the

sea. In fact, the provision of instruments required for sea-based policies is dependent upon the domestic political (in)stability and tensions. Marine bases play a significant role in sea power. Unable nations to operating across all sea realms on account of their having no marine bases cannot reach the status of a sea power. Some countries, such as Russia and China in compared to the United States, have failed to have a significant military and political presence in the world waters due to the lack of multiple naval bases. So it is better to refer them as "coastal powers". Coastal powers have a strong presence in the immediate area of their geographical environment and they play marginal roles in the remote geographical areas.

Keywords: sea states, human geographic factors, sea power.

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