

Introduction

One of the first historic sites a foreign visitor to South Korea notices is neither the majestic Gyeongbokgung Palace nor the solemn Bulguksa Temple. Nor is it the expansive Gyeongju Historical Areas complex designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, but a group of remote and tiny disputed islets known as Dokdo in Korea and Takeshima in Japan. The exposure to Dokdo starts even before one reaches the capital, with a government-sponsored video clip explaining the importance of the islets to Korea, Korea's rights to ownership and Japan's hideous claims to the islets being played on the express train to Seoul from Incheon airport. Probably only few of the foreign tourists actually make it to the islets as the journey is cumbersome and can be quite costly. One, however, is continuously reminded of Dokdo while in Korea as the islets are omnipresent in numerous posters, signs, and placards throughout Seoul and other Korean cities.

In Tokyo, the presence of Takeshima is somewhat less noticeable. However, it features prominently in official publications, websites and, recently, in school textbooks as well. A pamphlet centrally placed on Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) webpage dedicated to Japan-Korea relations, states that the islets are indisputably part of Japan's territory, illegally occupied by Korea. A video clip on the website of Cabinet Secretariat's Office of Policy Planning and Coordination on Territory and Sovereignty features a picture book that

depicts the peaceful fishing activities by Japanese fishermen on the islets prior to the Korean takeover and the tragedy of their loss. In 2016, electronic copies of this book were distributed by the government to over 30,000 primary and middle schools across the country.

Hundreds of kilometers away from the centers of political power in Seoul and Tokyo, in a small hotel in Japan's Shimane Prefecture's capital Matsue, Choi Jae-ik, chairman of a Seoul based civic group called the National Front of Dokdo Guardians, holds a press conference. Together with a handful of supporters he annually travels to Japan from Korea to protest against Shimane Prefecture's "Takeshima Day" ceremony aimed at commemorating Imperial Japan's 1905 incorporation of the islets. During the press conference, Choi makes a placard written with his own blood in which he denounces Japan's attempts to steal the islets and demands a revocation of the "Takeshima Day" ordinance. Back in the 1980s, Choi took an active part in Korea's democratization movement and was an avowed socialist. In late 1990s, he became one of the founding members of the "Protect Dokdo" movement. Today he makes a living as a kindergarten caretaker while most of his free time and money is devoted to organizing demonstrations and holding various gatherings related to the "protection" of Dokdo.

It is a twenty-minute walk from Choi's hotel to Shimane's Prefectural Assembly, whose members enacted the "Takeshima Day" ordinance in 2005. While being the birthplace of numerous national level powerful politicians including one Prime-Minister, Shimane

Prefecture is one of Japan's least economically developed prefectures and prior to enacting the "Takeshima Day" ordinance rarely appeared even in the national news. Before 2005, it had a multifaceted "sister prefectures" relationship with Korea's North Gyeongsang Province which administers the disputed islets. The two regional governments used to jointly conduct numerous cultural and expertise exchange programs and cooperate in facilitating tourism between the two regions. Most of these ties were severed after the passage of the ordinance, which did not bring any tangible benefits to Shimane residents.

The somewhat extravagant actions of non-state actors such as Choi's National Front of Dokdo Guardians and Shimane Prefectural Assembly may look like manifestations of a nationalist propaganda campaign designed and crafted by the central governments in Seoul and Tokyo respectively. This is not the case though. Until early-2000s the Korean government was trying to prevent any involvement of civic groups in the dispute and even restricted civilians' access to the islets. Neither the Korean nor the Japanese government engaged in any kind of a public campaign related to the dispute and the efforts of both were focused on keeping it on the backburner of bilateral relations. Accordingly, Seoul did not provide any funding to the groups that formed the early "Protect Dokdo" movement and Tokyo applied a considerable pressure on Shimane Prefectural Assembly not to enact the "Takeshima Day" ordinance. Thus, the emergence of Dokdo/Takeshima as one of the key issues in the domestic debates on bilateral relations in both countries was not a result of

governmental policy. To the contrary, it happened despite the efforts of the political elites in Seoul and Tokyo to keep it away from the public eye and can be attributed to actions of actors such as the National Front of Dokdo Guardians and Shimane Prefectural Assembly, whom I refer to here as *national identity entrepreneurs*.

While the roots of the dispute go back to state level negotiations of the Peace Treaty with Japan in the early postwar period, the narratives regarding the dispute and, even more importantly, their centrality in the public discourse in both countries is a relatively new phenomenon. In early 1960s, the Japanese and the Korean negotiators of the bilateral normalization treaty acknowledged the relative insignificance of the islets and even considered blowing them up as a, quite radical, solution to the dispute. They would have probably been bemused and perplexed by references to the islets as the heart of the nation or as a treasure box of natural resources which are integral to today's depictions of Dokdo/Takeshima in Korea and Japan respectively. In the following decades, there were hardly any publications devoted to the dispute and it rarely featured in bilateral negotiations. Half a century later however, the Dokdo/Takeshima dispute became one of the key issues in Japan-Korea relations, with hundreds of books, articles, TV programs and movies devoted to the islets. Today, the dispute over tiny uninhabitable islets of little economic importance is an integral part of historical memory and debates about bilateral relations in both countries.

National identity is a highly contested concept, subject to numerous academic debates,

beyond the scope of this study. Most of the constructivist International Relations (IR) scholars as well as scholars of nationalism however, agree that collective memory of the nation's past plays a key role in what constitutes a national identity. Overall, the notion of identity depends on the idea of memory as the core meaning of any individual or group identity is sustained by remembering (Gillis 1994, 3). Internalization and identification with the group's collective memory by its members, therefore, is the basis of any social identity (Zerubavel 2003, 3). When it comes to nation's collective memory, stories about its past create the collective experience of the nation, define its boundaries through differentiation from and in contrast to "others" and also serve as a basis for projections about the nation's collective future (Somers and Gibson 1994, 38-39; Triandafyllidou 1998). As Anthony Smith, one of the pioneers of nationalism studies, has aptly put it "one might almost say: no memory, no identity, no identity, no nation....Only by "remembering the past" can a collective identity come into being" (1996, 383).

These collective memories though, are not some abstract stories but are built of specific narratives which depict and interpret certain events and issues in the nation's interactions with its "others." The repertoire of these narratives is not constant but evolves and changes over time. Certain narratives disappear from the collective memory while others emerge as important markers of national identity (Kansteiner 2002, 192-193). The dispute over Dokdo/Takeshima has become one such issue, emerging in the 1990s and becoming an

integral part of the widely accepted story regarding the nation's collective past and present in both Japan and Korea. Needless to say, Dokdo/Takeshima is not unique but just one example of many other disputed territories in Northeast Asia and beyond that function as markers of national identity (e.g., Bong 2013; Bukh 2012; Deans 2000; Goddard 2010; Strate 2015; Varshney 1991).

It is often assumed that national identities are forged by the powerful as tools of control and domination. The example above suggests that this is not always the case and the process of identities' creation is not necessarily a top-down one. Exploring these socio-political processes with particular reference to disputed territories will enable us to gain a more nuanced understanding of how specific stories of which national identities are built emerge, the role of non-state actors in these processes and the importance they assign to disputed territory in question. Moreover, the narratives on territorial disputes are politically consequential—they carry important implications for the policies related to the disputes in question as they create a frame of reference for the policy makers.

The point of departure for this book is that territorial disputes are socially constructed, namely, that the meanings associated with these disputed territories and narratives about them, emerged as a result of a socio-political processes. Literature on broad identity narratives and discourses of the national "self" in Northeast Asia is abundant (e.g., Hagström 2015; Rozman ed. 2011; Suzuki 2009; Tamaki 2010; Wachman 2016) but with few exceptions (e.g., Samuels

2010) it rarely explores the domestic micro-processes through which certain narratives and ideas that serve as the building blocks for these identity constructs emerge and gain prominence. Narratives do not simply appear out of thin air and the social processes that result in a certain construct are neither anonymous nor abstract but can be traced to human agency (Thompson 2001). In the context of North Korean abductions of Japanese and South Korean citizens, for example, Samuels (2010) convincingly traces the social construction of the issue in both countries to interests and actions of specific actors ranging from relatives of abductees to political associations and politicians.

Focusing on the processes of construction of territorial disputes and the role played by non-state actors, this book provides a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the emergence and transformation of such constructs in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. What are the factors that gave rise to national identity entrepreneurs and shaped their narratives related to the territories in question? Why and how do territorial disputes that at one point mattered little, became salient? What are the domestic socio-political processes that propelled these narratives to the fore of the public discourse? These are the main questions I seek to answer.

Casual observers may think that territorial disputes related campaigns by non-state actors and stories deployed in the process are about recovery or protection of national territory. In this book I argue that this is not the case. In all of the cases examined here, campaigns and

related narratives originated at a time of a crisis, as tools of contention or criticism against a perceived failure of the state. The actors that advocate the protection or return of a disputed territory may resemble each other in their rhetoric and framing techniques but the nature of the crisis they responded to as well as their goals differed greatly and often had little to do with the disputed territory per se.

“Territory”, this book shows, can be an empty signifier. By this I do not mean that territory cannot have an important economic or strategic value to the state or the people whose livelihood depends on it. However, when certain territory’s material value is negligible or simply non-existent due to its location, limited resources or lack of actual control over it, just like other objects of no practical use, it is “liberated for full symbolic or ritual use” (Hobsbawm 1983, 4). In other words, territory’s lack of a tangible value expands and enhances its symbolic potential which stems from the generally shared sentiment regarding territory’s importance to the nation. Neither the symbolic meaning of “territory” nor norms associated with it however, are pre-determined or static. Similarly to the notion of the scared, it “occurs to represent an indeterminate value of signification, in itself devoid of meaning and thus susceptible of receiving any meaning at all” (Lévi-Strauss 1987, 55). This indeterminateness enables the actors to strategically attach meanings to “territory” in pursuit of their goals while identifying themselves with the “nation.” Indeed, because of the widely shared agreement on territory’s utmost importance to the nation, disputed territory is easily

embraced by national identity entrepreneurs as a rhetorical resource aimed at positioning themselves as champions of the nation, garnering support, and, in some cases, avoiding sanctions from the government. This framing of the disputed territory however can lead to an, often unintended, outcome in which it emerges as one of the markers of national identity.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework used in this book treats the construction of a disputed territory as a bottom-up process, initiated by non-state actors at a time of a significant change in their respective societies. Here I distinguish between a territorial dispute per se and a social construction of the dispute and the disputed territory. The former refers to contending claims of ownership between two or more states over a certain territory. Social constructs on the other hand, are the widely shared perceptions of the disputed territory, the dispute itself and the actions of the “self” and the other party. These constructs are built from *narratives*.

Narratives are stories that imbue certain real events, places, nations and other phenomena with a certain symbolic value and meaning, by this making them socially meaningful (Bially Mattern 2005, 83). The factors that generate such narratives related to disputed territories and the processes through which they are transformed and developed are the focus of this book.

The narratives do not emerge from nowhere and are no doubt related to the disputes they depict. All of the territorial disputes discussed in this book involve Japan and its neighbors,

and today constitute one of the main sources of inter-state tensions in the region. Thus, it is not surprising that International Relations, Area Studies, International Law, and historical scholarship devoted to the state-level causes and ramifications of these disputes is abundant (e.g., Chung 2004; Emmers 2009; Fravel 2008; Iwashita 2015; Koo 2010; Lee and Lee eds. 2011; Stephan 1974; Schoenbaum 2009).

The roots of competing territorial claims in contemporary Northeast Asia can be traced to a number of historical, geographical, and political factors. One such factor was the virtual simultaneity of two projects, which shaped Japan's modern history: nation-state building and colonial expansion. Japan's transition from a feudal society to a modern nation-state with unified history and defined geographical boundaries began with the Meiji Restoration of 1868. It was only in 1875 that Japan delimited all parts of its northern border with the Russian Empire. In the following year however, Japan concluded an unequal treaty with Korea, which dealt mostly with opening Korea's ports to Japanese trade and did not delimitate the borders between the two countries. In the following years, as a prelude to formal colonization and settlement, Japanese started to migrate to the Korean Peninsula (see Uchida 2011 for a detailed discussion). Well into the 1880s, the borders of Okinawa, Japan's southernmost prefecture, were still not fully determined. Similarly late, the Constitution of the Empire of Japan was adopted only in 1889. In 1895, after defeating Qing China, Japan gained control over Taiwan as its first formal colony. Only ten years later, Japan acquired Southern Sakhalin

as part of the spoils of the Russo-Japanese War, and made Korea into its protectorate.

This partial concurrence of Japan's modern nation-state building with the colonial expansion of the Japanese Empire resulted in certain ambiguity as to the borders of Japan proper. Further exacerbated by the geography of the region where tiny and remote islands are abundant, this ambiguity created the potential for territorial disputes arising in the aftermath of Japan's defeat in World War II and the dissolution of its empire.

Historical and geographical factors aside, the most important factor in the emergence of the disputes (Map 1) was the international politics of the Cold War, when the US – the main architect of the regional post-war order – decided that ambiguity on the ownership of certain parts of the now defunct empire would best serve its interests in the region. One of the most germane works on territorial disputes in Northeast Asia by Hara Kimie traces the roots of all of the territorial issues in question to the Peace Treaty between the Allied Powers and Japan signed in San Francisco on September 8, 1951 (Hara 2006). The Peace Treaty was supposed to put an end to above-mentioned indeterminateness but the relevant provisions in what was supposed to be the main legal document to delimitate postwar Japan's borders are rather brief and vague, leaving room for conflicting interpretations regarding the belonging of the islands in question. Looking at the numerous drafts and negotiations that preceded the conclusion of the Treaty, Hara (2006) convincingly traces this ambiguity in the final text of the Treaty to the Cold War policy of the United States, the main occupying power in Japan and the chief

architect of the postwar settlement.

(**Map 1 here.** Japan's Territorial Disputes. Source: CSS / ETH Zurich.

<https://www.ethz.ch/en/news-and-events/eth-news/news/2014/07/japan-turns-its-back-on-pacificism.html>)

The evidence offered by Hara related to the roots of the territorial disputes on the state level is indeed compelling. The international politics of the Peace Treaty, however, offer little to explain the process of social construction of these disputes which can be traced to actions and narratives of non-state actors. For example, in Japan, the perception of the territory today

under Russian administration as Japan's "inherent territory" originated in civic groups whose activism predates the San Francisco Peace Conference. On the other hand, the first wave of Chinese activism related to the Senkaku/Diaoyu/Diaoyutai islands took place only in the early 1970s, and, in Korea, first "Protect Dokdo" groups appeared in the late 1980s. As such, one needs to look beyond the Peace Treaty for factors that explain the emergence of such actors and the narratives they developed and deployed.

Mobilization by political elites is one of the most commonly offered explanations for public interest in territorial issues (Huth 1996; Fearon and Laitin 2000). This argument however is not applicable to the cases examined here as the activism related to territorial disputes spurred without any governmental support and, at least at the initial stage of their existence, the non-state actors engaged in this activism, criticized and contested the existing governmental policy rather than supported it.

While the rationalist IR scholarship locates the value of territory mostly in its economic or strategic properties (e.g., Fearon 1995, 408), the constructivist school focuses more on its intangible value and explores the various sentiments embedded in "national territory" as a social construct. Constructivist literature suggests that territorial disputes related actions and narratives are an expression of a "national consciousness", a social construct where "our territory", within which the ethnic or national group is located, is seen as an integral part of both the personal and the group identities (Newman 1999, 13). Boundaries indeed create

social entities and not the other way around (Abbott 1995). Thus, geographical boundaries between “our” territory and “their” territory, or bits of territory perceived as “ours” and occupied by “them”, function as symbolic markers of identity that produce and re-produce the “us” entity by differentiating it from “others” (Paasi 1998, 80-81).

What exactly are the symbolic meanings attached to a territory? In an extensive study of ethnic conflicts, Toft (2005) suggests that these meanings differ across actors, in her case, states and ethnic groups. Territory, according to Toft, is construed as a defining attribute of the ethnic groups’ identities, as a homeland where distinct culture and language are practiced, inseparable from the group’s past and intrinsically linked to its survival as a distinct entity (2005, 19-20). While this identification of control over the “homeland” with the group’s survival is seen by Toft as a rational act (2005, 20), her conception of the symbolic meaning of territory is not dissimilar to the one offered by the “national consciousness” literature.

Namely, in both cases, territory is seen as an expression of an identity, national or ethnic, and as means to distinguish the “self” from the “other”, be it a different nation or the state.

Similarly, Shelef (2015) draws on the theories of nationalism to argue that homelands are a specific kind of a territory, constitutive of a nation and constructed as sacred in the nationalist discourse. Thus, he suggests, their value is not reducible to the territory’s material attributes and the ideational value of the homeland is one of the main factors considered by actors (state and non-state) when calculating the costs and benefits of territorial conflict.

It is beyond doubt that “homeland” or “territory” is one of the most important markers of national identity, formerly embedded in an “uncontested background of thought” (Zellig 1995, 951) in all modern societies. “Territory” is an integral part of the nationalist discourse – one of the key modern regimes of truth in Foucauldian terms. As a material object, “national territory” performs a two-folded role in nationalism: it serves both as the material base for the projection of the nation and as an evidence for its existence (Koenigsberg 1977, 9).

“Territory”, however, is also a social construct, and the same can be said about certain parts of the “national territory.” If we are to accept one of the fundamental claims of constructivism—that processes determine identities (Mercer 1995, 231)—the questions then arise as to when and how these specific constructs of disputed territories emerge, how, why and by whom the “national territory” discourse is activated in relation to a certain disputed territory.

Focusing on the political processes that led to the construction of Jerusalem and Northern Ireland as indivisible in the Israeli-Palestinian and Anglo-Irish disputes respectively, Goddard (2010) argues that the link between identity and a disputed territory is not a given. She traces the emergence of these two constructs to legitimation strategies deployed by politicians in the bargaining process. Goddard shows that the specific symbolic meaning (indivisibility in her case studies) associated with a certain territory is an, often unintentional, structural effect of political elites’ strategically chosen rhetoric. This rhetoric, she argues, is both a product of the

domestic social and cultural networks in which the politicians are embedded, and a strategic choice aimed at appealing to certain audiences and undercutting other.

The particular value of Goddard's use of network theory and its application to the cases of Northern Ireland and Jerusalem lies in its emphasis on process rather than on the final construct. This enables her to challenge simplistic, outcome-focused constructivist explanations, and to identify and analyze the complex processes of social construction of the two territories as indivisible and intrinsically linked to national identity. Similar to many other works on territorial disputes however, Goddard's analysis suggests a top-down process in which the social construct and actors that identify with it are structural byproducts of politicians' strategies. In this sense, it resembles the above-mentioned political elites' mobilization literature. While this kind of an argument may indeed be true for Jerusalem and Ireland, it would be a gross generalization to claim that it applies to all cases of disputed territories. As the chapters in this book will show, such constructs often emerge as tools of contention between non-state actors that claim to represent the nation and political elites, advocated by the former and initially resisted by the latter .

I suggest that, in order to be able to conduct a more multifaceted and multidirectional analysis of the social construction process of a disputed territory, we need to explore the role of actors outside of the political elites, referred to here as *national identity entrepreneurs*. National identity entrepreneurs are non-state actors (individuals, civic groups or any other

entity which is not part of the state and has a capacity for agency) who create and actively promote a certain narrative (territorial disputes related for the purposes of this book, but overall not limited to such) which invokes the nation. In other words, national identity entrepreneurs are signifying agents who engage in linking of a certain issue or event with the nation and national interest.

The concept of national identity entrepreneurship I introduce here, draws on the broader scholarship interested in the origins of ideational constructs and their diffusion. Literature on norms' emergence for example, emphasizes the role of norm entrepreneurs. Norm entrepreneurs also referred to as moral proselytes (Nadelmann 1990, 482) or meaning managers (Zelling 1995, 1008) are agents that have strong notions about appropriate behavior or desirable behavior in their societies and engage in promotion of these notions in their societies through active persuasion. They play a key role in norm emergence through deployment of a particular cognitive framing which implies a fundamentally new understanding of appropriateness (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 896-897). National identity entrepreneurs are also similar to political entrepreneurs analyzed by Tilly (2003, 34-35) in his work on collective violence. Both claim to represent the nation and, while doing so, activate certain symbolic boundaries, stories and relations, and connect certain groups and networks. National identity entrepreneurs are also not dissimilar to other identity entrepreneurs such as those out-group members who intentionally leverage their out-group identity to derive a

certain social or economic benefit (Leong 2016:2-3).

The above-mentioned literature suggests that the motives for entrepreneurship are either instrumental or ideational. In other words, it is divided along the “strategy versus identity” line which has dominated the broad debate on the motives behind social activism (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001, 409). While the advocates of the strategy approach argue that actors invoke and promote certain ideational constructs as means for material or political ends, the identity approach traces these actions to the actors’ identities and their belief in the virtue of the ideas they advocate. Occasional references in the scholarship devoted to the territorial disputes in Northeast Asia, usually treat such identity entrepreneurship as manifestations of nationalism (e.g., Bong 2013; Choi 2005; Emmers 2010; Valencia 2000), by this suggesting the ideational explanation for their actions.

There are a number of caveats however that need to be considered when thinking about the framework for analyzing the causes of national identity entrepreneurship in territorial disputes and beyond. To start with, nationalism is a rather ambiguous term. As Reicher and Hopkins pointed out, the term “nationalism” has been used to denote a range of phenomena and wide-ranging definitions of the nation and its interests (2000, 81-82). Writing more than half a century ago, Hans Kohn, the pioneer of nationalism studies, argued that “everywhere nationalism differs in character according to the specific historical conditions and the peculiar social structure of each country” (1955, 89). From a somewhat different perspective, Calhoun

(1997, 21) noted that an enormous range of otherwise different movements is constituted through the usage of terms like “nation”, “national” and “national interest.” Moreover, different nationalisms can often exist concurrently within the same country, offering competing visions of the same nation. For example, Reicher *et al.* (2005:629) show how the essence of Scottish nation has been construed differently by different political groups in Scotland. While the left-wingers depicted Scots as inherently egalitarian, communal, and welfarist, for the right-wingers, canniness, hard work and entrepreneurship constituted the essence of Scottish national identity.

More relevant to the topic of this book, the diversity of nationalist symbolisms associated with disputed territories has been exemplified in Zellman’s (2015 and 2018) study of public attitudes in Serbia and Israel towards lost or contested territories. His individual-level experiments show not only the existence of multiple and concurrent valuations of disputed territories in the two nations but also the various ways their symbolism is tied with other dominant narratives in the two societies. Thus, even if we assume that national identity entrepreneurs engaged in territorial disputes-related activism are driven by nationalism, simply labeling them as “nationalist” obscures more than it reveals about their motives. Namely, the “nationalist” label fails to account for the exact vision of the nation these actors advocate as well as the particular symbolic role these territories play as markers of national identity in different narratives.

Moreover, ideational motivation does not necessarily mean sameness of the invoked ideas and those actually pursued by the actors. Certain ideas and norms can be used as framing techniques in a pursuit of fundamentally different values. Consider the following example as an illustration to this point.

In early November 2018, Japanese Prime-Minister Abe's cabinet approved a revision to the immigration legislation which will enable more foreign blue collar workers to come and work in Japan. Few weeks later, an email from a Japan related mailing list drew my attention to an article, which decried the slave-like conditions of existing foreign workers in Japan and came strongly against the new legislation, arguing that it does not guarantee the human rights of the workers (Yamawaki 2018). The new immigration policy was criticized by many on similar grounds but what made this article stand out was the fact that it was published in the conservative Gekkan Nippon magazine. The magazine actually devoted a whole section to the new immigration legislation in its December 2018 issue with many of the articles criticizing the conditions of foreign workers in Japan. It is indeed possible that the editors of Gekkan Nippon were genuinely concerned with the human rights of foreign workers when planning this special issue. However, bearing in mind the broader ideology espoused by the journal, it is more likely that the main motivation for the extensive criticism of the new legislation was its perceived threat to the ethnic homogeneity of the Japanese society. The latter is seen as a unique and an ultimately positive feature of Japan by many in the

conservative camp.

Furthermore, the instrumental motivation in identity entrepreneurship should be neither dismissed nor taken for granted but explored inductively. Overall, it is quite dangerous to explain behavior by relying on the categories that the actors themselves employ (Gould 2003, 2-13). Individuals, collectives and states often appeal to certain ideals and norms in pursuit of their rather mundane interests. As Bürkner (2015, 29) noted, ideas, symbols and images are often introduced by agents to legitimize their objectives, create power resources and rationalize their project. Tobacco manufacturers' appeal to the notion of liberty enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence as part of their efforts to preserve smoking as a social practice and maintain their profits (Zellig 1995, 1009) serves as a perfect illustration to this point. In cases of territorial disputes, symbolism associated with these territories may indeed be utilized by political actors in their rational calculations aimed at legitimizing their claim and boosting their domestic support (Goddard 2010). Instrumental use of "national territory" however is not limited to political actors. In one of the most insightful studies on nationalism and territory, Peter Sahlins (1989) has shown how borderland villages along the French-Spanish border in the Pyrenees in the early nineteenth century appropriated and utilized the emerging nationalist discourse. "National territory" was used by the villagers as part of a strategy to mobilize the state's support for their cause in the land conflicts with their neighbors.

At the same time, we should also not forget that territory can indeed be related to tangible benefits such as natural resources and often access or possession of these resources are the actual sources of conflict (Hensel and Mitchell 2005). On the sub-state level, territory may provide real resource value to people (Starr 2005, 392) and its loss may also become an incentive for identity entrepreneurship.

All this suggests that any kind of *a priori* theorizing regarding the motives behind national identity entrepreneurship is to be avoided. The motives need to be explored inductively in each of the cases through a careful analysis of the entrepreneurs' actions and narratives in the context of their broader social, political, economic and ideological backgrounds.

Furthermore, in order to fully understand the causes of national identity entrepreneurship we need to look beyond the agent-level factors. While the latter provide us with certain immediate insights into motives for action, structural factors are of utmost importance when trying to understand the broader conditions that enabled and shaped it.

The key importance of drastic social, political or economic transformations in emergence of new ideas and agents that carry these ideas is one of the general themes of constructivist literature (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001, 406). It also runs through other works concerned with social change across various disciplines. For example, social movements theorists have long argued that contentious collective action emerges in response to changes in political opportunities' structure as well as appearance of new threats and incentives, all of

which can be either material or ideational (Tarrow 2011, 7-16; Della Porta and Diani 2006, 33-62). The importance of broad structural transformations has also been emphasized in the literature on norms emergence. In his analysis of the rise of global prohibition regimes for example, Nadelmann (1990) points out the importance of changes in trade volume and the structure of diplomatic relation in late 17th century Europe as well as the assent of the Enlightenment in the emergence of anti-piracy and anti-slavery norm entrepreneurship respectively.

Eric Hobsbawm, an acclaimed historian, observed that the process in which new national “traditions” (defined as social practices that seek to inculcate certain norms and values) are formalized and ritualized, occurs more frequently when social patterns are weakened or destroyed as a result of a rapid and profound transformation. Hobsbawm refers to such points in time as critical junctures (1983, 4). In his classic work on social theory, Anthony Giddens, uses a similar term, critical situation. “Critical situation” refers to a radical disjuncture which threatens or destroys social routines. This kind of a radical rupture in the social routines, Giddens argues, results in important transformations of the affected subjects and often triggers a new identification process (1979, 123-127 and 1984, 61-64). Similarly, scholars working on discourse theory suggest that disruptions in the structures of meaning threaten and undermine identities but at the same time create the foundation for the construction of new identities and enable political subjectivity (Howarth and Stavrakis 2000,

12-14). Applying this theoretical framework to the case of religious populism in Greece advocated by the Greek Church in early 2000s, Stavrakakis (2005) traces its emergence to the widely spread sense of crisis related to Greece's membership in the European Economic Community. Overall, "crisis" as the main cause for the emergence of populist discourses and agents that promote them is one of the dominant tropes in the literature on populism (Moffitt 2015, 190-191) which can also be seen as a particular form of national identity entrepreneurship. Borrowing from Hobsbawm and the broader historical institutionalist literature, I refer to such important transformations as *critical junctures* in analyzing the structural causes of national identity entrepreneurship. While the concept of critical juncture has been defined in multiple ways (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007), the definition I use here is a synthesis of Hobsbawm and the one offered by Soifer (2012) in his exploration of the causal logic of critical junctures. I define critical juncture as a period of significant social change which threatens or destroys social routines and creates both the permissive and the productive conditions for new agency. Permissive conditions stand for the loosening of the constraints imposed by the structure and hence increased capacity for agency, while productive conditions are those aspects of the critical juncture that determine the shape and the content of new forms of agency. This definition of a critical juncture is broad enough I believe, to encompass not only social and discursive disruptions but also economic and political changes that may play a role in emergence of identity entrepreneurship.

Another important point to keep in mind is that the process of social construction is rather complex and the resulting construct may have little in common with the initial interests and motives of actors who triggered it. As Tilly (2005, 211) noted, interactions among parties can alter the stories and symbolic boundaries initially invoked by political entrepreneurs who initiated the process. Legitimation strategies deployed by actors and strategic interactions they engage in, can transform the actors or turn into a focal point around which new actors and identities emerge (Goddard 2010, 36-37). One of the best examples for such a transformation is probably the global anti-whaling regime. Initially driven by the long-term economic interests of the whaling industry to conserve stock, over time the whaling regulation efforts evolved into a prohibitory norm (Nadelmann 1990, 517-519), still opposed by some states but actively advocated by many others, including former whaling countries such as Australia and New Zealand. Or consider the chronologically parallel process that led to the construction of whaling and consumption of whale meat as an integral part of Japan's national culture. Today, the government of Japan and numerous conservative pundits in the country act as national identity entrepreneurs, advocating whaling and whale meat consumption as an integral part of Japan's national tradition. The origins of this "national tradition" however can be traced to postwar efforts of the American occupation authorities aimed at popularizing whale meat as part of its efforts to eradicate widespread malnutrition (Arch 2016 ; Hirata 2005).

The above examples suggest that the socio-political process that results in a certain social construct is not a linear one and that the interests of the actors that contributed to its emergence cannot be simply derived from the existing construct. As Tilly observed, there is no convincing general theory that explains the process by which politically consequential narratives form, gain credibility and transform (2005, 212). I would add that such a theory is probably impossible simply because the factors that shape such processes vary greatly from one case to another. As Tilly argued elsewhere, human affairs are far too complicated to be explained through a limited set of grand laws (Tilly 2004, 9-10). Rather, these processes need to be explored inductively in individual cases through a careful examination of the actors involved, their interests and interactions.

One last question to be considered is related to the factors that result in the social acceptance of a narrative. In her work on Jerusalem and Ireland, Goddard (2010, 37) refers to the elevation of the idea that these territories are indivisible to the level of national identity as a yoking effect. She suggests that yoking occurs when two conditions are met. One is a presence of a powerful actor with links to multiple parts of the society who acts as an identity bridge to connect otherwise disparate social groups. The other condition refers to the legitimization strategy deployed by this actor who must be culturally inventive, combining existing symbols and histories into new legitimization strategies. Unfortunately, Goddard does not unpack these pointers and the exact meaning of cultural inventiveness as well as the most

effective combinations and choices of symbols and histories are not elaborated upon. Here I draw on two distinct but not unrelated bodies of literature to define the conditions for such narrative to become part of the national identity discourse.

One is the social movements literature. When it comes to successful consensus formation or social reception, social mobilization theory points out the importance of “framing.” “Framing” refers to the provision of interpretive packages that make a compelling case for injustice that the movement seeks to correct, but also, like in any identity discourse, distinguish “us” from “them” (Poletta and Jasper 2001, 291). The framing perspective views social movements as signifying agents, engaged in the production and maintaining of meanings in their respective societies. “Framing” refers to this process of signifying or the assignment of particular meanings and interpretations of the event or the situation, which is the object of the movement’s activism or intrinsically related to it (Snow and Benford 1988, 198; Snow 2004). Thus framing is the process of invoking one set of meanings rather than another when communicating the movement’s grievances (Johnston and Oliver 2000, 45). In order to be successful and win attitudinal support, social movements theory argues, “frames” provided by the activists must resonate with the dominant “cultural narratives” (Snow and Benford 1988, 210), or what Klandermans (1988, 175-176) calls as “collective definitions”, dominant in their respective societies.

The other body of literature with direct relevance to social acceptance of certain

narratives is the one on ontological security. In sociology, ontological security is seen as a fundamental prerequisite for individual's ability to exercise agency. In a nutshell, ontological security refers to stability and continuity in the individual's self-identity (Zarakol 2010, 6). Building on sociological work by Anthony Giddens and others, the IR ontological security approach extrapolates the argument to the state level. Thus, in IR, ontological security refers to states' need for a stable cognitive environment, which is achieved by developing a cognitive "cocoon" (or cognitive apparatus) through which they interpret their everyday reality and regularize their social life. Ontological security of the state is maintained through social relations with other states that are interpreted through but also confirm the veracity of state's cognitive apparatus (Mitzen 2006, 342-343). It is also maintained through the narratives about the state as a coherent "self", created by state leaders, or other agents acting on behalf of the state (Steele 2008, 19-20).

The extrapolation of the notion of ontological security to the level of the state or any other collective actor is not without its dangers as it implies that they are capable of a purposive and reflexive agency (McSweeney 1999, 151). If we assume however the existence of national identity as a generally accepted discourse about the nation's "self", we can also treat the nation as if it was an agent with a coherent sense of the "self". What happens then when as a result of internal or external transformations, this construct of the "self" is threatened or undermined? When the accumulation of outcomes that cannot be explained

through the existing cognitive apparatus undermines its validity? This ontological insecurity is addressed through construction and reconstruction of historical symbols, myths, and chosen traumas which either stabilize the existing identity construct, or, alternatively, provide a different story of the collective “self” (Kinvall 2004,763).

While the “framing” literature pays more attention to the purposeful agency of social movements and the ontological security one focuses more on the structures of meaning, both suggest that the social acceptance of a certain narrative depends on its relationship with the dominant discourse. Namely, “yoking effect” is achieved not simply as a result of the cultural inventiveness by the identity bridge actor, but when the narrative this actor advocates either feeds into the dominant identity construct or creates a modified and a more stable version of this construct.

To summarize the above, the analytical framework used in this book treats the construction of a territorial dispute as a complex socio-political process in which national identity entrepreneurs play an important role. National identity entrepreneurs are defined as non-state actors who create and actively promote a certain narrative in which a certain issue or event is linked with the nation and national interest. Causes of such entrepreneurship lie in the interplay of structural and agent-level factors. On the structural level, identity entrepreneurship is most likely to emerge during critical junctures: a period of significant social change which threatens or destroys social routines and creates both the permissive and

the productive conditions for new agency. On the agent level, the motives behind identity entrepreneurship can be either ideational or instrumental and need to be explored empirically in each of the cases by examining the actors and the narratives they advocate in the context of their broader background, interests and ideology. Neither the agent-level motives nor the critical juncture define the shape and content of the process of social construction of the dispute in question. Interactions among parties to the process can alter the narratives, transform the actors and lead to emergence of new actors and identities. The yoking effect in which the construction of a territorial dispute becomes part of the national identity discourse is likely to occur when there is a powerful actor that can reach multiple parts of the society and when the narrative advocated by this actor either resonates with the dominant national identity or, when the latter is severely undermined, provides an alternative vision of the national “self.”

Before concluding this section, I should emphasize, that the main interest of this book is the process of construction of territorial disputes rather than the policy effects of these constructs. Social constructs and foreign policy are no doubt related as the former create a frame of reference through which policy elites are socialized into a particular mode of thinking to interpret the international environment (Tamaki 2010, 15). The relationship between identity and policy however is not in a simple straightforward causal relationship as often suggested by the constructivist literature. Social constructs do set boundaries for

appropriate behavior but rarely do they rise to the level of causal or principled beliefs (Oros 2008, 11). For example, most scholars of Japan would agree that the so-called “nuclear allergy” has been an integral part of Japan’s national identity throughout the postwar decades. This widely shared social construction of nuclear weapons as the ultimate evil and Japan as its victim however did not prevent the Japanese policy makers from conducting a number of feasibility studies looking into the pros and cons of nuclear armament (Hughes 2007; Kase 2001).

All of the empirical chapters do note some of the policy effects of territorial disputes related constructs. Many of these effects however have been already examined elsewhere (e.g., Bukh 2012; Choi SJ 2005; Iwashita 2015; Kimura and Welsh 1998) and I would like to avoid repeating these arguments here. Policy, in one form or another, does feature throughout the book, but my main concern here is with the process of social construction and domestic policies that played a role in shaping it.

Methodology

Each of the chapters is devoted to examining the process of construction of one territorial dispute, analyzing the nature of the main national identity entrepreneurs involved and their claims, the factors behind their entrepreneurship, and the entrepreneurs’ interactions with their respective governments. The first two chapters focus on Japan and the construction of

the Soviet occupied territories today known as the “Northern Territories” and the Takeshima islets currently administered by South Korea. The third chapter is devoted to the “Protect Dokdo” movement in South Korea and the emergence of “Dokdo” as one of the main symbols of the Korean nation. The fourth shifts the focus to “Protect Diaoyutai” (*Baodiao*) movement in Taiwan. Indeed, the state-level importance of dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu/Diaoyutai islands today lies mainly in Japan-China relations, but the chapter explores the initial factors that led to the emergence of *Baodiao*, the narratives that emerged from this movement and its effects on Taiwanese society. Furthermore, Diaoyutai-related activism in China is a relatively new phenomenon and has been already subjected to a number of detailed studies (Chung 2007; Weiss 2014). In this chapter, I also mention, although only in passing, the Japanese right-wing organizations such as the Japanese Youth League that engage in activism on the Japanese side. The territorial dispute is only one of the causes they champion, and their ideology, formation, and actions should be examined within the history of Japanese right-wing activism, a more important task that is beyond the scope of this book.

What binds these cases together besides the obvious—the commonly shared focus on disputed territories and geographical location? One aspect shared by all of the constructs examined here is that they originated in actions of national identity entrepreneurs who were in a contentious relationship with their respective governments. Not surprisingly, in all of the

cases, the narratives advocated by these entrepreneurs were critical of the existing governmental policies related to the territorial dispute in question.

More importantly though, all of the cases of national identity entrepreneurship examined here originated at times that their respective societies were going through some profound social, political or economic transformations. In the cases of the Soviet occupied territories and Takeshima, the first identity entrepreneurs appeared immediately after Japan's defeat in WWII. However, the second wave of Takeshima related entrepreneurship, which culminated in the "Takeshima Day" ordinance occurred during the time of a major political and economic turbulence of the early 2000s, dubbed by Mulgan (2013) as Japan's "failed revolution." "Protect Dokdo" movement in Korea formed in late 1990s, when the country was suffering from the devastating effects of the Asian Financial Crisis. The Taiwanese *Baodiao* emerged in early 1970s, in the midst of the US-PRC rapprochement which had a tremendous impact on ROC's standing in the international society and its relations with the world. As such, all of the cases of national identity entrepreneurship examined here have their roots in critical junctures in their respective societies. I will show that territorial disputes related national identity entrepreneurship was shaped by these critical junctures and emerged, to a large degree, as a response to a perceived failure of the state in tackling the crisis.

Focusing on the most representative national identity entrepreneurs in each of the cases, I use primary sources such as pamphlets, reports, petitions, declarations, educational material,

and similar documents produced by the organizations in question. I also use memoirs of, and, occasionally, interviews with, key individuals. When analyzing the factors that instigated the emergence of entrepreneurship in each case, the relationships between the national identity entrepreneurs and their governments, and other related issues, I make use of the relevant academic literature, governmental sources, and newspaper and journal articles. Most of the national identity entrepreneurs examined here are either individuals or civic groups, but in some cases, I also look into campaigns by regional governments which some may find as somewhat puzzling. However, as the literature on activism in Japan (e.g., Steiner 1980; Kamimura 2001; Muramatsu 2010) has shown, local governments should be seen as actors in their own right, to a degree independent of other levels of the state, who can play an important role both as leaders of social change and as intermediaries between civil society and the central government. As Yeo's (2011, 63-85) work demonstrates, for example, an analysis of activism against US military bases in Japan's Okinawa would be impossible without accounting for the role of the prefectural governors.

Within each of the cases I engage in an interpretative analysis of the narratives advocated by the identity entrepreneurs. By locating the actors, their stories and arguments in the broader social, ideological and economic context, I analyze the interplay of the agent level and the structural factors in spurring their entrepreneurship and the aim of the narratives they created and advocated. This approach is not dissimilar to the concept of "thick

description” introduced to social disciplines by Clifford Geertz (1973). Similarly to Geertz, I believe that causes and meanings of a similar act may differ depending on their social (broadly defined) context and circumstances and it is important to go beyond the level of surface appearances to fully understand it.

Given meanings are never static or fixed but evolve over time, historicity is a fundamental part of any constructivist analysis. As Pouliot has put it, “to say that X is socially constructed means that X is neither natural nor inevitable: X is historical” (2007, 367). Each of the chapters therefore provides a diachronic narrative that traces the historical development of the social constructions of disputes in question and analyzes the social processes that shaped these developments. My goal here is not to establish positivist causality between certain variables but to understand the historical evolution of meanings associated with disputed territories and the social contexts in which they evolved.

Why study territorial disputes-related national identity entrepreneurship?

My main goal in writing this book is to understand the process of social construction of disputed territories and more generally, of national identities. Tracing the process initiated by national identity entrepreneurs rather than focusing on the final construct, enables us to explore the causes of such campaigns, the meanings attached to disputed territory, and the factors that shaped the construction of these territories as markers of national identity. These

constructs are politically consequential and have important ramifications for bilateral relations of the parties to the dispute.

In this book I also seek to shed new light on the societies and the domestic politics of the disputes in question. In the Introduction to the edited volume on invented traditions, Hobsbawm noted that national traditions and their invention are “important symptoms and therefore indicators of problems which otherwise may not be recognized, and developments, which are otherwise, difficult to identify and to date” (1983, 12). Same, I believe, can be said about national identity entrepreneurship and the narratives created by these entrepreneurs. In other words, a focus on non-state actors’ engagement in territorial disputes provides us with a particular angle to study the societies within which they operate and to explore the tensions, contradictions and conflicts that exist within these social realms and trigger identity entrepreneurship.

A focus on non-state actors also helps us to overcome the state-centrism in the study of territorial disputes and to present a different story of the disputes in question. This story — the story of the people who are affected, subjectively or objectively, by the disputes in question, or, alternatively, use the dispute for certain gains — usually remains obscured when the importance of a disputed territory is construed as residing solely in international relations.

Plan of the Book

The following chapter analyzes national identity entrepreneurship related to Japan's territories occupied by the Soviet Union in the waning days of WWII in Asia, and traces the transformation of the narrative. It argues that in its early phase the appeal to the nation was instrumental—the main goal of the grassroots entrepreneurs who submitted petitions and organized rallies demanding the return of the territories was alleviation of their economic conditions. The defeat and subsequent developments created both the productive and the permissive conditions for this entrepreneurship. The permissive conditions created by this critical juncture were Japan's loss of sovereignty and the subsequent democratic reforms introduced by the Occupation authorities. The severance of a sub-regional economic zone that encompassed Eastern Hokkaido and parts of the territories that came under the Soviet occupation was the main productive condition that shaped the content of national identity entrepreneurship. Based on various data on the economic and social conditions of the activists prior to and in the aftermath of the defeat, memoirs of activists, and documents produced by the groups that formed the movement for the return of Soviet occupied territories, I show that their campaign was driven mostly by a sense of economic deprivation. The second part of the chapter analyzes Hokkaido Prefecture's embracement of the irredentist cause. It argues that for the prefectural Governor the territorial cause and the appeals to the nation were also instrumental and utilized as means to delegitimize the central government in

the context of domestic rivalry between the ruling conservatives and the socialists. The final part analyzes Tokyo's response to this campaign. It shows that, while Japan's stance on the territorial dispute with the Soviet Union was shaped mostly by Cold War considerations, the central government adopted certain measures aimed at addressing the economic plight of those affected by the dispute. I conclude the chapter by analyzing the factors behind the government's cooptation of the movement from the late 1960s onwards and trace the related transformations of the narrative from mainly economic into a nation-centered one.

Chapter 2 traces the emergence and transformation of Takeshima related campaign in Shimane Prefecture from the early postwar days until the passage of the "Takeshima Day" ordinance in 2005. To a certain extent, the structural conditions that gave rise to this campaign were similar to those identified in the first chapter. However, I also show that the changes in the unique structure of economic rights in Takeshima and its surrounding waters in the pre-1945 period created the productive conditions for national identity entrepreneurship in which the Shimane prefectural authorities became the main advocates of the islets' return. The chapter continues by examining the transformation of Takeshima from a perceived economic asset into a symbol of injustice vis-à-vis Tokyo in the aftermath of the normalization of Japan's relations with South Korea in 1965. The second part of the chapter analyzes the process that led to the passage of the prefectural "Takeshima Day" ordinance in 2005. Here, I explore the structural factors that caused Shimane's Prefectural Assembly to

rebel against the central government. I argue that, while the 1999 Fisheries Agreement between Japan and Korea played a certain role in enhancing the sense of frustration among Shimane's fishermen and political elites, it was the de-centralization and intra-party reforms pursued by then-Prime Minister Koizumi that played a decisive role in instigating a "coup" by prefectural lawmakers against Tokyo. In other words, "Takeshima Day" ordinance was largely a response to Koizumi's reforms and the pursuit of the Takeshima cause was instrumental in voicing the prefectural discontent. The chapter concludes by reviewing the central government's response to Takeshima-related demands and shows that the intense media and public attention to the dispute in the aftermath of the "Takeshima Day" ordinance brought about certain symbolic measures adopted by the central government.

Chapter 3 moves to South Korea and traces the development of "Protect Dokdo" movement, which formed in late 1990s. Through analyzing the Dokdo related narrative voiced by activists and juxtaposing it with the ideas advocated by Korea's democratization movement, I demonstrate the ideological proximity between the two movements. I argue that the "Protect Dokdo" movement whose members had no vested interests in the islets was an attempt to reconstruct Korean national identity in the aftermath of democratization. I argue that the critique of the government and the historical narrative proposed by the activists was shaped largely by the post-democratization socio-political and economic transformations accentuated by the devastating effects of the Asian Financial Crisis. The second part of the

chapter analyzes the Korean government's response to the movement and the gradual institutionalization of the Dokdo issue. I trace the government's embrace of the "Protect Dokdo" narrative and partial implementation of the movement's demands to a number of factors that include the mainstreaming of Takeshima in Japan but also to economic concerns, the most important of which being the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US, strongly opposed by the Korean civil society. I also show that the government's policy was not limited to accommodation of the movement's demands. Rather, it involved measures aimed at reshaping the movement's narrative through grants and close cooperation with certain groups in the movement. The chapter concludes by examining the effects of the government's cooptation, as well as other political and socio-economic developments in post-2005 Korea, on the movement's demands and the structure of its narrative. I show that while the movement maintained its ideational character, the narrative has gone through a number of important transformations. Both the criticism of the government and the people/elite dichotomy that dominated the discourse of the early "Protect Dokdo" organizations has disappeared. In contrast, through the "othering" of Japan, the narrative advocated by the movement today responds to contemporary issues in the Korean society and presents a construct of the nation as a socially, politically, and economically homogenous subject.

Chapter 4 explores the Taiwanese *Baodiao* movement focusing mostly on the 1970-72 demonstrations by Taiwanese students in the US and Taiwan. The immediate triggers for the

rise of the movement were the discovery of oil deposits in the vicinity of the Senkaku/Diaoyu/Diaoyutai islets in 1969, and the US decision to return them to Japan as part of Okinawa. In this chapter, however, I show that the main motives that drove the movement were ideational and the potential economic benefits associated with the possession of the islands had little to do with its formation and narrative. I argue that the movement was to a large extent a product of two critical junctures: one was the “long 1960s” in the US and the other was the collapse of the nationalist ideology of the Kuomintang (KMT) brought about by the US-China rapprochement. The first part of the chapter analyzes the interplay of the ideas advocated by the radical left on US campuses and the collapse of KMT nationalist mythology in the formation of the *Baodiao* and its self-positioning as the reincarnation of the May 4th Movement. The chapter continues by examining the response of both the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC) governments to the movement, the attempts by the former to use its members as agents of influence, and measures by the latter to pacify and suppress the activists. After examining the broader effects of the *Baodiao* on domestic politics and its relationship with the democratization movement, I briefly examine the post-1990s transformation of *Baodiao* into an actor in cross-strait politics.

The last chapter summarizes the findings of this book. It draws a number of conclusions regarding the factors that spur the emergence of territorial disputes-related national identity entrepreneurship, and analyzes the factors that account for the difference in

the social reception of the narratives in the respective societies. It also outlines the implications of these case studies for our understanding of the social construction of disputed territory as well as the broader constructivist IR literature on national identity.