5 Name talk: technologies of belonging

In the social world constructed in the play *The Numbered* (1984) by Elias Canetti, the citizens are allocated names according to the number of years they will live ("Fifty," "Twenty-Five," "Twelve," and so on). No one, it is assumed, is able to escape his or her specified fate. The names are decisive and fatal and the subjects are not consulted. One of the persons in the play is worried about "Twelve," who has run away from home:

> She was afraid of her name. People told her she had to die when she was twelve . . . She grew quieter and quieter. We didn't know why she spoke so little . . . But then, on her birthday, fear seized her. She disappeared. She went away among people who did not know her name . . . Since then she has been hiding . . . She has avoided us like the plague. (Canetti 1984: 94)

It seems likely that Canetti developed his name talk as an analogy for the gene talk on the "secret of life" gaining currency at the time of writing, about a decade after the discovery of the double helix. Perhaps one should see the play as a commentary on the idea that our lives are more or less determined by both our names and our genetic characteristics, a theme popularly explored, for instance, in the film *Gattaca*, which radically separates "valids" from "in-valids." Canetti's names are like ticking time bombs: 12, 11, 10, . . . Bang! On their own, names have significant impact on our lives and, as a result, practices of naming represent a particular form of biopolitics, a technology of the self. Sometimes names imply deliberate exclusion or social death, commencing at the time of naming when the name begins to operate in the manner anticipated.

Because they are essential to every person everywhere, personal names have often been taken for granted. Anthropology, sociology, and philosophy, however, have created a fairly extensive literature on the variety of systems of naming in different times and cultural contexts (for a useful recent overview, see vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006). Drawing upon this literature one may ask: To what extent do naming practices exemplify or parallel the biopolitics of bodily inscriptions and markings such as tattoos and presumed racial signatures? Paraphrasing Foucault, it seems that names not only specify and individualize their bearers, they also represent "technologies of the self"

(Foucault 1988), serving as means of domination and empowerment, facilitating collective action, surveillance, and subjugation – exclusion as well as belonging.

Practices of naming have probably followed humans since the development of rudimentary language. Yet, they vary considerably from case to case and from one time to another. This poses a number of questions: Why, in particular, would humans bother to adopt names? What kinds of choices are available in each case? What kinds of roles do names play in social life? Why do traditions of naming vary from one context to another and from one epoch to another? What are the conditions and processes through which names acquire their momentum or "illocutionary force," in Austin's sense (engaging in "performance," "securing uptake," and producing "conventional consequences") – guaranteeing what Pina-Cabral (2011) refers to as the "ontological weight" of names?

Personal names, as Lévy-Bruhl observed, are not simply neutral devices for classification and indexing but are inseparable from the person, embodied and emotionally charged; people tend to "regard their names as . . . sacred. . . For such a person, a name is a distinct part of his personality, just as much as are his eyes . . . and [he] believes that injury will result as surely from the malicious handling of his names as from a wound inflicted on any part of his physical organism" (quoted in Bodenhorn and vom Bruck 2006: 9). Drawing on Lévy-Bruhl's perspective, Bodenhorn and vom Bruck (2006: 20) suggest that it is "particularly striking that names have not featured in analyses of the body because they engage all crucial aspects of embodied experience: identification, moral relations, power, the gendering and sexualizing of bodies, and displacement."

This chapter discusses personal names in relation to other technologies of belonging, highlighting the relevance of practices of naming for body politics, radical differences between the recent Western tradition of surnames and some other naming traditions and epistemologies, the formation of subjectivity in slavery through renaming, and the cultural and political clashes that sometimes result when an expanding empire encounters and colonizes an indigenous tradition. Practices of naming, it is argued, are not only key elements of identification and personhood, embodied in the biosocial habitus much like other biomarkers, they also situate people in genealogies, social networks, states, and empires. Naming involves powerful speech acts, making history, constituting persons and the social relations and systems within which they are embedded – families, communities, states, and empires; indeed, naming is one of the key examples used in Austin's (1962) classic formulation of speech acts.

While for many Inuit the role of personal naming is similar to that of genes in modern gene talk in the sense that the individual is seen as a vehicle for hereditary information, there are important differences. Names, unlike the

genes of gene talk, are transferred horizontally as well as vertically through human agency, the speech acts of relatives, friends, and neighbors – and the person adopting the name. Such a comparison, besides being worthwhile as an analytical method, may also help in the understanding of Inuit comments on genomic studies and the potential impact of genomic studies on indigenous notions of sociality and citizenship. Clashes, I suggest, between different traditions and practices of naming, especially in the context of slavery and empire, illuminate with striking clarity the relevance of names as technologies of exclusion and belonging. Further explorations should elaborate on the differences as well as the parallels of name talk and gene talk and the multiple forms and social implications of both kinds of discourses.

5.1 Technologies of naming

Despite differences in tradition, certain fairly obvious generalizations can be made about personal names. They always serve the purpose of situating people in social space, connecting them to family, lineage, ethnic group, and so on. The practice of naming, however, is not simply a classificatory exercise. Naming is a speech act, shaping the life course and the person involved. Names, in other words, both personify and embody, resulting in durable dispositions in Bourdieu's (1978) terminology. The reason why names "stick," why the speech acts work, is that somehow the acting speaker is granted the license to name by the community involved, through a formal or informal social contract. That "somehow" is rather difficult to establish or define. The social contract is sometimes based on relations of relative equity and sometimes on relations of subjugation and power (typically for derogatory nicknames). Either way, without the contract the person would not adjust to the name and, as a result, the name would simply be discarded like worn or irrelevant clothes.

Any attempt to account for the force of personal names has to attend to the notion of context. Goodwin and Duranti (1992: 4) point out that a relationship of mutuality is "central to the notion of context (indeed the term comes from the Latin *contextus*, which means 'a joining together')." Context and talk, they suggest, "stand in a mutually reflexive relationship to each other, . . . talk, and the interpretive work it generates, shaping context as much as context shapes talk" (Goodwin and Duranti 1992: 31). Just as namers and the names they establish are inseparable from the community in which they are embedded, the person is inseparable from his or her environment. Subjectivity, identity, and naming, then, are informed by the social and political environment in which the person is embedded (Jackson 2005). This is why naming practices are often a contested issue for groups campaigning for human rights and social justice; renaming involves redefining context.

Patrilineal surnames, an influential technology in the modern world, developed in Europe during the Middle Ages. Along with the genealogical tree, they served the purpose of tracking time, succession, and inheritance among agrarian elites, documenting at the same time the symbolic and social capital on which political alliances were based. Pina-Cabral (2011) explores the discourse and reality of "true" names in Portuguese-speaking contexts, partly in the context of a shift in the allocation of administrative responsibilities early in the twentieth century as the national Civil Registry took over some of the roles traditionally played by the ecclesiastical register. "In the Lusophone tradition," he argues, "'truer' names rise above the flux of everyday relations . . ., they give an appearance of permanence and inalterability that makes them indispensible instruments of bureaucratic control" (Pina-Cabral 2011: 308). In other words, the "true" names sanctioned by the overarching authority of the state and its Registry determine the subjectivity of national citizens, operating as a technology of belonging.

Patrilineal surnames are not universal in the Euro-American context. Thus, for instance, Icelanders generally do not have family names, in line with an old Norse tradition. People are listed and known, above all, by their first names, which embody their persona. The second name is usually a patronym (matronyms, however, are increasingly used, either on their own or along with the patronym). "Jónsson" (or "Jónsdóttir"), for example, simply indicates that the person in question is the son (or daughter) of a man named "Jón." Women rarely change their name when married, nor do men. This, however, has not created major administrative hurdles, nor has it prevented or slowed down the development of population projects and genomic studies (Palsson 2007).

While patronyms and matronyms do not provide the same level of cultural and genealogical memory as patrilineal surnames, they nevertheless ensure some attention to the history of social networks. A striking contrast to the excessive cultural memory generated by patrilineal surnames is provided by the teknonymy of Bali. This system consistently erases knowledge of collateral kinship ties with each generation, creating "an ever-repeating sequence of four impersonal statuses – child, parent, grandparent, and great-grandparent" (Geertz and Geertz 1964: 102). Such genealogical amnesia is not just an odd ethnographic curiosity, it represents "a 'cultural paradigm' of social roles and relationships which serves the Balinese as an interpretive guide for understanding and manoeuvring within their own institutional system and as a set of instructions, a programme in the computer-theory sense, for maintaining that system" (Geertz and Geertz 1964: 103).

One of the Orientalist structures of modernity is the hierarchy of expert and lay knowledge. Given that the separation of the natural and the social is ethnographically and theoretically suspect, such a hierarchy is not helpful in research. In a collaborative approach, the real challenge for anthropology is to

explore and engage with the theorizing of the people being studied. Such engagement is common in anthropological studies of science, which "study up," but it has been less common in other contexts. While studies of genetic ancestry tend to generate convincing narratives, the "biological facts" they construct in probabilistic terms through laboratory work need not have privileged epistemological status (Latour and Woolgar 1979). It is important to recognize that our informants may see things differently. To explore patterns of regional movement and differentiation, the organizers of the Inuit Genetic History Project discussed in the previous chapter asked those who provided genetic samples to fill out a brief questionnaire specifying, in particular, the birthplace of their grandparents. Since, for many Inuit, people are rooted in the land, it is unlikely that the respondents had significant doubts about the places in question (significantly, the suffix *miut* [people], which identifies families and communities with the places they occupy, has become co-opted in current ethnopolitical discourse). However, respondents in Kitikmeot and Greenland need not have given priority to what would normally be described as "biological" grandparents. What, then, do Inuit make of inheritance, relatedness, and sociality, and how does their theorizing relate to that of others?

5.2 Inuit name talk

A glimpse into the ethnography of indigenous communities in North America helps to further establish a radical contrast with the system of patrilineal surnames, with which Euro-American readers may be most familiar, and to set up a useful context for exploring culture clashes heavily focused on renaming. Here as elsewhere, practices of naming are firmly rooted in epistemologies of belonging, relatedness, and becoming human.

It is difficult to generalize about notions of sociality in the Inuit region; different ethnographers do not always agree, and, moreover, the cultural and geographical terrain from Alaska to Greenland is vast and diverse. The ethnographic present adds further complications, if only because the arrival of Christianity and empire has had a profound but variable impact. Inuit kinship appears to be changeable and flexible, like other social connections. Adoption is fairly common, and often children move, temporarily at least, from one household to another. Inuit do differentiate between adoptive and "biological" relationships (see Burch 2006: chap. 3); when, for example, attached to a root kin term such as *ataata*, the suffix *saq* indicates an adoptive relationship: *ataatasaq* (adopted father) or *ilniqsaq* (adopted son). Alia's (2006: 36) remark that "in the Inuit custom-adoption culture the whole Qallunaaq [white] idea of biological versus adoptive families has no relevance" is therefore an overstatement. At the same time, a man who has genetically fathered a child is its "real"

father only to the extent that he establishes paternity by his actions, by looking after the child and caring for it after its entry into the world.

The complex social network that forms an Inuk's person is to a considerable extent interlinked through personal names. Persons are called into being when a soul-name (*atiq*) is spoken. While the idea of the soul-name can be interpreted in several ways and it is not clear what is transferred, naming seems to create multiple personalities, particularly through the combination of names: "You are not simply playing different persons; you are different persons" (Bodenhorn 2006: 151). For the Iñupiat of Alaska, names are "open" in the sense that while they do have a social life and travel through time, they usually do not classify nameholders in terms of gender, kinship, or social position. Nuttall (1992) gives a similar interpretation in the Greenlandic context, suggesting that this naming practice pertains to most Inuit. Names imply certain personality traits that are passed from one person to another, traits that are recycled with each new generation. Relatives, friends, and acquaintances give each other names both as children and later in life.

Several ethnographers have underlined the central role of naming in the Inuit context. In Alia's (2006: 37) summary, "naming is a – perhaps *the* – central component of Inuit culture." Many observers have nevertheless been baffled by the complexity and apparent contradictions of Inuit naming practices. Stefansson's field notes from a century ago provide one illustration. He had often heard a particular woman address her daughter Noashak as her mother. Then, he wrote, "Today we had a curious example of the final grasping of an idea which one would think should have come years ago" (see Palsson 2001: 285–286). It had finally dawned on him that this naming might be seen as a form of reincarnation theory, Noashak being understood as two dead individuals.

It is illuminating to explore the similarities and differences between Inuit name talk and modern gene talk. In some ways, the role attributed by many Inuit to personal names is similar to that of genes in the program theory. Names, like genes, somehow inform or establish identity and personhood, accounting at the same time for divergence and continuity. Indeed, when describing Inuit realities, some Inuit and ethnographers have resorted to a quasi-genetic language of "vehicles," "mutations," and "substance" similar to that of mainstream genetics. Thus, as one of Bodenhorn's Alaskan Inuit informants suggested, a child is "a vehicle for the name" (Bodenhorn 2006: 147). Similarly, Williams argued that the Inuit "soul complex and naming system is in fact a series of constantly-changing transcendencies and mutations" (quoted in Alia 2006: 22), and Saladin d'Anglure (1977: 33) reported the Inuit belief that "the essential ingredient of a human being is its name. The name embodies a mystical substance which includes the personality, specific skills, and basic character which the individual will exhibit in life."

Inuit sometimes refer to personal names when explaining behavioral traits that tend to be medicalized in contexts heavily informed by gene talk. Thus, hyperactivity ("attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" in medical language) in children is sometimes accounted for by their particular names or the fact that they have too many names or a name that does not "fit." Stefansson observed that restless Inuit children sometimes seemed to protest against their names, requesting renaming (see Palsson 2001: 156).

While for many Inuit the role of personal naming is similar to that of hereditary material in modern gene talk, there are important differences. Essentially, Inuit discourse on identity and relatedness is nonreductionist and relational, in line with the principles of epigenetics and developmental-systems theory. Inuit names operate much like horizontally transferred genes, cosmopolitan names passing from one person to another depending on a host of personal and contextual factors. Also, and this follows from the notion of agency, names may change during the life course, remaking personhood in the process. This does not mean that Inuit kinship is simply a matter of "cultural" construction or framing. For Inuit and other epigenetic theorists, "biology" (in the conventional Western sense) is beside the point; fatherhood and motherhood are always "real" and embodied. In Ingold's (2001: 257) approach to kinship, which aims to dissolve the boundary between "biology" and "culture," behavioral dispositions are "formed in and through a process of ontogenetic development within a specific environmental context. Kinship is about the ways in which others in the environment contribute – through their presence, their activities and the nurturance they provide – to this process." This resonates with Inuit thought. It is partly through naming that Inuit children are positioned in a relational field through which their biosociality unfolds.

Not only is the person constituted by names, names are the subject of constant discussions as, quite literally, technologies of belonging. Among the Yup'ik of Alaska, children are usually named after a recently deceased relative or community member. The bestowal of a name is marked with offerings and gifts and, in the process, the person becomes more than a relative. The ceremony during which a child is named is called *kangiliriyaraq* which literally means "to provide with a beginning" (Fienup-Riordan 2000: 192). For the Yup'ik, personhood would not be generated without parents and biological birth, but what matters above all is ancestral names defining a person's position within a particular genealogy. Aside from ancestral names, people also have "calling names," many of which are teasing names similar to what is usually referred to as "nicknames." A further ethnographic case is that of the Tsimshian of northwestern British Columbia. For Tsimshian, the act of naming "gives the person to the name" (Roth 2008: 15). Proper names are selected from a "basket" of "vacant" names. Reincarnation is of central

importance, "an undeniable fact of the universe . . . It is a fact of nature rather than an aspect of their 'culture'" (Roth 2008: 62). The English term "reincarnation" is in fact a translation of indigenous terms denoting salmon "running together" to or from their spawning grounds year after year.

Yup'ik, Tsimshian, and Inuit notions of sociality and personhood, evident in much of their name talk, highlight the irrelevance of the idea of the autonomy of the "biological" as commonly understood. The biology of the organism seems inseparable from the durable dispositions of the habitus developed in the course of everyday practices. Although indigenous North American notions of naming and personhood tend to be anathema to genetic concepts of heredity, essence, and relatedness, they have a clear bodily reference. Names embody what needs to be embodied, fashioning the organism and the person, which, in the local view, is the same.

5.3 Renaming

While modern states and empires encourage and sometimes enforce stability of names, assuming the same name from birth to death, names frequently change. In many contexts, people become known by nicknames that sometimes overshadow official names. Nicknames can be purely classificatory, distinguishing between people with almost identical formal names, but often they locate people in social space, much like other names. Occasionally, a nickname begins to operate as a "surname," applied to a whole family and extending across generations. Sometimes nicknames are denigrating, the result of some kind of competition or power game, moulding the life and persona of the individuals to which they are attached. Like other names, they depend on a social contract without which they would have no force or weight. In extreme cases, the persona is severely injured as a result of a nickname. The wounds inflicted in the process may not be highly visible, although sometimes people clearly "lose face," and can be just as serious as physical violence. Indeed, this *is* physical violence in a very real sense, with lasting and damaging embodied results. The *abuse* of names, harassment in the form of nicknames, testifies to the bodily reference generating sensation and shame.

Some of the most extreme cases of renaming come from the history of slavery. Slaveholders are usually keen to rename their slaves, often with names not unlike those applied to pets and livestock. At the same time, the application or citing of the person's original name is liable to be subject to punishment. Thus, the persona of the slave is deformed with the new name, torn from its former social environment: Not only is the persona of the slave eradicated, the slave is "marked off from other persons whose social identities are given privileged recognition" (Benson 2006: 181). Significantly, when slaves are granted freedom they often insist upon formally receiving a new name in front

of witnesses, to mark the ending of oppression, to regain dignity, and to publically confirm the support and acceptance of society.

Caribbean slavery is a case in point (Palsson 2016). Most of the slaves in the Virgin Islands came from West Africa. The slave owners usually adopted new kinds of names for their slaves that would have sounded alien to their free West African ancestors. Slaves had to accept being renamed. This was part of the erasure of identity and history that characterized the so-called "Middle Passage," between West Africa and the plantations (Davis 2006). While slave owners had complex and colorful names indicating social connections across time and space – one example being "Heinrich Ludvig Ernst von Schimmelmann," the name of a Danish aristocrat and plantation owner, a key player in the plantation economy of Virgin Islands – their slaves were only called by one or more "first" names that distinguished them from each other, and all of them, by the absence of a "second" name or a family name, from their masters and other free persons. The slave names on eighteenth-century plantation lists from the island of St. Croix are usually European or Western: Emilia, Regina, Hans, Jonatan, Anna, Maria, Andreas, and so on. Occasionally, though, one can see "strange" names on the tax lists, exotic to Euro-American readers: Profix, Polepti, Leipis, Suatre. Probably these were recent "acquisitions" that had not yet been renamed.

Sometimes Caribbean slaves were given a name associated with people of historical importance, simply to humiliate them and keep them under control. The name of Cicero was one of the popular names. A slave carrying such a name was constantly reminded of his marginal subjectivity. One of the house slaves of plantation-owner Schimmelmann mentioned above first appears in the slave records as "Cicero." Later, however, at a baptism ceremony in St. Croix, he was renamed "Carl Heinrich," probably testifying to a significant change in status.

The cases of the Yup'ik and Inuit illustrate what may happen when a powerful and highly orchestrated system of surnames, sanctioned by an expanding state, clashes with a radically different set of naming practices, in the absence of surnames. In the Yup'ik context, particular administrative and legal complications in documenting identity have sometimes been associated with multiple names. How would one issue a passport when a person's records – baptismal and birth certificates, government enrolment forms, and so on – have been issued under a series of different names? This was a question the US Passport Agency was bound to raise. As late as 1997, it initially denied requests for passports for four Yup'ik elders who planned to travel abroad and finally issued them only on a limited basis (Fienup-Riordan 2000: 195).

The customary naming practices of the Inuit often clashed with bureaucratic procedures in Alaska, Canada, and Greenland that sought to "tidy up" Inuit nomenclature and normalize a standard patriarchal family system deemed well

suited to national citizenship and civilized conduct. In Canada, a system of identification by means of serial numbers was proposed in 1935 to craft legible identities for the Inuit population and to avoid the "confusion" of native practices, which baffled the ruling officials. A medical officer originally proposed the number system with the "humble suggestion" that "at each registration the child be given an identity disk on the same lines as the army identity disk and the same insistence that it be worn at all times. The novelty of it would appeal to the natives" (see Alia 2006: 52). Inspired by the military use of dog tags, this system suggested that a number be engraved on the disk to facilitate easy identification by outsiders. This would make it possible to monitor the Inuit as national subjects. Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias (2002: 27) speculate that had the technology of the time permitted, "there is little doubt that the officials would have preferred small electronic transmitters and global positioning systems to monitor all movement by satellite." Undoubtedly they would have preferred genetic signatures and DNA fingerprints as well. Enforced renaming along the lines of the disks (*ujamiit*) is a violent act that necessarily downgrades the people involved, a frequent outcome of slavery and empire.

Partly as a result of complaints of disrespect and internal colonialism, the disk system was abandoned in 1968. During the past century, a system of family names was introduced throughout most of the Inuit regions of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland, at different times and paces in different places, partly as a result of the growing number of children of mixed Inuit-white parentage. In Canada, there was a contrast between west and east. In the east (roughly the future Nunavut), Project Surname was introduced in 1969, alongside the customary naming system, partly to replace the disk system. Currently, name pluralism is typical for Inuit throughout the North, with the systems of patriarchal surnames and customary names coexisting in many places, their use dependent on context. There is much interest in keeping customary names as part of "tradition" in Nunavut, and they are still quite common there.

Given the importance of naming in Inuit contexts, the imposition of the disk system and patriarchal surnames can be regarded as a biosocial undertaking analogous to genetic engineering. Such changes helped to reconstitute the Inuit subject in the dual Foucauldian sense: governing the people (minimizing or eradicating what Canadian officials tended to see as a hopeless administrative mess) and redefining their biosociality (refashioning their habitus – that is, their relatively durable embodied dispositions). The refashioning of subjectivities, bodies, and groupings through acts of naming and categorization is a common predicament of people subjected to the encroachment of states. This, indeed, problematizes life, allowing for "life beside itself" (Stevenson 2014), life that requires maintenance and effort (Praet 2013).

5.4 Names, populations, and ethnic groups

Given the historical role and significance of patrilineal surnames in Europe, it need not be surprising that they still seem to provide indicators of the regional, cultural, and genetic structure of continental populations. Taking a broad geographic perspective, Mateos (2007) suggests that often people's names offer a convenient window into population structures, especially in the absence of reliable knowledge about self-identified ethnicity, and, as a result, names both open up a new era of genetic genealogy and are an important tool for policy in today's multicultural society. Patrilineal surnames, indeed, have proved a useful avenue into European genetic history, a field pioneered by L.L. Cavalli-Sforza (see, for instance, Stone and Lurquin 2005: 62).

A perennial problem, however, for social and biological analysts as well policy makers and administrators is how to define and demarcate human "populations" (see, for instance, M'charek 2005 on the Human Genome Diversity Project). While molecular studies removed anthropometry and the categorization of races to the sidelines during the second half of the twentieth century, at least in scientific discourse, focusing on gene frequencies and sequences rather than phenotypic characteristics, they tend to fall back on problematic notions of populations and ethnic groups.

Years ago, Ardener launched a critique of the bounded notion of populations and ethnic groups in demographic studies, a critique that seems pertinent to many modern studies of genomic differences and human variation: "[A]re the entities called 'populations'," he asked, "*names* or *numbers*? If names: named for whom, and by whom? If numbers: counted by whom, and for whom? In asking the questions 'by whom?' and 'for whom?' we also ask in particular: by or for the 'people' concerned? Or by or for the anthropologist or other scientific observer?" (Ardener 1989: 110; emphasis in the original). Including the human geneticist, we might add. Research on genetic history has its own politics of naming and categorization in the identification of "populations" for sampling diversity (Palsson 2007: chap. 7). One of the critical issues is potential bias in sampling and the resultant possibility of circular reasoning: Populations have been sampled on the basis of preconceived ideas about geographical distributions and differences, generating empirical results that seem to support preconceived ideas about human variation. While many reports elaborate on the laboratory techniques employed, less attention has been given to sampling procedure. The sampling in Siberian studies, for instance, based on brief and simple interviews, has been flawed; in some cases, "people's ethnic identity . . . may . . . depend on the vagaries of . . . ideological reason or . . . shifting state policies" (Rockhill 1999: 69). Frequently, a dearth of genealogical and ethnographic information has led to understatements of

both the mobility and the genetic admixture of indigenous groups before and during the Soviet period.

As many anthropologists have emphasized, among them Ardener, ethnic groups are fluid units with flexible boundaries, subject to both self-identification, and naming. This is a theme classically explored by Fredrik Barth in his *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969). Ethnic boundaries are *made* for specific pragmatic purposes. Personal names, indeed, somewhat like gene frequencies, are often implicated in the process of demarcating and defining populations and ethnicities. Significantly, after the riots in Paris in 2006 which involved mostly young people of North African origin, a French security agent was quoted as saying that the rioters "feel penalized by their poverty, the colour of their skin *and their names*" (quoted in Finch 2008: 713; emphasis added). As Palmié (2007) observes, personal names are part of "racecraft" or race making.

5.5 Conclusions

Personal names play important roles in all societies at all times, although practices vary significantly both over time and from one context to another. The "strange" naming practices discussed above, the recycling of personal names among Inuit, help to de-familiarize the contemporary systems with which most Euro-American readers are likely to be familiar. In all cases, however, naming systems operate – sometimes tacitly and sometimes explicitly – as technologies of differentiation and belonging, much like racecraft and genomic essentialism. The study of names and practices of naming, as a result, should be included in studies of biopolitics. Finch (2008: 709) suggests that "sociological research on names and their use is surprisingly sparse given their social significance." While this is an overstatement, practices of naming deserve greater attention in social science and humanities research, partly in the context of the technologies of belonging.

Drawing partly on my own research in Inuit contexts, I have explored some of the opportunities offered for anthropology in the genomic domain and identified both some tensions that they invite and some potential ways of resolving them. The history of the Inuit can be advanced through crossdisciplinary perspectives, and Inuit notions of subjectivity and relatedness can also provide an interesting and useful contrast to the program theory of genes and development. For many Inuit, a person's character is determined less by the parents' DNA than by the personal names he or she is given or by the act of naming. While Inuit epigenetics tends to resist the biologizing of kinship that pervades Western discourse, for Inuit identity and relatedness are nevertheless thoroughly embodied.

Genomic studies must attend to local practices and conceptions of personhood, naming, and relatedness. Local understanding and interpretation of

genetic analyses are likely to depend on a host of factors, including how people construct nationhood, citizenship, subjectivity, and relatedness. Even when researchers avoid making statements about identities and relatedness, the mere fact that they are sampling DNA in an attempt to map genetic histories may unavoidably engender genetic citizenship, possibly revising established notions of belonging. Genetic studies are, however, unlikely to replace established notions of sociality with new ones. Instead, their results will be filtered through local notions. Likewise, local notions may inform the ideas and theories entertained by visitors. There may, for instance, be a fruitful dialogue between Inuit epigeneticists and professional developmental-systems theorists.

It seems pertinent to explore the variety in current naming traditions in terms of what they do, the impact of the speech acts involved, integrating analyses of such technologies into studies of the constitution of subjects, the politics of belonging, exclusion, and control. The perspective of personal names is highly pertinent for the study of the use of signatures associated with ethnicity and race and social attempts to modify, establish, or erase any kind of social hierarchy. While names are embodied much like other biomarkers, they are not fixed, natural essences; if that were the case, people would not be renamed, and naming traditions would not change. Just as slaves can regain their freedom and personhood, those stigmatized by nicknames can regain their dignity – through revising the social contract on which naming is based. The numbered, after all, can be renumbered.