International Political Implications of Language: The Linguistic Puzzle of “Inherent Territory”

Ethan Yorgason

The term “inherent territory” is commonly used to claim disputed lands within the Korean, Chinese, and Japanese languages. It is not common in English. This paper explores the phrase for the first time as a multi-lingual phenomenon, focusing especially on its implications for English. The term became internationally prominent after 1950 because of Japan’s territorial dispute with the Soviet Union over the Northern Territories/Southern Kuril Islands. Japan gradually applied the term to its territorial conflicts with Korea and China. Over time, it became more prominent in both Korean and Chinese, as well. In addition to the Japan-Russia dispute, it now is used in official language in the Dokdo-Takeshima, Diaoyu-Senkaku, and South China Sea territorial disputes. With its increased usage across Northeast Asia, including in English translation easily available on the Internet, the term has strong potential to become common usage in English with respect to territorial conflicts outside of Northeast Asia. Yet, that potential has not been realized. This paper explores possible reasons why English speakers are reluctant to use “inherent territory” through a close political-discursive-linguistic analysis. This paper also discusses the term’s potential power if it becomes more popular in English. The article addresses “inherent territory’s” lack of status within international law, translation issues, the multiple meanings of inherent, connections between “inherent” and “inherit,” the metaphysics of inherent, and the issue of standards through which to evaluate claims to “inherent territory.” The paper explains why the English “inherent territory” is simultaneously vague, potentially powerful, and deeply problematic.

Key Words: inherent territory, political discourse, territorial conflict, Northeast Asia, discourse analysis

*Ethan Yorgason(yorgason@knu.ac.kr) is an associate professor in the Geography Department at Kyungpook National University. He received a Ph.D. in geography from the University of Iowa. His main areas of research are in political and cultural geography, with particular emphasis on the geopolitics of religion as well as eastern Asia’s territorial disputes.

During a March 1, 2018 speech celebrating the Korean independence movement, South Korean President Moon Jae-in condemned what he called Japan's faulty historical viewpoints. As part of the argument, he asserted that Dokdo is "우리 고유의 영토" (our inherent/natural territory) (Park 2018). Often translated in English as "inherent territory," though it was not in this case, 고유 영토 is a common phrase in Korean. Its equivalents in Chinese (固有領土) and Japanese (固有の領土) are perhaps even more common. Each of the five major ongoing interstate maritime territorial disputes in Northeast Asia involves claims to "inherent territory" (Fravel 2014). The English phrase "inherent territory" became internationally relevant in the mid-1950s as part of a Japan-USSR dispute. Japan used the phrase to describe what the Japanese now call the Northern Territories and are sometimes known as the southern Kuril Islands from a more Russia-centric perspective. For several years, the term generally was confined to that dispute. Eventually, Japan also began to use "inherent territory" to refer to Japan's two other major disputes over Dokdo/Takeshima Island with Korea and Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands with China/Taiwan. As its usage spread to these other disputes, scholars, politicians, and national partisans in both Korea and China/Taiwan also increasingly used the term to make their own territorial claims. This is perhaps not surprising since the Japanese 固有の領土, the Chinese 固有領土, and the Korean 고유 영토 (inherent territory) each share Chinese-language roots.

For the most part these phrases, and their English translation as "inherent territory," have been used straightforwardly within these three languages. Inherent territory seems to exist comfortably within the multitude of phrases available to describe land belonging to a state, even as it has become something of the leading catchword for such claims. The long Japanese use of it to describe the Northern Territories, its gradual adoption to claims to what the Japanese call the Senkaku and Takeshima islands—as well as the Chinese claims to disputed islands in the East and South China Seas—suggest that those two states see it as especially potent rhetorically. For the most part, it seems to present few interpretive problems for political communication within Korean, Chinese, and Japanese contexts, though it may contribute to the intractability of the disputes to which it is applied. This situation stands in contrast to how inherent territory is used outside these three languages. The other states most heavily involved with these territorial disputes (Vietnam, Russia, and the Philippines) have not made much use of the phrase inherent territory in their international appeals. Neither is the term typically used in English within territorial disputes of non-Chinese/Japanese/Korean origin. In other words, over the past several decades, "inherent territory" as a term of international political communication seems largely con-

fined to Japanese, Korean, and Chinese contexts and appears quite unknown or even problematic outside them.

The main analytical goal of this paper is to explore the term within English, perhaps the most influential language of international political communication. The term is ever more commonly seen and heard within English through coverage of China's, Korea's, and Japan's territorial disputes, especially because of social media. As an ever more central phrase within Northeast Asian political discourse, it makes sense at this historical juncture to consider its possible English meanings. Thus, this article provides what might be termed a speculative discourse analysis of the phrase "inherent territory," looking at its use historically to determine future possibilities of usage. After briefly discussing the theoretical context within discourse analysis, the paper next provides additional background on the history and extent of its usage, a three-language history that the literature has yet to adequately acknowledge or describe (see Lee 2015). Section 4, the longest and most central section, also provides a unique analysis. It explores "inherent territory" as an English-language term that addresses state territorial claims. That analysis relies on two major questions. First, given that the term so commonly emanates from Japan, Korea, and China, why has it not caught on within English political communication? This article argues that the word "inherent" is the key problem; it proves to be a problematic partner for "territory." Second, it asks what the power of the term might be if it happens to catch on within English? In particular, what would such adoption tell us about the way we think of relationships between states, nations, and territory? The paper concludes that, in English, "inherent territory" is potentially a particularly powerful, if vague and problematic, phrase rhetorically, in part because of seeming multiplicity of connotations of "inherent," and in part due to its deeply metaphysical assertions.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The social scientific methodological tradition of discourse analysis inspires the analysis of the term "inherent territory" that follows. This broad and multi-faceted tradition, stemming back to Foucault (1990), holds that social meaning is created through patterns of speaking, thinking, and action that coalesce around particular terminology or key phrases (van Dijk 1977; Müller 2008). As detailed below, the thinking and political action toward territorial claims framed by the notion of "inherent territory" is one such discursive pattern. Discourses are both *productive*, in that they allow certain kinds of ideas to be thought, and *limiting*,

by pushing thought/action into certain channels and thus closing off other possible ways of thinking. The term “inherent territory” provides a whole set of meanings for, and potential actions toward, disputed lands, but simultaneously makes it hard to see other possibilities for understanding and acting in relation to those lands.

One key claim from discourse analysis is that discourses are historically constituted. That is, they emerge, gain, and lose power in certain historical, socio-political contexts. Though the key purpose of this paper is not to provide an exhaustive history of the term, the paper situates and accounts for the historical growth of “inherent territory” as a term that arises and operates strongly within the particular historical, geographical, and socio-political contexts of late 20th- and early 21st- century Northeast Asia. More importantly for this paper, however, is the notion that discourses shape thinking and, thus, political possibilities. Here the paper’s analysis is more speculative and oriented toward possible futures in the English language than historically grounded. It linguistically explores the impact that meanings typically applied to “inherent” (including through the concept of intertextuality discussed below) are likely to have on the phrase “inherent territory.” Since the main analysis is prospective rather than retrospective, it utilizes more qualitative than quantitative modes of reasoning.

NORTHEAST ASIA’S HISTORICAL USAGE OF THE TERM INHERENT TERRITORY

The phrases eventually translated into English as “inherent territory” have likely existed in Northeast Asia’s languages for several decades, and perhaps much longer. Article 4 in the Republic of China’s 1946 Constitution, for example, uses a phrase that can be translated as “The territory of the Republic of China within its inherent territory/boundaries” (“中華民國領土，依其固有之疆域”) (“Constitution” 1947). However, official English translations did not use inherent territory, but rather, “The territory of the Republic of China within its existing national boundaries” (“The Constitution” 1946). Several friends who grew up in 1960s-1980s Taiwan under the Republic of China’s government told me that 固有領土 (inherent territory) was a common phrase then in textbooks teaching about the territory the ROC claimed. However, the English translation of “inherent territory” did not become prominent through that usage. This English translation emerged internationally first through a Japanese territorial dispute.

At the end of the Second World War, with Germany having surrendered in the Atlantic theater, the Soviet Union terminated its non-aggression pact with

Japan. It joined the United States and other allies in the effort to bring the war against Japan to a close. Both the USSR and the United States were already looking ahead to the postwar map of international geopolitical power, and the Soviets wanted to ensure that they had a position of strength in Northeast Asia. This rivalry between wartime allies, of course, led to the Cold War and Korea's division. It also shaped Japan's territorial relations. Japan and Russia had been territorial rivals during the previous century, as both sought to expand influence into the Sakhalin and Kuril islands, areas well beyond their traditional cores. Treaties and wars gave Japan something of the upper hand in the rivalry prior to World War II. When that war ended, consensus emerged among the victorious Allies that Japan must return territory acquired by colonial greed and aggression. While the defeated Japan broadly acceded to this principle, the extent of this territory was unclear. Least controversial was the idea that Japan should retain its four large, historically core islands—what came to be known as Japan Proper—the relatively late establishment of control over Hokkaido, notwithstanding. However, several of the nearby islands caused dispute. To the north, Japan abandoned claims to Sakhalin and the bulk of the Kuril Islands in favor of the Soviet Union, somewhat parallel to consenting to U.S. control over Okinawa in the south (not to mention the U.S. occupying government in Japan Proper). Postwar conditions led Japan to agree to abandon immediate control of these areas, though convictions that they rightly belonged to Japan lingered (somewhat more strongly for Okinawa). However, greater controversy arose over a few small islands to the northeast of Hokkaido. By this time those islands had a modest Japanese, and a somewhat Japan-assimilated Ainu, population. A local movement arose in Hokkaido advocating for continued access to these islands. Over time, the Japanese government took up the cause, suggesting that the cession of the Kurils did not apply to the islands closest to Hokkaido.

As positions consolidated, questions arose over which islands were Japan's. Slightly further south, two sets of islands—Habomai and Shikotan in Japanese—appear on a map to be less directly connected to the Kurils. Just to the north, the Kunashiri and Etorofu islands more clearly seem to link the Kuril chain to Hokkaido. Initial Japanese attention focused on the former islands. For a time, it appeared that an agreement with the USSR to return their control to Japan might be reached, but as the Cold War rivalry and nationalism began to deepen, the second set of islands became a more intense part of the discussion. Japanese arguments began to insist that these two sets together formed a distinctive South Kuril category, or perhaps historically they had never been considered to be part of the Kurils at all. The United States began to pressure Japan to not accept the return of just Habomai and Shikotan, but to also insist upon Kunashiri

and Etorofu. Diplomatic signals suggested that if Japan assented to the Soviet Union in these Northern Territories, the United States would expect similar concessions on Okinawa. Many observers regarded this as a Cold War strategy by the United States to foment continued distrust between Japan and the Soviet Union and, therefore, more strongly lock in its own new alliance with Japan. Thus, the Northern Territories/Southern Kuril dispute was born (Stephan 1974; Hasegawa 1998; Lasserre 1996; Bukh 2010; Brown 2016).

The earliest efforts to reclaim access to these islands in late 1940s to early 1950s were primarily local rather than national. The displaced and otherwise economically affected populations in northeast Hokkaido began to refer to these islands with such phrases as “our inherent territory” and “land inherited from our ancestors” to advocate for continued fishing and other access rights to the islands (Bukh 2014, 127). To the extent that many in this Ainu-heavy population had lived on, and used, these islands over many generations for their subsistence, these phrases made some sense.

The Japanese national government adopted the rhetoric by the mid-1950s. It shifted the argument from one emphasizing continued economic access to one emphasizing national pride and ownership. Japan, the government began to argue, could not be whole until the islands were returned. In the process, the government adopted the phrase “inherent territory” and adapted it as “inherent Japanese territory” (Bukh 2010, 2014). Over time the phrase became a kind of official catchall term to encompass the various arguments Japan held regarding the Northern Territories. Wada (2013) reported that the earliest use of the term “inherent territory” by the Japanese national government might have been in 1945, though the term did not develop into a government’s slogan until the mid-1950s. Although serving as a general catchphrase, its most specific connotation was perhaps the idea that no other state and no other people had ever held title to the islands (Kimura 1980). This was similar to countless other cases of colonizing state expansion throughout the world, with political communication used to effectively write indigenous peoples—primarily Ainu here—out of modern political history (Hara 2009; Bukh 2010). While less often explicitly argued, “inherent territory” also carried a sense that the territory had always been part of Japan’s natural territory.

For a few years, 固有の領土 and its English translation as “inherent territory” were mostly confined to the Northern Territories/Southern Kurils dispute. As time passed, however, Japanese politicians and society at large began to apply it to the island disputes with Korea involving Takeshima/Dokdo and with China over Senkaku/Diaoyu (Kim 1997; Bukh 2014; Hyun 2014; Koo 2014; Okuda 2014; Iwamoto and Togo 2015). Thus, it eventually became a key catchphrase in

these disputes as well. Similar language patterns exist in Korean and Chinese. The maritime territorial disputes in the second half of the 20th century were characterized by sporadic reference to "inherent territory" before the phrase was more generally embraced. In Korea, usage is most common among scholars. Its scholarly usage comes mostly in rather direct response to Japanese claims about two small islets known as Takeshima in Japan and Dokdo in Korea. "Inherent territory," at least in English, seems less strongly used by the South Korean government. Overall, it is not quite as much of a leading catchphrase within Korea as it is in Japan.

In Chinese, government has been more directly involved. Usage of "inherent territory" in internationally prominent documents seems to have emerged first in Taiwan, especially during the 1990s, though primarily in Chinese and not official English translations at that point. Statements described the relationship of territories such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao to China, as well as Taiwanese claims to islands in the South China Sea (Sun 1995; Jiang 1999; Hsiao and Lin 2016). The People's Republic of China used a single instance of "inherent territory" in 2000 in discussing Taiwan's relationship to China, after not having used it in a very similar 1993 document ("The One-China Principle" 2000; "The Taiwan Question" 1993). Though hints of increasing PRC usage can be seen toward other disputes during the early 2000s, it was during the 2010s—and in 2012 especially—that the term exploded onto the international arena. The promotion of two documents with the same title ("Diaoyu Dao, an Inherent Territory of China") gave the term particular prominence (the most prominent of the two was "Diaoyu Dao" 2012). The term also has been strongly applied to China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. The most notable example was when a CCTV news anchor, perhaps intentionally, called the Philippines "China's inherent territory" (Beech 2012). "Inherent territory" now is the leading catchphrase for asserting China's territorial claims internationally. Its use there currently is stronger than in either Taiwan or Korea and now rivals or even surpasses Japan's use of the term.

THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF INHERENT TERRITORY

Over the past several decades, the phrase "inherent territory" has been used in the countries of Northeast Asia almost exclusively. More particularly, the vast majority of usage comes from either partisans to, or analysts of, the territorial disputes relating to Japan, China/Taiwan, or Korea. The phrase's usage is other-

wise almost nonexistent in English. However, China's growing power and the increasing role of the Internet and social media in recent years surely are expanding the term's audience. It may become more broadly known outside of Asia as a phrase through which to claim and speak of territory. It is thus worth considering the phrase outside of its Northeast Asian contexts. This is the main task of the analytical section of this paper. First, this section briefly clarifies the status, or lack thereof, within international law of "inherent territory." It then undertakes a much lengthier exploration of the English-language consequences of using "inherent" to modify territory. Several subsections consider various issues, but together they prioritize two related questions: 1) what are the implications of choosing "inherent" over other possible modifiers of territory, and 2) how might English speakers interpret "inherent territory"? This analytical section then concludes by considering possible implications for the relationship between states and disputed territories if "inherent territory" gains broader global usage.

"INHERENT TERRITORY" WITHIN INTERNATIONAL LAW

In each of the countries that commonly use "inherent territory," occasional arguments treat the phrase as if it constitutes a valid category within international law (for particularly strong examples, see Kim 1997; "Dokdo Is" 2011). In such cases, it appears not only to be taken for granted, viewed as unproblematic term within Northeast Asia's cultural/language contexts, but also a term that is expected to persuade within the global legal arena. In essence, such arguments seem to assert that, *because* territory is deemed "inherent," it must be recognized internationally as belonging to the claimant. Yet the term has no legally recognized status. There is no advantage, at least within international law itself, in calling a particular territory an *inherent* territory as opposed to using other adjectives. A few limited lines of scholarship in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, though not much from China, acknowledges the phrase's lack of standing in international law and approach the term critically (Wada 2013; Hyun 2014; Lee 2015; Chang 2016).

While "inherence" has no standing within international law relating to territory, several categories of territorial acquisition do carry such status. These include occupation and prescription, cession, conquest, and accretion (Dixon, McCorquodale and Williams 2011). A claim to an inherent territory fits most closely with occupation and prescription. For Sharma (1997, 108), for instance, one route to prescription is "immemorial possession," or possession of such length that assertion of legal acquisition, control, and occupation goes beyond the historical record. International courts used immemorial possession in disputes over Clipperton Island, a small Pacific island disputed between Mexico

and France, and in the Western Sahara case regarding Morocco's territorial claims (Dixon, McCorquodale and Williams 2011, 240-242). Among many other examples, it also appears occasionally in British claims to the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. Also, China, when more formally/legalistically grounding its claims to islands in the South China Sea, also calls upon the legal concept (Lu 1989). Nevertheless, by prioritizing claims to "inherent territory" over the use of "immemorial possession," Northeast Asian countries lose the precision and narrow legality that the latter term holds within international law. As of yet, international law does not recognize "inherence" itself as a valid category in territorial disputes. However, those who use "inherent territory" may prefer its broader, less specific rhetorical power.

Analyzed somewhat differently, territorial claims appealing to treaty law, geography or territorial integrity, economy, culture, effective control, history, *uti possidetis*, elitism, and ideology are commonly made within international law (Burghardt 1973; Sumner 2004). The phrase "inherent territory" may encompass many of these, but history and effective control seem to be most directly invoked. Yet not all elements have equal weight within international law, and the balance between these types of claims shifts somewhat over time. One review of cases decided by the International Court of Justice finds that the Court prioritized first treaty law, then *uti possidetis* (continuity between colonial and post-colonial boundaries), and then effective control. Surprisingly, perhaps, since so many claims are raised under this banner, the Court does not accord history much weight (Sumner 2004). This lack of direct recognition within international law—whether as an acknowledged means of acquisition or a common type of claim to territory—is likely one reason "inherent territory" almost never appears in English, except as it has emerged from Japanese, Chinese, and Korean language/cultural/political contexts.

INHERENT TERRITORY IN ENGLISH: TRANSLATION ISSUES

Inherent territory's lack of traction in international political discourse stems from more than its lack of recognition in international law. It also faces difficulties because it is a perplexing term in the English language. When the phrase "inherent territory" enters English as the primary translation of Japan's, China's, and Taiwan's governments' claims to island territories, it joins a different linguistic landscape from those of the source languages. Many English-language reports use quotation marks around "inherent territory" when referencing the territorial claims of Japan, China, or Korea. Those marks seem to signal unease and uncertainty with the phrase.

The puzzle of "inherent territory" in English stems in part from translation

issues. The meanings conveyed by the English “inherent” may differ somewhat from those typically intended by those who use the Chinese/ Japanese 固有 or the Korean 고유 for “inherent.” One scholar who explained the Japanese usage believed that, in spite of literal denotative meanings as it entered English as “inherent territory,” the Japanese 固有の領土 refers most directly to the idea that a particular state first claimed the territory under consideration and that the territory had never since changed hands (Kimura 2000); a second scholar found that it emphasized a “sense of reinforced possession or exclusive belonging” (Brown 2016, 8). Another scholar, who referred to the broader usage throughout Northeast Asia, found that the term signals a territorial claim with great historical depth (Lee 2015). If these are the major connotations in Northeast Asia then other translations are possible, even though “inherent” is probably the closest literal translation. Indeed, two scholars who discussed 固有の領土’s role in Japanese society used “intrinsic” and “traditional” territory (McCormack 2013; Okuda 2014). English-language news outlets translated South Korean President Moon Jae-in’s 2018 Korean Independence Movement Day use of 고유의 영토 as “native territory” (“Moon Says” 2018). As noted above, the official translation of the 1946 Republic of China Constitution refers to territory “within ... existing national boundaries,” yet most who have translated the relevant phrases into English recently, whether officially on behalf of governments or less officially, have used “inherent.”

Within English, many adjectives other than inherent can be used to modify claims to territory. Claims from various states—including Korea, China, and Japan—also use many of them. The terms appear at various times synonymously with, alongside, in support of, or in place of “inherent.” Among these we might list: “intrinsic,” “integral,” “sacred,” “inalienable,” “non-negotiable,” “original,” “ancient,” “historical,” “indigenous,” “inviolable,” “immanent,” “essential,” “basic,” “primordial,” “fundamental,” “natural,” “ineradicable,” “distinctive,” “unique,” and “traditional.” Each of those terms captures some element of arguments implicitly residing within references to “inherent territory.” Out of all of the terms listed, however, “intrinsic” probably shares the closest denotative meaning. Indeed, some lexical commentators concede that “inherent” and “intrinsic” are interchangeable in almost all situations (“Is There” n.d.; Maddox n.d.). Within English overall, there seems to be little preference for one over the other. For example, according to a Google Internet search in 2017, “inherent” has just slightly higher usage than “intrinsic.” “Inherent” returned search results at about a 7:5 (1.4:1) ratio compared to “intrinsic” (see Table 1 below), so one might suppose that “intrinsic territory” would be nearly as common as “inherent territory,” but this is not the case. When preceding “territory,” “inherent”

strongly dominates. "Inherent territory" yields 79 times as many search results as "intrinsic territory." The overwhelming majority of such citations refer to the disputed maritime claims of Japan (Northern Territories, Senkaku, Takeshima), China (Diaoyu, Paracels, Spratlys), and Korea (Dokdo). Unsurprisingly, the ratio becomes even more pronounced when Japanese or Chinese is in the middle of the phrases (284:1 and 403:1 ratios, respectively). Whether by accident or intent, "inherent" is the term English speakers usually confront when hearing of claims to 固有/고유 territory. This is doubtless a defensible translation, but it is worth considering the implications of that choice.

Table 1. Comparison of Usage Between "Inherent" and "Intrinsic"
Based on Google Internet Search Results

Inherent		Intrinsic		Ratio (Inherent/Intrinsic)
Term	Search Results	Term	Search Results	
Inherent	95,700,000	Intrinsic	69,000,000	1.4
Inherent territory	72,800	Intrinsic territory	919	79
Inherent Japanese territory	1,990	Intrinsic Japanese territory	7	284
Inherent Chinese territory	1,610	Intrinsic Chinese territory	4	403

Source: Google searches (September 20, 2017).

SYNONYMS OF INHERENT TERRITORY

One way to explore the choice's significance is to compare the term to other similar terms or words that are more traditionally used in English to claim territory. The dictionary definition of "inherent" is, "involved in the constitution or essential character of something: belonging by nature or habit" ("Inherent" n.d.). Even in comparison to terms such as "essential," "non-negotiable," or "integral," for instance, "inherent" implies greater historical depth, or perhaps even timelessness. Something may seem essential now, but if it is not involved in that thing's constitution, it may have appeared very different 50 years ago and may look quite different 50 years into the future. Even "original," "historical," or "traditional" territories or "immemorial possessions" can theoretically change hands. However, "inherent" seems to suggest a more necessary, and perhaps even ethical, relationship to territory, but what is that relationship? How does territory *inhere* in something, and what is the thing in which territory inheres? Is it the state, or perhaps the nation? Because the term can exist in verb form,

the English construction raises such questions more directly than a phrase such as “intrinsic to” might (“intrinsic” lacks a verb form).

This sense of timeless necessity conveyed by “inherent” does not correspond well with many territories’ historical relationships with states and nations. In actual fact, the particular maritime territories most prominently claimed as “inherent” have not been part of the claimant states from the beginning of those states’ existence. All of those territories lie far from the states’ historical cores (see a similar critique from the Japanese scholar Yamabe Kentaro in 1965: quoted in Lee 1998, 54-55). The territories’ historical relationships with states are roughly datable, and indeed contesting states focus considerable attention on those dates (Yorgason 2017). In addition, the roles of those territories to the people considered as the nations’ cores were quite marginal historically. Except for the Northern Territories, which were inhabited by a people historically distinct from the Japanese, none of the territories had been permanently occupied. The vast majority of ancestors of those who ethnically constitute the cores of Chinese and Japanese “nations” had for centuries, perhaps millennia, never known of the existence of these “inherent territories.” Thus, one might conclude, part of the power of “inherent territory” is its ability to exaggerate and perhaps even mislead about a contested territory’s historical centrality.

“Inherent territory” is not the only territory-claiming term to use rhetorical exaggeration, of course, but it arguably masks its excess more than most. This obfuscation is part of its political-rhetorical power. For example, “sacred territory” brings its connotative stakes more directly to the table, at least in English. “Sacred” possesses heavy religious overtones. Yet, Western culture has a long history of attempting to separate religion from the state, so claiming a territory as sacred implicitly invites the audience to consider how a non-religious, state-linked entity (territory) can be understood through religious terminology. Listeners and readers usually do not take the assertion that something is a “sacred territory” literally; they know that such sacredness is not a fact of nature. Instead, they understand that an identifiable group must have developed a strong identity attachment towards a territory through specific historical processes. Thus, “sacred territory” readily presents itself as a metaphorical claim. “Inherent territory,” by contrast, more easily masquerades as a statement of fact. “Inherent territory” produces something of the sense of awe and reverence of “sacred territory,” while obscuring its own historical production. “Sacred” creates greater ontological distance than “inherent” does between the state/nation and the territory. “Inherent,” on the other hand, more strongly implies that the relationship transcends history.

Perhaps then “inherent” can also be compared to “natural,” another term that

brings timeless necessity to mind. Yet, in relation to territorial conflict, claims to "natural territory" possess fairly conventional meanings. These meanings relate to issues of geographic space and shape, as well as geologic structure. The term also has a well-established status as a legitimate route to claim territory within international law. Nevertheless, claims invoking "natural territory" are not usually successful, or at least take lower priority than many other types of claims (Sumner 2004). In comparison, "inherent territory" lacks these interpretative conventions. In English, it calls to mind no specific standards for judgment. In actual usage, "inherent" often adds little denotative value to "territory." It is difficult to discern differences in the literal meaning between occasions when advocates argue that islands are "inherent" Chinese/Japanese/Korean territory and when they simply use Chinese/Japanese/Korean territory. The latter arguments include senses of historical depth and original ownership, which some analysts ascribe to "inherent territory," regardless. Indeed, these senses usually accompany almost every state's territorial claims. These characteristics add up to a perplexing term. From one point of view, the literal meaning of "inherent" goes against the historicity we know exists in relationships between states and territory. From another, its actual usage adds little denotative information to territorial claims. From yet a third viewpoint, "inherent" possesses a strong potential to rhetorically strengthen territorial claims. Its strongest value might then be as a term that summarizes, naturalizes, and places beyond question many of the meanings already present in territorial claims.

"INHERENT" VERSUS "INHERIT"

Yet another issue must be considered. It is possible that interpretations of "inherent territory" might relate to the term "inherit" in the latter's sense of "to begin to have responsibility for a ... situation that previously existed or belonged to another person" ("Inherit" (a) n.d.). Maybe "inherent territory" implies that today's Japanese, for example, inherited the Northern Territories from their ancestors, or that the People's Republic of China/Republic of China inherited the Paracel Islands from previous Chinese governments, but this idea appears to falter upon closer inspection. The two words seem similar, yet they possess not only distinct modern meanings, but also completely unrelated etymologies. "Inhere," to take the verb form, comes "from Latin *inhaerere*[,] 'to stick in or to,'" while "inherit" stems from "Late Latin *inhereditare*[,] 'to appoint as heir,'" (Online Etymology Dictionary n.d.; see also "Inherent vs. Inherit" n.d.). Thus no lexical license exists to conflate the two words.

It must be noted, however, that English speakers do occasionally confuse the two terms ("Inherence and Patrimony," n.d.; De Roche, 2016).

Misunderstandings need not even be involved. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* does not regard the two words as synonyms; nevertheless, “inherited” and “inherent” are classified together in a “related” words category (“Inherited” n.d.). Japanese, Korean, and Chinese uses of “inherent territory” often rely on historical evidence. That sense fits uneasily with connotation of timelessness and essence in “inherent.” The historicity within “inherit” may provide a bridge to that evidence.

In fact, a stronger discursive connection exists between the ahistoricity of “inherent” and the historicity of “inherit” than is immediately apparent. This relationship exists in human rights discourses. The connection may well affect how English speakers understand “inherent territory.” Theories of intertextuality emphasize how the meaning of any text, including words or phrases, is not established in isolation. Textual meaning is also established in relation to other texts (Allen 2011; Del Casino and Hanna 2000). In other words, the ways people comprehend the term “inherent” in one discourse may affect the way they understand it in others.

Many strands within human rights discourses rely on ideas of “inherent rights” or “intrinsic rights.” Such references frequently connect to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations General Assembly adopted this document with significant international fanfare in 1948. The Declaration preceded the Japanese government’s early use of “inherent territory” by only a few years. This paper’s analysis cannot determine whether Japan’s focus on “inherent territory,” beginning in the mid-1950s, has any connection to the Declaration. At the time of the Declaration’s adoption, Japan was not yet a U.N. member. Many member states distrusted Japan, in part for having allied with Nazi Germany, the architect of the Jewish Holocaust in Europe that was the primary impetus for the Declaration. Nonetheless, the language of “inherent human rights” was part of the 1950s global “political air.” Perhaps that global political discourse led to Japanese politicians discovering the rhetorical power of “inherent,” but this possible connection is purely speculative at this point.

Whatever the case regarding Japan, important ties within that discourse exist in English between “inherence” and “inheritance.” Human rights discourse practically invites interpretations of “inherent” as simultaneously temporal and atemporal. This near invitation comes most directly through the concept of birthright. In that 1948 U.N. document (“Universal Declaration,” 1948), the Preamble declares with its first “Whereas ...” statement, that “... recognition of the *inherent* dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the *human family* is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world ...” Article 1 elaborates: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity

and rights. They are *endowed* with reason and conscience ... (emphasis added).” An endowment to which one is entitled by birth is basically the definition of birthright. This, according to the Declaration, is an important aspect of “inherent human dignity” and a condition for inalienable rights. Morsink (2009) explains that crafters and signers of the Universal Declaration drew upon a natural rights tradition extending back to, and beyond, the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution. This tradition regarded human rights as “inherent” in the individual, by birthright. Some advocates restrict this use of birthright to the mere fact of birth. Indeed, the *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2005) calls this less-historically-inflected meaning a “special usage” of the term birthright: “a natural or moral right, possessed by everyone.” However, birthright’s general definition coincides more closely with “inheritance”: “a particular right of possession or privilege one has from birth, especially as an oldest child.”

This general meaning of birthright typically implies historically locatable decisions and moments of succession. “Inheritance” occurs at particular points in time, with rights being passed from specific predecessors to specific successors. This temporality may be clouded when “inheritance” is universalized, however. Many who use the discourse of universal rights argue that this birthright, this “inherent inheritance,” comes from a divine giver. So, for example, at an 1835 anti-slavery meeting Gerrit Smith argued:

My rights all spring from an infinitely nobler source—from the favor and grace of *God*. Our political and constitutional rights, so called, are but the natural and *inherent* rights, of man When ... this right [free speech] is called in question, then is the invasion, not of something obtained from human convention and human concession, but the invasion of a *birthright*—of that which is as old as our being, and a part of the original man (*Proceedings*, 1835, 19; emphasis added; for a different, though also Christian, perspective, see Pearson 2011, 299).

The International Indian Treaty Council’s executive director, Andrea Carmen (n.d.), likewise wrote in commemoration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Indigenous Peoples were not involved in drafting or adopting the UDHR. But its recognition that Human Rights are *inherent*—the *birthright* of all persons and Peoples, *bestowed* on us by our Creator—have resonated strongly with us (Carmen n.d.; emphasis added).

Similarly the indigenous organization, Chiefs of Ontario said:

As distinct and independent Nations, we possess inherent rights to self-determination. These *inherent* rights were not *endowed* by any other state or Nation, but are *passed on* through *birthright*, are collective, and *flow from* the connection to the Creator and our lands (“Understanding First Nation,” n.d.; emphasis added; see also “Message,” 2016; Grandor, n.d.)

Even without the idea of a divine giver, strong connections between birthright and “inherent rights” are common within human rights discourses. Adolphus Slade wrote in 1840:

The parliament of a constitutional country is considered omnipotent; but the common sense of every man tells him that its omnipotence has bounds ... The English parliament cannot deprive a man of his property or his *birthright*; it cannot subvert the *inherent* rights of the people (Slade 2012, 52-53; emphasis added).

It is hard to tell whether birthright and “inherent rights” are meant as distinctive or as near synonyms in this passage. Nevertheless, their close proximity is part of a common and persistent pattern (Levine 2003). Sherover (1989, 107) explains that, for the 17th-century British philosopher John Locke:

Governments and societies exist ... to defend those natural rights belonging to each individual as a *birthright*. Presumably socially capable individuals ... were able to enter into one to form a state to protect their *inherent* rights.

Developing a critique of Locke and John Stuart Mill, Sherover argues:

[B]oth ignored the *inherent* social relations that constitute any individual; both ignored the role of one’s society – as the cultural *parent* to the individual – which provides the historical communal framework within which one’s *inherent* humanity may flower (Sherover 1989, 108; emphasis added).

The pattern has not disappeared in the 2010s. For example, American Promise, a group that advocates for reduced corporate involvement in U.S. elections, declared:

No entity – be it a global corporation, international union, or political party – can take away the *inherent* rights of human beings. Our American *birthright* is built on that fundamental assurance (“What’s the problem?” n.d.; emphasis added).

In each of the examples above, “birthright” and “inherence” are used properly; they appear not to be conflated. However, their frequent close proximity in human rights discourse may encourage English speakers to find complementarity and mutual dependence between “inherence” and “inheritance.” It may condition thoughts of “inheritance” to accompany reference to “inherence.”

This tendency to mix hints toward “inheritance” with “inherence” can also be found outside of human rights discourse, though to a lesser degree. In a scholarly analysis critiquing European-centered scientific racism, for instance, Ana Monteiro-Ferreira (2014, 43) describes the racist notion that “... Europeans, members of the white race, are *endowed* with an *inherent* greater ability ... than non-Europeans.” Continuing two paragraphs later to analyze the same belief, she speaks of “[t]he purported ‘scientific’ evidence of differences biologically *inherited*” (emphases added). As a recent example from popular culture, the *Guardian* newspaper brought the terms into close connection through a headline, “The geeks are *inherent* at birth: older men have geekier sons, study finds.” The article asserted, “The scientists calculate that 57% of the geek index score is *inherited* ...” (Sample 2017; emphasis added; for other examples see Skulsky 1989, 135; Levine 2012, 51).

In most examples, it is possible to imagine “intrinsic” replacing “inherent” (see Beaumont n.d.), but English speakers arguably find connections of birthright or “inheritance” to “inherent” more natural than to “intrinsic.” At least, Google searches again seem to agree. “Inherent birthright” returns about 53 times more search results than “intrinsic birthright” does, which is a much higher ratio than with more generic references to human rights (see Table 2 below). It may be impossible to determine whether the reason is unconscious conflation due to the similar pronunciations of “inherence” and “inheritance.”

**Table 2. Comparison of Usage Between “Inherent” and “Intrinsic”
Based on Google Internet Search Results**

Inherent		Intrinsic		Ratio (Inherent/Intrinsic)
Term	Search Results	Term	Search Results	
Inherent rights	231,000	Intrinsic rights	53,600	4.3
Inherent human rights	142,000	Intrinsic human rights	14,700	9.7
Inherent birthright	9,190	Intrinsic birthright	173	53

Source: Google searches (September 20, 2017).

In any case, despite its literal definition, “inherence” seems to hint at times toward the notion of *succession*, a concept that allows for historicity. Thus for Morsink (2008, 1), the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “meant that people have these rights by virtue of their humanity and on account of their *birth into the human family*, and for no other reason. I call this the metaphysics of simple *inherence*” (emphasis in original). By contrast, close synonyms to “inherent”—such as “intrinsic,” “inalienable,” or “integral”—when allowing for historicity, do so more in the realm of *accession*, in its sense of accretion. A territory may become “integral” or even “intrinsic” to a state without being present at the state’s origin, but instead by later addition. However, hints of “birthright” or “inheritance” carry implications of being passed on from one government or generation to another. “Inherent territory” more strongly signals the notion of territory being fundamental to the state since the state’s birth. The unique rhetorical power of “inherent” thus also lies partly in the stronger sense that it is unimaginable to think of the state and territory existing apart from one another.

METAPHYSICAL DEPTH: “INHERENT” VERSUS “INALIENABLE”

The previous subsection suggested through ideas of intertextuality and the simple fact that “inherence” and “inheritance” have similar pronunciations that English speakers may be prone to add connotative hints of “inheritance” to their interpretations of “inherent territory.” Specifically, the sense of historical succession in “inherit” may sit alongside the denotative ahistoricity of “inherent.” Such a process adds to both the power and imprecision of “inherent” when used in territorial claims, as it seems to encompass multiple and not-always-logically-consistent characteristics. Hence, supporting a state’s claims to “inherent territory” though reference to specific dates, events, and ancestral heritage, may not seem quite as illegitimate as a more literal definition of “inherent” would

imply. Taken generally, this line of reasoning has some validity, and yet the point should not be overemphasized.

In this regard, comparison to "inalienable" is cautionary. Human rights discourse uses the two adjectives almost interchangeably. References to "inalienable rights" or "inalienable birthright" are actually slightly more common than the "inherent" version of those expressions, according to Google. Given this situation, one might question the argument outlined above. After all, the close proximity of "inalienable" and "birthright" likely does not evidence conflation between "inalienable" and "inheritance." English speakers can keep the definitions separate while understanding why they are often paired together. Thus, we should not overestimate the degree to which people interpret "inherent territory" in English through hints of "inheritance."

Comparison to "inalienable" also helps us to understand the uniqueness and potential power of "inherent." "Inalienable" is another term often used in claims involving disputed territory. Like "sacred," both "inherent" and "inalienable" imply that depriving a state of its claimed territory is not just legally illegitimate but also deeply immoral. Yet "inherence" and "inalienability" are not quite equivalent, and the difference is important in trying to imagine how English audiences might interpret "inherent territory." Put most simply, "inherent" more deeply inhabits metaphysics than "inalienable" does. One might note, for example, the connections scholars make between metaphysics and "inherence" (Morsink 2009; Mulligan 1999; van Inwagen and Sullivan 2017). Sophisticated treatments of metaphysics tend not to regard "inalienability" as such a basic concept. Here metaphysics is defined as the line of inquiry addressing the nature of existence. In other words, a claim of "inherent territory" leads more directly to metaphysical assertions than a claim of "inalienable territory" does. There is something logically, perhaps even historically, prior about "inherence."

Without delving too deeply into metaphysics, perhaps a couple of examples can illustrate. The sentence "Earthquakes are an inalienable risk in Japan" seems awkward in English. This strangeness comes in large part because "inalienability" presupposes a possessor (person, group, institution), but risk is not something that is possessed. Risk may exist in a certain sense, of course. It may be real for people or groups, but in English, risk is not typically thought of as possessable. "Inalienable" implies the logically prior existence of an entity that can possess or that can be belonged to. By contrast, "inherent risk" is a perfectly normal, common word coupling. Such risk may affect certain people more than others, but it more directly *exists in* a situation (in this case, the geology of Japan) rather than *belongs to* a person or group. A second example also relies on the distinction between "existing in" and "belonging to," but even more strongly

shows that “inalienability” tends toward legalism while “inherence” more deeply implies unchangeable existence. Imagine speaking of a person’s attributes; for example, a “happy woman” or a “kind man.” Although English speakers often use “inherence” and “inalienability” synonymously, they function quite differently if added to these constructions. The phrase, “an inalienably happy woman,” while grammatically correct, once again seems awkward in English. It immediately raises questions about why happiness cannot be taken away from the woman. Happiness is not subject to legal regulation, we might reason, so how can it be “inalienable”? By contrast, the phrase “an inherently kind man” is not awkward and raises no such questions. In fact, it seems to close off the possibility for questions. The man is kind; there is no point in trying to imagine otherwise. The man is kind because kindness is the nature of his existence, not because kindness is something that cannot/ought not to be taken away from him. Thus, “inherence” seems to be the deeper, more fundamental metaphysical quality.

On the surface, “inalienable human rights” and “inherent human rights” mean virtually the same thing: rights so fundamental and basic that they cannot, or at least should not, be taken from any individual. So, too, do “inherent territory” and “inalienable territory” seem to be very close synonyms, but a specific logical relationship differentiates the two when we look more closely. It makes much more sense to claim that certain human rights are “inalienable” because they are “inherent” than it does to say that those rights are “inherent” because they are “inalienable.” Or, put somewhat differently, “inalienable” relates more strongly to looking forward in time, while “inherent” goes back much deeper in time, and perhaps transcends time altogether. In spite of its etymology (related to “sticking to”), “inherence” in modern-day English is much more about the metaphysical quality of being in something (Mulligan 1999). It is logically prior to other qualities that are attached to, attributed to, or derived from the more fundamental aspects of human existence. This quality is precisely what makes claims to “inherent territory” potentially so potent. More than virtually any other possible adjective, “inherent” closes off discussion. It moves the relationship between the state (or nation) and the territory out of the realm of history, politics, or law and into the realm of the natural existence of things. Strictly speaking, declarations of an “inherent territory” should not be arguable. They simply state how things are and must forever be. Such metaphysical assertions are potentially very powerful rhetorical weapons for states, but ones unlikely to facilitate political compromise. Thus, though coming from a different language context, I agree with Wada (2013) that assertions of “inherent territory” discourage political negotiation or compromise; on the contrary, they logically

lead to conflict, fights, and military action. At best, such assertions make it difficult to escape the cycle of claims, counterclaims, and recriminations between states (see "S. Korea" 2018).

However, it is precisely this same metaphysical quality that makes "inherent territory" a perplexing term in English, and one that has not (yet) been adopted outside of its translated usage from Japan, China, and Korea. One might argue, in fact, that as a descriptor of specific pieces of territory, "inalienable" makes much more sense than "inherent." Particular territories, in most forms of Western thinking, are things that belong—to peoples at times, but mostly to states. Of course it makes sense to say that unspecified territory (territory in general) is "inherent" in states; states do not exist without territory. However, particular pieces of territory are usually thought of as belonging to states rather than as being "inherent" in them. It is possible to imagine China existing over time even as the specific territory that belongs to it shifts somewhat. In fact, this is entirely consistent with the historical record. It is not possible to imagine China existing without territory. To call any particular set of small, contested, lightly populated islands with historically modest strategic or economic significance "inherent territory" stretches "inherent" far beyond its essential meaning in English. At least "inalienable" implies an evaluable issue: does this territory more rightfully belong to one state rather than another? Then standards, such as international law, historical precedence, and others, can be applied to that question. The term "inherent territory," if intended as more than simply rhetorical intensification of territorial claims, offers few appeals to standards.

THE ISSUE OF STANDARDS

The closest serious recent usage I have found of "inherent territory" with no connection to Japan's, China's, or Korea's territorial disputes differs from typical Northeast Asian usage by reference to such standards. This comes in a 2002 letter from Honduras to the United Nations (Pérez-Cadalso Arias 2002). The Honduran government complained in the letter that Nicaragua encroached on its maritime claims through an oil-exploration map. "Those maritime spaces have been recognized as inherent parts of the Republic of Honduras by virtue of its status as a coastal State of the Bay of Fonseca, under the Judgment of the International Court of Justice ...," it argued. Although this phrasing has similarities to the use of "inherent territory" in Northeast Asia, the differences are important. Its focus is not land, not even the maritime land of islands, but instead resources associated with the sea. More importantly, it implicitly relies on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which gives each

coastal state certain types of control over waters and resources at particular distances from its coastline. In other words, “inherence” within this claim derives from a certain type of existence—being a coastal state—and from an international standard that is meant to apply equally to all such states.

Such grounding of “inherence”—making reference to particular facets of existence and/or internationally agreed upon standards—is most typically absent or at best unclearly implicit in most usages of “inherent territory” emanating from Northeast Asia. To overgeneralize slightly, most claims to “inherent territory” in Northeast Asia fall into one of three categories. First are claims that assert “inherent territory” with little to no explanation. In such claims, “inherent territory” is presumably assumed to be a self-explanatory or well-understood concept. It is possible that these usages may present the strongest rhetorical support for territorial claims. They allow the interpreter to read any meaning into “inherent” in a claim. Second, some who claim “inherent territory” follow up the claim with mainly a historical explanation. These explanations usually emphasize that the claimant state’s knowledge or use of the islands goes back further historically than does knowledge or use by any other state. A sense of “inheritance” is arguably present in many such usages. Third, explanations that follow claims of “inherent territory” implicitly or explicitly appeal to the standards of international law. These explanations may include historical arguments, such as those emphasized in the second category, but are less exclusively oriented around claims of being first. In addition, they may point toward treaties and other state-to-state agreements, claims of effective control, natural geographic situation, and the like. In such usage, “our inherent territory” seems mostly to be synonymous with “our territory according to international law.” In none of the three categories, however, is the metaphysics of “inherence” explicitly addressed. For English speakers at least, this means that the most central meaning of “inherent,” the aspect that makes it almost a uniquely powerful descriptor, is virtually never acknowledged or justified.

DOES “INHERENT TERRITORY” HAVE A FUTURE IN ENGLISH?

Nevertheless, for English speakers this unacknowledged metaphysical aspect remains in virtually all references to “inherent territory” and affects its interpretation. It is difficult to hear “inherent territory” without wondering how any particular territory exists at such a metaphysical depth within a state. This unacknowledged presence is another aspect contributing to the reluctance of an English speaker to use “inherent territory” on his own accord. Hiroshi Kimura (1980) was among the first scholars to explain the Japanese concept of “inherent territory” to English audiences. He argued that the concept was based on a

Japanese understanding of territory that differed from that held by Russia, one perhaps unique to Japan altogether:

Because of Japan's natural sea borders, the Japanese people have come to take it for granted that the natural, racial, linguistic, and cultural boundaries must coincide with political and administrative borders. Furthermore, Japanese have always fought their wars abroad and have never experienced prolonged international conflict on their own land. These factors have contributed to the Japanese view that each nation has its own inherent or inalienable territories—the land that is regarded historically and legally as part of a particular country alone (709-710).

By contrast, he argues, Russians regard state territory as much more artificial, contingent, and changeable. We might quibble with the environmental determinism pervading Kimura's argument, but the quotation does usefully point to the existence of culturally variable conceptualizations of state-territory relationships. Different cultures/states may have differing views of how territory relates to states.

Thus, for English speakers, many of whom subscribe to Western culture broadly defined, acceptance of "inherent territory" as a useful political category would likely require one (or both) of two shifts. One move that would accommodate "inherent territory" is a gradual change in understandings of the word "inherent," itself. That would likely include overlooking its currently strong metaphysical content in favor of strengthening other connotations, such as "inalienability," original/historical possession, or possibly even "inheritance." A second possible shift concerns how people think of relationships between states and particular territories. Currently, though there are significant advocates for the notion that certain territories must necessarily "inhere" in certain states, the scholarly consensus tends toward seeing the relationship in terms of historical contingency. Shifting toward a more metaphysical connection between states and particular territories would make the phrase "inherent territory" seem much more viable and representative of reality. Alternately, if "inherent territory" somehow becomes more popular in English and other powerful world languages, it may push conceptions of the state-territory relationship in a stronger metaphysical direction.

My own sense is that none of these possibilities are likely to be achieved soon. The gap in use of "inherent territory" between Northeast Asia's three dominant languages and English is likely to remain large for the near future. "Inherent territory" will probably remain a perplexing term for English speakers. Although

territorial disputes do exist among English-speaking states, few have the political immediacy that would push toward adoption of “inherent territory” as a rhetorical necessity. With that said, two situations in particular could potentially lead to greater adoption in English. One concerns the South China Sea, with China/Taiwan holding disputing claims to islands against Vietnam and the Philippines. The United States is also involved in “freedom of navigation” operations in the South China Sea. Greater conflict there increases the potential for more English usage of “inherent territory.” Conflicts over land near the margin between East Asia and South Asia (particularly territorial disputes between India and China), likewise raise the possibility that those who dispute Chinese claims may adopt the Chinese catchphrase of “inherent territory” in their own counterclaims.

Before concluding, one other possibility for greater English acceptance of “inherent territory” deserves consideration. This involves a change in grammatical form. Claiming that Dokdo, for example, is “inherently Korean territory” makes better sense in English than saying that it is “inherent Korean territory.” The slight change does not eliminate metaphysics and all of the other issues that make “inherent territory” a difficult term in English, but it makes many of these issues easier to swallow, so to speak. Once again, a simple example may help to illustrate. Consider two phrases: “polio is John’s inherent burden,” and “polio is inherently John’s burden.” The two can mean nearly the same thing, but the focus differs slightly. In the first, there is more of a sense that John’s nature includes polio, while the second shifts the emphasis more towards the possibility that polio’s nature includes John. The first makes better sense as an English phrase. Thus, to claim that Dokdo is inherently Korean territory is to say that Dokdo’s existence is necessarily Korean. Saying that Dokdo is inherent Korean territory, by contrast, implies that the existence of Korea necessarily includes Dokdo. While it may be arguable as to which sense people who claim “inherent territory” wish to prioritize, the first sense better matches Western notions of state-territory relationships. Thus, there may be fewer barriers to overcome within English through more frequent use of the adverb instead of the adjective.

INHERENT TERRITORY: A UNIQUELY NORTHEAST ASIAN TERM?

Drawing on discourse analysis, this paper asks why the term “inherent territory,” a key catchphrase for territorial claims in certain Northeast Asian countries, has not become more prominent in English-language political communications.

The term has increased in international importance, particularly in Japan but also in China/Taiwan and Korea, since the 1950s, a growth of usage never fully described in other research. Chinese usage during the 2010s greatly increased its global prominence. Not defined within international law, "inherent territory" faces several challenges to broader application in English. This paper's analysis of these obstacles is a new and unique contribution to the literature on interstate territorial conflict. These challenges include whether it is the best translation of the relevant terms from Japanese, Chinese, and Korean; the metaphysical content of "inherent"; an uncertain relationship to temporality; unclear standards as to what qualifies a territory as "inherent"; and even grammatical quirks. Inherence encompasses many possible definitions and synonyms, resonating at moral, natural, and legal registers, and may even be slightly conflated with "inheritance" at times. While polysemy, simultaneous historicity and ahistoricity, and metaphysical depth likely contribute to English resistance in adopting "inherent territory," these characteristics give the term power if it ever becomes common within that language. More than most terms used to claim contested territory, "inherent territory" potentially alters territory-state conceptualizations. This paper hopefully provides insight into both pitfalls and possibilities relating to the rhetorical persuasion of "inherent territory" within English.

Arguably, "inherent territory" is currently most rhetorically potent in its ability to exaggerate and naturalize territorial claims, as well as to imply a host of territorial arguments. This paper argues that "inherent territory" exaggerates and naturalizes more deeply than other synonyms. English speakers may not always know exactly what makes a claim of "inherent" Japanese territory different from a claim of Japanese territory, for instance, but they surely sense that the former signals stronger self-assuredness and intensity of belief. In addition, acceptance of the literal meaning of "inherent territory" seems to close off questions. The term implies that a natural order of things exists which should not and cannot be altered; therefore, questions become difficult to ask, not only about which specific territories belong to which states, but also about the more general basis of such claims. It has led towards greater distrust and militarization between China, Japan, and Korea (Wada 2013). The term hardens views and closes off possibilities for creative territorial solutions. Viewed this way, greater prominence for the term "inherent territory" should not be desired. Its primary contribution to political communication seems to be to obscure and misrepresent a state's relationship to territory, both historically and normatively (Yorgason 2017). Yet perhaps this is an overly Western-centric and pessimistic view. Looked at differently, we might ask about the discourse's

theoretical productivity. Perhaps “inherent territory” contains the germ of a Northeast Asian—not simply Japanese, as Kimura (1980) suggested—theory of state-territory relations, one that differs in important and valuable ways from common Western theories. In any event, whatever one’s normative view of the term, “inherent territory” deserves continuing attention, not only in its Northeast Asian manifestations, but also in its English-language usages.

REFERENCES

- Allen, Graham. 2011. *Intertextuality*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- American Promise. n.d. “What’s the Problem?” Accessed at <http://www.americanpromise.net/faq1> (February 25, 2017).
- Beaumont, Leland R. n.d. 2009. “Dignity: The Quality of Worth and Honor Intrinsic to Every Person.” *Emotional Competency*. Accessed at <http://www.emotionalcompetency.com/dignity.htm> (September 25, 2017).
- Beech, Hannah. 2012. “A Chinese TV Anchor Claims China Owns the Philippines, as Spat Heats Up the South China Sea.” *Time* (May 10). Accessed at <http://world.time.com/2012/05/10/a-chinese-tv-anchor-claims-china-owns-the-philippines-as-spat-heats-up-the-south-china-sea/> (February 22, 2018).
- Brown, James D.J. 2016. *Japan, Russia and their Territorial Dispute: The Northern Delusion*. London: Routledge.
- Bukh, Alexander. 2010. *Japan’s National Identity and Foreign Policy: Russia as Japan’s ‘Other’*. New York: Routledge.
- . 2014. “Japan’s Quest for Dokdo and the South Kurile Islands: A Sub-State/Non-State Actors Analysis.” *The Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies* 1(2), 115-133.
- Burghardt, Andrew F. 1973. “The Bases of Territorial Claims.” *Geographical Review* 63(2), 225-245.
- Cambridge Dictionary. n.d. “Inherit.” Accessed at <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/inherit> (February 22, 2018).
- Carmen, Andrea. 2008. “International Human Rights Day, December 10th, 2008.” *International Indian Treaty Council*. Accessed at http://cdn6.iitc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/PRESS_60thAnniv121008FINAL.pdf (September 25, 2017).
- Chang Kui-tai (trans. Eddy Chang). 2016. “China’s ‘sacred’ claim to Taiwan.” *Taipei Times* (November 24). Accessed at <http://www.taipeitimes.com>.

- com/News/editorials/archives/2016/11/24/2003659873/1 (September 8, 2017).
- China.org.cn. "The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China." 1993. Accessed at <http://www.china.org.cn/english/7953.htm> (February 22, 2018).
- Constitution of the Republic of China[中華民國憲法] 1947. *Justices of the Constitutional Court, Judicial Yuan, R.O.C.[司法院大法官]*. Accessed at http://www.judicial.gov.tw/constitutionalcourt/p07_2.asp?lawno=45 (February 23, 2018).
- _____. 1946. Taiwan Documents Project. Accessed at <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/constitution01.htm> (August 25, 2018).
- Chiefs of Ontario. n.d. "Understanding First Nation Sovereignty." Accessed at <http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/faq> (February 25, 2017).
- De Roche, Len. 2016. "Sunday Sermon: 'Coming Home.'" (September 11). Accessed at http://www.westhartforduu.org/sermons_print/Sermon_9_11_2016.pdf. (September 25, 2017).
- Del Casino, Vincent J., Jr., and Stephen P. Hanna. 2000. "Representation and Identities in Tourism Map Spaces." *Progress in Human Geography* 24(1), 23-46.
- Dixon, Martin, Robert McCorquodale, and Sarah Williams 2011. *Cases and Materials on International Law*, 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- English Language & Usage Stack Exchange. n.d. "Is There a Subtle Difference between 'Inherent' and Intrinsic?" Accessed at <https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/3217/is-there-a-subtle-difference-between-inherent-and-intrinsic> (February 22, 2018).
- Foucault, Michel (trans. Robert Hurley). 1990. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books
- Fravel, M. Taylor. 2014. "Territorial and Maritime Boundary Disputes in Asia." In Saadia Pekkanen, John Ravenhill, and Rosemary Foot eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia*. Oxford: Oxford Handbooks Online.
- Grammarist. n.d. "Inherent vs. Inherit." Accessed at <http://grammarist.com/usage/inherent-vs-inherit/> (February 22, 2018).
- Grandor, Daei. n.d. "Declaration, Advisory, and Notification of Inherent Tribal Sovereignty." *United Cherokee Republic of North America*. Accessed at http://www.unitedcherokee republic.org/v1/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Tribal-Law-sovereignty-WAMAPANOAG-NATION_1.pdf (September 25, 2017).
- Hara, Kimie. 2009. "Introduction: Northern Territories, Asia-Pacific Regional

- Conflicts and the Åland Experience: Untying the Kurillian Knot.” In Kimie Hara and Geoffrey Jukes eds., *Northern Territories, Asia-Pacific Regional Conflicts and the Åland Experience: Untying the Kurillian Knot*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1-14.
- Hasegawa, Tsyuyoshi. 1998. *The Northern Territories Dispute and Russo-Japanese Relations, Vol. 1: Between War and Peace, 1697-1985*. Berkeley, CA: International Area Studies, University of California at Berkeley.
- Hsiao, Anne Hsiu-an, and Cheng-yi Lin. 2016. “Taiwan’s Evolving Policy toward the South China Sea Dispute: 1992-2016.” In Ian Storey and Cheng-yi Lin eds., *The South China Sea Dispute: Navigating Diplomatic and Strategic Tensions*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 74-103.
- Hyun, Daesong. 2014. “Postwar Japan’s Dokdo/Takeshima Policy[전후 일본의 독도 정책].” *Korean Political Science Review[한국정치학회보]* 48(4), 49-73.
- Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China. 2012. “Diaoyu Dao, an Inherent Territory of China.” Accessed at http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7168681.htm (February 22, 2018).
- Iwamoto, Seigo, and Kazuhiko Togo. 2015. “Three Complementary, Simultaneous Approaches to Maritime Security in the East China Sea: International Law, Crisis Management, and Dialogue.” In Kazuhiko Togo and G.V.C. Naidu eds., *Building Confidence in East Asia, Maritime Conflicts, Interdependence and Asian Identity Thinking*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 87-102.
- Jiang, Xinli. 1999. ‘Macao’s Return’ and the Relations between the Three Sides of Taiwan: Myth of Lee Tung-hui’s ‘Two-State Theory[「澳門回歸」與兩岸三地關係: 李登輝「兩國論」的迷思] *Strait Review[海峽評論]* 108. Accessed at <https://www.haixia-info.com/articles/2570.html> (February 22, 2018).
- Kim, Myung-Ki. 1997. “A Study on Legal Aspects of Japan’s Claim to Tokdo.” *Korea Observer* 28(3), 359-387.
- Kimura, Hiroshi. 1980. “Japan-Soviet Relations: Framework, Developments, Prospects.” *Asian Survey* 20(7), 707-725.
- _____. 2000. *Japanese-Russian Relations under Brezhnev and Andropov*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Koo, Min Gyo. 2014. *Island Disputes and Maritime Regime Building in East Asia: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

- Lasserre, Frédéric. 1996. "The Kuril Stalemate: American, Japanese and Soviet Revisiting of History and Geography." *Journal of Oriental Studies* 34(1), 1-16.
- Lee, Han Kee. 1998. "Korea's Territorial Rights to Tokdo in History and International Law." *Korea Observer* 29(1): 1-92.
- Lee Keun-Gwan. 2015. "An Enquiry into the Palimpsestic Nature of Territorial Sovereignty in East Asia—with Particular Reference to the Senkaku/Diaoyudao Question." In Christine Chinkin and Freya Baetens eds., *Sovereignty, Statehood and State Responsibility: Essays in Honour of James Crawford*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 126-143.
- Levine, Aaron. 2012. *Economic Morality and Jewish Law*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Levine, Robert S. 2003. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Lu, Zijian. 1989. *China's Policy toward Territorial Disputes: The Case of the South China Sea Islands*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Maddox, Maeve. n.d. "Intrinsic vs. Inherent." *Daily Writing Tips*. Accessed at <https://www.dailywritingtips.com/intrinsic-vs-inherent/> (February 22, 2018).
- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. 2016. "Message from Chairman Cromwell—Our Aboriginal Rights Are Our Foundation and Birthright!" Accessed at <http://www.mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/blog/?p=866> (September 25, 2017).
- McCormack, Gavan. 2013. "Much Ado over Small Islands: The Sino-Japanese Conflict over Diaoyu/Senkaku." *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*. Accessed at <https://apjff.org/2013/11/21/Gavan-McCormack/3947/article.html> (February 22, 2018).
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary. n.d. "Inherent" Accessed at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inherent> (February 22, 2018).
- _____. n.d. "Inherited." Accessed at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/inherited> (February 22, 2018).
- Monteiro-Ferreira, Ana. 2014. *The Demise of the Inhuman: Afrocentricity, Modernism, and Postmodernism*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Morsink, Johannes. 2008. "The Universal Declaration and the Conscience of Humanity." Accessed at <http://menschenrechte.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/The-Universal-Declaration-and-the-Conscience-of-Humanity.pdf> (September 26, 2017).

- Morsink, Johannes. 2009. *Inherent Human Rights: Philosophical Roots of the Universal Declaration*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Müller, Martin. 2008. "Reconsidering the Concept of Discourse for the Field of Critical Geopolitics: Towards Discourse as Language and Practice." *Political Geography* 27, 322-338.
- Mulligan, Kevin 1999. "Inherence." In Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa eds., *A Companion to Metaphysics*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 242-243.
- New Oxford American English Dictionary (Kindle edition). 2005. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Northeast Asian History Network. 2011. "Dokdo Is Korean Territory." Accessed at http://contents.nahf.or.kr/english/item/level.do?levelId=isd_k_001e_0020_0020&langTypes=e (February 22, 2018).
- Okuda, Hiroko. 2014. "Historical Narratives in Japanese School Textbooks." In Thomas A. Hollihan ed., *The Dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands: How Media Narratives Shape Public Opinion and Challenge the Global Order*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 51-79.
- Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Accessed at <http://www.etymonline.com> (February 22, 2018).
- Park Gyeong-jun. 2018. "President Moon Jae-in Celebrates the 99th Anniversary of the 3/1 Movement[문재인 대통령 제99주년 3·1절 기념식 기념사]." *Yonhap News* (March 1). Accessed at <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2018/03/01/0200000000AKR20180301031300001.HTML?from=search> (March 2, 2018).
- Pearson, Mel. 2011. *Absolute Sovereignty of the People: Norvus Ordo Seclorum, New Order for the Ages*. Noblesville, IN: Aquila Press.
- Pérez-Cadalso Arias, Guillermo. 2002, "Appendix" to "Letter Dated 12 August 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Honduras to the United Nations Adressed to the Secretary-General." from Marco Antonia Suaxo, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative, Chargé d'affaires a.i.. *United Nations General Assembly, Fifty-seventh session, Item 25 of the Provisional Agenda, Oceans and the Law of the Sea*, A/57/150. Accessed at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/No2/521/98/PDF/No252198.pdf?OpenElement> (January 28, 2018).
- Proceedings of the New York State Anti-Slavery Convention, Held at Utica, October 21, and New York Anti-Slavery Society, Held at Peterboro', October 22, 1835. 1835. Utica, NY: Standard & Democrat Office.
- Sample, Ian. 2017. "The Geeks are Inherent at Birth: Older Men have Geekier

- Sons, Study Finds." *The Guardian* (June 20). Accessed at <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jun/20/older-men-fathers-geekier-sons-study-geek-index> (February 22, 2018).
- Sharma, Surya P. 1997. *Territorial Disputes, Acquisition and International Law*. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Sherover, Charles M. 1989. *Time, Freedom, and the Common Good: An Essay in Public Philosophy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Skulsky, Harold. 1989. *Spirits Finely Touched: The Testing of Value and Integrity in Four Shakespearean Plays*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.
- Slade, Adolphus. 2012. *Travels in Germany and Russia: Including a Steam Voyage by the Danube and the Euxine from Vienna to Constantinople, in 1838-39*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Stephan, John J. 1974. *The Kuril Islands: Russo-Japanese Frontier in the Pacific*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.
- Sumner, Brian Taylor. 2004. "Territorial Disputes at the International Court of Justice." *Duke Law Journal* 53(6), 1779-1812.
- Sun, Kuan-Ming. 1995. "Policy of the Republic of China Towards the South China Sea." *Marine Policy* 19(5), 401-449.
- Thesaurus.plus. n.d. "Inherence and Patrimony." Accessed at <https://thesaurus.plus/related/inherence/patrimony> (September 25, 2017).
- The State Council The People's Republic of China. "The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue (2000)." 2000. Accessed at http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2005-07/27/content_17613.htm (February 22, 2018).
- United Nations. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." 1948. *United Nations*. Accessed at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> (September 28, 2017).
- Van Dijk, Teun A. 1977. *Text and Context: Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Van Inwagen, Peter, and Meghan Sullivan. 2017. "Metaphysics." In Edward N. Zalta ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition). Accessed at <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/metaphysics/> (September 27, 2017).
- Wada, Haruki. 2013. *How to Solve East Asia's Territorial Problems* [동북아시아 영토문제, 어떻게 해결할 것인가], Lim, Gyeong-taek, translation of 2012 Japanese original. Paju: Sanyejul Publishing.
- Wiktionary: The Free Dictionary. n.d. "Inherit." Accessed at <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/inherit> (February 22, 2018).
- Yonhap News. "Moon Says Japan Has No Right to Claim Sex Slave

Issue Settled.” 2018. *Yonhap News Agency* (March 1). Accessed at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/search1/2603000000.html?cid=AEN20180301002451315> (March 2, 2018).

_____. “S. Korea Lodges Protest against Japan’s Renewed Claim to Dokdo. *Yonhap News Agency* (September 28). Accessed at <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2018/08/28/0200000000AEN20180828003752315.html> (October 13, 2018).

Yorgason, Ethan. 2017. “Eastern Asia’s Revitalization of the State Ideal through Maritime Territorial Disputes.” *Political Geography* 61, 203-214.

[Received Aug 6, 2018; Revised Aug 26, 2018; Accepted Oct 8, 2018]