THE EAST CHINA SEA DISPUTE IN JAPANESE POLITICS

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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The East China Sea (ECS) dispute between Japan, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of China began in the early 1970s and has continued to escalate. Although the Japanese government claims to handle conflicts in the disputed area as domestic matters, scholarship has focused on the dispute as an international relations or legal issue between states. This project explores the dispute as an issue in domestic Japanese politics by examining the narratives and power dynamics of the major political parties, nationalist and ultraconservative groups, and Okinawan activists vis-à-vis the national government and international actors.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Tensions in the East China Sea (ECS) dispute regarding maritime boundaries between Japan, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the Republic of China (ROC) often distill into conflicting claims of sovereignty over a group of small, uninhabited islands known as Diaoyu Tai in Chinese and Senkaku Shotō in Japanese. Although no party in the dispute uses these islands to determine their current maritime borders or exclusive economic zones provided as under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea III (UNCLOS III), activists, politicians, and government officials on all sides continue to hold up the islands as a rallying symbol for control of the surrounding waters. Discourse over disputed zones and borders thus become conflated with the sovereignty of the islands in both politics and scholarship.

Of Japan's three major territorial disputes—the ECS dispute, the dispute with the Republic of Korea (ROK) over Dokdo-Takeshima, and the dispute with Russia over the Hoppō Ryōdo-Kuril Islands—the ECS dispute is unique for several reasons. First, the ECS dispute is the only one in which Japan exercises administrative control over the disputed territory. Second, the ECS dispute covers a more valuable area than the Dokdo-Takeshima or Hoppō Ryōdo-Kuril Islands disputes due its large size, abundant fishing grounds, carbon resource deposits, and strategic position vis-à-vis the PRC. Third, the ECS dispute is the only dispute of the three in which there has been prolonged escalation between the party states' security forces. The Japanese constitution's ban on use of force—and in the case of the Dokdo-Takeshima dispute, the mutual alliances with the United States by Japan and the ROK—curtailed Japan's ability to deploy its Self Defense

Forces (SDF) to the other disputed areas. However, Japan's presence in the ECS is the result of the US administration of Okinawa following the end of the Pacific War. This presence, when coupled with the increased deployment of PRC vessels in the area, has created a situation in which the Air Self Defense Forces (ASDF) are scrambling more than once a day in response to the PRC's activities in the area (Ministry of Defense 2014). Amid this tension, unilateral escalatory behavior by security forces in the area, such as the 2013 incident in which a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) frigate locked its radar on a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyer without authorization from Beijing (Japan Times 2013; SCMP 2013), and the increased nationalist motivation for security forces to act counter to their government's directions, like the leak of footage in the 2010 collision incident by a Japan Coast Guard official (Hagström 2012b; Shinoda 2013), have created a dangerous situation in which an armed conflict may erupt due to an accident or unauthorized act. In this way, the ECS dispute is more similar to the ongoing South China Sea (SCS) disputes between the PRC and Southeast Asian states such as Vietnam and the Philippines than Japan's other territorial disputes.

The ECS dispute began in 1970, after a report was published in 1968 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East's Committee for the Co-ordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in Asian Offshore Areas that predicted large deposits of hydrocarbon resources near the islands (Blanchard 2000; Lai 2014; Smith 2013; Suganuma 2000; Wei Su 2005;). The question of sovereignty over the area was raised first by the ROC in August 1970 when it passed a statute governing prospecting in the area (Suganuma 2000). The following month, activists hoisted a ROC

flag on one of the islands, resulting in a protest from Japan (Suganuma 2000). After a joint meeting among officials from Japan, the ROC, and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in November 1970, the PRC asserted its claim to the disputed territory as well (Suganuma 2000). Though the governments of Japan, the PRC, and the ROC justify their sovereignty through irredentist arguments, and numerous scholars—most notably Suganuma (2000)—have critiqued the historical documents in these claims, the dispute itself did not exist until 1970.

Prior to these claims, the islands were under the control of United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) from 1950 to 1972, which considered them part of Okinawa in several of its ordinances (Eldridge 2014). The United States Air Force paid rent to the private owner of Huangwei Yu-Kubashima to use the island for target practice from 1950 to 1971 (Eldridge 2014). When Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972, administrative control of the islands was also transferred to Japan (Eldridge 2014; Suganuma 2000). This "administrative control," however, was hardly secure: even under USCAR, residents of Yonaguni and Ishigaki consistently complained of incursions by Taiwanese poachers and fishermen, not only around the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands, but on Yonguni and Ishigaki themselves (Eldridge 2014). A handful of violent attacks on Okinawan fisherman by foreign fishermen flying the ROC flag—but whose nationality was never verified—resulted in tensions between the ROC and the government of Japan before oil deposits were ever mentioned (Eldridge 2014).

Following the PRC and ROC's protest of the inclusion of the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands in the Okinawa Reversion Agreement 1971, Japan began to seek normalized relations with the PRC and withdrew its recognition of the ROC as the legitimate

government of mainland China (Blanchard 2000; Hagström 2005; Ong 1997). As part of this effort, the Japanese government adopted the "three nonactions" policy (not to land, not to investigate, and not to build) in the early 1970s, which ended locals' activities on the islands that had been allowed under USCAR (Eldridge 2014; Togo 2014). When the Treaty of Peace and Friendship to normalize relations between Japan and the PRC began to take form in 1978, the islands again became an issue. A group of 80 to 100 lightly armed fishing vessels from the PRC sailed to the islands as part of political posturing, which brought negotiations to a halt in April (Blanchard 2000; Koo 2009; Manicom 2014). Just as both parties returned to the table that summer, the nationalist group *Nihon Seinensha* (Japan Youth Association) landed on the islands and began construction of a makeshift lighthouse on Diaoyu Dao-Uotsurishima (Blanchard 2000; Deans 2000; Koo 2009). Despite this, the islands were simply left out of the treaty: the PRC maintains that both sides agreed to table the issue until a later time, while the Japanese government claims that it did not agree to revisit it at any point in the future (Smith 2013; Suzuki and Murai 2014).

In the 1980s and early 1990s, there were few incidents on or near the islands. In 1985, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and Japanese company Uruma pursued a joint development project (Liao 2008), and in 1988 Japan offered a large overseas development aid (ODA) loan for the years 1990 to 1995 (Ong 1997). Immediately after the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, Japan was the only G-7 state to maintain a fairly cordial relationship with the PRC. For example, Japan's carefully phrased response to the incident was not nearly as critical as the others, it resumed loans to the PRC before any other G-7 state, and sent the first head of government for an

official visit following the incident (Kim 2001; Koo 2009; Ong 1997). This period of calm ended at the time of each state's adoption of domestic maritime laws in pursuance of UNCLOS III, which both would sign in 1996 (Blanchard 2000; Hagström 2005; Ong 1997; Wei Su 2005). When the PRC passed its Law on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone (LTC), it claimed its waters extended to the Okinawa Trough, and added an amendment that reaffirmed not only its claim to the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands, but also the right to use force to defend them (Blanchard 2000; Hagström 2005; Manicrom 2014 Ong 1997; Wei Su 2005). Japanese conservatives took up countering the LTC as a cause in the National Diet (Hagström 2005; Koo 2009; Manicom 2014). Both the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and its Japanese counterpart (MOFA), however, quickly resolved the tension through diplomatic means. Foreign Minister Qian Qichen stated that the "new law did not change Beijing's position" (Hagström 2005, p. 167). During his visit to Japan, Chinese Communist Party Secretary General Jiang Zemin told Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi that he hoped the LTC did not adversely impact relations (Hagström 2005, p. 167-168).

The territorial dispute again flared in the summer of 1996 following a series of tensions in the region that included the PRC's nuclear tests the previous year, the Taiwan Strait Crisis, the renegotiation of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, and the Hashimoto-Clinton joint statement of 1996 (Deans 2000; Koo 2009; Ong 1997; Smith 2009). In July of the same year, the Nihon Seinensha again landed on the islands to repair its 1978 lighthouse and to construct a new one on Bei Xiaodao-Kita Kojima (Blanchard 2000; Deans 2000; Koo 2009; Ong 1997). This, coupled with Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutarō's visits to the controversial Yasukuni

Shrine, led to protests across Chinese communities worldwide and prompted activists to take to the islands (Blanchard 2000; Koo 2009). As a result of the drowning of PRC activist David Chan in September, both states took actions to end the conflict (Blanchard 2000; Koo 2009).

The 1996 tension was followed by a period of relative calm until the early 2000s. Oil deposits again became the source of contention in 2003 due to competition between the PRC and Japan for Russia's oil exports as well as CNOOC's partnership with Royal Dutch Shell and Unocoal for joint drilling projects near the disputed area (Liao 2008; Manicom 2014). This was further complicated by the revelation that the Japanese government had begun to lease three of the privately owned islands that January (Blanchard 2009; Lai 2014). Though drilling by the CNOOC-led group was west of the "median-line" that Japan claims as the boundary between its and the PRC's territorial waters, it was reported in the *Tokyō Shimbun* that the Chinese drilling could deplete the supplies east of the line (Liao 2008; Manicom 2014). When the PRC invited Japan to join the project, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) rejected the offer (Liao 2008; Manicom 2014). The conflict over the drilling escalated as the Japan Maritime Safety Agency (JMSA) encountered PRC research vessels in the Japanese-claimed EEZ, which prompted the agency's own surveys of the area (Liao 2008; Koo 2009; Manicom 2014). Shell and Unocoal eventually withdrew from the project in September 2004 (Liao 2004).

Despite a meeting between PRC and Japanese officials to pursue the possibility of joint development, the situation continued to deteriorate as provocative and seemingly-provocative measures were made by both sides. For example, a Chinese submarine was

discovered in Japanese waters (Smith 2009), and the PRC announced it would cut oil exports by two-thirds the following year (Liao 2008). In what appeared to be a response, Japan granted test-drilling rights to Teikoku (Blanchard 2009; Liao 2008; Manicom 2014), and the Japan Fishery Agency announced a three-year plan to expand corral reefs in the disputed zone (Liao 2008). This period of tension subsided with the appointment of pro-PRC METI Minister Nikai Toshihiro, who immediately suspended Japanese applications to drill in the disputed waters and visited the PRC to negotiate for an end to the conflict (Liao 2008; Manicom 2014).

The most recent period of disturbance in the disputed waters began with the 2010 collision between a PRC fishing trawler and a patrol ship of the JCG near the Diaoyu-Senkaku Islands. Though there was a similar collision with an ROC fishing vessel in 2008, the matter was settled quickly as video footage of the incident proved that the collision was the fault of JCG (Krauss 2013). The 2010 collision, on the other hand, was protracted. Until this incident, activists and crews of foreign ships caught by the JCG were usually detained and deported within a few days. This time, the prosecutor's office in Naha decided to press charges against the captain of the vessel, and held him for seventeen days before dropping the case (Hagström 2012b; Hughes 2013; Masuo 2013; Shinoda 2013). The PRC's response was strong in both diplomatic exchanges between the MFA and MOFA and statements by PRC leaders such as Premier Wen Jiabao (Shinoda 2013; Sneider 2013). After the captain's release, Diet members demanded to see the video footage of the collision recorded by a camera on the JCG ship that had been withheld by the Kan administration (Hagström 2012b; Shinoda 2013). Before the Transport Ministry could comply with the Diet's request to make a segment of the video

public, a coast guard official leaked the full video, which proved the guilt of Chinese captain and sparked public outrage against the administration (Hagström 2012b; Shinoda 2013).

After a brief period of calm following the triple disaster on March 11, 2011, Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintarō announced in April 2012 his intention to purchase the three privately owned islands and administer them as part of Tokyo (Masuo 2013; Smith 2013). As a result of mounting tension due to Ishihara's campaign to buy the islands, which included surveying them with supporters, the national government announced in July that it would purchase them to prevent Ishihara from further straining relations (Maicom 2014; Masuo 2013). The purchase, however intentioned, prompted activists from the PRC to take to the islands (Masuo 2013; Togo 2014). There has also been an increase in the number of the PRC's People's Liberation Army Navy ships that have continued to enter disputed waters (Manicom 2014; Smith 2013).

This timeline of events follows the standard narratives of most works related to the ECS dispute. However, most texts in English approach the dispute as an issue of international relations and international law, and assume that the primary actors are the states themselves. Activists and other "secondary actors" (Eldridge 2014) are usually referred to by their national origin only: activists from the ROC and PRC, for example, are never identified by political persuasions (c.f., Japanese "nationalists," "ultraconservatives," "right-wingers"), nor is there any mention in the current literature about these activists' possible association or group affiliations. Although Japanese activists are much more likely to be identified as "nationalist" or "right wing," the names of specific group affiliations are inconsistently used. The Nihon Seinensha, which

constructed lighthouses on the islands in 1978, 1990, and 1996, is not always referenced as such in the literature. Koo (2009), for example, identifies the organization that constructed the 1978 lighthouse as the *Seirankai* (Blue Storm Group). The Seirankai, however, was an association of Diet members that constructed a beacon shortly before assisting the Seinensha with their lighthouse (Lai 2014). Although most of the Japanese activists exhibit nationalist both ultraconservative ideologies, not all do. Incorrectly or selectively attributing provocative actions to specific groups blurs the distinct motivations and disjointed nature of Japanese nationalist and ultraconservative activists. For example, there is little differentiation between mainland Japanese activists and those from Okinawa. One notable example is when a group of Okinawan activists hoisted a Japanese flag on Diaoyu Dao-Uotsurishima one month after the Seinensha's 1996 visit. Koo (2009) only references the construction and repair of lighthouses in 1990 and 1996 by "an ultra-nationalist Japanese group," and omits the Okinawans' landing (p. 208). Manicom (2014) mentions the Seinensha in his discussion of the 1996 incidents, but also ignores Okinawan activists. Scholars who reference these activists do not acknowledge their Okinawan origins. Blanchard (2000), for example, notes that "a different rightist organization posted a flag" (p. 100) in his article. Ong (1997) is the only source I found that identifies the 1996 flag-raising group as being from "Okinawa-Ken" (p. 47). In their chapter on the Japanese media's coverage of the dispute, Suzuki and Murai (2014) initially note that "Japanese activists suddenly landed on the Senkaku islands" following the deportation of Chinese activists who had landed on the islands in response to the 2010 collision (p. 154). Later, they explain "the Japanese activists" were "members of a local conservative group," (p. 154) but do not reference Okinawa specifically in their work.

The issue of Okinawan politics may seem irrelevant from an international relations or international law perspective, these omissions contribute to the perception that all Japanese secondary actors in the ECS dispute share similar motivations to be involved, which is not the case.

Additionally, given Japan's official position that no dispute exists over the islands, and that it claims to handle any incidents in the area with domestic law, it is worth investigating the roles of the ECS dispute within Japanese political discourse and how the dispute highlights Japan's issues of internal sovereignty as much as the external dispute. The national government's purchase of the privately owned islands in 2012, for example, was meant to prevent nationalist and ultraconservative actors from using the islands to further escalate tensions with the PRC. This implies that under the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), there was a challenge to the national government's legitimacy in matters related to the islands and foreign policy making, as the effort to purchase them was prompted by Ishihara, a singular, fringe—if well known—*local* official. Even the major political parties primarily use the territorial dispute in their rhetoric challenge the legitimacy of ruling party or the bureaucracy, rather than to change the national government's official position on the dispute. An examination of Okinawan narratives on the dispute similarly indicates a growing legitimacy crisis between Okinawans and the national government.

However, scholarship on Japanese politics thus far only uses the dispute as an example or case study within works that focus on other subjects, such as the foreign policy of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) during its brief time as ruling party (Hughes 2013; Sneider 2013) or nationalism in Sino-Japanese relations (Lai 2014).

Literature on Japanese politics tends to focus on the parties and concerns of mainland Japan, and treats Okinawan issues similarly to the territorial dispute. With the exception of Gavan McCormack, scholars who write about Okinawa similarly avoid the territorial dispute.

Despite Okinawa's seeming irrelevance to international relations between the party states due to its marginal position in Japanese politics, Okinawan narratives about the territorial dispute are richer than those of the major political parties or the nationalist and ultraconservative activists from the mainland. These narratives reflect Okinawa's past as a colonized nation, and residents' concern for the wider implications of escalation in the ECS. The Senkaku Islands are, after all, administered as part of Okinawa, and issues the prefecture faces over military bases, security, environmental damage, and poverty are closely related to the handling of the dispute by all sides. The diversity of Okinawan narratives also highlights the fact that there is no singular "Okinawan narrative" on these issues, but rather several. The well-known anti-base sentiments in the Okinawan Islands are at odds with the interests of the other islands in the prefecture. The Ishigaki City Council, which has jurisdiction over the islands, demanded more involvement from the national government following the 2010 collision. Its members have participated in their own escalatory behavior in the dispute, such as the declaration of a "Senkaku Islands Day." Despite some anti-militarization debate, Yonaguni Island resolved to welcome a SDF base in order to secure financial support and to slow down population attrition.

To provide an alternative perspective on the dispute that can include these more nuanced issues, this thesis will compare the narratives and strategies of the major political

parties, nationalist and ultraconservative groups, and Okinawan citizens with regards to the ECS dispute. In this work, I untangle and reorganize existing scholarship on the dispute, Okinawa, nationalist groups, and Japanese politics more generally to identify and contextualize these narratives. Direct examples of each narrative, such as newspaper editorials, pamphlets, website publications, and essays, will also be examined. Gaps between these narratives and the standard timeline of events presented in scholarship on the dispute will be filled with more recent and infrequently cited news reports.

In so doing, I argue that these groups' positions vis-à-vis both the national government and the international community determines how they use the territorial dispute in their political efforts as well as the depth of their narrative. I will expand on Simon Cotterill's (2011) "broken triangle" model to illustrate this point. Cotterill's model depicts the unbalanced relational influence between the state (Japan), international organizations, and the Ainu minority in Japan. He argues that because the Japanese government was able to exert influence over the lives of Ainu while Ainu had little representation in or influence on the government, the Ainu instead sought assistance from sympathetic international organizations, such as the United Nations, that were able to influence the government on their behalf (Cotterill 2011). This principle can be applied to Japanese groups involved in the island dispute. Major political parties have no broken "sides" in this triangle of influence: even when a major party is not in power, it still influences the ruling government, and most of the major political parties maintain relations with their counterparts abroad in case they come to power. Nationalist and ultraconservative groups and parties, on the other hand, do not command enough seats in the Diet to strongly influence the government unless they are in accord or coalition with

the ruling party. Thus, when these groups feel the need to usurp influence over the government, they attempt to provoke international actors to undermine the ruling party's efforts. Similarly, these groups react to provocation from international actors when they think state's response is inadequate. Okinawa, on the other hand, is influenced by both the government and international actors (e.g., the US, the PRC, and the ROC), but has not been successful in exerting influence upon them. Because of this, in the process of finding a narrative that can repair these "broken" relationships with the national government and international actors, Okinawan narratives about the territorial dispute are more nuanced and varied than those most referenced in scholarship.

As this thesis examines the islands and the territorial dispute within Japanese politics, I will hereafter refer to the islands by their Japanese names, but I do not take any position in the dispute itself. The Chinese names of individual islands will be included in parentheses the first time they are mentioned. Names of organizations, such as the Seinensha and small political parties, like the *Ishin no Kai* (Restore Japan Party) will be referred to by their Japanese names with the English translation appearing in parentheses the first time they are used. Political parties whose English names are used more frequently in scholarship and journalism, such as the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), will be referenced in English only. Names of Japanese individuals will be ordered family name first.

CHAPTER II

THE TERRITORIAL DISPUTE AND MAJOR POLITICAL ACTORS

Introduction

Within Japanese domestic politics, the sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands is not disputed: all major political parties consider the islands to be Japanese territory (Deans 2000; Hirano 2014). The issue, rather, is how best to prevent conflicts with the PRC and ROC over the disputed area, and how to handle conflicts when they arise. When international conflict erupts over the islands, it provides opposition parties with the opportunity to criticize the ruling party or coalition as well as government ministries that are involved. Prior to the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) first loss of both houses of the Diet in 1993, the opportunities to critique its handling of the dispute were few and short-lived. The escalation of the dispute in recent years coincides with a major electoral reform in 1994 and the second—and longer lasting—defeat of the LDP. Though the Senkaku Islands do not occupy a substantial place in domestic politics compared to other issues, such as pension reform or child subsidies, they have recently become more significant.

The official position of the government of Japan is that there is no dispute over the sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands. The government maintains the islands were *terra nullius* when they were claimed by Japan in 1895 and thus were not included in the Treaty of Shimonoseki in which Taiwan was ceded to Japan. The validity of this claim has been challenged by historians such as Suganuma (2001) who argue that there is compelling documentary evidence that the islands were not *terra nullius*. An information page on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website—available in twelve languages—argues

that until the discovery of oil reserves in the area "the Chinese government did not contest Japan's sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands" (MOFA 2014). The page further states, "Japan has consistently maintained that there has never been any agreement with China to 'shelve' issues regarding the Senkaku Islands" (MOFA 2014).

Since the normalization of ties with the PRC in 1972, the Japanese government has followed a policy of the three "non-actions" (no landings, no investigations, and no building) to prevent conflict around the islands (Togo 2014). The government recommended to civilian groups not to pursue these activities on the islands or any other activity that might provoke the PRC. This halted recurring research trips by the University of the Ryūkyūs and surveys by the Ishigaki City Council, which has jurisdiction over the islands (Eldridge 2014; SCMP 2014). Japan also did not allow Japanese companies to pursue oil drilling in the area until 2005, but even that activity was quickly suspended (Liao 2008). Following the incidents of 1996, Japan promised the PRC that it would try to control nationalist activists. In 1997, for example, the national government condemned a Diet member's landing, and the Seinensha was permanently banned from landing on the islands in 2004 (Blanchard 2000; Manicom 2014). The latter action was possible primarily because the government began leasing the privately owned islands in 2002 (Wani 2012). Previously, the government's authority to detain activists was limited to foreign nationals on the grounds of illegal entry, since it was unclear whether or not Japanese groups had permission from the owner of the islands to land. Journalists and scholars have speculated that the owners of the islands had ties to or were sympathetic with nationalist groups like the Seinensha, and that they may have granted permission to land (Wani 2012). Most notably, the owners after 1978, the Kurihara

family, rented other properties to nationalist groups, such as the *Fuji Taisekiji Kenshokai* (Wani 2012).

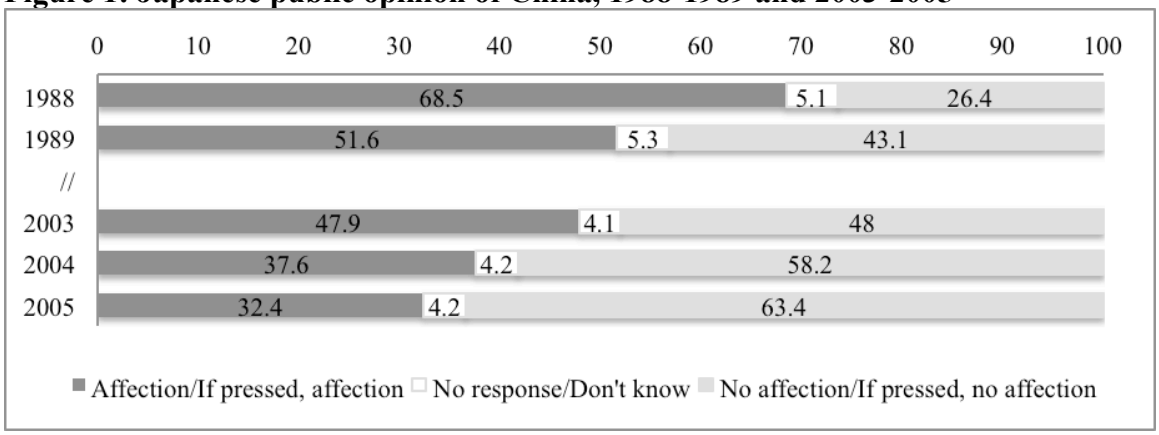
Laws and policies regarding Japan's exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and territorial seas, on the other hand, indicate that a dispute exists. The 1996 Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone and the Law on the EEZ and Continental Shelf, for example, do not use the Senkaku Islands to formulate Japan's straight baseline claims, and instead begin the measurement from nearby islands that are not contested, such as Ishigaki and Miyako (Drifte 2014). Similarly, Japan observes a "median line" as the boundary to its EEZ (Liao 2008; Moore 2014), which serves as a *de facto* acknowledgement of a territorial dispute. UNCLOS III offers "median lines" as a solution for states that have overlapping EEZ claims that have not been settled by agreement, and defines the median line as a boundary equidistant from the baselines of both states (Liao 2008; Moore 2014). This median line is observed by the JCG, Fisheries Agency, and other agencies that work in the area as the boundary of their jurisdictions. In the wake of UNCLOS III, the relevancy of the Senkaku Islands to maritime territorial claims has thus become symbolic, as the sovereignty of the islands is determined by the state's EEZ and not vice versa.

Japanese Public Opinion on Sino-Japanese Relations

Although there is a relative consensus in Japan that the Senkaku Islands are Japanese territory, the ECS dispute appears to have contributed to a decline in the Japanese public's opinion of the PRC. Figure 1 illustrates the abridged results of the Cabinet Office's (*Naikaku-fu*) annual public opinion survey on foreign relations between

1988 and 2005. The largest dip Japanese public opinion occurred between 1988 and 1989, in which the number of respondents to the Cabinet Office's annual public opinion poll on foreign relations who answered "feel an affection" (*shitashimi kanjiru*) or "if pressed, feel an affection" (*dochiraka to iu to shitashimi kanjiru*) towards the PRC fell from 68.5 percent to 26.4 percent and the number of respondents who answered "do not feel an affection" (*shitashimi kanjinai*) or "if pressed, do not feel an affection" (*dochiraka to iu to shitashimi kanjinai*) rose from 26.4 to 43.1 percent (Naikaku-fu 2004, 2005). After 1989, the Japanese public's opinion of the PRC slowly stabilized in the upper-thirty to lower-forty percent range until 2004 (Naikaku-fu 2004, 2005). Between 2003 and 2004, the total percentage of respondents who answered that they felt affection toward the PRC fell from 47.9 percent to 37.6 percent while the percentage of respondents who did not increased from 37.6 to 58.2 percent (Naikaku-fu 2004, 2005). This dip coincides with several tensions in Sino-Japanese relations as a result of the PRC's oil drilling project, as well as anti-Japan riots following China's loss to Japan in the 2004 Asian Football Confederation Cup (Liao 2008, Smith 2009).

Figure 1: Japanese public opinion of China, 1988-1989 and 2003-2005

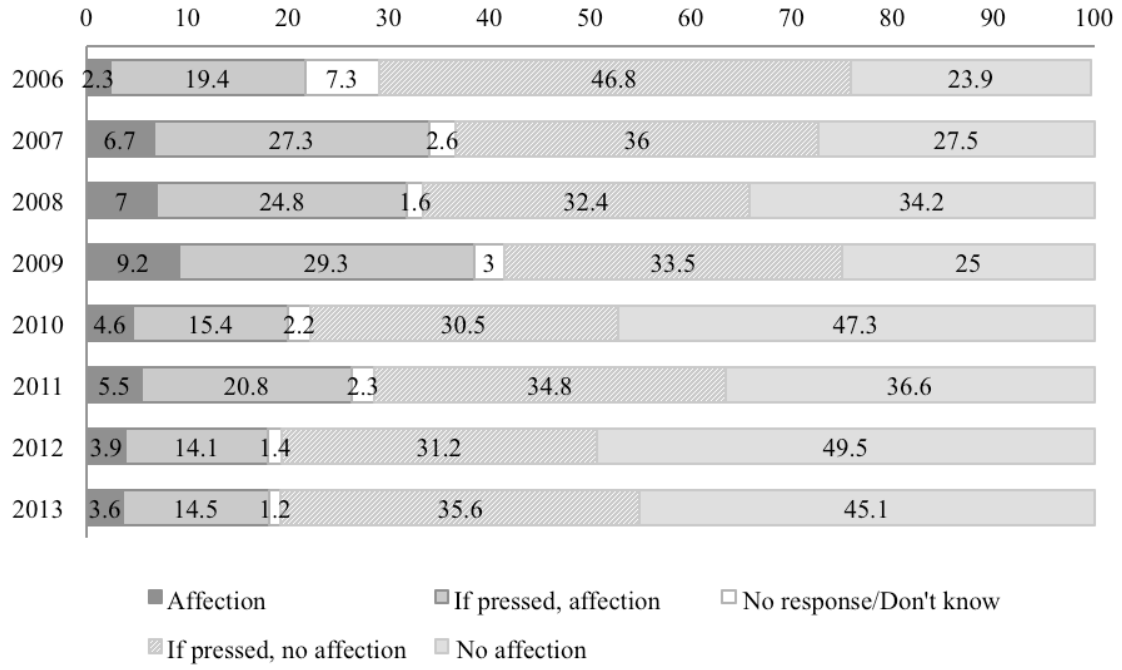


Source: Naikaku-fu 2004, 2005. Chart drafted by the author.

Between 2005 and 2006, there was another steep drop in respondents who answered that they felt affection for the PRC from 32.4 percent to 21.7 percent (Naikaku-fu 2005, 2006). This period coincides with anti-Japan riots in the PRC due to a flare-up in the history textbook controversy that led to damage at the Japanese embassy in Beijing and Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine in addition to continued tit-for-tatting over the disputed territory (Koo 2009, Liao 2008, Smith 2009). As shown in Figure 2, public opinion has continued to fall through a series of dips and small recoveries. The 2010 colloision incident appears to have caused a significant drop in respondents who answered that they felt affection for China, which resulted in a new record low for the annual study of 20 percent (Naikaku-fu 2009, 2010). The following year, the percentage of respondents who answered that they felt affection for China increased by over 20 percentage points collectively (Naikaku-fu 2011), perhaps due to the PRC's assistance during recovery from the triple disaster in March 2011. The percentage of respondents who answered that they felt affection for China fell below 20 percent for the first time in 2012, and did not improve significantly in 2013 (Naikaku-fu 2012, 2013). Over this eight year period, the percentage of "if pressed, no affection" responses shrank as the percentage of "no affection" responses grew, and the percentage of respondents who answer "don't know" has gradually decreased. This indicates that Japanese public opinion of China is not simply declinging, but also becoming more vehmently negative.

The Japanese nonprofit Genron has conducted public opinion polls on Sino-Japanese relations since 2005. Genron's results for its 2011, 2013, and 2014 surveys demonstrated an even lower level of positive sentiment toward China, however, this may

Figure 2: Japanese public opinion of China, 2006-2013



Source: Naikaku-fu 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. Chart drafted by the author.

be due to a smaller sample size compared to the Cabinet Office surveys, and its use of random door-to-door visits (Genron 2011, 2013, 2014). The organization also only publishes a curated report of its surveys, rather than the aggregate data. However, Genron's questionnaires are adapted for current events and provide useful insight to the factors driving Japanese public opinion. In the 2011 survey report, Genron reported that the percentage of Japanese respondents who cited the territorial disputes as the main impediment to Sino-Japanese relations jumped from 34.6 percent in the 2010 survey to 63.2 (Genron 2011). In 2013, the Senkaku Islands dispute was still the most-cited reason, but the percentage had fallen to 53.2 percent (Genron 2013). By 2014, the terrirorial dispute over the islands was only the fourth common answer, while the two most common were "China's actions are incompatible with international rules" and "Chinese

actions to secure resource[s], energy and food look selfish" with 55.1 percent and 52.8 percent respectively (Genron 2014).

This data suggests that although the territorial dispute is contributing to the decrease in Japanese public support for the PRC, it is not the main factor. Rather, as *Asahi Shimbun* correspondent Isogawa Tomoyoshi explains, "the Japanese people clearly feel threatened by China's growing military might" (Isogawa 2012). Genron's 2011 survey showed that Japanese respondents took issue with "the Chinese authorities' high-handed attitude" regarding the 2010 collision, they were also concerned with "the growing territorial disputes in the South China Sea" (Genron 2011). As Hagström (2012) argues, the PRC's "response" to the 2010 collision was inflated by the Japanese and Western media. For example, the PRC's cuts to rare earth mineral exports to Japan and the arrest of four Japanese nationals for unauthorized entry to a military area were depicted as acts of retaliation for the arrest of the fishing boat capitain (Hagström 2012). Hagström (2012) argues that at least some of these proported retalitatory acts may have been coincidental: with regards to these two cases, the PRC had told Japan earlier in 2010 that it would cut rare earth mineral exports due to supply issues in the fall, and the arrest of the Japanese nationals was proved to be warranted based on the men's own video of their activities. The territorial dispute between Japan and the PRC appears to be a smaller, topical piece of a larger concern for the PRC's rise.

The 1994 Election Reform and Party Politics

The rising tension over the territorial dispute coincides with shifts in domestic Japanese politics resulting from electoral reform. From 1955 to 2009, the LDP was

secure in its position as ruling party with the only exception being an eleven-month period in 1993 to 1994 when a new party of former LDP members won the election. Until election reform was passed in 1994, elections for seats in both houses of the National Diet, the House of Councilors and the House of Representatives, used single nontransferable votes in multimember districts of three to five seats each. Each voter was allowed one vote, and the winners were the candidates who accrued the most votes. In districts that had three seats, for example, the candidates with the most, second-most, and third-most votes won. During this period, candidates from the same party ran against both each other and members of other parties.

It was not uncommon for all candidates in a given district to be members of the LDP. This led to the rise of *kōenkai* (local support groups) and *zoku* (policy tribes). Candidates needed to distinguish themselves from their competitors to win, even if they were all from the same party and—presumably—shared similar policy platforms. Candidates thus aligned themselves to the interests of district voters (Krauss and Pekkanen 2011; Shinoda 2013). Once elected, LDP members who represented similar local interests found themselves in the same subcommittees of the party's Policy Affairs Research Council that corresponded to government ministries (Shinoda 2013). Long-term members of these subcommittees formed zoku within the party, and it became common for bureaucrats in the corresponding ministry to coordinate their proposals with the zoku before submitting anything to the cabinet (Shinoda 2013). Thus, party policies of the LDP were a careful balance between the platforms of parties with which the LDP was in coalition, factions around particular members within the party, and the conflicting interests of the zoku.

The 1994 reform, however, provided LDP leadership the opportunity to re-centralize policymaking. Seats in both houses were divided between smaller, more numerous single-member districts (SMD) based on geographical location and larger proportional representation (PR) blocs based on population (Krauss and Pekkanen 2011; Shinoda 2013). Voters vote once for a candidate in the SMD race, which is determined by plurality, and once for a party in the PR race. Parties create their PR candidate lists in advance, and members given the top position will occupy the first seat the party earns and so on. These new district lines effectively severed the ties between LDP members and their *kōenkai*, which left the party leadership to coordinate the transition of kōenkai loyalties to their new party members and which candidate would run in each race (Shinoda 2013).

The re-centralization of policy making within the parties led to a shift in voting behavior from candidate-based voting to party-based voting (Shinoda 2013). The shift is becoming more pronounced as time progresses (Shinoda 2013). Prior to the 1994 reforms, 49.1 percent of voters cast their votes based on the candidate, while forty percent went by party affiliation (Shinoda 2013). In the 2000 election, more voters cast their ballots based on party affiliation, but with a less than five-percentage point difference (Shinoda 2013). By the 2009, election, however, over sixty percent of voters followed party affiliation (Shinoda 2013). This change in voting behavior has also contributed to the publication of *kōyaku*, or policy manifestos, for elections (Hirano 2014; Krauss and Pekkanen 2011; Suzuki and Murai 2014; Yoshimitsu 2012).

Though policy manifestos are vague and the degree to which elected officials follow them is subject to debate, they provide the clearest statements of each party's

stance on the ECS dispute, as well as the importance of the dispute in different election cycles. Other party publications, such as news articles and New Year's letters from party leadership, provide additional insight into the use of the dispute in domestic politics outside of the election cycle. Due to the shift in voter behavior, personal opinions of rank-and-file party members are becoming less important than the positions of the parties. Examining party-curated materials eliminates the—presumably—few dissenting voices on the dispute, as well as any comments made in error.

Major National Parties and the East China Sea Dispute

The LDP's statements are most in accord with the official government policy, which is unsurprising given its long history as the ruling party of Japan. Of the LDP's manifestos published since 2009, only the 2010 and 2014 mention the Senkaku Islands specifically. The 2009 manifesto's section on territorial disputes focused on Dokto-Takeshima Island as part of a larger concern about North Korea over the abduction of Japanese nationals in the late 1970s and early 1980s, missile launches, and nuclear tests (LDP 2009, p. 12). In its 2010 manifesto, the LDP reaffirmed that the Senkaku Islands are Japanese territory and that no dispute exists (*Senkaku shotō niwa ryōdo mondai ha sonzai shimasen*), but also acknowledged the existence of a dispute in the East China Sea (*Higashi shina kai mondai ga sonzai suru*) (LDP 2010c, p. 31). In order to create a "sea of true friendship," the party planned a national campaign to promote awareness of the territorial disputes (LDP 2010c, p. 31; Hirano 2014). The campaign pledge for the 2013 House of Councilors election explained Japan's territorial claims are based on "law and fact" (*hō to jujitsu*) (LDP 2013, p. 27), and promised to promote this domestically and

internationally through education and public relations activities (LDP 2013). The 2014 pledge demonstrated a stronger position by pledging to strengthen the JCG and Fisheries Agency and create bases of operation in the remote islands (LDP 2014).

The Kōmeitō, which has been in coalition with the LDP since 1999, similarly argued that Japan should not give in to the PRC's demands while also promoting the need for dialogue to solve the dispute (Hirano 2014). In its 2013 manifesto, the Kōmeitō supported the adoption of a joint protocol between the PRC and Japan to prevent "inadvertent military clashes" over the islands (Kōmeitō 2013). The following year, it reiterated the official government position that no dispute exists over the islands. At the same time, it proposed to strengthen and enhance the JCG's equipment for more effective control of them (Kōmeitō 2014).

The DPJ, the ruling party from 2009 to 2012, did not emphasize foreign policy in its early manifestos, but references to the territorial dispute became more common following the 2010 collision incident. In 2004, the DPJ vaguely promised to "protect Japan's territory, territorial waters, and exclusive economic zone, including the Senkaku islands [sic] and Takeshima Island" through a review of the Self-Defense Force and the creation of "new defense policies" (DPJ 2004, p. 24). Manifestos from 2005 to 2010 did not mention the East China Sea dispute in any way. In the 2012 manifesto, the party adopted the official position that "there is no territorial dispute that needs to be resolved," and argued for enhancing the capabilities of the JCG and "actively explain[ing] Japan's positions on territorial sovereignty to the world" (DPJ 2012, p. 31). The DPJ's 2013 manifesto provided a clearer plan of action to "firmly defend the territorial sovereignty of Japan" by increasing the activities and support for the JCG and related agencies (DPJ

2014, p. 29). The manifesto for the 2014 election promised the establishment of a "Territorial Patrol Act" that would "enable the Self-Defense Forces to respond seamlessly to crisis situations" (DPJ 2014, p. 7).

In the wake of the 2010 collision, the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) reaffirmed its position on the Senkaku Islands, which it has held since 1972 (JCP 2010). In its statement released in October 2010, the JCP outlines the historical arguments that are also found in publications released by MOFA: the islands were *terra nullius* prior to Japan's 1885 claim, the islands were not considered part of Taiwan in the Treaty of Shimonoseki, and China had no objections to this claim prior to 1970 (JCP 2010). Executive Committee Chair Shii Kazuo again reiterated these points in 2012 (Shii 2012). The JCP argues for Japan to "clearly demonstrate to the international community as well as the Chinese government the clearcut [sic] legitimacy of Japan's sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands based on history and international law," while also urging both parties to "solve the issue at a working-level […] peacefully through negotiations" (JCP 2010). In a statement supporting the government's decision to purchase the three privately owned islands in July 2012, the JCP further argued, "nationalization will not in itself solve the problem," and called for the government to acknowledge the dispute as well as "active efforts to settle the dispute" (JCP 2012b). The JCP published Representative Kokuta Keiji's arguments against the House of Representatives resolutions regarding the ROK president's visit to Dokdo-Takeshima Island and several Hong Kong activists' landing on the Senkaku Islands in August 2012 (JCP 2012a). Kokuta criticized the Senkaku Islands resolution for focusing "only on the strengthening of physical countermeasures" instead of avoiding escalation (JCP 2012a).

These publications demonstrate that the Senkaku Islands are becoming a recurring topic in election campaigns as well as a more prominent issue in each party's foreign policy. With the exception of the JCP, the parties' policies have gradually shifted from reiterating the official government position and advocating its promotion abroad to arguing for concrete—and, as some have argued, aggressive—actions involving the MSDF and JCG. This policy consensus between party platforms regarding the ECS dispute during campaigns is the result of criticism against the ruling party or coalition and the bureaucracy between election cycles. Due to the apolitical nature of the dispute, it benefits the critiqued group to adopt the policy advocated by its opponents in order to refocus the election on contested domestic issues.

The Bureaucracy, the Parties, and the East China Sea Dispute

When opposition parties criticize the ruling party or coalition over mishandling of conflicts in the ECS, the government ministries can be attacked as evidence of the ruling party's incompetence. As many ministries have conflicting interests in or around the ECS, opposition parties have ample strategic options. The Fisheries Agency, which is responsible for monitoring and managing fishing activity within Japan's territorial waters, including the EEZ, falls under the administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. The Fisheries Agency's primary task is protecting and increasing fish populations in Japanese waters, and its reputation among Japanese fishermen benefits when foreign competitors are chased out of Japan's EEZs. Proposals for development with Japan's EEZ in the East China Sea fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI, formerly the Ministry of International Trade and

Industry). METI, similarly, benefits from increased development opportunities. The JCG, which has been on the front lines of the dispute, is an agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism (previously the Ministry of Transportation). The Defense Ministry manages the SDF, which is becoming a more prominent actor in the dispute. The Defense Ministry and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism have a vested interest in securing control of the Senkaku Islands and the disputed area.

Unlike the other ministries, the MOFA must navigate between Japan's interests and those of other states, and thus favors calm in the area even at the expense of the other ministries' aspirations. Because of the official position on the Senkaku Islands and the ECS dispute, the MOFA is essentially powerless if conflict arises. When MOFA officials are questioned about the islands, their task is to reiterate that it is a domestic matter, not an international one. Any response beyond this would undermine the official claim, and deviation from it results in swift and severe action against the offending official by the MOFA's administration. For example, after Ishihara's announcement to purchase the islands in 2012, Ambassador Niwa Uichiro acknowledged in an interview with a British newspaper that the announcement would strain the relations between Japan and the PRC (Asahi Shimbun 2012c). This led to an immediate correction by the MOFA that Niwa's comments did not reflect the official position of the Japanese government (Asahi Shimbun 2012d). Furthermore, although the MOFA cannot acknowledge discord over the islands, it does have to deal with it when pursuing other agreements or issues with the PRC or ROC (Manicom 2014).

Several poorly handled incidents, especially those involving the Seinensha's lighthouses and the 2010 collision incident, have been blamed on rivalries and lack of coordination both between ministries and between the bureaucracy and the cabinet. Though election reform has weakened the power of zoku within parties, it has not yet impacted the ministries (Shinoda 2013). When the Seinensha constructed their first lighthouse in 1978, they received approval for project from the Ministry of Transport despite objections from the MOFA (Manicom 2014). After it applied for the lighthouse to be recognized as an official navigation marker by the Maritime Safety Agency (MSA), the application was denied because it did not meet MSA standards (Manicom 2014). In 1990, the group renovated the lighthouse and again applied for its recognition (Blanchard 2000; Manicom 2014). The MSA seems to have seriously considered granting recognition until Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki announced that under no circumstances would the national government recognize the lighthouse, which usurped the power from the Ministry of Transport (Koo 2009; Manicom 2014). Manicom (2014) notes that the Ministry of Transport may have been trying to reinforce Japan's control of the islands, which put it at odds with the "China School" in the MOFA that favored close ties with the PRC. Shinoda (2013) likewise argues that the DPJ's failure to handle the 2010 incident was a result of the party's initial anti-bureaucracy policy. The DPJ poorly chose to ignore bureaucrats who had faced previous conflicts, and DPJ officials were "stunned by Chinese escalatory behavior" (Sneider 2013, p. 388). Similarly, the "leak" of the footage of the collision by a JCG official further implies that the cabinet did not have control over the ministries (Shinoda 2013).

The 2010 Collision Incident in National Politics

The 2010 collision incident and the resulting tension is the best example of how political parties within Japan use the ECS dispute to their own ends. The opposition parties seized the opportunity to criticize the DPJ's handling of the situation. In October 2010, Chairperson of the LDP General Council Koike Yuriko and then-former Prime Minister Abe Shinzō assisted with the campaign for a House of Representatives seat vacated by a DPJ member due to a campaign fund scandal. Koike alleged that the Kan administration had "allowed China to take advantage" of the incident and that the "territorial integrity [of the islands] had not been in question previously" (LDP 2010b). Abe criticized the administration for "allow[ing] the prosecution to assume responsibility for releasing the Chinese captain" instead of managing the situation more closely (LDP 2010b). The Chairman of the Policy Research Council, Ishiba Shigeru, claimed that the Foreign Minister and Defense Minister refused to meet with a delegation from the Ishigaki City Council to discuss the situation, and that this action reflected the DPJ's "attitude toward Okinawa and its sovereignty as empty rhetoric" (LDP 2010a). The latter point aimed to aggravate Okinawan resentment of the DPJ for failing to follow through on its campaign promise to downsize the US bases in the prefecture. LDP officials also pitted lower-level ministry officials against the DPJ-appointed cabinet by demanding the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Land and Transport take "political responsibility" for the video leak instead of the director-general of the Japanese Coast Guard (LDP 2010d). The LDP New Year's letter stated that the DPJ "brought chaos to Japan's domestic and foreign affairs […and] degraded Japanese diplomacy" (LDP 2011).

The Kōmeitō, despite its small size, also took actions to undermine the DPJ's efforts to reign in the situation. Chief Representative of the Kōmeitō, Yamaguchi Natsuo, said that the administration should have made more of an effort to "arrive at a diplomatic solution" (Kōmeitō 2010a). Yamaguchi then visited Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping in December. Despite tensions between the PRC and the DPJ administration, Kōmeitō party news site claimed that Xi "praised New Kōmeitō's service in developing friendly Sino-Japanese relations," and Yamaguchi promised the party would "foster greater trust and confidence" between the PRC and Japan (Kōmeitō 2010b).

Even the JCP took the DPJ to task for failing "to make any diplomatic efforts to explain its position over the islands" and simply stating that "it would deal with it according to Japan's domestic laws and jurisdictional procedures" (JCP 2010). Its press release also tied the DPJ's failure to the LDP's avoidance of "asserting an ambivalent position on the matter" (JCP 2010). Given that the DPJ campaigned as a worthwhile opposition party to the LDP, this point seems to have been designed to sway the DPJ's support base.

Major National Parties and the Broken Triangle

Major national parties in Japanese politics do not experience a broken triangle relationship vis-à-vis the Japanese government and international actors, because even when they are not in power, they still exert influence on the government and international actors. For example, the major parties often have connections with their equivalents in foreign states. Yamaguchi's visit with Xi is a case in point: even a representative from one of the smaller opposition parties may have a private meeting with a foreign official.

The JCP, similarly, notes that it sends its demands and statements on diplomatic issues to both the ruling administration and the PRC. The opposition parties thus have a considerable advantage over the ruling party or coalition when issues in the ECS dispute arise.

However, as the major parties have a prominent and more permanent presence within domestic politics than fringe parties (such as the Ishin no Kai or *Minna no Tō*), they use flare-ups in the territorial dispute to support their long-term goals. Neither the LDP nor DPJ can afford to adopt rigid and inciting rhetoric because of the possibility that it will become the next ruling party. The strategic opportunity to undermine the other party during crises must thus be weighed against maintaining amicable relations with Japan's neighbors. Criticism used to secure electoral support must not substantially harm the party's relations with the PRC and the ROC while out of power. As a result, discourse and actions taken by major political parties must be more measured than those by minority parties.

CHAPTER III

NATIONALIST AND ULTRACONSERVATIVE GROUPS

Introduction

Nationalist and ultraconservative groups have been the most involved Japanese secondary actors since the East China Sea dispute began in 1970. While their participation in the dispute is hardly surprising, contextualizing their activism with their marginality in Japanese politics provides a more nuanced picture of their motivations. The Liberal Democratic Party has dominated the right and center-right since it came to power in 1955. Of the few alternative conservative parties that formed on the right, only the Kōmeitō has survived more than a few years due its coalition with the LDP (Inoguchi 2005; Shinoda 2013; Szymkowiak and Steinhoff 1995). The far right in Japan is thus fragmented: ultraconservatives and nationalists who join the LDP are both forced to conform to its policies that support the US and are pragmatic toward the PRC (Murphy 2007; Yamaguchi 2013). Nationalist and ultraconservative groups independent of the LDP are at a disadvantage when their positions do not align with those of the major parties or national government. In the case of the ECS dispute, their involvement demonstrates an effort to undermine Sino-Japanese relations and challenge the competence of their political rivals when they cannot do so through normal political discourse.

In addition to their disproportionate involvement in the dispute, it is useful to examine nationalist and ultraconservative groups in a comparison to the more practical major parties and less-influential Okinawan actors. First, the ECS dispute is not a primary policy platform for any of the major parties. As I argued in the previous chapter, major

political parties invoked the ECS dispute only when it offers an opportunity to criticize political rivals. The apolitical nature of the territorial dispute between the major parties limits its application during calmer periods of the dispute. Thus, policy platforms related to domestic issues, such as taxation, pensions, the healthcare system, and free-trade agreements are more important and are given more attention in campaign debates and policy manifestos. For the nationalists and ultraconservatives, the ECS dispute is considered of equal or higher priority than these issues. This difference in policy focus puts them at odds with the major parties and perpetuates a sense of urgency within their discourses. Second, unlike major parties, nationalist and ultraconservative groups are not compelled to restrain or temper their responses to conflicts in the dispute. Though the major political parties use conflict as a means to criticize each other, comments directed towards international actors are more reserved. Nationalist and ultraconservative groups take issue with this approach because they believe Japan should be more forceful in its claims regardless of how international actors will react. Third, actions and rhetoric by nationalist and ultraconservative groups receive considerably more attention from international actors than those by Okinawan activists, even though both groups are within the margins of Japanese politics. This relationship provides nationalist and ultraconservative groups an indirect means of influencing the national government that inflates their significance in the political system.

Nationalism and Ultraconservatism in Japan

In the existing literature on the dispute in English, nationalist and ultraconservative groups are interchangeably called "nationalists" (Cho and Park 2011;

Drifte 2014; Murai and Suzuki 2014; Togo 2014), “neo-nationalists” (Murphy 2007; Penney and Wakefield 2008), “ultra-nationalists” (Kato 2014; Koo 2009; McVeigh 2003), “rightists” (Moore 2014); and “right-wingers” (Cho and Park 2011; Drifte 2014; Murai and Suzuki 2014; Penney and Wakefield 2008). The meanings of terms “neo-nationalist” and “ultra-nationalist” are not standardized. Murphy (2007) and Lai (2014), for example, use “neo-nationalist” to refer to newer nationalist groups compared to those with ties to the war and pre-war period. For Murphy (2007), neo-nationalists are synonymous with *netto uyoku* (internet right-wingers) that emerged in the late 1990s with the increased use of the Internet. Lai (2014), however, argues that neo-nationalists emerged after the end of the bubble economy and does not equate them with the netto uyoku, as use of the Internet is not limited to younger nationalists. McVeigh (2003) and Kato (2014) use “ultra-nationalist” to refer to groups such as the Seinensha due to their xenophobia, racism, and support for militarization. Koo (2009), on the other hand, also uses the term to refer to the Chinese activists in the dispute to emphasize the activists’ prioritization of “the nation” in their activities.

As McVeigh (2003), Takekawa (2007), Penney and Wakefield (2008), and others have argued, nationalism is a principle above the political ideologies of right and left that can manifest itself in a variety of ways. For example, left or left-leaning groups like the Japan Communist Party and the *Nihon kyōshokuin kumiai* (Japan Teacher's Union) advocate a pacifist nationalism in which Japan's identity is defined by its renunciation of war that acknowledges its history as both an aggressor state and the only country attacked by nuclear weapons (McVeigh 2003; Takekawa 2007). Banal nationalism or popular nationalism, in which national identity is separated from the state, manifests as Japanese

attendees waving the national flag at international sporting events (McVeigh 2003). Similarly, nationalist motivations in the dispute are not all fundamentalist. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the Okinawan groups from Ishigaki that landed on the islands after the 2010 collision appealed to the national government as members of the Japanese nation by hoisting the *hinomaru* flag on Uotsurishima. Though this would be expected, it runs counter to the Okinawan or Ryūkyūan identity embraced more widely in Okinawa prefecture. "Nationalist" groups in the dispute share a desire to protect the islands' identity as part of the cultural and historical Japanese nation, and, unlike the major political parties, prioritize this effort above other policy platforms.

Though nationalism is a crucial component of the motivation to get involved in the dispute, it alone does not provide a clear plan of action or policy platform and must be understood in relation to the actors' other political ideologies (Takekawa 2007). Island landings and demonstrations have been led by organizations that are also ultraconservative. Compared to their conservative peers within the LDP, ultraconservatives are defined by a strong opposition to the one-sided security relationship with the US as well as hostility to communism (Manicom 2014; Murphy 2007). More prominent ultraconservatives often work in alliance with the LDP on shared policy issues, and many ultraconservatives and mainstream conservatives are members or supporters of similar organizations such as the *Nippon Kaigi* (Japan Conference), *Nippon Izokukai* (Japan War-Bereaved Families Association) and the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho wo Tsukuru Kai* (Society for Textbook Reform, also known as the *Tsukurukai*). Despite this cooperation, it should be noted that ultraconservatives and mainstream conservatives are two separate groups, and the former occupies a marginal position in Japanese politics.

Nationalist and Ultraconservative Groups in Japanese Politics

Following the election of Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō in 2001, there has been a boom in literature that argues that nationalism in Japan is on the rise. Matthews (2003), for example, argued that growing nationalist sentiment was evident in the MSDF's sinking of a North Korean vessel in 2001 and the success of Ishihara Shintarō in the Tokyo gubernatorial election. In his work on nationalism in Japan's relations with the PRC through 2008, Lai (2014) claims a "growing support for the neo-nationalist cause" (p. 82) within the Diet and that a new, "more articulate, ideologically driven and politically committed movement has flourished" (p. 84). News organizations such as the *Guardian*, *New York Times*, and *Wall Street Journal* have provided a steady source of alarming articles and editorials since Koizumi took office, such as "Japan's Rising Nationalism Enrages Asia" (Guardian 2001) and Hayashi's "Tensions in Asia Stoke Rising Nationalism in Japan" (2014). These works mistakenly identify LDP leaders like Koizumi and Abe Shinzō with independent nationalist and ultraconservative politicians such as Tokyo governor Ishihara and Osaka mayor Hashimoto Tōru. Similarly, this literature predates or omits the DPJ's victory in 2009 that indicated the Japanese electorate had other policy priorities than the "nationalist" or "right wing" agenda, most notably the revision of Article Nine of the Japanese constitution and textbook revision.

With regards to the revision of Article Nine, in which Japan renounces war, Japanese respondents to polls regarding revision have consistently demonstrated apathy or lack of support compared to domestic economic issues (Asahi Shimbun 2013; Kamiya 2014; Penney and Wakefield 2008). In polls that focused on constitutional revision specifically, a majority of respondents expressed support for revision, but primarily as a

means to establish constitutional limits on the SDF or to revise other parts of the constitution (Kamiya 2014; Penney and Wakefield 2008). Even the more recent effort to revise the Article Nine has been met with considerable resistance, with more than half of respondents opposing revision in polls (Asahi Shimbun 2013; Kamiya 2014). Abe's approval rating has also dropped (Asahi Shimbun 2013; Kamiya 2014). That said, it is currently unclear if the existence of the SDF is constitutional, as the SDF was formed in 1954 through an expansion of the National Police Reserve despite Article Nine's ban on maintenance of "land, sea, and air forces" as part of Japan's renunciation of war. Under the Koizumi administration, the SDF began providing noncombat support to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean to assist with counterterrorism and anti-piracy activities after September 11, 2011 (Inoguchi 2005; Shinoda 2013). The commitment of SDF troops in these operations is considered an effort by the LDP to silence NATO states' criticism of Japanese "checkbook diplomacy" that began during the Gulf War, in which Japan offered financial support in lieu of providing troops (Inoguchi 2005; Takekawa 2007). Many Japanese, including anti-American nationalists and ultraconservatives, do not approve of Japan's involvement in these operations, and would prefer the SDF's international activity to be limited to peacekeeping operations sanctioned by the United Nations (Murphy 2007; Smith 2009; Takekawa 2007).

The controversial textbook reform effort has also been used as evidence of Japan's rising nationalist or ultraconservative sentiment, but as Penney and Wakefield (2008) argue, the textbook issue is considered a victory for the left within Japan, rather than a loss. Foreign coverage of the textbook controversy emphasize the content of the

Tsukurukai's revisionist submissions to the Ministry of Education, most notably the omission of the Rape of Nanjing and "comfort women," and an overall increase in their adoption by schools (Penney and Wakefield 2008). However, supporters of the left have consistently protested against these textbooks, and the adoption rates remain low. In 2001, the adoption rate of the Tsukurukai's textbook was just 0.039 percent, and by 2007, it had only increased to 0.4 percent (Penney and Wakefield 2008). This abysmal failure let the Tsukurukai to cut its ties with the textbook's publisher (Penney and Wakefield 2008).

The success of nationalist and ultraconservative sympathizers within the LDP, especially Koizumi and Abe, is more closely related to the election reform of 1994 and the candidates' economic policies and "style." Shinoda (2013), for example, argues that Koizumi won the premiership in 2001 because he was able to use the single-member voting district system to circumvent the LDP's factions and hierarchy. In the multimember districts, local groups would take their concerns to the most senior LDP Diet member in the district, which reinforced the hierarchy (Shinoda 2013). After the reform, there usually were no other LDP Diet members in the district, which gave younger LDP members equal political weight to their seniors from other districts (Shinoda 2013). These youths were empowered to critique the senior members, and campaigned to change the voting system for selecting the party membership to include all party members rather than Diet members only (Shinoda 2013). As a result, Koizumi conducted a public campaign on economic reform that was popular with the LDP membership more generally (Shinoda 2013). Inoguchi (2005) attributes some of his popular support to his "effective sound bytes and a youngish, stylish appearance" (p.

165). Koizumi's visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine were part of his premiership campaign to the Nippon Izokukai (Manicom 2014; Okazaki 2005). His wider popularity, though, stemmed from his efforts to aid the economic recovery and "reform of the whole system, especially with regard to social and defense policy" (Inoguchi 2005, p. 165). Furthermore, Koizumi's support of US-led operations in the Middle East and Indian Ocean put him at odds with the ultraconservatives within the LDP, and show his more mainstream conservative priorities.

With regards to Abe, Cronin (2007) suggests his "youth and style alone" made him a strategic candidate for the LDP to appeal to the younger, urbanite voters (p.2). His platforms to widen economic and administrative reforms and to address the growing income gap were essential to his election (Cronin 2007). Rather than equate Abe with the right-wing members of the LDP, Cronin (2007) attributes the decline of Abe's first administration to the "politically tone-deaf gaffes by right-leaning members of his government" (p. 4). This interpretation is supported by LDP member Yamasaki Taku's claim that only 10% of the LDP could be considered part of the "nationalist posse" (Murphy 2007, p. 18). The LDP's victory in 2012 was largely won as a backlash against the DPJ's mishandling of the 2010 collision incident and the triple disasters of March 11, 2011 (Curtis 2013). Though Abe has nationalist tendencies, he is nonetheless a member of the LDP and has changed his behavior and rhetoric when he met with considerable resistance. For example, he avoided visits to Yasukuni Shrine after the US condemned his visit in 2013 (Guardian 2014; Japan Times April 2015; McCurry 2013b; Nishiyama 2013). This effort to maintain strong ties to the US, along with resuming the construction

of a new US base in Okinawa and his attempts to improve relations with the PRC, demonstrate that Abe is either simply conservative or strategically ultraconserative.

The limited successes of independent nationalist and ultraconservative politicians such as Ishihara have been exaggerated. Though Ishihara secured over a million votes in the 1999 gubernatorial election, this amounted to only 30% of the total votes cast (Hood 1999; Matthews 2003). The effect of the split of votes between several LDP- and Kōmeitō-backed candidates was compounded by Ishihara's own fame before the election. Ishihara was a prize-winning novelist and movie star in the 1950s, and had gained notoriety for *The Japan That Can Say No*, co-authored by Sony executive Morita Akio in 1989 (Hood 1999). Matthews (2003) cites Ishihara's 2003 reelection with 70% of the votes as an indicator of a continuing rightward shift, but voter turnout was estimated to be less than 45% that year (Asahi Shimbun 2011; Tōkyō Shinbun 2007;). Ishihara's margin slipped to 50% in 2007, and 43% percent in 2011 (Asahi Shimbun 2011; Tōkyō Shinbun 2007). Although the coalition party *Nippon Ishin no Kai* (Japan Restoration Party), which was comprised of Ishihara's *Taiyō no Tō* (Sun Rise Party) and Osaka governor Hashimoto Tōru's *Ōsaka Ishin no Kai*, was able to secure 54 seats in the 2012 House of Representatives election, the party fractured over constitutional revisionism and Japan's relations with East Asia (Johnston 2014). Though Hashimoto is a notorious apologist of the "comfort women" issue, his party supports strong ties with Japan's neighbors for economic reasons, and he has criticized the racist rhetoric of other nationalist and ultraconservative groups, such as the *Zainichi Tokken wo Yurusanai Shimin no Kai* (Association of Citizens Against the Special Privileges of Zainichi, or *Zaitokukai*) (Japan Today 2014; Johnston 2014). The Osaka group successfully allied with another small

party and maintained a small presence in the House of Representatives after the 2014 election, but Ishihara's group lost all but two of its seats (Japan Times 2014). As a result, Ishihara retired.

The number of registered nationalist and ultraconservative groups not associated with the LDP has been on the decline for several years. Murphy (2007) claims the cause is the disappearance of the "clear and real enemy in communism" that united these groups (p. 15). The few remaining policy points around which these groups can rally have been adopted by the major political parties in some capacity, such as revising the constitution and preserving territorial integrity (Murphy 2007). These groups, however, do not support the LDP because of conflicts over Japan's relationship with the US, globalization, and anti-state tendencies (Murphy 2007). The National Police Agency estimated that membership in these groups has fallen from 10,000 in 1994 to fewer than 6,000 in 2004 (Murphy 2007). Even this number may be inflated: following the anti-*yakuza* (crime syndicate) laws in the early 1990s, many yakuza simply registered their groups as right-wing political organizations and took to blackmailing or mud-slinging at prominent individuals or companies to curtail further police involvement (Murphy 2007). Of the 900 active groups identified by the National Police Agency, Murphy (2007) suggests 80% of these are tied to the yakuza and are not true political groups, but the two have become conflated.

The decline of official nationalist and ultraconservative groups may also be due to the rise in *netto uyoku* (internet right-wingers) who participate in discourse on sites like NicoNicoDōga, 2channel, and YouTube without any group affiliations (Murai and Suzuki 2014; Yamaguchi 2013). The few organizations that formed from the netto uyoku,

such as the Zaitokukai, remain on the fringes of Japanese society and politics (Yamaguchi 2013). Due to the unorganized and individualist nature of the netto uyoku more generally, their influence in Japanese politics has been limited to the rule of the DPJ, when their sentiments were shared with the major political parties (Murai and Suzuki 2014).

Nationalist and Ultraconservative Discourses on the Territorial Dispute

As with the discourse of the major political parties, the nationalist and ultraconservative narratives of the territorial dispute center on the Senkaku Islands rather than the EEZ more generally. Due to these groups' marginality, however, they are able to express more clearly why the islands should be protected and developed. The Nippon Kaigi and the Seinensha, for example, identify the PRC as the main agitator and motivation for more government intervention in the dispute, while the major political parties avoid negative comments about the PRC in their policy manifestos. Even between the Nippon Kaigi and the Seinensha's publications, there is a considerable difference between the groups' interests in the dispute.

The Nippon Kaigi is the largest conservative organization in Japan, with approximately 35,000 dues-paying members (Kato 2014). Membership in the organization is open to anyone, and includes many well-known politicians like Abe and Ishihara. The group was created by a merger between two smaller organizations in 1997, when the LDP began to rely on coalitions to maintain its majority in the Diet (Kato 2014; Mullins 2012). The platforms of the Nippon Kaigi include patriotic education, revision of Article Nine, and official visits to Yasukuni Shrine (Kato 2014; Mullins 2012). Kato

(2014) claims that the organization's discussion group within the Diet currently includes "about 40% of the entire Parliament." During the conflict in the ECS resulting from the 2010 fishing trawler collision, the group published a question-and-answer booklet entitled *Senkaku Shotō wo Mamore* (Protect the Senkaku Islands) that advocated fortifying and developing the islands to prevent the PRC from taking them (Nippon Kaigi 2011).

Given the Nippon Kaigi's ties to the LDP, the booklet is more measured than the writings of the Seinensha, and frames the territorial dispute as a domestic issue as much as an international one. The primary reason the islands should be protected, they argue, is the "natural responsibility of the state to protect its territory and national assets" (*kokudo oyobi kokumin no zaisan wo mamoru no wa kokka no tōzen no gimu*) (Nippon Kaigi 2011, p. 10). The group also appeals to the marginality of the islands and Okinawa Prefecture. The Senkaku Islands are equated with the outlying border islands Minamitorishima, Okinotorishima, Ioto (previously Iwo Jima), and Yonaguni (Nippon Kaigi 2011). Of these, Yonaguni is the only island inhabited by civilians, and the only other island within Okinawa Prefecture. They suggest building a harbor, radio station, and more practical lighthouses to provide refuge for Okinawan fishermen who find themselves in the area during bad weather (Nippon Kaigi 2011). The Nippon Kaigi (2011) argues that the Japanese government burdens local fishermen with fines if they enter the disputed waters, while it does nothing to foreign vessels. One fisherman claimed that if he flew the Japanese flag from his ship (*hinomaru wo kakagetari*), he could not go to the fishing grounds because there were 200 to 300 foreign fishing vessels in the area compared to a dozen Japanese ships (Nippon Kaigi 2011, p. 25). The mayor of Yonaguni

claimed the Japan Coast Guard was preventing ships from entering the area even though it was Japanese territory (Nippon Kaigi 2011, p. 25). The inclusion of Okinawans is most likely an attempt by the conservatives to win their favor, as ties between the DPJ-led government and Okinawan residents were strained at time the booklet was published. DPJ Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio broke his campaign promise to relocate the US bases in the prefecture prior to the 2010 collision and stepped down as a result, and members of the Hatoyama cabinet allegedly snubbed a delegation from the Ishigaki City Council seeking more government action in the disputed area (Hughes 2013; LDP 2010a).

Posts on the Seinensha website, however, demonstrate the group's position on the fringe of Japanese politics. They demonstrate their ultraconservative sentiments in a letter of protest to the Chinese embassy following the 2010 collision incident. The letter not only outlined Japan's historical claims to the islands, but also criticized the PRC's human rights violations and suppression of Tibetans and Uighurs (Seinensha 2010a). Despite their ultra-nationalist label, the group often positions itself as being more politically correct than China with regards to race and ethnicity. For example, in its response to China's protest of the group's lighthouse maintenance and construction of a Shinto shrine in 2000, the Seinensha explained that the shrine was dedicated to "the [maritime] safety of all the world's ships that sail the East China Sea" (*Higashisinakai o kōkō suru sekai no subete no senpaku no kaijō anzen*), and claimed that its lighthouses had drastically reduced the number of accidents in the area (Seinensha 2000).

The Seinensha's primary justification for building the lighthouses, however, was to maintain effective control (*jikkō shihai*) of the islands when the "weak-kneed Japanese

government" (*Nihon seifu no yowagoshina shisei*) would not (Seinensha 2003). The posts express a frustration with not only the bureaucracy, but the major political parties as well. Most of the group's activity occurred under the rule of the LDP, which achieved no major changes in the administration of the islands. A post announcing the national government's agreement to take over maintenance of the lighthouses in 2005, for example, airs frustration that the government had neglected its duty to protect the national interests (*honrai memorubeki kokka kokueiki o naigashiro ni shite kita*) (Seinensha 2005). Following the 2010 collision incident, the Seinensha sent letters of protest to Prime Minister Kan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs that criticized the MOFA's "fear of absurd protest from the Chinese government" (*Chūgoku seifu no fujōrina kōgi wo osoreru*), and called for the government to deploy the Ground SDF to the Sakishima Islands which include the Senkaku Islands, Ishigaki, and Miyako (Seinensha 2010b, 2010c). In their letter to Kan, the Seinensha also appealed to the marginality of Okinawans by arguing that the deployment was necessary not only "for national public safety and stability" (*kokka kokumin no anzen to antei no tame*), but also for Okinawan fishermen to resume fishing in the area (Seinensha 2010c). Of the Seinensha's website posts since 2000, this is only the second time the group addresses the Okinawans, and the first that discusses the dispute's impact on them.

Provocative Actions and Results

Throughout the ECS dispute, the Seinensha and other nationalist and ultraconservative groups have used the dispute to undermine Japanese foreign policy initiatives when they could not do so through other means (Table 1). Activism by these

groups began in the late 1970s when negotiations for the TPF resumed. When conventional efforts to end negotiations failed, members of the Seirankai, a group of nationalist and ultraconservative Diet members that included the young Ishihara, travelled to the Senkaku Islands in April 1978 and constructed a makeshift beacon (Babb 2012; Blanchard 2000; Deans 2000; Koo 2009; Lai 2014). Until this event, officials in the negotiations had avoided the topic (Babb 2012). The members of the Seirankai hoped that by dragging the dispute into the negotiation process, the PRC would withdraw (Babb 2012; Treiak 1978). The PRC did withdraw, but returned to the table in July. The Seirankai then joined with the Seinensha to visit the islands again to replace the beacon with a lighthouse (Blanchard 2000; Deans 2000; Koo 2009; Lai 2014). Although the treaty was ratified later that year, the Seirankai claimed that the PRC had made concessions as a result of their actions (Babb 2012; Tretiak 1978).

Nationalist and ultraconservative groups' provocative actions were most successful in the early 1990s, as tensions in the region were already high due to the Tiananmen Incident, the Taiwan Strait crisis, and the renegotiation of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan (Blanchard 2000; Deans 2000; Koo 2009; Ong 1997; Smith 2009). Ultraconservatives successfully delayed the eventual imperial visit to the PRC using a short-lived controversy over the Seinensha's petition for their lighthouse to be recognized by the Ministry of Transport in 1990 and 1991, and repeated, vehement objections to the PRC's 1992 Law on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone in Diet sessions (Blanchard 2000; Hagström 2005; Koo 2009; Manicom 2014). In 1996, the Seinensha renovated the Uotsurishima lighthouse, constructed a second on Kita Kojima, and applied for the MSA's recognition

Table 1: Provocative acts by nationalist and ultraconservative groups

Year	Group/Actor	Action	Context	Result
1978	Seirankai	Landing, construction of beacon on Uotsurishima	TFP Negotiations	Minimal
1978	Seinensha, Seirankai	Landing, construction of lighthouse on Uotsurishima	TFP Negotiations	Groups claim concessions by PRC in TFP
1990	Seinensha	Application for MSA recognition of lighthouse	House of Representatives election, Japan ties with PRC post-1989	PM Kaifu (LDP) denies recognition
1991	Seinensha	Application for MSA recognition of lighthouse	Negotiations for imperial visit to PRC	Visit delayed until late 1992
1996	Seinensha	Renovation of Uotsurishima lighthouse, construction of Kita Kojima lighthouse, application for recognition	House of Representatives election, Japan and PRC ratification of UNCLOS III, Taiwan Strait crisis, renegotiation of Japan-US security treaty	Deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations, series of activist landings by Chinese groups
1997	Diet member Nishimura Shingo (independent)	Landing on Uotsurishima	1998 House of Councilors election	Minimal
2000	Seinensha	Construction of Shinto shrine on Uotsurishima	House of Representatives election 2000, House of Councilors election 2001	Japan begins lease of islands 2002, bans landing without permission 2004, takes over lighthouse maintenance 2005
2004, April	Nakagama Nobuyuki (member of Komintō)	Crashed a Komintō bus into the PRC Consulate in Osaka	PRC activists land on islands and are arrested by JCG in March 2004	Minimal
2010, October	Local right-wing groups	Protests in Tokyo	2010 collision incident	Minimal
2012, April	Ishihara Shintarō (independent)	Announcement of intention to purchase islands	2010 collision incident, DPJ's handling of March 2011 triple disaster	Government purchases islands in late 2012
2012, August	Ganbare Nippon and Diet members	Landing on Uotsurishima	Chinese activists' landing in response to Ishihara	Government purchases islands in late 2012

of both (Blanchard 2000; Deans 2000; Koo 2009; Ong 1997). This action was in response to Japan and the PRC's ratification of UNCLOS III, in which the PRC vaguely reaffirmed its territorial claims under its LTC, but did not mention the islands specifically (Manicom 2014). The Japanese government did not protest the PRC's statement, nor did it use the Senkaku Islands to measure its EEZ, which drew the ire of ultraconservatives (Manicom 2014). On the day of the landing, Prime Minister Hashimoto seemed to ignore the effort by reaffirming Japan's support for the PRC's membership World Trade Organization at a press conference (Manicom 2014). The Seinensha's landing, however, led to an extended period of tit-for-tatting on the islands between Japanese, Chinese, and Taiwanese groups. After an activist from Hong Kong drowned trying to reach the islands, the governments of Japan and the PRC ended the conflict by restraining their citizens (Koo 2009). In this effort, government officials raided Seinensha offices to demonstrate that they did not support the organization (Deans 2000).

From late 1996 to 2004, there was "a tacit consensus […] between Beijing and Tokyo that policymakers would not allow themselves to be manipulated by nationalist actors" (Manicom 2014, p. 52). In 1997, ultraconservative Nishimura Shingo visited the islands due to a campaign pledge, but the event did not elicit any significant response from the Japanese or PRC governments (Blanchard 2000; Manicom 2014; Wei Su 2005). The Seinensha completed maintenance on its lighthouses and constructed a Shinto shrine on Uotsurishima, which garnered minor criticism from the PRC (Manicom 2014; Seinensha 2000; Wei Su 2005). A few years later, a member of the *Nihon Komintō* (the Japan Emperor's People Party) drove one of the organization's buses into the gates of the PRC consulate in Osaka following a landing by mainland activists in 2004 (JCP 2004;

Manicom 2014; People's Daily 2004; Ramos-Mrosovsky 2008). Although it is unclear if the act was condoned by the organization, coverage of the incident emphasized his membership. Cabinet Secretary Fukuda Yasuo offered apologies to the Chinese government for the incident, and the JCP condemned the attack (JCP 2004; People's Daily 2004; Ramos-Mrosovsky 2008). To rein in nationalist and ultraconservative actors, Japan began leasing the privately owned islands in 2002, banned unauthorized landings in 2004, and took over the maintenance of the lighthouses in 2005 (Blanchard 2009; Koo 2009; Lai 2014; Manicom 2014; Seinensha 2005). These efforts hampered attempts to provoke Japan's neighbors during this period.

The calm, however, was broken by the 2010 collision. Nationalist and ultraconservative groups, as well as the netto uyoku, were already galvanized by the DPJ's ascension to ruling party in 2009 (Murai and Suzuki 2014). Although the major political parties and nationalist and ultraconservative groups expressed their outrage toward the DPJ over the handling of the 2010 collision incident, the recovery from the triple disasters of March 11, 2011 took precedence. In April the following year, however, Ishihara announced his plan to purchase the privately owned islands and develop them as part of Tokyo during a speech in the United States (Asahi Shimbun 2012a; Masuo 2013; Smith 2013). The announcement caught the national government and MOFA completely by surprise (Asahi Shimbun 2012b). The JCP condemned Ishihara's "meddling" as "complicat[ing] the issue further and hamper[s] the quest for a peaceful settlement through diplomatic means" (JCP 2012c). The LDP was relatively silent on the issue, but it was revealed that LDP Parliamentarian Santō Akiko introduced Ishihara to the owner of the islands after he expressed a desire to sell them in the wake of the 2010 incident

(Pryzstup 2012). As the national government tried to negotiate with the PRC, Ishihara continued to escalate the situation by requesting permission to land on the islands and keeping the topic in the news through provocative comments. In June, he suggested the new pandas at the Ueno Zoo be named "Sen Sen" and "Kaku Kaku," which drew the ire of the Chinese MFA (Asahi 2012c). In support of Ishihara, the nationalist ultraconservative group known as *Ganbare Nippon* ("Go for It, Japan" or "Do Your Best, Japan") landed on the islands in August with members of the non-partisan Diet committee *Nihon no Ryodo o Mamoru Tame Kodo Suru Giin Renmei* (Parliamentarians League to Take Action to Protect Japanese Territory) following the landing of PRC activists (Asahi Shimbun 2012f; Eldridge 2014; Ma and Balfour 2012). In order to prevent Ishihara from taking control of the islands and escalating tensions further, the DPJ cabinet approved their purchase by the national government (Asahi Shimbun 2012g; Manicom 2014; Smith 2013). After the LDP returned to power, the purchase of the islands by the national government was added to the Senkaku Islands timeline on the MOFA website. Despite Abe's support for stationing government officials on the islands during the 2012 campaign, the islands remain uninhabited and officials from nearby Ishigaki Island have been barred from landing (Japan Times 2014; Hagström 2012a; Pryzstup 2012; SCMP 2014).

Nationalist and Ultraconservative Groups and the Broken Triangle

Nationalist and ultraconservative groups in Japanese politics experience a broken triangle relationship with the national government and international actors. Due to their small numbers and factionalism, these groups have little weight in the Diet when their

positions do not align with any of the major political parties. The desire to undermine the normalization of ties with the PRC in 1978, to prevent the emperor's visit to the PRC in the early1990s, and to correct the DPJ's mishandling of the 2010 collision led these groups to attempt to provoke the PRC. There is never a guarantee that the PRC will react, nor that the national government's response to the PRC will be to the benefit of the nationalist and ultraconservative groups. In most cases, their efforts failed, but the more recent success was substantial. Ishihara's threat to purchase the islands led to their nationalization, which these groups could not achieve under the LDP. In the process, these groups also secured their short-lived victory in the 2013 by eroding the legitimacy of the DPJ and undermining the MOFA through unpredictable provocative actions.

Even when they failed to provoke foreign states, nationalist and ultraconservative groups almost always succeed in eliciting a response from foreign activists and media, which maintained the relevancy of the ECS dispute as a policy issue for the major political parties. Nationalist and ultraconservative groups thus exert disproportionate influence on the national government relative to their small numbers. In their own rhetoric, these groups elevated their position in Japanese politics by eliciting sympathy for an even more marginalized set of actors in the dispute: the Okinawans.

CHAPTER IV

THE EAST CHINA SEA DISPUTE AND OKINAWAN POLITICS

Introduction

The Senkaku Islands are administered in Japan by Ishigaki Island in the Yaeyama Islands of Okinawa prefecture. Despite Okinawa's proximity to the disputed area, Okinawan discourses about the ECS dispute have not been given considerable attention. As in mainland Japanese political discourse, the dispute is also becoming more significant in Okinawan politics. Residents in the outlying islands face the ramifications of the dispute from the front lines. A new SDF base is currently under construction on Yonaguni, the outermost island in the prefecture (McCormack 2012, 2013; Japan Times 2015). In addition to an increased presence of JCG and MSDF vessels in Ishigaki's ports, the island's booming tourism industry faces a decrease in visitor numbers whenever tensions flare between Japan and the PRC (Japan Times 2010; McNeil 2013; Schmitz 2014). Residents in the Okinawa Islands, meanwhile, worry that the fortification of the outlying islands will be a justification to keep the American bases they have long campaigned against (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013c).

These concerns contrast with the more straight-forward platforms of the major political parties and nationalist and ultraconservative actors that emphasize managing tensions with the PRC and sovereignty over the islands. Due to these groups' ability to engage with the national government, either directly or indirectly, they need not develop their narratives much further. Okinawans, on the other hand, have been systematically subjugated by the national government and international actors. In addition to the burden of closeness to the dispute, their narratives and concerns have been ignored or dismissed.

Thus, activists regroup, revise, and try again. This process has led to both more nuanced narratives and a wider variety. As the ECS dispute is contextualized and paired against other issues in Okinawa, some of these narratives are localized. Ishigaki, as the administrator of the Senkaku Islands, prioritizes its own security, while activists in the Okinawa Islands desire the elimination of US bases. The most pressing problems for Yonaguni are economic, and the acceptance of an SDF base is simply a means to an end.

The Okinawans' pragmatic considerations also reflect the asymmetrical impact of the dispute on the primary actors—the governments of Japan and the PRC—and those who have the most vested interests in it—the civilians in the literal margins of Japan, the PRC, and the ROC. The Okinawan approach to the dispute is more inclusive of their foreign counterparts than those of groups from the Japanese mainland due to Okinawa's shared past with other Japanese colonies, such as Taiwan, and the idealized, pacifist Ryūkyūan identity that emerged following reversion to Japan in 1972 (Shimabuku 2012; Tanji 2006). Activists from the Okinawa Islands place equal blame on the governments of Japan and the PRC for escalation at the expense of the fishermen who live and work in the area. Nationalists in Ishigaki, on the other hand, demand more action against PRC aggression. Similar to mainland nationalist and ultraconservative groups, these nationalist activists favor the ROC over the PRC, but they also regularly engage with their Taiwanese counterparts. Ishigaki Mayor Nakayama Yoshitaka, for example, visited Taiwanese fishermen before a summit to address fishing rights in the East China Sea (Japan Times 2012). As a result, Okinawan discourses grapple with issues of identity as much as security.

A Brief History of Okinawa

Prior to its colonization by Japan in 1879, Okinawa—then known as Ryūkyū—was a tributary kingdom of the Satsuma domain in Japan, as well as the Ming and Qing courts in China (Tanji 2006). After Japan modernized, it seized the islands in the Ryūkyū disposal (*Ryūkyū shobun*), in which the king was dethroned and taken to the mainland (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Like other Japanese colonies, Okinawa faced considerable hardship as it was incorporated into the empire. The outlying Miyako and Yaeyama Islands were immediately offered to China for most favored nation status, but the exchange was never finalized before the Qing's loss of power (McCormack and Norimastu 2012; Tanji 2006). Conscription of Okinawan men began before public schools opened, and use of Okinawan dialects was discouraged (Tanji 2006). Okinawans were forced to grow cash crops in order to pay their taxes in cash due to the mainland's tax scheme (Tanji 2006). As a result, the prefecture faced a devastating famine in the 1920s due to a drop in global sugar prices, but the National Diet did not address Okinawa's economic disparity until the 1930s (Tanji 2006).

In the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, approximately 120,000 Okinawans—between one-fourth and one-third of the population—died in the fighting or as a result of forced suicides (Asato 2003; Hein and Selden 2003; McCormack & Norimatsu 2012; Tanji 2006). Many more died from the cruelty of the Imperial Army prior to the battle's start. Some Okinawans contracted malaria after being forced from their homes, and others were killed for insubordination or using Okinawan dialects (Yonetani 2003). After the war ended, Okinawa was separated from the mainland and put under the control of USCAR. The US military seized land and relocated entire villages to construct bases

(Asato 2003; Shimabuku 2012). While Okinawa remained stagnant under USCAR, Japan's economy quickly recovered. Despite their suffering during the Pacific War, many Okinawans favored reversion to Japan because they assumed the bases would be closed and they, too, would enjoy the benefits of Japan's booming economy (Figal 2003; Hein & Selden 2003; Shimabuku 2012; Siddle 2003). Instead, Japan and the United States negotiated the terms of reversion without Okinawan representation and agreed to maintain the bases (Asato 2003).

As a result of this perceived betrayal, discourses on Okinawan identity vis-à-vis Japan began to take form. In Okinawan discourses about the Pacific War, Okinawans are portrayed as victims of the Japanese Empire, like Koreans and Taiwanese (Figal 2003). Many Okinawan schools use a supplementary history textbook, *Ryūkyū Okinawa shi* (A History of the Ryūkyūs-Okinawa), which discusses the "fate of Koreans, Taiwanese, and Filipinos during the war" omitted in mainland texts (Hein and Selden 2003). While memorials and museums constructed in the 1950s and 1960s depicted the dead as loyal heroes who died defending the homeland, those constructed after 1972 problematize Okinawa's relationship with the mainland (Figal 2003). For example, imperial reign years are not used at the *Heiwa no Ishiji* (Cornerstone of Peace), a memorial opened in 1995, and the accompanying New Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum addresses the cruelty inflicted on Okinawans by the Imperial Army (Yonetani 2003). Some groups have advocated for recognition of a separate Ryūkyūan (sometimes Romanized as Lewchewan) or *uchinānchu* identity: Ryūkyūans were recognized as an indigenous people by the UN Committee on Civil and Political Rights in 2008, but the Japanese

government has yet to acknowledge them (AIPR 2014; McCormack and Norimatsu 2012).

Issues in Okinawan Politics

Coupled with frustration over US military bases in the islands, this Okinawan identity has led to a disconnection between Okinawan and mainland politics. Of the 47 members of the current prefectural assembly, fifteen are either independents or members of Okinawan political parties (Okinawa Prefectural Assembly 2015). Even among the members backed by mainland political parties, the distribution is skewed. The Social Democratic Party, for example, currently holds three more seats in the prefectural assembly than it does in the entire Diet (House of Councillors 2015; House of Representatives 2015; Okinawa Prefectural Assembly). Base-related controversies have a strong impact on the parties' success in Okinawa, as well. Following the DPJ's failure to reduce the bases, one of the party's primary campaign platforms in 2009, it did not bother to endorse any Okinawan candidates in the 2012 Upper House election (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Conversely, while the LDP had overwhelming success in mainland districts during the 2014 election, all four LDP-backed candidates in Okinawa lost because of their history of "renegading" on their anti-base platforms (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2014b).

Okinawa's dependency on subsidies from the national government hampers its resolve over the bases. The prefecture receives a disproportionately high amount of aid for its size and population, but still has the highest unemployment rate in the country, 6.8% in 2012 compared to the national average of 4.0%, and the lowest average per

household income (Asato 2003; AIPR 2014; Okinawaken 2013; Shimabuku 2012). In spite of the government pumping money into the prefecture, most of its initiatives only bring more economic hardship to Okinawans. The 1975 Marine Expo, for example, caused a devastating real estate boom. Okinawans were encouraged to sell their agricultural lands to developers with the expectation that the new resorts would hire them (Asato 2003). Instead, many of the Expo-related businesses went bankrupt, leaving Okinawans jobless and landless (Asato 2003). The decision to hold the 2000 G-7 Summit in Nago City was considered an effort to placate Okinawans following a lengthy legal battle between the national government and anti-base activists, and to woo voters in Nago City to support the construction of an off-shore heliport near Henoko (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Approximately 81.4 billion yen in infrastructural improvements were made, including substantial "beautification projects" around the summit location (Hook 2005; Taylor 2000, p. 129). However, the summit coincided with the peak of the tourist season, and security for the summit required the closure of the most popular beaches on Okinawa Island, which placed a considerable burden on Okinawan residents and businesses (Taylor 2000). Following the so-called "Resort Act" of 1987, land speculation again wreaked havoc in the islands: large agricultural plots were permanently rezoned as commercial land, and have remained fallow since the bubble economy burst (Asato 2003). Resorts that survived privatized their beaches, leaving many communities without access to the ocean (Asato 2003). These resorts provide little benefit to the communities they replaced: Okinawans accounted for only 12% of the resort workforce in 2003 (McCormack 2003). Although there were several attempts to establish a free trade zone (FTZ) within Okinawa to provide more job opportunities, the national government would

not provide streamlined visa procedures, lower tax rates, or other necessary incentives for international firms to come to the islands (Hein and Selden 2003).

The environmental devastation of government projects has compounded the economic disparity between Okinawans and mainlanders. New highways divided villages and introduced feral cats and dogs to the fragile ecosystem of the forests, further endangering of local fauna (McCormack 2003). The increase in untreated run-off from poorly planned infrastructure projects has killed many local corals and devastated local fishing grounds (Asato 2003; McCormack 2003; Tanji 2003). One "land improvement" project on Ishigaki Island caused agricultural plots to lose their top soil every time it rained, leading many farmers to go bankrupt as they struggled to purchase fertilizer to replace it (McCormack 2003).

While Okinawa's economy has switched from base-dependency to a subsidy-dependency, economic development is inherently tied to the base problem (Hook 2003; McCormack 2003; Tanji 2003). The national government frequently uses prefectural funding to "maintain subordination" regarding the bases (Hein & Selden 2003, p. 8). In 1998, for example, the national government made significant cuts to the prefectural budget in order to "rein in the administration of Governor Ōta" (Masaki 2003, p. 60-61) after he refused to sign base land lease renewals in the stead of reluctant landowners, then increased funding after the LDP-backed gubernatorial candidate, Inamine Keichii, beat Ōta in 1998 (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Most recently, the 2015 budget of Okinawa was cut by 4.6% following the election of anti-base Governor Onaga Takeshi in November 2014 (Japan Times 2015; Japan Today 2015). The national government provides various "sweetener" projects to cities and towns most impacted by the bases as

well. For example, in 1997, Nago City was offered a two to three billion yen infrastructure package for "roads, harbors, bridges, irrigation, a multimedia centre [sic], a technical college, a training centre [sic] for Japanese volunteers, welfare facilities for women, the aged, and local communities, [and] a 'Yanbaru Wildlife Protection Centre [sic]'" ahead of a referendum to approve the relocation of Futenma Air Base to an artificial island near Henoko (McCormack 2003). After the resignation of the Nago City mayor over the issue, the package was increased to one trillion yen (McCormack 2003).

Opposition to the bases ranges from environmental interests to safety concerns. In the initial referendum to approve the Henoko project, many voters supported it because the measure included environmental protections, but the government's rushed environmental reports have led to wide opposition (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012; Ryūkyū Shimpo 2014c, 2015). In a guide published by the Okinawan Prefectural Government (2011), the bases in urban areas restrict "urban functions, traffic system[s], and land usage" while training activities limit commercial fishing (p. 2-3). In 2011, over 22,000 Kadena City residents sued for a nighttime flight ban and compensation for health problems resulting from noise pollution (McCormack and Norimatsu 2014). A history of aircraft accidents, such as the 2004 helicopter crash onto the Okinawa International University campus, is a major concern for neighboring civilians (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012; Okinawa Prefecture 2011). US military personnel were responsible for over 2,500 traffic and 5,700 criminal cases between 1972 and 2010, including two rape cases involving minors in 1995 and 2008 (Okinawa Prefecture 2011).

The national government's "indifference" to these problems has strained relations between Okinawa and the mainland (Hein and Selden 2003, p. 22). In retaliation for the

national government's slow and half-hearted response to the 1995 rape case, Governor Ōta refused to sign lease renewals of reluctant landowners, which led to a lengthy legal battle (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012; Smith 2000). Previously, when landowners refused to sign lease renewals, the local mayors would do so in their stead (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). If the mayors refused, the governor would sign (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Ōta, however, would not sign, prompting a lawsuit by the national government (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012; Smith 2000). Ōta lost the initial case and his appeal to the Supreme Court, and his popularity soured when he gave in to the rulings and signed the leases (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012; Smith 2000). The Diet quickly enacted the "Special Measures Law for Land Used by the American Forces" to prevent any similar delays by nullifying the landowners' right to recover their land when leases expired (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012, p. 139). The measure passed with an 80% vote in favor in the Upper House and a 90% vote in favor in the Lower House (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). As McCormack and Norimatsu (2012) point out, this measure violated the right to landownership guaranteed in Article 29 of the Japanese constitution, as well as the provision in Article 95 which requires Diet provisions that apply to only "one local public entity" to be approved by the local electorate (p. 139).

The burden of the bases—and the economic development "sweeteners" paired with them—is not carried equally by all of Okinawa prefecture. The bases are located in the Okinawa Islands, and base-related activity rarely impacts the communities in the outlying Miyako or Yaeyama Islands (Okinawa Prefecture 2011; Shimabuku 2012). Within the Okinawa Islands, the bases occupy almost 20% of the land on the main island (*Okinawa hontō*), home to 91% of the prefecture's population (McCormack 2012;

Okinawa Prefecture 2011). Additionally, the 30,000 landowners who receive rent payments reside in the Okinawa Islands (Tanji 2003). The outlying islands have suffered from economic stagnation and population attrition with much less support. In these communities, the imperative to demand stronger defense against unauthorized fishing vessels and PRC naval ships to protect locals' livelihood in the fishing and tourism industries, as well as the financial incentive to welcome base development is thus high.

The East China Sea Dispute in an Okinawan Context

Okinawan discourses regarding the Senkaku Islands and the East China Sea dispute are extensions of the previously examined issues. Unlike the narratives of the major political parties and mainland nationalist and ultraconservative groups, there is no singular Okinawan approach to the dispute as the stakes for residents vary based on their proximity to the Senkaku Islands and the disputed waters. For activists in the Okinawa Islands, for example, escalation of the dispute is undesirable because it provides a justification for maintaining the base presence in their communities. In Ishigaki, the inhabited island closest to the disputed area, the main priority is the security and welfare of residents. On Yonaguni, which lies closer to Taiwan than Okinawa Island or the mainland, the national government's goal to secure the outlying islands is an opportunity to revitalize the community. Okinawan narratives of the dispute are richer than those on the mainland because residents face the effects of Japanese, Chinese, and American policies in the area, and there is an imperative to be heard. These narratives go beyond the major political parties' and nationalist and ultraconservative groups' claims of

sovereignty and connect the dispute to other security issues, economic considerations, and Okinawa's colonial history.

The territorial dispute is most likely to be connected to the base issue in the narratives of activists in the Okinawa Islands. They emphasize the experience of the Battle of Okinawa as a reason to avoid escalation of the dispute (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). Activists also advocate a peaceful, diplomatic end to the dispute, in some cases calling for internationalization of the islands. McCormack and Norimatsu (2012) note that these narratives frequently mention that Okinawa has a longer, friendlier "memory" of China than mainland Japan. This memory is born from the post-reversion constructions of Okinawan identity as a peaceful, cosmopolitan kingdom that forgets the role of Okinawans in Japan's colonial expansion in Taiwan as well as residents' complaints about Chinese (or Taiwanese) boats attacking fishermen under USCAR (Eldridge 2014; Shimabuku 2012).

In 2013, for example, scholars from Okinawa International University and the University of the Ryūkyūs criticized the Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, and American governments for escalation tensions over the Senkaku Islands (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013b). The attendees claimed that the increase in Chinese patrol ships was being used to justify the US's deployment of Osprey aircraft to Okinawa and the Japanese government's reinforcement of the Yaeyama Islands (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013b). They suggested that the islands should be made into a "symbol of coexistence, cooperation and friendship" through the promotion of academic discourse and the creation of a "consultative organization" to prevent conflicts in the area (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013b). Hiyane Teruo, a professor emeritus at the University of the Ryūkyūs, said Japan's nationalization of the

islands evoked "territorial nationalism between Japan and China," and the panelists were worried the dispute could result in conflict akin to the Battle of Okinawa (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013b).

Editorials by the *Ryūkyū Shimpo*, one of the prefecture's two main newspapers, frequently tie the territorial dispute to the base issue using similar language. In a criticism of the Abe administration's handling of the Henoko project, the author argues that Abe is using the territorial dispute to improve his support rate as the Thatcher cabinet did with the Falklands, and that the "Abe administration is determined to build a new air base in Henoko to get the U.S. forces involved in the Senkaku Islands dispute" (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2014a). Doing so "sacrific[es] the beautiful nature, land, and the safety of Okinawa as a tribute to the United States" (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2014a). The author cited the warning of an Okinawan group against revision of the constitution "Okinawa will become a battlefield in a war between China and Japan" (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2014a). A later editorial regarding the 2014 election argues that mainland Japanese ignore the US's statement that it would not be entangled in the dispute in order to avoid admitting that they would rather the bases be on Okinawa than the mainland (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2014b). The author writes that the Japanese government is treating Okinawa "as its colony by ignoring the will of the people" regarding the bases (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2014b).

The territorial dispute was paired with the base issue in an *Okinawa Taimusu* article covering the gubernatorial campaign in 2014. Candidate Shimoji Mikio supported joint development of the area surrounding the Senkaku Islands that included both the PRC and ROC (Okinawa Taimusu 2014). Nakai Masahiro, on the other hand, maintained the position of the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly's 2010 resolution by saying Okinawa

should continue to request assistance from the national government to protect Okinawan fishing vessels (Okinawa Taimusu 2014). Onaga, who later won the election, prioritized the closing of the bases over the threat of tension in the disputed territory, as it is "necessary to demand the reduction and excessive base burden on Okinawa" (*kajūna kichi futan no keigen o tsuyoku motomete*), while the Senkaku Island dispute needs to be solved "through diplomacy and international law" (*gaikō to kokusai-hō ni yori*) (Okinawa Taimusu 2014).

Ishigaki Island, which is closest to the disputed territory, has a more complicated history with the Senkaku Islands than the Okinawa Islands. In the summer of 1945, residents from the outlying islands tried to evacuate to Taiwan, as it was still under Japanese control (Eldridge 2014). When American forces attacked a ship carrying women, children, and elderly residents from Ishigaki, a number of passengers were able to swim to Uotsurishima (Eldridge 2014). Due to the conflict and devastation in Okinawa at the time, it took more than forty-five days for help to arrive, and most of the passengers died of starvation (Eldridge 2014). In May 1969, the city of Ishigaki erected a memorial to these victims and held a ceremony for the bereaved family members on Uotsurishima (Eldridge 2014). Although nationalist and ultraconservative groups from the mainland requested endorsement from the *Senkaku retto senji sonansha izokukai* (Senkaku Islands Bereaved Families Association) for their attempted landings in 2012, the president of the association refused (Eldridge 2014). As a result of the instability around the islands, they had erected their own memorial on Ishigaki in 2002 (Eldridge 2014).

That said, Ishigaki is home to a group of nationalist activists. The *Yaeyama Nippo*, one of Okinawa's few right-leaning newspapers, is published in Ishigaki. Activists landed on the islands in 1996, 2010, and 2012 during periods of tension in the dispute (Fackler 2012; Japan Times 2012b; Ong 1997; Suzuki and Murai 2014). For the first time since the end of the Pacific War, a *hinomaru* flag was raised at the municipal office in response to the 2010 collision incident (Fackler 2012). Ishigaki officials demanded more action from the national government in their resolutions and created a "Senkaku Islands Colonization Day" in 2011 (Japan Times 2010; McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). When it comes to activities on the islands themselves, however, Mayor Nakayama and the Ishigaki City Council as a whole obey the national government's "nonaction" directives. In response to a landing by a group of activists that included two city council members, for example, Nakayama emphasized landings required approval from the government (Japan Times 2012b). The city council also cancelled surveys and flyovers at the national government's request in 2010 and 2014 (SCMP 2014).

Despite a handful of nationalist members, the Ishigaki City Council has tried to undo damage to the Senkaku Islands' ecosystem by mainland nationalist and ultraconservative groups. One of the landing parties in 1978 released a pair of goats on Uotsurishima as "emergency food," but the goats multiplied and have caused significant damage to the island's forest and surrounding coral (Asahi Shimbun 2008). In 1991, the last time a survey of the goat population could be conducted, there were an estimated 300 goats (Asahi Shimbun 2008). Based on aerial and satellite images of the island, researchers say they have eaten nearly 14% of Uotsurishima's vegetation (Asahi Shimbun 2008). As a result, landslides on the island are becoming more frequent, and are

damaging the surrounding coral (Asahi Shimbun 2008). In response to several environmental organizations' call to eradicate the goats, the Ishigaki City Council passed a resolution requesting the national government's intervention (Asahi Shimbun 2008). The request was ignored, and the city council revisited the issue in July 2014 to no avail (Japan Times 2014). Concern about the environmental damage of the goats is probably genuine, as there is a long history of environmentalist causes on Ishigaki. During the American administration of Okinawa, residents and officials frequently complained to USCAR about Taiwanese fishermen poaching eggs from the now-endangered Short-tailed Albatross (Eldridge 2014). Activists who wanted to protect the local corals were able to delay construction of the New Ishigaki Airport for nearly thirty years until 2009 (Ishigaki Airport; Tanji 2003).

The new airport was needed to keep up with the increase in tourism to Ishigaki. In 2013, the number of tourists to the Yaeyama Islands surpassed 810,000 (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013d). The mayor and Kakazu Hirohito, Ishigaki's Director of Tourism, Culture and Sports, have expressed concern about the dispute's effects on tourism to the island (Japan Times 2012b; Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013c; Schmitz 2014). In 2012, when tensions in the dispute were high due to Ishihara's announcement to purchase the islands, over 3,000 Chinese tourists canceled their trips to Okinawa prefecture due to the tensions in the territorial dispute (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2012). Tour operators interviewed by Schmitz (2014) two years later were still worried that another flare in tensions would impact their businesses.

While Ishigaki courts Chinese tourists, Yonaguni Island is in the process of becoming the new frontline against the PRC's navy. As a result of population attrition,

Yonaguni's current population fell from 12,000 in 1947 to 1,500 in 2012 (McCormack 2012). During the years of the Japanese Empire, Yonaguni and the other Yaeyama Islands enjoyed close ties with Taiwan (McCormack 2012; Shimabuku 2012). Now, its national weather reporting station, branches of the justice and immigration departments, high school, and hospital all are closed (McCormack 2012). In 2005, Yonaguni drafted a "Vision" to renew its relationship with neighboring countries through an "open seas" zone, but the national government did not approve, arguing Yonaguni's port did not qualify as a major port, and opening it to international traffic would require burdensome immigration and health measures (McCormack 2012). Two years later, the USS Patriot docked at Yonaguni—the first time a US naval vessel had docked at a civilian Japanese port since 1972—and the US Consul General in Naha identified Yonaguni as a key location for US forces if conflict broke out in the Taiwan Strait (McCormack 2012). As a result, a citizen group on the island gathered signatures for the Town Assembly to request an SDF base as an alternative means of revitalization in light of the failed 2005 Vision (McCormack 2012). Mayor Hokama Shukichi argued while the outlying islands had been spared invasion and occupation, they had been left out of "the compensatory public and infrastructural investment" (McCormack 2012).

Negotiations for the base were canceled following the DPJ's victory in 2009, as the construction of a new SDF base contradicted the party's platform of improving ties with Japan's neighbors (Matsumura 2011; McCormack 2012). After the 2010 collision incident, however, the DPJ pursued SDF deployments to the outlying islands and resumed negotiations. In the end, the Ministry of Defense agreed to lease 21.4 hectares for 15 million yen per year in addition to one billion yen in infrastructural improvements

(McCormack 2013; Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013e). The negotiations sparked a backlash in the community, and resulted in a prolonged series of referendums and Town Assembly meetings (McCormack 2013; Ryūkyū Shimpo 2015a). Activists in the Okinawa Islands opposed the construction of bases in Yonaguni. An editorial in the Ryūkyū Shimpo (2013d), for example, criticized the Town Assembly for being "swayed by money politics," and argued that SDF personnel and their families would "undermin[e] local autonomy" as they could account for ten percent of the electorate. In 2014, construction began on a military lookout station as part of the project, and the base was approved in a referendum in February 2015 (Japan Times 2014, 2015).

Okinawa and the Broken Triangle

These discourses demonstrate a top-down influential relationship between the mainland and Okinawa. Since Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972, the national government has ignored residents' opposition to the US military bases in the Okinawa Islands and demonstrated government policy trumps individual rights and local concerns. With regard to the territorial dispute, Ishigaki's repeated demands for more government involvement near the Senkaku Islands have been answered with calls for restraint. The desperation that drove Yonaguni to welcome an SDF base was the result of years of neglect from the national government and its unwillingness to cooperate with the residents' plan to make the island as an international hub. Given Okinawa prefecture's small presence in the National Diet, its disconnection from mainland party politics, and its dependency on government subsidies, the structure of this relationship is unlikely to change.

Okinawa has not circumvented its one-way relationship with the national government because the channel of influence with international actors is also broken. Some international actors, such as the US government and the Chinese Communist Party, have undermined the legitimacy and worth of Okinawan discourse. Governor Ōta's diplomatic efforts to speak directly with American officials regarding the bases were unsuccessful because the US considered Okinawa's dissatisfaction with the base situation to be a domestic issue for the Japanese government (Masaki 2003). US military officials in Okinawa have minimized of residents' concerns. In response to the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly's resolution requesting a reduction in US Marines stationed in the islands, General Earl B. Haliston dismissed assemblymen as "all nuts and a bunch of wimps" (Masaki 2003, p. 55). As McCormack (2012) notes, the fortification of the Yaeyama Islands is an integral part of the US military's shift to the Pacific. Sixty percent of the US Navy will be relocated to the Pacific Ocean by 2020, and the military has plans to establish two defense lines from Japan to Southeast Asia (McCormack 2012). The first would follow the Amami Islands and Okinawan archipelago from Japan to the Philippines by way of Taiwan (McCormack 2012). Although the US has tried to stay out of the Senkaku Islands dispute, it has an interest in the SDF's deployment to the outlying islands.

Actors on the Chinese side of the territorial dispute also negated Okinawan discourse. In May 2013, a commentary article printed in the CCP's *People's Daily* sparked a diplomatic conflict between the PRC and Japan. The authors argued that the sovereignty of Okinawa, and by extension the Senkaku Islands, was not settled because the Ryūkyū Kingdom was taken by force and the Qing court did not have the opportunity

to negotiate with Japan (Forsythe 2013; McCurry 2013a; Perlez 2013). Although the authors later clarified that their intention was only to problematize Japan's claim to the Senkaku Islands and that it was "a matter for the people in Okinawa to decide their future course" (Asahi Shimbun 2013), the *People's Daily* advocated for the PRC to "bring up the Ryukyu [sic] issue in the international arena" as it was a "powerful card" (People's Daily 2013). An anonymous Japanese official interviewed by Perlez (2013) speculated that China may be "hoping to exploit [the] unease" between Okinawans and the national government. The PRC government has yet to challenge the sovereignty of Okinawa, but these actors' view of Okinawa as a "card" in the territorial dispute reveals a one-way influential relationship vis-à-vis Okinawans. Rather than engage with them as stakeholders in the dispute, Okinawa as a whole is reduced to "an issue" to antagonize the Japanese government.

It is unclear to what extent an international organization, such as the United Nations, would engage with Okinawa's discourses on the territorial dispute or how much credence it would be given by Japan. The government has yet to recognize the Ryūkyūans as an indigenous people in accordance with the UN's decision in 2008 (McCormack and Norimatsu 2012). While there was a 15-year lag between the UN's recognition of the Ainu in 1992 and Japan's acknowledgement of their rights as an indigenous people in 2008, the Japanese government did establish a round-table committee with Ainu leaders as early as 1993 to negotiate government policies (Cotterill 2011). Similarly, in March 2015, anti-base activists appealed to three UN bodies over the Henoko base project, but there has been no response (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2015b). The

activists' appeal to multiple committees demonstrates their lack of confidence of UN intervention.

As the dispute wears on, smaller international actors, such as scholars and journalists, have acknowledged Okinawans' role in the dispute. Gavan McCormack, for example, has been studying the dispute's effects on Yonaguni since 2012, and in his co-authored work, *Resistant Islands*, a chapter is dedicated to the territorial dispute as an Okinawan issue. David McNeil (2013), similarly, wrote an article for *The Independent* that surveyed Ishigaki residents' concerns over the dispute. Rob Schmitz (2014) addressed the conflict's impact on Ishigaki's tourism industry in a piece for Marketplace, an American Public Radio program. Okinawan activists have started to focus their efforts on expanding this audience. In the last two years, activists have hosted a number of symposiums on Okinawa's relations with its neighbors and invited scholars from the PRC, ROC, and the Republic of Korea to take part (Ryūkyū Shimpo 2013a, 2014d, 2014e). Though these events have been small, and they received little international attention outside of Okinawa, continued contact may reestablish an equal influential relationship with international actors.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The dominant approaches to the ECS dispute assume it is first and foremost an international relations or legal issue in which the governments of Japan, the PRC, and ROC are the only meaningful actors. Within scholarship on Japanese politics, such as Hughes (2013) and Sneider (2013), conflicts in the ECS are framed as foreign policy crises for the national government, rather than a topic in domestic political discourses. However, the Japanese government's official position denies the existence of a dispute over the Senkaku Islands and argues the demarcation of Japan's EEZ is legal. The government thus maintains that conflicts in the area are domestic matters. Indeed, the ECS dispute has become a recurring topic in domestic political discourse, and secondary actors have proven themselves to be key actors on the Japanese side of the dispute. Nationalist and ultraconservative groups, for example, sustained the dispute's relevance in Japanese political discourse through landings and construction on the islands, even though such actions were not authorized by the national government. Sino-Japanese relations deteriorated under the DPJ-led administration due to party's alienation of the relevant bureaus and inability to handle its opponents' criticism and counter-actions. Okinawan residents on Yonaguni and Ishigaki welcomed an increased SDF presence near the disputed area, which has further increased tensions.

Examination of the ECS dispute as a domestic issue revealed significant differences in the influence of the major political parties, nationalist and ultraconservative groups, and Okinawa on the national government, as well as how international actors are strategically factored into this "domestic" issue. Cotterill's (2011) broken triangle model,

originally used to illustrate the unbalanced relational influence between the Japanese state, international organizations, and Ainu activists, provided a useful framework to evaluate these dynamics. In the case of the Ainu, Cotterill (2011) found that the channel of relational influence between Ainu activists and the national government was "broken," as the national government exerted influence upon the Ainu while they could not directly influence the government. However, because the channels of influence between Ainu activists and international organizations and between international organizations and the national government were intact, the Ainu were able to indirectly influence the government through these organizations. I expanded the scope of this model to include non-Japanese activists and state governments as "international actors," as they are more significant in the ECS dispute than international organizations. The relational influence of the major political parties, nationalist and ultraconservative groups, and Okinawans was then measured against the relational influences of national government and international actors. The major political parties, which included the LDP, Kōmeitō, DPJ, and JCP, exhibit an unbroken triangle of relational influence with the national government and international actors. Nationalist and ultraconservative groups experience a broken triangle of relational influence because they cannot directly influence the national government, but they have been successful in provoking international actors to exert pressure on the national government. Okinawa prefecture does not exert relational influence on the national government and international actors and thus its interests are largely ignored.

These groups' narratives about the ECS dispute reflect their relational influence in the broken triangle model. To identify these narratives and the relationships of these groups, I surveyed their own publications, such as policy manifestos and website posts, as

well as statements recorded in editorials, news articles, and scholastic works. These narratives were contextualized with these groups' position in Japanese politics based on existing scholarship on the dispute and Japanese politics. The major political parties use the dispute in their campaign platforms for long-term gains within the Japanese political arena, but their narratives are tempered in order to maintain cordial relations with the PRC and ROC should they come to power. Nationalist and ultraconservative groups try to overcome their marginality in Japanese politics by provoking international actors in the dispute as a means to usurp control from the national government. In Okinawa, the narratives of the dispute are more complex and localized as Okinawans have not been able to exert influence on the national government's or international actors' security policies in the area, even though they are impacted most by escalation in the dispute. This comparison exposes both the role of international actors as a secondary audience in Japanese politics and the dispute's relevance as both an international relations and domestic political issue.

Major political parties' inclusion of the ECS dispute in political discourse as well as the shift from reiterating the national government's position to promoting fortification of the outlying islands correlates to the rise of party politics after the 1994 election reform. Although the escalation of the dispute since the 2010 collision undoubtedly influenced these narratives, this shift is also the result of parties reacting against their opponents' platforms. The DPJ was the first party to advocate strengthening the capabilities of the JCG (DPJ 2012), and most likely did so in response to its opponents' criticism of how the DPJ handled the 2010 collision incident. In 2013, the LDP and Kōmeitō's manifestos still emphasized working with international actors by promoting

Japan's position and establishing a protocol with the PRC to prevent future incidents, respectively (Kōmeitō 2013; LDP 2013). The same year, the DPJ reiterated its goal to increase the presence of Japanese agencies in the disputed area (DPJ 2013. However, the LDP and Kōmeitō adopted the DPJ's platform and all three advocated increased defense in the outlying islands in their 2014 manifestos (DPJ 2014; Kōmeitō 2014; LDP 2014). Conversely, the JCP maintained its position that the national government should recognize the dispute and end it through diplomatic means (JCP 2010, 2012 b, 2012c). As the JCP's platform on the dispute has always been contrary to the other major political parties, there would be no reason for it to shift in conjunction with the others.

Nationalist and ultraconservative groups' and Okinawan narratives demonstrate their marginality in Japanese politics. Nationalist and ultraconservative groups consider the ECS dispute to be a policy priority, and criticize the government for inaction. These groups also undermine the national government's foreign policy efforts by escalating tension in the dispute. Thus, nationalist and ultraconservative groups' narratives remain a simplistic assertion of Japan's sovereignty to facilitate provocation of international actors. Okinawans, on the other hand, have the most nuanced narratives of the dispute because they receive little attention from international actors and the national government, as is evident by mainland Japan's dismissal of Okinawa's memory of colonization and Okinawa's continued exploitation by the United States. As a result, they face the consequences of tensions in the dispute, such as reduced numbers of tourists and the economic effects of the construction of SDF bases. The conflicting interests of Okinawan groups based on their proximity to the Senkaku Islands has led to localized narratives of the dispute that appeal to different domestic and international audiences. On

Ishigaki, more intervention is desired in order to protect itself from conflict near the Senkaku Islands. Nationalists in Ishigaki appeal to mainland nationalist and ultraconservative groups by adopting similar tactics. Activists in the Okinawa Islands instead argue the government's escalatory behavior further provokes the PRC and justifies the presence of US bases in the islands at the expense of Okinawans' safety and livelihoods. These activists emphasize Okinawa's shared history with China and Taiwan to encourage scholastic exchange to diffuse tensions. Meanwhile, Yonaguni's decision to comply with the fortification of the outlying islands reflects acceptance of inability to exert relational influence on the national government or international actors.

These findings suggest a need to more clearly identify marginal actors in the dispute and their influential relationships with their respective national governments and international actors. Some marginal actors, such as the nationalist and ultraconservative groups in Japan, are able to exert a disproportionate influence in the dispute relative to their actual position in domestic politics, while others do not. We should also determine the motivations and relational influence of Chinese and Taiwanese activists vis-à-vis their own governments. Determining possible distortions would enable non-state international actors seeking to deescalate the dispute, including scholars and nongovernmental organizations, to identify underutilized channels of influence. On the Japanese side of the dispute, for example, it may be beneficial for these actors to participate in Okinawan discourses and to pressure the national government on their behalf. Similarly, withdrawing or limiting discourse with nationalist and ultraconservative groups would return the national government's control over policymaking.

Application of the broken triangle model to the nationalist and ultraconservative groups and Okinawa raises questions about the engagement of non-state international actors in the dispute. As Tanji (2003) notes, international activists were key to Ishigaki residents' ability to delay the construction of the New Ishigaki Airport, but it is unclear if they simply abandoned the effort over time or if their influence was negated. Similarly, the success of nationalist and ultraconservative groups in provoking Japan's neighbors has been inconsistent. It would be beneficial to identify more clearly all of the international actors involved in the dispute, and to measure how likely they are to engage. International actors' own motivations and influential relationships could be examined more thoroughly to determine why tensions were allowed to flare or were suppressed by the respective governments, as well as why it is only recently that tensions have continued to escalate.

Within Japan, the major political parties, nationalist and ultraconservative groups, and Okinawans are integral to understanding the dynamics of the ECS dispute. Competition between the political parties contributed to a widespread consensus that the outlying islands should be fortified to counter the PRC presence near the Senkaku Islands. Nationalist and ultraconservative actors agitate Sino-Japanese relations for their own domestic gains. Okinawans, although marginal in Japanese politics and in the dispute, provide troubling narratives of the dispute's impact on populations closest to the disputed area. The ECS dispute is more than an international relations issue, and more credence should be given to the dispute's role in domestic politics and the role of secondary actors in the dispute.

APPENDIX

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIPR: Association of the Indigenous Peoples in the Ryukyus
ASDF: Air Self-Defense Forces
CCP: Chinese Communist Party
DPJ: Democratic Party of Japan
ECS: East China Sea
EEZ: Exclusive economic zone
GSDF: Ground Self-Defense Forces
JCG: Japan Coast Guard, formerly Maritime Safety Agency (MSA)
LDP: Liberal Democratic Party
LTC: The PRC's Law on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone
MFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China
MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan
MSA: Maritime Safety Agency, later Japan Coast Guard (JCG)
MSDF: Maritime Self-Defense Forces
PR: Proportional representation
PRC: People's Republic of China
ROC: Republic of China
SCS: South China Sea
SDF: Self-Defense Forces
SMD: Single member districts
TFP: Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the PRC
UN: United Nations
UNCLOS III: The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea III
USCAR: United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands

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