Rational Emotions:

The Role of Identity and Emotions in Dokdo/Takeshima Dispute between South Korea and Japan

Min Seon Ku
Yonsei University

August 2015

Rational Emotions:

The Role of Identity and Emotions in Dokdo/Takeshima Dispute between South Korea and Japan

Min Seon Ku

Yonsei University

Abstract

This paper looks at the role of emotions in international relations by linking it to identity. It blurs the distinction between rationality and emotions and explains emotional action by altering the equation of desire (interests) + belief (identity) = action. There are two parts to the argument. First, it argues that identities trigger specific emotions, making the attribution of emotional action as "irrational" obsolete. Second, an emotion lingers because it gets institutionalized. By combining the sociological approach to emotions and constructivist theory of international relations, it explains the source of the Korean public's anger toward Japan's actions and its persistence in the case of Dokdo/Takeshima territorial-historical dispute. It concludes by providing important implications for the study of conflicts and tensions in international relations by showing how identity clash and the anger generated adversely affect inter-state relations.

Keywords: identity, historical and territorial disputes, Korea-Japan relations, emotions, security-economy-identity nexus

1. Introduction: The Unravelling of Boundary between Rationality and Emotions in IR

This paper specifies the reason why a general public feel angry toward another country, why the anger persists for a long time, and how that affects international relations. There are two parts to the argument. First, it argues that identities trigger specific emotions which makes attributing emotional reaction as irrational obsolete. Second, an emotion lingers because it gets institutionalized. In making this argument, it considers the factor of emotions which had been neglected in the field of International Relations (IR) due to the hitherto dichotomy between rationality and emotions and the assumption of rational choice. Under the rational choice theory, action is a product of desire (interests) and belief (identity). This action, however, entails emotions which create additional repercussions in inter-state relations. Therefore, I identify the dichotomy between emotions and rationality or reason as the conventional boundary in IR that ought to be unraveled. It attacks the conventional assumption of rationality in IR theories by including emotions to explain conflicts. In essence, this paper argues that identity produces emotional reaction which is rational from the standpoint of the emotional party.

The case of the historical and territorial dispute between Korea and Japan over Dokdo/Takeshima in the post-Cold War era is selected to show that identity clash triggers angry reaction in Korea toward Japan which seems irrational. This issue was selected over others for two reasons. First, anger was expressed through aggressive protest especially in 2005 which were unprecedented in other historical disputes like the Yasukuni shrine visits or comfort women which stems more from a sense of justice rather than anger as shown by the endless demands for apology.[1] Studies reveal that sense of justice is caused by reason and not emotion, and thus the Dokdo/Takeshima case serves to be a better case study in this analysis. Second, recent public opinion surveys conducted by East Asia Institute (EAI) and Genron NPO reveal Koreans singling out the territorial disputes as the greatest obstacle in improving bilateral ties.[2] It must also be clarified that Dokdo/Takeshima dispute for Koreans is primarily historical and secondarily territorial.[3]

This paper incorporates the study of emotions from sociology, social psychology, and IR to explain why labelling the Korean public reaction to Japan's territorial claims "irrational" is irrelevant. By incorporating emotions into constructivism, identity is shown to produce emotional reaction.

The outline of this paper is as follows. The next section reviews existing literature on emotions in IR. The third part looks at emotions and identity, followed by the identity theory of emotions which links identity and emotions. The fifth section looks at how Koreans' anger has been prolonged by the state through unintentional institutionalization. The last section offers possible solutions to the pacification of Korean anger and the conclusion.

2. Literature Review: Locating Emotions in Existing IR Scholarship

The "emotional" or "affective" turn in IR took place since the turn of the millennium as scholars located emotions at the "very heart of political reasoning."[4] Several emotions have been studied – fear, trust, humiliation, friendship, solidarity[5] but most literature remain limited to Middle East region such as

[1] Jann Ingmire, "Brain scans link concern for justice with reason, not emotion," UChicago News, March 27,2014, http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2014/03/27/brain-scans-link-concern-justice-reason-not-emotion#sthash.5e1xoyIb.dpuf

[2] Genron NPO and East Asia Institute (EAI), *The Joint Study on Korea-Japan Public Opinion Poll*. May 2013, p. 27*; Ibid*, 2014, p.9; *Ibid*, 2015, p. 8.

[3] Chinsoo Bae, "Territorial Issue in the Context of Colonial History and International Politics: The Dokdo Issue between Korea and Japan," The Journal of East Asian Affairs. 26(1) (2012): 19-51.

[4] Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison. "Theorizing Emotions in World Politics." *International Theory*. 6(3). (2014): 491-514.

[5] Michael Torsten, "Time to get emotional: Phronetic Reflections on the Concept of Trust in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations*. 19(4) (2012) : 869-890; Oded Lowenheim, and Gadi Heimann. "Revenge in International Politics." *Security Studies*. 17 (2008):

Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Islamic extremists' hatred towards the U.S especially after the 9/11 attacks.[6]

More recent literature on emotions in IR show attempts of theorization, as shown by the November 2014 issue of International Theory journal which gathered pioneering scholars working with emotions in IR for a special issue. While there are existing concepts in IR that are related to emotions - such as suspicion, misperception, uncertainty, trust, nationalism, and anti-foreign sentiments, scholars have tended to use these concepts as they are. For example, Randall Schweller attempted to theorize nationalism in IR by incorporating it into the theory of neo-classical realism as a domestic variable to explain Chinese assertiveness.[7] His conceptualization of nationalism, however, excludes any emotional dimension as it is defined as "assertive foreign policies,"[8] overlooking the role of emotions.

A more formal attempt to theorize emotions in IR was attempted by Andrew A.G. Ross who theorizes emotions as "circulations of affect" but he adds that politics of emotion is a messy topic to research on.[9] This view is shared by other scholars who pinpoint at the "internal and seemingly elusive nature" of emotions that makes it so difficult to study.[10] Nevertheless, the difficulty of studying emotions in IR should not impede further exploration into the topic.

At this point, it is necessary to clarify the differences between nationalism and emotions. Nationalism and anti-foreign phenomena like anti-Americanism is more about action and attitude of people and hence it glosses over specific emotions.[11] For instance, Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane define anti-Americanism as a "psychological tendency to hold negative views" of the U.S. and it comprises cognitive, emotional, and normative elements.[12] Specific emotions accompany these attitudes

---

685-724; Saurette, Paul. "You Dissin Me? Humiliation and Post 9/11 Global Politics." *Review of International Studies.* 26. (2006): 495-522; Moisi, Dominique. *The Geopolitics of Emotion: How Cultures of Fear, Humiliation, and Hope are Reshaping the World*. New York: Anchor Books, 2010.

[6] Saurette, 2006; Andrew A.G. Ross, "Why They Don't Hate Us: Emotion, Agency and the Politics of 'Anti-Americanism," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39(1) 2010,109–125 ; Moisi, 2010; TY Solomon, "'I wasn't angry, because I couldn't believe it was happening': Affect and discourse in responses to 9/11. *Review of International Studies*, 38, (2012) pp 907-928; Christopher L. Schilling, *Emotional State Theory*. ePUb: Lexington Books, 2015; Lowenheim and Heimann 2008; Fattah, Khaled and K.M. Fierke. "A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East." *European Journal of International Relations*. 15(1). (2009): 67-93.

[7] Randall. Schweller, "China's Aspirations and the Clash of Nationalisms in East Asia – A Neoclassical Realist Examination." *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*. 23 (2), (2014):1-40.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Andrew Ross, *Mixed Emotions: Beyond Fear and Hatred in International Conflict*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014, P. 16.

[10] Bleiker and Hutchison, (2014).

[11] Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. "Nationalism." Accessed: July 15, 2015. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/

[12] Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane, Anti-Americanisms in World Politics, New York: Cornell University Press: 2007, p. 12.

especially when the source of nationalism is a specific Other. Identifying the specific emotion is important because it helps us to better understand its source and alleviation. Of course, people could feel different emotions like fear and hatred at the same time when they are nationalistic. However, singling out an emotion in a study is necessary to specify the factors contributing to the emergence and expression of that emotion.[13]

The Dokdo/Takeshima dispute remains the longest-running and most perennial bilateral issue in Korean-Japanese relations. The source of escalation in the dispute seems to be largely attributable to two factors. One is that the dispute is a victim of domestic politics in both countries: especially in the case of South Korea, democratization in 1987 contributed to the rise in number of protests.[14] Second, identity plays a crucial role in worsening bilateral ties.[15] However, this literature glosses over the link between identity clash and bilateral conflict. Both arguments also fail to show that domestic politics feed identity clash which hinders inter-state cooperation. They assume that the public is passive and easily incited by politics. In other words, the role of the public in escalating tensions because of identity clash is missing in existing literature.

What is unique about Koreans' anti-Japanese sentiments is that anti-Japanese narratives and protests are less state-led than spontaneous public reaction. In the post-Cold War era, bilateral (and regional) economic interdependence and socio-cultural exchange were not visibly disturbed by occasional flare-ups over history but people's negative opinion towards each other remains. Negative opinion toward each other as represented by public polls in Korea and Japan reveals not only a divorce between politics and economics but also that between the government and the public. Hence, not only has socio-economic cooperation failed to spill over to the security realm, but government-level cooperation has also not trickled down to the public level.

By combining the micro and macro-level approaches to emotions, this paper attempts to theorize emotions in IR by showing how emotions at public level affect international relations using the case of Koreans' anger toward Japan over territorial claims in Dokdo/Takeshima. Here, the "public" refers to people not in the bureaucracy or directly involved in policy-making process. It borrows the definition

---

[13] Randall Calhoun, "Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention," in Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements, Jeff Goodwin, James M. Japser, and Francesca Polletta (eds.), Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001, 52-53.

[14] Sung-jae Choi "The Politics of the Dokdo Issue." *Journal of East Asian Studies*. 5 (2005): 465-494; Youngshik Bong, "Built to Last: the Dokdo Territorial Controversy. The Baseline Conditions in Domestic Politics and International Security of Japan and South Korea," *Memory Studies*, 6(2), (2013): 191-203.

[15] Chung in Moon and Chun-fu Li. "Reactive Nationalism and South Korea's Foreign Policy on China and Japan: A Comparative Analysis." *Pacific Focus*. XXV(3) (2010): 331-355.; Ji young Kim, "Rethinking the Role of Identity Factors: the History Problem and the Japan-South Korea Security Relationship in the Post-Cold War Period." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*. (2015) doi:10.1093/irap/lcv007

from Jurgen Habermas, who defines "public sphere" as a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed. Individuals in the public sphere have no business or professional interests, and are not constrained legally by state bureaucracy.[16] Hence, the public in this paper includes civil society groups, interest groups, and non-governmental groups.

3. Emotions and Identity

Identity

National identity is a common topic in politics. This paper, however, adds the sociological approach to emotions into accounting for the emotional effects of national identity in IR. Identity is a key concept in Alexander Wendt's Constructivism. He defines it as a "property of intentional actors that generates motivational and behavioral dispositions."[17] This identity is determined by an actor's self-understandings whose meaning depends on how other actors represent that actor. As Wendt points out, an entity has many identities operating at the same time which are hierarchical. He discusses four kinds: personal or corporate, type, role, and collective. His thesis in the Social Theory of International Politics is based on state identity being personal or corporate identities which make actors "distinct" entities.[18] "Type" identity is related to categorizing certain characteristics like appearance or values.[19] Role identity, as opposed to pre-social type identity, is not innate but exists only in relation to Others.[20] Lastly, collective identity involves "identification" which blurs the distinction between Self and Other.[21]

No entity has a single identity. In the case of South Korea, I argue that the government and the public perceive the Korean identity differently in relation to Japan: the government based on personal or corporate identity and the public, role identity. This is logical considering that today's governments function on the assumption that every state in the modern international system is equal and they conduct diplomacy according to their own distinctive identities. For example, the South Korean government has been guided by its "middle power" identity in both its domestic and general foreign policies.

The Korean public, on the other hand, prioritizes role identity in Korea-Japan relations and perceives Korea as not having been completely "liberated" from Japanese militarism or aggression in its relation with Japan (especially the Japanese elites) because of collective memory of Japanese colonial rule. Such memory distorts Koreans' perception towards Japan's actions and behavior as not acknowledging Korea

---

[16] Jurgen Habermas, Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," New German Critique, 3, 1974, pp. 49-55.
[17] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 224.
[18] *Ibid*, pp. 224-225.
[19] *Ibid*, p. 225.
[20] *Ibid*, p. 227.
[21] *Ibid*, p. 229.

as an independent, sovereign state. Role identity in international politics requires states to fulfill their "roles." In Korean-Japanese relations, Koreans remember the colonial past and perceive its role to that consistent with a modern state. Its identity as a modern state in the international system has to be verified by Japan. Koreans' perception of the process of verification entails Japan apologizing for denying Korea's nationhood in 1910 and with regards to Dokdo/Takeshima specifically, Japan's relinquishing territorial claims would be a verification of Korea's identity as a sovereign state. Thus, the Korean public became sensitive towards Japan's actions in historical and territorial disputes and looks for any Japanese narratives and actions that negate Korea's sovereign status.

Emotions

The definition of emotions in IR is several and different.[22] The commonality among them, however, is that emotions are inter-subjective and social. This way, emotions matter in international politics because just as identities, ideas, and interests are intersubjective in Constructivism, emotions are not given and are an impetus in international relations.

In the case of Korea's emotions towards Japan since the 1990s, anger ('*bunno'* in Korean) seems to be more predominant than fear. Fear of Japan was prevalent especially right after the signing of the 1965 Basic Agreement when Korea and Japan normalized their relations. Such emotion was a product of wound from colonialism still fresh in many people's memory at the time of normalization as many feared the influx of Japanese capital into the country again.[23] This fearful sentiment is rarely observed today. Although South Korea still lags behind Japan in terms of economic and cultural power, the narrowing gap in economic and soft power especially since 2000s have raised Korea's confidence in relations to Japan. [24]

Moreover, Korea's fear of Japan is unfounded considering the security alliances both countries have with the U.S. as well as Article 9 of Japan's Peace Constitution; both serve to restrain Japan from initiating military action against Korea. Therefore, Koreans' reaction over Japan's territorial claims is less about fear than anger.

Anger is defined as "an emotional reaction to a perceived internal or external provocation"[25] and occurs when one is prevented from doing what he or she wants.[26] It remains understudied in politics

---

[22] For example, see Mercer (2014) and Crawford (2014).

[23] David C. Cole and Princeton N. Lyman, "The Climax of Dissent," in *Korean Development: The Interplay of Politics and Economics*, Harvard University Press, 2013. pp. 106 – 110.

[24] Weekly Trade, "America's Favorability toward Korea at Record High," October 27, 2014, http://weeklytrade.co.kr/news/view.html?section=1&category=136&item=&no=1943; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan, "2014 U.S. Poll on Opinions toward Japan," November 7, 2014, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/survey/.

[25] Maite Garaigordobil, " Feelings of Anger: Sex Differences, Correlations with Behavioral-Cognitive Variables and Predictors of Anger Expression in Adolescence," Psychology of Anger: Symptoms, Causes, and Coping (James P. Welty), 2011, p. 52.

[26] C.E. Izard, *The Psychology of Emotions*. New York: Plenum Press, 1991.

perhaps due to majority views of anger as a 'barbaric' feature. Nevertheless, today we observe anger in all parts of the world, ranging from individuals who self-immolate in Uighur, commit suicide terrorism in the Middle East, to groups in Greece demonstrating against financial austerity measures. Anger has also played a significant role in motivating social movements that seek social justice.[27] Thus it remains a dynamic force in world politics.

The Korean public's anger toward Japan is unique in terms of frequency and longevity. It is common to see the term 'anger' (*bunno*) used in the media to describe the general public sentiment towards Japan. Koreans' protests against Japan's territorial claims have taken place almost every year since 1999. Bodily expressions were also observed on many occasions, the 2005 national-wide protests against the designation of Takeshima Day by the Shimane Prefecture in Japan being the most attention-grabbing actions.

4. Connecting the Dots between Identity and Emotions: The Identity Theory of Emotions

Alexander Wendt's constructivism stops short in explaining how identity plays out in triggering certain action. He emphasizes the importance of interests and identities in influencing each other and their mutual importance results in action.[28] The sociological approach to emotions could enter this picture by adding emotions into the resulting action. Doing so broadens the scope of 'action' in the rationality equation (desire + belief = action) as it includes emotions. This notion is not radical if we consider Albert Hirschman's argument that interests, or desire, and passion are inherently the same. [29]

In the sociology of emotions, an identity is defined as "a set of meanings that individuals apply to themselves."[30] There are three broad sources of emotions: identity theory, exchange theory, and justice theory. Exchange theory of emotions conceptualizes the role of emotions in exchange relations. The idea of the theory of social commitments is that different emotions are produced depending on the level of commitment to a task, the success of a task, and the level of control on individuals in a group.[31] Finally, in the justice theory of emotions, the more just the procedure and distribution are, the more positive emotions are.[32] Of these three theories, the identity theory could supplement existing literature[33] on the

---

[27] Jeff Goodwin,, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta. *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2001.
[28] Wendt, (1999) p. 231.
[29] Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*, Princeton University Press, 2013.
[30] Jan E. Stets, "Current Emotion Research in Sociology: Advances in the Discipline." *Emotion Review*. 4(3) (2012): 326-334.
[31] *Ibid*, pp. 327-328.
[32] *Ibid*, p.328.

problem of identity in Korean-Japanese relations by clarifying how and why identity could be problematic for inter-state relations.

The identity theory focuses on the self as being composed of multiple identities. There are three types of identities: social, role, and person, which are similar to Wendt's four kinds of identities. Social identities approach refers to identities that individuals apply to themselves as members of different groups. Social identity theory (SIT) posits that conflicts between groups break out as groups discriminate between the "ingroup" and "outgroups."[34] This approach has been applied in a recent study which showed statistically that Koreans' closed identity contributes to anti-Japanese sentiments.[35] However, it is unclear if this same exclusivity in Korean identity is Japan-specific or applies to all other non-Koreans as well.

The identity theory of emotions is premised on the idea that individuals seek verification of their identity-defining meanings and identity standard. "Identity verification" occurs when one perceives Others regarding the Self in the same way as one perceives self.[36] Positive emotions emerge when identity verification occurs while negative ones emerge when verification fails and people fall short of the identity standard. Sociologists have narrowed the research on emotions to specific emotions in the identity verification process.[37] Anger is felt when "external attribution" does not occur: an external source that influences and shapes the nature of identity meanings does not verify an identity. If the source of an identity is internal ("internal attribution") and the identity is not verified by Self, sadness may occur. In social psychology however, identity meaning is derived more from Other than Self.[38]

Power and status considerations also influence emotions. If the external source that is responsible for verifying one's identity is more powerful than Self, the latter would feel fear when verification fails. The opposite would result in rage.[39] Thus, anger seems to be generated by a feeling of superiority as well.

Transposing this individual-level anger to the group level explains why Koreans' anger toward Japan's territorial claims over Dokdo/Takeshima. Its source lies in Koreans' perception of Japan not verifying Korea's identity as an equal sovereign state. It is also influenced by Koreans' collective memory of Japan's annexation of Korea which began since 1876. This collective memory can be observed from

---

[33] Brad Glosserman and Scott A. Snyder, "The Japan-South Korea Identity Clash: East Asian Security and the United States, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015; Gilbert Rozman, Misunderstanding Asia: International Relations Theory and Asian Studies Over Half a Century, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
[34] Jacques E.C. Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions, and Foreign Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.
[35] Jongho Choi, Han-Wool Jeong, and Heon Joo Jung, "An Empirical Study of South Korean Attitude toward Japan: Japan's Military Threat, Economic Cooperation and Identity," Journal of International Politics, 19(1) (2014): 41-76.
[36] Stets, (2012) p. 327.
[37] Jan E Stets,. & P.J. Burke. "New Directions in Identity Control Theory." *Advances in Group Processes.* 22 (2005): 43-64.
[38] Jan E. Stets and Alicia D. Cast, "Resources and Identity Verification from an Identity Theory Perspective," Sociological Perspectives, 50(4), 2007, pp. 517-543.
[39] Stets, (2012) p. 327.

Korean protesters accusing Japan of being "militarist" (*jegukjuyi*) and obsessed with "plundering" Dokdo/Takeshima from Korea.[40]Although emotion happens in biological bodies (individuals), it can be shared in the Korean society through shared culture, interaction, contagion, and common interest, resulting in group anger and protests.[41] In terms of power consideration, Korea-Japan relations is unique as Koreans do not "fear" Japan despite the latter being more powerful in economic and soft power terms. The ideational factor in Wendt's constructivism plays a role here since materialism alone does not determine Korea's perception of Japan's power. Koreans' idea of its history of relations with Japan going back to antiquity shaped its "superiority" over Japan.

One has to note that a problem emerges here as the mechanism of "revenge" seems to be operating in Korea-Japan relations. According to Oded Lowenheim and Gadi Heimann, whether a state takes revenge depends on three variables: how much a state emotionally experiences harm as morally outrageous, the extent of humiliation, and finally, the degree of institutionalization of retaliation.[42] I argue that Koreans' anger is an expression of revenge against Japan for the colonial rule. Although Japan claims to have resolved all past issues through a package of grants and loans worth 800 million dollars when the two normalized relations in 1965, Koreans today still deny this as an apology for several reasons. They include Japan's denial in recognizing South Korea as a victor country in the Second World War (and hence implying that Japan was never defeated by Korea), and the 800 million dollars package was not paid as part of war reparations (again denying Korea's insistence that Japan was defeated). Moreover, Koreans today still think that Japan has not paid "back" enough for issues like sexual slavery system (also known as "comfort women" system) instituted during the Second World War because this issue was neither brought up nor negotiated during the normalization talks. Therefore, Koreans' rage toward Japan seems to operate as a substitute for the use of force to take revenge, since the actual use of force between South Korea and Japan is not only costly but unthinkable.

In essence, Koreans' insistence Japan's verifying the former's identity as a sovereign state is part of Korea's revenge against Japan's colonial rule. As Koreans seek compensation and apology from Japan that is proportionate to the suffering during the three-decade-long colonial rule, Koreans' threshold for Japan's verification of the former's identity becomes high – they not only demand an apology, but in the case of Dokdo/Takeshima dispute, they want Japan to give up asserting claims over the islands. Thus, verification of Korean identity is also dichotomous.

---

[40] SBS, "'Militarist Japan Plunders Dokdo,' Criticisms Against Takeshima Day," February 22, 2015, http://sbsfune.sbs.co.kr/news/news_content.jsp?article_id=E10006336106 ; Genron NPO and EAI, (2014), p, 7; Gen ron NPO and EAI (2015), p. 6.

[41] Mercer, (2014).

[42] Lowenheim and Heimann, (2008).

The climax of Koreans' anger and desire for revenge against Japan over Dokdo/Takeshima was seen in the 2005 nationwide protests when a man self-immolated and a mother and a son cut off their fingers in protest against the designation of "Takeshima Day" by Shimane prefectural assembly in March 2005. Such bodily self-sacrifices become "acts of speech" that conveys political meaning [43] and have "redemptive" purposes.[44] In this case, they serve to get back Korea's statehood and its higher "status" that were lost in 1910.

The clamor for Korea's identity to be verified by Japan - which is a contrast from how Japan viewed Korea as of 'lower' status before and during the colonial period[45] – also implies Korea's search for ontological security, or the security of the self.[46] Therefore, Korea's ontological security in relations to Japan could be achieved once Korea is recognized by Japan as an independent sovereign state. Gaining this recognition would be equivalent to taking revenge against Japan from Koreans' standpoint of view.

5. Unintentional "Institutionalization" of Anger in Dokdo/Takeshima Dispute

The past four administrations in South Korea between 1993 and 2012 kept a low-key position by claiming that no dispute exists between Korea and Japan over Dokdo/Takeshima. Thus far it has only reacted to Japan's claims, with the exception of the issuance of Dokdo postage stamps in 2004 and President Lee Myung-bak's visit to the disputed islands in 2012. All administrations have touted the need to overcome the past in order for Korean-Japanese relations to be "future-oriented" (*miraejihyang*), indicating the need for a more cool-headed manner in handling Korea's relations with Japan.

In contrast, the Korean public has been demanding the government to take more aggressive reactions against Japan's "provocations" and they themselves have taken it to the streets every year to protest against Japan's claims over the island. Protests against Japan's assertions have taken place every year since 2001, implying that anger in the form of protests has become a normal reaction in Korea. If the state sought to institutionalize anger toward Japan, it would have taken a more aggressive stance and response toward Japan in a consistent manner. Instead, the South Korean government has always called for composed manner of resolving the territorial and historical disputes but most of the time such calls go unheeded especially by civic interest groups.

---

[43] K.M. Fierke, *Political Self-Sacrifice: Agency, Body and Emotion in International Relations*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 229.
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] Taku Tamaki, *Deconstructing Japan's Image of South Korea: Identity in Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
[46] Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations*, 12 (3), 2006, pp. 341-370.

If so, what could explain Koreans' persistent anger towards Japan whenever Japan makes territorial claims? Existing literature shows that the politicization of the Dokdo/Takeshima issue is especially perspicuous during the end of a presidential term. This implies that identity among Koreans plays an independent role in affecting international relations. The second part of my argument is that anger has been "institutionalized" unintentionally by the South Korean government as it asserts its territorial claims peacefully, resulting in the embeddedness of Dokdo/Takeshima in Korean identity. This does not mean that other means such as the media plays no role at all. Japan also contributes to Koreans' anger as it provokes Koreans by making territorial claims consistently. For example, the Japanese Defense White Paper has included Dokdo/Takeshima as a dispute every year since 2005. The Japanese central government has shown increasing support for the Shimane Prefecture's commemoration of "Takeshima Day" by sending high-level officials to the event for past three years consecutively. The Korean public's anger regarding Japan's territorial claims, however, should not be deduced from protests only as episodic expression of anger assumes that the emotion has remained latent. What I want to argue instead is that seemingly "peaceful" domestic measures to assert territorial claims bring about less peaceful inter-state relations unintentionally through institutionalization of anger.

This paper points to another unlikely source that prolongs the anger – unintentional institutionalization of anger by the Korean government. The process of "institutionalization" has been used by scholars like Neta Crawford to explain how specific emotions like fear become routinized through practices and procedures and affect policies.[47] When institutionalized, the emotions structure knowledge and over time, make it harder to resort to alternative and creative solutions. In essence, the government's "peaceful" measures regarding Dokdo/Takeshima dispute backfires by cementing Korea's identity in relation with Japan with the islands. The government's passive stance, however, is a result of legal requirements as well as pragmatic interests.

First, international law requires South Korea to exercise "effective control" over Dokdo/Takeshima in order to assert territorial claims.[48] Second, other interests deriving from economic interdependence between the two countries led to Korea de-escalating its territorial dispute with Japan that surfaced several times between 1950s and 2005.[49]

Precedent cases at the International Court of Justice defined effective control as "continuous and peaceful display" of sovereignty.[50] This broad definition allows the South Korean government to take any

[47] Crawford, (2014) p.547
[48] Young-su Kim, "Judicial Precedent and Historical Evidence about Effective Control of Dokdo," *Dokdo Studies*, 10, 2011, pp. 85-113.
[49] Min Gyo Koo, *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, New York: Springer: 2009.
[50] *Ibid*, P. 90

measures as long as they are constant and peaceful. However, the second element ("peaceful") has brought less than desirable consequences by symbolizing Dokdo as part of Korean national identity which fuels anger among the Korean public. The government has unintentionally fed anger into Koreans through three types of peaceful measures which links Dokdo/Takeshima with Korean identity.

First, the government has allowed the public to access the islands since June 1999. In March 2005, following the designation of 'Takeshima Day' by Shimane Prefecture, the policy changed from a system of approval to that of declaration. Since then, the government has gradually expanded the number of people who could visit the islands. Such visits influence national identity especially when the site of visit is related to nationhood.[51] The 'open door' policy by the Korean government has allowed more Koreans to 'experience' Dokdo/Takeshima through such visits and increased the visibility of the territorial dispute. The number of visitors to Dokdo/Takeshima increased six-fold between 2005 and 2013 - from 41,134 to 255,838,[52]implying greater salience of the issue among Koreans.

Second, the establishment of the Dokdo Research Institute in 2008 and other national laws, such as designating Dokdo/Takeshima as cultural heritage (2012) and preservation of ecosystem on Dokdo/Takeshima (2012) enacted by various ministries are part of peaceful display of South Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo/Takeshima. [53] Such measures, however, increase the "visibility" of Dokdo/Takeshima in the Korean society and they embed Dokdo/Takeshima in Korean identity. These measures coupled with history and geographical education affect Koreans' understanding of Dokdo/Takeshima dispute as one pertaining to Korea's sovereignty and identity.

Third, younger Korean generations learn about Japan's territorial claims from their Geography textbooks. A survey of five high school Geography textbooks reveals the government's dilemma in sending the "right" message.[54] On the one hand, all five textbooks explained the unlawfulness of Japanese claims and emphasized the Korea's rightful ownership. On the other hand, all five also required students to think about what they could do for Dokdo /Takeshima in the face of Japanese territorial claims without a clear answer. Only two advocated "logical" ('*nonrijeok*') reaction to Japanese claims.

At the same time, the South Korean government has refrained from encouraging emotional and reckless actions. For example, it has not acquiesced to local governments' moves to "retaliate" against the

---

[51] Hyung-yu Park, "Heritage Tourism: Emotional Journeys into Nationhood," Annals of Tourism Research, 2010, Vol. 37(1), pp. 116-135; Pretes, Michael, "Tourism and Nationalism," Annals of Tourism Research, 2003, Vol. 30(1), pp. 125-142.

[52] Gyeongsangbuk Province, "Admission and Transportation," *Dokdo*, http://www.dokdo.go.kr/pages/sub01/page.html?mc=0017 (Date of Access: July 25 2015)

[53] Gyeongsangbuk Province, "Laws for Managing Dokdo," http://dokdo.go.kr/pages/sub01/page.html?mc=15&skin=board&start=0&table=board_kbbs07&category=board_kbbs07&key=&keyword=

[54] The survey was conducted by the author.

designation of "Takeshima Day" by designating October as "Dokdo month" [55]or designating June 19th as "Daemado Day." These remain till today as local governments' ordinances. The central government in Seoul therefore has been attempting to detach itself from emotionally-laden reactions of the public.

The identity theory of emotions and the institutionalization of anger shows that the constructivist analysis has its shortcoming by excluding emotions in the rational choice definition. The emotion factor is inseparable from identity and hence what seems "irrational" can be accounted for by the identity theory of emotions. Likewise, persistent anger cannot be labelled as an "irrational" behavior.

6. Impact of Identity and Emotions on Korean-Japanese Relations

Despite having enjoyed bilateral economic symbiosis since 1960s and other socio-cultural exchanges especially since 1998, public opinion in both countries are at its worst today. Koreans do not view Japanese favorably and vice versa. The most common reason why Japanese do not view Koreans favorably is because of anti-Japanese sentiments in Korea.[56] The portrayal of Koreans' anti-Japanese sentiments in Japan would lead to a vicious cycle by inciting anti-Korean sentiments in Japan which in turn would lead to Japanese domestic support for nationalist policies. In fact, the number of anti-Korean protests in Japan increased approximately five-fold from 22 in 2010 to 319 in 2013.[57]

This is a cause for concern because even if government-level relations are not poor, unfavorable public opinion could hinder political and economic cooperation. As pointed out by Yul Sohn, the security-economy-identity nexus that is characteristic of East Asia entangles identity with security and economy and this nexus could result in either a virtuous or vicious cycle of relations.[58] Indeed, history and identity are the only factors hindering the two key U.S. allies from security cooperation as shown by the Korean public's backlash against the Korea-Japan military accord that was almost concluded in July 2012.[59] In the economic/financial realm, even though the expiration of the Korea-Japan currency swap arrangement is known to be based on economic consideration, the arrangement as a symbol of

[55] Gyeongsangbukdo, "Ordinate No. 2879," July 4, 2005, http://dokdo.go.kr/pages/sub01/page.html?mc=15&skin=board&no=16&start=0&mode=view&table=board_kbbs07&category=board_kbbs07
[56] Genron NPO and EAI, (2013) p. 15; *Ibid*, (2014) p. 4; *Ibid*, (2015) p. 4.
[57] KBS News, "921 Anti-Korean Protests in Japan in Last 5 Years," October 7, 2014, http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ref=A&ncd=2943786 (Date of Access: July 26, 2015).
[58] Yul Sohn, "East Asian Regional Order Building Strategy for Co-existence and Prosperity: Beyond the Northeast Asian Peace and Cooperation Initiative," *EAI Policy Report on East Asian Peace and Cooperative Initiative*, December 2014.
[59] Young Jun Moon, "History Intrudes on Korea-Japan Security Cooperation," Stimson July 13, 2012, http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/history-intrudes-on-korea-japan-security-cooperation/

cooperation and its expiration speaks volume about how poor relations caused by historical and territorial disputes could adversely affect existing cooperation.[60]

7. Conclusion

The analysis in this paper shows that emotional action should not be labelled simply as being "irrational." The rational choice equation (desire + belief = action) is altered and broadened to account for emotional action as belief – influenced by identity – generates emotions. In the case of the Korean public's anger toward Japan's territorial claims over Dokdo/Takeshima, angry reaction is only natural from Koreans' perspective because they seek to "balance" the emotions and set off the humiliation of losing the statehood and suffering from Japanese colonial rule by seeking identity verification.

Adding in the emotional factor into the constructivist theory of international relations also demonstrates the difficulty of structural change and the formation of collective identity. The discrepancy between the South Korean government and the public in their relations with Japan implies the lack of "internalization" of amicable relations at the public level in Korea even after normalization 50 years ago. For example, although the number of South Korean visitors to Japan accounted for the largest in 2013,[61] public opinion poll shows that 75 percent of Koreans have never visited Japan.[62] This suggests that both governments need to improve the Korean public perception of Japan in order for positive relations to be internalized within the Korean public. However, it is highly unlikely that Japan will apologize to Korea for colonial rule and relinquish its territorial claims over Dokdo/Takeshima.

The short-term resolution to the current stalemate therefore seems to lie with de-coupling identity from security and economy. This, however, would impose costs on the South Korean government as it would lose either election votes or ownership of Dokdo/Takeshima. In the long term, Korea's rising global status and power relative to Japan could alleviate anger as a result of higher self-esteem and hence ontological security among Koreans.[63] This, however, is based on the assumption that South Korea enjoys continued economic growth that is high enough to narrow the economic power gap between South Korea

---

[60] Mitsuru Obe and Kwanwoo Jun, "Japan, South Korea to Let Currency Swap Program Expire," The Wall Street Journal, February 16, 2015, http://www.wsj.com/articles/japan-south-korea-to-let-currency-swap-program-expire-1424088419

[61] Krista Rogers, "South Korea Sent the Most Foreign Visitors to Japan in 2013," Japan Today, May 20, 2014, http://www.japantoday.com/category/travel/view/s-korea-sent-the-most-foreign-visitors-to-japan-in-2013

[62] Genron NPO and EAI, (2014), p. 27.

[63] Jiyoon Kim, "Young Generation and Positive Outlook for Korea's National Self-Esteem," Asan Column, July 20, 2015, http://asaninst.org/contents/%ED%95%9C%EA%B5%AD-%EC%A0%8A%EC%9D%80-%EC%84%B8%EB%8C%80%EC%9D%98-%EB%B0%98%EA%B0%80%EC%9A%B4-%EA%B5%AD%EA%B0%80-%EC%9E%90%EC%A1%B4%EA%B0%90/

and Japan. In conclusion, only a change in the Japanese administration to a less nationalist government could contribute to the pacification of Koreans' anger toward Japan.

Bibliography

Bae, Chinsoo. “Territorial Issue in the Context of Colonial History and International Politics: The Dokdo Issue between Korea and Japan.” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*. 26(1) (2012): 19-51.

Bleiker, Roland and Emma Hutchison. “Fear No More: Emotions and World Politics.” *Review of International Studies.* 34 (2008): 115-135.

_____. “Theorizing Emotions in World Politics.” *International Theory*. 6(3). (2014): 491-514.

Bong, Youngshik D. “Built to Last: the Dokdo Territorial Controversy. The Baseline Conditions in Domestic Politics and International Security of Japan and South Korea.” *Memory Studies*. 6(2). (2013): 191-203.

Choi, Jongho, Han-Wool Jeong, Heon Joo Jung. “An Empirical Study of South Korean Attitude toward Japan: Japan’s Military Threat, Economic Cooperation and Identity.” *Journal of International Politics*. 19(1) (2014): 41-76.

Choi, Sung-jae. “The Politics of the Dokdo Issue.” *Journal of East Asian Studies*. 5 (2005): 465-494.

Coicaud, Jean-Marc. Emotions and Passions in the Discipline of International Relations. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 15, 2014. pp 485-513

Cole, David C. and Princeton N. Lyman. *Korean Development: The Interplay of Politics and Economics.* Harvard University Press, 2013.

Crawford, Neta C. “Institutionalizing Passion in World Politics: Fear and Empathy.” *International Theory*. 6 (2014): 535-557.

Fattah, Khaled and K.M. Fierke. “A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East.” *European Journal of International Relations*. 15(1). (2009): 67-93.

Fierke, K.M. *Political Self-Sacrifice: Agency, Body and Emotion in International Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Genron NPO and East Asia Institute (EAI). *The Joint Study on Korea-Japan Public Opinion Poll*. May 2013.

_____. *The Joint Study on Korea-Japan Public Opinion Poll*. July 2014. http://www.eai.or.kr/data/bbs/kor_report/2014071614504448.pdf

_____. *The Joint Study on Korea-Japan Public Opinion Poll*. May 2015. http://www.eai.or.kr/data/bbs/kor_report/201506151483473.pdf

Goodwin, Jeff, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta. *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2001.

Gyeongsangbuk Province, “Admission and Transportation,” Accessed: July 25, 2015. http://www.dokdo.go.kr/pages/sub01/page.html?mc=0017

Gyeongsangbuk Province, “Laws for Managing Dokdo,” Accessed: July 25, 2015. http://dokdo.go.kr/pages/sub01/page.html?mc=15&skin=board&start=0&table=board_kbbs07&category=board_kbbs07&key=&keyword

Gyeongsangbukdo, “Ordinate No. 2879,” July 4, 2005, Accessed: July 25, 2015. http://dokdo.go.kr/pages/sub01/page.html?mc=15&skin=board&no=16&start=0&mode=view&table=board_kbbs07&category=board_kbbs07

Habermas, Jurgen, Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964),” *New German Critique*, 3, (1974): 49-55.

Hirschman, Albert O. *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*. Princeton University Press, 2013.

Hymans, Jacques E.C. *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions, and Foreign Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Ingmire, Jann. “Brain scans link concern for justice with reason, not emotion.” March 27,2014. Accessed July 27, 2015. http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2014/03/27/brain-scans-link-concern-justice-reason-not-emotion#sthash.5e1xoyIb.dpuf

Izard, C.E. *The Psychology of Emotions*. New York: Plenum Press, 1991.

Katzenstein, Peter and Robert Keohane. *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics*. New York: Cornell University Press: 2007.

KBS News. “921 Anti-Korean Protests in Japan in Last 5 Years.” October 7, 2014. Accessed: July 26, 2015. http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ref=A&ncd=2943786

Kim, Jiyoon. “Young Generation and Positive Outlook for Korea’s National Self-Esteem.” *Asan Column.* July 20, 2015. http://asaninst.org/contents/%ED%95%9C%EA%B5%AD-%EC%A0%8A%EC%9D%80-%EC%84%B8%EB%8C%80%EC%9D%98-%EB%B0%98%EA%B0%80%EC%9A%B4-%EA%B5%AD%EA%B0%80-%EC%9E%90%EC%A1%B4%EA%B0%90/

Kim, Ji Young. “Escaping the Vicious Cycle: Symbolic Politics and History Disputes between South Korea and Japan.” *Asian Perspective*: January-March 38(1) (2014): 31-60

_____. “Rethinking the Role of Identity Factors: the History Problem and the Japan-South Korea Security Relationship in the Post-Cold War Period.” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*. (2015) doi:10.1093/irap/lcv007

Kim, Young-su. “Judicial Precedent and Historical Evidence about Effective Control of Dokdo.” *Dokdo Studies*. 10, (2011): 85-113.

Koo, Min Gyo. *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. New York: Springer, 2009.

Long, William J. and Peter Brecke. *War and Reconciliation: Reason and Emotion in Conflict Resolution.* Massachusetts: MIT, 2003.

Lowenheim, Oded and Gadi Heimann. “Revenge in International Politics.” *Security Studies*. 17 (2008): 685-724.

Masan City Council. “Ordinance,” 2005, http://council.changwon.go.kr/council_ms/daemado/sub_01_01.php.

Mercer, Jonathan. “Feeling Like a State: Social Emotion and Identity.” *International Theory*. 6(3) (2014): 515-535.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan. “2014 U.S. Poll on Opinions Toward Japan.” November 7, 2014. Accessed: June 10, 2015. http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/survey/

Mitzen, Jennifer. “Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma,” *European Journal of International Relations*. 12 (3) (2006): 341-370.

Moisi, Dominique. *The Geopolitics of Emotion: How Cultures of Fear, Humiliation, and Hope are Reshaping the World*. New York: Anchor Books, 2010.

Moon, Chung-in and Chun-fu Li. “Reactive Nationalism and South Korea’s Foreign Policy on China and Japan: A Comparative Analysis.” *Pacific Focus*. XXV(3) (2010): 331-355.

Moon, Young Jun. “History Intrudes on Korea-Japan Security Cooperation.” Stimson. July 13, 2012. Accessed: July 29, 2015. http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/history-intrudes-on-korea-japan-security-cooperation/

Obe, Mitsuru and Kwanwoo Jun. “Japan, South Korea to Let Currency Swap Program Expire.” The Wall Street Journal. February 16, 2015. http://www.wsj.com/articles/japan-south-korea-to-let-currency-swap-program-expire-1424088419

Park, Jin-woo. “Mutual Perception of South Korea-Japan Relations through a Public Survey.” *Ilbon Sasang*. 27. (2014): 102-129.

Park, Hyung-yu. “Heritage Tourism: Emotional Journeys into Nationhood.” *Annals of Tourism Research*. 37(1) (2010): 116-135.

Pretes, Michael. “Tourism and Nationalism.” *Annals of Tourism Research*. 30(1) (2003): 125-142.

Rogers, Krista. “South Korea Sent the Most Foreign Visitors to Japan in 2013.” Japan Today. May 20, 2014. http://www.japantoday.com/category/travel/view/s-korea-sent-the-most-foreign-visitors-to-japan-in-2013

Ross. Andrew G. *Mixed Emotions: Beyond Fear and Hatred in International Conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

_____.”Why They Don’t Hate Us: Emotion, Agency and the Politics of ‘Anti-Americanism

Saurette, Paul. “You Dissin Me? Humiliation and Post 9/11 Global Politics.” *Review of International Studies*. 26. (2006): 495-522.

Schilling, Christopher L. *Emotional State Theory*. ePUb: Lexington Books, 2015.

Schweller, Randall. “China’s Aspirations and the Clash of Nationalisms in East Asia – A Neoclassical Realist Examination.” *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies*. 23 (2), (2014):1-40.

Sohn, Yul. “East Asian Regional Order Building Strategy for Co-existence and Prosperity: Beyond the Northeast Asian Peace and Cooperation Initiative.” *EAI Policy Report on East Asian Peace and Cooperative Initiative*. December 2014.

Solomon, TY. “I Wasn’t Angry, because I couldn’t Believe It Was Happening: Affect and Discourse in Responses to 9/11.” *Review of International Studies*. 38 (2012): 907-928.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. “Nationalism.” Accessed: July 15, 2015. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/

Stets, Jan E. “Examining Emotions in Identity Theory.” *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 68(1) (2005): 39-74.

_____. “Current Emotion Research in Sociology: Advances in the Discipline.” *Emotion Review*. 4(3) (2012): 326-334.

Stets, Jan E. & P.J. Burke. “New Directions in Identity Control Theory.” *Advances in Group Processes*. 22 (2005): 43-64.

Jan E. Stets and Alicia D. Cast. “Resources and Identity Verification from an Identity Theory Perspective.” *Sociological Perspectives*, 50(4), (2007): 517-543.

SBS News. “’Militarist Japan Plunders Dokdo,’ Criticisms Against Takeshima Day.” February 22, 2015. Accessed: July 28, 2015. http://sbsfune.sbs.co.kr/news/news_content.jsp?article_id=E10006336106 .

Tamaki, Taku. *Deconstructing Japan’s Image of South Korea: Identity in Foreign Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Torsten, Michael. “Time to get emotional: Phronetic Reflections on the Concept of Trust in International Relations.” *European Journal of International Relations*. 19(4) (2012) : 869-890.

Weekly Trade. “America’s Favorability toward Korea at Record High.” October 27, 2014. Accessed: June 10, 2015. http://weeklytrade.co.kr/news/view.html?section=1&category=136&item=&no=1943

Welty, James P. (Ed) Psychology of Anger: Symptoms, Causes and Coping. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2011.

Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Wohl, M. J. A., Hornsey, M. J., & Bennett, S. H. "Why Group Apologies Succeed and Fail: Intergroup Forgiveness and the Role of Primary and Secondary Emotions." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. (2011) Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/a0024838;

THE EAST ASIA INSTITUTE #909 Sampoong B/D, 158, Eulji-ro, Jung-gu, Seoul, 04548, Republic of Korea