

## Discussion

CHI Sang-Hyun\*

---

Dr Hausner's paper shows how the early expedition to the North Pole has influenced the naming of the region. This may be said that the modern empires tried to show their power and influence by giving name originated from their emperors, royal families, generals and admirals. Despite the fact that many countries pretend to be neutral in naming geographic features, it is hard to deny that the naming practice is deeply related to state power, nationalism, and political ambition. Also, although we believe that geographical names are nothing to do with legal right, territoriality, or fishing right, which is relatively recent rationale and norm. Therefore it is always the incomplete truth that naming and the activities of toponymy experts are purely neutral and technical ones. To some extent, we are still living under the legacy of geographic expedition and imperialism. Therefore modern toponymy cannot be free from the agenda of post-colonialism. Although it may be an interesting task to go deeper in how the geographical names of the North Pole region has been changed by the rise and falls of European sea powers, I would like to focus on other two papers since another discussant adroitly pointed out the legal implications and issues of the region.

Professor Gammeltoft's paper is an interesting and insightful paper since it touches upon the regional governance of geographical names. Also, the disagreement among Nordic countries is a great example to show the tiny little things (here 'r' or 'rr') are often very important one. Again, we remind that naming is a process of identification of certain groups.

The lessons of this example can be summarized in two parts. The first one is the necessity of regional governance in geographical names. In particular, countries in a region share a same language or their languages shows significant level of affinity and homogeneity, it would be a sturdy foundation for the regional governance. As we see the organization of UNGEGN, the regional governance would make more sense. There are divisions based on language, such as Arabic division and French division. Second lesson would be the role of moderator, here the role of Sweden. Moderating does not only mean the will of engagement but rather the competence, experience and memory of success. The successful moderating can be achieved when the moderator has the will

---

\* Professor, Kyung Hee University, Republic of Korea.

to settle down the issue, the power and resources to tackle the issue, and experience of making successful deals. The case of Skagerrak seems to be successful since Sweden has power and hegemony in this region as well as Nordic states share the experience of cooperation.

If we draw more relevant lesson for Korea and North East Asian countries, it can be suggested that regional governance among two Koreas, China, Japan, Taiwan, and possible Vietnam since they share Chinese character. Those countries do not use Chinese but their writing and geographical names are deeply related to Chinese character. Hence, they have similar problems and tasks, such as how to Romanize their place names, whether to translate the generic part of place names, whether to place space between specific and generic parts. If we start with small and technical things, it may be possible to achieve positive outcome among East Asian countries. However, it should be emphasized that common ground in language is a part of naming issue. Countries sharing one language often have disagreement generated from history, politics, state-building process, economic interests.

Toponymy research in Anglophone geography was not a popular field. Geographers cannot agree more that collecting, cataloging, and memorizing place names helped to recognize geography as a boring field. However, interest in the recent nomination has been growing, and there is a critical viewpoint on the place name. In particular, the process of competition between different political groups in place naming is being intensively studied through the dynamic process of naming. In this sense naming is more important than names as with the emphasis on verb instead of noun in the discipline of geography, such as geographing, doing geopolitics. In addition, theoretically, various actors and multi - scale viewpoints participating in naming process have recently been suggested. The example of the study, Cyprus, is well known in international society since the naming disagreement is always a thorny issue in UN and other international organizations.

Despite the case of Cyprus is somewhat well recognized by international community, however, Professor Radil's approach is fresh and insightful. This may be indebted to his theoretical orientation of political geography that frames social phenomena by agency and scale. According to his analysis, the naming disagreement and political naming practice in both Northern and Southern parts of Cyprus, cannot be summarized like "Greeks want Greek place name and Turkish try to Turkish names". Rather there is a complex nexus of British Imperialism, Cold War, American hegemony, and regional political institutions (EU and NATO). Current Greek names are Anglicized Greek origin names, which supported by the US and EU while Turkish naming restoration is relatively local movement.

As Radil suggested, the case of Cyprus shed light on the issue of *East Sea/Sea of Japan*. According to him, it is a superficial understanding that Korea and Japan argue different names since their language is different and they have used different names. The truth is more complex. We know that naming of ocean is a recent and modern invention. In traditional Asia, they do not need to name seas and oceans. They only care about the sea adjacent to their land and the names of seas are highly dependent on land. Therefore, the disagreement on sea names begins when Western empires projects their powers to 'discovered' world. The relationship between European countries and Korea/Japan

cannot be ignored to investigate this problematic situation between two states. Also, international organizations, such as IHO, UN should be taken into consideration. Finally, the influence and role of the US in this issue are still very important. In other words, there is a layered scale to understand this naming dispute between Korea/Japan. Sometimes it is local (local government and daily experience of ordinary people). But we know it is also national issue between two governments or regional/global issue that invites other countries. In sum, it is not very wise solution to focus on the negotiation between two states, diplomatic war, transfer the issue to international community. In this sense, dual naming is the only possible way to please people, government and international community.