MARITAL NAME CHANGE:
A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF WHY WOMEN CHOOSE
A TRADITIONAL NAMING PRACTICE

by

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This thesis investigates reasons for the traditional practice of marital name changing among women. Research shows that the majority of American women will follow a traditional naming practice upon marriage which is reflective of the compliant behavior among women in a patriarchal society. Using a mixed methods approach, the focus of this research is to gain a better understanding of the reasons for the traditional practice of marital name changing among women in two samples of data. Results from the two samples used in this study show that the decision about marital name changing is closely tied to social norms, and specifically traditional practices, which is consistent with current literature. However, the qualitative data from my sample contributes extraordinary depth to this study by adding rich description from the respondents that was not available from the survey respondents. This in-depth information reveals that the women not only choose traditional naming practices because of social norms and tradition, but may also have conflicting feelings about their decision. The respondents' reasons and experiences with marital name changing reveal the ways that social norms shape people's personal decisions regarding significant life changing events while also showing how the decisions made by people in turn shape society. The issue of martial name changing illustrates the complexity of social life.

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To all the Lucy Stoners

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The names given to us at birth are assigned to us without our input and before our personalities have developed. This naming practice is a cultural tradition in the United States and typically the first name indicates gender and the last name a family affiliation (Brunet and Bideau 2000). As adults, however, names can be changed with relatively little complication. There are many reasons why one can choose to change a name, but few people do so unless they get married (Emens 2007). For women such as Lucy Stone (1818-1893), advocating for the right to keep women's surnames at marriage was as important an effort as women's suffrage and the anti-slavery movement (www.lucystoneleague.org). For many other women, however, taking on their husband's name at marriage remains a long-lasting tradition that 94 percent of native-born American women perfunctorily participate in today (Gooding and Kreider 2010:689). Thus, the practice of name-changing at marriage indicates the power of cultural traditions.

A patriarchal culture in which men hold more social, political and economic power than do women (Kimmel 2011) influences traditions. Sociologists such as Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann maintain that culture is socially constructed via symbolic aspects such as words, gestures, and language (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Language is the primary symbolic aspect that transmits culture and people's names, as symbols, carry meaning (Giddens, Duneier, and Appelbaum 2007). Because of the patriarchal society in which we live and its gendered societal expectations that we adhere to both willingly and unconsciously, women are expected to forego their own identities (as displayed in their last name) and take the husband's surname upon marriage. This reproduces gender inequality and discounts the conscientious efforts women and men have made toward equality. The ability to choose one's own name (e.g., keeping one's maiden name upon marriage) is an "act of power" and an "important aspect of self possession"

(Emens 2007: 774). Although the reasons for choosing to take a husband's last name upon marriage are often convoluted, simply having a choice in the matter is significant. For many women in the United States having a choice about their first or last name is not considered an option.

The topic of name changing upon marriage is complex because of the problems associated with the conflicting expectations it has for women. For example, a primary value in our culture is individualism (Knox and Schacht 2010), which promotes individual interests, personal identity and accountability. It seems an individualistic culture would increase the likelihood of a woman keeping her last name upon marriage and thereby maintain her personal identity. However, at the same time, social norms in our society expect women upon marriage to give up their identities for the sake of uniting themselves by name with their husband and children.

Working from a framework of symbolic interactionism theory and feminist theory, the research in this thesis seeks to understand the reasons women give for making the choice to change their last name upon marriage. My study utilizes data from two samples: a quantitative sample of 129 undergraduate women from a mid-sized university as well as data from a qualitative sample of 16 women who are engaged or recently married within the last year. The information provided by these data is used to develop a deeper understanding of the reasons for the traditional practice of women taking the husband's last name after marriage.

In chapter II, I elaborate on the theoretical framework for this research and explain how the tradition of name changing has been socially constructed. In Chapter III, I discuss the current literature and reasons why women choose a traditional or non-traditional naming option upon

marriage. In the chapters that follow, I present the research methodology, analysis and the

results. I finish the thesis with a discussion section and conclusion.

CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Sociologists emphasize the importance of the socialization process in constructing social reality (Blumer 1969; Schutz [1932] 1967; Garfinkel [1967] 1984). Through the socialization process - a life long process of learning and internalizing the values, beliefs, and norms of our social group - we become functioning members of society, and cultural values and social norms are passed on (Ferris and Stein 2008). Symbolic interactionism theorists emphasize the importance of symbols such as language. People learn the meanings of symbols in social interactions, such that these symbols are social objects used to represent whatever people agree that they should represent. More importantly, words make all other symbols possible; symbols in general and especially language allow actors to actively create their own society (Blumer 1969; Schutz [1932] 1967; Garfinkel 1984). This perspective is useful for the examination of reasons for name-changing.

Erving Goffman (1959) describes the social construction of reality by comparing the social world with an on stage performance. Goffman suggests that everyone wears a mask and plays a role. The role that each person plays is a performance that we put on for ourselves and others because this is how we think we are supposed to act or behave because of the indications we get from others. Further, we become so accustomed to wearing this mask and playing this role that we forget that we are actors, and the actor becomes more like the actual person that we truly are (Goffman 1959). This ties into name changing because within our culture, women feel that they are expected to participate in the custom of taking their spouse's last name. Within this framework, the tradition of name changing is a social construction developed by actors (i.e., people in the culture) and passed on as a normal practice in our culture. The social expectation of

taking your husband's name at marriage is one that many people regard as insignificant; however, from a symbolic interactionist approach, names are symbols which identify us to the rest of society. To provide further insight into the social construction of reality, a feminist framework will be discussed next.

2.2 Feminist Theory

The question of why women change their names at marriage is a suitable topic for consideration in a feminist framework. For this research, I draw primarily upon the distinguished feminist sociologist, Dorothy Smith. According to Smith (1987), culture is a social construction that primarily reflects the standpoint of men. Further, women in our society have customarily been excluded from ". . . the making of ideology, of knowledge, and of culture . . ." (p.17). This means that *women's ways of knowing the world* have not been represented and that women have been routinely disqualified from the process of creating what is known as culture. Smith contends that women have both participated in this power imbalance and can remove themselves from it, which is imperative to the creation of culture, knowledge, and ideology based on the experiences of women (Smith 1987: 17-18).

Smith (1987) describes traditions as ways of thinking that have progressed and become normalized, formed by the written and spoken word being passed along throughout history. Organizing society around only men's views, ideologies, and experiences began to develop in Western Europe around four or five hundred years ago (p.18). In regard to name changing, historically, women wouldn't have had the opportunity to participate in creating an alternative tradition separate from that of changing their surname at marriage. Smith (1987) maintains that:

> Women have never controlled the material or social means to the making of a tradition among themselves or to acting as equals in the ongoing discourse of intellectuals…They have not had, until very recently, access to the educational skills necessary to develop, sustain, and participate in the making of a common culture. (Pp.18-19)

The fact that women lacked educational, economic, and political opportunities necessary to participate in creating culture helps provide some insight into why the patriarchal tradition of women taking the husband's name at marriage has persisted across time.

Recognized feminist theorist, Miriam Johnson suggests that women must create a division of labor that doesn't penalize women or "reinforce privatization and isolation of the family" in order to avoid gender inequality (Johnson 1989:106). She argues that men legitimize male dominance by using the economic power that comes along with the *provider role*. This means that women may feel subservient to men because they rely on them financially. In terms of marital name changing within a patriarchal culture, women may feel as though they want to please their husbands or have little room to make decisions since the man is seen as the head of the household. Or, they may regard the decision to take their husband's name as a powerful and independent choice. Feminist law professor Elizabeth Emens (2007) maintains that whatever the reason may be to change or keep one's name at marriage, it should be done so out of understanding the laws and options governing your decision, and not because of pressures from societal norms and traditions, expectations from family members, or because of lack of knowledge about the choices available.

In her book, An Anthology of Western Marxism, the feminist scholar, Ann Ferguson ([1987] 1989) lends support to the idea of the social construction of reality as presented by Smith and the symbolic interactionism theorists. She adds to the discussion by stating that gender inequality is socially constructed, gender roles are unequal, and lastly she calls for change in women's self-perception of their social status in society in order for there to be positive change. Ferguson discusses that male dominance and other types of social dominance, such as racism, capitalism, and ethnicism are reproduced culturally. Further, she contends that through the

socialization process, children are taught gender roles that carry different expectations for girls and boys. In a patriarchal culture, girls are socialized that being connected to others is important while boys are encouraged to be independent. An example of this is the way in which from a young age women are taught to put other people's needs before their own and to ensure that their family is cared for before they are. Since this lesson is unequally taught to children, girls learn that they are required and expected to do more caretaking work but not to expect anything more because of it. In regard to marital name changing, Ferguson's perspective on the constraints of gender roles suggests that women's given names are considered inconsequential, not needed for perpetuating a family lineage, and that as group, women are less important than are men. Ferguson ([1987] 1989) maintains that women need to organize with other women and use the power gained to challenge the patriarchal family.

Understanding that culture is socially constructed helps reveal why only men's names have been passed on throughout generations. In a patriarchal culture that views only men's voices as significant, it becomes apparent how men's ideas, values, and knowledge would be those that are passed on as social norms and traditions. Therefore, any differences to women's ideology, values, and knowledge are suppressed. It is evident from this perspective why it is that women change their name upon marriage and how men's names get passed on through the generations as a traditional practice in our society.

Considering this fact within the framework of cultural norms is a helpful tactic. Sociologists define cultural norms as rules and guidelines regarding what kind of behaviors are acceptable; they develop out of a culture's value system (Ferris and Stein 2008). Such behaviors are learned from parents, teachers, peers, and the media whose values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors take place in the context of their own organizational culture (Ferris and Stein 2008).

Cultural norms often are so strongly ingrained in an individual's daily life that the individual may be unaware of certain behaviors. Therefore, changing cultural norms takes time and effort because they are so deeply embedded within us (Giddens, Duneier, and Appelbaum 2007). Shifting cultural norms from taking a husband's surname to keeping one's own surname upon marriage could be an extreme cultural change in a patriarchal society and one that would likely take time. Therefore, a likely reason why in recent years we have not seen great increases in women who keep their name is because the cultural norm of changing one's surname to that of the husband is so deeply embedded in our culture.

In this chapter, I have described how the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, feminist theory, and cultural norms provides insight into the context of choices about marital name changing. Next, I present a review of research studies on the topic of marital name changing.

CHAPTER III. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The History of Marital Name Changing

An examination of the history of marital name changing reveals a stable pattern with only a few deviations. In the past, women took their husband's name upon marriage and were considered his property. This practice wasn't disputed until 1855, the year Lucy Stone became the first woman in America to keep her surname upon getting married (Boxer and Gritsenko 2005:3). Lucy Stone was a trailblazer and is noted for being an effective abolitionist and suffragist. Her bold choice fit with her advocating for women's rights, but it was not a widely embraced decision that shifted adherence to the social norm of marital name changing.

In fact, the practice of marital name changing and restrictions on married women continued across time. For example, records show that in the 1930's it was standard practice that the wife would take the husband's last name upon marriage and have no legal identity apart from her husband (Scheuble and Johnson 1993: 748). Married women who used their maiden names were restricted from voting, receiving passports, earning income, and/or having bank accounts using their birth surnames (Gooding and Kreider 2010). Due to the feminist movement and changing social norms, in 1975 it was finally legal for women in all states to keep their birth surname at marriage (p. 682). Although keeping one's surname at marriage was legalized there were many steps that were taken to reach that point, and The Lucy Stone League is worth mentioning as a part of this reform.

The Lucy Stone League, founded in the 1920's, is an organization that focuses on name choice equality for women and men and advocates for women's equal status in society. The organization's platform emphasizes the importance of a name to an individual's self-identity and urges brides to keep their surnames upon marriage. On the page *Who are we?* on their website

you find this statement "[A] person's name is fundamental to his/her existence…" (www.lucystoneleague.org). The website explains that when the organization was formed it stressed the importance of the right for married women to use their own surname to: "obtain a passport, register at a hotel, check a book out from the library, receive paychecks, and obtain a copyright from the Library of Congress" (www.lucystoneleague.org). The Lucy Stone League has emphasized the importance of name choice equality for women since the 1920's and remains an active organization today. The League supports this cause in order for women to exercise their right to keep or change their name at marriage since this right has not always been afforded to married women.

Despite the efforts of The Lucy Stone League, the majority of American women are marrying and taking their husband's name as the most popular naming choice (Kopelman et al. 2009: 688). Although the law changed in the 1970's declaring that married women could choose their surname rather than be required to take their spouse's, the majority or 94 percent of native-born American women still take their husband's surname (Gooding and Kreider 2010:689). It seems as though after years of being denied the right to choose one's last name upon marriage, those that were not afforded the opportunity to choose their last name at marriage would be more eager to seize the chance to express their right. However, the trend of women keeping their maiden name (although still a man's name) at marriage has not increased as much as one might expect after the reform. This suggests that a more influential force than the law, more specifically a social norm, is at work in their decision making process. Simply ratifying a law by making it legal for a married woman to keep her own name may not change socialized values and beliefs, but a shift in a social practice may be linked to the changing of norms over time.

Some research shows that currently, young women may not think keeping their last name is important to their identities since they grew up in a time when women had the right to keep their surnames name after marrying (Houvouras and Carter 2008; Hoffnung 2006). Or they may think that it is not an important indicator of progress toward gender role equality as do feminists of the first and/or second wave under the false impression that equality has been fully reached when it hasn't (Shriver 2009). A research study by Hoffnung (2006) used data from wedding announcements from The New York Times from the years 1982-2002, and also surveyed a sample of 126 college-educated women. The researcher suggests that during this time period, some feminists didn't find their identity through their name, nor did they see this as a factor in making progress towards equality. Although more women have gained access into the professional work world, they are not necessarily taking on feminist identities and keeping their birth surnames (p. 824). However, this could be explained by considering that women using their husband's name who are currently employed may not see themselves as being negatively sanctioned by not being hired because of their name. Regardless of what their reasons may be, the reality that Lucy Stone is remembered more for keeping her birth name than for being a social advocate for women's rights or abolition (Gooding and Kreider 2010), is a sign that the social norm that women will drop their surname name at marriage and replace it with the husband's last name is one that runs deep in our culture.

Across time, important social changes for women include increases in the number of women in the labor force, fewer families with multiple children, expanded educational opportunities, and more women in professional occupations (Shriver 2009). Some researchers assert that these social changes have altered the way our culture views the expectations of traditional name changing practices and affected how women want to be perceived after

marriage (Scheuble and Johnson 1993). Johnson and Scheuble (1995) surveyed a sample of 929 married persons and a sample of 180 of their married adult offspring to determine prevalence and determinants of women's name choice at marriage. Researchers found that women married since 1980 were more likely to make non-traditional naming choices than those married before 1980. The researchers concluded that this shift indicates social change in marital name changing. This is easily explained by the fact that women were required to take their husband's name upon marriage until the mid 1970's; therefore the number of women after 1980 with non-traditional surnames should have increased at least somewhat after the law changed, although more recent research shows contradicting findings.

Kopelman et al.'s (2009) content analysis using The New York Times found inconsistent findings in a sample of brides who kept their names upon marriage. Researchers found in the 1980's only nine percent of brides kept their names, in the 1990's 23 percent kept their names, and in the years 2001-2005 only 18 percent kept their names (p. 698). The pattern shows an increase from the 1980's to the 1990's and then a drop off in the 2000's. This is interesting because one would assume that the progression of women who keep their names would continue to increase as advancements in educational opportunities for women improve and as more women continue to enter the workforce. However this trend shows a drop off in the 2000's suggesting that the viewpoint of third wave feminists about naming decisions differs from that of second and first wave feminists such as Lucy Stone and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

3.2 Expectations about Name Changing

Research studies have found that women who choose to keep their surnames face the possible disapproval of their future husband and also negative stereotypes from society (Emens 2007; Noordewier et al. 2010; Scheuble and Johnson 1993). For example, Emens (2007) reports

that researchers in the 1980's discovered women who were called "Ms." instead of "Miss" or "Mrs." were thought to be less honest or concealing something about their marital status (p. 780). This provides some evidence that women are expected in our culture to follow the path of least resistance by taking their spouse's surname in order to not be negatively sanctioned by others.

A study conducted by Noordewier et al. (2010) analyzed a large representative sample using data from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study. Researchers found that women who take their husband's names were seen as more stereotypically feminine (i.e., more dependent, less intelligent, and less ambitious) than women who kept their own name. Women using their own names, unmarried women, and men were all viewed as less feminine than women with no surname information (Noordewier et al. 2010: 22). Therefore, a woman may feel as though she is being judged on her degree of femininity due to the decisions she makes regarding marital name choice. This could cause her to make the naming choice that causes the least resistance from those around her depending on whether they support femininity or not. In turn, she may or may not think that being stereotypically feminine is a good quality; but she should be aware that this choice impacts the chances of a married woman's employment and income. According to Noordewier et al. (2010), a woman who took her husband's name at marriage was less likely to be hired and her salary lower compared to single women or name keepers. Therefore, this study shows that women who decide to change their name upon marriage risk the consequences of being considered stereotypically feminine not only on a personal level but on a professional level as well.

Scheuble and Johnson (1993) found in a <u>Wall Street Journal NBC</u> nationwide news poll that 56 percent of respondents preferred the president's spouse not use her birth name as her middle name. This suggests that over one-half of respondents are not supportive of prestigious

public figures, specifically Hillary Rodham Clinton, keeping her birth name as her middle name (p.748). Therefore, if the former first lady of the United States is regarded as deviant for using her maiden name as a middle name, this reinforces the social norm of marital name changing in our culture.

3.3 Women Constrained in the Middle

Women faced with the choice of keeping their surname or taking their husband's name upon marriage outlines the inequalities present in marital naming traditions. For example, if a man has children, he would be able to share his surname with three generations of his family. For women to be able to do this, they must hyphenate their name so that they can be connected to their parents, husband, and children (Emens 2007: 776). This exemplifies how women may feel as though they have to make a choice between their identity or life before marriage and their life after marriage.

Women are constrained by a set of inegalitarian or unfair choices about marital name changing. Not only because they have fewer options than men, but because women are given a choice called a *default option* of keeping their name when they get married (Emens 2007). Elizabeth Emens, a professor at Columbia Law School, describes one of her most striking findings contributing to these unfair measures with the term *Desk Clerk Law*. This is explained as the most informal form of rulemaking by clerks who make the regulations for many couples informally by explaining the legal system erroneously. Emens explains that, "…federal, state, and local government clerks gave inaccurate, incomplete, contradictory, or normative responses to specific questions about legal options" (p. 824). For example a woman may call into a DMV office to ask if she can hyphenate her name and the desk clerk falsely explains that she may not want to do that because it is too much of a hassle, it would be too costly, or that she would need

to have several documents signed. This example of exaggerated information could deter a woman from making a naming choice that she may desire because of the inaccurate or subjective information she received.

There are many consequences that women face regarding their marital naming decision. If they decide to keep their surname they may be personally fulfilled knowing they won't lose their identities as well as have the opportunity to pass on their feminist beliefs and even matrilineal lineage to their children. However, they may also experience dissatisfaction from their husband and his family and feel societal level pressure to conform to the cultural expectations of name changing upon marriage.

Therefore, suggestions for alternatives to the "Mrs. His Name" convention are: keeping your own name, matrilineal naming, bilineal naming, hyphenating, Mr. Her Name, new names, and merged names (Emens 2007: 796). There are many options to taking a husband's name at marriage and many of these would allow the woman to remain connected to both her maiden name and to her husband and children without feeling as though she has sacrificed her identity.

3.4 Women's Views toward Marital Name Change

Previous research by Scheuble and Johnson (1993) reported women's attitudes about name changing at marriage. Their study was based on data collected in 1990 via personal interviews with 258 college students at a small Midwestern college. They found that women were significantly more likely than men to believe it is acceptable for a woman to keep her maiden name if she marries and that it is appropriate for a woman to keep her birth name if she is a professional. The researchers also presented respondents' reasons for when it is acceptable for women to keep their own names at marriage. Results indicated that men and women were significantly more likely to believe it is acceptable for women to keep their maiden names upon

marriage if: a woman likes her maiden name, does not like her husband's name, is older when she marries, or if she wants to keep her own family name going (Scheuble and Johnson 1993:751). This signifies that the women college students in their sample think positively about name keeping for a variety of reasons.

However, in the same study Scheuble and Johnson (1993) report that 81.6 percent of respondents planned to change their name upon marriage and only seven percent planned to hyphenate their maiden and married names (p. 751). Results from their study suggest that the respondents support individuals having their naming choices honored. As expected, women planning to marry later and planning more liberal work roles after the birth of their children were less likely to plan on changing their name upon marriage. Women who were from a larger community, those with mothers of higher education levels, and those who held non-traditional gender role attitudes were more likely to be accepting of name change variations (Scheuble and Johnson 1993: 751). Consistent with other literature on this topic, women with more liberal views and coming from a more diverse background were more likely to be tolerant of name keeping and less likely to plan marital name change.

3.5 Why Do Women Change their Names?

Research has shown that women take their spouses' name upon marriage because of tradition, family values, and pressure from society (Scheuble and Johnson 1993; Johnson and Scheuble 1995; Blakemore, Lawton and Vartanian 2005). Scheuble and Johnson (1993) report that women who are unfamiliar with egalitarian lifestyles, women with lower levels of education and women marrying at a younger age are more likely to change their name upon marriage. Those that chose to keep their maiden name stated that it was an important part of their identity

(Noack and Wiik 2008; Kopelman et al. 2009; Gooding and Kreider 2010; Noordewier et al. 2010).

In a cross-cultural study conducted by Boxer and Gritsenko (2005), two samples were used to study women's surname decisions: one collected in the United States and the other from Russia. Their methodology integrated a qualitative sample derived from oral interviews from 12 American women and seven Russian women, and a quantitative sample utilized a survey consisting of a sample of 74 American women and 103 Russian women. Results indicated that women from both countries had mixed feelings in regard to name changing (e.g. reluctant or regretful about their decision, concerns about identity, desire for family unity). However, Russian women were found to be less autonomous than the American women and this can be explained by the lack of feminist discourse in Russia during Soviet times (pp. 5-6). The differences found between the two cultures in name changing suggest that American women speak more readily about feminist ideas than do Russian women (e.g., they don't want to lose their identity, not wanting to be owned, and desiring an equal partnership in their marriage). The researchers conclude that while following tradition may be an act of personal choice it is also due to pressure being put on the individual from social institutions.

In Hoffnung's (2006) study, the researcher found several key factors separating women who changed their name from those who kept their name upon marriage. She reports that compared to women who were name keepers, women who changed their name were significantly more likely to be Catholic, have mothers with only a high school education, and state that they want to have children earlier in their marriage (p. 823). These differences show the influence of religion, education, and marital norms in a woman's decision about name changing upon marriage.

Blakemore, Lawton, and Vartanian (2005) took a random sample of 149 men and 246 women who ranged in age from 18 to 31 years from Introductory Psychology classes. Respondents were surveyed to determine the characteristics associated with women who are more likely to want to use the title "Mrs." and to adopt their husband's surname. Participants were asked thirteen questions concerning their desire to get engaged and married, as well as excitement and pride in achieving marital status; this resulted in the *Drive to Marry Scale*, which is a five point likert scale. Results indicated that women with a stronger drive to marry, those who value the role of parent more (versus valuing a career for example), and more traditional women (measured by the *Attitudes Toward Women Scale* that ranges from 0 = very traditional to 45 = very pro-feminist) had a higher likelihood of wanting to adopt their husband's name upon marriage or to be called "Mrs." (pp. 330-332).

3.6 Other Variables that Influence Name Choice

Race and ethnicity affect naming options as well. Gooding and Kreider's (2010) study used a nationally representative sample of 251,358 native-born married women. The information was collected from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2004 ACS file, with mail questionnaires, using computerized interviewing (both CATI and CAPI), and personal interviewing to construct a more comprehensive and current study than was previously available. Researchers found that members of all racial/ethnic groups had two to three times higher odds than those who were white non-Hispanic, of using a non-conventional surname (p. 697). This difference suggests that social norms vary across racial/ethnic subcultures, exert considerable influence, and actually supersede mainstream cultural norms about name changing.

The region of the country where respondents reside also impacts the decision about name changing upon marriage. For example, research has shown that women living in the Northeast or

West were more likely to use a non-traditional surname (i.e. keep their own surname or have a merged name) than those living in the South (Gooding and Kreider 2010). This is consistent with the literature that suggests that there are differences in the prevalence of non-traditional surnames by region (Johnson and Scheuble 1995).

Studies show that the education level of the woman is a very influential component in determining if she will change her last name or keep her birth name upon marriage. Researchers report that compared to women with less education, women with a bachelor's degree are 1.7 times more likely to use a non-conventional surname, women with a master's degree are 2.8 times more likely, women with a professional degree are 5.0 times more likely, and women with a doctorate are 9.8 times more likely (Gooding and Kreider 2010: 683). This study provides evidence that educational degrees are correlated with decisions about name changing. Highly educated women may feel even more inclined to keep their name when they get married if they have already established careers or have made a name for themselves. Women with higher education levels are more likely to have already established professional relationships or have work recognized with their name attached to it that they do not wish to lose.

In sum, the review of the literature presented in this thesis shows that the decision about marital name changing is closely tied to social norms, and specifically traditional practices. Prior research indicates that education influences attitudes and in turn allows women (and men) access to knowledge and ideas that they may otherwise not have been exposed to previously, such as alternative naming options. The aim of my research is to delve deeper into these reasons for marital name changing.

With this study, I examine if prior findings hold and investigate the research question: How does a mixed methods analysis contribute to gaining a deeper understanding of the reasons

women give for the traditional practice of marital name changing? This research question

includes mixed methods because quantitative information measures the perceived extent of

traditional views about name changing among a large group of college women and qualitative

information describes individual perceptions and experiences of the practice of name changing.

In the next chapter I will describe the methodology of the qualitative and quantitative samples.

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

For this study, two types of data are employed to study choices about marital name changing: a quantitative secondary data set and a qualitative data set collected via in-depth interviews. Prior to any data collection or data analyses, I received approval for my study from the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). In preparation for this research project, I studied the mixed method approach. The following explanations about the mixed method approach were especially helpful to me. The prestigious researchers, Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln (2003) wrote in their book The Landscape of Qualitative Research, this description:

> [T]he use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. We can know a thing only through its representations. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry. (P. 8)

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define the mixed method approach as "[T]he class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" (p. 17). They also state:

> [R]esearchers should collect multiple data using different strategies, approaches, and methods in such a way that the resulting mixture or combination is likely to result in complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. Effective use of this principle is a major source of justification for mixed methods research because the product will be superior to monomethod studies. (P. 18)

Thus, taking a mixed method approach facilitates the effort of the present study to more fully understand the reasons for marital name changing and the traditional gender norms regarding the practice. Therefore, through the analyses of two samples, I maintain that I can best answer my

research question. Next, I will explain how I obtained the two samples and follow with the results of the analyses.

4.1 Quantitative Sample

The quantitative sample used in the present study is a secondary data set compiled by Dr. Rebecca Powers and provided to me for this research project. These data allow for the study of opinions about marital name changing among a sample of people who had just entered college and had not studied gender stratification or the topics of marriage and the family. During the fall semester of 2007, questionnaires were administered to first year and sophomore year college students enrolled in fifteen sections of lower division Sociology classes at a medium-sized southeastern U.S. public university (See Appendix B).

To measure the social norm of name changing a list of potential reasons for name changing after marriage was created using a two-stage process First, a pilot study was carried out using open-ended questions about reasons for name changing. From these responses, a content analysis was carried out to ascertain patterns. Secondly, a list was compiled of sources from prior literature on name changing. By comparing the pilot study results to those of previous studies, twelve different reasons for marital name changing were determined. The respondents were asked to answer a short questionnaire about their personal preferences for name changing after marriage. The questionnaire asked students to respond "yes or no" to each of the reasons in addition to ranking their likelihood of dropping the maiden name, keeping the maiden name, or hyphenating the maiden and married name. Information about the respondents' race/ethnicity, the year they graduated high school, the type of high school that they attended, and the city/state where they attended high school was collected as a means of determining demographic characteristics. Out of the 673 students present at the time the surveys were administered, only

10 were not returned, resulting in 663 surveys completed. The response rate was 98.5 percent. Of the questionnaires completed, those with missing data on variables of interest were omitted, producing a sample of 355 women and 168 men with complete data.

For this study I focus on the reasons why women choose a traditional naming option. Thus, I restricted my sample to women respondents only. A preliminary examination of the frequencies on all of the variables revealed inadequate numbers for statistical analysis on the demographic variables of age, race/ethnicity, and high school type. I also carried out a preliminary analysis of differences by region. It revealed a general consensus about reasons for marital name changing with the exception of one reason. Out-of-state respondents (who were from various states) were more likely to say "yes" at 65 percent to it "being a bad idea for a woman to drop her maiden name and take her husband's name at marriage if she wants to keep her family name going" compared to in-state respondents at 49 percent. Despite this evidence of consensus there are reasons to expect regional differences on variables such as gender norms (see e.g., Powers et al., 2003). Therefore, to avoid misrepresentation due to the lack of further explanatory information, I decided to restrict the sample to respondents who had attended high school in central and eastern North Carolina. Since the numbers were too few for respondents who were older, nonwhite, graduated from a private high school and attended high school out-of-state, I restricted the sample to those categories with sufficient data. In the sample of 355 women, 73 percent were white students, ages 18-19 years old, in their first year of college, almost all (94%) had graduated from a public high school and 77 percent of those high schools were in central or eastern North Carolina. These selection criteria resulted in a final sample of 129 respondents with complete information (see Table 1).

4.2 Qualitative Sample

Next, using a qualitative method approach, I carried out in-depth interviews with 16 women (ages 18-31 years old) who were engaged to be married or recently married. I used this sample profile to target women who would be making a choice about marital name changing in the near future or had recently made that decision. I employed a "snowball" technique to build my sample. Babbie (1992) offers this definition for the method, "[A] snowball sample is a nonprobability sampling method often employed in field research. Each person added to the sample may be asked to suggest additional people for interviewing. The sample would 'snowball' as each of the interviewees suggests other participants who would be influential members of the group" (p.292). To begin, I invited acquaintances to participate in my study who I knew had plans to marry within the next year or were recently married. Then I asked those participants if they knew of others who fit my sample profile. I received leads about potential participants from acquaintances, friends of friends and from visiting three summer classes and describing my study to the students. I used e-mail and the social media site Facebook to send messages to potential participants inviting them to be a part of my thesis research and requested that they schedule interviews with me. I contacted 21 individuals. Five of the women did not respond to my messages, and of the others no one declined participation in the study. This effort resulted in a snowball sample of 16 women ages 22- 31 years old and had lived in southeastern North Carolina an average of ten years. Over half (56%) of the women were married and the rest (44%) were engaged to be married. All of the respondents had attended college with most (75%) completing a Bachelor's degree and three (19%) had earned a Master's degree (see Table 2). In Table 3 I provide a detailed description of the demographic characteristics of the sample by each respondent.

During this process, I kept a tally of the time spent developing the sample and collecting the data. The number of hours I spent setting up appointments was approximately eight hours for 16 interviews. I only spoke to two of the respondents via telephone before meeting with them, and the other 14 respondents agreed to meet with me through e-mail or Facebook messages. We arranged meeting places that were convenient for the participants and included their office, coffee shops, and the library. I asked participants to arrive at the interview alone (or without their significant other) to discuss their perceptions and opinions with me. I spent on average of 27 minutes with each respondent during the face-to-face interviewing process. Approximately three to five minutes were spent introducing myself, explaining the interviewing process and informed consent process. The majority of the time or approximately 15-20 minutes per interview was spent asking/answering questions with a voice recorder taping the actual interview questions and responses. During the interview I took notes on the setting and any non-verbal communication that I noticed. These field notes are included in the discussion of the results.

At each interview I began by obtaining the participants' informed consent and got permission to audio tape the conversation and interview. I explained that my research should not have a negative impact on them and that their opinions would remain anonymous and confidential. Respondents were not paid monetarily or rewarded to take part in my research, but they did benefit from the research by participating and contributing to the understanding of marital name changing.

After getting informed consent, I had the respondents fill out a brief demographic sheet which took about two minutes for them to complete. The questions on the sheet asked their age, the city and state of their high school and college, the highest education level they had completed, their subject area of degree and current or planned career, if they expect to work full

time in their occupation, how long they have lived in southeastern NC, their current marital status, how long they have been engaged or married, and how often they attend religious services (see description above of respondents' characteristics). These demographic questions were asked to get a comparison of how similar the respondents in the quantitative sample are to the qualitative sample and to examine possible trends.

4.2.1 Reliability and validity. In this section I describe the process I followed for transcribing and the tests performed for assessing my work. I spent approximately 24 hours transcribing the 240 minutes of audio interviews. My process for double checking my work included rewinding and listening to the interviews several times to ensure that I had correctly documented what the respondents had said in each interview and transcribing it into text. The Sound Organizer software program included with the digital voice recorder is a program that allowed me to stop, pause, fast forward or rewind without my hands leaving the keyboard for more accurate and faster transcription.

I ensured that my data was reliable by using intercoder reliability which means asking other observers to review your analysis and determine the extent to which there is agreement on the themes and patterns. According to Marvasti (2004), intercoder reliability is similar to triangulation, in that the use of multiple perspectives is expected to reduce the possibility of misreading the data (p. 115). For this test of reliability, another graduate student in my department who is also working on a qualitative thesis reviewed a random sample of my transcriptions by listening to a selection of five interviews and reading the transcriptions to ensure that I correctly documented the data. Her findings indicated that I had accurately transcribed the audio into text with minimal errors. An intercoder reliability check on the coding

of the themes was not carried out due to time constraints, however, future work would benefit from this additional test of reliability.

For a test of validity in my work I am using triangulation or collecting data from multiple perspectives with the goal to increase the *truth* which is interpreted as, "the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers" (Marvasti 2004: 113-114). He suggests another approach to checking validity. This strategy for checking validity, suggested by Marvasti (2004), is through respondent validation which involves taking a summary of the transcription back to the subjects and asking them if the summary constructed about them had correctly characterized their experiences. I randomly chose four respondents, e mailed them, and asked if they agreed or disagreed with the summary of the themes I had organized into a synopsis from their interview. I asked them to tell me "yes" or "no" if what I had concluded in my analysis was what they meant to convey to me through the interview. When the four respondents agreed that I portrayed them correctly, I concluded that my data collection and transcription effort was valid.

4.3 Measurement

Below is a description of the operationalization of the survey questions and the interview used in the analyses.

4.3.1 Quantitative sample measures. The variables in this study measure expectations and reasons for marital name changing. *Naming expectations* are measured here by asking respondents the question, "If you get married, how likely are you to…keep your name, drop your name or hyphenate your names." To measure *reasons* for marital name changing, respondents were asked "When a woman gets married, do you think that dropping her maiden name and taking her husband's last name is…:" and then they answered "yes" or "no" to a list of 12

statements that were possible reasons. Each of the *reasons* were dichotomized for the analyses as 0=no and 1=yes variables.

4.3.2 Qualitative sample measures. The following research questions were used in the interviews to gather data from respondents about their perceptions of and compliance with (a) social norms, (b) gender norms, (c) marriage traditions (d) socialization practices and (e) self-identity. In the interviews, I asked respondents the following:

1. *Why [do you think] women are typically the ones who take on their spouse's surname upon marriage?* I operationalized this question and concept with surname being considered the name added to a given name and in many cases a surname is a family name. I asked respondents for reasons for the practice of women, rather than men, taking their spouse's surname, and why this is seen as a norm, or a typical and expected practice in our culture.

2. *[In your opinion] Why is the wife taking the husband's name considered symbolic of the marriage union?* I operationalized this question and concept of marriage union by using the following definition: Marriage is a socially approved sexual relationship between two individuals. It is an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually intimate and sexual, are acknowledged in a variety of ways, depending on the culture or subculture in which it is found (Giddens, Duneier, and Appelbaum 2007). To investigate reasons given for why the practice of name changing is symbolic of being married in our culture I asked, *"Was the decision about whether or not you will or did take your husband's name something you contemplate? And if yes, how so?"*

3. *In what ways has tradition formed [your] perceptions about the decision to take the husband's name at marriage? What traditions, beliefs, or religious ideals have led*

you to your perceptions about the decisions to take or keep your surname at marriage? I operationalized the concept of tradition as being a ritual, belief or object passed down within a society, still maintained in the present, with origins in the past. A belief is the psychological state in which an individual holds a proposition or premise to be true. An ideal is a principal or value that one actively pursues as a goal (Webster's English Dictionary 2001). To further investigate reasons that led them to their decision to change or keep their name, I asked, *"Did you think about how your decision would affect a) your career? b) ...your self identity? c) ...your family harmony?"* and I also asked *"Do you think your educational attainment or career goals have been a part of this decision? And if yes, How so?"*

4. *Why do women who self-identify as feminists take men's names?* I operationalized feminists as persons who support equal rights for both men and women (which can be persons of either sex) (Webster's English Dictionary 2001). Those answering "yes" to being feminists were then asked about their reasons for supporting the social norm of the woman changing their names to that of their husband's upon marriage. If they answered "no" to being a feminist they were asked why they thought women who identified as feminists supported the social norm of the woman changing their names to that of their husband's upon marriage.

CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the reasons for the traditional practice of marital name changing among women in two samples of data. I started by analyzing the quantitative data and the qualitative data separately to develop a concurrent mixed methods approach, which is suggested by previous research (Clark, Garrett, and Leslie-Pelecky 2010). The purpose for this was to ensure an adequate understanding of the two databases prior to any merging strategies. This procedure allows for two separate sets of results that can be compared for purposes of strengthening and complementing the findings, before beginning data integration (Clark et al. 2010). In the following sections I describe each step of analysis performed.

5.1 Quantitative Analysis

The statistical program SPSS was used for all of the quantitative analyses.

5.1.1 Descriptive analysis. Initial frequencies were produced to examine the distribution of responses for each of the 12 reasons for marital name-changing variables. Only six of these variables held sufficient numbers in each cell for further statistical analysis. Another set of frequency distributions were produced to determine the amount of agreement, or disagreement among respondents for the reasons given for marital name changing.

5.1.2 Bivariate analysis. To determine associations between the six reasons variables, a correlation matrix was produced. The purpose of this analysis was to determine if there were significant associations between the six reasons for why women would drop their surname and take their husband's last name upon marriage.

5.1.3 Reliability analysis. For a test of internal reliability, I used Cronbach's Alpha which is a coefficient of reliability to assess whether the six reasons were all measuring the same concept.

5.2 Qualitative Analysis

To begin analyzing the qualitative data, I used traditional procedures such as open coding and thematic development (Clark et al. 2010). As a supplement to my process, I utilized NVivo software for storing and analyzing the qualitative database. This software was available through the university at no cost to students. I concluded that it would benefit my mixed methods analyses because of the features it supports including the ability to store, organize and transform qualitative data.

5.2.1 Open coding and thematic development. I began by creating a coding scheme made up of the themes as they appeared in the qualitative responses. A description of these themes is shown in Appendix C. To reduce error in coding the data, I coded the interviews through three separate methods: reading the transcripts and coding the themes, listening to the interviews and coding the themes, and using NVivo to code the themes (which included re-reading the interviews and coding the themes inside the program). Each qualitative response could be coded for multiple themes. Thus, for example, a participant who described the reason for changing her name as *everyone in her family before her had done it and she would be expected to also* would receive codes for both "family expectation" and "tradition".

5.2.2 Merging the data. Next, after analyzing both sets of data separately, I followed the implementation strategy of Clark et al. (2010) which includes first, "…identify[ing] overlap topics within the substantive content of the two sets of results…and refin[ing] the analyses in the overlap areas…as needed to facilitate comparisons" (p. 161). Next, the strategy consists of,

"[C]ompar[ing] the qualitative and quantitative results for a substantive topic and assessing to what extent and in what ways the data sets support or illustrate each other"(p. 161). The final stages of their strategy suggest, "[W]rit[ing] the results from one data set, followed by a corresponding result from the other data set, and discuss[ing] interpretations about how the result from one data set corroborates, illustrates, or generalizes a result from the other data set" in the discussion (p. 161). Next I will discuss the results from both samples of data.

CHAPTER VI: RESULTS

6.1 Quantitative Results

6.1.1 Descriptive results. Table 4 shows the results for respondents' naming expectations. The majority, or 90 percent, of women are likely to drop their name upon marriage. The data show that 15 percent are also likely to hyphenate names and 13 percent are likely to keep their maiden name. This shows some overlap in the responses for their future decisions on whether they will change, hyphenate, or keep their names.

Table 5shows the frequency distributions for all 12 possible reasons for marital name changing available as choices to respondents in the survey. The table is organized from high to low in agreement on each of the 12 reasons and shows "A marriage practice that families expect" as the most agreed upon statement at 91 percent and "Giving the husband power over the wife" as the least agreed with statement at 3 percent.

As shown in Table 6 women showed the most consensus (i.e. with 80 percent or more in one response category) for the reasons given in response to the following question. The women were asked "When a woman gets married, do you think that dropping her maiden name and taking her husband's last name is…" (1) *Giving the husband power over the wife* and 97 percent said NO, (2) *Giving up the woman's identity* and 97 percent said NO, (3) *A marriage practice that families expect* and 91 percent said YES, (4) *A traditional act that should be honored* and 83 percent said YES, (5) *A good way to build family unity* and 82 percent said YES, and (6) *Easier than having two names* and 81 percent said YES. However, each of the 12 reasons did not have adequate numbers of respondents to run further statistical analyses. Only 6 of the 12 reasons had adequate numbers of respondents to continue statistical analyses (as shown in Table 7).

Table 7 shows the frequencies for the six reasons for marital name changing that have adequate numbers of respondents. Respondents' agreement on the following question "When a woman gets married, do you think that dropping her maiden name and taking her husband's last name is…" is as follows: Two thirds or 67 percent of respondents agree that it is *important if the couple is going to have children,* whereas a little over half or 57 percent agree that it is *showing respect toward the husband.* Almost half or 53 percent of respondents agree that it is a *personal choice based on how the name sounds,* and 52 percent also agree that it is *a bad idea if she wants to keep her family name going.* Only 33 percent agree that it is *a disadvantage if she has already built a career*, and slightly over half or 54 percent agree that it is *not an important issue.* According to these results there is no consensus among the remaining six reasons, meaning that there isn't a greater proportion of agreement or disagreement on any one reason.

6.1.2 Bivariate results. Table 8 is a correlation matrix which shows four pairs of significant associations for the reasons variables:

(1.) Respondents were likely to agree on the following two reasons that complete this statement: The woman dropping her surname and taking the husband's name is: *important if the couple is going to have children* and *showing respect toward the husband* (r=.259, p<.01).

(2.) Respondents were likely to agree on the following two reasons that complete this statement: The woman dropping her surname and taking the husband's name is: *a bad idea if she wants to keep her family name going* and *a disadvantage if she has already built a career* (r=.285, p<.001).

(3.) Respondents were likely to agree on the following two reasons that complete this statement: The woman dropping her surname and taking the husband's name is: *a bad*

idea if she wants to keep her family name going and *a personal choice based on how the name sounds* (r=.223, p<.05).

(4.) Respondents were likely to respond similarly to the following two reasons that complete this statement: The woman dropping her surname and taking the husband's name is: a *bad idea if she wants to keep her family name going* (agree) and *showing respect toward the husband* (disagree) (r=-.185, p<.05).

The results for Table 8 reveal that there are notable correlations among four of the reasons. Results also indicate that there is no consensus on all of the six reasons, and this suggests there is ambiguity among the women in this sample in regard to their views on marital name changing.

6.1.3 Reliability results. After testing for internal reliability the results show that the six reasons are measuring different concepts rather than measuring the same idea. This finding provides evidence that the variables cannot be grouped together as one measure in the form of a scale. This indicates that the reasons given for name changing are complex and complicated.

In summary, analyses of these data show that respondents often give more than one reason for why they would change their name at marriage. At times, the reasons they give thematically support one another, and at other times the reasons seem inconsistent with each other. This suggests that marital name changing is not a black and white topic but has many grey areas and may best be understood by allowing women to respond in their own words. To develop a more complete understanding of why women choose a traditional naming practice, the qualitative analyses are presented next.

6.2 Qualitative Results

Table 9 shows the results of the women's expectations for marital name changing. The majority of women or 81 percent in this sample (N=16) expect to *drop their name* which is

consistent with the quantitative sample (N=129) at 90 percent. Only 12.5 percent of women in the qualitative sample expect to *hyphenate* their name which is consistent with the quantitative sample at 15 percent. The smallest percents for both samples were to *keep their name* with only 6.2 percent of women in the qualitative sample and 13 percent in the quantitative sample.

 6.2.1 Open coding and theme development. After reviewing the transcriptions several times, I determined that there were two main groups of themes apparent; the first group is **social expectations** which have five subthemes: *family expectation, family unity, tradition, compliance,* and *heteronormativity.* The second group is ***identity*** which has three subthemes including *heritage, career, and religion.* Next, to double check the accuracy of my coding, I counted the frequencies of themes and also used NVivo to count the frequencies of each theme that was associated with an individual respondent. Table 10 shows the frequency distribution of the most prominent themes about name changing as a frequency and percentage of respondents cited expressing each theme, and Table 11 shows the number of times each theme was mentioned. Therefore, Tables 10 and 11 show that the five most commonly mentioned themes were also the same five themes that I found were the most heavily weighed themes respondents mentioned in their interviews. These frequencies were used only as secondary measures to back up the themes that I determined were most influential among the respondents.

 6.2.2 Themes and respondents. Table 12 shows the most prominent themes of the qualitative sample with two examples from each respondent who best summarized the theme; several important points prevailed and will be discussed here. Beginning with the first group of themes: ***social expectations,*** a large proportion of the women mentioned *family expectation* as a reason for their marital naming decision. For example, Parker, a 22 year old engaged woman stated:

I guess both of us come from families that have done that, and I guess in our…you know families no one has ever not taken the last name so it not something that was ever thought about. I guess we would have to have good reasoning behind [keeping the name] and we wouldn't so therefore they might be a little bit hesitant about it so...

Similarly, Jordan, a 25 year old married woman stated, "I think for most of it, it was just assumed that I would just change my name and since it wasn't [name changing wasn't mentioned], and since I chose to it wasn't an issue."

These two women, as well as most of respondents I spoke with said that *family expectation* was a main reason for changing their name, which is exemplified by their desires to please their families and maintain family harmony. Many of the women felt that they were *expected* to or were *supposed* to take their spouses name because of their families. For example, Dakota, a 23 year old engaged woman stated, "I think it was almost instinctual, it was something that I felt I was supposed to do." As well as Cameron, a 24 year old engaged woman who stated:

My family is very conservative, so I think that they would expect it, that I would become…The first time that they introduced us to their friends after we got engaged was this is the future Mr. and Mrs. Bob Jones and went way traditional with it and completely dropped my first name too which was weird. [Laughs] So they wouldn't have expected anything different so we never even had the conversation. So I think that it would be a huge discussion if I were to try and not change my name with my family.

This statement by Cameron suggests that her parents did not consider anything other than the traditional practice of changing her surname at marriage. Her family would expect her to change her name to her husband's name, and if she didn't, her behavior would be seen as deviant. Therefore, *family expectation* is seen to be a driving force for women in this sample to change their name.

A large portion of the respondents expressed the theme *family unity*. For example, Jayden, a 24 year old woman stated, "I'm more so just doing it because I think that when you start a new family the name is an important symbol as your unity as a family." Likewise,

Hayden, a 24 year old married woman who is still contemplating what to do with her surname stated:

> I can see now how it can affect [family unity] for little things, like Bob likes to call us the Jones, but we're not *the Jones* so that bothers him a lot. So it does affect family harmony because it's a rip and when we have kids it will be important because I want them to have our name, not just his name or not just my name. So I suppose that's important.

These women express that sharing a name is important to them for building their families. Many of the women, even those that considered themselves non-traditional (i.e. career oriented, well-educated or identified as feminists), wanted to share a name with their husbands in order for their families to be one unit or one team. Jayden illustrates this point by saying:

> I want to have the feeling of family unity of being *the Jones*. So, I think that it is more…I want to be a cohesive family unit. I guess it's that feeling or belief that is the real reason or main reason why I want to change my name.

This concept came up routinely in my interviews with the women; the view that I can have both, my independence as a woman (i.e. my career, education, or life apart from my husband) and also still share that unity and commitment with my husband by joining myself with him by name. This implies that *family unity* is a likely reason for women to change their names upon marriage, regardless of whether the women perceive themselves to be traditional or non-traditional.

Further, *tradition* was highlighted by many of the women in the sample and explained by Emerson, a 32 year old married woman as:

> I think so, I think just having seen other family members, cousins and so on get married prior to me and just having known the background of my parents and their siblings and so on and so forth. I guess yea in a way I guess you could look at that as tradition because it was something that always happened and always occurred.

Emerson, like many other respondents in the sample, demonstrates *tradition*, by explaining that everyone in her family has taken the surname of their spouse at marriage. Therefore, she has learned about marital name changing through life experiences and seeing others around her

practice this tradition. Since taking the husband's name is something that has always occurred in her social sphere, she feels comfortable continuing this custom and consequently will pass it on herself. Additionally, Reece, a 30 year old engaged woman stated:

> Um, I think it's just you know the tradition in our country to do it. It's basically the norm. Um, so I mean that does kind of have an influence and I think you know sometimes that has negative connotations if you keep your own last name, you know people will call you a feminist and that kind of thing…Um, but you know changing my last name is just kind of what you know just what everyone does.

Similar to Emerson, Reece is likely to be a name changer because she is comfortable with the path of least resistance and she has grown accustomed to everyone around her taking the husband's surname at marriage. She is aware of the negative consequences of not taking the husband's name at marriage (i.e. being labeled a feminist), but overall considers name changing the *norm* in our society or a tradition that everyone adheres to and something that *everyone just does*.

Generally, the women in my sample showed enthusiasm when they spoke about traditions in a way that they appreciated that the practice of marital name change was a tradition itself. For example, Jordan showed passionate emotion when referring to *tradition* by the way she stressed her words and her use of non-verbal communication. She stated:

> Ultimately I like the tradition, I like the idea of it, I like the whole idea of I'm going to be a part of you, you know what I mean so...I never struggled with it at all. It was never like do I do it, do I not, it was mainly more like what do I do with my middle name, you know what I mean?

Here, the respondent gets excited (i.e. her voice increases, her eyes widen, and she smiles) when she talks about *liking the tradition* and *liking the idea* of taking the last name upon marriage as an important part of being married and being *a part of her husband*. Overall, many of the respondents showed interest when they spoke about following the tradition of name changing.

Subsequently, the theme *compliance* was evident as a prominent theme in the respondents' interviews. To illustrate, Emerson, a 32 year old married woman stated, "And [changing my name] was not something that I ever questioned, I know other people choose to keep their last name or choose to hyphenate, but that was just never something that I guess was questioned or that I was concerned with." This shows that she didn't even question the act of name changing and that she didn't give it a second thought. Most of the women in my sample stated that they did not give the topic of name changing much thought or that it was not something that they were *very concerned with*. This is interesting because these types of reports seem inconsistent with other statements that they present throughout the interview, such as their identity being important to them, wanting family unity, or ensuring that their family harmony is not disrupted by their decision. As another example, Dakota, a 23 year old engaged woman stated, "I haven't obviously given this a lot of thought. It wasn't something that I have thought about a lot because I just always thought that I would just do it." It is obvious by the women's apathetic tone of voices and their nonchalant body gestures (i.e. shrugged shoulders, lifted eyebrows, flipped up hands) that they didn't think this was an issue that they should have given much thought to --at least until now. To further demonstrate, Logan, a 23 year old married woman stated, "Honestly it wasn't even a conversation that we had. It was just something that we just both knew would happen and we didn't give it any thought." The women in this sample often allude to the fact that they have just *assumed* that they would change their name as a standard procedure of practicing this tradition in our society.

The last subtheme in the **social expectation** group is *heteronormativity*. This theme is important because respondents in my sample mentioned that they wanted people to know that they were officially married, no longer just dating or cohabitating, that they are seriously

committed to their husbands, or are now *doing life together* as a husband and wife. These types

of statements were ones in which the women showed the most enthusiasm when speaking about

name changing. For example, Logan, a 25 year old married woman stated, "Because the man is

typically the head of the body of the union. When they come together you want to, I want people

to know that I am married, that my name has changed, and that I am married to my husband."

When sharing this with me, the respondent was excited about wanting people to know as an

outward display of her marriage to society. She portrayed this excitement to me as her tone of

voice changed to a higher pitch, her hand tapped the table as she stated each phrase, and she

smiled. Another example of *heteronormativity* and desiring an outward display of marriage is a

response from Cameron, a 24 year old engaged woman who stated:

> I want people to know that we're together and that I'm his wife. I think I want that title
> and I want to be Mrs. Bob Smith if that's what you want to call it. And I am fine taking
> on his name to be able to have that identity with us being together.

The women were very persistent in their comments about wanting other people to know that they

were married and that their marital status had changed from being a single woman. Obviously

these women recognize that our culture approves of and encourages heterosexual marriages,

therefore they would benefit from being a married person in our society and should take

advantage of changing their name in order to be acknowledged as a married individual. This

suggests the importance of certain values in our culture such as monogamy, commitment,

heterosexuality, trust, etc. that are established as being linked to marriage. One respondent even

commented that her marital name change was looked at as reaching a certain goal in her life.

Emerson stated, "And that was kind of like one of those goal achievement types of things and

that was just kind of how I viewed it." The passion in which the women spoke about wanting

others to know that they were married was interesting in that they see getting married and the

name change as significant events in their lives. It is interesting to note here, that this statement is not consistent with the respondents' previous statements on *not giving the name change much thought.* This further demonstrates the ambiguity among the reasons for name changing and the complexity of the decision-making process. This was conveyed by Avery when she stated, "And it's not that I disagree with [name changing], I enjoy it, I think it is a positive step in your marriage when you do that." In general, the women portrayed a very optimistic view about name changing and had a strong desire for others to know that they were married women with their husband's last name.

The second group of themes involves the topic of personal ***identity***, specifically including *religion, heritage,* and *career. Identity* was a theme mentioned by most of the respondents and that can be explained as women considering their name to be an important part of who they are. The women mentioning this theme don't want to lose this aspect of themselves or a certain part of their life that has been with them since birth which shows who they are to the rest of the world. It is interesting to note here that while a majority of the women reported changing their name because of *family expectations,* the majority of the women also considered their personal *identity* as an important aspect of their naming decision. Therefore, these two themes were both expressed heavily but are inconsistent. This further explains that marital naming is a complex decision and that women report many different reasons for name changing. For example, they may want to please their families by following a traditional naming practice, but also don't want to lose a part of their identity (i.e. through changing their last name). In describing personal *identity*, Avery, a 28 year old married woman stated:

> It is a little emotional like I said, it is sad because you are completely changing the surface of how people know you. When I call people they don't always recognize who you are and that's hard and learning your new name and changing everything about you

was not fun and not easy. So it's the frustration, the equality, the loss of your sense of identity for the short amount of time that I think it takes for you to overcome that.

This respondent has struggled with her naming choice as shown above in that her identity is important to her. Like others in my sample, she mentions that *it is sad* losing your name and changing the way that others know you (i.e. your personal identity). She mentions an interesting contradiction with the statement that the loss of identity is *short lived* although changing your name is essentially *changing everything about you*. Also Hayden, a 24 year old married woman stated, "I've been me my whole life and it was a little bit hard for me to give up my name and change to a new name. Which for what I see is not a very big reason." It is interesting to note that although these women state that changing their names is *hard, sad,* or *unfair*, they still make the decision to change their name. Hayden who suggests that giving up her name was *hard* given that it was for something that she considers *not a big reason* exemplifies that although personal *identity* may be important for women, there are other influential factors that take precedence in their decision making process, such as their family's influence or pressure from societal norms and long-lasting traditions.

Many of the women in my sample communicated to me that their personal *identity* was important to them specifically in terms of their family *heritage*. For example, Ryan, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "And I am very Italian and I am very proud of that and I love my heritage, and I don't really want to lose that, I just don't want to go from being an Italian to all white." Likewise, Peyton, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "Sure, I'm really proud of my family and heritage and everyone knows me as Peyton Jazzy and it is such a different name, but I've never disliked it so thinking about how I would feel being called something else, I took that into consideration." These two women both state that they care about their family heritage and had to think about how changing their name would affect their identities. Overall, the

respondents in my sample that mention *heritage* as a part of their identity that they don't want to

lose report that their *heritage* is an important part of how they represent themselves to the rest of

the world.

Secondly, some respondents in this sample also mentioned that their *careers* made them

think about their *identity* as a factor in their marital naming decision. For example, Hayden

stated:

> Yea, I do, but maybe not so much if after my first year after getting in. But every
> connection I've made with school has been with my maiden name, and I know there are
> ways to getting around it by using my maiden name and my new name on resumes and
> stuff but I want people to know who I am if I apply for jobs and they won't have any idea
> who I am if I use my married name, so that's important.

Similarly, Jayden stated:

> I thought about, I will have a couple publications under my maiden name by the time we
> get married, just two I think and it kind of stings to 'lose' those publications so I am
> toying with idea of keeping it hyphenated Smith-Jones for publications only like no
> where else, but then that gets confusing too, and it is only two publications so I might just
> make the switch and say screw it.

These two women both have considered their career and professional lives as a part of their name

changing decision. Although they are both going to be professional women, they are still

choosing to take their husband's name upon marriage. The women in these two examples have

weighed the consequences of changing their names (i.e. losing their publications, social

networking issues), but still feel that the benefit of taking their husband's name outweighs their

professional concerns and this highlights their priorities.

Lastly, in the *identity* group is the subtheme *religion*. The women who mentioned their

religion or religious beliefs as being influential factors for changing their name at marriage stated

that they felt they had a *motivation* for changing their name, and that this was something that

they had grown up believing and was taught to them as a value and belief system. For example,

Casey, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "I think that if I didn't believe what I believe that I may not change my name…there is a meaning and a motive for it." In the same way, Cameron, stated:

> Because it is kind of how marriage has been laid out. He is the head of the household…But as far as the tradition as the name change and us being one household and the way marriage was said to be, it's the religious aspect of me taking his name that has played a big part of it.

The women in these examples identify themselves with their religion; therefore they want to take on their husband's names as a symbol of following a specific belief system. It is noteworthy that fewer respondents reported *religion* as a factor in their naming decision than reported the overarching themes of personal *identity* or *social expectations*. However, when the women spoke of religion as a factor of their decision, they made it clear that it was an influential aspect of their choice and one that could not easily be changed.

Results from these data suggest that women's reasons about marital name changing vary. There is little consensus among the reasons given for marital name changing, shown by the lack of a common theme emerging. However, most of the women's comments provided support for the idea that *social expectations* for marital name changing is an influential factor in their decision to change their name, whereas personal *identity* factors come into play as reasons to make them question their decision. These results generally indicate the complexity of name changing shown by the reasons that women give for their decisions. This suggests that they have mixed feelings toward the traditional practice and some find themselves torn about the decision they have to make upon marriage. The need to adhere to the *social expectations* of name changing while also having ties with their *identities* that they don't want to break was strongly evident. In the next two chapters I will present the discussion and conclusion of this research project.

CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to gain a better understanding of the reasons for the traditional practice of marital name changing among women in two samples of data. The review of the literature presented in this thesis shows that the decision about marital name changing is closely tied to social norms, and specifically traditional practices, which was found to be consistent with my two samples. Utilizing a mixed methods analysis allowed me to gain a better understanding of the reasons women give for the traditional practice of marital name changing, thus allowing me to more fully answer the research question. Working inductively I began by observing patterns among the two samples of data, formulating a research question and developing conclusions.

The use of a mixed methods approach strengthened this study because using both qualitative and quantitative data revealed the complexity of individuals' decisions about marital name changing. The responses from the women in the interviewing data show that the reasons given for name changing are out-of-the box reasons, and not reasons that are easily captured by survey categories included in the questionnaire. Using the qualitative data delivers depth to the study by using thick, rich data from 16 women while the quantitative data gives the study breadth with a sample of 129 women. The use of these two methods brings together a rich and deep understanding of the reasons for marital name changing in which the complexities of this decision unfold.

Overall, the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that there is agreement among the two samples of data in that the majority of women are expecting to follow a traditional naming practice and change their names when they get married (or have changed their names if already married) at 90 percent and 81 percent respectively. This is consistent with recent literature which

suggests that approximately 90 percent of native-born American women with a Bachelor's Degree will drop their names and take their husband's name upon marriage (Gooding and Kreider 2010:692).

Results from this study indicate that the reasons given for women choosing a traditional naming practice vary. The mixed method strategy used in this study confirms the ambiguity among respondents about the reasons for name changing; specifically women in both samples displayed mixed feelings in regard to name changing. Often, the women that mention strong societal pressures for changing their names such as religious beliefs, traditions, or familial expectations also mention feeling a loss of self identity or worry about how changing their name might affect their future career. This is an interesting finding because a large percentage (54%) of women in the quantitative sample and 50 percent in the qualitative sample said they *didn't question changing their name* or that the act of name changing was *not an important issue.* The reason that this is interesting is because the women conversely mention themes that imply that name changing is important to them such as they desire *family unity*, and don't want to lose their *family heritage.* This further exemplifies the ambiguity among the women in this sample. A possible explanation for this conflicting emotion could be that women may have both personal reasons for wanting to hold onto their identities and also wish to please their new spouse's family at the same time with their naming decision.

In this study the qualitative findings often support the quantitative findings; both samples of data suggest that the ***social expectations*** of *tradition* and *family expectation* had substantial influence on the respondents' decision to change their names upon marriage. From the quantitative sample, 91 percent of respondents reported *a marriage practice that families expect* as a reason for a woman dropping her last name and taking her husband's last name, and 83

percent of the sample agreed that taking the husband's name is a *traditional act that should be honored.* This stated compliance shows the power of socialization. According to these women, name changing is an accepted step in the marriage process. They do not question how and why they have come to agree with this tradition.

Another pattern that arose among the two samples was in the theme *not an important issue/compliance*; 54 percent of respondents in the quantitative sample reported this theme as a reason for a woman dropping her last name and taking her husband's last name. This theme was predominant among the women in the qualitative sample as well, for example, Dakota, a 23 year old engaged woman stated, "I haven't obviously given this a lot of thought. It wasn't something that I have thought about a lot because I just always thought that I would just do it." Similarly, the theme of *family unity* was displayed by 82 percent of the women in the quantitative sample, and many of the women felt strongly about this in the qualitative sample, as exhibited by this statement from Jayden, a 24 year old woman, "I'm more so just doing it because I think that when you start a new family the name is an important symbol as your unity as a family."

A theme that stood out most in the qualitative findings, but was not asked as an answer choice in the quantitative questionnaire was *heteronormativity.* This theme was dominant in the qualitative sample as many of the women expressed their desire for an outward display of unity through the name change. Logan stated, "…I want people to know that I am married, that my name has changed, and that I am married to my husband." I thought that this was particularly important because of women's status as a subordinate group in society.

Working within a feminist framework, women have been underrepresented in many ways because of their lack of social power. In Powers and Reiser's (2005) study researchers found that there were no significant gender differences in reports of feeling personally powerful, however

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both men and women agreed that women do not have a lot of power in society. Their results showed that only 9 percent of women and 10.8 percent of men perceived women as powerful (p. 563). This shows that perhaps as a result of their subordinate status, women can more easily recognize the gender imbalance in society, and can also detect the societal level differences in the amount of social power granted to men (p. 563). Therefore, this shows that women have identified a power inequality between men and women, in that *men in general* have more social power than women as a group.

Further, in a patriarchal society, men's approval becomes a form of power**.** Even in societies where women have other means to obtain power, as children, girls are encouraged to seek out and maintain male approval as a way to ensure their own power in the world (Tanenbaum 2000). Therefore, although women may be able to acquire different forms of power on their own, they are socialized from an early age to gain attention and approval from men.

In my sample of women, although all respondents are college educated women, and some have reached professional status, they still speak of wanting society to know that they are married as a confirmation that they have gained this approval from a male figure in their lives. One respondent even considered taking her spouse's name as *goal achievement*. The women in my sample seem to view their spouses as a source of power, in which by taking their names, they are able to gain some of this power. This power can be used to show other people in society that they are no longer single women, but married women (women who have men who know they are physically attractive, desirable, and worthy of being married). This power that they receive from having a new name is similar to gaining a new status symbol or moving up in social class, as described by a respondent who stated, "[I]t's a name upgrade!"

Symbolic interactionism and feminist theories were helpful frameworks for understanding from a sociological perspective why women change their names at marriage. People, as active participants in society create their own cultures, and within that social construction social norms and traditions such as marital name changing develop. In a patriarchal society, women are not seen as being as important or as valued as are men. Therefore, women have not had the same opportunities as men to participate in the creation of culture or the traditions that form out of it, such as name changing. Women's names at marriage, as a result, have not traditionally been the names that are adopted or passed on by generation, explaining why the traditional act of marital name changing for women is such a long lasting tradition in our culture.

There are limitations to this study which should be noted. First, there are known biases in both qualitative and quantitative research. Such that each method has its own weaknesses and strengths, the reason why it is important to note them in research methods is to account for the errors that may develop in the research due to the chosen method of the study. According to Johnshon and Onwuegbuzie (2004) biases for qualitative research are: "1) results are not generalizable, 2) it is difficult to test hypotheses and theories, 3) it is time consuming, and 4) results are easily influenced by the researcher. Known biases or weaknesses in quantitative research are: 1) the researcher's measures, categories, and theories may not be understood by anyone other than the researcher, 2) confirmation bias may occur which is when the researcher misses out on phenomenon occurring because of the focus on theory or hypothesis testing rather than generation, and 3) results produced may be too abstract and too general to use" (Pp. 19-20).

Second, a limitation in the present study is the generalizability of the samples. The quantitative sample was a non-representative sample of 129 women from a mid-sized college in

North Carolina, and the qualitative sample was a convenience sample of 16 women. Although this type of sampling is not uncommon in studies on this topic, this does limit the ability to generalize the findings.

Third, the present research could have been strengthened by including men's views in conjunction with women's view to get a more nuanced understanding of the reasons for name changing. It is reasonable to believe that women's decisions about name changing are not independent of their future spouse's and this is an area for future research. Lastly, being a young sociologist and inexperienced in the areas of qualitative and quantitative research, I am aware that I have undoubtedly missed important aspects of the results that developed from this study.

CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION

The findings from this study indicate that being socialized in a patriarchal society contributes to conformity with gendered traditions and adherence to cultural norms. That is, women are likely to follow the practice of dropping their name and taking their husband's name upon marriage. However, as confirmed by both samples of data, women showed mixed feelings in regard to changing their names at marriage. This suggests that marital name changing can be a difficult decision and one that comes with potential consequences to a current or future career and to family harmony. A key contribution of this study is the use of mixed methods to gain a deeper understanding of reasons for marital name changing. The mixed method approach is well suited for examining a social norm as complex as the traditional naming practice at marriage.

Future research on this topic would add to the body of knowledge by exploring the reasons given by name keepers and name hyphenators for their choice about marital name changing. Future research would also contribute to this topic by including variables such as region of residence, level of education, gender ideology, and age. As shown in this study, our culture's traditions and gendered hegemony is difficult to overcome, making non-traditional naming choices complex. Therefore, there are many areas for future research to explore on this topic to help us come to a fuller understanding of how social norms are shaped.

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TABLES

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in Quantitative Sample (N= 129)	
VARIABLES	FREQUENCY
Year in College	
Freshmen	129
Race	
White	129
Type of High School	
Public	129
Region	
Central NC	63 (49%)
Eastern NC	66 (51%)
Source: Data collected in 2007 from college women at a mid-sized university	

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Qualitative Sample (N=16)		
VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Average age	25.4 (range 22-32 yrs)	100
Average years lived in Southeastern NC	10.8 yrs. (range 1-24 yrs)	100
Marital Status		
Engaged to be married	9	56%
Married	7	44%
Educational Degree		
Associate's Degree	1	06.2%
Bachelor's Degree	12	75.0%
Master's Degree	3	18.8%
Expecting to work full time in their occupation	14	87.5%
Source: Data collected in 2011 from sixteen women during in depth interviews		

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Qualitative Sample by Respondent (N=16)						
Name	**Age**	**Years in SE NC**	**Marital Status**	**Degree Type**	**Expect Work F/T**	**Current (italicized) /Future Career**
Parker	22	4	Engaged	Bachelor's	Yes	Physician's Assistant
Dakota	23	5	Engaged	Bachelor's	No	*Biology degree*/ Future in Fashion
Ryan	24	6	Engaged	Bachelor's	Yes	Speech-language Pathology
Casey	24	2	Engaged	Master's degree	Yes	*Psychology Student*/Psychologist
Cameron	24	24	Engaged	Bachelor's	Yes	Education Mgmt. Systems
Hayden	24	12	Married 1 yr.	Bachelor's	Yes	Elementary Education Teacher
Peyton	24	24	Engaged	Bachelor's	Yes	*Student*/Psychologist
Jayden	24	24	Engaged	Master's degree	Yes	*Student*/Therapist and Professor
Skyler	25	8	Married < 1 yr.	Bachelor's	Yes	Student Affairs (Higher Education)
Logan	25	23	Married < 1 yr.	Bachelor's	Yes	*Student*/Nursing
Riley	25	3.5	Married < 6 mo.	Bachelor's	Yes	*Student*/Psychologist
Jordon	25	4.5	Married 1.5 yrs.	Bachelor's	No	*Musical theater degree*/Retail Sales
Morgan	27	6	Engaged	Associate's	Yes	*Journalism degree*/ Retail Sales
Avery	28	20	Married < 1 yr.	Bachelor's	Yes	Financial Planning
Reece	30	10	Engaged	Bachelor's	Yes	*Student*/ Elementary Education Teacher
Emerson	32	3	Married 1 yr.	Master's degree	Yes	Student Activities Administrator also in Higher Ed
Source: Data collected in 2011 from sixteen women during in depth interviews						

Table 4: Expectations for Marital Name Changing from Respondents in Quantitative Sample (N= 129)			
Expectations:	Drop Name	Keep Name	Hyphenate Name
% Likely to:	90	13	15
% Unlikely to:	7	76	76
% Don't know:	3	11	9
Totals	100	100	100
Source: Data collected in 2007 from college women at a mid-sized university			

Table 5: Frequency Distribution for all 12 Possible Reasons for Marital Name Changing from Quantitative Sample (N=129)		
Question: When a women gets married, do you think that dropping her name and taking her husband's last name is:_____		
Reasons:	AGREE	DIS-AGREE
A marriage practice that families expect	91%	9%
A traditional act that should be honored	83%	17%
A good way to build family unity	82%	18%
Easier than having different last names	81%	19%
Important if the couple is going to have children	67%	33%
Showing respect toward the husband	57%	43%
A personal choice based on how the name sounds	53%	47%
Not an important issue	54%	46%
A bad idea if she wants to keep her family name going	52%	48%
A disadvantage if she has already built a career	33%	67%
Giving up the woman's identity	3%	97%
Giving the husband power over the wife	3%	97%
Source: Data collected in 2007 from college women at a mid-sized university		

Table 6: Frequencies Showing Women's Consensus on Six Reasons for Marital Name Changing from Quantitative Sample (N=129)		
Reasons	%	Response
Giving Husband Power	97	NO
Giving Up Woman's ID	97	NO
Practice Families Expect	91	YES
Traditional Act Honored	83	YES
Good Way Build Unity	82	YES
Easier than Two Names	81	YES
Source: Data collected in 2007 from college women at a mid-sized university		

Table 7: Frequencies Showing Women's Reasons for Marital Name Changing from Quantitative Sample (N=129)			
REASONS	AGREE	DISAGREE	TOTALS
Important if the couple is going to have children	67%	33%	100%
Showing respect toward the husband	57%	43%	100%
A personal choice based on how the name sounds	53%	47%	100%
A bad idea if she wants to keep her family name going	52%	48%	100%
A disadvantage if she has already built a career	33%	67%	100%
Not an important issue	54%	46%	100%
Source: Data collected in 2007 from college women at a mid-sized university			

Table 8: Correlation Matrix						
Respondents were asked the following question: When a woman gets married, do you think that dropping her maiden name and taking her husband's name is: Respondents were asked to select "yes" or "no" to each of the six reasons below						
REASONS	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**
A *Pearson r* *Sig.*	1					
B *Pearson r* *Sig.*	.066 .458	1				
C *Pearson r* *Sig.*	-.099 .265	.065 .463	1			
D *Pearson r* *Sig.*	-.111 .212	-.001 .987	-.033 .712	1		
E *Pearson r* *Sig.*	.000 1.00	-.117 .186	-.051 .567	.259** .003	1	
F *Pearson r* *Sig.*	.285** .001	.223* .011	-.057 .520	-.185* .036	-.105 .234	1
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed) (N=129)						

REASONS:
   A- A disadvantage if she has already built a career
   B- A personal choice based on how the name sounds
   C- Not an important issue
   D- Showing respect toward the husband
   E- Important if the couple is going to have children
   F- A bad idea if she wants to keep her family name going						

Table 9: Naming Choices Made by Married Women and Expectations for Engaged Women for Marital Name Changing from Qualitative Sample (N= 16)		
Respondent replied to the question: "When you <u>got married</u> or when you <u>will marry</u>, what <u>did you do</u>, or what do you <u>expect to do</u> with your name?"	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Drop My Name and Take My Husband's Name:	13	81%
Keep My Maiden Name:	1	6.2%
Hyphenate My Maiden Name with My Husband's Name:	2	12.5%
Source: Data collected in 2011 from sixteen women during in depth interviews		

Table 10: Frequency Distribution of Prominent Themes of Qualitative Sample (N=16)		
Themes about Name Changing	**Number of Respondents Cited**	**PERCENT**
Family Expectation - *family expects them to change their name, feel as though they are "supposed" to change or everyone just assumes that they will do it*	10	62.5%
Identity - *considers their name to be an important part of who they are, doesn't want to lose their name or a certain part of their life that has been with them since birth which shows who they are to the rest of the world*	10	62.5%
Family Unity - *wants their family to be one unit, one team, joined by something bringing them together – in this case usually their family name*	9	56%
Tradition – *many people they know have participated in this practice and they will also, their families have all done it this way and they want to continue this on*	9	56%
Compliance - *didn't question the act of marital name changing, didn't think twice about it or doesn't consider it to be an important issue*	8	50%
Religious Beliefs - *their marital naming choice is based off of their religious beliefs or values*	7	43.8%
Heteronormativity- *they want an outward display of being married; they want people/society to know that they are no longer dating or cohabitating, but that they are married, one unit and a family*	7	43.8%
Career - *considered the impact of their name on their career before making the decision to change or keep their name at marriage*	6	37.5%
Respect Husband - *wants their husband to know that they do not mind taking his name, that they are willing to change their names, or that if it is important to him then it is worth them doing*	5	31%
Heritage - *didn't want to lose their heritage if they got married; felt connected to their past, history, and family lineage. Some last names were symbolic of their ancestry and where their families were from*	4	25%
Source: Data collected in 2011 from sixteen women during in depth interviews		

Table 11: Frequency of Theme's Appearance in Qualitative Sample (N=16)	
Themes about Name Changing	**Number of Times Theme Mentioned**
Compliance - *didn't question the act of marital name changing, didn't think twice about it or doesn't consider it to be an important issue*	27
Identity - *considers their name to be an important part of who they are, doesn't want to lose their name or a certain part of their life that has been with them since birth which shows who they are to the rest of the world*	20
Family Unity - *wants their family to be one unit, one team, joined by something bringing them together – in this case usually their family name*	17
Family Expectation - *family expects them to change their name, feel as though they are "supposed" to change or everyone just assumes that they will do it*	17
Tradition – *many people they know have participated in this practice and they will also, their families have all done it this way and they want to continue this on*	16
Heteronormativity- *they want an outward display of being married; they want people/society to know that they are no longer dating or cohabitating, but that they are married, one unit and a family*	12
Religious Beliefs - *their marital naming choice is based off of their religious beliefs or values*	12
Respect Husband - *wants their husband to know that they do not mind taking his name, that they are willing to change their names, or that if it is important to him then it is worth them doing*	8
Career - *considered the impact of their name on their career before making the decision to change or keep their name at marriage*	7
Heritage - *didn't want to lose their heritage if they got married; felt connected to their past, history, and family lineage. Some last names were symbolic of their ancestry and where their families were from*	7
Source: Data collected in 2011 from sixteen women during in depth interviews	

Table 12: Prominent Themes of Qualitative Sample with Respondent Quotes (N=16)	
Theme	**Respondents Who Best Explained Theme**
Compliance	a.) Emerson, a 32 year old married woman stated, "And [**changing my name] was not something that I ever questioned**, I know other people choose to keep their last name or choose to hyphenate, but that was **just never something that I guess was questioned or that I was concerned with**." b.) Dakota, a 23 year old engaged woman stated, "**I haven't obviously given this a lot of thought. It wasn't something that I have thought about a lot because I just always thought that I would just do it**."
Identity (didn't want to lose, or felt like they lost it)	a.) Avery, a 28 year old married woman stated, "It is a little emotional like I said, **it is sad because you are completely changing the surface of how people know you**. When I call people they don't always recognize who you are and **that's hard** and learning your new name and changing everything about you was **not fun and not easy**. So it's the **frustration, the equality, the loss of your sense of identity** for the short amount of time that I think it takes for you to overcome that." b.) Hayden, a 24 year old married woman stated, "**I've been me my whole life and it was a little bit hard for me to give up my name and change to a new name**. Which for what I see is not a very big reason."
Family Unity	a.) Jayden, a 24 year old woman stated, "I'm more so just doing it because I think that when you start a new family the **name is an important symbol as your unity as a family**." b.) Hayden, a 24 year old married woman stated, " I can see now how it can affect [family harmony] for little things, like **Bob likes to call us the Jones, but were not the "Jones"** so that bothers him a lot. So it does affect family harmony because it's a rip and **when we have kids it will be important** because **I want them to have our name, not just his name or not just my name**. So I suppose that's important."
Family Expectation	a.) Parker, a 22 year old engaged woman stated, "I guess **both of us come from families that have done that** and I guess in our…you know families no one has ever not taken the last name so it not something that was ever thought about. I guess we **would have to have good reasoning behind [keeping name]** and we wouldn't so therefore they might be a little bit hesitant about it so..." b.) Jordan, a 25 year old married woman stated, "It **was never even mentioned actually**, they never even brought it up. I think for most of it, **it was just assumed that I would just change my name** and since it wasn't, and **since I chose to it wasn't an issue**."

Table 12: Prominent Themes of Qualitative Sample with Respondent Quotes (N=16)	
Tradition	a.) Emerson, a 32 year old married woman stated, "I think so, I think just having **seen other family members, cousins and so on get married prior to me and just having known the background of my parents and their siblings** and so on and so forth. I guess yea in a way I guess you could look at that as **tradition because it was something that always happened and always occurred**." b.) Dakota, a 23 year old engaged woman stated, "**I think it was almost instinctual, it was something that I felt I was supposed to do**."
Heteronormativity	a.) Cameron, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "**I want people to know that were together and that I'm his wife**. I **think I want that title and I want to be Mrs. Bob Smith** if that's what you want to call it. And I am fine taking on his name to be able to have that identity with us being together." b.) Logan, a 25 year old married woman stated, "Because the man is typically the head of the body of the union. When they come together you want to, **I want people to know that I am married, that my name has changed, and that I am married to my husband**."
Religion	a.) Casey, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "I think that **if I didn't believe what I believe that I may not change my name…there is a meaning and a motive for it**." b.) Cameron, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "Because it is kind of how marriage has been laid out. **He is the head of the household**…But as far as the tradition as the name change and **us being one household and the way marriage was said to be it's the religious aspect of me taking his name** that has played a big part of it."
Respect Husband	a.) Reece, a 30 year old engaged woman stated, "But I have come to realize that **it is important to my fiancé so you know…If it is important to him then it is worth me doing**. Um...so I mean **it never crossed my mind to just keep my last name and not include his at all**." b.) Peyton, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "But it was a struggle just because **I don't want my husband to think that I don't like his last name or not willing to take it** or anything like that."
Career (how it would affect)	a.) Peyton, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "And I have the opportunity to use my name in the professional realm without any kind of stigma associated with it and I won't be labeled." b.) Jayden, 24 year old engaged woman stated, "I thought about, **I will have a couple publications under my maiden name by the time we get married, just two I think and it kind of stings to "lose" those publications** so I am toying with idea of keeping it hyphenated Smith-Jones for publications only like no where else, but then that gets confusing too, and it is only two publications **so I might just make the switch and say screw it."**

Table 12: Prominent Themes of Qualitative Sample with Respondent Quotes (N=16)	
Heritage (didn't want to lose)	a.) Ryan, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "And **I am very Italian and I am very proud of that and I love my heritage, and I don't really want to lose that**, I just don't want to go from being an Italian to all white." b.) Peyton, a 24 year old engaged woman stated, "Sure, **I'm really proud of my family and heritage and everyone knows me as Peyton Jones**, and it is such a different name but I've never disliked it so thinking about how I would feel being called something else, I took that into consideration."
Source: Data collected in 2011 from sixteen women during in depth interviews	

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. IRB Approval Letter

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
1L-09 Brody Medical Sciences Building• 600 Moye Boulevard • Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** • Fax **252-744-2284** • **www.ecu.edu/irb**

TO: Megan Keels, Student, Dept. of Sociology, ECU—Mailstop 567

FROM: UMCIRB

DATE: May 31, 2011

RE: Expedited Category Research Study

TITLE: "Marital Name Change: A Deeper Understanding of Why Women Choose a Traditional Naming Practice"

UMCIRB #11-0347

This research study has undergone review and approval using expedited review on 5.25.11. This research study is eligible for review under an expedited category number 6 & 7 which include collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes and research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.). The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this **unfunded** study **no more than minimal risk** requiring a continuing review in **12 months**. Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

The above referenced research study has been given approval for the period of **5.25.11** to **5.24.12**. The approval includes the following items:
- Internal Processing Form (dated 4.19.11)
- COI Disclosure Form (dated 5.18.11)
- Informed Consent (version date 5.18.11)
- Interview Guide

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

The UMCIRB applies 45 CFR 46, Subparts A-D, to all research reviewed by the UMCIRB regardless of the funding source. 21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56 are applied to all research studies under the Food and Drug Administration regulation. The UMCIRB follows applicable International Conference on Harmonisation Good Clinical Practice guidelines.

APPENDIX B. Name Changing Survey

NAME CHANGING

You are asked to voluntarily participate in a study on preferences in name changing after marriage by completing this questionnaire (which will take about 10 minutes). Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there is no compensation provided for participation. You may refuse to participate, or stop participating at any time without penalty. Your responses are confidential and anonymous. No identifying data will be available to anyone.

WOMEN ONLY

If you get married how likely are you to:

1. DROP your maiden name (last name) and take your husband's last name? (circle one)

| Highly | Somewhat | Indifferent | Somewhat | Highly |
| Unlikely | Unlikely | (Don't know) | Likely | Likely |

2. KEEP your maiden name? (circle one)

| Highly | Somewhat | Indifferent | Somewhat | Highly |
| Unlikely | Unlikely | (Don't know) | Likely | Likely |

3. HYPHENATE your maiden name and his last name? (e.g., Johnson-Hughes) (circle one)

| Highly | Somewhat | Indifferent | Somewhat | Highly |
| Unlikely | Unlikely | (Don't know) | Likely | Likely |

When a woman gets married, do you think that dropping her maiden name and taking her husband's last name is: (check <u>one</u> for each item)

	YES	NO
4. a traditional act that should be honored	____	____
5. a disadvantage if she has already built a career	____	____
6. giving the husband power over the wife	____	____
7. easier than having different last names	____	____
8. giving up the woman's identity	____	____
9. a personal choice based on how the name sounds	____	____
10. not an important issue	____	____
11. a marriage practice that families expect	____	____
12. important if the couple is going to have children	____	____
13. showing respect toward the husband	____	____
14. a good way to build family unity	____	____
15. a bad idea if she wants to keep her family name going	____	____

Any other comments? _____

Please provide the following information about yourself:

Year in college (circle one)   FRESHMAN   SOPHMORE   JUNIOR   SENIOR

Type of <u>high school</u> that you attended (circle one)   Public   Private   Religious
What year did you graduate from <u>high school</u>? _____
Where did you attend <u>high school</u>? CITY _____   STATE _____
What is your race/ethnicity?   White   African American   Hispanic   Other_____

APPENDIX C. Descriptions of themes from qualitative sample interviews (N=16)

1) Compliance
   a. Didn't question the act of marital name changing, didn't think twice about it or doesn't consider it to be an important issue. These women have stated their conformity to the social norm of name changing.
2) Identity (didn't want to lose)
   a. Considers their name to be an important part of who they are, don't want to lose their name or a certain part of their life that has been with them since birth which shows who they are to the rest of the world.
3) Family unity
   a. Wants their family to be one unit, one team, joined by something bringing them together – in this case their family name.
4) Family expectation
   a. Feels as though their family expects them to change their name, they feel as though they are supposed to change or everyone just assumes that they will do it.
5) Tradition
   a. Everyone they know has participated in this practice and they will also, their families have all done it this way and they want to continue the tradition.
6) Heteronormativity
   a. They want an outward display of being married; they want people/society to know that they are no longer dating or cohabitating, but that they are married, one unit and a family as husband and wife.
7) Religion
   a. They are making their marital naming choice because of their religious beliefs or values.
8) Respect husband
   a. Wants their husband to know that they do not mind taking his name, that they are willing to change their names or that if it is important to him then it is worth them doing.
9) Career (how it would affect)
   a. Considered the impact of their name on their career before making the decision to change or keep their name at marriage.
10) Heritage (didn't want to lose)
    a. They don't want to lose this important part of their identity that they feel keeps them connected to their families and their history. Considers their name something that can be kept with them throughout their lives as a representation of their lineage.