

Discussion

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Place names are not just “names” for geographic feature in the study of contemporary geography. Rather they are the crystalized entity with history, national entity, and various levels of geopolitical strategies. In this vein, the three papers presented in the session of Sea Names, Border Issues and Disputed Territories in Eastern Europe are extremely well prepared and represent the recent trends in the study of place names. They consider the place name disputes in the regional historical background, the shadow of great power competitions and national building process. Especially, the political geography of Balkan has been the “must to know stuff” to political geographers. The three papers also show very good division of labor in that the papers touch upon the relationships between the break-up and national building process and place name disputes. The papers are interrelated each other but are not redundant by providing useful information and implication of recent political geography theories to understand the place name disputes in Balkan region. I, as a commentator, totally agree with the points and arguments in the presented papers. But I would like to make the contributions of the papers more visible and understandable by asking several questions.

The paper “Bordering Eastern Europe: European Union’s integration and local impacts” of Dr. Christoph Waack, is a well-organized paper with the mix of theory and empirical stories. Most of all, it is very fresh new attempt to look at the dispute over territory and place name by using scalar approach. After 1990s, globalization, borderless world have become buzz words, which predicted that distance would be overcome and the world would be incorporated into one single system. The prophecy with full of confidence that the role of geography would not have power any more, turned out a groundless argument in the face of still strong power of nation-state. Moreover, the disputes between states have made political geographers to emphasize the role of state. To

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date, the discussion of territory, sea, place naming issues are indeed trapped with the Westphalia system of nation state. The dominance of state scale in the study of territory and place names is taken-for-granted and understandable. The single scale approach, however, should be revisited since there is no single and best scale to explain social phenomena but scale is constructed and reconstructed. Moreover, scale can be a political strategy to achieve a goal to set up a preferable scale for various actors. Then, we may have to think about different scales, say, local, regional scale in the study of territory and place names. According to Dr. Waack countries behave under the assumption that places in different scales would influence the decisions and implications of each state. For example, Croatia made agreement with Slovenia to make the road less hilly to get an admission to EU membership.

With regard to the territory and place name disputes, my first question is whether there were different voices in the negotiation process between Croatia and Slovenia. In general, solving territorial issues are very difficult since public opinions are generally not very supportive to make an agreement or negotiation with a neighbor. Often public opinion is amplified by the political projects of political elites. Political elites are inclined to use territorial issues to make them visible in the national political arena. In this case, it is extremely hard to make a negotiation with neighbors on the territorial issues. I would like to ask any other voices in the process of negotiation between Croatia and Slovenia.

I also want to know the role of EU in the process of resolving territorial disputes between EU member states. To the people outside of EU, it is still hard to understand the governance system in European continent. So if possible, it is very instructive to present more detail about the role of EU in facilitating states to make an agreement about territorial issues. In addition, scale jump political strategy has an important implication on Koreans to deal with sea name and territorial issues. If there are more examples of scale politics in EU, it may be very helpful for Koreans to set up strategies to make these naming and territorial issue settled down.

With regard to the paper “Maritime boundaries and geographical names in the Adriatic Sea” of Mladen Klemencic, I think Dr. Klemencic’s paper provides interesting stories to think about the history of place names around Adriatic Sea. Especially, I real-

ly enjoyed the explanation about how place names changed according to the geopolitical context. I have a few questions to have better understanding of the sea naming issues around Adriatic Sea. The first question is whether there is a Slavic name of Adriatic Sea. Based on the paper, there are many Slavic origin place names in Adriatic Sea while the Adriatic Sea is the only name used in the region. Second, if the process of the restoration of Slavic names is elaborated in the text, it would be better. Generally, it is very expectable to encounter resistance when a place name is under change. For example, Italia might not happy about the (re)use Slavic place names instead of Italian origin place names. I would like to hear more about the process of restoration, especially, focusing on political struggle and resistance. Third, it seems like there is an ongoing project to use “Bay of Savudija” instead of “Piran bay”. I am wondering how successful the campaign has been. In other words, how widely the name is accepted among Croatians?

Professor Gosar’s paper is very informative and provides comprehensive knowledge about Balkan region. Especially story between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina around the narrow corridor is interesting. Personally I believe, everybody knows Dubrovnik but few people know it an exclave. The article also makes it very clear to the point that EU made a clear distinction of inside and outside, which produced more porous border in side EU, but stricter border enforcement with non-EU states. Considering that there is a trend that foreign population is increasing and the advent of multi-ethnic and cultural society is more common, I would like to ask some questions about the context in multi ethnic countries, such as states in Balkan. The first question is what the basis of territorial claim is in multi-ethnic context. There may be many reasons of territorial claims, such as historical boundary, the distribution of ethnic groups, economic influences of states and so forth. I would like to know what the major issues are on territorial claims in the context of Balkan. I am also curious about the role of political elites to deal with territorial claims because political elites often utilize territorial claims to elicit public support and fortify their seats during nationalistic campaign. Another question is the effect of EU membership. Specifically what is the future of territorial disputes after other Balkan state get the EU membership? Also I would like to ask the opinion about the presence and creation of EU identity? Is there any EU identity among European states? It there is, what is the influence of EU identity on territorial issues between EU and non-EU member states?