Introduction

This study is about two pervasive aspects of the social world: argumentation and compromise. We listen to arguments, make arguments and exchange arguments in order to make up our minds about something and in order to persuade others to make up their minds in the same way we do. Some arguments convince us. We are persuaded by the line of reasoning that the argumentation contains. Other arguments, by contrast, are unconvincing. They do not make sense to us. There are different degrees of non-persuasiveness. Some arguments violate our most deeply held beliefs. They upset us, we firmly reject them in their entirety, and we do not even consider abandoning our stance. Others, by contrast, do not violate our most fundamental beliefs and we discard them with less vigour. Since we feel less strongly about our opposition, we are prepared to compromise on our stance if there are incentives to do so.

It is my contention that argumentation and compromise provide a generative mechanism through which nations come to select norms. I depart from the existing literature on norm selection in three important ways. First, my research inquires in depth not only into the international but also the domestic processes through which nation-states select norms. The field of International Relations continues to exhibit a strong tendency to conduct research on the international without the national or to narrow the latter down to elite interactions. Much of the literature on norm selection shares this tendency. Yet the exclusive focus on elites is a convenient but frequently misleading theoretical and analytical shortcut. Domestic processes, involving government elites, civil society actors and the public, are often of key relevance for the explanation of norm selection.

Second, I elaborate on the advocacy literature in several ways. Proposing a sociological theory of agency, I address the neglected question of why actors engage in an advocacy in the first place. Furthermore, I overcome the neglect of world views by including the episteme – i.e. a taken-for-granted lens, comparable to a paradigm, through which

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actors look at the world – in my theoretical framework. And, perhaps most importantly, the literature's insight that successful argumentation involves the construction of a linkage between already established ideas and the advocated idea is not the end but merely the starting point of my inquiry. I distinguish in detail the properties of links that make an argument persuasive from those that fail to do so.

Third, I do not dichotomise Rationalist and Constructivist selection mechanisms but propose a synthesis. If a number of conditions are present, nations come to select norms in three ideal-typical stages: innovative argumentation, persuasive argumentation and compromise. An innovative normative advocacy, triggered by a change of the environment in which agents are embedded, persuades large segments of elites and public by constructing a compelling link between ideas that are already established and the advocated normative idea, and, finally, recalcitrant actors bend to the pressure of the newly established majority stance.

The occurrence of these three stages is contingent on a number of conditions. Much of this book is concerned with identifying these conditions. The environmental change providing the impetus for agents to engage in innovative argumentation may be constituted by a revolutionary event and/or by a shifting repertoire of commonplaces. The revolutionary event, such as large-scale violence and destruction, makes it obvious to actors that the old ways of doing things have to change. The changing repertoire – i.e. the pool of taken-for-granted ideas upon which agents draw to make the world intelligible to themselves – provides advocates with novel clues for how the new should look.

Persuasive argumentation requires advocates to construct what is to their audience a compelling link between the repertoire of commonplaces and the advocated idea. In order to map this construction in detail, I unpack the repertoire of commonplaces and examine what constitutes the repertoire, and I also identify what elements of the repertoire as well as what linkages between these elements and the advocated idea make for a compelling argument. I contend that the repertoire is constituted by episteme, identity and already selected norms. Out of this repertoire, advocates pick those *topoi* (commonplaces) that help them make sense of the normative idea for which they argue. Advocates link the *topoi* to the advocated idea in three ways: abstraction (syllogism), comparison (analogy) and appropriateness (rule-following). Particular linkages between particular *topoi* and the normative idea are more compelling to an audience than others.

Finally, even if an advocacy is extraordinarily successful in persuading its audience, it is unlikely that it will convince everybody. Yet the power of an argument is not confined to persuasion. It may sway the unconvinced. A successful advocacy establishes a new majority view. Opposing this dominant stance is costly. This makes recalcitrant actors eager to reach a compromise with the advocates as long as this does not violate their most cherished beliefs. A compromise is impossible if the parties draw upon different ideational pools for making the world intelligible to themselves. If the *topoi* used in the advocates' argumentation are outside of the repertoire of commonplaces held by recalcitrant actors a compromise is impossible.

Pierre Bourdieu cautions that we should refrain from developing 'theoretical theory'. Researchers should not merely talk about concepts but they should try 'making them work' (quoted in Brubaker, 1993: 212). In full agreement with this credo, my theoretical framework seeks to illuminate the dynamics of an important but widely neglected empirical phenomenon: irredentism. In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia institutionalised the sovereign state. Starting with the French Revolution in 1789, Europe's age of revolutions turned the state into the nation-state. A seemingly unshakeable dogma evolved that there ought to be a congruence between the spatial boundaries of the nation and the state. All members of a particular nation ought to live in the same state and this state ought to encompass all of the nation's ancestral homeland. The world, however, is not naturally divided into states and nations. The borders of states and nations are artificially imposed by agents who often disagree about them. More than one nation may call a piece of land part of its homeland. More than one nation may believe that a group of people living in a neighbouring country are co-nationals, and the group identified as co-nationals may or may not share this belief or be divided about the issue itself. These disagreements about what appeared to the protagonists as natural boundaries of the state and the nation gave rise to a plethora of irredentist disputes in Europe from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. These irredentist disputes proved to be more war-prone and much more difficult to resolve than other forms of territorial conflicts.

Scholarly contributions were not exempt from the spirit of irredentism. Max Boehm wrote his *Europa irredenta* (1923), the last comprehensive study on irredentism in Europe, at a time when the number of irredentist disputes had reached a new peak, the Balkan Wars had

demonstrated the volatility of these conflicts, the First World War had shown the destructiveness of modern warfare, and the territorial changes laid down in the Versailles Treaty and the Treaty of Trianon had added new fuel to the already raging irredentist fire in Europe. Boehm was very pessimistic about the future of Europe. He maintained that Europe was flourishing without nationalism but that the contemporary doctrine of nationalism and resulting irredentist conflicts threatened to destroy Europe. Boehm's book, however, did little to prevent this destruction. It was a diatribe against the territorial implications of the Versailles Treaty for Germany and, in some passages, a determined manifesto to fight against them. In this way, his book helped to entrench rather than to overcome irredentist sentiment.

After the end of the Second World War, the nation-state doctrine was exported from Europe all over the globe. This was accompanied by a diffusion of irredentism. Some irredentist disputes, albeit unresolved, have had little impact on world affairs. Swaziland, for example, claims considerable parts of South African territory on the grounds that these areas are Swazi ancestral homeland. This claim never significantly affected Southern African relations. Yet other disputes have been at the core of some of the world's most volatile conflicts, such as Pakistan's claim to the Indian part of Kashmir, Argentina's to the Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands), Somalia's to the Ogaden, and China's to Taiwan.

Europe, once the exporter of irredentist ideas, however, has somehow succeeded in putting an end to the age of irredentism. In the post-Second World War era, irredentist disputes have become an anomaly in Europe. In the 1950s, almost as many states made irredentist claims as in the inter-war years. Beginning in the late 1960s, however, the overwhelming majority of irredentist disputes have been resolved peacefully by the claimants' recognition of existing borders. Only two disputes – Serbia's claims to territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Croatia – were settled by force. The aggression of the claimant was rebuked by force. Only one dispute remains. Spain refuses to recognise British sovereignty over Gibraltar. What explains this remarkable development? How have European states, in sharp contrast to Europe's past and other world regions, come to exhibit such a strong tendency to resolve their irredentist disputes peacefully? Why do the peaceful settlements consistently recognise the territorial status quo (and not agree on peaceful territorial change as in previous eras or other world regions)?

I probe the three-stage norm selection mechanism by inquiring into these questions. An examination of argumentation and compromise requires an in-depth analysis. My empirical research focuses on two cases: the irredentist claims by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the Republic of Ireland. The FRG claimed the entire German Democratic Republic (GDR) and all those territories from Poland and the Soviet Union that had been part of Germany within its 1937 borders, i.e. after the Versailles Treaty and before Hitler's expansionism. It renounced these claims in the early 1970s. The Republic of Ireland claimed Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom and put an end to the claim in 1998. I chose these two cases because they make for an interesting puzzle within the puzzle. While the marked decline of irredentism in post-Second World War Europe poses an important research puzzle, it is particularly puzzling that Bonn renounced its claims almost two decades before Dublin did. Bonn had to reach out across the Iron Curtain. Dublin, by contrast, merely had to come to an agreement with a long-time fellow-member of the European Union.

I argue that the three-stage norm selection mechanism provides a plausible explanation for both cases. First, environmental change, constituted by a shifting repertoire of commonplaces and a revolutionary event, provided the impetus for innovative argumentation. A shocking event – the construction of the Berlin Wall in the German case and the beginning of the Troubles in the Irish case – made it clear to agents that the old ways of doing things had become obsolete, and the new aspects of the repertoire of commonplaces, in particular epistemic and identity change, made it possible for actors to think of alternatives that had previously been inconceivable. An advocacy formed, arguing for the selection of the territorial status quo norm: states ought not to claim territory from other states.

Second, the advocacy resonated with a broad audience. Being persuaded by the argumentation, a growing number of social actors joined the advocacy, and the argumentation increasingly resonated with the public. The successful advocacies in the FRG and the Republic of Ireland linked the advocated normative idea to a number of *topoi* taken from the dominant repertoire of commonplaces by employing abstract, comparative and appropriateness reasoning. The dominant episteme, the Idea of Europe, was a particularly powerful *topos*. In both empirical cases, the taken-for-granted belief in the necessity of overcoming the divisiveness of nation-state borders was the intersubjective foundation for advocacies for – and even against – the territorial status quo norm.

Third, the successful argumentation put pressure on recalcitrant actors to conform. Those who shared the *topoi* invoked by advocates of the territorial status quo norm were eventually prepared to compromise. The advocates failed to convince the most powerful political parties in the FRG and the Republic of Ireland. Yet the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the FRG and Fianna Fáil (FF) in the Republic were swayed by the pressure of the newly established majority opinion. Eager to avoid the mounting costs of their recalcitrance, the two parties, who fully shared the *topoi* invoked by the advocates but not the manner in which the advocates linked them to the advocated norm, compromised on their stance.

This book is organised into seven chapters. First, I elaborate on the research puzzle. I list all irredentist disputes between 1848 and 2000 in Europe, and critically review the literature pertaining to irredentism. I criticise in particular the neglect of norms. Second, I develop the three-stage norm selection mechanism. I explain the salience of *topoi* for arguments, conceptualise the reservoir from which they are taken as repertoire of commonplaces, and define the constitutive elements of this repertoire, i.e. episteme, identity and already selected norms. Based on this discussion, I outline the environmental conditions conducive to innovative argumentation, as well as the conditions facilitating persuasive argumentation and compromise. The following two chapters deal with the case of the FRG. The third chapter traces the evolution of the West German repertoire of commonplaces pertaining to the German Question. In chapter 4, I look at how and with what success West German norm entrepreneurs linked elements of the evolving repertoire of commonplaces to the idea of a territorial status quo norm. The fifth and sixth chapters inquire into the evolution of the repertoire of commonplaces on the Irish Question in the Republic of Ireland, and how domestic advocates made use of this evolution for their advocacy for a territorial status quo norm, respectively. Finally, the concluding chapter examines alternative explanations of the two cases, discusses the implications of the findings for the study of irredentism and International Relations theory, and sketches an agenda for further research on argumentation and compromise in world politics.

1 | *Irredentism in Europe*

In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia replaced a system of overlapping authority with a system of clearly demarcated state borders. Two hundred years later and prompted by the French Revolution of 1789, Europe's popular revolutions transformed the state into the nation-state. This added a critical dimension to European affairs. With boundaries between nations having become as significant as borders between states, nations began to strive for the congruence of state and nation boundaries.

The nation-state doctrine gave rise to a new and often deadly kind of international conflict: irredentism. Seeking to reach congruence between the borders of the state and the boundaries of the nation, an unprecedented number of states started to claim territory from other states. Irredentist disputes frequently resulted in full-scale war. When former colonies were finally granted independence, the problem of irredentism started to surface outside Europe as well. The disputes between Pakistan and India over Jammu and Kashmir, Somalia and Ethiopia over the Ogaden, Israel and Syria over the Golan Heights, Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands) are perhaps the best known among a very considerable number of cases.

Since the end of the Second World War, however, and in sharp contrast to Europe's past and other world regions, European states have shown a strong tendency to settle their irredentist disputes peacefully. There is even a consistent pattern of how they are settled peacefully. Almost all irredentist disputes have been resolved by the peaceful *de jure* recognition of the *de facto* existing borders rather than by peaceful territorial change. What explains this remarkable shift? How have European states come to settle their irredentist disputes peacefully in the post-Second World War era? Why have they settled their disputes by the recognition of the territorial status quo?

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on this research puzzle and discuss the existing literature pertaining to this puzzle. The chapter is

organised into six sections: First, I define irredentism. Second, I examine
the importance of studying irredentism for our understanding of world
politics. Third, I survey irredentist claims in Europe from 1848 to 2000 and
in the world from 1946 to 2000, in order to sharpen the research puzzle. In
the final three sections I critically review the literature on irredentism.

Defining irredentism

Amid fears that Europe's post-Cold War future may echo its hyper-
nationalistic past, a small literature set on irredentism evolved in the
early 1990s. There is a consensus in this literature that irredentism is a
particular kind of territorial dispute. Yet there are fundamental dis-
agreements on how exactly to define irredentism. Three contentious
issues may be identified: Who is the claimant? What is the motive of the
claim? How much of another state's territory is claimed?

First, most scholars use the term irredentism to describe a territorial
claim of one state against another (Weiner, 1971; Ben-Israel, 1991;
Chazan, 1991; Landau, 1991; Neuberger, 1991; Ambrosio, 2001).[1]
Others, however, define irredentism as the attempt of an ethnic minority
to be incorporated by the neighbouring 'motherland' (Gutmann, 1991;
Reichman and Golan, 1991; Saideman and Ayres, 2000). Donald
Horowitz uses both definitions. In his *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* he
confines his analysis of irredentism to claims by states (1985: 281–8).
Yet similarly to Stefan Wolff (2002), he combines the two definitions in
subsequent research (Horowitz, 1991: 10).

Second, among those authors whose definitions identify the state as
claimant, there is no consensus on what it is that these states are
claiming. Many authors emphasise the ethnic link between a mother-
land and a minority in a neighbouring country. Irredentist states,
according to this definition, seek to retrieve ethnically kindred people
and the territory they inhabit from a neighbouring state (Weiner, 1971;
Horowitz, 1985, 1991; Reichman and Golan, 1991; Ambrosio, 2001).
Some scholars, however, define irredentism literally according to the
Italian *terra irredenta*: territory to be redeemed. It is land that is to be

[1] David Carment and Patrick James (1995, 1997) are ambiguous on this topic. Their
conceptual definition follows Chazan's. Their operational definition partly
contradicts the conceptual definition by stating that it is *usually* a state that is the
claimant.

retrieved. A government's claim to an ancestral homeland, even if it is not accompanied by the desire to incorporate the people who inhabit it, qualifies – according to this definition – as irredentism (Ben-Israel, 1991; Neuberger, 1991). Finally, there are definitions that include claims to ethnic kin and ancestral homeland (Chazan, 1991; Landau, 1991; Carment and James, 1995).

Third, some definitions of irredentism encompass claims of national unification, i.e. the desire of a state to merge with or annex an entire state (Horowitz, 1985, 1991; Ben-Israel, 1991; Neuberger, 1991). Several definitions, however, rule out claims of national unification by asserting that the claiming state seeks to detach a part of the territory of another state, or tries to retrieve its ethnic kin that constitute a minority in the challenged state (Weiner, 1971; Chazan, 1991; Landau, 1991; Reichman and Golan, 1991; Carment and James, 1995, 1997; Ambrosio, 2001).

For the purposes of this study, I use the following definition: irredentism is a territorial claim by a sovereign state against another sovereign state, aimed at reaching congruence between the boundaries of the nation and the borders of the state. The former are far less tangible than the latter. Whereas state borders are usually more or less unambiguously delimited on maps and even physically demarcated on the ground, national boundaries are imaginations about the spatial limits of the nation. Yet these imaginations appear to the nation as very real. They are persistent and non-selective definitions of a nation's settlement area and ancestral homeland. 'Persistent' means that the imagination of these boundaries rarely changes. It is deeply ingrained in a nation's identity narrative and this does not allow for frequent changes. 'Non-selective' means that this imagination is based on settlement areas of co-nationals and historical regions, and refrains from picking and choosing among these for economic, military or geo-strategic reasons.

This definition of irredentism, along with the definition of the boundaries of the nation, takes the following stances with regard to the above-listed contentious issues on how to define irredentism. First, claims to land and the attempt to retrieve a nation's diaspora qualify as irredentism. Excluding the one at the expense of the other is problematic, because both ancestral homeland and the settlement area of the nation play key roles for imagining a nation's spatial boundaries. Most cases of irredentism are a mixture of both (Carment and James, 1995, 1997). Second, the claimants are states. The dynamics of irredentist claims made by states are very different from those made by non-state actors.

Research on both types of claims is needed, but this study focuses on irredentist claims by states against other states. Finally, the definition includes cases in which a state claims a part of another state's territory as well as cases in which a state claims the entire territory of another state. Excluding the latter is arbitrary. Cases such as North Korea's claim to South Korea (and vice versa), for example, are best classified as irredentist disputes. The central motive of the quest for claiming part of the territory of another state or an entire state is the same: reaching congruence between the borders of the nation and the state. This motive is the defining characteristic of irredentism.

Why study irredentism?

Over a decade ago, Tuomas Forsberg (1995: 9) observed: 'Although territorial disputes are regarded as major diplomatic challenges, knowledge about their nature, occurrence and resolution is weak.' This statement still holds true and applies in particular to irredentist conflicts. Yet is more attention to irredentism actually warranted? What is to be gained from studying irredentism?

There are two principal reasons – one theoretical and the other empirical – that make studying irredentism a very important research enterprise: First, research on irredentism offers an opportunity to scrutinise how and to what extent the international order changes. Current International Relations theory is full of claims that the Westphalian order is not what it used to be. The burgeoning globalisation literature, for instance, makes far-reaching claims about the transformation (Mann, 1997; Wolf, 2001; Prange, 2003; Smelser, 2003) and decline (Cerny, 1995; Brenner, 1999; Lipschutz, 1999; Zürn, *et al.*, 2000; Leggewie, 2001; Robinson, 2003; Walby, 2003) of the nation-state. Yet there is usually very little empirical evidence for these claims. And much of the evidence that is provided focuses on economic and technological processes but neglects to inquire into what the debate is actually about, i.e. the meaning that elites and masses attach to the nation-state (Biswas, 2002; Goldman, 2002).

In a similar vein, the blossoming literature on Europe's evolving regional order puts the meaning that actors attach to borders at the centre of its theoretical assertions. John Ruggie (1998: 173), for example, writes about the possibility of the emergence of the 'first truly postmodern international political form'. Ole Wæver (1995) and