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**Contesting Place Names: The East Sea/Sea of Japan naming issue**

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## **Abstract**

Building on the work of critical toponymy, this paper provides an example of the active contestation of a place name. Since the early 1990s, successive Korean governments have argued that the singular use of “Sea of Japan” is a colonial legacy. We provide a brief historical context for this dispute. We identify the array of names currently used in newspapers, journals, educational texts, and internet sites and show that a dual naming is now a more common usage, especially in international English-language newspapers, atlases, educational textbooks and internet materials. A colonial naming practice has been challenged.

*Key Words: critical toponymy, dual naming, East Sea/Sea of Japan, Sea of Japan/East Sea,*

## Introduction <A>

We humanize the world by turning space into place. One of the main and most important ways we do this is by assigning names. To name provides meaning and confers identity. To name is to create order. There is now a considerable body of critical toponymic research that focusses on the wider social and political implication of place names and place-naming practices (Rose-Redwood et al. 2010; Vuolteenaho 2017). If names create order, then the fundamental question that critical toponymy asks is, *whose order?* The thrust of contemporary research is to excavate and expose the power relations behind place names in the process of naming and renaming. Naming places embodies and expresses power. Recent scholarship includes an emerging body of theory that looks at, among other topics, naming regimes (Hui 2019), toponymic commodification (Rose-Redwood 2011; Medway and Warnaby 2014), utilizing the Foucauldian notion of *dispositif* to explore naming processes (Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch 2016) and the elaboration of Gramsci's ideas on hegemony to explore how names transmit power (Puzey and Kostanski 2016). There is also a wide variety and growing body of case studies including urban streetscapes (Rose-Redwood et al, 2017), toponymic landscapes (Post and Alderman 2014), slum neighborhoods (Wanjiru and Matsubara 2017) and memorials (Dwyer and Alderman 2008).

Naming is an act of power that privileges some name-giving groups over others. The condescension of history erases some names, while others remain contested. There is a vigorous debate on the name changes associated with shifts in power relations. Examples include the renaming of indigenous places in settler societies (Murphyao and Black 2015), colonial inscriptions (Wanjiru-Mwita and Giraut 2020), postcolonial renaming (Short 2012a) and the imposition of country name changes (Halasz et al. 2019).

Contestation is most evident in dual namings. There are well-documented cases of places still known by different names, including (the individual pairs are listed in alphabetical order) Arabian Gulf/Persian Gulf, Derry/Londonderry, Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, Dokto/Takeshima, and Falklands/Malvinas. These dual naming arise from the naming practices of different groups. Catholic Irish prefer “Derry” while Protestant Irish use “Londonderry.” Argentina refers to the Las Malvinas for example to press their claim of ownership of the islands while the UK uses “Falklands” to reinforce their ownership of the islands. This paper expands the discussion of contested place names, examining in detail the usage of the “Sea of Japan” and “East Sea”.

The Sea of Japan/East Sea debate between Japan and South Korea provides a case study of a colonial/postcolonial naming issue between two sovereign states. Since the early 1990s, a sustained campaign has been waged, in large part underwritten by the Republic of Korea (hereafter South Korea), to promote a global recognition that East Sea is a legitimate name and that the singular name of Sea of Japan is a toponymic injustice. The question that this paper seeks to answer is “how successful is this campaign?”

The paper is divided into three main sections: we discuss four areas of critical toponymy that the paper seeks to advance, we provide a brief background to the issue, and then present empirical data that highlights the nature of the naming contestation in a range of public discourses. We identify the array of names currently used in newspapers, journals, educational texts, and internet sites and show that dual naming is now a more common usage especially in international English-language newspapers, atlases, educational textbooks and internet materials.

#### Developing Four Themes in Critical Toponymy <A>

The paper engages with and seeks to advance four elements of critical toponymy. First, we provide a case study of a dual naming. “One feature, one name” is the standard policy of many formal naming institutions such as the U.S. Board of Geographic Names (USBGN). The policy has the value of simplicity and immediate recognition. However, it either assumes or imposes a unidimensional quality to the nature of multidimensional places. Places have multiple meanings to different groups at different times. Surveys of residents in one town in Zimbabwe, for example, revealed the use of multiple names for these multiple realities (Jenjewa and Barnes 2017). Since one place or one feature is a carrier of multiple meanings that may involve multiple names, the imposition of a single name is an act of power and domination that privileges some and ignores others. There is a large body of work that highlights how power is embodied in these linguistic acts of erasure, annexation and possession (Puzey and Kostanski 2016). Yet, power is also resisted and contested as well as imposed. Forms of toponymic resistance emerge that either demand renaming and/or call for the use of dual names (Puzet 2009). The trend is most apparent in the postcolonial context. Imperial powers and colonial settler societies expressed and embodied their power by naming features. Australia, for example, long settled and named for over 50,000 years by indigenous peoples, was linguistically appropriated by the British after 1788. City names such as Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney commemorated members of the British elite. In the interior, the names “Alice Springs,” and “Ayer’s Rock” celebrated colonials and their families. The settlers renamed the land in their own image in acts of appropriation that implied an empty land, *terra nullius*, an uninhabited place without meaning or purpose before the coming of white settlers. However, sustained Aboriginal resistance and more recent changes in white attitudes has led to an awareness of these linguistic injustices. A dual naming has occurred. Alice Springs is now also known as Mparntwe, the name used by the local Arrernte people, while the official name of the impressive monolith is now

Uluru-Ayer's Rock, to recognize the name used by the local Pitjantjatjara people (Short 2012a). There is now a formal widespread acceptance of dual names across Australia. The dual naming official policy of the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales is worth quoting at some length,

All Australians share a relationship to the land and the names we give to places convey their significance, sense of history and identity. The New South Wales Government is committed to recognising Aboriginal cultural heritage by registering original place names given by Aboriginal people so that they sit side by side with existing European names. Since June 2001 the government has supported a dual naming policy for geographical features and cultural sites. This community-driven system acknowledges the significance of Aboriginal culture and, in doing so, represents a meaningful contribution to the process of reconciliation in NSW. The Board is committed to the preservation and promotion of Aboriginal languages and acknowledging Aboriginal culture through place naming in NSW. The Board does this by preferencing traditional Aboriginal place names or names with Aboriginal origin wherever it can and restoring traditional Aboriginal names to features with introduced names through its dual naming policy and recognising important traditional Aboriginal placenames alongside longstanding introduced names. Geographical Names Board (2020)

We should also be aware that dual naming may not always come to pass. One study found that not all colonial names were replaced in former French and Spanish colonies in West Africa (Stolz and Warnke 2016). However, when and if it does occur, dual naming can be a form of reconciliation, a

historical remembrance that disrupts singular narratives of history and allows for the polyphonic nature of historical geography to be heard, celebrated and enshrined. It does not rewrite history but accepts a wider historical angle of vision. Dual naming can be an act of historic reconciliation that respects and embraces a deeper history of more complex stories.

Dual naming may not be a preferred outcome but a compromise. Dual naming is sometimes a third-party compromise. The goal of competing linguistic communities is often to impose their singular name. The dual naming is sometimes the compromise that results from third parties seeking to be respectful and/or avoid controversy. Dual naming may be an outcome rather than a strategy. In this paper we will show that the dual naming of East Sea/Sea of Japan is often of this third-party compromise form.

The second theme we explore is the importance of affect (Gregg, Seigworth and Ahmed 2010; Pile 2010). Naming and renaming are infused with emotions and feelings. Feelings can run so high that changing names is sometimes only possible after long campaigns. In 1975, the Alaskan Legislature sought to change the name of highest mountain in North America from Mount McKinley to the indigenous name of Denali. Mount McKinley was named after a politician from Ohio who was President of the U.S. from 1897 to 1901. A long time ago for a president best known perhaps for being assassinated, but still so important that the Ohio Congressional Delegation resisted the change and blocked its passage as late as 2015 when the Secretary of the Interior invoked her powers to name geographic features if the USBGN took too long. Place names are not just descriptors, they are emotional connections, filaments of memory, strands of longing. Place names are infused with affective power.

A third theme builds on the idea of the group affect in national sentiment. Nationalism takes many forms but one that is often little appreciated is the importance of place names to national



history and national identity. Place names and placemaking are an integral part of the ways that nationalism orders and classifies the world (Maxwell 2018). In an argument of great subtlety Benedict Anderson argued that nations are not so much facts of race or ethnicity. Rather, they are, what he terms, *imagined communities*, with three institutions of power: the *census*, the *map* and the *museum* that together allow the state to imagine the people under its dominance, the geographic territory under its control and the nature of historical legitimacy (Anderson 2006). We can enlarge the understanding of *map* to include place name features. The names in this case study are deeply significant and affective forces in both Japanese and Korean national sentiment and rhetoric. The name of body of water that separates the two countries also divides the two countries. Our case study highlights the role that nationalism plays in naming.

Finally, renaming projects can take a variety of forms. In this case study we look at both formal and informal processes that range from attempting to change rule-based procedures, to localized campaigns to the influencing of specific discourses.

Our aim is to show how and why a naming campaign, deeply encased in national identities and infused with national sentiments, has emerged, and to gauge its success.

### The Background <A>

There is a very long history in Korea, dating back at least 1,500 years, of the term “East Sea” being used to describe the body of water to the east of the Korean peninsula. By the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, Western explorers used a number of names including Sea of Corea and Gulf of Corea. Even early Japanese maps sometimes used the term Sea of Joseon or Sea of Japan to reference the same body of water (Short 2012b).

As part of an expansive Japanese imperialism, Korea became a Japanese protectorate in 1905 and was annexed formally in 1910. The domination took many forms, including a toponymic colonialism. A Japanese naming system was applied to all maps, including place names, roads, and natural features of the country in an expression of Japanese power (Short and Lee 2010). In Seoul, 661 administrative districts with Korean names were combined and replaced by 186 districts with Japanese names. There was also the renaming of larger regional features, such as the Sea of Japan, envisioned now as part of a wider Japanese empire. The Korean designation of “East Sea” was erased from official maps and other formal documents.

The singular use of the name “Sea of Japan”—with its erasure of “East Sea”—was formalized in international usage at the 1929 Conference of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) when the term “Sea of Japan” was recognized as the only official name (International Hydrographic Organization 1929; Kerr 1998), and reconfirmed at subsequent meetings of the IHO in 1937 and 1953. Korea had no independent voice at the initial meeting, and there was little international sensitivity to the colonial context of the new name. For example, in a book on world regions, published by Oxford University Press in 1939 entitled *The World: General Regional Geography*, Part Three is devoted to Asia. Chapter 18, entitled “The Monsoon Lands,” has a section on Japan, subtitled “The Island Empire of the East”. Korea is depicted as an integral part of Japan (Stembridge 1939). The book depicts Korea as a legitimate colonial possession of Japan and the sea between them as the Sea of Japan.

Even after Japan's defeat in World War II, there was little formal reckoning of Japan's colonial rule in Korea, and much of Japan's prewar political system remained. The Emperor was retained, and political and economic elites of pre-war and war-time Japan continued to exercise power in postwar Japan. From 1947 to 1952, the Reverse Course policy rescinded the very early postwar attempts at

democratizing Japan through purging war time officials and limiting the power of big business (Ward and Sakamoto 2019). Rather than transform Japan into a democratic nation reconciled to its war crimes as with West Germany, the main aim was to strengthen Japan as an ally of the U.S. in East Asia. The Cold War, and then the Korean War, prioritized Japan as a key ally for the United States in its fight against communism. The occupying U.S. forces used Japanese maps of the country, and the name “Sea of Japan” became the widely accepted name. The colonial underpinnings of the designation “Sea of Japan” were neither addressed nor considered. The following demonstrates just one example of the dominant discourse of the time. In 1956, the London newspaper, *The Times*, decided to publish, in association with Cambridge University Press, an atlas of the world. The *Times Atlas of the World: Mid Century Edition* was dedicated to the young Queen Elizabeth II and was published in four volumes. It was the most ambitious atlas of the time. The map of Korea, in Volume I Plate 20, designates the body of water between Korea and Japan as the Sea of Japan (Bartholomew 1956).

At the end of the Korean War (1950-1953), the Korean peninsula was divided into two countries, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea). North Korea defiantly used the name “East Sea.” In South Korea, there was little official attention to the Sea of Japan/East Sea naming issue due to South Korea’s history of elite collaboration with the Japanese colonial regime. Some of the South Korean military and economic elites prospered under the period of Japanese control and had little interest in raising issues about South Korea’s colonial relations with Japan. However, 1960 marks a change. The brief Second Republic (1960-61) saw the beginnings of more critical perspective on Japan. Military rule (1961-1963) and then a series of authoritarian governments (1963-1987) adopted a more overt nationalism and East Sea became a commonly used term. Then as South Korea democratized, there was an even greater articulation of the colonial experience’s negative aspects. The name “East Sea” embodied this nationalist discourse

drawing attention to a separate Korean identity before Japanese occupation. Yet, South Korea remained insular, exerting little influence in the global naming discourse. The series of authoritarian leaders and military dictatorships reinforced this sense of isolation. Disconnected from the international community, and especially from the international regimes of naming practices, South Korea had few opportunities to make its case on the international stage. Things only began to change in the late 1980's with the first democratically elected government in 1987 and with Seoul's hosting of the 1988 Olympic Games. Hosting the Olympic Games was part of a self-conscious attempt to become more actively engaged with the global community. In September 1991, both South and North Korea joined the United Nations. A more globalized South Korea could now address the naming issue in international forums.

#### The Naming Campaign <A>

Korea initially sought to effect change through formal channels of international organizations. In 1992, Korean officials raised the naming issue at the sixth United Nations Conference of Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) in New York City. In 2007, the two Koreas combined to submit another naming amendment at the ninth UNCSGN. The official position of the South Korean government is that the correct international usage should be the dual name "East Sea/Sea of Japan." The official Japanese position is to resist either changing the designation of Sea of Japan for East Sea or to adopt a dual name. They argue that "Sea of Japan" is widely accepted in international usage and adopting a dual name would be confusing.

As South Korea became more self-confident, wealthier, with its migrants forming large and successful communities in the U.S, the country became more able to address the naming issue. There

is a powerful constituency that sees the name “East Sea” as a central feature of Korean national identity. In recognition of this constituency, South Korean official government documents all use the term “East Sea.” The South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well the Ministry of Education, Korean Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency, the National Geographic Information Institute, and the Korean Culture and Information Service, amongst other agencies, all promote the usage of “East Sea”. South Korea also uses its soft power to influence the change of name. Campaigns also are waged by such quasi-government institutions as the Korea Foundation. The Korea Foundation was established in 1991 to promote a better international understanding of Korea by supporting overseas research as well as hosting conferences and other events. The official policy of the Korea Foundation is to employ the term “East Sea.” Other institutions with similar strategies and tactics include the Society for East Sea, established in 2004, and the Northeast Asian History Foundation, established in 2006. In effect, South Korea has a two-track naming policy. Government bodies more concerned with domestic issues and domestic audiences use the term East Sea almost exclusively while the official policy for foreign consumption is the use of the dual name.

In the formal arenas of naming regimes, there is stout resistance to changing names, using dual names, or being involved in the Korea-Japan conflict. The more the South Koreans have pushed the issue, the more overtly politicized it becomes. The formal place name regimes shy away from entering such a political minefield. The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names (UNGEGN) and the IHO have largely avoided making a definitive decision, hoping South Korea and Japan can sort it out between themselves. The U.S. Board of Geographic Names (USBGN) persists in the use of the term “Sea of Japan” and does not currently envision the use of dual naming. While the USBGN is only binding for U.S. federal agencies, it exerts tremendous influence in the U.S. and

around the world since many other institutions rely on the Board for guidance. The U.S. government has distanced itself from the debate, preferring not to antagonize two important allies.

In the U.S., despite lack of success with the USBGN, the South Korean government, in alliance with the large and influential Korean diaspora, has been more successful at influencing politics at the state level. In February 2014, the State of Virginia House of Delegates, after intensive lobbying by the South Korean government and the local Korea-American community of over 85,000 people, voted to ensure that the name “East Sea” would be used alongside “Sea of Japan” in all textbooks used in Virginia schools. Despite intense lobbying by the Japanese government, the law was enacted when Governor McAuliffe signed the bill into law (Robertson 2014).

In 2019, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) advised all superintendents and principals in the state’s education system to use the name “East Sea/Sea of Japan.” The memo from the Deputy Commissioner for Education, Dr. Kimberly Young Wilkins, states:

The New York State Social Studies Framework does not specifically refer to the Sea of Japan or the East Sea; however, while teaching about this geographical location, school districts should be sensitive and responsive to the historical significance of both names. The NYSED recommends teachers refer to the body of water on the eastern boundary of Asia between Korea and Japan as both the East Sea and the Sea of Japan (Wilkins, 2019).

#### Assessing the Effects of The Naming Campaign <A>

The government of South Korea through its formal organization such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and state funded, non-government organizations such as the Korea Foundation, the Society for East Sea, and the Northeast Asian History Foundation have all worked to promote the naming issue in

a variety of discourses including newspapers, textbooks, maps and atlases. If we concentrate on the effects rather than the detailed mechanics of the campaign, a basic question then is how successful is the campaign?

To answer the question, we examined a variety of discourses over an eighteen-month period from mid-2017 to the end of 2018:

- Journals and newspapers;
- Educational material, including atlases and textbooks;
- Internet sources.

For each of these discourses we identified different possible namings: “East Sea,” “East Sea or Sea of Japan” and “Sea of Japan.” The data that we collected are tabulated in Table I and depicted in Figure 1. In the following sections we break down the usage by each discourse. The data has its limitations: it is a snapshot at just one time, internet-dependent and heavily reliant on English-language sources. Because of these limitations, it is best interpreted as a provisional and partial assessment.

### Journals and Newspapers in the U.S. <B>

We examined U.S. journal and newspaper internet sources that employed a variant of East Sea and/or Sea of Japan in any news story over an 18-month period from mid-2017 to the end of 2018. We utilized arguably the world’s most common search engine, Google. We extracted 84 articles that referenced East Sea/Sea of Japan in any of their articles.

The single use of the term “Sea of Japan” dominates in a range of influential journal publications such as the *Atlantic*, *Fortune*, and the *New Yorker*. Even specialized naval publications such as *Voice of America* and *The Navy Times* persist with the single name of “Sea of Japan.” However, the *Diplomat*, which specializes in covering Asian Pacific issues, varies in

its usage, sometimes using “Sea of Japan” and at other times “East Sea/Sea of Japan” (Gady 2017, Gady 2018; Harold, 2018).

The campaign has made some headway in other journals. *Newsweek* frequently uses both terms, sometimes citing “East Sea” before “Sea of Japan” (Persio 2017). The liberal *Politico* references both names as does the more conservative *Daily Caller* (Pickrell 2017; Alexander and Castillo 2018;). *The Hill*, specializing in national politics in Washington, D.C., mentions both “Sea of Japan” and “East Sea,” as does the *Maritime Executive* (Greenwood 2017; Maritime Executive 2017). Some publications, such as *Business Insider*, and *Time*, sometimes use “East Sea” and at other times “Sea of Japan” (Friedman 2017; Meixler, 2018). This reflects the important point that the naming used on many website journals will depend on the individual author or editor. While many journals continue to use the term “Sea of Japan,” some of the most influential journals for international news, such as *Newsweek* and *Time*, regularly reference the naming issue in their coverage of East Asian news items (O’Connor 2018; Goseong-Park 2018).

In some regional newspapers, such as the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *Columbus Dispatch* and *Desert Sun* the single term “Sea of Japan” was used, while other regional newspapers including the *Chicago Daily Herald*, *Chicago Tribune*, *San Diego Union Tribune* and *Mercury News* used the dual name (Warrick, 2017; Rose 2018). These cities have a substantial Korean population, suggestive that local newspapers in cities with significant Korean-American populations are perhaps more sensitive to the naming issue. Of the more important national U.S. newspapers, *USA Today*, uses the term “East Sea” while the *Christian Science Monitor* and *Wall Street Journal* only use the term “Sea of Japan” (Gale 2017; James 2017).

Three of the most important newspapers in the U.S., regularly read and cited by the political, economic and intellectual elites, are *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and



*Washington Post*. The *New York Times*, reliant on the USBGN for its editorial policies on naming only uses the term “Sea of Japan and on its maps only designates the sea as “Sea of Japan” (Rich 2017; Sang-Hun 2017).

The 2018 Winter Olympics was effective at drawing attention to the naming issue. The *Washington Post* coverage of the event included a map that had the dual naming of “East Sea (Sea of Japan)” (Berkowitz and Meko, 2018). Their more normal coverage, in contrast, tends to persist with “Sea of Japan” (Wootson 2017). The *LA Times*, perhaps because of a significant and vocal Korean presence in the region, uses the term “East Sea” (Stiles 2017).

It is clear that there is a varied usage across U.S. journals and newspapers. Because some editorial guidelines, such as those of the *New York Times*, rely on the USBGN, the singular use of “Sea of Japan” continues to be used although not exclusively. The majority of articles, fifty-one, use the term “Sea of Japan,” with twenty-seven articles using the dual naming.

#### International English-Language Newspapers <B>

We examined international English-language newspapers that mentioned either or both of the two names. We identified 109 instances in the 18-month period (see Figure 1). The Korean English-language press most consistently utilizes the single name of “East Sea.” Newspapers such as the *Korea JoongAng Daily* regularly employ the term (Sun-Min, 2018; Kim, 2018). The *Korean Herald* uses the term “East Sea” while also providing information for English readers on the naming dispute and on the reasons for the Korea preference for “East Sea” (Ju-Young, 2018). The Korean English-language press is an important platform to transmit the name “East Sea.” This is not an unexpected finding. What is more interesting, and perhaps surprising, is the use of the term “East Sea” in some English-language Japanese outlets. While most tend to use the term

“Sea of Japan” there was recognition of a controversy in some articles especially in the more liberal *Asahi Shimbun* (Reuters 2018). But even the more conservative Japanese outlet, *The Japan Times*, also discussed the naming issue in an article published on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017, when it noted that:

South Korea has long demanded that the waters be called the East Sea, arguing that the term Sea of Japan only became popular globally after Japan’s contentious annexation of the peninsula in 1910 (Kyodo 2017).

While the Japanese-language press—aimed almost exclusively for the domestic audience—relies on the simple usage of “Sea of Japan,” it is clear that the Japanese English-language outlets do recognize the dispute though it is often framed as an either/or issue. Japan says “Sea of Japan” while South Korea says “East Sea.” There is frequently no discussion of dual naming. It is significant however, that English-language Japanese outlets sometimes make their readers aware that there are alternatives to “Sea of Japan.”

Across Asia, the dual naming is more common. Pakistan’s *Dawn* and *Daily Times* print articles that use the dual naming as a matter of course. Singapore’s *The Straits Times* always mentions the two names while the Hong Kong-based *Asia Times* and *South China Morning Post*, and the Taiwan base *Taipei Times* use the term “East Sea/Sea of Japan” (Da-sol 2017). Russia’s *Sputnik International News* outlet regularly references “Sea of Japan/East Sea” (Sputnik 2017).

Newspapers rely on articles from international news agencies. Often, they are edited to fit in with local sensibilities. Here is a *Reuters* story filed from Beijing that was published in the *Taipei Times*,

China’s air force yesterday carried out another round of long-range drills, flying into the Sea of Japan (known as the “East Sea” in South Korea), prompting South Korean jets to scramble, and again around Taiwan amid growing tension over Beijing’s assertiveness in the region

(Reuters 2017).

The same story was also carried by the United Kingdom *Reuters*, but with a difference:

China's air force carried out another round of long-range drills on Monday, flying into the Sea of Japan and prompting South Korean and Japanese jets to scramble, and again around self-ruled Taiwan amid growing tension over China's assertiveness (Blanchard, 2017).

Note how the *Taipei Times* added "East Sea" while this qualifier was missing in the U.K. version of the same story.

In the UK, there is less use of the dual naming and less discussion of the context of the dispute. The influential weekly, *The Economist*, and the daily *Financial Times* always use the term "Sea of Japan.". However, some of the other influential U.K. newspapers are aware of the issue. *The Independent* and *The Guardian* make occasional references to the naming controversy (McCurry 2017). The *Daily Mail* uses the formal dual naming, even in articles where the Sea is not the focus of the story (French, 2017).

Dual naming is now embedded in English-language newspapers and journals throughout Asia. Chinese-based news sources highlight the issue as part of China's long running conflict with Japan in the East China Sea. But even English-language Japanese outlets make reference to it. The English-language Asian press, including Japanese outlets, appear to be more sensitive to the naming issue than the European and North American press.

#### Educational Materials <B>

Education is a powerful tool for informing people about a changing world. We examined two main education materials, atlases and textbooks used in high school and first-year university courses. We restricted our analysis to atlases (in a variety of languages) and English-language

books published in the past ten years. Popular textbooks and atlases are often republished. We did not distinguish between texts republished and revised, and those republished and not revised. In total, twenty-nine atlases and textbooks were examined. The results are shown in Figure 2.

The public as well as scholars, diplomats and politicians use atlases to gain a picture of the world. We looked at major atlases from France, Germany, UK and US. Apart from one German atlas, all of the atlases from Germany, the U.K. and U.S. use the dual name.

The German atlas *Der Grosse Dumont Weltatlas* uses a term that, in English translation, reads as “Japanese Sea/East Sea,” giving equal weight to both names (Dumont 2015). Similarly, the French *Le Grand Atlas Géographique Le Monde* also gives equal billing (Istituto Geografico DeAgostini, 2014). A French technical atlas *L'Atlas Du Monde Diplomatique* was one of the few to place “East Sea” before “Sea of Japan” in its dual naming (Gresh et.al. 2006).

The most recent editions of a number of major English-language atlases, such as *The National Geographic Visual Atlas of The World*, *The Oxford Atlas of the World* and *The Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World*, all use the dual name in the form “Sea of Japan (East Sea).” The *National Geographic Atlas of the World* has an entry, that reads “The sea between Japan and Korea called the ‘Sea of Japan’ by the Japanese and the ‘East Sea’ by Koreans” (National Geographic 2014). Even a more technical atlas produced by the international insurance agency of Lloyds—*Lloyd's Maritime Atlas of World Ports and Shipping Place*—uses the dual name “Sea of Japan (East Sea)” (Informa 2017). Dual naming has made considerable headway in the world of atlases. In the English-speaking world the dual naming tends to be in the form of “Sea of Japan (East Sea)” although equal recognition is given in the indexes with a separate entry for “East Sea.” German and French atlases are more likely to give equal billing or to rank “East Sea” before “Sea of Japan” in their dual naming.

Eleven recent textbooks were evaluated in this study. They are all world regional geography texts published in the U.S. in the past five years and sold throughout the English-speaking world. Here the picture is different, with 5 of the 13 texts still using only “Sea of Japan.” The persistence of the singular naming could be due to inertia, with books being republished over the years without substantial changes and so fossilizing naming practices. Inertia is also heightened by the fact that maps are often the most expensive part in the production costs of popular textbooks. Retaining older maps, in the interest of reducing costs, can solidify the singular name usage. However, those that did use dual naming, used it extensively. The popular textbook *World Today: Concepts and Regions in Geography* uses “East Sea/Sea of Japan”, while another text, *Globalization and Diversity: Geography of a Changing World* has a total of 9 maps all showing the sea as “Sea of Japan/East Sea” (Nijman, Muller, and de Blij 2015; Rowntree et.al. 2016).

Dual naming is prevalent in educational materials. Atlases published in English, French and German in particular are now more likely to use a dual name option rather than just “Sea of Japan.” This is a remarkable change from past decades and is in large part due to the concentrated South Korean efforts to inform atlas and textbook authors of the issue.

#### Internet Searches <B>

Many people, and especially younger people, tend to get their information from the Internet. We conducted an Internet search with the English-language Google search engine on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018, using three terms, “Sea of Japan,” “East Sea,” and “Sea of Japan or East Sea,”. We identified the top 166 different “hits” as they appeared on the screen (see Table I and Figure 1).

We restricted the hits to the most relevant and focused. A subjective call to be sure, but one we felt comfortable in making after extensive and intensive reading of the sites.

Some comments on the internet search are in order. We wanted to spread the net as widely as possible, so we used both the singular and dual names. We were careful to exclude any citations of “East Sea” that were in fact references to the Vietnamese designation of “South China Sea” as “East Sea.” To reduce the risk of bias from saved cookies, we cleared all search history and cookies before conducting searches. Nevertheless, searches could have been biased by geographical influences. Searches were conducted from the USA. Using Google maps from Korea, for example, brings up a map with the name “East Sea.” Yet, a user in Japan will see “Sea of Japan” instead. We drew our sample on one randomly selected date; so, it is a single snapshot. With more resources we could have taken a wider sample stratified by time to assess the temporal stability of the sea names. But since the timeline for all the other date sources was less than two years, we decided that the extra efforts would not have resulted in vastly different results. Of course, a much longer-term time sampling would be useful to assess name stability and change, but this is beyond the scope of the present study. We only discuss the top hits in each of the searches. An internet search for “Sea of Japan” returned 4.5 million hits and “East Sea,” 2.2 million hits. A full analysis of all of these hits is beyond the scope of this paper.

It is significant that amongst the top seven hits for just “Sea of Japan,” the reader also is informed of the dual naming issue. The Wikipedia site for “Sea of Japan,” for example, mentioned the dual naming issue. Out of 66 sites listed using the search term “Sea of Japan,” 22 of them refer to the East Sea. It seems clear that the Internet search engines that find international rather than only Japanese sites introduce the idea of dual naming.

The Internet search for “Sea of Japan or East Sea” produced results from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Yahoo*, Republic of Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a *National Geographic*-style manual that provides instruction in how maps should be drawn. There were more than 145 educational sites. The distribution shown in Figure 1 shows a slight majority favor of dual naming.

We also conducted a similar search of images on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 employing the same three terms. We used Google Image, the foremost image search engine in the English-speaking world. Again, we only discuss a sample of the top hits. The results are shown in Figure 1.

When searching under the single term “Sea of Japan,” out of the first 51 “hits,” 12 of them mentioned “East Sea.” So even when people search for “Sea of Japan” only, one out of five times the image obtained includes reference to “East Sea” and the dual naming issue. Further, if one searches for “Sea of Japan” images, the encyclopedia site *Britannica* mentions the dual naming issue (Lee et al. 2018). Similarly, when searching for just “East Sea,” out of 100 hits, 10 percent also made mention of “Sea of Japan.” Most of the hits for “East Sea” alone came from Korean sources. There were fifty hits when searching for both terms, “East Sea” and/or “Sea of Japan.” Examples include sites devoted to geography education and geopolitics. It is clear that the dual naming has penetrated the Internet even when the search is confined to “Sea of Japan.”

#### What Does Our Data Show <B>

The study has some limitations. It is an analysis of data collected over a narrow time period. There is no base point to measure change over time. We did not weigh the importance of the different sources so do not have a comparative measure of their influence. The bulk of the material, apart

from atlases, was limited to English-language sources, and the Google searches may be biased by the Google algorithm. Despite these limitations, the data do suggest that since the campaign began in the 1990's, South Korea has managed to shift the discourse. By 2018, out of a total of 541 citations across all discourses that we examined, only 43 percent used the singular "Sea of Japan" while 48 percent employed some form of dual naming. A mere 9 percent, all Korean sources, used the singular form of "East Sea." There are some differences across the discourses. Figure 1 provides a summary picture. The singular use of "Sea of Japan" continues to dominate in U.S. journals and newspapers and to a lesser extent in the international English-language newspapers. Dual naming is prevalent in the educational materials of books and especially atlases and in internet searches. Overall, it is clear that dual naming has gained traction as a third-party compromise to deal with a contested issue.

#### Assessing The Naming Campaign <B>

The Korean effort to have the name "Sea of Japan" formally changed has so far proved elusive. The U.S. and world organizations responsible for naming have yet to rule in their favor. Their campaign has been much more successful in shifting the discourse away from an automatic and singular use "Sea of Japan" in the less formal areas of everyday linguistic practice in atlases, journals, newspapers, textbooks and the internet. Dual naming is now a *de facto* if not the *de jure* reality. More people around the world are now aware that the singular use of the term Sea of Japan is not the only possible designation. The campaign has been successful, not in achieving a universal change or in formal recognition of a dual naming, but in making a change across different discourses and in making the name itself an issue that journalists, authors, and publishers now have to address.



The contestation itself is now part of the naming discourse. The success of the campaign shows what a concerted national effort by an affluent and well-connected country using its soft power can achieve.

#### Contributions to Critical Toponymy <A>

Finally, let us summarize our contribution with reference to the four topics that we raised at the beginning of the paper. First, we provided an example of a postcolonial naming issue. The insistence of the South Korean government and the reluctance of the Japanese government to accept a change is not, alas, an example of dual naming as a platform for reconciliation but as a continuing source of friction and conflict. Dual naming was more of an outcome than a strategy. The naming issue has not transcended the conflicts of the past but reinforced them. Second, the continuing campaign and ongoing counter campaigns reveals the affective power of placenames and especially contested place names. Third, and related, the case study reveals how naming issues can become integral parts of national identity entwined with national sentiment embodying different national memories of shared historical experiences. The renaming involves two relatively wealthy sovereign nations. Change was affected by one state using its soft power to change the linguistic narrative from an acceptance of a singular name to the promotion and wider diffusion of an alternative renaming or dual naming. The dual name East Sea' Sea of Japan has emerged as third-party compromise in many discourses. Finally, we showed how, in this case, dual naming was denied formal acceptance but become part of everyday linguistic practice. The case study highlights the differences between formal, rules-based naming bodies,

such as the USBGN, with little flexibility, and the more flexible naming regimes used in education and media.

This case study is important in its own right, but also for what it reveals about name contestation, postcolonial toponymy issues, dual naming, the national use of soft power to effect toponymic change, and the growing flexibility in the use of dual names in a range of linguistic practices.

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**Table I**      Summary Data: Name Usage by Discourse

	US Journals and Newspapers	International News	Educational Materials	Search Engine Hits	Google Image Search	<b>Total</b>
East Sea	6	13	0	9	25	<b>53</b>
East Sea/Sea of Japan	8	9	2	32	20	<b>71</b>
Sea of Japan/East Sea	19	30	20	79	45	<b>193</b>
Sea of Japan	51	57	7	46	63	<b>224</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>541</b>

