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Balancing Family Strategies with Individual Choice: Name Changing in Early Modern Japan

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Summary

In this paper I use names and name changing as a tool for gauging intention and acceptance in the relation between families and potential heirs. My previous research has shown a strong relation between naming patterns, family membership and heir choice, or inheritance, making this a convenient tool. I use data from two villages for this analysis: Shimomoriya in northeastern Japan and Nishijō in central Japan. The two villages are both small agricultural villages with no industry and families in these two villages place similar value on family continuity typical of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), but their inheritance practices differ. My findings suggest that differences in the political, social and economic environments of the villages change the range of choices available to individuals and therefore influence family strategies of inheritance to ensure survival. This leads me to further suggest that social change may be the result of changes in the environment shaping the range of choices available to individuals and which choices may seem more attractive.

INTRODUCTION

Social systems and social structures are formed and maintained by an aggregate of human action and individual choices made within a network of con-

straints. These constraints, in turn, are a part of the social, economic and other structures within the larger social framework. In this paper I address the interaction of family strategies to maintain the rules of a social system and individual choices that may break, and therefore change, the rules of the system. The system I focus on is the stem family in agricultural villages in early modern Japan during the period 1716–1870. The rules I focus on are inheritance and heir choice.

In my previous research on name changing, I found that families used names as a way of identifying family membership and, more specifically, heir choice (Nagata 1996, Nagata 1997). Moreover, I discovered that siblings changed their names either to match or diverge from the family naming pattern as their own status as heir/stayer or nonheir/leaver changed. I see the heir choice as a negotiation process between the family strategies of the former head and the personal preferences of the potential candidates for next head. In this paper I will use the above naming practices to observe the negotiation process in heir choice as I ask what role individual choice plays in stem family inheritance rules.

The stem family structure of Tokugawa Japan (1600–1868) is called the *ie*. Japanese scholars of the *ie* generally agree that a sense of long term continuity over generations was a basic characteristic of the *ie* in all its various forms. There are a number of regional variations in the inheritance rules of the *ie*. Whereas eldest sons were preferred almost everywhere, eldest child succession and youngest child or youngest son succession were acceptable alternatives in certain regions. Eldest child succession can also be seen in two forms: regions where eldest daughters were commonly accepted as heirs and regions where sons-in-law were accepted as substitutes for sons (Yonemura and Nagata 1997).

Inheritance patterns in early modern Japanese agricultural villages were constrained by several other practices and structural circumstances. One important part of the structural framework was the legal system of landholding and tax. Taxes were imposed on the estimated rice yield of the village as a whole. Individual families might have greater, lesser or no responsibility for contributing to the tax and some villages simply divided the responsibility equally among all families in the village. If some family was unable to contribute its share, the other families had to make up the difference. At the same time, shares in this responsibility were frequently limited and the number of shares a family had were the basis of social status hierarchy (Yonemura and Nagata 1997; Ooms 1996). These shares also represented landholding, profits from any cooperative economic activities by the village and access to various economic resources. When shares were limited, there was little opportunity to set up or include new households or families in the community unless someone moved away. New households could break off as branches of larger families if the main family was willing to divide some of its holdings and shares, new land was developed for

cultivation or shares became available because a shareholding family had died out or disappeared (Shōji 1982, 319; Ōtō 1996).

Under these circumstances there was considerable social pressure to ensure family continuity and headship. Moreover, the head of each household frequently formed a village council or otherwise participated in village management, so there was further pressure for each family to have an acceptable and capable head, preferably male because women were generally not included in these village councils (Ōtō 1996, 61–62, 252–254). In regions where women were acceptable alternate heirs, their husbands—the sons-in-law of the former heads—often became the heir or family representative in fact or the village used an alternative form of representation (Mizumoto 1997, 3–14; Ooms 1996). Another important rule under these circumstances was that only one child could inherit. Very little attention has focused on the fate of the other children and that is one topic that will require further investigation in the future.

Three more rules are important to the overall system of inheritance and heir choice. Not only does only one child inherit, but all other children tend to leave the household before the heir inherits (Kurosu 1996). If a family had no children or no sons, they would adopt either a son or a son-in-law to maintain the family continuity. Moreover, research suggests that, with some few exceptions, Tokugawa village society was one of universal marriage. In other words, younger siblings all managed to marry into other households where they too became heads (Okada and Kurosu 1997). Young people who found no slot in the village community have received little attention. Moreover, these rules assume that all young people wanted to remain in the village and inherit. What if some preferred to go elsewhere? What happened to the siblings who had no obvious slot in the village? Naming and name changing practices may offer some clue to these questions.

For data I use the religious and population registries of two villages in Tokugawa Japan, Nishijō in central Japan and Shimomoriya in northeastern Japan. These registries, called *shūmon aratame chō* (SAC), were kept yearly in each village.[1] They essentially record a snapshot of each village on the registration day. Each person is recorded as a member of a household in relation to the household head. Both of these villages recorded both the *de jure* and *de facto* population in their records, so we know who actually lived in each household and where absent members went for what purpose. The records also include all vital events such as birth, death, marriage and adoption as well as service. However, these records do not give dates for these vital events. They just record that they had happened between the previous year registration and the present one. Children in Japan were reckoned age one at birth and age two at their first new year. Therefore, a child appearing in the registry first appears at age two in

Japanese reckoning except for a memo made by the recording official that a child was born.

For this paper I use the SAC of two villages: Nishijō in central Japan and Shimomoriya in northeastern Japan. The Shimomoriya SAC series continue from 1716–1870 with 9 missing years (1720, 1729, 1846, 1850, 1858, 1864–67). When a person changes his name, the record notes that the former XX is now YY. I do not include any slight changes in the way a name is written unless the Shimomoriya record contains this notation. The Nishijō SAC continue from 1773–1872 with 5 years missing (1829, 1838, 1845, 1870–71). The Nishijō SAC do not record the personal names of married women. Instead, they are identified as the wife, widow, or mother of XX. Therefore, I will only look at men in this analysis for comparisons of Nishijō and Shimomoriya.

The Nishijō officials used slips of paper they pasted on the record to keep track of any changes during the first 20 years of the series. These slips of paper easily fall off and sometimes get repasted to the wrong page, so I only have certain records that person XX changed his name to YY intentionally for about 60% of the name changes in the data. For the remaining changes, I only counted those that were obvious changes in pronunciation as well as character choice. An individual might appear in the records of three different households in the Nishijō record: his home household as an absentee member, his household of employment as a servant, and in a memo regarding the next household he joins as servant or adopted son. Sometimes, the names he uses in these three households are different or the timing of the record of a name change may be different. In such cases I choose the earliest record of the new name.

Nishijō and Shimomoriya have a similar type of data of similar quality and both are agricultural villages with little or no industry. In almost every other sense, they are very different. Shimomoriya is an isolated village at the foot of the Ou mountains in present-day Fukushima prefecture. The village is at the northern edge of the rice cultivation region making yields low and life difficult (Narimatsu 1985, 3; Okabe et al. 1981, 358). The Shimomoriya record begins with a population of 443 in 1716 that falls more or less continuously until 1841 when it bottoms out at 238 and then begins a recovery reaching a population of 330 in 1869. For comparison, the population in 1773 was 368. The average age of first marriage for the whole period was 14.8 for women. In spite of the early age of first marriage, the marital fertility rate was also low at 2.9 for women marrying at ages 11–15 (Narimatsu 1985). The average life course was early marriage, childbirth, service migration and return. The most common form of service was "pawn service" in which the family borrowed money using the labor of a family member as collateral. Other labor options include migration and service in Kōriyama, a local highway post town; in Nihonmatsu, the domain castle town and agricultural wage labor in other villages.

In contrast, Nishijō is located in central Japan on the Nōbi plain in present day Gifu prefecture. The village was located close to the Tōkaidō main highway connecting Edo, Nagoya and Kyoto with easy access also to towns on lake Biwa as well as the Nakasendō mountain highway leading to northern Japan. The region was particularly known for its paper manufacturing industry as well as sake brewing, and local rivers provided alternative modes of transport. The Nishijō record begins with a population of 365 in 1773, the population remains relatively stable with a low point of 277 in 1843 and a population of 380 in 1869. The average age of first marriage in Nishijō was relatively high at 22 for women and the marital fertility rate was also high compared to Shimomoriya at 6.2 for women marrying at ages 21–25 (Hayami 1992). The average life course for the people of Nishijō was to enter service at about age 15 and work for 5–10 years, return, marry and start having children (Hayami 1988). Pawn service does not appear in the Nishijō records. Instead, Nishijō villagers are known for their migration to the major cities of Japan as well as local towns and villages for wage service.

NAME CHANGING AND NAME CONTINUITY

People in early modern Japan changed their names relatively frequently. Name changers were mostly men, but included women as well and the practice was related to family membership and headship. Some regions in Japan used name changing in a coming-of-age ceremony in which the namer, a naming parent called *nazuke oya*, entered into a fictive parent-child relationship with the named through the bestowal of a name (Ōtō 1996, 124; Plutschow 1995, 47–58). The two villages in my sample do not seem to use this rite as part of a coming-of-age ceremony. Instead, they seem to use names and naming patterns to establish the membership of an individual in a lineage and designate him as an heir candidate (Nagata 1996, Nagata 1997). From another point of view, names were used to announce or establish the claim of a lineage upon an individual member and vice versa. When individuals changed their lineage membership by marriage or adoption into another lineage or by moving away and not returning, their names may also announce the existence or lack of a relation between these individuals and their lineages. These methods were open to and used by both men and women.

There are three methods by which a lineage might use a name to establish and announce its claims on individual members. One method would be name inheritance. The second and more common method would be for a person to receive or take a name formed around a front character that had been used previously in the lineage (Takagi 1981; Nagata 1997). The third method relied entirely upon

the name changing ceremony to establish a fictive parent-child relation between namer and named.

People in early modern Japan did not usually name someone for another person as is done in the West. Rarely do two people in the same lineage share the same name at the same time and there seems to have been a taboo against this practice (Harada 1928; Plutschow 1995, 5–7). Name inheritance, therefore, refers to two similar practices. One method is for someone in the lineage to pass his name to a new user. In this case, the former XX gives up his name and takes a new name while the new XX gives up his former name to become XX. This type of name inheritance is frequently related to headship change wherein the head of a family or lineage always bears the same name and the new head inherits the name with the position. Headship inheritance, however, could be a long process taking several years and the name might be inherited at the end of the process rather than at the official point of inheritance. The second method of name inheritance is to take a name used by someone, usually a famous or well-known person in the lineage who is dead. Some scholars have suggested—and I tend to agree—that this may be a method for someone with a doubtful claim to lineage membership to announce his claim or the support of the lineage for his claim (Ooms 1996).

Forming names that share a front character is one obvious and effective way of showing and establishing membership in a lineage. For example, one family in the Shimomoriya data formed its membership names on the character "Den." Male members of the family were Denbei, Denjirō, Densaburō, Dengorō and Denuemon. The advantage for the lineage of this type of naming pattern is that the pattern is clear and does not break the rule against simultaneity. Moreover, there are numerous possible combinations and numerous front characters to choose from so each lineage in a village could easily have a different root character for their naming pattern. The research literature on naming has further suggested a use of similar name endings—such as in the names Kanzō, Denzō, and Tazō—as a way of identifying siblings. On the possibility that this practice might be incorporated in the larger pattern, I include it in the analysis with less weight.

I have studied name changing and lineage naming patterns of the two villages in this data sample separately in earlier papers (Nagata 1996, Nagata 1997). In my study of name changing and the life course in Nishijō, I developed a method for measuring how closely a name matches the lineage naming pattern (Nagata 1996). I refined this measure for my study of name changing and family structure in Shimomoriya (Nagata 1997). I have further refined the measure for this paper.

Names that duplicate names formerly used in a lineage receive a value of 2.0. Names that share a front character with characters formerly used in the lineage receive a value of 1.0. Names that share endings receive a value of 0.5 and names that share a front character with one name and an ending with another name re-

ceive a value 1.5. Similarly, names that almost, but do not quite duplicate former lineage names also receive a value 1.5. I assigned these values to each name used by each individual in the data upon the first appearance of that individual with that name according to the lineage of his residence household. If the individual was a servant at the time he first used a name, then I assigned it a value only in comparison with other servants in the lineage. Non-servants were compared only with non-servants.

The Shimomoriya data set runs from 1716–1870. In my previous study of Shimomoriya I found a probable change in naming practices after about 1790. For this paper, therefore, I compare not only Shimomoriya with Nishijō, but early Shimomoriya with later Shimomoriya. I break the data at 1790 and use 1720–1789 as t1 and 1790–1859 as t2. By cutting off the final eleven years of the Shimomoriya data set I equalize the time period and give more chance for men at the end of the data sample period to reach adulthood in the data. The Nishijō data runs 1773–1872, but I use the same time period as t2 in Shimomoriya for comparison. Hereafter, t1 and t2 refer to the earlier and later time periods in Shimomoriya.

I also use a cohort comparison to provide a different and more detailed view of the differences between the time periods and the villages. I chose three cohorts defined by appearance at recorded age 2 in the data. Earlier appearances are frequently memos by the recording official, often as slips of paper in the Nishijō data which are easily lost. Cohort 1 (c1) appears in the Shimomoriya data 1721–1730; cohort 2 (c2) appears in the data 1781–1790; and cohort 3 (c3) appears 1821–1830. C1 is limited to Shimomoriya, but c2 and c3 are taken from both Shimomoriya and Nishijō thus producing 5 cohort groups.

I chose c1 to be at the beginning of the data and living most of their lives in t1. At the same time, their continuity values are potentially higher than t1 overall because they all have fathers and possibly uncles, brothers and grandfathers providing a pool of former names in the lineage, thus offsetting the slight disadvantage t1 names might have in continuity. The c2 cohort was born near the beginning of the Nishijō data and in the decade before t2 during a period of change in Shimomoriya. Finally, I chose c3 as 100 years after c1 and still early enough to reach age 40–50 by the end of the data series, meaning that most important life course events related to naming, name changing and headship had occurred during the observation period.

For analysis I ask two questions of the data sets and various groups and categories in these data sets. One question is the probability of a name change, or the proportion of people changing their names at a specific event. The second question is the average name continuity of the names held by people in the various categories and situations. By doing so the figures I produce are a gauge for measuring family expectations and acceptance on both sides.

I chose the various comparison groups and category events as most likely to reveal differences in family expectations and acceptance regarding headship inheritance. Research has shown that families and lineages in early modern Japan placed a high value on family continuity. Moreover, eldest sons were the preferred heirs when possible, but different regions had different strategies for maintaining continuity by finding alternatives when eldest sons were unavailable or unable to inherit (Okada 1996; Kurosu 1997; Yonemura and Nagata 1997).

Shimomoriya is known to have used the alternatives of adopted sons and sons-in-law. Moreover, heir candidates could be disqualified for failure to produce children (Okada 1996, Nagata 1997). Nishijō inheritance patterns are not so obvious and include a large number of women, usually widows of former heads (Hayami 1992). In my previous work with the Nishijō data it seemed that eldest sons sometimes refused to inherit. Conversely, naming, migration and marriage patterns have suggested sometimes a competition for inheritance rights (Nagata 1996). In either case, heir choice and inheritance in Nishijō appears to have been a topic for negotiation and naming practices seem to play a part in this process. In Shimomoriya, however, the negotiation seems less a competition between potential heirs than a scramble to find acceptable heirs; acceptable to the family, the lineage and the village community. Names in Shimomoriya establish or announce the claim of the family to a potential heir and, equally important, the fruits of the labor of its members.

The comparison categories I use in the t1, t2 and Nishijō data sets are eldest sons (son1) vs. younger sons (son2+), family native vs. adopted sons, village natives vs. outsiders and, finally, all heads. Each of the couplets are opposing groups for heir candidate and the final group represents those who succeed. I compare the average name continuity and, when appropriate, the probability of name changing by people in these categories in four circumstances. First I look at general, overall figures for t1, t2, Nishijō and the five cohort groups. I will discuss these findings in the next section.

In the following section I examine the name continuity at birth for village natives and at entrance to family and village for adoptees and outsiders. This analysis is also compared in the framework of t1, t2, Nishijō and the five cohort groups. I assume that name continuity at birth reflects the expectations of the family for the new member. For adoptees I assume name continuity may also reflect the level of agreement by the outsider to the family as well as the family's expectation or acceptance of him. In this section I also examine the sons who marry or adopt out of the family to discover the percentage of this group that changed names and the name continuity of this group immediately before they leave. I suggest these figures reflect the intentions of the individual leaving members.

In the final section of analysis I address the probability of a name change and the average name continuity of new heads at headship change. One consideration in this analysis is also the number or proportion of heads in the various categories. Then, in the conclusion I discuss my findings and what they may tell us of individual choice in forming, maintaining and changing the rules of inheritance in the family system.

GENERAL ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON

The pool of names used by the men of Shimomoriya and Nishijō is surprisingly large for their respective populations. A male population of 1194 men appear in the Shimomoriya data including in-migrating servants, and these men use 1101 individual names. The most common name in the male pool is Tarō, meaning eldest son, and appears 24 times in the data. With more than 100 lineages in the Shimomoriya data, I think it is obvious that name duplication was hardly inevitable within a lineage even though the data series continues for 150 years. I must assume, therefore, that name duplication found in the data was by conscious choice of the namer and agreed to by the adult wearer.

Similarly, the 921 men appearing in the Nishijō data used 836 individual names. The most common male name appearing in the Nishijō data is Sōsuke, a name the headman's family gave to male servants during service, and this name appears 28 times in the data. Because Nishijō men did not generally take their service names home with them, this tendency for using specific servant names should have little effect in this analysis. The second most common name in the data, Yosaburō, was not a service name and only appears 10 times in the data set. With 95 lineages in the Nishijō data, again name duplication was not inevitable within a lineage. In Nishijō too, therefore, I must assume that name duplication was a conscious choice of the namer agreed to by the adult wearer.

I assigned each name in the data sets a continuity value according to the lineage the wearer resided in when he took the name. Names were assigned one of five possible values: 0.0, 0.5, 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 as explained above. Averages of these values give general tendencies for members of various categories to match the lineage naming pattern or not. I consider an average value of 1.0 as high because it means that names valued 0.0 are equally balanced by names valued 2.0, 0.5 names are balanced by 1.5 names and the remaining names are all valued 1.0. An average continuity higher than 1.0, therefore, has an overbalance of 1.5 and 2.0 names. The higher the average, the higher the probable frequency of name inheritance. Conversely, an average continuity less than 1.0 has an overbalance of 0.0 and 0.5 names. An average continuity of 0.5 or less shows little

tendency to match the lineage naming pattern and perhaps a conscious effort for each person to have a unique and dissimilar name.

Table 1 shows the general analysis for each comparison category in each time period and village. Vertical columns show differences between categories in each time period and village. Horizontal rows compare each category across time periods and villages. Probability was calculated by dividing name change events by person years. Continuity values are all averages.

Table 1. Probability of Name Changing and Average Total Name Continuity of Various Category Groups t1, t2 and Nishijō.

	t1 1720–1789		t2 1790–1859		Nishijō 1790–1859	
categories	prob.	cont.	prob.	cont.	prob.	cont.
son1	0.022	0.8	0.026	1.2	0.023	0.8
son2+	0.018	0.6	0.024	1.0	0.018	0.7
fam nat	0.021	0.7	0.025	1.1	0.020	0.8
adopt	0.023	0.8	0.031	1.3	0.013	1.0
vil nat	0.022	0.7	0.026	1.1	0.019	0.8
outsiders	0.011	0.3	0.033	0.9	0.124	1.0
all heads	0.024	0.7	0.034	1.1	0.018	0.7
total avg.	0.020	0.7	0.028	1.1	0.034	0.8

The group most likely to change their names in the data is outsiders in Nishijō with a probability of 0.124. Conversely, the least likely groups to change their names are outsiders in Shimomoriya t1 at 0.011 followed by adopted family members in Nishijō at 0.013. Further investigation reveals that only 3 of the 155 men in the Nishijō data who first appear as servants ever change their names in the data. This suggests that the outsiders who changed their names were in-migrants who joined Nishijō families through adoption of marriage. Moreover, although these in-migrants generally changed their names—perhaps multiple times—in the data, Nishijō families were far more likely to adopt someone from within the village than an outsider. Finally, the overall probability that an adoptee would change his name was lower than the probability that an outsider would change his name, suggesting that the village natives were highly unlikely to change their names after adoption.

In Shimomoriya, outsiders were far more likely to change their names in t2 than in t1. During t2 they were almost as likely as household heads to change their names. This suggests that outsiders were relatively unimportant in

Shimomoriya during t1, but many were adopted as heir or household head during t2. This is one possible explanation for the similarities in the figures for adopted family members, outsiders and heads in Shimomoriya during t2 (1790–1859). Name continuity values also support my suggestion that a low probability of name changing implies less attention to the members of certain categories by the village or the family and possibly less importance. Outsiders in Shimomoriya have a very low average name continuity of 0.3, suggesting that even the few outsiders who changed their names did not often take or receive names that matched the lineage naming pattern. This is the only group in the table with average continuity values of less than 0.5.

Otherwise, the table shows several trends. Generally a higher probability of changing names is related to a higher average total name continuity. This suggests that names were generally changed to match the lineage naming pattern more closely rather than to move away from the pattern. Probability and continuity values look quite similar in the vertical groupings of time periods and villages with little overall difference between the categories. However, there are apparent differences between vertical groups. The Shimomoriya t2 values are highest in both probability and continuity showing an overbalance of high continuity names by eldest sons and adopted family members, but generally the level balanced at 1.0.

Name changing in Shimomoriya during both t1 and t2 appears to be related to headship because people who become heads have the highest probability of changing their names in both periods. In Nishijō, however, name changing is more common among other groups that do not become heads. Instead, the focus of both name changing and name continuity in Nishijō is upon family and village membership and assimilating outsiders into the community. I will discuss these points later when I address the topic of headship.

Table 2 shows the cohort sizes and total continuity figures for the five cohort groups. The differences in cohort sizes testify to the differences in fertility and mortality between the two villages. Shimomoriya in 1721 was much larger than

Table 2. Total Name Continuity Averages for Cohort Groups.

	Shimomoriya			Nishijō	
	C1	C2	C3	C2	C3
N	43	29	39	46	59
continuity	0.6	1.0	1.2	0.5	0.8
son1	29	14	17	25	27
cont.	0.6	1.0	1.3	0.5	0.9
son2+	14	7	11	19	30
cont.	0.5	0.9	1.0	0.6	0.8

Nishijō was in 1781, but the two villages were not much different in size in 1781 and 1821. The period 1781–90 coincides with the Tenmei famine which probably effectively reduced the size of the Shimomoriya cohort.

The members of the cohort groups are by definition family and village natives, so I only compare eldest and younger sons defined by birth order at recorded age 2. Apparently continuity values rise in both Shimomoriya and Nishijō, but Nishijō values are not outstandingly high in the last cohort except for eldest sons. Eldest son continuity shows the largest change across cohort groups in both villages, but there is little difference in continuity values by birth order in most of the cohorts. The only exception is in the final cohort for Shimomoriya. The lineages of this village seem to place greater weight on eldest sons toward the end of the data period.

In this section I have looked at general patterns and tendencies. Ensuring family continuity and headship succession appear to be a major concern in Shimomoriya and were probably a major part of family survival strategies. The Nishijō figures suggest less concern with finding and ensuring the existence of an heir and more attention paid to family and community membership. Some of these differences probably lie in demographic factors and these factors may have influenced how much leeway family strategy could allow for individual preference and alternative choices.

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS: BIRTH NAMES AND ADOPTION

The birth name is the one name in the life course of men in early modern Japan that was certainly chosen by the parent or other important person in the community. As such, the birth name and its relation to the family naming pattern represents the expectations of the family towards its native members and therefore its claims upon their membership.

Table 3 shows the birth name continuity for eldest sons, younger sons and all sons in Shimomoriya and Nishijō, t1 and t2. Here we can see that Shimomoriya t2 overall continuity values were high because even birth name values were high.

Table 3. Birth Name Continuity in Shimomoriya and Nishijō.

	Shimomoriya t1		Shimomoriya t2		Nishijō t2	
category	N	cont.	N	cont.	N	cont.
son1	166	0.6	117	1.0	153	0.6
son2+	62	0.5	80	1.0	202	0.7
vil nat	228	0.6	197	1.0	370	0.7

Moreover, because name duplication was rarely practiced with birth names, these values represent a very strong tendency to share front characters with other members of the lineage. In my earlier study of Shimomoriya I gained a sense of this pattern by random examples pulled from the 19th century data. In one example, a boy was born to the "Den" family where every male name shared the front character "Den." Later he was adopted by the "Gen" family where every member shared the character "Gen" and the young man changed his name to match the "Gen" pattern (Nagata 1997).

In contrast, neither Shimomoriya during t1 nor Nishijō (t2) show any strong pattern of expectations. Names balanced at around 0.5 implying names sharing endings—a relatively easy and common pattern—and every name valued 0.0 was balanced by a name 1.0 with few higher continuity names. Nishijō birth names show a slightly stronger tendency toward higher continuity names, but the tendency is weak. Also interesting in all three groups is the lack of any major birth order differences. In short, Shimomoriya t2 families placed a strong claim on the membership of all male children regardless of birth order. The other two groups showed only weak claims and birth order played little role in the strength of those claims.

Name changing is part of the reason for the lack of birth order differences in the strength of name continuity. Male children, whether younger sons or eldest sons, could take higher continuity names later when survival was more certain and choices had been made. Name changing allowed a flexible system of heir choice where name inheritance and naming patterns could have been part of a rigid system. It also allowed more leeway for individual choice and adjustment when adult sons disagreed with or refused family strategies.

This leeway can be seen in the change in continuity values from birth names to later names for men who later changed their birth names. Table 4 shows this contrast in the five cohort groups. The only group that makes no change in name

Table 4. Birth Name and Later Name Continuity of Eldest and Younger Sons in Five Cohort Groups, Shimomoriya and Nishijō.

	son1		son2+		total	
cohorts	nm1 cont	nm2+ cont	nm1 cont	nm2+ cont	nm1 cont	nm2+ cont
S c1	0.3	1.0	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.9
S c2	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.1	1.0	1.0
S c3	1.2	1.4	0.9	1.4	1.1	1.3
N c2	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.7
N c3	0.6	1.3	0.7	1.0	0.7	1.2

continuity after name changing is eldest sons in Shimomoriya cohort 2. All other groups show higher name continuity after name changing. Moreover, eldest sons in Shimomoriya cohort 1 and both Nishijō cohorts change from low continuity names to high continuity names. These changes are also made by younger sons. The number of children in Shimomoriya cohort 2 is small enough that families may have needed to place a high claim on all members regardless of birth order circumstances because there were so few children.

While birth names probably reflect family expectations towards male members, names of adopted family members and outsiders upon entry to family and community represent a combination of individual choice and family acceptance. I suggest that individual choice played a part in the adoption transaction because adopted sons were usually adult, often sons-in-law and usually adopted as potential heirs (Kurosu 1997).

Table 5 shows the name continuity and name change probability of eldest sons and younger sons at departure from the family for adoption and marriage The second half of the table compares adopted family members with outsiders at entry to the family and the community. The continuity values for the two villages in t2 are relatively high and the values for Shimomoriya t1 are very low. Comparison with the general values in Table 1 show the general values to be higher in Shimomoriya than the values of adopted members the year they entered their new families. This implies that these outsiders who became members of family and community changed their names to higher continuity names later. Some even inherit names of adoptive fathers in the new lineage. The period from entry into the group until taking a name that matches the lineage pattern may be considered a probationary period before final acceptance. This probationary period has also been noted by Kurosu Satomi in her work on adoption in Shimomoriya (Kurosu Forthcoming).

The lower proportion of name changing at departure suggests that the departing sons may have kept their birth names or changed them away from the lin-

Table 5. Name Changing and Continuity at Departure from and Entry to the Family at Adoption.

	Shimomoriya t1		Shimomoriya t2		Nishijō t2	
category	%chg	cont.	%chg	cont.	%chg	cont
dep son1	0.03	0.4	0.08	0.8	0	0.7
son2+	0.11	0.5	0.14	0.9	0.10	0.9
ent adopt	0.31	0.4	0.35	1.0	0.65	1.0
outsiders	0.13	0.3	0.22	0.7	0.10	0.9

eage pattern. This action to move away from the pattern was not as necessary for younger sons as for eldest sons because younger sons were less likely to have been serious candidates for next head. Nevertheless, younger sons were more likely to change their names just before departure from the lineage. Were they pushed out? Or was departure their personal choice?

Adopted members of the family deserve notice. Many of the adoptees changed their names upon entry to the family, and they tended to inherit names from the adoptive lineage and match the naming pattern. The exception is Shimomoriya in t1. Shimomoriya was a larger village in t1 than either Shimomoriya or Nishijō in t2. The village community may have discouraged the assimilation of outsiders, particularly as potential household heads and therefore participating in village councils and decisions. The population in t2, however, had fallen so far that Shimomoriya families may have had little choice for maintaining lineal continuity. Another possibility is that Shimomoriya used the ceremony of name changing itself to establish fictional parent/child relations between namer and named as a means for integrating outsiders into the lineage. Under such a system the name choice had less importance than the act of a name change. If so, it would explain the overall lower name continuity in Shimomoriya t1. I will address this topic further in the next section when I discuss heads and names at headship change.

WHO BECAME HEAD? NAMES AND HEIR CHOICE

There are some differences in the inheritance practices of Shimomoriya and Nishijō. One difference is in the choice of alternatives for heir when the eldest son could not or would not become head. Table 6 shows the populations of

Table 6. Male Heads and Their Backgrounds in Shimomoriya and Nishijō.

	Shimomoriya t1		Shimomoriya t2		Nishijō t2	
categories	N	% male hh	N	% male hh	N	% male hh
son1	133	0.62	87	0.50	87	0.60
son2+	21	0.10	12	0.07	36	0.25
fam nat	154	0.72	99	0.56	117	0.81
adopted	61	0.28	71	0.41	29	0.20
vil nat	153	0.71	99	0.56	126	0.88
outsider	39	0.18	76	0.43	18	0.13
(male/all)	215	(0.96)	175	(0.90)	144	(0.56)
all heads	224		195		256	

different categories who became heads and their proportions to all male heads. At the bottom of the table I also included the ratio of male heads to all heads. The first obvious difference in heir choice between Shimomoriya and Nishijō is that women were far more likely to become head in Nishijō. Most of these women are recorded as the widow of the former head, but this difference cannot be explained by mortality. Instead, it represents a difference in the strategies for alternative head choice when native male sons or eldest sons were not available to inherit. Shimomoriya families were more likely to adopt male heirs while Nishijō families tended to avoid adoption, but chose female heirs instead.

If we take the proportions of heads with different backgrounds as a reflection of heir preference and family strategy, then the following tendencies appear. When the eldest son was not available to inherit in Shimomoriya t1, the alternatives were chosen in order of village natives, adopted outsiders, younger sons and women. The order of importance in Shimomoriya changes somewhat in t2 to outsiders, village natives, younger sons and women. The move from village natives to outsiders probably represents a change in demographic constraints so that village natives—largely younger sons from other households—were not as available as in t1. Also, some outsiders moved in and set up new households or took over the landholdings and tax responsibilities of former families without being adopted into them. Nevertheless, while families in Shimomoriya preferred native heads, they chose outsiders over native women as heirs. Moreover, only a small proportion of male heads were younger sons, suggesting that alternatives were chosen when eldest sons could not inherit rather than because they would not stay to inherit.

The order of preference for alternative heirs in Nishijō, however, is quite different from Shimomoriya in either period. First choice for Nishijō families was women—usually the widow or mother of the former head—younger brothers, adopted sons and outsiders. Approximately a quarter of the male heads were younger sons suggesting that alternatives were often required because the eldest son chose not to inherit. This might also explain the large number of women if they were used to maintain the family place until a son was ready to take over the responsibility of headship. This pattern suggests that Nishijō families put more weight on keeping headship in the hands of family natives rather than allowing outsiders a major place in the community, and that this pattern was shaped more by individual choice than by demographic constraints.

How do these patterns appear in naming and name changing? I show the name continuity and probability of name changing at headship succession for the various categories of heads in Table 7. The base numbers can, of course, be found in Table 6. In Shimomoriya, half of the outsiders changed their names upon headship succession regardless of period. This does not appear to affect

Table 7. Name Changing and Continuity by Household Heads of Various Backgrounds at Headship Change.

	Shimomoriya t1		Shimomoriya t2		Nishijō t2	
categories	%	cont	%	cont	%	cont
son1	0.13	0.5	0.14	1.0	0.17	0.9
son2+	0.14	0.7	0.08	1.4	0.17	0.7
fam nat	0.13	0.5	0.13	1.1	0.17	0.9
adopted	0.16	0.3	0.18	1.4	0.45	1.3
vil nat	0.13	0.5	0.13	1.1	0.23	0.9
outsider	0.49	0.3	0.45	0.7	0.17	1.3
all heads	0.18	0.5	0.24	0.9	0.13	1.1

their name continuity during t1, suggesting again that they may have used the act of naming to establish fictional kinship relations rather than focusing on the name itself. In t2 also outsiders are the only group to have an underbalance of lineage names even though nearly half of them changed their names, suggesting again that the act of changing the name was more important at this point than taking a lineage name. Instead, the native adopted sons together with younger sons tended to inherit lineage names together with headship.

In Nishijō, outsiders did not change their names any more often than other groups when they became heads. However, half of the adopted heads changed their names at headship succession. Moreover, many of them appear to have inherited lineage names together with headship. The similarity in name continuity together with the difference in name changing rates between all adopted heads and outsiders in Nishijō suggests that the many outsiders may have taken lineage names before headship succession and name changing at succession was largely practiced by village natives, some of whom inherited lineage names. I suggest that lineage names were used to assimilate and show the acceptance and support of the family for the new member as head or heir. Name changing, however, was a way to establish fictional parent-child relations that did not always require lineage names as a label. Furthermore, name inheritance was used to bolster the weaker claims of less preferred groups.

The preference in Shimomoriya for outsiders over women as heir alternatives was related to the village decision-making mechanisms. Villages in the Nihonmatsu domain made many important decisions regarding water rights or the division of labor tasks in a council of all heads, but this council was limited to male heads (Okabe et al. 1981, 247–250). Failure to have a male head therefore meant loss of a voice in village decisions. Nishijō villagers, however, elected

a *hyakushōdai* "peasant representative" from among the poorer families in the village. Therefore, having a woman as head did not necessarily mean loss of a voice in village affairs because she could probably speak to the representative about her concerns the same as other heads.

The individual choices of heirs appears to have been more important in Nishijō than in Shimomoriya in any period. One possible explanation for this difference can be found in service migration which was contingent upon economic differences and government policy. Shimomoriya was part of the Nihonmatsu domain in northeastern Japan. The domain prohibited outside labor migration and there was little industrial development in "pre-industrial" industries such as paper, sake, soy sauce, weaving, etc. (Shōji 1982, 79–81). Some men are listed each year as having disappeared, and many probably spent these periods working in distant regions outside the domain. Nishijō villagers, however, suffered no such limitations. In the introduction above I noted that Nishijō villagers took advantage of their proximity to the main highways and migrated to Osaka, Edo, Nagoya and Kyoto as well as major castle towns and regions where early industry was developing. Moreover, although Nishijō villagers did not participate in manufacturing within the village, paper, sake and textiles were local industries providing labor opportunities. Undoubtedly this economic environment played a role in the individual choices of eldest sons who were expected to be heirs.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have compared the naming and name-changing practices of two villages in different regions of Japan with relation to family strategies of family continuity and headship succession. I chose naming as a possible way of gauging individual choice. However, I generally found that names represented family membership and acceptance which led me toward an understanding of family strategies. Nevertheless, this measure allowed me to gain some idea of the role of individual choice in changing inheritance practices and family strategies. If we assume that families in both villages preferred eldest sons, then the choice of eldest sons in Nishijō not to inherit forced families to look for alternatives. Demographic availability played a similar role in Shimomoriya. The differences in the family and inheritance patterns between the two villages reveal differences in their strategies for finding alternative heads and these differences were related to differences in village decision-making mechanisms as explained above.

One finding of this paper is that names can be used to understand aspects of family strategies and choice that are difficult to find by other methods. In early

modern Japan, personal names are labels that identify individuals as members of groups rather than unchanging symbols of personal identity. As such, the practice of name changing leads to questions regarding the relation between identity and social structure. This is an area that will require more consideration in the future.

A second finding, although less directly related to naming patterns, is that individual choice influenced a change in inheritance practices. At the same time, the range and order of importance of the alternatives families choose reveal underlying rules in the society that would not exist without the problems arising from individual choice. Moreover, the economic and legal environment also plays a role in the possibilities for individual choice. This is a relationship that will need more attention in the future, particularly in a comparative context.

Finally, economic development and changes in access to and the pull of the labor market play a role in the range of choices made by heirs and other family members that may oppose family inheritance rules. This is an important economic mechanism in effecting social change.

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Notes

1. Hayami Akira and other scholars use the term SAC as a generic term for this type of register, but the actual titles can be quite different. The SAC of Shimomoriya are called *Hito On Aratame Chō* while those of Nishijō are called *Shūmon Aratame Chō*. See bibliography.

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要 約

家族の相続形態はルールで決まったものなのか？ それとも個人の意向と家族の存続計略から出た結果なのか？

永 田 メアリー

この論文で二つの村の命名と改名パターンを個人の意向と家族の受け入れの代理として使う。それで相続形態を比較しながら考え直す。分析資料として東北農村二本松藩下守屋村の人御改帳と濃尾地方西条村の宗門人別改帳を使う。この二つの農村は色々の面で似ている。農産業のみの小村で、しかも出稼ぎが多い。村の制度は多少違っても、やはり家族の存続は生き残るための大事な条件であって、長男が最も好ましい相続人であった。しかし、結果として相続形態は違う。著者は村外の経済発展の違いにより個人の選択の違いから生まれたのではないかと論述する。