NAMES REDUX: PERSON, STRUCTURE, CHANGE

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NAMING SYSTEMS are evergreen targets of anthropological attention. Names simultaneously individuate and associate. They plug people into their encompassing social structures, thereby exposing local understandings of persons and the durability of groups. Anthropologists have inspected personal names and naming systems at least since the compilation of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (Garson and Read 1892: 157–59), and descriptions of names and naming practices are scattered in many subsequent ethnographies. Austronesian naming systems caught notable anthropological attention in the 1940s. Both mid-century phenomenology and structuralism, theoretical shadows of each other, had boosted comparative interest in persons and in social systems. On the existential side of things, French missionary-ethnographer Maurice Leenhardt argued that New Caledonian Kanak personhood was relational or, as this would also come to be called, partible. Making this claim, Leenhardt drew partly on Kanak naming systems. In every island relationship, "the person assumes a different aspect which requires a new name or surname. No single name includes him entirely. Each name represents him in one of his kinship or mythic relationships" (1979, 155).

Later, from a counterpart structuralist perspective, Claude Lévi-Strauss likewise pursued systematic aspects of names within *Pensée Sauvage*,

wherein proper names are "a means of allotting positions in a system admitting of several dimensions" (1966, 187). Among the Paiwan and Bunun of Taiwan, on Tanna, as in many other Austronesian societies, for example, new acquaintances might ask each other (where such asking is polite), "Who is your name?" A name in these societies is not a thing—a "what"—but rather a personage, or a structural position that a name bearer fills while he or she carries that name. Appellatives identify persons, as persons, but also as slots or locations within social systems. Thus, "there is an imperceptible transition from names to titles, which is connected not with any intrinsic property of the terms in question but with their structural role in a classificatory system from which it would be vain to claim to separate them" (1966, 190). Even should a person receive a name that does not specifically locate him or her within some existing group structure, that act of naming nonetheless reveals the individual's given social connection with his or her namer.

Names and naming systems continue to tantalize. Dissected properly, they can reveal much about persons, systems, and persons in systems. A stream of naming system analyses continues to flow. Notable recent contributions include Chave-Dartoen, Leguy, and Monnerie (2012); Harrisson (2006); Ku (2006, 2010); Lindstrom (2011); Monnerie (2003, 2012a, 2012b); Moutu (2013); Pina-Cabral (2013); Roth (2006); vom Bruck and Bodenhorn (2006); and Yangwen and Macdonald (2010). This collection, too, offers additional comment on naming systems from several locales in the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and Madagascar, where Austronesian languages dominate.[1] Shared linguistic (and presumably cultural) heritage underlies the diversity of contemporary naming practices in these societies. Attempting to make sense of Austronesian naming systems in Southeast Asia, Macdonald counted at least three basic classes but concluded that this typology was still "very far from being a complete typology" of regional systems (2010, 96). Building on a solid foundation of previous work and remarking continuing interest in names and naming, our own contributions explore ways in which Austronesian naming systems afford broader understanding of that region's cultures, including relationships among names, identity, and personhood; naming and structural reproduction; and how changing naming practices portend reconfigurations of persons and systems in the contemporary world.

"Name" (*ŋajan) is among the 1,400 Proto-Austronesian words reconstructed to date. Ancestral speakers of these languages, like all humans, have been in the naming business since their shared beginnings and, no doubt, considerably before. Linguistically, the second richest in languages and of broadest geographic distribution (at least in the precolonial era), the Austronesian language family covers at lot of ground. We offer a collection of case studies of naming systems from here and there within that range from

communities in Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Chuuk (Federated States of Micronesia), Sarawak (Malaysia), Taiwan, and Madagascar. These reports from the field investigate the tripartite interconnection of name, structure, and person.

Several of our analyses focus on ongoing alterations in naming systems. Names, like coal mine canaries, can signal erosion and transformation of existing social structures and forms of personhood. All communities we describe have been deeply affected over the past several centuries by incorporation into encompassing colonial and global systems. Attention to changing practices of naming (including increasing evidence of "self-naming") helps track renovations in both Austronesian persons and groups.

Given constitutive connections among name, person, and structure, all our cases address aspects pertinent to these three sides of naming systems. To introduce our cases' principle descriptive and analytical objectives, however, we summarize their particular contributions to our main themes of social structure and its reproduction, personhood, names as resources, and historical transformations of these systems.

Structure and Personhood

Names in many Austronesian societies are property possessed by local groups or members thereof. These units, typically, have been taken by anthropologists to be kin-based, descent-reproduced families, lineages, and clans. However, people may conceive of their local groups as "houses" (as Levi-Strauss [1987] recognized) or "canoes" (see Wood). (The canoe, as local group, is metaphorical; the house often takes material form as well.) Persons may join canoes and houses through naming—by receiving a personal name associated with that house or that canoe. Descent relationship may dispose name givers' decisions on whom to bestow a name, but the personal name—not kin relationship—ultimately confers membership in a particular house or canoe.

Lamont Lindstrom summarizes a naming system of this sort from Tanna (Vanuatu), using the term "name-set" in lieu of kin-related alternatives like family or lineage. On Tanna, namers most often name their own children into a name-set, but they have the option to bring anyone into a group with the bestowal of one of the group's names under their control. Lindstrom argues that local groups on Tanna, thus, are not descent groups but rather corporations reproduced from one generation to the next as names flow from current members to new recruits. Names, in these groups, function like corporate shares; the named are owners with rights and property (including rights to name another into the group).

Groups that reproduce through naming and that do not depend on the vicissitudes of childbirth enjoy better stereotypic reproduction insofar as those with more available names than children or more available children than names easily repair demographic circumstance through calculated name bestowals. Lindstrom, comparatively, reviews several similar naming systems from Melanesia and elsewhere and also those where descent does indeed determine group membership but where names make up a significant measure of a local group's corporate endowment, legitimizing its claims to land and place.

Latham Wood describes a largely similar naming system on Aneityum, the island just south of Tanna. Here, too, children join a "canoe" (or totemic group, as Wood also calls this) when they receive one of its ancestral names. In so doing, they "restore" that ancestral personage, as Leenhardt put this, becoming the newest of its "replicas" (1979, 156).[2] Children commonly are named into their father's group, but some get named into their mother's or into other canoes with more names than people. Unlike Tanna, where people associate (when they can) particular land plots with particular personal names, Aneityum names confer collective rights to a group's land and other resources. Wood frames his analysis with discussion of a ritual suicide on the island. Tepahae, a leading elder with nominated rights to a depopulated district, lost a court case when a judge applied prevailing rules of patrilineal descent and not nomination to rule against his land claims. In protest, Tepahae set himself on fire on the disputed land, asserting his nominated rights. Modern courts better understand rights based on "blood" and descent than they do those arising from nomination.

Isabelle Leblic explores personal names among the Paicî (New Caledonia). People, here, may accumulate at least five different sorts of name, traditionally the weightiest of these being names associated with a person's clan, with family or house, and with an ancestor. As in southern Vanuatu, particular names signal rights to live in a place and use family lands. Many of these names are also toponyms; place-names and personal names merge. Strong association between names and places leads people, should they move from here to there, to take up new names associated with that new place. Other names index events and places in a group's past and make up a sort of local historical database. Their transmission from one person to the next keeps alive memory of historic events and personages.

A Paicî person's assorted names recall Leenhardt's comments on aspectual personhood. One assumes a different name in one's various dealings with different sorts of kin, with local group members, with friends, with state authorities, and so on. Namesake relations are notably important here, as elsewhere in Austronesia. A name distinguishes its living bearer but also namesake

ancestors. Namesakes are personally identified, if not identical. One person possesses multiple named identities that come to the fore in different relational contexts, and one name can conjoin and identify two persons. Kanak naming, thus, evokes the sort of "dividual" personhood that anthropologists of Melanesia have struggled to define since Leenhardt and, later, Marilyn Strathern (1988).

Pinyuymayan people of Taiwan, like the Paicî, also collect a portfolio of personal names as they age through life stages, from child to respected elder. As Wen-Te Chen describes, a person's cumulative array of names remarks his or her gender and age status and shifting relational contexts. Youth, for example, trade personal names for generic appellatives for a period of time after moving into boys' and men's houses, in classic Van Gennep *rite de passage* fashion wherein initiands' personal differences and previous identities are ritually muted. Local theories of personhood, here, may presume not the sort of developmental continuity demanded of individuals but rather the multiplicity of dividuality where personhood shifts from context to context and from age to age.

Personal Names as Resources: Naming as Strategic Practice

Doris Bacalzo explores strategic naming among the Wampar, who live in Papua New Guinea's Markham Valley. Interethnic marriages have here become more common since the 1970s as migrants have moved into the valley, some following the highway that links Papua New Guinea's upland valleys with the port of Lae. Parents married to non-Wampar partners strategically name children to situate them more firmly within the community and, notably, to enhance their rights to use valley land in the future. Notably, they name sons after mothers' brothers and daughters after fathers' sisters, figuring that older namesakes will nurture younger, making future access to land more likely. Parents in interethnic marriages may also double name their children and also bestow names from migrant source communities. These names permit children to assert rights to places where their migrant parent originated, to which they themselves may someday return. Fathers from the Sepik region (where, like Tanna, names provide titles to land) are particularly concerned that a child's array of personal names includes at least one Sepik one.

Names and titles merge in many Austronesian systems insofar as the name/title secures rights to land and other resources, situates one within a local group, and sometimes signals aristocratic or likewise high social status. Names as titles plug their bearers into social networks, thus highlighting a person's categorical or structural position more than his personal

distinctiveness or individuality. Monica Janowski describes names as titles among the Kelabit of Sarawak. Here, persons throughout their lifetimes acquire names signaling two sorts of cherished social status. Names mark life's passage and expanding personal eminence as people become parents and then grandparents. When a couple has a child, they cast aside their own child names and take on a shared parental title, one often previously held by new ancestral namesakes. Their own parents may then assume grandparental titles.

Grandparental titles, secondly, fall along a prestige scale. Some are "bigger" than others. People who have proved their generativity by producing and nurturing children competitively demonstrate status by grabbing the most impressive title they can. They celebrate this title taking, with its titular claims, by hosting competitive feasts for friends and neighbors (see Wood for name-taking celebrations on Aneityum, Fang for naming ceremony among the Bunun, and Regnier for the Betsileo).

Kun-hui Ku describes political competition and strategies among Paiwan families for prestigious personal names (titles) associated with noble houses and argues not only that Paiwan names reflect social structure (classification) or personhood (social relations) (Ku 2010) but also that naming serves as a device to change one's position in that structure and/or personage. Even though the political rights of the nobles have diminished under consecutive colonial powers, the symbolic and ceremonial rights of the nobles as embedded in Paiwan names remain to this date. Good names as symbolic resources are thus highly desirable and are the motive for action in social mobility; arguably, material exchange (such as of heirlooms) follows the transactional flow of noble names rather than the other way round.

Transformations

Colonial and contemporary states, over the past several centuries, have incorporated Austronesian societies and local naming systems. Bureaucratic concern to identify, record, and track persons has further increased nomenclatural complexity. Denis Regnier tells the story of a Betsileo (Madagascar) woman who changed her name to avoid police pursuit. French colonial and now independent Malagasy bureaucrats have created civil registries to monitor citizens and laws that permit only a single change of a registered name. Alongside "identity card" names, the Betsileo maintain a more traditional naming system. This, too, permits name changes. People, seeking and demonstrating prestige and success in life, appropriate even better ancestral names to signal their senior status within family and community; see also Ku (2006).

Conversion to Christianity has also transformed local naming systems. Among the Bunun and the Paiwan of Taiwan, as among the Betsileo, people increasingly have taken on Christian names. Before this, many assumed or were given Japanese colonial names and later, after the Japanese quit the island, Chinese ones. Chun-wei Fang notes that, traditionally, heads of family named their children after house ancestors, expecting that the ancestral name was a "good" one and that this ancestor would nurture and look after the new namesake. Should a person fall seriously ill or experience other misfortune, however, families consulted spirit mediums to select a luckier, more salubrious new ancestral name. Following conversion to Presbyterian Christianity, many Bunun instead took on biblical names, figuring that these would induce the Christian god to extend the same sort of spiritual blessings and protection once sought from ancestral namesakes.

Namoluk naming (Federated States of Micronesia), as Mac Marshall describes, has been notably transformed by four colonial administrations and Christian conversion. Naming over the years reflects the presence of successive colonial powers. Ancestral connection and namesaking have withered as parents choose names for children, often playfully, from a panoply of sources, both local and global. Promiscuous naming of this sort suggests transformation of island personhood (and the decay of traditional landowning houses or name-sets) and the emergence of something like Western individuality.

Contemporary renaming practices also reflect emergent political identities within the global system, as notable among Taiwanese Aboriginal communities. A "name rectification" program (see Chen; Ku 2012) has encouraged some young people to replace their Chinese names with ancestral Aboriginal ones. Christianity dogma, too, insofar as this expects "sincerity" (see Fang; Ku 2010), presumes a different sort of personhood: one that is constant, more singular, developmental, and responsible.

Acts of "self-naming" (see Regnier and Bacalzo) also suggest extraordinary transformations of Austronesian personhood that challenge traditional social structures. Here, the named individual escapes altogether Lévi-Strauss's classified structural position. Naming connects one no longer with a namer but only with oneself, although self-names may still index contextual, multiple personalities. Wampar schoolchildren (see Bacalzo), for example, signal new sorts of identity in the names they today are giving each other or choosing: Mix Blood, Peter Pikinini Pukpuk, Sixpacks, and Blacky. On Namuluk, too (Marshall; see also Chen), youth self-name especially to feature themselves on Facebook: Nuff U, Rustie Smile, and Ying Yang.[3]

Such transformations in Austronesian naming systems will continue. And names continue to be a convenient window into local understandings

of personhood and local group structures. It repays anthropological understanding regularly to revisit and to name names.

NOTES

1. Contributors took part in a three-year-long series of sessions focusing on "Naming Systems and Naming Relations in Austronesia/Oceania," held at subsequent annual meetings (2012–2014) of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO). We thank Don Gardner, whose contribution is not included here. A previous ASAO session in 1981 also tackled Pacific "Personal Names and Naming Practices," this organized by Bradd Shore. Participants then analyzed "implications of naming forms and processes for differentiating hierarchical and institutional complex societies found throughout Oceania." Several papers presented in 1981 were subsequently individually published (e.g., Carucci 1984; Feinberg 1983; Grant and Zelenietz 1983; Kuschel 1988; Lindstrom 1985; McCall 1981).

2. Like many later ethnographers of Melanesian, Leenhardt (1979, 157) described Melanesian nonlineal notions of temporality wherein the past is ever present. He thus avoided characterizing this repetition of ancestral personages as a lineal series or a reincarnation.

3. Facebook managers in September 2014 proposed to ban drag and other "unreal" names. Like Christian apologists, perhaps, they favor individual "sincerity," continuity, and responsibility over traditional or playful forms of multiple personhood.

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