

Discussion

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Paul Woodman's "One Territory – Two Toponymies: Patterns of Geographical Naming in the Falkland Islands" is a very close look at place-naming patterns across countries/cultures that helps us show how and why naming patterns differ between the UK/Argentina on the Falkland/Malvinas islands. Especially valuable was the point of how religious and nationalistic motivations at different times and places led to differing rounds of naming. I was also intrigued by the point that there are no indigenous names (possible) to help bring the two sides together.

I think questions worth pursuing include the following: Since the focus of the paper is on the relatively small proportion of names that differ between the UK and Argentina, I wonder if the same patterns (such as those relating to rounds of nationalistic and religious naming) are also to be found among the shared names between the two countries? Have there been any efforts to Anglicize more names (as a means to assert British control)? How are the Argentinian names kept up/maintained? Is it largely through maps alone, or are there other venues?

Joshua Nash's "Island Toponymies and Fishing Ground Names: Is There a Peaceful Onshore and Offshore Reconciliation?" offers a wonderful case study and ethnographic reflection on situations where naming is fairly new and/or may be open to more-than-usual change/development because of small size/isolation of Pitcairn, Norfolk and other islands. It also brings up several intriguing concepts/ideas (though some could use further development). What is toponymic truth and how might it be judged? How could triangulation as a naming method apply to other island naming situations? What is the role of memory, time-space, and nostalgia in the creation of names? Does the sharing and non-sharing of names (sea-connected names as proprietary) have relevance at other spatial scales?

Two issues are most important to raise and pursue. First, the paper hints at the way that reconciliation of onshore/offshore emphasis can be used to think about the *East Sea/Sea of Japan* issue. I would like to see this possible application developed more explicitly. Second, Pitcairn Island naming was the result of multiple languages coming together.

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Does the blending of the languages (or relative role of each constituent language) differ in regard to place names in comparison with the more general development of the Pitcairn language?

In “The Memory and Traces of Marine Exchange: Jeju Island in Eastern and Western Antique Maps,” Oh Sanghak provides a very detailed, useful case study of Jeju island exonyms, with particular attention to how Jeju island was named (and “seen” through naming) by Chinese and Europeans during periods of European colonialism and growth of the world system. It strongly reminds us of the mutability of names. Naming practices aren’t once-and-for-ever solutions, but may often respond to changing world conditions and issues.

I’d like to see more discussion on the political/cultural conditions that led to Jeju Island taking such a long time to appear accurately in Western maps. For example, was this a result of a European reluctance to find endonyms in relation to Jeju, or were there more complicated factors at play? I’d also like to see a little more about who Jeju Island was seen to “belong” to at various times throughout this changing exonymic history.

Sirkka Paikkala gives a strong case study regarding Finland’s Åland islands in “The Åland Islands Question,” particularly regarding the complexity behind two states’ (Finland and Sweden) and two language groups’ (Swedish and Finnish) claims to the islands. Paikkala points very helpfully toward how unresolved issues from the past can often continue into the future, as well as the importance of a good compromise in helping keep relations between states and peoples manageable. She also points to the viability in some situations of double-naming solutions (even if certain complexities have to be worked out).

There are hints in the paper at the role and more general content of Swedish and Finnish nationalism in the ever-evolving story, but I would like to see this role and content specified a little more fully. I’d also like to see more discussion of why the naming controversy erupted in 2011-2013 (beyond the proximate cause of the Google Map controversy) as opposed to some other time period. For example, was nationalism a particularly salient issue then? If so, why?

In “When Exonyms and Endonyms Turn into International Names: An Additional Function in Need of a Term,” Peter Jordan introduces the concept of “international names.” This concept spans the breadth of both endonyms and exonyms and seems to be a creative and useful development within toponymic classification. Though arguably an important (if unrecognized) category for a long time already, such international names may be ever more relevant as the pace of globalization increases. The category may possibly provide a “safety valve” to take pressure off competition among endonyms and exonyms (and between competing exonyms), while at the same time aiding precision in international communication.

In some senses, the category of “international names” seems to be an effort to remove naming from politics, or at least take some of the political pressure off naming issues. While a valuable objective, I wonder whether “international names” will actually be able to accomplish that goal. Or does it instead just defer the politics (or, alternatively, lengthen the chain that is involved with politics)? I’m particularly not sure that politics can be reduced when potential international names are seen to “belong” more to one

group than another. I'd also like to see additional discussion on what might be some of the politics involved in successfully achieving recognized status for the category of international names. Is this an issue that can bypass the interests of nation-states? And if not, what are the likely reactions to this among (various) nation-states?

I'd also like to add a few general comments. Size matters. The case studies seem to indicate that issues at play at one scale (such as the local) might be very different issues than those at play at another scale (e.g. national or international). Attempts to draw comparisons should keep this in mind. Place naming is also profoundly complex. The relationships, politics, and cultures involved with naming practices around the world are so varied that it is difficult to imagine principles that might apply universally to sort out naming conflicts. Finally, naming solutions are always (at least potentially) temporary. As products of culture, identity, and power, naming conflicts may be ameliorated, but are unlikely to be fully resolved, through establishment of technical principles or politically imposed standards. Rather, political and cultural compromise/understandings are perhaps better paths to longer-lasting solutions (though they provide no future guarantees either).