RICHARD COATES
Richard.Coates@uwe.ac.uk
ORCID: 0000-0002-3175-4775
University of the West of England
Bristol, United Kingdom

SOME THOUGHTS
ON THE THEORETICAL STATUS OF
ETHNONYMS AND DEMONYMS[*]

Terminology is fundamental to every academic discipline, and the topic is one in which Professor Czopek-Kopciuch herself demonstrated an engaged interest (see e.g. Czopek-Kopciuch, 2019), against a background of historic inconsistency in Polish practice (Górny, 2019, pp. 105–107). A conceptual framework of terminology presupposes adequate and agreed definition of terms, including new ones such as *nick* (Czopek-Kopciuch, 2004).[1]

As Cieślikowa and Czopek-Kopciuch (2006 [2011], pp. 273–274) remarked: "Any new ordering of onomastic terminology ought to be preceded by methodological and metalinguistic reflection". In this paper I hope to provide such a reflection. But it is more; it is about whether the entities in the title, ethnonyms and demonyms, can appropriately be defined as proper names at all, and if so, on what basis. I believe the answer is yes in both cases, but there are uncomfortable issues to confront, and there may be a loophole for those who disagree.[2] Nevertheless an understanding of the difficulty can lead us to a proposal for a terminological innovation that has useful practical consequences.

---

[1] A nick is a "self-attributed name" as used, for example, in establishing an online persona (Raátz, 2011).

[2] There is scope for a wider discussion about whether names should be (sub-) categorized at all, because they can be categorized probabilistically at best (Coates, 2014). But for present purposes I adopt the more conventional position, viz. that names do indeed fall into categories.

Certain key terms in semantics have historically been applied in different ways, so to ensure clarity, here are some such terms as used in this paper:

Reference: the act of picking out an individual in some context

Referent: the individual picked out in some context

Denotation: the set of individuals constituting the potential referents of some term (*denotata*: the individuals themselves)

Extension: those individuals considered in principle as individuals (for *blackbird*, all actual individuals that can be appropriately referred to as *blackbirds*)

Intension: those individuals considered as forming a class by virtue of one or more of their characteristics (blackbirds considered as defined by the necessary characteristics of *Turdus merula*)

Sense: the network of sense-relations (e.g. synonymies, hyponymies) enjoyed by some lexeme (e.g. *blackbird* and *Turdus merula* as synonyms)

Individual: a single entity, whether a person, place or member of some other category

The topic of the meaning of ethnonyms, specifically any intensional properties they may possess and hence the way in which they relate to their denotation, has been scantly treated so far. The two major books on name theory which appeared in 2007, those by Willy Van Langendonck and John Anderson, do not treat the subject of their meaning at all, though both have interesting and subtle things to say about their grammar. Both Anderson (at several points in his book) and Rübekeil (2004, pp. 745–746) deal with the question of the status of ethnonyms as plural names in relation to the distinction between names and lexical expressions and about appellatival uses of expressions originating as proper names. That said, coverage of the nature of ethnonyms remains sparse in recent years. None of these three authors deals with demonyms as a distinct type of name or problematizes the distinction between them and ethnonyms, which is of some theoretical importance from a linguistic perspective, as we shall see.

The two terms obviously have rather similar denotations. An *ethnonym* is a name for a group of people related, or assumed to be related, by genetic inheritance (DNA), or, to use the common pre-scientific metaphor, by blood; and often also such a group which shares a material, artistic or spiritual culture. Plenty of difficulty attends the concept *relatedness* used in such a way, but it is enough for our immediate purpose as a reasonable approximation; we return to the matter more fully below. A demonym is a name for a group of people related by geopolitical allegiance (consensual or coerced) and its attendant bureaucracy. There may be considerable overlap, but rarely if ever exact correspondence in modern societies, in the denotata of the same term applied as an ethnonym and as a demonym (e.g. *Russians* as members of a particular genetically or anthropologically defined East Slavic people, and as citizens of the state called *The Russian Federation*).

In this article I shall provisionally treat the terms as equivalent despite this important semantic distinction, using the term *ethnonym* to cover both, pending a reassessment and a terminological proposal later in the paper. Some groundwork needs to be done first.

THE MEANING OF ETHNONYM

Adrian Koopman has recently noted the "…lack of consensus amongst onomasticians as to whether ethnonyms can be considered to be proper names, partly because of lack of consensus on the types of entities described by ethnonyms" (Koopman, 2016, p. 251). Some authoritative sources differ about this basic issue of the relevant types of entities. The American Name Society web-site defines *ethnonym* as "*proper name* used for ethno-racial grouping", which skates around the problem of how to define ethnicity in relation to similar concepts, such as *race*. www.dictionary.com (based on the Random House Dictionary and others) follows this approach with "the proper name by which a people or ethnic group is called or known" thereby adding two further related terms to the mix. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) offers "A proper name by which a people or ethnic group is known; *spec*. the name a people or ethnic group uses for itself". The "spec[ific]" definition appears wrong — surely *Germans* and *Niemcy* are no less ethnonyms than *Deutsche* — and the discipline of onomastics could apply the term *endonym* (or rather should encourage *endoethnonym*) for the specific concept in question in OED. All these resources agree explicitly that ethnonyms are proper names.

The International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) web-site offers a short definition reminiscent of the others: "name of a people or tribe", thereby adding a further related term for an entity-type, *tribe*. It can be taken for granted that "name" means "proper name" here. More fully and defensibly, in reporting the work of its Terminology Group, ICOS defines an ethnonym as the "proper name of an ethnic group (a tribe, a folk, a clan etc.), or a member of this group, e.g. Italians, Bavarians, Croat, Frenchman, Zulu". This at least addresses the problem of defining *ethnicity* by acknowledging in parentheses a set of partly denotationally equivalent terms. ICOS adds a warning note: "Ethnonyms are not treated as proper names in some languages and by some scholars, e.g. *ingleses* in Spanish. According to some theories, ethnonyms are proper names both in plural and singular, in other theories, ethnonyms in the plural are proper names, in the singular appellatives". Algeo (1973, p. 77) accepts that such singulars are proper names, but calls them *secondary proper names*, on the grounds that they require definition (only) in terms of the related plural entity denoted by the *primary proper name* (his example: *Angle* 'one of the Germanic tribe of Angles'). We will agree

to settle the semantic point in this neat and satisfying way; others, such as Van Langendonck (2007), correctly point out that such names satisfy some grammatical criteria for appellatives, e.g. in respect of number and potential (in)definiteness.

The ICOS definition hints at a further problem. Among proper names, ethnonyms are atypical in being the names of groups of individuals and are therefore grammatically plural (though their morphology need not be explicit about this: in English *the Portuguese*, *the Nuer* — on the history of this matter see Tuite, 1995). The groups they denote are of individuals considered collectively, i.e. as a single entity (*The Maasai live in Kenya*, *The Maasai speak an Eastern Nilotic language*), and simultaneously of the same individuals considered as relevantly related individuals (*The Maasai are tall*); that is, these names have two applications, collective and individuated, and usage is often indeterminate between the two interpretations (*The Maasai are semi-nomadic*; arguably also the first example sentence above); compare Van Langendonck (2007, p. 160), who treats certain usages of individuated ethnonyms (e.g. *The Frenchmen arrived early…*) as appellative. This matter is hereby noted, but will not be pursued in the present paper.

As observed above, the question whether ethnonyms as ethnic denotators are or are not proper names could be a controversial one. In specialist literature, it has generally been settled in favour of the idea that they are proper, at least in their plural, group-denoting, form, although the capitalization conventions of the written forms of different languages might suggest otherwise (e.g. *les Anglais*, *de Engelsen*, *Anglicy*, *Енглези*, *na Sasanaigh*, *İngilizler*; versus *los ingleses*, *engelskmændene*, *englantilaiset*, *англичаните*, *anglai*, *az angolok*), to mention only some European examples. This difference is what ICOS's warning note (above) alludes to, but the note seems to suggest that capitalization is the key diagnostic of properhood in general, which cannot be right.[3] But do such different orthographic conventions show that the scholars who devised them espoused different theories of properhood? This could be an interesting question for historians of linguistics, but one which we cannot go into here. We leave this matter also aside in order to examine a more fundamental issue.

PROPERHOOD AND INTENSIONAL PROPERTIES

For linguists like the present writer who espouse a view of the nature of properhood deriving from the philosophy of J.S. Mill (Mill, 1843: §§1.2.1 ff.; Coates e.g. 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2019), these ethnic denotators raise an interesting and

---

[3] For a useful display of differing conventions on this and similar topics, see 'Capitalization of Wiktionary pages', https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Capitalization_of_Wiktionary_pages (accessed 10 December 2020).

deeper problem. A strict Millian approach dictates that if they are proper names, then they have an extension but no intension, i.e. they each denote a group of individuals having no common and unique (and therefore defining) set of characteristics apart from their group-name.

We will need to bring in certain concepts of sociocultural import. Some simplifying assumptions are made below, for the sake of argument in this short paper, about gender, ethnicity and other categories, in order to bring to the foreground the key point about the tension between scientific (linguistic) definition and language users' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes.

The following question must immediately arise: Is it true that groups of individuals denoted by ethnic terms (must) have no common defining characteristics, other than what is implied by traditionally obligatory grammatical gender marking (*Français*, *Françaises*), if that reflects natural sex/gender in the relevant language? That is, is it true that such groups of individuals (must) have no common essence?

INTENSION, ESSENCE AND STEREOTYPES

If one believes that ethnicities, however one defines the concept, have defining characteristics rather than being simply sociocultural constructs offering a label for a group of individuals, then the expressions designating them are not proper names, because any intension they possess will give rise to entailments, i.e. validly derived propositions that are necessarily true. Stereotypes amount to sources of such unscientific (default) entailments within some ethnoepistemology, or overgeneralizations that masquerade as real-world truths. There are many that are well known and persist as expressions amounting to institutionalized value judgements, from the mildest all the way down to ethnic slurs and pretexts for genocide, as with the following examples current or formerly current in Britain and elsewhere:

1. Germans are efficient and hard-working.
2. Black people/Blacks are musical and/or sexy.
3. The Maltese (and other Mediterranean peoples) are emotionally demonstrative or volatile.
4. The English people are emotionally cold.
5. Jews revere their mothers.
6. The Irish people have the gift of the gab (= are competent storytellers).
7. Poles are drunkards (at least to the French of Napoleon's time: *Il fallait être saoul comme un Polonais pour accomplir cela*).

Up to a point, some of these stereotypes may be harmless (if annoying), but others are not harmless at all; consider:

8. Chinese people are inscrutable or devious ("wily Orientals").
9. Black people/Blacks are lazy and untrustworthy.
10. Gypsies are thieves and deceitful or fickle.
11. Jews are swindlers or misers or (dangerously) clever or conspirators against the world order.

These unreflecting and often callous stereotypes, common currency of earlier centuries and still with us to some degree, are rejected as false generalizations by political liberals, and even by many people who would not be liberal on other matters. They will find them at best cringingly embarrassing and at worst dangerous. They are projections of individuals' characteristics universally onto ethnicities, and *ipso facto* false as generalizations.

That appears to mean that political liberals must accept that ethnic terms are proper names of the Millian sort: that is, that they license no such entailments (and indeed none of any sort; Coates 2006a, esp. 366–371). On the other hand anyone who accepts that some or any such ethnic terms really do license propositions corresponding to stereotypes like 1.–11. must also accept that they are not proper names of the Millian sort. Consider as an example:

12. [= 4.] English people are emotionally cold.
13. Jane is an English person.

If 12. and 13. are true, then as a matter of logic so is 14.:

14. Jane is emotionally cold.[4]

Indeed, a consequence of such intensional inflation can be seen in the deonymic use of some ethnonyms as common nouns with meanings related to the stereotypes (generally negative), such as, historically in English, *Corinthian* ʿprofligate idler', *Jew* ʿmiser', *Gypsy* ʿfickle person (esp. woman)', *Arab* ʿunruly or belligerent person', all evidenced in OED, and of course often written with a lower-case initial in those senses, as also in adjective or noun to verb conversions such as *to welsh* ʿto renege on paying out after a losing bet' or *to jew* ʿto swindle'.

This all means that a theoretical question in semantics and philosophical logic about what should pass for a linguistic or cognitive universal (ethnonyms either are or are not proper names) cannot be decided (if it can be at all) without taking into account the political views or the wider cultural assumptions or "truths" of

---

[4] In real-life situations, of course, this might well be understood probabilistically; the believer's discovery of a warm English person would be a surprise rather than a logical outrage. That is not the point, but we return to the matter of probabilism below.

the user of the terms involved. If stereotypes embody truths in any sense, then they are definitional, encoding part of an expression's intension, which undermines that expression's properhood. Do we then have to face the existence of "alternative truths" in onomastics as a would-be science?

Let us explore a possible other sort of intension, which has a special characteristic. For the political liberal, all of the following declarative statements must fail to be *universally*, *definitionally* true (even though they may be valid for a large number of the denotata of the ethnonym (in the narrow sense)):

15. Poles are (all and only the) people who live in Poland.[5]
16. Poles are (all and only the) people who speak Polish natively (or will be brought up by Polish-speakers to speak Polish as their first language) — perhaps roughly equivalent to the notion *Polish nationals*.
17. Poles are (all and only the) people with certain "blood" characteristics or genetic markers which can be branded Polish (the hypostatization of the family, the central fallacy of Romantic nationalism) — or are these, from a different political perspective, the *Polish nationals*?

The problems with contestable definitions of these types are obvious: where do they leave emigrants and temporary workers abroad, minorities, immigrants and refugees wishing to assimilate, and people of mixed ethnic heritage? And if none of them are valid, how else might one define *Pole*? Such definitional problems are hardly peculiar to onomastics, but their importance here is to provide context for an assessment of a particular notion in linguistics.

Are you a Pole if you have one non-Polish grandparent? Or just one Polish grandparent? The possibilities 15.–17. all assert that being a member of a particular ethnic group is an all-or-nothing question, however difficult it might be to underpin it genealogically. But history has been plagued with the idea that a person may be *more or less* a member of a particular group, for example that British citizens of Pakistani heritage may be not really, or be only ambivalently, British, or, disastrously, that Jews in 1930s Germany were not real or entire Germans. This idea was enshrined in anthroponymy when many Turks, being obliged to choose a surname by the Surname Law (Soyadı Kanunu) of 21 June 1934, chose such names as *Öztürk* ʿoriginal or authentic Turkʾ, *Özkan* ʿoriginal or authentic

---

[5] Disregarding the complication of whether we are considering Poland defined by its present political borders, its past political borders, defined as only a geographical entity between 1775 and 1919, or in some other way. The notion *Poland* has had in recent centuries an ethnogeographical ("area where (predominantly) Poles live") and clearly geopolitical definitions ("area ruled by certain Polish aristocrats", "area within borders established by the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements").

[i.e. Turkish] blood' to distinguish themselves from people of non-Turkish or not fully Turkish ethnicity within the post-Ottoman national but secular Turkish state (Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, etc.), or to claim such authenticity for themselves, whether truthfully in genetic terms or not. It is important that, in early-20th-century essentialist racial theory, one's status was deemed to be fixed, "in the blood", but there is an undercurrent implying that those who fretted about race were worried about a person's allegiance or potential for treachery towards the state or towards the supposed values of the people of that state as much as about establishing the "objective" value of a person's "blood".

Given the difficulty of defining *Poles* for use as an ethnonym, but bearing in mind its emotional and practical importance, a way forward must be found. Either one accepts some kind of intensional definition which undermines its properhood, or one looks for an alternative compatible with Mill's view which preserves it. Or possibly both, yielding different analyses for different usage-patterns, but not some flabby compromise; for neo-Millians it must be an all-or-nothing matter, especially if being *proper* or *common* is a matter of distinct cognitive processing modes (as suggested by Coates, 2005) — no compromise is possible!

There is a way which offers a sort of intension to ethnonyms whilst avoiding the pitfalls of essentialism. Alternative possible definitions of the second-order ethnonym *Pole* (what Van Langendonck would regard as appellative) might include:[6]

18. A Pole is a person who self-identifies as one of the group called *Poles*.
19. A Pole is a person whose ancestors self-identify/identified as one of the group called *Poles*.

That is, the defining characteristic of a Pole is personal adherence to or adoption of a pre-established category or label (a nominalist position), and professing inclusion in or explicit allegiance to it, irrespective of their reasons for doing so and irrespective of the pressures which lead them to do so, which may differ among individuals. If either 18. or 19. is accepted as true, that raises no problem for the Millian orientation, at least superficially. *Pole* is a second-order proper name — we are in the dark hinterland of Algeo's definition, accepted above, which avoids considering on what basis one "is a" Pole — and *Poles* is a first-order proper name. The extension of *Pole* includes any individual who agrees to be identified as a member of the group denoted by *Poles*, meaning that the denotation entails nothing further about the person(s) making the self-identification.

---

[6] One of the features of being a second-order name is its being subject to an explicitly marked definite/indefinite distinction in those languages which manifest it; Polish is of course not one of those while English is.

The hazard on the escape route, of course, is that more is involved than self-labelling. For most analysts, whether lay or professional, some kind of epistemic warrant (justification or validation) for the claim would be required. Few if any people would accept that I could be or become an ethnic Pole simply by declaring that I am one (18.; we return to 19. below). But what could such a justification be, if not one of 15.–17. or something of the same kind? To the extent that 15.–17. are conventional understandings and therefore quasi-definitional shared beliefs, they are indefeasible, and therefore to be understood like entailments rather than implicatures. We are therefore still faced with the problem of an essentialist component to the definition of *ethnonym* which not even a political liberal can avoid, except in a manner to be treated *below* (*Resolving the issue of essentialism*).

DEMONYMS AS DENOTATIONALLY DISTINCT

The above argument relates to ethnonyms in the narrow sense. *Poles* may of course also be used as a *demonym*, and for that sense or usage the definition in 20. may be uncontroversial.

> 20. Poles are (all and only the) people who are entitled to carry identity papers or passports issued by the Republic of Poland.

I can justifiably declare myself to be a Pole if I have the epistemic warrant provided by possession of suitable documentation issued by the Polish state.

TAKING STOCK

The upshot is that narrow-sense ethnonyms such as *Poles* may vary, or at least be uncertain, as regards properhood: (i) according to the stance of the analyst towards supposedly shared characteristics of groups of individuals — not a purely epistemological position, but one embroiled in a wider network of cultural beliefs that pass for truths; and (ii) accordingly, ethnonyms *may not be* proper names, even for would-be consistent Millians, but *may be*, if we can resolve the issue of essentialism in relation to stereotypical attributes.

Demonyms, on the other hand, are "second-order" proper names ("third-order" in the case of their singular forms), for the following reason: their definition *must* involve, but *only* involves, establishing a relationship with a named geopolitical entity: *Poles* <> *Poland*. Normally these names are morphologically related, though not in any simple and regular way, at least in English (data for example in

Shaw, 1983, *passim*), and there are occasional exceptions: *Dutch*(*wo*)*man*, *Dutch people*, *the Dutch* <> *the Netherlands* or *Holland*. But I will take their necessary connection with a named entity as sufficient to establish that they have no intension outside the onymic system of the relevant language, and are therefore indeed proper names. A charge of sleight-of-hand may be entered here, but I ask for a generous hearing.

The lack of perfect congruity in the semantics of ethnonyms and demonyms regarding their intensions and suitable epistemic warrant for them raises problems for the many names which may serve as both, and the relationship — the alignment or the lack of it for a particular individual — between the two may accordingly be a politicized hot potato.

RESOLVING THE ISSUE OF ESSENTIALISM

Can we resolve the issue of possible essentialism in the meaning of ethnonyms and its consequence, namely that they *may* license characteristics which amount to an intension, and therefore *may* not be proper? We need to proceed carefully. What is the effect of treating stereotypes as probabilistic (as everyday experience and lack of bigotry would dictate), despite their universal form and their constraining cultural function? Much of the above problem disappears if we simply disregard the (implicit or explicit) universal quantification in examples such as 15.–17. and understand them as, for example:

> 17′. Most Poles are people with certain "blood" characteristics or genetic markers.

Accordingly, possession of such characteristics or markers is not definitional for Poles, and 17′. evidently does not license entailments of the kind in 21.:

> 21. Some arbitrary Pole (say Jana Pietrowska from Zgorzelec) has certain "blood" characteristics or genetic markers.

Such an interpretative move away from universal quantification is clearly a trope, because stereotypes are expressed in absolute terms, but in what direction does the move proceed? Are stereotypes which are expressed as "absolute truths" required to be interpreted in context, i.e. pragmatically, as loose non-definitional generalizations, or is it a semantic principle that certain loose non-definitional generalizations can be encoded rhetorically as absolute and definitional?

I submit that that cannot be answered without reference to individual speakers' beliefs, and therefore that for some individuals (some) ethnonyms do indeed

have intensions (and are therefore not strictly, logically, proper) whilst for some individuals they do not (and are therefore strictly, logically, proper). To deal with this, we need to accept that knowledge is grounded in a belief system, that there exists a plurality of belief systems, and that to qualify as a fact within a belief system a proposition does not necessarily require epistemic warrant[7] — a position cogently defended by Hazlett (2010, pp. 502–503). What would happen if we insisted that stereotypes lacked epistemic warrant? That would be to privilege a universalist, "scientific", understanding of the matter at the expense of some common usage. We may prioritize objective, evidence-based knowledge for certain purposes, and for many purposes it would be unethical to do otherwise, and contrary to the Enlightenment spirit of scientific endeavour ("Truth is One"), but we do not have to when trying to understand the nature of "factuality" in everyday usage.

There is an escape clause by which a stricter universal version of the Millian viewpoint[8] can be defended, i.e. that names license no entailments. The escape from the difficulties discussed above is made possible if we foreground the relevance of *allegiance* for ethnonymic identification as well as for demonymic, and if we can find a way of accepting that allegiance does not have to be underpinned by essentialism. If we return to 18. and 19.,

18. A Pole is a person who self-identifies as one of the group called *Poles*.
19. A Pole is a person whose ancestors self-identify/identified as one of the group called *Poles*.

we will note that there is an important but non-binding relationship between them that we call *tradition*, as expressed in 19. which provides the epistemic warrant for 18. Tradition provides the epistemic warrant for self-identification and the expression of allegiance using a particular ethnonym, i.e. tradition in the relevant belief system is "sufficient reason for holding a particular belief".

Compatibility with the Millian position can be achieved, and expressed by espousing generalized forms of 18. and 19., placing second-order ethnonyms in the same set as other group-belonging or allegiance terms, whether indicating religious allegiance, political allegiance, or even allegiance to a football club (Roman Catholic, Sunni Muslim, Buddhist, Parsee; Christian Democrat, Gaulliste, Sandinista, Menshevik, Nazi, Trumpist; Gashead [supporter of Bristol Rovers Football Club]). Accordingly, first-order ethnonyms are the names of allegiance

---

[7] Understood simply as "a sufficient reason or justification to hold a particular belief", the working definition adopted by Raj (2016, p. 101).

[8] A scientific, not a lay, viewpoint, and one which does not have non-scientific counterparts or competitors.

groups, and members of allegiance groups have no *necessary* attributes in common apart from their allegiance to such a named group.[9]

The concepts underlying the term *ethnonym*, such as *ethnicity*, *race*, *tribe*, (*a*) *people* and so on have this in common: that in agreeing that one is a member of one, one generally commits to a belonging or allegiance which transcends the approval of either the speaker/writer or the listener/hearer/reader. In saying

> 21. I feel ashamed to be a Brit.

one concedes nevertheless that one is a Brit (whichever technical term in the set related to *ethnonym* or *demonym* one would use to categorize *Brit*). *Be ashamed* (*of/that/*infinitive clause) is a factive predicate, that is, it presupposes the truth of its complement (following the notion of factivity initiated in linguistics by Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1968), which works broadly, but whose detailed applicability has attracted dissenting views within philosophy; see papers from Karttunen, 1971 to Hazlett, 2010).

It would be useful to have a general technical term for ʿproper name of a belonging or allegiance groupʾ. That would obviate the need to have predetermined, perhaps controversial, definitions for subtypes of allegiance group such as *race*, *tribe* or (*a*) *people*, and thereby contribute to removing the difficulty alluded to by Koopman (2016). Since we onomasticians habitually fall back on Greek when labelling a new type of *onym*, I propose the term *pistonym* for this overarching concept, from Greek πίστη, among whose senses is ʿallegianceʾ.[10] If one draws attention to the fact that the word has more general senses including ʿfaithʾ, this should not be a problem; *Catholics*, *Buddhists*, *Shi'ites*, *Mormons* and

---

[9] There is an interesting further issue here. Do the "names" of ideological movements of a religious or political sort carry intensional meanings like:

> Roman Catholicism (necessarily) includes belief in the Transubstantiation.
> Christian Democracy (necessarily) includes espousal of a form of market economics.

That would mean the ideology-"names" fail to be names of the Millian sort. And if that is the case, do those intensional meanings carry over to the names of their adherent groups?

> Roman Catholics (necessarily) believe in the Transubstantiation.
> Christian Democrats (necessarily) espouse a form of market economics.

That would clearly have the effect of challenging the position on allegiance adopted in this paper. But rather, these ideology-"names" should be treated as analogues of non-names such as *agnosticism* and *socialism*, *agnostic* and *socialist*.

[10] *Hypotagonym*, from ʿυποταγή ʿattachment, allegianceʾ, might be better, but I cannot envisage it attracting supporters.

so on are equally pistonyms.[11] A pistonym involves any term *X* where "I am (an) X-singular" means "I have allegiance to (the) X-plural" and *X-plural* is a proper name.

We as onomasticians do not have to be bound by arcane points of theology to decide whether a group is a religion or a sect, or whether Isma'ilis are "real" Muslims, or Anabaptists are "true" Christians, any more than we have to decide whether Bosniaks are "really" Serbs or Catalans "truly" Spaniards. If people choose to self-identify in these ways, that is a matter for them (subject to resolution of the difficulty of essentialism and its epistemic warrant presented above). We as onomasticians deal simply in *names* for allegiance groups. If we adopt this notion and term, difficulties with the term *ethnonym* and its denotation are a sideshow. The "lack of consensus on the types of entities described by ethnonyms" identified by Koopman loses its importance; the structural tension between ethnonymic and demonymic applications of some name disappears or is at least downgraded, as does the question of whether *Jews* is primarily an ethnic, cultural or religious designator, or the political question of whether the definitions of *Indians* and *Hindus* "should" align (an example of the "hot potato" referred to above). The question of whether a particular pistonym is ethnically- or religiously-focused and whether it is controversial is secondary, and not a matter for technical definition within onomastics.

The new concept/term has the potential to be useful. During the project resulting in the "Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland" (Hanks, Coates and McClure, 2016), the researchers had to confront a categorization problem. It was clear that some family names could be assigned a particular linguistic origin, typically associated with a particular ethnicity (most notably English, Norman (French) and Irish), whilst others could be associated with a particular ethnicity but not a specific language (notably Jewish, some typically Jewish names being German or Yiddish and others, for example, Hebrew or Portuguese). Muslim names, whilst typically though not exclusively formed in Arabic, were not defined by association with one particular ethnicity at all (Arabs, Mandé, Indonesians, Pakistanis, a substantial group of African Americans, and so on). The research team took the view that it was clearly desirable in an etymological and historical work to label names as falling into one or more of these categories, but it gave rise to conceptual difficulties, and to the resultant small practical problem of how to label the database field in which such terms as *English*, *Portuguese*,

---

[11] There are words for allegiance groups that are clearly not, or not clearly, proper names (*freethinkers*, *atheists*, *conservatives*, *Londoners*, *Welshmen*, *Italians*), and there is room to discuss whether the denotation of *pistonym* should be extended to include them, or whether a contrasting term is necessary or desirable.

Jewish or *Hindu* should be entered. In the end, the dictionary as published simply uses the categories without labelling the field at all — names may be, for example, English or Jewish. If some such term as *pistonym* had been available with an agreed definition, we probably would not have used the unfamiliar term in the published work. But we would probably have felt more comfortable about a conceptual grouping of rather disparate notions (origin within a certain linguistic community or a certain ethnic, religious or other cultural community) under the single notion of belonging/allegiance, especially since allegiance is at least in principle a matter of individual choice, though in practice constrained by other factors that we all know only too well, including family pressure, peer pressure and political-administrative pressure; or indeed by tradition, which may subsume some of these. But there is no necessary link between one's allegiance(s) and any essential factor such as one's DNA.

* * *

This discussion is intended to be something more than a discussion of an obscure and peripheral technicality, but an honest attempt to harmonize some of the competing claims and assumptions of philosophical logic and an anthropologically-inclined linguistics, even if difficulties remain. It leads to a terminological suggestion and offers a "metalinguistic reflection" in defence of that "new ordering of onomastic terminology" required by the Polish scholars quoted at the top of the article.

REFERENCES

Algeo, J. (1973). *On Defining the Proper Name*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
Anderson, J. (2007). *The Grammar of Names*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Brendler, A., & Brendler, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Namenarten und ihre Erforschung*. Hamburg: BAAR.
Cieślikowa, A., Czopek-Kopciuch, B. (2006[2011]). The old and the new in onomastic studies: The Polish experience. *Onoma*, *41*, 271–294.
Coates, R. (2005). A speculative psycholinguistic model of onymization. *Quaderni internazionali di Rivista Italiana di Onomastica*. *1*: *Naming the World: From Common Nouns to Proper Names*, 3–13.
Coates, R. (2006a). Properhood. *Language*, *82*(2), 356–382.
Coates, R. (2006b/2011). Some consequences and critiques of the pragmatic theory of properhood. *Onoma*, *41*, 27–44.
Coates, R. (2007). A strictly Millian approach to the definition of the proper name. *Mind and Language*, *24*(4), 433–444. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0017.2009.01369.x
Coates, R. (2014). We are surrounded by onymies: Relations among names, name-types, and terminological categories. In J. Tort Donada & M. Montagut (Eds.), *Els noms en la vida quotidiana. Actes del XXIV Congrés Internacional de Ciències Onomàstiques (ICOS), secció 1* (pp. 6–13). Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.

C o a t e s, R. (2019). The meaning of names: a defence of the pragmatic theory of properhood (TPTP) addressed to Van Langendonck, Anderson, Colman and McClure. *Onoma*, *52*, 7–26. https://doi.org/10.34158/ONOMA.52/2017/1

C z o p e k - K o p c i u c h, B. (2004). Nick — nowa kategoria antroponimiczna? [Nick — a new anthroponymic category?]. In K. Michalewski (Ed.), *Współczesne odmiany języka narodowego* [Present Varieties of the National Language] (pp. 106–111). Łódź: Wydawnictwo UŁ.

C z o p e k - K o p c i u c h, B. (2019). Once more about the need to harmonize onomastic terminology. *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska*, *37*(1), 83–90. https://doi.org/10.17951/ff.2019.37.1.83-90

G ó r n y, H. (2019). Polish anthroponomastic terminology — towards systematization and normalization. *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska 37*(1), 105–117. https://doi.org/10.17951/ff.2019.37.1.105-117

H a n k s, P., C o a t e s, R., & M c C l u r e, P. (Eds.). (2016). *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

H a z l e t t, A. (2010). The myth of factive verbs. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *80*(3), 497–522.

H o u g h, C., & I z d e b s k a, D. (Eds.). (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

K a r t t u n e n, L. (1971). Some observations on factivity. *Papers in Linguistics*, *4*(1), 55–69.

K i p a r s k y, P., & K i p a r s k y, C. (1970). Fact. In M. Bierwisch & K.E. Heidolph (Eds.), *Progress in Linguistics* (pp. 143–173). The Hague: Mouton.

K o o p m a n, A. (2016). Ethnonyms. In C. Hough & D. Izdebska (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming* (pp. 251–262). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

M i l l, J.S. (1843). *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*. (Vols. 1–2. 1st ed.). London: John W. Parker.

R a á t z, J. (2011). Nick as self-attributed name. *Nouvelle Revue d'Onomastique*, *53*, 183–209.

R a j, K. (2016). Epistemic warrant for ethical beliefs in relation to living freely and patriarchal systems of oppression. *Res Cogitans 7*(1). https://doi.org/10.7710/2155-4838.1151

R ü b e k e i l, L. (2004). Stammes- und Völkernamen. In A. Brendler & S. Brendler (Hrsg.), *Namenarten und ihre Erforschung* (pp. 743–772). Hamburg: BAAR.

S h a w, P. (1983). *The Major Derivatives from Place-Names in English and German* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

T u i t e, K. (1995). The declension of ethnonyms in English. In J. Ahlers, L. Bilmes, J.S. Guenter, B.A. Kaiser & J. Namkunkg (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: General Session and Parasession on Historical Issues in Sociolinguistics/Social Issues in Historical Linguistics* (pp. 491–502). https://doi.org/10.3765/bls.v21i1.1420

V a n L a n g e n d o n c k, W. (2007). *Theory and Typology of Proper Names*. Berlin–New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

SUMMARY

In this paper I reflect on whether ethnonyms and demonyms can appropriately be considered proper names at all from the semantic perspective, and if so, on what basis. I believe the answer is yes, perhaps unsurprisingly, but there are troublesome conceptual tensions to overcome in the relation between logic and linguistics. Nevertheless an understanding of the difficulties can be constructive, and in this case it lead to a proposal for a terminological innovation that has useful consequences.