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Abstract

**Exploring Aviation Rivalries within the Legal Context
of the WTO**

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When states file complaints at the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body regarding another's trade behaviour, they may be motivated to strategically promote their own national interests rather than work towards a collectively beneficial resolution. Using two cases related to aviation, I explore the evolution of trade rivalries in the WTO environment. I derive a hypothesis from the endogenous protection literature, that states that produce the same goods in a small and competitive market will be more likely to file a significant number of WTO disputes in order to block access to their own and foreign markets. Using the principal rivalry approach, I find that both disputes involve a mutual recognition of rivalry over the aviation sector, as well as the use of heightened diplomatic language. I expect that as more states begin to utilize the DSB, other dyads involved in the trade of highly specialized goods will be more likely to engage in this type of strategic behaviour.

Keywords: aviation, World Trade Organization, protectionism, rivalries