The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of the Liberal Arts

WOMEN'S POST MARITAL NAME RETENTION AND THE

COMMUNICATION OF IDENTITY

A Thesis in

Communication Arts and Sciences

by

Kara A. Laskowski

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 2006

The thesis of Kara A. Laskowski was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Ronald L. Jackson II
Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences
Thesis Adviser
Chair of Committee

Dennis Gouran
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences and Labor Studies and Industrial Relations

Lisa S. Hogan
Senior Lecturer in Communication Arts and Sciences and Women's Studies

Michelle Miller-Day
Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences

Stephanie Shields
Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies

James Dillard
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences
Head of the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

A growing body of research in the field of communication has focused on identity, and has paralleled studies in psychology, family studies, and gender studies on the significance of women's naming practices after marriage. However, despite the fact that nearly ten percent of married women choose to retain their name in one form or another, and the widely recognized significance of using the correct form of address, no study has attempted to describe how post-marital name retention works to communicate women's identity. This dissertation was motivated by a desire to provide an account of women's post-marital name retention and the communication of identity that is both theoretically grounded and representational of the native voices of women who have kept their names after marriage.

The purpose of this study is to describe the how identity is symbolically communicated through women's post marital name retention by examining the factors influencing women's choices, the communication around the decision to retain the name, and how the nontraditional last name is present (or not) in ongoing interactions. This study used symbolic interactionism and critical feminism as orientating framework for the collection and analysis of data. Data was collected in twenty three face-to-face interviews, and was analyzed using constant comparison and thematic analysis. Findings indicate that women who retain their names after marriage expect to do so, based upon identity-related concerns of ancestry, professional status, and feminism. In addition, women who engage in nontraditional marital naming engage in ongoing communication of their choices with others whose responses range from acceptance to challenge of their choice. The findings of this study indicate that a layered theoretical approach to questions of naming and the communication is warranted in order to generate understanding of decision making, identity negotiation, meaning, and the communication of identity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the members of the committee, for their wisdom and patience,
To Dr. Ronald L. Jackson, for his insights and guidance,
And to my colleagues and friends who have cheered me on,

    my deepest gratitude and appreciation.

To my family, for their belief and support,
To Adam, for his love and encouragement,
And to Samuel and Emelie, for always and forever,

    my indebtedness and love.

Chapter One: Introduction and Theoretical Orientation

Naming is a powerful act, with symbolic implications for identity, relationships, and society. Last names function as legal and practical labels for identification and as such, are particularly salient forms of identity and address (Carbaugh, 1996), that serve not only as a reflection of identity, but of identity itself (Fowler, 1997; Piaget, 1965). According to Fowler (1997), naming is central to a sense of self across time, roles, and relationships. In social interaction with others, names provide a basis for identification and "may shape how others react to us, which then affects our own self-appraisal" (Twenge, 1997, p. 418). From this perspective, "[O]ne's choice of a last name, then, is nothing less than the 'principal' resource by which one is addressed and known" (Carbaugh, 1996, p. 113). Accordingly, the act of naming serves identity, relational and social functions as it "represent who we are" and may "identify us and describe us in relation to others" (Fowler, 1997, p. 1).

Names function as labels that are subject to formal and informal changes, are highly significant and memorable, and are "meaningful, non-trivial objects of study" (Darden & Robinson, 1976, p. 423). Because names serve as a expressions of identification by the individual and function as marks for identification by others, they are symbols rich with meaning, and deserve examination as symbolic artifacts (Scheuble & Johnson, 1993). As symbolic labels, names can be manipulated, announced, and discussed with insight (Darden & Robinson, 1976). Viewing names as symbolic identity markers positions this manipulation, announcement, and discussion as a form of identity negotiation (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Of particular interest to this investigation was understanding the meaning(s) of post-marital name retention to women through description of the decision to retain the name, the interaction at the time of marriage, and the ongoing negotiation around the name as a symbol of identity. Although the American legal system affords any individual

the equal right to change her or his name, as long as there is no intent to commit a crime or fraud (Kay & West, 1996; Lebell, 1988), few people actually engage the process necessary to result in a legal name change (Brightman, 1994; Goldin & Shim, 2004). The notable exception is marriage. Marriage, and more specifically, the wedding ceremony, is an American cultural institution characterized, in part, by the tradition of a woman taking her husband's name (Fowler, 1997; Kay & West, 1996; Lebell, 1988; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002). This feature casts marriage as a rare event in American society because it represents one of the few times when adults engage in self-naming (Lebell, 1988). The adoption of the husband's last name at the time of marriage and announced as the finale to the wedding ceremony is contrasted by retention of a woman's own name, a combination of the couple's two names, or the creation of a new name (Allyn & Allyn, 1995).

These two forms of marital naming, globally referred to as "traditional" and "nontraditional" (Stodder, 1998), respectively, function as symbolic communicative acts (Carbaugh, 1996). This investigation focuses on women's choice of "nontraditional" marital last names, defined briefly as the retention of a woman's birth name, hyphenation, or other forms that exclude conventional adoption of the husband's name as the primary moniker. [1] Specifically, the goal of this study was to describe how identity is symbolically communicated through women's post marital name retention by examining the factors influencing women's choices, the communication around the decision to retain the name, and how the nontraditional last name is present (or not) in ongoing interactions.

Forms of nontraditional marital surname choice are further differentiated by the naming style adopted. Women who have retained their own names are generally referred

---

[1] For the purposes of this study, the terms "own names" and "last names" are used deliberately, rather than "maiden name" which reflects outdated views of women's sexuality at the time of marriage, and "surname," which means father's name and is reflective of a patronymical system (Fowler, 1997; Lebell, 1988).

to as "name keepers" (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kline, Stafford, & Miklosovic, 1996; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Twenge, 1997) and may use their own names solely in professional contexts, or in both social and professional situations. A second style of nontraditional marital naming is hyphenation. Women who choose to hyphenate their own name with the last name of their spouse are often referred to as "name-combiners" (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kline et al., 1996; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Twenge, 1997b) and may be joined by their husband in their decision. Finally, a small percentage of couples have made the decision to create a new last name, either through a combination of both names or by selecting a moniker that has significance to the relationship. Though uncommon, this act provides couples seeking to explore last names that do not reproduce gender roles or expectations with an option that satisfies the desire to share a familial moniker (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Basow, 1992; Kupper, 1990). To continue the style of labels assigned to women in naming categories, women and men in this category are referred to as "name makers."

Although the practice of traditional marital naming styles is increasingly being viewed as a choice and understood to be motivated by complex factors (Sutter, 2001), dominant trends suggest that traditional marital name choice is widely viewed by contemporary women as automatic, socially desirable, and necessitating little decision making (Brightman, 1994; Carbaugh, 1996; Fowler, 1997; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993). By contrast, the choice of a nontraditional marital last name has been interpreted as a feminist act (Post, 1997), as well as one illustrative of identity (Carbaugh, 1996; Fowler, 1997).

The interpretation of post-marital name retention as a feminist act is reflective of feminist theories on gender and language. While feminisms are highly varied in orientation and emphasis to gendered issues (Tong, 1989), including language, feminist theories are unified by a common concern with the status and condition of women, and in

the view of gender as "an inherently communicative process" (Romaine, 1999, p. 2) as well as a relevant and useful category of analysis.

Post marital name retention provides a location at which to examine the social practice of language (Lorde, 1982; Romaine, 1999). Although some feminists (Spender, 1980) maintain that name retention serves to perpetuate a patronymical system located in paternal ownership of women, a growing number have followed the example of the signers of the Declaration of Sentiments at the 1848 Senaca Falls convention on women's rights. Among the signers was Lucy Stone, who proclaimed, "[M]y name is a symbol of my identity which must not be lost" (cited by Romaine, 1999, p. 147). In arguing that the name with which one develops an identity and by which one is identified (Kupper, 1990), feminist theories of language and naming have centered concern not on the production of a name at birth, but on the right of women to name ourselves (Jong, 1998) as a vital component of self-definition (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). In this way, the question of post marital name retention has come to symbolize the ways in which "refusing to be submerged in the identity of wife is a burning issue for our generation" (Jong, 1998, p. 415) for many women, both feminist and non-feminist.

Despite being an issue of concern to feminists, there is little indication that the specific act of post marital name retention is an overtly feminist one, or that traditional choices are merely sexist (Coleman, 1996). While many women who retain their names do self-identify as a feminist (Kupper, 1990), this facet of identity is only a component of a larger collective of the self.

Married women's decisions to retain their own names are primarily viewed as a symbolic illustration of identity. Identity is a complex construct that is produced and reproduced through social (inter)action (Charon, 2001; Jackson, 1999). Identity is complicated by its nature as a socially constructed phenomenon. Through social comparison (Fowler, 1997) and the receipt of identity-oriented messages, communication

allows individuals to exchange messages about identity (Hecht, 1993; Mead, 1934). The exchange of identity messages enables individuals to share who they are, to receive messages about whom others perceive them to be, and to send messages about whom they perceive others to be. Names function as a primary "self label" (Charon, 2001, p. 164), by which individuals may announce their identities and share who they are with others in communication. As mentioned previously, names serve a primary function of identity labels and signal to others features of the self, including family identification, ancestry, ethnicity, and the like.

Identity as a process and product of social interaction comprises multiple constructs (see Hecht, 1993; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Skevington & Baker, 1989). Identities are largely constructed from roles and derive from social structures that shape role behavior and interaction (Stryker, 1987), as well as collectively define the self (Nutbrock & Freudiger, 1991). Accordingly, social structures, including power, sex, age, race, class, and social norms, are integral elements in the creation of self-construct and identity and are employed in determining the relative salience of identities. Identity salience is intrinsically linked by interaction to roles played by individuals, as salience is reflective of the cost of disrupting or foregoing the role that supports the identity construct (Stryker, 1987). As a result, names connect individuals to a large number of others and often provide labels for close relationships (Nutbrock & Freudiger, 1991). Consequently, women's decisions concerning marital naming offer rich insights into how they communicate identity.

Symbolic communication via the choice of marital name is one that signifies identity negotiation and identity salience. Carbaugh (1996) suggests that "the use of a naming style potentially signals an identity through a code, through a discourse of identification consisting of associated symbols, motives, meanings, and norms" (p. 119). While nominal realism, or the direct association of the label to the object (Piaget, 1965;

Fowler, 1997), is something children primarily exhibit, identity constructs have been noted as rationales for the choice of name retention (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Twenge, 1997), and nontraditional name choices have been implicated in how women are identified (Etaugh, Bridges, Cummings-Hill, & Cohen, 1999; Intons-Peterson & Crawford, 1985). Qualitative analysis of name retention among married women, although limited, has consistently pinpointed identity as primary, as reflected by statements relayed by Fowler (1997), including, "[R]etaining my name is a symbol of my identity as an independent person who wishes to be perceived as such" (p. 5) and "[K]eeping my name was a way of maintaining my identity in much the same way a man is expected to maintain his identity after marriage" (p. 53). In short, the name is a label that operates as shorthand for the symbolic identity of the individual.

Despite evidence of identity constructs in marital naming, this symbolic form of communication has neither been fully interrogated within extant research, nor received treatment as a multifaceted communicative act. Primarily reflective of identity, the choice of nontraditional marital names is one that provides meaning to the self, as "mediated by the relationships, situations, and cultures" (Fine, 1993, p. 78) in which women are located. Accordingly, nontraditional marital last name choice cannot be understood only as a function of identity, wholly independent of other factors. Instead, nontraditional marital last names are powerful symbols that function as other labels, with implications for how the self, relationships with relevant others, and American culture are constructed and communicated.

Statement of the Problem

Although choosing nontraditional marital last names purportedly has been, in the view of some, motivated by feminism (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Post, 1997), a question of relational orientation (Braithwaite & Baxter, 1995), and a function of identity (Carbaugh, 1996; Falk, 1976; Kupper, 1990; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995), naming has also been

considered a rooted and reflexive practice whereas the multifaceted design of post marital

name choice has been overlooked (Sutter, 2001). The present study considered the topic

of nontraditional marital naming patterns within the framework of symbolic

interactionism and examines naming, meaning, identity, and culture in the process. By

locating nontraditional marital surnames as symbols within a language system, it was

possible to explore how the communication of nontraditional marital last names operate

as significant and meaningful representations of identity, relationships, and cultural ideas

and perspectives (Charon, 2001), as illustrated through application of Ogden and

Richards' (1923) model of meaning:

Symbol (retained name)

Referent (woman)   Reference (identity)
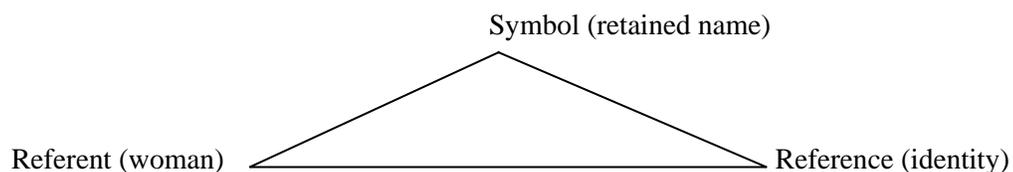
The conscious deliberation necessary for a choice that defies social convention

leads to three outcomes, each of which was important to the theoretical framework of this

study and the development of understanding of this particular symbol. First, women who

make nontraditional marital name choices are likely to express different motivations for

the choices and to articulate differing meanings of their last names. The assorted

variables that may inform women's choice and significance of the name ostensibly are to

be representative of identity. Thus, the last name is a symbol representative of individual

identity. Second, the practice of taking nontraditional last names in marriage requires that

women negotiate the meaning of the name with their partners, a process typically not

present in traditional naming patterns. The process of interpretation (Blumer, 1969) of

the name requires negotiation of the meaning of the relationship, as well as how the

marriage will be symbolically represented. Finally, nontraditional naming patterns

frequently invite questions and may produce criticism. The explanation and/or defense of

nontraditional naming choice represents the potential of this symbol to contribute to cultural change as it necessitates social actors to orient to the changing meaning of a culturally constructed artifact of communication.

Rather than treating marital last names as static and fixed, this approach recognizes that the meanings and interpretations of names "arise and are transformed through interaction" (Charon, 2001, p. 52) and helps to (re)construct identities, relationships, and cultural reality (Burke, 1966; Dean, 1996; Shibutani, 1955). However, the placement of nontraditional marital last names in the framework of symbolic interactionism does not provide an explanation for the function and meaning of this topic. Instead, this position affords the possibility to examine a communicative symbol through the theoretical lens of symbolic interaction in building understanding of identity.

Conceptual Framework

This study employed the joint frames of symbolic interactionism and critical feminism in order to interrogate the function of a specific symbol in identity while foregrounding concerns with women's socially signified roles and identities (Deaux, 1993). From this perspective, marital name retention is a symbolic communicative act emblematic of identity and representative of a patronymic system within a patriarchal culture (Fowler, 1997; Sutter, 2001). Research surveying married women indicates that identity is a primary motivation in both the retention and the changing of last names, but does little to illuminate the process by which identities are negotiated, names are understood, and retention serves to convey identity. This study of marital name retention unifies the perspectives of SI and critical feminist research within the discipline of communication in a way that permits description of negotiation and meaning of post marital name retention.

Symbolic interactionism is fundamentally concerned with the use of symbols to construct social situations, relationships, culture, and identities (Heise & Weir, 1999).

Through the use of significant symbols that occur in language, humans are able to interact, create meaning, and shape and share identities (Denzin, 1969). Although developed primarily in the field of social psychology, symbolic interactionism is uniquely suited to the study of communication (Charon, 2001; Griffin, 2003) in view of the emphasis it places on the meaning that arises from, and resides in social processes and interaction (Denzin, 1969; Goffman, 1983; Lal, 1995; Stryker, 1987).

The central role of communication from the perspective of symbolic interactionism renders meaningful definitions of self and other, as well as mind, self, and society. Symbolic interactionism posits that the self is an emergent category of description and understanding (Meltzer, 1972). It is by means of interaction with significant (peer group, families) and generalized (mass mediated, culture) others that the social self, or the "me" is (re)produced (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). This view allows for the creation and change of the self through discourse and symbol using interaction, a series of actions directed and understood by the mind (Blumer, 1981; Natanson, 1973). Mind action further allows for the strategic (re)construction of identity (Mead, 1934), a function integral to all of social interaction, and particularly to the presentation and negotiation of identity(-ies) (Jackson, 2002) present in all communicative acts.

Critics of symbolic interactionism note its breadth as limiting clarity and specificity of study (Griffin, 2003), what some refer to as "intellectually promiscuous" (Fine, 1993, p. 64). Indeed, "[S]ymbolic interactionism treats language as an interpersonal and intrapersonal medium by which culture, socially structured situations, interpersonal relationships, and social identities are created and maintained" (Heise & Weir, 1999, p. 139). The development of symbolic interactionism, following Mead's original lectures, provides expansive treatment of the meaning of symbols and language in establishing social reality and social life (Charon, 2001). This foundation allows for the development of research and theory in the role of symbolic thought and

communication in establishing self, identity, action, human interaction, culture, and society (Charon, 2001; Fine, 1993).

Although each facet of symbolic interactionism provides a distinct standpoint from which to observe and assess communicative interaction, the nature of symbolic interactionism requires a broad overview of the conceptual frame in order to understand the relationships between and among key concepts within the theory. Accordingly, social and cultural meanings cannot be divorced from identity constructs if either is to be wholly understood. According to Denzin (1969), "[S]ymbolic interactionism takes as a fundamental concern the relationship between individual conduct and forms of social organization. This perspective asks how selves emerge out of social structure and social situations" (p. 922). The dialectic between individual identity and social meaning provides the context and crucible for the analysis of the symbolic meanings contained within women's choice of marital names.

Symbolic interactionism treats identity as a process and product of social interaction (Charon, 2001; Weigert, Tietge, & Tietge, 1986). The process of communicative interaction through meaningful symbols allows significant and generalized others to participate in the construction of individual identity. Distinct from a spontaneous and relatively uninhibited "I" (Charon, 2001; Weigert et al., 1986), identity is highly influenced by the "Me," or that part of the self that is defined by human interaction (Mead, 1934). Names serve a short-hand identity function in interacting and are often the means by which individuals answer and announce the question, "Who am I?".

Symbolic interaction with a multitude of others can lead to a multitude of identity constructs that help to define the self. Interaction with different individuals, in different contexts, or with different variables may lead to situational identities, or "identity options" (Lal, 1995, p. 432). The duality of identities revealed in an individual actor's

positionality demonstrates the complex and multiple properties of identity, as well as the placement of self as individually defined (subject) and externally validated (object).

Salient self-concepts develop as a product of interaction, but remain malleable, particularly to the receipt of identity messages from significant others. At the level of communicative interaction, "[I]dentity is seen as multiple categorizations of the individual by both self and others that vary by situation, influence behavior, and constitute life's meanings" (Weigert et al., 1986, p. 27). As a process, identity is a continually changing phenomenon that interacts with social meaning as individuals form meaning from symbolic social interaction and participate in the ongoing construction and definition of culture and society.

The interaction of individual identity and culture, as explored through symbolic interactionism, reflects interdependence and tension. The relationship between identities that comprise the self and culture and society is neither linear nor divisible (Blumer, 1969) and is particularly illustrative of women's identities (Deegan, 1987). Social and cultural meanings ascribed to symbols employed in meaningful interaction require social coordination and agreement (Charon, 2001). At the same time, larger cultural contexts inform human thought and action, as well as provide meaning for symbolic interaction at the micro-level (Schellenberg, 1990; Weigert et al., 1986).

The relationship between cultural meaning and individual identity readily provides a framework for the examination of women's marital name choice. Social and cultural definitions of women's identity, particularly that of identities expressed through labels assumed by or assigned to women, inform identities recognized by the self and communicated to others (Coleman, 1996; Nutbrock & Freudiger, 1991). Denzin (1969) suggests that names allow highly salient features of the self to be "lodged, recognized, and reciprocated" (p. 924) and are important in establishing relationships and determining identities. The assumption of the title of "Mrs." and the adoption of the husband's last

name upon marriage is an identity label that reflects acceptance and participation in the cultural definition of the identity of (married) women and the institution of marriage. The use of a traditional marital last name communicates an identity that cannot be understood in isolation from the marital relationship. By contrast, the use of the title "Ms." challenges and reshapes cultural meanings of women's identities and the institution of marriage; it also communicates identity constructs that are self-defined and distinct from relational identity.

Significance of the Study

Feminist and communication scholars have challenged researchers to explore understudied topics and extend scholarship to address concerns held by women but excluded from study (Ewick, 1994; Kohrs Campbell, 1998; Wood, 1995). Research into marital name choices meets challenges issued to researchers in the field of Communication to explore unconventional and nontraditional avenues of research, particularly research that is situated in the context of the influence of the larger culture on people's lives (Crawford, 1995; Wood, 1995; Wood & Duck, 1995). Accordingly, this research is significant because it offers theoretical development, as well as practical application, and targets social action where social action is defined as disrupting traditional practices and offering an alternative framework for raising awareness and promoting dialogue.

This research affords significant understanding of the integration of symbolic interactionism and communication through the study of symbols. Despite criticisms of symbolic interactionism (Charon, 2001; Katovich & Reese, 1993), the perspective of human reality it offers has been widely accepted and adopted by social scientists and laypersons alike (Fine, 1993; Stryker, 1987). This investigation uses symbolic interactionism as a broad framework for analysis and understanding of the nature of a particular symbol. Accordingly, this study serves the aims of theoretical development and

application rather than theoretical testing, with emphasis on the description and understanding of symbolic use by women who have retained their pre-marital name (Wood, 2000).

Although the broad tenets of symbolic interactionism are assumed a priori (Charon, 2001; Lal, 1995), this research focused specifically on symbolic interactionsims' implications for the role of symbols in the construction and communication of personal identity, relational identity, and social norms. In addition, the study addressed several critiques of symbolic interactionism (Katovich & Reese, 1993). By examining a specific symbol and its personal, relational, and social/cultural meanings, this investigation offered a specific symbol as both example and extension of the utility of symbolic interactionism in the study of communication and examined self and society through personal and social meanings in symbol use, topics explored in the following chapter.

Additionally, although symbolic interactionism research has been principally located within the fields of sociology and social psychology, this theoretical approach to the study of human interaction is uniquely communicative in origin and application (Charon, 2001). The tenets of symbolic interaction are believed by some (Wood, 1982) to be the underlying hypothesis of the social science of communication. This framework allows for the inclusion of other, uniquely communicative theories, including that of identity negotiation (Jackson, 2002a, 2002b; Ting-Toomey, 1999), identity communication (Hecht, 1993), relational dialectics (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998), as well as cultural and critical/feminist approaches to communication (Kohrs Campbell, 1998).

Understanding women's nontraditional marital last names as symbols that are used to communicate and negotiate meaning has considerable practical value. For women who have retained their own names, or who anticipate the decision making process that is increasingly involved prior to marriage (Kupper, 1990; Sutter, 2001), this research

offered a starting point and a index of issues to consider and discuss. More directly, the critical/feminist approach in this study was intended to offer support and guidance for women making nontraditional marital name choices, and to further the demise of patronymic systems of naming ourselves and naming our children (Lebell, 1988).

Adopting a critical/feminist approach to the study of marital name retention positions the topic of patronymy within the broader framework of patriarchy (Millett, 1970; Post 1997). Feminist research examines not only "the values of the personal, but elucidates its embeddedness in the larger social structure" (Forbes, 2002, p. 277). Patronymy, according to Kramarae and Treichler (1985), is the practice of deriving an individual's name from the paternal parent or ancestor, and Sutter (2001) who suggests that "patronymy is a naming practice that embodies and perpetuates the values of patriarchy" (p. 9). From this perspective the normal, mundane, and even the minutia of daily life is what best serves overarching social practice; patronymy (and other forms of language) serves patriarchy by rendering women invisible, making our lives transitory, perpetuating a sexist/misogynist institution, and continuing to position the identity/ownership of family on men while the work and change remains on women (Lebell, 1988; Miller & Swift, 1976). Through a critical feminist lens, it is possible to attend to the power dynamics of interpersonal relationship within a social context and to examine name retention as a discursive form of identity, and perhaps even subversive act (Forbes, 2002).

The examination of women's last name retention has application for a broader cross section of American culture. Carbaugh (1996) acknowledges that nontraditional marital names are not a concern for all Americans, but argues that "when addressing and referring to others in any American context, these issues can become highly salient, for in these acts, persons and social identities can become quickly codified, in part, through the style of name" (p. 111). Although Carbaugh (1996) is primarily addressing practical

benefits of research like the present study, it also highlights the potential contributions to the understanding of communicated and negotiated meaning in American culture in a larger sense, that of social change. Darden and Robinson (1976) predicted that "[m]easuring the meanings of names . . . may well prove to be a rather reliable indicator of social change" (p. 430). Carbaugh's (1996) application of the topic of investigation to "all Americans" suggests the degree to which meaning is culturally dependent (Charon, 2001), and reveals the utility of studying changing meanings of linguistic symbols.

The examination of nontraditional marital last names as a communicative symbol enhances the development of theory, communication study, and practical application. The purposes and objectives of this study further emphasize such possibilities.

Purposes and Objectives

The primary purpose of the study was to explore the symbol of women's choice of nontraditional marital last names. This objective could be best achieved with the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. Specifically, this study interrogates the meaning of symbolically expressed identity for the individual and the martial relationship through the lens of women's nontraditional marital last names.

This study sought to expand the understanding of a particularized symbol in human communication. Although marital naming has been addressed in legal cases (Anosike, 1991; Brown, Freedman, Katz, & Price, 1977; DeCrow, 1974; Kay & West, 1996), as well as family (Braithwaite & Baxter, 1995; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993) and gender studies (Crenshaw, 1997; Kupper, 1990; Lebell, 1983; Suarez, 1997; Twenge, 1997), the subject is largely absent from communication research. As a communicative act, the choice of marital last names is rich with symbolism (Suarez, 1997). The choice of marital last name is central to identity and "a potent site of communication and culture" (Carbaugh, 1996, p. 119). As a symbolic artifact, women's nontraditional last name choices help to communicate personal identity,

relational identity, and social/cultural norms and change, (Carbaugh, 1996; Charon, 2001; Fowler, 1997; Goffman, 1959; Sutter, 2001).

Additionally, the study addressed real challenges and issues for women who are engaged in a decision-making process about their own names. As Kline et al. (1996) have stated, "[T]he basic rationale for exploring women's name choices stems from the fundamental belief that the choice of a name is a real, practical, and symbolic issue that may systematically affect the quality and conception of marital relationships" (p. 594). Kupper (1990) reports that conflict over marital last names had delayed one wedding and caused one divorce among the 300 participants in her study. Whether or not to change one's name is increasingly being viewed as a *choice*, and the description of the experience of post-marital name retention is viewed as useful to those women (and men) engaging in this decision.

This research had as its central aims determining why names are so important to those women who have chosen post-marital name retention, and how personal and relational identities may be negotiated within nontraditional marital name choice at specific decision points, as well through ongoing interaction. Accordingly, it addressed the following questions:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between post marital name retention and identity negotiation?

Research Question 2: How do women understand the meaning(s) of post marital name retention?

Research Question 3: How is the ongoing use of the name employed to communicate identity, if at all?

Overview

This study was developed with the expressed intent of examining nontraditional name choice from a critical feminist approach. This perspective underscores the feminist

perspective that traditional naming practices are reflective of patriarchal social and communicative practices (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Post, 1995). Accordingly, the accounts and explanations of women who have adopted nontraditional marital last names are central to the explication of the symbolic interactionist approach to the topic, as well as to a full understanding of the significance of identity in name retention.

      The following chapter reviews previous scholarship relating to naming, language, and power within the conceptual framework of symbolic interactionism. In addition, relevant research concerning women's choice of marital names is reviewed. Chapter Three discusses the research methods for this study. Chapter Four presents the results of the interviews. The results receive interpretation and discussion in Chapter Five, in which limitations and directions for future research are also noted.

Chapter Two: Review of Previous Scholarly Literature

Naming is a crucial element in the study of communication, and the power of naming reveals it to be of critical concern to feminist theory. Because of its practical and symbolic functions, language possesses power. To name confers on the namer the power to define, constrain, and create meaning for that being named, in short; it provides us with a means to control a social object (Romaine, 1999). The act of naming both creates and constitutes the objects named, as well as contains the power to shape and define. Insofar as "one's name and identity are inextricably linked . . . renaming is remaking" (Suarez, 1997, pp. 236-237). The power of language to define, constrain and create meanings also renders naming a "political activity. To give a name is to give power *to*, or to gain power *over* the named. Naming establishes or affirms boundaries; it provides a label, a representation of the self, or a self" (Alia, 1995, p. 34). Cross cultural and historical origins of naming reveal this power but at the same time problematize the contemporary continuation of such social conventions when examined through a dual lens of feminist theory and symbolic interactionism.

The identity functions of personal and group names (Frech, 1998) reveal that names have utility in the creastion of political, ethnic, and personal identities. In developing nations, the invocation of the name of a prominent tribe in association with a new government can engender legitimacy and support (Cambell, Lee, & Elliot, 2002; Mendez-Gastelumendi, 2001). The public naming of political and ethnic groups provides a means by which identities are intentionally fastened and made distinct (Reed, 2001). Individual affiliations are expressed and changed through the use of personal names, which may be chosen to reflect ideology and to make political statements (Beit-Hallahmi, 1998; Hvoslef, 2001). According to von Hassell (1998), names are "rooted in a politics of liberation, creation, and change, and . . . serve as a foundation for community

storytelling, reposition people of color and women, and create a way for dispossessed groups to inscribe their own history and identity" (p. 375).

Having the power to name allows for a determination of social identity and how one publicly expresses that identity. Those entrusted with the power to legitimately name social problems are by extension able to classify and diagnose social groups (Loader & Mulcahy, 2001). The power to name also confers the power to interpret history through engagement in the production of both an individual and a shared past (Azaryahu, 1996; Herfray, 1999; Roth, 2001), whereby the naming of public places and events establishes the dominant discourse of their understanding, and the naming of individuals and families invokes ancestry and social position (Simmonds, 1996). As Roth argues, "[N]ames, embedded in their structures, are vehicles for the making of histories" (p. 61). These histories are carried by individuals and collectives, demonstrating that naming influences the identities of social groups and engages in the construction of social reality (von Hassell, 1998).

The naming of social groups also emerges as a central concern in respect to power (Brosnahan-Broome, 1995; Gordon & Grady, 1995; Mills, 2003), particularly among marginalized groups who engage in complex identity negotiations when choosing to embrace or renounce names assigned by a dominant group and struggling to assert the power and right to self-name. Groups of lesser social power may resist attempts to be named in order to preserve an existing identity and to reject an assigned identity (Franco, Ramanathan, & Chand, 2001). These negotiated positions are illustrated by the AIDS activist group ACT UP, which has embraced the term "queer" in an attempt to remove the stigma of homophobic language and harness the power of the term for the group's own efforts.

Questions of naming and power are particularly salient at both personal and group levels among African Americans. The historical use of the terms "Negro," "black,"

and "African American" by African American leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jesse Jackson, and by whites reveal that naming is a political exercise that may promote group affiliation and pride (Martin, 1991) or highlight differences. This "representation and reproduction of agency and identity" (Roth, 2001, p. 61), strongly informs the ways in which human beings realize identity and construct the world (Gerrig & Banaji, 1991). Because names are used to construct "human status categories" (Gerrig & Banaji, 1991, p. 173), the right to name oneself and one's social group has been paramount in civil rights movements concerning issues from abolition to segregation (Neal, 2001), as well as evidenced in naming practices among African American families who grapple with the continuation of "slave names" and the desire to reflect African heritage in the name (Smith, 1996).

The naming of women poses similar problems and issues. In both Western and Middle Eastern cultures, cultural notions of gender and the social person are embedded in naming patterns (Parigoris, 2001; vom Bruck & Baggio, 2001). Cross-cultural variability reveals that where matriarchal lines are valued, women's family names are retained, or multiple surnames are employed (Murru-Corriga, 2000), as is the case in some Spanish-speaking cultures. As such, the (automatic) conferring of a man's last name *on to* a woman at the time of marriage, otherwise known as patronymy, operates as an instrument of patriarchy (Fowler, 1997; Romaine, 1999; Schroeder, 1986). According to Post (1997) and Romaine (1999), this system allows for the continued placement of women in subordinate positions of owned property, but also for the attachment of "nubility titles" (Romaine, 1999, p. 124) that serve to mark women according to marital status.

Despite the construction of traditional marital naming practices, it may be overly simplistic to cast the question of birth name retention in feminist terms. Although Kanowitz (1969) notes that a woman who takes her husband's name at the time of marriage "knowingly and willingly" (p. 41) participates in the destruction of a vital part

of her identity, and Suarez (1997) asserts that the act of marital name changing sacrifices a symbol that identifies her to others and reflects her ancestry and achievements, the study of name change and retention (Kupper, 1990; Sutter, 2001) demonstrates that the question of marital naming is much more complex. Although patriarchy and traditionalism play a significant role in women's choices, other factors, including ancestry, aesthetics, familial concerns, and professional status are also involved. Central to the issue of a woman's own name are questions of how identities are contained and communicated within a particularized symbol.

Naming patterns are also of considerable importance for the study of communication, where the name is a factor in the presentation of identity. As Hecht (1993) observes, identity is present in every form of communicative behavior. Because our names serve as markers of our identities in both cognitive and psychological self-constructs, as well as within our interactions, they embody and communicate our identities. To examine the function of women's marital name retention as a symbolic form of the communication of identity, it is necessary to examine the history of the matter and provide a definition of terms before reviewing the relevant literature to this topic.

History of the Matter

The legal and traditional roots of the adoption of a husband's last name at marriage reflect more than personal choice. As Suarez (1997) points out, "[T]he custom of taking a husband's surname has consequences not just for the individual woman who chooses to follow it. It affects all women" (p. 235). The widespread practice of marital name change is a social convention that, to many, symbolizes the subjugation of women and serves both to reinforce and perpetuate the particular function of patriarchy that recognizes women not for their individual worth, but rather for their relationship to a man (Post, 1997).

In the state of Pennsylvania, a married couple using separate names was required file different state income tax forms because of the inability of computers to match individuals with different names as recently as 1998 (Nelson, 1998). Although this practice may present little more than an inconvenience at least, or the additional fee required by some tax preparers at most, it is representative of a history of legal discrimination and tacit disapproval of women who have chosen not to adopt their husbands' family name at marriage. Such legal practice is deep-rooted in history, tradition, and patriarchy, and reveals that "when women and men engage in the institution of marriage, a legal role transformation occurs" (Kline, Stafford, & Miklosovic, 1996, p. 593). This transformation has a greater effect on women and is reflected in the changing of the wife's, rather than the husband's, last name.

The common practice of familial nomenclature first entered Western practice after a significant growth in population, such that it became necessary to distinguish among individuals in the same locale who may have had the same given, or Christian, name (Post, 1997). Nomenclature was largely derived from occupation and location (Plankans & Wetherall, 2000; Post, 1997). Thus, John the baker came to be known as John Baker, Matthew the blacksmith became Matthew Smith (or Smythe), and so on.

The origin of marital names reflects the public and private divide and reinforces feminist claims that the personal is political (Landes, 1998). Women, denied agency during this period (or the recognition of agency for women), became known by the occupation of their immediate male relatives (Post, 1997). The association of women with the occupation of either their husbands or fathers extended the religious, historical, and legal understanding of a woman as the property of her husband, such that "upon marriage, a woman passed from the control of her father to that of her husband . . . the woman was not a person" (Post, 1997, p. 285). Denied access into the economic and political, or "public" sphere, women were simultaneously denied the opportunity to

develop both a public identity and the communicative symbol of that same identity

(Ryan, 1998).

Western traditions have played a central role in the customs and laws stipulating

the adoption of a man's name at the time of marriage. As a result, "[T]he law came to

view a married couple as being one person, and to view that person as being the man"

(Suarez, 1997, p. 234). Both social customs and legal norms assumed that the only legal

identity of a woman was that of her husband (Scheuble & Johnson, 1993). The historical

identification of a woman as belonging to her father or to her husband was manifested,

practiced, and reinforced by the norm of a woman's adoption of her husband's name at

marriage (Post, 1997). In this way, the "marital re-naming is a form of linguistic

domination, with the new name less symbolic of change than *ex* change (a transfer of

ownership from father to husband)" (Alia, 1995, p. 35). These traditions, like other

Western cultural customs, were largely informed by religious cannons.

Christian tradition has informed customs and norms concerning the last name of

a married woman. As Post (1997) indicates, "[M]uch of the law concerning marriage,

especially Anglo-American jurisprudence, is derived from cannon law" (p. 284). The

religious imperatives of a wife to obey her husband, the church, and Christ provide many

with the justification for the subordination of women. Interpretation of these imperatives

has set the stage for a dominant subordinate relationship within a patriarchal culture that

sanctions the reduction of women's identity through the elimination of symbolic

expression in a continuous last name. The dominant position of the husband's last name

as the single family name affirms, symbolizes, and communicates his rightful position

under Christian tradition as the head of the household.

Western and Christian assumptions and traditions have created a false dilemma

for many women who were denied information concerning their right to retain their name

after marriage. The growth of women's rights and suffrage movements in both Europe,

particularly Great Britain and in the United States, during the late 1800s led to the challenges of the laws and traditions governing the naming patterns of married women in the United States.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the first known woman in the United States to retain her own name after marriage by using her family name, Cady, as her middle name (Kupper, 1990). Lucy Stone was the first known woman in the United States to retain her own name solely after marriage (Kupper, 1990; Lucy Stone League, 2003). In 1921, the journalist Ruth Hale founded the Lucy Stone League, which was largely derided with the pejorative term "Lucy Stoners" used to castigate women who defied social convention and pursued public agency and identity (Lucy Stone League, 2003). The reaction to the organization and the vilification of the women who joined the league reflects the "extent to which naming patterns that depart from the traditional pattern can have important social consequences" (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995, p. 72). Deviation from such social conventions that symbolize patriarchal structures as the institution of marriage often result in hostility and can have negative repercussions (Jackson, 2002b; Pharr, 1993). Nontraditional naming patterns are a primary example of such deviation.

Whether these deviations subvert law in addition to social custom remains a question. There are mixed views of the legal history of name changes in the United States. Scheuble and Johnson (1993) assert that, "[E]arly in U.S. history, no law required married women to take their husband's last name. Since it was assumed that women were the property of men, no such law appeared necessary" (p. 748). Yet in 1973, Kohrs Campbell claimed that "every married woman's surname is legally that of her husband, and no court will uphold her right to go by another one" (p. 76). This apparent confusion may have resulted from the federal government's refusal to comment on the subject when raised in the courts, which effectively left the rulings on women and marital naming up to the individual states (Kay & West, 1996). Therefore, although no law barred a woman

from keeping her own name, "many states did not allow women to vote, receive passports, get paid, or have bank accounts in their maiden names until the mid-1970s" (Twenge, 1997b, p. 418). Often no statute requiring a marital name change existed; however, government agencies and the courts frequently invoked tradition in order to force women to change their last names when they married. Kay and West (1996) also note that state laws employed to compel women to change their names at marriage were based on a misreading of common law, rather than on actual statute.

Changes in the status of women, including the name choices available to them in the 1970s were undermined by the 1972 Supreme Court ruling in *Forbush v. Wallace*. The Court upheld an Alabama lower court ruling requiring a married woman to receive her driver's license in her married name unless she used bureaucratic means to change her name to her own after she was married (DeCrow, 1974; Kupper, 1990). Courts continued to reflect a "reluctance to grant a married woman authorization to assume the name of someone other than the husband - except where it is done with the consent of the woman's present husband" (Anosike, 1991, p. 13). Other courts required children of both unmarried and married couples to have their fathers' last names (Kupper, 1990). These decisions were rooted in historical and Judeo-Christian perspectives on the family, with the man as head of the household, and a woman as the property of her husband.

Whether or not the law has ever required a woman to take her husband's name at marriage is largely immaterial for the experiences of women who have attempted to retain a nontraditional name after marriage. The common law of England that allows any individual to acquire any name through common usage so long as there is no intent to defraud is replicated in nearly every district of jurisprudence in the United States today. However, as Brown, Freedman, Katz, and Price (1977) point out:

> The majority of states . . . also have enacted elaborate statutory procedures for name change that presume a woman's adoption of her husband's name upon

marriage. The result of these statutory enactments has been to discourage official

acceptance of the simpler and less costly method of name change and to

perpetrate the misconception that a married woman is required by law to use her

husband's surname. (p. 102)

The long-standing assumption that women should take their husbands' names at

the point of marriage is embedded in social convention and legal praxis (Suarez, 1997).

Despite the existence of law or precedent, institutions and assumptions have placed

hurdles constructed of red tape and resistance to the woman who attempts to retain or

reclaim her own name (Kanowitz, 1969). The legal process and social processing of

nontraditional naming choices among married women moved at disparate speeds. This

cultural lag showed that while diverse naming practices were no longer legally limited,

social acceptance of such lagged behind (Scheuble & Johnson, 1993). Attitudes toward

new naming patterns do not reflect the legal rights of a woman to keep her own name

(Scheuble & Johnson, 1993).

Today, the options available to women who wish to keep their own name often

appear to be daunting. If women are aware of their right of post-marital name retention

(Post, 1997), common convention holds that a significant amount of effort is required to

do so (Alia, 1995). In fact, women who wish to retain their own names after marriage

must do nothing and simply continue to use them. In contrast, women who change their

names at marriage must change multiple forms of identification and paperwork, from

social security to voter registration and employment information.

The adoption of a new name may have serious economic consequences for

women as well. The development of a credit history is a case in point, as women who

change their names and open accounts with their husbands are considered by many

banks, loan institutions, and credit card companies to be authorized users rather than joint

holders (Post, 1997). As a result, women frequently do not build their own credit history.

If a woman is designated as a joint account holder, a later name change, as might occur as the result of death or divorce, can result in the loss of her credit that was established with her previous husband's name (Suarez, 1997). As Kupper (1990) notes, dealing with government and legal institutions, such as a credit card company or the IRS and attempting to change or correct a record is "like swimming through molasses" (p.100). Often women are told that such practices are a matter of institutional policy, that their hyphenated names will not fit on the form, or, as in the case of Pennsylvania's tax code, that the computer will not recognize individuals with different last names as part of one family unit.

Although historical patterns and society's resistance to change can be daunting, feminist organizations and activism have produced positive results for women committed to retaining their own names and, hence, identities after marriage. Despite cases like one in Pittsburgh, in which "Federal Judge Hubert I. Teitlbaumm … threatened Attorney Barbara Wolvovitz with bail because she insisted on referring to herself as Ms. Wolvovitz rather than Mrs. Loel, after her husband" (Suarez, 1997, p. 236), the legal profession, as well as social convention, continues to progress. Kupper (1990) notes that "[W]henever parents (suing jointly) have challenged a state law or requirement stating that a child must receive the father's name, they have won" (p. 127). Scheuble and Johnson (1993) reported that the majority of college students indicate acceptance of patriarchal practice by others and anticipate replicating it in their future relationships. Although only a fraction intend to adopt nontraditional marital names, they nonetheless were accepting of alternative naming practices on the part of other individuals and couples.

The changing social status of women has elicited changes in the way people communicate, the topics people discuss, and the symbolic forms of human communication humans use to interact. Researchers are beginning to investigate topics

that have been marginalized as "women's issues." Despite this trend, little attention is afforded to the topic of marital surnames (Kline, Stafford, & Miklosovic, 1996; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995). Even after the national furor surrounding Hillary Clinton's use of her name, Rodham, and her subsequent dropping of that name (Brightman, 1994), we know comparatively little about the significance of women's choice of marital surname (Scheuble & Johnson, 1993), especially with respect to language and identity.

Analysis of the communicative act of naming oneself affords insight into the use of language as symbolic markers of identity, and a type of communication that both reflects and alters patriarchal practice. To clarify further the approach undertaken in this study, the following sections provide a definition of terms pertaining to marital name choice, and review relevant scholarly literature relating to the topic of women's name choices at marriage revealing that women's choices are multifaceted, but largely informed by considerations of identity. This chapter also addresses the application of the topic to the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism and critical feminism.

Definition of Terms

Several key terms are vital to the understanding of identity in women's marital surname choice. First, the phrases "a woman's own name," or "birth name, are used to denote the last name a woman receives at birth. These terms deliberately exclude the more common phrase "maiden name, which reflects an antiquated view of women and marriage (Kupper, 1990; Post, 1997).

Women's marital surname choices fall into two primary categories: traditional and nontraditional. Traditional surname choices denote the adoption of a husband's surname by a woman at the time of marriage (Kline et al., 1996; Twenge, 1997a). This choice is predominant among contemporary married women in the United States (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995). Women who choose this marital surname are sometimes

referred to as "name changers" (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kline et al., 1996; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Twenge, 1997b).

Nontraditional surname choice shows a greater degree of variability. Women's choices of nontraditional marital surnames generally are one of three types. First, women may opt to keep their own names. Generally called "name keepers" (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kline et al., 1996; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Twenge, 1997b), these women may use their own names solely in professional contexts, or in both social and professional situations.

A second choice of nontraditional marital surname is the combination of the woman's name with the husband's name. This choice may be expressed through the use of a middle name, the transfer for a woman's surname to her middle name, or the hyphenation of both names (Kline et al., 1996; Kupper, 1990; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Suarez, 1990; Twenge, 1997b). Women who choose this style of marital surnames are generally referred to as "name combiners" (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kline et al., 1996; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Twenge, 1997b).

A third, emerging choice is the combination of both names into a name that is unique to the couple (Allyn & Allyn, 1995). This name may come from a combination of the letters of each spouse's name, the use of the name of a place where the couple first met as a surname, or the adoption of a grandparent's name. Though uncommon, this option provides couples seeking to explore surnames that do not reproduce gender roles or expectations while signifying a single familial unit (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Basow, 1992; Kupper, 1990). To continue the monikers assigned to women in the above categories, I will refer to women and men in this category as "name makers."

Review of Relevant Research

Research involving post marital name demonstrates the complexity of language as a living code, naming as a powerful act, and identity as a communicative phenomenon.

The decision by some women (Brighten, 1994) to retain their own name, even while married, has been explored as a communicative cultural artifact (Kupper, 1990; Sutter, 2001), an issue of equality (Post, 1997), and as a symbol of identity (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Falk, 1976). The deliberate act of name retention is an understudied communication that has significant implications for messages concerning individual and joint identities.

A marital surname is a form of language that functions as a deeply embedded communicative cultural artifact reflexive of gender codes (Spender, 1980). The pervasiveness of gender hierarchy is historically reflected by strong opposition to the use of nontraditional surnames (Post, 1997; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993). In 1972, the Supreme Court upheld an Alabama law requiring women to obtain drivers' licenses in their husbands' names unless they had pursued legal avenues to retain their names (DeCrow, 1974; Kupper, 1990). Until the mid-1970s, most states required married women to conduct all civic and economic transactions (including obtaining passports, voting, banking, and wage earnings) in their husband's name. In 1988, a judge in Pittsburgh threatened an attorney with contempt of court if she did not stop using her own name, rather than call herself after her husband (Kupper, 1990; Suarez, 1997). Attitudes concerning nontraditional surname use are slowly changing, and although only a fraction of college students report planning to use a nontraditional surname if they marry, a majority have indicated acceptance of this practice for others (Scheuble & Johnson, 1993). According to the most recent national statistics (Brightman, 1994), about ten percent of American women were using a form of nontraditional marital surname, a figure that may be higher in some areas of the country while experiencing a slight decline overall (Goldin & Shim, 2004). The growing use of nontraditional marital surnames, increasing exposure to them, and heightened understanding of various facets of identity

intensifies the need to understand women's choice of marital surname. Of considerable interest is the function of marital surnames in reflecting and communicating identity.

Although marital surname choice is embraced by some as an issue of equality and feminist ideology (Post, 1997), women are more likely to assert that post marital name retention was driven by identity. Whether women indicate intentions to choose traditional or nontraditional marital names, the two groups used "intriguingly similar language to explain their choices" (Twenge, 1997b, p. 427). Although identity issues are not the factors women note in explaining their marital name choices, women in all categories cited identity. Interpretations of identity varied among name changers, keepers, and combiners. Accounts of choices "emphasize self-achievement, attachment, distinctiveness, and traditionalism" (Kline et al., 1996, p. 596), reflecting contemporary gender identity issues for women.

Although research into women's marital naming choices is limited, four empirical studies (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kline et al., 1996; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; and Twenge, 1997b) focus on explanations of surname choices. In addition, a descriptive interpretative analysis by Kupper (1990), and two qualitative dissertations (Fowler, 1997; Sutter, 2001) identify the purpose of the research as explaining women's marital name choices. This research provides a starting place for exploring the meaning of marital last names and the role of identity in women's marital name choice.

Women who choose traditional marital surnames and fall into the category of 'name changers' articulate several rationales for their choices. As expected, traditionalism is the primary reason given for the choice of a traditional marital surname and is invoked more frequently than all other explanations combined (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kline et al., 1996; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; and Twenge, 1997b). As previously stated, the majority of American women fall within this category (Brightman,

1994), and a majority of female and male college students indicated intentions to continue in this fashion (Scheuble & Johnson, 1995; Twenge, 1997b).

In a study of 110 married women, Kline et al. (1996) observed that women who changed their surname when they married reported that they desired the new identity that came with the adoption of their husband's surname. This finding echoes Falk's (1976) assertion that a change in name reflects a change in identity. Several considerations motivated the desire for a new identity. First, women who wished to distance themselves from their pasts, their families, or the last name of an ex-husband report affinity for the new identity afforded by their husband's last name (Kline et al., 1996; Twenge, 1997b). Second, women indicated preference for traditional marital names as symbols of their new social identity (Kline et al., 1996; Twenge, 1997b).

Combining names is sometimes perceived as a compromise between a woman's desire to maintain her identity and to establish a new family identity (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Kline et al., 1996). Name combiners indicate equal concerns with multi-faceted identity constructs, including family attachments and personal and career identities, as well as identities as married women, and see the combination of their surname with their husbands' as a way to achieve identity parity (Kline et al., 1996). For some, hyphenated names represent compromise (Kupper, 1990), or a way to acknowledge both families' identities (Twenge, 1997b). Despite these motivations, most women are not joined in their choices by their husbands, nor do they attempt to persuade to influence their husbands to use the combined name (Kupper, 1990).

Women who keep their names after marriage overwhelmingly cite negative ramifications in careers and identity should they change their names, as well as a need for autonomy (Kline et al., 1996). In two studies, women in the professions (Kline et al., 1996; Twenge, 1997b) and especially in "more liberal work roles" (Scheuble & Johnson, 1993, p. 751) tended to keep their own names after marrying. Often these women had

established name recognition and identities in their fields, a fact that reflects the tendency of name keepers to have married at a later age than the general population (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Twenge, 1997b).

Name-keepers report additional considerations in their rationales for choosing nontraditional marital surnames. Although personal and career identity provided the most frequent explanation for name keepers' choices, their own family identity was also a factor (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Twenge, 1997b). One woman reported that she was an only child and felt an obligation to carry on her family name (Kupper, 1990). Others decided to keep the name of an ex-husband so as to have the same name as children from that marriage (Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kupper, 1990). Name-keepers also report that identity issues remain problematic, as they struggle with questions relating to their children's names (Kupper, 1990) and feelings of being symbolically exiled from their nuclear family, particularly when children carry their father's name (Lebell, 1988).

Twenge (1997b) uncovered three commonalties among college aged women who planned to keep their birth names when they married. First, they were likely to be immigrants or women of color who wanted to retain their ancestry through their name. A similar effect for race and ethnicity was found by Johnson and Scheuble (1995), particularly among Latinas. Second, many of these women had a feminist orientation, as measured by the Attitudes Toward Feminism and the Women's Movement Scale. Finally, these women score higher on measures of instrumentality and lower on measures of expressiveness (as rated by the Personal Attributes Questionnaire) than women who intended to make traditional naming choices. This finding is consistent with the view of Etaugh, Bridges, Cummings-Hill, and Cohen (1999), who claim that women who do not adopt their husbands' names are perceived as being less stereotypically feminine and more agentic.

Compared to name-changers, combiners, and keepers, women who use a name that has been chosen or created relative only to the marriage are much less likely to do so unilaterally. Instead, this decision is one into which women and men enter into and make together, although the topic women are much more likely to introduce the topic (Kupper, 1990). Couples who choose this route do so in order to avoid gender laden connotations while using a surname that reflects their common bond (Allyn & Allyn, 1995). Both women and men in Kupper's (1990) survey stated that the created name reflects the identity of the new nuclear family, an aspect they would miss as part of a dual-name couple.

The seemingly disparate choices of women's marital surnames are unified by a common emphasis on identity. Name-changers focus on traditional and relational identity, whereas name-makers focus on nontraditional and relational identity. Name-keepers and name-combiners struggle to balance multiple identity roles, including those assigned to the public and private. A fuller understanding of the implications of and for identity in women's choices of marital surnames emerges from an examination of the roles of language and identity.

The common conclusion that identity is prominent in the marital naming act is accompanied by a common lack of theoretical framework to interpreting the source of identity or its communicative expression. This research examines marital name retention as a form of identity negotiation and the use of the name as the symbolic communication of identity. This investigation also answers the charges of non-specificity by critics of symbolic interactionism by working within a theoretical frame to explore how an individual symbol is used in order situate selves, others, and social processes.

Application to Theoretical Framework

The role of women's surnames as both a reflexive and prescribed form of naming reveals the power of language in the formation and expression of identity, as understood

in the framework of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934) and critical feminist research. This dual lens allows for interrogation of the symbolic role of marital name retention as a linguistic marker in the communicative processes that produce individual self-perception in relation to and negotiation with others, as well leads to a highly salient, stable identity that is invoked in subsequent transactions (Mead, 1934). In addition, this symbol of identity is located within a language system that reflects and benefits patriarchy (Romaine, 1999) and examining the meaning of the subversive act of name retention allows for a greater depth in understanding the function of language in (re)shaping culturally dominant social systems.

Identity is a composite self-conception, having primary (including culture, ethnicity, gender, and personal identity) and situational (including role, relational, and face identity, and symbolic interactionism theory) domains (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Jackson defines identities as "products of collective perceptions and individuated definitions of the self" (2002a, p. 245) that are constantly being exchanged in symbolic codes as part of the process of the negotiation of identity (2002b). Identity our sense of who we are that involves defining ourselves in a process of socialization (Garner, 1997). In short, identity is shaped and shared through the process of communication. Symbolic interactionism, which holds the self as a multi-faceted reflection of society or culture (Charon, 2001) and allows for the negotiation of identities among significant and generalized others as a central part of self-definition (Jackson, 2002b), gives further illumination to this perspective.

Identity negotiation theory contributes the role of communication in the development of the self by recognizing that individuals bring identity to communication interactions and acquire identity through communication with others in a society or culture (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Accordingly, the choice of marital surname entails the negotiation of identity because identity is enacted through language (Miller, 2000). Thus,

language is central both to the creation and the enactment of identity through

communication and expression, as reflected through identity negotiation in which

individuals make language choices to present a selective image of the self (Ting-Toomey,

1989; 1999).

Understanding marriage as a life-span transition that has significant effects on

self-definition allows for the perspective of marital name choice as a form of

communicative behavior that helps women to adapt to new role identities (cf. Ethier &

Deaux, 1994). For women with strong nontraditional gender and gender role identities,

choices to continue that identity may result in nontraditional marital surname choices

(Etaugh et al., 1999). For women with traditional gender and gender role identities,

choices to adopt a traditional marital surname may reflect a greater openness to change in

self-concepts (Etaugh et al., 1999; Intons-Peterson & Crawford, 1985). Stated simply,

nontraditional identities may explain nontraditional choices, and traditional identities may

explain traditional choices. Ultimately, the choice of a marital surname is viewed as

informed by the roles women occupy and the gender identities that underlie primary and

role identities.

Women's marital surnames are made more important to understanding the

intersection of language and identity because the choice of a marital surname reflects the

negotiation of identity at multiple stages (Hecht, 1993). As a marker of personal identity,

the marital name offers a unique opportunity to engage in the naming or remaking

(Suarez, 1997) of the self. This modification and definition of one's self-image reflects

the negotiation of "self-images constructed, experienced, and communicated by the

individuals within a culture and within a particular communication interaction" (Ting-

Toomey, 1999, p. 39). Although the option to change one's name is readily available to

almost everyone in the United States, married women are the only group routinely

confronted with this choice (Palczewski, 1998). Further, the negotiation of the marital

surname choice by a couple demonstrates that "identity becomes a property of the relationship because it is jointly negotiated" (Hecht, 1993, p. 79). Additionally, the use and presentation of a nontraditional or alternative naming choice engages ongoing negotiation with a larger social community (Hecht, 1993), or generalized other (Charon, 2001), which women may meet pressure, resistance, or acceptance when presenting their choice.

The importance of language to identity is further in viewing it through a critical feminist lens. When understood as a social construct, language is a primary forum for enacting identity (Miller, 2000). Put another way, language choice has implications for how identity is presented and negotiated (Scott, 2000) in that said choice may replicate or challenge culturally dominant power relations. Spender (1980) notes that language is powerful because:

> Language helps form the limits of our reality. It is our means of ordering, classifying, and manipulating the world. It is through language that we become members of a human community, that the world becomes comprehensible and meaningful, that we bring into existence the world in which we live. Yet it is ironic that this faculty which helps to create our world also has the capacity to restrict our world (p. 3).

Palczewski (1998) and Sunderland (2000) share this perspective in noting the symbolic use of language reflects bias in what we feel, see, and do. So does Penelope (1990), who indicates that languages are systems of rules that "proscribe the boundaries of the lives we might imagine and will ourselves to live" (p. xiv). The labeling and representation of the self (Alia, 1995), reveals the symbolic power of in surname choices, as made within the boundaries of socially constructed language rules.

Discussion of the boundaries created by language is particularly important in the consideration of language within a patriarchal system benefited by patronymy. Krohl

(1991) asserts that the rhetorical act is itself gendered, and Lazar (2000) points out that discourse works to maintain a largely unchallenged traditional gender order. Weatherall (1998) observes that "the study of language and communication has contributed significantly to understanding how gender relations are reflected, created, and sustained through everyday interactions" (p. 275). Specifically, language and communication involve the creation of boundaries for women that define them in their relationships with men (Weatherall, 1998), and that leads to ignoring them, defining them narrowly, or devaluing them (Henley, 1987). Buzzanell (1995) posits that "language is the critical factor in the ways we think about gender relations or equally important, do not think about them" (pp. 62-63). Messages about gender serve to create (gender) role identities for individuals, and individuals, in turn, invoke language to express their own (gendered) roles (Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995). The "nubility titles" (Romaine, 1999, p. 14) connected to a woman's changed marital surnames represent the expression of this role, and it is imperative to understand how resistance of a dominant language code invokes and reflects individual (and gender role) identities.

Recognition of the communicative nature of identity and the relationships among language, gender, and identity prompt interest in the language of identity, particularly as conveyed by women's marital surnames. Research involving women's choice of marital surnames is reflective of identity as expressed through language, which is consistent with the long association of naming with identity (Allport, 1963; Brown & Ford, 1961; Lossiter, 1983). Lucy Stone, the first American woman to retain her own name after marrying did so on the grounds that her name was "the symbol of [her] identity and must not be lost" (cited in Suarez, 1997, p. 234). According to Kupper (1990),

Names are important components of identity. They set up apart from others, and
come to represent all that we have been and done. Juliet was right that a rose will
smell as sweet if it's called by another name, but there is more to it than that.

Just as the label 'rose' holds a set of particular associations for us, so does each
person's name. For most of us, a name is a personal symbol, not to be
relinquished lightly (p. 23).

Situating marital surname choice in the framework of symbolic interactionism
and critical feminist theory allows for the exploration of women's marital surnames as
symbolic indicators of (gender) identities that are performative and transformative of
gendered roles and relationships. If gender is viewed as a primary identity (Ting-
Toomey, 1999) that is enacted across situations (Hogg et al., 1995), a woman's
conception of her own identity is ipso facto gendered, and language and communication
provide for an expression of gendered (role) identities (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Review

Women's choice of marital surnames is a complex topic that remains
understudied by communication scholars. Despite variations in surname choice, women
acknowledge the role of identity in determining whether to adopt a traditional or
nontraditional marital surname. Name-changers, keepers, combiners, and makers point to
the central role of identity in the evolution of their decision. Because gender identity is a
highly salient identity construct that is elicited in diverse situations (Hogg et al., 1996), it
is highly linked to human behavior, including communication. Given the gendered role
identity of *wife* implicit in the choice of marital surnames, gender identity is a
determining factor in women's adoption of a traditional or nontraditional marital
surname.

Competing viewpoints on the function of gender and identity in marital surnames
exist among identity theorists and feminists. Suarez (1990) suggests that the loss of a
woman's independence through marriage is most clearly illustrated by the common
practice of her adopting her husband's name. Along these lines, the Center for a
Woman's Own Name (1975) states that a woman who takes her husband's name is

"reduced to a parenthesis as though her identity is parenthetical, secondary to her husband's identity" (p. 7). Spender (1980) condemns name changing as a cultural practice that conceals women's independent identities. Although some feminists view marital surnames as an issue of equality, seemingly traditional surname choices may also prove emancipatory for women. Women affected by destructive behavior or abusive relationships may find refuge in name that serves as a marker of a new life and new self (Kupper, 1990; Sutter, 2001).

This study was principally concerned with the meaning of women's marital name retention as a symbolic artifact in the communication of identity. The power of language (Romaine, 1999) and the central role of naming in self-definition, culture, and power (Neal, 2001; Zola, 1993) provided a foundation from which to understand the importance of women's marital name retention. The history of the topic demonstrate that traditional forms of marital naming are a type of patronymy that is reflective of a patriarchal culture (Post, 1997; Sutter, 2001). The relevant research concerning the topic of marital naming, while largely outside of the scope of the Communication discipline, lends an understanding to the central role played by identity in name retention, name changing, and name creation (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Kupper, 1990). The adoption of a dual lens of symbolic interactionism and critical feminism reveals name retention to be a symbol of the self that challenges a traditional patriarchal code, while simultaneously invoking the process of negotiation of identities with the self, significant, and generalized others. As a whole, this review provides a foundation for the investigation of the communication and meaning of marital name retention and offers a specific example of the roles of symbols in the communication of identity.

This research promotes the mindful exploration and negotiation of ways in which language shapes identity with the hopes that the results will prove both insightful and liberating for women, and also for men. The following chapter positions women's voices

as central in the use of methods and analysis in order to collect and present data that best

describes the role of marital name retention in shaping and sharing women's identities.

Chapter Three: Methods

The use of semi-structured interviews and grounded theory has been recognized as a "voice-centered" approach to data collection and analysis (Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1997, p. 236; Thompson, 1999). Qualitative research methods are characterized by collection and analysis procedures that seek to balance power between the researcher and the participant, describe and interpret, and prioritize the native voices of those who experientially know the topic (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Of particular interest to the present investigation was furthering the understanding the meaning(s) of post-marital name retention to women through description of the decision to retain the name, the interaction at the time of marriage, and the ongoing negotiation around the name as a symbol of identity. Together with the central importance of identity and meaning in symbolic interactionism and a critical feminist approach, this perspective requireed that research methodology privilege participants' native voices and understandings. At the same time, the intersections of identity, relationship, and society essential to the description of meaning in women's understandings of the naming act prioritized the actor's interpretation and subjectivity. To attend to the theoretical frame, topic of investigation, and participants in this study, this investigation employed personal interviews and uses grounded theory techniques consistent with the use of qualitative research within the theoretical frame and the discipline.

There were three research questions for this study:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between post marital name retention and identity negotiation?

Research Question 2: How do women understand the meaning(s) of post marital name retention?

Research Question 3: How is the naming act and use of the name employed to communicate identity, if at all?

This chapter provides an overview of the method employed. It first describes the selection and characteristics of participants, and then procedures used to analyze the interview data.

Participants

The twenty-three participants in this study ranged in age from 28 to 58 years of age, with an average age of 44.4 years. All were married women and all had retained their names. Consistent with previous findings (Brightman, 2000), the participants reported having been married at an average age of 29 (range 21 to 44) later than the national norm. Contrary to overall trends, participants disproportionately reported holding a professional or graduate degree (n = 22) with the remaining one participant having a college degree. Length of marriages ranged in number, from 6 weeks to 20 years, with an average of 8.6 years.

The informants were identified through purposeful sampling. Purposeful (Patton, 1980) or criterion-based selection (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) sampling allowed for the selection of participants who had the characteristics necessary for relevance to, and inclusion in, the study. Brightman (1994) asserts that marital name retention is practiced by approximately 10% of the population of married women within the United States. Further, name retention is highest among comparably more affluent women with advanced degrees who marry later in life and remain engaged in the workforce. For the purposes of this study, purposeful sampling was used to reflect the limited variation within a fairly homogenous population (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

To acquire an adequate sample size within the target population, I first identified groups that were likely to include women meeting the established criteria and who were

available for interviews. I sent email notes to named representatives of Women's Studies

programs and organizations at three academic institutions, as well as of private

organizations that have high levels of memberships of women in professional fields. Each

email contained a brief statement of introduction, a short description of the research

project and the considerations for participation, including length of time and lack of

compensation (see Appendix A). I asked each contact to forward the request to women

who they believed would fit the criteria and might be interested in taking part. This

process resulted in a preliminary list of 22 potential participants. I contacted each

prospect in order to provide additional details concerning the research project and to

arrange for a time and location to conduct the interview. In 3 instances, it proved to be

impossible to schedule an interview, due to schedule conflicts or a lack of response from

the contact.

Nineteen preliminary participants were identified, and interviews with each were

scheduled during May and June of 2004. At the close of each interview, I asked the

participant if she might recommend a friend or colleague who would be interested in

participating. Through snowball sampling an additional four participants were identified

and contacted. Because interviews were ongoing during this period, from July to August

2004, I was able to assess the nature of responses to the interviews against the need for

more participants. Through repeated listening to the taped interviews of 21 women I was

confident that the data were sufficiently redundant to have achieved saturation. I

conducted two additional interviews in order to confirm saturation, which resulted in the

final number of 23.

Research Instrumentation

To generate non-numerical, or textual data, semi-structured interviews with

married women who have retained their names after marriage were conducted during late

spring and summer of 2004. Individual, or personal, interviews, according to Seidman

(1991) are ones in which the topic is explored in depth and detail in a face-to-face, interpersonal meeting. The semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix D) provided a framework for analysis of the research questions previously identified while providing enough flexibility to respond and adjust to participants' input (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

The use of personal interviews is consistent with the relationship between the goals of the study and the data collection methods. Wood (1999) suggests that the narratives constructed in the interview process are meaning making acts that can be attended to through open listening, focused awareness, and attention to meta statements, logic of the narrative, and inner dialogues. The current investigation stands to benefit from each. Open listening provided the ability to respond to participant cues and to generate depth in response. Focused awareness on the part of the researcher allowed for attention to nonverbal cues, the use of silence, and vocalic indicators. By attending to meta-statements, I was able to identify significant issues in how women think about meanings. Piecing together the logic of the narrative forced greater awareness of gaps and incomplete data, as well as attention to inner dialogues that women articulate (Wood, 1999) in response to questions, and alerted me to identity negotiation within the self, or with the other internalized.

Pilot study.

To determine the utility of the proposed interview protocol, a pilot study involving 3 participants was conducted during the final two weeks of March 2004. Participants were recruited by individuals known to the researcher, represented a convenience sample of married women who had retained their names, and were not compensated for their assistance in this project. Each participant took part in a face-to-face interview and was urged to provide feedback to improve the design and experience of the research.

The pilot study provided important information for the refinement of this investigation. First, the completion of face-to-face interview averaged just under 54 minutes (interviews were 47, 51, and 67 minutes in length). Transcription of each recorded interview for content averaged 4 pages of single spaced text for a total of 12 pages. Preliminary coding of the responses indicated that the semi-structured interviews were effective in generating discussion of marital name retention that was within the scope of the research. In each of the interviews, the participants recommended changes in the wording of questions that helped to refine the semi-structured interview protocol. Subsequent dialogue concerning the preliminary coding indicated that the questions were appropriate and that participants' responses were correctly interpreted.

Demographic items.

A brief Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix C) completed by each participant allowed for a composite description of the women who participated in this study. Items related to age when married and the length of their marriage. The cumulative response to the first two questions served to reveal participants' age when they did not do so in the interview. Participants also identified their highest level of education and their current occupational level.

Semi-structured interview protocol.

Each interview entailed the use of a semi-structured protocol (Appendix D) that listed pertinent items under each research question. These questions provided a guide for each interview to assure that significant questions and areas of discussion were not omitted.

In order to describe the relationship between post marital name retention and identity negotiation, per Research Question 1, What is the relationship between post marital name retention and identity negotiation? I began each interview by asking the

participant to provide me with background information concerning her engagement and the role of her naming decision. In this part of the interview I included prompts that asked women to disclose or elaborate recollections of conversations about the naming decision that they may have had with their (future) husband at this point in the relationship, and how that conversation came about. Additional items concerned asked whether there was conflict about the decision, and how that decision was explained and presented to others.

The second research question was: How do women understand the meaning(s) of post marital name retention? This research question was addressed in the second part of the interview in which I asked participants to expand on the decision making process by talking about the factors that contributed to their decision to retain their names. This section of the interview protocol also had women consider the meaning of their name in the present moment by asking them to reflect on advantages and disadvantages of their decisions, what they liked and disliked about having retained their names, and what they perceived others to infer about them based on their naming choice.

Research Question 3 was as follows: How is the ongoing use of the name employed to communicate identity, if at all? In the third and final part of the interview I asked each woman to reflect on the interaction she has had experienced relative to post-marital name retention, specifically how others responded to her decision, and when necessary probed by listing general categories of relationship (e.g., parents, in laws, and so forth) and time (e.g., reactions at time of engagement or wedding as compared to current interaction). I asked the women whether they use their retained name strategically, either deliberately using or not using the name, or if they had experienced others who have engaged in deliberate use or nonuse. I also asked them how they reacted when called by their husbands' last names, as well as what they thought might be different if they had changed their names.

The participants were willing to share their stories, and the interviews quickly assumed a feeling of natural discussion. As the data collection progressed, I found myself relying less on the interview protocol but still using it as a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix D), as I was both better able to guide the conversation, and more confident in my ability to assess the interview as it went along. I concluded each interview by summarizing the points discussed, and asking the participant whether there was anything that we had not talked about that she would like me to know. In most cases, the participants answered that the interview had covered all pertinent areas related to the topic.

Procedures

The Office of Regulatory Compliance at The Pennsylvania State University approved the study and the use of uncompensated volunteers as participants (Appendix B). Following the policies of the Institutional Review Board, each participant received two copies of the Informed Consent Form at the start of the interview, signed one copy and retained the other for her records. I signed each Informed Consent Form and filed it separately from other documents and notes pertaining to each interview. Subsequent to this process I informed each participant that I would begin recording of the interview.

After completing of the Informed Consent Form, each participant received a short demographic questionnaire, as described above. Participants were reminded of their right to refuse to complete the demographic questionnaire or to answer individual questions. Once completed, the Demographic Questionnaire was assigned a number for the purposes of identification and filed separately from the Informed Consent Form and retained in a file apart from the Informed Consent Form and field notes made during the interview.

I conducted all interviews, which took place in a variety of venues. In all cases, I asked that the participant identify a time and location most convenient for her and

adjusted my schedule accordingly. In order to minimize any power differential associated

with the role of the interviewer, no interviews were conducted in my office or home.

Interviews were held in the participants' office, at a site (including restaurants and parks)

they suggested or in their homes.

The interviews ranged from 37 to 113 minutes, with an average length of 48

minutes. I taped each interview. To ensure the quality of the recorded data, I used a

primary tape recorder with a full-sized cassette tape and a mini cassette recorder with a

micro cassette tape. Both tapes had the same number as the corresponding demographic

questionnaire and my field notes. Within 48 hours of each interview, I listened to the tape

a minimum of two times.

Transcription of the tapes occurred in batches. I allowed for a period of no less

than one month to lapse before transcribing an interview in order to ensure that what I

thought I heard during the conversation with each participant did not influence my

transcription of what she actually said. All data relevant to the research project were

transcribed in full. Transcripts ranged from 2.75 to 6.5 pages, yielding a total of 111

single-spaced pages of printed transcripts, or an average of 4.8 pages per interview. In

some instances, I chose to omit transcription of side conversations concerning points of

commonality that I had with a participant (e.g., our children's attending the same child-

care center) after I concluded. Through repeated reviews of the recording, I surmised that

the personal information had no bearing on the research project. Transcription of the data

was completed in December, 2004. All transcripts were saved to a personal computer, of

which I am the only user, and backed up on a removable storage disk that was secured

with the tapes.

Treatment of the Data

The use of grounded theory perspective within a qualitative investigation

comports with the theoretical framework built of symbolic interactionism (SI) and critical

feminist research. SI and critical feminism are unified by concerns addressed through qualitative research, namely attention to meaning, preserving participants' voices, and exploring embedded relationships. These components can be further articulated by an examination of each frame with respect to qualitative research methods. Further, the integration of these concerns in the overarching context of the study of communication demonstrates the usefulness of qualitative research to the topic and to the field.

Forbes (2002) states that "a feminist framework proposes that method is grounded in theory and theory grounded in method, and the two are intertwined and inextricably linked" (p. 276-277). Additionally, inductive analysis of emergent themes is consistent with feminist goals in that it offers a way to place "priority on identifying respondents' versions of reality – the meanings they construct for their experiences" (Wood, 2001, p. 246). Accordingly, critical feminist research is primarily that which is driven by women's accounts and experiences, rather than theoretical assumptions, and is characterized by foregrounding the voices and experiences of women engaged in the research project. Wood (2001) maintains that "by not imposing on how interviewees narrate their experiences, researchers increase the likelihood of appreciating lived experience from respondents' perspectives" (p. 246).

The central feature of qualitative methods is the approach to data analysis. Maxwell (1996) likens the design and analysis of qualitative data to a "philosophy of life; no one is without one, but some people are more aware of theirs, and thus able to make more informed and consistent decisions" (p. 3). Awareness of the purpose and process of said analysis, and a better understanding of connections and relationships revealed in the conclusions of the study (Dallimore, 2000; Maxwell, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Yoder (2001) describes three major components to qualitative data analysis performed through constant comparison, including data reduction, data display, and conclusions. Data reduction is the process of transforming and abstracting raw, textual

data into codes that convey the essential meaning articulated by participants. Data display is achieved through the organization of information, whether narrative text or graphical display, that exemplifies the codes abstracted from the raw data. Drawing conclusions involves the notation of patterns and the grounding of the data within a theoretical framework to offer an interpretation of meaning. These major components are generally achieved through five non-linear states (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Yoder, 2001), including organization of the data, generation of categories, examination and verification, consideration of alternative explanations, and formulation of findings.

Data may be organized through classification of tape, transcript, and concurrent observation (LeCompt & Schensul, 1999). The organization of data is largely a matter of housekeeping and inventory, but assures that reading and analysis of data may proceed with rigor and without omissions or gaps. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the development of conceptual categories is an intuitive process reflecting obvious factors (e.g., who, what, where, and when), as well as convergence and divergence. Constant comparison is engaged in order to avoid the trap of locking into a pattern too early in analysis simply because it makes good sense and fits within a theoretical frame (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Finally, the formulation of findings may offer basis for interpretation, judgment, and recommendations (Yoder, 2001).

Within the interpretivist paradigm, there is a range of approaches to qualitative research that demonstrates a continuum of activism and ontology (Tesch, 1990). Following Yoder's (2001) Graphic Overview of Qualitative Research Types, the concern for characteristics of language as communication content and the "identification (and categorization) of elements, and exploration of their connections" (p. 8) to meanings held by participants in this investigation is best accommodated through the use of grounded theory. The grounded theory approach to the study of human communication also assists

in the comprehension of the meaning of action and the identification of common and unique themes.

Grounded theory addresses process questions of how experience and meaning change over time and in stages (Yoder, 2001). Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend a descriptive analysis that separates distinct themes into codes and categories that are factored into structures. These structures are then linked in order to determine relationships and patterns among themes in the data. The interpretation of emergent themes and relationships is grounded in the data themselves and guided by theoretical constraints.

The goals and focus of this study are congruent with the criteria for qualitative inquiry generally, and for thematic anlaysis through grounded theory specifically. Maxwell (1996) identifies the strengths of qualitative research and appropriate research purposes as including understanding meaning, understanding content, identifying new phenomena, understanding processes, and developing causal relationships.

Data reduction and data display

To achieve data reduction and organization, each interview was transcribed in its entirety. Multiple readings of the transcript were performed in order to identify statements that evinced understandings of the decision-making act, the meaning of the name, and of ongoing identity negotiation surrounding the name. Using the constant comparison technique (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), discrete units of data were identified, and the transcript was then placed aside to allow sufficient time to elapse to perform a fresh reading. Using a clean copy of the transcript each time, the same process was undertaken, and I again identified discrete units of data. I then compared my categorization of the data between the transcripts in order to assure the accuracy of the categories. When there were conflicts in the readings, I stopped the process of categorization (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and returned to the audio-tape to review the statements as they were articulated in the

woman's own voice, and verified the best fit for the established categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process was continued for each interview until I was satisfied that systematic technique employed to unitize the data had produced the "smallest piece about something that can stand by itself" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345).

Following the categorization of data, I followed recommendations concerning self-reflexivity to minimize researcher bias as I identified codes reflecting the participants' meanings. Maxwell (1996) cautions that the personal motives of a researcher may have significant implications for the validity of design and conclusions. Accordingly, it is necessary to "be aware of these concerns and how they may be shaping your research, and to think about how to best deal with their consequences" (p. 16). This concern is shared by feminist researchers, and expressed by Fine (1992) and Gluck and Patai (1991), who note that researchers must engage in reflexivity in order to understand how we position ourselves with respect to the narratives studied and the issues of power, ethics, and politics within the researcher-participant relationship.

Burman (1997) defines reflexivity as "the practice of action reflection on one's own experience as a researcher in accounting for the interpretive resources brought to bear in arriving at interpretations, and including the experience of the process of the research" (p. 796). As part of this process, I made separate notations of my responses and reactions to the data, including points at which my personal beliefs were aligned or in opposition to the statements made by the participants. This process was integrated into an account of my personal experience with post-marital name retention, and I used that writing as part of the constant comparative process to ensure that my judgment and my subjectivity were not being projected upon my reading of the emergent codes and categories.

The form of reflexivity adopted in this study was designed to minimize the subjective experience of the researcher that serves only to inject autobiographical

experience as a reference point for the data (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Accordingly, the reflexive accounts in this research process served to "strengthen rather than weaken claims to its value" (Burman, 1997, p. 796) and contribute to the validity of the conclusions and the advancement of understanding meanings of identity communicated through post-marital name retention.

Identifying my subjectivity through self-reflexive writing and constant comparison allowed for a more complete focus on the emergent themes within the data. Each discrete unit of data was separated from the original transcript, identified by a code attached to the transcript and randomly pasted into a new word processing document. Using constant comparison, I advanced each discrete unit of data to the top of the document, which was then read to determine whether the second and subsequent units of data could be grouped with the "yet to be named category" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 347). I repeated this process until each unit of data was exhausted and placed into groupings that achieved Lincoln and Guba's (1985) "look-alike and feel-alike" (p. 347) threshold.

I subsequently placed the sub-categories of data created through the process delineated above onto index cards, and created a defining rule characterizing the essence of each unit of data through constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Following the stage of "integration of categories and their properties" established by Glaser and Strauss (1967), I abstracted concepts from the data to generate labels that allowed for recognition of patterns (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) that were marked by the use of the same, or highly similar terms. A review of the coding schema developed revealed that some dissimilar terms had consistent meanings. For example, many women discussed the role of their family's ethnicity in their decision to retain their names, data that initially labeled as "ancestry." Women also discussed their determination to have their family of origin's name reflected in their accomplishments, and to retain a linkage

to their parents and siblings, data that was initially coded as "family." Through the process of data reduction I determined that these labels held a consistent meaning and combined them in terms of "Lineage." Other cards did not initially fully display the essential meaning of the category. For instance, the code "Expected" reflected participants' sentiment that both they and their partners "expected" that they would retain their names. Initially, this code encompassed statements that were more reflective of identity issues. Multiple readings lead to the determination that this data was more appropriately coded "Not That Kind." These cards were reassigned to the grouping that more fully met the defining rule and allowed for "delimiting" the data into manageable grouping that required fewer modifications each time the process was repeated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 110). Each grouping was then identified by its emergent theme in order to create structures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Verifying categories of analysis may be achieved through constant comparison, saturation, the consideration of negative cases as potential alternative explanations, and member checking (Maxwell, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1984). The process of constant comparison and the determination of saturation are described above. In addition to these avenues for verification, I also considered negative cases in the data, including the account of one participant whose husband encouraged her to retain her own name. Finally, I sought informal feedback from participants with whom I had the occasion to interact after the interview. When asked about the data process, I described the preliminary findings and asked whether my understandings were consistent with their intent and meaning, in order to assess the credibility of the coding scheme and to verify the context of their ideas. Although the responses from the participants primarily expressed interest in the results and encouragement for the project, they also "gave [sic] support to or cohere[d] with the previous renderings of the data" (Chenail & Maione, 1997).

The ongoing process of reflexivity and constant comparison, combined with member checking, allowed for the determination that the emergent themes reflected the native voices of the participants in the study. The next state in data analysis involved an integrative strategy by which I identified the codes as major themes illustrated by textual data (Glaser & Struass, 1967). These major themes revealed an understanding of the meanings of post-marital name retention and a process of the communication of identity through ongoing engagement with the symbol and its expression in a symbolic act.

Review

Symbolic interactionism as a theoretical frame necessitated the use of research methods that promote the meanings of individual social actors (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interaction as an organizing principle yields "verifiable knowledge of human group life and human conduct" (Blumer, 1969, p. 21) through a "world of reality (p. 22) that exists in and from perspectives and experiences. Critical feminist research is characterized by attention to the perspectives of women and men, positions the researcher as an advocate, considers the specific cultural and historical contexts that design and conclusion are bound to, and acknowledges the value-laden nature of social science (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Further, feminist research is characterized by outcomes, a focus that seeks to prioritize women's experiences and realities. This combination created the orientation adopted in this research, and specifically for the process of data collection and analysis.

Semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to retain women's native voices while simultaneously capturing variability in meaning and response. Multiple readings and the use of grounded theory allowed for the identification of categories present in women's accounts, as well as provided a framework that illustrates the relationship between and among meanings women hold for their names. Finally, an intense self-reflexive process employed throughout the process of data collection and

analysis served to minimizing aspects of my perspectives that might cloud the picture painted by the participants in this study.

This method, design, and analysis employed in this research are consistent with the stated goals, reflective of the conceptual framework, and instrumental in positioning women's voices as central to the understanding of the communication of identity in post-marital name retention. The following chapters present the results of this study and a discussion of the findings.

Chapter Four: Findings

Adopting a voice-centered approach to the analysis of the data led to the

identification of emergent themes identified by prominence in occurrence or emphasis

(Owens, 1984). The participants spoke freely, and at length, about their names, which

provided insight into the decision making process, the meanings, and the ongoing

communication surrounding post-marital name retention. The results of the analysis

(summarized in Appendix E) are detailed below, with priority given to the native voice of

participants.

Negotiations and Decisions

Research Question One asked: What is the relationship between post marital

name retention and identity negotiation? The pertinent portion of the interview was

conducted first, as I asked participants to begin by telling me the story of their name.

They spoke about their decisions to retain their names, and how the decisions were

negotiated within the pre-marital relationship. The analysis revealed two dominant codes,

"Expected" and "Not that Kind" that were given depth by co-occurring themes. There

were three accounts comprising a "Divergent" theme, as well as "Minor Themes"

identified in the data.

Expected.

The theme most prominently expressed by participants in this study as they

reflected on the stories of their name was that it was "Expected," both for the self and for

their partners. The participants noted that the decision to retain their names was not an act

they viewed as a choice, per se, but rather as something they understood about who they

were. In this portion of the interview, the participants articulated a strong attachment to

their names. Amelia[2] stated simply, "I said I'd never change my name. Samantha echoed

this sentiment: "I don't think there was every any doubt in my mind that I was not going

to change my name. I remember thinking in conversations hypothetically about marriage that I'd never give up my name, ever." Alana made the following statements, characteristic of this theme, in rapid succession:

I think it never occurred to me to change my name.

It never occurred to me to change my name ever.

It wasn't at the point where I had to think about it, it never occurred to me.

The "Expected" theme was also evident when the women reported identity negotiation with their partners. In this part of the interview, I asked the participants to recount conversations they had with their partners about post-marital name retention and to recall the reaction they received. Many women reported that the conversation was minimal, if it occurred at all. Most expressed the same sentiment as Greta who reported "there was never an expectation that I would change my name." According to Alana, "When I first knew my husband and we had begun dating we didn't even have to talk about it."

In Andrea's words, "I think it never occurred to either one of us that I wasn't going to keep my name. I think he would have been in shock if I would have changed my name. I mean it was probably a matter of discussions we've had about feminism and politics and identity. I think he would have been, I mean I've never asked him, but I think he would have been shocked if I had, I think he would have been embarrassed to be honest."

Jennifer said, "I don't even think I brought it up in the this will be my last name sort of way. He just always knew. Maybe it's easier because I wear my politics on my sleeve a lot. He just never would have thought ever that I would have taken his name"

Women who reported having conversations concerning the question of post-marital naming still echoed the theme of "Expected" by discussing communication that

2

did not explore the identity implications of names within the marriage, but instead those outside. Typical of this was Alana, who reported: "When we did talk about it, it was only how to deal with other people. Because as he said, I'm marrying Alana [Her Name], I'm not marrying Alana [His Name]"

Not That Kind.

A second dominant, and related, theme that emerged from discussion of identity negotiation with the self and partner was "Not that Kind". This theme was initially coded with "Expected" but after multiple readings I identified a distinct meaning that warranted its own coding scheme. Highly related to the first theme of "Expected," "Not that Kind" speaks more directly to identity issues than the process of negotiation, either internally, or through communication with the partner. Amelia gave voice to this theme when she stated:

If he had a big problem with it that would have meant that he had really missed something about the kind of person I was and I would have made an error in judgment about this person understanding who I was and respecting me. I can understand him being like, having mixed feelings about it for a week but then okay get over it. But not being able to understand what it mean in the context of who I am, that would have indicated well, I'm not the person you think I am and maybe you're not the person I think you are.

As with the first major theme, "Not that Kind" contained subsets for the self and the partner. For several women, the "Not that Kind" theme was enriched by accounts of identity negotiations in their developing sense of self. Krista said: "I was never though a girl who for instance, sat around and practiced signing my name differently. I mean I know that there are, that girls do that, with boys, they fantasize – I was never that girl, so you know, um, it's been hard for me to imagine getting excited about changing your name. For me it's the complete opposite I've been very resistant to the idea all along."

Jade expressed a similar view: "I didn't know it was an option at that point, but I just thought I don't want to do that. So in junior high or high school when people would write their boyfriend's last name and I never did that because I thought I don't want to, you know, I don't wanna do that."

The "Not that Kind" theme was also evident in some participants' discussion of their partners, and their partner's response to the decision of post-marital name retention. Participants in this study repeatedly voiced the sentiment that they wouldn't be with "that type" of man. Samantha said,

> I guess I would say, I feel, any man or partner that would insist that you take on his name has got some issues in terms of what the tradition of marriage might be or what the has to be and to insist on you or to make that sort of request on you I think is unreasonable and problematic.

Other participants voiced this sentiment. According to Kim, "I would not have gotten along with someone like that. He just cares about what matters". Hilary said, "I can't see myself marrying someone like that because that would set up all kinds of issues for other things". Finally, Jennifer reported that "I would have never been with anyone who felt it was a problem".

Divergence.

There were two accounts of naming that diverged from the themes above. The stories are worth noting because they represent a broader spectrum of reactions to naming decisions. Two participants in the study reported resistance from their husbands. The first, Elise, reported:

> When I decided to tell my husband I think he knew for a while that it was coming but you could tell that he was taken aback. It was different to him … He knew that it was coming [but] it probably took about two months for him to accept it."

Once her husband accepted her decision, she indicated that there had only been one occasion when he voiced opposition to the name, "He just said for one day can you please be K—[His Name], and I said okay, fine, if that's all you really want is for us to be introduced on the wedding day as [His Name], feel free." However, he had accepted it for the remainder of their marriage, "my husband still constantly refers to me as [Her Name]. Hey [Her Name] can you throw me that? Sure. So he even, although he may have fought it briefly, he buys into the fact that I am [Her Name]."

In the second instance of resistance, Rebecca reported that her husband was not comfortable with her decision, and had remained unhappy with her choice. She stated: "I think he's half joking not joking every time he says that. He doesn't care on a fundamental level but he thinks it would be nice, I think."

In the second case that diverged from the themes of "Expected" and "Not that Type", Ann identified her husband as the source of her decision, saying simply "My decision was actually the recommendation of my husband," and "it's my husband's doing more than anything." In this instance, the participant reported that her husband referenced his culture of origin, and the difficulty of his name which she claimed is "hard to say, hard to spell, the whole deal." Although Ann said that initially she "felt funny" not taking his name, she has since concluded, "I always believed in marriage as I have my life and my husband's life and then ours together. When you keep your name you are truly keeping your life."

Minor themes.

Less common than the primary themes of "Expected" and "Not that Kind" in participants' responses were a number of co-occurring subordinate themes that reflected the participants' understanding of their names and naming choice as manifest in identity negotiation through communication with the partner. Although these themes occurred with less intensity and frequency than "Expected" and "Not that Type," they nonetheless

remained central to some women's narratives of post-marital name retention decisions. These themes centered on the relationship and the children. Thematic analysis led to identification of three:"Children," "Options," and "Reconsider/Regrets."

Although some women reported that their conversations concerning their married names were minimal, the conversations often focused less on the name each spouse would adopt and more on the question of what name potential children would have. Accordingly, a minor theme was identified as "Children." Shelley, stated "[W]e had far more conversations about kids' last names than about mine." Jill said "[F]or us the issue was what the kids names would be," and Andrea also identified children's names as a point of negotiation, in observing that it "was sort of an issue, not anything we fought over or lost sleep over."

Several women also reported that, while expected that they would not take their husband's name, they were open to other solutions. In exploring these "Options," participants Shelley stated: "I invited my husband to take mine but he declined and we did an electronic game as a combination of our last names, and I said why don't we both just adopt that as our names, but he's 6 years older than me and he wasn't ready for that." Lauren recalled "I would find articles in magazines about couples that had married and merged their names to create a new name, or couples that had hyphenated, which to me seems much more egalitarian and honoring of the untion, to me more so, so I would pass those along to him, hey I just saw this why don't you read it? kind of stuff. … I totally would have been open to changing my name totally and creating a new one, or both of us hyphenating or coming up with something together but I didn't want it to be one sided or another."

Finally, in response to whether the question of names was an ongoing one with their husbands, the responses revealed the theme "Reconsider/Regrets". This label reflects a continuing process of communication and identity negotiation with the self, and

within the relationship. The theme reflected a more full picture voiced. Although the participants in the study were in unanimous agreement that they would make the same decision again, a recurring sentiment was that there were factors that made some "Reconsider/Regret" their decision. This secondary theme is closely tied to the secondary theme of "Children," as the prominent issue expressed was stated succinctly by Andrea, who said "I hate not having the same name as my kids". Moreover, "It has been an interesting thing for me, not having the same name as my husband, we were equal in that way, but if eel like there's the family where everyone has the same last name. Well we are that family that doesn't have the same last name. It never occurred to me how much I would have like that."

Despite this sentiment, respondents continued to assert that they would not choose to take on their husband's names, saying in such observations as Hilary's, "I'm happy I've done it". Rather, they expressed regret that post-marital name retention is "not a great answer" (Michelle) and, as one put it, "I don't think you could come up with a really good solution for this" (Kate).

The themes that emerged in regard to Research Question One were identified through multiple readings of women's accounts of their individual decisions and communication with their partners regarding the decision-making surrounding post-marital name retention. Consistent with previous findings (Fowler, 1997; Kupper, 1990; Sutter, 2001), the participants in this study had a strong, positive affinity for their own names and choose partners who shared the values that underpinned their decisions (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Kupper, 1990). Despite the relative certainty with which they approached the question of post-marital name retention, additional themes surfaced, including "Options," "Children," and "Reconsideration/Regret" that reflected the process of internal and dyadic negotiation (Ting Toomey, 1999). Both major and minor themes were

reflections of women's understandings of the meaning of their post-marital name retention.

Understanding Meaning

Research Question Two was: How do women understand the meaning(s) of post-marital name retention? The answer was pursued via a series of questions, including "What makes your name important to you?" and "What do you think your decision says about you?" that were placed midway through each interview. The themes that occurred frequently or exhibited a great deal of intensity, included "Identity," "Institution," and "Lineage". Others that occurred with moderate or lesser amounts of frequency included "Common," "Aesthetics" and "Experience."

Identity.

The most frequently evident theme coded in response to questions concerning the meaning of post-marital name retention dealt with "Identity". At the broadest level, women simply spoke of their name as being one and the same as their identity. Krista observed, "I would need to keep my name at some level because otherwise you, you know, lose your identity." In Sharon's view, "That step is part of losing your previous identity, letting some of that go. I guess for me I just, I'm my own person." Finally, Jennifer noted that, "What it's about for me primarily is my individuality, keeping my identity as a person."

Women clearly rejected their husband's names as components of their identities. For instance, according to Grace, "Even though I have a relationship with my husband it's not who I am. It's part of who I am." Kate said, "In terms of identity, [His Name] is just not who I am." When asked for examples and more information on what was meant by "identity," Samantha stated that there were "a bunch of different things that just culminate in that name," representing the multiple branches of the theme of identity

identified in the data. Within the identity theme, the following sub-themes were apparent: Professional and Feminism.

Professional identity was the principal code under the larger theme of identity. Many women associated their names with their accomplishments and reputations, including Grace, who said "I think for me a lot of it was professional, you know having a sense of this is who you are as a professional. That you've gone and established yourself with degrees with your maiden name and not that that changes, you can go back and undo that but it was a big thing for me."

Finally, the data revealed that for participants, feminism was a significant facet of the broad theme of identity. However, the participants expressed two views of the role of a feminist identity. For some, like Grace, feminism was a motivating factor, as evident when she said "I really did enjoy the women's studies classes I had as an undergrad and I was a member of NOW and sent money to Planned Parenthood and I considered myself to be very interested in women's issues and this idea of why do we do that? Why do we still in this day and age, why do we still need to take our husband's names?" But for others, like Greta and Kate, the adoption of feminism followed the decision to retain her name:

> Part of it now more is politics. At the time I can't say that was a huge reason or if it was I didn't articulate it in the way I would today. At the time I wouldn't have said I have these feminist reasons, but now I would definitely characterize those reasons as feminist. (Greta)

> It was not like an obviously feminist decision, but now that I reflect on it, it is totally feminist. (Kate)

Institution.

Two themes that were less frequently apparent in the data, but that were nonetheless expressed with a great deal of intensity were named "Mrs." and

"Appendage". Surprisingly, a number of participants used the same terminology and phrasing in making these themes salient in the participant's understandings of post-marital name retention "Mrs." was expressed as rejection of the label and the associated meanings it carries, as expressed by Krista, who said, "[t]he Mrs. thing, for me, forget whether you use which name, I HATE it. It's the same name Mr. versus Mrs. Ms. Miss. All of it is just gross, I mean I had to get a Ph.D. to get out of it. I don't wanna play that game. I don't like it at all, it just sucks." Likewise, Jill stated that when a woman changed her name after marriage, it meant that "[Y]our own identity is Mrs. and I had very strong feelings about that, I was not going to be Mrs. anybody." Michelle also asserted "it was really important to me not to be Mrs," a sentiment also expressed by Jennifer, who claimed "I am not going to be Mrs. [His Name]."

Similarly, the theme captured by the code "appendage" was directly identified within the data. It occurred repeatedly, as in Amelia's comment, "I won't give it up and become an appendage." Additionally, Elise stated "[I]t still feels to me - I never wanted to be a wife, a helpmate to my husband, you know?"

In combination, these sub-themes are subsumed under the larger theme of "Institution." Occurring with moderate frequency in the data, "Institution" encompasses the question of labels and roles, as well as the rejection of what the traditional cultural view of marriage has offered women. Participants in this study expressed the view that post-marital name retention was a means by which to reject traditional views of marriage. According to Samantha, "I really don't understand giving up your name and I'm surprised because so many feminist friends of mine are doing it and it's weird to me. When it really comes down to push and shove why do you think you do this because there's a reason, instead of resisting it, and I think that's part of the reason why I think resisting marriage, it doesn't have to be the way it has been and it has so much value to it, the name is hard to separate from how we traditionally think of marriage." Hilary said,

"[T]he patriarchal stuff like changing the name and it just, the history of it, property, chattel, losing who you were in your name." Sharon's view was similar: "]I]t [changing your name] totally represents the worst thing about marriage, the woman subverting to her husband, being conventional." This was the point Shelley made in saying "[I]t's about a transfer of property and I'm not property. There you go."

In addition to rejecting the traditional construction of marriage, many of the participants saw their decisions as creating a new meaning concerning marriage. By retaining their names, women were reportedly identifying what Greta described as "a different way of being in an institution that has patriarchal roots, that there is a new way to construct that institutional from a feminist perspective and part of that is retaining your identity." This element of the theme "Institution" was also evident in Jennifer's comment that "it was the only way I could be subversive while looking at marriage."

Lineage.

The theme "Lineage" reflects ties to past and existing groups of familial others, as well as offspring and the potential of future generations. Amelia typified this theme when she said "none of us are breeders, really, and the [Her Name]s are vanishing," as does Hilary who stated, "I'm the only female descent who has this name."

Women expressed an understanding of the meaning of their names as an associated with their family and culture of origin, saying that their name was a "tie to family" (Jill). This theme was expressed in a straightforward manner, as shown in the following examples: "I didn't want to give up my name because it was a link for me to my father" (Alana); "It honors my history and my identity in the sense of my heritage, my cultural heritage" (Hilary); and "I feel like my parents planned [Rebecca] like I planned for my baby" (Rebecca); "I have such a pronounced German name that is a part of me" (Ann).

Minor themes.

Occurring with the least among of frequency were the themes "Common," "Aesthetics" and "Experience." These themes were apparent in remarks participants made in passing, about which they did not elaborate a great deal upon when asked.

A few participants remarked that post-marital name retention was "common" among their peer groups, or people with whom they were in regular contact with, such as Jade, who stated, "[E]very woman I know did that and it was very common."

A second theme occurring with lesser frequency was "Aesthetics." A number of women reported that their decision was influenced by their own affinity for the word that is their name, including Greta who said, "I think that people feel an affinity to their names in some way whether it's positive or negative. For me, it's positive." For participants, this positive affinity about their name – the way it looks or sounds was evident in Amelia's observation that "[T]here's strength to it and I've been told that it's a unique name, not that his isn't, and I like the way it looks when I write it and yeah, it's a good strong name."

Last among the themes occurring with lesser frequency was "Experience." Two participants reported having changed their names in a previous marriage. For both, it was an overwhelmingly negative experience, as reflected most directly by Krista:

I did change my name the first time I got married and it – I – it was miserable.
I was so irritated by the idea of taking his name, I found the whole thing
oppressive. I hated it. [T]he new signature - hated it, hated it, absolutely hated it.
I never understood why you should be the only one to have to go through that. I
cried the day I had to do it - to get the new thing to change your name. I cried. I
was absolutely traumatized by it.

The data revealed that the names are potent symbols for women (Carbaugh, 1996), and that the meanings of the names women retain after marriage are multiple and

complex. Personal identity (Hecht, 1993) drives most women's decisions, as they consider issues including professionalism, family/ethnicity, and feminism. Women are also guided by the meanings of the institution of marriage, and their concern for lineage. Among this group of participants, post-marital name retention has been influenced by their contact with others who have made similar choices, their degree of affinity their name of origin, and, in two cases, past experience with name change. The decision to retain a name beyond marriage is one with multiple sources of motivation, as well as multiple implications for the ongoing communication of identity.

Communicating Identity

Research Question Three was as follows: How is the ongoing use of the name employed to communicate identity, if at all? I asked participants whether they engaged in deliberate use of their names, corrected others who used the husbands' names, and what sort of reaction they received to the use of the name. Again, data was coded for repetition and recurrence, as well as for the intensity of delivery (Owens, 1984). Four dominant themes emerged: "Interactants," "Messages," "Strategy," and "Time."

Interactants.

Participants identified a number of coding categories for those with whom they engaged in identity communication through, or about, the use of their names. Family members were most frequently nominated. As Samantha said, "It's funny because I talked to my grandfather recently and he sent me a check for something and I said you should be happy that I'm keeping this [family] name, and he said yes, yes, very happy, and he's real old school Italian so I think it's been interesting for him and he seems to be happy I'm not changing my name." According to Jade, she could "remember talking about it a lot to my parents and my husband's parents."

Participants also reported coworkers, neighbors, and friends among those with whom they had communication about post-marital name retention. For instance, Jane

noted, "The neighborhood we live in is primarily older retired people so when we first moved in and we'd be introducing ourselves I had to clarify that we were married so it wouldn't be the neighborhood scandal." Shelley observed, "I still worked in a far more traditional culture so there was a lot of 'so what's your name now' and 'we don't believe you have a husband.'"

The final category of individual with whom participants had communication concerning their names was those in the service and business sectors. According to Jill, "Other people I don't know questioning my motivations. One was making a reservation for an airline ticket and I was giving the names, saying my name is, spell it, my husband's name is, spell it, and the woman just said very outright, 'why didn't you change your name, why would you do that?'" Hilary noted that, "Even the bridal registry takes it for granted. The letter I got the day after the wedding to remember to update your registry." Michelle reported, "We've had several problems with the bank." Finally, Jennifer indicated that, "Sometimes I do just go off on the telemarker who after I just got seven pieces of mail and I'm like goddamn it and it was just an external public thing."

Participants reported that across the categories of interactants, the question of their name was a frequent topic of conversation. As Kate said "[I]t does come up a lot. I'm surprised how much it comes up" and Hilary asserted "It's present for me everyday. When I get the mail, the telephone. Everyday, when I talk to his parents because I know it's a huge issue for them."

Messages.

A dominant code theme related to Research Question Three was 'Messages,' which reflects women's sense of the purpose and symbolic use of their name. Some of the messages can be characterized as *intentional*, others as *relational*, and, still others, as *activist*.

Participants expressed cognizance and deliberateness of intent concerning the use of their name. Many participants reported that they made an *intentional* effort to introduce their name into the interaction, whether by announcement or introduction. Krista stated, "After we got married we did the here's how our names will be on our address, we made it clear." According to Michelle, "I know plenty of people who have put that in their invitation and I did and guess I didn't say that out front, just that because we didn't have an open wedding that the announcements saying we've gotten married, join us for festivities. These were our names, and some people totally disregarded that, but others did not, they were keen enough to acknowledge and were aware of what was being written there. These are our married names, without explicitly saying I'm keeping my name." Jennifer offered the following comments: "How do we make this known? What I did at the back of our wedding program I wrote the bride and groom's contact information after the wedding and then I wrote [My Name] and [His Name]. I put a little gold star – 'the bride and groom are keeping their names.'"

Some participants also expressed a willingness to correct those who used the husbands' name, again demonstrating intentional revelation and use of the retained name. Krista, reporting her reactions to this type of situation as follows, "How do you not correct someone who assumes that, they assume that my name is his, when we're around his family. I'm like I don't use that name, sorry, I'm not going to apologize for it." Jane said, "If someone calls me by his name by mistake then I usually will let them know my name."

Some participants viewed the intentional use of women's nontraditional marital surname as a *relational* message. Women interviewed identified the symbolic meaning to be that of equality within the relationship, as illustrated by Grace who stated succinctly, "I think it sends a message that we value equality".

Participants also reported that the message their name communicated signified a form of *activism*. The deliberate use of the nontraditional marital surname conveyed feminist action, or being a role model for younger women. Alana stated that explaining her name is "an opportunity to educate people and that's not bad. A teachable moment." According to Jade, "I think I'm a role model, a professional role model and I never thought of myself that way, but a lot of students come to my office and ask about it and to be someone that just maintained that professional sense of self lets them know it is a possibility."

Although Kate initially viewed retention as a professional decision, she had come to see her name as a symbol of an emergent feminist identity, and remarked that it serves as

> [a] statement on the way that people perform these norms without any reflection so that we can address that, and say that we're just marching along and performing these behaviors without any reflection on it, and what does it really mean to change your name, or to go from your father's name to [your husband's] name and that whole sense of ownership and its disrupting that a little bit. It's calling attention to the fact that what does that practice mean? It's definitely been a great way to start a conversation with people about what was your thinking about that, why didn't you do it? Was it hard for you? What do you do in a situation where people assume that you have his last name and how do you handle that? And it's a great way to raise awareness in a society in different groups of people.

Several women saw their decisions as opening possibilities for other specific groups of women, including Hilary, who said, "I think it's important in the sense of the women who come after me, for them as well, so the assumption isn't made" and Natalie noted that, "I have had some interesting conversations with some girlfriends who are

getting married about what they are going to do about their name. I think they are just putting more thought into what they want to be called rather than just accepting society's standards. Just brining it up as a topic of conversation.

Strategy.

The interviewees overwhelming reported using their names intentionally to express their identities and the nature of their relationship while also reporting frustration and anger with the challenges and negative responses they had received. However, many noted that they had found the "name issue" to be one that they can work to their advantage, and sometimes, with humor. As Kim said, "I just find in getting through things and having somebody work on the furnace they're not somebody who needs in lesson in, whatever to get it done. If I just have to be the little wife to get it done, then fine, you know." According to Sharon, "Only recently did I learn to say, yes, I'm Mrs. [His Name] when the most important thing is actually to get something accomplished." Finally, Lauren pointed out, "I feel like I have a fluidity in my life, because there are times I will adopt Mrs. [His Name] if it is advantageous, if there's a potential situation, whatever it is, when I find that it is a good strategic move, we can be flexible in that way."

Many women, such as Shelley and Jill expressed having fun while using the name issue as a specific strategy concerning telemarketers. As Shelley indicated, "It's a great tool though when you get junk calls. You know they don't know you. It has some convenience." Jill offered the following observation: "If somebody is calling and they know you or not, it's very easy to weed those out. Phone solicitations kind of things are that way, they have not a clue that is Mrs. in the house? **NO** (extended) there isn't."

Time.

Two of the women interviewed were newlyweds, and their narratives of experience with post-marital name retention contrasted with participants who had been

married for an extended period of time. Jennifer, who had been married for 6 weeks at the
time of the interview, said:

> If we get things addressed to Mr. and Mrs. [His Name] I circle the last name and
> write return to sender no one at this address with that name. That's how pissed I
> am about it. People in his family will ask me … I heard that you're not taking
> [his] last name, and they'll say something like you know I read that means you
> are more likely to get divorced? Why is that? Why aren't you concerned about
> that? Why are you keeping your last name? At this point I say, "it's my fucking
> name." People say things to me. I hope that it stops, because I hate being angry
> about it all the time.

Other participants indicated that they had once experienced such anger, but as
time progressed they had become more sanguine about their name. In talking about the
responses from others, and her anger concerning others' reactions to her name Kim noted
that "between year four and year seven [of marriage] it mellowed out … If someone calls
me by [His Name] then I think this person's stupid but not that I have to clarify it if it's
just a one time thing, as compared to like 4 or 5 years ago". Jane had a similar view:
"When we were first married every time I answered the phone I felt like I had to correct
the person, no I married him but my name is … But now I just go with it. But he often
does feel like he has to set someone straight, be correct in his speech about it and explain
the whole thing to telemarketers."

For the participants in this study, communication regarding their decision to
retain their names after marriage remained a communicative symbol of identity. Ongoing
interaction regarding post-marital name retention indicated extended identity negotiation
(Ting Toomey, 1999), in which participants' choices were met with varied degrees of
acceptance and resistance (Jackson, 2002b).

Review

The results of the analysis reveal that the post-marital retained name was a complex and multifaceted symbol present in interaction and employed in communication to deliver specific messages. They also point to the need to employ a multifaceted, layered theoretical understanding (Jung & Hecht, 2004) to the study of symbolic communication of identity through naming practices. The results of the analysis with respect to individual and relational identity negotiation, women's understandings of the meanings of their names, and the communication of identity are discussed in the following chapter, wherein limitations of the study and directions for future research are also noted.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Directions for Future Inquiry

The communication of identity via the significant symbol of a name is a complex process best represented as a form of symbolic interaction and understood through a layered lens of theory. The decision women make to retain their name after marriage defies social convention and accordingly requires introspection and explanation. This is making post-marital name retention an ideal avenue for exploration of the communication of identity. This study prioritized women's native experiences and voices in describing the decisions they made, explored the role of identity, and characterized the communication about them involving significant others. This chapter provides an overview of the concerns leading to the present study, a summary and discussion of the findings, and observations concerning the limitations and directions for future research.

Review of the Purpose and Objectives

The primary goal of this study was to describe how women's decisions to retain their names after marriage communicate identity. The findings revealed that the retained name serves as a significant symbol that functions to convey identity. The connection of identity to the pre-marital name is first examined by exploring the relationship of the symbol to the self through consideration of the decision making process. This process ostensibly allows for the connection of the name to the communication of identity as described by women's accounts of their interactions concerning their decision with significant others, most notably, their future husbands, families, and close friends. Finally, the communication of identity, as represented by the retained name, extended through women's accounts of ongoing interactions and explanations of their name.

This study also has as an aim exploring the post-marital retention of women's names as a gendered act within the social practice of language. Traditional and nontraditional forms of marital naming are socially situated within "relationships, situations, and cultures" (Fine, 1993, p. 78) wherein women's sense of self is located.

Accordingly, this project prioritized women's experience of identity in reference to nontraditional naming practices in identifying the practical and theoretical considerations in the phenomenon of interest.

Review of the Previous Literature

Women's decisions to retain their last name upon marriage has been noted as a curious phenomenon in American culture since Lucy Stone publicly declared her intent to do so (Romaine, 1999). Despite the attention that women such as Stone, Hilary Rodham Clinton, and others have garnered, communicative aspects of the topic have remained relatively unexplored.

Naming is a powerful act (Romaine, 1999) that is intrinsically connected to identity (Suarez, 1997). Names serve as a representation of the self (Alia, 1995; French, 1998). As such, the Western practice of patronymy, or the assumption of the man's name as the common name at the time of marriage (Post, 1997; Sutter, 2001) is a culturally complex, symbolic act. The rejection of this practice via the use of nontraditional naming practice, and particularly through name retention, is a symbol that is rich in communicative properties of identity. Adopting a symbolic interactionist orientation towards the question of identities communicated through women's post-marital retention of names helped to pursued three critical goals central to the current study and to the treatment of naming as a multifaceted communicative act.

The first goal of this study was to offer a response to the challenges of critical feminist theory in communication research to explore practical applications of theoretical concerns that may lead to change (Crawford, 1995; Wood, 1995). Although the retention of a woman's name after marriage may or may not be a feminist act (Kantowitz, 1969; Kupper, 1990; Sutter, 2001), it is highlighted through its juxtaposition to the dominant naming practice within American culture (Carbaugh, 1996).

The second goal was to explore nontraditional marital names as communicative acts that may be cast as representative of identity (Allyn & Allyn, 1995; Carbaugh, 1996) that are produced and enacted through communicative practices (Hecht, 1993; Jackson, 2002a; Jung & Hecht, 2004). The emphasis on the symbol of the name reveals multiple constructs of identities that are expressed, negotiated, and altered through interaction with others.

The final goal of this study was to explore women's post-marital name retention as a theoretically situated communicative practice. While the placement of post-marital name retention within the framework of symbolic interactionism allowed for the examination of the artifact as a communicative symbol, it does not provide an explanation for the function of the symbol. Instead, symbolic interactionism serves as a unifying perspective in this study, providing a framework for the discovery of layered theories implicated in women's narratives of their names.

Together, these considerations served to guide the present study, wherein the following research questions were posed:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between post marital name retention and identity negotiation?

Research Question 2: How do women understand the meaning(s) of post marital name retention?

Research Question 3: How is the ongoing use of the name employed to communicate identity, if at all?

Review of the Methods

The participants in the study were 23 women ranging in age from 28 to 58. All had retained their names after marriage. They had been married on average of 6.8 years. The participants in this study were identified through purposeful sampling allowing for a selection within a relatively homogenous population (Brightman, 1994; Guba & Lincoln,

1989). Recruitment of participants led to an initial pool of 19. Through snowball

sampling, four additional participants were added. Each participant participated in a face-

to-face interview that was audiotaped and subsequently transcribed.

A pilot study involving three participants allowed for field testing of the

instrumentation used in the study. The participants provided feedback that contributed to

refinement of the interview questions and assessment of the protocol as generally

acceptable in the interview process.

Data collection for the current study took place from May 2004 through August

2004. Each interview was uniform in respect to process. It began with a review of

informed consent and collection of the signed Informed Consent Form, in compliance

with the approval granted by the Pennsylvania State University Institutional Review

Board Office of Regulatory Compliance. In addition, each participant responded to a

demographic questionnaire prior to the start of the interview. Each interview followed a

semi-structured protocol designed to provide answers to items relating to each of the

research questions.

The interviews privileged participants' voices and meanings, while still allowing

for the exploration of relationships and themes (Wood, 1999). To this end, data analysis,

data reduction, and data display occurred via a process of thematic analysis and

continuous constant comparison. The process of constant comparison led to the

identification of distinct themes that were identified by codes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

This process ensures that the identification of emergent categories is grounded in the data

while also allowing for theoretical considerations to guide the process of interpretation.

Throughout the process of data analysis, measures to limit bias (Maxwell, 1996), promote

reflexivity (Rossman & Rallis, 1998), and verifying coding (Miles & Huberman, 1984)

were in evidence.

Review and Summary of the Results

The first research question asked: What is the relationship between post marital name retention and identity negotiation? The portion of the interview data relating to this question provided an opening for the discussion of the communication of identity via the significant symbol of nontraditional marital naming as women recounted their decisions and conversations with their (future) husbands concerning their names.

Women who had retained their name after marriage had anticipated this decision. This anticipation was shared by their partners. The most commonly expressed categories of responses to this question included "Expected" and "Not that Kind." In the first instance, participants reported that they had never anticipated changing their names, as well as that their partners had no expectation that they would do so. An explanation for this expectation surfaced in responses reflecting the second dominant theme, "Not that Kind," which emerged from the participants' explanations that neither they nor their partners held their selves or marriage in a traditional view.

Despite the prominence of these themes, the results of the analysis relating to the first research question further revealed "Divergence" and minor themes, including "Children," "Options," and "Reconsider/Regrets." In consideration with the dominant themes, data for these themes indicate that the participants' names were significant indicators of identity, but that the process of identity negotiation within the marital frame was highly nuanced. A potential explanation for this outcome appears in Hecht's (1993) description of identity within a relational frame, where identity is produced as a property of the individual, of the individual in relation to the other, and of the relationship itself. Accordingly, personal considerations of identity (including feminism and professionalism) have to be balanced with an understanding of the partner, and of the communication created through joint representation.

The second research question, How do women understand the meaning(s) of post-marital name retention? drew on data relating to items focusing on women's connections to their names and their decision to retain the name after marriage. Emergent themes indicated that participants viewed the name and the act as being multi-thematic. Included were the themes of "Identity," wherein some aspects of identity (including "Professional" and "Feminist," as well as "Lineage," "Aesthetics," and "Experience") were stated to be represented by the nontraditional marital name whereas the alternative, traditional name was rejected as not reflective of the self. Additionally, the theme of "Institution" emerging from the data was reflective of the participants' rejection of traditional forms of marriage. The data revealed that the choice of post-marital name retention was symbolic of identity, as well as that the name itself served as a significant symbol participants used to define and announce who they are (Carbaugh, 1996).

The third, and final, research question asked: How is the ongoing use of the name employed to communicate identity, if at all? The analysis of relevant data revealed that women used their nontraditional name at times as a "Strategy" that depended upon the "Interactants" and "Messages" and that changed over "Time." Women described the use of their names as strategic representations of the self, especially when establishing (or reflecting) a particular identity. This strategy could change, as a function of the reactions the women received from the people with whom they came into connection through their name, including family members, friends, and business acquaintances. Many women also reported that they emphasized or deemphasized their names, in relation to the message that they wished to convey in a given interaction. Finally, women who had been married for different periods of time understood the use of their name in different senses. Overall, the results pertaining to this final research question indicate that the participants experience varying degrees of success in the communication of identity through non-traditional marital surnames, and that they adopted varied practices according to the

audience and situation. This process is reflective of identity negotiation (Ting-Toomey, 1999) and can be further explained as the performance of cultural contracts (Jackson 2002a, b).

Discussion and Implications

The results of the study are believed to our understanding of Communication, as well as identity. An interpretation of the findings, supported by prior scholarship, as well as given added perspective by the limitations of the study and its practical implications, make clear how.

Summary of findings, interpretation, and literature support.

The analysis of the data relating to the principal objectives of the study indicated that women's decisions to retain their name after marriage is likely a choice rooted in considerations of identity. The considerations the participants mentioned are of interest for Communication scholars. Most prominent among these considerations is that naming is a communicative act that serves an identity function. Although this finding has grounding in previous scholarship (Carbaugh, 1996), it is richer because it includes women's accounts of the deliberate and purposeful selection and use of the name in order to convey to others who they have defined themselves to be. Rather than simply asserting that the marital name is an identity label, this study points to theoretical implications for the study of naming and identity in communication.

These data underscore the value, if not need, for a layered theoretical approach to the study of identity in communication. This layered approach, according to Hecht (1993) is described as a process wherein "Alternative ways of knowing … are continually juxtaposed and played off each other and/or blended together" (p. 76). Carbaugh (1996), includes recognition of the social identity, integrated self and social practices, symbolic interactionism, social constructionism, and cultural theories in the development of a

cultural dimension approach to the study of the "communication of social identities" (p. 16).

Using layered theories of identity to understand and describe how women's decisions to retain their own names after marriage communicates identity requires first examining the personal decision that women have made. Participants in this study indicated that the decisions to retain their names was a given and an outgrowth of the kind of person they viewed themselves to be. The forms of identities emergent in the data, including professional, feminist, and family/ancestral are reflective of previous findings (Carbaugh, 1996; Kline, et al., 1996; Kupper, 1990; Twenge, 1997) and have been explicated in the data analysis section of this report. The further verification of this finding through a review of the relevant literature strengthens the understanding of the nontraditional marital name as a significant symbol reflective of identity.

Because marriage is a dyadic act, and a marital name is reflective of an interpersonal relationship, the personal understanding of identity must be shared. While the decision to engage in name-keeping (or name-changing) is primarily the woman's, the participants in this study indicated they received support for their decision, and an endorsement of the identity message their names communicated from their husbands. This consideration implicates Identity Negotiation Theory (Ting Toomey, 1993, 1999) as an explanation for how the participants were empowered to express a symbol they define as representative of their primary identities within the (pre)marital relationship. The view of self symbolized in a woman's own name encompasses primary identities, including gender (including feminist attitudes), ethnic and cultural (or "ancestral"), and personal identities that require integration with the assumption of the new role and relational identities associated with being a 'wife' and 'married.' The negotiation of the name then reflects identity meanings for the self, the other, and the relationship (Hecht, 1993). In further agreement with Identity Negotiation Theory, the findings of this study include the

code of "Expected" and "Not that Kind." These themes are emblematic of the third assumption of the theory, that of the dialectic of identity security-vulnerability. The participants indicated that they had selected partners who shared values and attitudes, including a view of cultural practices of marriage as a patriarchal institution they wished to change. Within the marital relationship, the participants reported that they felt secure in voicing their identities, and they received affirmation for their choices.

Despite the relative prominence of dialectics in an explanation of women's post-marital naming (Braithwaite & Baxter, 1995; Carbaugh, 1996) that might be included in the personal frame, these concerns were not apparent in the current data. Although the participants mentioned points of difficulty in their decision (namely "Children" and "Options") no theme reflecting a tension between personal and relational identities surfaced. This departure is one that warrants further exploration in future studies of dialectics in post-marital name retention as an "identity gap" between the personal and relational frames (Jung & Hecht, 2004) that may lead to dialectics for some, but not others who have retained their name.

Third, the expression of the decision, once negotiated, constitutes both a communal and enactment frame of identity wherein women are expressing a core component of identity through a highly visible label in communication with others. The use of nontraditional marital names violates an ongoing an ongoing cultural worldview of the institution of marriage (Jackson & Crawley, 2003) and, in doing so, violates a social contract. The participants relayed that this violation resulted in conflict when engaging in deliberate usage of their own name with others in interaction, highlighted differences, and garnered evaluation (Jackson, 2002a). Responses from others ranged from acceptance by those in similar peer groups, confusion within families, and reproach from in-laws and others in the larger cultural communities and are reflective of co-created, quasi-completed, and ready-to-sign contracts, respectively.

Finally, the considerations acknowledged in a layered approach to understanding identity communication were grounded by the common threads of symbolic interactionism and critical feminism. The consideration of identity in communication as reflective of a framework of intra-, interpersonal, group, and communal activity requires symbolic enactment of who and how one presents herself. The negotiation of identity in a relational frame requires that the parties involve assume and ascribe labels that identifyp parties to each other, as well as both to others. The presentation of the self is an enactment accomplished with others in culturally informed communities, be they family members, friends, or acquaintances one encounters at the doctor's office or the other end of a telephone line also requires that interactants provide representation (Carbaugh, 1996) of who they are. The unifying form of representation throughout this study and discussion is the significant symbol (Charon, 1996) of the nontraditional marital name. Communication occurs as this symbol is employed to display and make sense of the self in relationship to others.

The practical implications of this finding echo Carbaugh's (1996) assertion that every American should be concerned with naming practices. This concern comes from a need be effective in communicating with others, as effective communication is facilitated when the appropriate form of address is employed, and the long term implications for the culture. First, the participants in this study indicate a desire to discontinue interaction with individuals who voice resistance or rejection of the symbolized identity the participants have chosen. This may indicate that women whose names are repeatedly (and perhaps willfully) "gotten wrong" by telemarketers, bank tellers, and others may take their business elsewhere while circumscribing related topics while in communication with family members or friends. Second, the impact of a woman's choice to engage in nontraditional marital naming has implications for others, most notably, for children. Although the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the options available for a

familial name, most had given both names to their children. Without a framework, such as that used in Spanish speaking cultures, for the integration of matrilineal and patrilineal names, a growing number of children will ultimately have to make individual choices about what to do about their last names. If no other practical considerations surface, at the minimum the routine question of "mother's maiden name?" on credit card transactions is highly problematic.

From a critical feminist perspective, the choice to retain one's own name at the time of marriage is treated as an act of identity, that positions women as active and agentic in the construction of their selves. This view necessarily requires casting traditional naming practices as a choice, a perspective articulated and responded to by the women interviewed. Because the lens of critical feminist theory positions participants' voices as authoritative on the topic, it is instructive to return to their comments in which they voiced hope that no matter what decision other women make about naming, the participants hope their own performance of identity through communication might raise awareness that choices exist. Like many of the women in this study, I too hope that all women who make the decision to get married consider the question of their name carefully, and believe that the "Activism" of those who participated in this study may help accomplish that goal.

Discussion of the problems and limitations.

There were three primary limitations that were encountered in the process of implementing this research study: the composition of the sample and the form of data collection. One needs to consider both in interpreting the findings.

The participants in the study were all well educated, professionally employed, white middle-class women who represented a homogenous population. However, their relative similarity is not automatically a cause for concern. Nonetheless, two aspects of the sample limit the conclusions of the results. First, some distinguishing characteristics

within the targeted population, most notably, ethnicity, were not proportionately

represented in the sample (Goldin & Shim, 2004; Twenge, 1997). Extensions of this

research should target ethnic minority organizations or affiliations which may lead to the

recruitment of women in this category.

Second, post hoc reflection leads me to conclude that additional items in the

demographic measure, including an instrument rating the degree of traditional attitudes,

such as the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, 1973) or another, less problematic

(Spence & Hahn, 1997) measure would provide more insight into the target population's

views concerning feminism and the cultural practice of marriage. While such attitudes

were accessed through the interviews, the data gained in a survey measure would provide

another point of verification for the study.

A third concern limiting the interpretation of the data was the use of face-to-face,

semi-structured interviews. Problems with interviews, including researcher bias, have

been noted, and additional problems involving scheduling and time (Hall & Rist, 1999)

surfaced in this study. However, personal interviews allow for the pursuit of in-depth

responses while providing the opportunity for observation of nonverbal behavior (Calder,

1994; Hall & Rist, 1999), and personal interviews are judged as having the most potential

to generate women's understandings of their experience with marital name retention. The

question to be resolved is whether the values were compromised by the problems noted.

Discussion of the practical implications.

A number of findings from the study have potential implications for others

involved in research or applied practice in the area of study. Although research emphases

in the field of Communication shift in order to reflect trends and contemporary concerns,

identity remains a core component of communication, and is proposed by some scholars

(Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003; Jackson, 2002a; Jung & Hecht, 2004; Ting Toomey,

1999) to be part of all messages, and must be included in an understanding of meaning.

Two significant contributions to the field are noted: first, it is possible to isolate a significant symbol that is reflective of a myriad of identity concerns for examination; and second, the utility of a layered theory approach to describing and understanding the ways in which identity is shaped and shared through communication.

Carbaugh (1996) notes that although the practice of using nontraditional marital names characterizes a minority of the American public, the need for a form of address is almost universal. The "minimization rule" that requires a "single reference form" (p. 117) most frequently invokes an individual's name when engaging in introductions, explanations, and other forms of conversation. A wider awareness of naming practices - an expansion of the cultural contract of marital names - is warranted in efforts to improve general competence and accuracy as communicators.

At a more narrow level, this study also presents some insights and explanations that may be of interest to women who have, or who face, the decision concerning their name. The themes emergent in the data and the theories implicated by the findings may provide a more systematic structure by which women can consider their decisions, the process of negotiation, and contemplate future interaction regarding their choices. At the very least, I hopes that this study contributes in some small way to the recognition that marital names are a choice, not a given, and one to be made with careful, thoughtful deliberation.

Suggestions for Further Research

Although women's post-marital name retention is an understudied topic, there are related areas of concern that have received even less attention in communication research. Of co-equal occurrence and interest is men's experience in marriages in which nontraditional naming occurs. No data currently exist that provides an understanding of why men reject their partners' attempts to engage in "name making" or join their wives in nontraditional naming practices. Although the current study, and Kupper's (1990)

previous account indicate that women who choose to retain their names are largely

supported by their partners in this decision, interviews with men who are married to

women who have kept their names, or with men who have changed their names through

the process of hyphenation, could significantly contribute to the understanding of the

negotiation of relational identity.

Similarly, a smaller subset of the population implicated in this study has opted to

change both names at the time of marriage (Allyn & Allyn, 1995). Anecdotal accounts

indicate few couples fall into this category, but their stories nevertheless appear to be

significant in developing description and understanding of the name as a symbolic act of

communication. Because of the small size of this population, extended interviews or case

studies involving both partners would be appropriate methods for generating data.

A final consideration in the study of names among couples points to future

research involving gay and lesbian couples. A cross database search of Communication

Complete, PsychINFO, Social Scien Abstracts, and GenderWatch revealed that labeling

and marriage are concerns within research and within the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and

transgendered (GLBT) community, but no direct references to naming have been found

(Lewin, 1998). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the adoption of a common name, while

an exception, is a growing trend among GLBT couples, as both commitment

ceremonies/marriages and children are more frequent. As Sutter (2001) notes, a study of

naming among LGTS couples would also serve to isolate and examine the "tradition of

patronymy" (p. 185) outside of the heteronormative, patriarchal structure of heterosexual

marriage.

Another direction for future research is the expansion of the topic into informal

names. The selection of names is most distinct at the point of marriage, but exploration of

additional forms of naming would deepen the body of knowledge on the significance of

the symbol to questions of identity within communication. To this end, it would be of

value to examine names that are assumed and subsequently become referents for an individual within a distinct community or episode. This process is common in computer mediated communication, wherein users adopt a "screen name" that may or may not serve a communicative function of identity. An additional, interesting case in point is the adoption of "trail names" by "thru hikers" on the Appalachian Trail. Although trail names are detailed on web accounts and "blogs," (e.g.,

http://www.atmuseum.org/trailnames.htm), they have not been examined as part of a systematic study. Here again, a focus on description and explanation necessitates an interview approach to the study of naming, and I am personally intrigued by the possibility of undertaking an autoethnographic account.

Conclusion

This study was guided by the primary goal of describing how women's nontraditional marital surname choices communicate identity. Three primary areas of interest were identified, including the decision-making process, motivations for the relevant decisions, and the communicative outcomes of using the retained name in order to convey identity. Through 23 face-to-face interviews, this study provided support for the contention that names are significant symbols, and depth to this claim by grounding the findings in theoretical descriptions of the communication of identity. In doing so, it has contributed to improved understanding of the processes involved in the communication of identity, at least in the case of women's post-marital name retention.

References

Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society, 4,* 139-158.

Alia, V. (1995). Women, names, and power. *Women and Language, 8*, pp. 34-36.

Allport, G. W. (1963). *Pattern and growth in personality*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Allyn, J., & Allyn, D. (1995). Identity politics. In R. Walker (ed), *To be real: Telling the truth and changing the face of feminism.* New York: Anchor.

Anosike, B. O. (1991). *How to legally change your name without a lawyer.* New York: Do-It-Yourself Legal Publishers.

Azaryahu, M. (1996). The power of commemorative street names. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 14*, 311-331.

Basow, S. (1992). *Gender: Stereotypes and roles*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Baxter, L., & Montgomery, B. (1998). A guide to dialectical approaches to studying personal relationships. In B. Montgomery and L. Baxter (Eds.), *Dialectical approaches to understanding personal relationships* (pp. 1-15). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Beit-Hallahmi, B. (1998). Naming norms and identity choices in Israel. *Sociological Papers, 6,*191-205.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Braithwaite, D. O., & Baxter, L. A. (1995). 'I do' again: The relational dialectics of renewing marriage vows. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 12,* 177-198.

Borgdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Brightman, J. (1994). Why Hillary chooses Rodham Clinton. *American*

    Demographics,16, 9-11.

Brosnahan-Broome, E. (1995). Letter to a friend: A reflection on connectedness

    and naming. *Women and Therapy, 16,* 45-54.

Brown, R., & Ford., M. (1961). Address in American English. *Journal of*

    Abnormal and Social Psychology, 62, 375-385.

Brown, B. A., Freedman, A. E., Katz, H. N. & Price, A. M. (1977). *Women's*

    rights and the law: The impact of the ERA on state laws. New York: Praeger.

Burke, K. (1966). *Language as symbolic action*. Berkeley, CA: University of

    California Press.

Burman, E. (1997). Minding the gap: Positivism, psychology, and the politics of

    qualitative methods. *Journal of Social Issues, 53,*785-801.

Buzzanell, P. M. (1995). Reframing the glass ceiling as a socially constructed

    process: Implications for understanding and social change. *Communication*

    Monographs, 62, 327-354.

Campbell, C., Lee, J. Z., & Elliott, M. (2002). Identity construction and

    reconstruction. *Historical Methods, 35,* 101-116.

Carbaugh, D. (1996). *Situating selves: The communication of social identities in*

    American scenes. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Charon, C. M. (2001). *Symbolic interactionism: An introduction, an*

    interpretation, an integration (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Chenail, R. J., & Maione, P. (1997). Sensemaking in clinical qualitative research.

    The Qualitative Report, 3, [On-line serial], *3*(1). Retrieved, February 17, 2006,

    from: http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-1/sense.html

Center for a Woman's Own Name. (1975). *1975 Supplement to booklet for*

women who wish to determine their own names after marriage. Berkeley, CA:

Women's History Archive.

Coleman, C. M. (1996). *The power of names: Women, marriage, and claiming*

identities. Unpublished master's thesis, California Institute of Integral Studies,

San Francisco.

Crawford, M. (1995). *Talking difference: On gender and language*. Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crenshaw, K. (1997). Intersectionality and identity politics: Learning from

violence against women. In M. L. Shanley & U. Narayan (Eds.), *Reconstructing*

political theory: Feminist perspectives (pp. 178-193). University Park, PA: The

Pennsylvania State University.

Dallimore, E. J. (2000). A feminist response to issues of validity in research.

Women's Studies in Communication, 23, 157-181.

Darden, D. K., & Robinson, I. E. (1976). Multidimensional scaling of men's first

names: A sociolinguistic approach. *Sociometry, 39,*422-432.

Dean, J. (1996). *Solidarity of strangers: Feminism after identity politics.*

Berkeley: University of California Press.

Deaux, K. (1993). Reconstructing social identity. *Personality and Social*

Psychology Bulletin, 19, 4-12.

Deaux, K., Reid, A., Mizrahi, K., & Ethier, K. A. (1995). Parameters of social

identity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68*, 280-291.

DeCrow, K. (1974). *Sexist justice.* New York: Random House.

Deegan, M. J. (1987). Symbolic interaction and the study of women: An

introduction. In M. J. Deegan & M. Hill (Eds.), *Women and symbolic interaction*

(pp. 3-15). Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin, Inc.

Denzin, N.K. (1969). Symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology: A

proposed synthesis. *American Sociological Review, 34,*922-934.

Etaugh, C. E., Bridges, J. S., Cummings-Hill, M., & Cohen, J. (1999). "Names
can never hurt me?" The effects of surname use on perceptions of married
women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 23*, 819-823.

Ethier, K. A. & Deaux, K. (1994). Negotiating social identity when contexts
change: Maintaining identification and responding to threat. *Journal of
Personality and Social Psychology, 67,* 243-251.

Ewick, P. (1994). Integrating feminist epistemologies in undergraduate research
methods. *Gender and Society, 8*, 92-108.

Falk, A. (1976). Identity and name changes. *Psychoanalytic Review, 62,* 647-657.

Fine, G. A. (1993). The sad demise, mysterious disappearance, and glorious
triumph of symbolic interactionism. *Annual Review of Sociology, 19*, 61-87.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. K.
Denzin & Y. S. Guba (Eds)., *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 361-376).
Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Forbes, D. A. (2002). Internalized masculinity in women's discourse: A critical
analysis of the (re)production of masculinity in organizations. *Communication
Quarterly, 50, 269-291.*

Fowler, R. I. (1997). *Women's marital names: A narrative study of five retainers'
experiences in a patronymical society.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation: Miami
University, Miami, OH.

Franco, F., Ramanathan, S., & Chand, S. V. S. (2001). Tribals: The politics of
identity construction. *Indian Social Science Review, 3*, 145-174.

French, S. (1998). The Rumpelstilzchen or the magic of names. *Sprachspiegel,
54,* 251-254.

Garner, A. C. (1999). Negotiating our positions in culture: Popular adolescent

fiction and the self-constructions of women. *Women's Studies in Communication, 22*, 85-119.

Gerrig, R. J., & Banaji, M. R. (1991). Names and the construction of identity: Evidence from Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby. Poetics, 20,*173-192.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Gluck, S. B., & Patai, D. (1991). *Women's words: The feminist practice of oral history*. New York: Routledge.

Griffin, E. (2003). *A first look at communication theory* (5th ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City: Anchor.

Goffman, E. (1983). The interaction order. *American Sociological Review, 48*, 1-17.

Goldin, C., & Shim, M. (2004). Making a name: Women's surnames at marriage and beyond. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 18,* 143-160.

Gordon, S., & Grady, E. M. (1995). What's in a name? *American Journal of Nursing, 95*, 31-34.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Hecht, M. (1993). 2002: A research odyssey. Towards the development of a communication theory of identity. *Communication Monographs, 60*, 76-82.

Hecht, M. L., Jackson, R. L., & , Ribeau, S. (2003). African American Communication: Exploring Identity and Culture (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Heise, D. R., & Weir, B. (1999). A test of symbolic interactionism predictions

about emotions in imagined situations. *Symbolic Interaction, 22*, 139-161.

Henley, N. (1987). Perspectives on language and communication. *Signs, 3*, 638-651.

Herfray, C. (1999). Identity is a history. *Revue des Sciences Sociales de la France de l'Est, 26*, 27-32.

Hogg, M. A., Terry, D. J., & White, K. M. (1995). A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 58*, 255-269.

Hyoslef, E. H. (2001). The social use of personal names among the Kyrgyz. *Central Asian Survey, 20*, 85-95.

Intons-Peterson, M. J. & Crawford, J. (1985). The meanings of marital surnames. *Sex Roles, 12,* 1163-1171.

Jackson, R. L. (1999). *The negotiation of cultural identity: Perceptions of European Americans and African Americans*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Jackson, R. L. (2002a). Introduction: Theorizing and analyzing the nexus between cultural and gendered identities and the body. *Communication Quarterly, 50*, 245-250.

Jackson, R. L. (2002b). Cultural contracts theory: Toward an understanding of identity negotiation. *Communication Quarterly, 50*, 359-367.

Jackson, R. L**.** & Crawley, R. (2003). White Student Confessions about an African American male professor: A Cultural Contracts Theory approach to intimate conversations about race and worldview. *Journal of Men's Studies,* 12, 25-42.

Jackson, R. L., & Heckman, S. M. (2002). Perceptions of white identity and white liability: An analysis of white student responses to a college campus racial hate crime. *Journal of Communication, 52,* 434-450.

Johnson, D. R, & Scheuble, L. K. (1995). Women's marital naming in two

    generations: A national study. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*, 724-732.

Jong, E. (1998). Hillary's husband re-elected! The Clinton marriage of politics

    and power. In J. B. Landes (Ed.), *Feminism, the public, and the private* (pp. 409-

    417). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jung, E., & Hecht, M. L. (2004). Elaborating the Communication Theory of

    Identity: Identity gaps and communication outcomes. *Communication Quarterly,*

    52, 265-283.

Kanowitz, L. (1969). *Women and the law: The unfinished revolution.*

    Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Katovich, M. A., & Reese, W. A. III. (1993). Postmodern thought in symbolic

    interactionism: Reconstructing social inquiry in light of late-modern concerns.

    The Sociological Quarterly, 34, 391-411.

Kay, H. H. & West, M. S. (1996). *Sex based discrimination: Text, cases and*

    materials (4th ed.). St. Paul, MN: West.

Kline, S. L., Stafford, L., & Miklosovic, J. C. (1996). Women's surnames:

    Decisions, interpretations, and associations with relational qualities. *Journal of*

    Social and Personal Relationships, 13, 593-617.

Kohrs Campbell, K. (1998). Relationships between rhetorical and critical/cultural

    studies of discourse by and about women. In J. S. Trent (Ed.), *Communication:*

    Views from the helm for the 21st century (pp. 171-176). Needham Heights, MA:

    Allyn & Bacon.

Kramarae, C., & Treichler, P. A. (1995). *A feminist dictionary.* London: Pandora

    Press.

Krohl, T. F. (1991). Women talk about talk at work. *Discourse and Society, 2*,

    461-476.

Kupper, S. (1990), *Surnames for women: A decision making guide.* Jefferson,

    NC: McFarland & Co., Inc.

Lal, B. B. (1995). Symbolic interaction theories. *American Behavioral Science,*

    38, 421-441.

Landes, J. B. (1998). The public and the private sphere: A feminist

    reconsideration. In J. B. Landes (Ed.), *Feminism, the public, and the private* (pp.

    135-163). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Lazar, M. M. (2000). Gender, discourse, and semiotics: The politics of

    parenthood representations. *Discourse and Society, 11*, 373-400.

Lebell, S. (1988). *Naming ourselves, naming our children: Resolving the last*

    name dilemma. Freedom, CA: Crossing.

LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (1999). *Analyzing and interpreting*

    ethnographic data. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

LeCompte, M. D., & Priessle, J,. with Tesch, R. (1993). *Ethnography and*

    qualitative design in educational research (2nd ed.). San Diego, CA: Academic

    Press.

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (2002). *Wedding as text: Communicating cultural identities*

    through ritual. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Loader, I., & Mulcahy, A. (2001). The power of legitimate naming. *British*

    Journal of Criminology, 41, 41-56.

Lorde, A. (1982). *Zami: A new spelling of my name*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossings

    Press.

Lossiter, M. (1983). *Our names, our selves: The meaning of names in everyday*

    life. London: Heinemann.

Lucy Stone League. (March 1, 2003). The Lucy Stone League. Retrieved June 20, 2000,

from: http://www.lucystoneleague.org/index.asp

Martin, B. L. (1991). From Negro to Black to African American: The power of

names and naming. *Political Science Quarterly, 106*, 83-105.

Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*.

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago

Press.

Meltzer, B. N. (1972). *The social psychology of George Herbert Mead*.

Kalamazoo MI: Center for Sociological Research, Western Michigan University.

Mendez-Gastelumendi, C. (2001). The power of naming, or the construction of

ethnic and national identities in Peru: Myth, history, and the Iquichanos. *Past and

Present, 171*, 127-159.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis: A

sourcebook of new methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Miller, J. M. (2000). Language use, identity, and social interaction: Migrant

students in Australia. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 33*, 69-100.

Miller, C., & Swift, K. (1976). *Words and women*. Garden City, NY: Anchor

Press/Doubleday.

Millett, K. (1970). *Sexual politics*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Mills, S. (2003). Caught between sexism, anti-sexism, and 'political correctness':

Feminist women's negotiations with naming practices. *Discourse and Society,

14*, 87-111.

Murru-Corriga, G. (2000). The patronymic and the matronymic in Sardinia: A

long-standing competition. *History of the Family, 5*, 161-180.

Natanson, M. (1973). *Social dynamics of George Herbert Mead*. The Hague:

Martin US Nijoff.

Neal, A. (2001). The naming: A conceptualization of an African American

    connotative struggle. *Journal of Black Studies, 32,* 50-65.

Nelson, J. (April 1998). Personal interview with Certified Public Accountant, LC

    PA.

Nutbrock, L., & Freudiger, P. (1991). Identity salience and motherhood: A test of

    Stryker's theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 54*, 146-157.

Ogden, C. K., & Richards, I. A. (1923). *The meaning of meaning: A study of the*

    influence of language upon thought and the science of symbolism. New York:

    Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Owens, W. (1984). Interpretative themes in interpersonal research. *Quarterly*

    Journal of Speech, 70, 274-287.

Palczewski, C. H. (1998). "Take the helm," man the ship . . . and I forgot my bikini!

    Unraveling why woman is not considered a verb. *Women and Language, 21*, 1-8.

Parigoris, C. G. (2001). *Marital surnames and gender roles of contemporary*

    women. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Chicago School of Professional

    Psychology.

Patton, M. Q. (1980). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Penelope, J. (1990). *Speaking freely*. New York: Pergamon.

Pharr, P. C. (1993). Onomastic divergence: A study of given-name trends among

    African Americans. *American Speech,* 68, 400-410.

Piaget, J. (1965). *The child's conception of the world.* Patterson, NJ: Littlefield

    and Adams.

Plakans, A., & Wetherell, C. (2000). Patrilines, surnames, and family identity: A

    case study from the Russian Baltic provinces in the nineteenth century. *History of*

    the Family, 5, 199-214.

Post, D. (1997). Why marriage should be abolished. *Women's Rights Law*

Reporter, 18, pp. 283-313.

Reed, G. C. (2001). Fastening and unfastening identities: Negotiating identity in

Hawai'i. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 22*, 327-350.

Romaine, S. (1999). *Communicating gender*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (1998). *Learning in the field: An introduction to

qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roth, C. F. (2001). *The social life of names: Personhood and exchange among the

Tsimshian*. Ann Arbor, MI: Dissertation Abstracts International, A: The

Humanities and Social Sciences.

Ryan, M. P. (1998). Gender and public access: Women's politics in nineteenth-

century America. In J. B. Landes (Ed.), *Feminism, the public, and the private*

(pp. 195-222). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Schellenberg, J. A. (1990). William James and symbolic interactionism.

Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 16, 769-773.

Scheuble, L., & Johnson, D. R. (1993). Marital name change: Plans and attitudes

of college students. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 55,* 747-754.

Schroeder, L. O. (1986). A rose by any other name: Post-marital right to use

maiden name: 1934-1982. *Social Science Research, 70*, 290-293.

Scott, K. D. (2000). Crossing cultural borders: 'Girl' and 'look' as markers of

identity in black women's language use. *Discourse and Society, 11*, 237-248.

Seidman, I. E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for

researchers in education and the social sciences.* New York: Teachers College

Press.

Shibutani, T. (1955). Reference groups as perspectives. *American Journal of

Sociology, 60*, 562-569.

Simmonds, F. N. (1996). Naming and identity. In D. Jarrett-Macauley (Ed.),

Reconstructing womanhood, reconstructing feminism: Writings on black women
(pp. 109-115). London: Routledge.

Skevington, S., & Baker, D. (Eds.). (1989). *The social identity of women*. Beverly
Hills, CA: Sage.

Smith, L. A. (1996). Unique names and naming practices among African
American families. *Families in Society, 77*, 290-297.

Spender, D. (1980), *Man made language*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Stodder, J. (1998). Double-surnames and gender equality: A proposition and the
Spanish-case. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 1*, 585-594.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and
procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stryker, S. (1987). The vitalization of symbolic interactionism. *Social Psychology
Quarterly, 50*, 83-94.

Suarez, E. (1997). A woman's freedom to choose her surname: Is it really a
matter of choice? *Women's Rights Law Reporter, 18*, 233-242.

Sunderland, J. (2000). Baby entertainer, bumbling assistant, and line manager:
Discourses of fatherhood in parentcraft texts. *Discourse and Society, 11*, 249-
274.

Sutter, E. A. (2001). *A community based study of married women's naming
practices: Norms and traditions, individual identity, and meaning*. Unpublished
octoral dissertation, University of Urbana-Champaign, Urbana.

Taylor, J. M., Gilligan, C., & Sullivan, A. M. (1997). *Between voice and silence:
Women and girls, race and relationships.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University
Press.

Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research*. Desert Hot Springs, CA: Qualitative
Research Management.

Thompson, I. (1999). Women and feminism in technical communication: A qualitative content analysis of journal articles published in 1989 through 1997. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 13*, 154-178.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1989). Identity and interpersonal bonding. In M. F. Asante & W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Handbook of international and intercultural communication* (pp. 351-373). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating across culture.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Tong, R. (1989). *Feminist thought*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Twenge, J. M. (1997). Mrs. His Name: Women's preferences for married names. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21,* 417-429.

vom Bruck, G., & Baggio, P. (2001). The name as a bodily sign: The example of women of the Yemenite nobility. *Annales, 56,* 283-311.

von Hassell, M. (1998). Names of hate, names of love: Contested space and the formation of identity on Manhattan's lower east side. *Dialectical Anthropology, 23*, 375-413.

Weatherall, A. (1998). Women and men in language: An analysis of seminaturalistic person descriptions. *Human Communication Research, 25*, 275-292.

Weigert, A. J., Teitge, J. S., & Teitge, D. W. (1986). *Society and identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

West, C. & Zimmerman, D. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender and Society, 1*, 125-151.

Wood, J. T. (1982). *Human communication: A symbolic interactionist perspective*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Wood, J. T. (1995). Feminist scholarship and the study of relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 12,* 103-120.

Wood, J. T. (1999). "That wasn't the real him:" Women's dissociation of violence from the men who enact it. *Communication Quarterly, 47*, 1-8.

Wood, J. T. (2000). Applied communication research: Unbounded and for good reason. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 28,* 188-192.

Wood, J. T. (2001). The normalization of violence in heterosexual romantic relationships: Women's narratives of love and violence. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 18,* 239-261.

Wood, J. T. & Duck, S. (1995). *Understanding relationship processes, 6: Off the beaten track: Understudied relationships*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yoder, E. (2001). *Advanced quantitative and basic qualitative research methods.* Unpublished course text, Department of Agricultural Education: The Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

Appendix A: Initial Recruitment Email

Dear _____,

My name is Kara Laskowski. I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences at The Pennsylvania State University. I am contacting you to ask for your assistance in data collection for my dissertation.

The research project I have undertaken is an examination of post-marital name retention and communication. I am interested in talking to women who kept their names after they got married, and it has come to my attention that you may fit that description. If not, I apologize for taking your time. Please feel free to delete this email, or pass it along to someone who has retained her name and might be interested in participating in the study.

If you are willing to participate in a research project on this topic, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk to you. In the coming weeks I will be setting up interviews to discuss women's names. The interviews will be scheduled for a time and date that is most convenient for you, and will take approximately an hour. The interviews will be audio-recorded, and if you choose to participate you will be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire as well as an Informed Consent Form that protects your rights as a research participant.

Please let me know by return email, or by phone at 717-423-6592 if you are interested and willing to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please feel free to contact me, my advisor Dr. Ronald Jackson at 814.863.6260 or the Office of Regulatory Compliance at Penn State at 814-865-1775 (please reference project #18735).

With thanks,

Kara Laskowski

Appendix B: Office of Regulatory Compliance Approval and Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RE

The Pennsylvania State University

<u>PAGE 1 OF 2</u>

Women's Marital Name Retention and the
Symbolic Communication of Identity
(IRB #18735)

Researcher: Kara Laskowski
Faculty advisor:Dr. Ronald Jackson

1. <u>This section provides an explanation of the study in which you will be participating:</u>

A. The study in which you will be participating is part of research intended to identify and
    describe how the retention of a woman's own name after marriage communicates
    identity. By examining interactions where the decision is negotiated and the name is
    employed, I hope to further our understanding of how a significant symbol is
    operationalized in order to communicate identity.

B. If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to take part in a one-on-one
    interview. Your responses will be audio taped, transcribed, and analyzed with
    approximately 30 other women's responses about their experiences. In addition, you will
    be asked to complete a short, demographic questionnaire.

C. The audiotape of your interview will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the
    researcher's office. Only the researcher and the faculty advisor will have access to the
    tape, which will be destroyed by May, 2005.

D. Your participation in this research will take approximately 45 minutes.

2. This section describes <u>your rights as a research participant</u>:

A. You may ask any questions about the research procedures, and these questions will be
    answered. Questions should be addressed to Kara Laskowski.

B. Your participation in this research is <u>confidential</u>. In other words, no information that
    could be used to identify you is associated with your responses. To make sure your
    participation is confidential, informed consent forms will be separated from demographic
    surveys, and you will be asked to choose a pseudonym for use in transcribing your
    interview. All audio tapes will be erased and destroyed, and demographic questions will
    be used to describe the sample group only.

C. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to stop participating in the research at any
    time, or decline to answer any specific questions.

D. This study involves minimal risk; that is, no risks to your physical or mental health
    beyond those encountered in the normal course of everyday life.

E. You may call the Office for Research Protections at 814.865.1775 if you have questions
    about your rights as a research participant.

F. Benefits: You will have contributed to a better understanding of how identities are communicated through language and naming choices. At your request, you will receive a copy of the final research report.

3. This section indicates that you are giving your <u>informed consent to participate</u> in the research.
    <u>Participant</u>:

    I agree to participate in a scientific investigation of women's identity, as an authorized part of the education and research program of Penn State University.

    I understand the information given to me, and I have received answers to any questions I may have had about the research procedure. I understand and agree to the conditions of this study as described.

    To the best of my knowledge and belief, I have no physical or mental illness or difficulties that would increase the risk to me of participation in this study.

    I understand that I will receive no compensation for participating.

    I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I may withdraw from this study at any time by notifying the person in charge.

    I am 18 years of age or older.

    I understand that I will retain a copy of this consent form.

    I will contact Kara Laskowski, at 717.477.1564, 717.423.6592, or kal223@psu.edu, or Dr. Ronald Jackson at 814.863.6260, or rlj6@psu.edu, with questions or concerns.

    _____   _____
                        Signature   Date

    [] I would like to be contacted with the results of this study

        Address: _____

                        _____

    [] I do not wish to receive information about the results of this study.

    Researcher:
    I certify that the informed consent procedure has been followed, and that I have answered any questions from the participant above as fully as possible.

    _____   _____
                        Signature   Date

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

The following questions are being asked in order to collect demographic information about the participants in this research project. None of the information you provide will be linked to your signed consent form or to your audio tape and the transcript. You have the right to refuse to answer any, or all, questions.

1. What was your age when you were married? _____

2. How long have you been married? _____

3. Is this your first marriage? _____

       If no, how many times were you previously married?_____

4. Do you have children? _____

       If yes, please provide age and sex for each child:

                    _____

                    _____

                    _____

                    _____

5. Please identify your highest level of education:
_____ some high school
_____high school diploma, or equivalency
_____technical or two-year degree
_____some college
_____college graduate
_____graduate/professional degree
_____other (please describe):

6. Please identify your current occupational level:
_____service industry   _____education/faculty
_____manufacturing   _____education/student
_____clerical   _____business owner
_____professional/management _____stay at home mother
_____other (please describe):

Thank you! Your responses are confidential and will be filed separately in order to maintain your confidentiality.

Summary of Demographic Items

Participant (Pseudonym)	Age	Marriage Age	Marriage Length	First Marriage	Children	Education	Occupation
Amelia	38	34	4 years	y	Y; 1	Grad./Prof.	Education
Samantha	29	29	5 months	y	N	Grad./Prof.	Education
Krista	58	44	14 years	n	Y; 4	Grad./Prof.	Education
Grace	38	35	3.5 years	y	Y; 1	Grad./Prof.	Education
Alana	35	26	9 years	y	Y; 1	Grad./Prof.	Education
Jade	33	28	5.5 years	y	N	Grad./Prof.	Student
Kim	40	31	9 years	y	N	Grad./Prof.	Business
Jane	30	29	1 year	y	Y; 1	College Grad./Prof.	Business
Sharon	29	24	5 years	y	Y; 1	Grad./Prof.	Management
Elise	38	33	5 years	y	N	Grad./Prof.	Education
Shelley	33	28	5.5 years	y	N	Grad./Prof.	Student
Hilary	34	34	1.5months	y	N	Grad./Prof.	Education
Greta	39	29	10 years	y	Y; 3	Grad./Prof.	Education
Jill	39	24	15 years	y	Y; 2	Grad./Prof.	Education
Andrea	45	34	11.5 years	y	Y; 2	Grad./Prof.	Other
Michelle	40	21	19 years	y	Y; 2	Grad./Prof.	Education
Lauren	36	21	15 years	y	Y; 2	Grad./Prof.	Education
Jennifer	28	28	6 weeks	y	N	Grad./Prof.	Education
Kate	43	29	14 years	y	Y; 2	Grad./Prof.	Education
Kelly	45	25	20 years	y	Y; 3	Grad./Prof.	Education
Natalie	38	33	5 years	n	Y; 2	Grad./Prof.	Student
Rebecca	30	28	2 years	y	Y; 1	Grad./Prof.	Business
Ann	44	40	4 years	y	N	Grad./Prof.	Other
Mean	44.4	29	8.6 years	Y n = 21 N n = 2		College n = 1 Grad./Prof./ Prof. Degree n = 22	Management n = 1 Education n = 14 Student n = 3 Business n = 3 Other n = 2

Appendix D: Semi Structured Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Reception, introduction and appreciation
Setup: Informed consent, demographics
Self explanation – personal and academic connection to the topic

RQ #1: How do women perceive and report identity negotiations with both the self and the other when deciding to retain their own names?

1. [segue] Would you mind telling me about your name – the story behind it and why you chose to keep it?
2. Did you discuss your decision with your partner before you were married?
    --- when/why did you talk about your name?
    --- what was the outcome?
    --- did you experience conflict about the name?
3. How do you think things would be different if you had changed your name?
4. How was your name announced? (wedding ceremony, program, etc)

RQ #2: How do women understand the meaning(s) of marital name retention?

5. What factors contributed to your decision to retain your name?
6. What makes your name important to you now?
7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of your decision?
8. What do you like and dislike about having retained your name?
9. What do you think your decision says about you?

RQ #3:   How is the naming act and use of the name employed to communicate identity, if at all?

10. How did others respond to your decision?
11. Do you make a point to introduce your name?
12. What type of reception do you get when you use your last name?
13. How do you think you are perceive by others as a result of your name?
14. If someone were to call you by your husband's name, how do you respond?

15. Any additional questions or issues not covered in the interview?

Appendix E: Summary of Emergent Themes

"Women's Post Marital Name Retention and the Communication of Identity"
Summary of Findings

RQ1:: What is the relationship between post marital name retention and identity negotiation?		
Themes:		
	Expected	"It never occurred to me to change my name, ever."
	Not that Kind	"I was never that girl … I've been very resistant to the idea all along."
	Divergence	"it's my husband's doing more than anything"
	Children	"for us the issue was what the kids names would be"
	Options	"I invited my husband to take mine but he declined and we did an electronic game as a combination of out last names, and I said why don't we both just adopt that as our names…"
	Reconsider/Regrets	"We are the family that doesn't have the same last name. It never occurred to me how much I would have liked that."

RQ2: How do women understand the meaning(s) of post-marital name retention?		
Themes:		
	Identity (Professional, feminist)	"What it's about for me primarily is my individuality, keeping my identity as a person."
	Institution	"the name is hard to separate from how we traditionally think of marriage."
	Lineage	It honors my history and my identity in the sense of my heritage, my cultural heritage."
	Common	"every woman I know did that and it was very common"
	Aesthetics	"it's a unique name … I like the way it looks when I write it"
	Experience	"I did change my name the first time I got married and it – I – it was miserable."

RQ3: How is the use of the name employed to communicate identity, if at all?		
Themes		
	Interactants	"it does come up a lot. I'm surprised how much it comes up."
	Messages	
	Intentional	"I put a little gold star – 'the bride and the groom are keeping their names'".
	Relational	"I think it sends a message that we value equality."
	Activism	"…it's a great way to raise awareness in a society in different groups of people."
	Strategy	"I feel like I have a fluidity in my life, because there are times when I will adopt Mrs. [His Name] if it is advantageous"
	Time	"People say things to me. I hope that it stops, because I hate being angry about it all the time." "between year four and year seven [of marriage] it mellowed out"

VITA

Kara A. Laskowski

Kara A. Laskowski earned her BA (cum laude) in Peace and Conflict Studies, Women's Studies and Communication from Juniata College in 1996; her MA in Speech Communication from the Pennsylvania State University in 1999; and her Ph.D. in Communication Arts and Sciences from the Pennsylvania State University in 2006.

She has taught at the Pennsylvania State University as a Teaching Assistant (1997-1999), at Juniata College as Visiting Professor of Communication (1999-2003), and as Assistant Professor of Communication at Shippensburg University (2003-present).

Laskowski has presented at numerous conferences, including the Pennsylvania Communication Association, the Eastern Communication Association, the National Communication Association, and Mid Atlantic Women's Studies Association Annual Conference. She has co-authored a paper that appeared in *Communication Reports* (2004).

Married since 1997 to Adam Nonemaker, she has two children, Samuel and Emelie.