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Names between invention and convention

Naming practices among mixed families in Iceland

Imena med invencijo in konvencijo

Prakse poimenovanja pri mešanih družinah na Islandiji

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Izvleček

V nalogi se ukvarjam z vprašanjem osebnih imen ter patronimov in matronimov na Islandiji. Imena umeščam v širši kontekst jezikovnih praks, politik in ideologij, ki so jih ključno zaznamovale narodnobuditeljske težnje. Islandščina, islandska imena in sistem patronimov so igrali pomembno vlogo pri nacionalizaciji kulture. Diskurz čistosti in potrebe po ohranjanju in zaščiti sega tako v sfero kulture – predvsem formalnih in neformalnih regulacij glede jezika in imen – kot v sfero narave in okolja. Jezikovni protekcionizem, predvsem na področju zakonskega omejevanja osebnih imen, sproža na Islandiji številne javne polemike. V nalogi predstavim nekaj tovrstnih medijsko izpostavljenih primerov, v nadaljevanju pa se posvetim praksam poimenovanja otrok v mešanih družinah na Islandiji. Te – zanje velja nekoliko manj strogo omejevanje izbire imen – predstavljajo zanimivo liminalno skupino, nacionalna identiteta obeh staršev namreč pomembno vpliva na izbiro imen. Etnografsko gradivo, zbrano med terenskim delom na Islandiji, kaže, da pri poimenovanju starši upoštevajo dvojno naravo imena – to posameznika hkrati individualizira in ga umešča v številne skupnosti (družinsko, etnično, nacionalno, jezikovno). Tovrstna dvojna vloga imena se zrcali tudi v praksah poimenovanja, kjer starši lovijo ravnovesje med inventivnostjo in upoštevanjem družbenih konvencij.

Ključne besede: osebna imena, antropologija imen, Islandija, otroci, mešane družine

Abstract

In the thesis I bring forth the question of personal names and patronyms/matronyms in Iceland. I place personal names in the wider context of language practices, politics and ideologies. They were strongly influenced by nation-building tendencies. Icelandic language, names and the system of patronyms have been playing an important role in the 'nationalization of culture'. The discourses of purity and the need to preserve and protect, concern both: the sphere of culture – especially formal and informal regulations about the language and names – and the sphere of nature and environment. Language protectionism, mostly on the realm of legislation on personal names, triggers numerous public polemics in Iceland - I present some of those cases, exposed by the media. I continue with the naming practices among mixed families in Iceland. As less rigid name regulations apply for them, they represent an interesting liminal group – the national identities of each parent influence the decision for the name. Ethnographic work I collected during my fieldwork in Iceland shows the parents' awareness of the double nature of a name –

it individuates and collectivises the person at the same time. This double role of a name reflects also in the naming practices, as parents balance between inventiveness and recognition of the social conventions.

Key words: personal names, anthropology of names, Iceland, children, mixed families

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1 Introduction

We inhabit a named world. From planets to pets – and everything in between, is bestowed with a name. Anything that a human can have a relation with, is named. And anything that a human can have a relation with, can be of anthropologist's interest. Of course there are significant differences between proper and common names. In this writing we will focus mainly on proper names. Proper names have been the object of numerous influential philosophical works (Russell 1911; Frege 1952; Derrida 1967; Mill 1974; Kripke 1980; Plato 1997). The questions of names and naming were touched by anthropology as well, but they are often found scattered in ethnographies, seldomly being their main focus. In contemporary anthropology, the issue of names and naming has been a micro field. It is somehow puzzling why it did not get more attention. The cornerstone of the field in the last decades, however, has been the volume *Anthropology of names and naming* (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006), which is also one of the the main references in this thesis. Names and naming have the potential to put a new light in questions of ethnic and national belonging, gender issues, personhood studies, kinship studies, linguistic anthropology, etc. In the context of Slovenian ethnology and cultural anthropology, few authors have done research on names and naming among their other interests (Hudales 1994; Telban 1995; Kotnik 1996; Makarovič 2001; Ivančič Kutin 2006; Smerdel 2009; Piko-Rustia 2012; Hazler 2013 etc).

Having a name is a culturally universal phenomenon even though the manifestations of it are numerous and vary greatly. We cannot reconstruct the past to the level of knowing about the personal names of the pre-literate societies. It is believed, however, that the names have developed together with the language itself. The first personal name, the first person who became immortal by his name is surprisingly not a king, a chieftain, a priest or another member of the ruling class. The history is way more profane. It is assumed to be Kushim, an accountant in Mesopotamia approximately 5000 years ago (Harari 2014: 131).

The omnipresence of names is striking. The question: 'Who are you?' is answered with a personal name. So are we our names? What is the relation between the name and the person? Names are usually given to us by others and they will outlive us. They can reveal numerous information about our ethnic or national identity, gender, position in the kin, martial status, religious belonging, etc. Inscribing of names marks the absence of the name holder. They have thus a strong commemorative function. Names classify, collectivize and individuate at the same

time. People who have the right to give a name to a newborn, consider both the individuating and the classifying aspect of names. Naming is therefore done on the thin line between invention and convention.

But in order to keep the intentional part of naming within a certain frame, in most Western societies names are limited by laws. The extent of the state involvement vary considerably. The USA is known for its liberal naming laws, while some countries have introduced lists of approved names. Iceland is one of them. Its naming regulations often cause heated public debates. In this thesis naming policies and practices are placed within the field of language ideologies. We show how Icelandic culture has been nationalized during the nation building processes in the 19th and 20th century in which the Icelandic language has been perceived as a crucial part of culture. Finally, as names are a significant part of the language, the regulations about names and naming practices should be seen through the optic of cultural preservation and protection.

The structure of this thesis follows this reasoning. We begin with a short historical overview, which emphasizes selected facts that are important for the following chapters. We continue with the nationalistic movement in Iceland, when the self-image of the island and its people was constructed. The perceptions of culture and nature, of homogeneity, uniqueness and relatedness of Icelanders are discussed. The 'purity discourses' are traced within the notions of gender, class and, crucially, the language. Icelandic kinship is introduced, but as we place names within the language practices, the latter are emphasized more strongly. We proceed with the presentation of the Icelandic naming system. The second part begins with the overview of some more theoretical aspects of names. It brings forth the examples from the world of literature. The following chapters link various anthropological literature concerning names and naming with my own fieldwork which was done in Reykjavík from March to June 2015. I focused on mixed families living in Iceland. With the term mixed families I refer to those families in which one parent is of Icelandic and the other of non-Icelandic origin. I focused on seventeen families with which I conducted semi-structured interviews in English. In some cases I was in contact only with one parent and in some cases with the whole family. The families are of very different social background, but all of them live in greater Reykjavík area or the nearby town of Keflavík. All of them, therefore, live, work and go to school in an urban environment. The non-Icelandic parents (I took into account the country of origin, not the citizenship status) are from the following countries: Denmark, Germany, France, Poland, Spain, Albania, Russia, Nepal, Japan, the USA/India, Canada, Nicaragua, Morocco and South Africa. Besides, I interviewed a

member of the parliament who submitted a bill to change the law of personal names. I was in contact with some organizers and teachers of Móðurmál, an organisation of language classes for children of foreign or partly foreign background in Reykjavík. I attended some activities for foreigners living in Iceland and I followed the media coverage available in English on the broader topics of a) names and naming policies in Iceland and b) immigration issues and foreigners living in the country. The main research group I focused on are mixed families as they represent an interesting 'grey zone' – their cultural and social position is often liminal. They are neither entirely 'Icelandic' nor 'foreign'. All of the mixed families I was in contact with are aware of the children's 'double identity' – the term is often used by the interlocutors themselves and should be taken as emic. They actively encourage their bilingualism and cultural knowledge about both countries, starting with children's stories from the early age on. We took all those facts into account and placed them within the specific context of Icelandic naming regulations, which are considerably less rigid when it comes to foreign and mixed families. The main research question was how do mixed families choose the names for their children. As the material I collected turned out to be richer and more rewarding, I decided to include the broader perspectives on names and naming of those children. The following chapters thus bring forth the topics such as, firstly the naming as a ritual of passage and a process of deciding, secondly, namesakes, through which children are placed within the net of family relations, thirdly, the phenomenon of referring and addressing and lastly, nicknames. As cultural practices should not be seen as if they emerged in vacuum, everyone of these chapters begins with some ethnographic data in cross-cultural perspective. Final remarks try to distil the thick ethnographic data and point towards the future challenges within the researched field.

2 Historical overview

Iceland was discovered by Norwegian settlers in the late 9th century. The precise year is assumed to be 874 AD and the process of settlement took approximately sixty years. Norwegians left their territories due to numerous reasons, but an important one was that Norway was at the time divided into small kingdoms. King Harald wanted to unify and centralize Norway. Some of his opponents moved to the uninhabited island of Iceland, together with their families, livestock and some Irish slaves. *Landnamabok* (The Book of Settlement), written in the first half of the 12th century, describes the settlement period, the 430 settlers, their kin and descendants, the locations of their settlements and some notable events. By the 930 *Alþingi*, the parliament, was founded where chieftains had both legislative and judicial power, while the executive power was in the hand of the people. Christianity was brought to the island towards the end of the tenth century, mainly through the influence of Olaf Tryggvason, the king of Norway. In 1262, after turbulent years, they submitted to the Norwegian king to bring peace to the country. The period of independence – between 930 and 1262 is referred to as *Commonwealth* in Icelandic history. The famous Icelandic Sagas were written in the period between about 1100 until 1350. The Sagas “mainly tell of people who lived in the period from the settlement until after the acceptance of Christianity in 1000” (Ísberg 2010: 34). In 1380 Norway and Denmark were unified and Iceland became subject to Denmark. This lasted until 1944. However, Icelanders obtained home rule in 1904 and sovereignty in 1918 but they shared the Danish Monarchy until World War II. When the war broke out Iceland declared neutrality. On 17th of June 1944 Iceland became a republic. In the Icelandic narrative centuries of being under a foreign crown are seen as times of degradation, poverty and natural disasters. In 1940 the British forces invaded Iceland to establish a military base there. One year later they were replaced by the United States military forces, which obtained the base in Keflavík in Reykjanes peninsula until 2006¹. In after-war years Iceland received the most Marshall Aid *per capita* of any European country. Between 1950s and mid 1970s Iceland and Great Britain had a series of militarized disputes over the fishery limites referred to as Cod Wars. From 1950s until 2008 Iceland experienced a financial growth which ended with a banking crises and a collapse of the national economy.

Soon after Iceland became a sovereign state, the first law on citizenship was passed in 1919. The main principle for citizenship was based on *jus soli* principle. This principle recognized the

¹ The US armed forces withdrew by 1947 but returned in 1951.

right to obtain citizenship to those, who are born in the certain state. In 1952, some years after Iceland became a republic, a new law on citizenship passed. “The principle of jus soli was taken out and jus sanguinis became more important, that is the right to citizenship through family and blood ties” (Ísberg 2010: 24).

3 Notes on Icelandic Nationalism

During the 19th century, nationalistic ideas spread in Europe. Numerous nations, which belonged to larger empires, started with nation-building tendencies. In this period, cultural traditions were invented to serve emerging state elites in Europe (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Those invented traditions were instituted to instill nationalistic sentiments by showing continuity with the past. Icelandic nationalism and independence movement “were part of the general restructuring of the European state system, though it was shaped by local conditions” (Durrenberger 1996: 178). In Nordic countries, nationalisation processes emerged especially among those nations which did not have the state sovereignty, namely Iceland, Norway, Finland and the Faroe Islands. Among Icelandic nationalists, the writings of the German poet and thinker Johann Gottfried Herder had profound impact. “Herder was critical to the vision that humans and nature were opposed to each other and that humans could create themselves and political units through their own will” (Björnsdóttir 1996: 108). He argued that humankind “was an inherent part of nature, and human life, spirit, and consciousness rested within nature, the 'maternal' body” (ibid). Nature was therefore seen as a co-creator of nations. The country's unique natural characteristics influenced the culture, language and history. According to Herder, nature determines the national spirit, *der Volksgeist*. Those ideas shaped nationalistic movements across Europe, including Iceland.

At the turn of the 19th century, Iceland was a small underdeveloped Danish colony with less than one hundred thousand people. Sigríður Matthíasdóttir argues that “obtaining home rule in 1904 caused a change in the national consciousness of the Icelanders” which was influenced by Herder (in Ísberg 2010: 35). Matthíasdóttir claims that there were two themes in Icelandic nationalism.

One is the idea of the restoration of the Commonwealth or the Golden Age, which was the ideological base on which Icelandic independence struggle was built in the early 20th century

and the other one is the biological nature of Icelandic nation which is similar to a living organism formed by the Icelandic language. (in Ísberg 2010: 35)

We must, however, keep in mind, that those nationalistic ideas were developed and implemented not by uneducated farmers, but by the elites. They “developed distinctive images of what Iceland was and what it was to be Icelandic: historians and legalists developed arguments of law; folklorists collected, purified, and published an Icelandic tradition; and linguists showed Icelandic to be the original language of the northern peoples” (Durrenberger 1996: 179). The dichotomy of we/others has been strongly articulated.

The seemingly direct link to the glorious past was invented. The Sagas were playing an important role in this process, as their glory “was held up as a model for modern Icelanders and certain celebrations were revived to emphasize the connection” (Durrenberger 1996: 182). Icelandic Sagas are prose stories which are based on historical events of the period called the Saga Age (from Settlement until early 11th century). They were written some centuries later, mostly in 13th and 14th centuries. The immense importance of those old manuscripts in Iceland was maybe illuminated most clearly during the Second World War. When the British Army invaded the island, one of the first security steps was to remove manuscripts and children out of Reykjavík. “Even though the present would be 'destroyed', Iceland's past and future would be saved” (Björnsdóttir 1989: 108).

3.1 Cocktail parties or family reunions?

I trace the interest in genealogy in Iceland to the lack of trees. Because of the sparsity of trees, people opt for family trees and find themselves forests among their forebears.
(Einar Már Guðmundsson: Angels of the Universe)

Early manuscripts, especially *Islendigabok* (Book of Icelanders) and *Landmanabok* (Book of Settlement), give an overview of the first inhabitants of Iceland. Its 21st century 'version' is available as a public online database, also called *Islendigabok*. It maps relations between around 300,000 living Icelanders and 420,000 ancestors, which means “almost all Icelanders who have lived since 1703” (Heijnen 2010: 308). But the difference between the two *Islendigaboks* is more profound. While the old one maps relatedness between Icelanders in narratives, the new one visualizes relatedness through shared DNA (Heijnen 2010: 309). The latter one thus creates a strong connection between Icelandic national and genetic community, between culture

and nature. “In this light, the Icelandic nation is not imagined, in Benedict Anderson's meaning of the word (Anderson 1991), but made concrete and visible by DNA mapping” (Heijnen 2010: 309). Gísli Pálsson argues that “DNA analyses and molecular biology have given genetic relatedness a renewed, supreme status, allowing little room for cultural and social construction. The implication here is that relatedness is simply connection by birth – something traceable through a genealogical tree” (2002: 340). The idea of relatedness of all Icelanders is by no means a new one, it was implemented already in the 19th century nationalistic movement. It was a forceful argument, claiming that Icelanders are related by blood to the first families, who “braved the dangers of the unknown, rather than lose their independence” (Heijnen 2010: 310). Nowadays, tracing genetic lines as far back as one can is a popular activity (ibid). Pálsson lightly observes that “[S]uddenly all cocktail parties have been turned into family reunions” (2007: 76). How persistently excluding these practice and ideology are to a growing foreign-born population in Iceland does not need to be pointed out specifically.

As the Icelandic society is ethnically relatively homogenous, especially compared to, let's say, the central European, the island has been an interesting site of biomedical experimenting and personal genomics (Pálsson 2012: S187). The Genetics Committee at the University of Iceland has been established already in 1966. It focused on “the recording in one place on punch cards various genetic information on Icelanders” (Genetics Committee 1974: 2, cited in Pálsson 2012: S188). Their database was “an indirect precursor to the key projects of deCODE genetics” (Pálsson 2012: S188). DeCODE is a company based in Reykjavík, which offers personal genomics analyses. It is able to “draw on several kinds of assets, in particular large-scale efforts over several years to discover the genetic factors involved in common diseases and extensive genomic anthropological work on human populations and their migrations, ancestry, and mixing” (ibid). Those technologies which enables individuals to trace back their ancestry, are becoming both “a family affair and a global concern” (Pálsson 2012: S190). But the collectivity which lies in between the family and the global, is the national or ethnic one, and such a personal genomics can act as a scientific (or pseudo scientific) counterpart for imagined communities. Pálsson similarly points out that “it is important to keep in mind, however, that the genome is not just a personal issue but also a matter of cultural identity and 'ethnic' belonging” (2012: S193).

At this point we shall return to 19th century nation-building processes. As culture with ancient manuscripts was used to strengthen national sentiments, so was nature, engraved into landscapes. “Images of a heroic past were welded to the landscape of contemporary farming in

a rhetoric in which Icelanders could imagine a community stretching unbroken from the glorious days of the medieval past to the present” (Durrenberger 1996: 179). Both, the sphere of culture and the sphere of nature served to construct the feeling of an unbroken arch from the Commonwealth times to modernity.

The metaphor of pureness and cleanness was implemented in the romantic national ideologies both for Icelandic nature and environment and for language and people (Einarsson 1996: 216). Icelandic culture and language were perceived as rooted in a particular natural environment, which was different than the environment of the Danish colonizers (Pálsson 1995: 133) The analogy of language and nature, that both need to be protected from pollution, is still present in public discourse. Pálsson argues that in the case of Icelandic public discourse, nature, gender, nationalism and purity are interrelated into a complex unity (ibid).

Another important factor in Icelandic nationalism is the myth of uniqueness² (Durrenberger 1996: 185), focusing on Iceland as being an isolated island, inhabited by a small and homogenous population, which was able to cope with natural harshness.

“Icelanders readily suggest that their history has been one of difficult struggles against the sea, volcanoes, earthquakes, the weather, the topography, and isolation. They describe the 'we', bound together by survival against natural forces on the island, as opposed to the 'they' outside social forces of colonial rule by first Norway and then Denmark and the cod wars with Great Britain over fishing rights. The image of David and Goliath, the small but successful warrior resisting the foreign giant, comes to mind.” (Sizemore and Walker 1996: 201)

Guðmundur Hálfðanarson argues that “being Icelandic was seen as primordial or essentialist as it was put forward by the nationalists of the 19th and 20th century who saw the independence struggle as a struggle of a unified nation for its natural rights” (in Ísberg 2010: 34). It is clear how these ideas correlate to Herder's philosophy. Hálfðanarson also points out that “since Iceland is an island, the language is homogenous and religion has not caused internal strife since the reformation in the 16th century it is understandable that Icelanders today, even historians, see their nationality as given or primordial” (ibid). Paul Durrenberger is even more critical towards national history and historiography. He argues that “as long as Icelandic history

² Sizemore and Walker describe Icelandic preoccupation with uniqueness with a good deal of humour: “Someone in the Statistical Bureau is kept very busy calculating Iceland's position relative to other countries in a wide assortment of 'highest per capita' concerns – number of chess players, number of chess grandmasters, number of swimming pools, number of unwed mothers and their children, number of household computers, televisions, and videotape recorders, number of bookstores and books sold annually, and so on *ad infinitum*. These claims to fame are important to Icelanders as they continue to maintain their 'unique' position relative to the outside world.” (Sizemore and Walker 1996: 201)

remains in the self-referencing institutional context of ideological production, it is difficult to see how it can transcend reproduction of past themes” (1996: 187–88). He refers to Hjörleifur Rafn Jónsson, who detects the problem not only within history, but in wider field of cultural studies. He claims that “most of the scholarship in Iceland which has to do with Icelandic culture has been in this paradigm, and has always been more Icelandic than scholarly” (Jónsson 1989: 448–49, cited in Durrenberger 1996: 188). However, in the past decades Icelandic self-perception has changed significantly: its main university, University of Iceland has become more international, immigration increased, travelling abroad became easier for Icelanders. Due to all these factors, primordialist views, although still present, have been questioned and criticized more openly in last twenty years than ever before.

3.2 Nationalism, purity and gender

In the nationalist discourse of the 19th century, the mother/feminine principle held the central position. It was manifested in the figure of Mountain Woman (*Fjallkonan*). “The Mountain Woman was constructed as a countersymbol to the Danish king, the 'father'” (Björnsdóttir 1996: 109). She had two separate yet related dimensions: the cultural/maternal and the political/masculine (ibid). “The cultural/maternal dimension included Icelandic language, culture, and history, which were believed to be rooted in her body and actively controlled by the mother. Her political/masculine dimension included Iceland's political power and sovereignty” (ibid). Even though *Fjallkonan* symbolized “what Icelanders considered to be genuine and purely Icelandic, in her purity she reflected a deep-seated, but unattainable, wish of Icelanders to be a totally independent nation” (Björnsdóttir 1989: 107). She is thus not only a national symbol, but also represents the nation's ultimate dream, its vision (ibid). The president of Iceland, just like the Mountain Woman, “represents what all Icelanders have in common: their country, their language, their culture, and their history” (Björnsdóttir 1996: 111). Keeping this in mind, there are some meaningful details about Icelandic presidents. Kristján Eldjárn, Icelandic third president (from 1968 to 1980), was former director of the National Museum and his successor, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir (from 1980 to 1996), was former director of the City Theater of Reykjavík. Both held a leading position in institutions that 'guarded' Icelandic culture and language.

Even though Iceland is listed as one of the best countries in the world for women and has a variety of enviable achievements concerning various aspects of gender equality, it has not

always been so. Until the late 1960s the majority of Icelandic women worked within home (Björnsdóttir 1996: 117). The turning point occurred in the year 1970 when a group of leftist women had established a women's liberation movement, *Rauðsokkahreyfing* – the Red Stocking Movement. “They demanded critical reevaluation and a total reconstruction of women's roles and capacities” (Björnsdóttir 1996: 118) and even though general public reacted to this movement in an ambiguous way, in the long term they made a path for Icelandic awareness for gender issues.

In the article about domestic violence in Iceland, Julie Gurdin brings forth an interesting perspective on gender differences. She argues that the Icelandic national and private identity is closely tied to the notion of independence (*sjálfstæð/ur*) (1996: 134). But the independence is “an upper-class masculinist ideal, from which most women are excluded during their child-bearing years” (ibid). Men, as independent individuals, thus have the right to privacy. On the other hand, “[M]otherhood and child-rearing is not a private matter, but a public one that involves the propagation of culture, 'race', and nation” (Gurdin 1996: 138).

In 1940 British military forces invaded Iceland in order to establish a military basis to prevent a German attack. A year later they were replaced by American troops. Iceland, which declared neutrality, accepted this with uneasiness. The authorities encouraged Icelanders to avoid contact with soldiers. A newspaper editorial stated:

“Now more than ever it is the Icelanders' duty to protect their nationality and national right. It will not be done by provoking the foreign military to interfere in our internal affairs /.../ The only possible thing is indifference, even though we may not like it. But one has also to be aware that too close contact with the military can be as dangerous as a hostile one. Too much involvement is even more likely to paralyze our sense of patriotism.” (Tíminn, 29 April 1941, cited in Björnsdóttir 1989: 99)

It is not hard to imagine the reactions towards those Icelandic women who dated American soldiers. This example very clearly shows the interrelatedness of perceptions of gender and nationalism. Women's involvement with soldiers was seen as a polluting relationship. They were immediately stigmatized.

“It is argued that the strong public reaction against Icelandic women who dated foreign soldiers was related to the symbolic and actual role women were supposed to play in the nation's independence movement. Women became identified with and were seen as the representatives of the realms that were believed to be purely Icelandic: Icelandic culture and nature. The relationships between Icelandic women and foreign soldiers were thus seen as pollution of

Iceland's most sacred parts and, consequently, a major threat to Iceland's existence as an independent nation.” (Björnsdóttir 1989: 101)

The moral situation of Icelandic women and the national identity were seen as closely linked. Women who dated soldiers were regarded as if they would somehow betray Iceland. There were fears that if this was going to continue for a while, Iceland would be reduced to “serve as a brothel for the superpowers” (Magnúss 1959: 622, cited in Björnsdóttir 1989: 103). The influential surgeon general, Vilmundur Jónsson defined the problem as “a dangerous disease or a plague” (Björnsdóttir 1989: 104). He used medical and pathological terms, associatively linked with pollution, to raise the public awareness of the situation. One of the worst and the most humiliating punishments a woman who dated a soldier could get was to be labelled a prostitute. A common derogatory term was *kanamella*, an 'American whore' (Björnsdóttir 1989: 112). This labelling, according to Inga Dóra Björnsdóttir, “reflected deep-seated ambiguous beliefs and ambivalent attitudes toward women” (1989: 105). As there is a tendency to objectify women for both negative and positive reasons, women are seen as being either prostitutes or saints, “but the line between those two extremes is often very thin” (ibid).

Motherhood was another point where fears got dense. “Not only did the mother bear the child but it was her responsibility to turn the individual into a true Icelander” (Björnsdóttir 1989: 108). Sexual behaviour was not seen as a private matter, as women's morality and national identity were perceived to be closely connected. Mothers were “the guardians of Icelandic culture,” they were supposed to marry an Icelandic man and raise Icelandic children (Björnsdóttir 1989: 109). Sexual contact with foreign soldiers was thus seen as a “threat to the very foundation of Icelandic society” (ibid). But the “ultimate violation of Iceland's sacredness” was if an Icelandic woman brought a soldier to Þingvellir, the localized heart of Icelandic national identity, where also Fjallkonan's real home was believed to be (Björnsdóttir 1989: 113). Þingvellir is also symbolically related to female body. Apart from being a place where the first national parliament, Alþingi held its sessions it is also geologically significant. It lies in a rift valley which marks the crest of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and the boundary between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates.

In all the examples, from *Fjallkonan* to women dating American soldiers we can see how Icelandic nationalism was imbued with images of motherhood and femininity. The fact that women's sexual behaviour was perceived as a public matter can be analysed also from the point of view that they were regarded responsible, not only in symbolic way, to reproduce the nation. Violation of expected behaviour of women was regarded as polluting. The 'dirt', however, could

not only be an individual matter, but also a national one. Some of the children, who were born to those Icelandic-American couples, were also given a father's family name. Some of my interlocutors pointed out that the English surname sometimes still have negative connotations. One of them expressed it: “*Names that came with American army were seen as culturally bad and were associated with lower classes.*”

3.3 Short excursion to Icelandic kinship

As my research topic gravitates around mixed families in Iceland it is important to introduce the broader field of Icelandic kinship. Without a question it would be possible to use the optic of anthropology of kinship as an 'entry' point to the research of naming practices among mixed families. However, the main line of argument in my thesis is the position of names within the wider discourses concerning language practices and policies. This is the reason why we focus the discussion primarily on Icelandic nationalism and language as a part of 'national(ized) culture'.

Icelandic kinship has been studied extensively, starting with Lewis H. Morgan, who included Iceland in his *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity*. He was delighted about the case of Iceland, for in his view “the insulation of the Icelandic Teutons would tend to preserve their form of consanguinity from foreign influence” (1871: 37, cited in Rich 1989: 54). For Morgan, the Icelandic system, frozen in time, was thus “nearer the primitive form of the Aryan family than that of any other nation in the Teutonic branch” (ibid). Since then Icelandic kinship has been researched by historians, anthropologists, social workers etc. There is some extensive work both on Icelandic kinship in the past (Barlau 1981; Hastrup 1981)³ and present (Merill 1964; Rich 1976, 1978, 1980, 1989; Pinson 1979). But different scholars interpret Icelandic kinship in a profoundly different, sometimes opposite way, causing quite some fuzziness (Rich 1989; Ísberg 2010). The questions that are still raised are mostly related to “what words constitute Icelandic kinship terminology and what cultural units do they denote” (Rich 1989: 62). One of the major points of disagreement is “whether or not there are modern usages that merge affines with consanguines and lineals with collaterals (Rich 1989: 63). Broadly speaking the majority of studies of Icelandic kinship therefore focus on kinship terminology.

³ It attracted also some Slovenian anthropologists (for example Keržan 2000; Mozetič 2005).

George Rich argues that the kinship terminology reflects the relatively flexible relation between the formal structures and the more independent decisions made by every individual (Rich 1989). Icelandic kinship terminology is so complex because it consists of three different systems of kinship terminology, namely the sudanese, the iroquais and the eskimo (ibid). Katarina Mozetič, who sums up variety of work on the topic, explains that the Icelandic society has features of both descriptive and classificatory terms since medieval times (Mozetič 2005: 262). Descriptive terminology is related to linear societal organization, while the classificatory is linked more to bilateral organization. The second one is believed to spread to Iceland from Denmark and Sweden (ibid). But what is interesting is that the majority of other Scandinavian languages lost the descriptive terminology, while in Iceland, both, the descriptive and the classificatory systems still exist (Mozetič 2005: 262–63).

Even though Icelandic society has been presented as being organized according to patrilinear principals, nowadays scholars generally agree that it is rather characterized by a bilateral kinship system. Adriënne Heijnen argues that

for this reason, the question of the nature of genetic relatedness /.../ is even more pressing, because the bilateral kinship system corresponds to the kinship model that biogenetics evoke, in two important ways; inheritance comes from both parents /.../, and, by tracing vertical lines even further back to shared ancestors, the idea emerges that everyone is related to everyone else. (Heijnen 2010: 309)

In the bilateral kinship system “one could trace forever outwards” (Strathern 1996: 529) and in the Icelandic case, it can turn out that practically everyone is relatively closely related to everyone else. Consequently “the notion of 'relatives' becomes a bit too broad to have much significance” (Pálsson 2007: 79).

As mentioned already earlier, the sentiment of being related to each other is still very vivid in Iceland. Heijnen describes “a highly popular activity in present-day Iceland” which is to trace genetic lines as far back as possible (2010: 310). Icelandic kinship reckoning, she argues, “consists of tracing lines between people, thereby making visible those connections between people which might previously have been tacitly acknowledged” (ibid).

Conversations between Icelanders that deal with people who are unknown to one of the actors in the dialogue begin often with the tracing of their relatedness, through finding ancestor who is known to the actor. Knowing persons is knowing how they are positioned in a network of kin. (Heijnen 2010: 310)

The Icelandic term for relative is *frændi* and *frænka*. The English word friend relates to Icelandic one and it etymologically emphasizes that “Icelandic kinship is more about alliances than blood” (Heijnen 2010: 311)⁴. Also Mozetič brings forth the question whether it is kinship or institutionalized friendship that forms the basis of modern Icelandic society (2005: 253). Nína Rós Ísberg describes *frændi* as a term “which can be applied to any relative, outside of the immediate family, without specifying how they are related to ego” (2010: 49). *Frændi* and *frænka* are “the ones most used in daily speech while the more descriptive ones are used when somebody wants to explain the relationship in more detail” (ibid). Rich (1976) argues that kinship terminology has changed in modern Iceland and that the terms for relatives (*frændfólk*) have been broadened to include also those people who are linked through affines, marriage and fictive kin. However, there is no commonly accepted agreement of scholars of Icelandic kinship on the inclusive/exclusive nature of the term *frændfólk*.

Another key term in Icelandic kinship terminology is *ætt*, which broadly corresponds to the English term kin. Ann Pinson argues that “it is impossible to ask an Icelander the question, ‘Who are your relatives?’ because there is no kinship term in Icelandic that encompasses both consanguineal and affinal relationships” (1979: 189). She argues that the closest Icelandic word for that is *ættfólk*, “a word that ultimately means descent from a particular male ancestor” (ibid). She claims that the term *ætt* is “the key to the Icelandic psyche” (1976: 189, cited in Ísberg 2010: 51). Kristen Hastrup, who wrote extensively on kinship in medieval Iceland, argues that “the apparent ambiguity of the term is a problem of translation from the Icelandic concept to the etic construct of social anthropology” (in Rich 1989: 65).

Ísberg disagrees with Pinson's emphasis on patrilinear descent principles. She refers to Stephen Barlau (1981) who claims that what Pinson sees as an overemphasis on men in the family charts is actually due to their position of wealth and power in the society (Ísberg 2010: 52). Another point Ísberg makes is that the genealogies that Pinson uses as examples are actually fictitious (ibid). They “came about around the mid 20th century within an atmosphere of nationalism and the establishment of a new republic” (Ísberg 2010: 52–3).

We will conclude this short introduction to Icelandic kinship by pointing out how clearly it shows the discrepancies between the etic and emic concepts. Rich and complex kinship terminology⁵ and sometimes opposite anthropological 'translations' of them show that the field

⁴ Keeping in mind that anthropology of kinship is a contested field in Iceland, there is plenty of scholars who would disagree with this notion.

⁵ For presentation of the terms look at Ísberg 2010: 48–50.

of anthropology of kinship is the one that can produce some fruitful scientific debates. However, integral parts of Icelandic kinship have become genealogies and placing one in a net of kinship is “a very common way to start talking and getting to know each other in Iceland” (Ísberg 2010: 53). Even the native term for anthropology has been influenced by genealogies. At the beginning, the term for anthropology was *mannfræði*, which could be translated as the knowledge about the mankind. But with time, another term – *ættfræði*, replaced it. This term brings forth much clearly the emphasis on genealogy and kinship (Pálsson and Durrenberger 1989, cited in Mozetič 2005: 253).

4 Language

One of the milestones of Icelandic nationalism has been the language. It has played an important role in the "nationalization of culture" (Löfgren 1989). The Icelandic language, literacy and literature have been crucial in processes of nationalistic movements in the 19th century, but they maintained its core position in the idea of '*Icelandicness*' throughout the 20th century. Hálfðanarson argues that "it is the language, the literature and the culture which give Iceland its uniqueness, separates it from other countries and links it to the past as well as the future" (in Ísberg 2010: 35).

Icelandic is one of the Nordic languages, a subgroup of the Germanic languages, which belong, as most of European languages, to the Indo-European language family. The closest languages are Norwegian and Faroese. First settlers spoke the language that was spoken in 9th century Norwegian territories and widely in Scandinavia, called old Norse. However, it is usually claimed that Icelandic has emerged "as a separate language as early as in the 10th century" (Pálsson 1989: 121). But the differences between Icelandic and Norwegian were probably not very significant until the 14th century (ibid). "Since then Norwegian has undergone many changes, while Icelandic appears to have remained relatively uniform and resistant to change" (ibid). Pálsson refers to Guðmundsson, who brought forth several reasons for the unity of the Icelandic language:

Different Scandinavian dialects were mixed into a unified language. Communications within the country were relatively easy, and there were regular travels of laborers and vagrants from one place to another. The populated area was circular, with an uninhabited interior, and few regions were permanently isolated. A strong literary tradition encouraged further unification. Denmark's language policy in Iceland during its period of colonial rule seems to have been weak or nonexistent. (in Pálsson 1989: 121–22)

The early settlers neither identify themselves as Icelanders nor their language as Icelandic. The first evidence of the identification of Icelandic as a separate language was in a manuscript called '*The First Grammatical Treatise*' written in the mid 12th century. The author is an anonymous Icelander, who repeatedly writes about 'our language' (*vár tunga*, *várt mal*) as opposed to the 'Danish language' (*Dönsk tunga*).⁶ "The author's aim was to compose an alphabet 'for us Icelanders' in order that it might become 'easier to write and read /.../ both laws and

⁶"A term that was commonly used for 'Norse language' or *norræna*" (Pálsson 1989: 122).

genealogies.”(Pálsson 1989: 122). What is striking to me is that one of the first Icelandic manuscripts provides means to read and write genealogies. This shows the immense importance that genealogies played in Icelandic history from the first centuries on.

The language that was used during the first centuries after the settlement, when the number of well known manuscripts and Sagas were written, and modern Icelandic language, are relatively similar. Consequently, it is easier for Icelanders nowadays to read and understand their old texts than it would be for Norwegians. The belief that the language remained unchanged from the settlement era onwards is widely spread among Icelanders (Willson 2009: 8). But even though the language did change, it is still possible for most of the Icelanders to read the manuscripts, Sagas, poems (mainly Eddic and Skaldic poetry) and other kinds of old texts (Hilmarrsson-Dunn 2006: 296).

The important role of the language was also clear in the demands made by Icelanders working on a new treaty between Iceland and Denmark in 1918. The treaty “claims that by protecting the language, the key to the Sagas, a common heritage of the other Nordic countries has been protected as well as special nationality, traditions and culture” (Ísberg 2010: 35). A special language and culture were perceived as giving the Icelanders historical and natural right to independence. Beverly Sizemore and Christopher Walker observe that “their literacy identity, associated closely to their language, was one means by which Icelanders distinguished themselves from others. With the advent of a national independence movement, language, literature, and literacy became emphasized for their uniqueness and, Icelanders argued, for their high quality.” (1996: 201)

Durrenberger argues that the wider Scandinavian audience, motivated by its own nationalistic and romantic movements, “was certainly willing to listen to the Icelandic elite's claims and ratify them” (Durrenberger 1996: 179). Danish romantic scholar Rasmus Rask saw Icelandic language “as the key to Scandinavian languages and advocated its purity” (in Durrenberger 1996: 179). This perception is, to a certain extent, still vivid. Sigurður Magnússon believes that for many Scaninavian tourists, Iceland is “ ‘the Isle of Sagas' and a place where Nordic culture blossomed some centuries ago” (1977:1, cited in Einarsson 1996: 222). Language identity was preserved also among many Icelandic emmigrants who moved to Canada and the United States of America during the second half of 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (look for example Matthiasson 1989).

4.1 Language Purism

The notions of purity of Icelandic language has been one of persistent motives on both academic discussions and folk perceptions in Iceland. Pálsson argues that the oldest written record of linguistic purism dates back to 1609, when the book *Crymogæa*, written by Arngrímur Jónsson was published. Jónsson discussed “the 'danger' of linguistic change, the 'threat' of Danish and German influence or 'imitations' and the necessity of preserving the 'purity' of Icelandic” (Pálsson 1989: 122). At the beginning, those puristic tendencies were fairly limited, but later, by approximately 1780, “linguistic purism had become an established doctrine” (ibid). In the period of national movements “purism became a useful ideological weapon for the nationalists who argued for independence from Denmark” (ibid). They emphasized, as already mentioned, on the Sagas as the literary heritage of Iceland. “Not only did the sagas provide a symbol of national pride and unity, they also exemplified Icelandic in its 'purest' form. Purism sought to revive 'uncorrupt' Icelandic, to modernize the Icelandic vocabulary, and to uproot Danish influence” (ibid).

Guðmundur Finnbogason, an influential Icelandic thinker from the first half of 20th century and the author of the book *Icelanders* (*Islendingar* 1971) made a comparison between Icelandic language and a polluted river:

“During periods of thawing many brooks have joined it from far away, carrying clay and mud, but they have never succeeded in polluting the deepest channels /.../ gradually the dirt has sunk and disappeared” (Finnbogason 1971: 8283, cited in Pálsson 1989: 123).

An important Icelandic poet and lawyer from the national movement era, Einar Benediktsson remarked that Icelandic language is “perhaps more noble than that of any other nation” (1952:336, cited in Pálsson 1989: 124).

The goal of those nationalistic aspirations was

to define valid reference points for judging cultural and linguistic practices as either correctly Icelandic and elite or wrong and rubbish to be discarded. Some culture, like some linguistic usage, is good and some is bad. The old and rural is Icelandic and good; the urban, village, fishing, and working class is deplorable and un-Icelandic. (Durrenberger 1996: 182)

Icelanders tend to perceive their language “not as an extension of their person or a culturally fashioned tool, but rather as an artifact independent of themselves analogous to their equally celebrated landscape. In other words, an external condition within which they operate.”

(Pálsson 1989: 123) They see Icelandic as a living organism, as having a life of its own. The aim of purist policy is therefore “to prevent the speakers from doing harm to their language” (ibid). One of the policymakers, Baldur Jónsson, writes: “Language cultivation is similar to the conservation of nature, the protection of plants and the soil /.../ Frankly speaking, the Icelanders are somewhat sloppy in their pronunciation” (Jónsson 1978: 4, cited in Pálsson 1989: 123). The perception among Icelanders of their language as being 'an artifact independent of themselves' explains why linguistic changes are often perceived as “a result of the internal dynamics of language itself and not the product of social or 'extralinguistic' factors” (Pálsson 1989: 124)⁷.

A significant case of the interrelatedness of nature and culture protectivism within the nationalistic discourse can be observed in political agenda of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, Icelandic first female prime minister. In her presidential speeches, she “harbors no doubts about the unique qualities of Icelandic nature and culture and how fortunate Icelanders are to be born into a society with such a distinguished historical and cultural background” (Björnsdóttir 1996: 120). At the same time, she was “greatly concerned about the undesirable polluting effect that foreign influence is having on Icelandic culture, especially on the language” (ibid). The themes of language protection are present in various levels of political and public discourses. For Finnbogadóttir, the foreign influence “is likely to rupture Icelanders' holy trinity: the nation, the country, and the tongue” (ibid). She even launched a campaign to keep the Icelandic language pure and free from foreign slang. She made numerous visits around the country where she told the children “to eliminate such foreign greeting as *halló* from their vocabulary. Instead, she insists, children should use such good Icelandic expressions as *komdu sæl(l) og blessaður(-uð)*” (ibid). But she was not active only in the field of culture and language preservation. She also dedicated herself to planting trees. As the Icelandic landscape has through the centuries become increasingly barren, “the president has been tireless in her tree-planting, inspiring both individuals and organizations to join her effort” (ibid). On the one hand there is the cultivation of language, on the other, cultivation of nature. Both should be kept (in the case of language) or returned (in the case of trees) to the 'original', ancestral conditions.

As the nature and natural environments must be protected from people who pollute and ruin the natural harmony and balance, similarly the Icelandic language is perceived as in need to be

⁷ An example for that is the dual form. In Icelandic grammar it persisted relatively long, until 17th century, while in most other European languages it vanished earlier. Icelanders tend to look at this process from a purely linguistic point of view. “Several Icelandic scholars have commented upon the linguistic properties involved, the evidence for the change, and its chronology and geographical distribution. None, however, has systematically related changes in meaning and usage to social structure.” (Pálsson 1989: 124)

legally protected from foreign influences. The protection is organized on the level of national politics. In 1964, the Icelandic language committee was established. There is also an Icelandic language institute, which operates under the Ministry of Education, science and culture. Those bodies try to protect the language on two levels. Firstly, on the level of grammatical structures and morphology, and secondly, on the level of vocabulary. Contrary to Danish, Norwegian or Swedish, Icelandic remained morphologically more complex (Hilmarsson-Dunn 2006: 297). For instance, there are 18 forms of present tense, 4 cases and 3 grammatical genders. But we will focus more on the second level, namely the vocabulary. The main way for preserving the vocabulary is through minimization of adding new words, taken from foreign languages. In order to avoid anglicisms, Icelandic language policy tends to create neologisms. It means that they create new terms by combining already existing Icelandic words. Nowadays, there are more than forty associations which make those neologisms (Hilmarsson-Dunn 2006: 298). The word for phone, *simi*, derives from the word for a long thread, the term for computer, *tölva*, combines two words, *tala* (number) and *völva* (sibyl).

Durrenberger argues that Iceland “accommodates new technology, ideas, disciplines, and people, but the language must remain pure and uniquely Icelandic, inviolable” (1996: 174). It is also legally defined that all television programmes, DVDs and other digital material must be equipped with Icelandic subtitles (Sizemore and Walker 1996: 212). It is not a surprise that a passed language proficiency test is one of the conditions for getting the Icelandic citizenship. Hallfríður Þórarinsdóttir (1999) argues that the fight against foreign 'strains' (*slettur*) throughout the 20th century meant that some people openly correct the speech of the others, while some may even hold themselves back in fear of not speaking correctly. The idea of one and true version of Icelandic has served also to conceal class differences. Stefanie Bade researches the perception of foreigners speaking Icelandic among native speakers of Icelandic. She found out that Icelanders tend to associate the Icelandic language with a foreign accent to characteristics like unreliability, uneducation, undiligence. But it would be wrong to assume that in Iceland people tend to be ignorant towards other languages. On the contrary, the high level of proficiency in one or several foreign languages is common. Durrenberger argues that

paradoxically, it is the potential for foreign languages to take the burden of detailed discussion for cosmopolitan Icelanders that makes possible the parochialism of language purity. Instead of having distinct registers within the same language, Icelanders use different languages. (1996: 174–75)

4.2 Language and class

There has been a prevailing belief that Icelandic society is egalitarian and that class differences are almost non-existent. Already in 1924 Sigurður Nordal observed that most of the Icelandic history had been “the history of people rather than the history of a people. We have been proficient in genealogy, but less so in politics.” (Nordal 1924: 165, cited in Durrenberger 1996: 173) Durrenberger argues that the denial of class “is informed by an ideology of egalitarianism and homogeneity” (1996: 171). If all Icelanders are equal, “there can be no classes, no social differences, hence no sphere of the social as distinct from the individual” (ibid). Will van den Hoonaard writes that the notion of crimelessness in Iceland is maintained by particularizing any crime act as an act of individual symptomatic (in Durrenberger 1996: 172). Crime is then explained in the frame of individual psychology; social context is seldomly brought forth.⁸ Pálsson and Durrenberger wrote extensively on the tendency of Icelanders to see individual characteristics as unrelated to social ones and that this is rooted in the fishing industry (Pálsson and Durrenberger 1982, 1983, 1990, 1992). They term this a 'skipper effect' or an idea that some skippers are more successful at fishing than others solely because of their personal characteristics. Skippers were important figures in an economy that largely based on fishing. Many Icelanders “tend to reject the conclusion that differential fishing success is related to the size of boats and effort more than to characteristics of skippers” (Durrenberger 1996: 176).

The same goes for language. Most native scholars, according to Pálsson, “have assumed that in Iceland social variations in language are negligible or even nonexistent” (1989: 125). Similar sociolectic assumptions are spread also among regular Icelanders, who tend to think that there is little or no difference in language in terms of social class. A survey in 1986 revealed that more than 61% of randomly selected Icelanders do not believe in language differences based on social class (Pálsson 1989: 126). However, there are several examples of usage of the substandard language that is perceived as inappropriate. Pálsson (1989) explains some of those, for instance the 'sound mistake' (*hljóðvilla*), 'lax speech' and 'dative disease'. The proponents of language policy in Iceland used particular terminology when referring to nonstandard language, namely the language of purity and disease (Pálsson 1989: 129–30). Standard language is regarded as pure, while nonstandard is perceived to be pathological or

⁸ This classless notion that tends to neglect social context is present also in other Nordic states. The case of Breivik in Norway is a very clear example of treating crime as a pathological individual behaviour, detached from wider social context.

contaminated (Pálsson 1989: 130). As the idea of the link between language and thought is widely spread in Iceland, it is evident that

pure language is assumed to exhibit 'clear' thinking, and impure language is assumed to represent 'unclear' thought. In this scheme, there is no room for the possibility of using 'good' language to express muddled thought, or using 'bad' language to express clear thought. Thought and language are somehow identical. (Pálsson 1989: 130)

Consequence of that is that “one is Icelandic to the extent that one speaks pure Icelandic. Some are more Icelandic than others.” (Pálsson 1989: 132) The language of purity is a middle-class device, “one element of the ethos of cultural reproduction” that is related to social class (ibid), but at the same time the existence of class differences is neglected. The domain of language shares the same characteristics with the other public, cultural domains. “Inequality is therefore reproduced under the cover of an individualistic ideology that suggests that people are very much different but that the differences among them have nothing to do with social structure” (Pálsson 1989: 133). Durrenberger similarly points out that “the phenomenon of class remains disguised and hidden, unavailable for conceptualization, thought, or critique” (1996: 175–76).

The notion of purity is widely spread within the Icelandic nationalistic discourse. Language, perceived as an inevitable part of the culture (and culture as the cornerstone of nationality), is seen as in need to be protected in order to stay pure. It is imagined as a direct, unchanged link to the glorious past. It is believed to convey the essence of '*Icelandicness*'. It has an intrinsic value and it seems to have a 'life' of its own, outside of those who speak it.

In the next chapters we will look at the system of Icelandic names. I perceive it within the frame of language ideologies in Iceland. There are numerous formal and informal regulations and 'guidelines' concerning the preservation and protection of the Icelandic language. In the next chapter we will move from language ideology within the Icelandic nationalism to the phenomenon of names and naming.

4.3 Names in Icelandic language

Before we continue with some theoretical aspect of names, we will introduce the naming systems and practices in Iceland as I believe they should be seen in the context of language practices and ideologies. In Icelandic naming tradition there is no family name. Icelandic names

consist of given name(s)⁹ and a last name, which is a patronym or, seldomly, a matronym. A common name would be Magnús Einarsson. Magnús is the given name, while Einarsson is the patronym, consisting of the father's given name (Einar) in genitive case¹⁰ (which indicate ownership) and the suffix -son, meaning the son. Literally translated it means Magnús, son of Einar. Magnús' sister is called Sigríður Einarsdóttir. Sigríður is the given name, while the patronym Einarsdóttir consists of the father's given name and the suffix -dóttir, meaning the daughter. Literally translated it means Sigríður, daughter of Einar. Neither Magnús' nor Sigríður's name is supposed to change due to marriage (or any other reason). Married women do not get any new or additional name, deriving from the husband. “This, however, has not created major administrative hurdles nor has it prevented or slowed down the development of population projects and genomic studies” (Pálsson 2014: 5).

People in Iceland never address each other by patronyms only, regardless of the level of formality and context. Mr Einarsson or Mrs Einarsdóttir is a form that is not used among native speakers. However, the foreigners often use it and it sometimes cause some joking among Icelanders. In formal introductions it is common to use the full name. Other ways indicating more formal or polite contexts are indicated by words such as 'excuse me' (*afsakið*), followed by the first name (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 169). The importance of given names is reflected also in phone books. They are ordered by given names, not by patronyms. In Icelandic academic writings, sometimes even reference list is ordered by given names. Pálsson sums up that “people are listed and known, above all, by their first names that embody their persona” (2014: 5). If someone wants to know the person's patronym/matronym, the following formulations can be used: Whose son/daughter are you? (*Hvers son/dóttir ert þu?*) or: To which people do you belong? (*Hverra manna ert þu?*)

At the first glance there is a discrepancy between Icelandic preoccupation with genealogies, ancestors, family trees and the like on one hand and the lack of family names. There is nothing in the name that traces one back to the ancestors, that places one in a web of relatives, there is no shared name that would 'cut' straight through generations. But Pálsson claims that “while patronyms and matryms do not provide as much cultural and genealogical memory as patrilinear surnames, they nevertheless ensure some attention to the history of social networks”

⁹ It is common nowadays to have two given names.

¹⁰ Additional -s is attached to the name because of genitive case, for example: Jónsson.

(2014: 5). Heijnen argues that in order to keep the 'genealogical memory', given names play a significant role.

The patronymic naming practice emphasises one generation, the last name of the child being derived from the name of the father (and nowadays sometimes of the mother). In an attempt to confirm kinship ties with paternal and maternal kin through several generations, continuity is created by reproducing first names from both paternal and maternal relatives. (Heijnen 2010: 314)

The patronymic system used to be widely spread in Scandinavia and elsewhere¹¹, but it gradually transformed or merged with the form of family names. Iceland is the only country in Europe where a vast majority of population does not have a family name. The patronymic naming system has remained unchanged from the settlement period until today. It is one of the traditions which play an important role in nationalistic movements and in self-perception of Icelanders. In the public discourse it is presented as a culturally unique phenomenon which needs to be protected and which forms an important part of the national identity (Ísberg 2010: 88). It meets two important points in Icelandic self-image of authenticity. Firstly, it creates an unbroken link with the Commonwealth period and secondly, it is unique in contemporary European context.

But the patronymic system has not always been perceived as a cultural treasure that needs to be enforced and protected. From 17th century on, part of the Icelandic upper class tended to copy the Danish habits. As Danes were using family names, some Icelanders also started to use them. Many of them changed their names and adopted family names while living in Denmark (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 270). The family names were 'invented' in two ways. Either the patronyms were transformed into the Danish-sounding family names (for example Jónsson into Jensen) or the farm and/or local names began to function as the family names (for example Laxness, Blöndal, Nordal). On the other hand, the Danes and their descendants, who lived in Iceland, did not 'adapt' to the local system of patronyms but continued to use family names. Therefore the number of family names in Iceland increased significantly during the 19th century. In 1855 there were 155 family names in Iceland, while in 1910 the number was 297¹² (ibid). In 1994

¹¹ Patronyms are partly still in used in Russia, similarly in Arab countries, where *ibn* means son and *bint* daughter.

¹²A headline in one of the biggest newspapers, Morgunblaðið was sensationalistic: 'More family names than patronymic names' even though in reality, only around 5% of Icelandic population had family names (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 270).

there were 2227 different family names registered in Iceland – they outnumbered the patronyms (ibid).

Consequently the law on family names and patronyms was implemented in 1913. Since then everyone who wanted to take a family name were required to officially request for it. One of the criteria was that the requested family name had to be compatible with Icelandic language (ibid). This shows that already during the proces of nation building names were regarded as part of language ideology. The first law also introduced a list of appropriate names and that has been causing public controversies until today. Þórarinsdóttir writes that “with the passing of the first law the legislature stipulated the state department to put together a list of names that could be used as family names and another list over 'good and solid' old and new Icelandic names” (ibid). The limitations of family names became even greater in 1925 when the new law banned the new family names completely. The restrictions were grounded on the ideas of protection and preservation of patronymic system. But on the other hand the law also maintained the division of social classes (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 271). The families of Danish descendants and the Icelanders who adopted family names in 19th century and earlier were all members of higher social classes. On the other hand the names

that had to come into use from 1913 were stipulated to disappear with the second or the third generation. The argument for these restrictions was that if family names would be allowed to increase without governmental interference the old and unique patronymic tradition would soon dissappear. (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 271)

Critics of the naming restrictions often claim that these restrictions maintain divisions between the old ruling elite and the general public. Óttarr Proppé, one of my interlocutors, argues that even today the richest families in Iceland have much higher proportion of family names than the average. Þórarinsdóttir points out that not all family names have the same 'weight': “for the most part the older family names from the nineteenth century carry much more prestige – and at times also power – than the newer ones from the twentieth century” (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 272). Legal regulations on names in Iceland “relate directly to the notion of purity” (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 268). In earlier chapters we shed light on the 'purity discourse' in wider context of Icelandic nationalism. Many people who supported the naming restrictions in order to maintain the purity of Icelandic names argue “that people's names are part of the vocabulary of the national language and thus rightly subject to legislation's” (ibid).

The line of reasoning goes from Icelandic early nationalism, preoccupied with drawing the image of continuity with the past, to the language as being one of its cornerstones and finally to Icelandic names as being inherent part of the language and therefore part of pure 'Icelandicness' which needs to be protected and preserved.

The fact that 'new' and 'old' citizens of Iceland do not have equal rights concerning names and naming is also one of the main arguments of Óttarr Proppé¹³, a parliament member from the party Bright future (*Björt framtíð*). He submitted a bill for the change of the name law into parliamentary procedure. This proposal suggests that the only legal requirement concerning personal names is that every citizen has to have a name, while there are no limitations whatsoever on selection of the given name, the patronym/matronym and/or the family name. Proppé's proposal actually follows the United Nations' Convention of Children's Rights, where it states that:

The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents. (UNCRC 1989)

It is interesting to note that in the article the following three elements are brought forth: name, citizenship and parents. It corresponds to Pálsson who argues that “[S]ubjectivity, identity, and naming, then, are informed by the social and political environment in which the person is embedded” (Pálsson 2014: 4). There is a fascinating interplay between those factors which will be shown with more ethnographic examples from my field research in Reykjavík in the following chapters.

The majority of Icelandic names is of Nordic origin from pre-Christian era. With the arrival of Christianity in around 1000 Christian names were introduced but the older names did not disappear (Ísberg 2010: 91). Proppé points out that the second larger wave of Christian names came with reformation. Beside the old Nordic and Christian names, some Danish, English and German names were spread in Iceland. They were, however, quickly adapted to Icelandic pronunciation and spelling. Due to this assimilation, they were soon hard to distinguish from

¹³ Óttarr Proppé entered the politics as a representative of The Best Party in Reykjavík city council during the time of Jón Gnarr being the major (2010–2014). Before the parliamentary elections the party changed its name to Bright Future. The party actively opposes the existing name law. At the time of research (summer 2015) they were the only party with the unified opinion on the topic. The other parliamentary parties are internally discordant about the name law. Proppé points out that it would be too simplistic to see the division on the topic following the line between, vaguely said, conservatives and liberals. “It is not political conservative, it is more culturally conservative.”

the other Icelandic names. Generally speaking, however, Icelandic names, which were of a limited variety, had remained relatively unchanged from the early middle ages until 19th century. In 19th century the bestowal with two given names became popular. But especially in second half of the 20th century there was “an enormous increase in double names” (Heijnen 2010: 315). In 1997, around 70% of all children had two personal names. Due to a considerable amount of wealthy and influential Danes living in Iceland, many Icelanders from higher social classes adapted some of their cultural habits, including naming. In the same period, however, strongly influenced by nationalism, the names from Sagas also became common (Ísberg 2010: 91). The names of the first settlers and heroes from Icelandic early literature were also growing in popularity (ibid). The popularity of names from the Sagas was increasing also throughout the 20th century (Ísberg 2010: 92). Proppé similarly points out that the nation-building processes inspired people to search for names that have not been used since the 13th century. Some of my interlocutors pointed out that during and after the financial crisis in 2008, the names of historical and literary heroes as well as the names related to courage, bravery and power, became fashionable. Some of them also emphasized the choice for pre-Christian Nordic names which are regarded as “*the most real Icelandic names*” according to one interlocutor. Again we see the need to find the ‘pure’ names, the ones that are thought to be the most authentic and the most untouched from the outside. With the reemergence of the names from the Saga times the perception of continuity from the Commonwealth era is reinforced.

The story of Óttarr Proppé and his name reveals the complex interplay of very different ideological influences that shaped Icelandic society in the 19th and 20th century. He has a family name, Proppé, because his great great grandfather moved to Iceland from Denmark. But his first name, Óttarr, is an old Viking name, which has not been used in Iceland for more than five centuries. His grandfather, who was born in 1916 – in times of nationalistic movements in Iceland – was given this name. So the Danish family, which at one hand kept their Danish family name and did not adopt the local patronymic system, sought an authentic Icelandic name for their son.

Jón Gnarr, a former mayor of Reykjavík and a comedian, is a strong opponent of the naming legislation. He has publicly criticized it on several occasions but he is also engaged in legal process concerning his own name. His full name is Jón Gunnar Kristinsson, Gunnar being his middle name and Kristinsson the patronym, but he always uses the name Jón Gnarr. At the Naming Committee he applied to change his name into Jón Gnarr only, Gnarr becoming his last

name. The request was declined as a ban on the new surnames is still valid in Iceland. Therefore Jón, who used to live in United States of America as a writer in residence at Rice University applied for the name change in the USA, where his request was successfully resolved.¹⁴ When he returned to Iceland in spring 2015 he wanted to officialy register this name change in his homeland as well. But as the situation of Icelandic citizen changing the name abroad happened for the first time, the process got complicated even more and is so far still not resolved. Jón Gnarr has emphasized the fact that the law on surnames does not treat all cizitens equally. Immigrants who get an Icelandic citizenship can keep their existing family names. Those family names can be transmitted to their spouses and children. The law thus clearly distinguishes between the 'foreign' citizens and the 'ethnic' ones. Jón Gnarr announced that if Iceland will not positively resolve his request, he will try to get a citizenship of another country, at the same time resign from Icelandic-one, assert his name change in the USA in the new country and then, as a foreigner, apply for Icelandic citizenship again.

¹⁴ In the USA laws concerning names and naming are very liberal. It is interesting that his American friends who helped him were anthropologists and Current Anthropology editors.

5 The Phenomenon of Names

Naming and names constitute a significant part of forming one's identity and placing one in a social world. At a first glance they may seem to be only of a minor research interest, but if we take a closer look, names and rituals of naming often reveal insight into larger social issues. They are involved in numerous social practices that are of central importance to understanding the notion of personhood, self, identity and belonging in a particular society. Gabriele vom Bruck and Barbara Bodenhorn claim that the power of a name “plays a critical role in a social life” (2006: 3). Names may – and may also not¹⁵ – reveal information about gender, kinship, geographical origin, marital status, religion, ethnicity etc. But they are not rigid identifiers. Their capacity to fix on the one hand and detach on the other give them wider power in social contexts. Names can fix people as individuals and as members of social groups, but their detachability “provides the vehicle for crossing boundaries between these very same categories [gender, kinship, geographical origin ...] and also between life and death, past and future and humans and non-humans” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 4).

We can observe “the property-like potential of names to transact social value” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 2). This is why the act of naming “has the potential to implicate infants in relations through which they become inserted into and, ultimately will act upon, a social matrix. Individual lives thus become entangled – through a name – in the life histories of the others.” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 3) As one aspect of naming is placing one in a society, we should not forget the legal and administrative side of naming. In the United Nations' *Convention of Rights of the Child* the right to a name is one of them. But we must differentiate the right to a name from the right to name. Self-naming is rare in ethnographical evidences¹⁶, as names are usually bestowed upon people by the others. Michael Lambek points out:

We identify with names we are given by others; and if we reject a particular name, none of us rejects being named or the idea of having a name. It is striking how personal names are largely bestowed upon us /.../ by others. /.../ Moreover, we are never the chief enunciators of our own names; they are what we respond to, or how we are spoken about, not what we are given to speaking ourselves. (Lambek 2006: 118–19)

¹⁵ For instance, in Iñupiaq names carry “no descriptive social information, revealing nothing about gender, kinship, birth order, religious affiliation, or social status” (Bodenhorn 2006: 148).

¹⁶ For cases of self-naming look for example vom Bruck (2006) for Yemeni case and Watson (1986) for Chinese one.

When Slovenian former Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek was referring to herself using her personal name, this caused plenty of satirical jokes. Referring to oneself with the personal name is, apart from the social setting of introducing, reserved for formal, ritualized contexts. An example for that would be a marriage in western societies. A bride and a groom are asked to repeat the standardized formula. In case of imaginary Jane who marries Jack it would be: 'I, Jane, take you, Jack, to be my wedded husband ...' In relation to names and those rituals Lambek claims that in modern states birth and marriage certificates “confirm or validate not only our name but also our person; they constrain movement and agency and in their absence our very existence is illegitimate” (2006: 123)¹⁷. Another key feature of those rituals that play a function of legitimization of a person is a signature. Each and every time a person is involved in a ritual of this kind, a signature – the most personal visualization of one's name – is needed. Jacques Derrida argues that a signature “implies the absence of the signer” (in vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 15). The signature “makes a name the intermediary between public and private” (ibid).

Names play a double function. In his essay *A category of the human mind* Marcel Mauss claims that names simultaneously identify individuals and classify persons into groups (Mauss 1985). The interplay between those functions is also important in anthropological research on names. Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn state that the leit motif in anthropological writing on the topic is precisely “the assumed relationship between (personal) names, the self and social identity” (2006: 26). Clifford Geertz stresses that our social world “is populated not by anybodies /.../ but by somebodies, concrete classes of determinate persons positively characterized and appropriately labelled” (1973: 363). Naming can be seen as a process of converting “anybodies” into “somebodies” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006:3, Watson 1986: 620).

For Bakhtin “the name is an affirmation, by others, of our existence, hence a vehicle for realizing it for ourselves” (in Lambek 2006: 119). David Maybury-Lewis similarly observes that names “transform individuals into persons” (1984: 7). In the same period as Mauss published his essay on human mind, Levy-Bruhl also studied the classificatory nature of naming, arguing that for many people “names are more than classificatory labels. To a significant extent /.../ some people *are* their names” (in vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 9). Names as classification systems were of course in the focus also in French structuralism. Claude Lévi-Strauss, who sees naming purely as a classificatory act, points out that:

¹⁷ See also the case of 'Erased' people in Slovenia (for example Lipovec Čebren and Zorn 2011).

“At one extreme, the name /.../ establishes that the individual /.../ is a member of a preordained class /.../ At the other extreme, the name is a free creation on the part of the individual who **gives the name** /.../ But can one be said to be really naming in either case? The choice seems only to be between identifying someone else by assigning him to a class, or, under cover of giving him a name, identifying oneself through him. One therefore never names: one classes someone else /.../ one classes oneself /.../ And most commonly one does both.” (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 181)

5.1 Convention vs essence, denotation vs connotation, sense vs reference

A phenomenon of naming is a minor one in anthropological debates but nevertheless a continuously present research topic not only in anthropology but also in numerous other disciplines. We must take into consideration one of the earliest examples, Plato's *Cratylus dialogue*. In this classical philosophical text many questions that are relevant also for anthropological research in naming are asked: “who has the right – or responsibility – to name, what that means, and to what extent names 'ought to fit' the nominee” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 5).

In this dialogue, Socrates meets Hermogenes and Cratylus on a street and is called upon to intervene. Hermogenes argues that “names are based on a convention, an argument of a community of speakers, and whatever the arbitrary agreement may be, it is the sole foundation of proper naming” (Dolar 2014: 7). Cratylus claims that “names must ultimately be based in nature, so that there would have to be a tie, an umbilical cord that attaches the names to the things named” (ibid). On the one hand there is convention, on the other essence. We can also label Hermogenes' view as conventionalism and Cratylus' as (linguistic) naturalism (Sedley 2006). At this point we should keep in mind that the Ancient Greek term for names (*onomata*) can be translated as “(a) a general term for 'words', (b) more narrowly, nouns, or perhaps nouns and adjectives, and (c) in certain contexts, proper names alone” (ibid). Socrates first criticizes conventionalism and tries to convince Hermogenes that “some kind of naturalism must be endorsed” (ibid). Socrates – and his thoughts are taken to represent Plato's view – points out that “names are like tools that we need to get to this essence, and there can be tools which are more or less appropriate, and hence have a varying degree of truth and falsity. But these tools are not quite freely ours to choose, or to select better ones from, for the names are always given by some Other, the rule-setter, the lawgiver, the name-maker.” (Dolar 2014: 8) Socrates then

gives plenty of poetic etymologies of names¹⁸ which shows that names somehow depict the thing they name, that they are necessarily evocative. They “have not been attached in a merely arbitrary way to their objects, but are encoded *descriptions* of them” (Sedley 2006). Yet in the final part he shows that naturalists' expectations are set too high, that their argumentation has no end as “the semantic value of a name is supported by the semantic value of another name, so that ultimately we are moving in a circle” (Dolar 2014:12). Names “cannot aspire of being perfect encapsulations of their objects' essence, and some element of convention must be conceded” (Sedley 2006). Socrates then compares names with portraits and claims that the *appropriateness* of names is possible because “names are like imitations of things, their images” (Dolar 2014: 15). Of course philosophical interpretations of Plato's views are still vivid and contested, but for our purposes it is sufficient so see that Socrates holds a position that contains both, conventional and naturalistic points; “that although names do indeed function as names by being miniaturized descriptions of their objects, they can succeed in being names despite the considerable variation in their degree of descriptive accuracy” (Sedley 2006).

Another influential binary pair on interpretation of names is also John Stuart Mill's. On the one hand, there is a denotation (identification), on the other connotations (meaning). Mill claims that names denote without connotation and that proper names “attach to objects, not their attributes” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 5). In *A System of Logic*, Mill states:

The only names of substance which connote nothing are proper names /.../ A proper name is merely an unmeaning mark /.../ which we endeavour to connect with the idea of the object in our heads /.../ Objects thus ticketed with proper names resemble, until we know something more about them, men and women in masks. We can distinguish them, but can conjecture nothing with respect to their real features. (1974: 979–81)

If we look at ethnographic evidences from different cultures, we can see that in most of the examples this is not the case. In Japan the decisive factors in choosing a child's name are “a felicitous meaning and a visually pleasing aspect” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 6). In Chinese society, the importance of connotative aspect of a name is present as well (Watson 1986). My Korean interlocutor in Iceland similarly pointed out the importance of the meaning when choosing her daughter's name. Numerous name books, which are intended to help parents-to-be in choosing children's names, also contain detailed information on the meaning of every name. Linda Layne writes that “interest in the meaning of given names is a common aspect of

¹⁸ Examples: *theoi* (*gods*) – *thein* (*to run*); *psuchē* (*soul*) – *anapsuchon* (*what gives breath and revitalize*) etc. (Dolar 2014: 10–11).

popular American consumer culture. A range of goods such as wall plaques, mugs, and decorative plastic thermal glasses are proffered for sale, which describe the meaning and qualities associated with a person's name” (2006: 41).

The third binary pair we must take into account is Gottlob Frege's distinction between sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*). It is sometimes misinterpreted to be the same as Mill's notion of denotation and connotation. Lambek explains that “sense concerns the way different modes of presentation determine the thought expressed by the sentence in which they occur, whereas reference determines its truth or falsity” (2006: 120). It can be argued “that proper names may be distinguished from other form of denotation insofar as the reference function comes to predominate over that of sense” (ibid). In the word *rose* sense predominates over reference, while in the word *Rose* reference predominates over sense. As we used the example of the word rose, we cannot pass by without recalling one of the most famous moments of literature when the same flower was brought forth. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in the famous balcony scene Juliet is contemplating on the power of names:

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

Here the great verses reflect on all binary pairs we encountered: are names based on nature or on convention? What is the interplay between denotation and connotation? And how much 'weight' does the sense on the one hand and the reference on the other have? Socrates, Mladen Dolar argues, “seems to shake hands with Juliet, who strives for love as the direct access to her beloved without the by-pass of the name.” Juliet believes that “one should get out of the regime of names to get to the pure love” (2014: 23).

When discussing denotative, connotative, conventional and essential aspect of names, we are already in the field of semiotics and in the Saussurian arbitrary relation between the signifier and the signified. An important point of de Saussure's theory is that “meaning does not derive from a specific relation between the signifier and the signified, between the materiality of language (the word or the name) and its referent, the concept” (Muršič 2010: 9–10). The language is merely a convention. Dolar discusses that since de Saussure, we believe “that names, as all signs, are arbitrary and that any foundation of names in similarity is complete nonsense, fomenting fantasies that have no linguistic or epistemological value. Yet, can there ever be a word, a sign, an utterance, that we could simply take as arbitrary, with no other value than that?” (2014: 25). And referring back to Plato, Dolar continues:

Isn't it rather that we are all profoundly Cratylan at heart, that words contingently connect, secretly correspond and form echoes, that they constantly produce fantasies by their sounds, that any sign or word, as arbitrary as it may be, ceases to be just arbitrary the moment we use it? And even if we officially agree with Hermogenes that names are just conventions, established by usage, this is not a view that we can ever espouse in our inner beliefs, dreams and desires. Names evoke, and what they evoke is not quite what they name. (Dolar 2014: 25–6)

5.2 (Violent) power of names

Ethnographic data on names and naming reveals similar findings. Cross-culturally people perceive names not as a purely denotative and conventional words, freed from connotation and sense. The examples from Iceland that we will bring forth in the following chapters, largely correspond to Dolar's notion of our 'Cratylan hearts'.

However, there are a couple of cases known when individuals were named with “names” which were solely denotative. We will start with the cases from Iceland, where the clash of newcomers and the rigid name laws resulted in numerous anthropologically interesting ways.

5.2.1 Names and newcomers in Icelandic context

In the chapter about Icelandic names we have noticed that both given names and patronyms play a significant role in the Icelandic self-perception. Names are related to national identity. This had an impact also on laws and regulations concerning the migrants.

The legislations from 1913 and from 1925 indicated that “foreign born people who settled in Iceland and their descendants were fully permitted to keep their given names and their family names” (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 272).

The legislation changed in 1951. From then on the foreigners could acquire Icelandic citizenship only if they had an Icelandic name. A group of Vietnamese, who arrived to Reykjavík in 1978 and were the first ones granted with political asylum in Iceland, had to change their names to Icelandic ones immediately (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 273). This had happened well before they could speak or understand Icelandic and before they were able to pronounce their new names correctly. The same strict rules applied for all immigrants who got citizenship. Consequently some foreigners who lived in the country declined to apply for a citizenship (Jóhannesson, et al. 2013: 12). There was only one exception to this rule.

Famous Russian pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy married an Icelander and applied for Icelandic citizenship in 1972 but refused to change his name as by that time he already gained a world-wide fame. The former Minister of Justice, Ólafur Jóhannesson stated in the parliament: “His name is known worldwide and also recognised by all in Iceland. Therefore, I will, whatever the law may say, follow common sense in these matters and not insist on a name change” (Jóhannesson et al. 2013: 12). Soon after, a Catalan painter Baltasar Samper¹⁹, who also sought Icelandic citizenship and was therefore supposed to choose an Icelandic name, wanted to change his name to Vladimir Ashkenazy, but his request was declined (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 266). Later he reapplied and requested the name Egill Skallagrímsson. This is a name of a hero from Egil's Saga who, in the eyes of Icelanders, personalizes the mythical persona and represents almost sacred, untouchable core of Icelandic national pride. So this request was declined as well.

The law in 1991 included an article on foreigners seeking Icelandic citizenship. The controversial article

stipulated foreigners who sought naturalization to take up both an Icelandic given name and surname. It also called for their children to follow the Icelandic patronymic tradition, and thus banned them from using their 'foreign' family name. (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 272)

It is important to note, however, that “family names taken up by 'native' Icelanders were accepted, as it was considered unrealistic to ban them” (ibid). We can clearly see the double

¹⁹ His son is a well-known Icelandic film director Baltasar Kormákur, who directed many warmly received films, for example 101 Reykjavík, Djúpið, Hafið ...

standards for the rights of foreign-born and native-born Icelanders. While native-born Icelanders were allowed to keep the names and pass them unto their children, foreign-born Icelanders had to adopt the 'authentic' Icelandic name (ibid).

Ísberg, on the other hand, writes that in 1990s, when the amount of immigrants increased, the law and regulations on names were gradually liberalized. Since 1991 one is not required to change his/her name in order to get citizenship. However, Ísberg writes that until 1996 it was necessary to add an Icelandic name to one's existing name in order that the patronym/matronym can be formed (Ísberg 2010: 25). Since 1996 the name can remain unchanged in the process of acquiring citizenship. Those who had to do it before 1996 were allowed to change their names back to the original ones²⁰ (ibid). One of the last well-known cases before the law was changed was the one of Columbian Jorge Ricardo Cabrera Hildago. He chose to change his name to Eilifur Friður Edgarsson. Eilifur Friður literally means 'eternal peace'. Even though the name consists of Icelandic words and therefore formally meets the requirements, it is, by all common standards “not a name in Icelandic and sounds very strange to say nothing more” (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 265). But since it legally meets the requirements, the naming committee accepted it. In an interview he explained that “he deliberately chose this strange name in order to show how absurd the current law was” (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 265–66).

All cases mentioned above – from Vladimir Askenazy to 'Eternal Peace' – have attracted considerable media attention and fuelled heated debates on Icelandic naming policy. The public opinion was divided as some Icelanders found it necessary to preserve the naming traditions, while the others regarded it as too intrusive into the personal decisions and dignity. After 1997 the number of such cases decreased significantly. Hallfriður Þórarinsdóttir argues that “the most significant change in the new law regards a conflict of interests between ideas central to the notion of democratic society on the one hand and nationalistic ideas concerning the importance of maintaining linguistic/cultural purity on the other” (1999: 266). The opponents of the new law emphasized that the changes can threaten Icelandic culture and language. The former Minister of Education Svavar Gestsson argued that the new bill could even eradicate the old Icelandic naming traditions (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 267). The authors of the law from 1996 argued that the previous one suffered from some big flaws. Firstly, it was discriminative against foreign-born Icelanders. Secondly, the prohibition of adopted foreign names “on the basis of lack of tradition within the Icelandic language” was too vague as many foreign names were

²⁰ In Iceland one is allowed to change the name once in a lifetime.

adjustable to Icelandic grammar. Thirdly, the 1991 law prohibited non-gender specific middle names – this disabled the usage of family name as middle name, which was often the case for those who had both the family name and the patronym. Fourthly, the authors of 1996 law argued that the 1991 law “took to increase in foreign family names at the cost of Icelandic patronymic tradition” (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 268). The speech of former Minister of Justice, Þorsteinn Pálsson is very significant on many levels:

A person's name is one of the most important aspects of their personal identity and concerns first and list his/her personal interest rather than a public interest. The right of parents to decide their child's name must be great and the right of the legislature to interfere with name giving proportionally limited. However, some name traditions are such that they touch on important social interests as well as on personal interests, hence, an increased right of the legislature to interfere. This applies not least to the Icelandic patronymic tradition. (Þorsteinn Pálsson October 31, 1996, cited in Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 273)

Pálsson argued that the new law was aimed at three issues: to expand the freedom in name giving (by allowing foreign names), to even people's naming rights (by expanding the right of new citizens), and to encourage the use of family names as middle names instead of surnames (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 274–75). What is particularly interesting is his acknowledgement of the fact that the name reaches in both, the personal/individual and social/public sphere. It is a double function of the name – it individuates the person, on the one hand, and it places him/her in the society, on the other. And exactly through placing one in the society, it recognizes him/her as a member of the society.

An institution that needs to be mentioned when discussing names and power in Iceland is the Naming Committee. It is appointed by the Minister of Justice and its primary purpose is to make and maintain the list of allowed names in Iceland. The second role is to assist religious ministers as “traditionally name giving and christening goes hand in hand and are performed by church ministers” (Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 274). The third role is “to solve controversies over name giving and name spelling” (ibid). In practice it means that if parents want to give a name that is not on the name list²¹, they must make a request with the committee. If the name complies with grammatical and other standards (it has to be possible to decline in order to form a patronym), then the name is permitted and is placed on the name list – from this point on it is automatically allowed to use this name in the future. “The Bureau of Statistics will not register a name of a

²¹ The list is available online and is refreshed regularly: <https://www.island.is/mannanofn/leit-ad-nafni/>

child if it is not found on the name list” (ibid). One of my interlocutors describes how she felt when her daughter's name got accepted and appeared on the list:

I think it is nice to try to get your name into the national registry. Because now Gíta is an Icelandic women's name. We were the first, we registered it. I like the idea that maybe some Icelanders want to name their kids Gíta. /.../ They can go through the register looking at names. And then other Indians that moved here, if they want to name their child Gíta, they can use this. /.../ But also the idea that it is not just an Indian name but now it is an Icelandic name. Like Sigrun is an Icelandic name, Gíta is an Icelandic name!

We have already mentioned earlier that Proppé from the Bright Future party proposed the new law which would decrease the power of the Naming Committee significantly. He points out:

I think the majority of Icelanders and actually majority of parliamentarians realize how absurd the system is now and it is really just a question of how do you change it. There is of course the conservative way of thinking about that this would be bad for Icelandic language and traditions. I am putting forth that it is more of a humanitarian issue of the same law applying to everybody. I can use this name because by coincidence I have a male descendent who was a foreigner. I have nieces and nephews who are even closer to these descendants but because a name has not travelled through a male line and the law says you can pick out an old family name only if it has been used in your family in last two generations so if it was only used in the third generation then you cannot. And also the fact that foreigners can become Icelandic citizens and keep their names, so if you become an Icelandic citizen your last name would actually be legal in Iceland from then on. But not a name of your ancestor from three generations back. /.../ And the cause with first names. Foreigners are allowed to bring in foreign names. I am sure that Jose is a legal name in Iceland because somebody named Jose introduced it so now it is on the list. But some other Spanish name is not there. /.../ For me it is a question of basic human rights and equality issue. And then also the absurdity of the official committee, part of the government, being forced to take these decisions. To say yes or no. And it does not feel like it should be an official decision to make.

Proppé puts emphasis also on the generational gap in Icelandic society. The older the generation is, according to him, the more conservative it is. We have to keep in mind that Icelandic society faced big changes in the last decades on many levels, from internationalization, new media and digital technologies to transport possibilities.

I am almost 46 now and when I was 20 very few foreigners were living in Iceland, there was just one tv station and it was a very closed society, especially culturally. And in 30 years it just totally changed. So some people want to change more and others want to hold back. /.../ We are

at this point that most other Scandinavian countries have gone through in 70s and 80s and England and France in 50s and 60s.

5.2.2 Naming in Nunavut, Canada

First we will look at an example that illustrates James Scott's notion that “the surname was a first and crucial step toward making individual citizen officially legible, and along with the photograph, it is still the first fact on documents of identity” (1998: 71). In Nunavut in northern Canada, indigenous population, which had no surnames in their naming system, were given numbers to be identified for administrative state records²². Ann Meekitjuk Hanson, an Inuit writer, recalls: “So when I was baptized, I became Annie, but to my parents and elders, I was Lutaaq, Pilitaq, Palluq, or Inusiq. To the Canadian government, however, I was Annie E7-121!” (Meekitjuk Hanson 2016) The imposition of foreign names started already during the 19th and 20th century, when Christian missionaries baptised them with Christian names and encouraged them to use only their Christian names. For Europeans, the indigenous names were “difficult to pronounce, accurately spell and understand” (Filice 2015). But in 1920s and 1930s, federal government introduced additional changes. At first the system of fingerprints was implemented, but as taking the fingerprints was associated with criminal activity, so this solution was soon replaced with identification disks and numbers. “The Inuits were expected to keep this tag on their person at all times” (ibid). The disks were imprinted not with indigenous or Christian given name, but only with the number, having a function of the surname and the identity number. Even though the system was used for 30 years, it had strong opponents (including missionaries) who considered the disks de-humanizing. “Opponents likened the disks to military tags or hospital bracelets, worn by people who might have difficulty identifying themselves, which was not the case with the Inuit” (ibid). In 1970s, the disk system was finally replaced with surnames. This project, known as the Project Surname, was carried out by an Inuit leader, Abraham “Abe” Okpik (previously W-3 554). He, as someone who knew various dialects of Inuktit and was fluent in English, “was responsible for directing the assignment and registration of Inuit surnames” (ibid). Most people choose one of their ancestor's names to become their surname. But even though Project Surname took Inuit names as a source of surnames, many opponents stressed out that the surname system itself violates the customary naming system. As in their

²² Indigenous population in Alaska went through similar processes. As late as in 1997, US Passport Agency denied to issue passports to some Yup'ik elders who wanted to travel abroad, because they did not have surnames (Fienup-Riordan 2000: 195).

naming system names do not reveal gender (Bodenhorn 2006: 148) and the marriage does not require any name change for women (nor for men), gender inequality reflected in names was literally non-existent. With surnames the situation changed and many saw it as just another form of paternalistic policies (Filice 2015). This is an example of fixing personal names and surnames as legal identities, and it is always undertaken by the state (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 14). Pálsson argues that “currently, name pluralism is typical for many Inuit, with the two systems of surnames and customary names coexisting, their use depending on context” (2014: 9).

The critique and the uneasiness that accompanied the names in the form of numbers was, as we suggest, exactly because they seem as purely denotative, as only classificatory labels²³. It is our 'Cratylan heart' to borrow Dolar's formulation, that perceive names in form of a number as unacceptable.

We must also note that identification with numbers exist also in our society, but not in the form of personal names. However, throughout our lives, we 'acquire' plenty of numbers – on passports and IDs, license plates, telephones, bank accounts, etc. Lambek argues that “most of these numbers can be seen as forms of interpellation, means by which the state and financial institutions call upon us, monitor us, and direct and constrain our agency. Insofar as names are distinct from numbers, and we feel as though they are, it must be with respect to sense rather than to reference” (Lambek: 2006: 122).

We will discuss on power of names in literature in the following pages but at this point it is worth mentioning that the idea of numbers replacing names has also been a motif in the world of literature. Elias Canetti, modernist novelist and playwright, wrote a play *The numbered (Die Befristeten)* in which people are named with numbers indicating the years they will live. Those numbered names have a tyrannous and fatal feature. Pálsson argues that Canetti “developed his 'name talk' as an analogy for the 'gene talk’”(Pálsson 2014: 3).

Another example that abused the classificatory aspect of names occurred in Hitler's Germany in 1930s when “one of the first acts of his government was to compel every male Jew to carry the name of Isac and every Jewish woman to register the name of Sarah” (Adler 1978: 132, cited in Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 266). Labelling all individuals of a certain group with the same

²³ However they were not so – the beginning of the tag revealed the information (W for west, E for east and the following number indicating the region).

first name has a de-individualizing effect *par excellence*. According to Mauss, names at the same time identify individuals and classify persons into groups – but the attempt of Nazi government has instrumentalized names as a collective classifier only.

A special category of names were also 'answer names' of slaves in Asante communities in western Africa. Slaves had to use these names only when replying to his or her master. 'Answer names' may be for instance Biako eya (To be alone is sorrowful), or Barima e na (Heroes are difficult to find), or Ade nyina we Nyame so (All things are with God) (Benson 2006: 187) “They demonstrate – both to the audience and to the individual thus called – the difference between those who can command the bodies and actions of others and those who are commanded, whose very names speak not to their own histories and character but act as a vehicle for the communicative intentions of their masters” (Benson 2006: 188).

Names, however, might seem highly denotative also in the cases that are not imbued with power-relation, dominance and oppression. In Mongolia the naming system is based on a precondition that “every person should have one single name and in principle that name should not be the same as anyone else's in the social world known to the name-givers. /.../ To give a child the same name as someone else would be wrong, both because that would fail to acknowledge the individuality of the child and because it would also insult the existing bearer of the name by suggesting that this child is somehow 'the same' as him or her” (Humphrey 2006: 159). As an effect, there is a large number of names existing²⁴ and they are formed as a combination of more words, sometimes including also non-Mongolian ones (Tibetan, Chinese, Russian) (Humphrey 2006: 163). Mongolian names thus appear as highly denotative because “any object or concept in any language may be used as a name” (2006: 161). But if we take a closer look, we can see that they are “*both* highly denotative *and* highly connotative,” as “all these words used as names are chosen in order that the child thereby has something of that quality” (2006: 162).

In cases of Inuit, Asante, and Jews, a violence of naming is particularly obvious. But Judith Butler argues that all forms of naming are violent. “The process of becoming a subject is intimately linked with the imposition of names and classifications which effect 'a primary subordination or, indeed, a primary violence'” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 17). Judith Butler sees naming as a “prime example of the way power as discourse may be performed” (in vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 16). Pierre Bourdieu similarly notes that “naming inculcates

²⁴ The estimated number of personal names in Mongolia is 15 000.

durable dispositions that are more or less painful” (in vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 14). Imposition of a name “is one of the central 'acts of institution' which inaugurate the actor's identity and inform him 'in an authoritative manner of what he is and what he must be’”(ibid). The official naming is “a symbolic act of imposition which has on its of common sense, because it is performed by a delegated agent of the state, that is, the holder of the *monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence*” (Bourdieu 1992: 230). Dolar is also aware of the power of names, as they “are not to be taken lightly – there is always the moment of the claim to power in every name, in the assumption of the social role that goes along with it, in the transmission of symbolic legacy, in the social impact, in the inscription into genealogy” (2014: 50).

5.2.3 Power of names in literature

We should now return to *Romeo and Juliet* and think of Juliet's words in the light of the power of names. Juliet's monologue indicates “not the question of changing the name, but the question of an exit from the regime of names altogether, the departure from the symbolic places assigned to us by names” (Dolar 2014: 58). As this is not possible – we are all necessarily labelled and classified – the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* is inevitable.

Every name entails politics. By one's name one always belongs to a certain social group, a class, a nation, a family, the names pin us down to an origin, a genealogy, a tradition, names classify us and allow us a social place, they distribute social power. By the name, one is always a Montague or a Capulet /.../ By our names, we are always inscribed in social antagonisms, they always place us either on the Montague or on the Capulet side. (Dolar 2014: 58–9)

The power of the name as a label that locates its bearer in the web of social relations has been often used as a motif in literature. But writers are often aware of the connotations and (hidden) meanings of the names they choose for their protagonists. Personal names in Dostoyevsky's novels reveal information about the person. Raskolnikov is the surname of the protagonist of *Crime and Punishment*, and for the Slavic speakers it is easy to recognise the root '*razklati*' (to disunite, to split). The moral split that the protagonist is facing is one of the main forces in the famous novel, which is indicated also in the name itself. Raskolnikov's loyal friend is named Razumikhin, representing anti-radicalism and reconciliation – as '*razum*' means a reason, a sense, the name connotes his characteristics as well.

Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn are stressing out “the property-like potential in names to transact social value” (2006: 2). This idea is one of the main motives in Ivan Cankar's short story *Polikarp*. Polikarp is a name that is given to a bastard child. In 19th century Slovenia those children who were born to non-married woman were often stigmatized and somehow excluded from the society. In this story, this is already made by the priest's decision to not respect the mother's wish to name the child Francelj, but to mark him with an unusual, strange name Polikarp.

In that moment, with a spark in his eyes, his lips curved in an eerie smile.

“So be it, this is to be the punishment for the sin! ...”

The grandmother stammered uneasily; she felt weird fear in her heart.

“His mother asked to name him Francelj ...”

The chaplain had his eyes widely open and his face turned red with anger.

“To baptize him as Francelj? She said so? Good heaven! St Frances, great saint, forgive them their bold insult! He will never be Francelj!”

The grandmother was disheartened; the godfather also looked up in astonishment.

“Why should he not be Francelj?”

At once the chaplain turned to the godfather, who was a stranger to him, and gave him a furious look.

“And why are you meddling in? You, a tramp! You yourself have a name that I would not give even to a grave sinner. And you would christen others! You stay quiet; keep your nose out of things that are not your concern! God knows what sins are on your conscience.”

The godfather timidly stepped back and the chaplain started thinking.

The grandmother felt awful; she knew that her objections were useless.

“Sir, let him be at least Matija! ...”

Again rage came over the chaplain and he called out loud, so that his voice came echoing back from around the church.

“What? Matija? Everyone would like to be Matija nowadays! Matija, never!”

The child softly cried in his godfather's arms. His small face grimaced miserably and it seemed like a wrinkled face of a seventy-year old midget. The chaplain half closed his eyes and slightly

turned his head, pondering. Finally his cheeks brightened up, his lips smiled widely and he coldly glanced towards his godfather and grandmother.

“His name shall be Polikarp! ...”

The grandmother looked with round, blunt eyes; she turned pale, then raised her hands to her face and wept out loud. Pale was also the godfather; his hands were trembling while holding the child and he uttered with hoarse and quivering voice.

“For God’s sake, why Polikarp? Mercy, sir!”

The chaplain looked at him again with rage and the godfather fell silent.

The child turned in his blanket like a worm, he squeaked loudly and could not be comforted, although his godfather tried to rock him. A curly boy who came to replace the priest, laughed out loud; the chaplain turned about and hit him with a strong and cross hand ...

On the way back from the church, grandmother was sobbing in tears and she was so sad that she even forgot to open her umbrella.

“Oh you poor child! Unhappy, dishonoured, renounced for life! May God save you! ... /.../

Polikarp, punished with this name, comes back to his native village and dies in the priest's yard on the night of his arrival. But despite the priest's attempt to bury him deep in the ground, nail the coffin well and so on, the deceased returns again to the priest, and exchanges his name with the priest's.

“Today you must have an idea about what great deed got me on this hard journey. No need to turn pale, sir, it was nothing! What could I take from you? Only few hours are left to you, why should I waste them? No, I cannot take anything but I can give you something precious. Something precious I brought with me from my long pilgrimage ...”

The priest sat quietly, he hasn't missed a word but didn't move nor blinked his eyes. He leaned his head when Polikarp stopped talking and sighed from his soul.

“May it happen if it's God's will!”

Polikarp smiled unforgivingly.

“I brought you my name, sir. You gave it to me yourself; take it! It is still pure and unspoiled, not worn out or dirty ...”

The priest held out his hands, as if in prayer.

“Mercy!”

“Oh what!” Polikarp laughed. “It is a very honest name, pure Christian name and Polikarp was a great saint! ... You must still have it in your breviary; you put it in there! Just look, read how beautiful it sounds!”

The priest pulled out his breviary from a pocket and there was a note in it. He gently took it with two fingers and presented it to Polikarp.

“Really, it is a very beautiful name! Look, you have carried it for so long and now you reject it? Isn't it all the same? Polikarp or Franc – what is a name? Here, and go in peace!”

Polikarp raised both hands and moved backwards.

“Oh, sir, you are too kind! Just keep the name. I offer it to you, save it and protect it! ... What do you say? A nice sign – it fits nicely, pinned to your back!”

And he smiled wickedly.

“Oh, if you knew, sir, how light is my heart now! And still it is sad if a man is happy only after his death. What would I do to live up to just one nice hour, or at least a minute! Because this cheerfulness after death is like a tree with no shadow, as a song without sounds, as, for example, a man without a name ... Anyway, better so than not at all!”

Last hope awoke in the priest's heart.

“But look, what will you do without a name? Won't you be ashamed? All the others that lie there, they have names, beautiful honest names – and you will be like a non-believer! ...”

Polikarp smiled cunningly. “Do you think that I was so clumsy? Pay attention, sir, look around – where is your name then?”

The priest jumped up terrified, he trembled and he lost balance. He looked for it in breviary, checked his pockets, vest, searched the whole room and even looked into his certificate of baptism – there was no name ... He held his head and cried out loud.

“You stole my name, give it back!”

Polikarp burst into laughter.

“What? Don't you have a name? But I brought it to you – a beautiful, resonant, fresh name! It lies here on the table!”

Relieved of fear, the priest hit the table and shouted.

“Give me my name! My old, honest name! Aren't you ashamed of stealing, even after death? Give it back!”

Neither tears nor anger did move Polikarp. He rose from the table, lifted his collar since it was cold outside, and took his leave.

In this short story the name puts a stamp on a bearer, determines his life path and functions as a curse. It would be misleading to interpret it as only a metaphor for the difficult and unfair position that bastard children had in the society. As a representative of realism Cankar was taking themes and motives from real, everyday life from rural social settings. The power of the name, on the one hand, and the power of priests to decide on the name they bestow during a baptism ceremony, on the other, clearly shows the property-like potential of names. Dolar argues that

[A]lthough nowadays the codes of naming are more relaxed, elusive and loose, seemingly liberal, they still very much exist and continue to secretly delineate us, although in subtle ways that are hard to decipher. (2014: 60)

But as the names are almost always bestowed upon us, they do not have only the property-like potential, but they function as a gift as well. Layne writes that

names function in much the same way as consumer goods /.../ Like other gifts, a name is an expression of the gift givers' taste and values and the characteristics of the gift may also express characteristics of the gift may also expresses characteristics that the gift giver wishes for the recipient. (2006: 48)

5.2.4 Literature and names in Iceland

Iceland is a country that strongly emphasizes literacy and literature tradition. Sizemore and Walker argue that

the construction of a tradition of literacy has had, and continues to have, an influential effect on Icelanders' perceptions of their country's history, its educational apparatus, and their sense of distinctive national identity. This literacy identity has been inextricably intertwined both with the country's history and with the history of literacy practices. (1996: 195)

An important Icelandic term related to their self-image of literacy identity is *kvöldvaka*. Literally it means the evening wake. It includes telling stories and loud reading of Sagas, singing and handiwork at home. The *kvöldvaka* “acted as a means of continuity between the Saga Age and the present” (ibid). It reinforced the awareness of reading and speaking the same Old Norse language as in the past. The cultural image “that all Icelanders are literate, saga-

reading individuals has been taken for granted by both outsiders and Icelanders themselves until just the past few years. Being literate has been an essential part of being Icelandic, an essential part of the self-image” (Sizemore and Walker 1996: 200). Nowadays there is a discrepancy between the actual literacy practice and the literacy identity, the latter being “a myth that no longer corresponds to actual literacy fact” (Sizemore and Walker 1996: 201). The authors are critical also towards the widely accepted belief that literacy in Iceland is over 99%. It is more a mythical statistic, as “no reading tests had been administered in Icelandic schools since 1977” (Sizemore and Walker 1996: 204). However, Icelanders still have the highest number of books published and sold *per capita*. Book market is the liveliest before Christmas, as books are the traditional Christmas gift. But buying books of course does not necessarily imply the reading. In today's Icelandic homes many of the books, “especially beautiful, leather-bound sets of the sagas, are there only for display as material possessions. This has been described as a kind of 'required' interior decorating scheme for Icelandic homes” (Sizemore and Walker 1996: 208)²⁵. The heritage of *kvöldvaka* has changed significantly. There has been a shift from the communal reading of printed materials to individual reading of newspapers, textbooks and especially television subtitles.

One resounding case of Icelandic naming corresponds strongly with the role that the literature has in their society. In 1997 Björk Eiðsdóttir named her daughter Blær Bjarkardóttir Rúnarsdóttir²⁶. In Icelandic Blær means a light breeze, and the noun itself is masculine. This was the reason why the Naming Committee declined the name for a girl. What followed were years of legal procedures as parents did not accept the committee's decision. The main argument (apart from the fact that in 1973 there was already a woman who had been allowed to use it), was that the name was chosen on the basis of Icelandic literature. In the novel of a famous writer, Nobel laureate Halldór Laxness, *Fish can sing (Brekukotsannáll)* there is a female protagonist called Blær. Laxness is one of the most exposed novelists in the country, his works contributed greatly to the self-perception of cultural identity in Iceland. Reading and expertise of his novels is almost a social imperative. In 2013 the case was finally solved in the favour of Blær and her parents. Until this year, Blær has been recognised by the state as *Stúlka* (Girl). We

²⁵ 'Knjige na metre' (books by the meters) is also a very similar phenomenon in many Slovenian homes.

²⁶ We can see that Blær has both patronym (Rúnarsdóttir – the daughter of Rúnar) and matronym (Bjarkadóttir – the daughter of Björk). The practice of giving the children both patronym and matronym is increasing. It may well be compared with growing number of Slovenian parents who decide on giving both father's and mother's family names to their children.

can see that language and literature have such an impact on national identity that they can be used as an argument even in court.

Our short excursion to the world of literature, especially to the story of Polikarp, shows that the ritual of naming forms a crucial part in understanding of the names as such. Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn similarly point out: “[W]hat names are in any particular context is clearly connected to what naming as an initial act is thought to do” (2006: 25). This is why we will now take a closer look at the naming itself.

6 Naming as a ritual of passage

“Naming is like the tide; it's never exactly the same, but if you watch it for a while, you see how it works.” Yup'ik elder (Fienup-Riordan 1983)

Before we begin with the phenomenon of naming as such, we must place it in a wider social context, especially in the context of social and biological birth of a person. In Western societies, social and biological births are usually not recognised as the separate events. While in some other cultures

social birth occurs some time after the biological birth, often as part of a ceremony that ends a period of ritual seclusion for a mother and her newborn. It is not until this period ritually ends that personhood is attributed and the baby welcomed as a new member of the society. One of the most common features is naming. (Layne 2006: 34)

But it is not necessary that the social birth (cf. Telban 1997) occurs after the biological one, as “naming – and thus social birth – can occur either well before or well after biological birth” (Layne 2006: 35). Birth, both social and biological side of it, is an example of liminality *par excellence*. Liminal statuses are related to Mary Douglas' concept of being out of place (1979). Placelessness is, according to Douglas, disordered part of order. On the other hand, disorder has unlimited potential for patterning – this potentiality is full of danger and power. Taking an example of an unborn child, it is easy to note that we cannot place it among men or women and among alive or not-alive persons. He or she is out of our classification system, his or her status is indefinable. Douglas gives an example of Lele people from Basongo area (today's Congo), who perceived an unborn child and his/her mother “as in constant danger” (1979: 96). This is why a pregnant woman should not approach sick persons. There are similar beliefs among other groups, for example the Nyakyusa: “A pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of grain she approaches, because the foetus in her is voracious and snatches it” (ibid). This is explained by the inevitability of the “'seed within' fighting the 'seed without'” (ibid).

The rituals and beliefs accompanying both social and biological birth are typical examples of Van Gennep's *rites de passage*, which, as the name reveals, imply that the movements from one identity or social status to another is accompanied with the transitional rituals. Rituals are necessary in order to control the danger, because persons in transitional states resemble the 'matter out of place' – they are outside the established categories. “Danger,” as Douglas points out “lies in transition states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is

undefinable” (1979: 97). Naming as one of the core rituals that accompany the birth, is thus an important ritual of passage. When a name is given, a newborn is recognised and accepted as a human being and consequently as a part of a society.

But it is not only the birth that is accompanied with the ritual of naming. Also other rites of passages sometimes include renaming. Partisans, Slovenian and Yugoslavian guerrilla fighters during the Second World War, were often given new or additional name(s) that were used during the liminal period of the war. Many of them kept their partisan names and were even mostly known by them. To mention some of them, we must start with Josip Broz Tito, Franc Rozman Stane, Fran Leskošek Luka, Karel Destovnik Kajuh, etc. Also in the modern armies, soldiers are bestowed with *noms de guerre*. João de Pina-Cabral argues that this is “the practice of modern armies to choose a simplified version of each soldier's formal name so that (a) soldiers' names are simple and (b) there are no two soldiers in a battalion called the same way” (2016: 5).

It is important to see how the naming rituals, indicating the social birth of the person, are related to the perception of the identity and the person on a wider scale. Pálsson argues that “practices of naming are firmly rooted in epistemologies of belonging, relatedness, and becoming human” (2014: 6).

Social birth, according to Layne, is modelled on the biological birth, “yet differs in substantial respects. Whereas biological birth is one-time event /.../ the attribution of personhood is a gradual, collaborative process, /.../ person often is only provisionally granted and is frequently revoked if the pregnancy does not end in a live birth” (2006: 37–8). Layne analyses the naming policies and practices among families in the USA who lost their children. She brings forth the cases when biological and social birth are decoupled, namely when babies are named well after their birth/death. American law enables naming of the child also after the death certificate has been issued – identity can thus be changed retrogradically. This, according to Layne, shows on nexus of law and names: “Although naming one's children is generally understood to be private, personal matter, this law makes clear that the state has an interest in controlling the naming of its citizens” (2006: 36). This point corresponds strongly with my fieldwork in Iceland, where we also find a fascinating nexus of law and names.

Quite contrary to Layne's case of naming the deceased children, there was the practice of necronymic naming in the past in Europe. Lawrence Stone argues that until mid 18th century in England it was a “common practice to give a new-born son the same first name as an elder

sibling,” who has recently passed away (1979: 257). As necronymic naming had died out by the late eighteenth century. Stone writes that this indicates “a recognition that names were highly personal and could not be readily transferred from child to child” (1979: 258). In order to illuminate the interrelatedness between the names and the personhood we can go back to late 16th century in England. Stone argues that “the earliest evidence of greater attention being paid to infants and children was the tendency /.../ to record upon tombs erected decades later children who died in infancy” (1979: 257). This is closely related to the invention of childhood. Naming of the deceased children reflects “a greater concern to register the existence on earth, however brief, of all infants born” (ibid). For him, naming is an “evidence that, for the first time, parents were beginning to recognize that each child, even if it lived only for a few hours or days, had its own unique individuality” (ibid). Icelandic historian Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, who studied name-giving in the 19th century, found out that “in 76% of the cases, parents named their children after deceased siblings” (1999: 299, cited in Heijnen 2010: 314). It is interesting that this naming practice existed even though people also believed that death could follow the name – that this child would die as well (Heijnen 2010: 314). It clearly shows that certain names had to stay in the family (ibid). There are parallels between Stone's and Layne's case as “the baby is being constructed as part of the collective identity of the family” (Layne 2006: 44). She compares Stone's analysis to her own: “The pregnancy loss support movement is extending this logic to a new category and seeks to include those who did not even live 'a few hours or days,' or, more accurately, they are seeking to redefine the definition of 'living'“ (2006: 44). The definition of 'living' is constantly questioned and culturally constructed.

Just as at the close of the early modern era the 'right to a name' was extended to infants, a similar process may now be underway with regard to embryos and fetuses, at least those from wished-for pregnancies. (Layne 2006: 47)

Naming in the Layne's case serves as a way of memorizing. The names are used in all forms: speaking, hearing and inscribing. When names are bestowed upon the deceased children, the memorizing function is predominant. “In the absence of bodies, names play a particularly important role” (2006: 47).

In Iceland a form close to the necronymic naming occurred as well. As in earlier times infant mortality rates were very high, several siblings might be given the same name. Kendra Willson explains that this practice ensured the survival of the name (2007: 109). These children were referred to as *varabörn* (spare children) (ibid).

Necronymic naming, however, is a relatively narrow phenomenon in the general realm of naming. Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn argue that the act of naming “has the potential to implicate infants in relations through which they become inserted into and, ultimately will act upon, a social matrix. Individual lives thus become entangled – through a name – in the life histories of the others.” (2006: 3) Naming is thus a prime example of Geertzian converting anybodies into somebodies. Butler claims that naming brings the subject into relationship with others, but she claims, in her manner, that it is “a primer example of the way power as discourse may be performed” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 16).

When approaching the naming from anthropological standpoint it is useful to perceive it as a creative action. John Austin brought forth the performative and didactic aspects of naming (1990 [1962]). In his famous work *How to do things with words*, he was concerned not so much with truth-values of sentences but mostly with another kind of sentences, which he calls performative utterances. Performatives do not contain true/false implications and they are intended to have performative power, to trigger an action – those sentences are *doing* things. When using the language imbued with performative utterances, these acts are called *speech acts* and more precisely *illocutionary acts*. Naming can be perceived as an illocutionary act as, among other things, it works only under certain conditions. “That is, naming someone will 'take' only if the person doing the naming is recognized as having the right to do so” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 11). As a consequence, the right to assign a name “varies considerably across cultures and provides important insights into the ways in which naming carries the potential to express as well as to constitute social relations” (ibid). At this point Austin resonates with Plato as in Cratylus dialogue Socrates discusses that “neither ships nor babies may be named by just anyone” (ibid).

Conferring a name is therefore “a performative act that involves a subject-constituting power and takes place within a wider field of conventions and ideological relations” (Humphrey 2006: 158). Lambek also links naming with illocutionary acts. He even argues that

rituals of name bestowal are quintessential examples of what Austin illuminated as performative or illocutionary acts. Formal and conventional connections between specific names and persons are made; they are the products of performative speech acts. Such acts may entail baptism, the signing of legal registries, or ancestral blessing. They are generally sanctified and authorised, but whatever the degree of formality and legitimation, however elaborate the process, there is a discrete transition between a person's not having and then having a certain name. (Lambek 2006: 123)

Locutionary acts are taken to be true or false with respect to the facts, while illocutionary acts “construct conventions with respect to which the facts will henceforth be judged as true or false” (Lambek 2006: 124). Lambek argues that it is “precisely here, then, that a theory of proper names simply in terms of reference falls flat” (ibid). In order that the name refers to the person, it has to be correctly established in acts that “cannot themselves be described as acts of reference” (ibid). Perceiving naming as a ritual, Lambek refers to Roy Rappaport, who argues that ritual “contains within itself not simply a symbolic representation of social contact, but a consummation of social contact” (Rappaport 1974: 38). Therefore, naming can be seen as the “quintessential ritual act” (Lambek 2006: 128). In other words, getting a name is a “ritual act that indicates acceptance of the universe that has created the conventions of naming” (ibid). We will now look at some ethnographic examples of those social 'universes' which created various conventions of naming.

6.1 Naming practices across the world

Zafimaniry from eastern Madagascar give personal names eight/seven days after a girl/ a boy is born. They believe that seven is a strong number, which girls “could not bear” (Bloch 2006: 101). Parents consult a diviner astrologer before they choose the first name. Sometimes the astrologer suggests a different name, which has a function to “mislead those vague forces of evil who might want to harm it” – the negative character of those 'bad names' protect the child “by putting off evil forces” (Bloch 2006: 102). It is common that 'real names' of young babies are avoided in public by the parents and are instead placed by an “unflattering generic term such as 'little rat' /.../ The evoking of the unique person is thus delayed.” (ibid) But it would be misleading to see this practice as pointing at the significant value of the 'real name' *per se*. Maurice Bloch even writes that “the actual names of young children seem to be chosen on a wide variety of not very serious *ad hoc* principles” (ibid). Furthermore, they “really only reflect the impulse of the moment when they were given” (Bloch 2006: 103).

Choosing the right name among Iñupiat in northern Alaska is far more deliberate than among Zafimaniry. Name givers are most commonly relatives, but this is “by no means a closed universe” (Bodenhorn 2006: 146). The idea of the proper name of a child is often seen as a question of discovery. They pay attention to small signs that are taken as “evidence of a reincarnated presence that should be recognized by matching the proper name to the newborn person” (2006: 147). If the name turns out to be wrong, they change it. Barbara Bodenhorn

argues that Iñupiat “are not naming, but discovering the right name” (ibid). For Iñupiat names play “an important part in transforming a small, unaware human being entering this potential universe into a real person” (Bodenhorn 2006: 145). How crucial is the name in forming one's identity, is clear already if we consider the form of a name inquiry. In literal translation, Inupiak ask: 'Who is your name?' And the answer is: 'I, Quimmieluk' (Bodenhorn 2006: 140). The power of recognition, on the one hand and the power of speech, on the other are therefore the crucial aspects of naming (ibid). Among Yup'ik from Alaska, who are ethnically close to Iñupiat, the naming ceremony is called *kangiliryaraq* which literally means “to provide with a beginning” (Fienup-Riordan 2000, cited in Pálsson 2014: 6), which reminds us of Polikarp. Similar to Bodenhorn findings, also Ann Fienup-Riordan argues that the name contains the essence of what it means to be a human (ibid). “Personhood would not be generated without parents and biological birth, but what matter above all are the ancestral names defining a person's position within a particular genealogy” (ibid). Pálsson claims that both, Iñupiat and Yup'ik data “highlight the irrelevance of the idea of the autonomy of the 'biological' as commonly understood /.../ The biology of the organism seems inseparable from the durable dispositions of the habitus developed in the course of everyday practices.” (ibid)

As we have mentioned already earlier, in Mongolia every person should have the unique name within the one's social world. They are bestowed with a name “by someone in a position of seniority and it normally consists of a word or words with meaning in every-day language” (Humphrey 2006: 159). In contrast to Zafirmany, the meaning of the name is of a crucial importance as it denotes the intended character of the named. But similar to the Madagascar case, babies in Mongolia are either not given a name for some time after the birth or it should not be spoken aloud (Humphrey 2006: 168). Sometimes babies get a temporary strange name, that can be said aloud. The literary translation of those names would be Not human, No-name, Not that one, Whoever ... (Humphrey 2006: 168–69). This custom has a similar function as among Zafirmany – it “prevents evil spirits from getting to know where the child is by overhearing its name spoken aloud” (Humphrey 2006: 169). The children can be given a real name relatively late. Latest at the age of hair-cutting ritual at the age of around 3–5 (ibid). At the ritual the children's hair is cut for the first time and they are given distinctive gendered hairstyles. Getting a distinctive personal name is thus intertwined with getting a more individuating visual appearance. Children have to be old enough, the process of becoming a person has to be at the point when they are strong and prepared to bear a name. Caroline Humphrey argues that not just the name but also the naming itself has a power and is “explicitly

recognized as dangerous” (2006: 173). Similar to Bodenhorn, she places it in a wider socio-cultural context of language: “ /.../ this must be related, it seems to me, to the Mongols' language ideology, their recognition of the transformative capacity of spoken language in general” (ibid).

The idea that the name is too powerful for a newborn is spread also among Tukanoans of north-western Amazonia. Some of societies there “delay naming till the child's bones are hard and it begins to walk and talk on the grounds that names are too 'heavy' and potent for small babies” (Hugh-Jones 2006: 84). But on the other hand some other Tukanoan societies name their babies soon after the birth. “There the rationale is that naming 'transforms' the soul /.../ of the child, giving it strength and vitality and increasing its chances of survival” (ibid). In both cases individuals are named after deceased members of the group. Stephen Hugh-Jones explains that “through naming, the individual acquires group identity and a share of group soul while the collectivity of the living is a continuation of the ancestors and keeps their memories, names and vitality alive” (2006: 79).

In Cantonese China it is believed that a baby's soul is not firmly attached until at least 30 days after the birth. After this time, the infant is named by the father or grandfather at a ceremony called the 'full month' (Watson 1986: 620). The elaborateness of full month festivities depends considerably on the child's gender. The name that one is given at full month is called *ming*. Ming is based on literary or classical allusions. “It may express a wish for the child's or family's future, or it may enshrine some simple event that took place at or near the time of the child's birth” (Watson 1986: 621). It can also express the parent's wish for no more children. The same practice is found also in Mongolia, where name Otgon literally means 'the last child' (Humphrey 2006: 163). The name Otgon also implies his or her role in the family: to stay at home and take care for the parents when they get old (ibid). Even though *ming* name is given at one-month ceremony, the name is not used a lot for the first one or two years, as most of the children are called by a 'milk name' (family nickname) (Watson 1986: 621). Another parallel with Mongolia is that in neither society, there is a category of words reserved specifically for names. Moreover, also in China the idea of sharing the name with “millions of other people” is perceived extraordinary (Watson 1986: 622). Rubie Watson gives an example from Taiwan as well, where the “individuation of one's name is so important that the government has established a set of rules for name changes. These rules enable a name change when two people with the same name work or live in the same place (ibid).

Another ethnographic example of protective names bestowed upon a child at birth comes from Asante from southern Ghana. They name their newborn by such 'disguise names' as 'We don't want you', 'Slave', etc. (Benson 2006: 186). Proper name is bestowed eight days after birth and it is usually the father or someone from the father's line who choose the name (ibid). Similarly to Mongolian naming practice, Asante's naming is also “intended to conduce resemblance: the identity between name and person shapes the character of the one who bears it” (ibid).

Among Hausa, one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, the 'hidden name' was common. The hidden name is “whispered in the newborn's ear by one of their parents, by which they should never be publicly addressed and which was indissolubly linked to the corporeal essence of the new human being” (Benson 2006: 181–82). However, seven days after birth, they were given the 'book/day name', which was chosen by the father or the father's representative and was bestowed in public ceremony (Benson 2006: 182). The book name is thus the public name, imbued with less danger, but also less intimate than the hidden name. In this case the double nature of the name – its public, social, exterior function, as well as its individualizing, personal, inner aspect – is particularly clearly demarcated.

For Orokaiva ethnic group from Papua New Guinea, naming system consists of complex categories of small and big names. It is important to know that in Melanesia relations constitute persons, who are not closed up units. Naming systems in Melanesia gained quite some anthropological attention, as addressed by contributors to *Pacific Studies* vol. 39, no. 1/2. André Itenau argues that among the Orokaivans, names “constitute nodal points around which networks of relations appear that have the potential either to expand or to contract” (Itenau 2006: 62). Name bestowal is therefore not “a simple formality, but it implies a group and an individual strategy. The practices used to control the names closely resemble those applied to marriage exchanges” (Itenau 2006: 64). Newborns are called *ahihi*, which means recently dead. “While thus called, they cannot bear a personal name. They only receive one a few months later, when people start to call them *mei*, 'child'” (Itenau 2006: 66). In this chapter we are dealing mostly with naming practices cross-culturally, however, it is crucial to know that name for Orokaivans “pertain exclusively to the realm of the living /.../, they are only transmitted from a living person to another” (ibid). They never refer to deceased ones by their names because with death one loses one's own name. To speak to the dead or about the dead, kinship terms are

uttered, or preferably the plant emblem²⁷ (Itenau 2006: 65). In Western societies a name is attached to someone as long as one is remembered in any sense. Among Orokaivans “personal names do not keep this openness between the living and the dead. Names do not belong to the person, are not contiguous to his or her body, do not carry individual memories and do not need to be mourned” (ibid). The idea that the name is something that only a living person has makes this symmetry or almost symbolical contact between the newborns who are not yet persons, whose social birth has not yet occurred and are therefore called *ahihi*, and the deceased ones, who are not persons anymore, as they 'return' to the world of non-persons. Being a person and thus having a name is an episode with the processual yet clear beginning and the end. What is striking here is that names, if not used for the currently living people, would be lost. When Orokaiva pass their name onto a child, they say that names must not be forgotten (Itenau 2006: 59). In their culture it is literally the case. “Passing on a name, therefore, prolongs this name in time beyond the capacity of personal memory” (ibid). In Iceland some families similarly keep some names 'alive' by bestowing them to the newborns.

6.2 Naming as a cultural DNA

Dolar, referring to Freud's remark²⁸ on connection between the names and immortality, talks about “the question of symbolic transmission by names” (Dolar 2014: 39). The name, he argues, is:

like our cultural DNA, the unique mark of our singular inscription into the social, and naming children after our heroes and our beloved ones is propelled by the hope that our cultural DNA may run at least a small part of the way alongside with our biological DNA into the unforeseeable future. The individual name may be seen as a signifier's way to provide its replica, its cultural progeny, the individual is the name's way to make another name. (Dolar 2014: 40)

Pálsson argues that practices of naming are about identification and personhood, they are “embodied in the biosocial habitus much like other biomakers” while on the other hand they also “situate people in genealogies, social networks, states, and empires” (2014: 3). Similar to

²⁷ Plant emblem is a personal mark, which is inherited from one's father, mother or namesake. Plant emblems “may represent an assembly of dead not totally individualized, but not yet entirely depersonalized” (Itenau 2006: 65).

²⁸ “I had insisted on their names (of my children) being chosen, not according to the fashion of the moment, but in memory of people I have been fond of. Their names made the children into revenants. And after all, I reflected, was not having children our own path to immortality?” (in Dolar 2014: 36)

Dolar's notion of names as our cultural DNA, Pálsson, inspired by Foucault, writes about naming practices which “represent a particular form of biopolitics, a technology of the self” (2014: 4).

In all cases, however, naming systems operate – sometimes tacitly and sometimes in an explicit manner – as technologies of differentiation and belonging, much like racecraft and genomic essentialism. (Pálsson 2014: 10)

In Western naming systems as well as among for instance, Orokaivans, the names will outlive us. The name is “more enduring than we are, it presents our chance at immortality” (Dolar 2014: 43). The difference between societies where the death does not disassemble the person and the name, and those where it does is in the way how it will outlive us. For the first ones, the name serves as “a reference point for what we might be remembered for,” but also in more direct sense, “as written on a gravestone” (ibid). Dolar argues that

a name is something that imprints our identity into stone and makes it indelible /.../ They [the names] have a secret mission, a destination, the name being that part of us that will one day find itself on our gravestone /.../ It [the name] is that part of our identity that is more lasting than we are, written on the supposedly most lasting substance of stone. Names are 'eternal', we are not, names last, we pass away. (Dolar 2014: 43)

Dolar refers to the ideas of names that are common in Western societies. For Orokaivans and their conceptions of the dead, the outliving feature of names has very different implications. The deceased in Mongolia are also not referred by their personal names. Those names should not be spoken aloud “since the sound of the name will cause 'bones to ring out'“(Humphrey 2006: 167). Zafimaniry beliefs about the deceased also do not resonate with Dolar's notions. For Zafimaniry, the dead are somewhat ambiguous. They are the source of blessing on the one hand, but on the other they are also suspected of being jealous of the living (Bloch 2006: 109). People therefore refer to the dead as a group, using the general term for ancestors or of their houses, which emphasize more the protective, beneficial side of them, “but calling them by individual names evokes the particular individual who could be the source of trouble” (ibid). So only respected elders and only at rituals asking for blessing can the names of the dead be said. Even then they are addressed very quietly, so that only those who have the right to stand close to the elders can hear the names (ibid). Dolar's notion of engraving the names into stone has an interesting resonance among Zafimaniry. The practice of writing the names of the dead on monuments or on burial spots is full of discomfort and does not fit in Zafimaniry conceptions of the personhood after death. With Christianity, it has “become common to place a wooden

cross against the stone covering the tomb on which is then inscribed the name of the deceased and the date of their death” (Bloch 2006: 109–10). The solution for these incompatible cultural practices is witty. The Zafimaniry carefully select “wood that rots quickly for the making of these crosses” (Bloch 2006: 110).

6.3 Between invention and convention: naming practices among mixed families in Iceland

6.3.1 First names

One of my main research interests is how do mixed families who live in Iceland choose the names of their children. I assumed that parents encourage children's notion of double national or ethnic identity on the one hand and encourage their bilingualism on the other. How does it reflect on one of the first big decisions made about the child's identity, namely the name? In earlier chapters we addressed the legal perspectives on names and naming in Iceland. While the regulations that apply for Icelanders are still relatively strict (e.g. the case of Jón Gnarr), for children of mixed couples naming regulations are considerably loosened. If one parent is of non-Icelandic origin, the second name of the child can be chosen from this parent's 'pool' of names. The authorities, however, do not check if the non-Icelandic name really is a 'typical' let's say Cambodian name. The idea behind this regulation is that children should have one name that is approved by the Naming Committee, which implies that it is grammatically possible to form a patronym or a matronym from it. The second name can, therefore, reflect the culture of another parent and does not need to fit into Icelandic declination system necessarily. If parents choose only one name, then it must be approved by the Naming Committee, respectively.

Naming practices of all of the families that I was in contact with can be divided into two broad groups. The first and prevailing pattern is giving the child two names, one Icelandic and the other reflecting the culture/language of another parent. Second pattern is giving the child one international name, which exists in both parents' cultures. We will begin with some examples who belong to the first group.

Gestur Diriangen has Icelandic and Nicaraguan name. His parents firstly decided to give him two names and then his Icelandic mother chose the Icelandic name and Nicaraguan father the Nicaraguan name. Then they put the two names together to see if they 'fit' to one another. For his mother, the meaning of both of the names was very important. Diriangen is a name of Indian

chieftain who fought against the Spanish when they came to Nicaragua. Thus he has a hero status in Nicaraguan history. While Gestur²⁹ is a name from the Nordic mythology – it is one of the names that the God Odinn used when he visited people. So Gestur means a visitor, a guest (it is not a surprise that the word *guest* has the same root). His mother emphasizes that the two meanings correlate to each other. The names can reflect on the self-image one has as there is an interplay between meaning of the name and the child's developing character, his mother explains. That is why she often tells him stories about both of his 'namesakes', the Indian chieftain and the mythological Gestur.

For Ari the pre-Christian origin of name and the power it conveys was crucial. With Anna they similarly chose one Icelandic and one Polish name for both of their children. Ari was mostly in charge of choosing the Icelandic one and Anna of Polish. Another factor that they emphasized was that the name should be rare. The names they choose are Úlfur Kazimierz for their son and Freydís Balbina for the daughter. Úlfur soon became very popular name. Ari tells:

There was a mistake in case of Úlfur. This name was very rare, but then all of a sudden it became fashionable. So now many kids have this name.

So now he sometimes regrets that he did not choose the name Loki instead, which is a Nordic trickster god and a rare name in Iceland.

As already mentioned, Ari focused on names that imply power and resistance:

For me it is strongly rebellious. There is this idea that Úlfur was impossible to tame and it had a mythical status. And then Christianity made it a bad thing. That was also something that was intriguing for me. So strong and aggressive against the establishment. You know our national church was kind of forced upon people.

His clear anti-Christian names orientation influenced also the name of his daughter, Freydís, as Freyja was the old Norse goddess of beauty and fertility.

In Iceland parents have six months after the birth to choose the child's name. Úlfur Kazimierz was named when he was 3 months old. But Anna knew that his Polish name will be Kazimierz³⁰:
“I knew before I had kids that I would like to use this name. But Ari was thinking about names.”

²⁹ The main decisive factor, however, was not the meaning but the namesake – Gestur is the name of his grandfather – we discuss naming after the ancestor more in the chapter Namesakes in Iceland.

³⁰ Both Kazimierz and Balbina are also the names of Anna's grandparents.

I wanted to know if the perception of the baby changed when he was bestowed with the name. Ari said without hesitation: *“Yes. For me the name is very important. One puts the meaning of the name on the person.”*

For her daughter's name Anna was less decided. She wanted the name from the family but was not satisfied with the common Polish names like Maria, Anna, Barbara, which were used among her relatives. She chose the name Balbina after her grandmother. This name is very rare and is not *very Polish* as Anna puts it. But there was a popular children's story with the main character called Balbina in Poland and this is usually the only association with the name.

I was hesitating. Balbina was a cartoon story. So when I told my closest friend she tried to change it. And one thing my brother said to me to give me courage, was exactly the opposite thing. Not that the name will pose on her but that she will represent the name. So that for people who know her she will be the association. Not this cartoon story. So she will become the representative of the name.

Considering the order of the two names, Anna told me that it was not clear from the beginning on.

I sometimes want that Balbina would be her first name. It was more a question that we are living here so that it is more practical to have an Icelandic name first. But sometimes I think it would not be a problem if it would be the other way around. /.../ I feel like I sort of gave up to the kind of rationality. Not to make the statement, they will have the Polish name first.

She points out also the complications this would cause as they would have to get the permission from the naming committee. Ari thus added: *“It was out of practicality to have Icelandic name first.”*

Even though almost all of my interlocutors were aware of the meaning of the name, many of them did not stress it as a decisive factor. Parents of Sóley Björk and Jón Kári point out that they chose the names that *“are Icelandic but can be easily pronounced in English. And that have some kind of connection to our families.”* Their father, who is from South Africa, liked the name Zoe, but as it is not an Icelandic name, they agreed on Sóley as it sounds similarly. As the names they chose exist in their families, they did not put much attention on the meaning:

The meaning was not so important. I mean Jón is biblical and Kári means wind or boy with curly hair. And Sóley is a flower and Björk is a tree. So the meanings are not so deep.

But even though their mother claimed that she does not put much attention on the meaning, later on she still said:

Jón was always going to be Jón, but then for the second name we thought about Herman. Because his [her husband's] dad's name is John Herman. But Herman means soldier and I did not like that. And there were a few others, like Jón Tomas, but that did not have any reference to me.

An interesting tradition in Iceland is that the name of the child is not revealed before he or she is born. Some people are superstitious about it. Traditionally the name was revealed at baptism. Even though none of my interlocutors follow this tradition, majority of them still did not reveal the name before the child was born. The ideas that a name has to be hidden for a certain period of time prior to birth or in the first months and years are to be found in different cultures. We analysed some of them earlier in this chapter. Parents of Sóley Björk and Jón Kári for example announced the names just after their births.

Matthildur Louise has a Danish father and an Icelandic mother. Her mother points out that they chose the first name because it is an international name with both Icelandic (Matthildur) and Danish (Mathilde) version and it is not difficult to pronounce. As they decided for Icelandic spelling, her second name was her Danish grandmother's name. Her mother puts more stress on meaning than on the sound of the names:

Mathilde Louise I mean it is ok, but it is not extremely beautiful. I mean, I do not know if it is a beautiful name. But I like it. /.../ Matthidur is of a German origin. Maht hild. So it is a powerful battle. /.../ So it is a very strong name.

Considering the order of the two given names, Astrid, who is half French and half Portuguese, and her Icelandic husband chose an interesting way. When their first son was born they lived in Belgium and did not plan to move to Iceland. So they gave him first the Icelandic and then the French name, Kjartan Henri.

Then I really liked the fact he would have an Icelandic first name and even patronym. It was not a problem because I thought that I was going to work in Belgium and it would remind him of his Icelandic part.

But when the second one, Audric Auðunn was born, they had already planned to move to Iceland: “*He was six months old when we moved and then I wanted somehow to print it, the French part. And then I decided to give him a French name first and then the Icelandic name.*”

While her husband was very happy about the order of names for the first child, Astrid had to convince him to go for the reversed order for the second child:

I had to fight a bit because my husband was a little bit disturbed by the fact that I wanted to give a French name first. Because there is also a problem of declination and the patronymic system. So we had to find a name that would work with this patronymic system. /.../ It could not be any French name. So it was quite something to find a name that he would agree on. And then I was so happy that I just let him choose the second, the Icelandic name.

As they basically chose an Icelandic name for Belgium and the French name for Iceland, it was crucial to find names that would be pronounced correctly. Astrid emphasizes the importance of the sound:

We wanted names that would be beautiful in French and in Icelandic. In both languages. The meaning was not very important. /.../ This [pronunciation in both languages] has been a very big, important thing. We always agreed that if we choose a French or an Icelandic name it has to sound nice in both languages and it has to be easy to pronounce. But this is the first name, because we thought that we are not going to use the second name.

She explained that both first names, Kjartan and Audric are easy to pronounce, even though Kjartan is of course not a known name in France and Audric not in Iceland:

Kjartan is easy to pronounce in French. It is a Celtic name. There are some Celtic names in France. And Audric, it is a French name but it has a Germanic origin. So it is very easy in Iceland. They have the name Erik here. So the sounds are quite familiar. Erik. Audric.

The parents of Gíta Guðrún chose her Indian name as her first name. Her mother explains:

I wanted her to have an Indian first name. Of course I was assuming that she will come out looking more Indian and I feel, I always feel it is important, if you are coming from a different heritage, to have a name to reflect that heritage. That is especially true if you look different. Because otherwise you just feel like you are a defective version of the people around you. Instead you can say: 'Ok, I look strange, but I have also a strange name, why is this?' And in Gíta's case it turned out maybe not to be necessary. Still – maybe it gives her motivation to feel connected to her Indian background.

It is interesting how her mother's experience of being an Indian in the USA formed her naming practice. She explains it in more detail:

Let's say she came out like most of the interracial Indian kids come out. Which is to say they look somewhat Indian. May have dark eyes, skin, everything might be lighter but still looks ...

So let's say she would look like she is half Indian. Then as I said, if she looks different but she does not have anything in her name that is different then it is just like she is a weird Icelander. As I said, defective Guðrún. Does not meet all the requirements. Just like, we are all defective white men.

Somewhat ironically, Gíta Guðrún now looks surprisingly non-Indian. Here we are surely not in the domain of any anthropological correctness but in the sphere of laic and general notion of physical 'features' of different 'races'. I am fully aware that a race does not meet requirements to be anyhow scientific term so here it is used because my interlocutor brought it forth and is used in a purely emic perspective. The fact that Gíta Guðrún does not resemble her mother in appearance in a significant way, causes her some uneasiness. Most of the time her mother even forgets that she is half Indian.

I am used to it by now. It took me a while to get used to it. The biggest thing is being kind of bothered, feeling that when I am walking with her, nobody knows that she is my daughter. Nobody thinks so. Most people do not say anything. But still you feel like. Maybe it is kind of paranoia. Sometimes it happens though. There was mother's day in my daughter's preschool and me and my mother-in-law went there to have brunch with her and other kids. And we were talking to some other mothers and grandmothers and after a while I said something to the fact that she is my daughter. And they said: 'Oh, is she your daughter?' 'No, I just wandered on the street to get free food.' I mean I can understand. But ...

Coming to the point of the meaning, Gíta means music or song³¹ and her daughter asks what does her name means sometimes, to refresh her memory: “*When she likes something she likes to ask it even though she knows it. Just to hear it again.*”

However, as they chose the names after grandmothers, the meaning was not a decisive factor. Similarly meaning was not a crucial factor for Stefanie and Ágúst, who also used their father's names for their son, Wolfram Orri, but more an additional 'indicator' that they chose the right names.

Wolfram is of course a name that is Germanic so it is not that foreign actually. Wolf is Úlfur in Icelandic and a ram is also some kind of animal. And Orri is a type of a bird. So he has only animal's names. Animals that are quite beautiful and quite powerful. We did not choose the name according to that but it gives it an extra, like, it is a right decision.

³¹ Bhagavad Gita means song of the lord.

While they looked at the meaning after the names had been already chosen, they did consider the sound when they were deciding about the order of the two names. Stefanie simply explains that Wolfram Orri sounds better: “*I think that Orri Wolfram does not have the same kind of flow.*”

Similar to the other interlocutors Stefanie and Ágúst also revealed the name after their son was born. But the reason was not only to follow the tradition:

We wanted to keep it a little bit secret, not only for the fun reason that we could play around a little bit with the idea that we already know. But also I imagined: 'What if I see my child and the name does not fit at all?' /.../ I would just see my child and would be like, no, that is not his name. So I wanted to have that option a little bit open.

While the majority of my interlocutors choose the names that already existed in the family, in the case of Særún Sai, her Japanese mother Megumi and her Icelandic husband did not follow this tradition. Megumi recalls:

When I was pregnant I was walking along Sæbraut [a street next to the sea in Reykjavík] and I found the sign and it was by the ocean. Then I thought that it sounds like Japanese too. So I found the characters that match the name in Icelandic and Japanese.

Actually Megumi first thought about Sæ Sai³² but then her husband advised to add -rún, which is a common suffix of female Icelandic names. So the main idea, or beauty, so to say, of her name is that it does not only sound very similar in both languages but that it also has very similar meaning. Sæ means sea in Icelandic while sai, if used with special character, means colourful ocean. Megumi explains:

When she grows up she can choose whether she is going to take Japanese or Icelandic passport³³. Then I believe the naming is really important. So I want to give her the name which helps her to be herself, I mean, that both names have the same meaning. /.../ Hopefully she will understand the meanings clearly. They are related to Icelandic and Japanese culture.

The Japanese naming system is very complex as people take great care of how the names are written, which characters to use. In the case of the name Sai it would be sufficient to use only the first character. Megumi decided to add another character because of the number of strokes. Number and order of strokes is a very crucial aspect of Japanese writing. Some people are

³² When pronounced the two words sound almost the same.

³³ Now Særún Sai has double citizenship. In Iceland she is registered with both names, while in Japan only with a Japanese one because one cannot use foreign names there (the names that are not written in their characters).

superstitious about the number of strokes of the child's name. Megumi's sister advised her that she should add another character to avoid 22 strokes as “*it did not show the good fortune.*” It is interesting that even though Megumi claimed she is not particularly close to her family and that she does not believe in it, she still added one character. But with adding an additional character, the name falls into the category of *kira kira* names.

Kira kira means shiny or glittery and it is a new trend in Japan to give children foreign sounding names. It is considered somehow shameful to name someone *kira kira*, as it can imply the lack of education of parents or the general lack of good taste. It went so far that even the prime minister Shinzō Abe got involved. He pointed out the problem of bullying that children with *kira kira* names may be facing. He said that “parents should take a more sober approach to naming their kids, because it is 'different than naming your pets’“(Karnas 2013). Megumi explains that *kira kira* names do not sound sophisticated and that even though it is controversial, some people still choose to use “those foreign sounding names.” She said that *kira kira* names often sound silly or too cute or just stupid. She also points out that there are more *kira kira* names among Japanese community in Iceland than in Japan. She somehow shameful says:

Also Sai is kira kira. It is not kira kira in sound but in the characters I chose. Because I can just simply use one. But I added this ocean character, to make the number perfect. So if I do not explain the number of strokes, people think it is kira kira. So we always have to explain why I have to name this. /.../ If we would go back to Japan I would not use these characters. I would just use simple Japanese to write the name. /.../ I am kind of ashamed of naming kira kira. I did not realize it is kira kira. But after I named her I heard about those names and I thought: 'Oops, is it kira kira?'

As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter we can roughly divide naming practices among mixed families into two groups. So far we were concerned with those who chose two names, each 'representing' one of cultural and linguistic identity of one parent. The other group are those who chose a given name that “*works in both countries*” as many of my interlocutors formulated. However, I met some who, because of different reasons, named one child with one name and the other with two. We will look at two examples of those families.

Mirella from Albania and her Icelandic husband have two adopted children. Their son is called Sindri and the daughter Elisa Nimet. Mirella points out that she was actually the one to decide:

I was supposed to be given a priority. Because I am the foreigner who lives here. And I was supposed to find a way, to find a bridge between. So I found it and I explained it to my husband and he agreed. He liked it. But I was the one deciding. I remember he brought some names

earlier which would be ridiculous in Albania. And I said that I do not want my child to be teased. I wanted a name that goes smoothly with both cultures. I was thinking of Gísli. I always liked Gísli, how it sounds. But it has not any specific meaning. And I said I want a name which has a meaning. And then I was reading the famous Björk biography. She talks about her son that she had when she was 17. And she said: 'he is the flame of my juvenile, he is the spark of my juvenile, he is my Sindri. And I was: 'What does it mean, Sindri?' I checked and I said: 'That is my son!' And I told it to my husband, he agreed and that is it.

Sindri means the first spark of the fire. “And in Albanian,” she continues, “if you add just one letter -n in the end, it means water sparkling. And we found it strangely beautiful.”

We can see a striking similarity between Særún Sai, where her mother found a word that sounds and mean almost the same in Icelandic and in Japanese, and Sindi, which has very similar Albanian correlation with even a similar meaning. 'Strangely beautiful'. Mirella points out how important it is that the name can function in both countries:

Definitely I wanted my child to be welcomed here. And as I said, the laws did not give me any choice. I try to understand them. The way I obey them is that I chose the name that was on the list but has a meaning for me. I could not have given Guðmundur or Þorleikur or whatever, which my husband could have. He belongs to both cultures.

Her daughter, however, has two names. Elisa was the name given to her by the medical staff who assisted at her birth and “helped her to be alive.” So they decided to keep the name out of respect. Especially as the name was already on the list of allowed names in Iceland. Mirella adds:

So we kept that name. But I just wanted to have some connection to Albania. And I gave her the name of my grandmother as a second name. So she is called Elisa Nimet.

If they would have a non-adopted girl, she would have a different name:

We wanted to give the name Lillia as an Icelandic name to our daughter. I mean we knew we could not have our own children. /.../ I like Lillia, it is a beautiful flower name. But since my daughter has some history connected to her own name, we respected that.³⁴

Even though Elisa Nimet was not their first choice, Mirella still finds a sense in the meaning of the two names:

³⁴ For the story of the name change of her brother, now Sindi, look at the chapter Addressing and referring of children of mixed couples in Iceland.

Nimet is a very old Arabic name and it means the gift from God. So with my daughter, especially because adopted children bring the luggage with themselves from the past, so we try to give them identity. So I told her that Elisa is an Israeli name, the joyful one, and Nimet is an Arabic name. I said to her that she is a peaceful person because she is like both enemies. /.../ She is a gift of the two cultures which do not go with each other well. /.../ I want to give them an identity with the name. So Sindri is the first spark of the fire and he was the first child which came alive to our family. And Elisa is a very joyful gift of God.

Another family has one son named Skorri Pablo and the other Emanúel. Marion, a mother from France, tells me that she actually wanted Pablo to be his first name but as it was not on the list yet, they would have to officially request it with the naming committee. Marion says: “I was very tired and I did not want to go through that.” So they decided to put the Icelandic name first. They agreed this to be only due to practical reasons. However, it turned out to be a big source of arguments as his Icelandic father kept using only Skorri for addressing and referring to him³⁵. Marion mentions some artists who might be the inspiration for the name Pablo (Pablo Neruda, Pablo Calas, Pablo Picasso) and the French song titled Pablo. As she was very disappointed that the French name of her first son was used so little, she decided for a different approach when she got the second child (with a new partner):

We decided to have a name that will work in both languages. We chose Emanúel. Also because my husband is Catholic and Emanúel is very Catholic name. My husband's name is Josef and my name is Marion and we thought Josef and Marion have Emanúel, that is a bit funny. I am not a believer, I am not a Christian, but we thought it was funny. And I think it is a beautiful name and it works both in French and in Icelandic so that was very easy.

Returning back to the 'Christian' humours inspiration of naming, it was actually their friend who came up with the idea:

We were laughing about Mary and Josef and Jesus. And then there was a friend of my husband who said: 'Well, you do not have to call him Jesus, you can call him Emanúel.' And I said: 'Yeah, it is a beautiful name.' And my husband also thought so. So we agreed on that.

Marion assured that now she finds the choice of only one name a much better solution. This is also the idea that many other mixed couples have. Sergio from Spain and Dóra from Iceland chose the name Júlía for their daughter. “*We wanted international name, that both families could pronounce,*” they told me. The inspiration was a song from the Beatles:

³⁵ For more, look at the chapter Addressing and referring of children of mixed couples in Iceland.

There is a song Julia that I really love. It is a song that John Lennon wrote for his mother because she died in an accident and he saw it. And I think I have liked that name for quite a while, maybe unconsciously. I said Julia, which in Spanish is Julia [he pronounced it in Spanish way] and in Icelandic is Júlía [he pronounced it in Icelandic way]. She [Dóra] was happy about it so we decided to keep it.

The name is spelled differently in two languages, so they decided for Icelandic spelling. Sergio explains:

I thought that since she would be living mostly in Iceland I wanted her name to look Icelandic. /.../ To be honest I would prefer to use a Spanish name. But we thought that maybe Icelanders would not like it so much, would find it strange ...

They did not consider choosing two names, one Spanish and one Icelandic. Sergio explains: “*For me that does not sound good. /.../ It sounds better that the whole name is kind of close.*”

Dóra had first in mind the name Isabel, but she was happy that Sergio took initiative in naming:

I thought it was so cute that he came with name Júlía and he was very enthusiastic about it. And I thought it was so cute and adorable that the father took this role. And I was, yeah, let's do that. I could have try to argue, to convince him. But I did not.

What is rare in Júlía 's case is that the parents did not emphasize the meaning of the name at all. They looked it up after the name was chosen, but they forgot what it means. They pointed out that it was the sound that was important. Dóra explains:

For me this name sounds international and I do not really know the meaning. When I hear it does not mean anything to me. Other than Romeo and Juliet. For me it is kind of a romantic name. Feminine.

On the other hand, her husband sees it differently:

I have my image of what Júlía means. The sound makes me think of a woman that is very strong and independent. And that is going to get her way. /.../ I want her to be strong.

It is interesting that they emphasized the importance of the sound on several occasions. When they were choosing the name, the matronym and the family name, they said the whole name out loud to hear how it sounds. For some time they were considering having the second name, Victoria or Maria, as well³⁶. But then they decided it would not sound good:

³⁶ For more on that, look at the chapter Namesakes in Iceland.

I remember thinking if it sounds good or bad that both names end with -ia. Júlía García. And so Júlía María García was kind of too much. /.../ Also Júlía Victoria García is -ia -ia -ia. I did think about that.

Similarly Héléne from France and her Icelandic husband decided for one name³⁷ that would work in both countries:

We wanted to choose names that are easy to say in both French and Icelandic. We wanted to follow the Icelandic way, choosing the names from the family. And those that are also a bit different and individual. And we were just lucky to have girls. Because it was easy to find names. So we have Sýlvía, Theodóra and Henrietta.

For them the important factor was, apart from the fact that they must exist in the family, that the names are not too common, that they express individuality. Héléne points out that she likes the idea of namesakes but:

I also like that the name would individuate. So I am happy with the names they have because they are not really straightforward. They are a bit special.

The meaning, even though they know it, is not crucial, as Héléne points out, they are not superstitious that the meaning would shape them. However, when she talks about it, even though jokingly, she refers to the meaning of their youngest daughter:

Sýlvía is the one from the forest. Theodóra is the same as Dorothea, the gift from God. And Henrietta, she is the one that rules the home. It is a bit what she has been doing.

Coleen and Davíð also decided to name their children with one name³⁸. Their three sons are called Kasper, Stefán and Leópold. They also decided on the basis that the names are known in both countries: “*We did not have a lot of names to choose from. They had to be able to work in both countries.*”

Kasper, that was like we least thought of name. It was our first and we were so excited. It is an old name in Canada and it works here. Because it is Danish name and there was a lot of Kaspers in the area that I am from.

Coleen actually thought to name her first son Travis, after her brother. Davíð, however, was against it as it is not an Icelandic name. When they moved to Iceland, Coleen also realized:

³⁷ The eldest daughter, Sýlvía, in fact has a second name but it is not used.

³⁸ They actually dropped out one name of one of their son as it was not in use. For more look at the chapter Addressing and referring of children of mixed couples in Iceland.

“After living in Iceland I got used to Icelandic names and then I think it would seem strange to me to name someone Travis. It does not fit in here.”

Stefán got his name after an Icelandic poet who moved to Alberta in Canada: *“He was called Stephan G Stephanson. And we met in Alberta so it seemed kind of appropriate.”*

Leópold, which is a rare name in both Canada and Iceland, was named after Davíð 's Icelandic grandfather. As Sergio came up with the idea for his daughter, it was also Davíð who suggested the names Leópold and Stefán.

Quite the contrary to Ari and Anna, who searched for rare and uncommon names, Coleen and Davíð wanted to give them rather common names. Coleen explains:

My dad was really against naming of something weird. No, you cannot just give him some weird name. And I was strict on that to myself. You know, give names that you never heard before, no, that is weird. I remember my dad said: 'What if you want to buy your kid a toothbrush with your kid's name? Do you want to have some weird name that there is no toothbrushes with his name on it? And I was like: 'Oh no, I do not want that!' Or coffee cup with his name on it. I wanted a name that is possible to buy a cup with that name on it. I do not know. It does not make much sense now but at the time it made a lot of sense. I was nineteen.

Another significant similarity between the Spanish-Icelandic and Canadian-Icelandic families is that Coleen also has a rich array of associations related to the names. They are not based on the meaning of the name³⁹, as was the case in some previous examples (Sindi, Úlfulur, Gestur etc.). The associations, the 'representation' of the name, to use Anna's term, seem to be less rationally explainable:

The names just suit them so well I think. Stefán is such a normal name and he is the most normal guy you could ever imagine. So you would never change his name.

For an anthropologist researching names this was a very exciting notion so I wanted to know more about Stefán's 'normality':

He does not like to be in the spotlight for anything. He just does exactly what is expected of him. He comes home, does his homework and he does not ever try to seek attention. So I think it really suits him to have a really, really common name. I mean, he would never wear an orange sweater. Ever. He just wants to blend in. So he should be called Stefán. And Kasper, he is super loud and

³⁹ Coleen actually did make one direct reference to the meaning of the name Kasper: *“In the Bible he was keeper of the treasure. We though it is really funny because he hides everything that he likes, his bars [chocolate bars] ... he hides them in his room.”*

he draws attention and it works with him really well. Everybody knows him. /.../ We are living in Keflavik and it is a small town so everyone is like: 'Oh, you are Kasper's mum.' Everybody just knows he is Kasper. It is definitely his name. /.../

The third son, Leópold is usually called Leó. Coleen explains how his name fits him:

He is a Leó, that is for sure. He is super happy, he is never ever unhappy. So a serious name does not suit him at all. So we cannot really call him Leópold. We just call him Leó. I think it works. But maybe I think that because he is my son. A short, fun name.

All those rich associations that Coleen has about her sons' names emerged after they named them. She sees that their children's personalities influence the way she thinks about these names now. It is somehow the opposite process of those names with fixed meanings. Gestur Dirriangen or Úlfur Kazimierz both got names that evoked associations of being powerful and strong to their parents way before they got children. But as it happens often in anthropology, we should not fall in with seemingly binary oppositions. Many parents point out that the name, its meaning and associations can impose some qualities onto a child to a certain extent, but also the child shapes the 'image' of the name he is bestowed with. The child becomes the 'representative of the name'. As representations are always processual, meanings and associations that parents connect to a certain name are never fixed and stable. It seems that at this point many parents with no background in anthropology or related fields very accurately recognize the ever-moving nature of cultural meanings.

6.3.2 Last names

Within the field of choosing the name, one has to keep in mind that parents choose not only the given name(s) but also the patronyms, matronyms and family names. In many cultures there is an official system (regulated by the laws) or unofficial conventions regulating whose or which family name the child will get. We write about legal aspects of family names and patronyms in Iceland in earlier chapters. Even though the regulations on patronyms and family names caused quite a lot of public debates, the system of patronyms and sometimes matronyms is still the regular practise that Icelandic families follow. With the exceptions of those 'old elites' who have used family names since the 19th or beginning of the 20th century. With newcomers, the practices of family names and patronym bestowal are less regulated by the state and thus allow more freedom for parents to decide. Mixed couples have several options. They can either give

the child only the family name of the non-Icelandic parent or the patronym/matronym of Icelandic or non-Icelandic parent or they can give both, patronym/matronym and the family name. The number of possibilities, especially with those parents where also the non-Icelandic parent's name can form the patronym/matronym, is relatively high. Interestingly, I did not notice one prevailing option that most of those families would decide for. We will rather look at a few selected examples⁴⁰.

Some parents pointed out that they had to keep in mind the laws from the second country so that the child could have double citizenship. French-Icelandic children have to have the family name from one parent. Skori Pablo's father is called Sverir Sverirson. As his patronym is therefore the same as his father's, it was not a problem to register it as a family name in France (and of course as a patronym in Iceland). His mother Marion, however, thought of giving him her family name as well:

I thought about it but I did not do it because I thought it was too long. He had two names and then 2 family names, I thought it was too long.

Marion's second child Emanúel (she had him with another man) does not have a patronym because his father has a family name, Lund⁴¹. Marion points out the sound of both names together: *"I thought it was very beautiful, Emanúel Lund. It sounds really nice."*

She has therefore two sons, one with the patronym, the other with the family name, and none of these names they have in common. But she sees it positively: *"It does not bother me at all. I like it. I think it is more healthy than having this one big family name over every head."*

Mirella and her husband Valdimar also had to obey the Albanian laws. When they adopted their children, they could not get patronyms. They got her family name instead. Valdimar actually suggested that they would have both patronym and the family name, but Mirella did not agree: *"I said: 'Forget about it, it is such a long name. It takes like 10 minutes to sign.'"*

So when they came to Iceland and got Icelandic citizenship, they were renamed only to Sindri Valdimarsson and Elisa Nimet Valdimarsdóttir. A somehow Kafkaesque situation that happened is that they still have only their family name in Albanian passports and only patronyms in Icelandic ones. *"It is like one person with two identities,"* Mirella comments.

⁴⁰ Some of the family names and/or patronyms selections are also described in the chapter Names and gender.

⁴¹ Lund is a common Danish family name.

Coleen and Davíð 's children also have only the patronym. But as the older two sons were born in Canada, they could not have the patronyms from the beginning on as they are also not allowed in Canada. So at the beginning they got Coleen's family name, Berman. The reason why they did not get Davíð 's family name is quite complicated. Davíð has a patronym, Robertson, after his father (which functions as a family name in Canada), if his children would get Robertson as a family name it would bear the wrong information that they are sons of their grandfather. So they decided for Berman and they replaced the family name with the patronym Davíðsson when they moved to Iceland.

Parents of Gestur Dirriangen had a longer process of deciding. As Saul, his Nicaraguan father has two family names, they had even more choices than usually:

We could just use the first family name of father or the second family name of father or we could make patronym of the father's name or of me or of both of us. So there are five different possibilities of what would come after the names. It was really a long discussion.

Saul has, as it is common in Hispanic cultures, family names from both, his mother and father. But as he is not so close to his father's family name, he wanted to use his mother's one. The problem was that this family name has a negative meaning in Icelandic, it means a loser. But they were aware that as they were going to live in Nicaragua for some years, it was good to have the same family name as his father. So after all they decided to give their son the family name from his father's side. She brings forth also the aspect of symmetry of initial letters as he is now Gestur Dirriangen Gutierrez. It is interesting that Saul was fonder of creating a patronym, Saulsson, than his Icelandic partner. She comments that the patronym, formed from his name “*did not sound very good*”, while the whole name they finally decided for, “*looked more impressive.*”

Also the Icelandic-South African couple decided to give the father's family name, Smith, instead of forming a patronym. Their mother explains that the family name Smith already existed in Iceland and points out that “*it is easier if we live abroad. Because it is very confusing for a foreigner when the whole family has different surnames.*”

On the other hand, Deepa and Hannes, Gíta Guðrún's parents decided to give their daughter only a patronym, Hannesdóttir. Her mother explains that also what she uses as her Indian surname is not really perceived as a family name: “*In South India nobody has a last name. But for legal purposes often people take their father's name as last name.*” The name that she and her family use as a last name is Iyengar. And even though she considered naming her daughter

with this name as well, her parents were against it: “*They said it is too long and she is growing up here so let her just be Hannesdóttir.*”

Stefanie and Ágúst on the other hand decided to give their son both a patronym Ágústsson and a family name from Stefanie's side, Bade. Stefanie explains:

It was always clear that he will get his father's name, Ágústsson. Because I think this is very important for Ágúst. And I assume to many Icelanders. So that was never a doubt. I was also thrilled with it. I thought of course we are doing it like that. Then I thought it would be nice that he would have my name also. We talked about it and were a little bit reluctant. He was sometimes saying: 'Oh, but it becomes so long then and then my name is kind of in the middle and not in the end, as it is supposed to be.'⁴² And then German authorities helped us a bit. Because those patronyms are not accepted in Germany, you cannot have that as a last name. I mean he has two citizenships now, our son needs my last name to be accepted as a German citizen. So we kind of have to have it like that. There was no other way around. And by the time that we found out that this is kind of the only solution, we both have also accepted it. That this is going to be the name. So it was just a little bit of a confirmation by the German state, to say, no, you cannot do it like that.

Stefanie also emphasizes the emotional aspect of sharing the name with her child. Because if Wolfram Orri would not have her family name, “*he would have had no part of me. That is why I thought I want my last name to be his also. /.../ I want him to be a part of me also in his naming.*”

On the other hand, when they are in Germany, people do not see the connection between him and his father from the name point of view.

If we go to Germany everyone understands that my son belongs to me because of the last name. But they see Ágústsson and they do not make the connection to his father. /.../ If you do not know the naming system then you do not make the connection. I think that is a little bit of a shame. I also caught myself when we went to Germany now, that I thought like, yeah, it would be nice that people just knew how it works, so they immediately identify him also as his father.

Astrid and her husband decided for both her family name and his patronym as well. She explains they made this decision because it is “*the most mathematic*”. When I asked if she ever considered giving her sons her matronym too, she answered, smilingly:

⁴² They decided for the order on the basis of the sound and also so that it has the same order in both, Icelandic and German passport.

I could not do that. I had to let my husband give them the patronym. I wanted to give them my name. And I wanted him to give them his name too. I wanted some sort of equality.

A prevalent motif that we can trace in parents' deciding for last names is also how the names will function abroad. The Icelandic patronymic system is unusual and can cause some problems when families are travelling outside Scandinavia, and it is even more unusual for mixed families. In the next chapter we will therefore look at what happens when 'names go to travel'.

6.3.3 Travelling with names

Crossing the borders legally implies that you cross them as a named person. At numerous border controls, one sometimes gets the feeling that they are seen more as the name, inscribed on the passports, which is travelling around, and not the person 'behind' it. When people are crossing borders with children, it is usually the shared name which 'proves' that they are part of the family. As we have seen in the earlier chapter, it is often the case that among Icelandic and mixed families, every person has a different last name. My interlocutors experienced various amusing and less amusing 'adventures'. Mirella recalls some of the troubles they faced:

We were going from Albania to Italy. And we were stopped there. My second language is Italian but I never speak Italian with the authorities unless I have to. Especially when travelling you always experience things that are not so human. So we were both with Icelandic passports and we were in Ancona, we had just left the ferry. We were checked in to go to the country. And there were two policemen there, who stopped us and said: 'Who are these children?' Part of the story is that in my passport there is a page which lists all identities, so it is enough that you look at that and it shows that I am the mother of the child even though I have a different name. But these authorities, they were not so well prepared. And they were talking in English and I answered in English. I said: 'They are our children.' And they said: 'Are you a family?' And I said: 'Yes, we are.' And then they continued in Italian and I tried hard not to laugh. They said: 'How is it possible? He has a different last name, she has a different last name, and the daughter another last name and the son another last name.' And I explained to them. But I do not think that they understood. They are always looking for human trafficking or whatever. But in the end I got tired. So I said: 'Just put the passports in the computer and then say yes or no. Just let me through. It is too hot here.' And then we passed through. But they were talking about me being an Albanian. They have some prejudices. And there were four of them, talking about whether they should let us pass and whether we had fake documents. It cannot be a family with four different last names for them.

One could assume that the border authorities were extra suspicious as the children were adopted. But the fact is they did not know that and, surprisingly, they did not look physically very different from Mirella and Valdimar, their foster parents. But as they had had similar experiences when going from Albania to Italy by ferry, the parents consequently decided that from then on, they would travel this route exclusively by plane. Mirella remembers one time when Sindri only had an Albanian passport, while the others only had the Icelandic one with them:

He had already got the citizenship but he did not have the passport yet. So we were in Ancona, they stopped us and said: 'Who is this child with the Albanian passport?' And I said: 'That is my son.' And they saw in my Icelandic passport, that I am Albanian. And then they asked: 'Who is this man?' 'That is my husband.' 'When did you marry?' 'In 1998.' 'And why does not his son have a passport and the last name of the father?' And I did not want to say that he was adopted so I said: 'He will get it when we go back to Iceland, because he has not yet been to Iceland.' And they were talking in Italian: 'Look, an Albanian, married to an Icelander and now surely with another man she has this one.' They did not think the child could be adopted. They were so stupid.

Those border control stories are surely very unpleasant when they happen, but looking back on them, they are also quite funny.

Once when my husband had an old version of the passport, a bit darker blue, and I had a new one, they were asking: 'Why do you have a light blue passport and your husband has a dark blue one?' This was the time when we decided that we will not go by boat any more. And I just wanted to get rid of them so I said: 'Because he is a man, men have dark blue and women have light blue passports in Iceland.' I am not proud of that. But I said it because I was tired and angry. So by making fun of them I felt better. Which is not good ...

From this beautiful example of humour as a survival technique, we will move to a case in which my interlocutor was actually happy with how cautious the border control staff was. When Marion sent her older son Skorri Pablo to France with his French grand parents, she got a telephone call at 7 am that same morning. The voice was saying:

'Are you Skorri Pablo's mother?' I said yes. 'Do you know where he is?' I said: 'He is with my parents going to France.' 'Ok, we just wanted to check.' And I was 'Ok, thank you, good to know.' You know, good to know that they are checking.

She did not feel offended: “*I found it good because now I know that my son will not go anywhere like that.*” Afterward she told this to her parents, who had no idea that the airport staff called their daughter.

Gíta's mother also experienced problems:

We were entering Britain at Heathrow. It was confusing in the first place because Hannes and Gíta went to the EU line and I went to the non-EU line and my parents were with us too. And then I and my parents were in the non-EU line and then Hannes and Gíta came running over and they said that we have to go through again. It turned out that family has to go through together. But anyway, so five of us went to the EU line and then the guy was getting a bit tense and confused, he was like, ok, how are you related? Two white people and three Indian. Ok, I am married to him, these are my parents, that is our daughter. Ok, but why do the three of you have three different last names? Iyengar, Hannesdóttir and Williamson. But we just told it like it was. /.../ He believed us, he let us through.

She points out that “*the combination of having different last names and not looking alike could cause a little confusion.*”

Megumi, who wants to avoid any complications at airports, always brings the family registration documents with them. This was actually suggested to her by the Japanese embassy in Reykjavík, “*as some troubles have happened before.*”

Anna, mother of Úlfur Kazimierz, remembers some issues she had as early as when she was buying the flight tickets:

I was buying the flight tickets when he did not have the name yet. And then before the trip we were supposed to call there when we knew the name. So I was talking on the phone and said Úlfur Kazimierz and then we got the tickets and it was misspelled. So I called again and they wrote it wrong again. So eventually I wrote them the name. Then I thought that maybe it is more practical to have the Icelandic name first.

7 Namesakes

In many societies sharing the same name implies some kind of a bond between the namesakes. Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn argue that the “link between what is means to be related to others and what it means to be a self is perhaps most intriguingly brought out in the consideration of namesakes” (2006: 22). Looking at the family names in western societies we can see that sharing a name is closely related to kinship. Orokaivans in Melanesia do not even have “a term

corresponding to 'kinship' but speak of 'sharing a name' (ibid). But it would be incorrect to see relations between namesakes simply as another expression of kinship. Among Orokaivans, sharing a name (*jawo wakai* – literally 'one name') implies a range of different relations. As has been mentioned earlier, there exist two main clusters of names, big and small names. Individuals acquire both small and big names through either parent or maternal kinship relations, through namesake relations, through friendship ties, or war alliance (Iteanu 2006: 54). When the name is chosen, the child (and parents) will consider that they stand in a reciprocal *saso* relation to: a) namesake/s; b) the one(s) who have chosen the name; c) relatives of a) and/or b) (Iteanu 2006: 62). But we must not perceive it as a rigidly defined rule or as a compulsory relation. André Iteanu points out that the namesake relation is stronger if the two have a good relationship. Then the two *saso* “are considered to be the 'same person', *embo wakai*” (Iteanu 2006: 63). However, this does not mean that Orokaivans believe in reincarnation, but that the “younger namesake gradually replaces the older in all social situations” (ibid). This is why the process of giving a name is also an opportunity for strategic decisions. Iteanu differentiates between two ways in which those strategies might be implied.

The first option is that “a name group use *saso*-making to gain affiliation into another group by systematically choosing the name-giver of their children in the same autochthonous name group, often that of a wife” (Iteanu 2006: 63). What happens then? These children become *saso* with right “in land, names, and so forth.” This strategy, often 'used' by immigrant families, is successful since “the fusion into the other name becomes total in the next generation” (ibid). This tactic resembles strongly to the one used by European courts, and which was especially successfully developed by the Habsburgs, who gained power, territory and influence with strategic marriages.

The second option that Iteanu describes is “usually developed by larger name groups seeking to 'capture' smaller ones” (ibid). This happens when two large name groups exist in the same village. “Each of them then competes to incorporate smaller 'independent' names by bestowing personal names on their newborn” (ibid).

The name system among Orokaivans therefore plays a role that is not an addition to the kin system, but rather an alternative to it. When “the kin's claims are too oppressive, one resorts to namesake relations and conversely” (Iteanu 2006: 70). Evidently names are always implicated in social relations. But Iteanu claims that among Orokaivans “names have their own relations among themselves, and when taken together, one could picture them as a sort of 'perfect society',

if only those who momentarily bear them did not, at times, disturb this perfection” (Iteanu 2006: 71).

Tukanoans, on the contrary, do not have a namesake relation, similar to *saso*. Hugh-Jones argues that “no special relation pertains between living individuals who share names, and although group affiliation is linked to naming, the names themselves do not denote fixed social positions” (Hugh-Jones 2006: 89). However, it is possible for almost anyone “to ask, as a favour, that the parents give a child his or her name and such a request is very difficult to refuse” (Hugh-Jones 2006: 102). It usually involves the name giver to also give a present to the parents. But such procedure does not “necessarily imply a continuing relationship between the name giver and the child that would be part of some 'social' order” (ibid).

Among Orokaivans, the *saso* relation does not imply any kind of reincarnation, while among the Iñupiat, “people talk about names traveling as a kind of reincarnation” (Bodenhorn 2006: 148). As names are therefore perceived in some ways as “reincarnated essences”, they “may be thought to effect both personality and personhood” (Bodenhorn 2006: 149).

In all three societies presented in this chapter so far, some kind of namesakes are found. On the contrary, in Mongolia where one should bear a unique name, the namesake relation is precisely the phenomenon that needs to be avoided. This “reduces the overtly social connection-building of naming almost to zero” (Humphrey 2006: 160). When a namesake relation occurs in closer social circles, for example, if a wife has the same name as someone in the husband's family, then the wife's name is changed (Humphrey 2006: 163). So, to borrow Iteanu's formulation, names in Mongolia constitute a kind of a 'perfect society' of their own, but in the human, 'imperfect version' of the first, sometimes, by namesakes, this order is temporarily disturbed.

7.1 Namesakes in Iceland

We will look at a particular kind of namesakes in Iceland. *Aðvitja nafns* (to seek a namesake) is a term that designates the phenomenon of someone getting a name after a deceased relative or friend who appears in the dreams of a pregnant woman or someone close to her. In a survey conducted by the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Iceland, around 10% of the respondents “experienced the appearance of a deceased person in a dream expressing the wish to pass his or her name onto the – at the time of dreaming – unborn child, while 75% believed this to be possible” (Heijnen 2010: 308). *Aðvitja nafns* can on the one hand cut across

gender categories, whereas, on the other, it is thought to provide knowledge on the gender of the unborn child (Heijnen 2010: 311). Usually, the deceased appearing in dreams are classified as close relatives, but they can also be “friends, distant relatives, local sailors who had drowned, neighbours who had died in accidents, and also hidden beings, who are supposed to live in rocks and hills, called *huldufólk* or *álfar*, wished to pass their name to an unborn child” (Heijnen 2010: 312). These kind of dreams have a big influence on the naming decision, since, if parents refuse it, it is believed that the child could be in danger (ibid). The dreams can also be very ambiguous for the dreamer. Heijnen writes about the occasions on which several people would appear in a woman's dreams during her pregnancy (ibid). The practice of *aðvitja nafns* can be stronger than the habit of naming first-borns after one's grandparents (Heijnen 2010: 316), which is another wide-spread naming practice in Iceland. Heijnen points out that the “deceased persons who are not genetically related to the dreamer have as much authority to pass on their names through the agency of dreams as the dead who are” (ibid). This is an important finding since one could make the wrong assumption that in Iceland, what with their kin relations so strongly present and with their genomic knowledge, the genetic relatedness would necessarily prevail. The wide acceptance of deceased neighbours, *huldufólk*, and others who pass their names on to new-born children “and the fact that people who are genetically related might be classified as classmates, rather than relatives, demonstrates that 'the social and cosmological' is (still) and important point of departure for relatedness, even in Icelandic society, where the new genetics are so prominent” (Heijnen 2010: 317). In the case of *aðvitja nafns* 'social and cosmological' relatedness can prevail over the genetic relatedness. One of my interlocutors, Ari, was named after a friend of his parents who drowned. As he was the next-born child he got his name.

Another very common naming practice that 'creates' namesakes is naming a child after the grandparents. Halldór Sigurðsson claims that “one third of the children received the names of their paternal or maternal grandparents” (Sigurðsson 1996: 48, cited in Heijnen 2010: 315). This usually implies for first and second born children. The historian Olöf Garðarsdóttir writes about her way of dealing with the tension between this custom and the desire to emphasize the children's individuality:

When I gave birth to my first daughter in 1984 I felt no need to name her after close kin. At the time I was a fervent feminist and wanted to stress the girl's uniqueness by giving her a dynamic and unusual name. She was named Katla, a name that, besides being a rather uncommon female name, is the name of a volcano in southern Iceland. I knew that my relatives and friends had

expected me to name the girl after my mother, especially since my daughter was her first grandchild. However I felt no need to strengthen my kinship ties and name her after any of my relatives. (Garðarsdóttir 1999: 298)

This practice makes some names very wide-spread in certain families and, if it were a perfect model, the pattern would be ABABAB *ad infinitum*.

Vertical transmission of names was often appearing among my fieldwork participants. When we were talking about choosing the name of her son, one of my interlocutors explained:

The Icelandic name was not really something to discuss because I named him after my father, my father named me after his mother, who named him after her father, so it is a father-daughter-father-daughter chain⁴³. So for me it was never a question that my son would be given his grandfather's name and my husband at the time was fine with that.

Another mother points out that her daughter carries the same names as her sisters, while her son keeps the names of both grandfathers:

My daughter is Sóley Björk. Sóley means the buttercup flower, the sunny flower, and my two sisters names are Sunna, which is sun, and the other one is Sóley /.../ And Björk is my mum's name and that is my daughter's second name. And his [her son's] name is Jón Kári, Jón is after his grandfather from South Africa, John, and Kári is after my grandfather.

Stefanie, a mother from Germany, explains:

We [she and her partner] went to very very Icelandic tradition. We took the names of both of our fathers. So our child now has names of both of his grandfathers. My father's name is Wolfram, which is his first name, and Orri, which is the name of my partner's dad and this is the second name.

But until they knew the gender, they had girl's names prepared too. They decided for the same pattern of grandmothers' names. The idea of naming children after their grandparents was introduced to Stefanie through her partner:

I guess it was my boyfriend, Ágúst, I guess it was him. Because he is more in this tradition⁴⁴. I mean in Germany we used to have that maybe until 50 years ago, people had done that. It just simply died out, I do not know why ... Foreign influences. Now suddenly German kids have

⁴³ As Icelandic names are gender specific, the name of these father daughter chains alternate in male and female version (for example Kristján, Kristín).

⁴⁴ Ágúst, Stefanie's partner is named after one of his grandfathers while Ágúst's brother is named after the other grandfather.

French names or English names. It is slowly coming back that old German names are in fashion again. But naming system of grandparents' names ... I think it has not got back, at least not until now.

She continues to explain the tradition in Iceland:

Sometimes you simply do not like your grandma's name and you do not want your child to have that name. But you certainly take someone from the family. Then you go one generation higher or you take an aunt or someone who was really closely related.

Similarly to Stefanie and Ágúst, Deepa, who was born in India, but raised in the USA, and Hannes, her Icelandic husband, chose the grandparents' names. Their daughter is thus called Gíta Guðrún. Her mother adds:

/.../ the nice thing with Gíta Guðrún is that my husband's father's mother is also Guðrún, so the name Guðrún is of both of these ladies, one grandmother and one great grandmother.

She explains this as fair to both of her husband's families. On the other hand, this naming pattern is not common among her Indian family or in the region where they come from. But she recalls:

I have heard that in some other regions people do not do it because it is like a superstition. If you name new kid the same as somebody existing, then this person is gonna get sick or die or something, bad luck. So it is not our tradition. And my mother's relatives had a little bit of trouble adjusting to there being two Gítas.

Her mother, though, accepted it well:

She was very happy, very honoured. My mother in law was actually worried because my mum spells her name Giita and that would never work in the Icelandic system, nobody would know how to pronounce it, so I changed it to Gíta. /.../ My mother in law was not sure though, she thought maybe, you know, maybe my mother would not like it because spelling is different. But it was not a problem for her. /.../ In a way my mum likes it because then she can tell the difference at least in print, which one you are talking about.

But on the other hand, some parents do not want to follow the Icelandic tradition of naming their children after their grandparents. Ari, an Icelander married to Anna from Poland, explains:

In Iceland there is this pressure to use the names that are already in the family. Like the name of my father or mother, of my grandparents ... But my sister is older than me and she did all that. I did not want to break up this tradition. /.../ It is too much to follow the tradition, I wanted something new. Now in the family there are soo many Haukur, Haukur the middle, Haukur the little. And María. These names are very frequent.

So for those who want to escape this tradition it is easier if a sibling already has children with the names of ancestors. This happened in Ari's family, so he and Anna were more flexible. Ari formulates it: “*They already had the names, I mean kids of my sister.*”

Dóra, mother of Júlía, similarly observes:

In our case my sister already had a girl who is named after her grandmother. So I did not really feel pressured to name my daughter after her grandmother. So that is kind of ... We did not have to think about that.

We can perceive this tradition as a duty – names should be repeated in every generation. So when children's names of the first-born child meet this silent 'requirement', the other children can be named more freely.

Another interesting occurrence among many families is that the partner of non-Icelandic origin decides to 'mirror' the Icelandic tradition of naming after the grandparents. Like Giita, the grandmother from India, who suddenly got a namesake and was “very happy, very honoured,” or the less 'visible' case of Jón Kári, who bears the Icelandic version of his South-African grandfather John. The case of Ari and Anna is interesting, as the Icelandic names they chose do not follow the namesake tradition, but the Polish names are from the ancestors, even though this is not a very common practice in Poland.

Séverine from France, who was pregnant when we met, also pointed out:

I lost my mother less than 10 years ago, I think if it is a girl we might take that name. And my husband suggested to use my mother's name. It is something I would never have thought about in France, to take the name of my mother for my kid. But here they give it a lot, even when the parents are still alive.

Stefanie and Ágúst decided to keep the names secret until Wolfram Orri was born. As the German part of the family did not expect they would name their son after the grandfather, the surprise was even bigger.

We informed them when he was a couple of hours old. I talked to my parents, and my mum of course asked, what is his name? And then I said the name and my mum was like: 'What?' And then she told my dad immediately and she said: 'He cannot speak at the moment.' /.../ My father was extremely surprised because of course in German culture this is not existent any more. He was, I have seldom seen my father speechless, but he was, he was extremely touched.

What is more, Stefanie's father is not her biological father. She adds:

I think that is something why he was extremely happy and surprised, because I did not name my child after my biological father but after the father I had. My mum met him very early when I was very young so this was the man who played the role of the father for me and who I grew up with. And I think that makes it even more touching for him. That I kind of crossed over ...

Even though most of my interlocutors did not stress any special relationship between the namesakes, Wolfram often subtly points out this fact:

I mean my father of course does not live here, but he is making a lot of jokes about the name Wolfram and we were just visiting my parents a month ago and when I said: 'Wolfram, I need to change your diaper,' of course my father said: 'Oh, is it time again?' So he makes a little bit of a game out of the fact that he has the same name as his grandchild.

He also emphasizes the similarities in character:

My dad likes joking around and when my child, I mean he is still so young, but when he is a little bit smiling and having fun with us, he is like: 'Yeah, that is my grandson, obviously, he is happy. He is so happy, it is obvious that this comes from me.'

It is similar with the Icelandic grandfather but it was less of a surprise. However, Stefanie points out:

Orri is a name that is quite common in my partner's family and also his best friend's name is Orri. So there is a lot of positivity around the name. It is in the family and there is also the friend and it is kind of nice.

While in Wolfram's case the bond between the namesakes functions smoothly, one family faced some problems as the mother felt that her mother-in-law, that is the child's grandmother, put too much weight in the namesake bond between her and her grand daughter. The daughter-in-law explains, how attached her mother-in-law was to her namesake grand daughter:

The grandmother would like to think so [there being a special connection between the two]. She is sometimes making a bit too much out of it. She was also her first grandchild. So she is a little bit too much on her.

When our discussion continues, she also becomes more direct:

I did not want her grandmother to get too close. There was a problem with her. She was too possessive with her. /.../ It was almost not healthy. She was really overcompensating her personal problems. But it is not anymore like that. It is done now. /.../ My daughter is growing up with her own personality and she is establishing herself as a completely different individual.

But on the other hand, they knew that the grandmother will get very close to her first grandchild. “*The name would not change this,*” her mother adds. So it would be too simple to see a namesake relation in isolation from the whole context of complex family relations.

Some parents decide not to name their children after the ancestors. All of my interlocutors were aware of the namesake tradition and made a conscious decision not to follow it. Marion recalls when she and her then-husband were choosing the name for their son, the decision not to use a name from the family was “*probably the only thing we agreed on.*” She explains her view: “*I think that a child has to be in his own life and does not have to carry the life of his predecessors.*”

But expectations or wishes to name the new-born child after them do not necessarily come only from the Icelandic part of the family. A Spanish-Icelandic couple recalls how Sergio's mother wished their daughter to get her second name, Victoria. Sergio describes his mother:

She is the kind of person who does not know any boundaries. And I know she would have loved Júlía to be named after her. But I did not want to do it, I did not want to impose anything to Júlía.

When they saw an ultrasound image of the unborn Júlía, she held her fingers in the 'peace' sign. Her grandmother commented that maybe she wants to be called Victoria.

It has been established that the 'duty' to name the child after a relative is strongest for the first-born. But Eva, who gave birth to three daughters (sadly the middle one passed away), explains that even though she likes the Icelandic naming pattern, she decided not to follow it for her last child:

There is a very strong tradition in my family of using the same names, so my older daughter, her name is Sigrún and I also have a sister named Sigrún and my grandmother was Sigrún. Then I had another girl who died when she was three and her name was Margrét, which was her grandmother's name, the mother of the father. So I like this tradition, I think it is nice to give your child the name of someone you love. But when Mathilde was born, you know ... My mother, her name is Ragna, my sister is Ragna and my grandmother was Ragna. And two of my mother's granddaughters are named Ragna. So I thought, well, we have now living four Ragna just in the close family, so I thought that is good for now.

We would think that after all these Ragnas, her family would expect that she will get another name. But when Eva told her family she had chosen a name that was not taken from the ancestors, they were very surprised: “*My father thought I was joking, not picking a name from the family.*”

When choosing the name, there are always multiple decisive factors. A wish for the namesake is, as we have seen, a strongly present one. But, on the other hand, many parents are also considering the pronunciation issues that complicated names could cause to the non-Icelandic part of the family (and vice versa). One mother, whose husband comes from South Africa, wanted to name her daughter Hallfríður, after her best friend, but it would be very difficult from the father's side to get used to this name so they agreed on Sóley instead, which is easier to pronounce.

8 Names and gender

Names reveal various types of information. One of the most common kind of information 'engraved' in the name is sex. Richard Alford argues that in around three quarters of societies in the world, names indicate sex (1993: 268). One exception are Sikhs' names, which are not gender specific (vom Bruck 2006: 230). In some societies, including the Slovenian society, gender-neutral names are also known (for example Saša). Layne writes that in USA, gender neutral names (Kim, Carol, Lyn) are more likely to be bestowed upon girls than boys. Referring to the popular *More Baby Names*, Layne quotes: "Parents of boys are much more careful not to cross gender lines than parents of girls /.../ who often feel that a 'power' name for their little darling will give her an edge in the business world" (Globe 2002: 5, cited in Layne 2006: 39). The fact that naming after relatives is in the US preferred especially for boys and first-borns (ibid) should also not be ignored. Boys are therefore the bearers of the name that circulates in the family through generations. They will be 'inscribed' in the family trees and genealogies in a more visible way than girls.

In most of the Western, especially Christianized societies, women change their family name when they get married. Butler argues that "for women, then, propriety is achieved through having a changeable name, through the exchange of names, which means that the name is never ornament, and that the identity secured through the name is always dependent on the social exigencies of paternity and marriage. Expropriation is thus the condition of identity for women" (Butler 1993: 153).

In this sense, Iceland is an exception. As, most commonly, there are no family names, the full name of an Icelandic woman remains unchanged throughout her life. Patronyms and matronyms, which internationally have the function of the surname, are unchangeable. For example, a girl's full name is Anna Hannesdóttir – this literally translates into 'Anna, the daughter of Hannes'. When she gets married, her name is not changed in any way, neither does she get any additional names. However – gender inequality is present in the form of patronyms. Namely, patronyms are much more common than matronyms. In the past, the latter were used in cases when the father was unknown or if it was in some way inappropriate to bestow the patronym upon the child. In recent years, there have been some cases in which parents, in order to strive for bigger gender equality, bestow the child with both the patronym and the matronym. In this case, the full name would be Anna Hannesdóttir Helgudóttir. Meaning Anna, the daughter of Hannes, and the daughter of Helga.

Even though women who married an Icelander can take their patronyms in the same manner as family names are taken, only one of my interlocutors did that. She did it from strategic, marketing reasons. She is French but as she is a well-known knitting designer, the author of numerous books about Icelandic knitting, and the coordinator of various activities connected to traditional and modern Icelandic knitting, she wants her name to reflect her Icelandic identity. Magnús, her father-in-law, accepted well that she is called Magnússon, which literally means the son of Magnús. She jokes:

*Sometimes I say that when I got married I became a boy. And the son of my father in law. /.../
He is very proud. It is not a joke, he is really proud.*

She also points out that there are some existing family names in Iceland with the suffix -son so it is not something that would stigmatize her in the Icelandic society.

Some of my interlocutors, however, showed clear disapproval of this practice or were even surprised that I asked them about it. Mirella from Albania explained that she had considered this option but she had not taken it:

I was 30 when I got married. So I had my identity with my name. I could not ... it just felt strange. And I think it was very ugly. Mirella Thrigvardsson. It means Mirella, the son of Trigvi. No, there were so many things which made 'no' decision.

Megumi similarly could not take the husband's patronym:

I never thought of it. For me, it is just my opinion, it sounds so strange to have a foreign name. Then also in Iceland, my husband's name is Baldur Sigarsson, so I could be Megumi Sigarsson. But why do I have to have -son? But many people do that. But for me – no. Not acceptable. It was so strange. It was not me. I was just raised with this name.

Stefanie is also openly against it:

I would never do that. I find it silly. I understand the tradition of taking the name of the husband but I would not want to be the son of my father in law. Because that is what you are as a woman and I think that is a little bit violating also the Icelandic naming system. I feel that it is strange. I understand the wish to take someone else's name but I think it has gone a little bit too far. The Icelandic system does not allow it, kind of. So I always find it a bit weird when women have -son as their last name.

On the other hand, she is aware that, contrary to the German system, within the Icelandic naming system, there is no name that links the family together:

I sometimes feel that even if we get married nothing changes. Which is also nice, just a piece of paper in the end of the day. But in a way, I associate having one name more with being a family, being a little bit of a unit. So I think you are right, a little bit is missing, yeah. Also because we travel with our child. And nothing documents us as a family unit. That is a bit strange.

The impacts that the Icelandic naming system has when families are travelling abroad will be explained more in detail in the next chapter. Coming back to the woman taking the man's patronym, Deepa similarly points out: “*No, I did not take it, I could not be Villiamsson, no, this makes no sense, it is not a last name, it is not a family name.*”

But her mother brought forth this topic when she got married:

My mum was nervous about that. She said: 'People will think you are not married.' But with my husband, since he does not have a last name, she was kind of ... the objection went away.

However, one interlocutor, who changed her first name to increase her employment options, also changed her last name. Her Canadian family name was Berman, but she changed it to Neilsdóttir, after her father. So she made her accurate patronym even though the patronymic system does not exist in Canada. Her family accepted her decision well: “*My dad thinks it is cool that I am Neilsdóttir and so it is all fine.*”

So, patronyms prevail over matronyms greatly. However, in recent decades, more and more children have both. Pupils at school therefore usually know someone with a matronym. Some of my interlocutors children expressed the wish to have it as well. Freydís Balbina asked her father why she is not Önnudóttir. A somewhat opposite case was the one of Pablo, who has a patronym after his Icelandic father. Pablo once said to his mother that his real name is Pablo Herrera (Herrera is the family name of his mother). Gestur Dirriangen Gutierrez, an 11 year old boy of an Icelandic mother and a Nicaraguan father, experiences that people in Iceland have problems with pronouncing his family name. That is why he wants to change it to Saulsson (after his father) or Gerðuson (after his mother). His mother said: “I hope it is just a phase. I told him he will be allowed to do it when he is 18.” When I suggested that he might not be completely serious about it, she pointed out:

No, it was definitely not a joke, he was really bothered. If I allowed him today, he would do it. But I hope that he would change his mind in seven years.

Some of my interlocutors decided for the matronym, for instance Júlía García Doradóttir, whose father Sergio is Spanish, and whose mother Dóra is Icelandic. In the Spanish naming tradition, a child gets both the father's and the mother's surnames and they decided to follow this. It is

interesting that when they were searching for a way that would encompass both the Icelandic and the Spanish naming traditions, they checked other Spanish-Icelandic families on Facebook to see which solution they found. But as Dóra does not have a family name, they created a matronym, Dórudóttir. They also obey the order, first being the father's surname and then the mother's. It is interesting that it was not Dóra who would encourage the idea of the patronym:

I thought that Dórudóttir sounds really strange. So I was not really keen on it. But Sergio insisted that in Spain you need two surnames. I remember he was clear about that. So I thought that this would be fine and also then, for example, it is really obvious that she is my daughter and his daughter, you can see it on the list of the names.

Eva and her Danish husband decided to give their daughter only his Danish family name, Gottler, because the husband's name is Ip, “*which is a very short name and somehow it does not sound very well in Icelandic, Ipsdóttir.*” But today she regrets that she did not give her a matronym as well. She says, smiling:

Maybe I am a more active feminist today than I was before, 13 years ago. Yes, I think I would use it. I think it is more common today that people use both, the mother's and the father's name.

Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn argue that names “engage all crucial aspects of embodied experience: identification, moral relations, power, the gendering and sexualizing of bodies, and displacement” (2006: 20). The cases of Yemeni gender crossing and naming among Indian minority in South Africa are showing how names reveal the power and agency issues within the frame of gender. In South Africa, Christians Indians are often baptized with anglicized names, as this is supposed to bring them “easier access to education and employment opportunities in the civic administration” (Hansen 2006: 215). But this is true only for men. Girls, on the other hand, generally have Indian names (ibid). Thomas Blom Hansen discusses the reason for that: “the feminine and domestic sphere – always the heart of ethnicity and the scene of exercise of paternal power by otherwise emasculated and subordinated males – was to be kept as pure and traditional as possible” (ibid). It is interesting to note that men who have an anglicized first name for very pragmatic reasons stop using it when they get older. “Retirement and the status of grandfathers do in some cases mark a certain transition and 'return' to the community, to religion, to family, and to tradition – and imply the use of Indian names” (Hansen 2006: 216). The case of Indians in South Africa shows how names correlate with the notions of, on the one hand, the outer, foreign world, which is perceived as masculine, and, on the other

hand, the inner, domestic world, which is somewhat feminine. Old age, however, brings men from the outside, masculine domain, 'back' to the inside, domestic, in this case un-gendered domain.

The Yemeni case shows how “cross-gender names serve to recast female bodily images” (vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006: 24). Gabriele vom Bruck writes about a practice that occurred in a certain period in the 20th century in Yemen among higher classes, when women used male names. She argues that:

in a culture where gendered spheres tend to be clearly demarcated, cross-gender naming, rather than being perceived as improper category confusion, is practiced in order to maintain the religiously sanctioned moral universe. Women belonging to the last ruling dynasty of the Yemeni Imamate provide an example that bearing a gender-specific name does not necessarily require the person to act in conformity with the norms applying to that gender. (vom Bruck 2006: 227)

The author opposes some of Butler's notions on expropriation as the condition of women's identity. Bearing a male name increases the freedom of movement and enables women to deal with their affairs (vom Bruck 2006: 242). The names “are represented as empowering rather than as a constraint implying inferiority” (ibid). To better understand why using their female names would be inappropriate, we must take into account that among Yemeni elite, women's names, like their bodies, were perceived as '*aurah*' meaning 'what is indecent to reveal'. The name, just like hair, is seen as a mark of intrinsic potency (vom Bruck 2006: 228). “Through veiling and naming the body cannot be sexualized by either the male gaze or utterance” (ibid). A relative of one of those women said “a woman's male name is a second veil” (vom Bruck 2006: 242). The author argues that “carrying a male name identifies as it conceals: it marks out the bearer of the name as a member of the nobility while it disguises female bodily images” (vom Bruck 2006: 228). Carrying a male name therefore enables certain forms of female agency. Vom Bruck claims that this particular agency is actually “rendered possible only through this symbolic transformation of the body through naming” (2006: 245). The activities that women with male names could engage in included those controlling the land and real estate. Control of property used to be one of the sources of authority. “The women corresponded with administration on behalf of their own and other people's property” (vom Bruck 2006: 240). By using their male names, commoners and high-ranking men “could make these women the subjects of their conversations and communicate with them without invading their privacy” (vom Bruck 2006: 236). Male names were also used when dealing with lower status men, when

those women exercised control and gave orders (vom Bruck 2006: 247). “By virtue of their status and authority, elite women were more masculine than low status men” (vom Bruck 2006: 246). Male names were thus, generally speaking, used in context of the outer world. As women still keep female names too, this double naming “connected women with a world both inside and outside the sphere of kinship” (vom Bruck 2006: 229). The female names were linked to “concepts of their bodies as principal loci of sexuality and are conceived as parts of the body,” while the male names were detachable parts of their bodies and those names “defeminize women's bodies” (vom Bruck 2006: 244).

The use of cross-gender names enables women to identify and demarcate their own sphere of praxis (vom Bruck 2006: 231). Vom Bruck even argues that their male names highlight their individual personae” (ibid). It is interesting to note that it is only after death that their female names can be publicly revealed – by being inscribed on the gravestones. At that moment, the women's names are made known to everybody – “on death, these boundaries no longer need to be maintained” (vom Bruck 2006: 243).

Death removes a layer of the paradoxical double social skin that male and female names produce during a woman's lifetime. Naming is contingent on biological, social, and political processes, and the use of the names women carry is always contextual. (vom Bruck 2006: 244)

Without a male name, their agency would be limited because of their gender, which was common only among female members of the Yemeni elite in the past⁴⁵. Other women were still determined by the limitations of their female name.

Similarly, the agency differs greatly between male and female names in Ha Tsuen in China. Watson argues that girls “nearly always have less elaborate full month rituals than their brothers, and less care is taken in choosing girls' names” (Watson 1986: 623). But the biggest difference between the sexes pertains “not to the aesthetics of naming but to the written form of the name” (ibid). “Upon seeing a person's written name, the beholder may comment on the beauty, the refinement, the auspicious connotations of the characters. As long as it is simply spoken, however, it is in a sense 'just a name'. Although women have names, these do not convey as much information as do men's names, for the obvious reason that the former were rarely written.” (ibid) Furthermore, Watson claims men's names are distinctive and unique, while women's tend to be classifying (ibid). At the wedding, the groom is given or takes a marriage name, *tzu*. “In choosing a marriage name /.../ the groom demonstrates his

⁴⁵ Nowadays, this is no longer existing practice and many people are criticising it (vom Bruck 2006: 243).

sophistication, learning, and goals” (Watson 1986: 624). *Tzu* is essential for the “attainment of male adulthood, which gives a man the right to participate in important lineage and community rituals” (ibid). In other words, it is indispensable for agency. Another name that men acquire is *hao* – 'style' or 'courtesy' name. The *hao* “is a public name par excellence” (Watson 1986: 625). An important aspect of *hao* is, that it can be taken by any man, but if the one is not successful in gaining a certain social and economic status, the *hao* is likely to remain unknown and unused (ibid). The third form of male names (along with *ming*) are posthumous names. Watson suggests that “names mark stages in a man's social life” (ibid). The choice of one name or another is “a tactical decision” (ibid). Men have, to a certain extent, the power to self-name. This correlates strongly to the Yemeni elite women, who also usually choose their male names themselves (vom Bruck 2006: 236). Self-naming is strongly related to achieving agency in socially recognized level.

In Ha Tsuen, the name a girl gets at full month celebration ceases to be used when she gets married (Watson 1986: 626). Instead, she is called by kin terms. “The marriage rites relegate the woman to the inner world of household, neighbourhood, and family” (ibid). The women, similarly to both Yemeni women and Indians in South Africa, are placed into the domestic sphere. Watson uses a Chinese term to describe this feature, since it “she loses her name and becomes the 'inner person' (*nei jen*)” (ibid). Among women, there is no possibility of self-naming and “the reference and address terms used for women in Ha Tsuen are very rigid compared to those employed for men” (Watson 1986: 627). What is more – “the terms by which she is addressed and the terms she uses to address others serve as constant reminders of the hierarchical relations of gender, age, and generation” (ibid). With the life circle, Watson argues, women's anonymity increases (ibid), while, on the contrary, men acquire additional names and hence become more individualized. Even at death a woman does not have a personal name (Watson 1986: 628). The inscription on the grave consists only of her father's surname – “not even a name survives as testimony of her existence as a person” (ibid).

Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn write that “naming is about recognition, rather than the imposition, of personhood” (2006: 27). In case of gendered naming, we can claim that in some societies, male and female names 'recognize' the personhood of the one being named, in a profoundly different way.

Similarly to female names in Ha Tsuen, slave names also signaled the lack of agency. Susan Benson argues that “slaves were also 'marked' by the distinctive names that their masters chose to give them” (2006: 183). Conferring a name of this kind, she claims, “is an act of domination”

(2006: 184). Slave names were “characteristically incomplete and frequently derogatory: lacking, initially, at least, both soul names and 'proper' names, these were individuals who only had a precarious hold of social connectedness, had no substantial connection to abusuorntoro group, no worthy suban to transmit” (Benson 2006: 187). Pálsson similarly argues that “slaves had to accept being renamed. This was part of the erasure of identity and history that characterized the so-called Middle Passage, between West Africa and the plantations” (Pálsson 2014: 7–8). When slaves were brought to England, their names were often used either in diminutive forms, like Bess, Jack and Tom, either fancifully, for example Scipio, Caesar, Pompey, Nero (Benson 2006: 189). Those fancy names, obviously deriving from Classical Antiquity, were very wide spread. The name Pompey was “so popular that it became the generic name for a black servant in the 18th-century England” (ibid). Such names, Benson argues, “served to reinforce the idea of Africans as embodiments of exotic alterity, but also invited pointed comparison between the appearance and circumstances of the slave and the illustrious personage referenced by his name” (ibid). Slave names were thus highly connotative – they “indicated incomplete personhood” (Benson 2006: 190). We could claim just the same for female names in Ha Tsuen. In America, “some African names (Sambo, Quashee, Cuffy) are clearly appropriated by slave-owners *as* slave names /.../ and indeed acquire pejorative overtones among Blacks as well as Whites” (Benson 2006: 193). As slave-owners had a right to rename the slaves, slave names did not place them in their kin relations and genealogy. While the names of slave owners were complex and colourful, “indicating social connections across time and space /.../ their slaves were only called by one or more 'first names' that distinguished them from each other, and all of them, by the absence of a 'second' name or a family name, from their masters and other free persons” (Pálsson 2014: 8). Toni Morrison, first black American who got the Nobel Prize for literature, writes in her novel *Song of Solomon*, about the wish “for some ancestor, some lithe young man with only onyx skin and legs as straight as corn stalks, who had a name that was real. A name that was not a joke, nor a disguise, nor a brand name” (Morrison 1977: 17–8). This – together with other Morrison's works – somehow resonates with the lucid thesis by Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, namely that “the antithesis of 'slavery' is not 'freedom' but rather 'belonging’“(1977: 17). Since the middle 1980s, more and more African Americans have started exploring their connections to Africa by visiting the continent (Benson 2006: 195–96). On these travels, some of them acquire 'African' names. “Such names might be conferred lightly, in conversations with acquaintances or tour guides – often the *kradin* that every Ghanaian knows and many Americans are pleased to receive, even though they may not use them in the future” (Benson 2006: 196). But the trend of having an

African name reaches also beyond those travels. Nowadays, there are books offering lists of 'African' or 'African American' names to guide new parents (Benson 2006: 195). Benson concludes that contemporary African Americans are taking the names “that inscribe them in a history purified of the injuries of the slave past, yet pressed into the service of an individuated, self-fashioned future” (2006: 197).

9 Addressing and referring

Personal names are closely related to questions of 'appropriate behaviour'. Who can address or refer to someone by his or her name? In which social context is the usage of the personal name allowed and in which is it prohibited? How do these social and cultural rules change during one's life? Do somebody's age and generation influence the right to address them with their first name? When does the kinship term replace the name? How are these informal regulations implemented in contexts of speech on the one hand and writing on the other? These are some questions that illuminate the broad corpus of themes that can be found within the framework of addressing and referring.

For dealing with these questions, the notion of modifiers can be particularly helpful. The term 'modifier' encompasses a wide range of words that can be used as substitutes for names. Modifiers “approach the self indirectly, circumspectly, beginning with socially recognized aspect of identity, relatively public or surface features. /.../ Modifiers ensure relationality” (Lambek 2006: 122). Moreover, Lambek argues:

modifiers help modulate and conceal, whereas names in their direct referential purity, can expose. This may be why address by means of the most direct or elemental name is, in many cultural contexts, considered rude. That is to say, the more an act of naming appears to rest with the purely referential aspect of the name, the more potentially ambiguous the sense and hence the more dangerous. Unmodified application of a name is invasive. (Lambek 2006: 122–23)

Let us now move to some ethnographic examples, starting with the Zafimaniry in Madagascar. Bloch begins with the notion that names are “tools used in social interaction,” furthermore “the use of names are a constituent part of the social interactions in which they are used, they are never isolated acts, but parts of acts” (Bloch 2006: 98). Names, whether used in reference or in address, are therefore

one among many ways by which people can be referred to. They do not form a bounded system. They must be considered with other designating devices, which include, *inter alia*, eye contacts, pronouns, titles, gestures, and kinship terms. (Bloch 2006: 98)

Life circle strongly determines the way people are referred to and addressed. To begin with, once a person gets their first child, they should “never again be addressed, nor referred to politely, by their personal name. They must be addressed by teknonym” (Bloch 2006: 104). Teknonym is formed after the name of the first child. Bloch explains the categorical nature of

the principle underlying this rule: parenthood marks the entry into 'society', not birth" (ibid). The other side of the token in this process is, however, the loss of individuality: "while the teknonym honours, it also depersonalizes. It replaces the individual by his or her role" (ibid). Another effect that the teknonym has is that it links spouses terminologically (ibid). If they have more children, the teknyons are not fixed – the child that the speaker knows will be the basis for forming the teknonym to address the parents. "Such contextual practice shows how the use of teknyons is not simply a matter of identifying a person by a conventional sign – a teknonym also contains a proposition" (Bloch 2006: 105). Apart from being called by the teknonym, the term *raiamandreny* (literally it means 'father as well as mother') is also used. The author argues that being called *raiamandreny* depersonalizes in an even more fundamental way than the teknonym (Bloch 2006: 106). It implies that "soon, they will be dead and completely nothing in themselves individually. Or rather, they will survive in a transformed sexless, bodiless, unindividuated state, in the form of their house and their progeny combined" (Bloch 2006: 107). We can see ageing as a process of simultaneously becoming less and less individualized and more and more localized. Gradually, parents start to be referred by the name of the village. "Such a usage is particularly respectful, as it seems to treat people, either as if they were always representatives of their locality, or as if they were part of a place" (ibid). But this is not true for young parents, as they are in a liminal state: they are parents but not yet elders. As such, they are "often referred to by no word at all" (ibid). Additionally, the term *raiamadreny* changes its connotation with time – from being a parent to being the elder.

Christian names, that the Zafimaniry also have, are seldom in use for reference and addressing. They can be used if, firstly, other names are forbidden for some reason (taboo etc.), secondly, if the person is strongly committed to the church, and thirdly, if the person is oriented towards the outside, modern, urban world (Bloch 2006: 111). Bloch gives an example of a person called Jean-Paul. As he was, in terms of the outside world, successful, he was addressed by this name. But precisely in this usage of the name, there were also the irony and the ambiguity to his success. Due to his success his children left the village. So "from the traditional point of view, he was a relative failure" (Bloch 2006: 112). The perception of this success was thus double. "He was respected and always represented the village to the outside and especially to the administration; but, inside the village, he was not powerful since this would have required descendants" (ibid). So even though he is mostly referred to as Jean-Paul, the elders address him by his teknonym. By doing so, they mark him as an insider and also place him "within the genealogical framework" (ibid).

We can see that the teknonyms, *raiamandreny* and similar words used to address and refer to someone, in the case of the Zafimaniry do not necessarily correlate with Lambek's notion of modifiers. Especially not if we consider modifiers as a relatively public and surface feature, as opposed to a somehow more valuable inner personality contained within the personal name. I suggest that among the Zafimaniry the personal name does not remain an inner, true aspect of someone, but that the nature of the true, valuable, and inner aspect of someone is changing with one's ageing process – from a more individualized person at the beginning to a more localized parent and elder later. But, as Lambek states that this point is applicable especially for those societies where naming “appears to rest with the purely referential aspect of the name” (Lambek 2006: 122), and considering that among the Zafimaniry “personal names really only reflect the impulse of the moment when they were given” (Bloch 2006: 103) then this can solve the quasi discrepancy between Lambek's and Bloch's writings.

The Iñupiat have many names, and someone address the person with a name that he or she gave to the person. This multiplicity of names “evoke sociality of already existing relationships. /.../ Speaking them calls forth not only the persona, but also the relationships that person is caught up in” (Bodenhorn 2006: 150). One could say that to utter an Iñupiat name is to “precisely to invoke a specific relationship” (Bodenhorn 2006: 153). But the non-Iñupiat cannot address Iñupiat with their names – that would be inappropriate. The important part of Inupiaq naming is the configuration of names, which is unique. Bodenhorn explains that the personality of each person “is explained in terms of a particular combination of names” (Bodenhorn 2006: 152).

The author provides a very helpful insight for understanding the usage of numerous Iñupiaq names – but my suggestion is that it can be applicable, broadly speaking, to modifiers in their general meaning as 'words used for addressing and reference'. Namely, Bodenhorn claims that names “contribute to individual and to dividual sense,” not only in the Maussian sense of an actor playing different roles, but in the Strathernian language, implying that “we are talking about multiple personal essences; you are not simply playing different persons; you *are* different persons” (Bodenhorn 2006: 151).

The Strathernian notion of dividuals, I believe, serves as a good approach in understanding modifiers. The Zafimaniry are not called by teknonyms because becoming a parent would be just their social role. Names and modifiers can be present in a completely non-hierarchical way. As Lambek argues: “names are the guarantor of the relative stability or continuity – the identity – of the me or the various me's” (Lambek 2006: 119).

The Iñupiat believe that animals speak their names, which people hear and can utter to call them. The animals thus name themselves, but “with one voice – and one name” (Bodenhorn 2006: 152). What sets the animals apart from humans is that the former do not possess *ilitqusiq*, “the individual body of knowing that express an individual human's way of being” (ibid). Iñupiat names therefore individuate, while animal names do not. As people can address animals by their names – or, to be precise, with one name for one species – there are also rules which regulate that. The dangerous power of the name “is reserved for those animals thought closest to humans: whale ('the big one we are so looking forward to welcoming') and bear (who often is simply not referred to at all)” (ibid). There are parallels to avoiding uttering the bear's name found in Slovenian culture as well. The term itself, *medved* itself is derived from a substitute descriptor (*med jed* – the one who eats honey), used to camouflage the original word for the animal. The initial word for *medved* is actually forgotten.

Rules concerning avoiding names are also common in Mongolia. Similarly to Zafimaniry, seniors' personal names should be avoided. Instead, they are “referred to by informal 'respect names', often together with a kin term” (Humphrey 2006: 169). In Mongolia, respecting someone “should imply not addressing them by name” (Humphrey 2006: 167). Consequently, for elderly and highly placed people there “may be no one alive who can use their name” (Humphrey 2006: 170). Again, this resembles Zafimaniry society, because when people in Mongolia grow older “even the individuating function of names seems to fall away, to be replaced by categorization into a social type” (ibid). Humphrey also argues that also generally “Mongol names are in fact relatively infrequently used either in reference or especially in address. There are really rather few people – all juniors – you can politely call by their name” (Humphrey 2006: 168). But we should not interpret this as if the society functioned on a very formalized, impersonal level due to the absence of using names. The complete contrary is true: not to be named is seen as somehow “indicating both respect and a warm and close relationship” (Humphrey 2006: 170). For example, husband and wife should not use each other's names as they are 'one' (ibid). The interpersonal conventions of not-naming in Mongolia, Humphrey argues, are “omnipresent in social life and deeply engrained in proper behaviour” (Humphrey 2006: 173–74). Also in the case of reference, people have to find alternative words that are not the names of respected relatives (Humphrey 2006: 170). The usage of names clearly shows that in Mongolia, people are 'Austinian by heart'. Speech itself is perceived as active and creative (Humphrey 2006: 171). In following those rules, they are, each and every time, confirming the wider social order.

In not speaking out a name or title one is not just deferring to a particular person, one is also conveying respect for sociality itself and for one's own place in it. (Humphrey 2006: 174)

Orokaivans have a somewhat similar rule which “forbids one to utter the name of one's affines” (Iteanu 2006: 66). The authour claims that in Papua New Guinean societies in general, “the name system occupies a similar position to prescriptive alliance and title systems elsewhere, as regards to projecting society through time” (Iteanu 2006: 71). The tukanoan naming system is similarly to the Zafimaniry one – it is influenced by parenthood. When the child is born “either parent may be denominated teknonymically” (Hugh-Jones 2006: 81). The use of teknonyms in addressing is, according to Hugh-Jones, “largely confined to the two parents themselves and it is typically the husband who addresses his wife via reference to her child” (ibid). With the child, the 'coordinate system' of addressing is set anew. A similar process occurs also in Slovenia. When partners become adults, they sometimes start to call each other and other affines with their kin terms from the child's reference point. The wife addresses her husband as 'dad', her siblings as 'uncles' and 'aunts' and her parents as 'grandma' and 'grandpa'. The same goes for the husband. This phenomenon is not set as a rule or as a socially expected behaviour, nonetheless, it happens relatively often.

Finally, rules and regulations concerning addressing and referring to are spread also in Yemen. Vom Bruck, who focuses especially on women, argues that “when one meets a woman for the first time, she usually identifies herself as the 'wife-of-so-and-so' /.../, or as a member of *bayt fulan* (the house of ...)” (vom Bruck 2006: 234). The avoidance of women's personal names is very strictly adhered to among the families of upper social class and it is so wide-spread, that “in San'a, at laundries and surgeries, women often register the names of their male kin rather than their own” (ibid).

9.1 Addressing and referring of children of mixed couples in Iceland

As we have seen in the earlier chapters most of the children who have one Icelandic and one non-Icelandic parent have two names which reflect both their Icelandic and non-Icelandic origins. As this usually implies that one of the two names is less known in Iceland and indicates being foreign, how this affects addressing and referring to was one of the core aspects I focused on. Thus, some examples of children who bear one Icelandic and one non-Icelandic name will be examined in the first place.

Gestur Dirrianger is called only by his Icelandic name. One factor is that it bothers him when Icelanders try to pronounce his Nicaraguan name as they pronounce it wrongly. Even his Nicaraguan father uses only Gestur. The only person who sometimes uses his whole name is his mother. When I asked her on what occasions she does that, she replied:

I guess it is just when I want to hear the sound of it. It is not when I am angry or carrying or anything like that. It is just to keep it in use.

Interestingly, even when they lived in Nicaragua for two years, he was always called Gestur. As Nicaragua is a Spanish-speaking country, people pronounced it wrongly, with 'G' sounding like 'H'. 'Hestur' in Icelandic means a horse, which could irritate him, but as he loved horses he was happy to be called, essentially, a horse. His mother, who tries to keep in use his entire name, sometimes encourages him to introduce himself with both names. One of the reasons why he keeps avoiding his Nicaraguan name is that people do not know it. His mother explains:

Everybody is asking: 'Hmmm, what does it mean? So that bothers him. /.../ People struggle with pronunciation and make strange comments. A few years ago we went to a doctor and he was saying: 'What kind of name is that?' He was just ignorant. This bothers him.

As he was eleven years old when I met his mother, she suggested that it was the age and the fact that he was becoming a teenager that made him more sensitive regarding this issue. As he was not irritated by people mispronouncing his name when he was younger, his mother was not worried: “*But I know that later on he will be happy with it again.*”

Brothers Kjartan Henri and Audric Auðunn are both called only by their first names, even though Audric, for instance, is actually a French name. Their mother points out that not only do she and her husband always address them exclusively as Kjartan and Audric, but it also seems that everyone follows this practice. Therefore, the family and friends in France call the oldest one Kjartan or Kjartan Henri, and the people in Iceland call the younger one Audric or Audric Auðunn. This is interesting because most of other children with two names are usually called only by the Icelandic name, regardless of it being the first or the second given name. Even though the French name of their younger son, Audric, is always pronounced correctly, he still sometimes wants to be called with the Icelandic name, Auðunn:

Sometimes he tells me that he does not want to be called Audric because it is strange. But he did not give me the reason. He is just seven years old. It is just that he ... If I understood correctly, he would like to have a more Icelandic name. Something that fits in the Icelandic environment. Because he has a foreign name and so I guess that sometimes kids ask him: 'How

do you pronounce that?' Maybe they have problems. Maybe they think it is strange. It is a strange name because they have never heard it. So he asks sometimes to be called Auðunn. He says he wants to be called Auðunn and not Audric anymore.

Særún Sai, a girl born to an Icelandic-Japanese couple, is referred to with both names. Megumi, her Japanese mother usually calls her Saichan, *-chan* is a Japanese suffix which holds similar meaning as *elska* in Icelandic, 'dear' in English. It is often used for small children in Japan. But when Megumi wants to be authoritative, she uses the full name, Særún Sai. Her husband only calls his daughter by her Icelandic name, Særún. The pattern of addressing follows the languages: as her mother speaks only Japanese to her daughter, she calls her by her Japanese name, while her father, who uses only Icelandic, calls her by her Icelandic name. Similarly goes also for her friend circles too: Japanese friends call her Saichan, while Icelandic ones call her Særún. Megumi points out:

No one calls her Særún Sai. I do not know why. I think I am the only one calling her Særún Sai when I am strict. Even my husband does not.

We can thus see the similarities between Særún Sai and Gestur Dirriangen, who are called with both names only by their mothers.

Deepa offers us another interesting perspective on why was her daughter was only called Gíta:

At home we have a habit to call her Gíta because when she was a very small baby I had a hard time not being used to the two names. It is a tiny baby and you are calling it, you know, big name. So I was just calling her Gíta. That is now our habit at home. But his [husband's] relatives call her Gíta Guðrún and you know especially when my parents in law do that then I also make an effort to call her Gíta Guðrún. Otherwise it is again kind of not fair. To say: 'She is Gíta, let's forget about it.'

The feeling that 'big' names do not fit to small babies was expressed also by some other interlocutors. On the other hand the perception of 'fairness' at naming and addressing is also something that I noticed relatively often. Gíta Guðrún's mother thus calls her with both names in front of her daughter's Icelandic part of the family, while the Indian grandparents call her only Gíta.

Similarly to Gestur Dirriangen, Elisa Nimet, a girl of Albanian and Icelandic parents, is also sometimes upset by her Albanian name. She experienced that children at school were laughing at her, asking what kind of a name is Nimet. Her mother explains:

Sometimes, as she is nine and she is trying to find out who she is, she finds it [her name] is strange for Icelanders and it is a strange name. But who are we to decide what is strange? So I gave her an example of another girl, who is called Isabella Nicole. Isabella is ok, it is on the list. But Nicole? It is a cool name. So is Nimet, it is a cool name. You kind of cheat until she really understands.

Siblings Sóley Björk and Jón Kári have names that are entirely Icelandic. However, Sóley Björk is usually called only by her first name. Her mother uses both names when she wants to be authoritative. But her grandmother, from whom she got her second name, calls her with the full name, to use their mutual name. Even though the names are Icelandic, they are not difficult to pronounce for the South African family. However, Jón Kári is sometimes called Johnny or JK and Sóley's name is pronounced slightly wrongly.

Freydís Balbina and Úlfur Kazimierz of Icelandic and Polish parents have names which clearly point out the two cultures. Anna, their mother, usually calls them by their Polish names, using the full names only if she wants to be very formal. Ari, their father, almost always uses Icelandic names only. Similarly to the case of Særún Sai, in this family the use names correlates with the language too – Anna uses the Polish and Ari the Icelandic names. What they noticed with Freydís Balbina is that she was, for some time, perceiving her two names as the two versions or translations:

There was one situation, when my Polish friend was asking her: 'Do you know how it is in Polish Freydís?' And she said Balbina. So it indicated that she thought it was a translation. If someone asks her in Polish: 'What is your name?' she says Balbina and in Icelandic, she says Freydís. But she is puzzled when someone asks her in another language, like in English. But I think now she has grown up enough to understand that she has these two names and that she can use the one she wants in whatever situation.

It is therefore not surprising that in school she is mostly called Freydís or Dissa. In kindergarten, however, she was called Balbina. As Anna's friend, who knew her as Balbina was working there, the others followed her example. Now, when she is in school, her schoolmates do not call her Balbina anymore but some teachers still do, especially those from the earlier years. Similarly to earlier cases it also seems that Freydís Balbina feels more comfortable with her Icelandic name. But her mother adds:

I think it is also a problem that she tries to be nice. And then when she saw that I was maybe a bit upset she said like: 'No, no, I like it.' But sometimes I feel ...

When they are in Poland, people use Polish names, only Anna's father sometimes refers to his granddaughter as Dissa or Dissa Binja (Binja is an informal shortage for Balbina). Anna recalls:

My mum was laughing once that she gets many names. Because my friend always calls Balbina Binja, I call her Balbina mostly, sometimes Freydís Balbina ...

When they are in Poland, her younger brother's Icelandic name Úlfur, which means wolf in Icelandic, is sometimes translated into the Polish term for a wolf. It is worth mentioning that Úlfur Kazimierz did not have the name registered until he was three months old. During this time Anna knew his Polish name was going to be Kazimierz, but they were still deciding on the Icelandic one with Ari. So while Anna was calling him Kazimierz, Ari and his family were mostly referring to him as *litli minn*, my little one. We must keep in mind that most Icelanders cannot pronounce the name Kazimierz correctly. However, he is relatively often called with the shorter version of his name, Kazik. Even his father, despite the fact that he said to me he always addressed him with Úlfur, unconsciously referred to him as Kazik on one occasion when we talked. Sometimes Úlfur's Icelandic grandparents jokingly call him with the Icelandic expression for young wolf.

Addressing was actually a very important aspect of naming Freydís Balbina and Úlfur Kazimierz. Namely, both parents wanted to name them uncommon names. This is mainly due to the experiences Anna has:

For me, I like my name, but I really do not like that wherever I go there are many people with the same name. And it is not enough to say Ania, I always have to say Ania Wojtyńska or something. I have many close friends with the same name so I am like Ania Islandia. I always have to have some description.

Quite the contrary, Ari's name is very rare. He explains:

It is uncommon so I have more the feeling that it is just my name. It is a feeling that it is mine. And that is also what I want to give to my kids. And it is also this, not being part of the herd, the establishment, like everyone else ...

Even though in this chapter, we are dealing with addressing and referring to, the case of this family shows just how much the thought about addressing the children can influence the selection of the names.

The examples presented so far show that in most cases, children are called by their Icelandic names. Even though this is the prevailing pattern among the families I met, it is not always the case. Wolfram Orri is mostly called only Wolfram. Stefanie says:

We sometimes call him Wolfram Orri but not as often as I would have actually suspected. And the funny thing is that I am here in Iceland and his first name is a German name and I expected everyone in his family to call him Orri. And no one does. I think it is kind of funny that they call him by his first, German name. I do not know whether they think it is nice name or maybe also want to not confuse with that Orri, my partner's dad, I do not know. But it makes me a little bit happy. And I find it a bit weird, I must admit.

However, his Icelandic grandfather, from whom he got the second name, sometimes calls him Orri:

He calls him Wolfram mostly. But when he wants to stress a certain thing, when he has been especially good or especially nice then it's Orri. So he refers back to himself as being good then also.

Similarly to Gíta Guðrún's mother, Stefanie too is aware of the 'size' of her child's name – Wolfram Orri Ágústsson Bade. Stefanie describes it as a 'massive' and 'huge' name. But in a lighter tone she adds:

We sometimes make fun of it and say all the four parts of the name really slowly. To make it even longer. Because I think we both are aware of the fact that it is a long name. Well, we just hope, we cannot more than hope, that he likes it, what we have done to him.

However, the addressing and referring to does not always turn out to be an easy question, one to which parents could easily and smoothly find an answer. Marion has her first son with an Icelander, but they later divorced. When Skorri Pablo was born, they would have to apply at the naming committee to put the name Pablo first. In order to avoid these bureaucratic issues, they decided Pablo to officially be the second name, but it would be used in referring to him and addressing him. In practice this did not happen. Marion still talked about it with bitterness:

The only thing I regret is that I said I accept it. We agreed on that just to not go through these administration troubles. But then today his father and his Icelandic family are calling him Skorri. He totally forgot the Pablo agreement. And it is the same at school and everywhere. In Iceland everybody is calling him Skorri. I was very sad about it. I try not to think about and

said: 'Ok, he is Skorri in Iceland and Pablo in France so I have to respect it.' But yeah, I do not like it.

Today, Pablo is eleven years old, and his mother talks about his name in a more light-hearted manner. However, she still remembers how upset she was:

I am not making a big fuss out of it. It was very ... I was very [emphasized] sad at first. It hurt. Especially with his father's family. I thought it was very unfair from them. But they are unfair people so it is the way it is.

What helped her was that Skorri Pablo seemed not to care about it that much:

I think the fact that he takes it easy and does not have trouble with that, it helped me a lot. I mean it is his name, it is his life. So what matters is how he [emphasized] feels, not me. Just take it this way. /.../ Children are always better than us. He decided that it was ok, he has two names and it is our problem to find out how do we want to call him.

When Pablo was little his parents were arguing about how to call him. Marion recalls:

I remember once I had an argument with his father and I said: 'Why do you do that? We agreed that his name would be Pablo.' And he was small at this time and I was telling him: 'I do not think it is good for a child to have two names, it could become some personality disorder later.' But his father always put his problems first so he wanted to call him Skorri and nothing could change him. Even though it could make some trouble. And then he told me: 'Yeah, but to have a French name in Iceland is not good for him either.'

It is not surprising that she never calls him anything else than Pablo. When I asked if she maybe uses both names to sound stricter, like the majority of my interlocutors do, she said that she sometimes switches to Icelandic language but:

Pablo is always Pablo. /.../ because this is his [emphasized] name.

Apart from his mother, his step father and French community in Reykjavík also call him Pablo. Marion also suspects that some relatives in Iceland call him by both names in her presence in order not to offend her. In the first years of school he was called Pablo as well, but then they gradually started to call him Skorri. Similarly to Elise Nimet and Gestur Dirrianger, he was also mocked at school because of his foreign name. His mother tells:

I think they asked him: 'What Pablo? Is that a name? What kind of name is that?' I told him that he should answer: 'No, it is not a name.' And then it would be an absurd situation. /.../ I think that is why he wants to use this name [Skorri] in Iceland. Easier for him.

With her new husband Marion has a second son. He has only one name, Emanúel, which functions in both languages. The decision for one name was influenced by the problems and disappointments she had with Skorri Pablo. Emanúel is called Mani by his father and his stepsiblings, while Marion always uses the full name.

The Herrera family thus represents both naming patterns that I noticed among mixed families in Iceland: choosing two names in two languages, or choosing one international name that is known in both cultures. One family who followed the latter pattern obeys the difference in pronunciation between the two countries. Júlía García Doradóttir is called differently in Iceland and in Spain. Parents were aware of it already from the beginning and named her Júlía on purpose: “*She is Julia in Spain and Júlía in Iceland. So that is what we wanted.*”

When they introduce her in Spanish, they use the Spanish version of the name. Their daughter knows both her names. However, the family in Spain cannot pronounce her matronym Doradóttir properly. But as she is never addressed or referred by her matronym, it turned out not to be a problem at all.

Mirella from Albania and her Icelandic husband could not have their own children so they decided to adopt them from Albania. Her son was two years old when he was adopted. Even though the name Sindri was already in Mirella's mind before, she found out that his name was Mario:

Mario is an Italian name and because I speak Italian I found it beautiful. And I was looking at him, at Mario, Mario, Mario, ok, I am trying to understand, I wanted to know why the name had been given. Because if it had been given by the birth mother, I was definitely going to keep it. Out of respect for her. But I discovered that the priest of the church was called Mario and all the boys being left there were Marios. So I did not see any obligation. I found it a bit like, no, my child is going to have identity.

Mirella was aware that she had to prepare her son for the name change gradually. It took a few months:

I gave him a gift, a little horse toy which was called Sindri. He always held that horse. So every time I called him, I said: 'Mario Sindri, Mario Sindri.' And after a few months I started to call him here and there just Sindri. And he was just confused a bit because he was Mario Sindri. But after six months he was called just Sindri. And after one year I was testing him, I was calling him Mario when he was playing. I was cooking and I said Mario and he did not even react. He forgot it. So my way was positive. I was giving the identity.

However, Sindri's parents were aware that there are very similar names existing in Albania, Sindrin and Sindrit. So it was not a surprise that some people called him that. Mirella explains:

I have prepared my child for that. He knows that. When he was little, he was a bit confused. Then I explained it to him many times. That this is the culture, so no problem. If you prepare your child then there is no problem.

As his 'real' name Sindri, is so similar to Sindrin and Sindrit he now perceives it more as an Albanian version of his name. In Iceland, where many people call others with two names, some friends and relatives add something to his name. His Icelandic aunt calls him Sindri Snær, while some other people call him Sindri Prins. His mother, however, points out: “*That is absolutely ok. But his name is Sindri.*”

Even though H el ene does not directly refer to sound that is crucial, she still sometimes mentions the issue with very opinionated sensitivity over the 'translations' of the names. For instance, she was hesitant to name her daughter Sylv ia as she does not like the French version, Silvie. She does not perceive it as a translation or a variation of the same name. When I asked if some people, especially in France, would still call her Silvie, she said:

No, they call her Sylv ia. Because she is Sylv ia, not Silvie.

Similarly, she does not like to be called with the Icelandic version of her name. She corrects people in order to call her by the French version:

Because I am not Helena [with Icelandic pronunciation] and I do not like Helena. I do not like the way it sounds. /.../ I want to be called H el ene [with French pronunciation].

It is interesting that her daughters' names do have a different pronunciation in Icelandic and French and with those names, H el ene does not find it disturbing. She explains:

There is a very slight difference. It is still the same name.

So we can see that the line, what is the same name and what defines the name to become a different name, is not objectively set and can vary greatly from person to person.

A Canadian-Icelandic couple who have three sons also decided for names that function in both languages: Kasper, Stef an and Le opold. Their mother, Coleen explains how the addressing issue influenced the naming itself:

We have so much family in Canada, three quarters of our families are Canadian. My husband's sister, their kids' names are all very Icelandic. And then their grandparents in Canada cannot

say them and I really did not want that. My son's name is Stefán and even now, my dad says it wrong. Every time. It is like, oooh, so hard? He says it like Stefan [with stress on second syllabus]. It is just wrong.

She continues by explaining that other members of the family do not have any problems with pronouncing any of the three names. It is just the name Stefán that her father does not pronounce correctly. She is not trying to correct him any more: *“There is a point. I just try more to say Stefán [with stress on first syllabus]. I just try to say it properly and he does not get it.”*

While Stefán and Kasper are always called by their full names, Leópolð is usually just Leó. Only when he does something wrong is he called by his full name. What is interesting is that Kasper used to have a second name, but they decided to officially drop it as it was not used. So the lack of referring to and addressing by his second (it was his first name, to be precise) name resulted in dropping it:

We cut it when he was five. We never called him that. Andrew Kasper. We always just called him Kasper. /.../ One of the reasons we chose Kasper was that it would fit into Iceland, whereas Andrew would not. And we knew that. As he got older he was just so much Kasper. And we thought, this is stupid to have this Andrew on there. So we took it off.

Interestingly, Kasper did not even know that he is Andrew:

He had no idea. We never called him that. And it even caused problems sometimes. At kindergarten of course they take the first name, Andrew. And it was not his name so we were like, do not call him that. That is why we decided to take it off so that no one would call him that. This was not his name.

His brother Stefán also has a middle name, Elías. It is his grandmother's maiden name. Coleen says that they wanted to drop this name together with Kasper's, but it turned out not to be a good idea:

We decided that one name is enough but everybody was so offended. I was totally dropping it. I was like: all will have one name. But his [her husband's] side of the family was really like: 'Oh no, that is such a beautiful middle name. That has to stay.' So he has it still.

So we can see that some names have a special value and meaning for parents or relatives while they do not have it for the others. It is also interesting that the fact that the name Elías was, just like Andrew, not used by anyone does not imply that family members would not care about it.

Pronunciation difficulties that Coleen had in Iceland made her decide to change her name as well. She explains:

I did not like when I get to the doctor and they call you and they mispronounce my name because they have no idea how to say it. So like: 'Co ... Co ...' And everyone is looking at you and I am like 'That's me.' I was really tired of that.

Coleen also faced difficulties getting a job while she had a foreign name:

I applied for hundreds of jobs, but you know – Canadian name. Even though I have a degree now in Icelandic and I do my masters and stuff, so I have no problem speaking ... Nobody called me back. But as soon as I changed my name I got a job.

When she chose the name, it was not a name that she would be particularly attached to: “No, I just wanted something simple. Easy to spell, easy to say.” When she was deciding for a new name, pronunciation was crucial:

I wanted something that my family could say if they wanted. Even though they do not. It would be weird to say: 'I changed my name to something you could not possibly say.'

Now her Canadian family, friends and people who know her from before all call her Coleen, while at the workplace she is Katrín. Her husband also calls her Coleen, the only exception is if they are talking to Icelanders they do not know from before – then he calls her Katrín. When we have met she introduced herself with her Canadian name. She also did not change her name on Facebook. “Yeah,” she added, “that is a real name. A Canadian name.”

Another interlocutor, Séverine, also got a new, Icelandic name when she moved there. She explains that the French way of pronouncing her name sounds very similar to Sigurlína. So it was not a name that she would choose and register with, as Coleen did. She was given this name by Icelandic people she was in contact with. Even though she did not officially register it, the name is still widely used. She puts a special meaning to it:

I took it as a gift. It is a first gift that Iceland gave me. I was really happy, it was really great to have this name. Yesterday I was at confirmation and people asked me for my name. I said Séverine and they were like ... So I said: 'You can call me Sigurlína, it is ok.'

It is interesting that her husband Halldór calls her Séverine as he met her before she got an Icelandic name. Similarly his family and friends address her with her French name. But otherwise she prefers if Icelanders call her Sigurlína. She does not use the Icelandic name only

in Iceland. When she travelled to Nepal, she also encouraged the Nepalese to call her Lína. She points out the meaning of the name:

Sigur means victory or horse secure and lína is the line or the rope. So it can be the line of victory. Sigurlína. My pride is completely satisfied. And a really funny thing is that when you are saving someone who fell in the glacier, he is in his rope and you have to go there and then you pluck another rope to access to him in a secure rope – this rope is called Sigurlína [Séverine works as a glacier tour guide as well] /.../ A lot of Sigurs are called Sigga or some little names. But they never give me the little one. It seem that the long and difficult name can stick with me.

Similarly to Coleen, Séverine also brings forth the issue of which name to use on social media:

On Facebook I changed to Sigurlína, but when we were abroad I changed it back to Séverine. Now I was again about to change it to Sigurlína. Because some friends thought I dissapeared from Facebook with Séverine. I think now, seven years, it is good to have my real name. But still I put it [Sigurlína or Lína] as nickname on Facebook.

It is striking how often my interlocutors spoke about their 'real' name. The name *is* them, to bring back Bodenhorn's ethnographic case from Alaska. In Coleen's case, the latter is her real name, while Katrín, even though she officialy registered the name change, is mostly a 'calling name' she is addressed with but she does not perceive herself as Katrín. Séverine remarks that it is good to have her real name on Facebook, meaning the 'original', French name. Marion similarly sees her son as Pablo, pointing out that this is his *real* name, somehow more real than Skorri. Mirella also used the word 'real' to stress that he is Sindi, even though in Albania people call him slightly differently. Hélène points out that she is not Helena. And that her daughter *is* Sylvía not Silvie. So in these cases we do not have names that carry the same 'ontological weight', to use de Pina-Cabral's (2010) term. Some names are more real than the others, some names are more directly linked to selfhood. And it does not necessarily overlap with the name that the person is mostly called by. Which names is perceived as 'real' can also differ depending on a person. As Marion emphansizes that her son *is* Pablo, Pablo's father would probably similarly claim that he *is* Skorri. That this is his real name. While Pablo can be purely Stratherian at heart, perceiving himself as dividual – as both, real Pablo and real Skorri.

10 Nicknames

Official names and surnames – what a lack of imagination! You can never remember them, they are detached and banal to the degree that they in no way remind of the person to whom they properly belong. In addition, every generation has its own fashions and suddenly everyone is named Marjetka, Patrik or even – God forbid! – Janina. I try, because of this, to never use names, but rather nicknames, that we come up with on the occasion of meeting a person for the first time. /.../ I believe that everyone amongst us sees every other person in his or her own way, and thus has the right to give a name he or she sees fit. That is why we all are multinamed. (Olga Tokarczuk: Drive your Plough over the Bones of the Dead)

Within the anthropology of names and naming, nicknames are relatively well-researched phenomenon (Collier and Bricker 1970; de Pina-Cabral 1984; Glazier 1987 etc). Their bestowal is less formalized, and often has less "ontological weight". Different ethnographical examples show the various functions, features and usage that nicknames might have. Like other names, nicknames also “depend on a social contract without which they would have no force or ontological weight” (Pálsson 2014: 7). In some societies⁴⁶, however, nicknames or correlating informal naming does not exist or is very rare. Among Orokaivans, who have a very structured naming system, nicknames are called *javo isapa*, meaning small personal names or nicknames. They, unlike personal names, “refer to the individual life of particular persons” (Iteanu 2006: 69). Consequently they have the ability to cross boundaries between life and death, affines and non-affines (ibid). Some *javo isapa* also exist just among two people and can therefore imply a very particular social relation. Another Amazonian ethnic group, Tukanoans, also have a structured naming system, where each person has several names. Hugh-Jones differentiates three kinds of personal names: spirit names, nicknames and foreigners' names (Hugh-Jones 2006: 79). To better understand nicknames, we must briefly describe all of them. Spirit names are seen as an intimate aspect of the self and they are not used to refer to adults. Nicknames are brought forth in joking situations and are used by kin and friends. Foreigners' name is bestowed upon them at baptism (Hugh-Jones 2006: 80–1). These three layers of personal names show how different names correlate to different 'masks' that an individual has. The most intimate one, touching the individual identity, is not used in addressing and referring to. The joking names are pointing to those very personal relationships among people who are close to each other. Lastly, foreigners' names place one into a wider society, into an outside world, revealing the religious identity, but at the same time they are being perceived as less intertwined with the core, inner personality of the person. Nicknames, the same as foreigners' names, “share a certain

⁴⁶ Most of Mongolians do not have nicknames or similar second names (Humphrey 2006: 159). If they do, the nicknames are used only among age-mates (Humphrey 2006: 170).

external quality,” they can “come like added layers of clothing bestowed by others in later life” (Hugh-Jones 2006: 82).

Iñupiat nicknames, which often consist of descriptive elements, have an individuating nature as well (Bodenhorn 2006: 143). The Iñupiat give nicknames also to those strangers that they have a close relation to. These nicknames “provide a way for the Iñupiat to transform outsiders with whom Iñupiat regularly interact on Inupiaq terms without putting Inupiaq social relations at stake” (Bodenhorn 2006: 144). Those names do not make these foreigners Iñupiat. But this process “does draw them into Inupiaq sociality, which /.../ is a recognition of past and an expectation of future behaviour that is about belonging” (Bodenhorn 2006: 151). Quite oppositely, members of the Indian minority in South Africa have anglicized first, and consequently anglicized nick names, which are used mostly in public, while their official Indian names are reserved for the most intimate situations (Hansen 2006: 216). “The desire to have anglicized first names was also motivated by the fact that most Indians anglicized and shortened their names in work places to pre-empt the often humiliating nicknaming by white superiors of staff whose Indian names they refused to pronounce” (Hansen 2006: 216). Among the Hausa, children get a whole series of nicknames (Benson 2006: 182). As nicknames can be less durable and more contextual than personal names, “some (of nicknames) might fall out of use in adulthood, others of which endured throughout their adult lives” (ibid). Hausa example is revealing also the problem of categorization – which names in that coexist beside formalized personal names, can be classified as nicknames? Are womb names nicknames? Are the protective names, used only during the infancy, also nicknames? The unofficial names that reveal the circumstances of birth? These questions are usually open for authors to decide for themselves and there is quite a big range of what falls into category of nicknames, when comparing different anthropological writings on nicknames.

Nicknames are common in Iceland. Some of them are derived from first names (Gunni for Gunnar), while in some instances, the connection is less obvious (Mangi for Magnús) (Willson 2008: 487). Some of the nicknames are derived from other bases (Lilli and Lilla, related to the adjective *lítill* – little) (Willson 2008: 488). Many nicknames that are created in one's childhood, fall out of use later, while some retain them throughout their lives (ibid). Some nicknames are in use only among the family members or friends, but others are general terms of address used by acquaintances as well (ibid). A person can have numerous nicknames that differ on the basis of who uses them and in what context. Comparatively to Slovenian informal naming practices, we can claim that the two are relatively similar.

Many people are outspokenly unsatisfied with their nicknames and do not want to be addressed with them. As vom Bruck and Bodenhorn write the 'tyranny of the name' (2006: 26) in a broader sense, nicknames can be tyrannical as well. One child of Icelandic and Canadian origin, called Stefán, is often called Steffi. His mother explains that he hates it so much that he would not even answer to it. She tells:

We moved to Iceland when he was two and so it is like a pet name here and automatically kids would start calling him that. It is like a pet name. And he just never followed that. It is just his personality, he is like: 'my name is Stefán and nothing else'.

When Héléne and her husband were choosing the names of their daughters, they were very cautious about the nicknames. Héléne knew that Theodóra could easily become Dóra:

I really did not want her to be called Dóra. Because I hate this name. So I wanted her to be called Théa right away. So we call her often Théa rather than Theodóra. And Henrietta, I really wanted that she has a nickname in Icelandic. I mean I never called her by a nickname. But I knew she could be Henni. Which I find horrible. So my husband found out that she can be called Netta. And Netta means also cute. So it is a kind of a very nice nickname.

For when Henrietta was little, her parents *prevented*, as her mother formulates, to be called Henni. They made it sure none would ever call them Dóra or Henni. This was very planned. Héléne explains:

I really asked my husband to find a nickname for her. Because I knew none would call her Henrietta in Iceland. All the family is calling her Netta.

Nicknames are often used only in a certain period of someone's life. Especially infants and babies are usually called by special nicknames. Stefanie calls her son *mein kleiner haze*, as her mother called her like that and "when she talks about me being a child she refers to me as her *little hare*." And Ágúst, Stefanie's husband calls him with an Icelandic expression for a little child. Séverine, who is pregnant, refers to her child as 'a little monster'.

Some other children are satisfied with their nicknames. Sometimes at school Mathilde is called Matha and she likes it. When she was younger, her Danish father used to call her with an Icelandic word for something small and fragile. But now that she is thirteen, she finds it too childish and her mother comments that "*it is not allowed anymore*."

Some children are called by their initials, for example Gíta Guðrún is sometimes called GG by her uncle and Jón Kári was called JK when they lived in South Africa.

Generally speaking, it does not seem that children from mixed families are more likely to get nicknames.

11 Conclusion

Icelandic narratives of the past have greatly influenced the perception of the culture and the language within it. The first centuries of Icelanders, the early manuscripts, the Sagas and the Commonwealth era with the beginning of Alþingi – all these form the foundational image of the heroic past. In the times of nation-building processes during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the early era became crucial for the self-image of Icelanders. The narratives of the past put the ideal, which needs to be strived for in the present and the future times. The importance of genealogies and the idea of (genetic) relatedness of Icelanders form an important aspect of national identity. Furthermore, the ideas of their uniqueness are closely related to the harsh environment, the survival struggles and the geographical isolation.

Icelandic language is imagined as a direct, unbroken link to the glorious past. It is believed to convey the essence of 'Icelandicness'. It has an intrinsic value and seems to have a 'life' of its own, outside of those who speak it. Icelanders tend to perceive their language “not as an extension of their person or a culturally fashioned tool, but rather as an artefact independent of themselves analogous to their equally celebrated landscape. In other words, an external condition within which they operate.” (Pálsson 1989: 123) The similarity between the discourses of language preservation and the protection of nature and environment are thus not a surprise. The language, as well as the nature, should remain pure from dirt and foreign influences. The link between the language and the thought has been brought forth as well. Clear (and clean) language reflects clear thought. “[T]here is no room for the possibility of using 'good' language to express muddled thought, or using 'bad' language to express clear thought. Thought and language are somehow identical” (Pálsson 1989: 130). The literacy identity and the concept of *kvöldvaka* are closely related to the language. The image of an Icelanders as a Saga-reading individual is still present.

Icelandic language policy has been actively protecting the Icelandic from foreign influences, especially from the new loanwords from other languages. Unlike many other European languages, in Icelandic the new words for technical and digital terms are avoided. Instead, they are constructed from the already existing ones. In this light, we can also better understand the naming policies. Throughout most of the twentieth century, new personal names, brought from other languages, were not allowed. Consequently newcomers who applied for Icelandic citizenship had to change their names for the Icelandic ones. Some of these cases gained significant public attention (Vietnamese refugees, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Baltasar Samper,

Eilifur Friður Edgarsson), which aided in the liberalization of the naming law in the 1990s. In the debates about the naming regulations, many broader questions concerning names and naming were brought forth. One example of it is the speech by the former Minister of Justice, Þorsteinn Pálsson:

A person's name is one of the most important aspects of their personal identity and concerns first and list his/her personal interest rather than a public interest. The right of parents to decide their child's name must be great and the right of the legislature to interfere with name giving proportionally limited. However, some name traditions are such that they touch on important social interests as well as on personal interests, hence, an increased right of the legislature to interfere. This applies not least to the Icelandic patronymic tradition. (Þorsteinn Pálsson October 31, 1996, cited in Þórarinsdóttir 1999: 273)

This correlates strongly with the anthropologists' findings that the names at the same time individuate and classify. Their individuating role is connected to Pálsson's notion that the name concerns someone's personal interest. While on the other hand, classifying aspect of names relates to public interest. The possible tension between these two functions of names can result in the names being perceived as violent to those who are bestowed with them.

Being bestowed with a name never happens in vacuum. Names are always given by someone. In cross-cultural perspective we can see that self-naming is usually an exception. People are most often named by the others. In my fieldwork in Iceland I focused on various factors that influence the naming processes. Firstly, the law on personal names represents the state-imposed regulation. For mixed families (as well as families with both foreign-born parents), however, regulations are less rigid than for families in which both parents are of Icelandic-origin. Secondly, all of the families I worked with are aware of the 'double identity' of their children. Some of them even referred to their sons and daughters as 'bicultural'. The name(s) they choose usually reflect their 'biculturality', to use the emic term. Namely, majority of them decided to give two given names, one Icelandic and the other not. A boy, born in Polish-Icelandic family is Úlfur Kazimierz. A girl, born in Indian-Icelandic family is Gíta Guðrún. Thirdly, the factor of the wider family also plays a significant role. The tradition of naming children after the ancestors (mostly after the grand-parents) is still very present in Iceland. Some parents therefore feel pressured to choose the name among the names existing in the family. Interestingly also some of non-Icelandic parents decided to follow this pattern even though it is not common in the culture they are coming from (the example of Wolfram Orri, born to German-Icelandic couple).

We must perceive namesakes tradition in the light of the broader Icelandic naming practices. As there are no family names (the existing family names in Iceland all derive from various foreign influences) in Icelandic naming system the collectifying aspect of names may seem to be less present than in the societies with the system of family names. This presumption turns out to be wrong as namesake tradition actually emphasizes the family belonging of the individual. A given name in Iceland (as patronyms still predominate, it implies mostly for male names) is chosen with a careful thought of it becoming a patronym. The system of given names and the patronyms therefore cannot be studied separately. They are two phases of the same cycle.

We arrived to another key feature of names, namely that they would outlive us. They can be seen as a cultural DNA, which only temporarily ‘dwells’ in us. Especially among the societies like the Icelandic one, where the names are recycled within the family, names may appear to be almost eternal.

12 Povzetek

Na vprašanje '*Kdo si?*' bi večina ljudi odgovorila s svojim imenom. Kakšna je torej povezava med osebnim imenom in osebo? Kje se konča prvo in začne drugo? *Jaz sem Ana*. Pa sem res? Kaj to sploh pomeni?

Osebna imena so neločljivo povezana s človekom. Njihova dvojna vloga – na eni strani posameznika individualizirajo, ga razločujejo od drugih, na drugi strani ga umeščajo v skupnost (Mauss 1985) – odraža razpetost posameznika med 'sebe' in 'svet'. Po drugi strani imen ne moremo misliti zunaj procesa, skozi katerega se reproducirajo – poimenovanja. Poimenovanje posameznika spremeni v 'nekoga' (Geertz 1973) in je posledično povezano s konceptom družbenega rojstva. Hkrati pa pravica do poimenovanja implicira tudi hierarhijo družbene moči. V večini primerov nas poimenujejo drugi. V evropskih kulturah so to zvečine starši oziroma družinski člani. A njihova pravica do svobodnega poimenovanja otrok hitro trči ob zakonske omejitve. V svoji magistrski nalogi prikažem različne in raznolike dejavnike in akterje, ki vplivajo na poimenovanje in osebna imena. Pa vendar osebna imena niso vpeta zgolj med državne zakonske omejitve na eni in svobodno odločanje staršev na drugi strani. Da bi fenomen osebnih imen razumeli bolje in predvsem natančneje, moramo upoštevati vrsto širših kulturnih in družbenih dejavnikov.

Ključne dejavnike pri preučevanju imen na Islandiji si lahko predstavljamo v obliki koncentričnih krogov: (osebna) imena – jezik – (nacionalna) kultura – procesi nacionalizacije. Prva stoletja islandske zgodovine se pogosto omenjajo kot zlata doba ali *Commonwealth*. Otok je bil neodvisen, ustanovili so Alþingi (zametek današnjega parlamenta), gre za dogajalni čas večine islandskih sag, v teh stoletjih nastajajo tudi drugi pomembni rokopisi. Zato ni nenavadno, da so se v času narodnobuditeljskih teženj Islandci idejno naslonili prav na to dobo. Zlata doba je bila ideal, ki naj bi se mu islandski narod spet približal. Kulturni elementi zgodnje islandske zgodovine so imeli intrinzično vrednost. Prav tako je bila razširjena predstava, da se kultura in jezik od dobe naselitve pa do devetnajstega stoletja v svojih temeljnih vidikih nista spremenila. Ohranjanje jezika in kulture je tako postalo pomembno ideološko orodje. Seveda pa je v procesu nacionalizacije kulture ključno vlogo igrala tudi narava, ki je bila tako očitno drugačna od okolja danskih kolonizatorjev (Pálsson 1995). Podoba odpornih in močnih Islandcev, ki znajo preživeti v neprijaznem severnem okolju tega geološko aktivnega otoka, njihova kulturna homogenost in povezanost so pomembno vplivali na njihovo samopercepcijo. Metaforiko čistosti so uporabljali tako za naravo in ohranjanje le-te kot tudi za jezik. Slednjega

naj bi bilo potrebno zaščititi pred tujimi vplivi. Da bi se izognili tujkam na tehnološkem in digitalnem področju, so vpeljali mnoge zloženke islandskih besed. Tuja imena so bila podobno nezaželena. Do leta 1996 so morali vsi tujci, ki so želeli zaprositi za državljanstvo, izbrati islandsko in zavreči svoje dotedanje ime. Ta zakon je sprožal številne odmevne polemike (Þórarinsdóttir 1999). Da bi tovrstne regulacije bolje razumeli, moramo upoštevati islandski sistem patronimov. Patronime (ali matronime) namreč tvorijo iz osebnega imena v roditeljski obliki in končnice -son (za sinove) ter -dóttir (za hčere). Iz tistih tujih imen, ki jih v islandščini ne gre sklanjati, ne bi mogli tvoriti patronimov (in matronimov). Eden izmed glavnih argumentov nasprotnikov liberalizacije zakona o osebnih imenih je tako morebitna ogroženost starodavnega sistema patronimov.

Mešane družine, ki so bile v fokusu mojega trimesečnega terenskega dela na Islandiji, so lahko pri izbiri imen za svoje otroke nekoliko svobodnejše od ostalih. V primeru da izberejo dve osebni imeni, mora eno ustrezati islandskim pravilom (to pomeni, da mora biti bodisi že na seznamu dovoljenih imen bodisi morajo starši zanj zaprositi – v primeru pozitivne razrešitve se novo ime doda na seznam), drugo pa lahko odraža jezikovno in kulturno identiteto drugega starša. Prav tako lahko otroci v mešanih družinah prevzamejo priimek starša, ki ni Islandec in/ali patronim/matronim islandskega starša. Upoštevajoč to, za islandske razmere veliko svobodo pri izbiri imen, je bilo moje glavno raziskovalno vprašanje, kateri faktorji vplivajo na izbiro osebnega imena, priimka in/ali patronima/matronima. Kljub množstvu raznolikih dejavnikov, ki jih starši upoštevajo ob izbiranju, se zvečine odločijo za enega izmed dveh prevladujočih vzorcev. Bodisi – ta možnost je med mojimi sogovorniki prevladovala – izberejo dve imeni, eno islandsko in drugo iz jezikovnega okolja drugega starša (na primer Úlfur Kazimierz), bodisi izberejo eno ime, ki, kakor se je izrazilo več sogovornikov, 'fukcionira v obeh jezikih' (na primer Júlía). Pri odločanju za priimke in/ali patronime nisem opazila prevladujočega vzorca, faktor, ki ga velja izpostaviti, pa je, da nekateri starši vztrajajo, da otrok dobi tudi priimek (ne zgolj patronima) zaradi morebitnih poti v tujino. Izbira osebnega imena in proces poimenovanja sta neločljivo povezana z nekaterimi širšimi premisleki o imenu, ki se jim posvetim v zadnjih poglavjih: kako je izbira imena povezana z vprašanji spola in spolne identitete, kako izbrana imena 'živijo' v praksi – gre za vprašanja naslavljanja in nanašanja, kako je z vzdevki in njihovim potencialnim 'tiranstvom' ter kakšno vlogo pri izbiri imena ima tradicija poimenovanja po starih starših. V želji po kontekstualiziranem, komparativnem pogledu vsa poglavja uvajajo etnografski primeri iz različnih kulturnih in geografskih območij.

Fenomen poimenovanja in osebnih imen je kulturno raznolik in hkrati vseprisoten. Imena, kakor toliko drugih človeških prizadevanj in delovanj, lovijo ravnovesje na tanki meji med inventivnostjo in prilagajanjem družbenim konvencijam.

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Izjava o avtorstvu

Izjavljam, da je magistrsko delo v celoti moje avtorsko delo ter da so uporabljeni viri in literatura navedeni v skladu z mednarodnimi standardi in veljavno zakonodajo.

Ljubljana, 24. avgusta 2016

Ana Svetel

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Spodaj podpisana Ana Svetel izjavljam, da je besedilo magistrskega dela v tiskani in elektronski obliki istovetno, in dovoljujem njegovo objavo na fakultetnih spletnih straneh.

Ljubljana, 24. avgusta 2016

Ana Svetel