



University
of Glasgow

Hillebrecht, Hendrik (2015) *No common ground? Decoding China's sustained territorial disputes*. [MSc]

<http://endeavour.gla.ac.uk/66/>

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author(s)

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author(s)

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, institution and date must be given



University
of Glasgow | School of Social
& Political Sciences

FINAL DISSERTATION

**No Common Ground?
Decoding China's Sustained Territorial Disputes**

Date of submission: 4th September 2015

Student ID: 2164739

Turnitin ID:

Turnitin score:

Word count: 15,758

Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
M.Sc. Chinese Studies (International Relations)

Abstract

China has attracted much criticism from the international community in recent years with regard to the country's assertiveness in territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. The PRC's military modernization and ongoing frictions with Taiwan have further amplified China's depiction as a revisionist power in the international relations discourse; a growing threat to regional security and the global order. China currently asserts ownership over nine contested territories in its periphery. Past territorial disputes have seen China display rather benevolent behaviour, in most cases actually preferring conciliation over coercion. Yet, in some disputes China has resorted to military force or deterrence in order to consolidate its territorial claim and has given no indication of retreat. Why does China sustain certain disputes but settle others? This paper seeks to decode the causal mechanisms behind China's territorial behaviour in the 21st century by examining disputed territories in regards to four characteristics relating to international as well as domestic policy issues: energy resources, economic value, geostrategic location and nationalist motives. The paper finds that China sustains disputes due to a variety of territorial interests beyond mere power politics, and discusses potential implications of China's ambiguous behaviour in territorial disputes on the country's future role within the Asian community and international relations at large. Moreover, the study suggests that assessing the PRC's territorial disputes requires a more sophisticated understanding of China beyond the dichotomous framework of liberal institutionalist versus realist, status quo versus revisionist power.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Review of the Literature on China's Territorial Disputes	2
III.	Research Design	10
IV.	Empirical Results and Case Analysis	18
	i. The Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute	20
	ii. The Multilateral Dispute Over the Spratly Islands	23
	iii. The Dispute Over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands	27
V.	Discussion	31
VI.	Conclusion	36
	References	37

I. Introduction

In light of China's rapid increase in economic and political clout over the past three decades the country's foreign diplomacy has become a more and more significant topic within the field of international relations. China's engagement in territorial disputes, particularly since the Taiwanese Strait crisis of 1995-96, has been accompanied by an intense policy discourse on the implications of China's coercive diplomacy on regional and global security. Most recently, there has been particular anxiety from states both in the Asia-Pacific region as well as the Western hemisphere with regard to the destabilizing effects of the PRC's alleged revisionist policies in the South and East China Seas. Disputes over territorial sovereignty and maritime rights were among the focal points addressed at the 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore with analysts noting China's uncompromising behaviour as crucial to President Xi Jinping's vision of a rejuvenated and strong Chinese nation capable of playing a leading role in the international system in the near future.¹

As a recurring theme in European and US academic writing on China's behaviour and motives, offensive realist theory is widely taken as a basis to argue that power politics and the aim to counter-balance against US dominance in the region is what drives China's foreign policy course.² However, a historical review of China's territorial dispute behaviour offers hardly any evidence for this narrative and in fact shows that China has used force only on six occasions since 1949 while seventeen disputes over territory were settled through compromise and concession rather than coercion and threat.³

Why, then, does China sustain certain territorial disputes, such as in the China Seas, and seek to settle others? Alternative explanations revolve around China's "scramble" for resources as the South and East China Seas have been estimated since the 1970s to hold vast reserves in hydrocarbons, as well as China's interest in securing vital sea lines of communication.⁴ A more recent theory among China analysts sees domestic incentives at the core of China's territorial behaviour, following a resurgence of state-led nationalism in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen disaster. Territorial claims, many argue, may prove an

¹ International Institute for Strategic Studies (26.05.2015) "China's Regional Grand Strategy Paves the Way for Realising the China Dream", in *Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment 2015*, 77-90; see also Kerr (2014) "Introduction: China's Many Dreams", 1-4; Callahan (2013) *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future*.

² On the likeliness of China's rise leading into international conflict in future years see for instance Mearsheimer (2014) [2001] *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 360-411.

³ Fravel (2008) *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, 313-319; (2007) "Power Shifts and Escalation: Explaining China's Use of Force in Territorial Disputes", 44-45.

⁴ See Emmers (2013) *Resource Management and Contested Territories in East Asia*; Fravel (2011) "China's Strategy in the South China Sea".

efficient way to draw attention away from domestic grievances and strengthen the regime's image.⁵

While China's territorial dispute behaviour has been widely criticised in the mainstream academic literature, only few studies thus far have taken a close look at the respective conditions that motivate China to maintain a claim over territory rather than seek a peaceful settlement through compromise. This dissertation draws on comprehensive theoretical work by Fravel (2005; 2008) on cooperation and escalation in China's territorial disputes, as well as empirical data from a variety of sources including Huth (1996) and the *Issue Correlates of War Project* (2014) to decode the complexity of China's diplomacy regarding territorial disputes beyond the realist notions of power politics and national security. By examining four exogenous variables – a territory's (1) energy resources, (2) economic value and (3) geostrategic importance, as well as (4) the evocation of nationalist sentiments through a territorial claim – with regard to their respective impacts on China's likelihood to display aggressive behaviour in a dispute rather than show willingness for compromise and cooperation, this paper argues that China's behaviour in territorial disputes should not be generalized as a continuation of the country's grand strategy, but rather be seen as issue-based and multilayered.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section II offers a brief review of China's participation in territorial disputes and the depiction thereof in academic literature. Section III lays out the research design and methodological background for coding and confirming the abovementioned variables. Empirical results are presented in Section IV along with three illustrative case studies of territorial disputes over regions along the Sino-Indian border, the Spratly Islands, as well as the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Section V discusses key implications of China's territorial dispute behaviour past and present on future international relations, particularly the Sino-US relationship. Section VI presents a few concluding remarks.

II. Review of the Literature on China's Territorial Disputes

The unprecedented speed of China's rise from a relatively weak state in the aftermath of a century of humiliation under Japanese and Western occupation into a major power with the world's second largest economy over the last seven decades has manifested China as a key subject in the intellectual discourse on international security and global politics. Anticipated

⁵ See for example Zhao (1998) "A State-Led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China"; (2004) *Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*; Gries (2004) "Popular Nationalism and State Legitimation in China"; Hughes (2006) *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*, 55-91.

by many to take on a leading role in (re-)shaping international relations in the 21st century, China is widely scrutinized with regard to its foreign diplomacy agenda and, particularly, dispute behaviour, which is generally indicative to an extent of a country's status quo or revisionist intentions.⁶ Understanding China's territorial dispute behaviour has become ever so important in recent years as tensions between a multitude of claimant states over island territories in the South China Sea have put regional stability to the test. Ongoing disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands as well as China's ambition to reunite Taiwan with the mainland further contribute to the tensions. In addition, although currently not as crucial, China's disputes with India over a few territories along the Sino-Indian border, including the Aksai Chin region bordering Xinjiang province, as well as related boundary issues with Bhutan remain unresolved.

China's diplomacy with regard to the East and South China Sea disputes has been condemned almost unanimously by the international community as revisionism, contradictory to the shared norms of international relations. China has been consolidating its territorial claims through the construction of military facilities in the Spratly and Paracel Islands, as well as the creation of artificial islands by land reclamation at exceptional speed, counteracting the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which was co-signed by 167 parties including China in 1982 and has been in effect since 1994.⁷ Hence, China's behaviour has repeatedly been deemed a "threat" to international norms and peace by other claimant states such as the Philippines and Vietnam, a narrative that is also prominently featured in Western academic writing.⁸ It should be noted, however, that although the PRC has been in control over the Paracel Islands since 1974 and has claimed sovereignty over the Spratly Islands since 1951, the large majority of features in the Spratlys is in fact held by Vietnam, more than twice as many as all other claimant states combined.⁹

⁶ Fravel (2005) "Regime Security and International Cooperation: Explaining China's Compromises in Territorial Disputes", 47; For detailed theoretical studies on the nature of China's foreign diplomacy see also Johnston (2003) "Is China a Status Quo Power?"; Shambaugh (2011) "Coping With a Conflicted China"; Goldstein (2001) "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy: A Rising Power's Emerging Choice".

⁷ Beckman (2013) "The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Maritime Disputes in the South China Sea"; Charney (1995) "Central East Asian Maritime Boundaries and the Law of the Sea"; Fravel (2011) 294.

⁸ See for instance *World Politics Review* (13.02.2015) "Philippines, Vietnam Expand Ties to Counter China Threat"; Mazza (03.02.2015) "Made in China: A Vietnam-Philippines Axis"; Western foreign policy analysts adhering to the threat narrative include Roy (1994) "Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security"; (2013) *Return of the Dragon: Rising China and Regional Security*; Mosher (2000) *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*; Menges (2005) *China: The Gathering Threat*; see also Mearsheimer (2014) [2001] 360-411.

⁹ See for instance Austin (18.06.2015) "Who Is the Biggest Aggressor in the South China Sea?".

When questioned about operations in the South China Sea, China's official response routinely contains positive adjectives such as "lawful, reasonable and justifiable".¹⁰ Increasingly harsh criticism from other ASEAN countries, however, caused the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to come forward with a more detailed explanation of China's strategy in April 2015, which included a wide interpretation of responsibilities from safeguarding territorial sovereignty and maritime rights to environmental protection and navigation safety.¹¹ Even though China has shown no ambition to retreat from their claims as of yet, such self-justification is a rather unusual step and may to some extent be indicative of China's openness for dialogue. In fact, as will be detailed below, China has displayed consensus-oriented rather than aggressive behaviour in most of its past territorial disputes.

A historical review of China's participation in territorial disputes shows that the PRC has been willing to negotiate peaceful settlements in most cases, going as far as to eventually accept concessions of the majority of contested land. In the early 1960s compromises were reached in boundary disputes with Burma, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mongolia, North Korea and the Soviet Union which saw China concede a significant portion of the disputed territory.¹² After the collapse of the Soviet Union further settlements were reached throughout the 1990s over the demarcation of borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia, with China receiving less than half of the disputed border land; settlements with Laos and Vietnam on China's southern frontier split territory evenly.¹³ The only offshore dispute settlement thus far took place in 1957 when China transferred control over White Dragon Tail (*Bailongwei*) Island to Hanoi. Although not officially resolved as of yet, bilateral disputes with Bhutan and, particularly, India have been shelved through confidence-building measures as well as a 2005 agreement on guiding principles for the settlement of the dispute, as will be further discussed under Section IV.¹⁴

Fravel (2005; 2008) lists twenty-three territories that China has contested since 1949, including disputes regarding the demarcation of borders with its fourteen neighbouring states, island disputes in the Seas off its vast coastline, as well as inland disputes concerning the

¹⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (03.03.2015) "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference", English translation available at [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1242257.shtml].

¹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (09.04.2015) "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference", English translation available at [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1253488.shtml].

¹² See Fravel (2005) 66-69, 71-74.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 76-78.

¹⁴ See Kondapalli (2015) "Fence Sitting, Prolonged Talks: The India-China Boundary Dispute"; Sidhu and Yuan (2001) "Resolving the Sino-Indian Border Dispute: Building Confidence Through Cooperative Monitoring".

territorial status of Taiwan and the former European colonies Hong Kong and Macau.¹⁵ Seventeen of these disputes reached settlements, demonstrating that China regularly relied on status quo policies by means of cooperation and concession, and suggesting that offensive realism alone does not provide an adequate theoretical foundation to explain China's behaviour.¹⁶ Instead, it seems that different disputes are met with alternating strategies according to their individual circumstances. Fravel links the willingness to cooperate in land border disputes to regime weakness in China's vast central Asian frontier regions, arguing judiciously that the settlement of a border dispute may pose an effective way to secure the allegiance of neighbouring states in preventing ethnic unrest in boundary regions that are largely inhabited by minority groups and thus difficult for the central government to exert influence on.¹⁷ As for China's strategy in the South China Sea, Fravel (2011) maintains that China's considerably more confrontational behaviour is unlikely to change as the regime does not face any direct threats to their internal security in the region.¹⁸

While this is certainly a reasonable assessment based on historic observations, several other possible factors beyond regime instability and ethnic geography require further attention: The geostrategic position of disputed territory – favourable geographic conditions for the set-up of military outposts or as a natural defence line against potential rival aggression, as well as its proximity to important strategic routes – as a major influence on China's behaviour is not fully developed. Furthermore, the effects of the availability of energy resources and the economic potential of contested territory on China's dispute strategy are not systematically tested. These factors may be of relevance however, as China is looking for ways to sustain its highly demanding economy in future years. Some scholars also point out that China's behaviour in the international arena following the Tiananmen massacre in 1989 and the end of the Cold War era shortly after has been considerably influenced by state-led nationalism as a means to invoke public support in international conflicts with rival states and divert from domestic grievances, a hypothesis that is nurtured to some extent by China's territorial dispute with long-standing rival Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.¹⁹ Few studies thus far have taken a systematic approach to analyze China's territorial dispute behaviour with regard to the specific conditions of the territory in dispute. While there have been extensive theoretical works on China's territorial disputes since 1949 in the academic literature that focus on the

¹⁵ Fravel (2005) 56-57.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 55-57.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 81-83; Fravel (2008) 300.

¹⁸ Fravel (2011) 313.

¹⁹ See Zhao (1998; 2004); Gries (2004) 55-91; Downs and Saunders (1998) "Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyutai Islands".

legal terms and conditions under which settlements were reached, empirical scholarly work on patterns in China's dispute behaviour past and present remains limited.²⁰

Over the years significant contributions have advanced the study of conflict and territorial disputes in a wider context through quantitative research, providing comprehensive empirical data on the nature of interstate disputes. The *Correlates of War Project* data collection in its most recently updated version compiles data on all military interstate disputes (MIDs) that occurred from 1816 until 2010.²¹ MIDs, as defined by Jones et al. (1996), constitute historical incidents in which one state issues a threat, displays or uses military force against another state's official representative bodies or territory.²² The MID data distinguishes four types of dispute: "territorial" disputes, in which force is used by a state in order to acquire or defend territory; "policy" disputes, in which one state aims to change another state's foreign policies through the use of force; "regime" disputes, in which one state tries to enforce regime change in another; and "other" types of dispute that do not clearly display one of the aforementioned characteristics.²³ Drawing on this data to create a typology of wars, Vasquez and Valeriano (2010) find that 43 out of 79 interstate wars documented in the period between 1816 and 1997 evolved from territorial disputes, with roughly five out of every six of these disputes fought out between neighbouring countries.²⁴ This conforms to Vasquez's (1993) explanation that humans, due to their inherent territoriality, tend to display aggressive behaviour in order to carve out territories and defend them against challengers.²⁵ Territorial peace between two neighbours, then, is only possible if shared boundaries are clearly demarcated.²⁶ This seems a reasonable argument in light of China's sensitivity toward territorial issues, as it has to secure land borders with fourteen neighbouring states – more than any other country besides Russia – as well as maritime borders with South Korea, Japan, the Philippines and Taiwan.²⁷

²⁰ For a review of China's territorial disputes under international law see for instance Chang (1982) *China's Boundary Treaties and Frontier Disputes*; Tzou (1990) *China and International Law: The Boundary Disputes*; see also Charney (1995); Hyer (1995) "The South China Sea Disputes: Implications of China's Earlier Territorial Settlements".

²¹ See Palmer et al. (2015) "The MID4 Data Set: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description".

²² Jones et al. (1996) " Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns", 6.

²³ See Palmer et al. (2015).

²⁴ Vasquez and Valeriano (2010) "Classification of Interstate Wars", 300; see also Vasquez and Henehan (2001) "Territorial Disputes and the Probability of War, 1816-1992"; Jones et al. (1996).

²⁵ Vasquez (1995) "Why Do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction, or Territoriality", 281-286; (1993) *The War Puzzle*, 140-141; see also Vasquez and Henehan (2001).

²⁶ Vasquez (1995) 283-284; Vasquez and Valeriano (2010) 306; see also Gibler (2007) "Bordering on Peace: Democracy, Territorial Issues, and Conflict", 529; Huth and Allee (2002) *The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century*.

²⁷ For a detailed account on the delineation of China's boundaries at the beginning of this century see Anderson (2003) *International Boundaries: A Geopolitical Atlas*, 174-184.

Johnston (1998) analyses MID data on China more specifically in order to find patterns in China's dispute behaviour and crisis management that might offer insight with regard to future conflicts involving China.²⁸ The data shows that China was more conflict-prone during the Cold War period between 1949 and 1992 than any other state aside from the US, engaging in 2.74 MID per year compared to 3.93 annual MID with US participation.²⁹ Notably, 49 percent of China's MIDs were territorial disputes, a substantial portion of which occurred within the first decade after the foundation of the PRC, which matches the theory of states showing aggressive behaviour early in their existence to establish control over territory.³⁰ Johnston finds that China was more likely to reach high levels of hostility in MIDs than any other state, using force in 80 percent of its policy and regime disputes, and 65 percent of its territorial disputes.³¹ He draws the conclusion that China better switch to an alternative, less violent approach in order to avoid direct military conflict with the US in the future.³² Many echo this assessment, cautioning against the emergence of a Sino-US military rivalry in the East Asia-Pacific region and the effects this may have on the status quo in international relations.³³

However, several scholars have also stressed that China has taken an active position in the international system since the beginning of this century by embracing international institutions and norms, and employing a new, more constructive approach to foreign diplomacy.³⁴ Fravel and Twomey (2015) respond to repeated claims by analysts that China's modernization of its military and naval capabilities is driven by a "counter-intervention" strategy against the US by highlighting that said term hardly ever appears in Chinese literature on military affairs.³⁵ Rather, they contend, it is a fabrication by Western writers who are preoccupied with projecting their known traditions and views on to China instead of focusing on Chinese publications and empirical data to explore the actual conditions and motives behind China's behavioural pattern.³⁶ Misconstruing China's actions as primarily aimed

²⁸ Johnston (1998) "China's Militarized Interstate Dispute Behaviour 1949-1992: A First Cut at the Data".

²⁹ Ibid, 9-10.

³⁰ Ibid, 11-12, 24-25; Note: The revised dataset with MIDs until 2010 includes 170 cases involving China with 51 (30 percent) classified as "territorial", still the most frequent type of dispute before "policy" (46; 27 percent).

³¹ Johnston (1998) 15-17; Data includes multiple confrontations over the same territory.

³² Ibid, 28-30.

³³ See for example Callahan (2004) *Contingent States: Greater China and Transnational Relations*; Shambaugh (2011) "Coping With a Conflicted China", 21-25; For a particularly sinister assessment of Sino-US relations see Carpenter (2006) *America's Coming War with China: Collision Course over Taiwan*; see also Goldstein (2013) "First Things First: The Pressing Danger of Crisis Instability in U.S.-China Relations".

³⁴ See Medeiros and Fravel (2003) "China's New Diplomacy"; Shambaugh (2004) "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the International Order".

³⁵ Fravel and Twomey (2015) "Projecting Strategy: The Myth of Chinese Counter-intervention", 175-177.

³⁶ Ibid, 182-183.

against the US thus might fan a security dilemma between the two powers and heavily compromise prospects for a peaceful resolution to ongoing territorial disputes.

Within Chinese academic literature, as Callahan (2013) accentuates, the past several years have seen the emergence of a cohort of scholars led by political economist Hu (2011) and IR analyst Zhang (2012) who assert that a post-American century has begun in which China is designated to become the next superpower, however not by means of coercive diplomacy but rather policies of cooperation and consent to manage its international relations and gain regional and global influence.³⁷ This assessment corresponds in large part with the Chinese government's official stance on 21st century international relations fleshed out by Fu (2003) who shoots down the Western conceptualization of a "China threat" as an illusion and puts much emphasis on China's awareness of its responsibility to ensure regional security and development, and its determination to maintain "good-neighbourly" relationships with other ASEAN countries.³⁸ Addressing the territorial dispute in the South China Sea, she acknowledges the strategic importance of the contested islands and their surrounding waters for China's shipping of resources and goods, but promotes a peaceful resolution through dialogue and economic cooperation.³⁹ Fu further refutes the notion of Chinese counter-intervention and recognizes US contributions to regional stability; it is clearly implied, however, that China will uphold its zero-tolerance policy regarding any foreign dissent in the issue over Taiwan. Despite Fu's largely benevolent statements, more than a decade later China's sea disputes are still being sustained and peaceful settlements in the near future appear rather unlikely, much to the detriment of regional cooperation and China's international relations.

In a seminal study on the conditions that may increase or decrease the likelihood of a territorial dispute being resolved peacefully through a settlement, Huth (1996) takes a modified realist approach considering both domestic and international issues. Loosely defined as cases in which one state is in disagreement with another state over the demarcation line of its border, or contests either another state's sovereignty over certain territory or its very existence as an independent state, 129 territorial disputes between 1950 and 1990 are

³⁷ Callahan (2013); see also Hu (2011) *China 2020: A New Type of Superpower*; Zhang (2012) *The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State*.

³⁸ Fu (2003) "China and Asia in a New Era", 309-310.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 310-311.

identified by Huth.⁴⁰ Through extensive analysis of data on each of these occurrences he offers compelling evidence that democracy, political alliances, the economic value of the contested land, as well as being engaged in multiple disputes simultaneously are all statistically significant factors that increase the probability of states seeking a peaceful resolution of a dispute.⁴¹ A number of scholars further highlight the significance of the regime type of disputing states, as well as interventions by external parties and international norms.⁴²

However, as Fravel (2005) notes, about two-thirds of the aggressors in territorial disputes have been authoritarian countries, which, although typically less inclined to engage in negotiations, nonetheless initiated the majority of peaceful territorial settlements.⁴³ As non-democracies such as China are generally more likely to rely on force than democratic states due to their regimes being less restricted by the need to legitimize military actions, it would seem counter-intuitive that these states statistically seem to favour concession and compromise over prolonged disputes. China, however, has avoided escalation by and large in favour of peaceful negotiation and only used force on six occasions during the latter half of the twentieth century. While Huth (1996) undoubtedly presents an important study on the territorial dispute behaviour of states, his data collection does not provide a full account on China's ambiguous behaviour. Boundary disputes with Mongolia, North Korea and Laos, for example, are omitted from the dataset and territorial disputes with the former Soviet countries are not differentiated as the data ends in 1990. Moreover, developments in territorial disputes that have been maintained over the past twenty-five years – multilateral disputes over features in the Spratlys and Paracels in the South China Sea for instance – call for a renewed analysis.

In order to shed light on China's motivations to sustain territorial disputes, the following section sets up four exogenous variables which are then tested with regard to their relevance for China displaying intransigence rather than willingness to conciliate a dispute, let alone concede disputed territory.

⁴⁰ For more detail on the concept of a territorial dispute see Huth (1996) *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict*, 19-26; Replication data (2009) available for download at [<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.1/10214>].

⁴¹ Huth (1996) 141-179.

⁴² See for example Chiozza and Choi (2003) "Guess Who Did What: Political Leaders and the Management of Territorial Disputes, 1950-1990"; Huth and Allee (2002); Kacowicz (1994) *Peaceful Territorial Change*; Goertz and Diehl (1992) *Territorial Changes and International Conflict*.

⁴³ Fravel (2005) 48-49.

III. Research Design

To accentuate different conditions under which China may be more likely to display uncompromising behaviour in territorial disputes, twenty-four cases in which the PRC has disputed territory since 1949 are examined (see Tables 1A; 1B). The disputed territories included in this study largely correspond with those listed in Version 1.01 of the *Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Project* dataset on territorial claims.⁴⁴ The sample contains Chinese territorial disputes with Bhutan, Burma, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Japan, Taiwan, South Vietnam/Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines. Disputes with the former Soviet Union are divided into border disputes with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.⁴⁵

Also included in the *ICOW* dataset are territorial disputes with North Korea and Mongolia, which Huth (2009) [1996] omits for a lack of evidence that an actual confrontation over territory took place.⁴⁶ Although Fravel (2008) concurs in this regard, noting for instance that information on the 1962 boundary treaty between China and North Korea was never made public, he nonetheless includes the territorial dispute in his study as both states openly claimed sovereignty over Changbai Mountain after 1949.⁴⁷ China's territorial dispute with Mongolia arose after the foundation of the PRC as the China-Mongolia border had not been defined until then, and repeated talks were held throughout the 1950s before a settlement was eventually reached in 1962 over several areas along the border, covering 16,808 square kilometres in total.⁴⁸ While China's dispute with Afghanistan over the Wakhan Corridor does not appear in the *ICOW* dataset, it is however relevant in the studies by Huth and Fravel, and therefore also part of this analysis.

Two exemptions are made in the context of this study on China's territorial dispute behaviour with regard to the territorial claims listed in the *ICOW* dataset: The negotiations over the reversion of the former British and Portuguese colonies Hong Kong and Macau respectively to China in the 1980s are not considered disputes as the territorial status of both regions was pre-arranged and bilateral talks mostly revolved around the establishment of the

⁴⁴ *Issue Correlates of War Project* (30.03.2014) "ICOW Territorial Claims Data, provisional version 1.01", available for download at [<http://www.paulhensel.org/icowterr.html>]; for more discussion of the data compilation and coding see for instance Hensel and Mitchell (2005) "Issue Indivisibility and Territorial Claims"; Hensel et al. (2008) "Bones of Contention: Comparing Territorial, Maritime, and River Issues".

⁴⁵ The territory contested between China and the Soviet Union amounted to approximately 35,000 sq km, which focused mostly on the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tajik border regions on China's western frontier, as well as several islands in the Ussuri and Amur rivers delimiting the Chinese province of Heilongjiang from Russia's far eastern federal subjects Amur Oblast, Khabarovsk Krai, and Primorsky Krai; see Kireyev (1999) "Demarcation of the Border with China", 98-109; Fravel (2008) 324.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 241.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 113-115, 321-322.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 110-113, 322-323.

two regions as special administrative zones with reformed political and economic systems after the PRC would regain control.⁴⁹ Aside from this deliberate omission, the following analysis incorporates data on all territorial disputes as listed by the *ICOW Project* (2014) as well as by Fravel (2008), complemented by information drawn from case-specific academic literature on China's past and ongoing disputes, official press releases by the Chinese government as well as journalistic coverage by Chinese news media.

China's behaviour in past territorial disputes as listed in the tables below displays a few particularly notable characteristics: Firstly, the majority of disputes were initiated by China. In thirteen out of sixteen settled cases the PRC was classified as the revisionist actor, or challenger, while only two cases saw China as the target of revisionist claims by other disputant states.⁵⁰ In the territorial dispute between China and Nepal revisionist claims went both ways. Moreover, China is considered to be on the revisionist side in eight out of nine ongoing disputes. In two of these cases, concerning the Spratly and Paracel Islands, the PRC is contemporaneously the target of conflicting sovereignty claims by other states. In the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, China and Taiwan are both separately challenging Japan's territorial integrity. China's dispute with India over Shaksgam Valley and parts of Aksai Chin marks the only case in which the PRC is regarded solely as the target state as India has been challenging the legitimacy of the land transfer between Pakistan and China since the early 1960s.

Secondly, in spite of its apparent territorial assertiveness, China has evidently pursued territorial peace rather than territorial expansion in the majority of its past disputes. As Fravel (2005) accentuates, China was willing to negotiate compromises – and in many cases offer substantial concessions – not just in cases in which it was initially challenging the status quo, but also in the few cases in which it had been the target, namely in disputes with Pakistan and North Korea. China's behaviour in as of yet unsettled territorial disputes, however, stands in stark contrast to the peacefully resolved cases in the past; Here, China has issued threats and even resorted to violence on several occasions to affirm its position.

The PRC's strategy in territorial disputes thus seems ambiguous as certain territorial claims have been sustained for decades while others were settled in a few years. This begs the question if China's assertive behaviour stands in connection to particular characteristics of a disputed territory. Four exogenous variables are defined below to test this hypothesis.

⁴⁹ This exemption is also made by Huth (1996) 241-242.

⁵⁰ The dichotomous classification of a disputant state as either "challenger" of the status quo or "target" of revisionist claims is widely applied in studies on territorial claims; see *ICOW* (2014); Fravel (2008); Huth (1996).

Table 1A. The PRC's Settlements in Territorial Disputes Since 1949.

Name of disputed territory*	Challenger(s)	Target(s)	Year of first claim**	Year of settlement	Terms and conditions of settlement
Wakhan Corridor; Sino-Afghan border	China	Afghanistan	1949	1963	Afghanistan retained full control over the Wakhan Corridor.
Trans-Karakorum Tract; Shaksgam Valley	Pakistan	China	1953	1962	China held the majority of the disputed territory, but nearly 2,000 sq km were transferred to Pakistan.
Aksai Chin; Eastern Ladakh	China	India	1954	1962	As a result of the 1962 border war, the Line of Actual Control (LAC) was installed to lower tensions; this settlement did not solve the dispute permanently.
Doklam; Sinchulumpa; Gieu	China	India	1966	1971	Dispute inherited by Bhutan.
Mt. Everest; Nepal-Tibet border passes	China; Nepal	Nepal; China	1959	1961	China retained half of Mt. Everest; Nepal received most passes.
Nam Wan Tract; China-Myanmar border	China	Myanmar	1949	1960	China only received a fifth of the disputed territory.
Sino District Tract	China	Laos	1960	1991	Disputed territory split evenly.
White Dragon Tail (<i>Bailongwei</i>) Island	China	South Vietnam	1955	1957	Chinese occupation withdrawn.
Sino-Vietnamese border	China	S. Vietnam; Vietnam	1956	1999	Disputed territory split evenly.
Changbai Mountain	North Korea	China	1952	1962	Sixty percent of the disputed land was transferred to North Korea.
Baytik Mountains; Hongshanzui	China	Mongolia	1949	1962	China received less than a third of the disputed land.
Amur & Ussuri River Islands	China	Russia	1954	2004	Abagaitu and Heixiazi Islands split evenly.
Russia-Xinjiang border	China	Russia	1954	1991	Disputes inherited by the Soviet successor states.
Chagan Obo; Kazakh-Xinjiang border	China	Kazakhstan	1991	1998	Nearly eighty percent of disputed territory conceded by China.
Uzengi-Kuush; Kyrgyz-Xinjiang border	China	Kyrgyzstan	1991	1999	Kyrgyzstan held two thirds of the disputed territory.
Sarykol; Pamir Mountain region	China	Tajikistan	1991	2002	China only received four percent of the disputed area of 28,000 sq km in the Pamirs; Sarykol split evenly.

* Sixteen settled disputes are listed here as opposed to Fravel's (2005; 2008) seventeen, as Hong Kong and Macau are excluded while Sino-Indian border settlements are differentiated by region in the *ICOW Project* (2014) dataset; ** The year of the first claim only refers to official claims made by the People's Republic of China both pre-emptively and in response to claims by other disputants; Disputes with Mongolia, India, Myanmar, and France during the colonization of Vietnam actually started before 1949 and were sustained by the newly founded PRC.

Table 1B. The PRC's Sustained Territorial Disputes.

Name of disputed territory*	Challenger(s)	Target(s)	Year of first claim**	Current status
Taiwan	China	Taiwan	1949	The PRC and ROC have claimed sovereignty over each other ever since the end of the Chinese Civil War.
Pescadores (<i>Penghu</i>) Islands	China	Taiwan	1949	The archipelago covers 141 sq km and forms a county under the authority of Taiwan.
Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands	China; Taiwan	Japan	1951	The Senkaku Islands belong to Japan according to international law, following the 1971 Okinawa Reversion Treaty; both China and Taiwan do not recognize the Treaty.
Spratly Islands	China; South Vietnam/Vietnam; Taiwan; Philippines; Malaysia; Brunei	China; South Vietnam/Vietnam; Taiwan; Philippines; Malaysia; Brunei	1951	Although China's claim to the Spratlys is older than any other, Vietnam is in control of most features in the Spratlys (48) followed by the Philippines and China (8 each), Malaysia (5), and Taiwan (1). Brunei does not occupy any features.
Paracel Islands	China; Vietnam (DRV; RVN)	France; Vietnam (RVN); China	1951	The Paracels encompass 23 features with a total land mass of roughly 10 sq km and have been largely under Chinese control since 1974.
Arunachal Pradesh	China	India	1949	Covering an area of approximately 90,000 sq km, this region was partially administered by Tibetan officials prior to Indian independence and is now delimited by the McMahon Line, which China does not recognize.
Sikkim	China	India	1959	Despite an informal acknowledgement by Wen Jiabao during a visit to India in 2005 that Sikkim was part of the Indian territory, Beijing has never unequivocally withdrawn its claim and border transgressions continue.
Shaksgam Valley; Aksai Chin	India	China	1962	India's claims to territory in the Kashmir region bordering Xinjiang stem from an earlier conflict with Pakistan; India does not recognize Pakistan's 1963 concession of land to China.
Doklam; Sinchulumpa; Gieu	China	Bhutan	1971	This dispute is often overshadowed by the Sino-Indian border dispute; little attention was given to the demarcation of the China-Bhutan boundary before the early 1970s; final settlement still pending.

* Nine ongoing disputes are listed here as opposed to Fravel's (2005; 2008) six, as the *ICOW Project* (2014) dataset distinguishes the Sino-Indian border conflict into three disputed territories and also includes the Pescadores (*Penghu*) Islands in the Taiwanese Strait as a disputed territory separate from Taiwan; ** see Table 1A.

In order to better understand the rationale behind China's ambiguous territorial dispute behaviour, this paper seeks to differentiate disputed territories on the basis of four exogenous variables that relate to both international and domestic issues, and may incentivize China to sustain its claim rather than seek a peaceful settlement.

Dependent variable

$y = \textit{behaviour}$: The likelihood of China displaying aggressive territorial behaviour.

The endogenous variable is coded as 0 for cases in which China demonstrates willingness to settle disputes over territory through compromise or concession by agreeing to some or all of the terms and conditions by the other claimant state. For all cases in which China demonstrates willingness to engage in bilateral negotiations, yet categorically refuses to concede territory and sustains its claim and/or occupation, the variable is set as 1. For occasions on which China refuses to compromise in any way and utilizes military force or intimidation to stake a territorial claim, the dependent variable is coded 2.

Conciliatory behaviour is expected to be more likely when the disputed territory is of little or no strategic or economic value and therefore provides no incentive for China to put bilateral relations with the target country into jeopardy; peaceful settlements are further expected to be more likely if a disputed territory is not perceived as crucial to the integrity of the Chinese nation in the perception of politicians and the Chinese public. Contrariwise, assertive behaviour is presumed to be more likely if disputed territory is deemed valuable in terms of its strategic location and/or resource endowment, or if disputed territory is relevant to the Chinese nationalist narrative. To verify these propositions, this paper tests the following four exogenous variables as possible incentives for China to sustain a territorial dispute.

Independent variables

(1) $x_1 = \textit{resources}$: The availability of energy resources in or near disputed territory.

This variable is coded as 1 for each case in which large reserves of energy/fuel resources including coal, oil and natural gas are estimated or confirmed to be located within 50 miles of land borders to a contested territory or within 200 nautical miles of disputed island territories.⁵¹ For cases in which such characteristics cannot be attributed the variable is set as 0. Coding for this variable is derived from the *ICOW* dataset. To be considered relevant,

⁵¹ This is in line with the definition of exclusive economic zones (EEZs) by UNCLOS from 1994 and analogue to Huth (1996) 257.

resources must be available – or believed to be available – in quantities large enough to cover a considerable portion of China’s own needs or generate significant export revenue.⁵²

China’s foreign policy has repeatedly raised criticism from the international community in light of what is widely referred to as a “scramble” for energy and resources across the third world, from Africa to Southeast Asia.⁵³ China’s territorial claims in the South China Sea cover areas which are estimated to hold vast reserves of natural gas which China has been promoting as a preferred energy source.⁵⁴ The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates the volume of natural gas in the region at 190trn cubic feet in addition to 11bn barrels of oil, potentially explaining China’s fierce claims.⁵⁵ However, in past boundary disputes along its Central Asian frontier – with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for instance, countries that are either confirmed or believed to be endowed with significant oil and gas reserves⁵⁶ – China conceded territory willingly and rather chose to strengthen their economic partnership through the initiation of the Shanghai Cooperation Foundation. China has since become the recipient of a substantial percentage of Kazakhstan’s crude exports.⁵⁷ Although a plausible influence at first glance, it appears that energy resources alone fail to explain China’s territorial claims in some cases, as China has secured its resource interests by means of economic cooperation through multilateral forums and institutions instead of coercive diplomacy and revisionism.

(2) $x_2 = econvalue$: The economic value of disputed territory.

This variable is coded 1 if territory is considered economically valuable, i.e. if it is fit for agricultural use in the case of disputed border land, or provides significant fishing grounds within 200 nm of disputed island territory. The variable is set 0 if no such value can be attributed. This variable follows the assumption that China consolidates territorial claims

⁵² Precise geological data on energy resources is rare as energy corporations tend not to make results of their geological surveys openly available to protect their commercial interests. Furthermore, the Chinese leadership usually base territorial claims on historical affiliation rather than on prospective resource exploitation. Therefore, coding relies mainly on contemporary news reports and geographical documents; see *ICOW Project* (31.12.2013) “Coding Manual for Territorial Claims Data”; available for download at [www.paulhensel.org/Data/terrcode.pdf].

⁵³ See Heydarian (19.03.2015) “China Dominates the Scramble for the South China Sea”; Land (16.05.2014) “SE Asian anti-China sentiment is rooted in scramble for resources”; on Africa see for example Power et al. (2012) *China’s Resource Diplomacy in Africa: Powering Development?*; Vines (2010) “The Scramble for Resources: African Case Studies”.

⁵⁴ Emmers (2013) 10-12; See also Owen and Schofield (2012) “Disputed South China Sea Hydrocarbons in Perspective”.

⁵⁵ See U.S. Energy Information Administration (03.04.2013) “Contested areas of South China Sea likely have few conventional oil and gas resources”.

⁵⁶ Full reports on Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tajik resource endowment respectively are available for download from U.S. EIA (2015) *International Energy Data and Analysis*; see also Romanowski (03.07.2014) “Central Asia’s Energy Rush”.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

depending on the economic benefits at stake. The disputed territories in the South China Sea for instance play an important role for China's fishing industry. The official government statement released by China in April 2015 states the jurisdiction over claimed islands and their surrounding waters as one of China's many responsibilities, including the enforcement of maritime laws as well as the supervision and regulation of fishing activities.⁵⁸ This has brought about regular confrontations with Vietnamese and Philippine fishing vessels in disputed waters around the Paracels and Spratlys and affected bilateral relations between the countries. Aside from fishing, the South China Sea is of further importance logistically as it is crossed by major shipping routes linking the Chinese economy to the global market.

(3) $x_3 = \textit{geostrategy}$: The geostrategic importance of disputed territory.

This variable is coded 1 if the location of territory is considered auxiliary to China's military strategy, and/or if it provides access to important routes of communication (railway or shipping). Included are locations which (a) could be developed into military defensive posts against rival states such as the US and Japan, (b) could serve as the base for offensive military operations, (c) would give China control over strategic routes of adversaries in the region, enable interference with rival military manoeuvres and critically compromise their mobility, and/or (d) include vital transportation routes or commercial shipping lanes. If such characteristics cannot be found, the variable is coded 0. The coding of this variable goes largely in accordance with the *ICOW* dataset.⁵⁹

China has openly engaged in the construction of military facilities and execution of naval exercises in the South China Sea in recent years, showing off its increasing defensive capabilities and deterring other states from challenging its authority. Geographically, the Senkakus, Paracels and Spratlys are part of a chain of islands that acts as a natural defence line against the perceived encroachment from US military forces stationed in the Pacific. China's control over these territories would incapacitate US navigation in the region and keep military vessels from getting too close to the Chinese mainland. However, as China managed to secure its vast central Asian frontier via the concession of disputed border land and was subsequently able to diminish US influence in the former Soviet countries by means of diplomatic and economic partnerships rather than intimidation or escalation of force, the causal mechanisms of China's uncompromising behaviour in the East and South China Seas may be influenced by additional factors beyond geostrategy that require closer attention.

⁵⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (09.04.2015).

⁵⁹ For detailed information on the coding rules refer to *ICOW Project* (31.12.2014) 11.

(4) $x_4 = \textit{nationalism}$: Territorial claim as means to evoke Chinese nationalism.

This variable tries to capture whether or not the post-1989 rise in nationalism may have an impact on China's territorial dispute behaviour. The variable is coded as a 1 if (a) media narratives on disputed territory are shaped noticeably by polemic, defaming language toward the other claimant state (e.g. Japan or Taiwan) while placing emphasis on the legitimacy of China's strategy through leading motives such as "sovereignty" and "national integrity"; and (b) if disputed territory is covered noticeably more frequently and intensively than other concurrent foreign or domestic policy issues by Chinese news media. The variable is set as 0 if these characteristics could not be observed.

As the notion of Chinese foreign diplomacy being informed considerably by the CCP's domestic interests constitutes a relatively recent hypothesis, empirical evidence is still rather difficult to come by. Information for the coding of this variable is derived from case-specific literature, Chinese media coverage, as well as government rhetoric in official releases regarding past and ongoing disputes. The country's largest print media agency, Xinhua News Agency, and the main television broadcaster, China Central TV (CCTV), not only address by far the largest audiences out of all media outlets in China, but also operate under close supervision of the government.⁶⁰ Hence, their shaping of historical narratives and generating of controversy through journalistic coverage of territorial disputes is taken as an indicator of China's government-controlled media diplomacy to invoke nationalist sentiments among the population through the sustainment of territorial claims against rival states.

China's foreign policy course over the past decades has arguably been informed to some extent by the regime's attempt to divert attention from domestic grievances – for example with regard to deep-rooted government corruption and misrepresentation of ethnic minorities – by putting blame on foreign adversaries. China's long-standing rivalry with Japan in particular has been fuelled by the territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and media coverage thereof, which has facilitated anti-Japanese sentiments among some parts of the population on several occasions and consolidated regime legitimacy.⁶¹ Although the territory in dispute appears to be of limited value in terms of potential for infrastructure and land development let alone civilization, nationalism seems to be a significant factor in China's sustainment of the dispute, especially since Taiwan is involved as a claimant party in the dispute as well. In accordance with the academic literature on Chinese nationalism, this variable is expected to be less relevant in territorial disputes prior to 1989.

⁶⁰ See Zhang (2014) "Fanning the Flames of Public Rage: Coverage of the Diaoyu Islands Dispute in Chinese Legacy Media", 82-83.

⁶¹ Ibid, 90-93; Emmers (2013) 36-39; see also Downs and Saunders (1998).

IV. Empirical Results and Case Analysis

The abovementioned variables as observed for each of China's settled and unsettled territorial disputes since 1949 are depicted below. Table 2A lists all territorial disputes China was willing to settle through compromise or concession. The dependent variable is coded 0 accordingly for each of the sixteen cases. Furthermore, two independent variables – energy resources and nationalism – are coded 0 for the entire sample, as none of the disputed territories showed any significant evidence for the presence of either. Only two territories are coded as economically valuable; Sino-Mongolian and Sino-Russian borderland, of which China eventually conceded large portions in the early 1960s and early 1990s, respectively.

Twelve out of sixteen disputed territories are confirmed to be of strategic importance to China, either due to vital border passes in the region, or as suitable locations for the establishment of military posts. However, it seems the geostrategic merits of disputed territory alone did not necessarily provide enough incentive for China to sustain a territorial claim rather than negotiate a settlement. China's active territorial disputes, as Table 2B illustrates, show a noticeable contrast regarding the observed characteristics of each contested territory.

Table 2A. China's Behaviour in Settled Disputes.

Disputed Territory	y=behaviour	x ₁ =resources	x ₂ =econvalue	x ₃ =geostrategy	x ₄ =nationalism
Wakhan Corridor	0	0	0	0	0
Trans-Karakorum Tract; Shaksgam Valley	0	0	0	1	0
Aksai Chin; Eastern Ladakh	0	0	0	1	0
Doklam; Sinchulumpa; Gieu	0	0	0	1	0
Mt. Everest; Nepal border	0	0	0	1	0
Nam Wan Tract	0	0	0	1	0
Sino District Tract	0	0	0	0	0
White Dragon Tail Island	0	0	0	1	0
Sino-Vietnamese border	0	0	0	0	0
Changbai Mountain	0	0	0	1	0
Baytik Mts.; Hongshanzui	0	0	1	0	0
Amur & Ussuri Islands	0	0	0	1	0
Russia-Xinjiang border	0	0	1	1	0
Kazakh-Xinjiang border	0	0	0	1	0
Kyrgyz-Xinjiang border	0	0	0	1	0
Tajik-Xinjiang border	0	0	0	1	0

Table 2B. China's Behaviour in Sustained Disputes.

Disputed Territory	y=behaviour	x ₁ =resources	x ₂ =econvalue	x ₃ =geostrategy	x ₄ =nationalism
Taiwan	2	0	1	1	1
Penghu Islands	2	0	0	1	1
Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands	2	1	0	1	1
Spratly Islands	2	1	1	1	1
Paracel Islands	2	1	1	1	1
India: Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	1	1	0
India: Sikkim	1	0	0	1	0
India: Shaksgam Valley; Aksai Chin	2	0	0	1	1
Bhutan: Doklam; Sinchulumpa; Gieu	1	0	0	0	0

China has demonstrated coercive behaviour in six out of nine ongoing territorial disputes, either resorting to military force – such as in the disputes over Taiwan in the 1950s and 1990s, as well as the Paracel Islands in the 1970s and Spratly Islands in the 1980s – or threatening other claimants with military consequences for challenging China's territorial status. Although the PRC has shown an interest in shelving the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands with Japan in favour of joint resource development, Japanese territorial claims have been reciprocated by China with military deterrence. In three of its active disputes China has shown willingness to negotiate terms for a settlement, albeit without compromising its claim.

Seven contested territories are coded positive for at least two exogenous variables; Exemptions are the Indian state Sikkim, which is only considered strategically relevant and has not been claimed by China since 2005, as well as contested areas in Bhutan, for which none of the four characteristics apply. As the China-Bhutan dispute has not been the centre of much political attention since the 1970s, it shall be regarded as an outlier in this study.

Three territories exhibit significant resource endowments, namely the contested inland groups in the East and South China Seas. Four territories are considered as economically valuable due to rich fishing grounds (Paracels and Spratlys) or agricultural conditions (Taiwan and Arunachal Pradesh). Six territories are incorporated in the Chinese nationalist narrative, coinciding with China's use of force (or threat thereof) in each of these disputes. Similar to Table 2A, the strategic location of territory constitutes the most commonly observed characteristic, manifest in every case aside from Bhutan.

Four territories are coded 1 for at least three variables, including China's most entrenched disputes over Taiwan, the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, Paracel Islands, and Spratly Islands. The

latter two territories display all four variables, thus offering various potential incentives for China's assertive behaviour. The following section dissects three as of yet unsettled territorial disputes – over regions along the Sino-Indian border, the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea as well as the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea – in order to illustrate the effects of fuel resources, economic value, geostrategy and nationalism on China's behaviour in these disputes and derive some implications from these ongoing territorial conflicts for China's future international relations.

i. The Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute

China's territorial dispute with India concerns three sectors along the Sino-Indian border that add up to as much as 128,000 sq km of contested land.⁶² The western sector comprises Aksai Chin, an area of approximately 38,000 sq km bordering Xinjiang and Tibet that has been largely under Chinese occupation since the early 1950s and is regarded as an important region for China partially due to the Xinjiang-Tibet highway.⁶³ Most confrontations between Chinese and Indian border patrols have occurred in this sector. The middle sector covers around 2,000 sq km in the border triangle of India, Tibet and Nepal, and marks the least disputed territory, despite the existence of several strategic border passes in the region.⁶⁴ The eastern sector is by far the largest, encompassing most of the Indian state Arunachal Pradesh, roughly 90,000 sq km in size. India contends the McMahon Line drawn by Britain in 1914 to be the official frontier demarcation line in this area, which China rejects.⁶⁵ However, China has repeatedly offered territorial concessions in the eastern sector in return for India's renunciation of Aksai Chin, which has likewise been dismissed by India.⁶⁶ China's rationale in the decentralized boundary dispute with India appears to centre on striking a balance between the consolidation of influence in the region on one hand, and economic cooperation on the other. Nationalist conviction on both sides plays a minor role in the sustainment of the issue.

The Sino-Indian boundary dispute emerged in the two countries' early existence as newly formed states in 1950, when India and the PRC both moved to establish control over their borderlands which had not received much attention from either side previously due to the

⁶² Kondapalli (2015) 90; Other sources put the total area at 125,000 sq km. See for example Fravel (2008) 326-327; Sidhu and Yuan (2001) 353.

⁶³ Fravel (2008) 327; Huth (1996) 227; Kondapalli (2015) 91-92.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 92-93; Fravel (2008) 326-327.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Kondapalli (2015) 93-94, 105.

inaccessibility of the Himalayan terrain.⁶⁷ Although parts of the western sector had been administered by Tibet prior to its annexation by China, no official boundary demarcation was ever put in place as a clear divide between Indian and Chinese sovereignty. As of today, the Sino-Indian frontier is theoretically defined by the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that was initially established in the western sector in 1962 following an escalation of violence in the dispute, and extended to the entire Sino-Indian border in 1993.⁶⁸ However, the LAC has proven to be practically ineffective as a long-term guarantor of peace as it does not prevent frequent forays by Chinese troops into Indian territory, and subsequent stand-offs with Indian patrols continue to put a strain on the resolution of the boundary issue.⁶⁹

China has sustained the territorial dispute with India through the use of force on three occasions in 1962, 1967 and 1986. Tensions had been building up steadily between 1953 and 1959 as both sides sought to consolidate their territorial claims via increased military presence along the disputed border.⁷⁰ Following the PLA's crackdown on the 1959 Tibetan revolt, India deployed a large number of troops to the western sector as a countermeasure against Chinese dominance and first confrontations ensued. By the end of 1961 India had increased the number of outposts in both the western and eastern sectors by seventy, some of which were located even beyond the McMahon Line, a point at which China – already struggling with domestic instability – started to initiate a large-scale counteroffensive that was executed in 1962 and saw China re-establish authority over contested territory in the west.⁷¹ After the Indian troops had been repelled, tensions were exacerbated as India nearly doubled their presence. The border dispute once more escalated in 1967 over a mountain pass in the central sector when the PLA carried out an attack, leaving 32 Chinese and 65 Indian troops dead.⁷² In the two decades thereafter, the dispute cooled down as both sides largely retreated from the border and created a neutral zone.

Between 1981 and 1987 Chinese and Indian representatives met for eight rounds of bilateral talks on the border dispute during which conditions for a settlement were discussed but no major agreements reached.⁷³ Rapprochement in the negotiations was thrown back considerably in 1986 when China occupied an Indian seasonal outpost in Samdorong Chu in

⁶⁷ Fravel (2008) 326.

⁶⁸ Kondapalli (2015) 90.

⁶⁹ Particular tensions arose in April 2013 when PLA troops entered Indian territory in eastern Ladakh and refused to leave after being detected. While the incident did not lead to an escalation of force and Beijing later even denied that the incursion had happened, several hundred similar incidents are reported by India each year; see Ratner and Sullivan (04.05.2013) “The Most Dangerous Border in the World”; see also Kondapalli (2015) 103-104.

⁷⁰ Fravel (2007) 68.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 68-70.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 71.

⁷³ For a detailed list of all diplomatic encounters see Kondapalli (2015) 95-96.

the eastern sector. China deemed the outpost a threat to the status quo as it had been set up in close proximity to the McMahon Line in an area that had been vacated since 1962. Talks were held over the incident in 1987 and the border dispute stabilized. Bilateral relations have been on the mend since and several joint working group meetings have taken place throughout the 1990s and 2000s.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, prospects for a formal settlement appear dim in light of ongoing transgressions by PLA troops in the disputed sectors as well as in Sikkim, despite the fact that the Indian state was acknowledged as such by Chinese then-Premier Wen Jiabao in 2005 and cross-border trade between Tibet and Sikkim opened.⁷⁵ China's territorial dispute behaviour toward India thus appears to follow a two-sided strategy, seeking conciliation through bilateral dialogue while simultaneously sustaining claims through wilful border transgressions.

China remains particularly assertive in the western sector as Aksai Chin links Tibet and Xinjiang in an otherwise largely underdeveloped and impassable region.⁷⁶ Moreover, Beijing regards control over the western sector as a prerequisite condition for relative stability in Tibet, where the 2008 Lhasa uprisings only mark the latest in a series of violent episodes since its annexation. China's behaviour in frontier disputes, as Fravel (2008) accentuates, has historically been influenced by regime insecurity in regions prone to ethnic unrest, which explains why the PRC has been keen to reach a compromise in the western sector since the late 1950s, even offering to concede the disputed parts of Arunachal Pradesh in a swap.⁷⁷ This region is important for India as a riparian state of the Brahmaputra River, vital to the lives of millions but threatened by extensive dam construction on the Chinese side.⁷⁸ While India has formally acknowledged Tibet as part of China in response to China's concession of Sikkim, its position with regard to Aksai Chin has remained firm. Furthermore, India continues to demonstrate solidarity with the exiled Tibet government, much to the chagrin of Beijing.⁷⁹ A diplomatic solution to the boundary dispute seems to be inhibited by nationalist narratives on both sides, as China and India each hold conflicting views on their respective spheres of influence in the Himalayan region.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Kondapalli (2015) 95-98.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 103.

⁷⁶ For a detailed map of the Xinjiang-Tibet Highway crossing the western border junction see Fravel (2008) 179.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 93-96.

⁷⁸ Ratner and Sullivan (04.05.2013).

⁷⁹ *Ibid*; see also Parashar (18.04.2013) "India to press China further over building dams on Brahmaputra".

⁸⁰ See Astarita (05.02.2013) "China-India Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Decoding Border Disputes with Critical Junctures"; Kondapalli (2015) 104-105.

Despite the sustainment of their territorial claims, China and India have significantly improved economic cooperation in the twenty-first century with bilateral trade expected to reach a volume of \$100bn for the year 2015.⁸¹ In addition, both countries have become more active in multilateral forums. China was admitted as an observer state in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, whereas India is designated to assume full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2016.⁸² Commenting on the latter development, Chinese President Xi Jinping described the SCO's success in establishing a "new model of international relations" based on "partnership instead of alliance".⁸³ This suggests that China may generally be inclined to promote bilateral cooperation, notwithstanding certain diplomatic differences. Even though China and India have both increased their military defence spending in the disputed border junctions in recent years, no imminent escalation is to be expected as both countries have agreed to consolidate their relations through cooperative monitoring and joint development of new cross-border trading routes.⁸⁴

ii. The Multilateral Dispute Over the Spratly Islands

Covering an area of approximately five square kilometres, the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea are made up of over 230 islets, reefs, and rocks.⁸⁵ International law does not officially determine sovereignty over the islands which are currently contested – wholly or partially – by six states: China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei.⁸⁶ All claimant states with the exception of Brunei have established physical control over one or more features in the Spratlys: Taiwan holds the largest feature, Taiping Island, approximately half a square kilometre in size, while forty-eight smaller features are occupied by Vietnam, eight by China and the Philippines respectively, and five by Malaysia.⁸⁷ The disputed territory is considered strategically important as more than half of the world's annual cargo volume is shipped through the South China Sea.⁸⁸ Rich fishing grounds and potentially enormous reserves in energy resources further add value to the Spratlys and their surrounding waters.

⁸¹ Saxena (22.06.2012) "India, China bilateral trade set to hit \$100 billion by 2015".

⁸² Panda (07.07.2015) "India and Pakistan Are Set to Join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. So What?".

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Kondapalli (2015) 104; for more background on cooperative monitoring measures see Sidhu and Yuan (2001).

⁸⁵ Fravel (2008) 333.

⁸⁶ Ibid.; see also Emmers (2010) *Geopolitics and Maritime Territorial Disputes in East Asia*, 65-86; Catley and Keliat (1997) *Spratlys: The Dispute in the South China Sea*, 26; In addition, Indonesia – while not officially laying claim to the Spratlys – recently announced plans for a new military base to safeguard the country's territorial integrity near the South China Sea, arguably motivated to an extent by China's maritime border demarcation line overlapping with Indonesia's exclusive economic zone; see Parameswaran (17.07.2015) "A New Indonesia Military Base Near the South China Sea?".

⁸⁷ See Austin (18.06.2015).

⁸⁸ Emmers (2013) 52.

China's sovereignty claims in the region are delineated by the so-called "nine-dashed line", an interrupted line employed for the first time by the Nationalist government in 1947 that comprises virtually the entire South China Sea.⁸⁹ China contends that its historical ties to the Spratly Islands, located more than 500 miles away from the Chinese mainland, can be traced as far back as to the second century, thus granting China ownership of the islands by principle of first discovery.⁹⁰ Following Japan's post-war renouncement of sovereignty over the Spratlys and Paracels in 1951, then-Premier Zhou Enlai formalized China's claims to both territories. While unable to capitalize on the archipelago's unclear status at the time and promptly establish control over the islands, China has been upholding its territorial claim ever since.

The Vietnamese claim to the Spratlys is similarly based on historical involvement with the islands, which supposedly goes back to the fifteenth century.⁹¹ Although Hanoi had recognized China's sovereignty over the disputed territory prior to the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, historical claims were reaffirmed thereafter, referring to Vietnam's administration of the Spratly Islands in past centuries. In 1971 the Philippines officially laid claim to fifty-three features in the Spratlys under the name Kalayaan, and in 1978 these were incorporated in the Philippine province of Palawan. In the same year Malaysia joined the dispute by claiming ownership of twelve islets located in the southern part of the archipelago, citing the principle of continental shelf extension in lieu of historical affiliation.⁹² Following that same strategy, Brunei is the most recent state to have entered the territorial dispute, claiming sovereignty over Louisa Reef based on the legal foundations established through UNCLOS in 1982 regarding the extension of coastal territory seaward.⁹³ In spite of Brunei's claim, Louisa Reef has been under Malaysian control since 1984. While the territorial dispute over the Spratly Islands has evolved into a complicated web of conflicting multilateral claims from the 1970s onward, China and Vietnam are regarded as the two principal disputants.⁹⁴

Following the occupation of a variety of features by Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines, China retired its passive strategy in 1988 and established physical control over six features with plans to seize another three, fuelling a fierce competition with Vietnam that culminated

⁸⁹ Emmers (2013) 53; The "nine-dashed line" has never been defined with regard to the precise claims it represents and is not supported by international maritime law, leaving room for varying interpretations; see Fravel (2011) 294-295.

⁹⁰ Catley and Keliat (1997) 24; Emmers (2013) 52-53.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁹² Catley and Keliat (1997) 35; Buszynski and Sazlan (2007) "Maritime Claims and Energy Cooperation in the South China Sea", 147; Emmers (2013) 54.

⁹³ *Ibid.*; See also Joyner (2002) "The Spratly Islands Dispute: Legal Issues and Prospects for Diplomatic Accommodation", 20-21.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21; For a detailed account on the conflicting views held by each actor involved in the dispute see also Saleem (2000) "The Spratly Islands Dispute: China Defines the New Millennium", 536-542.

in a violent clash over Johnson Reef, killing 74 Vietnamese.⁹⁵ China sustained its coercive behaviour until the 1994 occupation of Mischief Reef, after which it switched to a more moderate strategy again in an attempt to prevent diplomatic relations in the region from deteriorating even further than they already had. Exploratory talks between China and Vietnam regarding the de-escalation of the territorial dispute and joint development of energy resources took place in 1994-95, but no concrete agreements were reached.⁹⁶

When the ASEAN bloc countries began to set up a code of conduct for the disputed territories in the South China Sea in the early 1990s, based on the 1976 Treaty of Amity of Cooperation (TAC) and intended to provide guidelines for interstate conflict management under reference to shared international norms and principles such as non-interference and peaceful dispute settlement, China joined the discussion.⁹⁷ Beijing did not initially comply with the 1992 multilateral Declaration on the South China Sea – maintaining their sovereignty claim and stating repeatedly that China would engage in bilateral talks over the territorial dispute if anything – but eventually began to acknowledge ASEAN norms late in the 1990s in order to enable economic and diplomatic partnerships in Southeast Asia and do away with China’s increasingly dark portrayal as a regional security threat.⁹⁸ China signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in 2002 and the TAC in 2003, followed by a surge in regional cooperation agreements including the 2005 Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) co-signed by China, the Philippines and Vietnam.⁹⁹ However, the agreement collapsed only three years later as the Philippines refused to extend the JMSU, firmly criticizing China’s sustained sovereignty claims to the Spratly Islands.¹⁰⁰

China’s assertive behaviour in the Spratly Islands dispute is reflective of several interests, mainly revolving around potentially “huge economic and military benefits” from controlling the islands.¹⁰¹ Chinese estimations of hydrocarbon reserves in the South China Sea put the volume of oil and natural gas at up to 220bn barrels and 2,000trn cubic feet respectively, which, if accurate, would eclipse China’s inland resources.¹⁰² While such vast figures are widely regarded as blown out of proportion – estimates by the U.S. Energy Information

⁹⁵ Fravel (2011) 298; see also Fravel (2008) 294-296; Studeman (1998) “Calculating China’s Advances in the South China Sea: Identifying the Triggers of ‘Expansionism’”.

⁹⁶ Emmers (2013) 61

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*; see also Roy (1994); Odgaard (2003) “The South China Sea: ASEAN’s Security Concerns about China”.

⁹⁹ Buszynski and Sazlan (2007) 163-164; Emmers (2013) 62; Fravel (2011) 299.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; Emmers (2013) 63.

¹⁰¹ Liu Huaqing, as cited in Fravel (2011) 296.

¹⁰² Emmers (2013) 55; See also Buszynski and Sazlan (2007) 156; Kreil (2002) “Energy Issues in the South China Sea Region”, 43.

Administration for example amount to only about ten percent of the PRC's numbers – the pursuit of energy resources still provides an obvious explanation for territorial and maritime claims made by China as well as the other disputants.¹⁰³ The exact amount of viable oil and gas reserves, as Emmers (2013) remarks, appears not to be as important as the perception of their very existence.¹⁰⁴ It is hardly a coincidence that the multilateral territorial dispute over the Spratly Islands erupted only after international oil companies had begun to conduct seismic surveys in the South China Sea from the 1960s onwards, and by the 1990s most claimant states were actively involved in offshore exploration.¹⁰⁵

China's strategy since the mid-1990s has been to issue formal objections to any commercial activities by other claimant states, including hydrocarbon exploration and fishing, and to exercise its self-proclaimed jurisdiction by policing the disputed maritime space around the islands. Over the last decade, China has confronted a large number of fishing vessels, mostly Vietnamese, in waters around the Spratly and Paracel Islands, detaining hundreds of fishermen in total and killing several.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, multinational energy companies that were awarded concessions for oil exploration by other disputant states in the past two decades have repeatedly been threatened to cease any surveying activities in areas claimed to be within the Chinese EEZ.¹⁰⁷

In order to strengthen its position in the territorial dispute over the Spratlys, China has increased its military presence in recent years, most notably through the construction of military ports and buildings, as well as a fully operative 10,000-foot airstrip on Fiery Cross Reef in the western part of the archipelago.¹⁰⁸ In total, China has been piling up seven new islets since 2014, most of them now apparently complete with expansions of Mischief Reef and Subi Reef still ongoing.¹⁰⁹ Alarmed by the exceptional speed at which China has been reclaiming submerged reefs for strategic use, other claimants have repeatedly condemned China's island-building activities, as have the major naval powers in the region, US and

¹⁰³ U.S. Energy Information Administration (03.04.2013); Kreil (2002) 42; Buszynski and Sazlan (2007) 156; Emmers (2013) 55-56; For a detailed assessment on hydrocarbon resources in the South China Sea see Owen and Schofield (2012).

¹⁰⁴ Emmers (2013) 56.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid; Fravel (2008) 296-297; see also Dzurek (1996) "The Spratly Islands Dispute: Who's on First?"

¹⁰⁶ Fravel (2011) 305.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 301-303, 306-307.

¹⁰⁸ See Watkins (31.07.2015) "What China Has Been Building in the South China Sea" for excellent maps and satellite imagery of ongoing (multilateral) construction efforts in the Spratlys, including illustrative time-lapse footage of Fiery Cross Reef; see also Lee (16.03.2015) "China's New Military Installations in the Disputed Spratly Islands: Satellite Image Update" for a detailed analysis of China's land reclamation activities.

¹⁰⁹ Watkins (31.07.2015); See also Ministry of Foreign Affairs (16.06.2015) "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Remarks on Issues Relating to China's Construction Activities on the Nansha Islands and Reefs"; According to the official statement, China's activities in the Spratlys were expected to be complete in June 2015.

Japan.¹¹⁰ While China's strategy in the Spratly Islands has been met with international outrage, however, it should be noted that Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Taiwan have all been undertaking island expansion efforts of their own – albeit on a considerably smaller scale than China – and had already built airfields in the Spratlys before China's installation on Fiery Cross Reef was reported.¹¹¹ Vietnam and Taiwan in particular have been investing in new military reinforcements of their occupied features recently.¹¹² Although no other disputant has been operating at a capacity even close to that of China in terms of island redevelopment, China has not made any additional advances to occupy new features in the last two decades while the number of features occupied by Vietnam has doubled since 1996, putting China's alleged revisionism into perspective.¹¹³

Nonetheless, US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter maintained in a speech during the 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue that China had reclaimed more than 2,000 acres, exceeding all other claimant states combined, and demanded that all claimants halt their activities and work out a Code of Conduct between China and ASEAN.¹¹⁴ China, however, has repeatedly and in no uncertain terms declared, both through official press releases as well as state media, that it will not tolerate any US interference in the South China Sea issue, accusing the US of playing a militarizing rather than mediating role in the dispute, while paradoxically continuing to build up its own military capabilities.¹¹⁵ Apparently unfazed by dissent from the international community, it seems unlikely that China will alter its uncompromising position in future years.

iii. The Dispute Over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands

The Senkaku Islands are a group of islets and barren rocks covering an area of under seven square kilometres with circumjacent maritime space of about 11,700 sq nm, and are situated in the East China Sea approximately 120 nautical miles to the northeast of Taiwan, 200 nm off the coast of mainland China and 200 nm southwest of Okinawa Island.¹¹⁶ Considered valuable for their strategic location near important maritime routes for

¹¹⁰ See *World Politics Review* (13.02.2015); Rosenberg (27.05.2015) “U.S. Rebukes China on Efforts to Build Artificial Islands”.

¹¹¹ Watkins (31.07.2015); Lee (16.03.2015).

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Austin (18.06.2015); see also Austin (11.06.2015) “Intelligence Check: Just How ‘Preposterous’ Are China’s South China Sea Activities?”.

¹¹⁴ See US Department of Defense (30.05.2015) “IISS Shangri-La Dialogue: ‘A Regional Security Architecture Where Everyone Rises’”; Full speech available at [<http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Article/606676>].

¹¹⁵ See Ministry of National Defense (30.07.2015) “Defense Ministry Spokesperson Yang Yujun's regular press conference on July 30, 2015”, English translation available at [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/TopNews/2015-07/30/content_4611958.htm]; see also Mortimer (25.05.2015) “US warned by Chinese media to stop meddling or ‘war will be inevitable’”.

¹¹⁶ Emmers (2013) 33, 39.

commercial and military vessels, as well as a supposed abundance of natural resources in their immediate vicinity, the Senkakus are the subject of a trilateral dispute between the PRC, Taiwan and Japan. Beyond geostrategy and resource endowment, China's behaviour in this territorial dispute is considerably influenced by nationalism.

China and Japan each base their claims on historical belonging. In the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 the Senkaku Islands, along with Taiwan, were officially ceded to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which was reversed nearly half a century later in 1943 in the Cairo Declaration.¹¹⁷ Following Japan's surrender at the end of World War II in 1945, the Potsdam Declaration issued by the US, UK and China constrained Japan's authority to its four main islands Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. The San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 saw Japan step back from its claim over Taiwan. However, the US retained control over the Senkaku Islands which had not been explicitly defined in either of the treaties above.¹¹⁸ Hence, Japan has sustained their territorial claim to this day, arguing that none of the treaties are relevant to the dispute. In 1971 the Okinawa Reversion Treaty was signed by the US and Japan, officially turning over both Okinawa Island and the Senkaku Islands to Japanese sovereignty. China rejects the reversion, maintaining that Japan's annexation of the islands in 1895 had been illegal in the first place. The Diaoyu Islands, as China refers to the contested territory, are argued to have belonged to China since the 14th century Ming Dynasty, a claim supported by the historic works of various writers and cartographers, both Chinese and foreign.¹¹⁹

Notably, as Suganuma (2000) writes, the territorial dispute over the Senkakus reached its high level of intensity only after a UN geological survey was widely publicized in the late 1960s that estimated large reserves in oil and gas in the area surrounding the islands – potentially on par with the reserves in the Persian Gulf – whereas the islands did not seem to have any value to either China or Japan before the publication.¹²⁰ Shortly after the seismic study of the East China Sea had been conducted, the PRC renewed its claim over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands as an indisputable part of the Chinese territory, for the first time also including adjacent maritime space, while Japan began to evaluate drilling rights in the area.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Emmers (2013) 34.

¹¹⁸ Ibid; For more background and analysis see Blanchard (2001) "The U.S. Role in the Sino-Japanese Dispute Over the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands, 1945-1971".

¹¹⁹ See for instance Zhang (2014) 88-89.

¹²⁰ Suganuma (2000) *Sovereign Rights and Territorial Space in Sino-Japanese Relations: Irredentism and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands*, 124-130; Su (2005) "The Territorial Dispute over the Tiaoyu/Senkaku Islands: An Update", 47; Fravel (2008) 276; Emmers (2013) 40.

¹²¹ Ibid. 36, 40-41.

After objections from China all exploration efforts were put on hold in the early 1970s and the territorial dispute was shelved in favour of improving bilateral relations with China's then-Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping declaring that the following generation may find an acceptable solution to the dispute.¹²² Nevertheless, China and Japan went on to sign separate resource exploration schemes with international oil companies in the East China Sea in the years after, each side condemning the other's activities, and tensions prevailed. As of 2015 both China and Japan still claim ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and no offer for compromise let alone concession has ever been extended by either side. The territorial dispute has caused severe diplomatic frictions as well as confrontations between China and Japan and has been a catalyst for strong anti-Japanese sentiments in China, a fact which the Chinese government is argued to have used to their advantage on several occasions to divert public attention from grievances against domestic policies and instead strengthen their image as a legitimate regime.¹²³

The territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands reached a boiling point in 2005 after Japan had taken control over a lighthouse on Uotsuri/Diaoyu Island, the largest feature of the island group. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately came forward with a statement, scolding Japan's unilateral actions as illegal and a serious violation of China's territorial integrity, and later went on to call Japan's behaviour "a severe provocation to the interests of China as well as the norms governing international relations".¹²⁴ The lighthouse incident and the PRC's reaffirmation of sovereignty over the disputed islands were accompanied by a series of anti-Japanese riots in major cities across China that erupted once more in 2012 following the perhaps most severe upset in the Sino-Japanese dispute yet: In August Japanese forces arrested fourteen Hong Kong activists who had landed on Uotsuri/Diaoyu Island to affirm China's claim to the territory, after Japan had announced its plan to purchase the Senkaku/Diaoyu group from their private owners. In response to the initial announcement the Chinese government had declared the plan to be against international law and a violation of "the feelings of 1.3 billion Chinese people".¹²⁵ Following news of the

¹²² See Pan (2007) "Sino-Japanese Dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands: The Pending Controversy from the Chinese Perspective", 74; Emmers (2013) 36.

¹²³ Ibid, 37; Zhang (2014) 81-82.

¹²⁴ Pan (2007) 76.

¹²⁵ Zhang (2014) 81, 86-87; A lot of the initial *Xinhua News* coverage of the event has since been removed from the website; for instance Xu (26.07.2012) "Japan Heads Down Dangerous Path with Provocative Moves"; Sun (26.07.2012) "China Expresses 'Serious Concern' over Japanese PM's Remarks about the Diaoyu Islands"; Li (10.11.2012) "Chinese Minister Presses Japan to Correct Mistakes over the Island Dispute".

arrest, China once more affirmed their territorial claim and issued a statement demanding the activists' release.¹²⁶

The incident caused public outrage across China with nationalist protesters gathering at the Japanese embassy in Beijing and on the streets in various other cities, waving Chinese flags and chanting anti-Japanese slogans.¹²⁷ Particular explosiveness was added to the event by the fact that August 15 marked the 67th anniversary of Japan's surrender, and in some isolated cases protesters directed their rage openly against Japanese products, vandalizing restaurants, stores, and cars.¹²⁸ What was most remarkable about the incident, however, was the government's initially silent reaction to the riots before issuing a lukewarm statement condemning the violence, leading some to suggest that Beijing stood in support of the nationalist sentiment.¹²⁹ Moreover, Chinese (state) media coverage cited various international voices in support of China's position and critical towards Japan throughout the dispute, emphasizing the message to the public that China's behaviour was reasonable and legitimate.¹³⁰

Since the beginning of Xi Jinping's Presidency China has strengthened its military presence in the East China Sea and held naval training exercises to demonstrate its determination to defend its territory if necessary. In a publication titled "The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces" China claims that neighbouring states are responsible for complications in the dispute and openly criticizes Japan for "making trouble over the issue of the Diaoyu Islands".¹³¹ Anti-Japanese rhetoric was employed with particular clarity by Chinese state-run media after Tokyo's passage of new security legislation in July 2015, which, once approved by the upper house, would enable Japan's military to partake in collective self-defence overseas even without being directly under attack.¹³² While Japan by Prime Minister Abe's own admission seeks to consolidate national security, concerns are raised in China over

¹²⁶ Bai (15.08.2012) "China to Lodge Complaints with Japan Over the Arrest of Hong Kong Activists"; Hou (15.08.2012) "Urgent: China Asks Japan Not to Endanger the Safety of Chinese Citizens".

¹²⁷ See *Xinhua News* (16.08.2012) "Demonstrations Grow Over Diaoyu Islands"; Zhang (2014) 90.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ See for instance Yu (22.08.2012) "Inside China: Anti-Japanese Protests Turn Violent"; Zhang (2014) 91.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 94, 107-108.

¹³¹ See "The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces", chapter 3, *White Papers of the Government* [http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2013-04/16/content_28556880.htm].

¹³² See for instance *Xinhua News* (16.07.2015) "China voices stern concern over Japan's security bills"; Tiezzi (17.07.2015) "China: Japan Security Legislation a 'Nightmare Scenario'"; For comprehensive analysis of Japan's national security policies and their impact on Sino-Japanese relations see Smith (2015) *Intimate Rivals: Japanese Domestic Politics and a Rising China*.

Japan's future military conduct.¹³³ Despite China's geographic proximity to the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and increasing military power in the region posing a challenge to Japan and its sovereignty over the archipelago, Japan's military capacities still exceed any other Asian state including China by a considerable margin.¹³⁴ Yet, China has not offered any indication of retreat from their claim thus far and has instead been actively promoting the militarization of the dispute, which fuels bilateral tensions and arguably puts a settlement out of reach for years to come.¹³⁵ The territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands is complicated considerably by the dark history of Sino-Japanese relations, and prevailing nationalist sentiments seem to be a significant motivator for the sustainment of China's claim.

V. Discussion

The above analysis suggests that China's ambiguous behaviour in active territorial disputes can be attributed to a multitude of factors, relating to both international and domestic issues. While China was willing to settle most of its territorial disputes peacefully throughout the twentieth century, a number of disputes have been sustained in pursuit of different interests and with varying degrees of aggression. This section provides a brief discussion of the insights and limitations of the analysis of China's territorial assertiveness, as well as potential implications on China's future accommodation within the Asian security landscape and international relations at large.

This paper finds that seven of nine territories currently contested by China provide more than one potential incentive to assert ownership, usually extending beyond geostrategic considerations. China sustains disputes over territory along its land borders with India and Bhutan respectively, three island territories plus maritime space in the South and East China Seas, as well as two offshore territories, Taiwan and the Penghu Islands, which the PRC has long sought to reunify with the mainland. Geostrategic location constitutes the most commonly observed variable among the four tested and applies to eight ongoing disputes. Still, the explanatory power of this variable in regard to China's territorial assertiveness appears relatively limited as it can also be found for most territories conceded by China in the

¹³³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (16.07.2015) "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Remarks on Japan's House of Representatives Approving New Security Bills"; Full translation available at [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1281847.shtml].

¹³⁴ Emmers (2013) 46; Fravel (2007) 82.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

past. This is predominantly due to the inherent imperfection of dichotomous coding, as the variable captures a territory's strategic value in terms of its geography and relevance for the development of military infrastructure in general, but does not specify the extent of China's perceived strategic gain in each case and thus does not carry such clear implications for China's sustainment of territorial claims in itself. However, when complemented by variables for energy resources, economic value, as well as nationalist motives, the analysis suggests that China's actively contested territories can be distinguished from those to which China eventually withdrew its claims under varying settlement conditions.

Five contested territories exhibit either energy resources or economic value; the Paracel and Spratly Islands display both. Although the Chinese leadership typically refrain from publicly disclosing China's economic interests in the context of territorial disputes, extensive resource exploration and fishery activities have been observed in the South China Sea since the 1990s. Philippine and Vietnamese fishing vessels have been harassed, detained or sunk on a number of occasions, in some instances causing fatal casualties. China's aggressive sustainment of territorial claims in the South China Sea thus appears to be driven not just by military strategy but also by the economic benefits at stake, as has been acknowledged by high-ranking PLAN personnel.¹³⁶ In fact, China's offshore disputes intensified noticeably after geological surveys began to reveal rich hydrocarbon reserves in the South and East China Seas from the late 1960s onward.

China's resource interests do not seem to differ much from those of other claimant states that have also been involved in land reclamation and resource exploration projects, if on a much smaller scale. Artificial reef extension notwithstanding, China, unlike Vietnam, has not expanded its area of occupation to any vacant features in the Spratlys since the mid-1990s and has indicated openness for bilateral talks on joint resource development. However, by expanding its military capabilities in the South China Sea, China has also sent a clear message that it will stand firm in the territorial dispute in future years. Although the coding method chosen for this study does not allow for a precise account on the criteria China applies to prioritize certain disputes, energy resources and economic value appear to be key concerns.

Aside from physical characteristics, six contested territories are found to be incorporated in the Chinese nationalist narrative, each of which has seen China resort to military force or intimidation to consolidate sovereignty claims. These territories are typically regarded as integral parts of the Chinese nation based on historical affiliation, as in the respective cases of the Spratlys and Senkakus for instance. Nationalist sentiment is most prominently featured in

¹³⁶ Fravel (2011) 296.

the disputes over Taiwan and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The latter dispute in particular has been accompanied by strong anti-Japanese rhetoric in Chinese government releases and journalistic coverage in recent years, which some interpret as a deliberate attempt by Beijing to divert public attention away from domestic issues. While the nationalism variable considers the use of defamatory language and criticism of an adversary's diplomacy, however, its one-dimensional setting does not actually trace whether each instance of nationalist reporting did in fact occur in reaction to an increasing number of public protests within China, or in coincidence with the passing of a controversial new piece of legislation bound to provoke an unfavourable public response. Hence, the variable does not capture to what extent the Chinese leadership intentionally exploit a territorial dispute for their domestic policy agenda. While nationalist sentiment is observable in regard to a number of contested territories, the causal mechanisms behind China's territorial behaviour will require a more nuanced approach in future research.¹³⁷

Overall, this paper, due to methodological limitations, does not fully decode China's ambiguous behaviour in territorial disputes. Nonetheless, the four variables examined above are to some extent indicative of the complex nature of China's sensitivity in active territorial disputes, far beyond realist notions of power balancing and revisionism; On one hand, control over the South and East China Seas are a vital national interest to China, both militarily and economically. On the other hand, China has not taken any expansionist action in the past two decades, very much aware of the negative impact on the country's international relations.

China's territorial dispute behaviour in the twenty-first century appears to be shaped by multilayered – and in some instances self-contradictory – interests and emphases that may to some extent be representative of the country's ambivalence in regard to its own national identity. As Shambaugh (2011) has pointed out, the intellectual discourse on foreign policy and international relations in China pits a variety of scholars from conflicting schools of thought against one another, with views ranging from strong anti-Americanism and realism on one end of the argumentative scale to liberal institutionalism promoting transnational partnerships and an active role in global governance on the other.¹³⁸ Behavioural shifts in territorial disputes with India as well as its Southeast Asian neighbours are somewhat reflective of Beijing's attempts to locate itself on this scale and harmonize China's national interests with its responsibilities as an increasingly potent member of the international

¹³⁷ See Huth (1996) for a variety of additional independent variables that may contribute to China's dispute behaviour, but cannot be accommodated in this rather confined analysis.

¹³⁸ See Shambaugh (2011) 9-10.

community. China altered its coercive diplomacy in the South China Sea in the mid-1990s to a strategy of self-restriction and rapprochement. As a result, bilateral ties with the other claimant states were improved significantly through the signing of multiple cooperation agreements and treaties. Elsewhere, China initiated the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 1996, consolidating relations with neighbouring states on its western periphery. Since the mid-2000s, however, China seems to have fallen back on assertiveness and military deterrence in territorial disputes, seeking to strengthen its position but simultaneously obliterating much of the previous diplomatic success. China's behaviour in recent years has been met with growing concern from the Asian community, and has promoted the revival of the China treat narrative.

A recent survey by the *Pew Research Center* compares seven current challenges in international politics as perceived by the general public in 40 countries across the world.¹³⁹ The results show that countries in the Asia-Pacific region assess territorial disputes between China and its neighbours as a major threat to peace and stability in the international system with a median of 31 percent "very concerned" about the issue; Vietnam (60%), the Philippines (56%), Japan (52%) and India (38%) appear particularly worried, which is not especially surprising given their active involvement in disputes with China.¹⁴⁰ Globally, however, China's territorial disputes rank as the least concerning issue among those listed with a median of 18 percent, suggesting that China's assertiveness as an imminent security threat remains largely confined to regional perception. While almost a third of the US public (30%) express concern over China's disputes, each of the other current issues is apparently considered an even greater threat.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, China's military modernization in the Asia-Pacific in recent years has been observed by the US leadership with growing suspicion. Unimpeded navigation and international trade in the South China Sea are frequently featured in official statements as major national interests that the US seek to protect, in fear of China trying to compromise US dominance in the region. While Washington does not openly take sides in China's territorial disputes, comments in the context of multilateral forums – such as Ashton Carter's in Singapore – clearly carry an instructive message, urging China to cease any revisionist activities and instead take on a more cooperative role, both regionally and globally. China typically responds in similar fashion, accusing the US of being a *de facto* revisionist actor

¹³⁹ Issues listed include China's territorial disputes in addition to climate change, global economic instability, the Islamic State, Iran's nuclear programme, cyber attacks and Russian expansionism; for more background on methodology and data see Carle (14.07.2015) "Climate Change Seen as Top Global Threat".

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

seeking to undermine China's rising influence in Asia; terms regularly used to describe the US approach to foreign relations include "hegemonism" and "neo-interventionism".¹⁴² Bilateral relations thus appear to be deadlocked, as mutual mistrust and rejection of the other side's concept of international order continue to prevent any substantive cooperation agreements.

American scholars, much like their Chinese counterparts, diverge greatly in their views on how China should and will behave in the international system in future years.¹⁴³ While some primarily regard China as a revisionist – or at the very least redistributive – power that is destined to eventually challenge the status quo in international relations, others put emphasis on China's increasing participation in multilateral forums and international institution-building as signs that China is more interested in consensus than conflict. At any rate it seems essential that, in order to peacefully integrate a rapidly transforming China in the global order and keep Sino-US tensions low, both sides need to adopt a more sophisticated and complex understanding of each other beyond the dichotomies of revisionist versus status quo, realist versus liberal institutionalist, and belligerent versus benign power. While China and the US hold fundamentally different views on China's offshore territorial disputes and US alliances with Taiwan and Japan for instance, military conflict would not serve either side's interest. Rather, China and the US should take mutually shared norms and principles as a point of departure to reassess their relationship and build a platform for constructive exchange.¹⁴⁴ Common interests include enhancing multilateral institutions in the Asia-Pacific, as well as tackling global issues such as climate change, transnational terrorism, and economic crises. Furthermore, China and the US are on the same page in the nuclear debates regarding North Korea and Iran. Given their similar positions on a variety of international politics issues, Chinese and US policymakers should commit to strengthening their diplomatic ties rather than fuelling a security dilemma in Asia.

¹⁴² See Chance (03.07.2015) "How America and China Have Different Visions of International Order".

¹⁴³ See for instance Callahan (20.06.2015) *Mearsheimer vs. Nye on the Rise of China* [Video file], available at [<https://vimeo.com/131276478>].

¹⁴⁴ See also Rudd (2015) *U.S.-China 21: The Future of U.S.-China Relations Under Xi Jinping*, 27-36; Shambaugh (2011) 24-25; Chance (03.07.2015).

VI. Conclusion

Three main insights in regard to China's territorial dispute behaviour emerge from the analysis and discussion in this paper. Firstly, China does not display realist or revisionist behaviour in every territorial dispute. If past territorial disputes are any indication, China actually prefers settlement over sustainment in most cases, unless core national interests are perceived to be under threat. These interests mostly – although not exclusively – relate to strategic considerations. Other motives involve access to energy resources, the economic benefits at stake, as well as nationalist sentiment. Most active territorial disputes are sustained due to a mixture of influences, which may differ greatly in significance and scope. The validity of China's sovereignty claims varies substantially as well. While the Senkaku Islands have been assigned to Japan by international law, for instance, China's occupation of features in the Paracel and Spratly Islands appears no less reasonable from a legal perspective than the assertive behaviour by other claimant states such as Vietnam.

Secondly, China's sustainment of territorial claims does not necessarily pose an imminent threat to security in the region. China has not attempted to change the status quo since the occupation of Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands in 1994, and has in fact displayed a more cooperative than coercive diplomacy, taking on more responsibility in regional multilateral forums and increasing participation in global political institutions. While China's military modernization in recent years constitutes a source for genuine concern among the ASEAN bloc and Japan in particular, unilateral revisionist action by China is not to be expected as long as its territorial claims – particularly over Taiwan and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands – are not compromised by military action from one of the other disputants, or by US intervention. If relations between China and the US continue to deteriorate further, however, potential for conflict will certainly increase.

Thirdly, western analysts and policymakers may need to adopt a more sophisticated way of assessing China's ambiguous territorial dispute behaviour beyond liberal dichotomies such as status quo versus revisionist power. China's strategy in territorial disputes appears complex and in some cases even contradictory, reflective of the country's multifaceted national identity. While China may entertain an alternative, less US-centric idea of international order, both sides should be able to find common ground regarding a variety of current challenges to regional and global security. Likewise, China should put more emphasis on mutually agreeable norms and principles, and less on nationalist sentiments and anti-Americanism, in order to enable diplomatic consensus and a peaceful integration of China in the global system.

References

- Anderson, E. W. (2003) *International Boundaries: A Geopolitical Atlas*, London: The Stationary Office.
- Austin, G. (1998) *China's Ocean Frontier: International Law, Military Force and National Development*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Beckman, R. (2013) "The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Maritime Disputes in the South China Sea", *The American Journal of International Law*, 107(1): 142-163.
- Blanchard, J.-M. F. (2001) "The U.S. Role in the Sino-Japanese Dispute Over the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands, 1945-1971", *The China Quarterly*, 161: 95-123.
- Brecher, M., and J. Wilkenfeld (1997) *A Study of Crisis*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Buszynski, L., and I. Sazlan (2007) "Maritime Claims and Energy Cooperation in the South China Sea", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 29(1): 143-171.
- Callahan, W. A. (2013) *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2004) *Contingent States: Greater China and Transnational Relations*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Callahan, W. A., and E. Barabantseva (2011) (eds.) *China Orders the World: Normative Soft Power and Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Carlson, A. R. (2005) *Unifying China, Integrating with the World: Securing Chinese Sovereignty in the Reform Era*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Carpenter, T. G. (2006) *America's Coming War with China: A Collision Course Over Taiwan*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Catley, B., and M. Keliat (1997) *Spratlys: The Dispute in the South China Sea*, Brookfield, VT: Ashgate.
- Chang, L. T. (1982) *China's Boundary Treaties and Frontier Disputes*, New York: Oceana.
- Charney, J. I. (1999) "Rocks that Cannot Sustain Human Habitation", *The American Journal of International Law*, 93(4): 863-878.
- (1995) "Central East Asian Maritime Boundaries and the Law of the Sea", *The American Journal of International Law*, 89(4): 724-749.
- Chiozza, G., and A. Choi (2003) "Guess Who Did What: Political Leaders and the Management of Territorial Disputes, 1950-1990", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 47(3): 251-278.

- Colaresi, M. P., K. Rasler, and W. R. Thompson (2007) *Strategic Rivalries in World Politics: Position, Space, and Conflict Escalation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Day, A. J. (1982) (ed.) *Border and Territorial Disputes*, London: Longman, 234-331.
- Deng, Y. (2008) *China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Downs, E. S., and P. Saunders (1998) "Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyutai Islands", *International Security*, 23(3): 114-146.
- Dzurek, D. J. (1996) "The Spratly Islands Dispute: Who's on First?", *Maritime Briefing*, 2(1): 1-67.
- Emmers, R. (2013) *Resource Management and Contested Territories in East Asia*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- (2010) *Geopolitics and Maritime Territorial Disputes in East Asia*, London: Routledge.
- Fravel, M. T. (2011) "China's Strategy in the South China Sea", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 33(3): 292-319.
- (2008) *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- (2007) "Power Shifts and Escalation: Explaining China's Use of Force in Territorial Disputes", *International Security*, 32(3): 44-83.
- (2005) "Regime Insecurity and International Cooperation: Explaining China's Compromises in Territorial Disputes", *International Security*, 30(2): 46-83.
- Fravel, M. T., and C. P. Twomey (2015) "Projecting Strategy: The Myth of Chinese Counter-intervention", *The Washington Quarterly*, 37(4): 171-187.
- Fu, Y. (2003) "China and Asia in a New Era", *China: An International Journal*, 1(2): 304-312.
- Gibler, D. M. (2007) "Bordering on Peace: Democracy, Territorial Issues, and Conflict", *International Studies Quarterly*, 51(3): 509-532.
- Goertz, G., and P. F. Diehl (1992) *Territorial Changes and International Conflict*, New York: Routledge.
- Goldstein, A. (2013) "First Things First: The Pressing Danger of Crisis Instability in U.S.-China Relations", *International Security*, 37(4): 49-89.
- (2001) "The Diplomatic Face of China's Grand Strategy: A Rising Power's Emerging Choice", *The China Quarterly*, 168: 835-864.

- Gries, P. H. (2004) *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hensel, P. R., S. Mitchell, T. E. Sowers II, and C. L. Thyne (2008) "Bones of Contention: Comparing Territorial, Maritime, and River Issues", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52(1): 117-143.
- Holsti, K. J. (1991) *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648-1989*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hu, A. G. (2011) *China 2020: A New Type of Superpower*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Hughes, C. R. (2006) *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*, London: Routledge.
- Huth, P. K. (1996) *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Huth, P. K., and T. L. Allee (2002) *The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyer, E. (1995) "The South China Sea Disputes: Implications of China's Earlier Territorial Settlements", *Pacific Affairs*, 68(1): 34-54.
- Johnston, A. I. (2003) "Is China a Status Quo Power?", *International Security*, 27(4): 5-56.
- (1998) "China's Militarized Interstate Dispute Behaviour 1949-1992: A First Cut at the Data", *The China Quarterly*, 153: 1-30.
- Jones, D. M., S. A. Bremer, and J. D. Singer (1996) "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns", *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 15(2): 163-213.
- Joyner, C. C. (2002) "The Spratly Islands Dispute: Legal Issues and Prospects for Diplomatic Accommodation", in J. C. Baker and D. G. Wiencek (eds.) *Cooperative Monitoring in the South China Sea: Satellite Imagery, Confidence-Building Measures, and the Spratly Islands Disputes*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 17-34.
- Kacowicz, A. M. (1994) *Peaceful Territorial Change*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Kerr, D. (2014) "Introduction: China's Many Dreams", in Kerr, D. (ed.) *China's Many Dreams: Comparative Perspectives on China's Search for Rejuvenation*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1-9.
- Kireyev, G. (1999) "Demarcation of the Border with China", *International Affairs*, 45(2): 98-109.

- Kondapalli, S. (2015) "Fence Sitting, Prolonged Talks: The India–China Boundary Dispute", in G. V. C. Naidu, M. Chen, and R. Narayanan (eds.) *India and China in the Emerging Dynamics of East Asia*, New Delhi: Springer, 89-106.
- Kreil, E. (2002) "Energy Issues in the South China Sea Region", in J. C. Baker and D. G. Wiencek (eds.) *Cooperative Monitoring in the South China Sea*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 35-48.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014) [2001] *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, rev. ed., New York: W. W. Norton.
- Medeiros, E. S., and M. T. Fravel (2003) "China's New Diplomacy", *Foreign Affairs*, 82(6): 22-35.
- Menges, C. C. (2005) *China: The Gathering Threat*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Mosher, S. W. (2000) *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, Lanham, MD: Encounter Books.
- Nathan, A. J., and A. Scobell (2012) *China's Search for Security*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Odgaard, L. (2003) "The South China Sea: ASEAN's Security Concerns about China", *Security Dialogue*, 34(1): 11-24.
- Owen, N. A., and C. H. Schofield (2012) "Disputed South China Sea Hydrocarbons in Perspective", *Marine Policy*, 36(3): 809-822.
- Palmer, G., V. D'Orazio, M. Kenwick, and M. Lane (2015) "The MID4 Data Set: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description", *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. Forthcoming.
- Pan, Z. Q. (2007) "Sino-Japanese Dispute Over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands: The Pending Controversy from the Chinese Perspective", *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 12(1): 71-92.
- Paul, J. M. (2008) "Territorial Dispute in the East China Sea and Its Effects on China-Japan Relations", *Maritime Affairs*, 4(1): 112-139.
- Roy, D. (2013) *Return of the Dragon: Rising China and Regional Security*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- (1994) "Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security", *International Security*, 19(1): 149-168.
- Rudd, K. (2015) *U.S.-China 21: The Future of U.S.-China Relations Under Xi Jinping*, Summary Report, Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

- Saleem, O. (2000) "The Spratly Islands Dispute: China Defines the New Millennium", *American University International Law Review*, 15(3): 527-582.
- Scobell, A. (2003) *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Shambaugh, D. (2011) "Coping with a Conflicted China", *Washington Quarterly*, 34(1): 7-27.
- (2004) "China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order", *International Security*, 29(3): 64-99.
- Smith, S. A. (2015) *Intimate Rivals: Japanese Domestic Politics and a Rising China*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Studeman, M. (1998) "Calculating China's Advances in the South China Sea: Identifying the Triggers of 'Expansionism'", *Naval War College Review*, 51(2): 68-90.
- Su, S. W. (2005) "The Territorial Dispute over the Tiaoyu/Senkaku Islands: An Update", *Ocean Development & International Law*, 36: 45-61.
- Suganuma, U. (2000) *Sovereign Rights and Territorial Space in Sino-Japanese Relations: Irredentism and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Togo, K., and G. V. C. Naidu (2015) (eds.) *Building Confidence in East Asia: Maritime Conflicts, Interdependence and Asian Identity Thinking*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tzou, B. N. (1990) *China and International Law: The Boundary Disputes*, New York: Praeger.
- Valencia, M. J. (2007) "The East China Sea Dispute: Context, Claims, Issues, and Possible Solutions", *Asian Perspective*, 31(1): 127-167.
- Valencia, M. J., and A. Yoshihisa (2003) "Regime Building in the East China Sea", *Ocean Development & International Law*, 34: 189-208.
- Vasquez, J. A. (1995) "Why Do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction, or Territoriality", *Journal of Peace Research*, 32(3): 277-293.
- (1993) *The War Puzzle*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Vasquez, J. A., and M. Henahan (2001) "Territorial Disputes and the Probability of War, 1816-1992", *Journal of Peace Research*, 38(2): 123-138.
- Vasquez, J. A., and B. Valeriano (2010) "Classification of Interstate Wars", *The Journal of Politics*, 72(2): 292-309.

- (2009) “Territory as a Source of Conflict and a Road to Peace”, in I. W. Zartman, J. Bercovich, and V. Kremenjuk (eds.) *Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, London: Sage, 193-209.
- Wang, Z. (2012) *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Whiting, A. S. (2001) “China’s Use of Force, 1950-96, and Taiwan”, *International Security*, 26(2): 103-131.
- (1975) *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Wolf, A. B., and M. T. Fravel (2006) “Correspondence: Structural Sources of China’s Territorial Compromise”, *International Security*, 31(2): 199-205.
- Zhang, W. W. (2012) *The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State*, Hackensack, NJ: World Century.
- Zhang, Z. (2014) “Fanning the Flames of Public Rage: Coverage of the Diaoyu Islands Dispute in Chinese Legacy Media”, in T. A. Hollihan (ed.) *The Dispute Over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands: How Media Narratives Shape Public Opinion and Challenge Global Order*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, chapter 4, 81-120.
- Zhao, S. S. (2004) *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press.
- (1998) “A State-Led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 31(3): 287-302.

Internet Sources

- Astarita, C. (05.02.2013) “China-India Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Decoding Border Disputes with Critical Junctures”, on *Columbia, SIPA Journal of International Affairs* [http://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/online-articles/china-india-relations-twenty-first-century-decoding-border-disputes-critical-junctures/#_edn22]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Austin, G. (18.06.2015) “Who Is the Biggest Aggressor in the South China Sea?”, on *The Diplomat* [<http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/who-is-the-biggest-aggressor-in-the-south-china-sea/>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- (11.06.2015) “Intelligence Check: Just How ‘Preposterous’ Are China’s South China Sea Activities?”, on *The Diplomat* [<http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/intelligence->

- check-just-how-preposterous-are-chinas-south-china-sea-activities]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Callahan, B. (20.06.2015) *Mearsheimer vs. Nye on the Rise of China* [Video file], available at [https://vimeo.com/131276478]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Carle, J. (14.07.2015) “Climate Change Seen as Top Global Threat”, on *Pew Research Center* [http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/07/14/climate-change-seen-as-top-global-threat]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Chance, A. (03.07.2015) “How America and China Have Different Visions of International Order”, on *The Diplomat* [http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/how-america-and-china-have-different-visions-of-international-order/]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- China.org. (2013) “The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces”, chapter 3, on *Govt. White Papers – China.org.cn* [http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/2013-04/16/content_28556880.htm]. Last accessed 3 Sep 2015.
- Heydarian, R. J. (19.03.2015) “China Dominates the Scramble for the South China Sea”, on *The National Interest* [http://nationalinterest.org/feature/china-dominates-the-scramble-the-south-china-sea-12443]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Huth, P. (2009) “Replication data for: Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict”, available for download at *Harvard Dataverse* [https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.1/10214]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- International Institute for Strategic Studies (26.05.2015) “China’s Regional Grand Strategy Paves the Way for Realising the China Dream”, *Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment 2015*, 77-90, available for download at *IISS* [https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/strategic%20dossiers/issues/asia-pacific-regional-security-assessment-2015-4c79/rsa15-07-chapter-5-d9e8]. Last accessed 3 Sep 2015.
- Issue Correlates of War Project (30.03.2014) “ICOW Territorial Claims Data, provisional version 1.01”, available for download at *Paul Hensel/ICOW Territorial Claims Data* [http://www.paulhensel.org/icowterr.html]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Land, G. (16.05.2014) “SE Asian anti-China sentiment is rooted in scramble for resources”, on *Asian Correspondent* [http://asiancorrespondent.com/122766/se-asian-anti-china-sentiment-is-rooted-in-scramble-for-resources]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Lee, V. R. (14.04.2015) “South China Sea: China Is Building on the Paracels As Well”, on *The Diplomat* [http://thediplomat.com/2015/04/south-china-sea-china-is-building-on-the-paracels-as-well/]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.

- (16.03.2015) “China’s New Military Installations in the Disputed Spratly Islands: Satellite Image Update”, on *Medium* [<https://medium.com/satellite-image-analysis/china-s-new-military-installations-in-the-spratly-islands-satellite-image-update-1169bacc07f9>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Mazza, M. (03.02.2015) “Made in China: A Vietnam-Philippines Axis”, on *The National Interest* [<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/made-china-vietnam-philippines-axis-12174>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (16.07.2015) “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Remarks on Japan's House of Representatives Approving New Security Bills”, on *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1281847.shtml]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- (16.06.2015) “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Remarks on Issues Relating to China's Construction Activities on the Nansha Islands and Reefs”, on *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/t1273370.shtml]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- (09.04.2015) “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on April 9, 2015”, on *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1253488.shtml]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- (03.03.2015) “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference on March 3, 2015”, on *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1242257.shtml]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Ministry of National Defense (30.07.2015) “Defense Ministry Spokesperson Yang Yujun's regular press conference on July 30, 2015”, on *MOD* [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/TopNews/2015-07/30/content_4611958.htm]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Mortimer, C. (25.05.2015) “US warned by Chinese media to stop meddling or ‘war will be inevitable’”, on *The Independent* [<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/us-warned-by-chinese-media-to-stop-meddling-or-war-will-be-inevitable-10274559.html>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Parameswaran, P. (17.07.2015) “A New Indonesia Military Base Near the South China Sea?”, on *The Diplomat* [<http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/why-is-indonesia-building-a-new-south-china-sea-military-base/>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.

- Parashar, S. (18.04.2013) “India to press China further over building dams on Brahmaputra”, on *The Times of India* [<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-to-press-China-further-over-building-dams-on-Brahmaputra/articleshow/19607327.cms>]. Last accessed 3 Sep 2015.
- Ratner, E., and A. Sullivan (04.05.2013) “The Most Dangerous Border in the World”, on *Foreign Policy* [<http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/05/04/the-most-dangerous-border-in-the-world/>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Romanowski, M. (03.07.2014) “Central Asia’s Energy Rush”, on *The Diplomat* [<http://thediplomat.com/2014/07/central-asias-energy-rush>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Rosenberg, M. (27.05.2015) “U.S. Rebukes China on Efforts to Build Artificial Islands”, on *The New York Times* [<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/28/world/asia/us-rebukes-china-on-efforts-to-build-artificial-islands.html>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Saxena, S. (22.06.2012) “India, China bilateral trade set to hit \$100 billion by 2015”, on *The Times of India* [<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/India-China-bilateral-trade-set-to-hit-100-billion-by-2015/articleshow/14327879.cms>]. Last accessed 3 Sep 2015.
- Tiezzi, S. (17.07.2015) “China: Japan Security Legislation a ‘Nightmare Scenario’”, on *The Diplomat* [<http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/china-japan-security-legislation-a-nightmare-scenario/>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- U.S. Department of Defense (30.05.2015) “IISS Shangri-La Dialogue: ‘A Regional Security Architecture Where Everyone Rises’”, on *U.S. Department of Defense* [<http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Article/606676>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- U.S. Energy Information Administration (03.04.2013) “Contested areas of South China Sea likely have few conventional oil and gas resources”, on *U.S. EIA* [<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=10651>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- Watkins, D. (31.07.2015) “What China Has Been Building in the South China Sea”, on *The New York Times* [<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/30/world/asia/what-china-has-been-building-in-the-south-china-sea.html>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.
- World Politics Review (13.02.2015) “Philippines, Vietnam Expand Ties to Counter China Threat”, on *World Politics Review* [<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trendlines/15087/philippines-vietnam-expand-ties-to-counter-china-threat>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.

- Xinhua News (16.07.2015) “China voices stern concern over Japan’s security bills”, on *Xinhuanet* [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-07/16/c_134419318.htm]. Last accessed 3 Sep 2015.
- Yu, M. (22.08.2012) “Inside China: Anti-Japan protests turn violent”, on *The Washington Times* [<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/aug/22/inside-china-anti-japan-protests-turn-violent/>]. Last accessed 3 Sep 2015.
- Zhou, A. (12.06.2015) “China’s Maritime Disputes: Trouble to the South, but the East Stays Quiet”, on *The Diplomat* [<http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/chinas-maritime-disputes-trouble-to-the-south-but-the-east-stays-quiet/>]. Last accessed 2 Sep 2015.