

Naming Practices

Surnames or **Family names** are names that various members of a family share, typically across generations

Sometimes surnames come from the name of a place where the family once lived

- *Azcona*, 'badger' in Basque, is also the name of one or more towns in Europe
- *Beam* is the Americanized spelling of *Boehm* which is a (Swiss) German surname originally meaning 'someone from Bohemia'
- *Muehlbach* means 'mill by the brook'
- *Kirk* comes from a Scots Gaelic word for 'church'
- *de León*, *de Ávila*, and many names beginning with *de* mean 'of' or 'from' a place

Sometimes surnames refer to the occupation of some ancestor

- *Smith* 'metalworker'
- *Guerrero* 'warrior'
- *Miller* 'someone who works at processing something, e.g. wood'

Some European surnames were changed to embarrassing terms as punishment for debtors, other dubious surnames may have began as teasing nicknames

- *Loveless*
- *Cantarrutti*
- *Canoso*
- *Sullivan*

Many surnames refer to one's (or an ancestor's) father's given name

- *Johnson*, *Peterson*
- *Chistensen*, *Jespersen*
- Gunnar Ólafur Hansson > X. X. Gunnarsdottir
- Davis, Jones
- González, Hernández, Fernández

Given names

- Birth order: George Forman's sons George I, George II, George III...
- Birth date: Tuesday Weld
- Birth/Conception place: Posh Spice & Beckham's son Brooklyn
- Desired qualities: Hope, Faith, Amy, Linda
- Admired people & supernatural beings: Malcolm, River, Mary, Abraham, Esther, Jesus; Enrique, Miguel, Jose Luis, Juan, Benjamin, but not Guillermo.

In some Mesoamerican communities children were and are named after the day they are born on, e.g.:
13 Owl > Juan (with owl totem)

Names inherited from one's mother are **matrilineal**. Names inherited from one's father are **patrilineal**.

In the XVIII century Pennsylvania Dutch families would give their children two given names (Bulick, 2003)

- The first name was a spiritual name taken after a saint, may have been reused for all of a couple's male or female children, and was not used socially
- The second name was the one used socially and often referred to a particular family member depending on set patterns according to birth order:

	Sons	Daughters
1 st	father's father	mother's mother
2 nd	mother's father	father's mother
3 rd	father	mother
4 th	father's father's father	father's father's mother
5 th	mother's father's father	mother's father's mother
6 th	father's mother's father	father's mother's mother
7 th	mother's mother's father	mother's mother's m.

In many cultures children are often given names of qualities that the society or the parents view as beneficial or appropriate. For example, many female names mean 'fair' or 'blond'

- Dravidian *Prabha* 'light, glow, shine'
- Celtic *Fiona* 'fair, white, beautiful'
- Spanish *Blanca* 'white'
- French, English *Blanche* 'white'

Moralistic or virtuous names are more common (and different) for females than for males

- Charity
- Chastity, Virginia
- Hope
- Serena
- Mercedes
- Amy
- Linda
- Blanche, Blanca, Sunny
- Honor
- Dolores
- Grace
- Flor, Rose, Nikte'
- Justo, Justin
- Mario
- Christian
- Jude
- Santo(s)
- Earnest
- Thurgood
- Augustine
- Rex
- Salvador
- Valentino (< Valor?)
- Thor, Tog, Cuauhtemoc

In cultures where two given names are used:

- some people always use both names as a single compound, e.g. Britney Spears's sister *Jamie Lynn* (note stress difference of *Jámie Lynn* vs. *Jámie Lýnn Spéars*), *Sarah Jessica Parker*. Some middle names, e.g. *Lee*, *Lynn* lend themselves more to this practice, almost like a suffix.
- some people never use one of their names or only as an initial
- some people use each name for a different purpose or to change their identity at different stages of life. The same can be done with name translation.

African American names
(www.slaveryinamerica.org)

As in Africa, African Americans often have more than one given name, one public and one private

In Africa, babies receive separate public and private names because keeping one name (the "real" or special/personal name) secret is thought to be protection against those who would use magic to harm a person.

Some Native American (and other) cultures also have secret names.

- This is similar to such cultural practices as Mexican (< Spanish) architecture & Muslim hijab.
- These are in stark contrast with the dominant US culture's vision of "making a name for one's self" or "seeing your name in lights", and having a house with "curb appeal". Why do you think US culture is different?

In slavery times, and among today's Gullah and standard AAE speakers, people often have two names that remain with them throughout life.

Slave owners when advertising runaway slaves included both their "proper" names and their "country" names.

The private name or "nickname" is often only used by family members.

Many AAE family nicknames reflect a creole history (e.g. English words with African reduplication patterns): as in *Jo-Jo*, *O.K.*, *John-John*, *Mercy-Mercy*, *Bo*, *Boo*, *Bad Boy* (note P. Diddy's company is named "Bad Boy records")

Gullah and Bantu nicknames, as well as AAE names, often refer to animals as well, e.g.:

- Gullah: *De Dog*, *Doggie*, *Crocker*, *Frog*, *Spider*, *Jumper*, *Crocki*, *Dr. Buzzer*, and *Dr. Eagle*
- AAE nicknames: *Cat-Fish*, *Bear*, *Pig-Lasses*, *Rattler*, *Buffalo*, *Red Fox*, *Coon*, and *Jack Rabbit*.

Many Gullah family nicknames are lexically W. African and are also called "basket names" or "day names". These Gullah Bantu names come from (Tshi)luba (a language of the Bantu family, Niger-Congo stock, spoken in the Congo):

- *Ndomba* means 'I am begging with my outstretched hand' and is given to a child born hand first.
- *Mviluki* as a Gullah name means 'penitent' and in Luba means 'a remembered one who doesn't forget his sins.'
- *Sungila* means 'to save, help, deliver'
- *Anyika* as a Gullah name means 'she is beautiful' and in Luba means 'to praise the beauty of'
- *Seba* as a Gullah name means 'leather ornament' and in Luba means 'hide; leather'
- These basket names are the very same in Gullah and Luba: *Tulu* 'sleep,' *Tuma* 'send,' *Pita* 'pass by,' *Mesu* 'eyes,' *Kudima* 'to work or hoe,' and *Kudiya* 'to eat.'

In the Sea Islands and in Bantu-speaking Africa, in addition to a basket name and a public name, people often have a third name given to them by the community which usually reflects their personality, e.g. *Smart Child* or *Shanty* ('show off')

Today some AAE families are using traditional names as public/official names. Why?

African Americans may change their name to mark changes in their life

- *Sojourner Truth*, *Frederick Douglass*, and *Jelly Roll Morton* are some famous African Americans who changed their name to mark transitions in their lives.
- Malcolm X was also known at various times and to various people as *Malcolm Little*, *Homeboy*, *Detroit Red*, *Big Red*, *Satan*, *Malcolm*, *El-hajji*, and *Mali El Shabazz*.

Sean Combs, Sean “Puffy” Combs, Puff Daddy, Puffy, P. Diddy, (his clothing line is called *Sean John*), and most recently:

from www.diddyrunsthecity.com:
 “chill with Diddy...anything you want to know about Diddy...find out what Diddy... Diddy-cate a mile”
 but the signature still reads “Sean ‘P. Diddy’ Combs”

Irish surnames
 (Ó Sé & Sheils, 1993)

- *Mac* means ‘son’ in Irish and *Ó* originally meant ‘grandson’
 - *Tomás Mac Cárthaigh* is lit. ‘Thomas, son of Carthy’
 - *Seán Ó Conaill* is lit. ‘Sean, grandson of Connell’
- In Irish the female version of *Ó* and *Mac* are *Ní* and *Nic*, e.g. these could be the names of siblings:
 - *Áine Ní Shé & Seán Ó Sé*
 - *Máire Nic Mhathúna & Pádraig Mac Mathúna*

- Married Irish women take a last name from their husband’s family, but in a different form:
 - *Máire (Bean) Uí Chonaill* is lit. ‘Mary, wife of O’Connell’
 - *Síle (Bean) Mhic Mhathúna* is lit. ‘Shelia, wife of MacMahon’

Each Irish name occurs in several forms including:

First name (Nominative)	Man’s surname (Genitive)	Maiden name (Lenited genitive)	Anglified (loanword)
Conall	O’Connail	Ní Chonaill	O’Connell
Cárthach	Mac Cárthaich	Nic Charthaich	McCarthy

Irish	English
Ó Murchú	Murphy
Ó Dónaill	O’Donnell
Ó Ceallaigh	Kelly
Ó Sé	O’Shea
Mac Mathúna	McMahon
Ó Mathúna	O’Mahony
Mac Craith	McGrath
Ó Dochartaigh	Doherty
Ó Cinnéide	Kennedy
Ó Riagáin	Re(a)gan
Mac Gearailt	FitzGerald <i>Fitz</i> < Norman French <i>filz</i>

Irish Americans often give their children (given) names of Irish place names (which are not used as given names in Ireland), e.g.

Erin, Kerry

English-speaking American Culture

Early XX century:

Given Given Family

Rosemary Grace Beam

- Family names (surnames, “last” names) are patrilineal
- Women take husband’s last name in place of their own upon marriage
- First and middle names are given
- Sometimes mother’s maiden name or another family surname is given as a middle name
- Given names can be family names or any name the parents choose
- In formal contexts woman may be referred to with husband’s first and last names
 - “Mrs. Henry Azcona”
 - not “Mr. Rosemary Beam”

Late XX and early XXI century
Given Given Family(-Family)

Erin Nikte’ha’ Azcona-Beam

- Last names are typically patrilineal but may be hyphenated reflecting both parents’ lineages
- Matrilineal-only last names are still rare and are mostly for children of single mothers
- Many women hyphenate upon marriage
- A few men also hyphenate upon marriage

Naming practices in Spanish-Speaking countries

People have two surnames
and two given names

Given Given Family Family

Gabriel José García Márquez

The surnames (*apellidos*) are the patrilineal names of both parents (the two grandfathers' names)

Miguel Azcona Baxter + María Teresa Covarrubias Avelar
Enrique Azcona Covarrubias

Enrique Azcona Covarrubias + María Weber Borello
Enrique Azcona Weber

When shortened the maternal surname is dropped or abbreviated

Enrique Azcona W.
Vicente Fox (Quesada)

In some formal or social contexts a woman drops her mother's surname for *de* + her husband's father's surname

María Teresa Covarrubias de Azcona
Diana del Río de León
María Weber viuda de Azcona

In society pages sometimes women maintain four surnames for prestige

(G. G. F. F. de F. F.)

Some Spanish surnames are compounds either reflecting the merger of multiple families or the geographic origin of a particular line of the family

Alfonso Colín García de Alba

The second given name is often preferred.

Mario Javier González Gómez
María Eleanor Azcona Weber
María del Carmen Azcona Weber
María Teresa Azcona Weber

Nicknaming is common among Spanish speakers. Some names have standard nicknames, but others are innovated.

- Enrique: Quique
- Jesus: Chuy, Chucho
- Ignacio: Nacho
- Graciela: Chela
- Alfonso: Poncho
- José : Chepe
- Ernesto: Neto
- Guillermo: Memo
- Carolina: Caro
- Vicente: Chente
- From Jessica Cruz's family:
- María del Carmen: Maruca
- Marco Antonio: Maco
- José Ernesto: Cheneto
- Guillermo: Yemo
- Julio Cesar: Checha
- JC's little brother (Melvin): Chiboludo
- (Leslie): La perica del 78; Telemundo

The use of both given names as a compound name is common among Latinos and in some families a common name like *María* is used almost like a classifier. Case in point: some of my sisters-in-law:

- María Teresa (Tere)
- María Guadalupe (Lupe)
- María Eleanor (Maru)
- María del Carmen (Tuty)

After immigrating to the US:

- A few Latinos translate their given names
- Some Latinos in the US (and Latin America) give their children English names for motives of assimilation and/or overt prestige
- Other Latinos in the US give their children indigenous or Spanish names as a way of asserting a non-Anglo identity

Compare these Marin Latino toddlers I know born in 2000:

- Brian
- Ashley
- Citlalli
- Nikte'ha'

Many Latinos in the US drop their maternal surname or turn it into a middle name and some hyphenate

Enrique Azcona Weber > Henry (Weber) Azcona
Salma Hayek Jiménez > Salma Hayek

More US-based Latino naming patterns:

- More Latinas than Anglo women keep their surnames without change upon marriage
- Some Latinos give US-born children only the paternal last name in an effort to assimilate
- Other Latinos keep the two-surname tradition but add a hyphen so the maternal surname will not be taken as the only surname
– *Calocero Cuahtemoc Azcona-Beam*

In Indigenous communities in Latin America:

- Some indigenous surnames survive
 - *Miguel González Balam*
 - *Pastora Reina Mukul Poot*
 - *María Teresa Dzul Poot*
- Some Spanish names have been taken from *hacendados* or selected at random
 - *Javier Galicia Silva*
 - *Lázaro Díaz Pacheco*

Some Indian Naming practices among UC Berkeley students

- Dravidian Hindu (Krishnamurthy, 2003)
- Punjabi Sikh (Gill, 2004)

Dravidian-speaking Hindu names:

- No surnames per se but two names identify one's father and are shared by all his children
- There are three parts to a name
 - **place of father's origin – father's given name – given**
 - *Kanakapura Srinivasmurthy Shailaja* is a woman named Shailaja whose father (named Srinivasmurthy) was born in a town called Kanakapura

After British colon(ial)ization:

- First two names often abbreviated (British found the names confusing and difficult to pronounce)
 - *K.S. Shailaja*
- Some omitted the middle initial:
 - *K. Shailaja*

A group of Bramhins do have surnames e.g. *Iyengar* as in *B.K.S. Iyengar*

Many given names refer to Hindu deities, great people, virtues, or features of nature with religious overtones

<i>Padma</i> ---'lotus' (the seat of the goddess)	<i>Achyuta</i> ---one of many names for Vishnu
<i>Shailaja</i> ---'born near the mountain' (alludes to Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva)	<i>Narayana</i> ---""
<i>Krishnamurthy</i> ---'Krishna (god)-statue'	<i>Ajay</i> ---'unconquerable'
<i>Satyamurthy</i> ---'truth-statue'	<i>Aparna</i> ---another name for Parvati
<i>Aditya</i> ---'lord of the sun'	<i>Lalita</i> ---""
	<i>Devaki</i> ---mother of Krishna
	<i>Vidya</i> ---wisdom, knowledge

When moving to the US many Dravidian speakers alter their names in different ways:

- The father's name may be taken as a last/family name and the town name dropped
– *K.S. Shailaja* → *Shailaja Srinivasmurthy*
- A long or compound given name may be split in two
– *Krishnamurthy* → *Krishna Murthy*
- The caste (traditional family occupation) name may be used as a last name, e.g. *Gandhi* describes a green grocer, *Patel* a farmer.
- Names may be phonetically altered to suit English speakers: *Ashok* → *Ash*, *Nayna* > *Nena*

English names like *Sam*, or *Nick* may be adopted---this is done more by men, as one Tamil speaker put it:

Easily memorable, impressionable names are often needed for the business world. Females are more likely to be met with 'What a pretty name!' as strangers try to shape their mouth around names such as *Nalini* or *Aditi*.

In Punjabi Sikh naming practices (Kirandeep Gill, 2004), women receive the middle name *Kaur* 'princess' and men receive the middle name *Singh* 'tiger'

What other example(s) that I've covered here from another culture is similar?

Chinese naming practices (Mak et al., 2003)

Family Classifier/Given Given

Family names

- Early Chinese surnames (*xìng*) were matrilineal but modern Chinese surnames are patrilineal
- Historically Chinese people had clan names (*shi*) derived from place names or aristocratic titles granted, e.g. *Situ* 'minister of land' and only the nobles also had surnames.
- Men and women with the same clan and surname could not marry.
- After the Han dynasty the difference between clan and sur-names was erased.

- Modern Chinese surnames refer to heavenly bodies, place names, flora and fauna, ethnic identities, dynasties and regimes, aristocratic titles, occupations (e.g. *Shang* 'businessman'), times and seasons, cardinal directions, numbers, colors and more.
- Different Chinese languages have variants of the same names, e.g. *Yu* and *Yee*.
- Some Chinese women do not change their names at marriage, others add their husband's surname, e.g. *Lin Mei Lan* → *Chen Lin Mei Lan* upon marriage to *Chen Ming Chun*

Middle names

- may simply be additional given names that may act as a compound with the third name (also given)
- may classify the individual in various ways:

Birth order:

- *Da* 'great; big' for the first child
- *Er* 'two' for the second child, and so on.

Generation membership: In some families, the first given name of all the siblings and cousins of the same generation is the same

- sometimes girls have a different name or a generation-irrelevant name instead.
- sometimes generational names were not given at birth but acquired at marriage (a fading practice)
- the order of generational names could be kept straight with a generation name poem. A person would thus immediately know the rank of a relative they were first meeting or hearing about.

<http://www.kwanfamily.info/poemchart.html>

創 祚 繼 開 崇 宏 君 修 關
守 胤 業 基 勳 仁 必 德 氏
永 恆 光 澤 則 定 汝 象 族
傳 錫 先 懋 天 國 顯 賢 譜

Given names (*míng* or *míngzi*) are the second and third of three names and in addition to the above classificatory meanings they may reflect:

religious and philosophical beliefs

a child astrologically deficient in the wood element might be given the name *Sen* 'forest', which has the 'wood' character in it, in order to compensate.

sex-appropriate qualities according to the culture

- women's names traditionally were for "composure, flowers, birds, jewelry" and smallness e.g. *Xiao* 'small'
- men's names usually imply "honor to one's ancestors, militaristic bearing or virility"

historical/political/socioeconomic/cultural movements and trends, e.g.:

- *Jian Guo* 'build the country' (common after the PRC was established)
- *Hong* 'red; revolutionary' (popular during the Cultural Revolution)
- *Zhi Fu* 'getting rich' (in the 1980's)

Chinese names in the US

Many Chinese people, especially in the US, take on a Western name in addition to their Chinese names.

Sometimes people choose a Western name that translates their Chinese name, e.g. *Li Bao Zhu* may go by *Pearl Li* in America because *Zhu* means 'pearl'

Various romanized spellings exist for Chinese given and family names e.g. *Zhang* (pinyin spelling of Mandarin form)

- Cheung (Cantonese)
- Teoh (Hokkien)
- Chong (Khek)
- Chiang (Hainanese)
- Teo (Teochew)

Lily Tsen (2004)'s family adapted their family name to the local languages after immigrating

Her grandfather's (ethnic Chinese in Vietnam) family name was *Shum*. The communist takeover forced him and his 13 children into exile in China, from whence many of the children later fled to other countries

- In the US & Malaysia: *Tsen* [sen]
- In Brazil: *Sanchez*
- In Russia: *Saborov*
- In Japan: *Samoo*

Vietnamese naming practices are similar to Chinese naming practices (genealogy.about.com) & (Bao, 2004)

Ho – Chu Dem/Lot - Ten

e.g. *Nguyen Van Nam*

- *Ho*--- patrilineal family/clan name
- *Chu dem* or *chu lot* – middle/ “cushion” name
- *Ten* – given name

Family/Clan names

- *Nguyen*, the most common Vietnamese family name, refers to a deity or hero supposed to be a clan ancestor.
- Most Vietnamese surnames are old Chinese clan names, but some are from Chamic languages in the South.

Some Vietnamese people have compound surnames.

- In some cases a middle or “cushion” name came to be used as part of the surname in order to differentiate families with common surnames.
- In other cases an individual was adopted and the first surname refers to the adoptive family while the second surname refers to the family of origin.

Cushion names

- Sometimes these middle names are omitted by men
- The middle name often refers to sex: before 1945 all girls had the middle name *Thi* (<Chinese *shi*) and many still do.
- Common middle names for boys are *Van, Huu, Duc, Dinh, Xuan, Ngoc, Quang, Cong*.
- In some families all boys have the same middle name.
- In other families brothers’ middle names indicate birth order where *Manh, Trong, Qui* are the names of the first, second, and third sons respectively.

Some families, including the Royal family in the XIX century, use(d) generational names from generation poems for middle names. This tradition is maintained by the family of one 2004 Ling. 55 student

“In 1820, Emperor Ming-Mang established a system of giving names to his descendents to distinguish them from common people. He wrote the following poem:

Mien Huong Ung Buu Vinh
Bao Qui Dinh Long Tuong
Hien Nang Kham Ke Thuat
The Thoai Quoc Gia Xuong
(Bao, 2004)

In Bao's family (the descendants of the last royal family) the family name has fallen out of use so the generational name is used like a surname:

Nguyen Phuc Bao Huy > Bao Huy

Only male descendants in this family take a generational name. The female descendants instead take the name (now used as a family name) *Huyen Ton Nu*. Men in this family who are not direct descendants of the Emperor take the family name *Ton-That*.

Bao plans to continue this tradition with his own children.

Many Vietnamese (like Chinese) families switch the order of their names upon immigration in order to match the US pattern of family names coming last:

Bao Huy > Huy Bao
Vinh Hoa > Hoa Vinh

In Bao's family tree you can observe the use of generational names and the reversal of name order upon immigration.

Bao, his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather:

Ung Tuc

—
Buu Tai

—
Hoa Vinh

—
Huy Bao