

**LIVING NAMES, NAMING LIVES**  
**On the naming practices of Germans living in Finland**  
**A socio-onomastic study**

Master's thesis  
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# JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tämän pro gradu -työn päätavoitteena on tutkia Suomessa asuvien saksalaisten etunimivalintaa. Tutkimusaihetta ei ole tutkittu toistaiseksi. Tutkimukseni tavoitteena oli vanhempien etunimimotiivien ja Suomen nimiperinteiden selvittäminen. Samalla tutkittiin myös monikulttuurista elämää toisessa maassa, sekä sen mahdollisia vaikutuksia lapsen etniseen identiteettiin.</p> <p>Teoreettinen tausta sisältää suomen ja saksan nimitutkijoiden töitä. Sen lisäksi hyödynnettiin monikulttuurisen nimeämisen sekä nimimuotojen tutkimusta. Pro gradu -työni kuuluu laadulliseen tutkimusperinteeseen. Otos koostui kahdestatoista perheestä, joista puolessa oli yksi saksalainen ja yksi suomalainen vanhempi. Loput vanhemmat olivat saksalaisia. Aineistossa käsitellään kuudentoista korkeintaan viisi vuotiaisten lasten nimeämisprosessia. Aineisto kerättiin vuosina 2009 ja 2010 ja koostuu yhteensä 12 tuntia kestävästä parihaastatteluista.</p> <p>Living names, naming lives -tutkielmani osoitti, että useimmat vanhemmat valitsivat tietoisesti suomalaisia etunimiä. Sekä saksalaiset perheet että suomalais-saksalaisperheet valitsivat suomalaisia etunimiä, mutta vanhempien motivaatiot erosivat ryhmien välillä. Suomalais-saksalaiset vanhemmat pyrkivät etunimien kautta korostamaan kansainvälisyyttä, kun taas saksalaisten vanhempien tavoitteena oli nostaa esiin yhteyttä Suomeen. Suomalaiset nimeämisen perinteet eivät olleet ratkaisevia kummassakaan ryhmässä.</p> <p>Toisen etunimen valinta osoittautui ristiriitaiseksi. Suomalais-saksalaisissa perheissä kaikki lapset saivat toisen etunimen, kun taas vain puolessa saksalaisissa perheissä lapset saivat toisen etunimen. Myös motiivit vaihtelivat. Nimeäminen suvun piiristä oli suomalais-saksalaisten vanhempien yleisin motiivi. Toinen ryhmä valitsi vapaampia motiiveja.</p> <p>Saksalaiset vanhemmat osoittivat suurta halukkuutta integroitua suomalaiseen yhteiskuntaan. Tämä näkyi suomalaisten päiväkotien ja etunimien valinnasta sekä vanhempien kielenopiskelussa. Lisäksi vanhemmat pitivät suomen etunimen roolia integraatioprosessissa tärkeänä.</p> <p>Lisätutkimusta aiheesta on toivottavaa, koska tämä tutkielma oli ensimmäinen, joka tutkii suomi-saksa kieliyhdistelmää. Yksi mahdollisuus olisi käyttää valintaparusteena lasten sukupuolta, jotta tyttöjen ja poikien nimiä olisi yhtä paljon.</p>	
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<p>The main objective of this Master’s thesis is to research the naming of children of German families living in Finland. The research topic has not been examined so far. In the thesis, the aim was to research the naming motives of parents and the execution of Finnish naming traditions. It also examined the bicultural aspect of living and bringing up a child in another country, as well as its potential influence on the child’s ethnical identity.</p> <p>The theoretical background was comprised of works of Finnish and German name researchers. Additionally, multicultural studies and international research on naming fashions were added in order to provide an extensive background for the further analysis of the research material.</p> <p>The study is situated in the field of qualitative research. The sample group consisted of twelve families, out of which six contained one Finnish and one German parent. In the remaining six families both parents were of German decent. The material discusses the naming process of altogether sixteen children aged 0-5. The data was collected between 2009 and 2010. The resulting material comprised twelve hours of recorded interviews and approximately 200 pages of transcription.</p> <p>Living names, naming lives revealed that most parents consciously chose a Finnish first name. The percentage of Finnish first names in both samples was the same, while the naming motives differed between the groups. Parents of the Finnish-German sample strove to express internationality; parents of the German-German sample were aiming for the name’s relation to Finland.</p> <p>The selection of latter forenames proved discrepancy between the sample groups. While in the Finnish-German sample, 100 per cent of all children received latter forenames, this happened only in 50 per cent of the German-German families. Also, the naming motives differed. Relation to kin was the most common motive in the Finnish-German sample. The other group chose freer motives.</p> <p>Finnish naming customs were of no significant influence in either sample.</p> <p>German parents of both groups showed a similarly high degree to be integrated into Finnish society. This was displayed by choosing Finnish-speaking kindergartens, studying the target language and by selecting Finnish forenames. Parents further considered the importance of a Finnish forename regarding the integration into the host society.</p> <p>Further studies of the topic are desirable, because this was the first study, which researched this language combination. A possible suggestion is to alter the selection criteria in order to have a homogenous number of boys and girls in the research.</p>	
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*This thesis is dedicated to my mother Petra Endter for being the wonderful woman she is and for selecting a name for me that nearly every nationality can connect to.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Master's thesis entitled *Living names, naming lives* researches the naming practices of Germans living in Finland. The idea for the work was born, when a befriended Hungarian couple got their first offspring back in 2007 and gave their child a Finnish first name. I was astonished by that fact, taken that both parents had a Hungarian last name and were immigrants, who, at that time, had only been living in Finland for some years. This was the starting point of a journey into the Finnish field of onomastics.

Taking advantage of my own biographical background and home country, I intended to research the naming practices of Germans living in Finland. I was aiming to find out, whether they behaved similarly and what effects a temporary or permanent country of residence would have on the naming decisions. The topic itself is not yet researched in this language combination and while reviewing the existing literature, I only found a few similar projects. However, I relied on material about German and Finnish naming practices that discussed the subject separately.

During the time of the process, I was focusing on the following research questions:

1. If any, what are the key differences in the sample groups' decisions?
2. What kind of names did parents choose for their children?
3. What media got used in the naming process?
4. What factors were of importance during the naming process?
5. How do Finnish and German naming practices differ?
6. How do Finnish naming practices affect Germans living in Finland?
7. How does the length of stay in Finland affect the naming decision?
8. What does the name reveal about the families' current state of integration?
9. Do parents consider the name as a potential shaper of identity?

The research method used in the study is situated in the field of qualitative research. Even though there are existing studies on naming practices that discuss the matter in a quantitative manner, it was this study's purpose to explore the research subject more deeply in order to enlighten the motives behind the given names that led to the final decision. Even though there have been hypotheses about possible factors involved in the naming process, the study was excelled inductively as to complete and develop the suggested factors in the beginning of the research. Starting from the research questions presented above, the method chosen in this thesis is the survey. With gaining empirical measurements and data from the



research questions, I was then able to categorize and analyze the data received in order to build up an inductive framework on the naming processes of Germans living in Finland.

Before proceeding with the theoretical background of the study, I would like to make some introductory remarks about the network of Germans in Finland, which built the basis for my research.

In 2010, there were 3715 Germans living in Finland (Statistics Finland 2011), the biggest part of them living in the capital region. An official intercept point of Finnish and German culture is the *Goethe Institut* in Helsinki. The Embassy of the Federal German Republic is situated in Helsinki with additionally honorary consuls in Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Lappeenranta, Mariehamn, Munio, Oulu, Rauma, Tampere, Turku and Vaasa.

The German-Finnish congregation, which offers Germans living in Finland church services in German, has groups in twelve Finnish towns with its headquarters in Helsinki. The only German school, a German library and the German chamber of commerce run their services in Helsinki. In Tampere, a German cultural centre can be found with a branch of German schooling.

Additionally to that, the Finnish-German associations (present in 29 Finnish towns and cities) see themselves responsible of being a point of approach for Germans living in Finland and Finns that are interested in German language and culture. The association, which offers local and national events about intercultural understanding, publishes the newspaper *Silta* about its activities.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the theoretical background I focused on leading researchers of forenames of the past decades in Finland and Germany, Eero Kiviniemi and Wilfried Seibicke. Additionally to that, I referred to established and recent publications of international name researchers, such as Richard D. Alford comparative naming study and Stanley D. Lieberson's work on naming and fashion, which added sociological value to the matter.

In the following chapter I will cover a large variety of topics on forenames. Starting from the legal regulations and national tracking of names in Germany and Finland, I will move on to a presentation of gender in both languages' names and how naming differs in regards to gender. Following that, I will move on to the topic of multiple forenames in both countries, and cover the historical and recent naming beliefs, before coming to different naming motives or criteria in Finland and Germany. Proceeding from the naming motives, I will focus on changing naming criteria and naming fashions. The last two topics deal with names, prejudice and personal identity, as well as naming in a multinational context, which sheds light on the additional challenges that parents deal with when naming their children in another culture just like in the case of Germans in Finland.

Depending on personal taste and cultural background, name givers and name holders attach varying importance to names. However, the existence of names is a common feature in almost all cultures. The use of forenames and last names is only a significant characteristic of industrial societies, while tribal cultures suffice with only one name, in some cases even none (Alford, 1988). As far as German and Finnish culture is concerned, a rather similar two-patterned naming system of forenames and last names occurs. While the former is chosen freely within certain regulations (see chapter 2.1 about governmental restrictions on naming), the latter derives from the mother's or father's family.

Richard D. Alford (1988, 69) writes that naming systems fulfill two central functions: *differentiation* and *categorization*. The latter function is commonly met with the help of the last name, which places an individual into a certain frame of kin, society and culture. The first function is largely served by the personal name or forename, which extracts the individual from its social frame and generates a unique referrer. As recalled in his study (1988, 125), "the bestowal of a name on a child indicates either that the child is a legitimate member of the society (e.g. citizenship) and/or that the child's parents are publicly claiming parenthood." Hence, I studied the societal frame of the subject, which led to the national regulations of

forenames, society's support when finding a suitable name and the present tracking of forenames in the Finnish and German state.

## **2.1 National regulations and tracking of forenames**

### 2.1.1 The regulations on naming according to German law

The process of naming a child is only partly regulated in German law. According to the *Personenstandsgesetz* (Law on Civil Status, BGB1 §12), every human being is entitled to bear a name that consists of forename and last name. The last name of a person shows its belonging to a certain family, whereas the forenames can be chosen freely within a set of regulations. Even though the exact number of forenames remains unregulated in the law, they got limited to altogether four forenames after a lawsuit in the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitution Court) in 2004. The order of forenames is of no legal importance and the preferred name may be used and changed without further notice to the register office.

The time of registration of a new-born child at the register office is regulated in chapter 5 paragraph 2 of the Law on Civil Status. According to that, a child, its forenames and last name has to be registered at the local office within one week after birth by a parent or another authorized adult. In case the forenames have not been chosen by that time, they can be added to the birth entry up to one month after birth in the register office.

The parents have the right to choose a forename according to their wishes within the following criteria: One of the forenames has to clearly display the sex of the child, and more than two hyphenated names may not be used. The name may not be ludicrous, spiteful or racist. Furthermore, siblings may not bear the same names. Abbreviations such as *Jr.* are not admitted as second forenames. The register office is free to discard parents' naming proposals, if they are not coherent with the child's good.

The German law is constantly keeping international family relations in mind when admitting new names. According to Koss (2002, 139), every sixth marriage in Germany is intercultural, which requires a high degree of flexibility from the officials.

In the following I would like to present a series of names that got admitted/not admitted in Germany. Further names including their court decisions can be looked up at the pages of the *Personennamen Beratungsstelle* of the University of Leipzig:

Admission granted: *Domino, Carina, Fanta, Dior, Mikado, Roi, Singh, Mete, Godot*

Admission not granted: *Chris, Lord, La Toya, Kiran, November, Sonne, Cezanne, Stone*

The Finnish name *Mika*, which rose slightly in popularity since 2000, got allowed for girls and boys alike. Even though it gained popularity with the success of Mika Häkkinen, it is also a common girls' name in other Nordic countries. Despite this ambiguity, it got admitted as a single boys name in 2004 and 2006 (Beliebte Vornamen.de 2007).

### 2.1.2 The regulations on naming according to Finnish law

Legal regulations about forenames in Finland can be found in the *nimilaki* (Finnish Names Act). According to that, every Finnish citizen has a forename and a last name. The number of forenames is limited to three. The full name of a child has to be announced to the Local Register Office up to two months after birth. Parents have the right to choose their child's name freely, unless they violate one of the following rules: Unacceptable is a name, which is considered to be unsuitable or harmful for the child. Three explanatory moments fall under this example: 1) A name that disagrees with Finnish spelling rules and/or naming system (which includes Swedish names); 2) A name of the opposite sex; 3) Last names; 4) Names of siblings (as a first name). Exceptions are being made in religious matters, different handlings in another state, tradition, culture or for any other significant reason.

In the Finnish language, there are no clear grammatical rules about the indication of sex. In this sense, innovative parents are free to invent a new name for their child, which also might lead to the problem of further recognition of sex.

### 2.1.3 Comparison between the Finnish and German Names Acts

Worth noticing when comparing German and Finnish laws is the varying time of registration for newly given names. In Finland, two months of time is allowed until the child's name has to be registered. In Germany, this act should happen within a week after birth. In case the name has not finally been decided by the parents, three additional weeks are granted. According to the Finnish church law of 1686, the child was supposed to be baptized by its eighth day of birth. This law got abandoned in 1869, which admitted the two months of time for finding a suitable name for the child (Kiviniemi 1982). These agreements are related to the traditions of naming in both countries. In Finland, it is common to give the name only after birth. Whereas in Germany, it is a habit to search and decide upon the name before the child is born.

The number of names defined by Finnish and German law varies. Even though multiple forenames are more common in Finland, the overall number of allowed forenames is lower. In Germany, the number of forenames is not regulated by law and required lawful attention after several cases at court. Since then, the general suggestion is not to use more than four names. A common explanation of parents who choose multiple forenames in Germany is that the child would be able to choose its preferred name at a later point in time, while the remaining names would serve as latter forenames.

#### 2.1.4 National tracking and support

A list including the most common one thousand Finnish names is annually updated and published in the *Yliopiston nimipäiväalmanakka* (University Name Day Almanac), where approximately 98 per cent of the names are chosen from the total amount of 408 girls' names and 387 boys' names (2005) in the database (Kiviniemi 2006, 28). The current editor is name researcher Minna Saarelma, after Kiviniemi was conferred to emeritus status in the end of 2009.

On average, the fifty most common Finnish names of the twentieth century were sufficient for about 80 per cent of the new-born children, and the 100 most common names covered the needs of about 90 per cent of all children. Even though the tendency is decreasing and more and more individual names get chosen in Finland, traditional names are still of high importance (Kiviniemi 2006, 24 et sqq). One common reason for choosing the names from this collection is to assure the existence of a name day for the child (Vilkuna 2005, 6), which is a popular festivity in Finland and used to be of higher importance than a person's birthday in the past.

Names can be looked up in the *nimipalvelu* (Finnish Name Service) of the Population Register Center, which offers a free and accurate source on current and historical Finnish names. It displays the ten most favorite names of each decade starting from 1900. Recent years can be looked up separately. Additionally, a search function allows the research of the distribution of any name in Finland.

Accessing common forenames in Germany is not directly comparable to the situation in Finland, since a national tracking of the local birth registers does not happen for reasons of data protection. Studies on naming commonly rely on the voluntary collaboration of civil registry offices. However, the studies presented in the literature review suggest a number of trends in German naming.

The *Wilfried Seibicke Institut für Namensforschung* (Wilfried Seibicke Institute of Onomastics) annually publishes in the *Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache* (German Language Society) a top 10 list of the most common forenames in Germany. Detailed statistics can be ordered for a small fee. They also offer help for parents-to-be in matters of legal questions on naming. The same support is provided by the *Personennamen Beratungsstelle* (Personal Name Information Center) of the University of Leipzig. One can say that a certain degree of public analysis of naming in Germany is taking place; however, it is not as capacious and centralized as its Finnish equivalent. In addition to that, there are a large number of unofficial and private websites about and around naming in both countries, which parents can benefit from in their naming decisions.

After having an overview of how the national systems are supporting the naming of newborns, I would like to come closer to the structure and content of German and Finnish forenames. As seen in the example in the admission of the name *Mika* earlier this chapter, both languages' ways to display sex may vary. The topic of gender in forenames will be discussed in more detail in the following topic.

## 2.2 Gender and naming

As pointed out in Alford's study (1988, 79), sex is the most shared attribute in all naming systems. Three-quarters of the researched societies have a system at hand that would communicate the sex of the individual, either by connecting prefixes or suffixes to the names or by categorizing names into male and female. How gender is displayed in Finnish and German forenames shall be presented in the following paragraph.

### 2.2.1 Gender in German names

Seibicke (2008, 103) writes that the bigger part of German forenames consists of two and three syllabic words. They form about 80 per cent of all forenames.

	Male (in per cent)	Female (in per cent)
One syllable	17	1
Two syllables	37	40
Three syllables	38	40,5

Four syllables	7	17
Five syllables	1	1,5

Table 1: Syllabic distribution of female and male forenames in German language

As seen in table 2, monosyllabic girl's names are rare, which can be explained by the fact that they usually hold gender-specific suffixes (e.g. *-a*, *-e*, *-ea*, *-ina*). Disyllabic names are commonly pronounced according to the stress pattern Xx as in *Thomas*, *Stefan*, *Birgit* or *Tanja*. Girls' names also have the model xX deriving from French origins (e.g. *Nicole*, *Annett*). Speaking about trisyllabic names, there are three different types common: Xxx (*Michael*, *Melanie*) for more boys' than girls' names, xXx (*Sabine*, *Brigitte*) for more girls' than boys names and xxX (*Béatrice*, *Alexej*), which occurs equally in both genders.

Gender in German names is either displayed by specific parts of a name or with the help of gender-specific phonemes. The first one includes names ending in *-bert*, *-brecht*, *-helm*, *-mann*, *-olf* for masculine names or *-borg*, *-gard*, *-hilt*, *-run* to signify feminine names. The phonemes for generally males names are *-o*, and *-(i)us*, *-n*, *-s*, *-d*, *-r*, and *-m*. Female names are characterized by *-a*, *-e*, *-na*, *-ne*, and by *-ina*, *-ine*, *-ette* and *-is*, which are exclusively used for females (Seibicke 1996, 1177; Seibicke 2008, 105; Gerhards 2003, 163). Despite that, Seibicke also recognizes the appearance of genderless forenames deriving from different European languages (e.g. *Micha*, *Dominique*, *Chris*, *Kim* and *Robin*). Names, which are against these general gender rules can be regarded as a source of irritation, and might lead to confusion (e.g. *Ilja*, *Joscha*, *Attila*, *Jorma*, *Indra*, *Ildiko* or *Pirkko*). Since a general mixing of naming corpuses deriving from different languages is constantly increasing, Seibicke predicts that German legislature will not be able to maintain the strict division between male and female names in the future (Seibicke 2008, 107).

### 2.2.2 Gender in Finnish names

According to Vilkuna (2002, 10), approximately one third of all common Finnish male names end in *-o/-ö*, the responding female names end in *-a/-ä*. The occurrence of *-o/-ö* in male names is four times higher than in female names. Within the 100 most common female names, only a few of them end in *-o/-ö* (*Aino*, *Kaino*, *Marjo*, *Pirjo*, *Pirkko*, *Sisko*, *Vieno*, *Vuokko*, *Kielo*, *Muisto* and *Siro*). Usually, they derive from native Finnish words and transmit meaning (Kiviniemi, 2006, 116). The Finnish officials strive to admit only clearly distinguishable names, even though exceptions to this rule can be found (e.g. *Pirkka* vs.

*Pirkko*). In female names, the endings *-ija/-ijä* as in *Maija, Raija, Tuija, -lja/-ljä* (*Heljä, Hilja, Silja*) and *-rja/-rjä* (*Tarja, Mirja, Merja*) are common. The only precise male suffix is *-io/-iö* (*Ensio, Tapio, Päiviö*). Furthermore, Finnish masculine names tend to voiceless consonants (*k, p, t*), while female names tend to voiced consonants (especially *l* and *m*) (Kiviniemi 1982, 153 et sqq.).

Speaking about traditional meaningful Finnish names, forenames relating to flowers, berries and grass such as *Ruusku, Vanamo, Onerva, Taimi* are usually used for females (Kiviniemi, 2006, 122), as well as forenames relating to natural phenomenon like *Tuuli, Sade, Lumi, Talvi* or *Tähti* (Kiviniemi 2006, 124).

In the period between 2000 and 2004, only a few original Finnish names got chosen for both sexes (e.g. *Ilo, Kuu, Kuura, Paju, Runo, Tuli* and *Utu*) (Kiviniemi 2006, 117). Other names, which have been recently given to both genders, include *Angel, Alva, Bela, Carol, Eeti, Juhanna, Nikki, Reine, Sandy, Sassa* and *Tini* (Kiviniemi 2006, 118). Regarding names that got introduced to Finnish language from other naming corpuses, Kiviniemi (2006, 126) reveals that finding a common agreement about the sex of a name can be exhausting. However, the situation improved during the last century as fewer and fewer names get chosen for both sexes.

### 2.2.3 Different approaches in naming gender

Mädchennamen haben – wie die Mädchen selbst – in erster Linie schön zu sein!  
(Wilfried Seibicke, 1991, 29)

Girls' names are rather chosen because of their pleasingly sounding beauty, whereas names given to boys should more often imply a certain character and strength. Thus, the sound of a boy's name is likely to step behind in favor for reaching an anticipated severity in the name (Seibicke 1991, 56). Susanne Oelkers (2003, 36) supports this opinion by saying that different criteria in the selection of females' names in comparison to boys' names seem to exist. While girls tend to receive more innovative names with a closer connection to tonal beauty, males tend to receive shorter and more traditional names. In the German language area, girls generally receive more names deriving from other cultures, especially with Romanic origins (Seibicke 2008, 108).

Oelkers also mentions the use of diminutive suffixes which is an interesting topic regarding the German-Finnish context. The German diminutive suffix, usually ending in *-l*



(such as *Mimi, Anni, Tini* etc.), is a common ending for females and almost not used in male names, as it would most often imply a kind of infant character. However, there are existing Finnish male names with this ending (e.g. *Antti, Heikki, Juhani, Lauri, Matti, Sami*). It is anticipated that such male forenames would cause confusion amongst Germans.

Seibicke (1991: 104), Kiviniemi (1982, 185) and Oelkers (2003, 37) agree that the corpus of girls' names is greater; as one of the most favorite criteria for girls' names is individualization (see the latter chapter on changing naming motives). A possible explanation to this fact could be that women tend to change their last name during a lifetime, e.g. through marriage. They also find out that the naming fashion of girls' names passes faster than the one of boys' names. Alford (1988, 155) puts this observation together, claiming that "female names may occasionally function as verbal jewelry, emphasizing attractiveness".

Concluding, one might say that male names suggest a greater ability to classification in social contexts, while the more individualistic female names try to isolate from social contexts (Oelkers 2003, 40). Boys' names are preferred to be common and low-key, while female names can bear a little bit of eccentricity. As discovered in the previous paragraph, this development is present in Finland and Germany alike. However, the characteristics of male and female names in both cultures differ at times, as does the dispersion of multiple forenames, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

### **2.3 Multiple forenames**

Kiviniemi (2006, 14) states that individuals of all societies generally have one to four forenames, while in Finland, at least two forenames would be common (2006, 72). As Finnish first and latter forenames are chosen according to different criteria, Kiviniemi (1982, 180) considers a separate analysis of both as necessary, even though this is not done in parts of current research.

In Germany, the custom of giving multiple forenames got established in the beginning of the sixteenth century (Seibicke 1996, 1177). This tradition swept over to Finland by the end of the sixteenth century. By the year 2001, 63 per cent of all Finnish boys and 66 per cent of all Finnish girls had received a second name, 35,5 per cent of the males and 32 per cent females were given three forenames. The percentage of children receiving only one first name was between 1-2 per cent (Vilkuna 2005, 20).

Speaking about German naming practices, one can observe regional differences in

giving multiple forenames. In the Northern parts of the country, more than two thirds of all children only have one first name, whereas the distribution lays around two thirds in favor for multiple forenames in the Southern and more religious parts. It is also likely that parents tend to give fewer names in big towns with mainly Protestant-Lutheran population than elsewhere (Seibicke 1991, 53 et sqq.). Kiviniemi (1982, 183) also agrees that regional differences in bestowing multiple forenames are of greater importance in Germany than in Finland. Seibicke (2002, 70) states that multiple names were most common in Oberfranken, where 35 per cent of all children received only one first name. The other extreme was found north of the Hunsrück and the Westerwald, where more than 70 per cent received only one first name. The highest amount of giving one forename is reached in the New Laender. Here, the average of having one name is between 70-80 per cent, with Schönebeck/Elbe reaching the top with 90 per cent. Despite these trends, Seibicke thinks that the tradition of multiple forenames is not endangered. Giving three forenames in Germany was most common in the first half of the twentieth century and is of no greater importance anymore (Seibicke 1991, 54). Interestingly, the use of multiple names in 1911 was more common amongst illegitimate children than in the higher class (Seibicke, 1991, 57).

The reasons behind the variations between the geographical areas are generally unknown and only sparsely researched, but certain common features can be found (as e.g. attachment to religion and size of the town). The only distinct similarity between the geographic distributions is that providing children with one single name occurs more often in the naming of girls than boys (Seibicke 1991, 54).

According to Kiviniemi (2001, 219), the greatest distinction between Finnish first and latter forenames lies in their construction. Monosyllabic names are almost unexceptionally used as first names (Kiviniemi 2006, 108). Disyllabic names ending in vowels are commonly chosen as first names. Exceptions to this are only a few (*Alex, Hannes, Joonas, Niklas, Rasmus, Tuomas; Iris, Karin, Sigrid*). Trisyllabic and polysyllabic names serve as latter forenames. Exceptions to this rule are the so-called harder, and often very traditional disyllabic names, like (C)VVCVC (as in *Iiris* and *Maarit*), which tend to be used more for latter naming. Also a few new trisyllabic names deriving from other languages have recently been used as first names (e.g. *Janette, Janika, Janina, Janita, Jessica*). Since latter forenames are not as exposed to daily use as first names, their fashion cycles process slower (Kiviniemi 2006, 106).

Most Finnish naming compositions are aligned to the *viskurilaki*, a poetical rhythm also used in the Finnish national epos *Kalevala*. According to this rule, hard and heavy

syllables are placed in the end of the name construction. Referring to naming, shorter and lighter names would be used as first names in the beginning, while longer and stronger forenames are placed in the end. Whenever two forenames are used, the *viskurilaki* applies in 86 per cent of all cases, being even more common in the naming of boys. If three forenames are chosen, only 25 per cent of the names are chosen according to the rule, which leads to an average number of 75 per cent of all names. Whenever names are not constructed according to the suggestion, common naming combinations are 2+2+3 (as in *Anssi Tomi Juhani* or *Terhi Mari Annika*) or 3+2+3 (as in *Pauliina Hanna Helena* or *Johannes Erkki Ilmari*). In both combinations, the syllabic construction of first names is heavier than the one second forenames. If the first name is trisyllabic, the second forename is usually also trisyllabic with a strong syllabic cut (e.g. *Susanna Tuulikki*, *Johanna Kristiina*). The only exception to this custom is the commonly chosen *Maria*. Possible is also a heavy disyllabic name (*Johanna Maarit*), or, like recently popular 3+2+3 as in *Johanna Suvi Elisa* (Kiviniemi 2006, 111 et seq).

As seen in the previous chapter, the traditions in giving multiple forenames in Germany and Finland differ. The explanation lies in the German state, where regional differences and cultural attitudes about multiple forenames exist. The Finnish attitude towards latter forenames is more homogenous and the topic of latter forenames gets more scholar attention due to their established role in the country. The topic of naming tradition easily leads to the matter of naming beliefs, which is the focus of the next chapter.

## 2.4 Naming beliefs

Richard Alford (1988, 34) researched 60 different societies and their naming processes in his multicultural naming study. According to him, 60 per cent of all societies named their children between birth and the first nine days. Possible explanations for later naming are high infant mortality and superstitious belief. Adolf Bach collected such kind of beliefs in his work *Deutsche Namenskunde* (1953). In many nations and cultures, as Bach writes, the name of a person is identical to the essence of the human being. Knowing a person's name could either harm the name bearer or serve him (Bach 1953, 227). Unchristened newborns are most vulnerable to such harm, which is why the name of a child was to be kept secret until Baptizing. In many areas of Germany it was a custom to give unchristened children a temporary name to protect them from bad spirits, such as *Pfannenstielchen* for boys and

*Bohnenblättchen* for girls (Bach, 1953, 233). This tradition is also known in Finland, where names like *voileipä* or *pavunvarsi* were used. According to Finnish customs, one would not give away the name of an unchristened child, in order to prevent bad luck (Kiviniemi, 1982, 30). Also beautiful names would attract bad spirits, which is why Bavarians used to call their infants depreciating names such as *Schwein* or *Bengel* until they were adults (Bach 1953, 233, Alford 1988, 34). In an opposing argument, Zabeeh (1968, 67) writes that magical beliefs would prevent parents from giving bad names. They would seldom give neutral names and almost exclusively good names.

As seen from these examples, naming beliefs have been of importance in Germany and Finland. Even though such beliefs are no longer widespread in both cultures, they still form the basis of recent naming traditions. From beliefs I will now move to the concrete motives in naming.

## 2.5 Naming motives

Many efforts have been made in the scientific field to categorize naming motives in an attractive and accessible manner. However, it has to be added that despite the best attempts of accurately structuring motives, they are far more confused in the real naming process. Whether genuine naming criteria can be traced back with the help of categories, is a highly discussed topic. In the end, it is likely that some sort of unexplained motives are left out and keep hidden in the backs of the parents' minds.

In the following, a comparison of Kiviniemi's (2006) and Seibicke's (1991) systematics of the most common motives in naming is presented. The differences between both models shall be discussed below.

<b>Kiviniemi</b>	<b>Seibicke</b>
Kin-related naming	Sound of a name
Living role models aside from kin relations	Derivation of a name
Historical and literary role models	Denotation of a name
Religious role models	Role model names
Denotation of a name	Kin-related naming
Naming related to the circumstances of birth	Naming customs
Systematic naming and peculiar motives	
Practical reasons	

Liking of a name	
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Table 2: Naming motives according to Kiviniemi (2006) and Seibicke (1991)

Both systematics have common features, even though distinctive attributes can be found. So is *sound of a name* (Seibicke) included in Kiviniemi's *liking of a name*, while *derivation of a name* is missing in Kiviniemi's systematic completely. Seibicke summarizes Kiviniemi's motives of *living role models*, *historical role models* and *religious role models* under the general criterion of *role model names*. He also sums up *systematic naming* and *naming related to birth* under the motive of *naming customs*. The topic of *practical reasons* can be found in different categories of Seibicke. Agreeing with the work of Harma Järvinen (2001, 18), the criterion tends to be vague. Depending on the concrete motives in question, I would compare them to Seibicke's *sound of a name*, *derivation*, as well as *naming customs*.

Vilkuna (2002, 21) distinguishes six distinct motives of Finnish naming. For a matter of comparison and with regard to my binational study, I would like them to be represented here. They, too, vary from Seibicke and Kiviniemi's models, but seem to display recent naming motives of parents authentically:

1. Internationalism (*Anna, Laura, Sofia, Paul*)
2. Finnishness (*Lumi, Pihla, Suvi, Tuisku*)
3. Individualism
4. Commonness
5. Old Finnish names in colloquial speech (*Emma, Alekski, Teemu, Eetu*)
6. Colloquial names as official names (*Pertsu, Jaska, Pete, Mimmu*)

Seibicke further distinguishes between *free* and *bound* naming. In the first case, choice is limited by family traditions and naming customs. This is e.g. the case when naming a child after his godfather or through other family ties. It also occurs in automatic naming systems, e.g. according to the day of birth (see Kiviniemi's model). The free choice includes inherited naming in the family, but without its strict traditions. There might be an option of choosing a kin-related; however, parents would not feel obliged to do so (Seibicke 2008: 114 et sqq.). In the free naming process (Seibicke 1996, 1178), parents have the power to choose their child's name from the large naming corpus of the world's languages, as well as be admitted to create new names themselves (within the regulations of the naming law). Concluding, Seibicke (1996, 1208) recognizes a transition from bound to free naming over the past centuries.

One of the commonly most mentioned attributes in naming is the liking of the name (cp. the naming models in table 2). Stanley Lieberman (2000, 26) argues in his study about

naming and fashion, “how often do parents select a name that they flatly dislike?” With saying that, he is trying to transmit that the attribute of liking a name is rather arbitrary and not concrete. Within the free naming choice (see Seibicke), parents choose their likable name from a collection of thousands. However, it would be interesting to find out, what exactly parents liked about the given name.

Following, I will have a closer look at some of the most common naming motives and trends in current naming procedures.

### 2.5.1 The sound of a name

Choosing the name according to its sound is a free naming practice. During the past couple of decades, the sound of a name has been, with the decrease of kin-related naming and bound naming in general, the most important reason for selecting a name.

Der Trieb, sein Kind durch einen wohlklingenden Namen [...] zu adeln, ist löblich, und diese Verknuepfung einer eingebildeten Welt mit der Wirklichkeit verbreitet ueber das ganze Leben der Person einen anmutigen Schimmer.  
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

In addition to the solemn sound of the name, forenames and the last name should fit together (Seibicke 1991, 30; Kiviniemi 1982, 163 et sqq.). One example of customizing a forename to its last name is to make use of alliterating names, such as *Heinrich Heine*, *Herman Hesse* or *Bettina Bretano*. Choosing alliterated names like *Heikki Heikkilä* or *Tiia Tuusula* is also a popular custom in Finland and accounts in 6 per cent of all given names as a selection criterion (Kiviniemi, 1982, 159).

On the other side, Germans try to avoid repeating vowels in first and last name (e.g. *Kurt Unruh*, *Heinrich Weinreich*). They also obtain from using the final sound of a forename as the initial sound of the last name (e.g. *Kurt Trautmann*, *Karl Lange*) in order to prevent confusion between the border of both names. Another more general criterion for a name’s sound is its rhythm. Generally speaking one could say that a short German last name fits with a long first name and the other way round (Seibicke, 1991, 30/31).

Finnish first names usually tend to have few front vowels (with *e* and *i* being neutral vowels). Exceptions are still found, as e.g. *Yrjö*, *Yrjänä* or *Lyly* (Kiviniemi 1982, 153 et sqq.). Thus, a name comprised of dark vowels (*a*, *o*, *u*) and voiced consonants like *l* or *m* would make an excellent female first name. Male first names would be served with voiceless

consonants.

A good number of traditional Finnish names are meaningless and purely form a sound construct. In these cases, such as in *Aira*, *Eija*, *Leila*, *Raija*, *Raila*, *Rauno*, *Reija* or *Saija*, the criteria of sound would be the first motive (Vilkuna 2002, 10).

The most discussed letter in Finnish naming is *r*. Its appearance in Finnish forenames is much higher than in the remaining vocabulary of the language. This leads to the conclusion, that *r* is especially popular, as it gets associated with *activeness*, *strength* and *courage*. On the other hand there are many name givers, who avoid *r*, because of its attributes and potential problems of pronunciation (Kiviniemi 1982, 160). It is expected that the sound would also be a matter of discussion amongst the parents of this study.

### 2.5.2 The derivation of a name

In today's naming customs, the sound of a name is of greater importance than its derivation. Most of the names used in Germany have Christian-antique origins; furthermore French, English and Nordic names are used. The Finnish naming corpus consists of very old traditional Finnish names on the one side and newly imported names deriving from Christian background as well as from other countries (Vilkuna 2002, 8; Kiviniemi 2006, 262) on the other side. When comparing the German and Finnish name stock, one can recognize a higher number of traditional and native names used in Finland.

Important in the question of derivation is that the forename also fit its last name stylistically. A foreign forename would not fit a typical German last name (e.g. as in *Camillo Hinterhuber*), and would be considered as a change in style (Seibicke, 1991, 33).

Seibicke (1991) cautions about choosing foreign names too freely, if no further connections to the country of the name's origin are existent (e.g. one parent coming from another culture). It might lead to bad consequences for the child. He also advises to be familiar with the correct pronunciation of the foreign name so as to avoid confusion and embarrassment, as well as suggests informing oneself about the connotations of the name.

Kiviniemi (1982) points out that it is necessary to adapt a foreign name to the standards of the host society, to keep and fulfill the necessary requirements of a name such as informational value, the possibility of having a nick name and the forename's legal requirements. He also says that it might be good to have an internationally known name in a globalizing world of our kind (Kiviniemi 2006, 283). Kiviniemi is not concerned about new

names entering the Finnish vocabulary. He considers them as an enrichment of the Finnish language, rather than as a danger for the traditional Finnish names (2006, 283).

According to Koss (2002, 139), it is especially young parents that are open to adapting foreign names for their children. Respectively, the usage of traditional or regional names decreased, which will be discussed more in detail in a later chapter on changing naming motives.

### 2.5.3 The meaning of a name

It is commonly agreed that names are no longer chosen according to their connotation, but because of their sound. This is valid for the common trends in naming. However, the importance of a name's meaning increases as soon as the educational level of the parents' advances (Seibicke, 1991, 35). In Finland, the meaning of a name used to be the most important motive. Even though it still has a big effect on choice, only 5 per cent of all parents declare it to be the most decisive attribute in selecting a name (Kiviniemi 1982, 12).

Stepping into the topic of a name's meaning deeper easily leads to the matter of naming beliefs. Names used to be chosen according to their denotation, in order to transmit wishes for the child's future life and identity (such as the old German names *Lebe recht!*, *Fuerchte Gott!*, or the Finnish names *Onni* and *Armas*). Amongst the traditional Finnish forenames, the number of content-rich, ideological and emotional names are high (e.g. *Aatos*, *Jalo*, *Lahja*, *Lempi*, *Onni*, *Rauha*). Other names would describe family constructions (such as *Sisko*, *Veli*, *Pääte* and *Viime*). Furthermore, forenames deriving from the national epos *Kalevala* (e.g. *Aino*, *Jouko*, *Kauko*, *Osmo*, *Sampsä*, *Tapio*, *Vellamo*) bear ideological value and link the child distinctively to the Finnish cultural heritage (Vilkuna 2002, 13).

Seibicke (1991, 36) and Kiviniemi (1982, 12) are concerned that meaningful names might easily lead to obligations of the name bearer. However, every parent is free to choose a name with good intentions, even though in most cases of recent naming, denotation is rather additional information than core of a name.

### 2.5.4 Role model names

Role model names are referred as names, which do not derive from kin. Role model names are most commonly godfathers' names, as well as names of saints according to Christian



traditions. This custom is of no significant importance in Finland and occurs in only 1 per cent of all naming decisions (Kiviniemi 1982, 135). Seibicke (1991, 39) writes that this naming motive is strongly comparable to the sound of a name, since in both cases the emotional detachment to the name is high (either to the person bearing the name or to the sound itself).

Role model names used to be politically influenced, and the strong decline of the name Adolf after the 1940s is a representative example of it. These names might also be influenced by literature and the arts. According to Koss (2002, 141), role model naming from politics and literature occurs more often in the higher educated classes. However, the initial contact does not usually serve as the means of distribution, which would lead to an increasing popularity of the name. This happens within the population itself. So, for some people the name *Selma* has derived from Macpherson's *Ossian*, but its popularity has however spread indirectly via distribution, which has made less and less parents choose the name because of the Scottish poet. The popularity of certain artists, politicians or literature in influencing the naming fashion is commonly overestimated (Seibicke, 1991, 42). The only fashionable name in Germany, which could directly be referred to its role model, was *Kevin*. *Kevin*'s popularity derived from the English footballer Kevin Keagan, who played in the Hamburger SV in the late 1970s. The popularity of Kevin Costner, the Kevin-movies and tennis player Marc-Kevin Goellner might have also influenced the name's dispersion. Vilkkuna (2002, 10) mentions examples of Finnish names, which spread because of their literary role models. The name *Olavi* for instance reappeared in the favorite lists after Johannes Linnakoski's *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta*, and *Arja*, *Pirkka* and *Ylermi* became popular after Eino Leino's anthology *Helkavirsi*.

Another common practice is role-modeling of a different kind – searching for the role models amongst other children. This practice is not common amongst highly educated parents, who strive for individualistic names, but it seems to include the wish that the own child might be as nice, cute, pretty as the namesake (Seibicke 1991, 44). In Finland, this kind of practice was practiced a lot, but occurs today only in 3 per cent of all decisions (Kiviniemi 1982, 137).

Seibicke (1991, 44) recognizes a certain danger in using the role model naming practice, namely the self-portraying of the parents, who might be more concerned with thinking about themselves than the future of their child. He concludes with the following words:

Letzten Endes muss und wird sich das Kind im Laufe des Lebens seine Vorbilder – unabhängig von der Namensuebereinstimmung – selbst suchen. Diese Freiheit sollte ihm unbenommen sein; ein eindeutig festgelegtes Namensvorbild ist da nur lästig.

From the topic of role model names I will move to a similar topic of this kind, which is naming related to kin.

### 2.5.5 Kin-related naming

As well as their power to symbolize social connection, names provide a potential set of tools with which family relationships can be constituted and managed.  
(Finch, 2008, 713)

In 42 per cent of all societies researched in Alford's study (1988, 75), the meaning of sharing a name with another individual could be traced back to a special relationship to the original name bearer (e.g. kin, godfather) or should recall the memory of a deceased ancestor.

The selection of children's names is therefore one way in which parents can choose to confirm and reinforce the particularity of those kin relationships which are important to them.  
(Finch 2008, 720)

This is especially the case when the person after which a child is named after has passed away already. Through keeping up the name of the deceased person, the memory of the beloved shall be kept alive.

In passing on one of their names, parents seem to express a desire to establish a connection between themselves and their children and to maintain family traditions.  
(Gerhards/Hackenbroch 2000, 505)

In their study and Gerhards' research in 2003 about the naming procedures in two German small towns (one Lutheran, one Catholic) over the period from 1894 to 1994, it became clear that passing on the parents' names had continuously decreased (from 23,5% in 1890 to 3,5% in 1994). The authors justify this development with the decreasing importance of the family as an economical unit and the increasing importance of the individual. With that motive, they refer to religiously motivated customs like the naming after a patron or godfather. Wherever the naming after godfathers decreased, one could similarly recognize a decline of giving multiple names to a child. The reasons for granting multiple names diminished and only one name is chosen for the child. Koss (2002, 131) presents a different number in kin-related naming. According to him, family traditions were a decisive practice in naming in 9 per cent of all cases in 1999.

The kin-related naming is especially popular amongst the naming of boys. It is also

said that kin-related naming would decrease with the number of children (Oelkers 2003, 36; Alford 1988, 134; Kiviniemi 1982, 129 et sqq.). A possible explanation to that might be that it is especially important for the first-born son to express and maintain family prestige. A second reason might be that parents run out of important family names to be passed on (Alford 1988, 135). Debus (1997, 728) explains this fact with keeping the males' role as son and heir – as the person, who is in patriarch cultures traditionally supposed to maintain the family and whose role is to secure the family's continuity. This might happen consciously or subconsciously (Alford 1988, 154).

Seibicke (1991, 46 et sqq.) reveals that kin-related naming differentiates the various classes. While in only 25 per cent of German working class families, kin-related naming is common, it is seen in 46 per cent of families with an academic background. Seibicke also found out that working class families are more likely to use the parents' (most commonly: father's) name, while in higher educated families, it is the grandparents' names, which are inherited from one generation to the other (55%).

Vilkuna (2002, 22) writes that Finnish parents would avoid their own generation's names, as they would tend to sound too old for their children. Instead, they would opt for the grandparent's names, which would sound fresh again and suitable. Also Alford's study (1988, 135) reveals that 12,5 per cent of all middle names are received from the grandparents, thus making it the highest number of all kin-related naming. Kiviniemi (2001, 217) supports this opinion on the situation in Finland.

An exception to this observation is the considerably new trend of patronymics and matronyms in Finland, which were common up to the mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Paikkala 1997). Between 1980 and 2000, latter forenames in the type of *Matintytär* (Matti's daughter) or *Jussinpoika* (Jussi's son) increased in popularity. The name *Matinpoika* (Matti's son) for instance was given 116 times between 2000 and 2009, whereas it was selected less than 15 times between 1900 and 1960 (Finnish Name Service 2011).

According to Seibicke (1991, 47), a common feature of kin-related naming is the use of leading names, in which one traditional name is inherited from one generation to another (e.g. grandfather: *Walter Johannes*; father: *Bernd Johannes*; son: *Stefan Johannes*). Kin-related naming does not mean that the names would not be adjusted to the common naming fashion. In this case, *Erich* might be passed on as *Erik* or *Eric*, *Heinrich* as *Hendrik*, *Fredriikka* as *Riikka*, *Vilhelmiina* as *Minna* or *Elisabeth* as *Eliisa* (Seibicke 1991, 47; Kiviniemi, 1982, 134). In Scandinavia it is also not uncommon to use the names of deceased children, which might be a taboo in other societies (Kiviniemi, 1982, 133). Also the use of

alliterations and other naming systems is common amongst kin-related naming and occurs in 13 per cent of the cases (Kiviniemi 2006, 134). Names in one family might be chosen to have a common first letter or even first syllable, or they might rhyme.

Alford (1988, 131), building upon a study by Alice S. Rossi from 1965, concludes that 70 per cent of the boys received at least one name from a relative, while the same occurred to only 52 per cent of the girls. Girls were more likely to be named after friends and neighbors, while boys received kin-related names. Alford and Rossi suggest that girl's names should have aesthetic value; boys' names should possess cultural value and thus confirm the previously mentioned differences in naming gender.

Kin-related names are most commonly bestowed as middle names. Alford (1988, 135) speculates that in doing so, the child's name would produce the intended benefits (honor, symbolic, encouragement) in the middle name, while exercising their aesthetic preferences in the first name.

Even though kin-related naming decreased as a selection motive for forenames during the last century in Finland, it is still popular (Kiviniemi 2006, 129 et sqq.) and was reported to be the main motive in 40 per cent of all cases between 1970-2004.

#### 2.5.6 Naming customs & special naming traditions

This category describes customs such as the naming after godfathers and other religious traditions, like naming according to the day of birth. In comparison to the role model names, naming customs belong to the bonded naming. Seibicke (1991, 51) states the decrease of naming customs in Germany, which is directly connected to the changing custom of giving only one first name: as naming customs become insignificant, reasons for selecting multiple forenames diminish. Koss (2002, 130) agrees with this statement and connects it to the changing customs in Christening. The initial naming of the child and the Christening are not necessarily connected anymore, and one could find the tendency of christening the child at some later point of time or to leave it out completely. These naming customs are in Finland relatively unimportant. According to Kiviniemi (1982, 158), only 4 per cent of all families chose their names according to this bound version of naming. He further disagrees with the common German opinion that such customs would mechanize the naming process. For Kiviniemi, the meaning can be the opposite and this naming method could be recognized as especially holy and pure, because of the fact that the naming process is not manipulable, which might lead to certain spiritual connections between the child and its godfather or its

time of birth.

A Finnish saying goes that the child becomes half of its name and 1/6 of its godfather (Kiviniemi 1982, 165), which might explain the strong tradition of the Christian godfather in Finland.

In this chapter, the most common motives in naming were presented. It became clear that naming a child is always also connected with reflecting on the parent's own personal history, their likings and personality. It also showed that naming takes place in a societal frame, whether it is a family, social group or culture. Moreover, it is attached to a temporal frame, which then, through the course of time, might change. The following two chapters will deal with such change of naming motives from different perspectives. In the next chapter, I will focus on the matter of fashion and current favorite names in Finland and Germany, while in chapter 2.7, I will write about changing naming motives over the past decades.

## **2.6 Naming fashions**

Stanley Lieberon (2000, 23) analyzed the coherence between naming processes and taste, and thus adds a sociological value to this matter. He considers contemporary changes in forenames to be a form of collective behavior. However, unlike many other fashions, parents give their newborn children a lifetime association. Lieberon (2000, 29 et sqq.) constitutes three influences to the changing of taste: external, internal and idiosyncratic historical developments. But fashion, so Lieberon, is not applicable to aesthetic preferences that never change. Instead, it is defined by a quantitative attribute, and can thus only occur in free naming (see Seibicke). Seibicke (2002, 144) and Kiviniemi (1982, 20) also regard fashion as a form of collective behavior, which establishes dependency between actions – individuals are not acting independently. Lieberon (2000, 36) found out that the rapidity with which leading names are replaced was decreasing in the past hundreds of years, with girls' names having a greater turnover than boys. Seibicke (2002) (see also Kiviniemi 2006 for more information on the situation in Finland) redeems the power of this argument with the fact that the given top names in Germany are used by merely 2,5-4,5 per cent of all children, which makes the big fashionable changes occur in a different light. Fact is that due to the individualization of names, the amount of top names steadily grows smaller and smaller. Lieberon (2000, 43) argues that urbanization, the dispersion of literacy, as well as to a certain extent, mass media have had a great influence on this development, as both increase the exposure to a greater

variety of tastes. Additionally, the decline of the importance of the extended family is seen as another cause, which led to freer decision-making in naming, and the decline of valuing the elder (Liebersson 2000, 67). The general assumption of the high importance of mass media in transmitting naming fashions could not be verified. The opposite might occur and very famous names might never make it into the top ten lists (Seibicke 2003, Liebersson 2000). However, as Seibicke, Liebersson and Kiviniemi agree, media can serve as a first contact with formerly unknown names. This is how the Finnish names *Pirkko* (after Pirkko Manola) and *Ronja* (after Astrid Lindgren's fictional character) found their way into the German naming corpus (Seibicke 2002, 113). In Finland, *Tiina* became famous after the *Tiina*-books starting from 1956. Also Kiviniemi (2006, 213) does not give great value to the mass media as an influence in naming. Even though formerly uncommon names might spread more easily, much depends on the name and its suitability to the current time itself. Kiviniemi (1982, 170) also admits that the social taste of parents and fashion are of far much greater importance than commonly assumed because of their indirect and often unrecognized influences. However, the final naming procedures show great accuracy of shared taste amongst parents. In this respect, Liebersson (2003) points out that name fashion changes much more rapidly than the actual tastes that would lead to the distribution of popularity.

The popularity distribution, in effect, has a certain permanent quality in the short run – even though there is an enormous turnover in the names themselves.  
(Liebersson 2003, 158)

This is explainable with the fact that parents might still like or be in favor of a particular name, but would not choose it anymore due to its increasing popularity, fashion, or decreasing popularity, depending on their personal naming preference. Names are thus chosen dependently from other parents' naming decisions.

In his research about naming fashions, Eero Kiviniemi (2001, 215) distinguishes *traditional* and *new* names. He refers to traditional names, if names were already common in the parents' generation at least. Whenever this is not the case, Kiviniemi refers to new names. According to his observations, the fluctuation of traditional names is faster than the one of new names, with an upcoming fashion happening generally faster than its decline. Kiviniemi (2001, 221) pays great attention to the distribution of first and latter forenames. In the case of *Anneli*, which was the third most common female name of the twentieth century, he states clearly that it served as a first name only in 5 per cent of all cases. Paying special attention to the fashion development of first and latter forenames is worth noticing in Finland. Cycles of

latter forenames are comparable to the one of first names; however, latter forenames' cycles usually take longer. Generally speaking, a short full cycle would last from ten to forty years, while a longer cycle might take sixty years or longer (Kiviniemi, 2001, 228). In some cases, like in the recent *Emma*, the cycle took more than hundred years. Kiviniemi (1982, 202) also mentions that naming fashions would affect names of a similar kind (e.g. *Maija, Raija, Saija*).

Vilkuna (2005, 29) and Kiviniemi (2001, 216) disagree in their opinion about the importance of regional differences of naming in Finland. While Vilkuna notes that Finnish naming fashions mostly start in Uusimaa and would spread over the country, Kiviniemi writes that such differences would even out and are generally of no greater importance. Taking a closer look at this matter, the situation shows exceptions and regional differences in naming. When comparing the ten most popular names in Järvenpää, Kerava and Tuusula of the year 1999, some of the names in one place were not reproduced in the other one at all. The national top list straightens such sensations easily, so Kiviniemi (2006, 70 et sqq.). He suggests that when having a national survey about the most beautiful forename (here speaking about the topic of taste), the results would vary highly according to different age groups.

In 2001 (Seibicke, 2002) there was still a difference in the most common names regarding the New Laender and Old Laender of Germany. Hereby it needs to be mentioned that the conformity of girls' names was higher than the one of boy's names (Table 3).

Old Laender (boys)	New Laender (boys)	Old Laender (girls)	New Laender (girls)
Leon	Paul	Marie	Sophie
Alexander	Lukas	Sophie	Marie
Maximilian	Leon	Maria	Anna, -e
Lukas	Max	Anna, -e	Michelle
Jan	Maximilian	Laura	Laura

Table 3: The most favourite first names in 2001 (Seibicke: 2002, 111)

In order to gain a better understanding of current Finnish and German naming fashions, table 4 offers a comparison of the most popular Finnish and German forenames of the 2000s (2000-2009). The numbers were put together with the help of the Finnish Name Service and an unofficial German page on forenames (Beliebte Vornamen, 2010). Even though it does not become clear from the current list, Anna is the all-time favorite name in Finland (Kiviniemi, 2006, 17).

<b>Finnish boys</b>	<b>German boys</b>	<b>Finnish girls</b>	<b>German girls</b>
Juhani	Lucas/Lukas	Maria	Anna
Mikael	Leon	Emilia	Hannah/Hanna
Johannes	Tim/Timm	Sofia	Lea/Leah
Matias	Luka/Luka	Katariina	Leonie
Oskari	Finn/Fynn	Olivia	Lena
Olavi	Jonas	Aino	Lara
Aleksi	Jan	Johanna	Laura
Valtteri	Niclas/Niklas	Julia	Sarah/Sara
Kristian	Felix	Amanda	Marie
Elias	Paul	Eveliina	Emily/Emilie

Table 4: Top names in Germany and Finland (2000-2009)

After having gained an understanding about naming fashions and current popular names in Finland and Germany, I will move on to discuss the topic of whether or not the motives in naming have changed over the past decades.

## **2.7 Changing naming motives**

Are naming motives indeed changing? Despite the scholarly debate about cycling naming fashions, Seibicke (2008, 114) states that the most popular naming criterion in Germany has not changed over the past 200 years. With the most favorite statement that *The name should be beautiful and sounding*, a second favorite got added, which is *The name should not be (too) common*. However, when having a deeper look at the matter and returning to subjects discussed earlier in the theoretical background, two trends can be distinguished – the decline of the religious role models for naming and the increase of individual and unique names. This shall be discussed in this sub-chapter.

### **2.7.1 Religious names**

Gerhards and Hackenbroch (2000, 510) showed a decreasing importance of religion as a motive of naming in Germany. The percentage of given Christian names in the catholic town of their study dropped from 69 per cent in 1884 to 28 per cent in 1994.

Wolffsohn and Brechenmacher (1999, 269), who researched the naming in Munich and in the former German Democratic Republic, also recognized a decline of traditionally



Germanic forenames (1950: 35%; 1990: 5%). The same was observed for religious names. Even though the names *Maria* and *Anna* reached new peaks in the last years, one has to admit that both have lost their religious connotation over the past decades and have moved from formerly religious names to fashion or modern names (see also Koss 2002, 130). The same refers to originally Hebraic names, such as *Sarah*, *Lea*, *Aaron*, *Manuel* or *Dan*. They made their way into the corpus of modern names. Moreover, Wolffsohn and Brechenmacher discovered an increase of international names of English, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian or Slavic origin in Munich from 10 per cent (1890) to 22 per cent (1990). Together with originally Hebraic names, the amount of foreign names in 1990 in Munich summed up to 35 per cent.

Lieberson (2000) studied the connection between the use of biblical names and practiced Christianity and researched this cohesion in the United States, England and Wales. He came to the conclusion that an increase in the use of such names occurred after the numbers in church attendance started to decrease (mid 1950's in the U.S.). Similarly, the numbers of biblical names increased after the number of church members dropped in the mid 1950's in England and Wales. Concluding, he interprets the greater usage of biblical names as fashion development, rather than as reflection of religious changes (Lieberson, 2000, 106). The names were given unrelated to the parents' religious intensity. Moreover, also parents, who are not involved in Christianity at all, started using names with solid biblical association. Thus, he argues, taste (in naming) changes also in the absence of social changes.

These examples show that the motive of religious naming decreased, while some formerly religiously bound names made their way into the common naming stock and thus become available to a greater public.

### 2.7.2 Individualization

A forename is commonly defined as the person's individual referrer. As noted earlier, research shows that this individuality has been becoming increasingly more important in the past decades. However, Alford (1988, 154) states that "studies have found that common (i.e. average) names are perceived as better, stronger, more active, and more desirable than unusual names" referring to the study of McDavid and Harari (1973). I will gather some more data on this subject in the following paragraphs.

As illustrated in the previous chapter on the situation of religious names Wolffsohn and Brechenmacher (1999) concluded that traditional names are declining. Simultaneously,

the variety and internationality of forenames increased over the past decades. The German forenames of the 1990s show more individuality but also more autonomy within the limits of the naming fashions. Gerhards and Hackenbroch (1997, 128) agree with this observation. They noted a rise in newly introduced names (1889: 3,9%, 1994: 14,0%) and refer it to the proceeding individualization of forenames. They also observed an increased usage of non-German and non-Christian names, which is connected to the ongoing globalization (1894: 25%, 1994: 65%).

Koss (2002) states (relating to Gerhards/Hackenbroch 1997), that innovative names are more likely to occur in the educated classes, from where they slowly are adapted by the lower classes. Though, how much the matter of class fluctuation is relevant in Germany is questionable (Debus 1996, 1733).

Koss went further into the topic of individuality and recognized six distinctive desires of parents, who are in search for an individual or unique name (2002, 131):

1. Wish for unique names (one or two forenames)
  - a. Girls: *Fritzi-Bo, Sammy-Joy, Adina Jana, Chelsea Luanne*
  - b. Boys: *Yoni Cyrus, Luca Tabio, Aaron Julius, Ricky Michael*
2. Wish for unique spelling
  - a. Simplification: *Dastin* pro *Dustin*, *Megs* pro *Max*
  - b. Different spelling: *Kjara* pro *Chiara*, *Maximillian* pro *Maximilian*
3. Wish for neologisms
  - a. Girls: *Derona, Dinendra, Jadine*
  - b. Boys: *Garion, Leonik*
4. Wish for changed sex
  - a. Boys' names for girls: *Gimmy, Joe, Mao, Mitja*
  - b. Girls' names for boys: *Nomi, Venus*
5. Wish for appellatives
  - a. Girls: *Moon, September*
  - b. Boys: *Cordes, Rheingold*
6. Wish for euphony and alliteration
  - a. Girls: *m/l* as initial sound plus *-a/-i-*
  - b. Boys: Initial sound is *j*

Since the introduction of the Finnish Names Act in 1946, a steady rise of unique and individual names could be observed in Finland, almost doubling the amount of individual names to approximately 3000 boys' and 4000 girls' names per year in the beginning of the

2000s (Kiviniemi 2006, 32 et sq). Kiviniemi argues that parents might tend to choose individual names in order to make the child freer, without being bound to old name sakes and expectations (Kiviniemi, 2006, 65). At the same time he states (2006, 156) that especially the most common spellings of a name turn out to be the least problematic ones when dealing with the name on a daily basis. Not everyone wants to be a *Mico-seellä* (Mico-with-c) until the end of his days. Kiviniemi thus advises parents not to be too innovative when selecting a forename for their child.

Giving a more individual name also leads to the danger of not having a name day, which is popular in Finland. In the beginning of the 2000s, more than 4000 individual names got chosen, with almost 60 per cent of them being used just once. The current Almanac, which gets regularly updated with common and fashionable names, includes only 795 names. In the twentieth century, approximately 90 per cent of all Finns could find their name in the calendar. Kiviniemi (2006, 162) recognizes a decrease of persons having a name day and calculated that of all children born between 2000 and 2004, 87 per cent of boys and 81 per cent of girls would have a name day. Again, here the discrepancy between female and male individuality can be perceived, with girls having generally more rare names than boys.

There is evidence that naming motives are slowly shifting, as religion becomes of less importance in the populations' everyday life and as the aim for individuality increases. On the other hand, as seen in the current top lists of Finnish and German names, the naming cycles bring back traditional names (e.g. *Aino*, *Emma* in 2011) into common use. However, the number of parents choosing the same name decreases with the increase of individuality in naming and shows thus a misaligned picture of the societies. Another topic of discussion is how such traditional or new names are perceived by others, which is the subject of the next chapter. Touching the question, whether *nomen est omen*, it will shed light on to what degree personal names can and should affect lives.

## **2.8 Names, personal identity & prejudice**

The pressure of choosing the right name for a child is high for parents-to-be. Too much was heard about disapproving names, too many bad associations the parents are having themselves from past experience. Choosing the right name also asks the question – “How do I want my child to be like?”, “What would other people think of it?” and “What should they think about it?” A lot of research was conducted about the reception of forenames and their influence on a

person's identity. A few examples of the topic shall be collected here.

Denn der Eigenname eines Menschen ist nicht etwa wie ein Mantel, sondern ein vollkommen passendes Kleid, ja die Haut selbst ihm ueber und ueber angewachsen, an der man nicht schaben und schinden darf, ohne sich selbst zu verletzen.  
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

Adolf Bach (1953, 235 et sqq.) collected beliefs about the connection between personal names and the bearer's identity. Children's self-confidence originates partly in their name, because the name is regarded as an essential part of one's self, so Bach. Most often, he continues, name bearers would try to live up to their names. Alford (1988, 51) agrees in his work. The question: "Who are you?" would almost exclusively lead to a recital of the person's name. This leads to the observation that the personal name forms an important part of an individual's identity. Kiviniemi (2006, 14) says that the individual and its name are so associated that it understandably becomes a part of a person's identity. Also Seibicke (2008) writes that a child identifies itself with his name long before the consciousness of self is fully developed, and makes it thus to a central point of finding one's self. As the relationship between one's name and one's self is so close, name-teasing is often seen as very hurtful.

Also other people judge individuals according to their names, depending on their own cultural background and personal experiences. This topic has been continuously researched in modern times as well, for example amongst teachers or employers and their reactions to students with names deriving from various social classes (Karriere.de 2009, Karrierebibel.de 2008). Reinhard Krien devoted an extended research to this topic in his *Namensphysiognomik*. According to his work, there is a correlation between extraordinary names and abnormal behavior and/or mental diseases of the name bearers. In his portrait test, he researched the prejudice of names from the unknown observer. On the contrary Friedrich Debus (1996, 1732) claims that social class is not indicated in names anymore. The greater measurements are income, education and profession. Also Seibicke (1982, 154) agrees on this fact, saying that classification like *name X = class i* can be problematic. Class-related naming might occur, but cannot be proven on a steady basis.

Iwar Werlen (1996, 1742) declares names to be social facts, but disagrees with Krien's study, since the judgments of names in the various tests are noncompliant. However he confirms that names in their function as social facts do get evaluated from a specific social class or group in the same way, since they rely on similar social resources of knowledge. This bears the danger of leading to prejudice. Edwin D. Lawson (1996, 1744) agrees with this in

his study about personal name stereotypes, that the physiognomy of a name plays an important role in how a name is perceived. According to his study, religious names imbue with positive qualities. His study researching US teachers came to the result that desirable names received higher grades in essays. Multiple other U.S. studies support this phenomenon (e.g. McDavid and Harari (1973), Nelson (1977), Marcus (1976)), suggesting that people tend to associate more or less specific images with most names. Lieberson (2003) states that almost all names have images attached to them.

Of significance here is the link between the images of a name and class differences in the disposition to use that name. [...] Classes may share a common symbolic association with a name but differ in how attractive they find that symbol for a child's name.  
(Lieberson 2003, 139)

A wide-spread German example is the use of forenames such as *Kevin*, *Denise* or *Jennifer*, which are popular in lower educated classes and arouse images about educationally deprived and badly behaving children in the higher classes.

Kiviniemi (1982, 18) writes about the associations that a forename might evoke. They could be introduced according to the example of the name *Johannes*:

Juho – old-fashioned and valuable  
Juhani – traditionally Finnish  
Janne – laid-back  
Jukka – homely  
Joni – young and fashionable

He further concludes that such associations could be common amongst different parameters, such as people that would commonly share a region, nation, generation or class.

However, even with prejudice about names being existent does not mean that this attitude cannot change. It is possible that with the increasing liking of a person, a formerly less valued name becomes beautiful (Seibicke, 2008, 82).

Also Kiviniemi (2006, 147) is positive about naming beliefs. Instead of holding onto the saying *nomen est omen*, he states that “jos ei nimi tee ihmistä, niin ihmisen on tehtävä nimi eli leimattava se omilla tekemisillään myönteisesti” and thus reminding the individual about his personal responsibility of shaping the impression of his name in a positive way.

Research proved that most people have conscious or subconscious images about personal names, which can be advantageous or unfavorable for the name bearer. But how are such images shaped in another language? The next chapter will focus on naming processes in multinational surroundings and the consequential opportunities for and responsibilities of

parents.

## 2.9 Multinational naming processes and parenthood

In two thirds of the 60 societies that Alford (1988, 49) researched, the parents serve as name givers. For the Finnish and German society, this statement sounds obvious, but remembering that naming is not solemnly the task of parents in all societies of the world, puts additional focus on the mothers and fathers of this research. This chapter will follow up on this idea and link the naming-decision to a multinational environment.

Tania Zittoun (2004, 134 et sqq.) discussed the development of parents-to-be during the process of the pregnancy. She compared pregnancy and upcoming parenthood to a stage of transition, and identified three types of change. The first change would occur in gaining new social, practical and theoretical skills about the new position that would allow the person to act, communicate and behave according to the changed state. In the second stage one would redefine the person's personal identity, thereby rethink and reconstruct representations of oneself in the past and of possible selves in the future within the new socio-cultural location. Finally, one would build up one self's personal meaning of the transition and its components. The transition to parenthood indeed involves skill acquisitions, identity changes and meaning construction, and has emotional and unconscious prolongations. Zittoun (2004, 140) states that: "A developmental outcome of the transition to parenthood involves constructing a representation of the child to come, in the future, and of oneself as the parent of that child." and further concludes:

Through this mobilization of representation of oneself in the past and the imagination of possible, parenthood future selves, the name choice procedure is thus related to identity redefinitions and relocations. In that sense, the procedure for choosing a first name mediates a certain developmental process, similar to the process implied by adolescence.  
(Zittoun 2004, 144)

Zabeeh (1968, 67) writes in *What is in a name?* that "the type of personal names given to persons and things may indicate something about the intention of the name-givers." Taking this idea further and linking it with the challenges that are faced when living in a multinational environment, might also add information to the degree of assimilation of the parents.

The selection of a first name for a child is an important cultural decision of immigrant parents.  
(After Sue and Telles, Becker 2009, 203)

When discussing the problematic of naming in the multinational context, one has to consider the concept of acculturation, being the process of cultural and psychological change following intercultural contact. John W. Berry (1991) established four orientations when being faced with another culture. Assimilation thus is that the migrants do not wish to maintain their culture while seeking daily interaction with the host society. Integration is defined as the wish of maintaining the native culture while seeking daily interaction with the other society. Wanting to maintain the own culture while not seeking contact with the host society is called separation. The last concept, marginalization, is defined by not seeking to maintain the original culture without having interest in the host society's culture at the same time (Berry 2001, 72).

Naming [is] a quintessentially social act... naming acts as a critical element in processes of social incorporation and the constitution of personhood.  
(Benson 2006, 180)

Janet Finch (2008, 712) researched the significance of naming in the UK and shed light onto the importance of kinship and individuality. She claims that if naming was part of social identity, then "it follows that a name is both a legal identifier of the individual but also potentially part of social identity". She elaborates further on the topic by saying: "So the power of a name to symbolize social connection, including ethnic and religious identity, is clear." (Finch, 2008, 713)

Gerhards and Hans (2006) researched the naming processes of migrants in Germany as a sign of assimilation to the host society. They used the concept of emotional or identificative assimilation (as introduced in Esser 1980) and came to the conclusion that the identificative assimilation is supported by the degree of cultural distance of original society and host society. Furthermore, religion, the success and education in the host society, as well as necessity of integration in the host society would have a decisive role in naming. Hence, migrants who come from culturally close countries, who practice the same religion, have enjoyed education in the host society, occupy an acknowledged position and who are in contact with the host society are more likely to have the wish to assimilate and to give names that are close or identical to the host society's naming corpus. The thesis is supported by Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind (1998, 217), who argue in their study about Russian-speaking immigrant adolescents in Finland that it is not the language proficiency, which leads to a higher degree of identification, but the amount of contact that migrants have with natives of

the host society.

Becker (2009) builds upon Gerhard and Hans' study and researched the naming of Turkish parents living in Germany in detail. She argues that "A child's first name signifies the identity the parents want for their child." (Becker, 2009, 203) In this work and referring to the degrees of acculturation by Berry (1997), she finds out that intermarriage has the greatest influence of selecting a name of the host society, followed by holding the German citizenship. Additionally to that, Turkish girls were given an integration option (a name that is either German or known in both cultures) in naming more likely than boys, who were more often given an ethnic name. This is also supported in Sue and Telles' study (2007) about the naming of Hispanic parents living in Los Angeles. Assimilation was more favored in naming girls than boys. Besides that, the exposure to the U.S. culture led to a greater possibility of giving the child an English name.

Lieberson (2003) researched the naming of immigrant parents of various descents in the United States. He notes that "The influence of imitation mechanism is noteworthy for immigrants because they are often disconnected from current developments in the newly adopted society. For this reason, earlier popular names affect their choices – thereby generating a lag in tastes" (Lieberson 2003, 174). Another explanation might be difficulties in pronouncing English names in the immigrant parents' home countries. Both rationales would lead to a wider array when selecting names. However, these forenames might not necessarily be in fashion amongst the native inhabitants, which could lead to a terribly bad choice for immigrant parents, who would like to give a fashionable and current name of the host society to their children.

Lieberson points out that names deriving from the immigrants' home country would quickly lose importance once the parents immigrated, and names would be converted to existing English names (e.g. from German names: *Franz* -> *Frank*, *Ludwig* -> *Lewis*). A culture close to the American one (e.g. from Christian countries) expands the repertoire of common names and makes the assimilation process smoother. However, sometimes can be seen a preservation of original names, such as the revival of Finnish forenames of Finnish immigrants after the Russo-Finnish war (Lieberson 2003, 178).

Arguable is, what importance the origin of the mother has when it comes to the naming process. According to Lieberson (2003), the mothers' origin would generally have more influence on accelerating or decelerating the wish of giving a name of the host society to the child than the father's origin. Seibicke (1991) notes that whenever one parent is of non-German descent, the chosen name would typically receive a name that is common either in



both countries, or it would receive each one name that is common in each the home countries. However, as Seibicke (2008, 112) states that it uncommon for Germans to adapt foreign names of immigrants (e.g. Turks, Greeks, or Yugoslavs). The opposite seems to be happening and these names might undergo a wave of stigmatization, which leads to the conclusion that pure contact with another name does not lead to its adaption. This is supported by Wolffsohn and Brechenmacher (1999, 274), who see the pure existence of foreign forenames in a critical light: “Je mehr ausländische Vornamen in einer Gesellschaft zu finden sind, desto weltoffener ist sie. Ob sie dadurch weniger authentisch wird, steht auf einem anderen Blatt.“

Gerhards, Hans (2006) and Lieberson (2003) conclude that the process of naming, which is not linked to any financial or educational obligations like other means of acculturation, is happening out of pure preference. Gerhards and Hans (2006, 4) conclude that it is a “Voluntary and desired identification with the host society on the part of immigrants.” and thus goes hand in hand with Becker (2009, 203), who states that

Thus, naming really does represent a relevant decision by immigrant parents that has serious consequences.

The publications state that choosing a name of the host society symbolizes the will to be integrated in the country. Researchers also pointed out the potential threats of giving a name of the other country, in terms of timeliness and suitability. It adds additional spice to the delicate matter of naming, and does not make the decision of parents easier. Concluding the theoretical part of the thesis, I will now move on to the research process and realization, after which I will come to the concrete analysis of the study. The reader may be prepared to return to some of the theoretical topics, as they will be touched in the analysis of the sample groups' answers.

### **3. RESEARCH PROCESS AND REALIZATION**

This chapter deals with the research process of the thesis. It starts with how I decided to choose the research instrument and how it got developed, points out critical parts while designing the instrument and how I planned to record the answers of the participants. Furthermore, I will explain the sample of the study and how it got selected. In the topic of data collection, I present more information about the final sample groups. The last sub-chapter will tell about the process of data transcription and its processing before preparing and evaluating the results in the following analysis.

#### **3.1 Research design and planning**

##### **3.1.1 Deciding upon a research instrument**

As a research method, the survey was chosen. With respect to the qualitative character of the research, theme interviews were used to gather the data. Choosing this tool left enough space for personal enquiry of the interviewees, but provided a common frame in order to cover all relevant research questions at the same time. This ensured that the final data could easily be compared with each other in the process of analysis. It was desired to create an almost natural atmosphere during the conversation. The interviews contained a lot of intimate and personal questions that arouse memories and stories from a very private and important part of the interviewees' lives. It was therefore necessary to create a certain amount of trust and relaxed mood during the interview to make the situation more comfortable for the interviewees as well as to get as much information as possible in regards of the research. In this sense, the theme interview was used rather as a thread than as an inescapable frame. It made sure to cover all areas of interest within the research. However, the questions got used loosely and in diverse order. In case a topic got covered by the interviewees themselves, the analogical question was regarded as answered without further inquiry.

##### **3.1.2 Development of the research instrument**

The survey was put together during the *KLSS714 Interviewing course* from December 2008 to January 2009. In order to receive the most relevant information on the research topic, mostly

open questions were chosen. The final interview consisted of 32 questions that were based on the research questions and dealt with the different topics of the research. Altogether, there are eight subject matters in the interview present: children's first name, other forenames, method of name finding and foundation, parents' relation to names, naming traditions in the family, reception of the given name, Finland as a home country and the future of the family. It was essential that the interview's question satiate a large scope around the naming process. Also the expression of both German and Finnish nationality and the troubles that might arise from given a foreign name got captured in the interview questions.

### 3.1.3 Ethical questions

In an onomastic research, the biggest obstacle while putting together the research results is the protection of the participants' privacy. Unlike in other studies, it is not possible to change the names of the participants. Thus, securing the anonymity of the research sample became a topic of interest right from the start of the research. I decided not to use the families' last names throughout the study but to refer to a Finnish or German last name only. However, this was not possible when speaking about the forenames that are essential to my research. This is why I decided to put them in their original version into the analysis but chose to make the compromise of handling the preferred and all further names separately from each other. This way, the preferred name and further last names of a child wouldn't be combined throughout the text. Whenever there were contextual links from one forename to the other, I paraphrased them rather than mentioning the name itself. The same strategy was used when speaking about the naming procedures of siblings that often link to one another.

All participants of the research got informed about the handling of the names in the study and agreed them to be used. With regard to the future and the written form of my research, I coded the families along a scheme (read further on the topic in the paragraph on data collection).

Another sensible topic during the process of creating the questionnaire was questions that touched the topic of German culture and German identity. Even in the twenty-first century, 60 years after the end of World War II, Germans can rarely express themselves about their nationality as freely as other nationalities. Equivalents to words such as *Englishness* or *suomalaisuus* (Finnishness) do exist in German language; however, they are scarcely used only. Being German myself, I was aware of the topic and handled questions concerning the

German culture with care in order to prevent awkward silence or misunderstandings.

#### 3.1.4 System for recording the research answers

The interview was implemented as an oral face-to-face interview. During the time of the interview, the interviewer took notes of the respondents' reactions and answers. Furthermore, the interviews were recorded with MP3 audio recorders. The survey had a pilot run within the scope of the *KLSS714 Interviewing course* in January 2009, after which it was revised and put into its final structure in agreement with the supervisor of this thesis.

The final interview was available in German and Finnish language. Depending on the interview situation, the interviewer could then choose between the different surveys in order to let the respondents answer in their preferred language or mother tongue. This method was chosen so to get a better picture about the interview participants' world of ideas and thoughts. In doing so, the respondents were able to express themselves, their ideas and emotions about the topic more easily. The interviewer was also prepared to translate the survey questions into English, whenever necessary.

### **3.2 Sample**

With respect to the nature of the research, the sample of this thesis got limited to twelve families altogether; of German descent, who are permanently living in Finland. They were contacted with the help of the Finnish-German associations. The sample got divided into two sample groups: six German-German couples and six Finnish-German couples. The reason for this division was the opportunity of being able to compare and analyze the different naming motives behind the selection practices of both samples. To be able to point out these cultural differences more easily, an equal number of both samples were targeted when finding suitable families during the interview process. I aimed at admitting only couples to the survey, which got realized. In case single parents had been interested in the survey, their participation would not have been neglected. However, if a family lived together, the answering of both parents was desired and got achieved. As a result of that, I collected versatile insights about the naming process and the families' cultural situation. Furthermore, I was able to observe the parents' dialogue during the time of the interview, which was especially fascinating in the bilingual families.

### 3.2.1 Selection criteria

Three selection criteria were established, which families had to meet in order to take part in the study.

In order to fit one of the target groups' selection criteria, each parent needed to have one nationality only. Even though the interest in participating in the project from parents with double-nationality was high, they were not allowed to the project as to keep the boarder clear and simple. There was the opportunity of establishing a third target group (Finnish-German – Finnish) and a respective forth (Finnish-German – Finnish-German), but it would have gone beyond the scope of a Master's thesis. In order to keep the cultural influences from both parents side visible and to point out possible cultural challenges in the children's upbringing, it was desired to have only Finnish and German participants.

The second selection criterion of the project was the age of the children. The age got limited to 5 years or to the year of birth (2005) respectively. This limitation was important for various reasons. For the parents, it was easier to think about the detailed aspects of the naming process. With the temporal limit, the loss of valuable memories got prevented or at least narrowed down. The process of naming one's own child is an event to remember throughout one's life-time. However, when it comes to details and incitements of the process and its circumstances, it is natural that some memories fade away over time. Also, catching those traces of memories was the aim of the limitation. Secondly it was important to narrow down the age of the children involved, because the techniques of naming have changed a lot during the past decade. In cases where name books, agendas, newspapers and the opinion of friends and relatives played an important role in the past, names and their meanings are able to be looked up and researched on the internet and with the help of social media today. With the age limit, parents were given a comparable starting point that could assume a general equal distribution of technologies. Finally, the age criterion also seemed sensible when thinking about the different waves of naming fashion. With getting a sample of children that were born in roughly the same years and thus being in the same age-group, the final work also represents a part of current naming fashion in Finland. References to commonly used names by the parents during the interview support the last point.

The third selection criterion referred to the permanent residence in the country, as mentioned already in earlier paragraphs. Families, who temporarily lived in Finland (e.g. Exchange students), would thus not be selected to the research. Using this selection criterion, I anticipated the will to integrate to Finnish society, which would make the naming decision

more challenging for parents when thinking about their bi-national experience.

### 3.3 Data collection

The data of the study was collected between January and December 2009. During that time, twelve families with German background were interviewed, six of them being German-German families and the remaining six families being mixed families with one parent of German and one parent of Finnish nationality (Table 5). The final sample compiled interview material of roughly twelve hours.

In order to ensure the participants anonymity, I established an arbitrary coding system. In the further course of the study, the families will get displayed as German-German 1-6 and Finnish-German 1-6 respectively (GG1, GG2, GG3, GG4, GG5, GG6, FG1, FG2, FG3, FG4, FG5, FG6).

Family	Number of Children	Boy	Girl	In Finland since
GG1	1	-	1	2006
GG2	1	-	1	2002
GG3	1	-	1	2002
GG4	1	-	1	2005
GG5	1	-	1	2008
GG6	1	-	1	2007
FG1	3	2	1	2006
FG2	1	-	1	1998
FG3	2	-	2	1996
FG4	1	-	1	1999
FG5	2	1	1	1997
FG6	1	-	1	2000

Table 5: The research sample

The interviews collected provided information about the naming practices of sixteen children. Thirteen out of the whole amount of children are girls, three of them were boys.

### 3.4 Data transcription and processing

The twelve interviews got fully transcribed in table form, which allowed further examinations. After each transcription, I reread the text and wrote a one-page memo about the specific interview to outline unique and outstanding parts of the discussion and to simplify the forthcoming handling. Further, the answers relevant to the research questions got highlighted and I established 22 categories, under which the answers of each interview got sorted.

The categories are:

- a) Sources and inspirations of forenames
- b) Motives of first name
- c) Considerations of first name
- d) Parental traditions of second forenames
- e) Considerations of second forenames
- f) Time of choosing
- g) Time of publication
- h) Transitional name
- i) General reception of the name
- j) Reception in Finland
- k) Reception in Germany
- l) Germans in Finland
- m) Finnish skills
- n) Finnish-German association
- o) Media usage
- p) Obstacles
- q) Bilingual Environment
- r) Education
- s) Hypothetical naming in Germany
- t) Name as driver of integration
- u) Name as driver of identity
- v) Statistics

After arranging the answers of every interview along the categories, I united the German-German part and the Finnish-German part of the sample in two big files. This helped to compare single categories of interest within the two sample groups and to establish conclusions deriving from them. Following, I compared both groups within and with each

other with the help of the extracted themes.

The process of data transcription and processing took longer than expected, but gave me the opportunity to fully absorb the collected material of the interviews. I regret that I was not able to use the whole amount of information for the study, as it would have gone far beyond the topic of my thesis. The results of the analysis and the sample groups' experiences about their naming decisions will follow in the proceeding chapter.



## 4. ANALYSIS

On the following pages, the results of the analysis will be presented. I will start with sources of first names in chapter 4.1 and will move on the names' motives and considerations in chapter 4.2. After that, the chosen latter forenames will be discussed in chapter 4.3, before having a look at the families' naming customs and traditions in the following chapter. Chapter 4.5 will discuss the success of the initial naming motives, as well as the final names' reception in both countries. The last chapter of the analysis is connected to the multinational background of the study and will take a step further to the matters of integration in Finland and future aspirations for the child. It will finally come to the question, what kind of importance the parents are admitting to their children's names and what kind of consequences these names might have for their children's future ethnical identity.

### 4.1 Sources and inspiration of first names

One of the reasons for limiting the age of the children to five years was the probable variation in researching a suitable name in comparison to ten or twenty years back. As expected, this was verified in the findings of the study, as can be seen in the distribution of media usage during the parents' search process in table 6.

Medium used	Finnish-German	German-German	Total
Books	5	5	10
Internet	3	4	7
Inspired by acquaintances	-	3	3
TV	1	1	2
Calendars with register	1	1	2
Newspapers	-	1	1
Graveyard	-	1	1
Inspired by relatives	1	-	1
Name list in use	4	6	10
Validation via Finnish friends	-	3	3

Table 6: Media used in the research process of parents (multiple answers possible)

Books were most commonly used during the search process. Ten out of twelve families reported to have consulted name books and dictionaries. The Internet received the next highest ranking. Many of the families utilized the Internet while searching for a potential name of their child. However, some of them also complained about the complexity of the search engines offered on private websites on naming.

Ten out of twelve families generated a list with potential names. The procedure of dealing with the naming list varied slightly. Six families were using one common list right in the beginning, while four families created two separate lists in the early days of the naming process and combined both documents with time. Out of the list, a top three was created and then the final name got chosen. In cases where the family was planning to have more children in the future, the opinions about using the same list varied. While one family had the opinion that the old list should not be used for a second time, two other families intended to use the existing list once more for their next child.

Half of the German couples enquired Finnish natives before determining the name for their children. Doing that, they intended to find out, whether the name was suitable in the present time or whether it bore any unpleasant connotations. Living in a foreign country can make it challenging to decide upon a name's suitability and timeliness, independently from the personal liking towards the name, as already presented in the theoretical part of the study. To complete their knowledge, families asked Finnish friends or colleagues for advice and incorporated their evaluations and reactions towards the name in question in the selection process.

A German-German couple summarised their motives behind this inquiry with saying:

Wir haben diese Reaktion schon ein wenig getestet, und es gab keine Aufschreie, die sagen: "Oh mein Gott, da gab's einen Massenmörder vor zwei Jahren...!"  
 [We've been testing the response a little, and there weren't any kind of outcries, saying: "Oh my God, there was this mass murderer two years ago...!"]

Another family had an old Finnish name in mind and hesitated about its timeliness:

Kann man ein Kind *Aino* nennen, oder ist das...? Ich mein, ich würde kein Kind *Väinämöinen* nennen, aus gegebenen Anlass, und, ist *Aino* eben auch so ein Name?  
 [Can you name a child *Aino*, or is that...? I mean, I wouldn't call a child *Väinämöinen*, for certain reasons, and... is *Aino* also a name like that?]

Looking back, the parents of Aino were lucky in their decision. *Aino* was a popular forename in the 1920s (Kiviniemi 2006, 197) but recently made its way back into the Finnish top naming lists by the end of the 2000s (compare with Finnish popular names as presented in

table 4 in the theoretical part of the study).

Having found inspiration and being certain about the suitability of a name, the families chose the final names for various other reasons, which will be introduced in the following chapter on the naming motives of first names.

## 4.2 Choice of first names

One of the most interesting aspects of the study was to find out, what kind of first names the interviewees chose for their offspring. Most of them haven't been living in Finland for a long time, so I initially expected to find a variety of international and German names in the study. Also taken that more than half of the sample group bears German surnames, I expected more diversity in the chosen first names. But what did the interviews reveal? Firstly that finding a suitable name for the child was regarded as an important task, which should not be taken too easily. Secondly, the given names offered a surprisingly homogenous picture, as can be seen in table 7.

Neela	Luzie	Leonie	Lumi
Henrik	Maija	Alva	Aino
Ronja	Frida	Eliisa	Paula
Jalo	Aatos	Taru	Johanna

Table 7: First names of the research

### 4.2.1 Motives

Following, the selection motives of both Finnish-German and German-German sample will be discussed. The term *attribute* refers to characteristics of the final names. It can be understood as those qualities that the present first name of their offspring has. After an overview about the features mentioned, I will then proceed to present a selection of single attributes and their individual meaning for the parents interviewed.

Many naming motives of the families as shown in table 8 corresponded to the systems presented in German and Finnish naming research earlier (see table 1). Reference to *liking* (Kiviniemi) and *sound* (Seibicke) were present in both groups, while the sound of the name was especially important to the German-German group. Here, all families mentioned the

sound of the name as selection criterion. The *denotation of the name* was of equal importance for both groups, and got two references each. Also having a *short, innovative* or *rare* name for their children got pointed out in both groups.

However, the most mentioned criterion was the aspect of *internationality*, which got emphasised by all families. Taking a closer look at the matter, one could observe differences in describing the matter of internationality between the Finnish-German and the German-German sample. In the Finnish-German group, having a name that is *suitable for both languages* and *international* got mentioned equally three times. In the German-German group, being *suitable for both languages* scored twice and being *international* only once. Instead, the German-German sample opted for having a name that can be *pronounced in the same way* in Germany and Finland (four mentions), while it got pointed out only twice in the Finnish-German group.

Aside from the differences towards sound as single criteria and in contact with the two languages through pronunciation, the biggest disparity between the German-German and the Finnish-German sample was the *relation of the name to Finland*. Having a name that is related to the country where the child was born was mentioned four times in the German-German group. The same answer was heard only once in the comparative sample.

<b>Affirmative attribute</b>	<b>Finnish-German</b>	<b>German-German</b>
Liking	2	3
Sound	2	6
Character	1 (consonants)	1
Denotation	2	2
Suitable for both languages	3	2
Same pronunciation in both languages	2	4
International	3	1
Traditional, Old	2	-
Innovative, new	1	1
Rare	1	2
Neither common, nor seldom; timeless	1	3
Easy	3	-
Short	2	2
Matches last name	1	4
Related to kin	1	-

Not used in family	1	-
Suitable to siblings	-	1
Suitable for sex	1	1
Related to Finland	1	4

Table 8: Affirmative attributes of first names (multiple answers possible)

### *Liking*

The attribute of *liking* a specific name got mentioned by five families (two Finnish-German, three German-German). As Seibicke reported, *liking* is the most common motive in choosing a name. However, it cannot be counted as an attribute as such and often parents are not able to tell precisely, what it is that they like in a name. Often enough, *liking* is combined with an affinity to a specific sound or is connected to positive images that the person has of the name. If we assume that in free naming, parents choose names they would also like; this might not necessarily be the case when speaking about bonded naming processes. For instance, when naming according to the day of birth or with the help of family naming traditions, it might be possible that the chosen name does not go along with the taste of the parents. In this study, however, all first names were selected in a free naming process and none of the families mentioned any dislike towards the names. Thus, I assigned the attribute of *liking* the name to those families, who had their child's name in mind already for a long time.

In the case of the two Finnish families that mentioned liking as a motive for choosing the final names, we are speaking about individuals, who had pondered about naming in general and the names of their children especially for many months and years. Both families are interested in names and naming processes and are also very aware about the denotation of their children's' names. Liking the names that they chose was the result of a long research process.

As the mother of Aatos put it:

Wir sind welche von den Verrückten, die Namen ganz wichtig finden. Ja, nomen est omen, und für unsere Kinder haben wir halt auch versucht, auch wirklich schöne Namen zu finden, die dann auch wirklich richtig passen vom Charakter her.

[We are some of those crazy people, who think that names are really important. Yes, nomen est omen. And for our children we also tried to find really beautiful names that suit the character very well.]

As one can see already in this quotation, liking the name is linked to a number of other attributes. In this case it linked as well to character of the name, as well as to its denotation. How character could be observed at such an early point of naming remains the

secret of the family.

The second Finnish-German family described the situation as following:

Ei, se on harrastus! Eli mä katoin paljon erilaisia nimiä, sitten mä palasin kuitenkin näihin, joista olen aina tykännyt.  
[No, it's a hobby! So, I checked out a lot of different names, but then again returned to those, which I have always liked.]

This family's affinity with names had already lasted for five years, long before their child was actually born. This could be considered as an adequate case of liking a name. Even more, one could speak about realising ones' dreams and bestowing the favourite name on the own child.

### *Sound*

The *sound* of the name got most references in the German-German group (six in the German-German, two in the Finnish-German sample). This can be recognized as a clear difference between the two samples. However, it is not surprising when being aware of the top three naming motives in Germany, which are liking, sound and family traditions. Finding a name with the right sound for the own child is of course highly subjective. As some prefer characteristic sounds with hard consonants to give the name the right edge and memorability, other parents opt for soft consonants and dark vowels. Also in this material, opinions differed.

In the cases of *Leonie* and *Neela*, the parents were striving for a smooth sound. *Maija's* parents favourite the sound of the ending vowel *-a*. The name *Ronja* got perceived as active and positive owing to the *r* in the beginning, which agrees with Kiviniemi's assumption about the name's recent popularity (Kiviniemi 2006, 58).

### *Suitable for both languages*

The attribute *suitability for both languages* was slightly more popular in the Finnish-German sample (three times, while twice in the German-German group) as pointed out earlier. In the Finnish answers, it was important to the parents that the name would not cause any problems to the child in case the family or the child would spend a part of their life in the other country. Having a name that is easy to understand and that does not lead to spelling problems got emphasised along with the naming motive. In the German-German group, both couples began their name search with set of Finnish forenames that they favoured and clarified in the course of the selection process that the name would be understood by Germans, too. Parents also referred to similar names in the German language in order to support an easier understanding

of the final name in German culture (e.g. chosen name *Maija* – examples given: *Maja*, *Maya*, *Maia*).

#### *Same pronunciation in both languages*

Out of the international categories, the attribute of having the same pronunciation in the German and Finnish language met the highest approval in the German-German sample. It got mentioned twice in the Finnish-German group.

In the general opinion, choosing a Finnish name should not cause pronunciation problems in German. It was acceptable for many families to spell out the name in order to make it understood for the other person. Still, the majority of German-German families were striving for a clear understanding of the name's pronunciation after hearing it for the first time. The father of a family commented on the given name *Lumi* that consists of:

Vier einfache[n] Buchstaben, die sich von jedem Deutschen einfach aussprechen lassen, aber völlig unbekannt sind.  
[Four simple letters that can be pronounced easily by every German, but are completely unknown.]

Another given explanation that in this matter concerned the grand-parents of the children. With finding an easy-to-pronounce name, the parents hoped that their parents may call their children just in the right way.

A Finnish-German family adopted the Finnish spelling of a relatively uncommon name in Finland in order to facilitate an easier pronunciation in both countries. Their chosen name is *Neela*. With doubling the vowel *e* they provided a clear basis for Finns as well as Germans to pronounce a long *e* in the beginning of the word. Surely enough, having a double-vowel in German forenames is relatively uncommon but not completely unknown to German language, as there are other nouns including double-e, such as *Seele* (soul) or *Beet* (flower bed).

#### *International*

Finding an international name for their offspring was an attribute almost exclusively used by Finnish-German families while the German-German counterpart tended to relate to the previously introduced attribute of having the same pronunciation. Using an international name got mentioned by three Finnish-German parents and one German-German parent altogether.

The advantage that parents saw in choosing *internationality* was that the name could be easily understood, pronounced and spelled by as many nationalities as possible This

conforms to Vilkkuna's model of naming motives (see theoretical part of the study), where the aspect of internationalism can be found on the first place in Finland. The spectrum used by the Finnish-German sample widened from the previous attribute of having a name that can be pronounced easily by Germans to a more complex and general concept of cross-cultural understanding. In doing so, the families intended to reduce communication problems of their children in later life. Together with this attribute, families also tried to avoid typically Finnish names with many vowels, which are rather distinct for foreigners.

A Finnish-German mother expressed her understanding about giving an international name in the following way:

Halt irgendwie international der Name, und so dass man ihn halt überall auf der Welt ganz einfach aufschreiben kann, dass die Leute verstehen, was (der Name des Kindes) ist. Dass es dann nicht so ist, wenn die Kinder dann das Leben lang sagen, „Warum hast du mir so einen Namen gegeben, den ich jedes Mal buchstabieren muss und den keiner aussprechen kann, das bin ich nicht.“ Also ... schon ziemlich wichtig.

[Somehow international, that name, so that you can easily write it down all over the world, so that people understand what (the name of the child) is. So that it wouldn't be like the kids said their whole lives long “Why did you give me a name that I have to spell every single time and that no one can pronounce? That is not me.” So... rather important.]

#### *Traditional – innovative*

Four out of twelve families explicitly mentioned to have searched for a *traditional* name on the one hand, or an *innovative* one on the other hand.

The two Finnish-German families that mentioned the *traditional* attribute during their name search had liked the particular name for a long time already, but were unsure about the suitability of the name in today's time. Both of them were very much aware of naming fashions and as they observed old names returning in fashion, they decided to opt for their favourite name.

Frida's German mother remembers the situation of deciding on a traditional name as follows:

Pitkään aikaan, se ei käynyt Saksassa, ei missään tapauksessa, liian vanha nimi, mutta nyt kuin... *Emma* ja *Anna* ja kaikki vanhat nimet tulivat takaisin, mä ajatelin heti että “Hei, nyt on hyvä hetki ota se käyttöön.” ja “Hyvä, nyt me uskallaan, se on oikein hyvää”.

[For a long time it wouldn't have worked in Germany, by no means, the name is too old, but now since... *Emma* and *Anna* and all these old names are coming back, I immediately thought “Hey, now is a good moment to use it” and “Great, now we dare to, it is really good!”]

On the other side, there were two families, who wanted to find a new and *innovative* name for their child. Their primary aim was not to have a name that was labelled in any kind of way, e.g. through namesakes in the family, environment or the media. They were also trying to



avoid stepping into current naming fashions and thus having a number of children with the same name in the kindergarten, school, and future life. They wanted to have a rather unique name to refer to their unique child.

A German father was hoping to set a trend with choosing a name that is relatively new and not yet widespread in the Finland. His daughter is called *Ronja* and the name is indeed rather uncommon. It appeared for the first time in the years of 1980-1984, and was since then slowly increasing in popularity (Kiviniemi 2006, 55 and 359).

### *Timeless*

Three families stated to have looked for a timeless name. They were familiar with the concept of modern names and didn't want to pick a fashionable name for their children. Partly, because they bear modern or fashionable names themselves and learned how to live with it throughout the years. Most of them were striving to find a name which would not lose its beauty throughout the years.

A German-German family referred to the name's *timelessness* in the sense that it is an old and traditional name, which has changed throughout the centuries. While sounding modern and fresh today, it has a long history and adapted itself over time. The chosen name, *Leonie*, regained popularity in Germany in the 2000s (see the chart in the theoretical part on naming fashions), but derived from the Old German name *Leonhard*.

Interestingly enough, one family made a distinction when elaborating on the topic between Finnish and German names.

Wir haben schon geguckt, ob das ein Name ist, wo wir das Gefühl haben, er ist jetzt nicht gerade momentan der Top Nummer 1 Name, den alle grade irgendwie wählen, aber, der irgendwie auch nicht zu exotisch ist... auch, für finnische Verhältnisse noch.

[We paid attention to whether it is a name where we got the feeling that it is not exactly a top favorite name right now, and which is chosen by everyone. On the other hand, we wanted to choose a name which is not too exotic... also in the Finnish proportion.]

This comment also revealed that the German-German family did find the Finnish names a little unfamiliar or uncommon at least. Despite the fact that they chose a Finnish name for their child (*Maija*), they still considered Finnish names more exotic than German ones.

One can probably realize that the attribute *timeless* is a more subjective one, or an attribute that is much more dependent on the linguistic background of a person. What does it mean to speak about a timeless name when having a Finnish background? How does it differ from being German? In some cases, I regarded the distinction between *timeless*, *traditional*

and *old names* to be rather challenging.

### *Short*

Four out of twelve families were searching for a short name for their child. When speaking about short names, the reference points were monosyllabic and disyllabic names. Having a look at the chart of given first names, thirteen out of sixteen names meet this criterion.

The most common reason for this motive were the parents' own experiences with either having a long name that others find difficult to understand, or having a short name, which taught them the convenience of it. Another reason for *shortness* was the intention to avoid nicknames, which children could give to their child later on. As a result, they decided to use a shorter version themselves right away, which could not be shortened or abbreviated too much. This gets confirmed in Vilkuna's model of naming motives. Another reason that supported giving a short name was the expressiveness and precision the name implied in comparison to a longer one. Moreover, the parents stated that a shorter name would be easier to remember and would cause less trouble in situations of presenting oneself.

The families, who explicitly wished to select a short name, also go along Kiviniemi's theory of naming, according to which the first names most commonly consist of two syllables. In Seibicke's model of German forenames, the distribution of disyllabic names accounts for approximately 40 per cent.

### *Matches last name*

This attribute is partly related to the attribute of length and choosing a short first name for the child. Three out of the four families, who paid attention to choosing a short name, linked their explanation to the length of the last name. However, there were more families mentioning this attribute, which was especially popular amongst the German-German families. Four out of six German-German families were concerned about the suitability of their child's first name. The only Finnish-German family, who referred to the topic, has a German father and last name.

Different aspects got mentioned of how the forename should suit the last name. Most commonly, the length of the first name got discussed and also the internationality or international qualities when having chosen a Finnish name. Furthermore, some parents attached importance to specific vowels and consonants in their last name that they wanted to see reflected in the child's forename. However, the custom of giving the child an alliterating name, which is more popular in Finland than in Germany, did not get used, even though some parents were aware of its popularity.

While considering the last name in their decision, it was regarded as necessary that the forename would match the last name stylistically. A Finnish-German family presented an example of children bearing highly international first names and a traditional Finnish last name, e.g. *Sarlotta Möttönen*. They were trying to avoid such unsuitable combinations and were aiming for a balanced and well-sounding unity (compare also with Seibicke's comment on style in the part of derivation of a name).

#### *Related to Finland*

A favourite attribute when choosing the first name amongst the German-German sample was the relation of the name to Finland, which got pointed out by four German-German families and one Finnish-German family. This attribute proves that the high amount of given Finnish names did not happen arbitrarily, but was the result of a conscious decision-making process. The two German-German families, who did not mention the relatedness to Finland, had also spent the least time in Finland at the time of research. Independent of their answer, one of them chose a Finnish name nevertheless.

The most common explanation for choosing a Finnish name was that the child was born in the country and that he or she spent a certain time of his or her life in Finland. A German-German family said they were certain that the child would receive a Finnish first name, because it was born in the country. They also mentioned that there are few German names available, which they would actually like and would have considered choosing.

For the big part of the German-German families, the future is still unsecure and it is also likely that they would move back to Germany or to a different country one day (while some others already had plans of moving). Selecting a Finnish name was comparable to taking a little piece of the country with them into their future. In the case that the family would still be living in Finland in some years, a Finnish name was regarded as more suitable for the child, as he or she would learn the language and grow into Finnish society. In the case of changing the country of residence, it would remain a nice memory of the time spent in Finland. A German father put it like that:

Also, für mich war ein finnischer Name interessant, weil das eben Teil ihres Lebens sein wird, dass sie hier geboren ist und dass das Teil unseres Lebens ist, dass wir hier ein Kind bekommen haben, und das kann man auch irgendwie festhalten.

[A Finnish name was interesting for me, because it will be a part of her life that she was born here and it is part of our lives that we got a child here. I think this is worth mentioning somehow.]

The families, who had plans of moving also stated that it is very likely that the next child would get a name of the country where they would be living in at this very time. It gives an insight into the flexibility and ambiguity of naming systems in times of globalisation.

Another family mentioned the advantage of exclusiveness that the child has in Germany when bearing a Finnish name:

Und dann kann sie immer sagen: „Ach, ich bin in Finnland geboren, das ist ein finnischer Name“ und das macht sie so ein bisschen besonders.  
[And then she can always say: «Oh, I was born in Finland, that's a Finnish name» and this makes her a little special.]

For varying reasons, the aspect of selecting a Finnish name was important to many of the German-German families. In this chapter, I also gathered information about the other motives of parents for choosing exactly the name they did. Now I will move on to the topic of what made parents hesitate between choosing a different name.

#### 4.2.2 Considerations

Life ain't easy for a boy named Sue.  
(Johnny Cash)

Besides clear selection motives, the parents also had a clear image in mind about what kind of names they were not striving for. Under the topic of considerations, I gathered the most common criteria that parents tried to avoid when choosing the name of their children. While the answers of the Finnish-German and German-German group were alike in attributes such as the presence of *r* or *s* in the forename, the avoidance of difficult Finnish names, rejecting names that carry bad associations for the family, they differed immensely in other attributes.

In table 9, the complete overview of exclusionary attributes can be found. I will discuss a selection of these attributes more in detail.

Exclusionary attribute	Finnish-German	German-German
Presence of r	3	3
Difficult Finnish name	2	1
Does not match last name	1	-
Old-fashioned	1	1
Fashionable name	4	1
Eccentric name	2	-

Danger of teasing	2	2
Bad associations/image	2	2
Shortcut-names (Maximilian – Max)	1	1
Name replacements (Mari-Kari)	1	-
Unsuitable in adult age	1	-
Bad sounding declination	1	-
Presence of s	1	1
Too long	-	1
Unclear sex	1	3
Swedish sound	1	-
Bad denotation	-	2

Table 9: Exclusionary attributes of first names (multiple answers possible)

### *Presence of r*

The most common criterion for exclusion was the existence of *r* in a name, which got mentioned by six out of twelve families. Often it was the case that one or both parents were not able to pronounce the Finnish alveolar *r* themselves, which is why they did not want it to be a component of their child's name. The skill of pronouncing the *r* is not as important in Germany as it is in Finland. While in Finland children might be sent to speech therapists in order to learn how to pronounce the *r*, it is a simple matter of fact that not everyone knows how to produce the sound in Germany. Also, it is not part of standard German, but is common in Southern dialects (e.g. in Bavarian and the East Franconian German dialects), as well as in the Austrian dialect. The standard *r* in German language is the uvular trill.

There were many associations mentioned with the existence of *r* in the forename, which were partly connected to other exclusionary attributes. Commonly, the parents did not strive to include this letter because of the difficulties of pronunciation for some people. Astonishingly, the different pronunciation of the *r* in standard German and Finnish was not mentioned by any of the parents, which could have been associated with the affirmative attribute of *Same pronunciation in both countries*. With including the *r* in a forename, this attribute would have not been fulfilled.

This result of the sample does not support Kiviniemi's theory about *r* being more common in forenames than in the remaining Finnish vocabulary. Still, it is aligned with Lieberon, who wrote about the difficulties in pronunciation, due to which foreigners would abstain from using certain common names of the host society.

### *Difficult Finnish name*

Three families aimed not to choose a difficult Finnish name for their child. Out of them, two belonged to the Finnish-German group. These parents aimed to prevent confusion and pronunciation troubles in the future. When referring to difficult Finnish names, parents used examples like *Väino* or *Yrjö*, which might sound obscure to a non-Finnish person. Having a big amount of diphthongs or difficult vocal-consonant combinations such as the *Yrj* of *Yrjö* was an exclusionary attribute for these parents. For one German, the bare existence of the Finnish *y* in the name led to its exclusion. Parents wanted their child's name to be overly comprehensible as a first name, which got illustrated by the father of a Finnish-German family:

„Wie heißt du?“ – „Yrjö“ – „Mmmmh... ist das ein Gewürz?“  
 „What's your name?“ – „Yrjö“ – „Mmmh, is that a spice?“

### *Fashionable name*

Trying to avoid giving a fashionable name to their children was the second most common exclusionary remark that parents made and got mentioned by four Finnish-German and one German-German family. The families, who declared to have avoided a fashionable name, also researched in the internet and their environment about the current use of the name in question. Additionally, they used the historical information provided by Finnish Name Service of the Population Register Center about the frequency distribution of names that they had short-listed. The statement of trying to avoid fashionable names supports Lieberman's theory of naming as a social fact, which happens dependently from other actors.

### *Danger of teasing*

The thought of not wanting to have a name that might lead to teasing got expressed by four families (two Finnish-German and two German-German). Even though many families confirmed the high level of acceptance and openness towards other cultures and languages, they still wanted to prevent their children from being teased and called monikers during their school age and beyond. Two families agreed that children could be cruel towards each other so they decided to better select the final name with care. Doing so, they were aiming to reject names that would rhyme with words that are having bad connotations, as well as names that could be reduced to amusing or disapproving words.

### *Bad associations*

Four families (two Finnish-German, two German-German) mentioned to avoid names that carry bad associations. It was both referred to popular persons that the families did not like their children to be connected to, as well as to individuals of their personal surroundings or past history that they had uneasy memories about. Furthermore, also the cultural problematic was of importance in this criterion. Hence, they rejected names that would be misaligned with both Finnish and German cultural understanding because of associations to persons or nouns in general. The father of a German-German family told a poignant example with mentioning the Finnish name *Ari*. Being acceptable in Finland, the name could cause problems to a boy living in Germany as it strongly reminds of *arisch* and *Arier* (German for Aryan) terms that the German National Socialists coined when referring to the human physical ideal of Nazi Germany. Other examples of Finnish names that were not popular amongst the parents were *Antti* (as being too similar to the German and English *anti*) or *Assi* (which is an insulting colloquial abbreviation for the German *Asozialer* and refers to an anti-social person). Also the association to names that reflect a certain social class or image, such as *Pascal*, *Chantal*, *Justin* or *Kevin* and stereotypically associate a low degree of education in Germany was avoided by the parents.

### *Bad-sounding declination*

Even though one family only mentioned this criterion, I still considered it to be that interesting as to put it into the detailed analysis, because it captures a typically Finnish phenomenon. The family in question was favouring the name *Niklas*. However they decided to drop the name due to its unpleasant sounds when being declined in Finnish cases (*Niklakselle*, *Niklaksella*, *Niklakselta*, etc.). Describing it in the words of the Finnish mother:

Ja, *Niklas* könnte ein guter Jungenname sein. Da haben wir dann überlegt, wenn so, wenn das auf Finnisch besonders, wenn man es konjugiert (sic!)... „*Niklakselle*, *Niklaksen*... so klack-klack-klack – Nein, auf keinen Fall.“ Also das war dann damit ...gegessen.

[Yes, *Niklas* could be a good boys name. Then we thought, especially in Finnish, if you conjugate (sic!) it...“*Niklakselle*, *Niklaksen*...so klack-klack-klack – No, in no way.“ And that’s the end of it.]

### *Unclear sex*

Rejecting a name of unclear sex was a criterion that mostly German-German families used (one Finnish-German and three German-German families). This might link to the fact that

names, suitable for both men and women are more widespread in Finland than in Germany. In the Finnish-German family, the concern was pointed out by the German father. He himself had experienced difficulties in revealing the gender of a specific person by only reading the name during his first years in Finland. Hence they decided to simplify the process for their German relatives and their child's bilingual future by choosing a name that is clearly male or female. The explanations in the German-German families were similar, and excluded male names ending in *-a* or *-i* (e.g. *Esa*, *Sami*) or female names ending in *-o*, or *-u* (e.g. *Aino*, *Satu*) from their assortments of possible names.

### *Bad denotation*

As shown in the table on affirmative attributes of first names, only four out of twelve families (two Finnish-German, two German-German) declared the denotation of a name to be a motive for choosing it. However, on the exclusionary side, two different German-German families stated that having a *bad denotation* led to rejecting the name in question. Both of them stated that they chose their names irrespectively of their meaning. Still, if they had a bad or unpleasant denotation, they would have opted for another name, which accounts for Kiviniemi's research. According to him, denotation lost its importance as a first motive in the naming process, but persists to be a latter selection criterion.

### 4.2.3 First names' motives and considerations

The previous pages discussed the sample groups' motives and considerations of given first names. Even though both thinking models overlapped at times, I was aiming to present both features, because it revealed more information about the parents' thinking processes. Including the exclusionary attributes in the study, I tried to detach from the ordinary attributes of *liking* and *sound* and step a little deeper into the matter.

Especially interesting were the findings about the usage of *r*, which disagree with Finnish studies and support Lieberson's study on naming in a multicultural environment. Furthermore, the grammatical exclusionary remark about the *declination of the name* was captivating, even though the argument is connected to *sound of a name*. Another attribute, which was unfamiliar to me, was the dislike towards names that *switch sex* with exchanging one letter (*Mari-Kari* -type). The family, who mentioned the criterion, had the opinion that such names would not demonstrate innovativeness and excluded them from their choice of



names.

Last but not least, many considerations brought up some of the concerns that especially foreigners might face when selecting forenames, such as the *difficult Finnish name*, *bad associations* in one of the two languages or *unclear sex*. I would even argue that the considerations of the interviewed parents were more concrete than the actual motives for choosing a name. This surprising observation added informational value to the subject.

In the following subchapter, I will step away from the chosen first names into the topic of latter forenames, which will reveal interesting observations of the study.

### **4.3 Choice of second forenames**

The dispersion of choosing second forenames vary in Finnish and German culture, as presented in the theoretical background. Knowing that and following the suggestion of Kiviniemi, I aimed to gather the data about the selection of second forenames separately. During the collection process, I received information about the traditions of second forenames in the parents' families as well as answers to why parents decided to give or to leave out second forenames.

The samples' conceptions about the use of second forenames differed. This can be verified in the final result of choosing second forename, as seen in table 10 and 11. Only 50 per cent of the German-German parents decided to take on a second forename for their child. On the other side, the percentage in the Finnish-German group was 100 per cent. All children born in this group received a second forename, two of them got a third. However, there was more to explore behind this result. As the interviews told, only one of six German mothers in the German-German group has a second forename herself. Speaking about the fathers, two thirds had received latter names, which links to the study of Seibicke that German sons are more likely to receive a second forename than daughters. In the German-German group, it was also less likely for those parents bearing second forenames to have naming traditions in the family (2 out of 5 parents), which got then reflected in selecting a latter names for their own child. In the Finnish-German sample group, 10 out of 12 parents were having second forenames themselves; the remaining two were mothers of German descent. Naming traditions inside the parents' family were common in six out of twelve cases. This might have affected the continued use of naming traditions in four cases, where latter forenames were given according to family traditions. Table 10 wraps up this paragraph on parents' latter

forenames, their naming traditions and the bestowal of latter forenames and traditions on their children.

	<b>Parents' latter names (male/female)</b>	<b>Family traditions (male/female)</b>	<b>Child's second name</b>	<b>Child's traditions</b>
GG1	Yes/No	No/-	given	No
GG2	Yes/No	No/-	given	No
GG3	No/No	-/-	not given	-
GG4	Yes/No	Yes/-	not given	-
GG5	No/No	-/-	not given	-
GG6	Yes/Yes	No/Yes	given	No
FG1	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	given	Yes
FG2	Yes (F)/No (G)	No/-	given	Yes
FG3	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	given	Yes
FG4	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	given	Yes
FG5	Yes/Yes	No/No	given	No
FG6	Yes (F)/No (G)	No/-	given	No

Table 10: Correlation of latter forenames and families' naming traditions.

As summarised in table 11, out of 16 children, three received one forename, eleven are the bearers of two forenames and for two children, three names were chosen. The two children, who received three forenames, are not related to each other and both have a Finnish and a German parent.

<b>Number of forenames</b>	<b>FG children (n = 10)</b>	<b>GG children (n = 6)</b>
1 (no second forename)	-	3
2 (second forename)	8	3
3 (two second forenames)	2	-

Table 11: Number of forenames

In both groups, the question of giving multiple forenames was discussed and parents questioned the need of multiple names for their child. The motives shall thus be analysed according to the final outcome of the decision. I will first present the decision of not having chosen latter forenames at all, before going on to the selection criteria of the given names.

#### 4.3.1 No second forename chosen

Within the three families that did not choose a second forename for their child, distinct rationales appeared when discussing the matter. The first one was related to the *usage* of the second forename, the second one to the *traditions* of it and the third was connected to *opportunities* a child might have with bearing a second name.

##### *Usage*

The families could not realise any concrete usage for second forenames. They were comprehended as an existing appendix without further meaning or role in daily life. Moreover, they were perceived as time consuming when having to note down the second names in documents. Inevitably there is some truth about it, as there are much better means of identification in this time than second forenames.

##### *Traditions*

Another family understood second forenames related to a bond naming tradition. In this case, the family had the impression that the second forenames are inherited from the father or the mother of the child. This perception was regarded as inappropriate and out-dated. The family put it in this way:

Ja ich seh den Punkt halt auch nicht, also bis auf, dass man halt persönliches Ego damit befriedigt, aber, sie hat ja eh nur einen Rufnamen.  
[Yeah, I don't get the point of it, despite of the fact of satisfying your ego, but still... she just has one first name.]

The impression of second forenames got expressed by the father, who himself has a name, which derived from his family. Family traditions were also mentioned in another family, who pointed out that they could not think of any names that would have been of importance in the family. From those two examples it is visible that second forenames are highly connected to family traditions, although there are other motives in the selection common and possible.

##### *Potential opportunities*

Another motive that got mentioned was the opportunity of *switching forenames*, which made the family almost choose a second name for their child. This idea links to the German Names Act, in which all forenames are equally valid and could be changed later on. Nevertheless, the family decided to opt for simplicity and chose only one name. Also Kiviniemi (2006) writes

about this matter, but adds that children would get used to the parents' preferred name so quickly that chances of switching them in the future are commonly low.

#### 4.3.2 Motives of latter forenames

Now I will present parents' motives of the chosen latter forenames. Similarly to the sub-chapter of forenames, I will present the affirmative attributes, which made parents choose the final forenames.

Firstly, the chosen second forenames shall be presented in table 12.

Blanca	Magnus	Eleonora	Melanie	Matilda
Leena	Silja	Darius	Aili	Pauliina
Jere	Jolanda	Aliina	Maria	Reina

Table 12: Second forenames of the research

Following, the naming motives of latter forenames in both sample groups are displayed in table 13. The number in brackets indicates the use of the attribute as second or third forename.

It became visible during the interviews that the German-German sample had more distinctive motives, while the bigger part of the Finnish group referred to naming traditions within the family. I will now discuss some of the attributes will be discussed in detail.

<b>Affirmative attribute</b>	<b>Finnish-German</b>	<b>German-German</b>
Why not	-	2
Distinctive attribute (marriage)	1	1
Better sound, complete	1	1
Switching forenames	-	1
Father	1	-
Parents' grandmother	4 (two as 2 <sup>nd</sup> , two as 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	-
Parent's godmother	1	-
Possible 1 <sup>st</sup> name (name list)	2	-
Possible 1 <sup>st</sup> name, but too long	1 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	-

Systematic naming	1	-
Denotation	1 (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	-

Table 13: Affirmative attributes of second forenames (multiple answers possible)

### *Kin-related naming*

Choosing a name out of the circle of relatives and family was the most common attribute. This agrees with Kiviniemi's study (2006, 131), according to which 59 per cent of Finnish second and third forenames get selected and inherited from within the family, adding an additional percentage for godfathers and godmothers. The most honoured persons within the sample of this study were the parents' grandmothers. Four children were named after them. Obviously, this is connected to the high amount of girls in the study, but correlate's with Seibicke (1991) and Vilkuna (2002), according to whom the children's second last generation would be considered most when choosing a name out of the family.

In addition to that, one child received his father's second name, which is the course of a naming tradition within the family. Another girl was bestowed her mother's godmother's name.

It needs to be pointed out that the German-German sample did not select a latter forename out of their families. Instead, they made use of freer attributes, which will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

### *Why not?!*

Two German-German families had the opinion that there was no clear obstacle to prevent them from giving a second name, which is why they chose to have one. Without mentioning the Finnish latter naming traditions, they simply decided that it would be pleasant to bestow a second name for no specific reason. In both families, each one of the parents owns a second name him- or herself.

### *Distinctive attribute*

For two German-German families, having a second name was useful in the sense of adding a unique element to the person. They were aware of the fact that there are other *means of distinction*, but with a second name in the passport, the recognition of a person would be easier and it would cause less confusion with namesakes. The family also considered the future life of their child, a girl. Even though the family does not have common last name, the

situation might change in the future with the girl marrying a man with a widespread name. Here again, having a distinctive second forename was perceived to be an advantage by the family and goes in line with the theory presented earlier.

#### *Switching names*

Equivalent to the family, who decided not to give a second forename, this attribute got mentioned from a German-German family as an affirmation for choosing a latter first name. Behind the motive stands the idea that the child could choose its favourite name later by itself, in case that it would not like the given first name. However, the family was not clear about this custom in practise, even though the father of the family received his two forenames for the same reason. He did not decide to change their order. As presented earlier, Kiviniemi (2006) also doubts about the practical usage of this custom.

#### *Better sound, complete*

Stated by one Finnish-German and one German-German family, the attribute refers to two ideas: The families' last name and the Finnish custom of bestowing multiple forenames. In the first case, the family was convinced that the naming composition improved with a second name in between first and last name, which would make the whole name round and sound. They also told that a single first name would sound unattractive and simplistic in their ears. The other comment refers to the Finnish environment, where the large percentage of population has at least two names (cp. with Kiviniemi's research in the theoretical background). With choosing only one name, the child would stick out in Finland and other people would comment on this rarity. A German mother put it in these words:

Und, da ich immer bedauert werde, dass ich nur einen Namen habe, habe ich gedacht, muss sie das ja nicht auch haben, dass sie auch noch bedauert wird und andersrum, in Deutschland zwei Namen zu haben, ist ja kein... kein Problem.

[And since I always get pitied, because I have only one name, I thought that she doesn't have to experience that, as well that everyone pities her. And on the other side, it is not a problem in Germany to have two names.]

#### *Possible first name*

Two thoughts refer to the attribute of a *potential first name*. Precisely, it verifies that the given name as second or third forename did not follow any specific system or tradition, but was as a potential first name on the naming list. Since the first name was already chosen, the families decided to utilize the other name as a second forename, which they like as much as the

previously selected one. One family said that they would have liked to give the latter name (*Jolanda*) as a first name, but they found it to be too long in order to suit Finnish first names, which usually consist of two syllables. Hence, they decided to use it as a latter name. This consideration agrees with the suggestion of the *viskurilaki*, which got presented in the theoretical part of the thesis and also reveals a distinct knowledge on Finnish naming from the mother's side.

### *Third names*

The given third names got added to the chart of latter forenames. When observing their selection criteria, one can realise no major system behind their choice, which correlates with Kiviniemi's theory, according to which second forenames are mostly traditionally bound, whereas latter forenames return to a freer choice in naming.

Similar results can be found in this sample. Both second forenames of the children that were given three forenames derive from a *kin-related* name and are traditionally bound in one case. In the other family, the bound tradition concerned the mother's first name instead of the grandmother, but got altered in this case because of personal *liking* towards the name. Both third names were favourites, which did not find their place as a first name. The first one, *Jolanda*, got already discussed in the previous paragraph. The second one, *Melanie*, is the only name of the sample, which is widely used in Germany.

### 4.3.3 Latter forenames in the samples

This sub-chapter deals with the bestowal of second and third forenames in the sample. As found out, the opinions of the existing need of having to give latter forenames differ between the Finnish-German and German-German sample. This observation is explainable due to the fact that latter forenames are regarded as natural in Finland, where only one to two per cent of the population receive one name. As the bestowal of latter forenames varies in Germany from region to region and family tradition, some of the German parents did not regard the use of latter forenames as necessary. Most of the families strongly connected second forenames to kin-related naming, whether they opted for latter forenames or not. Finally, kin also received the highest ranking when selecting the final second forenames, with the grandparent-generation being honoured the most. This agrees with common research in kin-related naming (cp. with the theoretical background). The German-German families that

decided to give a second name were freer in their choice and selected the names according to other criteria. They did not practice the tradition of choosing latter forenames deriving from kin. Some of them were influenced by the Finnish environment and their habit of giving latter forenames, while others considered the sound construction to be more interesting with having multiple forenames.

I will now proceed to another culturally distinct chapter looking at the naming traditions and their execution. In this chapter I will present, whether or not the German parents were also familiar with and acted upon other Finnish naming customs.

#### **4.4 Naming traditions and their execution**

Culturally fascinating in the research is the time of choosing and publishing the final name. I was intending to find out, how far the assimilation process would go and how far the parents would be willing to bend their own and their (German) relatives' perspective about the process and the execution of naming. Taking into consideration that the bigger part of the chosen names has Finnish characteristics in derivation or spelling, it was fascinating to research whether the German families and German family members would also follow the remaining Finnish traditions.

In the interviews, the discussion about the time of choosing a name and its time of publication caused the greatest confusion and lack of understanding from German side. Most German parents could not grasp the idea of selecting or publishing a name for their child only sometime after birth. As presented in the theoretical background on the governmental regulations about naming, such customs would not be litigable in Germany, where the name of a new-born child would need to be announced to the registration office within one and four weeks after birth. Both issues will be discussed on the following pages.

##### **4.4.1 Time of choosing**

The time of selecting a name is a distinctive characteristic in Finnish and German naming traditions. This difference was also visible in the research between the two sample groups. The German-German sample chose their names before giving birth, as happened in three cases in the Finnish-German sample. Additionally to that, one name got selected after birth, according to Finnish traditions. The opposite handling can be found in the Finnish-German



sample, which rather connects to personal preference than traditions, as in two cases, the name got chosen already before pregnancy (table 14).

<b>Time of choosing</b>	<b>Finnish-German (n=6)</b>	<b>German-German (n=6)</b>
Before pregnancy	2	-
Before birth	3	6
With birth	-	-
After birth	1	-

Table 14: Time of choosing given names

All families mentioned Finnish-German discrepancies in naming traditions and stated pretty clearly, whether they decided along Finnish or German traditions in their naming process. A German mother of a Finnish-German family described her difficulties with a naming decision after birth.

Ich kann mir das gar nicht vorstellen, dass jemand da mehrere Namen hat und erst innerhalb von zwei Monaten entscheidet, wie das Kind wirklich heisst. Das kann ich mir gar nicht vorstellen, die das funktionieren soll.

[I really can't image someone having multiple names and deciding only within the first two months about the real name of the child. I really can't imagine how that should work.]

However, she asked her Finnish husband after birth, whether the child looked like a child of the chosen name, to satisfy his sense of naming. The decision was made beforehand, what followed was assurance from her Finnish family.

A Finnish father told the following about naming a child according to its looks after birth:

Kuin kertoo että, että, tietyissä kulttuureissa annetaan nimi suoraan, ja suomalaisten vastaus tähän on: ”Eihän niin voi tehdä, kun silloin olisi etukäteen päättänyt, ei voi tiedä että sopiiko sen nimen sille.” Ja tämä on absurdi muutenkin, kun vastasyntynyt tai pikkuvauva kuukauden ikäinen, ei se vielä miltä näytä, se näyttää niin kuin tortulta tai joltain muulta, ei niin kuin, on sama minkä nimen sille annetaan.

[If you tell that names are given straight away in certain cultures, the Finnish answer is like this: „You can't do that, because then you would decide in advance, you can't know if the name really suits the child.“ And that's quite absurd, because a new-born child or a one-month-old baby looks like nothing. It probably looks like a cake or something, so... it is the same what kind of name you are giving to it.]

The family decided to bestow the name with birth according to the German tradition and the father concluded with a wink in his eye that the child pretty much turned out to look like a

child of its name. Alford (1988, 126) wrote about the matter of descriptive naming in the U.S.:

Since giving children names that are descriptive of their physical or behavioral characteristics is quite rare in the U.S., there is no need to wait around to see those characteristics emerge before choosing a name.

The general consensus of the families, who chose the name before pregnancy or with birth, was that they could not imagine having a child without a name. For them, an existing name was also important in order to establish a relationship with the child itself. Still, one Finnish-German family decided to proceed according to the Finnish tradition and gave the name in the first couple of days after birth. They used the time that Finnish culture allowed them to choose a little later, since they were pondering about two favourite names.

#### 4.4.2 Time of publication

When being asked about the time of publication of the children's names, eleven out of 14 families told to have used the German tradition of making names public with the moment of birth (table 15). But also the Finnish custom got used twice within the sample group. Besides that, one German couple told to have published the name before birth within the family (more explicitly, they told it the father's parents).

<b>Time of publication</b>	<b>Finnish-German</b>	<b>German-German</b>
Before birth		1
With birth	5	6
After birth	2	

Table 15: Time of publication of given names (multiple answers possible)

In the two cases that published the name after birth, one family announced the name after they chose a final name during the first couple of days (as discussed in the previous chapter). They compromised in this sense with their German relatives and did not let them wait until Christening, but aimed to decide quickly after the child was born. The other family also compromised between German and Finnish traditions. They used the final name of their child with birth, but left it open for others to decide, whether it was the actual name or a nickname. The second forenames were not told and published at the time of the Christening.

Another family mentioned that their Finnish friends were surprised, once they found

out that the child already had a name. Some others were deflated by society's disinterest to find out the name, as it is usually asked immediately in Germany.

As a mother phrased it:

Ich hätte das jedem sofort erzählt, aber man wird hier ja gar nicht nach gefragt.  
[I would have told it immediately to everyone, but you get not asked here at all.]

And another one stated concerning the matter of different traditions (\* name changed):

Und dann war's natürlich ein bisschen nervig – die Taufe, die war wirklich erst 2 Monate nach der Geburt, dass es immer nur *Mädchen Möttinen\** war, obwohl fuer uns die Namen klar waren. Dass das keiner wissen wollte. Und egal wo du vorher hingehst, da wird's immer nur mit *Mädchen Möttinen\** aufgerufen, das Kind. Und eben wird auch nie gefragt, „Habt ihr schon nen Namen?“ oder „Hat es schon nen Namen gekriegt?“ das ist erst, wenn man es eben offiziell im offiziellen Papier reinschreibt.

[And then it was slightly annoying that — the Christening was indeed only two months after birth— that is was only *girl Möttinen\**, even though the name was clear for us. That no one cared. No matter where you are going, the girl is being called *girl Möttinen\**. And no one asks "Do you already have a name?" or "Has is already gotten a name?" This is only when you put it officially into the papers.]

Dealing with the topic of the existing given name was challenging for many families. Still, they were able to accept it as a unique cultural difference, and also got used to the fact to be the only family in hospital giving birth to a child and knowing the name of the child at the same time.

#### 4.4.3 Temporary name

Many Finnish soon-to-be and young parents use the tool of a temporary name or working title for their child until they would select the final name. In this sense, it also seemed interesting to find out whether such a name was in use in the families.

As shown in table 16, half of the sample used a temporary name for their child. However, as seen in the previous chapter, there was no German-German family that left the naming decision open until sometime after birth, so it is questionable, whether it can really be referred to as a *temporary name* in the Finnish sense. On the other hand, it is not popular to use the real name for an unborn child in Germany either, even if the name got chosen already well before birth.

Temporary name	Finnish-German (n=6)	German-German (n=6)
Yes	3	3
No	3	3

Table 16: Usage of a temporary name during pregnancy

Interestingly enough, the temporary names of both sample groups varied.

In the German-German group, three names derived from animal names or nicknames connected to animals, while the names in the Finnish-German group could be considered as nick names or personal names for humans. Two names in the samples were connected to the unborn child directly. One of them referred to its looks, the other one to its behaviour. One Finnish-German couple practised the name the child was going to receive as a final name. However, they changed their mind and went with another name. From my point of view, this one could be regarded as a temporary name in its original sense and the way it would be used by Finnish parents. Worth mentioning is also that this Finnish-German family, did not make use of a temporary name at all. As in many cases, it also depends on personal taste and individual liking, than on traditions that are being lived on.

Just as taking on naming customs of another country are related to personal taste, so is the perception of names by others. This will be the topic of the following chapter.

#### 4.5 On the reception of the forenames in Germany and Finland

Kaksi *e*:tä ja yksi *l* ja sitten... jo. Just noin.  
 [Two *e* and one *l* and then... yeah, just like that.]  
 (Father of *Neela*)

In the following chapter, the reception of the given names will be discussed. Furthermore, I will question the initial naming intentions and their success on the basis of the chapter of naming motives.

First and foremost it is important to mention that the families of the sample did not pay great attention to how the final name got perceived, once the child was born. Few said that they were sceptical and slightly uncertain about their appreciation before birth, but this feeling disappeared once the name bearer was present. All the families expressed to have received good feedback about their naming choice. Some of them had been congratulated for their choice of names, others were told that relatives had to get used to the (for them) strange name,

but the general reception was positive. What follows are interesting remarks about the reception, which came up with the course of time and are connected to the bilingual environment of the families.

#### 4.5.1 Reception in Finland

The families, who have chosen a distinctly Finnish name, stated that their environment was surprised about their decision. The Finns were honoured and flattered, and some even admitted that they would not have done the same if they had been living abroad. This might link to the high amount of girls in the study, who are more likely to receive loan names and names of the host society (as researched by Oelkers, 2003). Even though I would also suggest that Germans are not as bound to their traditional names as Finns, I could not find any valuable information to support this argument. Despite the big amount of close-to-Finnish or Finnish names chosen, there was some space left for misunderstandings or different opinions.

When Neela gets introduced to Finns, she is usually understood as *Leena*, which is a common name in Finland. Her father's family was shocked to find out that she doesn't have a name day, which is still an important occasion in Finland (compare with Kiviniemi 2006).

Jalo got the same name as his grandfather's dog. Because of that, the grandfather was not in favour for the name in the beginning. He also had another reason, why the name would be unsuitable, as seen in this little quote from the father:

“You can't give those names, because there is that song...” and then I was well, asking it from around... “Who knows that song?” And no-one knows that anymore, so...

The forgotten song the grandfather had concerns about is *Pieni Sydän* by *Harmony Sisters* and starts with *Aaatosta jaloa ja alhaista mieltä*. It is from the 1930s and is indeed not very popular anymore.

*Luzie* and *Leonie* are pronounced [luʔsiə] and [leoniə] in Finland, whenever people are reading the name without having heard it before. This is in accordance with Finnish pronunciation rules of the opening diphthong *ie* (cp. ISK § 21). In German language, *ie* is not considered as a diphthong. Instead, the *e* functions as lengthening *e*, which produces the pronunciation [i:].

Frida's grandparents had some troubles pronouncing the *f* when the girl was little and called her *Rita*. The situation improved, but shows nicely that *f* is a considerably new letter in

the Finnish alphabet and not a part of the original Finnish word pool as such (see ISK § 6). Apart from that, the parents have to answer the question, whether the girl is spelled with one or two *i*, which derives from the fact that both of them pronounce the *i* a little too long for the Finnish taste.

*Henrik* is often misspelled as *Henri*, which is the more common first name in Finland. Instead, *Henrik* is rather used as a second forename, which can be verified in Kiviniemi (2006, 319), according to which the name *Henri* was used 13170 times, 84 per cent of that as a first name. *Henrik*, on the other hand found its use 34660 times, but was only appointed to be the first name in 8 per cent of all cases. Apart from that the parents told that the name *Henrik* is shortened to *Henka* in the kindergarten, which might sound normal to a Finnish ear. However, it gets very close to the German *Henker*, hangman. The pronunciation is almost the same, as in most German regions *-er* in the end of the word gets reduced to [ɐ] in spoken language.

The inspiration to the name *Alva* came from *Alvar* and *Alma*, which are both well-known names in Finland. As a result of the naming process, the parents are asked whether it is a typically German name, because *Alva* is still a relatively uncommon name in Finland. It is not a German name, but was in the top ten of the most common names in Sweden in 2008, which was new to the parents, until they were told so. Moreover, *Alva* was one of the few names that got admitted for both girls and boys during the last decades (Kiviniemi 2006, 126). According to the Name Service, *Alva* is more common for girls and also increasing in popularity. It is thus expected that questions about the name would diminish in Finland over time.

#### 4.5.2 Reception in Germany

Before making remarks on the reception of the names in Germany, here a few comments about how the German parents themselves are handling the names. All of them told to pronounce the names as Finnish as possible, but often, tiny details make the difference. One example is the pronunciation of *Neela*. Her parents' different articulation confuses the girl and she comments on them. While the mother says [ne:la], the father calls her [nä:la]. *Frida* gets pronounced a little too long by both of her parents for having only one *i* in her name. They are aware of the fact and continue using it in the way they like her name to sound. The father of Lumi is teaching himself, how to say the name correctly. Occasionally he gets caught

pronouncing the *u* too long and he needs to remind himself to say it shorter. A similar anecdote is told by Alva's mother, who requires some self-direction to remember that she needs to put the stress onto the first instead of the second syllable.

As of speaking about the German relatives and friends, there were also challenges.

*Aino* for example gets often misspelled as *Eino*, which is correct according to German grammar, where *ei* is pronounced [aɪ]. However, in Finland, this quickly turns a woman's into a men's name, moreover into an old-fashioned one. The question about the gender of *Aino* also occurs, as forenames ending in *-o* is an indicator of a men's name in Germany (see Seibicke 2008). The situation is different in Finland, because it derives from the national epos *Kalevala* and links to a native Finnish word, such a most names of this category (e.g. *Muisto*, *Sisko*, *Pirjo*, *Marjo*).

Some confusion might also arise in *Taru*'s case. A female name ending in *-u* is rare in Germany, and she could be mistaken for a boy. The grandmother of the girl did not like the name in the beginning, but had to admit after a while that “in fact, it is a pretty nice name.”

*Alva* tends to get pronounced as [alfa] in Germany. There are two distinct ways of pronouncing *v* in German, one is the voiced labiodental fricative [v] (*Vase*, *Voliere*, *Klavier*) the other one is the voiceless labiodental fricative [f] (as in *Vogel*, *Vorwand*, *Hannover*). Despite a concrete rule for the pronunciation of *v*, it is said that the original German pronunciation is [f] while loanwords and distinctive foreign words are usually pronounced [v] (Deutsche Welle 2006). What makes the pronunciation of *Alva* more challenging for Germans is the fact that there is the equivalent, namely *Alfa/Alpha* (the Greek letter) existent. Additionally to that, it is often asked whether *Alva* is a typically Finnish name (cp. the reception in Finland).

Some Germans did not perceive the denotation of *Lumi* too positively. Often, they connect snow with coldness and unpleasant feelings. The family itself stated that they love Finnish winter, and wanted to dedicate the daughter's name to it and the time in Finland. Another association to *Lumi* is the dialectal *lumig* or *schlumig*, which refers to a cheeky monkey.

*Henrik* sometimes gets misspelled as *Hendrik* in Germany, which is slightly more common than the version without *d*. In spoken language, detecting the difference between both names is nearly impossible.

The parents of *Maija* are quite aware of the fact that they need to add a little sentence describing the spelling of their daughter's name every time it gets introduced to a stranger (*Maija with i and j*). They know that there is a number of variations of this name existent

(*Maja, Maya, Maia, Maija*), which can lead to confusion.

Jalo's parents heard from his German grandmother that she knows a dog called *Jola*, which is, according to her, almost the same as *Jalo*. Luckily some time passed and she got used to the name, as did Jalo's Finnish grandfather.

*Eliisa* gets regularly misspelled as *Elisa*. With reason, because *Eliisa* is not a name that a German person without any knowledge of Finnish grammar would ever think of.

The name *Luzie* is not very common, but has a lot of related names. Most often, the parents have to add, whether the name is spelled with *z* or *c*.

*Aatos* as such is an uncommon name for Germans that might lead to confusion at first. However, there is a memory hook, which makes also Germans remember and like the name pretty easily:

*Aatos*, like the musketeer, but with double *a* and without *h*.

#### 4.5.3 Were the parents' initial naming intentions fulfilled?

Having seen the responses from German and Finnish relatives, friends and officials, one might wonder whether the parents consider their initial naming intention to be successful.

Most of the parents had the opinion that their initial wishes for their child's name got realised. They were aware that it is hard to find a name, which would please everyone. More importantly, it was not objective of the naming procedure. Most of them strived to find a name that would *fit both cultures* or would be *international*, while keeping a *Finnish attribute* to it. What they aimed for was finding a name that would please them and hopefully please the child later on. Furthermore, they wished to choose a name that would cause the least amount of problems in daily life and would not make it harder for their child in any way. Still, there are things that become clear only after some time, as one Finnish father tells:

Me onnistuttiin valitsemaan nimi, joka ei ole suomalainen eikä saksalainen, kun me yritettiin valita nimi, joka on suomalainen ja on saksalainen. Ja ehkä me siis onnistettiin, mutta se ei ole vahvasti suomalainen nimi, eikä se ole nyt saksalainen.

[We succeeded in choosing a name that is neither Finnish nor German, even though we tried to choose one that is both Finnish and German. And probably we still succeeded, just that it is not a strong Finnish name... nor a German one.]

Henrik's parents succeeded in finding an *international name* that is also *suitable in both languages*. However, they did not foresee the innovativeness of Finnish children in creating nick names.



The parents of Aino mentioned that they also would like to have a name that is *suitable in both languages*. At the moment, Germans are asking, where the name comes from, but they take it easily and explain their child's beautiful name. Questions, as they say, would have come nevertheless, no matter what kind of Finnish name they would have chosen.

*Paula* and *Johanna* got positive feedback in both countries as being also easy to remember, international and classic names and the parents felt they succeeded in their naming.

A German mother told how she learned using the name as an answer to the question whether another naming process would be easier:

Niin, kun tietää jo tavallaan, mitä vaatimuksia nimellä on... sillä lailla että, mitä mä on silloin lukenut usein että... ”kokeilkaa sen nimen huutaessa ...vaikka pihalla, vai metsässä, että jaksatko oikeasti 100 kertaa päivässä sanoa sen nimen” ja se on toiminut oikein hyvin, se ei ollut mitään semmoisia... ei se ollut vielä ärsyttävää.

[Yeah, because now you kind of already know, what kind of requirements a name should have...in a way that, what I read kind of often that...”Try out screaming the name...e.g. on the yard or in a forest, so you are really sure that you can say that name 100 times a day” and it worked pretty well, it wasn't somehow... it hasn't gotten annoying yet.]

In addition to that, she was pleased to hear that the name, *Frida*, is liked a lot and that foreign colleagues can remember it immediately. Also the parents of *Lumi* were happy that Germans like the initially uncommon name once they got accustomed with its denotation. They instantly realise *Lumi* as being a female name thanks to the ending in *-i* and are able to remember the short name, even though they might have never heard it before.

The overall position of parents was that their intentions of naming were generally successful. However, living in another country does not only potentially influence the naming of children, but does of other opportunities and consequences, as well. This will be the topic of the following chapter.

#### **4.6 Living in two cultures – its influences on naming and beyond**

This chapter will discuss the sample groups' point of view on living in a multicultural environment and their opinion on their degree of integration. It will cover how the families stay in contact with the German language and culture while living in Finland, and what intentions they have regarding their children's further education in that matter. Moreover, it will also spread light on the hypothetical questions of whether the parents would have chosen

a different name in Germany and whether they think that the cultural integration would be easier with the final name.

#### 4.6.1 Keeping track of German culture

Living in another country offers various challenges to the immigrant – a new social environment with unknown customs and traditions, a new language and a bureaucratic system that might vary greatly from the home country. In order to overcome these challenges and to keep contact with the German culture and language while being abroad, a broad network of German-speaking institutions exists in Finland. These might become increasingly important once there is a child born in an environment that is different from the parents' or one parent's origin. During the time of the research, I wanted to gain an overview on whether the interviewed families made use of the German institutions in Finland and for which reason.

The Finnish-German associations were known in the sample for different reasons. Mostly, other German friends introduced the associations to the parents. In other cases they found information about the associations while searching for a job or for other information about Finland in the Internet.

<b>Finnish-German Associations</b>	<b>FG (n= 5)</b>	<b>GG (n=5)</b>
Knowledge	5	5
Interested in activities	4	4
Not interested in activities	1	1

Table 17: Interest in Finnish-German Associations

As presented in table 17, eight out of ten families were interested in the activities of the associations. The remaining two families stated two different reasons why they would not like to be involved. The Finnish-German family recognized that their local Finnish-German association was mostly formed by Finns, which would not serve the purpose of the association, namely being in touch with other native speakers to foster the language learning of the children. The German-German family decided that learning Finnish should be the main priority, which is why contact with other German speakers was not considered to be beneficial.

Regarding the eight families, who stated to be interested in the associations, a clear distinction between the Finnish-German and German-German sample could be found when

having a look at the actual previous involvement as shown in table 18.

While all four Finnish-German families were already involved in the associations, none of the German-German families had used the services before.

<b>Finnish-German Associations</b>	<b>FG (n=4)</b>	<b>GG (n=4)</b>
Playgroup	3	-
Excursions and events	1	-
No involvement yet	-	4

Table 18: Involvement in activities of Finnish-German Associations

Attending one of the German playgroups for young children was the most attractive activity for all parents. It was important for them that their children would get in contact with other German-speaking children in a natural environment, which would offer an additional stimulus to their language-learning.

The playgroup was also priority for the German-German speakers. Without having a child, interest in attending activities of the Finnish-German associations might not have sparked at all. Some questions got raised by many German-German families, while speaking about the topic: “Why should they spend time with German-speakers now that they are living abroad? Why should the language of a person determine, whether to spend time with him? How is it that immigrants start shuffling together once they left their country of origin?”

The families were aiming to spend time with their international and Finnish friends and wanted interest in the person to be the first reason for their meeting. However, once the child was born, they learned about the advantages a playgroup like this might offer to the child, namely speaking the mother tongue together with children of their own age. This is what home education, the media, DVDs, audio books and singing parents could not offer – discovering the world in German together with other children.

#### 4.6.2 Stepping into Finnish society

The objective of nearly all parents was to facilitate the involvement of their children in Finnish society. As it might seem easier for young humans to learn a new language and to adapt to another environment, the German part of the interviewed parents was striving to get used to and to master the Finnish language in their own way.

The early education of children provided an almost uniform picture of parental

decision-making. Nine out of twelve families decided to send their children to a Finnish-speaking kindergarten, as presented in table 19.

<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Finnish-German (n=6)</b>	<b>German-German (n=6)</b>
Finnish-speaking	4	5
German-speaking	1	-
Other	1	-
Undecided at time of research	-	1

Table 19: Education of children

The reasons for choosing mostly *Finnish kindergartens* varied from being part of Finnish society, learning the Finnish language, practicality and the quality of the Finnish educational system. Regardless of the plans that they might have for the further education of the children, they recognized that laying the grounds with a Finnish kindergarten would be beneficial for their children's further development.

One of the Finnish-German children attends a *German-speaking* kindergarten, even though the stronger language of the majority of children is Finnish. Nevertheless, the family saw an advantage of an upbringing by German-speaking nursery-teachers. Another family currently educated their children at home, while a German-German family had not yet pondered over the different opportunities at the time of research.

While the children learn Finnish either at home from their Finnish parent and/or in the educational institutions, the learning process proved to be more challenging for the adults. All of the non-Finnish parents started to learn Finnish at some point. Some of them surrendered, others master the language proficiently in their life. The big part of the German parents took advantage of Finnish-courses offered by Finnish universities; others already studied Finnish in Germany as soon as they knew they would move to Finland. As one German mother put it:

Das ist so ein Lebensprojekt, wenn man Finnisch lernen möchte.  
[Learning Finnish is a project for life.]

And thus they continue discovering the well-hidden beauty of Finnish. Having a child with improving Finnish skills at home was seen to be supportive throughout the learning process. Firstly, because it encouraged the non-Finnish-speakers to study more intensively in order to keep track of the child's development. Secondly, because the own child proved to be the parent's teacher after a successful day in the kindergarten in more than one case.

#### 4.6.3 Living in a bilingual environment

Having the advantage of living abroad and being surrounded by multiple languages also has its challenges, especially when bringing up a child. Table 20 pictures the situation of the languages used at home within the families.

<b>Language used at home</b>	<b>FG (n= 6)</b>	<b>GG (n=6)</b>
German	1	6
German / native Finnish to child	1	-
Finnish	-	-
Finnish / German	1	-
Finnish / native German to child	1	-
Finnish/English / native German to child	2	-

Table 20: Languages spoken at home

In all German-German families, German remains the main language spoken at home between the parents, as well as between parents and children. One German-German couple decided to speak only dialect at home, in order to keep their children close to this language environment (in the table marked as German).

The situation is different in the Finnish-German sample. Here, German is used as the main language once, as well as is a strict separation between Finnish and German. In two cases, either German or Finnish is used at the main language at home, while the other language is only spoken by its native when communicating with the child. The remaining two cases use a mixture of English and Finnish as main languages and German is taught to the child by the native parent. Finnish as the only language is used in none of the families.

As stated by especially the Finnish-German families, this mixture of languages often presents a challenge to the parents, even more so when both parents are able to understand German and Finnish alike. Necessary are a high amount of attentiveness and the steady conscious use of the language, whenever the child is close-by, in order to lay the grounds for an equal language-learning. On the other side it requires compromises and the need to switch languages also in the presence of the child, for example when being in public.

#### 4.6.4 Dependency of the country of residence on the naming decision

After conducting the first two interviews, a few questions were added to the research. The hypothetical question, whether the parents would have chosen a different name if they were living in Germany at the time of pregnancy and birth was one of them. The question was aiming to find out, whether the parents themselves considered the (language) environment to be a decisive factor in the naming process.

As a result of the ten given answers can be observed that variations between German-Finnish and German-German answers are only minor (see table 21). However, the reasoning behind the answers was different.

Another name in Germany?	FG (n=5)	GG (n=5)
Yes	1	2
No	3	2
Partly	1	1

Table 21: Dependency of the country of residence on the naming decision

Both German-German families, who would have chosen a *different name*, told that the country-reference would have missed and thus the child would have received a different name. On the other side, the Finnish-German family would have chosen a Finnish name instead, as to point out the bilingual background of their child.

The German-German families who answered that the name would have stayed as it is today, declared that their chosen forenames were not connected with the country as such, and would have been an option nevertheless. For the Finnish-German families, the current name was a realistic option as to display the bilingual background of their children. For one family, German names were not attractive at all, which is why they would have also chosen the *same name* in Germany.

The German-German family, who would have altered the name *partly*, reasoned that the second forename would not have come to mind. They also believed it was rather probable that the child would not have received a second forename altogether. The Finnish-German family with the same result would have changed the orthography of the name to make it more appropriate in the German-speaking environment while keeping a name of Finnish descent.

#### 4.6.5 Naming as a supportive attribute for integration

Resulting from the last reasoning whether the localities have an impact on the naming process, one might ask, what kind of influence the names would have additionally. This is why the question, whether the parents consider it to be easier for the child to be integrated into Finnish society with the present name, was added to the interview.

Almost all families, who got asked this question, agreed that the current name would more or less simplify either the integration of the child or then make the bureaucratic procedures in Finland a little easier. The results are presented in table 22.

Easier for the child?	FG (n=4)	GG (n=4)
Yes	4	3
No	-	-
Undecided	-	1

Table 22: Naming as supportive attribute for integration

However, families were also aware that a name cannot be the only sign of integration, even though it was paid attention that it would not be too distant from the Finnish naming system.

Out of the German-German families, who answered that it would be *easier* with the current name, two different motives were mentioned. The first one was the internationalism of the chosen name. This would not only support the integration in Finland but also in another country. The other side of this motive was supported by the fact that a typical and old German name would have been counterproductive in Finland. The second attribute referred to the perspective of how the name is received by Finns. With them liking the name and with feeling a little proud that obvious foreigners would choose a Finnish name, the will to integrate oneself in Finnish society is visible. In this sense, they considered their naming decision supportive for the child.

The German-German family who chose to be *indecisive* justified their answer by the fact that the family might not spend a long time in Finland anymore. Independent of whether the current name might be supportive or not, the answer might turn around within only a year of time in another country.

The Finnish-German families commonly agreed that this solution was the easiest for their children. However, various reasons could be found. Firstly, the motive of internationality got mentioned alike to one German-German family, which aimed to find a suitable name for different countries and not only for Finland. Another explanation was the cruelty of other

children. With choosing a rather typical name in Finland, they wanted to prevent being called names by other children in later life. One answer was exceptional in the sense, as the matter of discussion switched to the child's last name. Here, the (unmarried) family agreed to give the Finnish last name to their child, as it would make the handling with Finnish bureaucracy considerably easier.

Concluding one can say that matters of integration got reflected by the parents when choosing the name of their child, even though they were not directly stated as motives in the beginning. However, the genuine degree of integration has different faces. It could stretch from integrating into a group of other (Finnish) children to filling out documents in Finland up to a fully cultural and social integration as a (German) Finnish child.

#### 4.6.6 What hopes are there related to the child's ethnicity?

Taken that parents considered the past two questions in the naming process as relevant, the interview took one further step and questioned the possible ethnical identity of the child. What, in the opinion of the parents, hopes are there for the child in relation to his or her ethnicity: A German, a Finnish child or a Finnish-German child? What could the most probable result be? The result is presented in table 23.

Potential ethnicity	FG (n=6)	GG (n=6)
Finnish	3	2
German	-	1
Finnish-German	2	2
Different answers	1	1

Table 23: What hopes are there related to the child's ethnicity?

Five families stated the likeliness that their child would be more *Finnish* than German. Out of these five families, the Finnish-German couples were the majority (three Finnish-German and two German-German families). Three of the five families expressed that their children would already now behave more Finnish than German, and that the Finnish language would have a stronger impact on the children's lives. This also included one German-German family, where the language spoken at home is German. The remaining two families mentioned that with time, Finnish would become the stronger language and culture, if the family decided to stay in the country.



Only one family (German-German) said that the child would become more *German* than Finnish. The reason for that was the plan to leave the country in the near future, so that the impact of the cultural environment would be only minor for the child.

Four families answered that the child is likely to become a *Finnish-German* child. All of the families with this answer hoped that the children would be fluent in both languages and cultures and are trying their best to keep a steady connection to Germany with the help of regular visits and with practicing German customs and traditions while living in Finland. In doing so, they wanted to enable their children to feel at home in both cultures.

Two families *could not predict* an answer to the question. The Finnish-German family agreed that they strive to connect the child to both cultures. However, the results of these intentions could not be measured yet and will only be answered in the future. They concluded that they would like their child to be international, which could enable them to live in other cultures more easily. The German-German family stated that the child should decide later on his or own, in which culture he or she would feel at home. The parents had the opinion that their influence on the child's cultural identity was rather minor.

As could be seen from the results, the opinions on the children's future identities were mixed, not between the cultural groups but within them. This can be partly traced back to the children's ages. While some of the children got already actively in touch with their Finnish environment in kindergarten and through Finnish friends, other children were barely born. In the first case, the parents already had an understanding of the impact the Finnish environment has on the children's development, in the latter case the parents had to make assumptions about this development based on their knowledge and wealth of experience. No doubt that a longer stay in Finland would increase the impact of the country on the child's future identity. It would be interesting to see how these opinions will change with time. However, for the time of the interview, the question got asked as to connect the process of naming, locality and identity. The reason was to find out to what extent the parents themselves have considered these questions in the naming process and while bringing up a child in another country.

Chapter four comprised the analysis of the research data. Starting from the inspiration and media usage when collecting ideas for possible names, it went to the actual given first and latter forenames, their selection motives and reasons why not to choose different ones. It also presented the usage of Finnish naming customs before and after birth. Taking a time leap, the chapter offered information of how the name was perceived by the Finnish- and German-speaking environment and whether, now that the child is born, the parents considered their naming intentions to be successful. Finally, it discussed questions of integration and ethnical

identity of the children and their name's possible influence on it. Concluding, I will now move on to the research findings of my thesis in the final chapter.

## 5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Master's thesis *Living names, naming lives* discussed the naming procedures of Germans living in Finland in an empirical manner. It researched the naming-decisions of twelve families, linked them to the traditions of naming in Finland and Germany and the families' multicultural everyday life. In the introductory chapter, I presented my research questions, which guided me through the process and to which I would like to return now. After answering the research questions, I will make suggestions for further research on this very interesting topic.

### 5.1 Homecoming – the research questions

#### 5.1.1 If any, what are the key differences in the sample groups' decisions?

In the course of the research, differences between the sample groups could be identified. Thus, the use of two samples instead of one common group was regarded as useful and nourishing for the research. This advantage presented itself already during the time of the interviews, and became even clearer as I proceeded with the analysis of the data.

Between the sample groups, I could observe three major differences. As I will return to them in later parts of this chapter, I will only note them shortly.

The first difference was the affirmative attributes of first names' motives. Here, the German-German sample wanted to create a connection to Finland. Four times, the attribute of *Related to Finland* got mentioned in this sample, only once in the Finnish-German group. Instead, they tended to strive for motives of internationality in their naming process.

The second distinction could be observed in the amount of given second and third forenames. Whereas all Finnish-German families decided to give latter forenames, only half of the German-German families chose to do so.

The third variety between the sample groups was found in the practice of Finnish naming traditions. Even though the number of parents practicing Finnish customs was low in the Finnish-German sample, no family of the German-German sample decided to adopt these customs for themselves.

### 5.1.2 What kind of names did parents choose for their children?

The present contains a collection of sixteen forenames. Seven in sixteen names are of distinctively Finnish origin (*Aatos, Aino, Eliisa, Jalo, Lumi, Maija* and *Taru*). Three first names have Latin origins (*Paula, Luzie* and *Leonie*). Out of them, only *Paula* is common in Finland. Two names have Hebrew origins (*Alva* and *Johanna*), with the first one increasing in popularity in Finland (also as a boys' name) and the latter one being commonly known in many countries. Finally, two first names (*Frida* and *Henrik*) have Germanic origins, with *Henrik* being a known latter first name in Finland. *Neela*, which comes from Sanskrit, is uncommon in Finland.

The second forenames were of more diverse origins. The greatest amount of second forenames derived from Old Greek (*Leena, Jolanda, Eleonora, Melanie, Aliina*) and Latin (*Magnus, Silja, Pauliina, Reina*). Two names originated each from Hebrew (*Jere, Maria*) and Old French (*Blanca, Aili*). One name (*Matilda*) has Germanic origins and *Darius* derived from Old Persian. Also in this collection one could see, how parents customized their names to the Finnish spelling and pronunciation. Five names (*Leena, Aliina, Silja, Pauliina, Aili*) have distinctive Finnish spelling, while *Maria* is commonly used as second forename in Finland.

### 5.1.3 What media got used in the naming process?

As found out in the course of study, the timely limitation as a selection criterion of participants was beneficial in order to equalize the variety of families participating in the research. This got reflected already in the part about media usage in selecting a name. Despite the popularity of the internet, parents most commonly relied on books, and used the internet only for short look-ups. Taking advantage of native speakers during the decision-making process was a tool used by mostly the German-German families as to prevent the selection of unsuitable or out-dated names.

### 5.1.4 What factors were of importance during the naming process?

In the process of selection, I intended to find out about affirmative and exclusionary attributes of the naming decision. I abstained from using the existing models presented in the theoretical

background for a reason, as it was the aim to come as close as possible to the genuine selection motives of the parents. By restricting the naming motives to one of the existing models (e.g. Kiviniemi, Seibicke or Vilkuna), valuable information that played a decisive role in the binational context could have been lost.

Having a second look at the naming motives of the sample groups, it would be possible to generate a naming model for both samples. However, the fact that the German-German motives were more homogenous in their affirmative preferences needs to be considered. The Finnish-German families bestowed their motives on a broader number of criteria, which is why the highest number of remarks about a single certain criterion was only three, as shown in table 24.

	<b>Finnish-German (affirmative)</b>	<b>German-German (affirmative)</b>	<b>Finnish-German (exclusionary)</b>	<b>German-German (exclusionary)</b>
1	International (3)	Sound (6)	Fashionable (4)	Presence of <i>r</i> (3)
2	Suitable in both languages (3)	Same pronunciation in both languages (4)	Presence of <i>r</i> (3)	Unclear sex (2)
3	Easy (3)	Matches last name (4)	Difficult Finnish name (2)	Bad denotation (2)
4	Short (2)	Related to Finland (4)	Bad associations (2)	Bad associations (2)
5	Liking (2)	Liking (3)	Danger of teasing (2)	Danger of teasing (2)

Table 24: First naming attributes in comparison (with number of reference)

The topic becomes even more interesting when recollecting the selection criteria and of latter forenames. In table 25, I present a summary of the four affirmative and exclusionary attributes.

	<b>Finnish-German (affirmative)</b>	<b>German-German (affirmative)</b>	<b>Finnish-German (exclusionary)</b>	<b>German-German (exclusionary)</b>
1	Kin (6)	Why not (2)	-	Lack of usage (3)
2	Possible first name (3)	Distinctive attribute (1)	-	Out-dated tradition (1)
3	Systematic naming (1)	Better sound (1)	-	Simplicity (1)
4	Denotation (1)	Switching names (1)	-	-

Table 25: Latter naming attributes in comparison (with number of reference)

It has to be added that also *distinctive attribute* and *better sound* got mentioned each ones in the Finnish-German sample. However, the clear difference is that the Finnish-German sample commonly relied on *kin-related* naming, which was in most cases traditionally bound. At the

same time, kin was not used as a selection criterion in the German-German sample.

The other clear distinction between both samples is that all parents in the Finnish-German sample chose second forenames for their children, while the ratio was 50 per cent in the German-German group.

#### 5.1.5 How do Finnish and German naming practices differ?

Finnish and German naming practices do not differ in a way that would make a name bestowal for the other culture insurmountable. Both languages follow the same naming system and derive from comparable origins. The naming corpuses show similarities in both languages. However I would argue that the Finnish naming system is slightly more traditional than its German equivalent. This can be recognized from the higher percentage of multiple forenames, and the living traditions of kin-related naming. Despite the fact that they are also decreasing in Finland, the importance is higher than in Germany. Furthermore, the time of selecting the name, as well as its time of publication varies from one country to the other. Also the importance of name days in Finland needs to be mentioned in this respect. While in Germany, name days are almost exclusively celebrated in catholic or orthodox regions, they are actively recognized in Finnish families and media.

In conclusion I would argue that the obstacles between Finnish and German naming practices can be overcome. I personally regard the biggest challenge in the difference between both countries' traditions in naming gender.

#### 5.1.6 How do Finnish naming practices affect Germans living in Finland?

The effect of Finnish naming practices as such was minor. The German-German sample actively executed German traditions in selecting and publishing the name. This also happened in the majority of the Finnish-German sample. Only one family chose the name after birth, and names were published after the children were born only in two cases. The issue of having a name day for the child was mentioned by parents, but was of no major importance for them. Rather, it was the (Finnish) grandparents' generation, who wanted to ensure that the child could celebrate his or her name day.

Kin-related naming was practiced in the Finnish-German sample as a selection criterion for latter forenames. However, it was not mentioned by the German-German group,

where the percentage of bestowing a second or third forename was also considerably lower. It remained partly unclear, whether the constellations of the Finnish-German sample in regards to naming traditions were lucky, or whether the longer stay in the country and the Finnish spouse were decisive in the final results. Undoubtedly, the number of given latter names in the German-German sample was relatively low. Still, it has to be stressed that only one mother in the sample has a second name herself. In contrast, 100 per cent of families selected latter names for their children in the Finnish-German sample, but only two in six mothers do not bear a second name themselves.

Considering the number of children in the study (sixteen), the answers of parent's proved that additional Finnish naming practices were of no major influence on the sample group. This result is rather surprising, thinking about the number of names with Finnish grammatical construction in both samples. Also the motive of having a name with relation to Finland, which was stated in the German-German sample four times, could have led to a different assumption. Partly, the result is explainable due to the fact that parents did not want to confuse their German relatives with distinct naming traditions. Partly, parents themselves could not imagine using any other traditions than their own, which makes a tradition exactly what it is – an inherited and established custom. This result also signifies that cultural differences do play a role in naming, even when speaking about two relatively close cultures such as in the case of Germany and Finland.

#### 5.1.7 How does the length of stay in Finland affect the naming decision?

The research question whether a shorter stay would affect the bestowal of a Finnish name negatively, could not be finally verified. Arguable is that a research of this size can offer adequate trends, which is why I would prefer not to judge it. The initial research question was pointed out, as I expected less names of Finnish origin. I expected the number of names to increase with the years spent in the country. The study proved the opposite and showed a high degree of integration when looking at the given forenames. This is even more astonishing if the length of stay in the country is considered. The average time of stay in the German-German sample was four years. The German parents of the Finnish-German sample had stayed in Finland for an average of 9,6 years. Three of the seven distinctively Finnish names got selected in the German-German sample, which accounts for 50 per cent of the children in the sample. It remains open whether the Germans present in the German-German sample were

especially open to selecting Finnish names, or whether four years spent in the country suffice as to affect the naming decision to this degree.

#### 5.1.8 What does the name reveal about the families' state of integration?

Judging from the analysis of the interviews, I think all participants are willing to integrate into Finnish culture. This opinion gets verified by concrete answers of the parents themselves. They also showed the will to integrate by selecting Finnish names or the Finnish version of an international name for their children. In the country, they are holding attractive positions, are trying to learn the language and enjoy being in Finland for multiple years, which then got reflected in the naming decision. It got further confirmed by the parents' future plans for their children's education and the answers received in the question about the children's possible identity. Obviously, I doubt that the naming decision reveals anything about the state of integration of the children at the time of the research, but I do think that some parents might be surprised by the impact of Finnish language on their children.

Taking the selection criteria and results of the analysis into consideration, the direct impact of the Finnish environment on the naming decision was higher than anticipated. Out of both sample groups, I would only exclude one German-German family, who was not influenced by their country of residence. Instead, the family chose names of another favoured culture and had concrete moving plans at the time of research. Still, they were actively participating in Finnish social life and the child went to a Finnish-speaking kindergarten.

#### 5.1.9 Do parents consider the name as a potential shaper of identity?

Almost all the parents took the choice of the forenames very seriously and also considered it as a potential shaper of identity. With saying almost, I would need to refer to one Finnish father, who offered amazing insights during the time of the interview, which were not used in the study so far.

Wie gesagt, den Namen wählen, war früher, war anders. Ich weiß nicht, wie das jetzt ist, aber .... Nein. Der Name war... das ist nicht so ein Prozess in Finnland, den nimmt man...man nimmt nur einen Namen.

[Like I said..., choosing a name was, was different in the past. I don't know how it is today, but.... No. The name was... that was not such a procedure in Finland, you just take it... you just take a name.]



His remark is worth considering and broadens the scope of the study. It is likely that too much attention is paid to naming and names, and very likely that not every person would devote a thesis to the topic. However, other participants were eagerly interested in naming for a long time, and paid great attention to the selection. The connection to the further ethnical identity of the child was not considered to be relevant by some parents. Still, I argue that by choosing a name of Finnish origin or according to Finnish spelling, they actively stepped towards shaping the reception of the child's identity in the future. Similarly, many stated the wish to illustrate the connection to the country in the name and seven out of eight families answered that the given name would simplify the child's integration. Hence I think that this question cannot be answered completely and believe that the naming process reveals more about the parent's in their period of establishing a partly new identity through parenthood and living abroad. The given name can only be a piece of the big puzzle of personal and ethnical identity. However, it remains to be a piece, which will be part of the children's whole life. It is undeniable that the larger amount of work on the children's future identity takes place right now, in the kindergarten, schools and the homes of the families. Despite this fact and their further development, the name will remain and will reveal something about the initial intentions of the parents at the moment of birth. Whether the living names will name the lives of the children is a future topic. For now, parents gave a name to their lives – in Finland.

## **5.2 Further research**

Further research of the topic in form of e.g. a doctoral thesis is desirable, but largely limited due to the number of Germans living in Finland and Germans with young children in Finland respectively.

In order to gain valuable results in a new study, it would be advantageous to have a bigger sample group and to conduct the research quantitatively. In order to simplify the research process, using a standardized survey instead of conducting interviews could be beneficial. On the other side, this method would skip parents' anecdotes, which make the topic of naming so fascinating.

The topic could be further investigated in multiple ways. Of importance would be to research the naming of boys, which was not paid enough attention to in the present study. It is thus advisable to establish a selection criterion of the number of children than the number of parents. Continuing from that point, one could compare the naming of sexes in the Finnish-

German context in terms of kin-relation, multiple forenames and individualization. If the matter of interest was the naming procedures of different classes, there would be the need of including it as a research criterion.

In the current study, it would be worth tracking the ethnic identity of parents and children, the further development of the children, as well as the future reception of the names in the form of a long-term research. The ethnic identity of the families was not part of the original research, but easily found its way into the thesis with the problematic of selecting Finnish names.

Furthermore it would be possible to continue this research according to different samples. One example could be the inclusion of Finnish-German and German-Finnish parents respectively, with the help of which one could establish up to six sample groups (a) Finnish – German, b) German – German, c) Finnish-German – Finnish, d) Finnish-German – German, e) German-Finnish – Finnish, f) German-Finnish – German). Alternatively, one could also take the simpler approach and research German-German and Finnish-Finnish naming in Finland. However, it is questionable how diverse the sample groups would be in comparison to each other, and whether the amount of needed participants could be found in the case of these two nationalities.

A limiting fact to future research will be the protection of privacy, unless further agreed with the participants of the study. This matter also limited the final analysis of this project, for instance in the analysis of latter forenames and in the handling of siblings. Still, taken the small amount of German immigrants in Finland, I considered it to be a needed procedure for dealing with the material.

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## ANNEX 1.

**Päivänmäärä ja aika:**

**Nimi:**

**Lapsen nimet:**

**Lapsen ikä:**

**Osoite:**

### Interview II (Finnish-German)

<p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>Kuinka kauan te olette asuneet Suomessa? Wie lange lebt Ihr in Finnland? Warum hingezogen?</p> <p>Tarkoitatteko jäädä pysyvästi Suomeen? Habt Ihr vor, dauerhaft in Finnland zu bleiben?</p> <p>Kenen sukunimi lapsilla on? Wessen Nachnamen trägt das Kind?</p> <p>Kuinka vanha on lapsenne? Wie alt ist das Kind?</p>	<p><i>Introduction – Notes</i></p> <p>Last name:</p> <p>Age:</p>
<p><i>Name selection</i></p> <p>Minkä nimen olette antanut lapsellenne? Mistä kielestä nimi tulee? Onko se saksalainen, suomalainen tai tuleeko se kolmannesta kielestä? Welchen Namen habt Ihr Eurem Kind gegeben? Aus welcher Sprache kommt er? Ist er finnisch, deutsch oder kommt er aus einer Drittsprache?</p> <p>Onko lapsi kaksi / useampaa etunimeä? / Onko teillä useammat etunimet? Hat das Kind mehrere Vornamen? Wie viele? / Habt ihr mehrere Vornamen? Eltern? Traditionen? Gegend in Deutschland?</p> <p>Oletteko tietoisia nimen merkityksestä? Minkälainen merkitys nimellä on Saksassa/Suomessa? Seid Ihr euch über die Bedeutung des Namens bewusst? Welche Bedeutung hat er in Finnisch/Deutsch/Drittsprache?</p> <p>Oliko nimipäätös yhteinen? Mitkä nimiehdotukset olivat olemassa? War der Name eine gemeinsame Entscheidung? Was waren die Vorschläge?</p> <p>Minkälaisia apuneuvoja tai neuvonta olette nimiantoprosessissa käyttäneet? Habt Ihr bei der Vornamenswahl Hilfsmittel zu Rate gezogen?</p> <p>○ Literatur - kirjallisuus</p>	<p><i>Selection – Notes</i></p> <p>Spelling:</p> <p>Parent's forenames:</p> <p>Meaning:</p> <p>Media:</p>

- Freunde und Familie – ystävyyspiiri tai perhe
- Internet - netti

Mikä merkitys nimellä on yleisesti teille? /... lapsen nimellä on teille?  
Minkä haluatte antaa lapselle lahjaksi nimellä?

Welche Bedeutung hat ein Name generell für Euch? / ...hat der Name eures Kindes für Euch persönlich? / Was wolltet Ihr Eurem Kind mit diesem Namen auf den Weg geben?

Motives:

Oliko suomalainen/saksalainen sukunimi ratkaiseva nimivalinnan puolesta?

War der finnische/deutsche Nachname ausschlaggebend bei der Vornamenswahl?

Millä oli ratkaiseva rooli nimivalintaan? Was war bei der Vornamenswahl ausschlaggebend? Wie?

Considerations:

Oliko teillä nimiesikuvia? / Hattet Ihr Vorbilder?

- Elävät tai kuolleet esikuvat Lebende/Tote
- Nimi suvun piiristä tai perintönimi / tuttavapiiristä? / muut pienet lapset?
- Vererbter Name aus dem Familienkreis oder der Verwandtschaft / Bekanntenkreis? / andere kleine Kinder? Wie alt?

Oliko nimivalinnalla käytännölliset syyt?

Hatte die Namenswahl praktische Gründe?

- Alkusointu Anfangsbuchstabe
- Nimiin kytkeytyvät assosiaatiot Assoziationen

Motives (2<sup>nd</sup>):

Minkälaisia ongelmia tulivat nimenantoprosessissa esille?

Gab es Probleme beim Namensfindungsprozess? Wenn ja, welche?

Milloin te olette päättäneet lopullista nimeä? Oliko se jo ennen syntyä tai synnyn jälkeen?

Wann habt Ihr den endgültigen Namen gewählt? Vor oder nach der Geburt (finn. Brauch)? Wann veröffentlicht?

Christianized? (y/n)

Hatte das Kind vor der letztendlichen Namensentscheidung einen Übergangsnamen - ylitysnimi? (z.B. während der Schwangerschaft?)

Aus welcher Sprache kam der Name/die Bezeichnung? Wusstet ihr, was es wird? Onko lapsi kastettu?

### *Reception*

### *Reception – Notes*

Miten te lausutte nimeä? Suomeksi? Saksaksi? /Wie sprecht Ihr den Namen aus? Deutsch? Finnisch?

Observations:

Lausutaanko nimi Saksassa (tai saksalaisilta) erilaisiksi kuin Suomessa? Wird der Name in Deutschland (von Deutschen) anders als von Finnen ausgesprochen?

Oliko sukulaisillanne aluksi ollut hankaluuksia nimen lausumisen kanssa?

Mitkä olivat sukulaisten reaktiot?



Hatten Eure Verwandten Probleme, sich an den Namen (seine Aussprache oder Schreibweise) zu gewöhnen? Wie waren die Reaktionen der Verwandtschaft? Wie im finnischen Umfeld? Rechtschreibung? Geschlecht?

Miten tuttavapiirinne reagoi nimeen? / Wie reagiert das Umfeld auf den Namen?

Kysytäänkö Saksassa tai Suomessa usein nimen oikeinkirjoituksesta? Kommt es häufig vor, dass Ihr den Namen buchstabieren müsst?

Komentoidaanko nimeä esim. päiväkodissa, neuvolassa, uusia ihmisiä tavattaessa?

Wird der Name oft kommentiert, z.B. im Kindergarten, auf Ämtern, beim Arzt, beim Treffen von Unbekannten?

Spelling:

### *Culture & Identity*

Mitä kieltä / kieliä te puhutte? Entäs kotona? Kasvatteko lapsen kaksikieliseksi?

Welche Sprache sprecht ihr? Zu Hause? Erzieht ihr euer Kind zweisprachig? Finnischkenntnisse?

Kuinka tärkeä on teille sekä saksan että suomen kieli? Wie wichtig ist für euch sowohl Deutsch als auch Finnisch?

Kuinka tärkeä on teille lasten puolisaksalainen identiteetti nyt, kun te asutte Suomessa?

Wie wichtig ist für Euch eure deutsche Nationalität, jetzt, da Ihr in Finnland lebt?

Miten te pidätte yllä yhteyttä Saksaan ja saksalaiseen kulttuuriin?

Wie haltet Ihr die Verbindungen nach Deutschland und zur deutschen Kultur aufrecht?

- Netti, kirjat Vierailut Saksankieliset kirjat / sanomalehdet TV Yliopisto
- Kontakt zu Deutschen/zu Finnen? Deutscher Bekanntenkreis?

Osallistutteko saksalaisten yhteisötoimintaan? Oletteko muiden Suomessa asuvien saksalaisten kanssa yhteydessä? (suomi-saksan seuran jäsenet, saksalainen lastentarha?)

Beteiligt Ihr euch am deutschen Gemeindealltag? Habt Ihr regelmäßigen Kontakt zu anderen Deutschen? (dt.-finn. Gesellschaft, dt. Kiga)?

Valitsitteko nimen tästä tarkoituksesta että lapsi yhdistäisi paremmin suomalaisiin lapsiin?

Habt Ihr den Namen aus dem Grund gewählt, dass es Eurer Kind leichter haben würde, mit finnischen Kindern in Kontakt zu kommen?

Luuletteko, että lapsenne menee nykyisellä nimellä helpommin tai vaikeammin liittämään Suomen yhteiskuntaan?

Denkt Ihr, dass es Euer Kind mit seinem Namen schwieriger oder leichter haben wird, sich in die finnische Gesellschaft einzugliedern?

### *Culture – Notes*

Languages:

Associations:

Rein theoretisch: Hättet Ihr einen anderen Namen gewählt, wenn Ihr noch in Deutschland leben würdet?

Miten kuvitellette lapsen tulevaisuutta? Tuleeko lapsestanne suomalaiseksi lapseksi?

Wie stellt Ihr Euch die Zukunft Eures Kindes vor? Wird aus Eurem Kind ein finnisches Kind?

---

*Statistical questions*

Kuinka vanhaa olette? Wie alt seid Ihr?

Mitä on teidän ammattinne? Was macht ihr beruflich?

Doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft, in Deutschland registriert – Probleme mit Behörden?

Kindergartenplatz / Krippenplatz des Kindes?

*Statistics – Notes*

Age:

Profession:

**ANNEX 2.**

Statistics Finland 2011

**vamu2****Ulkomaiden kansalaiset**

<b>Maa, jonka kansalaisuus</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Vuosimuutos, %</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Vuosimuutos, %</b>
Viro	25 510	16,4	12,9	29 080	17,3	14,0
Venäjä	28 210	18,1	4,8	28 426	16,9	0,8
Ruotsi	8 506	5,5	0,8	8 510	5,1	0,0
Somalia	5 570	3,6	13,2	6 593	3,9	18,4
Kiina	5 180	3,3	12,1	5 559	3,3	7,3
Irak	3 978	2,6	22,9	5 024	3,0	26,3
Thaimaa	4 497	2,9	14,4	5 021	3,0	11,7
Turkki	3 809	2,4	11,1	3 973	2,4	4,3
Saksa	3 628	2,3	3,6	3 715	2,2	2,4
Intia	3 168	2,0	15,8	3 468	2,1	9,5
Muut	63 649	40,9	8,0	68 585	40,8	7,8
<b>Yhteensä</b>	<b>155 705</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8,7</b>	<b>167 954</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7,9</b>

## **ANNEX 3.**

Bundesverfassungsgericht 2004

- 1 BvR 994/98 -

### **In dem Verfahren über die Verfassungsbeschwerde**

der Frau G..

- Bevollmächtigte:  
Rechtsanwälte Prof. Dr. Rolf Bietmann und Koll.,  
Schildergasse 24-30, 50667 Köln -

gegen den Beschluss des Oberlandesgerichts Düsseldorf vom 3. April 1998 – 3 Wx 90/98 -

hat die 3. Kammer des Ersten Senats des Bundesverfassungsgerichts durch

den Präsidenten Papier,  
den Richter Steiner  
und die Richterin Hohmann-Dennhardt

gemäß § 93 b in Verbindung mit § 93 a BVerfGG in der Fassung der Bekanntmachung vom 11. August 1993 (BGBl I S. 1473) am 28. Januar 2004 einstimmig beschlossen:

Die Verfassungsbeschwerde wird nicht zur Entscheidung angenommen.

### **Gründe:**

1

Mit ihrer Verfassungsbeschwerde wendet sich die Beschwerdeführerin dagegen, dass die Gerichte die Anzahl der für ihren Sohn zu bestimmenden Vornamen begrenzt haben.

2

Die Beschwerdeführerin gab gegenüber dem Standesamt die Erklärung ab, ihrem neugeborenen Sohn zwölf - von ihr ausgewählte - Vornamen geben zu wollen. Das Amtsgericht entschied, dass dem Kind lediglich drei der angegebenen Vornamen beizuschreiben seien. Nachdem die Beschwerdeführerin die Vornamen beziehungsweise deren Reihenfolge mehrmals geändert hatte, beantragte sie schließlich mit der Beschwerde, dass das Kind die Vornamen "Chenekwahow, Tecumseh, Migiskau, Kioma, Ernesto, Inti, Prithibi, Pathar, Chajara, Majim, Henriko und Alessandro" erhalten solle, wobei die von ihr gewählte Reihenfolge der Namen auch deren jeweilige Vorrangigkeit bei der Namensgebung zum Ausdruck bringen soll. Das Landgericht änderte den Beschluss des Amtsgerichts ab und wies das Standesamt an, dem Kind die vier Vornamen "Chenekwahow, Tecumseh, Migiskau und Ernesto" beizuschreiben. Zur Begründung führte es unter anderem aus, dass die Namenswahl nicht dem Kindeswohl widersprechen dürfe, zwölf Vornamen aber einen erheblich belästigenden Charakter für das Kind hätten. Es wäre gehalten, sich in seinem späteren Leben sämtliche zwölf Vornamen in der richtigen Reihenfolge und der richtigen Schreibweise zu merken. Bei den zum großen Teil ungewöhnlichen Namen sei dies keine leichte Aufgabe für das Kind. Zudem werde das Kind in seinem

späteren Leben immer wieder auffallen, wenn die Ausstellung einer Urkunde notwendig sei.

3

Auf die weitere Beschwerde der Beschwerdeführerin änderte das Oberlandesgericht den Beschluss des Landgerichts geringfügig dahin ab, dass dem Kind zusätzlich der Vorname "Kioma" beizuschreiben sei. Dabei machte es sich im Wesentlichen die Begründung der landgerichtlichen Entscheidung zu Eigen und führte zusätzlich aus, dass sich die staatlich-gesellschaftliche Kennzeichnungsfunktion des Namens wie auch sein Wert für die Selbstidentifikation des Kindes mit zunehmender Zahl der Vornamen verflüchtige.

4

Mit ihrer gegen den Beschluss des Oberlandesgerichts gerichteten Verfassungsbeschwerde rügt die Beschwerdeführerin die Verletzung ihrer Grundrechte unter anderem aus Art. 2 Abs. 1 und Art. 6 Abs. 2 Satz 1 GG.

5

Die Voraussetzungen für die Annahme der Verfassungsbeschwerde zur Entscheidung liegen nicht vor (§ 93 a BVerfGG). Der Verfassungsbeschwerde kommt weder grundsätzliche Bedeutung zu (1.), noch ist sie zur Durchsetzung der Grundrechte der Beschwerdeführerin angezeigt (2.).

6

1. Die für die Beurteilung der Verfassungsbeschwerde maßgeblichen Fragen zum Elternrecht beziehungsweise zum Namensbestimmungsrecht der Eltern (auch hinsichtlich des Vornamens) sind durch das Bundesverfassungsgericht bereits entschieden (vgl. BVerfGE 24, 119 <143>; 31, 194 <204>; 55, 171 <182>; 61, 358 <371 f.>; 75, 201 <218>; 104, 373 <385 f.>).

7

2. Die Verfassungsbeschwerde ist auch ohne Aussicht auf Erfolg.

8

a) Die angegriffene Entscheidung des Oberlandesgerichts Düsseldorf verletzt die Beschwerdeführerin insbesondere nicht in ihrem Elternrecht aus Art. 6 Abs. 2 Satz 1 GG.

9

aa) Das Recht der Eltern, Sorge für ihr Kind zu tragen, umfasst auch das Recht, ihrem Kind einen Namen zu geben (vgl. BVerfGE 104, 373 <384 f.>). Die Entscheidung, welchen Namen es tragen soll, haben die Eltern in Ausübung der Verantwortung für das Kind zu treffen. Dies betrifft auch die Wahl eines Vornamens, der ausschließlich der Individualität einer Person Ausdruck verleiht, den Einzelnen bezeichnet und diesen von anderen unterscheidet (vgl. BVerfGE 104, 373 <385>). Es ist zuvörderst Aufgabe der Eltern, ihrem Kind in freier gemeinsamer Wahl einen Namen zu bestimmen, den es sich selbst noch nicht geben kann, wobei sie mangels einschlägiger Bestimmungen im Namensrecht in der Wahl des Vornamens grundsätzlich frei sind. Diesem Recht der Eltern zur Vornamenswahl für ihr Kind darf allein dort eine Grenze gesetzt werden, wo seine Ausübung das Kindeswohl zu beeinträchtigen droht (vgl. BVerfGE 24, 119 <143>; 104, 373 <385>). Der Staat ist in Wahrnehmung seines Wächteramtes nach Art. 6 Abs. 2 Satz 2 GG nicht nur berechtigt, sondern auch verpflichtet, das Kind als Grundrechtsträger vor verantwortungsloser Namenswahl durch die Eltern zu schützen. Für einen darüber hinausgehenden Eingriff in das Elternrecht auf Bestimmung des Vornamens für ihr Kind bietet Art. 6 Abs. 2 GG keine Grundlage (vgl. BVerfGE 104, 373 <385 f.>).

10

bb) Diesen Anforderungen wird die angegriffene Entscheidung gerecht. Das Oberlandesgericht ist zutreffend davon ausgegangen, dass das von Art. 6 Abs. 2 Satz 1 GG umfasste Recht der Beschwerdeführerin, ihrem Kind (einen) Vornamen zu geben, dort seine Grenze findet, wo die Namensbestimmung dem Kindeswohl widerspricht. Seine Ausführungen dazu, dass die Beschwerdeführerin die ihr bei der Namenswahl gesetzten Grenzen nicht eingehalten habe, halten einer verfassungsrechtlichen Überprüfung stand. Das Landgericht hat in seiner Begründung, die sich das Oberlandesgericht insoweit zu Eigen gemacht hat, im Einzelnen ausgeführt, dass zwölf Vornamen

einen erheblich belästigenden Charakter für das Kind hätten. Es müsste sich die richtige Reihenfolge und Schreibweise der größtenteils ungewöhnlichen Namen merken und würde durch diese immer wieder auffallen. Schließlich hat das Oberlandesgericht maßgeblich darauf abgestellt, dass die Selbstidentifikation des Kindes mit zunehmender Zahl seiner Vornamen nicht mehr gewährleistet sei. Dass das Gericht vor diesem Hintergrund eine Beeinträchtigung des Kindeswohls bejaht hat, ist verfassungsrechtlich nicht zu beanstanden, auch wenn die der angegriffenen Entscheidung zugrunde liegenden Wertungen mit Blick auf das Elternrecht der Beschwerdeführerin in verfassungsrechtlich vertretbarer Weise auch anders hätten ausfallen können. Dem richterlichen Ermessen muss ein gewisser Spielraum bleiben, der die Berücksichtigung der besonderen Lage des Einzelfalles ermöglicht. Eine Grundrechtswidrigkeit liegt daher noch nicht vor, wenn die Anwendung einfachen Rechts durch den hierzu zuständigen Richter zu einem Ergebnis geführt hat, über dessen "Richtigkeit" sich streiten lässt, insbesondere weil sie den Interessen der einen oder anderen Seite zu viel oder zu wenig Gewicht beigelegt hat (vgl. BVerfGE 18, 85 <93>).

11

b) Ebenso wenig verletzt die angegriffene Entscheidung die Beschwerdeführerin in ihrem Grundrecht aus Art. 2 Abs. 1 GG. Das Recht, ihren Kindern einen Namen zu geben, ist Eltern grundrechtlich nicht im Interesse eigener Persönlichkeitsentfaltung, sondern allein im Rahmen ihrer Sorgeverantwortung nach Art. 6 Abs. 2 GG im Interesse ihrer Kinder eingeräumt (vgl. BVerfGE 104, 373 <392>).

12

Von einer weiteren Begründung wird abgesehen (§ 93 d Abs. 1 Satz 3 BVerfGG).

13

Diese Entscheidung ist unanfechtbar.

Papier

Steiner

Hohmann-Dennhardt

## ANNEX 4.

Karriere.de 2009

### Der Name macht den Unterschied

*Dana Heide*

**Mehr als Schall und Rauch: Namen können über Zu- und Absagen bei Bewerbungen entscheiden. Lesen Sie hier, warum es Annas bei Personalern leichter haben als Kevins und wieso ein attraktives Bewerbungsfoto immer noch mehr aussagt.**

Frank-Walter Steinmeier hat es versucht, Guido Horn war erfolgreich damit, und Thorsten Schäfer-Gümbel hätte es mal besser getan: den eigenen Namen ändern, um der Karriere auf die Sprünge zu verhelfen. Denn manche Namen lösen beim Gegenüber negative Vorurteile aus.

Beispiel Frank-Walter Steinmeier: Als Kanzlerkandidat versuchte er Anfang des Jahres vergeblich, seinen Walter verschwinden zu lassen und nur noch Frank Steinmeier genannt zu werden. Eine Erklärung hat Psychologe Lars-Eric Petersen, der an der Uni Halle-Wittenberg über Vorurteile und Stereotypen forscht: "Walter ist ein sehr altmodischer Name, der Name Frank Steinmeier klingt deshalb ohne ihn jünger und dynamischer." Bereits vor einigen Jahren fanden Forscher heraus, dass Menschen bei unmodernen Namen wie Walter im Gegensatz zu neutraleren Namen wie Anna auf alte Menschen schließen, die mit den Merkmalen "unattraktiv" und "weniger intelligent" belegt werden. Diese Mechanismen könnten auch bei einer Bewerbung Nachteile bringen, denn vor allem bei einem Überangebot seien Personalere anfällig für Vorurteile, sagt Petersen.



#### **Je weniger Infos über die Person, desto wichtiger ihr Name**

Schwerer hätten es deshalb auch Menschen, die einen Namen tragen, der vor allem in ungebildeteren Schichten verbreitet ist, wie Mandy oder Kevin. Bernd Samland, Leiter einer Werbeagentur, will in einer Studie sogar herausgefunden haben, dass Doppelnamen eine negative Wirkung haben können. "Namen wie Schäfer-Gümbel klingen so, als ob derjenige sich nicht für einen Namen entscheiden könnte", sagt er. Bei Berufen, in denen Entscheidungsfreude wichtig sei, könne so ein Name hinderlich sein.

Muss ein Hans-Georg Müller-Schmidt also seinen Namen ändern, um im Kampf um eine Stelle gegen eine Anna Lange überhaupt Chancen zu haben? Nein, sagt Petersen, der Name habe zwar eine Wirkung, das Bewerbungsfoto könne diese jedoch abschwächen, denn beim Betrachten eines Fotos werden mehr Stereotypen aktiviert als beim Lesen eines Namens. Klebt auf der Bewerbung von Hans-Georg also ein attraktives Foto, ist der Name vergessen.

Generell gilt: Je weniger Infos der Personaler über den Bewerber hat, desto wichtiger wird der Name. In den USA, wo Bewerbungsfotos verboten sind, haben es Menschen mit schwarz klingenden Namen wie Jamal schwerer, weil sie negative Vorurteile gegenüber Afro-Amerikanern hervorrufen können. In manchen Berufen ist ein ungewöhnlicher Name sogar

hilfreich. So werden Wissenschaftler mit einem solchen unverwechselbar. Auch Schlagersänger wie Guildo Horn machen sich diesen Effekt zunutze: Er hieß früher Horst Köhler.

*Dieser Artikel ist erschienen am 01.10.2009*



## ANNEX 5.

Karrierebibel.de 2008

### Nomen est omen – Die Namen der Elite

von Jochen Mai am 27. Oktober 2008



Mal ehrlich: An wen denken Sie bei dem Namen *Kevin*? An den Chef eines globalen Konzerns oder einen Versicherungsangestellten? Und wie ist es mit *Justin*, *Maximilian*? Oder bei *Chantal* und *Jaqueline*? Ich weiß, die Begriffe „Unterschicht“ oder „Klassengesellschaft“ sind politisch verpönt. Und doch ist es so, dass viele das soziale Milieu oft schon beim Vornamen assoziieren.

Über 200.000 verschiedene Vornamen sind in Deutschland registriert. Dabei fällt neben den jährlichen Hitlisten der beliebtesten Vornamen zunehmend auf: Namen sind nicht nur Geschmackssache, sie sind auch Ausdruck von Zugehörigkeit. So bevorzugen Akademiker derzeit gerne solide alte Vornamen, wie Jonathan, Friedrich, Elias, Franziska, Antonia oder Emilia, während einfachere Bildungsschichten eher zu Modenamen aus Film, Funk und Fernsehen greifen. Das ist dann vielleicht Ausdruck von Modernität, aber für die Kinder vielleicht nicht immer das Beste.

Dazu vielleicht ein kurzes Beispiel und Experiment. Es gibt Namen, mit denen verbinden wir ganz oft bestimmte Klischees. Diese schwanken zwar von Mensch zu Mensch, doch bei einigen Vornamen assoziieren nicht gerade wenige dasselbe Bild: *Benjamin* zum Beispiel wirkt sofort klein, *Gabi* ist vermutlich Frisörin, *Jessica* vermutlich auch. *Maria* ist bestimmt katholisch, Marie-Luise etwas Etepetete und Pamela ist nackt. Paul wiederum trägt sicher Brille, Wolfgang einen Bart, Wilfried häufig Pollunder und Kevin ist jetzt 16. Bestimmt fallen Ihnen dazu noch mehr Beispiele ein...

Das alles ist genau das: eine Reihe haltloser Klischees. Aber sie kann das Urteil unserer Umwelt beeinflussen, und im schlimmsten Fall wirkt sie negativ bei der Auswahl von Bewerbern. Und damit Sie mir glauben, dass das nicht völlig aus der Luft gegriffen ist, werfen Sie doch mal einen Blick auf sogenannte Onogramme. Das sind Assoziationslisten zu bestimmten Namen. So ist demnach etwa ein *Jochen* zwar sehr männlich, eher groß, alt und zuverlässig, aber auch unsportlich, ernst, und unattraktiv.

Zugegeben, in manchen Fällen ist die Geburtsurkunde auch nichts anderes als ein Mittel zur Selbstinszenierung der Eltern. Diesen Erzeugern reicht dann nicht nur einfach ein Vorname – es müssen schon mindestens drei sein und die möglichst extraordinär. Klasse durch Masse, man gönnt sich ja sonst nichts. Hollywood (siehe Liste unten) macht es schließlich vor: Die vier Geschwister von River Phoenix etwa heißen Liberty, Rainbow, Summer und Leif – offenbar allesamt made in Woodstock. Flugzeug-Fan John Travolta wiederum benannte seinen Sohn direkt nach seiner Leidenschaft: „Jett“ – das zweite T sicher um Verwechslungen auszuschließen.

So ganz neu ist das nicht. Schon Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart hieß eigentlich Wolfgang Theophil Mozart. Nur fand der Wiener Komponist die lateinische Form fescher. Der Schriftsteller Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen („Simplizissimus“) etwa wurde von seinen Eltern mit gleich drei Rufnamen bedacht. Und der mittelalterliche Mediziner Paracelsus (1493-1541) hörte eigentlich auf den eindrucksvollen Titel Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. Historisch sind Vornamen übrigens älter als Familiennamen: Erst vor rund 300 Jahren wurden Nachnamen für Bauern und andere Leibeigene eingeführt.

Das Bedürfnis nach Besonderem führt heute jedoch auch zu grotesken Taufgesuchen. So berichten Standesbeamte von Fällen, bei denen Eltern ihre Gören „Pepsi Cola“, „Karl der Große“ oder „Nicht Vaters Wunsch“ taufen wollten. Derartiger Mumpitz wird zurecht kategorisch abgelehnt.

Wo bei solchen Extravaganzen hierzulande die Grenzen liegen, ist aber nicht eindeutig geregelt. Erlaubt sind zum Beispiel: Azalee, Bavaria, Chelsea, Cheyenne, Europa, Momo, Oleander, Pumuckl, Sexana, Sunshine, Taiga oder Winnetou. Nicht erlaubt sind dagegen: Che, Gin, Grammophon, Judas,

Möwe, Moon, November, Pfefferminze oder Wiesengrund. Die grobe Regel dahinter: Rufnamen müssen das Geschlecht eindeutig erkennen lassen. Und sie dürfen keine negativen Assoziationen wecken. Positive dagegen schon. Deshalb stammt beispielsweise heute nahezu jeder dritte Vorname aus der Bibel. Das haben Onomastiker ermittelt.

Den Rekord für Onomastik-Onanie hält dagegen ein 1904 in Bergedorf bei Hamburg geborener Mann (das stand in der 1978 veröffentlichten Ausgabe des Guinness Book of World Records). Er hieß:  
*Wolfeschlegelsteinhausenbergerdorffvoralternwarengewissenhaftsschaferswessenschafewarenwohlge  
 pflegteundsorgfaltigkeitbeschutzenvonangreifendurchihrraubgierigfeindewelchevoralternzwolftausend  
 jahresvorandieerscheinendenvanderersterdemenschderraumschiffgebrauchlichtalsseinursprungvonkr  
 aftgestartsein langefahrthinzwischensternartigraumaufdersuchenachdiesternwelchege  
 habtbewohnbarplanetenkreisedrehensichundwohinderneuerassevonverstandigmenschlichkeitkonntefor  
 tpflanzenundsicherfreuenanlebenslanglichfreudeundruhemitnichtiefurchtvorangreifenvoneinanderint  
 elligentgeschöpfsvonhinzwischensternartigraum.*