

Women, Marriage, and Selfhood:
How Names Impact upon Gendered Identity

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Abstract

In Britain the naming norm of one name within a family continues to hold powerful sway. Women change their names to that of their husband in large numbers (Valetas, 2001: 2) and the expectation that they will do so remains, despite women's changing position within society. This, set within the context of individualisation and sociological ideas of the 'pure relationship' (Giddens, 1996: 6) and less commitment from couples (Bauman, 2003: 34), may seem anachronistic, yet the popularity of the name change remains. My aim in this thesis is to investigate what women in Britain do with their last names on marriage (name changing and name retaining) and how this impacts upon their sense of gendered identity. I explore the ideas raised by the individualisation theorists in relation to these naming decisions to assess their relevance for the actualities of women's lives. I also analyse love, commitment, family ties, and explore narratives of selfhood and accountability. The empirical work took the form of an open and closed question online survey, responded to by 102 women (75 changed names and 27 retained names), and 16 in-depth interviews. I asked for British, heterosexual women to take part to explore the institution of marriage, within one cultural setting. Though name changing has a historical connection with women as lesser than men and as property given through marriage, this history was rarely mentioned by name changing participants who focus instead on love, unity, creating a family, and creative and adaptable selfhood to justify their actions. Those women who retain their names focus on linear selfhood, feminism, work, and the private nature of marriage. Justifying one's actions is generally the preserve of the 'deviant' (Scott and Lyman, 1968: 62) and the disparity between those who must account and those who must not will be explored.

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Author's Declaration

A version of chapter 8, 'Self and Society', has been published in the journal *Families, Relationships, and Societies* (Policy Press) under the title 'The Making of Selfhood: Naming Decisions on Marriage'. It was published online in March 2013: DOI 10.1332/204674313X665913 and the print version is forthcoming.

A version of chapter 6, 'Maintaining the Status Quo? Love and Emotion Work', is due to be published in a hardback edition from inter-disciplinary.net by the end of 2013 under the title 'Love Stories: Name Changing and Narrative in Contemporary Britain'. The collection will be entitled *Gender and Love: Constructions, Practices, and Narratives*.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Throughout the course of this research I have been asked ‘why’. Why write something one hundred thousand words in length on names; is it really important to investigate something as everyday and innocent as the last name? My response is always ‘yes’: to research the everyday and the taken for granted is key to sociological understanding. Without a desire to probe the seemingly innocent parts of our lives there is little possibility of coming to any greater knowledge of how society works. Last names may seem unproblematic, almost natural, in the way they are passed along, taken, shared, or disposed of at certain points in a life, but this is to ignore the specific patterns involved in that passing, taking, sharing, and disposing. In the case of marriage, which is the main focus of this thesis, ignoring the gendered patterns of naming is to accept and silence the more subtle ways in which gender remains significant to how we live our lives and construct our sense of self.

The focus of this research project is on what women do with their last names when they marry and how this impacts upon their sense of (gendered) self¹. The focus is on British women, though more specifically on practices in England and Scotland as these are the areas of the UK my participants are from. 102 women took part in this project and they were married between the 1940s and 2011. My sample – which will be discussed in detail in the methodology chapter – was made up of 75 women who changed their name (‘name changers’) and 27 women who retained their name on marriage (‘name retainers’). They had a rich set of experiences, showing that names are significant to individual identity, as well as a societal or collective identity.

The name (both first and last together) is a significant symbol of our identities, both in a bureaucratic and a personal sense. The name is an important symbol of who a person is, and a sense of identity can be built up around this symbol; yet women are asked to change their last name at pivotal moments in their lives. Schimmel argues that the name and the person named are one and the same (Schimmel, 1989: ix) – they are interchangeable symbols for one another, so closely related that to think of one is generally to conjure up an image of the other. Even when a person’s name is simply written on paper the name will produce images and have connotations for the reader, who will attempt to classify that

¹ I focus specifically on changing names and retaining names.

person based on what is before them. Without a name a person cannot legally exist and cannot be properly referred to in conversation between people. The name becomes a symbol of life events, achievements and the actions of the person named and therefore represents the person's worth in society. Even after death the idea of burying a body without a name is seen as tragic and prevents families from properly moving on (Bodenhorn and vom Bruck, 2009: 1).

The sheer importance of names can be seen in the reactions to my project. The name goes beyond the letters grouped together to make a word or a means of distinguishing people from one another. It is invested with emotion and is a part of social organisation, as well as social ideals. Some of those I have spoken to about my project have become irate at the suggestion this needs to be investigated and my emphasis on the need to explore a wider range of possibilities for naming. The very idea that women should consider other options can produce anger, personal questioning, and a desire to have me validate my entire ideological and political standpoint; there has also been excitement, interest, and instant understanding of the project's aims. There is much wrapped up in these reactions and some connect with the experience of my participants so will be discussed further throughout this thesis. Significantly though, names – how we use them, and what they mean – are *not* innocent. They are an important part of our social organisation and therefore reflect social and cultural values. Our use of names remains political.

My thesis is divided into seven chapters. The next chapter – the literature review – will outline where my research fits into existing scholarly discussion, but also highlights the gap which it fills. Following this I will take a historical overview of marriage, love, and surnames from the medieval period to the present day: this is a sweeping and brief look but it is important to put present practices in their historical context to understand cultural change over time. The methodology chapter will then explain the methods used in conducting the empirical research for this study and the reasons for doing so, including reflections on my own personal reasons for wanting to research this topic.

The empirical research is then divided into four chapters: 'Powerful Stories: Tradition and Feminism'; 'Maintaining the Status Quo? Love and Emotion Work'; 'Creating "Family"'; and 'Self and Society'. The aim with exploring these themes is to highlight and analyse

various areas of identity-building brought up by participants and to create a picture of participants' identities embedded within a wider society in which the views of others are of central importance to their actions - the self is built within a dialectic of 'I/me' and 'them' (see Mead 1964). Each chapter engages with gender and the gendered nature of the naming norm in Britain; identities are formed within gendered relations and the naming norm ensures particular gendered relations to the topics I examine in this thesis.

The first chapter looks at the idea of the name change as tradition and its use as a justification for naming decisions. The power behind the creation of such 'traditions' is explored and questioned. As feminism is often seen as diametrically opposed to tradition the two are intertwined in one chapter, looking at the complex narratives around these two concepts which participants use to justify their naming decisions. The second empirical chapter focuses on the important narrative of love, especially utilised by those women who changed their names, and how this emotion becomes a part of maintaining the status quo in terms of gender relations and hierarchy within marriage. The idea of being an obviously committed partner in marriage is significant and links to ideas of a public, wifely identity. Name retainers must fight against these ideas to redefine heterosexuality and refuse love as relevant to decisions around names. Investigating emotions and feelings is critical to examining identity. As Budgeon (2003) argues, identity creation cannot always be fully and completely rational, but has elements of emotion, feeling, habit, and subconscious. This chapter highlights the place of love as emotion, its use and abuse, in decisions around names and identity. 'Creating "Family"' considers participant discussions of their familial identity (as well as how this might work with or against an idea of an individual identity) and how this impacts on participant naming decisions on marriage. Children are a key factor in these decisions for many women. The final empirical chapter discusses the importance of identity and names most directly, analysing how identity is shaped by both self and other, the part names play in this, specific narratives of selfhood utilised by participants, and the significance of the name changing norm for the formation of gendered identity. In the conclusion I will bring together these empirical strands to emphasise the continuing importance of names in British society and the significance of naming practices to the creation of gendered identity.

Chapter 2 Locating the Discussion: Names, Relationships, and Selfhood

2.1 Names

Historically, the philosophical significance of naming has fluctuated: both Plato and Aristotle discuss names and labels, but their importance was displaced by other philosophical concerns until the Enlightenment, when naming as a ‘crucial subject of enquiry’ was rediscovered with Locke’s discussion of names in his *Essay on Human Understanding* (Ragussis, 1986: 4; Locke, 2001). This revival of the prominence of the name in scholarly study paralleled the rise in the credibility of science, which was meant to explain and order the natural world. A central tool of this effort was to organise and classify. This was not a matter of personal names however, but names for the natural world: personal names were not considered to be within the scope of ‘objective’ science (Ragussis, 1986: 5). Systems of scientific classification illustrate the importance of naming in general in shaping our world and how gender has always been involved in these classifications. I will therefore highlight a very influential scientific naming system, created by Carl Linnaeus, to demonstrate this point. The chapter will then examine how names organise people within British society, the power of naming and its gendered aspects, and the ways in which names label and categorise individuals, particularly within marriage. This will lead into a discussion of the main bodies of literature which underpin this project and will include the outline of my own conception of selfhood.

2.2 Linnaeus: The Significance of Naming Systems

Linnaeus was one of the greatest scientific taxonomists of the Enlightenment. His reputation was built on the system he created for classifying the natural world, ‘using a two-word designation comprising genus and species’ (Livingstone, 2003: 130). This use of two words to name and classify is similar to the British system of personal names: using this system plants and animals were organised into ‘families’ in a hierarchical order. This system became famous and was spread throughout the globe with the authority of ‘objective’ science. However, it was not value-free and in fact presented the world in a very particular way.

Linnaeus used sexual classification of plants, based on counting the male stamen and then the female pistils in the plant; ignoring the fact plants are often hermaphrodites he split the natural world using a sexual dichotomy and in this way, despite claims of objectivity, reflected and reinforced the *social* system of gendered and sexual hierarchy – the female pistils were secondary in classification to the male stamen (Fara, 2003: 21). This gendering of classification was used as evidence for the ‘natural’, God-given ordering of the social world despite the fact it was entirely *man*-made. Linnaeus went on to fill his classificatory system with sexual overtones (Fara, 2003: 22). He discussed plants as ‘brides’ and ‘bridegrooms’, flower petals as ‘noble bed curtains’, and pollination as the moment of ‘celebrating... nuptials’; if plants did not have equal numbers of stamen and pistils he wrote of them as promiscuous and called them ‘concubines’ (Fara, 2003: 22, 24). Gendered, sexualised accounts of nature became the most popular way of classifying the entire natural world, and parts of the Linnaean system remain in use today; nature has been organised, researched and displayed using gender. Names have connotations, systems of organisation have meaning, and together they are powerful enough to (re)produce normalised and accepted ways of seeing society. With this in mind I wish to turn to consider the personal name.

2.3 Personal Names: Human Organisers

The personal name is used in human society as a way of classifying and organising people. Our social world is built around names as a way of organising and distinguishing individuals, and particular peoples and cultures have produced practices varying in complexity and symbolism; such practices usually highlight important social processes and provide a system of organisation, ordering people into a hierarchy along particular structural lines. Names can be readily used by some and are taboo for others; knowing a name can be powerful. ‘The name is part of the person; rather, it is really the person; therefore, to know someone’s name means to have power over that person.’ (Schimmel, 1989: ix)

For example, Mongolia has very strict naming practices in which the name is seen as having a power of its own: everyone must have a unique name which can come from anything in the world around (such as ‘Happy’, ‘Sun-Ray’ or ‘Frog’). Using ‘Frog’ as a specific example, once a person has been named thus the word ‘frog’ can no longer be

applied to the amphibian because it would be disrespectful to the person. The name is so powerful and closely connected to the person named that it has an awesome significance: the family must find other ways to describe the amphibian itself, using sounds other than those of the name (see Humphrey 2009). Outside the family there are also rules about who can use the names of whom in social situations: not naming an elder is a sign of respect, or, among equals, it can imply such a close relationship that the name does not have to be spoken. This is a complex system which defines a person's social status and delimits the appropriate relationships between people, thereby organising and structuring Mongolian society. The name is a potent symbol of the person named, their character and their worth, hence it can only be used by certain people, in certain situations and, as with 'frog', should be given the respect it deserves by only being applied to the human it names (see Humphrey, 2009).

In Britain we have a system of first and last names: the last name acts as a linkage into a wider family history, giving a person a place in the world and a kinship network to call upon, and together these two names represent the individual identity as a whole. A name acts then, in the same way as Linnaeus' classificatory system for plants, as a means to label. We use these 'labels' to organise and manage our society: the increased bureaucracy of modernity, sometimes oppressive in its control of human actors (Elliott, 1995: 727), is bound up with our surnames and individual identities. The state and its institutions keep a record of each person through this name from birth (even before the child has been given a first name she or he will be named as, for example, Baby Smith). As the child moves through the institutions of school and workplace, becomes a tax-payer, a voter, registers with doctors and dentists, signs for bank accounts and mortgages, it is this last name which will organise the person on records and be an important part of their signature; a sign of that person's individual identity and right to make contracts.

The state can keep records on this individual from birth to death and knowing their name *matters* – the many debates over identity cards and identity theft over recent years are proof of how strongly people feel about knowing who someone *really* is and that keeping identity intact is important both personally and to wider public and private bodies. Claiming a name as one's own, which is intimately bound up with selfhood, is an important modern right; changing a name involves a large amount of paperwork. Women

can more easily change their name on marriage than men – signing the certificate as their new self whereas men must change by deed poll – but this does not then remove the many changes that must be made to bank accounts, GP records, passports, and so on, so that the proper person can be connected with the correct name. This is the only way this person can be tracked by the state, keep their money in order, their signature valid, and be held accountable for anything done in their name; signing one's name on a dotted line *effects action*. In the modern world the name is a significant connection to an extensive amount of bureaucratic organisation, which makes up a part of the person's official identity.

The name can come to have a serious significance in the public sphere: to be a 'big name' or to 'make a name for yourself' are figures of speech which show how important the name is to reputation and public knowledge of a person. Whether or not a name is particularly significant will depend on many factors, but in the present day certain jobs and professions invest more in the idea of the name. Academia is one such profession in which the name becomes all important and seems an apt example when writing a doctoral thesis. With so much of academic work based on the written word, the name comes to represent the ideas and values of the person on the page; the title is of course an important element of the academic name too. Influential and well-known scholars are often better known by their names than their faces: their reputation is spread by the use of their name and the sheer recognisability of it. The name comes to act as a short-hand label for their ideas and their status.

Such 'labels' are often full of meanings and connotations: the meanings of many first names can be found in books of children's names, which may inform the parents' decision. Family names can have a similar significance, as well as long histories embedded in them. The connotations of a family name may be related to class, ethnicity, or religion, for example. As Ueno argues, having a mother's last name rather than a father's continues to imply that the child was born out of wedlock and this can carry a stigma (Ueno, 2009: 204). On first hearing a name we make assumptions about the background of a person, hence classify and organise them in our social world.

An example of this is a study done for the Department of Work and Pensions to test discrimination levels in recruitment practices in British cities. They found candidates with

‘white names’ were favoured over ethnic minority candidates. Of the 106 white candidates, sixty-eight percent received a positive response; but out of the 310 ethnic minority candidates just thirty-nine percent received a positive response (Wood et al., 2009: 31). This test had been designed to remove all other markers of ethnicity except the name, and these names were chosen to be easily identified with a particular ethnic group, as well as minimising the possible effects of other structures such as gender, and having all candidates equal in terms of qualifications and experience (Wood et al., 2009: 16). This indicates that names convey a great deal of information which is used to process and classify people, in this case as worth employing.

As Matza argues, ‘deviant’ identity and labels become intricately bound together so that the so-called deviant will be unable to wholly escape from this label, whatever his or her actions (Matza, 1969: 180). In this case, ethnic minority names act as labels and racist assumptions have assigned these men and women ‘deviant’ identities as non-white and therefore unreliable. Names act as a label which a person carries with them, and from which judgements can be made: to be able to name a person is to be in a powerful position.

2.4 The Power to Name

Feminist sociological discussions of naming and gender have focused on the important elements of power and control which reside in naming processes, most prominently by Dale Spender (1998). Through naming, as described above, the world is ordered and without names things are hard to perceive and to discern. This is made clear in Dale Spender’s discussion of naming when she says ‘By naming the world we impose a pattern and a meaning which allows us to manipulate the world’ (1998: 163). As part of the feminist discussion of gender, inequality, and names Spender discusses this manipulation of society by those in dominant positions to fit the world to their interests, noting that women’s experiences are often unaccounted for by a lack of fitting names and that feminists must work to create names for women’s experiences (1998: 183). In doing so women’s experiences become normalised and move into the centre rather than being seen as peripheral and ‘Other’ to the masculine norm.

Spender argues that if women had more power to name their own world these words would be different, from the female perspective, and more positive towards women. Positive

words, particularly in terms of heterosexual relations, are more often reserved for men, while normal, healthy sexuality in women is nameless (1998: 175), and has therefore even been seen as a sign of ill-health (1998: 175). Spender makes clear that the power of naming is a male one and that this power has informed how the world is viewed, (re)created, and *experienced* by both men and women. Spender's analysis has been widely critiqued (see for example Black and Coward, 1998) as needing more context as to how language is created and constructed, and how it is embedded within culture as well as a part of constituting that culture. However, Spender's argument about the power of naming to influence how the world is perceived and understood is significant to the framework of this project; the person with the authority to name is a person with a social power and status.

Naming is an act of power. Claiming power over lands and cultures and building empires in the 'New World' was in part achieved through the creation of maps and the naming involved in these representations of the lands newly discovered by Europeans (Livingstone, 2003: 155). By drawing lines across long established settlements and communities and naming locations and geographical features with the names of Spanish, French, or British royalty and cities, Europeans staked their claim to the land, its resources, and its people (Livingstone, 2003: 155 – 156). They obliterated the history of the indigenous people as they re-drew and re-named their landscape, suggesting to patrons at home that the land was empty and ready to be exploited (Livingstone, 2003: 155). The new names erased the old and silenced the history of the local people, making the spaces intelligible to Europeans:

When James Cook named well over one hundred Australian capes, bays, and isles, frequently using the names of European naturalists, he at once effaced local designations and brought those spaces into European circulation for the first time (Livingstone, 2003: 156).

The power to name is also gendered. The Bible's story of Adam and Eve gives a clear message about the Christian belief in *man's* ability to name and therefore to control; Christian stories have had – and continue to have – a powerful influence on British culture. God creates all of the animals and birds of the natural world and allows Adam to name them: 'So God formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called

each living creature, that was its name' (Genesis 2: 19). Adam also has the power to name 'Woman' when she is created from his rib, and later he gives her the specific personal name 'Eve': 'The man called his wife Eve' (Genesis: 3:20). Schimmel argues that the reason God allowed Adam to name is so that he may rule over all he names (Schimmel, 1989: ix) – naming and classifying gives the namer a power and implies a certain obedience from the one named. As 'woman', and specifically 'Eve', is named by Adam, along with the rest of the natural world, the Christian creation story gives Adam as Man a power over Woman, and Adam as Husband a power over his Wife. The power imbalance within these relationships is made obvious through this act of naming. As Leonard states, there is '[n]o doubt Adam's naming of Eve is a sign of his authority over her' (Leonard, 1990: 39). A prominent feminist theologian, Mary Daly, argued that the Christian story was a 'prototypic case of false naming' (1985: 47), in which the world has been named (ordered, organised) according to the wishes and interests of the dominant group; these were acts of naming intended to oppress women and bolster the claims of men to their power and status (Daly, 1985: 46; Spender, 1998: 167 – 168).

The name-giver, then, has authority over the named. Linnaeus saw himself as the 'second Adam', with the power to name and manipulate creation (Fara, 2003: 29). This authority and power is clear in other situations throughout society: parents name their children and have authority over them. A parallel of renaming, authority, and change/loss of identity can be seen in the institution of slavery, and I will use the particular historical moment of North American slavery to illustrate this.

People taken from Africa to become slaves in the United States underwent a *renaming* by their slave masters – their own names connected them to their African heritage and traditions, as well as to their freedom and as such were dangerous symbols of another life which needed to be erased. As the African names of slaves were no longer used every day as legally and socially enshrining their identity, they stopped having any power and their meaning for the wider social body was compromised. As Benson argues, names are not only a personal symbol, but equally a social one: they have to be used by others to have any real meaning and as such, 'they are constituted within and are ratified by the symbolic order, the order of power and its inscriptions' (Benson, 2009: 179).

Re-naming acted as erasure of identity and displaced slaves' sense of grounding in history which ensured greater submission. Slaves were re-named to constantly remind them of their inferior status: English diminutives which were childlike such as 'Doll or Bess' were used, names that were insults such as 'Villain, Trash, Whore', or overly grand names to make the slave feel worthless in comparison such as 'Dido, Venus, Nero' (Benson, 2009: 190 – 191). The slave was given the last name of his or her master as a public sign of ownership – slaves belonged, bodily, to their slave-master. The power of the name was clearly felt by slave-owners, and no doubt by slaves themselves.

The loss of identity which slaves experienced throughout their lives can be seen in the reaction after emancipation in which freed slaves began to rename themselves. Frederick Douglass is a well-known example of a former slave who renamed himself several times, before settling on 'Douglass' with the help of another emancipated slave (Benston, 1982: 3)². Malcolm X is another famous example of a man who refused a last name given by a slave-master at some point in his family's past, using 'X' to show up the dislocation of his ancestral history by slavery (Benston, 1982: 3). The writing on slave re-naming after emancipation focuses on the choices of men, perhaps because these men went on to be able to write, speak, and campaign for equal rights for black people in a conspicuous way, but also perhaps because naming is seen, as I have argued, to be the preserve of men. Women's names and choices are seen as less significant; they are unstable and likely to change.

In the example of American slavery the person is re-named so that they can be placed into the new category of 'slave' rather than 'free person'. As the main preoccupation of this thesis is with women who marry and make particular naming decisions I will turn to examine the category of 'wife', which is created through the institution of marriage.

² In his own narrative of his time as a slave, Douglass specifically used names to highlight the character of the person he was discussing. For example, Mr. Sevier became Mr. Severe. One does pronounce both the former and the latter in the same way, but Douglass wanted to show up his former master publically and explicitly. Names really labelled a person for Douglass, hence why his own was so important to him and why he changed it repeatedly until he felt comfortable (see Stepto, 2009).

2.5 Categories in Marriage

When a woman marries she becomes a 'wife', as a man becomes a 'husband', however the female category is inferior to that of the male as shown by the fact a wife was traditionally seen to lose her identity in marriage and become subsumed under the identity of her husband, for example as 'Mrs. John Smith'. Hierarchically then, 'husband' is a category above 'wife' and has a power over this lower category and the woman who fills it. The husband, as the more powerful, has the ability to name. This is an unequal, obviously gendered pairing of categories and what 'wife' actually entails needs to be examined in more detail.

Pateman considers the marriage contract to be a kind of labour contract in which a woman is contracted to labour within the home (Pateman, 1988: 116); she includes 'conjugal labour' as part of this work (Pateman, 1988: 117). With the wife acting as 'servant' for her husband's needs the marriage contract successfully 'reflects the patriarchal ordering of nature' in which women are generally seen as inferior and as needing male guidance and authority (Pateman, 1988: 118), most explicitly expressed under coverture when a woman become one with her husband in law and legally no longer in existence (see Chapter 3 for more detail).

Referring back to the example of Mrs. John Smith, it is clear that a woman becomes merely an auxiliary to the man's identity; she is 'secondary' or 'supporting', which as a 'help-meet' was what a wife was meant to be. Pateman makes a connection between slave names and those of wives: 'As befitted civilly dead beings, the slave was brought to life by being given a name... A wife was included under her husband's name' (Pateman, 1988: 121). As with slaves, women were not legal persons once they married and became, in some sense, the property of their husbands. I am not intending to directly compare marriage and slavery, but to point out the connections between naming, erasure of past connections and the attempt to replace them with new loyalties, as well as to highlight the history of re-naming and ownership.

The naming practices which I am focusing on in this thesis – those of England and Scotland – were different until the nineteenth century (Barclay, 2011: 98; Amy Erickson, 2005: 11). The name change signified this change in status for women from *feme sole* to

feme covert and the subsequent loss of ‘all personhood upon assuming the overriding legal *status* of wife.’ (Dickenson, 1997: 86; emphasis in original). This change had been the English practice for centuries (Amy Erickson, 2005: 11) and is usually taken to be British practice. However, my research shows name changing was not originally Scottish practice. The naming system which Scottish women used came from Roman law in which the head of household in the woman’s natal family had a large amount of power over all other family members, even into adulthood, and so all were to be recognised as connected to him through the last name (Arjava, 1998: 41; see also Chapter 3). The system grew from wanting to contain property within the birth family, rather than from any emancipatory gesture. Naming systems express the important values of the day.

Legally, coverture has ended, but it is only recently that a woman’s signature has come to have full legal significance, with the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 removing the need for a woman to have her husband or father sign for her mortgage (‘Sex Discrimination and Your Rights’, Civil Rights Movement website, n.d.). The category of ‘wife’ and the perception that a last name marks out a family unit and the particular relationships within it continues to exist: the practice of one name in a family and a wife taking her husband’s name on marriage is now accepted British practice and, despite the growing complexity of family forms in Britain, the idea that the last name marks out the ‘true’ family remains. The name *classifies* the family as a biological and social unit in which property and other inheritances can be given and exchanged; it makes it clear to the rest of society who is bound to whom and that there are particular kinds of relationships set up in which care and protection are meant to go hand in hand. Name changing remains a powerful norm filled with significance beyond simply changing one set of letters to another, as I will now go on to discuss in greater detail in relation to theorists who have entered this debate.

2.6 The Significance of the Name

The name as part of identity has been discussed, accepted and rejected by scholars for centuries but John Stuart Mill is often mentioned as a starting point for considering how important the name is to a person. His writings on names make it clear that he saw proper names as given only so that individuals can be discussed by others in general discourse, and not that they denote any specific attributes (Zabeeh, 1968: 10). As Gardiner puts it, Mill argued that proper names were ‘meaningless marks set upon things to distinguish

them from one another' (Gardiner, 1957: 1). This influential modern philosopher took names as organisers of people (separating them off from one another), but did not see *the way in which people were organised* as important.

I would argue against Mill's claim: as shown above, names are given by powerful sets of people in society and have real impact on people's lives. When scholars argue that last names 'tell people apart' it is important to note that, historically, the very aim of having women take on their husband's last name (and officially his first name too, e.g. Mrs. John Smith) was *not* to be able to tell them apart: women were a part of the husband's larger and more significant identity. Names, as Gardiner and later Bourdieu, point out, become *embodied* by both the person who gives and the person who receives the name: one has expectations of the person they name and the named must deal with those expectations and *become* the name they have been given (Gardiner, 1957: 10; Bourdieu, 1991: 106). A name is more than a 'meaningless mark'. People are always judged within society by their actions and words, and as the name is seen as interchangeable with the actual person, it takes on the value of that person's life as perceived by themselves and others.

Naming, then, has a significance and symbolism beyond simply entering people into discourse and allowing them to be easily distinguished from one another. In Bourdieu's argument, any kind of naming has 'a performative or magical intention' (Bourdieu, 1991: 105). He takes the personal name as one end of a continuum of naming which includes 'gossip, slander, lies, insults, commendations, criticisms, arguments and praises' as 'daily and petty manifestations of the solemn and collective acts of naming' (Bourdieu, 1991: 105). All kinds of naming acts construct our social world: 'By structuring the perceptions which social agents have of the social world, the act of naming helps to establish the structure of this world, and does so all the more significantly the more widely it is recognized i.e. authorized' (Bourdieu, 1991: 105) – this links back to the general discussion about classification and its power. The norm of women changing names on marriage is certainly recognised in British culture and therefore has definite authorisation. Mill's argument about proper names ignores the evidence that names, as value-laden symbols of a person's life, come to be closely bound up with their worth as a human.

The family becomes a group, classified together, and this is symbolically and literally shown by the use of the same last name. Ueno's point is worth reiterating – societies generally do not look happily on children with different last names from one another as this suggests an illegitimacy and promiscuity on the part of the mother (Ueno, 2009: 204). The biologically connected family unit is shown by a common last name, certainly between father and children and, in Britain, between *all* family members. This will be discussed further in Chapter 6 'Creating "Family"'.

Bourdieu claims that the authority of a person within society is cemented by particular rites of passage, and marriage is given as a specific example. Marriage produces a number of sexual divisions between men and women and masculine and feminine, each boundary entirely arbitrary but made to look natural (Bourdieu, 1991: 118). Once these rites have become recognised and normalised however their 'symbolic efficacy' acts on reality (Bourdieu, 1991: 119). The giving and taking of a last name can be seen in these terms as a highly normalised and socially recognised practice: any form is structured to deal with this process, having a space for 'previous name' and the marriage ceremony itself leaving space for a woman to sign her new name and immediately change it in law, whereas men would have to go through the process of changing their name by deed poll. This practice, by subsuming women and men under one name, ingrains and emphasises the gendered power within marriage and society more generally: a social order is maintained and innovative ways of dealing with the last name and family groupings are legally and socially discouraged.

The shared name, then, is a symbol of the family group and of heterosexual, family life. To venture into the world of semiotics, I turn to Pollock, who, in discussing masks and identity, refers to the 'semiotics of identity' – symbols which are 'a variety of means for signalling identity, or changes in identity' (Pollock, 1995: 582). Names, as with masks, can signal identity or changes in identity. Name changing is a clear example of such signalling, both of the change to becoming married and then representing this new identity. Such symbols can transform identity (Pollock, 1995: 582), but are also embedded within a culture and the two impact upon one another (Pollock, 1995: 582).

Goffman's work on the presentation of self (1990 [1959]) emphasises how important symbols are to interaction in everyday life. Without such symbols it is hard to make sense of the world around us and fit ourselves into everyday situations. The performance of selfhood requires knowledge and incorporation of 'the officially accredited values of the society' (Goffman, 1990 [1959]: 45). Name changing is one such performance of married selfhood, wifehood, and femininity. As Goffman argues, such performances can be looked upon as ceremonies; ceremonies celebrating the values of the culture (1990 [1959]: 45). Symbols can be many things, both tangible and intangible, but the important element is that they have meaning and order society in a meaningful way. This name changing manages, in a society that finds meaning in gendered hierarchy and inequality, and is a part of the reason name retaining is often seen as threatening and confusing.

Having outlined the importance of thinking about names and naming systems in sociological work, I will now consider four areas of literature significant to this project: individualisation theories, theories of love and heterosexuality, family, and selfhood, and highlight the gaps in these which my thesis fills.

2.7 Individualisation Theories

Thomas Dumm suggests that the modern world is suffused with loneliness: it is a powerful and political emotion which pervades most important aspects of our lives (Dumm, 2008). In outlining this loneliness Dumm notes that in modern relationships people are estranged from one another and their attachments are weak – our 'lives in common' are far less significant to us now (2008: ix); hence feeling lonely is the most common state for modern people. Dumm's thesis on loneliness is part of a wider ranging discussion on the state of the modern world in which theorists of individualisation have come to the fore. The names of Giddens, Beck, Beck-Gernsheim, and Bauman are significant within these debates for their ideas on the individualising modern world moving away from, and in some theories escaping, the bonds of the past. The separation from others and the loss of a 'life in common' in late modernity are important to all of these theorists, to differing degrees.

Bauman's description of late modernity is the most pessimistic. He describes the late modern world as 'liquid' 'because like all liquids, it cannot stand still and keep its shape for long' (Bauman, 2010: 1). Things change quickly and people have a short attention

span, which moves from one fad and excitement to the next (2010: 1). We have little control over the fast pace of our lives and therefore, to survive, we must be 'flexible' (2010: 2). The internet allows us more information than we could ever have previously imagined being in our pockets and at our fingertips – this is a mixed blessing for Bauman, as we can never escape the onslaught and have to wade through information attempting to sort the 'grains of truth... from the chaff of lies, illusion, rubbish and waste...' (2010: 2). The people moving within this fast-paced society are increasingly individualised and look to their own goals for satisfaction, rather than pulling towards a life in common directed by authorities and institutional structure (Bauman, 2011: 49). Though Bauman argues that the 'job with which humans are charged today remains much the same as it has been since the beginning of modern times' (2011: 48), the sheer amount of information and choice available to humans makes this task somewhat different. People are now expected to make coherent identities, 'solid enough to be acknowledged', but flexible enough to be able to move as necessary in an insecure world (Bauman, 2011: 50).

He argues that this insecurity and transience is not just confined to the world of work, but also spreads to relationships with other humans in which a '[d]isbelief in unity... goads people away from each other and prompts an urge to escape' (Bauman, 2003: 33). Relationships are short, lasting only as long as the intense emotions do and the individuals feel some sense of personal satisfaction (Bauman, 2003: 34) – this means that working at a relationship or tying oneself into a lifetime commitment such as marriage is seen as 'oppression' (Bauman, 2003: 47). In a society of consumers looking for the new and casting off the old, Bauman argues that long-lasting relationships are not justifiable (2003: 47). He asserts that '[l]iquid modern rationality recommends light cloaks and condemns steel casings' (2003: 47): why commit to one person when some other, better, situation may present itself?

Giddens is on the opposite end of the scale to Bauman, portraying the late modern condition as one of positivity and progress, opening up opportunity to all and breaking down the constraints of tradition and social positioning. He describes self-identity in late modernity as being a 'reflexive project of the self' (1996: 5) in which people must constantly evaluate and revise their biography, making a coherent story out of a huge number of possibilities (1996: 5). Constraint on choices due to social positioning, as with

the other theorists of individualisation and late modernity, is little mentioned by Giddens (1996) and when it is he appears to suggest that many choices remain available to the underprivileged, despite what may look like impossibly restricted situations. For example, Giddens discusses the position of a black woman, living in poverty with several children to care for and the fact her life may seem entirely bounded by her problems and her social positioning (Giddens, 1996: 86). However, he argues that the awareness of possibilities will make the experience of lack of privilege a different experience than that of the past – poverty may even make tradition seem so irrelevant that ‘the creative construction of lifestyle may become a particularly characteristic feature of such situations’ (1996: 86). This argument seems weak and overly optimistic about the reality of such a life as the one he offers as an example. His arguments, though attempting to provide a positive interpretation of the social changes he argues are happening, do not fully address the reality of lived lives, particularly for those who do not have many resources.

In terms of intimate relationships, Giddens argues that the ‘pure relationship’ grows from this high modern self-reflexivity (Giddens, 1996: 6) and couples are together simply for the benefits of being in that particular relationship. Giddens argues that commitment in pure relationships is ‘presupposed’ and that this is part of the dimension of trust key to these relationships, built through ‘mutual disclosure’ (1996: 6). This trust and commitment is part of an ‘internally referential system’ which needs no outward ‘criteria of social kinship, social duty or traditional obligation’ (Giddens, 1996: 6). This important point on commitment and outward criteria will be problematised in this thesis (see chapter 6).

In-between these two poles are Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, offering up a more neutral description of the late modern condition. Smart (2012: 20) has argued that Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s work allows the reader to ‘superimpose one’s own meaning’ onto their writing and this may account for the fact I see them as taking up the middle ground. Their theories suggest that people are indeed becoming less traditional and less attached to one another through the oppressive structures of institutions, but that this lack of security actually makes people more desperate to find love and partnerships (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2004: 190). Couples have to create their own rules and standards in love; love is ‘dogmatism for two’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2004: 191).

It is the changing place of women in society that these authors give as the major reason for the pace of change within human relationships, suggesting that men have changed very little (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2004: 150). They argue that men pay lip service to women's liberation and changing familial roles but are actively doing very little about it themselves; they may be changing in some capacities (fatherhood, for example), but it has been forced upon them (2004: 151). The combination of change and stagnation that Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2004; 2010) discuss is sometimes puzzling, as is making sense of their mixing of essentialist notions of gender and sociological attempts to break down the categories of gender. Smart has argued that the writing style of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim can make 'the meaning opaque' (2012: 20). However, their writings show the complex and contradictory nature of late modernity, and the problems with attempting to make sense of a time period that is present rather than past. Importantly they argue that tradition and the past are not completely devoid of interest and importance and that people *are* constrained by institutions, but that this constraint and influence usually occurs in a more subtle way, as 'individuals must, in part... import [regulations and guidelines] into their biographies through their own actions' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2010: 2).

The idea of changing one's name is clearly linked to patriarchal power structures within heterosexual relations: it is a guideline for marriage which people continue to import into their biographies. Such traditions hold a powerful sway and the actions of women and men are governed by them: the decisions we make are influenced by cultural and social tradition (Adams, 2003: 224; Gross, 2005; Jackson et al., 2013). Individualisation theorists do not allow for this and therefore their theories do not speak to every situation or every group within modern society (see Chapter 5). As Gross argues, the difference between regulative traditions and meaning-making traditions needs to be more fully respected by theorists of individualisation (2005: 294). Regulative traditions are those which stems from communities within our society which regulate out behaviour – religious communities, firms and companies in which one works, local community groups – and tell us which sorts of behaviour are acceptable and which are not; meaning-making traditions shape social action and what is even thinkable in a given situation (Gross, 2005: 294 – 295). Certain regulative traditions may be declining in significance as individualisation theorists suggest, but not all and not for everyone, while meaning-making traditions are *not* declining and continue to shape what action is meaningful to the self and understandable to

others (Gross, 2005: 295). Western societies are ‘characterized by the co-existence of traditional and modern elements’ (Jackson et al., 2013: 669).

It seems there is a tension for women living in modernity, a period of rapid social change. It cannot be denied that women’s lives *are* freer than they have been in the past – women can work outside the home, make their own money, and live independently, as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim discuss (2010), yet living freely is not as easy for women as it might seem at first due to gendered inequalities within the working world and the social pressure to conform to the path of marriage and family. Carter’s work (2011) has shown that younger women – who might be expected to be wholeheartedly enjoying their modern, individualistic freedoms – are conforming to traditional ideas of marriage. The meaning-making traditions surrounding marriage, love, wifehood, and name changing are as significant as ever (Gross, 2005). My study will consider the tension between naming decisions and individualistic versus relational ideas of the self (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim admit there remains an element of ‘living for others’ in women’s lives (2010: 74). This ‘living for others’ is displayed publically by the name change, which sees the woman lose her individual place in the world and take up a far more relational identity, which entails a sacrifice³. Woodhouse has argued that women’s identities are still closely bound up with being wife and mother and devoting themselves to others (Woodhouse, 1988: 380). This tending to the needs of others is done in a spirit of love and care, but if ‘love’ is used to justify a familial structure which remains exploitative of women then it requires examination. This theme will be explored in-depth in Chapter 6, but I will first consider the existing literature on heterosexuality and love in which my findings are situated.

2.8 Heterosexuality and Love

Heterosexuality is ‘a largely silent principle of social organisation’ (Johnson, 2005: 5). It is something taken-for-granted, presumed to be ‘natural’ and therefore not worth investigating. This is not to suggest that work critiquing heterosexuality has not occurred, because such work can be traced back to the 1970s (Jackson, 1999: 2), but that too little

³ All names are relational but, again, women are asked to change their symbol of relationality, take on a new name, focusing their selves on their new family in a break with the past. This is not asked of men.

attention has been paid to it. Both heterosexuality and love are often presented as timeless, ‘trans-historical and universal’ (Johnson, 2005: 40). They are seen as ‘natural’ parts of human society and love as a deeply held emotion which can barely be described, never mind subjected to scrutiny (Jackson, 1993: 201). This leaves major structures within our society under-researched and badly understood: love should not be thought of as an unchanging emotion, entirely natural and free from society’s influence, yet researchers are loath to tackle it seriously (Johnson, 2005: 45).

Heterosexuality, as Hockey et al. note, can be hard to research as it is barely articulated (2010: 2). Heterosexuals see themselves as the norm and conversations about heterosexual relationships rarely foreground the fact a *heterosexual* relationship is being discussed: people use ‘vague yet important yardsticks’ to discuss how ‘good’ their relationships are (Hockey et al., 2010: 3). People are aware there is a way of being a heterosexual in that they worry over transgressing boundaries – what is *not* heterosexual can be described, but what *is* is more difficult (Jackson, 2003: 77; Hockey et al., 2010: 10). It pervades our lives yet remains ‘absolved from scrutiny, explanation, condemnation or tolerance’ (Hockey et al., 2010: 5); even if we do not define as heterosexual we continue to be governed by it as it is such a dominant organising principle (Johnson, 2005: 11). As Rich famously defined it, heterosexuality is ‘compulsory’ (Rich, 1980) – it is seen as the ‘natural’ route, around which our society is structured and everything within it is organised around the idea of a working husband and a caregiving (house)wife. Thinking about heterosexuality as a specific identity rather than a natural given can cause consternation: the act of labelling – naming – this category is a political act in itself (Kitzinger et al., 1992: 297 – 298). Heterosexuality is not natural, however, and to refrain from investigating it leaves this illusion intact, without interrogating the interests that are being served by its present existence (Ingraham, 2008: 16).

Heterosexuality is an institution *and* a set of practices, experiences and feelings, which are intertwined with gender (Jackson, 2003: 77; 80). It is a complex term, which encompasses varying perceptions of it and cannot be reduced to an idea of a *monolithic* system (Jackson, 2003: 72). In approaching this complex system and attempting to destabilise it scholars have looked empirically at marriage and heterosexual coupledom, revealing power relations, the distribution of labour within the household, gendered emotion work, and the

continued power of gendered roles (Leonard, 1980; Askham, 1984; Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Mansfield and Collard, 1988; Jamieson, 2003; Hockey et al, 2010), some of which will be described in more detail below. Work looking at the convergence of class, gender, and respectability has helped to define the boundaries of heterosexuality and examined the ways in which women's lives are organised by it (Skeggs, 2001).

Other empirical research has looked at heterosexuality's influence on the state and economics, as well as into intimate identities. Heath describes the state-sanctioned encouragement of heterosexuality and children raised within heterosexual families, through 'marriage workshops' in the United States (Heath, 2009). These workshops provide an implicit message about gendered hierarchy (Heath, 2009). Schilt and Westbrook discuss the problems transgender people continue to face in 'passing' as heterosexual and the sanctions that are meted out to them by cis-gender heterosexuals when they fail (Schilt and Westbrook, 2009). The very 'One-ness' of heterosexuality, in contrast to the 'Others' of homosexuality and non-cis gender identities is revealed in this research. In an article which looks at the gendering of the World Bank and neoliberal economics Griffin (2007) discusses the socio-political effects of neoliberal economic policy governing the Bank and the specific ways in which gender and heteronormativity are used within this context to make sense of the world and render people easier to regulate (Griffin, 2007: 233).

Heterosexuality has also been interrogated on a theoretical level as an organising principle of society which is a normalised part of how the world is perceived and understood (Ingraham, 1996; Wittig, 1996; Beasley et al., 2012). Wittig described this as 'the straight mind' (Wittig, 1996: 146), which takes heterosexuality as a natural and given state upon which knowledges of the world can be built. Ingraham's idea of the 'heterosexual imaginary' (1996: 168) similarly addresses the way in which the world is perceived through a heterosexual lens, one which structures how the world is viewed. This, she argues, is most worrying when feminist sociologists take heterosexuality for granted and fail to investigate it critically, therefore reinforcing the patriarchal narratives they wished to undermine (1996: 181). Instead heterosexuality must be problematised and its position of dominance destabilised: recognising its contours, complexities, and contradictions has become a project recognised as vital to feminism (Smart, 1998). *Heterosexualities* becomes a more salient term than *heterosexuality* (Smart, 1998: 179).

Feminist scholars have grappled with the tensions of living a heterosexual life, especially when one defines as a feminist (Ramazanoglu, C, 1992; Jackson, 1999: 11). Domestic living arrangements within heterosexual relationships has been a point of interest for much sociological research but, as VanEvery argues, heterosexual domestic life does not have to equate to a hegemonic construction of – and lived experience of – heterosexuality (1998: 53). In attempting to re-imagine heterosexuality away from essentialist ideas of gendered power the argument that heterosexuality is a viable and possibly radical position for feminists to hold has begun to be discussed (Rowland, 1992). The tensions of living as a heterosexual who defines as a feminist will be discussed below, in reference to my participants.

As Jackson argues, everyday heterosexuality is experienced in a number of ways through various rituals, practices, and divisions of behaviour and routine (1999: 26). The ‘natural’ heterosexual relationship on which so much of social, political and economic policy is based includes the wedding as a pivotal (and taken-for-granted, ‘everyday’) moment. The relationship my participants have with their name may well have changed significantly on this day; they will have had to reflect upon their name around this point in their lives whatever their decision. Marriage is both an individual and a collective experience – people make choices for themselves and can be creative, but marriage continues to have a social and cultural aspect from which it cannot be severed, and which influences the decisions people make (Mansfield and Collard, 1988: 30-31). Marriage remains ‘an important cultural symbol’, a sign of growing up and gaining security (Mansfield and Collard, 1988: 52) (see Chapter 8). People attempt to show ‘that they belong to a category of normal, respectable, moral people, namely those who are married’ (Askham, 1984: 142). Within this setting women are expected to care and love and do not see any of the physical or emotional labour they do as exploitative (Mansfield and Collard, 1988: 35; see Chapter 6). It is, in fact, seen as quite normal, and falling into these patterns and roles confirms one’s normality (Mansfield and Collard, 1988: 53).

The disappointment in marriage which the women in Mansfield and Collard’s study on newly-weds found when their husbands did not return the emotional involvement and effort the women put into their relationship has also been found in other studies. In Duncombe and Marsden’s study, for example, the women were surprised to discover ‘the

emotional loneliness within coupledom which they had regarded as a personal failing was shared by other women' (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993: 225). Of course, not all marriages are like this, but roles within marriage do remain and cannot be dismissed. The high levels of divorce and decline in marriage seen in survey statistics of the UK may reflect this lack of satisfaction, as well as the higher standards people have of marriage, especially now they do not have to tolerate a life-long unfulfilling marriage (Smart, 2012: 14 – 15).

However, divorce rates have fallen, with 2007 seeing the lowest number of divorces in a single year since 1976 (Hughes and Church, 2010: 13). Though the latest statistics show that around 42 percent of marriages (in England and Wales) end in divorce (ONS, 2013) this is reflective of those marrying in the 1990s and before. The proportion of marriages ending in divorce for those married since 2000 is falling (ONS, 2013). Marriage continues to be an aspiration for young women (Carter, 2011) and the wedding industry continues to boom (Ingraham, 2008). The positive aspirations couples have for their marriage conceal the gendered work which still exists within the institution. The 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 2003a: 7) within relationships is connected to a huge number of gender differentials but is often disguised by the word 'love'.

As Jónasdóttir argues (1991: 11), the Western world has, for the most part, legally and formally given women equal opportunities, yet inequalities persist. She questions what underlying mechanisms are at work to maintain this situation (Jónasdóttir, 1991: 11), and throughout her work looks at the exploitation of feeling – love, specifically – which men are able to use to exploit women (Jónasdóttir, 1991; see also Chapter 6). The exploitation of feeling, and love in particular, is an important theme in my research.

The most powerful way of describing love is as a timeless, biological emotion, felt to be 'natural' (Johnson, 2005: 6). However, I will be following Johnson's social constructionist argument:

The proposition I am making is not that love *causes* heterosexuality but that the social construction of love is bound up with, and legitimizes, a range of heterosexual practices. This is the opposite of the biological model where we 'read forward' from love, because I am proposing that we 'read backwards' from

sexuality, to see how love is invoked as the basis for a way of being, rather than being a natural basis for that way of being. (Johnson, 2005: 3)

From this perspective I can consider how love is used to legitimise the practice of name changing, and what social pressures women have to struggle with whatever decision they make (see Chapter 6).

Theories of the ‘pure relationship’ (Giddens, 2008: 2) and ‘confluent love’ (Giddens, 2008: 61) suggest that people are only together for as long as they feel satisfaction from the relationship and that the idea of the ‘one and only’ is receding (Giddens, 2008: 61 – 62). As Giddens argues, romantic love has always been ‘skewed in terms of power’, despite people narrating it as egalitarian (2008: 62). Therefore, as women’s position in society improves and the gendered power imbalances disappear, Giddens argues that couples will not feel a need to be with each other for life, but only “‘until further notice’” (Giddens, 2008: 63). Yet empirical research suggests this theory is too simplistic (Langford, 1999; Carter, 2011). Long-term commitment is not something younger people are shying away from and romantic relationships within married coupledom remains something young women strive towards (Carter, 2011). The power of love as a discourse needs to be investigated here to understand why traditional decisions are being taken in its name, as well as taking to task some of the over-simplified ideas around modern relationships.

Wendy Langford’s study with 15 women and their experiences of love points out some of the ways in which narratives of love are used by women. These narratives, which run along the same lines as romance literature, are compelling; love lifts the world above the mundane everyday (Langford, 1999: 30). Love acts as a ‘secular religion’, giving women a sense of transcendence and otherworldliness (Langford, 1999: 35). This study shows love raising women’s self-esteem and their sense of self-worth: without love they feel ordinary, ugly and, often, unable to cope with life’s burdens (Langford, 1999: 28). Yet, she points out, women in relationships often end up continuing to do all of the work they did previously and do not receive emotional support from their partners (1999: 29): this conclusion is also upheld by other empirical studies (see Duncombe and Marsden, 1993 and Mansfield and Collard, 1988). Yet staying in the relationship is considered better than leaving it because ‘there is an association between being of value and being in a relationship such that being single is equated with being in some way defective’ (Langford,

1999: 28). Love promises to *complete* these women by providing them with what they lack (Johnson, 2005: 78) and this lack is the power that men possess in all aspects of life – the women in Langford’s study doubt their own autonomy and ability to cope with life, so turn to men for this support (Langford, 1999). Elements of these findings are found in my own research (see chapter 6). Love, heterosexuality and marriage are bound together, but they are also closely connected to ideas of family, to which I will now turn.

2.9 Family

Much sociological enquiry into the family has found that it does not really exist, at least not as one, singular, homogenised unit (Morgan, 2011: 3). There are varieties of families and family life which ‘the family’ does not encapsulate, including non-married couples, single mothers, and lesbian and gay couples (with children). There can also be ‘families’ of friends (Chan, 2012: 35 – 36) or other arrangements which steer away from the heteronormative image of a woman, a man, married and living together with their children. As Morgan argues, to use ‘the family’ is to oversimplify real lives (Morgan, 2011: 4).

Thinking about how a society conceptualises family is significant. As Luxton and Fox argue, such conceptualisations reveal ‘cultural assumptions’ which ‘inform... legislation, policies, and practices’, as well as how we live our lives on an individual level (2009: 6). The power of the concept of family is so great that it can limit, but also expand, our imaginations about possible futures (Luxton and Fox, 2009: 6). This last is pertinent: the imagining of gay and lesbian couples as loving units brought about the possibility of arguing for their ability to marry and adopt (Woo, 2007). The very act of imagining can have material and political consequences. Within my study the act of imagining the family – within heterosexuality – impacts on the use of names to create this imagined family in reality.

The family has been written about and conceptualised as a place of egalitarianism, care, and love, but also as a place where inequalities are reproduced (Seubert, 2010: 5 – 6). As Seubert has argued, families are *meant* to be places in which care is given and received and where we can share our troubles, but this does not always transpire (2010: 6, n6). Inequalities can also be generated through unequal sharing of resources, work within families, and/or ‘immaterial resources’ which Seubert defines as ‘values, dispositions,

abilities, competencies or gender-specific attributions... communicated to children by their parent's lifestyle, activities and interests' (2010: 6). Following Bourdieu, Seubert argues that the family unit conceals this inequality (2010: 6). Seubert ultimately wants to create a positive and just conception of family which could impact positively on people's lives (2010: 7) and strives towards this in her arguments. To do this, scholars need first to understand how families work in actuality and move from looking at family as a noun to considering the *processes* which constitute families of all kinds.

Morgan argues for thinking about family 'practices' and how we 'do' family (Morgan, 2011: 5). It is this 'doing' of family which I focus on in this thesis to understand the use of names in constituting family and kinship connections. Family is actively constructed, daily, through doing certain things. Sharing time, going to designated 'family events', talking with and about one another, perhaps living together, caring for one another, and sharing resources. I would add to this the importance of names and the meanings with which we fill them. As Finch argues, names make connections between people, as well as constituting individual selfhood (2008: 710 – 711). They are an important, if under-examined part of sociological research. She puts forward three questions about names and family in particular which need answering: 'How far, in the context of contemporary UK society, are names used publically to map family connections?'; 'How far do people use the process of naming in constituting their family relationships?'; and 'What do naming practices tell us about the contemporary significance of families and kinship?' (Finch, 2008: 710). My study offers data with which to begin answering these questions (see Chapter 7). Names are alive with meaning and are a part of living, constantly evolving familial relationships.

In many ways this 'doing' of family is about who we perceive our family to be: it is about the imagination and construction of family within the mind, which is then cemented by various practices, including naming practices. Ueno has argued that *perception* is as significant as action to an idea of family (Ueno, 2009: 4). The people who make up a family define its parameters and who is a part of it as well as who is not. Ueno gives an example from Japan, the context in which she works: Japanese war orphans searching for families to sponsor them to live in Japan and declare themselves their kin are looking to be perceived as family despite the lack of biological ties (Ueno, 2009: 4). Ueno points out

that the same perception might not exist on both sides of this relationship and could result in one side not seeing the other as ‘true’ family (2009: 4).

I was struck by one of my cousin’s children informing me that his mother’s family was his *mother’s family only*, and not his. His father’s family however, were his family. I was surprised by my desire to explain biological ties to this five year old and say he was wrong, until I realised his viewpoint was perfectly valid. As he pointed out to me, he rarely saw his mother’s family, spent little time with them, and barely knew them, yet saw his father’s family almost daily and was good friends with his cousins. Family is about what we perceive it to be and how we try to show this publically and through our actions. My participants constitute family in various ways and names aid them in doing so, as will be seen in Chapter 7.

Familial, relational identity is significant to a discussion of names, but so is individual identity. It is the connections between these – the self and other – which I explore in Chapter 8 and it is this literature I wish to examine next by considering the theorists most significant to my conceptualisation of self, as well as discussing the self of reflexive modernisation and the problems there are with this particular theory of selfhood.

2.10 Selfhood

There are varied and often conflicting theories of selfhood within long-term relationships. Falling in love and being part of an intimate couple relationship like marriage is often described as a merging or fusing of selves, so that individuality is in some way lost (Kern, 1992: 282). Yet there is also a struggle for autonomy within love which Sartre has described as appropriating the freedom of others to make oneself free (Sartre in Johnson, 2005: 79), yet this has a gendered angle which he did not investigate. This angle was theorised by scholars such as Rich who argues that women’s subjectivity is re-orientated to identify with men within heterosexual relationships (Rich, 1980: 646).

Naming practices highlight the tension in self-formation between the ‘desire for recognition’ by others (Crossley, 2001: 102) and the significance of individuality for women in contemporary Britain, and this tension must be dealt with to create a coherent sense of self. To do so, participants use narratives of self in particular ways to make sense

of social norms surrounding names and ‘appropriate’ heterosexual, gendered behaviour: how selves are conceptualised and narrated is significant to the everyday understanding and lived experience of gendered identity. This will be explored further in chapter 8. Here though I will outline the main theorists who inform my own conceptualisation of self and whose theories inform this project, first addressing the self of modern reflexivity and my conceptual problems with this particular idea of selfhood before looking at Foucault’s idea of ‘technologies of the self’, Bourdieu’s *habitus*, and Mead’s dialectic of the self.

2.10.1 The Problem with the Modern Reflexive Self

Recent theorisations on reflexive modernisation have posited that all of life now comes down to choice and individual agency (see above for more detail), and it appears to be an ideology many find appealing. The biography of the self is one built upon these choices: life is open to possibilities, less constrained by tradition, and how the self is defined and played out in individual lives can be creative, shifting and changing with the situation. The amount of reflexive work involved in living in late modernity and the proliferation of choices around all of daily life has created a situation in which reflexivity is unavoidable (Giddens, 1996; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2010). As Budgeon notes, for theorists of reflexive modernisation the fact we *must* choose is itself not a choice, but it is the only thing we are not free to decide for ourselves in modern society (2003: 106). Through actively reflecting on the possibilities open to us and the paths we can take in life, we choose the direction of our lives and the make-up of our identities. Our identities are truly there for us to self-create; we are true individuals.

The individual as self and agent became an important figure for political debate in the seventeenth century (Bellah et al., 1988: 143): individual rights and freedoms were significant at a time in which the power of God and His divinely established ‘natural’ hierarchy of people were being challenged. The concept of the rational, active agent of contemporary Anglo-American philosophy remains central to theorists of reflexive modernisation. This person’s desires:

are ranked in a coherent order and [their] aim is to maximize desire satisfaction. This conception of the self isolates the individual from personal relationships and larger social forces. It pays little attention to how the individual’s desires are formed, nor does it acknowledge the impact of the individual’s emotional life. The

self is identified with the instrumental rationality of the marketplace (Meyers, 1997: 2).

Meyers' definition of the self in Anglo-American philosophy could equally be applied to the modern reflexive self of sociological theory. The political individual was undeniably less individualistic than the reflexive modern self, but the ideas of freedom and equality, not being under the rule of any other person or group, and the ability to *choose* contracts to enter into in life (Pateman, 1988: 39 – 40) are all ideas that remain important to this conception of the post-traditional self. Yet this is a set of categories that it has often been difficult for women to fit, historically in terms of the legal and social position of women, but continuing today in less overt forms. Women remain subordinate in our society and the possibilities open to the reflexive self are curbed by this subordination.

Budgeon notes that Giddens has a commitment to individual agency which may have led him to place too much emphasis on choice alone, but it is imperative that theorists do not ignore the inequalities still shaping the identifications open to people (2003: 39). In late modernity we are positioned by many factors including gender, race, ethnicity, class, dis/ability, and sexuality. After all, to suggest that these positionings do not affect the identifications, choices and chances available to modern people, as well as the confidence they have in their ability to succeed, is to ignore the realities of people's lives. Such positionings are value-laden: gender, ethnicity, and class are based on binary thinking in which one half of the binary is privileged over the other e.g. male/female, white/non-white, upper and middle class/working class. As Connell argues, such binaries are not acceptable, are too simplistic and exclude the many differences between and within groups: the world does not divide easily into two camps (Connell, 2009: 10). However, these binaries do help to structure thinking and do have real effects on peoples' lives (see Lucal, 1999). Therefore, to be on the non-privileged side of the binary is to face social inequality, material deprivation, and discrimination. The modern reflexive individual is theorised without gender being taken into account in most cases and therefore is not an adequate conceptualisation of agentic selfhood.

The main exception to this is the work of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim analyse women's position in modern society separately from men, arguing that women are in a 'peculiar intermediate stage' in the process of individualisation (Beck and

Beck-Gernsheim, 2010: 56). Women are now less defined by family and less dependent on men for economic survival, but they continue to have more responsibility for the care of children and the elderly as well as housework, and their position in the labour market is rather more precarious because of the less linear route women often take through their career (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2010: 56).

Therefore Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue for separate treatment of women in theory on individualisation (2010) – they notice the gendered difference in the application of individualisation. Their discussion of women as following a different trajectory through modernity, individualisation, and identity-creation is required to combat the masculinist construction of the individual. Yet by doing so they appear to suggest that there is a kind of evolutionary model involved in modern individualisation – women will *evolve* towards the position men have of being free from others and able to look only to their own choices – rather than the gendered differences in our society make it easier for men to refuse a caring role. This apparent independence from others is what makes men appear ‘further on’ in this evolutionary model. However, it is important to recognise, with Budgeon, that in fact *all* lives continue to be embedded in social processes and institutions and that social inequality means the possibilities for choice are not uniform (2003: 37); and indeed that all lives are in some way dependent on others (Ackelsberg, 2005: 70). As Young argues, ‘independent’ men are often in fact *dependent* on women, as mother or wife, for day to day care and household maintenance (Young, 1997: 124; see also Smith, 1988).

Women need separate consideration from men because of social inequalities, not because they have not ‘evolved’ enough in modern individualism. No one is as individual as modern, reflexive theories claim – and the category should be re-worked with gender and interdependency in mind. No self can exist in a vacuum and no self can make truly free choices removed from the opinions of loved ones and others, and the restrictions placed upon them by wider society, which continue to exist. My thesis evidences this fact when women come to make decisions about their name. Though there are distinct problems with using individualisation theorists when looking at gendered selfhood, Beck and Beck Gernsheim’s examination of self does provide some useful critical analysis for this project.

It is clear that position within society makes a difference to how identity can be forged and these positionings are not separate but intersect and work together to form unique circumstances for each individual within the social framework. The self is always in process and never complete, but it is not purely choice which is behind this constant refashioning, but also down to these social positionings; regulating these selves is then managed using ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault, 1988: 18). It is these ‘[t]echnologies of the self [which] operate to organize conduct in the context of everyday life and to orient this conduct toward a consideration of the kind of person one should aspire to be and the kind of life one should aim to lead’ (Budgeon, 2003: 43).

2.10.2 *Foucault and Technologies of the Self*

Any way of speaking of ourselves – including calling ourselves ‘a self’ – is simply a ‘particular style or relation that the human being is enjoined to adopt towards itself’ (Rose, 1996: 299). This way of viewing selfhood – for this is what we call this site of practices at the present time – reminds us that identity is never fixed, but always changing and in flux and encourages thinking about what authorities there are in society which influence how people think of themselves as ‘selves’ and what kinds of things produce that experience. Indeed, the word ‘self’ is historically specific: ‘Homeric man [sic] was not the introspective self-conscious being who populates Socrates’ dialogues a few hundred years later –*The Iliad* has no word for ‘person’ or ‘oneself’.’ (Porter, 2002: 13) Rose argues that changes in social arrangements do not necessarily ‘transform the nature and form of ‘being human’ by virtue of some ‘experience’ that they produce, but instead the relation a person has to him or herself requires examination i.e. ‘the ways in which human beings understand themselves and are understood by others, the kinds of persons they presume themselves to be or are pressured to be in the various practices that govern them’ (1996: 305). It is these connections between ideas ‘by which human beings are rendered thinkable’ (Rose, 1996: 305) and through which we as individuals process a sense of coherent identity. Rendering oneself thinkable is bound up in names and naming practices and the self in relation to others. Names make the self and its relation to others clear for these others, within a societal context of specific and widely-followed naming practices. This will be explored further throughout this thesis.

Foucault's discussion of technologies of the self looks back over Greek, Roman and Christian forms of ethics, looking at whether and how people have been encouraged to 'look after themselves' through meditation, writing, confession, physical exercise or labour, and what authorities were involved in instigating the processes through which particular ideas of how to conduct the self evolved (Foucault, 1988). These 'technologies' are about how human beings regulate themselves and others in relation to particular social ideas or 'truths' such as virtue and self-realisation (Budgeon, 2003: 45). How a person conducts themselves should reflect the kind of person they are or aspire to be and the kind of life they are trying to lead (Budgeon, 2003: 43). In Foucault's own words, technologies of the self:

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (1988: 18).

Any authority on conduct and regulation can be considered a 'technology of the self' and be seen as a part of the creation of identity. Naming practices, bound up with heterosexuality, are one such authority – they guide our conduct, lead us to act out certain norms and attend to certain symbols, while perpetuating a gendered societal hierarchy.

Rose sees human identity as being like a pleat: the outward simply folds in and in this way there is no separate interiority (Rose in Budgeon, 2003: 44). The authorities of the outside world – the technologies of the self – act to influence the conduct of each person and that person's interpretation of this authority produces their experience of the world and their relation to themselves. This viewpoint allows for a wholeness of outward and inner life, while still being able to see identity as fragmented and complex, drawn from a constant and changing engagement with the outside, collective world (Budgeon, 2003: 44). This sense of wholeness means a coherent life-story can be told.

It is the sign of a successful sense of identity when there is a seeming coherence to it: when the individual can make a coherent narrative of their past and present selves and look to possible futures; without this sense of coherence subjects stray into the realms of pathology (Mead, 1964). Indeed the rational, acting, self-aware agent of Giddens' work is taken to be the healthy individual in psychological texts. Wilkinson-Ryan and Westen state that: 'A

healthy identity includes the ability to choose an appropriate avenue for industry, achieve intimacy with another, and find a place in the larger society' (Wilkinson-Ryan and Westen, 2000: 529). Their discussion concludes that the opposite of this is identity confusion and can lead to personality disorder (Wilkinson-Ryan and Westen, 2000: 540). Though some of their examples of successful identity and identity confusion may be overgeneralisations – people choosing a succession of careers described as being likely to have severe identity problems (2000: 529) – their point should not be ignored: to be considered a successful, 'normal' person one needs to create a coherent narrative about oneself and be seen to have resolved any possible inconsistencies.

Despite the credibility and worth of psychology and psychoanalysis being fiercely debated (Porter, 2002: 1) and how we view ourselves and our identities being embedded in culture and the authorities of that culture, the 'normality' of the coherent person holds sway. Even though selfhood is constantly open to negotiation and change depending on those around us, including what is defined as 'normal' and what as 'pathological' (Davies and Bhugra, 2004: 126), this coherent – rational, lucid, consistent, articulate – sense of self continues to be the marker of a successfully adjusted person.

People *are* generally successful in creating this feeling of coherence; indeed we regulate our lives into coherence by using particular life stages as building blocks for a successful life story, of which marriage can still be considered one. Participants' conceptualisations of self will be further explored in Chapter 8. The institution of marriage, as a technology of the self, regulates a person into a particular social group – the couple or family – and, for many of my participants, does exemplify how they want to be thought of and how they want to live their lives: settled, committed individuals, who love and care for others, who are adults with responsibilities, and a team with common goals. Those who changed their names were often happy to consider this a symbol of their new life stage and hence self-regulation.

In each individual's life there is an amount of being able to decide what kind of life one wants to lead and what one can do to be perceived as a particular kind of self by invoking and making use of technologies of the self, as outlined by Foucault, but this makes little explicit reference to the parts of life dictated by habit and a lack of thought and

consideration. It is this side of women's decision making that Bourdieu highlights so clearly; his theory of the self embedded within social fields of habitual action or *habitus*. This theory is also crucial to explaining the actions of participants as they follow particular paths when making their naming decisions.

2.10.3 Bourdieu and Habitus

Habitus is derived from social fields – arenas of social activity – and the dispositions and forms of competence that are acquired within these fields; it is 'collective conscious' (Boyne, 2001: 8). Once a person understands how to behave within a particular social context and has obtained or gained the correct kinds and amounts of capital (economic, social, symbolic, and cultural) they can enter and flow through these social fields with ease. They understand the 'rules of the game' (see Crossley, 2001: 100 – 101). Society, its norms and values, can be looked upon as the fields of *habitus* and people 'internalise the structure of the external field' (Boyne, 2001: 5). This means that much of what people do comes from an unthinkingness or habit which allows selves to deal with their everyday lives without having to consider each movement or social interaction deeply.

This unthinkingness, which will be an important part of thinking through the way participants discuss tradition in relation to naming decisions, is highlighted by Bourdieu as 'doxa' (see Bourdieu, 1998). Doxa is the part of the public sphere which is unquestioned and full of 'unspoken assumptions upon which the state rests' (Crossley, 2001: 98 – 99). This idea is useful for thinking through the actions of participants within this study whose decisions come from assumptions about the 'correct' behaviour related to heterosexual weddings: there is a great deal of silence around naming decisions, particularly the traditional decision to change names, which rests on unquestioned assumptions about gender, wifehood, heterosexuality, and intelligible families.

This desire to follow the norms and the accepted patterns of behaviour which make up a part of doxa and habitus comes from what Crossley calls the 'desire for recognition' by others (Crossley, 2001: 102). This is the need for an identity which is intelligible and valued by society and in terms of this project meaning to be seen as a committed wife, part of a unit, who may well be a mother as well; an identity forged from societal and collective understandings of what these categories ('wife', 'mother') mean. The understanding of

social norms and values is therefore critical to any social actor if they wish to be accepted as an intelligible member of that society: in other words, *others* are critical to the perception of oneself as a correctly functioning person. These others – both specific people and a generalised other or society – are critical to this project and their impact will be explored throughout.

Selves, within Bourdieu's theories, are created from within social fields of activity, along with the dispositions and capital that are necessary for acting and speaking with ease within them. This forms habits of action and speech which structures individual lives and allow everyday interactions to be completed with relative ease. Bourdieu did not believe agency to be completely overridden by these structures and held a place for resisting norms and for change within his ideas; however the lack of clarity about agency in his work has given rise to claims of determinism (see Crossley, 2001: 115 – 118). The application of Bourdieu's theory to participant claims about their sense of self and the actions they take when naming themselves on marriage is clear, but the need for a more explicit theory of agency in the construction of selfhood is also important. Hence I wish to turn to Mead's conception of self, which deals more clearly with agency within selfhood and is the main theory on which I base my conception of selfhood in this project.

2.10.4 Mead's Theory of Selfhood

The place of each individual's agency as a human being is vital to selfhood. It would not be fair to construct people as 'slaves to culture' or, equally, as completely free agents; instead we must try and view the ways in which people have choice *and* constraint in their lives. The self is social and in constant creation; reflexivity is still important to this self. Here the arguments of Mead, elucidated by Jackson, are useful:

Mead did not see reflexivity primarily as heightened self-concern, but as the capacity to see ourselves as subject and object, which rests on a dialogic interplay between self and other... While there is no unitary, stable "core self" in Mead's account, our ability to remember (or rather retrospectively reconstruct) selves other than the self of the present enables us to create for ourselves a sense of continuity or wholeness... Reflexive self-hood, then, implies a degree of agency and active *meaning-making*, but it is always both produced within and bounded by its social context. (Jackson, 2008: 55)

The self is reflexive and can 'be both subject and object' (Mead, 1964: 201). Mead sees this self as object to itself as 'a social structure, and it arises in social experience' (Mead, 1964: 140). The self may then 'provide for itself its social experiences, and so we can conceive of an absolutely solitary self. But it is impossible to conceive of a self arising outside of social experience' (Mead, 1964: 204). We all relate and respond to the opinions and actions of others (Mead, 1964: 205).

The social community in which people move and act – the 'generalised other' – is a part of building up a sense of self as this needs to be done in relation to these others, their opinions, and thoughts, and whatever social activity is being engaged in (Mead, 1964: 218). It is only by considering the thoughts of this generalised other that a person can have the necessary understanding of who to be and how to act (Mead, 1964: 220). Fitting ourselves into wider groups, from childhood onwards, is how personality develops (Mead, 1964: 223). Each self is different 'but there has to be such a common structure... in order that we may be members of a community at all' (Mead, 1964: 227). 'Selves can only exist in definite relationships to other selves' (Mead, 1964: 227). Mead argues that the social group must pre-exist for the self to arise: 'there is a social process out of which selves arise and within which further differentiation, further evolution, further organization, take place' (Mead, 1974: 164). This 'social group' can refer to a wide variety of contexts: family, work place, or a generalised society and suggests that people still need to account to others in a way individualisation theorists often do not allow (see Chapters 6, 7, and 8).

This fitting of oneself into the wider group takes reflexive work. Mead also looks to explain the idea of 'I' and 'me' using the idea of reflexivity: the 'I' and the 'me' are in constant dialogue. He argues that the 'I' of one moment, in the next becomes 'me'; we identify ourselves as 'I', but when we reflect upon our actions we are reflecting upon 'me' (Mead, 1964: 237). The 'I' 'is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the 'me' is the organized set of attitudes of others which one assumes (Mead, 1964: 237). The 'I' may not always react within the social expectations of others, but this response will become a part of the experience of that self and be stored up within their experience of how to react in similar situations; the 'me' knows the social expectations of others as they are stored up as experience (Mead, 1964: 238 - 239).

Mead claims that the 'I' will use and respond to the 'me' and that the 'self is essentially a social process going on with these two distinguishable phases' (Mead, 1974: 178). He believes the interchange between them creates both 'conscious responsibility... and [something] novel in experience' (Mead, 1974: 178). It is only after we act that we realise what we have done, and that the 'I' of that act becomes clearly responsible for it – it is these small acts which add up to social change over time (Mead, 1974: 203). This is not to suggest that the 'I' cannot take responsibility for its actions in advance and hold themselves to contracts, but that the exact format of the action cannot be envisaged until it is complete (Mead, 1974: 203).

The self is a social being, part of the social world and its limitations as well as its possibilities. The person will usually have agency in any given situation, to a different degree, but will remain bounded by the social and cultural context. There is no fixed core self, but instead a person changing with time, experience, and context. This is my theoretical stance on the self, but my participants use ideas of the self in a variety of ways to make their lives coherent and accountable (see Chapter 8). I would argue, with Gergen, that the unitary, singular self continues to hold imaginative sway in the Western context (Gergen, 1991), but that the idea of a more fluid and even fragmented self is gaining ground and is used, implicitly, by some of my participants as a narrative of selfhood.

Hence, the self is both agent and embedded within a restrictive set of cultural norms. People do have choices to make but these are not free from all constraint: the past, traditions, and the example of others are influential. Relationships with other people and their expectations structure thought and action, as the self attempts to make itself accountable and understandable to the other. Familial ties, couple relationships, as well as interaction with strangers and the generalised other of society are significant to how the self sees itself and is perceived by others; technologies of the self help to build up a picture of a person, which that person wants to project to the world. Names are a part of this. As powerful and meaningful social organisers they are a crucial part of social organisation and both individual and collective identities, projecting identity onto a public stage. All of these ideas will be discussed further throughout this thesis. Before looking at my empirical data though I will outline the historical context of marriage, love, and surnames to situate the modern British position within its past.

Chapter 3 A History of Love, Marriage, and Surnames

The connections between last names, property, and marriage are explicit throughout much of history and it is important to understand this historical association and the use of last names as a part of social organisation. This chapter will investigate marriage, love, property and inheritance rights, and their connections with surnames from the medieval period to the present day. The way in which British people marry has changed over time; the meaning of marriage and the intervention of Church and State are historically situated. The main focus will be on Scotland and England (or Britain where applicable) as these two nations are where my participants live or say their roots are, however I do also mention Wales and Ireland, and use examples from other countries where useful.

Historical research is valuable in understanding the institution of marriage: the institution has a history and the choices we make about it today are a culmination of this history so far. However, as with all research, there are limitations and for historical research this comes in terms of only being able to use the records left behind. These records are usually left by the upper classes – those with the time, education and social standing to be able to read, write, and record their thoughts or the proceedings of formal events and meetings; these upper-class authors are usually male also as, for large periods in history, women were not encouraged to learn to read and write and when they could were often discouraged from particular kinds of writing, especially public scholarship (Scott, 1999: 29 – 30). Added to this already biased record of history is the fact some records will have survived better than others through sheer chance, while others will have been destroyed deliberately to create a particular picture of history (Tosh, 2006: 77). My point in emphasising this is to note that much of what I write about in this chapter relates to these upper classes: property is a particularly upper class concern. Where possible I will try to illuminate the position of those without money and land, though sometimes there is a degree of speculation in historians' accounts.

This chapter acts as a brief overview and cannot give the full breadth and depth of historical change, but aims instead to paint a broad picture of significant changes. However, this context is necessary and relevant – in order to understand the modern day situation it is worth taking stock of what has led us to where we are. To this end I will

begin by looking at how people have married from the medieval period to the modern day in England and Scotland.

3.1 Getting Married

3.1.1 England

In England women were free adults who could technically make their own decisions about whom to marry (Macfarlane, 1987: 149)⁴. The woman and the man were both required to consent to marriage and this consent was the only thing *necessary* to make a marriage binding (Macfarlane, 1987: 126). Though ‘fully regular’ marriage was conducted in church, in front of witnesses, and only after the calling of banns or buying of a license, the marriage contract was in essence the uttering of only a few words (Lemmings, 1996: 344) without parental consent or church intervention. Though the speaking of words between two people, without public ceremony, was not legal it was *ecclesiastically* sound, hence it was difficult for courts not to accept these unions, as they were acceptable to God (Harth, 1988: 125). This kind of marriage was called a betrothal or self-marriage (Harth, 1988: 125). There was also another form of ‘irregular marriage’ that was conducted by a clergyman or priest, but without publicity (Harth, 1988: 125). Marriage was a sacrament and therefore encouraged among the lay people.

Whatever the religious and legal situation though, there is no doubt children looked to parents, other family, friends and neighbours for advice and support; many would want the blessing and consent of their parents to go ahead (Macfarlane, 1987: 128). The church did not *have* to be involved in marriage, but from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century it began to develop its control over the process (Macfarlane, 1987: 153). After the Reformation marriage was downgraded in the Protestant faith: it was no longer a necessary sacrament in the church as it had been in the medieval period. At the same time however it was also no longer posited as a ‘second best’ to celibacy, instead being an honourable, if worldly, institution (Macfarlane, 1987: 153). Martin Luther wrote that, though he understood the significance of chastity and was happy for those who could manage to remain chaste, he wished for all monks and nuns to leave their cloistered lives and marry, rather than live with the fear of having sinned despite feeling only natural feelings:

⁴ Most would no doubt have been subject to familial and other considerations in practice.

Therefore any monk or nun who finds that he is too weak to maintain chastity should conscientiously examine himself; if his heart and conscience are thus strengthened, let him take a wife and be a husband. Would to God all monks and nuns could hear this sermon and properly understand this matter and would all forsake the cloisters, and thus all the cloisters in the world would cease to exist; this is what I would wish (Luther, *Invocavit Sermons*: 7).

A quiet wedding between two people was a situation open to abuse, however ecclesiastically acceptable it was. People could later claim they had never consented to marry, marry several people without others knowing, disinherit children, or even abduct heirs and heiresses and force them to perform the marriage vows (Lemmings, 1996: 341). Errant clergymen also made money out of irregular marriages where they could and this became increasingly big business after 1660 (Lemmings, 1996: 345), beginning a serious debate about the regularisation of marriage in England. Nevertheless it remained that the speaking of words of commitment between a man and a woman was recognised by the church and was therefore a binding marriage. Macfarlane sums this up:

From the twelfth to eighteenth centuries marriage for men from 14, for girls from 12, was valid against all pressures from the outside world (1987: 127).

Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 saw limits placed on the ability for people under twenty-one to marry without their parents' consent (Lemmings, 1996: 343) and the ceremony had to be held publically, through official religious channels (Macfarlane, 1987: 127). This act was intended to deal with problems arising around proving whether or not a marriage had taken place and thereby ordering property and inheritance: this was of course most significant for wealthy families. Church and state mechanisms were also made central to the marriage process, as these two institutions tightened their regulation and control of the population.

The Act was precipitated by a case brought in Scotland, in which a man died and two women presented themselves as his rightful spouse (see Leneman, 1999). The case was protracted and both women brought evidence of their status as wife to Captain John Campbell of Carrick. There was evidence on both sides, and though in the end one woman was declared Campbell's 'true' wife, this troubling case brought the issue of clandestine marriage to the fore. Lord Hardwicke had long tried to move government to act on

clandestine marriage (Leneman, 1999) and this was finally done in 1753 (the act came into effect in 1754). Irregular marriage was now banned.

There remained ways of getting around the Act, however, the most famous being ‘Gretna Green marriages’ in which couples from England would go over the border to Scotland’s border towns to marry⁵. England continued to recognise irregular marriages conducted in Scotland, hence the use of this loophole by some couples. Gretna Green has become synonymous with this practice as it was on a major toll road leading up from England to Scotland and was therefore easy to travel to (Gibson, April, 2013). The marriage act of 1836 relaxed the restrictions on Catholics and nonconformists marrying in their own places of worship (the Hardwicke Act had forced them to marry in the Anglican Church), and allowed civil weddings to take place (‘The Law of Marriage’, www.parliament.co.uk). The act of 1929 officially barred marrying under the age of sixteen.

Once the contract of marriage was made, a woman was giving up control of her personhood and becoming one with her husband in law. This situation was summed up by one marriage advice writer:

‘[the woman] makes a surrender, an absolute surrender, of her liberty, for the joint lives of the parties: she gives the husband the absolute right of causing her to live in what place, and in what manner and what society, he pleases; she gives him the power to take from her, and to use, for his own purposes, all her goods, unless reserved by some legal instrument; and, above all, she surrenders to him her *person*’ (Cobbett in Macfarlane, 1987: 149).

This situation was enshrined in law as coverture, which meant that when a woman married she became ‘civilly dead’, unable to make her own contracts or hold property (Pateman, 1988: 119): a woman would have to have her husband sign legal documents and act on her behalf, neither one could testify for or against the other and a woman could not keep any money she made herself. English coverture was generally stricter than that of Continental Europe, though this changed over time, depending on how common law developed in the different countries (Dickenson, 1997: 84). The name change signified this change in status for women from *feme sole* to *feme covert*.

⁵Despite the Scottish case which led to the Hardwicke Act, Scots Law remained unchanged as there was popular resistance to ending the practice of irregular marriage though similar problems persisted.

Finn argues that coverture in the common law had certain loopholes which women could use to contract for goods and services, even after separation from husbands (1996: 709). The law of necessities accepted that women may have to buy things for themselves and their families to live and that husbands should be held accountable for payment (Finn, 1996: 707). This meant that a form of credit often existed between women consumers and tradespeople. Debt and credit relations could become complicated in a system in which women did not legally exist and the husband refused to pay for her purchases. Women could be called to account for and defend themselves in certain courts where the debts were small (Finn, 1996: 707). Finn cites one case in which a woman sold her adulterous husband's goods to pay to set-up a separate household and the man could not sue against her as this would be suing himself (1996: 712). However, the law was based around women purchasing and requiring what suited the station of their *husbands* and if they no longer lived with their husbands this right of contract for necessities could be removed from them; they would then be expected to fend for themselves (Finn, 1996: 710).

Coverture was an oppressive system, but one which could be negotiated in certain areas (Finn, 1996: 707). Women could have property saved for their own disposal by particular legal means in English law and wealthy families could employ this mechanism to see that property did not go into the hands of another lineage – this had to be enacted by the woman's legal guardian *before* marriage. However, the ownership of women in their person which went to the husband, as indicated in the quote above, meant a lack of control over many areas of their life and the right of husbands to violate the integrity of their wives' bodies. Coverture did give men a power over the women in their lives.

3.1.2 *Scotland*

In Scotland marriage could be undertaken by two parties alone when over fourteen (boys) and twelve (girls) in the same manner as discussed above for England (Macfarlane, 1987: 127), though some research suggests witnesses were necessary (Gibson, April 2013). This was the situation for much of its history. After the period in which 'Gretna Green marriages' were popular, Scotland introduced a residency clause to its marriage law, insisting on couples having lived where they were to be married for a period of at least

twenty-one days. This was repealed in the 1970s and, unlike England and Wales⁶, Scotland does not have a residency clause for present day marriages ('Marriage and Civil Partnerships in the UK', www.gov.uk). The law of 1929 voiding marriages under the age of sixteen also applied in Scotland.

There were various forms of 'irregular marriage' in Scotland until 1940, at which point civil marriages were created as a regular form of marriage and the idea of marriage by 'declaration of present consent and promise followed by sex' was abolished along with most forms of irregular marriage ('Development of the Law', SLCC materials, University of Strathclyde website, 2000). However, what is often referred to as 'common law marriage' – though it should properly be known as 'marriage by cohabitation with habit and repute' – continued until its abolition in 2006 ('Abolition of marriage by cohabitation with habit and repute', Family Law (Scotland) Act, 2006). This last form of marriage was only valid if the woman and man made it publically obvious that they considered themselves husband and wife. Marriage by cohabitation and repute was relatively rare in Scotland and those people who now consider themselves to be married in this way must have proof in the form of a 'Declarator of Marriage' ('Getting Married: Advice Guide', Citizens Advice Bureau website, 2011).

The system of coverture in Scotland seems to be open to greater debate by historians than the system in England. Barclay has argued that Scottish women, though still limited by the law, were not under coverture (Barclay, 2010), though Spence has argued that, in the early modern period at least, women *were* under coverture (Spence, 2011). It may be that the position of women in Scotland was more flexible than for women in England and that women in Scotland were able therefore to conduct certain types of business and contracts even once married that English women were not. However, this is open to debate. In Scotland marriage was a coming together of two families who nevertheless maintained their own identity through not sharing one name, whereas the English focused on the creation of a new family under the rule of the husband-father and one shared name within that family. In Scotland connections to the woman's birth family were held in high esteem as she acted as the gatekeeper to all that family could offer (Barclay, 2010). The surname

⁶England and Wales have a one week residency stipulation before registry facilities in an area can be used ('Marriage and Civil Partnerships in the UK', www.gov.uk).

symbolised this, yet women remained married and therefore had a duty towards their husband who generally controlled the majority of their property⁷, had rights to their body, and had far greater legal right to representation and contract creation and negotiation. Coverture certainly changed over time in severity and this also may account for the lack of certitude about the Scottish situation: coverture may have waned to an insignificant position in certain periods in Scotland when it did not in England. It is clear from the debate however, that coverture in Scotland requires further investigation.

3.1.3 Modern Marriages

Modern marriages are required to be conducted publically and by particular registered authorities. There are various layers of bureaucracy which must be completed, including giving notice of the marriage for a period of around two weeks during which time the details of both partners will be available to the public. This information includes full name, age, address, nationality, current marital status, occupation, and the venue at which the marriage will be conducted; documentary evidence of nationality and the dissolution of any previous marriages must be provided for this declaration of marriage to go ahead. There must also be details of two witnesses to the marriage and the procedures and paperwork involved may differ depending on what kind of ceremony will take place i.e. civil or religious ('Marriage and Civil Partnerships in the UK', www.gov.uk; 'Getting Married in Scotland', General Register for Scotland website). Scotland also allows humanist weddings with registered celebrants. Ceremonies in Britain may take place in English, Welsh, Gaelic, or Scots depending on which nation the marriage occurs in and as long as the celebrant and witnesses understand the language. Throughout its history Scotland has allowed marriage without parental consent; in England and Wales couples aged sixteen or seventeen must have written parental consent ('Marriage and Civil Partnerships in the UK', www.gov.uk).

The marriage certificate must be completed on the day, signed by bride, groom and two selected witnesses. Marriage certificates continue to ask for the father's name and occupation, and in Scotland the mother's 'maiden' name, as well as her occupation, are

⁷ As in England families could contract women's control over property preventing it from passing to a husband. In Scotland women technically kept control over certain forms of property without the need of contract but their husbands 'administered' it – how much control this really left wives is debateable.

also required. Finally, bride and groom will be expected to sign with whatever their legal name is to be henceforth – women may sign with their married name, but men must have changed their name by deed poll in advance if they wish to use a new name (‘A Man’s Name Change Rights and Options upon Marriage’, Deed Poll Services website)⁸. The signature will be deciphered and used as evidence of a woman’s new legal name if she has decided to change. All other documentation the woman has can then be changed using the marriage certificate as evidence⁹.

In modern British marriage, if couples were asked to give a reason for marrying, it is likely that ‘love’ would be among their first answers. It is generally accepted now that love should be the basis of marriage and that other reasons are not good enough or are demeaning to the whole idea. However love – as with marriage – has a history and it is to this history which I will now turn.

3.2 Love

Barclay’s study of Scottish intimate relationships and power between 1650 and 1850 provides clear examples of change in the idea of love over this period. This love took gendered forms and affected how power was constructed and negotiated in the couple relationship and within wider family connections – what follows is taken closely from her study (see Barclay, 2011).

Barclay describes how marriage negotiations among the Scottish elite early on in the period were based on financial and familial considerations, with love and affection – though important and preferably in existence – not *necessary* to creating matches. Parental love was shown by helping children make the right choice for their station and the wider family, rather than allowing passion to take over (p. 99). Parental consent was not a requirement for marriage in Scotland, but most children heeded their parents’ wishes nevertheless (p. 97). A person’s worth and place in life was very much a part of their place within their family network. Both parties were expected to bring ‘economic resources to the marriage and with it they brought tools to negotiate for power’ (p. 109). Wives could

⁸ As would anyone wanting to amalgamate names, hyphenate, move a surname to become a middle name, or any other naming innovation.

⁹ Though passports may be changed up to 3 months before the ceremony and used once the ceremony has taken place.

refuse husbands access to the resources and power of their birth family and, as important gatekeepers, wives had their own power within the couple relationship (p. 100). The power of the wife's/wife's family's economic resources and the clearly defined situation that two families were *uniting*, rather than one person moving to a new family and becoming subsumed by that lineage, meant that women were usually very interested and in many ways involved in the negotiations between the two parties at the courtship stage. If husbands-to-be bestowed money upon their wives at this contractual stage this was a sign of esteem for her (p. 110). Women were well aware of the contractual nature of marriage and in the prenuptial discussions that took place when drawing up the contract, tried to secure for themselves a certain amount of power and respect in the marriage to come.

This situation began to change in the eighteenth century as Romanticism took hold and discussion of financial concerns became 'increasingly distasteful' to those involved in what should be a love match (p. 111). This is not to suggest that economic concerns diminished in marriage negotiations, but that money stopped being equated with love and respect (p. 112). Discussion of money, and a husband-to-be bestowing money upon his wife-to-be in contracts, were no longer narratives of or signs of love. Though this may seem a positive step towards disinterested love it actually made it far more difficult for women to openly discuss money and financial security, and to negotiate terms for themselves (via representatives); men by contrast, though meant to be above such concerns in the Romantic period, were able to become involved using a discourse of the concerned and responsible head-of-household (p. 117). The balance of power shifted over this period through the use of the narrative of romantic love.

Romantic love was also gendered, with passionate love being seen as problematic to both genders but particularly women (p. 118). What is described as 'love' from around the 1720s is what would previously have been called 'affection' and does not necessarily equate with what we call 'love' today (p. 120): the parties ask after each other's health and what they can do to further one another's interests (p. 119). During the eighteenth century love becomes increasingly popular and glamorous and a major impetus for marriage, seen now as a stronger emotion (p. 120). The use of more personal names and emotional language becomes commonplace and the expected form, but this love also serves to undermine the relative power women had in the past. Men were usually the emotional

ones, with an elaborate system of actively wooing passive, reserved women who 'relented' at some stage (p. 122). Men expressed ardent desire for women but at the same time asked women for complete devotion to them, to be their possession and content to be such. In fact if women did not feel strongly enough about men to give themselves up entirely then they were not in 'true love' and should not enter into marriage. Barclay gives the example of Hugh Marchmont writing to his future wife:

I shall expect you not only to think of yourself as my property, but to be delighted with being so. Will this be tyranny? If not I have all my wish (quoted in Barclay, 2011: 121).

Women are to passively accept the love that men 'do'. Women of course did not always passively accept this situation, some trying to promote a rationality which helped them regain some power in marriage negotiations, while others conformed publically while complaining bitterly in private (p. 126). What is clear though is that the shift in power via the discourse of romantic love, though seemingly more egalitarian and disinterested, actually disempowered women. They were unable to explicitly intervene in marriage negotiations and had to give themselves up entirely to men if they wished to be perceived – and to perceive themselves – as truly in love. This desire to be one with husbands led to a turn towards taking their names in the nineteenth century; the connection between romantic love, women as possessions of men, and the use of one name is very clear in the Scottish situation.

Love underpins Western heterosexual relationships, providing them with a seemingly natural justification for existing as they do. However, love is not a pre-existing emotion, separate from the world around it; it helps to construct gendered power relations and hence is an important social phenomenon involved in the making of intimate and social relationships. Macfarlane studies the letters written between husbands and wives when separated from one another across history; he also looks at the grief-stricken writings of spouses recently bereaved, looking for evidence of love in the face of the idea that love is a modern concept (Macfarlane, 1987). At first glance the writings he looks at show close personal relationships, deep affection, friendship and passion. He suggests that love is natural and timeless. There are two problems with Macfarlane's analysis of these writings which are useful to the discussion here.

Firstly, as discussed above, love is not a given and it has its own history. Macfarlane does not focus on possible differences in definitions of romantic love, but instead presumes a similarity across time in his attempt to prove that people in the past had strong, passionate feelings about their spouses. Considering the amount of historical data which has assumed that people did not have these feelings (see Stone, 1977; Gillis, 1985) his account is understandable, but these ideas should not be considered mutually exclusive as both kinds of marriage surely existed. There would have been differences based on class and property holdings, but we can presume that, as now, there were loveless and love-full marriages. Secondly, Macfarlane's description of what men write to their wives as loving and evidence of a mutual, emotional relationship appears to miss out the thread of ownership, property and power which runs through many letters. For example, the 'good wife' is described in a text from 1614 as 'man's best moveable' (1987: 179). The connections between women as property and objects of men's power are quite clear, yet this is ignored by Macfarlane and talked of as fervent love. The patriarchal nature of love requires deeper examination and I will take up this theme in chapter 6.

Eustace (2001) considers the courtship rituals of young Americans in the eighteenth century in which love letters were written by men to family members of the beloved, with the intention that the publicly declared sentiments be passed on. This practice, Eustace argues, ensured that men had the favour of wider family when trying to secure a wife; it also meant that in declaring love in such a grand manner, if a woman refused the advances, the man could blame her shallow feelings and not his 'own inability to close a bargain' (Eustace, 2001: 532). Women's lack of ability to speak out about their love in case they were condemned by others meant that men could use love as a means of saving face and blaming women for their own shortcomings. The young women themselves were aware of the power involved in courtship ritual and wrote to one another about it (Eustace, 2001). During the period of courtship they had power: power over their suitors' attempts to secure a match and the power to embarrass him if they declined his offer. However, the young women were also aware that they could end up marrying the very person they had strung along and ultimately this could work against them as they would have to obey their new 'master' and he could enact his revenge (Eustace, 2001: 534).

Love is intertwined with gendered power. The young men in this period were looking to set up new homes and achieve the status of householder within society, while the young women were more ambivalent (certainly those Eustace studies) – they were aware of the position of subordination they would be admitting themselves to, yet they were also aware of the inevitability of it and had to think of the best strategy to minimise any retaliation. In an increasingly Romantic age, narratives of love were carefully and strategically employed by men in particular to secure a partner, gain property, and social standing. Women, unable to actively take a part in these narratives, had to react to them, trying to keep their position of power for as long as possible, while understanding that their ultimate lack of power made the situation precarious. ‘Love’ gave power to one and none to the other, yet the narrative simultaneously attempted to hide this power in declarations of sincere affection.

These relations of love between men and women, contained within the institution of marriage and articulated in narratives of love, are based on particular understandings of heterosexuality. Naming practices reflect and help to organise society and are a part of heterosexuality; they structure relationships between people through linking some and sectioning others off from one another and differentiating between women and men (women should change names; men not). Surnames have not always been necessary to the structure and organisation of society, but have developed and become increasingly fixed over time. I will now outline the history of surnames within Britain and then go on to consider their use.

3.3 A Brief History of Surnames

There is some uncertainty about when surnames came into general use in Britain, but authors place it somewhere between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Bardsley, 1969 [1873]: 12; Bennett, 1983: 37). These surnames were not yet hereditary and were certainly not as fixed as now. As Geary states: ‘Medieval naming followed complex patterns but never “rules” – decisions about how to designate children involved complicated strategies’ (2002: vii). Medieval sources are rich in data and are very useful for looking at the structure of local society at the time; however they present a ‘surname jungle’ (Bennett, 1983: 29) – many people at the time had the same name, or one person used more than one last name. Therefore a researcher may be looking at records which discuss, for example, a

John Smith, but he may somewhere else be referred to as John Wood, and the historian would not necessarily be able to recognise these names and historical references refer to the same man – these were often ‘aliases’ used in different circumstances, although sometimes written together so, ‘John Smith, alias Wood’ (Pine, 1965: 15).

Surnames were not necessarily able to connect up whole family groups as this was not yet the purpose of the name: it was about social activity rather than kinship (Bennett, 1983: 32). There was also a gender divide: men’s surnames came from where they lived, what they did, and so on; women barely had surnames of their own as they were generally identified only by linking them to men in some way: ‘the wife of ...’, ‘the daughter of...’; their husband or father’s name, in this way, became a sort of surname (Bennett, 1983: 35). The names that were created during the mid- to high medieval period are still recognisable to us: they were kept and began to be passed on in the hereditary style we now take for granted (Beech, 2002: x).

More widely in Europe, there were dramatic changes in personal naming from the late Roman Empire to the Renaissance. Beech notes that in

the western Empire during the fourth through the sixth centuries, the sophisticated Roman practice of double/triple naming had been replaced by Germanic single naming practices which then in turn, after four or five centuries of dominance, gave way to the two-element system (personal plus family name) as it has evolved into our own day (Beech, 2002: ix).

Within a country there was not necessarily uniformity as class, gender, and age intersected with naming to create a multitude of different styles of address. In Frankish aristocratic circles, two names became the norm, while the peasants continued to use only one name. They did not have the same inheritance rights as aristocrats, so there was not seen to be any need to show their lineage (Beech, 2002: xiii). There was also a religious influence here as Christian ideas about paternal authority took shape in the one name per family, passed on patrilineally (Beech, 2002: xiii).

In the British royal family the intersection of names and class can still be seen. Such exalted members of a society often do not need more than a first name and our present royal family only took on a (sort of) surname in 1917 (‘Windsor’) to rid themselves of their

German and, during World War One, politically unacceptable lineage title (Pine, 1965: 15): see Figure 1. Those royal households which had last names, such as the ‘Tudors’ or ‘Stewarts’, had them because they came, originally, from non-royal stock.

Systems vary across Europe; the British way of naming is not the only possibility. The Old Norse naming system gave each child a last name based on their father’s first name and whether the child was male or female. Boys became ‘- son’ and girls ‘- dottir’. The (American) National Museum of Natural History explains it thus:

Erik the Red had a son called Leif and a daughter called Freydis. Their full names were Leif Eriksson and Freydis Eriksdottir. If Leif named his son Thorfinn, the son’s name would be Thorfin Leifsson and if his daughter was called Gudrid, then her name would be Gudrid Leifsdottir (Sadler, 2000).

This system remains in place in Iceland today. Therefore father’s names are privileged and the system is a patrilineal one, but not as we have in Britain. Women do not change their names on marriage, but keep ‘- dottir’ throughout their lives (Sadler, 2000), explicitly connecting them with their father and his household.

The Spanish system involves the use of two names, with both the father’s and the mother’s name represented in the last name of the child, signifying the unification of two houses or lineages. However, when a woman married she historically dropped the name which came from her mother and replaced this with her husband’s name, connecting her with both husband and father and erasing the matrilineal connection. It is significant that it was the mother’s name which was dropped, as the presumably less important name in a patriarchal society. In today’s Spain women do not necessarily change names in this way on marriage; some change their mother’s name to their husband’s in their personal life but not in their professional¹⁰. These two examples of European naming systems show the patriarchal assumptions implicit in most naming systems, despite their differences. Why these differences might occur will be explored in more depth below by looking at English and Scottish naming practices.

Within the British Isles differences in taking up hereditary surnames can be seen: by the fifteenth century English people had hereditary surnames, but Irish people did not (Hassall,

¹⁰ For a personal description of this system in practice see Perez-Quinones, 2002.

1967: xv). Attempts by the English King Edward IV to change Irish practices to fit in with English ones failed (Hassall, 1967: 29): names have an important national connection and are important in fostering that national identity. Wales took on surnames later also – somewhere between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Pine, 1965: 12).

Surnames have become increasingly standardised, with one spelling expected for each name. Family members are today expected to use the same spelling of their name or else it could be considered a different name. Parish registers began to be used in England in 1538 (Bennett, 1983: 26) and in Scotland in 1552 ('Old Parish Registers', www1.scotlandspeople.gov.uk, n.d.): these were not always completed to the same standard and not all survive. In more remote parts of Scotland there is only data from the nineteenth century onwards ('Old Parish Registers', www1.scotlandspeople.gov.uk, n.d.). Once these registers were in place, *all* surnames had to be *written down* and this meant that spellings (at least in that local area) began to be standardised. In Scotland, clergymen had the job of collecting this data and their spellings became the 'official' version ('Old Parish Registers', www1.scotlandspeople.gov.uk, n.d.). There continued to be disputes about spellings and who had the authority to determine the 'correct' spelling of a name, but it was the beginning of the increased standardisation we know today.

In Britain masculine endings for names are prominent; whatever the sex of the child it is given a name ending in the masculine '-son'. As I have shown this is not the case in other European countries in which endings change for girls and boys, but in Britain only a masculine relationship is represented (Hassell, 1967: 6). There are a minority of names which show a relationship other than father-son: son-in-law, brother-in-law, nephew, and there is the occasional aunt (Hassell, 1967: 6). For example, 'Magh' meant 'brother-in-law' and can be seen in 'Hitchmough', 'Hickmott', and 'Hudsmith' (Hassell, 1967: 6). However, daughter is not to be seen. Masculine endings for names are pervasive and have survived across time in great numbers.

The number of '-sons', '-s' (an abbreviation of '-son'), and the Scottish equivalent 'Mac' in modern Britain is testament to this: Leak and Adnan have created an interactive map of contemporary Great British names (i.e. not including Northern Ireland) which shows the vast spread of these 'son of' names. Though the most common name overall is 'Smith',

England is also full of ‘Hodgeson’, ‘Johnson’, ‘Robinson’, and ‘Thompson’; Scotland ‘MacDonald’, ‘MacKay’, ‘MacLeod’, and ‘Wilson’; and Wales ‘Davies’, ‘Jones’, ‘Roberts’ and ‘Williams’ (Leak and Adnan, 2013). Names which signify relationships to women are rare in Britain.

However, they are not non-existent. Bardsley has pointed out that there could be several reasons for women’s names being used as last names: illegitimacy, adoption of children by lone women, the woman in the couple being more well-known locally than her husband (Bardsley, 1969 [1873]: 80), or perhaps the woman’s *family* were rather better known or of better standing than her husband’s so her name was spoken of more than his. Children then became known as ‘Elizabeth’s/Libby’s’ or ‘Emma’s son’, for example, which has led to ‘Ibson’ and ‘Emmott’; other names such as Sissons, Marriot, and Annotson, for example, can all be traced back to women’s personal names (Bardsley, 1969 [1873]: 79 – 80). This shows that surnames were far more flexible at one point than they now are: now passing on a mother’s name is highly unusual, particularly using her personal name as a last name.

Away from the history of the names themselves then, it is worth looking at their use: what names signified and how they became important.

3.1 Surnames, Lineage, and Inheritance

The family name is meant to represent who can legitimately say they are part of the family unit: in England this has meant the woman taking on her husband’s name and the children also having that name (Amy Erickson, 2005: 11). This has been a symbolic and real change made by the woman reflecting her place in the hierarchical relationship of ‘man and wife’ produced by marriage (Leonard, 1980: 241). The children are meant to be related to both the mother and father of that unit – rather than being illegitimate and simply living within it – and be fully related to brothers and sisters. However, in Scotland women only began to legally change their name to their husband’s after the nineteenth century (Barclay, 2011: 98). The reasons for this will be discussed further in chapter 5. Here I want to consider how these different traditions relate to property and inheritance. Firstly though, by way of illustrating my wider claim that property, names, and inheritance are closely connected, I wish to examine the French situation.

Figure 1. Punch cartoon showing George V ridding the Royal Family of their German name and title, 1917



(Source: *Punch*, 27th June 1917.)

Duby, looking at the area of Cluny in France, found documentation dating from between 1080 and 1100 which set apart family groups of brothers and cousins by a shared last name (Duby, 1976: 18). These names were held by property owners who could start a lineage based around this ownership and the desire to keep their property within the family. Duby found thirty-one family names in use in this area: seven were nicknames which became hereditary, but the twenty-seven remaining were connected with the land (Duby, 1976: 18). The connection between surnames, land, inheritance, and lineage is very clear. Duby describes the family name being added to contracts as a ‘recent innovation’ at around 1100 (Duby, 1976: 19). His research shows that from this period onwards family structure and surname usage began to change: family names became more commonly used, but the number of names themselves decreased (Duby, 1976: 19). Lineages were becoming more clearly defined, with branches spreading off with their own names, but also marriage being used to draw together the most significant of these lineages (Duby, 1976: 19). Older names were erased from the records with new names being created: the older names that did survive were usually those connected to the most powerful and prestigious lineages (Duby, 1976: 19). The period was one of flux and change in last names. Women continued to keep their own names in France (Barclay, 2011: 98), but the family as a whole was defined by the male head of household and the last name he possessed¹¹.

As the lineage narrowed and solidified a familial, biological connection became vital and the name represents that connection: the inheritance had to go to the appropriate, related person and remain within the family. This meant there had to be an heir working for the family’s interests. This has not always meant first born sons in every part of the world – though male relatives were preferred and girls were usually a last resort. However, in France, this depended on where one lived: in some areas *all* children were to inherit

¹¹ This has only recently changed in France as the rules on children’s names are relaxed. Since 2005 children do not *have* to have their father’s name in law. This has left some families caught between their own desires and the legal system. In a case recently brought before The European Court of Human Rights a family has been denied the right to legally change the children’s names to include both parents’ surnames as the children were born before 1990. The 2005 law gives a cut-off date of 1990 for changing names. Though the children in this case have been known day-to-day as having a double-barrelled last name using both parents’ names the European Court of Human Rights has ruled in favour of ignoring the desires of the family in favour of the patrilineal naming norm. Whatever the ‘day-to-day’ name of a child may be their ‘real’ name is their father’s, at least before 1990. (See European Court of Human Rights Press Release. ‘French law concerning choice of surnames and its transitional provisions complied with the Convention’, 2013). My thanks to Paul Johnson for bringing this to my attention.

equally – the woman’s husband would represent her interests after she inherited and, if it was a great deal of wealth, he often had to give up his own family name to show his trustworthiness in administering her estate (Bourdieu, 1976: 128). Younger sons could also be heirs if the head of the household decided they preferred that child to the eldest or that child would bring more money, land or status from an advantageous marriage (Bourdieu, 1976: 127). This aside, the family name took on a significance for families with wealth and land of appropriate, legitimate (in the sense of rightful *and* biological) connection between fathers, heirs, money, and land.

It would appear then that ‘[t]he distinctions in marital property regimes are reflected in naming practices’ (Amy Erickson, 2005: 11) and it is this which needs further investigation. As my main interests are in Scottish and English practices it is to the development of their systems of property law and naming practices to which I will now turn.

3.1.1 Scots Law

Scots Law is the ‘only “mixed” legal system in Europe’ (Carey Miller and Combe, 2006: 2). It combines elements of Roman law and Canon law with native developments (Carey Miller and Combe, 2006: 3). Property law in Scotland has developed from Roman law, in which there is a strict dividing line between personal and real rights¹². Scots Law, in general, protects the owner of property, allowing them ‘free reign’ over what they own (Carey Miller and Combe, 2006: 20). This development from Roman law is significant for property, marriage, and naming in Scotland.

In 1984 a Scottish Law Commission report (Maxwell et al., 1984) outlined the status of Scottish women in marriage in relation to property ownership from before the nineteenth century to the present time (1984). Before the *Married Women’s Property Acts* (Scotland 1880 and 1881), ‘the general rule of Scottish matrimonial property law was that all the moveable property (broadly, all property other than land and buildings) of a married woman passed automatically to her husband and became his property’ (Maxwell et al., 1984: 2). The Report states that there were some exceptions to this rule, for example,

¹² ‘Real’ rights relate to that which is external to the person: property falls into the category of ‘real rights’. ‘Personal’ rights must relate directly to the person. Though property might be seen to have some crossover with the ‘personal’ and the ‘real’, this is a significant and strict boundary within Scots Law.

‘clothes and ornaments’ (Maxwell et al., 1984: 2, note 1). The wife’s land and buildings, however, remained her own, though she did have to ask her husband’s permission to ‘sell them or let them out’ (Maxwell, 1984: 3). He also had the right to administer this property (Maxwell, 1984: 3). This law, as the Report states, was based on the idea of the husband’s supremacy, but could be opted out of in pre- and ante-nuptial contracts (Maxwell, 1984: 3). The strictures of this law were eroded in the nineteenth century, though Scottish women still had to ask permission from their husband to sell or let their property until 1920 (see Hansard debate of the Married Women’s Property Bill (Scotland) 1920).

The position of women in Scotland in relation to property and names reflects Roman law (though on a much less stringent scale). Roman law upheld *patria postestas* – the father’s right to have extensive power over his children. The difference was that the Roman father, unlike other ancient civilisations, did not lose this power over his children when they grew up and created their own households (Arjava, 1998:41). In practice there were ways to free oneself from *patria postestas*¹³ but the idea remained in theory (Arjava, 1998: 41) and was certainly seen as the preferable state for women (Gratwick, 1991: 39 – 40). To reflect this, the most common form of marriage across the period of the Roman Empire as a whole was marriage *sine manu*¹⁴, in which women remained legally separate from husbands and under their father’s control, retained their own property and took on the legal status of *suriuris*¹⁵ after their father’s death (Arjava, 1998: 124). Hence, a Roman woman, despite marrying and having children of her own, remained, legally, a part of her father’s household (Arjava, 1998: 94).

When freeborn and wealthy, Roman women had a great deal of freedom to deal with their own property, write wills, and sue in court, but they still had a guardian in their father (or a caretaker he had legally appointed) and had to ask certain permissions from him concerning their property (Arjava, 1998: 122). Wives usually legally retained their birth family name on marriage (though could also use their husband’s name day-to-day)

¹³ Children could be ‘emancipated’ by their father in writing. Fathers had also often died by the time children were adults, leaving sons free and daughters also free depending on the type of marriage they entered into: *cum manu* (see note 14) or *sine manu* (explained in the main text). However, even the freedom of *sine manu* marriage after a father’s death could be curtailed if the father had appointed a male guardian to look after his daughter.

¹⁴ There was an earlier form of marriage called *cum manu* in which the woman and her property passed into the hands of her husband, but this became far less popular (Arjava, 1998: 123).

¹⁵ Meaning ‘of one’s own right’ or able to take care of one’s own affairs.

(Rawson, 1992:19). There is a suggestion from Roman records that the woman's name could reflect what type of marriage she was in (Rawson, 1992: 20). It seems that the most common form of marriage – remaining under the control of the birth family's head of household – was reflected in the most common form of naming rite i.e. retaining one's birth name. As Rawson argues, Roman women 'remained members of their own *familia* in a very real sense' (1992: 18).

As Gratwick argues, it is possible that marriage *sine manus* was most popular for the upper classes, where rich heads of household did not want to lose property to another family, while those with less property and wealth would consider *cum manus* a more advantageous form of marriage as sons would inherit more if daughters were legally a part of another family and no longer able to inherit¹⁶ (1991: 44). However, most evidence suggests marriage *sine manus* was the most popular form of marriage in general, certainly from the third century BC onwards (Arjava, 1998: 123).

This brief outline of women, property, marriage, and names in Roman times should make the connections with Scots Law clear. Scottish women's naming practices reflected this development from Roman law and the feeling of two families uniting, but ultimately remaining separate, in marriage. Names reflect the historical development of Scots Law, and property law in particular: women were entitled to keep an amount of control over their property (total when decreed in a marriage contract) and the woman, as in Roman law, remained strongly connected with her birth family and its interests.

3.1.2 *English Law*

English Law, particularly property law, is quite distinct from Scotland's (Carey Miller and Combe, 2006: 3). English Law is, as Carey Miller and Combe put it, 'very much an indigenous and original development' (2006: 3), distinct from the Roman influences of Scottish and Continental European systems of law. Though English Law also recognises the separation of real and personal rights, its system of equity mitigates some of the possible outcomes of applying the law rigorously (Carey Miller and Combe, 2006: 3). By the thirteenth century English Law had 'arrived at the general doctrine that any property which a wife had owned as a *feme sole* became the husband's on marriage' (Baker, 1990:

¹⁶ Sons and daughters inherited equally in Roman society.

552)¹⁷. This meant *all* property, both personal and real. The woman could claim back the real property after the death of her husband, but not her personal property (Baker, 1990: 552). Baker notes that, by the early modern period, equity often intervened in cases of married women's property, and women could be treated as *feme sole* when it was deemed right (1990: 553). Contracting alone on her own property was unusual though¹⁸, and this was directly related to women being unable to own property in their own right (Baker, 1990: 555). This is the effect of coverture, when the woman becomes one with the man and is his subordinate in law. The naming customs reflect this arrangement of property ownership and married identity.

As with Scotland, women's property rights could be safeguarded in marriage contracts (only pre-nuptial contracts in England). My research in the *National Archives of Scotland* shows this option was not always taken up and may have been seen to be detrimental to a useful marriage alliance in some cases. One case from the papers of the Fergusson family of Craigdarroch in Dumfriesshire from the 1700s, when their daughter was marrying into an English family, reveals that the family chose to hand over all their daughter's property to her husband to be in accordance with English law and custom (Papers of the Fergusson family of Craigdarroch, Dumfriesshire, *National Archives of Scotland*, Reference GD77/174). Families had to carefully consider the balance of power and prestige when making marriages, as well as securing their property and their interests in the next generation of the lineage.

3.1.3 *Property and Legitimacy*

The production of legitimate heirs to inherit property has, throughout history, required marriage, as legitimate offspring could only be born within wedlock. Traditionally marriage can be thought of as a religious institution designed to control the sexual and moral lives of those who enter it, as well as following the commands of God. But it can also be considered a means to establish and order lines of inheritance and power. Marriage, property, and power are connected. Hardwick sums up this connection in her discussion of French marital and family structures in the early modern period:

¹⁷ I would argue that this kind of marriage looks similar in form to the Roman marriage *cum manus*.

¹⁸ One exception was a borough custom – in some boroughs only – which allowed married women who traded to own property as if they were single (Baker, 1990: 552).

Access to and control over property affected the form and content of relations between family members, within households and between them. The practices that were developed to control and to manage property were key elements in shaping who exercised power and how that power was exercised in everyday life (Hardwick, 1998: 52).

Property – who brings it to the marriage, who controls it, and what is done with it to increase family standing – all impact upon who has power within the married relationship. The power over property, and the economic independence this brings, has traditionally been held by men, instituting a dependent state for the majority of women. Mary More, writing on women's rights in marriage in England in the 1600s, spoke of the fact women *could* be provided for by astute families if they saw fit to secure the woman's property to her legally after marriage – most women, she wrote, were unaware of how to use the law to their advantage and parents were to blame for this (Ezell, 1987: 155).

Both the English and Scottish legal situations allowed families to create private contracts overturning all of the laws and customs giving power over all property to men by negotiating a contract before marriage (or also after marriage in Scotland); these contracts could then give a woman the right to 'keep control of her own property during marriage,... the right to make contracts in her own name or write a will, or completely restructure the amount to which each spouse was entitled upon widowhood' (Amy Erickson, 2005: 13). Specific sub-sections of property law were created to manage these kinds of contract rather than change the law itself (Amy Erickson, 2005: 13). This would have had to be discussed by families beforehand and the contract created by parents or guardians. However, this situation was more applicable to women who had great wealth and then only if families did not see advantage in promising at least some of this wealth to the husband and his family.

Of course most people did not, and nowadays do not, own swathes of land, but the history of marriage and inheritance is clearly important to a discussion of heterosexual marriage and surnames. Protecting the interests of the woman and the man entering the marriage as individuals, as well as offspring or what to do on the death of a partner, was important to kin as well as the couple themselves; for this reason marriage contracts were produced. Power within marriage was in part about how these contracts were negotiated by those who could do so. How far the woman herself could be involved in this discussion would depend on a great number of factors: her age, her relationship with those negotiating, her

cultural and social training and belief in what was appropriate behaviour for herself, as well as pure personality. Also, as shown by the evidence from the *National Archives of Scotland*, contracts did not always secure more for a woman; instead sometimes they handed everything over to her future husband for a variety of possible reasons, which could include the desire to relinquish worries over a daughter or for political or financial benefit to her family on doing so.

Naming practices reflected the idea of marriage each nation understood, reflecting law on property as well as gendered hierarchy. Names symbolised these structures and relationships. The empirical work within this thesis will analyse the significance of names to social organisation and how they express important ideas about marriage and relationships today. Before I go on to examine the empirical data within my study I would first like to set out the methodological considerations behind this research.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is to analyse naming practices within Britain on marriage and to consider their impact on (gendered) identity. I will focus exclusively on ‘name changing’ – when women take on the last name of their husband – and ‘name retaining’ – when women retain their previous last name, be that their birth name, name given to them as a child after a mother’s remarriage, adopted name, or name from a previous marriage. It aims to illuminate women’s lives and give as representative an account of those taking part in the research as possible, while providing more data for consideration on the topic of naming practices in Britain.

The decision to investigate name changing and name retaining exclusively was taken for several reasons. Firstly that name changing remains the norm in Britain (Valetas, 2001: 2) but despite that there continues to be little empirical evidence about naming practices (Johnson and Scheuble, 1995: 724). It was important therefore to add to the empirical evidence about the naming norm to build up a picture of what women in contemporary Britain are doing with their name and why. Valetas’ study (2001) shows that the norm in Britain remains strong and more so than in other European countries, with more people than anywhere else in her study believing women *should* change their name to their husband’s on marriage. Taking this into consideration the decision to completely oppose the normative expectation to change names seemed like a daring decision and one which also needed consideration. The two – norm and opposite – are relational and investigating them together was necessary.

In Britain¹⁹ there are few laws around last names: children’s names are legislated for to an extent but adults have a great deal of freedom. Despite this the existing evidence (Johnson and Scheuble, 1995; Valetas, 2001) would suggest that innovation with names is limited and British women in particular continue to follow the name changing norm. This led me to discard considering other naming choices such as hyphenating, combining names, or creating a new name. I asked my participants whether they considered these options and

¹⁹As my participants all live or have roots in England and Scotland my focus throughout this thesis is on the English and Scottish situations, though I do use ‘Britain’ or ‘the UK’ when referring to the nation as a whole.

how they felt about them but did not ask for participants who had chosen these routes. This information would of course be useful and would open up the discussion around those at the forefront of naming innovation and change, but I wanted to focus on the predominant and often unquestioned norm (and its related opposite) to unravel why it remains so powerful and what following it might mean for women in Britain.

Research into naming has occurred previously – looking at patterns of name changing on marriage (Scheuble and Johnson, 1993; Johnson and Scheuble, 1995; Valetas, 2001), the connections between naming, migration, and class (Webber and Longley, 2003), or the legal ramifications of name changing (Emens 2007) – but not with a focus on (gendered) identity, which is what I am investigating. I am also taking greater account of the decision not to change names than other studies. Creating wider empirical evidence for patterns of naming and the effects these have is significant and my project can add to this, though on a small scale. However, I also felt it important to ask women what they actually think of their last names and their naming decisions and whether and how these impact upon their sense of identity.

When a norm is so clearly gendered – with women being expected to change names on marriage in a way men are not – those affected by the practice should be consulted as to their feelings about it. If names are taken to be important to identity then to ask a person to change theirs becomes highly significant. It suggests less respect for that person's sense of identity, that their identity may be seen as more adaptable than the person asked to maintain their name, and it also suggests that the change must be meaningful to society on some level or it would be unnecessary. These are points I will investigate further throughout my thesis. Questioning the taken for granted and the normalised gender differences in our society opens up to scrutiny the way we organise ourselves, what acts we consider meaningful and why, as well as how gendered inequality is maintained in a society where men and women are formally equal (Jonasdottir, 1991: 11).

The one facet of identity I have assumed in this research is 'Britishness', in that my participants are legally British. I do not want to side-step this assumption as I feel the question of 'British identity' is a particularly pertinent and complex one at this point in its history (Gamble and Wright, 2009: 1). I am taking 'British' in this context to essentially

mean a legal status of citizenship, as a means to limit the scope of my study. However, I do implicitly assume a shared cultural background also. It is a significant point that the people in my study who had roots from outside the UK were more likely than those identifying themselves as entirely British (or from one of its nations) to retain their name. This group was very small, but the cultural influence is clear and it speaks to the fact that a shared British identity of some sort exists.

The complexity of this identity is apparent in the current discussions surrounding it (see Gamble and Wright, 2009). Understanding and resolving the tensions in British identity is, as Parekh argues, a ‘political project’ (2009: 32) and one which should be conducted in a spirit of open conversation (Parekh, 2009: 39). I do not attempt to resolve these issues here, nor to question British identity in any great depth – though I do look at it in the context of historical and continuing cultural homogeneity through shared naming practices (see Chapter 5). I accept a legal British identity for my participants and, to a greater or lesser extent, a shared cultural background which influences them.

This methodology chapter will describe the methods I used, my reasons for following a mixed methods approach, the strengths and weaknesses of my chosen methods, ethical considerations, my feminist stance, and my own personal reasons for researching this topic. I want to reflect on the research as it really was, discussing the things that did not work perfectly, the frustrations and painful moments, as well as the positive aspects of the research process. Firstly I wish to justify my mixed methods approach and will begin by giving a brief outline of the growth of mixed methods as a credible ‘third way’ between strictly quantitative and strictly qualitative methods.

4.2 Mixed Methods

As Teddlie and Tashakkori state, the field of mixed methods is ‘still in its adolescence’ (2003: 8). Though mixed methods research has been conducted for decades, it has only recently become a distinct field; previously quantitative researchers may have utilised a qualitative method for further explanation of their results with ‘little methodological controversy’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003: 6). However, from the seventies there began to be increased debate over the use of paradigms and methods, and positivism was further disparaged; postpositivism did not go far enough to deal with some theorists’ difficulties

surrounding values and the nature of reality; ‘constructivism grew quite rapidly in popularity’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003: pp. 6-7). From these debates over paradigms and methods came the ‘paradigm wars’ during which theorists argued over whether or not methods could be mixed if their underlying assumptions were opposed. Those engaged in mixed methods research or those who wished to defend the ability to mix qualitative and quantitative research found they now had to systematically explain and defend their ideas and processes, meaning mixed methods began to evolve as a separate ‘third way’ in research. The main answer to the problem of mixing methods was to put forward the use of a new paradigm – pragmatism – in which qualitative and quantitative methods were held to be compatible, thereby connecting method and epistemology (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003: 7). This has since been much debated by mixed methods researchers, but it began the process of accepting mixed methods as both possible and useful.

There were two main reasons for my choosing a mixed methods approach. Firstly it was about the creation of the data itself: the entire study attempts to illuminate an issue previously untouched (names and gendered identity) and to explore the ways in which selfhood is created and changed, or indeed left untouched or confirmed, by naming practices on marriage. Mixing methods allows this project to be approached in two different ways, which can bring greater clarity through both confirmation of results and possible divergence revealed through each method. Jick argues that divergence between the results of each method forces the researcher to more carefully and critically engage with their problem to understand why one method may produce a different result from another, and this more careful consideration ‘can lead to an enriched explanation of the research problem’ (Jick, 1979: 609). I would argue that mixing qualitative and quantitative methods does help to reduce the problems within each: generalisations of qualitative work can be more easily made through use of quantitative work, and statistics can be given more depth and clarity through qualitative work. When used in conjunction with each other these methods illuminate gendered identities more clearly, which is the ultimate aim of this project.

As Arksey and Knight argue, ‘although qualitative and quantitative approaches rest on very different ontological and epistemological assumptions, they can be complementary in the hands of the thoughtful researcher and need not be incompatible’ (1999: 14).

Questionnaires and interviews have their own strengths. I wanted to combine these to create a fuller picture of my participants and research topic. I will briefly list a selection of these strengths, which I saw as important for my project, following Arksey and Knight. Surveys can be used when ‘researchers want to know about how widely a view, attitude or belief is held, or whether a situation is perceived in a particular way by people at large, or whether many people explain a certain set of actions in the same way’ (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 16); they check the researcher’s hypothesis is shared by others, and one can see a wide range of responses from a wider range of people than other methods allow (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 34). Interviews reveal events, attitudes, and opinions, but allow more time to explore these in-depth. This time allows the researcher to see how informants think and construct their life stories around particular moments, which was important to me when thinking about the moment of marriage and decisions about names. Furthermore, the interview is a dialogue in which clarifications can be offered and nuances captured (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 34). The interview also pulls the research down to the individual, the minutia of their lives, and their particular emotions and feelings (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 34). They bring out beliefs and meanings and this is key to discussing a person’s sense of identity.

The strengths of these methods combined seemed to offer a way of accessing a larger number of people and the ability to create descriptive statistics about this sample which could then allow me to see patterns within my sample, as well as challenging my own viewpoint with a wider range of opinions. The interviews could then take this larger, more generalised picture and bring it down to the individual and their life story, which could be explored in-depth. Interviews and questionnaires are not opposed to one another, but can be seen as complementary (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 33). Indeed, Arksey and Knight recommend the choice of these methods for the exact reasons I have outlined:

For example, a questionnaire might be used to get an indication of attitudes, reasoning or behaviours in the target group at large and then interviews might be used to explore what lay behind the findings of the questionnaire study. Here, interviews are being used to understand the meanings of the questionnaire responses (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 17 -18).

The second overall reason for designing a mixed methods project ties in with the first as my project is specific in its aim to illuminate women’s lives and has a materialist feminist

perspective (Jackson, 2001) and a political stance. It therefore falls within the broader title of the ‘transformative-emancipatory perspective’ in which researchers want to concern themselves with social justice and attempt to explain inequality and improve the lives of those affected by it (Mertens, 2003). The transformative-emancipatory paradigm holds to the ontological view that there are ‘many viewpoints with regard to many social realities but that those viewpoints need to be placed within political, cultural, historical, and economic value systems to understand the basis for the differences’ (Mertens, 2003: 140). It is then up to researchers to try and understand these viewpoints and where they have come from, how one may be privileged over another, and how the researcher will privilege them within their own work. Transformative-emancipatory researchers understand that values are always at work within their research and that ‘objectivity’ – in the sense of value-free and looking at the work from an ‘outside and above’ perspective – is impossible. The researcher cannot be ‘distant and... dispassionate’ (Mertens, 2003: 141), but is a part of the creation of the findings with participants which means working with bias, opinions and values. As Mertens puts it:

interaction between the researcher and the participants is felt to be essential as they struggle together to make their values explicit and create the knowledge that will be the results of the study (2003: 141).

Methodologically this perspective seeks to bring in the underrepresented and not focus on those who make the decisions in positions of power. I will discuss my own sample further below.

4.2.1 Pragmatism and Mixed Methods

I take a pragmatist approach to the use of mixed methods. In this I am following Morgan’s description (Morgan, 2007) of the uses and benefits of the pragmatist approach to this kind of research. The pragmatist approach uses abduction, intersubjectivity, and transferability (Morgan, 2007: 71). Abductive reasoning allows for movement back and forth between observation and theory, theory and further research (Morgan, 2007: 71). The results which arose from my survey influenced the kinds of questions I went on to ask in the interviews, which points seemed most salient, and which topics I wanted participants to elaborate on. Ideas are produced from reading my own empirical evidence and then constantly referred back to my evidence to see if they ‘fit’ (Lewins, 2001: 306).

Furthermore, the pragmatist approach looks to break down dividing lines between objectivity and subjectivity and accept that doing research requires an amount of both and that the two can never be wholly separate (Morgan, 2007: 72). A variety of methods can be used in tandem when one approaches them in this way, as I have done in this project. The final significant point to be made about pragmatism is that the approach looks to the transferability of research. Pragmatists look to see *what can be done with the research*, rather than more abstractly arguing over generalisability (Morgan, 2007: 72). Though my research is a relatively small-scale study, the important considerations are what it tells us about the kinds of people in my sample, but also what parts of the findings can be applied in other locations and to other kinds of people. This last is not something I aim to answer here myself, but hope my research will provide the framework for others to judge.

Pragmatism is a paradigm open to the flexible use of mixed methods. I work with a sequential design in which I have two data collection phases: a survey of both open and closed questions, and then life history interviews. This means the survey was developed first and the results from analysis of it informed the creation of the interview topic guide. As the interviews were analysed both survey and interview results informed one another to create a more detailed picture of my participants. The project is generally qualitative, with descriptive statistics produced from the survey. One type of data (qualitative or quantitative) having priority is acceptable in certain mixed methods paradigms, including pragmatism (Cresswell et al., 2003: 228).

I have chosen the methods to best answer my research questions. I have divided my research questions between the survey and the interviews in Table 1 to give an idea of which method addressed what. Some are repeated in both however, as these questions were answered by both methods but to a different extent. For example, ‘how is sense of identity connected to naming?’ could be answered, to an extent, by open questions in the survey but also in a more personal way through discussion of life stories in the interviews.

Table 1. Research Questions by Method

<p>Stage One of the Research: Online Survey</p>	<p>Is sense of identity connected to naming?; if so, <i>how</i> is identity connected?; do British women feel a sense of disjuncture in their identities before and after marriage?; what purpose does a change of name serve for them?; have British women’s attitudes to their names changed over time?; what impact has social change had on the meaning of married names; what does retaining a name mean for those who do?; what motivates name retention?; what is the reaction of others to naming decisions?</p>
<p>Stage Two of the Research: Interviews</p>	<p>How is identity connected to naming?; do British women feel a sense of disjuncture in their identities before and after marriage?; what purpose does a change of name serve for them?; how is name changing reconciled with ‘individualism’?; what impact has social change had on the meaning of married names; what does retaining a name mean for those who do?; what motivates name retention?; what is the reaction of others to naming decisions?</p>

There was a final theoretical research question also: ‘what are the connections between names, identity, modernity and gender inequality?’ This was in part taken from my empirical data, but was also based on criticism of theoretical discussion of identity, modernity, and gender relations.

Finally, I want to clarify my terminology. Mixed methods research is relatively new and debate continues over nomenclature. I have chosen the term ‘mixed methods’ for my research as I believe this is the most appropriate for the kind of mixing I am doing. My project combines both quantitative and qualitative data, but within it there is another layer of mixing as my survey is both quantitative and qualitative. I combine findings from numerical, written, and spoken data which is a further combination. The myriad terms available at this stage to mixed methods researchers can be very narrow or very broad and, for my project, a broader term is necessary to cover the different points at which mixing occurs. Therefore I will be working with the definition of Cresswell et al. throughout:

A mixed methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research (2003: 212).

4.2.2 *Quantitative Data and Feminism*

Arguments have been raised against using quantitative methods in feminist research as such methods are seen as unable to access the real life experiences of women and instead force them to fit into pre-defined boxes (see Westmarland 2001 for a discussion of this perspective). However, I would argue along with Kelly, Burton, and Regan that the most important thing to keep in mind in any project is what its aims are and what methods would be most suitable to manage these (Kelly et al., 1994: 35). Quantitative methods are not inherently anti-feminist and, when combined with qualitative methods, can be used to allow women to speak and produce a greater understanding of the experiences of women’s lives: a mixture of closed and open questions gives women a chance to say more than pre-defined boxes allow, and these women have a chance to dispute the usefulness of these boxes at the end of the survey if they wish to do so; the boxes themselves have been produced in discussion with various women whose input has led me to amend and update my original ideas. Ease of analysis is not my primary concern – instead it is to hear women’s voices and build up a picture of their lives and decisions. I do not hold to positivist beliefs in the self-explanatory nature of scientific and quantitative data, or that scientific methods are universal and value-free; any data produced is contextual and the

findings can only be very cautiously applied outwith the group studied (whatever the method).

As Kelly et al. argue, whatever the topic under investigation, people will be more or less likely to want to disclose information about their lives and using a questionnaire with both closed and open questions allows them to write as much or as little as they feel comfortable with (Kelly et al., 1994: 35). It also gives them more time to consider their answers which is always useful to research findings and removes the complications that can come from an interviewer's presence to do with 'matching' gender or race positions, for example (Kelly et al., 1994: 35; Phoenix, 1994)²⁰. Survey research also allows a larger number of people to be reached and their views obtained. Surveys, of course, have their own problems *because* no one is there to guide the participant through the research process, as misunderstandings which may arise cannot be explained (Bryman, 2008: 218), but I have tried to minimise this possibility through extensive discussion with others and having women complete drafts of the questionnaire in a pilot study. Using quantitative methods in a different way from positivists should be something feminists embrace where useful; they can be used carefully to produce important information about women's lives, and this is a better course of action than cutting oneself off from any way of knowing the world.

The best way of analysing quantitative data also continues to be debated and I would like to outline my approach to this.

4.2.3 *Analysing Statistics*

As Byrne argues, 'there are no such things as variables' (Byrne, 2003: 32); instead when using statistics, researchers are measuring traces of the complex systems which make up the world. As these systems are never static, statistics cannot fully grasp the world but instead represent only a specific point in time in whatever system is being measured. It is individual *people* who make up these systems and the complex interactions between systems, and therefore they are always subject to change, 'both individual and social'

²⁰ These authors problematise 'matching' the gender and race of researcher and participant. They suggest when 'matched' certain comments may go unexplained as understanding of viewpoint as an 'insider' of the group is presumed. However, there are also possibilities for one party not giving their genuine opinion for fear of offending when positions are 'unmatched'. Furthermore, being 'matched' gives no guarantee of rapport.

(Byrne, 2003: 31). Discussing variables as if they are independent, have an agency of their own, and as if they are self-explanatory, transparent representations of the world only reifies the variables and presents an unrealistic and simplified version of reality; researchers must understand the contextual, time-specific, and partial picture of the world which is truly presented.

Applying this to my questionnaire means viewing the data I collect as integrated and nested information which cannot be understood without considering the women behind it, constantly going back and forth between data and research questions, and remembering that whatever has been measured is not real in itself but instead is an expression ‘of the relationships among things which are real’ (Byrne, 2003: 40). Class for example, as Byrne discusses, cannot be made into a mathematical equation into which real people must fit – the complexity of a category such as class cannot be reduced to this, and instead should be viewed as a series of relations; the numbers gained from statistical evidence are only a trace of the wider system at a particular point in time. I therefore cannot expect to paint a complete picture of the participants in my research project, but I will not reduce their experiences to ‘fit’ with reductionist ideas of quantitative data.

Having discussed the theory behind my choice of methods and my approach to this project, I will now outline the practicalities of doing the research in the sequential order in which I conducted it, starting with the survey and going on to the interviews.

4.3 The Survey

4.3.1 *Planning and Piloting*

Both survey and interview stages went through a process of planning and piloting. The survey was planned using literature on how survey questions should be written, the format of the questionnaire and how informants can be influenced by this, as well as by considering what exactly I wanted to know, whether the survey questions got to the heart of my research questions, and how I would then analyse the answers provided (see Bryman, 2008; Dillman, 2009; Gillham, 2000). There was also a great deal of discussion with my supervisors and questions were tested on people I know to gauge their response. The final draft was then piloted on thirty women from Yorkshire and the central belt of

Scotland – the final results of which became the foundation for my Masters dissertation – and the results analysed using SPSS and thematic coding (see Bryman, 2008). This pilot stage ensured that any problem questions were amended or removed from my PhD survey; gaps in information were also identified and questions could be added to fill these. Comments from the pilot survey takers were incorporated when necessary, in terms of areas of content they felt should have been included (for example, the aesthetics of the name) and design changes.

This resulted in a questionnaire with nine sections, most of which had a mix of both open and closed questions: ‘Background Questions’; ‘Naming Decisions’; ‘Names and Family Connections’; ‘Name Changing’ (for relevant participants); ‘Retaining your Original Family Name’ (for relevant participants); ‘Names and Working Life’ (for relevant participants); ‘Divorce and Naming Decisions’ (for relevant participants); ‘Naming and Identity’; and ‘Final Comments’. There was also a space for participants to note whether they would be interested in being interviewed at a later date. The questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix 3.

4.3.2 Sampling

Participants were drawn from a number of locations across Britain and even further afield in the hope that the sample would be as diverse as possible. This form of sampling was convenience and participants were self-selecting. I contacted national websites and forum groups (including Mum’s Net and the F-Word), who agreed to post my advertisement²¹. I used this same advertisement to contact people in local authority councils in northern England and central Scotland through friends and relatives who work for these councils and were able to access their intranet. I also posted this advert on a university campus in northern England’s ‘small ads’ online service and used my own personal networks, asking friends and relatives to advertise the project to their friends, family, and in their workplaces. There was an amount of snowballing from these contacts, though I tried to avoid too much of this method of sampling to keep participation diverse.

A group of more working class participants (in terms of job and therefore income) from the south of England were recruited via personal networks and all of these women used paper

²¹ The written advertisement can be seen in Appendix 1.

copies of the questionnaire. Due to printer problems at their end, these surveys were unfortunately incomplete and not all were able to be counted in the final numbers as the data yielded was not clear enough or simply not enough. In terms of ease of use for participants, when technologically versed, the online version of the survey was always preferable.

Once the survey was live initial responses suggested a mainly white sample, hence I tried to purposively sample non-white groups by sending emails with my written advertisement and posting posters²² to community centres in a northern English city and a city in the central belt of Scotland: these community centres advertise themselves as for particular ethnic groups to promote well-being (providing information about health care and crèches for children) and foster links between people of the same ethnic background (by organising social events). Unfortunately these attempts did not yield any results.

Participants were able to contact me by email or by writing (I provided details with my adverts). Once they got in touch I was able to answer questions about the project and then posted them an introductory letter, outlining the aims of the project, a consent form, and a sheet on which they could provide further contact details if they thought they may wish to be interviewed in future; they were provided with the URL for the website, a participant number (which they had to enter into the online survey), and the password to access the questionnaire (though I included the URL in my email to them confirming I had posted this information as it was easier to copy and paste, rather than type by hand)²³. Participants were provided with a stamped-addressed envelope to return their forms to me. Not all participants wished to provide their address and to these I emailed all the details and they either posted the forms back or signed, scanned, and emailed them back to me.

Participants were gathered mainly from the north of England, though participants did range from between Aberdeen and the Isle of Wight. Some participants lived abroad but were British and some spent time in both Britain and other European countries; there were also women who had emigrated from other countries to Britain. The women were expected to hold British nationality. Information was gathered about participants' backgrounds (in the survey) to be able to see what might impact upon certain naming decisions and what

²² The poster and letter of introduction I sent to these community centres can be seen in Appendix 1.

²³ These can be found in Appendix 2.

possibilities for identity creation might be open to participants. Table 2 gives the method of sampling with frequency, and an overview of sample characteristics is given in tables in Appendix 4.

Table 2. Method of Sampling

Method of Sampling	Frequency
Convenience	79
Snowballing	9
Personal Networks	14
Total	102

4.3.3 Coding

I coded the numerical data using a simple format: giving values to particular answers, for example, '1' for 'yes' and '2' for 'no'. As questions about age and finances had been flagged up in the planning stages as sometimes uncomfortable to answer, as seen to be very personal, band values were created for these questions, for example '16 – 25' and '£26,000 – 35,000,' and then each band was given a numerical code. String data (i.e. written words) were copied out. I used SPSS to complete this process, as well as to create the descriptive statistics for this project.

I also took detailed notes of what each person had said in the qualitative sections of her survey, including both paraphrasing and direct quotes. I went through this process twice. Following on from this I coded all of the data into themes. These themes I then wrote as title headings in two large notebooks (one for the name changers and one for the name retainers); under these headings participant quotes and experiences were written. I decided to do this process by hand, though I could have used NVivo for data management. I find that, in terms of getting to know the data, I prefer to do this manually as I remember far

better. Though this process was time-consuming it means I now have a better knowledge of my survey data than I would ever have had if I had used a computer tool. As Stanley and Dampier argue, CAQDAS packages are not always necessary in managing qualitative projects and may not have the specific capabilities required by the researcher to make their use worthwhile (2010: 30), hence deciding when to use them should depend upon each individual researcher and their project. This data was transferred into an Excel spreadsheet as a means to access and analyse the data more easily after this process was complete – using Excel allowed me to instantly see the connections between one participant’s set of comments, as well as between participants.

This process of sorting and coding the data meant I could then move onto a more detailed analysis of this data – though in reality analysis begins as soon as one begins to sort the data – and begin to see what was most significant to my research questions. The themes I selected as being the most important were used as jumping off points for the topics discussed in the interview. More personal and individual detail was sought on these themes to deepen my understanding of participants’ identity formation.

The participants are represented by a number, for example ‘participant 12’ or P12 throughout. As this project reflects on the importance of names and the thought processes around identity when asked to change a name, assigning a pseudonym seemed incongruous. Instead using numbers throughout emphasises the importance of the name by its absence. Therefore all participants will only be referred to by number: when data has come from an interview rather than the survey this will be indicated. A participant index providing background information for each individual can be found in Appendix 8.

4.4 Ethical Considerations for the Survey Research

My entire research project – survey and interviews – was passed by an ethics committee at the University of York. Nevertheless there are always on-going ethical considerations in any research project. Here I will discuss those relating to the survey. Ethical considerations relating to the interviews will be included in the discussion about the interview stage of the research below.

Participants, on receiving their consent forms through the post, were also given a cover letter with the link to the survey and a participant number. This allowed anonymity to be retained while I could have some means of later getting in touch with the appropriate people for interview (connecting their participant number with their contact details). This meant that the survey was perhaps more time consuming to manage, as it was not simply a link in an email with an inbuilt consent form, but a more involved process of communication. A great deal of time had to be spent communicating with participants, answering queries and solving problems, as well as printing and preparing packs to send off, and physically posting them.

Consent forms were safely stored in their paper format, as well as details of those who expressed interest in being interviewed at a later stage. The survey was on a survey website (www.kwiksurveys.com), and was password protected, as I explained earlier: ethically I could not accept just anyone stumbling upon the survey and completing it without full knowledge of what they were undertaking, and it would have undermined my own ability to decide who should later be part of the interview sample. The results, once created, were also only accessible by logging in to the website under my details and then by providing a separate password to open the results page.

Kwiksurveys was chosen as a useful survey tool after I was advised that I could not use Survey Monkey without paying considerable sums of money (because of the time span I needed the survey to be open and accessible). I researched various free survey tools and had piloted the use of kwiksurveys in my MA research. The tool had been very successful, allowing me all the necessary formatting options for questions, anonymity for users, and a clear, readable screen design. I therefore chose to continue using it in my PhD research. The site promised secure results, an unlimited number of respondents, had a full team of support staff behind it, and was used by businesses around the globe.

However, after completing the survey section of the research, the coding and analysis, the website was destroyed by a group targeting the business. All data was lost. Thankfully for the ethics of the project the data was deliberately and entirely deleted rather than taken (though it is important to note there were no personal details connecting individuals to data stored on the website); it has meant the original survey data can no longer be accessed. I

was from then on unable to return to my data to check its accuracy or to look for a direct quote in a section I may have paraphrased in the note-taking and coding process. This meant that anything I may have paraphrased would have to remain as such in the project detail itself. The situation could have been a great deal worse had I not dealt promptly with my survey data and ensured no personal data was stored with it; nevertheless this was a horrible blow to myself after all the work I had put into the survey. The kwiksveys website now exists under new control and the owners have asked that I make it clear they are in no way connected with the previous site.

This sort of research should be done ethically, and I was determined to have my participants well informed and feeling supported; I wanted them to feel they could approach me at any time, but this made me consider in more depth ethics in relation to the researcher. This investment of time and emotion provoked problems of how to manage this intensive process with other work, and how to manage difficult email exchanges. The element of gratitude that is involved in research (Green et al., 1993: 632) plays a significant role in how the relationship between researcher and participant develops, and it does mean that challenging participants when rude or dismissive is difficult when they remain a vital part of the research. This kind of exchange could be very draining, but was fortunately rare.

This more intensive method of administering the survey (posting forms, engaging in email conversation, etc.) also allowed participants to allay fears they had about entering into social research, in terms of protection of their identity and how the information could be used. Though this was explained to participants on the consent form, some wanted to ask deeper questions. This discussion actually allowed me to create rapport with some participants before the research process truly began and meant that I managed to secure participants who might otherwise have been put off by a more anonymous form of online survey research (Bryman, 2008: 648). The fact that the women contacted *me* and entered into a dialogue with me (rather than the other way around) also prevented another possible concern about internet-based research arising: the nuisance email being sent to groups of people (Bryman, 2008: 648).

The power relationship is swayed in the direction of the participants at this point: they are vital to the research taking place and their complaints and problems must be taken seriously to have them continue as part of the research. They have every right to leave at any point and this leaves the researcher in a precarious position. However, once the write-up stage begins, the power balance shifts back in favour of the researcher who can represent these women in any way she chooses. Power is complex and researchers cannot be naive about it (Taylor, 1996: 121). I try to remain aware of this power, and continually go back to the data as I write to ensure I am not suppressing the opinions of the participants with my own.

All details which may identify participants have been removed from the written up data. I also use the acronym 'OFN' at points throughout the thesis: this stands for 'original family name'. I do not use the term 'maiden name' because its connotations of what forms of sex and sexuality are appropriate are unacceptable to me; furthermore my participants may have had a previous name which was not the name they were given at birth, because of adoption, marriage, divorce, and so on, hence I use 'OFN' or 'previous name'.

4.5 The Life History Interview

4.5.1 *Planning and Piloting*

As with the survey I piloted the interviews beforehand. Piloting the interview was done with six participants who had taken the pilot survey, but were all known to me via friends and relatives. These six interviews all took place in a Scottish city and lasted between 40 minutes and one and a half hours. They gave me a near equal spread of name changers and name retainers. The pilot was conducted with a semi-structured interview style, and though this worked for some participants, it often felt too interrogatory when asking participants about their relationships, marriages, and emotions. The life history style seemed more suited to the aims of the project, in looking at life turning points and identity, but also gave the participant the initiative back, allowing her to lead the conversation as she saw fit. The interesting and varied conversations I had with these women influenced what topics I saw as important to the project.

4.5.2 *Sampling*

In undertaking the life history interviews I purposively selected a sample of the survey participants. I selected 20 participants from those who had expressed interest in being interviewed, chosen to provide as wide a range of views and naming decisions as possible. As I already had contact details for participants I was able to get in touch with them directly and ask if they were still interested in being interviewed. I emailed them details about the form the interview would take (life history interviewing), how long it might last, and their rights and responsibilities. Attempts at contact resulted in 16 interviews and appendix 5 provides the characteristics of these participants. Participants who agreed to be interviewed were asked to consider the information I had sent them and on the day of the interview were given a consent form to sign confirming they understood their rights and that they gave their consent to be interviewed and have their data treated as I had outlined²⁴. For the three interviewees who had to be recorded over the phone, I asked them to confirm their consent on tape.

4.5.3 *Interview Style*

The method of interviewing utilised was the life history interview in which participants are encouraged to tell their own life story and bring out the most important points in their own terms. The interviewer acts only as a guide with some open-ended questions and intervenes as little as possible in the narrative²⁵. My participants were encouraged to discuss the stages of their life surrounding their childhood, partnership, engagement, wedding, marriage, the naming choices made and awareness of identity shifts or continuity. My research focus dictated that these areas of life must be discussed but participants were able to bring up whatever they felt useful or interesting to expand their story. The life history interview encourages participants to go through their life in a chronological order and produce a coherent narrative, in this case explaining their decisions around names and emphasising what they felt to be the most important aspects of important life moments. There were, however, several pointed questions asked at the end of interviews to gauge feeling and challenge assumptions if these ideas were not touched on by participants in the main part of the interview.

²⁴ This consent form can be found in Appendix 6.

²⁵ The topic guide for questions can be found in Appendix 7.

To this end I produced a selection of topics which I thought were significant to my project and the research questions I had. I also produced a number of prompt questions to go with each topic in case the interviewee needed help in continuing her story or there was a lull in the conversation (see Appendix 7). The aim was to use these as little as possible and allow participants to take on the initiative for the flow of the interview. I found this quite difficult to manage at first. Transcribing one of my early interviews I was frustrated with my tendency to jump in to the interviewee's story and even to guide the sequence of discussion. I worked hard at pulling myself back from the interview to allow the participant the space to speak. This improved with practice, but meant I had to be careful with ensuring I did not look too disconnected and that I was always ready to step in if the participant had truly finished speaking.

The act of telling a life history is an act of storytelling, which Atkinson argues is a 'fundamental form of human communication' (Atkinson, 1998: 1). We use stories to make our lives understandable to ourselves and others; we learn more about ourselves 'through the process of reflecting and putting the events, experiences, and feelings that we have lived into oral expression' (Atkinson, 1998: 1). A person describing their life and its events is reminded through the very act of storytelling about obstacles, conflict, and resolution: the narrative form brings out detail and depth.

The document created from transcribing the words of the interviewee is entirely in their own words and in the first person. It is an account created through the collaboration of the interviewer and interviewee, though minimal interference from the interviewer during the storytelling is required. As with all interviewing the interviewer has to accept that they may not be getting an exact retelling of an event, but are getting one perspective and that one which the interviewee wants to tell – it may be how they remember it or it may be that they wish to recount the events in a way which brings certain ideas to the fore. This does not invalidate the account as it remains truthful to that person and is useful to the researcher as one person's viewpoint. In my research I am looking for accounts of selfhood and identity creation, therefore the idiosyncratic details of a person's account are necessary data in understanding how they build up a picture of themselves in the world. Atkinson sums up the process thus:

Whatever form it takes, a life story always brings order and meaning to the life being told, for both the teller and the listener. It is a way to better understand the past, the present and a way to leave a personal legacy for the future.... A life story gives us the vantage point of seeing how one person experiences and understands life, his or her own especially, over time (Atkinson, 1998: 8).

The final sentence of the above quote contains another two ideas which are particularly useful to the scope of my research. The life history interview provides an opportunity for the teller to situate their own life within a wider historical and social setting; as Polkinghorne refers to it 'human existence as situated action' (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). They can reflect on the structural forces outside their control which may have impacted upon their life at any given time. One aim of my research is to think about the wider social arena in which women are making their naming choices and how this arena works to influence their own sense of self and gender it in particular ways. The life history interview encourages the interviewee to think holistically about their life and all of the forces working upon it (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). The telling of such a holistic story will allow space for collective, societal values to be expressed as well as personal opinions, agreements and dissensions from these societal values.

Further to this, and the second point from the quote, is the ability to see change (or consistency) across a life course and to see how events have shaped and changed a person and their sense of self over time; for my own research purposes, this also means I can compare the older and younger women's values and decisions in detail and consider how change over historical time as well as within an individual life have come to bear upon selfhood and names. Therefore, the life history interview provides a means of learning about one person and their society, an individual's lifetime and, through comparison, any changes across historical time; it is holistic and can provide rich, detailed data in the first person. This type of interviewing provides the kind of detail and the correct focus on self within society that meets the needs of my research project. Such narrative accounts

rely on people's presumption that time has a unilinear direction moving from past to present to future and on their sense that events, motives, and interpretations can affect human actions and outcomes (Polkinghorne, 1995: 8).

Causal links may only be made after the event when people see what in fact was to become significant (Polkinghorne, 1995: 8). Using narrative, people construct their lives into

meaningful ‘plots’ (Polkinghorne, 1995: 8), turning busy, multi-layered, and often fragmented lives into an order (Polkinghorne, 1995: 16). Narrative may be seen to be too constructed, too emotive, to have real meaning, but it is in fact an important way in which humans make sense of themselves and others, and through which they make that coherent life story deemed so important and necessary; it is the best means by which to reach experience and opinion in real detail. The construction of the story – the viewpoint of the person – is what the researcher is looking for.

When in the interview situation the data produced there is a collaboration between researcher and participant (Mason, 2009: 62 – 63): the kinds of topics introduced and the prompt questions which may be used to guide talk will structure what the participant says. The life history interview style attempts to reduce involvement from the interviewer, but this cannot be wholly removed; even facial expressions, signs of agreement, or what the interviewee thinks of the interviewer will influence the kinds of data given. One interviewee may feel comfortable giving certain information to one interviewer, but not necessarily another (Phoenix, 1994: 66). The data is, in this sense, co-created. It is certainly situated and contextual (Mason, 2009: 62). The conversation, though attempting to be as natural as possible, is not. The context is synthetic, arranged between two people who may not otherwise have met. As Delph-Janiurek argues, interviewer and interviewee ‘constitute each other’ in the research process, as much as the data (2001: 414). They are in many ways performing a role within the situation. This can be a problem in research when interviewees look to give the researcher what they think they want to hear. This will be based on a general idea of what the interview is about, the topic at hand, knowledge of the researcher, and the cues received in the situation itself (Carter, 2011: 54; Wooffitt, 2007: 478).

This last is something I worried about during the interviews. The very fact of being based in a ‘Centre for Women’s Studies’ raised particular expectations in people’s minds, whether justified or not. I had one interviewee tell me what else I should be asking because it would really get to the heart of ‘what I was looking for’. I had hoped I was not ‘looking for’ anything. However, I feel it is naïve to suggest the researcher does not want certain topics addressed. It was harder to ask certain questions or push certain topics

further when it became clear during the interview that a participant assumed I had an agenda.

My most challenging question for name changers²⁶, kept until quite close to the end of the encounter, had to be finely judged, as I learned that it could completely kill off rapport. This was tightly bound up with being classed as a feminist. This word can conjure many images, both good and bad, and the interview atmosphere could be very different depending on what a participant thought about feminism and what they had assumed my feminist beliefs were. Not changing names, as will be explored in Chapter 5, is connected with feminist values, often perceptions of Second Wave values. I am a feminist. However, as the research process went on my ideas about names, selfhood, and feminism were increasingly complicated; by the time I came to interviewing participants I felt any agenda I may have had initially had been thoroughly problematised. I was frustrated when assumptions were made about me and I had to work harder to establish rapport; in many ways I wish now that I had started a frank discussion with participants about my views at the start of each interview, though this would not always have been necessary.

The interviews took place between December 2011 and May 2012; they lasted between forty-five minutes and two and a half hours. Interview participants were given details of the life history interview before it took place, so that they would know what to expect and not be surprised by the amount of initiative they were expected to take. I believe this prior explanation is ethical as participants should know what they are signing up for, but it also means participants are more likely to talk without prompting. This did not always work: sometimes I had to go over the structure of the interview – or indeed, lack of – when participants seemed confused, and occasionally a participant was simply unable or unwilling to carry out this kind of interview, despite having initially agreed to it. Some people were constrained by time and could only offer me an hour at lunchtime or a maximum of two hours while their husband looked after the children; the interviewee who took part in the shortest interview did not elaborate without a significant degree of prompting and was, even then, often uncomfortable about giving me details of her life.

²⁶‘If your name change is a sign of commitment to your husband, what is his sign of commitment to you?’

This may be in part to do with the fact this interview had to be conducted over the phone. Three of my participants lived in more isolated parts of the UK and it would have been difficult for me to travel there. With two of these participants I offered them a phone interview instead, and with one we planned to use Skype to keep the interview as close to a face-to-face encounter as possible, however the connection was unreliable and we switched to using the telephone.

There are several pros and cons to using telephone interviews, especially when compared with a face-to-face encounter. Most importantly for me was that this method allows for distance interviewing, meaning I could access participants I would otherwise have been unable to speak to. Participants are also less likely to be affected by the interviewer's characteristics or provide answers of which they feel the interviewer would approve (Bryman, 2008: 198). Though it is hard to generalise about this area of research, Phoenix has argued that having a socially 'unmatched' interviewer and interviewee can produce more thorough data, as no assumptions can be made about what the other person knows and many details have to be explained to ensure both parties correctly understand the narratives being produced (Phoenix, 1994). It is possible that the inability to be sure of social positioning when doing telephone interviews produces a similar situation.

However, one can still pick up on certain things over the phone, including accent; the interviewer also has to ensure that their voice carries over an appropriate level of interest to the interviewee, which can sometimes be more difficult without the use of body language and gesture. This is one disadvantage Bryman gives for telephone interviews – some interviewees may be put off by not being able to judge how the conversation is going without facial expressions and gestures (Bryman, 2008: 199). This may mean that my interviewee with the shortest interview was unhappy with the lack of face-to-face contact and felt ill at ease with sharing her life story with a disembodied voice.

The other two interviews were successful though, with an easy rapport and times of over an hour. In fact, the focus on my voice as the only real identifying factor produced one interesting conversation about what the participant's expectations of me had been on reading my name – she had pictured me from reading my first and last name together – and the location of the university I study at, and then how these ideas were changed on hearing

my voice. It was interesting proof to both of us how names can signal certain aspects of identity and that these signals may or may not always be correct.

4.5.4 *Transcription and Write-Up*

When transcribing the interviews I began with a very detailed process of verbatim transcription, including pauses, laughter, and some description of body language. As time progressed and interviews piled up more quickly, this transcription process became less detailed, and some passages which were not directly relevant were paraphrased. I experimented with software to help in this process – *Dragon Speaking Naturally*, for example, which allows the user to say what they are hearing/reading and the software will write it down – but this proved more time-consuming than manually transcribing the data myself as the software needs to be ‘trained’ to understand the voice. I coded the interviews for themes, as I had done with the qualitative sections of the survey. This meant I could now move between data from the survey and the interviews, comparing commonalities and disjuncture to see whether and how the two methods agreed or disagreed with one another in terms of the data produced. I went back and forth between survey data (both numerical and written) and the interview data throughout the transcription, analysis, and write-up phases.

I offered all interview participants the chance to see the transcription of their interview and comment on it. Only two participants took me up on this offer: one did not comment further on her transcript, but the other discussed it with me and added certain comments and clarifications. I wanted to offer the chance for participants to see and comment upon their transcripts because I see trying to keep the power balance between researcher and researched at an equilibrium as part of being a feminist researcher. It was an attempt to ensure my voice, biases, and assumptions were not getting in the way of the participant’s narrative (Bloom, 1998: 10). I wanted to make sure my participants felt involved in the research process and not exploited in any way. This leads me to more general reflections on the ethics of the interview process.

4.6 Ethical Considerations in the Interviews

As a feminist researcher I subscribe to the idea that a researcher should offer information about herself in the interview situation. This makes the sharing of information balanced and reduces the feeling of exploitation in the interview (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007: 333 - 334). This meant offering up information about my partnership, influential women in my life, my feminist political standpoint, and, when requested, my thoughts on names, naming, and marriage. I was generally happy to offer this information, although I sometimes worried about the impact of revealing my views to the interviewee. I was fortunate in that these kinds of questions usually came at the end of the session. However, throughout I was prepared to validate participant stories with my own.

If the session was going really well I occasionally offered stories which challenged a participant's viewpoint, but this could only be attempted when I felt the participant and I were comfortable enough to disagree. I was often in a person's own home and sometimes did not feel able to criticise them outright – this was a part of ensuring my own safety as well as maintaining rapport. Rapport-building can in itself be exploitative if it hides what the researcher truly thinks from the participant so attempting to share something with the participants helped to right the imbalance of information giving, but also helped reduce my feelings of guilt in taking information from women I had only just met (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007: 343). However, I also felt I should allow the participant to speak her own mind as much as possible and try not to encourage her to tone down her opinions because of my reactions. Some participants, however, made it clear that they were not interested in equal sharing – this was a space in which they wanted to tell their story, and I had to respect that also (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007: 333).

The interviews touched on many emotional and sensitive issues: when asking someone about something as intimate as their marriage a whole range of deeply personal events can emerge. I heard stories of physical, financial, and emotional abuse, alcohol and substance abuse, depression and other mental health problems, the breakdown of marriages, the death of children, and a description of the final moments of a husband's life. These were sometimes difficult to hear and produced emotional reactions in both myself and, of course, the woman telling me. In the consent form and before the interview I told participants not to feel they need tell me anything they did not want to and that they had

the right to refuse to answer questions; afterwards, and especially after these emotional encounters, I reminded my participants that they could ask me to remove certain sections from the transcript if they decided they did not want their words to be included in the project.

I always engaged with these stories and shared my emotional response with my participants; I wanted to ensure participants felt listened to and that I understood the emotional and physical toll these life events had taken. It felt like the only course of action available; acting in some 'objective' manner would have been appalling, both as an ethical researcher and just as a person. As it was, there was no way I could stop my reactions and I did not think to act in any way other than I did. This is a part of my ethical obligation to these women and I do not take it lightly (Dickenson-Swift, 2007: 340). I am privileged to have heard all of my participants speak about their lives, but these stories especially – some of which had never been described in such detail to another person – were deeply moving and I am grateful to my participants for sharing them with me. My thesis does not give me the scope to fully represent all of these complex life events, for which I am sorry. I am pleased and relieved that none of my participants asked for their stories to be removed from the transcript – I hope this indicates that they felt safe enough to leave them in my keeping.

For myself, these stories stay with me quite clearly and can elicit an emotional response in me even now. Emotional safety for the researcher is also important (Dickenson-Swift, 2007) and I did discuss some of these stories with my partner as a means of relief (he was never party to details which could connect story and participant). However, faced with women who had come through these events and were now sharing them with me, I felt more admiration and privilege in being allowed to hear their life narratives than any kind of emotional turmoil.

Interviews took place in homes, cafes, study rooms in libraries, and at places of work. I left the choice up to participants as I wanted them to feel comfortable. I was always able to book a room somewhere if participants could not think of a suitable space. My own physical safety was always ensured, when interviewing in a private home or work place, by using a 'buddy' system: someone knew where I was and was contacted by text or call on

my entering and leaving the property. I was lucky in that, when interviewing at home, family members were respectful of the privacy of the interview encounter. Once a participant asked if her husband could stay, which I accepted, but she later asked him to leave when she felt uncomfortable. He was entirely respectful of this; this was the only time a family member was present at the interview. Private spaces were easier to record in, in terms of background noise, but public spaces were never a serious problem either. Often it meant we enjoyed a coffee or tea while we chatted and the whole thing felt like a more natural event. We were never so close to other people that they might have overheard our conversation. Places of work were used at weekends when deserted, so silence and privacy were assured. Library study rooms were the least acceptable space, as we could not have refreshments and they were usually cramped. However, these rooms were used sparingly.

Interviewees used the same participant number given to them for the survey research to provide anonymity. It was made clear they could refuse to answer questions, ask for me to remove something from their interview transcript, or remove themselves from the research altogether. I would like to go on now to explore the strengths and weaknesses of my sample and my methods, and reflect on the kinds of claims I can make bearing these in mind.

4.7 Making Claims for my Sample

My method of sampling was a form of convenience sampling, as individuals were self-selecting: there were 102 participants, 75 of whom changed their name and 27 retained their previous/birth name on marriage. To attempt a probability sampling technique would have involved a study on too large a scale to be manageable for myself as sole researcher (with a population of around 30 million women in Britain, my survey would have needed to be responded to by hundreds of women, with even larger numbers being contacted to compensate for likely lack of response), but was also not necessary to accomplish the aims of my project, which are exploratory rather than fully explanatory. I will be working with *descriptive statistics* throughout and making cautious claims in line with the non-representative nature of my study. I cannot generalise to the whole population of British women as I could with a representative sample, as the patterns within my sample may be

due to the chance nature of those who decided to involve themselves with the research. The survey is instead designed to *explore* the research topic.

Nevertheless the study is able to give an idea of the lives and experiences of the women involved, their choices around names and marriage, and the consequences this has for their identity; conducting a survey has provided me with a larger sample and given me a greater insight into the topic than qualitative methods alone. The study adds to the debate around names, gender, and identity, providing more data for consideration.

4.7.1 Generalisability in Small Scale, Non-Representative Research

Generalisation in non-representative studies is tricky: making grand claims about the wider population is untenable. Nevertheless, as Williams argues, all studies make generalisations and, instead of ignoring this, researchers should interrogate in what ways they make these claims (Williams, 2000). I follow Mason's outline of claims to generalisability for qualitative and non-representative research (2009). Firstly, that my analysis is rigorous (Mason, 2009: 196): my methods, their strengths and weaknesses, have been carefully considered and I have conducted this research accurately and fairly. My use of these methods falls within the acceptable limits of pragmatist mixed methods research, adhering to the stipulations set out by this paradigm. My interpretations are based upon the empirical data and reading of the literature: I have endeavoured to represent my participants accurately while still being critical, to add to the theory around names, gender, and identity. My analysis is presented here for readers to judge, along with my methods, for criticism.

Having done all of this there is no reason to suspect that my project does not show something of value for wider sociological study. The women in my study are part of this society and their views are relevant and significant – what they are saying is real to them and therefore real to their understanding and perception of their lives and their society. This means there are material lives being lived out according to the beliefs expressed within my study. To have unrelated respondents from across the country express similar views and give similar explanations suggests something socially and culturally influenced is occurring. As Mason (2009: 195) argues, there is no reason to suspect my sample is atypical of the society of which it is part. Bearing this and the characteristics of my sample

in mind (please see Appendix 4) I should be able to *cautiously suggest* other women of similar backgrounds would express similar sentiments. This is open to relevant, representative testing.

I can only make cautious ‘*moderatum generalizations*’ (Williams, 2000). *Moderatum generalisations* are working hypotheses, open to re-working and change from other research (Payne and Williams, 2005: 297). The claims I make which generalise will be made with this idea in mind, as moderate and cautious, accepting a partial stance:

To generalize is to claim that what is the case in one place or time, will be so elsewhere or in another time. Everyday social life depends on the success of actors doing just this (Payne and Williams, 2005: 296).

4.7.2 *Limitations of the Study*

My decision to use an online survey tool may have impacted on the number of older women I was able to recruit. The oldest age bracket in my survey may not have had access to or the skills to use the internet. A paper format was always offered to participants if they preferred, but as so many were recruited using online sources this option was rarely taken up. The women in my older age bracket were technologically savvy – one extremely so, using far more advanced technology than myself – and could therefore be unusual in this respect. However, I would not want to make assumptions about older people in the twenty-first century as recently released statistics on internet usage in the UK (May 2013) suggest that nearly 30 percent of women aged over seventy-five now use the internet; this means, of course, that just over 70 percent do not, but this number is decreasing (‘Internet Usage by Age and Sex’, Quarterly Results, ONS). 83.6 percent of the female population have used the internet, so this method still seemed useful to me for all the reasons given here, despite the possibility of restricting my older age group (‘Internet Usage by Age and Sex’, Quarterly Results, ONS). Importantly, research has shown that the mode of administration of a survey does not seem to have a huge impact on the type of responses received (Bryman, 2008: 652).

When considering income and educational background my participants can be seen as predominantly middle class (see Appendix 4). Recent studies into social class in Britain show its changing and sometimes fluid nature (Savage et al., 2013). Class can no longer

be decided purely from income and occupation, but should also take into account cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 2010; Savage et al., 2013). My survey did not ask the kinds of questions that could identify this kind of capital; therefore my idea of the class background of my participants is based on their personal and household income, job, and the educational status they have attained. I am aware that I must make broad suggestions as to class background with this information, but would argue that education and income combined can still provide a reasonable picture of a person's class grouping, if not a complete one: Savage et al. show that education continues to split off the elite and middle class from other groups of people (2013: 231). My sample has its strengths, however, as I have been arguing. It gives a flavour of the lives of the women it does represent and this is in itself significant when beginning to explore a topic.

In making claims of any kind about participants I come up against the idea of objectivity. I would argue that 'objectivity' is a highly problematic term and is quite misleading. To be objective is not to distort something by personal bias, emotion or perception. However, no researcher can remove themselves, their own biography and biases from their research (Cotterill and Letherby, 1993: 74). In the case of the survey, I have striven to avoid questions that are too leading and to make sure that answer scales are balanced rather than in favour of a positive or negative response. However, I have still chosen this topic and the questions to be asked, which means that, in general, it is these issues which will be focused upon by respondents. Perhaps another researcher's focus would have been slightly different and the responses and ultimate shape of the research would therefore also have been different. Reading around the literature on survey research (see Bryman, 2008; Dillman, 2009; Gillham, 2000) it is clear that many things can influence a respondent, such as the order in which questions are asked or the placement of responses on a scale, and a researcher cannot avoid all pitfalls but instead needs to be aware of these problems and consider their impact on results.

I, as sole researcher, have the power to write-up and represent participants as I see them: their stories can be shaped by me and are no longer under their control (Bloom, 1998: 10). This is a highly powerful position and a power I seek to minimise. Following feminist engagements with the exploitative nature of this relationship (Maynard, 1994; Taylor, 1996; Wilkinson, 1999) I tried throughout the research process to refer back to my data and

hear the participants rather than my own views. Ultimately I must take responsibility for the fact I have the final say in how participants are represented and given voice by making this clear and my own biases transparent. As Bloom argues, without this final arbiter it becomes incredibly difficult to do research (Bloom, 1998: 10). Objectivity is not possible: the closest we can come to being 'objective' is actually interrogating and being constantly aware of our own biases and striving not to let them overtake the research analysis. With this in mind I would like to discuss my own thoughts around the topic of women and naming and reflect on why I decided to research this topic in the first place.

4.8 Personal Reflection

My own relationship with my last name is not straightforward. My last name reflects the heritage of my father who is from northern England, specifically Cumbria. The last name 'Thwaites' is generally associated with northern England, including Yorkshire where I am presently living. It is less well represented in other parts of the UK. I have grown up knowing my last name comes from Old Norse, as well as its meaning, which I have given below:

Northern English: topographic name for someone who lived by a clearing or patch of pasture land, Middle English thwaite (Old Norse þveit), or a habitational name from any of the various places named with this word, in northern England, Norfolk, and Suffolk (Ancestry.com).

This association with pasture land, clearings and, in some more romantic definitions, meadows, always seemed apt to me with my father's rural, farming background. On moving to Yorkshire I was struck by how normal the name is here, how people have heard it before, can spell it, and connect it with the drinks firm and digger company. This experience has been a relief for me.

I grew up in Edinburgh, in the central belt of Scotland; my upbringing was urban rather than rural. My mother's background is also Scottish central belt, though from the west coast, growing up in an urban town near Glasgow. My last name, with its northern English heritage and its rural connections in meaning and in my imagination, has forced me to ask certain questions of myself in terms of how it fits into my identity. The name is also so rare in Scotland that it is not easily understood by people, requires (repeated) spelling, and

has often resulted in my family being sent post addressed to a variety of bizarre names. This constant reminder of how unusual, and indeed problematic, a name can be has meant the importance of names has been something I have considered throughout my life. It made me question whether or not names really are significant to identity, whether this is a positive or a negative, and whether it matters to others that their name may not represent who they feel they are.

When I was growing up there was always the vague recognition that I could get rid of this cumbersome name when I married (there was no ‘if’). However, this was complicated for me by the example of some influential women in my life having ambivalent feelings about their name change. This mixture of expecting to marry and change names – along with the uncomfortable feeling that I might not end up happy about it – led me to question the practice of name changing. It is a research topic that flowed from personal considerations and experience, as well as my belief that the questioning and researching of taken-for-granted practices and processes is necessary if sociologists want to question inequality and delve more deeply into how societies work.

Name changing does have a history in seeing women as property. These patriarchal connotations have made me wary of the practice since I classed myself as a feminist. Doing this project has complicated my understanding of this in many ways. I have learned about cultures – including my own Scottish culture, pre-nineteenth century – where women did and, in some cases, still do not change names on marriage, but the culture remains patriarchal. I have heard from women who changed names for a whole variety of reasons, and though I may wish to question the underlying assumptions of these decisions, I can see the reasoning behind women making this decision when they live in the UK. I have heard from and met with many feminists who have changed their names, but who try to live their married lives in an equal way. I have been challenged by these women to be more careful and critical of my thoughts around naming decisions.

This project comes from a belief that there should be more open dialogue about naming and the gendered inequality that is intrinsic to the UK naming norm (women are expected to change in a way men are not). I will question some deeply normalised practices and assumptions and I realise this is a part of my own experiences and opinions. However, I

hope that through my encounters with all the different viewpoints of my participants, I have represented a true picture of what they told me and have problematised my own thinking. I offer this section as a means to make my biases transparent so the reader may judge how successful I have been (Mason, 2009: 192). The rest of the thesis contains empirical data from my research project. The next chapter will focus on tradition and feminism, followed by chapters on the themes of love and emotion work, family and kinship, and selfhood.

Chapter 5 Powerful Stories: Tradition and Feminism

Recent, influential sociological theory has proposed the idea that people and relationships are becoming more individualised. Theorists such as Giddens, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, and Bauman are prominent names in the individualisation debates, suggesting in various ways that the modern world is a place where people must and do increasingly look for their own satisfaction in work and love, even if that comes at the expense of others or means leaving a relationship for a better prospect (see Chapter 2). Giddens has linked the rise of ‘the reflexive project of the self’ (1996: 5) with feminism and the move away from identities for women ‘defined so closely in terms of the home, and... domesticity’ (Giddens, 1996: 216). Women, the feminist movement argued, should be given more choices in life and control over these decisions. Choice is now a powerful rhetoric in society generally, including for self-defined feminists. However this narrative has pitfalls and is now bound up with neoliberalism (Craven, 2007) which is actually opposed to the egalitarian message of the feminist movement. The complicated connection between feminism, choice and neoliberalism will be explored further in this chapter.

Individualisation theses call theorists to examine the nature of relationships in the modern world. My project looks to a debate that is seemingly ‘retro’ and a part of second wave feminism; women are surely free to make choices around their names regardless of traditions in this fast moving world? Yet the number of women in my study, across the time-span of the 1940s to 2011, would suggest this norm is not changing as fast as people may expect and that tradition holds a powerful sway over decision-making.

The reference to second wave feminism is also significant here. The debate over names is often connected to this period in time and the concerns of this moment in the feminist campaign (Mills, 2003). Therefore I also want to analyse how feminism comes into play in participant discussions of names: whether and how participants see feminism as a part of their decision-making around names and their ideas of themselves. Feminism has often been lambasted as a force which breaks down tradition in a negative and destructive way. Therefore I am drawing discussions of feminism and tradition together to see if the two are juxtaposed by my participants within their narratives.

5.1 Theories of Individualisation

As outlined in the literature review, there are differences between theories of late modernity, but the threads of connection are clear. People are less constrained by the past and have many more choices available to them; social positioning matters far less; relationships are much more a matter of choice and individual satisfaction; people bear the burden of creating their own identities and life trajectories to an extent not before experienced. In individualisation debates the past often seems to be held up as a homogenous and almost mythical time when people did exactly as they were told and followed rigid structures with no individual thought. The past, and the traditions stemming from this past, appear to be a straw man to knock down in order to justify and validate individualisation theories: in fact, Phillips argues, it is modernity that is usually of analytical interest and it is therefore easy to discard the past (or tradition) in favour of analysing the apparently more important concept (Phillips, 2004: 17). It is imperative then to examine ideas of the past and what ‘tradition’ might actually mean, as well as where our ideas of tradition come from. It will also shed light on whether our ‘lives in common’ (Dumm, 2008: ix; see chapter 2) really are as insignificant as the individualisation theses suggest.

5.2 The Past and Tradition

The individualisation theorists pit the past against the present. The past is presented as stable and unchanging, whereas the present is in constant flux. This reductionist view of the past is in part, Vanessa May argues, because we look at the past through its structures, whereas we look at the present via the personal (2011: 365): structures then easily appear unchanging, while our own personal lives appear to be moving fluidly. However, it is pointless to separate the two as this presents an unrealistic view of the world: the personal and structural – self and society – are ‘interdependent and permeable, each affected by the other’ (Vanessa May, 2011: 365 – 366). Simmel used the term ‘sociation’ instead of society because he saw society as something people *do*, not something that is (Vanessa May, 2011: 366). Structures are themselves the ‘sedimented practices’ of individuals over time and in a particular place – consequences of the sedimentation of these practices can be material and also intangible, as with social norms and particular ways of thinking (Vanessa May, 2011: 366). ‘Sedimentation’ should not imply fixing immovably, but practices being

open to development, variation, and (to an extent) change (Phillips, 2004: 12). Traditions do not remain perfectly the same: their very power to remain relevant comes through adaptation and development.

Shils argues that ‘All existing things have a past’ (1971: 122). In moments of both change and consistency, the past of an event, process, or person is pertinent and cannot be dismissed (1971: 122). As Adams says, the past continues to influence us all through its ‘codes of practice’ (2003: 227). These codes of practice are the traditions and norms passed down from one generation to the next. As Vanessa May argues, ‘traditions have not disappeared, but rather remain important features of contemporary societies though their nature and role may have shifted’ (Vanessa May, 2011: 365). People use the practices that have become fairly stable over time to help guide their decisions in the present (Young in Vanessa May, 2011: 366). People may well act with little knowledge of what they are doing rather than in a deliberate and careful manner (Vanessa May, 2011: 367), but enacting these social norms within lived relationships gives them continued meaning. Our traditions remain alive, meaningful, and significant to action, but the assumptions they carry will stem from a past historical moment. It is important to consider what historical moment the basis of many of our contemporary traditions is and what this might mean for the present.

Tradition is the ‘recurrence in approximately identical form of structures of conduct and patterns of belief over several generations of membership or over a long time within single societies’ (Shils, 1971: 123). It is rarely expanded upon (Shils, 1971: 123): tradition is a cause and an explanation for action. This means that the past is ever important to present-day members of a particular culture. Shils argues that anyone newly entering an on-going situation has to conform to its traditions and codes of practice, and that this is as true for a child being born into a family (and wider society) as it is for someone entering a new workplace (1971: 125). To find a place within whatever institution a person must make their actions acceptable and intelligible to those already within it; to secure a place for themselves they must become a part of the prevailing culture (Shils, 1971: 125). In this way individuals must always interact with those around them and the wider society, including its ever-present past. Traditions therefore need to have been accepted practice through time. It is time itself which becomes a legitimation for tradition: ‘it has been

accepted practice for a long period so why change now?’ or ‘it has worked well for those before us so why should we change?’ (Shils, 1971: 126). It must be *believed* to have existed previously (Shils, 1971: 126), and this is an important point in name changing to which I will return below.

The final point to make about the nature of tradition is how little people may think about it. Shils makes several important points about this ‘unthinkingness’ which I will work through in my empirical evidence:

The unthinkingness of the acceptance might be tantamount to the acceptance of the model of the already existent as a whole. Alternatively the model might be accepted after scrutiny to determine whether it conforms with certain criteria which are themselves unthinkingly accepted. Or again it might entail the discovery of a new pattern of belief by the application of criteria which are unthinkingly accepted (Shils, 1971: 128).

The most fully traditional of beliefs though ‘is one which is accepted without being assessed by any criterion other than its having been believed before’ (Shils, 1971: 128). This links with Bourdieu’s idea of ‘doxa’ in which much of social interaction is based on unquestioned assumptions and is not discussed (Bourdieu, 1998: 56 - 57).

5.3 Temporal Tradition: Powerful Stories

Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* (1987), draws together various examples of British traditions created and cemented throughout the nineteenth century. They argue that many British traditions stem from this period in history and that it is the thoughts, ambitions, and desires of nineteenth-century British people which continue to influence today’s Britain most directly (Hobsbawm, 1987: 1). As an example, a contributor considering the creation and use of pageantry and ceremony by the modern British monarchy, refers to the use of such symbols to create an idea of continuity, stability, and power (Cannadine, 1987: 124). This was done to cement the idea of Britain as a strong, imperial nation which had great worldwide power (Cannadine, 1987): the idea of a long, unbroken past of traditions provides an air of a type of stability which cannot be challenged and will not be changed. In fact though, the monarchy was losing its appeal in the mid to late nineteenth century as Queen Victoria became increasingly reclusive (Cannadine, 1987); pageantry and parade were re-invented to look old and long-standing to

reinvigorate the monarchy and the way it was viewed by the British public (Cannadine, 1987: 102). This display has since convinced generations of British people that the ‘traditions’ they see before them are part of a “‘thousand year old tradition’” (Dimbleby quoted in Cannadine, 1987: 102).

Such venerable traditions become things of pride, to be upheld and cherished. These traditions are nevertheless nineteenth-century inventions, based on the social and political priorities of this period; they uphold the questionable idea that the British monarchy is an ‘unbroken’ line of one thousand years and cement the country’s image as a world-power. This is a story about power: the power of Britain to colonise others, the power of Britain to command the respect of other countries, and the power of the British monarchy to rule over its own citizens and those it was subjugating in other parts of the world. ‘Tradition’ can be utilised to uphold the position of those in power.²⁷

The idea of ‘traditions’ as the stories of the powerful looking to maintain their power can be applied to the context of name changing. Firstly, as has been discussed, the naming traditions of England and Scotland are different: English women have changed names for centuries (Amy Erickson, 2005: 11), while Scottish women predominantly retained names until the nineteenth century (Barclay, 2011: 98). During the nineteenth century Scottish women increasingly changed their last name to their husband’s after marriage, in line with the English practice. This change in ‘tradition’ is in step with the politics of the day: the making of a unified British state, in which Scotland was playing its part, with a number of English bureaucratic processes being imported (Pittock, 2008). The significance of the British state and its homogenised practices became vital to the project of Britishness and creating a wider British empire; this in practice meant a cultural change towards English practices. Further to this there was the growing importance of Romanticism in the nineteenth century, which also played its part in shaping intimate relationships (see Chapter 3).

There is a paucity of research into this particular naming practice in Scotland and most people I have communicated with during this research have mentioned the fact that name

²⁷ I do not accept Hobsbawm, Ranger, and their colleagues’ arguments uncritically, but I would argue that their thesis of ‘invented tradition’ remains useful for me in conceptualising the relations between power, tradition, and geography.

retaining for women was simply ‘how it was in Scotland’ (personal correspondence with the staff at the *National Archives*, 2011). Before the nineteenth century, and even early twentieth century, women in Scotland were able to legally retain their birth name and be referred to by this name in contracts etc., though they could be referred to by both their original and their husband’s name socially. The *National Archives of Scotland* holds papers relating to binding marriage contracts – both pre and post marriage – in which women’s original family names are used. For example,

Mutual agreement between John Glas, merchant burgher of Perth, and his spouse, Janet Halyburtone, superseding their marriage contract, which was 'cancelled and destroyed as not being answerable to these ends and purposes intended of it'. (April 1672; Catalogue Reference: B59/37/5/16)

Draft antenuptial marriage contract between James Comb, portioner of Abernethy, and Mary Dewar (18th century; Catalogue Reference: B59/38/6/227)

Interim act and decree appointing Franc Gibb Dougall to be judicial factor on the trust estate created by the contract of marriage entered into between the deceased George Knox and Mrs Eliza Ferguson or Knox dated 4 Jun 1849 and recorded in the sheriff court books of Lanarkshire 5 May 1875 and granting warrant to complete title (April 1883; Catalogue Reference: CS46/1883/4/71)

Changing names had not been a legal and ‘normal’ part of Scottish culture until the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet this past has been lost under the homogenising narrative of ‘Britain’, which often stands for the importing of English customs. What is ‘normal’ now has been a tradition for less than one hundred years for sections of Scottish society, yet the participants in my study set their own decisions within a recent story of what ‘tradition’ means.

This chimes with Hobsbawm’s (1987) argument that most of our present traditions were born in the nineteenth-century, and Shils’ argument that people need merely to *believe* that what they do is a long-standing tradition to give it credence. It also shows that the stories of the powerful come to take on the credibility and venerability of ‘tradition’. Therefore, to suggest we are free from the past is to ignore the reality, which can be seen in the narratives of my participants.

5.4 Scottish Participants' Narratives of 'Tradition'

Within my larger survey study of 102 women, 6 defined themselves as being from Scotland specifically. All six of these women changed their name on marriage and were *situated agents* – they were involved in their own decision making but all recognised the importance of other people and wider society. Participant 11 commented that one name was important to her, but she was aware that this was 'culturally bound'; P62 said that name changing is 'expected culturally and I never thought about not conforming', though, on her second marriage, had begun a process of reclaiming her original family name as she was unhappy with her change. These two participants show just how quickly name changing has become accepted as a part of Scottish culture and marriage practice. Until recently in historical time these women would not have been able to make this appeal to culture and would instead have had a different narrative to claim as their own. Both what action would have been normative and expected, and the importance of that action, would have been viewed and interpreted differently.

Participant 15 spoke directly of the name change as being 'the norm at the time'. She is of course correct in saying the name change is historically specific, but she was referring to the fact that things may have changed *since she married*; an understanding of the recentness with which her own action has become the norm was not present in her discussion. Participant 15's narrative fits within that of linear progression and present and future progresses being pitted against the past. She believes modern society has moved on from when she made her decision in the 1980s (when she was under 25) and does not require women to make this gesture; the modern choice narrative of theorists such as Giddens (1996) is pervasive. The structures which regulated the lives of women in Scotland before the twentieth century, when it came to marriage and names, have been forgotten entirely; a homogenised idea of another country's past has been appropriated.

This appropriation has been quickly made and become totalising in its normalcy. Participant 112, who is delighted with her decision even after divorce, spoke of her family's total acceptance of name-changing – it was the expected course of action for her. Despite the fact her name may die out and that she feels her family history will be lost without more effort to understand the history of this name, no one questioned her action. Participant 2 noted that all her female relatives had changed names so it was 'traditional' –

she had a set example of how a woman behaves in this situation which legitimised the practice as 'normal' and 'correct'. Indeed, for P2, if she had not changed she would have felt she was 'holding back from the marriage'. The much older Scottish tradition is not to be seen and there is no narrative there for this participant to use.

The appropriation of the inequality of the name change and the power it entails can be seen by the reactions from husbands-to-be and their families in these participants' accounts. Participant 15 wrote that her husband's family would have been 'shocked' by retaining, while P2 noted that her husband would have 'taken offence' had she not changed. The idea of participants asserting a separate name and connection to birth family through retaining names is seen as offensive and upsetting by others. It is more than unusual: it is a deliberate attempt to be rude and snub the partner and his family. Both P62 and 95 had changed names because their partners wanted them to. Participant 95 wanted herself and her partner to change to a new name but her partner was 'very against this', while P62's second husband was 'very disappointed' when she said she did not want to change names again. The powerful stories told about name changing and tradition are gendered, as well as geographical, social, and political; this story maintains a sense of masculinity for some men separate from the feminine behaviour (of name changing) they expect in their partners. Name changing symbolically separates men from women in heterosexual relationships, maintaining a (symbolic) hierarchy and set of gendered social relations.

This data shows how naming practices, power, 'tradition', and narrative combine; what is *believed* to be tradition gains credence. As name changing now *is* the norm within British society it is best to turn and examine how 'tradition' is discussed by participants more widely and what influence it has had on their naming decisions.

5.5 Name Changing and 'Tradition'

When coding this particular theme in my qualitative data, I coded words and phrases such as 'tradition', 'what was expected', and 'the done thing': all stemming from the same idea of a long-standing and accepted norm, seen as the normal course of action by the individual as well as significant 'others'. These significant others may include their husband, family, friends, institutional structures and reactions from workers within institutions, and the generalised other of society. 30 of the 75 name changers explicitly

mentioned tradition as a reason for changing their names in the qualitative sections of the survey, with many participants indicating the influence of societal expectations, as can be seen from Table 3.

‘Tradition’ as a reason for name changing was more frequently given by members of my survey who married in the 1980s or earlier, but was not exclusive to them. For example a participant who married in 2002 stated that:

It was "the thing to do" when you marry. I thought nothing of it – I assumed it would be the only time I changed names. (P26)

When participants had grown up with a shared family name there was little example of being able to act differently and the shared name was taken without question as the norm: ‘I just completely accepted [one family name] as normal... didn’t really think about it at all’ (P15: interview data). This same participant went on to note that many things about getting married were barely thought about, including having a church wedding though the church was not a significant part of her life: ‘you know, it was, “of course we’ll get married in a church”’. When discussing her own name change she said ‘I didn’t even consider keeping my own name’: most women around her changed their name on marriage, the only exception being a cousin who was an actress and used a variety of names throughout her acting career. P15 noted that she found it hard to trace this cousin now after the number of name changes she had gone through. This point, though usually with fewer changes, applies to the tradition of name changing: women are far harder to trace than men in historical records because of the patrilineal nature of the name changing system in Britain.

When asked about her feelings about her married name, participant 15 said ‘I don’t like the name [married name] but that didn’t occur to me that... you know it just didn’t seem like an option, it was just what was going to happen’. The idea of choice in women’s naming decisions had not been a part of participant 15’s framework for thinking about her self and naming choices. In a conversation concerning feelings about first names she said ‘yes, well, I mean that’s a choice isn’t it whereas your last name...well...well I didn’t think I had a choice.’

Though P15 realises part way through this sentence that she could indeed have chosen what to do with her last name the norm was so prevalent and normalised that it did not feel as if choices were open to her. However, she goes on to say that ‘I probably knew I didn’t *have* to, but it just wasn’t an issue... for me.’ Participant 15 presents a complex picture: she says several times that she did not know she had a choice, and then finishes the discussion by saying that she might have known but it was not an issue for her. She may mean, had she thought about it, she would have known there was no legal requirement to change but that she would have done so anyway. However, the number of times she states that she thought she had no choice would suggest that there was very little thinking done at the time about changing her name, and that instead she simply followed the tradition. The lack of thinking surrounding this tradition once more becomes apparent.

In accordance with Shils’ description of tradition (1971), participants often felt no need to expand on ‘tradition’ as an explanation for their action, writing ‘Part of the ceremony of marriage and lifelong partnership’ (P61); ‘Just something one did’ (P87) or even just ‘Expected’ (P89). As with participant 26 quoted above, there was a level of ‘unthinkingness’ (Shils, 1971) around the tradition, thus making it a fully traditional idea – these women have changed names simply because it is what is done, has been done and is expected to be done. They do not consider the norm in any deeper sense and perhaps find it difficult to articulate any deeper meaning in their action.

5.6 Silence and Order

The power of silence around norms is as significant as the justification narratives used – what is said, as well as what is left unsaid, form the contours of a norm and what entails crossing a boundary. Much of society is based on such unquestioned assumptions which are little, if ever, discussed (Bourdieu, 1998: 54 - 55). Sheriff (2000) argues that silence cannot be seen as straightforward acceptance of powerful ideologies, or in my words, powerful stories. Silence is complex and scholarly attention needs to be paid to it – it is as important to the ‘powerful stories’ as speech. The norm of name changing and the

Table 3. Crosstabulation of who influenced participants' naming decisions by whether or not they changed their name²⁸

Who influenced your decision? * Did you change your name on marriage? Crosstabulation

Count

		Did you change your name on marriage?		Total
		Yes	No	
Who influenced your decision?	Myself only	23	15	38
	Myself and societal expectations	11	2	13
	Myself and my partner	3	2	5
	Myself, my partner, societal expectations	7	0	7
	Societal expectations only	5	0	5
	My partner only	4	0	4
	Other variations including the self	15	7	22
	Other variations not including the self	7	1	8
Total	75	27	102	

²⁸ It can also be seen from this table that two name retaining participants felt societal expectations were the only other influence on their decision than themselves. These two – participants 40 and 51 – give little information on this, but it may be suggested that societal expectations influenced them to act contrary to the norm as they did not agree with them.

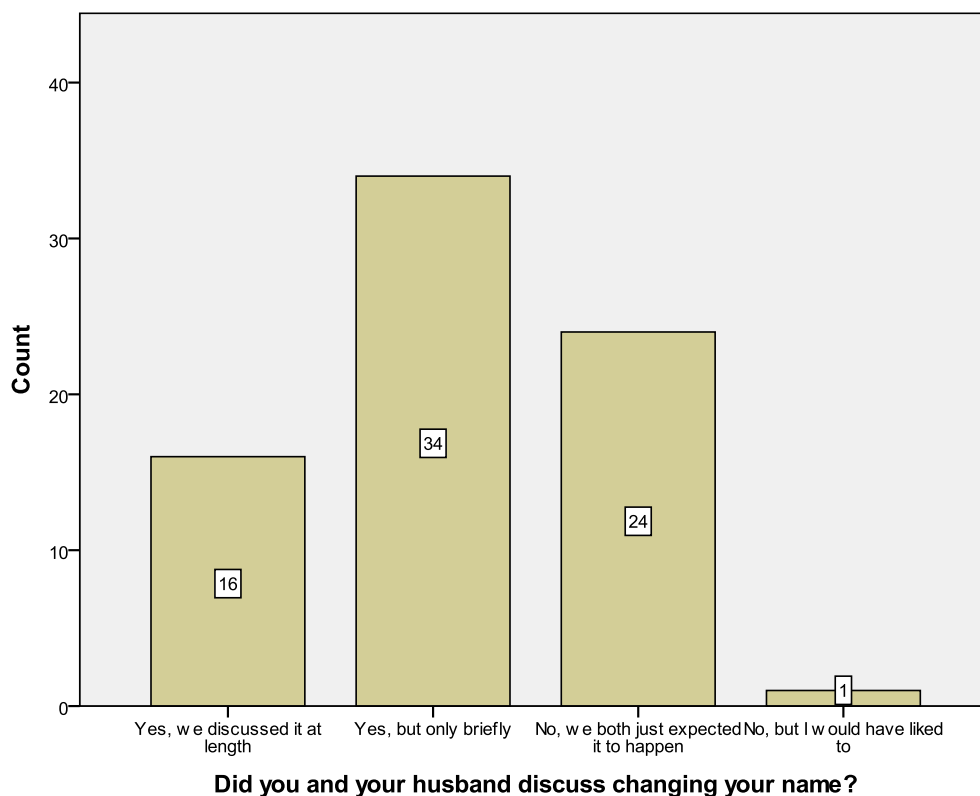
discourse around it as a part of marriage, a sign of love and commitment, and a bond between family members, has layers of silence connected to it. This silence has changed in kind in recent decades as name changing has begun to be discussed in Britain in terms of patriarchal relations. Yet, despite this emerging discussion, silence remains significant and continues to play a powerful part in the maintenance of this particular tradition. This kind of silence corresponds to Shils' description of the 'unthinkingness' of full traditions and the kind of silence which suggests 'acceptance of dominant narratives and the naturalization of power' (Sheriff, 2000: 127).

Figure 2 shows how many participants who changed names discussed their decision with their partner before acting. It shows that total silence around the norm was the second most common response by my survey participants, while even an initial discussion could quickly lead to acceptance and silence, and this was the most common response of all. Furthermore, some participants wrote in the survey that they had rarely spoken about this topic or had not thought or spoken about it in a very long time. Though discussion is more common than in previous centuries, as Figure 2 shows, silence and lack of thinking around this norm remain.

However, Sheriff's (2000) point that silence is more complicated is important here as some participants who changed names considered their decision beforehand, discussed it with their partner, and a number continued to feel ambivalence after the act. A very few went onto 'reclaim' their birth name. Though these responses will be discussed further below, here it is worth noting that these responses show that complete silence is not always what occurs. The silence may emerge after discussion with other people who influence decisions, particularly partners. At this point the women are silenced by the powerful stories told about this norm, all of which will be investigated further throughout the thesis. Continued ambivalence will usually be ignored or worked through until participants feel happy. For example, in the time between P80 taking the survey – when she said she felt 'quite negative' about her decision – and the interview taking place, she said she had come to feel better about her choice overall saying 'you go through phases I guess', yet later in the interview saying again that she did feel ambivalent still: 'Yeah, I do feel very ambivalent about it.' I asked her to explain her general feelings towards the name changing norm and she said:

Em... I suppose it's, for *me* anyway, I had more of a feeling for my name than I realised. I thought it kind of *was* just a name, you still are who you, I mean I could change my name by deed poll to something mad and I'd still be me, but actually I had more of a strong reaction to [changing my name], I *did* have more of an identity in my name so... (interview data).

Figure 2. Whether name changing participants discussed their decision with their partner beforehand (count)



Ultimately, whatever their decision, the majority of participants said they felt (to a greater or lesser extent) positive about their decision (see Table 4), but P80 shows the complex nature of this positivity and the shifts in feeling over time.

The number of women who chose 'neither positive nor negative' in response to the question of 'How do you feel about your [naming] decision?' is worth investigating further. Table 4 shows a relatively large number of women within my sample choosing this option and having changed names. There is a problem of categorisation here as several emotions could plausibly come under feeling 'neither positive nor negative': being ambivalent, being unsure of feelings, or feeling indifference (though it could be argued that feeling unsure and being ambivalent are akin to one another). Feeling ambivalent is rarely

discussed in the public domain; the norm is generally *publically* upheld. Participant 80 appears to hold ambivalent views over her name, veering from negativity to positivity when asked to define herself using a tick-box, and showing her continued ambivalence through speaking in interview. Participant 86, stated clearly that she remains 'very ambivalent' about her decision, while participant 30, faced with the fact she felt sharing one name was important on having her first child, did not know what to do for the best for herself and for her family: these two were not entirely juxtaposed (herself and her family), but she could feel tensions between them. This ambivalence shows that some women in my sample are aware of the possible problems of identity loss that a name change may entail or that they feel some sense of reservation that they *must* conform to this practice. However, they have done so and must live with the ambivalence.

The silencing of dissent from the norm is key to its dominance. As Hockey et al. (2010) argue, heterosexuality is a largely silent term of social organisation, and this is part of its power – it is accepted and goes largely unnoticed; it is normalised. The sub-institutions of heterosexuality, such as marriage and name changing, are also organised through a great deal of silence. Silence is a part of powerful stories, and is as much a part of the maintenance of patriarchal institutions and patriarchal relations as speech.

There is a general cultural silence around the name changing norm in Britain. Mead's generalised other may provide standards of behaviour and acceptability by which people judge themselves (1964: 218); this other can make these standards clear as much by its silences. The name changing norm is little explicated or discussed because it is deemed unimportant and frivolous to do so and thereby its nature and connection to the gendered organisation of society often goes undisturbed. Sheriff discusses this kind of 'cultural censorship' of certain discourses (2000: 114), saying it is 'social and customary' but also that it

demands collaboration and the tacit communal understandings that such collaboration presupposes. Although it is contractual in nature, a critical feature of this type of silence is that it is both a consequence and an index of an unequal distribution of power, if not of actual knowledge. Through it, various forms of power may be partly, although often incompletely, concealed, denied, or naturalized. Although the type of silence I refer to may be a more or less stable and widely shared cultural convention, it is constituted through, and circumscribed by, the political interests of dominant groups (Sheriff, 2000: 114).

Table 4. Crosstabulation of how participants feel about their naming decision with whether they changed or retained their name

How do you feel about your decision? * Did you change your name on marriage? Crosstabulation

Count

		Did you change your name on marriage?		Total
		Yes	No	
How do you feel about your decision?	Positive	34	23	57
	Quite Positive	15	3	18
	Neither positive nor negative	19	1	20
	Quite negative	6	0	6
	Negative	1	0	1
Total		75	27	102

The significance of names and name changing as a norm is discredited through the act of saying as little as possible. As Scott and Lyman argue, the ‘deviant’ forms of action are the ones which need accounting for: if one acts in accordance with norms accounting for action is deemed unnecessary (Scott and Lyman, 1968: 62). Language is key to deciding who is inside a community and who is outside, by providing the means to articulate and defend culturally appropriate forms of action (Phillips, 2004: 21). Tradition and reason are not separate (Phillips, 2004: 19): action through tradition comes from a place of understanding what is and is not acceptable in one’s community or culture. Though there is increased discussion of name changing and there are other possibilities for what one does with one’s name after marriage, these remain minority or unusual decisions which require justification.

As with any institution, speaking up against its norms is seen as somewhat dangerous and could result in negative responses— be that from family, local community, or generalised ‘society’ – and is therefore discouraged through practices of silence (Wolfe Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Silence is complex and works on various levels and at various points for women coming into contact with the name changing norm in their lives. If silence is a part of dominant discourses – powerful stories – this means that power is working at various levels also: through the generalised other and ‘cultural censorship’ (Sheriff, 2000: 114), through individual people who influence the woman making the decision, through institutional, bureaucratic organisation, and through the self-censorship and silencing that individuals perform on themselves, in connection with all of these other influences. Patriarchal, gendered relations – or the ‘gender order’ – are a product of this power, and name changing is a part of the maintenance of this power.

The gender order is a concept initially developed by Jill Julius Matthews (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2005: 61). Matthews argues that all societies ‘distinguish between women and men, but the particular forms of this distinction vary’ (1984: 12). The gender order intersects with other positions such as class or race and is not an unchanging, monolithic system, but one which takes on a different shape depending on the context (Matthews, 1984: 12 – 14). However, she goes on to argue that ‘the gender order of any particular society creates an ideology of femininity, which establishes both the imperative and the meaning of being a good or true woman’ (Matthews, 1984: 15). There are then, she argues, societal imperatives for women to attempt to achieve this kind of womanhood through various sorts of acceptable behaviours and actions (Matthews, 1984: 15). This gender order guides and shapes how we perceive the world and how our sense of self is developed.

The naming norm is a part of this gender order: it encourages women to act in a particular way in relation to men, and for women and men to be separated from one another through gendered acts. It is a part of the gendered organisational principle of heterosexuality, which organises men and women in certain ways, encouraging certain forms of behaviour, work, and sacrifice. In considering acceptable behaviours as expressed through the modern British gender order, the women note the expectation to act in a certain way and the worry over not living up to these expectations. Further they note the previous actions

of other women adhering to the gender order as examples and encouragement. Others note the lack of thought or discussion of the naming norm meant they had no idea there were other options – the naming norm has become an imperative despite the lack of laws making it obligatory. The naming norm is, in fact, so normalised and ‘unthought’ that it feels ‘natural’ and ‘proper’. The ‘traditions’ of the past act as exemplars and encouragement for others to act in a particular way; the gender order of modern Britain continues to encourage this kind of organisation of women, even if it has weakened slightly in terms of the naming norm. Individuals understand themselves through gender and fit themselves into a particular gender order, attempting to follow its rules and regulations of acceptable behaviour with the purpose of becoming (being perceived as) a successful and credible (gendered) human being.

This gender order now allows a small space for women to disobey the naming norm and the name retainers in my sample discussed the naming norm in negative terms. I will briefly turn to their words before moving on to examine their use of feminism to justify retaining their names.

5.7 Feminism and ‘Tradition’

Eight name retainers reflected very explicitly on the norm, away from their own personal experience of it. Their discussions focused on the inequality of name changing, as something women are expected to do but not men, as well as on the lack of good reasons to change names. Two of these eight mentioned that ‘tradition’ was not a good enough reason to change, in their opinion, but all eight women were questioning the way in which the norm is taken for granted.²⁹

It should not be an automatic assumption that a woman has to give up her heritage because it's tradition or "the done thing". It should be made easier for a man to change – as simple as it is for a woman. 'Maiden' name is a ridiculous idea and it should always be 'previous' name. (P16)

I feel it is odd that men keep one name for their whole life and that you can't tell if they're married or not from their name, whereas women are split into married and unmarried. (P8)

²⁹ Other name retaining participants also did this, but in relation to themselves and their own experiences which felt different in quality to the generalised reflections of these eight participants.

The name retaining participants could not use tradition as a justificatory narrative and instead 12name retaining participants (just over 44 percent) looked to feminist narratives to justify their actions. These feminist narratives of inequality between men and women and the desire to change this, as well as the questioning of gendered norms, emerge in these discussions. These participants are using feminist narratives to question the status quo. Participant 12 said her ‘feminist awakening’ had been part of her decision, while participant 38 stated that she had been influenced by feminist writers and thinkers and thinks ‘it wrong that a woman's name badged her at any and every time in her life as belonging to a particular man’. Feminism emerged in a variety of ways in the discussions of participants about their naming decisions, and it is these complex variations which I wish to consider. First though I want to investigate the connection of feminism to ideas of ‘tradition’, and how the feminist movement has been depicted as a negative and destructive force by those wishing to maintain ‘tradition’.

The anger and vitriol against feminism emerged early in the movement’s history: see Figure 3. However, the anger against feminism and the actions of women to improve their own and others’ lives continues to provoke backlash. Recent debates in the United States over reproductive rights have produced particularly vicious attacks (see Figure 4).

Figure 3. Anti-Suffragist Cartoon from 1910. (Source: www.genderben.com)



These cartoons depict women as emotional (in a negative and irrational way), loud, and stupid, as they make confused or – apparently – contradictory statements. The women are shown as ‘unfeminine’ and are both depicted as in some way immoral for acting in unconventionally feminine ways – the message is that women should stay at home and care for their families and not be promiscuous. The attempt of both cartoonists is to undermine the feminist convictions, thoughts, and actions of these women through ridicule and attempt at defamation of character, be it through an unspecified group ‘type’ or a particular woman. The one hundred and two years between these cartoons have seen a great deal of social change, but the methods used to make particular points remain remarkably similar. The ultimate message is that feminists should not be listened to or taken seriously, and this because they are acting against traditional ideas of womanly behaviour; they are attempting to change power structures in their countries to improve the position of women. ‘Tradition’ comes back to being the stories told by those in power to maintain that power.

Feminism is then often used as a scapegoat by those in positions of power for problems in society. This phenomenon has occurred recently in discussions over parenting, the family, and feminism. Diane Abbott, speaking to *The Guardian* newspaper in January 2013 about the rise in obesity being related to poor parenting and family breakdown, argued that feminists needed to re-think their discussions of the family and not ‘abandon that terrain to the right’ (Wintour, ‘Diane Abbot Outlines Plan to Curb Fast Food Shops’, 3rd Jan 2013). Although Abbott made the point that ‘the family’ need not refer to the heteronormative nuclear family model, she made comments about feminist discussions of the family unit as oppressive to women which could be interpreted as dismissive and this resulted in several right-wing newspapers using these comments to fuel articles on the feminist movement’s place in destroying the family (see for example in *The Daily Mail*, Shipman, ‘How Feminism is to Blame for the Breakdown of the Family, by Left-Winger Diane Abbott’, 3rd January 2013). The questions about health and emotional well-being are lost and instead the focus is on blaming the changed position of women in our society for social ills. The traditional story is revived and attempts to question it repressed; attempts are made to undermine feminism and to maintain the status quo.

Figure 4. Anti-Feminist Cartoon from 2012. (Source: www.genderben.com)³⁰



Name changing is one of these traditional stories of the powerful; those working against it can be ridiculed and their lives made difficult. The process and the norm have come under attack from the feminist movement, but it is a topic associated with second wave feminism in the general imagination. It is difficult to find definite connections with British second wave feminists: the United States has a much more defined and organised approach to the discussion of naming norms through the Lucy Stone League (www.lucystoneleague.org). This organisation connects its origins to nineteenth-century suffragist and abolitionist Lucy Stone, the first American woman known to retain her birth name after marriage ('Who is Lucy Stone?', n.d., Lucy Stone League website).

³⁰This cartoon depicts Sandra Fluke, a university student, who gave evidence in front of a congressional hearing in America on the importance of making insurance coverage of contraception for women mandatory. Fluke was subsequently lampooned as a 'slut' and a 'prostitute' by talk show host, Rush Limbaugh, who said: 'What does it say about the college co-ed Susan Fluke [sic], who goes before a congressional committee and essentially says that she must be paid to have sex, what does that make her? It makes her a slut, right? It makes her a prostitute. She wants to be paid to have sex. She's having so much sex she can't afford the contraception. She wants you and me and the taxpayers to pay her to have sex.' (www.genderben.com)

However strong the empirical evidence for second wave interest in names may or may not be the popular imagination connects the decision to retain the last name with a feminist stance. This can be seen from participant experience: 'I'm a feminist' (P37, when asked to explain her decision to retain her name), while participant 51 described receiving several sarcastic comments from family members about being a feminist once she explained that she would not be changing her name. As I said above, name retainers used feminism as a major justification narrative for their decisions. However, for name changers their relationship to feminism was complicated by the connection of name retaining and being a committed feminist. This left some of them questioning their decision and their feminist ideals, but provoked others to defend their decision *as well as* their feminist identity.

5.8 Feminism and Naming Decisions

Name retainers who identify themselves and their actions as feminist wrote that they have particular principles which make name changing impossible and/or they see no need to change their name in favour of another person's. They are aware of the gender imbalance in the name changing norm and this is a source of irritation and anger. There was a hope for some that they could influence others or open up further feminist debate through the discussions provoked by their naming decision. Not all of these participants were free of ambivalences about marriage or naming, as the examples below will show, but had ultimately come to accept marriage, with name retention, as a sign of their feminism, their break from tradition, and their independence, both as wife from husband, but I would argue, also as thinkers who have moved away from ingrained ideas.

Participant 3 spoke of her involvement with the feminist movement in the 1970s which 'made me more aware of being proactive and proud about my female identity and questioning the patriarchal status quo'. She wrote of not understanding why women change their names as there is no need: 'I do feel women sell themselves short by thinking that they must adopt their husband's name'. Though she changed her mind about the married state itself she said 'I think that women can become more invisible by changing their name on marriage, it seems an indicator that women are prepared to play second fiddle to men by changing their names. This is the wrong signal to send out!' She spoke of her belief in the power of women to change things and that it was up to women to do so.

Participant 5 spoke of her and her partner's dislike of the 'perceived dominance of the partner who keeps and bestows their name over the one that adopts the new name.' They went to great lengths to try to remove the 'patriarchal baggage' from their wedding, including researching the possibility of removing the words 'husband' and 'wife' from their ceremony, researching going abroad for a heterosexual civil ceremony, and having their ceremony in Scotland rather than the south of England where they live to be able to put their mothers' occupations, as well as their fathers', on their marriage certificate. Participant 5 noted her initial embarrassment at having married, and doing so in a 'big white wedding dress', as she did not feel this reflected her feminism. The name retain became a sign of her feminist principles.

Participant 46 wrote that changing her name seemed 'too enormous' a move, considering the history of the surname change as being an indicator of the woman as property. Men do not have to present themselves to the world as married and she felt it was important not to present herself as such. She wrote of the ambivalence she feels knowing her last name is still just her father's name, but that 'It's important to remember the centuries of struggle women have had to progress from being treated as second class citizens' and that naming decisions are a part of that history.

These comments suggest the idea of a standard of feminism and a 'proper' feminist, which participants are measuring themselves against. Certain actions and beliefs are associated with (Western) feminism and being critical of marriage, aware of the historical subjugation of women, and retaining one's name seem to be a part of this standard, for my participants at least. This reflects the findings of other smaller studies into feminists and naming decisions (see Mills 2003). When name retaining participants felt they might have acted contrary to this standard, or not quite match up with it as with participant 5, they felt the need to justify their actions almost apologetically. The retaining of their birth name was one action which displayed their feminist beliefs to the world. Participant 48 (name retainer) wrote that she knew someone who took on a beautiful Spanish name when she married and that everyone is envious of that, 'even the most hardened feminists!' It does not matter how much one may like a name or want a name to be one's own, one should not follow the norm as a 'true' feminist, this quote suggests, albeit in a playful manner. When articulating these standards self-identified feminists are creating a vocabulary around what

it means to be a feminist in Britain today: name retaining is one such standard course of action and forms a sort of 'social control' within feminist circles of what is expected and what needs to be justified (Mills, 1940: 907 – 908).

Participant 76 described herself as a feminist and told a story in her interview which suggested a standard of (Western) feminism: not being as interested in marriage as other women may be. She said:

I was very much a feminist. I did a lot of work in the 70s and 80s, I took a degree in Women's Studies... and I was very much a part of this and thought that "this is my life" and... (laughs) just today I was in [a university department] and a girl came out and was talking to one of my staff and she said "ooh, I got engaged!" and the other girl said "I got engaged too! When did you get engaged?" and I was thinking "I don't care!" (laughter) I really don't, didn't have that concept and none of my friends did either.

It appears that this standard of feminism is what name changers are also measuring themselves against, and this measurement produces a complex picture. Out of the thirteen name changers who mention feminism in some way, three explicitly state that there is no link between name changing and a lack of respect for feminism or women's rights.

Participant 39 said that she has considered politics, principles and theories behind name changing, but has concluded that feeling right about one's name within oneself is what should be aimed for; participant 52 thought she would not marry or change names and have church and state approval of her relationship, but she did all of these things. She does not accept that taking someone's name means accepting other inequalities. Finally, participant 44 said that name changing has nothing to do with rights, oppression or a denial of feminism. It annoys her when people believe women who change names are subservient or less intelligent than women who do not or who hyphenate.

Participant 120 was in a slightly more ambivalent position, writing that she had thought she would never change her name or marry, but at the time it ended up not being a big decision. She is a feminist and 'perhaps it is strange that I changed my identity for a male name', but she feels more worry over the use of titles and the declaration of marital status these entail. She feels unease over having changed her name and gone along 'with a tradition that is born out of inequality', but she wanted a family name for her children and felt happy to take his name. The feminist 'standard' of a person who would not change her

name and is therefore independently minded and unaccepting of inequality is a figure these women feel they need to address. They do not feel they should be discounted as independent, thinking women because they have changed their name, but feel that this is suggested by a (feminist) generalised other.

The remaining 9 of these participants spoke of their unhappiness with the norm, as it means that women are declaring their marital status in a way men are not. The problem of titles was brought up time and again by this group, who felt unhappy with the double declaration of marriage they were asked to make. Participant 86 had ‘strong reservations about the practice on feminist and equality grounds’ and ‘about what changing your name says as a statement about women’s role in society’. She worries she has set a bad example to her daughter, but sharing a name was more important to her husband than these reservations were to her, hence she decided to change names. Participant 93 wrote that her viewpoint has changed over time and that she has ‘come round to a much more feminist viewpoint’ and wishes she ‘had made a stand against this kind of unthinking tradition’. She would rather not use titles or last names at all. Participant 62 is in the process of reclaiming her name after her change, as she feels it is a way of feeling and showing (to others) that her relationship is an equal one.

There was only one participant who mentioned feminist expectations of behaviour but did not feel any need to match herself up to them. Participant 74 said she might have retained her name because it was ‘trendy’ in her ‘feminist-leaning social circle’, but she did not see ‘any compelling reason’ to do this. It seems there is a general assumption that feminists will look kindly on name retaining and will scorn name changing. The history of the movement as breaking with tradition, the association of second wave feminism in particular with name retaining debates, and the idea of a ‘standard feminist’ who does not change her name, hold imaginative sway.

Name retainers can see and articulate a clear relationship between feminism and name retaining, if they wish. The popular connection of second wave, Western feminism and name retaining remains powerful and the name retain is seen by many as a feminist act. In this way the name retainers juxtapose tradition and feminism – feminism offers a new route around names and thinking about one’s identity and the importance of that identity.

Feminism is the opposite of tradition, but in a positive manner. It may be breaking down old ‘traditions’, but not without reason – the narrative of feminist action is in opposition to the narrative of ‘tradition’ for these participants. For name changers it is more complex. For those who define as feminist the ‘standard feminist’ becomes a problem for them, as explaining why they have taken part in this symbol of female subordination (name changing) while maintaining a feminist identity is difficult. Problematic categories arise: can an individual be a heterosexual, married, name changing, *feminist*?

5.9 The Feminist Bride?

A brief look at feminist bride websites will in itself show how powerful the pull of heterosexual marriage remains (see for example, www.feministbride.com; offbeatbride.com; www.feministwedding.com). The authors of these sites attempt to question the norms of marriage and the amount of money involved in the wedding industry, but there are conflicting and conflicted discussions of whether or not a feminist can change her name. *A Practical Wedding.com* offers up the viewpoint that feminists can and do change names, but they do so after a period of thought and only when making the decision that is right for them (Keene, ‘What Should We Call Me? Changing My Name as a Feminist Choice’, 12th September 2012).

TheFeministBride.com however, advocates not changing names as the feminist decision: the owner of this website provides a video link to her own university presentation on this matter (Majkut, ‘Why do Bride’s [sic] Take Their Husband’s Name?’, 18th May 2012). There is no obvious answer to what a feminist should do in this situation: the ‘standard feminist’ would suggest not changing names but the individualised narrative of choice is also significant. On www.feministwedding.com, site visitors are asked to fill in a short quiz about name changing. The results show that most women who answered felt there was considerable pressure on women to change names, that they were irritated that it is seen as only a woman’s problem, that they were in the main going to keep their own name, but that they expected backlash for this decision.

These answers may seem to be ‘standard feminist’ thoughts, but the final question on whether women who change names are making an anti-feminist choice proves difficult to answer, despite clear thoughts on all the previous questions: 30 percent think it is an anti-

feminist choice, 47 percent think it is not, and the remainder are unsure (results examined on the 28/1/13). This is one short poll, but the comments on the other feminist bride sites reveal an equally mixed viewpoint on this question. *TheFeministBride.com* author has some support for her viewpoint from site users, but the idea of choice as more important to feminism begins to creep in; *ThePracticalWedding.com* article has a long comments section following it in which feminists argue this point, but most appear to agree that feminism is about offering women *choice* and that all decisions should be supported not belittled.

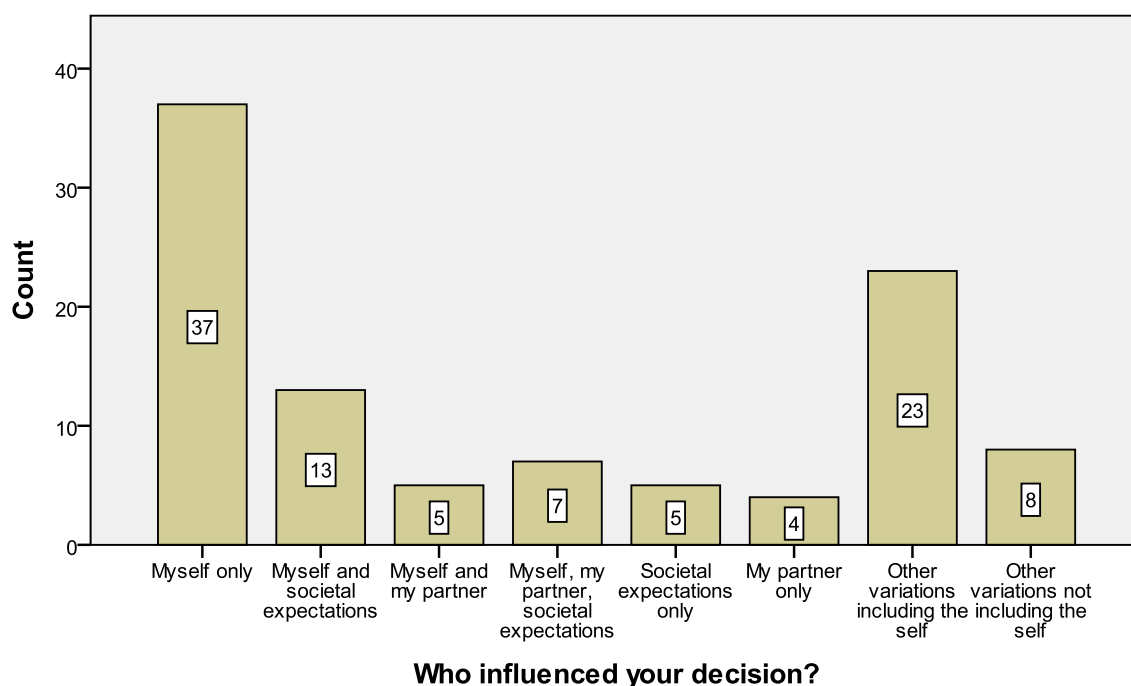
The difference here is that the name retaining feminist need not justify herself, but the name changing feminist must do so; within this circle the 'deviant' action is name changing and therefore needs an explanation and justification that name retaining does not (Scott and Lyman, 1968: 62). This was the only time in my research that it appeared that the name changing participants had to justify themselves more than the name retaining participants. The different groups one is involved in present different 'cultural' standards and contexts: whether one needs to justify oneself for an action depends on this context.

Choice is an important idea in discussions of late modernity and individualisation. Giddens' idea of the 'reflexive project of the self' (Giddens, 1996: 5) suggests that there are now more choices and options available to people than ever before. Life trajectories are not bounded as they once were by traditions and rigid rule structures. My previous discussion should make it clear that this argument is simplistic and ignores the continuing fact that some people have more choice than others due to their social positioning. The choice narrative also ignores the very important place of 'unthinkingness' (Shils, 1971) within 'traditions' and that some seemingly freely made decisions are so influenced by societal practice and opinion that they cannot be considered truly free, in Giddens' sense. As Lukes argues, some powerful social norms may be so ingrained that conceiving of other possibilities for action is practically impossible (2005: 113). Choices remain limited by the past, by resources, by the society in which a person lives, including the influence of the gender order and the ethical and moral standards of the day. Yet the narrative of freely made and informed choice is powerful: the feminist bridal websites make this obvious, as do my participants. Figure 5 shows the importance of thinking one has made a free and

individual choice, whatever the influence of culture, ‘tradition’, and close personal examples.

The idea that women should be able to do whatever they want and makes them happy is a part of this narrative of reflexive choice; it is also a part of the pervasive neoliberal rhetoric which is so significant to modern capitalist societies. Though neoliberalism, globalisation, and the impacts these systems have on the world are presented as inevitable forces – unstoppable in their linear progression – they are actually the consequence of human decisions and policies (Heron, 2008: 95). These decisions have created vast inequalities and, as Heron argues, the ‘role of international and political economic structures and interests as co-determinants to poverty and continuing inequality is not recognized’ (Heron, 2008: 95). Instead of investing in social equality and welfare, states look to solve problems through the market – and inequalities widen.

Figure 5. Who Influenced Participants’ Naming Decisions (count)



The idea that we can improve our lives through consuming is an important force within neoliberal capitalism. The consumer makes choices based on the idea of the consumer’s

right to choose (Craven, 2007): the consumer should be given a full range of choices and decide which is best for them. Yet, our choices are bounded, as I have argued. Silence prevents certain thoughts from even arising, as name changing participants discussing ‘tradition’ have shown. An agent may look as if they have made a totally free choice when in fact the powerful cultural norms at work can prevent ‘an agent or agents’ desires, purposes, or interests... [from being fulfilled] or even from being formulated’ (Lukes, 2005: 113). Choices which have such heavy cultural influences and powerful stories of their ‘traditional’ status are incredibly forceful in shaping action: the woman giving up a part of her selfhood for her partner/marriage is rarely questioned. The unequal nature of this naming practice is meant to no longer be significant or meaningful, yet it continues to be deeply embedded in gendered conceptions of the self and the maintaining of the powerful. Men benefit from the maintaining of a gender order which asks different things of women, including of their love, commitment, work in the family, and ideas of selfhood, which will all be explored further in this thesis.

Upholding all women’s decisions may seem like a feminist action in not belittling or talking down to other women, but it remains that feminists should be critical of the taken for granted norms which are unequally gendered. ‘Choices’ are not entirely free, but the rhetoric is clearly highly important. Feminism has been involved with using the rhetoric of choice to attempt to improve the position of women. Craven points out that feminists called women making decisions about their reproductive rights ‘consumers’ to attempt to get away from the generally paternalistic relationship with male doctors that women were entered into on becoming pregnant: female patient versus male doctor (2007: 701 – 702). However liberating this narrative was intended to be, the use of ‘choice’ by feminists within a neoliberal capitalist society needs more careful examination by feminists themselves. The neoliberal rhetoric of ‘choice’ is often invested in maintaining the status quo, by removing the agency of the less powerful and enhancing that of the established powerful elite (Heron, 2008: 95): norms are maintained and name changing is one such norm. Instead a re-imagining of what ‘choice’ means and indeed whether neoliberalism is really ‘inevitable’ is needed.

The power of the imagination is significant to being critical and opening up other possibilities: what courses of action we follow are in part influenced by whether or not we

can even imagine them (Lukes, 2003: 113). De Certeau argues that ‘the *thinkable*... is identified with what one can *do*’ (1988: 190. Emphases in original). In other words, if we can think it we believe we can do it. Contrary to this, if we cannot think it we cannot do it – it takes being able to imagine an action first before it can become a reality. Name changing is the prevalent norm. Name retaining is not so well articulated: there are fewer examples and bureaucracy often actively discourages it. The horizons of our imagination limit the possibilities for action: discussion is vital to allowing women to see the variety of naming options available and that following tradition is not necessary. Naming decisions could then be taken with a more genuine freeness, with selfhood and equality in mind. The fact name retaining is now even an imagined possibility is a step towards making it more normalised.

5.10 Conclusion

The constraints of ‘tradition’ are far more significant than the theorists of individualisation give credit. We remain influenced by past example, past ideas, and moral codes. Our bureaucratic systems reflect these ‘traditions’ and cement them into daily life. Name changing remains a significant ‘tradition’, which acts as a part of maintaining the gender order within British society. Despite the broadening of imagination and discussion that has occurred in recent years the norm remains powerful. Nevertheless, the broadening of imagination is an important and progressive step. Awareness of the tensions between the norm, choice, and individual identity has left a number of my participants in an ambivalent state.

Feminism has been a part of opening up discussion around the topic of names and is used, at least in the popular imagination, as a narrative of opposition to ‘tradition’. This can be used in both positive and negative ways, by feminists themselves or by their opponents. Name retaining participants can lay claim to this narrative with ease. However, naming is a difficult topic for feminists, aware of its patriarchal basis, but also attempting to adhere to a stance of supporting women in their decisions and allowing women to make free choices. The narrative of free choice as outlined by Giddens, and as used in support of the neoliberal project is, however, one that should be critiqued by feminists. It is not open to everyone equally and it ignores the important place of ‘traditions’ and the past in all our decisions – choices are never totally free. The many categories that are thrown up by my

participants such as heterosexual, married, name changing, and feminist can be problematic for some as their identity and their motivations for action seem confused when compared with certain standards. Resolving these tensions is something every individual has to do for herself to come to a sense of happiness. In the next chapter I wish to continue with the discussion of emotion by turning to participants' narratives of love.

Chapter 6 Maintaining the Status Quo? Love and Emotion Work

‘Love’ is a concept for which we have only one word in the English language, and this word has to encapsulate a great deal. It is a term which is defined in myriad ways, and is often linked with sexual desire (Hendrick and Hendrick, 1992: 5). Much of social, political and economic policy is based on the ‘natural’ heterosexual relationship: an idealised relationship, certainly within Western societies. Marriage is a pivotal moment in a (heterosexual) person’s life and is meant to join love and lust together in a public, legal celebration³¹. It remains both an individual and a collective experience (Mansfield and Collard, 1988: 30-31) though, as I shall show, name retaining attempts to control the public element of marriage.

Within the institution of marriage women are expected to do a great deal of the housework and carework for children and partners, and continue to do this to a greater extent than men (Maushart, 2003). The unmarked and seemingly unnoticed quality of this unequal physical and emotional labour has been commented upon in previous studies (Mansfield and Collard, 1988: 35). As Askham’s study (1984) shows, a movement into more structured roles occurs on marriage as stability is needed to maintain the relationship. In more recent work, such as Hockey et al. (2010: 179 – 180), men showed more awareness of the constructed inequality of labour in marriage and were attempting to come to terms with the inequality of emotional labour especially, but women remain the ‘self-defined guardians of their families’ emotional lives’ (2010: 18). Mansfield and Collard’s finding that performing traditional gender roles within marriage confirms ‘normality’ for those involved continues to have resonance (1988: 53). The ‘emotional labour’ (Hochschild, 2003a: 7) within relationships is rarely counted as work by those within the relationship itself, but is nevertheless an important contributor to its smooth running –work performed in the main by women. I wish to consider the unequal nature of love and particularly ‘emotion work’ (Hochschild, 2003a) in marital relationships in this chapter.

As Beasley et al. argue (2012: 1), the research on heterosexuality often focuses on the bad rather than the good, presenting it as either dangerous or dull. I do not want to argue that heterosexuality is a ‘monolithic source for the inculcation and doing of heteronormativity’

³¹ I use ‘marriage’ in the current legal sense of a ceremony between one man and one woman; this is set to change across the UK in the coming years as same-sex marriages become legal.

(Beasley et al., 2012: 2) or that there is never any pleasure or agency for women within this institution. However, the practice of name changing does not provide a highly progressive perspective on heterosexuality, showing instead a great deal of emotional labour on the part of wives and an element of exploitation of the idea and feeling of love by husbands and others. Name retaining may well be a genuine attempt to change this situation, but it remains a small change on the margins of the norm. The ultimate day-to-day happiness of the vast majority of my participants with their decision is a crucial point to remember, not in every case feeling subordinated by or to their husbands; however, the process by which they made their decision to change names and the assumptions surrounding the norm do not suggest egalitarian thinking processes or practices.

Name changing is seen as a sign of the woman's commitment to her marriage and is an encouraged practice in the British setting; as I have shown already, it remains the norm (Valetas, 2001: 2). The women who changed names often situate this action within a narrative of true love and true commitment. They take their action to be a symbolic sign and expression of these feelings, yet rarely comment on the unequal nature of this contribution. When situating their action within this narrative, women often implicitly or explicitly accept that name changing *should* be the woman's action. In so doing they manage two things: gendering who must do the public work of love and commitment, and masking the inequality behind the name change as ritual. The idea of giving up a part of selfhood as a sign of a woman's love for her husband is an ingrained idea. Name retainers also accept the ideal of love as egalitarian, but their thoughts and actions around names show an attempt to thwart the patriarchal nature of name changing and have the symbols of marriage live up to their egalitarian ideal. They attempt to control who knows they are a wife by refusing this public symbol of wifeness, and redefine ideas of love, marriage, and wifeness by retaining their name. I will discuss these ideas within this chapter, using empirical data. First I will turn to the gendered structure of love and the ways in which this is justified.

6.1 Gendering Love; Gendering Commitment

Love is not removed from social context (Jackson, 1993: 202) and should not be seen as too sacred, mystical, or biologically based to be exempt from sociological and scholarly scrutiny. It is a foundational emotion within modern society – our 'secular religion' (Beck

and Beck-Gernsheim, 2004: 184), but the emotion is not an egalitarian one, and it works within a patriarchal social context: women do more ‘love work’ than men do, but this is hidden behind stories of biology, naturalness and free choice. In this section I will examine the kinds of gendered work involved in love relationships and the stories used to keep this looking ‘natural’.

6.1.1 *Love Stories: Biology*

The most powerful way of describing love is as a timeless, biological emotion, felt to be ‘natural’ (Johnson, 2005: 6). These stories around love paint it as an emotion women are ‘naturally’ more invested in: women are meant to be more in tune with their emotions and more willing to settle down and have children. Human behaviour is often justified in terms of animal behaviour, as love is seen as so ‘natural’ and ‘hard-wired’. In scientific discussion of ‘mate choice’ it has been noted that the female of the species chooses her mate based on particular characteristics, and that, following Darwin, both sexes evolve characteristics which will appeal to the opposite sex (Fisher et al., 2006: 2173).

In these discussions love is a part of biological processes which control the progression of evolution and are responsible for how we act and, in a fundamental way, who we are. This kind of discourse *fixes* gender and gendered behaviour. There are, of course, more nuanced discussions of the *intersection* of biological processes and society (eg. Reis and Collins, 2004), but even these often ignore the *gendered* implications of their findings. Reis and Collins point out that young children identify with caregivers who provide for their physical and psychological security, but do not mention the probable gendered differences in identification and relationship that gendered care-work will produce (Reis and Collins, 2004: 234). The kind of caring love they describe has an important gendered element. The social and historical context of love is therefore highly significant.

Instead of thinking of love as a natural basis from which behaviours and roles flow, we should consider it as a justification for social structures and norms. Love itself is a socially constructed emotion, based on gendered inequality, as I will go on to show. I will first consider the Western basis for the construction of unequal love by considering significant religious, philosophical, political, and ritual aspects, before turning to the pervasive

modern narrative of ‘choice’ and its part in maintaining the status quo in gendered relationships.

6.1.2 *Unequal Love*

Love, Simon May argues, is the modern religion: ‘no less attractive to the diehard atheist than to the agnostic or believer’ (Simon May, 2011: 3). He claims that, within a Western context, the Hebrew Bible and Plato provide us with the most influential ideas about love to this day. However, he argues that the influence of the Bible has skewed human love into an unrealistic emotion in which humans have interpreted their own love as akin to God’s love – unconditional and eternal (Simon May, 2011: 4). This is unmanageable for humans, he writes, as it is in fact a ‘most conditional and time-bound and earthy emotion’ and we have made it ‘labour under intolerable expectations’ (Simon May, 2011: 5). Love is about rooting oneself in the world and finding meaning for existence, particularly in a world increasingly sceptical about God; we need little else to feel completely at home (Simon May, 2011: 36).

The inequality of love is there from its first definitions. Love between God and worshipper is far from equal: the one owes their very existence to the other. The imagery of inequality continues in the many references to the relationship between Christ and his followers as bridegroom and bride, in which the woman is told to submit to her husband: ‘Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is the head of the church—he himself being the saviour of the body. But as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything’ (Ephesians 5: 22 – 24). Here marriage is used as the exemplar of unequal love, in which one party must be submissive, and this party is to be the woman (stemming back to the Creation myth). God and creation, husbands and wives, are set up as unequally, but perfectly, in love – in fact, their relationship is only sound if this element of inequality is present and understood.

Within Plato’s *Symposium* the most highly valued of loves is that between an older man and a youth, in which the young man is most definitely the lesser in an unequal partnership of education and sex (Plato, 2005). In Plato we also find the first discussion of completion of oneself through another (without a heterosexual bias), the ability of love to bring out the

best in the lover, for love to allow one to see the whole person in their beauty – physical, intellectual, spiritual – and to see others as valuable in a fundamental way (Plato, 2005) Between these two sources, we have the basis of modern conceptions of love both explicit and not: as wonderful, transcendental, eternal, unchanging, and satisfying basic ontological needs, but also, *in the exemplars*, as unequal.

In more mundane everyday relationships we can see this inequality being learned: the child-parent relationship calls for total dependence of the one upon the other. The parent is meant to love but also discipline, including meting out violence as chastiser when deemed necessary. The child learns that this kind of violence/discipline is a part of ‘unconditional love’ – the person with power in the relationship has the right to behave this way *because* they are the more powerful and that this is not only acceptable but recommended and taken as another example of a kind of ‘true love’. This love is also dependent upon space – set within the home such love is acceptable, but no one outside the home has a right to use violence as a sign of love. Both the relationship and the space of domesticity regulate what kinds of ‘loving’ behaviour are acceptable. Though the husband-wife relationship has fewer comparisons with the child-parent relationship than it did in the past, it remains that the way we learn about love as children is as inherently unequal, including chastisement and possibly violence, and that this is most particular to domestic, familial relationships. The patriarchal context of our society within Britain sets up domestic relationships in which inequality is expected, though to a great extent hidden and with certain boundaries: abusing one’s spouse is condemned, though of course, and unfortunately, not uncommon.

It is true that our marriage ceremony calls for life-long commitment: unchanging, constant connection with one other person until death. More recently this commitment has been conflated with life-long *love* also: modern marriage should be founded on love, almost to the exclusion of everything else. In discussing migration and mobility, Bauboeck (2012) commented that cross-border marriage is allowed when couples prove their *love* for one another. They have to show love through particular state-sanctioned means: photos, letters and emails, for example. ‘Marriages of convenience’ are looked upon as appalling and underhand, but Bauboeck points out that this idea is very recent in its conception, as many people married for money, status, position, or, in other words, convenience, in times past (Bauboeck, 2012).

Cross-border marriage shows how important an emotion love has become in proving genuine connection and relationship. It is state-sanctioned and state-approved, via particular tokens or ‘proofs’. Couples originating from within one state may also have such ‘proofs’ of love for one another, along culturally acceptable lines, and often use marriage as the ultimate declaration of love for the other person. Love is an increasingly powerful justificatory message and has been put to good use in the debate around same-sex civil partnerships and marriage (see Woo, 2007). States may sanction and encourage marriage through tax-relief, and in doing so confirm their commitment to love within heterosexual couples and their families as an important socio-structural story³². Such interest is, of course, not disinterested nor egalitarian, but neither is the emotion of love itself: hierarchy, tension, and power are built into the emotion we describe as ‘love’. Being in love and looking from the inside out, as it were, to this claim, may make it seem preposterous, but this is a part of the ‘masking’ of the inequality which is inherent in love.

Studies from the 1970s and 1980s showed that, despite apparent changes in the socio-economic position of women, the inequality between husbands and wives persisted (Bell and Newby, 1976: 166) and that women continued to have their ideas and desires around timing of children and work overruled by their husbands (Leonard, 1980: 242 – 243). Though we are now more than thirty years on from these studies their comments continue to ring true: more recent research has found that women’s earning capacity does not necessarily relate to their power within the marriage as spouses look to preserve gendered expectations and minimise possible anxieties or arguments when a woman earns more than her husband (Tichenor, 2005). Following traditional role patterns remains common, though couples will often *say* they are acting in an equal manner.

The marriage ceremony is designed to differentiate maleness and femaleness (Leonard, 1980: 265) and, however people try to reinvent it, its symbols can and do continue to be interpreted in traditional ways and therefore fix values in people’s minds and (re)create what the group believes (Leonard, 1980: 265). Indeed, involvement in such rituals and ceremonies ‘may cause people to feel particular sentiments, to accept norms and concepts, and to objectify and confirm certain social roles’ (Leonard, 1980: 265). Symbols are

³² At the time of writing the present Conservative government in Britain has not yet introduced a tax benefit specifically for married couples, but the financial benefits of marriage are built into our system of (tax) law, including capital gains tax and inheritance tax benefits.

important as they ‘are, literally, effective’ (Leonard, 1980: 265); paying attention to a symbol may be tantamount to accepting it (Leonard, 1980: 266). This adds to ideas of what is and what is not acceptable and correct.

In the case of name changing, following this ritual and changing this symbol of selfhood: emphasises the idea that this is the most acceptable practice for women and that other naming ideas are problematic; maintains a separation between men and women in terms of their behaviour and action; suggests that women’s selfhoods should be more turned towards family; and upholds the historical connection to the subsuming of a woman’s identity into and under a man’s. This connection, historically publically and legally accepted, remains alive in terms of gendered relations and expectations, as I aim to show. It therefore remains a symbol for a wider patriarchal system of gendered hierarchy and however the women in my study who changed their names feel about their actions, their use of this symbol has added to the social acceptability of the name change and these underlying connotations.

6.1.3 *Choice*

Further to the above discussions is added the narrative of ‘choice’ in which the modern ‘self made self’ (Giddens, 1996) is held entirely responsible for their own actions and decisions; such theories of modernity posit that people have a wide variety of choices and courses of action available and there is little to prevent them from choosing what they truly want. The ‘normal biography’ is ‘the “elective biography”, the “reflexive biography”, the “do-it-yourself biography”’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2010: 3). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim point out that this does not always succeed and that we are constantly in a state of risk due to these choices we, ironically, *must* make. If truly making a totally DIY biography, women are simply *choosing* to take on their partner’s name, as opposed to following the social rules of love, and indeed most participants agree that their decision was indeed a ‘choice’ they made: the modal figure for influence on the decision to change or retain names was ‘1’ or ‘Myself’ (see Figure 5). Participant 32 said that ‘it was *my* choice, and for me it has been a happy one’, while P59 noted that ‘changing names is an individual choice’. However, the fit with wider patterns and trends on name changing/retaining is so close that it seems unlikely that pure choice is creating these figures.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue (2010: 2) that we must look to understand carefully what new forms of life are coming into being, and that, in their theorisation, individualisation does not mean the total destruction of ‘regulations, conditions, provisos’, but that ‘far more than earlier, individuals must, in part... import [regulations and guidelines] into their biographies through their own actions’. Our present moment holds both change and consistency, but individuals are left with the burden of making sense of this in their own lives (2010: 4 – 5). This stressful state of choice and risk for modern individuals leads them to seek ‘expert’ help and guidance, to take away some of the responsibility for actions and decisions (2010: 7). Traditional choices may well be made to deliberately stand against the growing number of possibilities (Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2010: 5).

Moving away from the traditional is also difficult in a society which continues to have important socio-structural dimensions and influential traditions and historical examples. Marriage may be increasingly a matter of choice (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim: 2010: 8), but it remains an institution with institutional structures and goals. However, in a time of individualisation, people must *look as if* they are taking responsibility for their own actions: actively *choosing*. It is therefore unsurprising that 37 percent of my participants stated that they were the sole influence on their decision.

However, closer examination of the qualitative evidence shows the important influence of others, including a general ‘other’ or ‘society’. This influence could be so significant that participants put their own feelings absolutely to the back, to the point where they changed their name purely to please someone else, usually their partner. In this way they follow the gendered social rules of love power and love work, which will be discussed in more detail below. However, by playing down or completely disguising the influence of tradition, past example, and wider social rules and practices, the gendered inequality of love and naming decisions is masked by the story of ‘free choice’, unfettered by anything outwith the person themselves.

This kind of choice, perhaps best displayed in Giddens’ theorisation on the ‘self made self’, is in fact impossible – no one can escape the importance of past example and other people in making decisions, as well as the limits of social and historical positioning (see chapter 5). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2010) accept the dialectical relationship between

individuals and society and though I may not be convinced by their argument about the degree of autonomy a modern individual has to make choices, it is this dialectic I wish to stress. Participants display the efficacy and reality of this dialectic when making decisions as an individual with agency who lives within a particular society. However, they also display the significance of the idea of totally free choice: it is important to *look as if* one has taken a fully informed and responsible decision *on one's own*.

Marriage, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue (2010: 11), has increasingly become about this story of free choice and responsible decision making, as opposed to familial or societal interests. They focus on the situation in Germany, but I would argue that this can be applied to Britain as well, though in a less explicit form. The German Civil Code of the 1880s expressed the importance of the institution itself, especially in terms of morality and the Christian viewpoint – these considerations were to come above any individual concerns. Women were expressly forbidden from using their own names and equal rights were only to be applied to family law if they did not upset the Christian basis for marriage (this applied into the 1950s in Germany) (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2010: 10). During the time of National Socialism in Germany, couples who wished to marry were reminded of their duty to the German state and the survival of the German race, but later in the century the importance of marriage, above all things, was stated to be the couple's desire to be with one another (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2010: 10).

The ideology of marriage and the increasingly 'free' nature of it, chosen and entered into for nothing but love and care for one another, is shown developing in these state documents. It is also shown, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue (2010: 11), in the official German marriage manual of the 1970s, in which the possibility of dissolving the marriage if it becomes impossible to live with one another is discussed – the idea of marriage has shifted entirely to one of individualised contentment. Being 'in love' is the officially accepted reason for marriage *par excellence*: an individualised emotion which leads to a free decision to marry one's partner. However, the case I wish to make here is that love is

not so free from social influence and neither are any of the decisions which may flow from it, including the name change, so often justified using a narrative of love³³.

We can see then that love is created unequal and the discourses surrounding it are justifications for this inequality. Such arguments ignore the importance of gendered love to managing work within a patriarchal society. Love includes care and nurturance work, as well as putting others before oneself. Women do a great deal of this 'love work' within their families. This means others are catered to and cared for by women. It saves the state a great deal of money in terms of care being done within the home. Yet this is all hidden and masked behind the word 'love'.

6.2 'Love Work' and 'Love Power'

The work involved in love has been discussed in part by Hochschild, through her concept of 'emotion work' (Hochschild, 2003a). To this I want to add my own terms: an element of 'conspicuous commitment' and call the whole (emotion work and conspicuous commitment) 'love work'. The emotional work of women conducted under the label of 'love' is a form of 'love power' which men have over women and can use to exploit them (Jonasdottir, 1991: 17). Before exploring this I will outline Hochschild's arguments.

Hochschild divides 'emotion work' into the private and professional, and within her definition of the 'private' falls the relationship between husband and wife. However, I would argue that marriage actually crosses the boundaries between these two definitions as both part of the private world and a highly public institution, meaning elements from both sides of her discussion are relevant. She argues that within institutions 'various elements of acting are taken away from the individual and replaced by institutional mechanisms' (Hochschild, 2003a: 49). In other words, roles are created for people to fill within institutions; within marriages there are normalised roles for men and women, with duties and responsibilities to be taken on. She goes on to argue that 'Many people and objects [are] arranged according to institutional rule and custom' and that the institution in this

³³I do not mean to suggest that people do not feel strong emotional attachments to one another – of course they do – but these attachments are built upon gendered foundations and expectations, and this leads to unequal distribution of work and sacrifice.

way becomes ‘a director’ and will ‘alter the relation of actor to director’ (Hochschild, 2003a: 49).

The institution of marriage has a history and its examples can be seen in the married couples women and men see around them growing up: not following such ‘stage directions’ in terms of behaviour is difficult. To re-emphasise a point made in the introduction to this chapter, falling into such roles and following the ‘rules’ of marriage is seen to *confirm* normality (Mansfield and Collard, 1988: 53). People therefore, to a greater or lesser extent, *act* within marriage to ensure their sense of normality (both private and public) is confirmed, and name changing is one way of achieving this by following expectations. As Hochschild notes, institutional techniques for deep acting can be pervasive in ‘suggest[ing] how to imagine and thus how to feel (Hochschild, 2003a: 49).

‘Deep acting’ was originally a method of acting, but Hochschild uses this idea when looking at everyday emotional experience. People will use past emotions, the daily ‘props’ of life around them, and their own abilities to manage their emotions, to come to feel in a particular way (Hochschild, 2003a: 42 – 43). Such management entails an understanding of the social expectations of how to feel and how to act in a given situation and to manage emotions to fit. On the day of marriage itself, and throughout married life, ‘the formal rules that prop up an institution set limits to the emotional possibilities for all concerned’ (Hochschild, 2003a: 53).

Marriage is meant to be built upon love – an all-consuming, passionate love, which is yet companionate and unconditional – and couples work to try and make it so, or at least make themselves feel that is what they are experiencing. Everyone within marriage must surely have to act at certain points in such a life-long commitment, but as Hochschild argues, women are more likely to act in this way than men because of their lower social status (Hochschild, 2003a: 57), meaning they need to work harder to find respect and credibility in everyday interactions. Rebecca Erickson’s study found that women saw emotion work as an integral part of their work within the family and as a part of showing love; men saw it as a part of their interpersonal relationship with their wife and did not define it as central to their sense of self (2005: 348). Within an institution such as marriage, built on inequalities of status, within a wider patriarchal context of gendered inequality, women do more

‘emotion work’ than men; yet it often goes unnoticed and is usually accepted as normal, and even showing innate, unchangeable differences between women and men. As Hochschild notes: ‘the deeper the bond, the more emotion work, and the more unconscious we are of it. In the most personal bonds, then, emotion work is likely to be the strongest’ (Hochschild, 2003a: 68). Marriage is one such deep bond.

Such emotion work includes, in Hochschild’s words, ‘affirming, enhancing, and celebrating others’ (Hochschild, 2003a: 165). Or, more specific to the marriage bond, ‘Offering encouragement, showing your appreciation, listening closely to what someone has to say, and expressing empathy with another person’s feelings (even when they are not shared)– day after day, year after year’ (Rebecca Erickson, 2005: 338). Hochschild shows in her description how self-effacing such work is, with one self turned towards the glorification of another (here the idea of a ‘secular religion’ becomes particularly pertinent); while Rebecca Erickson argues that emotion work is repetitive, time-consuming, and difficult.

Name changing is an act of just such emotion work, though it also contains another element of ‘conspicuous commitment’. Such commitment is no private act between two individuals; instead it is a public proclamation, directed toward society at large and a matter of display. Name changing is a form of declaring wifehood and lack of availability to others. For some participants it was also a way of claiming respectability and/or status, for example:

At the time of marriage I had a baby out of wedlock and didn't want to rock any more boats by not changing my name – I wanted to be accepted and respectable. (P28: name changer)

When I changed my name I took on a new identity as a married woman which I still feel very positive about. I feel my name gives me status in society and also confirms me as both my husband's partner and the mother of my children. I am proud of our identity as a family. (P61: name changer)

Putting the feelings of others before their own is a gendered framing rule (Hochschild, 2003b: 99) – women *should* put others before themselves, as it is women’s role to care for other people first. This frame has been applied by my participants to their situation. They feel they *should want* to please others; this is a way of being seen as respectably feminine.

For those who were ambivalent about these rules of feeling (their initial emotions did not fit with the framing rules) they most often used ‘deep acting’ to find contentment with their name change: working on their own emotions until they fit these rules.

Others also worked on participant emotions. Husbands in general expected wives to change names: either both spouses had accepted this is what would happen and there was no discussion, or there was a discussion and it was made clear that the woman should change her name, usually using very emotional means. For just under 20 percent of participants whose husbands became ‘very upset’ at the suggestion of their wife *not* changing there was a significant pressure then placed upon them to do so. Usually the woman would accept the social and feeling rules in place for her and change her name. This act is then described as an act of love.

In the economy of gratitude described by Hochschild (2003b) this action by women could be seen as a ‘gift’ to their husbands of a symbol of their selfhood for his love; however, this ‘gift’ is so expected of women it may well be lost upon husbands. There is also a complicating factor here in that two participants actively described their husband giving them his name as ‘a gift’ (P20 and P77). This means that the woman in these partnerships is then expected to be grateful for the ‘gift’ of a name, replacing her own willingly, and in some way expected to reciprocate or live in debt.

Participants work on feeling is therefore gendered, and it is a part of a wider social context of gender inequality and of course what is/can be felt or even imagined to be felt relies on this social and historical context. The narrative of sacrificial ‘true’ love itself (subordinating oneself to one’s partner), the gendered nature of this sacrifice within heteronormativity, and the idea of loyalty to one person are the context in which, despite other changes in women’s position within society, the feeling of love inspires traditional actions on the part of women. Keeping one’s name goes against this context, while name changing follows social and feeling rules. For those women who felt an initial ambivalence towards name changing they were caught between rules and their own feelings, but deep acting could secure adjustment and contentment with the name change; along with the important contentment of others. Of course women have agency and some

did not do this deep acting, remaining ambivalent or unhappy; some acted to take their old name back. They were however a very small minority.

This appropriation of women's love by men – and indeed women and men of extended family and friendship groups – has been called 'love power' (Jonasdottir, 1991). It is clear in the cases of conflict between spouses over names that love is being used to shape women's decisions and force them to conform to an idea(l). This use of love is exploitative: shoring up masculine identity and dominance of the family unit, while subordinating women's identities to these aims. I would argue that this is also happening in the cases of the name changers who did not question their change at all – the social gendered contexts of 'love power' have been accepted in a deep way by these participants and the 'love power' is implicit rather than explicit. To put this mostly theoretical discussion into context, I will now turn to the words of the participants themselves.

6.3 Name Changers and the Love Narrative

Over 41 percent of the 75 name changers (31 participants) in my study spoke explicitly of love, commitment, and pride in their marriage being connected with their name change: it was a significant justification narrative for name changing. The idea was that 'true love' and 'true commitment' were shown through this gesture:

I decided to take on my spouse's name because I felt it would be more of a commitment to our marriage on my part. Proud of it. (P34)

Wanted to 'complete the full marriage and change my surname, it made me feel more connected to my husband.... [wanted to show] my love and commitment by changing my name.' (P54)

I loved my husband, it was nice to take his name. (P69)

The gendered asymmetry of this supposed gesture of love and commitment was rarely brought up by my name changing participants; the idea of giving up a part of selfhood as a sign of a woman's love for her husband is an ingrained idea.

Participant 21 spoke a great deal about love and commitment within her interview, and the transformative effects it had had upon her life. Describing her own feelings about sharing

a name with her husband she said she enjoyed being close and feeling like a team together against the world. Marriage had brought her a great deal of security and a newfound self-esteem; she spoke of it in ecstatic terms:

Everybody said... 'nothing changes when you get married', but my whole world changed, everything changed, it was amazing, for the better, [husband] says the same as well, it just makes you feel stronger, I don't know if it makes you... makes you trust more, I don't know, this bond which just intensifies and... it just makes you more secure as well, with yourself, with your relationship, with everything else going on... (interview data)

The name symbolised this new happiness and security and P21 was extremely pleased with her decision, despite previous reluctance to consider name changing. Yet it had taken marriage to bring this transformation about, and in this P21 reflects a great deal of research into (heterosexual) women's desire to be married and achieve a sense of higher status and security through being loved and loving a man (see Langford 1999; see Chapter 2).

There were five explicit mentions of status in the survey by participants using the love narrative. For example, P61 said she wanted to be married to have 'the status of a married woman and be as Mrs.'. She put this down to being a 'traditionalist' and wanting to be seen to be a part of a 'legal partnership'. P62 also commented that changing her name '[conferred] a status and the sense of being in a relationship' which at that time in her life were highly significant. These women are both highly educated and have achieved a great deal on their own, but they still looked to the status of 'wifedom' and attachment to a man in marriage. Interviews brought out less explicit mentions of status, with women often unable to quite formulate this feeling into words. For example, P21 said:

Well, I think it makes us equal that we have the same name so that's a good to start with and the fact that we're Mr. and Mrs. kind of makes us... it is you're Mr and Mrs...I don't think I'd have had Mrs.if I'd kept my name. Mrs. [OFN], no that doesn't sound right. I wouldn't have felt equal, I would have still felt lower... not lower, that's the wrong word but I would have felt... I dunno, it just puts you on an equal footing having the same name.

The feeling of being in some way unequal becomes apparent in this account, in which she cannot bring herself to accept that she felt 'lower', but that there was some inequality without the name change. These participants referred to the 'equality' of Mr. and Mrs. and being seen by the outside world as a partnership. This suggests that, in a society in which

there is gender inequality and women are on the lower end of the hierarchy, women look to access male power and prestige through marriage to feel that they have achieved a new status and can somehow use the gendered power their husband has accrued as a man.

Further to this, and in agreement with Simon May's thesis of rootedness (Simon May, 2011), participants referred to a sense of security, commitment, and self-esteem coming from the name change:

Proud to have my husband's name; makes me feel wanted. (P83)

There's a sense of security in being able to call myself "Mrs Married Surname". (P115)

Such positive rootedness in the world through the love of a partner can be wholly transformative. Participant 112 had been badly bullied at school and her name was used against her. On marrying she was delighted to 'embrace the future and move away from the past' by changing her name to that of the person she loved. The name change allowed her to move on and become someone she prefers – someone happier and more confident. Participants 95 and 113 also spoke of similar events in the survey: P95 said 'at the time it made sense' because she wanted to move away from the unhappy period of bullying and focus on a happier future. While P113 wrote:

I hated my maiden name. I'd been bullied throughout school and, to me, [OFN] sounded odd and disjoined.... I got my degree with that name so it's still part of who I am, but I still don't like saying it or using it.

At the time of marriage these women found the possibility of moving their selfhood on through their partners and the transformative love that was being offered to them, using marriage and name changing as the legal and symbolic means of cementing this alteration. Love is transformative. It can change a system of belief, a lack of self-esteem, a feeling of insecurity or instability. However, the fact the loving response of women to this transformation is to give up a part of their selfhood raises questions about the gendered nature of this transformative power. Women expressing their feelings of being somehow lesser and requiring a status boost shows the wider patriarchal context in which name changing works: women's selfhoods are not considered as important as men's.

This can be seen further in accounts from just under 22 percent of the 75 participants who changed names when they mentioned feeling that not to change names would have been problematic in terms of how they themselves, or their partner or families, would have viewed their commitment to the marriage:

If I hadn't changed my name I would have felt like I was holding back from my marriage (P2)

It would have been like hedging your bets or not expecting the marriage to last [to retain] (P44)

His family would have seen it as a serious snub not to change (P111)

The above quotes show women attempting to 'do' love, commitment, and marriage appropriately: their 'love work'. 'Love work' is similar to Hochschild's 'emotion work', except that it also encapsulates my concept of 'conspicuous commitment'. As Hochschild argues, women are more likely to do 'emotion work' than men, predominately because of their lower status within society *as women* (Hochschild, 2003a: 162). This work 'affirms, enhances, and celebrates the well-being and status of others' (Hochschild, 2003a: 165). In caring, nurturing, listening, pre-empting, and actually putting the needs of the man first, women act to affirm, enhance, and celebrate men's well-being and status above their own: names are another part of this work. Women have internalised the idea that love and commitment equal a particular set of actions and acquiring of symbols *on their part*, and that this does not necessarily need to be reciprocal. In fact, their very attachment to their partner can be questioned if they do not follow the accepted gender rules around name changing – they may even question it themselves, as with P2. As part of their 'love work' they pre-empt and divert possible anger or discontentment from others by changing names, often with little regard for their own feelings. The feelings of their husbands and families are pushed to the fore in doing the appropriate 'love work'. In Cancian and Gordon's (1988) paper on emotion norms in marriage they note that 'self-help' and therapeutic guides to the 'marital emotional culture' are directed towards women (p. 310) and that women are expected to uphold the marital relationship – this emotional labour is divided along gendered lines (p. 311).

6.4 Discussion

The political and patriarchal realities of this intimate relationship are unpalatable when love is meant to be a genuinely egalitarian emotion and when marriage is meant to be based ‘solely on feelings of reciprocal love and thus be independent of external considerations’ (Honneth, 2004: 142). Thus, most discussions of marriage, justice and love by the classic theorists ignore the negatives and the possible abuses within such an intimate relationship, and certainly ignore the gendered differences. These classic formulations of marriage have been crucial to law makers and whether this intimate institution should ever be intervened upon. Hegel, for example, wrote that ‘The union can be expressed fully only in mutual love and assistance’, downplaying any interjection by the state (Hegel, 2008: 85).

As Honneth has argued, Hegel formulated the tension between justice and love as ‘wherever in families rights that have a legal characteristic are put forward by a member, the moral substance of familial life has already been destroyed; for the relationships between the various members normally consist not in the exchange of rights and duties but in the mutual guarantee of care and attention’ (Honneth, 2004: 152). Hegel’s model does not determine what and how many rights and duties are to be exchanged and does not put emphasis on them being equally reciprocal at all, but just that an expression of a need should be enough to have it satisfied by care. The problem is that Hegel’s notion can restrict the needs of one member of the group to satisfy those of another (Honneth, 2004: 153), and ignores the fact that women do more care work than men. ‘Love work’ is done to an unequal extent by women.

Women ‘do’ the public signs of being in love and committing to a relationship to a greater extent than men. Men are usually allowed a great deal more freedom than women in choosing whether these signs are appropriate for them. It is here that names fit in: women are expected to show they are in love and ‘off the market’. This is about women as property, whereas men are free, full individuals. Hierarchically then, ‘husband’ is a category above ‘wife’ and has a power over this lower category and the woman who fills it.

The name is a sign of self, but women are expected to give it up, as a matter of routine, on marriage: often without questioning the consequences. Women, unlike men, are under more pressure to give up a part of themselves to this relationship. In a supposedly individualistic society, women continue to act in a highly relational manner towards their husband and (future) children, sacrificing a part of their own selfhood for the wider family. This act is seen as loving and as showing commitment. The ‘love work’ of affirming, enhancing, and celebrating men rather than women requires women to deny their own self while affirming his (through using his name and getting rid of her own), enhancing his sense of selfhood as a husband with a (symbolically at least) dependent wife, and celebrating his selfhood by using his name and adding a link to his lineage and family tree, rather than her own. She ‘conspicuously commits’ by moving away from her own family (symbolically), becoming a part of his, and continuing that line. She must, as part of her gendered ‘love work’, think carefully about the feelings of others when she comes to marry: changing her name is a symbol of love and commitment and a way of ensuring her husband and his family feel valued and deferred to over her own.

Men do not have to show their love or commitment in this way, and do not face condemnation for retaining their own symbol of selfhood. Women do more ‘love work’ and are expected to demonstrate their love and attachment more publically, proving their status as ‘wife’ and their dedication to that one unit and no other: referring back to the property laws around legal, biological heirs. Name changing, its symbolism and connotations, are a part of this ‘love work’. Women are demonstrating how ‘truly in love’ they are by the total submersion of themselves into the other: a story which may seem romantic, but hides the gendered inequalities of this submersion of self. All of this is gendered work that women do and men do not. Loving gestures are not egalitarian, and neither is love. Thus far I have spoken about the name changers and love, but where does the hypothesis of unequal love stand when applied to the name retainers?

6.5 The Name Retainers and Love

The name retainers made no mention of love as a part of their decision to retain names. Their justifications for retaining their name focused on individual selfhood, feminism, and attachment to the lineage of their birth family (all of which are discussed in other chapters). The conspicuous commitment of the name change was a step too far for name retainers –

they had married and shown their love for and commitment to their partner through this act. This was perceived to be enough. They wished for love in marriage to be equal – adhering to the narrative of egalitarian love – and felt that name changing represented inequality. I will discuss these ideas in more detail below.

19 name retainers (70.37 percent) were explicitly critical of the name changing norm, speaking of it as unequal or unnecessary – usually citing the fact that women were expected to do something men were not:

Why should women do this and not men? It is unequal and no one's business.
(P85)

[Thinks] 'it wrong that a woman's name badges her at any and every time in her life as belonging to a particular man' (P88)

With discussion of inequality feminism was also raised by the name retainers as a reason for not changing names, with 12 participants (just over 44 percent) citing feminism generally, women's studies courses, or explicitly using feminist discourse to reflect on how this norm represented men owning women or to reflect on the patriarchal history of the name change more generally. As well as discussing their sense of coherent and continuing selfhood as significant (see Chapter 8) these were the most significant reasons given for retaining names: feminism and an active dislike of the norm, two reasons which are closely linked. The more critical and even political reasoning of these women contrasts with the generally romantic and holistic reasons of love and unity given by name changers. Instead of love there was confusion, anger, criticism, or indifference to a norm name retainers did not want to follow. When asked in interviews about love and the idea that name changing shows 'true love' and 'true commitment', name retainers refused this idea, claiming that names did not express a person's love or dedication to another and that there were other, more important measures of these emotions. Marriage may still express love, but name changing does not.

Marriage, despite its unequal history, has been entered into by these women, but the idea of using obvious symbols to connect themselves to marriage publically has been refused. Name changing, for the majority of these women, was explicitly pointed to as a symbol of inequality, but marriage did not have this stigma. This raises some interesting questions

about narratives around marriage, as well as how name changing/retaining connects with the public world. I will explore this before investigating versions of heterosexuality to try to understand where participants are situating themselves within this organising principle.

6.6 Pervasive Marriage; Pervasive Love

Participants have all married at some point in their lives, and have therefore accepted the idea of marriage as an important symbol of their commitment and love. As P61 said, ‘marriage itself’ shows love and commitment. This narrative was rarely discussed in such explicit terms – only, in fact, when I asked about commitment and love pointedly with the five name retainers I interviewed. As with name changers then, love and commitment as shown through the act of marriage was assumed to need no articulation, but was instead taken for granted. It was the name as symbol that was viewed differently.

In my call for participants I asked for women who had been married at some point in their lives, hence I implicitly asked for people who had accepted the idea of marriage; however I had participants who had separated, divorced, and been widowed, and the idea of marriage as a symbol of love and commitment was not questioned. Though ideas of what marriage meant and what was to be expected from partners varied to some extent, participants were united in their belief that marriage showed love and commitment, whether they married in the 1940s or in 2011.

Cancian and Gordon argue that women in the 1940s were urged to be realistic about marriage and keep expectations low to avoid disappointment; while women in the 1960s were urged to talk about feelings and express love, with a large dose of deep acting recommended to change internal feelings (Cancian and Gordon, 1988: 315 – 316). This ‘therapeutic model’ continues to be relied upon today, though theories of modern reflexive selves suggest deep acting may be less acceptable to individuals content to move on when relationships become unsatisfying.

My participants do not easily reflect this research. For participants married in the 1940s the more pragmatic and distanced terms in which they discussed their marriages came from the time that had passed between their husbands’ deaths and the research taking place. One participant discussed how her husband had experienced what is often called ‘love at

first sight' when he saw her, assuring himself that she would become his wife. She herself did not feel this immediate recognition, but was shortly also wrapped up in this romantic narrative. I quote this (wonderful) story at length below to illustrate this point:

I was going to a rather eccentric poets' party... given by a rather eccentric man and his very eccentric sister and...I got to the front door and as the door opened a man came out who was, literally my oldest friend, I mean we'd been babies together in India... and he said 'don't go in there, don't go, come and have dinner with me, it's awful!', so I was just about to leave when the host arrived and of course he said 'oh how lovely to see you' you know, so of course I couldn't go, so I walked into a room in this poets' party and my husband, he said that as I walked into the room he thought 'that's the woman I'm going to marry'. I, well... he was with another friend and in actual fact I rather fancied the other friend! ... I travelled a lot at that time so I didn't see [husband] for quite some time but we happened to have a mutual friend so we met again in the house of this mutual friend and then... we were engaged within a week! I remember him saying 'I knew I'd meet you again', which was all very nice. (P7: interview data: name changer)

This does not suggest a lowered expectation of marriage, but a close adherence to a narrative of 'true love'.

It is also hard to suggest that younger participants are less pragmatic about their marriages. Women who had married in the 1970s and 1980s, and therefore should fit into the 'therapeutic model' of marriage, reflected on the sometimes difficult realities of their long relationships, in which they had had to endure, for example, alcoholic and/or depressed partners, periods of separation, serious mental and physical abuse, and the death of children³⁴. Apart from – and thankfully – the participant who had experienced sustained physical and mental abuse from her partner, these women had remained with their husbands. There was no sense of walking away from the marriage because it was difficult, but instead every attempt was made to keep it going. Though participants who had married in the 1990s and 2000s did mention the possibility of divorce ending their relationships – therefore accepting that marriage is no longer necessarily forever – there was no flippancy about this statement; instead it was perceived as an absolute last resort when all other methods had been tried to save the marriage. I could not perceive any sense of Bauman's modern individual, unable to make lasting relationships and unwilling to sacrifice anything of themselves to that relationship to sustain it (Bauman, 2003). Instead, the idea of love

³⁴ These themes came out during the interview process when women perhaps felt more able to go into something so personal once they had met me. They also had more time to expand upon these themes.

and life-long commitment was so utterly accepted by all participants that it was hardly mentioned.

Such silence is instructive. My participants are clearly from a historical period in which the importance of love to marriage is accepted and, perhaps, seen as increasingly important as other ties of family standing and duty become less significant. It also shows how pervasive the narrative of love as egalitarian and fulfilling actually is. As we make sense of our lives through the important narratives of today, we all look to our ‘secular religion’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2004: 184) to help form coherent stories of selfhood and life narrative: love as narrative is used to justify certain actions, to the extent that it no longer needs to be openly narrated, but becomes a silent, assumed, culturally acceptable basis for these acts. The inequality of love and heterosexual relationships is not recognised or is ‘forgotten’ by participants; ‘forgetting’ must occur to allow the relationship to continue and for the narrative to have and give meaning (Anderson, 2006: 205), whether they changed their names or not. Why then, do name retainers take the action of name changing to be so particularly unequal and unacceptable?

6.7 Refusing the Name as Symbol of Love

The name as a symbol of selfhood is taken by name retainers to be too personal to change: for example, P40 felt it was so personal that even marriage was not a sign she had known her husband long enough to change such a sign of selfhood:

I hadn't known my husband long enough to change to his name.

It is too deep a sign of selfhood to relinquish. Further to this, it is taken to be an obvious sign of marriage and wifhood and not something name retainers want to ‘buy into’. They see the presentation of themselves to the world as ‘wives’ as unnecessary:

Why should I present myself to the world as married? Men don't have to do this.
(P46)

The name change is not a sign of love and commitment, as marriage is, but a sign of unequal gender relations – for some this makes it the very opposite of a sign of love, and working against this norm is the clearest way of displaying equality:

It made our marriage one of equals, right from day one. (P16)

The name retainers then, have a rather different idea of love than the name changers, and a different idea of what being a wife means. Love for them does not entail the merging of identities symbolised in the name change – they had been made a team by marriage and did not need any further public symbols of togetherness. They wanted to make sure the world saw them ‘not purely [as] a wife’ (P96); for some this was part of enjoying the confusion name retaining engenders in others:

I also get a perverse delight out of explaining my decision to people and challenging their notions of wifhood. (P12)

Participant 12 has clearly reflected deeply on the symbolism of the name and its connections with ideas of ‘proper’ wifhood and heterosexual coupledness. To repeat, not all name retainers saw their decision in this way, but the majority did. As P44 (a name changer) said

If you want to get rid of all symbols of marriage maybe that says something about how you feel about the married state and your acceptance of it and how you feel others perceive it.

Her argument is sound: the name retainers want to rid themselves of this particular symbol of marriage and its connotations, and therefore how others may perceive them because of it. They do not refuse all symbols of marriage, and have clearly accepted the ‘married state’ itself, but have refused to be entered into public discourse as ‘Mrs. Married Name’. The name acts as a relational connection between public and private worlds and these women do not wish to be known necessarily as wives. They see marriage as an *aspect* of their life, and indeed a rather private one between them and their husband: ‘[it’s] no one’s business’ (P85). These women are attempting to privatise their commitment: the opposite of the ‘conspicuous commitment’ enacted through the name change. They are refusing this aspect of love work.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2004) have argued that love is losing its rules and that we must all choose how to create love within individual relationships. In this way it is increasingly privatised. I would also argue that there is more fluidity around certain aspects of love than before, but I do not consider this phenomenon to be quite as advanced as they do.

Other authors have argued that the privatisation of family life has ensured that little attention has been paid to the amount of work women do within the home (Luxton and Fox, 2009: 15 – 16) and that this system of gendered labour is rarely questioned because of its private status (Worts, 2009: 325). Privatisation appears only to have had bad consequences for women.

However, this attempt by my name retaining participants to privatise their commitment is an attempt to both thwart and play down their move against the norm. In privatising their commitment to the married state by refusing the shared name as a public symbol of wifeness and ‘true love’, they attempt to take control of how they are perceived by the public and to control the connotations of wifeness which come from marriage. In so doing they refuse the definition of ‘true love’ and ‘properly committed wife’ set up by the norm, while at the same time attempting to keep their marriage as an *aspect* of their lives which will not necessarily be publically known or discussed. Names, these participants assert, are not important to love, but instead are important to selfhood. Love may be relational, but selfhood is seen as individual and should not be changed, threatened, or compromised by the name change. They situate this attempt at changed selfhood, for the most part, within a feminist discourse of gendered inequality, but love remains free of political connotations. Hence, marriage can be entered into, but names must not change.

This change in the definition of ‘true love’ and ‘true commitment’ from a wife is a way of restructuring what it is to be ‘properly’ heterosexual; and it is to ideas of heterosexuality that I now turn.

6.8 Heterosexualities

Hockey et al. (2010) discuss the concept of hegemonic heterosexuality, a concept which is not fixed, and is situated within a specific cultural and historical context, but which gives meaning to heterosexual lives and a kind of yard-stick from which to measure normality (Hockey et al., 2010: 180). Many varieties of heterosexuality come under the institution’s

‘umbrella’ (Hockey et al., 2010: 180) and name changing/retaining divides up two versions of what it is to be heterosexual and live a heterosexual selfhood³⁵.

Hockey et al. explore the way in which heterosexuality is naturalised and ‘*made to disappear*’ (Hockey et al., 2010: 6. Emphasis in original). It is constructed continuously, but also performed continuously and creates its own norms and ideals (Hockey et al., 2010: 6). Name changing on marriage is – within Britain – one such heterosexual ideal and regulates women and men along gendered lines of what it is to be heterosexual, to be a wife/husband, to love, to be committed, to show all of this publically, and what kinds of behaviour to expect from a partner. Those women who change names reach out to this particular ideal, which is a part of our hegemonic heterosexuality at present.

Name retainers are pushing at this idea of hegemonic heterosexuality and attempting to redefine wifhood along a less public line, in which the selfhoods of women are preserved through both the continued use of their own name and the re-definition of love and commitment as unconnected with names or this kind of change. For them, heterosexuality continues to structure their lives as they marry and become wives, but they play down the public aspect of this, attempting to keep marriage and love firmly between them and their husband. Removing the public aspect from such a highly public institution as marriage is, at present, extremely difficult. Along with the gendered aspects of power, particularly in reference to naming (see chapters 2 and 5), and to be discussed in relation to gendered selfhood in chapter 8, the action of name retainers is perceived as strange – it is an attempt to undermine a patriarchal norm, redefine wifhood, keep marriage and love purely private matters, and maintain/justify the maintenance of selfhood through name retention. It is a new version of heterosexuality, which points towards a reflexive modern self, but as yet is lacking in credibility and is hard to achieve. It is certainly not the free choice of Giddens’ (1996) reflexive modern agents.

The action the name retainers take can perhaps best be summed up by the term ‘quiet subversions’ (Beasley et al., 2012: 67). This type of subversion occurs when a person departs from a norm of the more ‘traditional’ heterosexual relationship, with the example

³⁵ Two participants openly told me they were bisexual, and there may be others who did not desire to reveal this information, however, being within such a heterosexual relationship is to be organised by heterosexuality; indeed heterosexuality is an organising principle even for those who do not live in heterosexual relationships.

that Beasley et al. use being long distance relationships (Beasley et al., 2012). Instead of following the norm of cohabitation when forming a committed (married) heterosexual relationship, these couples have decided to/must remain apart. Despite the fact this arouses suspicion about their commitment to each other (2012: 70) most couples express their happiness with living a rather unconventional heterosexual life (2012: 82).

The subversion arouses suspicion from others, requires justification, and requires planning and active thinking on the part of the couples involved. This kind of subversion is therefore very similar to that of the name retainers in my study, who have departed from the norm by retaining their names though they have married in the ‘traditional’ manner (as opposed to continuing ‘just’ to co-habit). Equally they have to be able to justify their actions in a way name changers do not, and their actions can arouse suspicion in others, who question their commitment. ‘Quiet’ does not mean participants’ were not vocal about their reasons for retaining – indeed they were expected to account for it in a way name changers were not. Instead it brings into focus the fact that, despite choosing an unusual path in one area of the institution of marriage, the name retainers in my study have otherwise followed ‘traditional’ routes – heterosexual marriage and monogamous love.

Name retaining is recognised as a genuine possibility for women on marriage, though it remains a possibility little taken up and therefore a relatively difficult decision to make. This makes it a ‘quiet subversion’: a small but significant action going against the heteronormative grain.

6.9 Conclusion

Marriage remains a heterosexual norm and name changing is not widespread enough to challenge it. The ability of women and couples to consider other options is a move away from this norm, but it is a course of action rarely followed. Love remains largely seen as a natural and egalitarian emotion, giving meaning in a secular age. However, my analysis shows that our most important exemplars of love build-in inequality and naturalise this as how love should be. In following such examples, gendered inequality within the love relationship, and by extension marriage, is seen as ‘normal’. All participants implicitly accepted marriage as showing love and commitment, and that, on the point of marrying, they found it a good institution to enter into. Marriage per se was not seen as unequal.

Name changing, on the other hand, met with different interpretations. For name changers it was a clear sign of 'true love' and 'true commitment' and this idea relates strongly to the hegemonic ideal of heterosexual wifedom in which a woman gives up her name to the marriage: relational rather than individual. Name retainers however, felt that names were not signs of love and commitment and that other acts – marriage itself – were enough, perhaps better, signs of such feelings. They want to redefine heterosexuality so that husband and wife are more equal when it comes to such symbols, meaning that their idea(1) of love and marriage would also be *symbolically* represented. They want to keep their act of commitment private – name changing is a highly public declaration of marriage and wifedom, a 'conspicuous commitment'. There remain tensions between ideas of what it is to be a heterosexual wife showing love and commitment, and these tensions are shown through the thought processes and decisions around names.

The last name is a connection between couples, but is one that can be extended to children and wider family. Understandings and perceptions of family are also significant to discussions and decisions around names. The next chapter will examine this issue in detail.

Chapter 7 Creating 'Family'

As Luxton and Fox (2009: 3) have argued, the word 'family' is often used with an assumption that its meaning is uncomplicated, though in fact defining the concept can be difficult and complex. The Office for National Statistics defines families as being started 'when people form partnerships or marry or when they have children' (Macrory, 2012: 1). The Oxford English Dictionary gives several definitions of family, showing how the word has changed in use over time, but also how difficult it is to accurately describe this grouping in the present day (see *Oxford English Dictionary Online*). There are political discourses surrounding 'the family' and from the political Right a narrative of maintaining 'family values' (Grice, 16th July 2013). When used by politicians it becomes clearer that 'family' can have a myriad of meanings, sometimes with highly political overtones. What we have called 'family' in Britain has changed over time and can be defined differently, depending upon context. However, the nuclear, heterosexual family continues to be a dominant conceptualisation of 'normal' family life and, as outlined in chapter 2, still underlies much political and economic policy. One way of delineating and keeping track of families in Britain is through names: the norm of one family unit sharing one name delineates relationships of care and protection. This family is often presumed to be a biological, heteronormative one and an ideal to strive towards, rooted by its name into past, present, and hopefully future too.

A family tree can be created and 'the family' traced back in time through genealogy. Genealogy makes blood ties meaningful (Kramer, 2011: 385). Genealogy as a pastime has been justified as a means to know about oneself *in the present*, as we are all made up of those who went before (Kramer, 2011: 385). Genealogy is a line between past and future, situating individuals and giving them a history; a person sees themselves as meaningfully 'in time' – placing oneself in a family tree is a temporal placement (Kramer, 2011: 386). Yet it can almost provide immortality, as the line stretches on after death and descendants remember the life of the dead person (Kramer, 2011: 386). The dead still play a role in personal life and behaviour. Traits and habits which are related to the dead person can be seen as part of identity creation in the living – or as a burden of expectation. The dead are felt to 'reappear' through the living in how a person looks or acts. Social death is expected to come with biological death, and yet it would seem this is not always the case (Kramer,

2011: 392): people live on in the looks, mannerisms, and viewpoints perceived as meaningful for the relatives left behind.

However, genealogy is not necessarily considered a positive thing. It has also been argued that it is purely self-indulgence and provides no help for a better present or future – looking for the self in the past is a questionable and ultimately fruitless pastime (Kramer, 2011: 386). A sense of self is not always to be found in one's lineage, especially when the people of the present view this lineage as meaningless history (Kramer, 2011: 387). Indeed, being clear about one's genealogical background could actually close off possibilities for 'creative imaginings of past realities' and the possibilities this can leave open for selfhood (Kramer, 2011: 387). Biological bonds, after all, can be seen as 'random' and 'alternative forms of sociality can be equally important' – close friends, for example (Kramer, 2011: 387) – and this most especially when the historical bonds of a lineage are distant and no longer emotionally meaningful for the living. Creating meaning through imagination is key.

Family is also about those in the present who are close to an individual and are meaningful in some way. Fitting oneself into a family can be seen as a highly collectivist activity, in which relational bonds in the present (as well as links with past and future members of the family) are sought to be kept alive. Yet, there is also a narrative of finding the *self* within the family, which is a more individualistic stance. I want to analyse how participants understand this process of family creation and the forming of a family identity, in both its relational and individualist aspects. Who is meaningful and what makes them so varies, but biology is an important part of the story within the Western context. Yet, as Edholm argues (2009: 22 – 23), biology is 'socially defined' and even those prohibited by incest taboos from forming relationships has changed over time and between societies.

My participants are British and live within a context of shared understandings of what counts as biological and what relationships are acceptable or otherwise. However, their conception of family is not always related to biology, and even when it is this does not mean their relationships with biological kin reflect the ideal bonds of care, love, and support which are often seen to flow 'naturally' from blood ties. Some participants questioned the idea that names can be a marker of family in a time of rapid social change

or as useful in making sense of their own (childhood) experiences; however this did not mean they were totally averse to attempting to use names to define their own family unit as adults. Some participants spoke of names as the clearest and easiest way of defining families; others were less convinced that names were significant at all.

It is this varied and complex construction of family and family identity that I want to consider in this chapter. Participants linked practices of naming with children and other family, and described how they created their idea of ‘the family’ and what family means to them. Names hold an important place in these discussions but the story is not straightforward. I will explore ideas of biological and social family in my sample, how participants ‘do’ family, respectability and names, and how children fit into naming decisions.

7.1 Names: Biological or Social?

In constructing family, it became clear that biology and heritage (or lineage) as markers of ‘true’ family links were complex ideas for participants and that names were an important part of their understanding and expression of how they viewed their ‘true’ family. This came across in both name retainers’ and name changers’ accounts. For example, participant 53 (name changer) discussed how her father left her when she was five and that she felt no connection to him or his name at all. This link, though biological, was not emotional or ‘alive’ for her in any way, and changing her name finally removed the last connection to a man she did not know and who was not part of her life. Participant 40 (name retainer) felt that because her father was adopted and had no biological ‘roots’, she should keep his name and make sure she played her part in ensuring *he* felt rooted. Implicitly she was suggesting that she would build a lineage for him, using the name as the social sign of this lineage, and that she would build it through her own biological connection to him and her children.

The conflating of biology and lineage can be seen in this account: P40’s father does have genetic ‘roots’ somewhere but he does not know them so this link is not alive to either him or his daughter. Equally though, the people who raised him are not mentioned or considered as ‘rooting’ him in the world: this has to be done by his daughter and her children through their *biological* link. Though I speculate when I say her father’s name

would not be that of his biological parents as an adopted child, it is likely he is carrying the name of his social parents – despite their lack of ability to ‘root’ him, according to this participant, that name is nevertheless the start of a biological lineage. The disruption of biological lineage can be smoothed over by the name.

Further to this, the reactions of family groupings added to the complexity of biological understandings of family versus the social connection of names. When women changed names, participants spoke of feeling ‘claimed’ by their in-laws – not all of them appreciated this. P43 (name changer) spoke of her irritation at feeling claimed, while participant 62 (name changer) found to her ‘disgust’ that her family felt they could tell her she was no longer one of them after marrying and changing her name. Though this was half in jest, P62 found it unsettling and said it was because her family is ‘quite patriarchal’ and thought about ‘these things’ in a traditional manner.

The other side of this is when participants were pleased to be seen as more a part of their husband’s family, to the extent that they spoke of taking on his heritage in becoming a part of his lineage. P97 (name changer) spoke of being close to her husband’s family and linked to their genealogy after her own parents passed away: she considered her own line as a dead-end, despite having given birth to a child who is genetically a part of her own biological lineage. Her own line symbolically died with her parents – her husband’s has taken precedence and is real in a way her own is not. The name displays the end of one line and the continuation of another.

Participant 120 (name changer) spoke of becoming a part of her husband’s Scottish heritage and being proud that she and her children now share in it: she felt she had no real roots to speak of in any particular geographical location, having moved around a lot as a child, and said ‘I like the idea of having Scottish heritage’. The name provided this social and symbolic link and showed complete acceptance of her by his family. Though she herself has no immediate genetic link to Scotland she has taken on that heritage as if it were her own. For these participants the social and symbolic link of the name to people and places has come to be as, if not more, significant than biology as we usually understand it in Britain. The social relationships formed by marriage and name changing

have come to take on a biological significance, as if the lineage they have joined truly does run in their blood.

Straightforward acceptance of biological connection as understood in the British context and direct mapping onto names was, however, also a major theme. Name retainers in particular spoke of the connection with paternal grandparents, fathers, and other family members on their father's side:

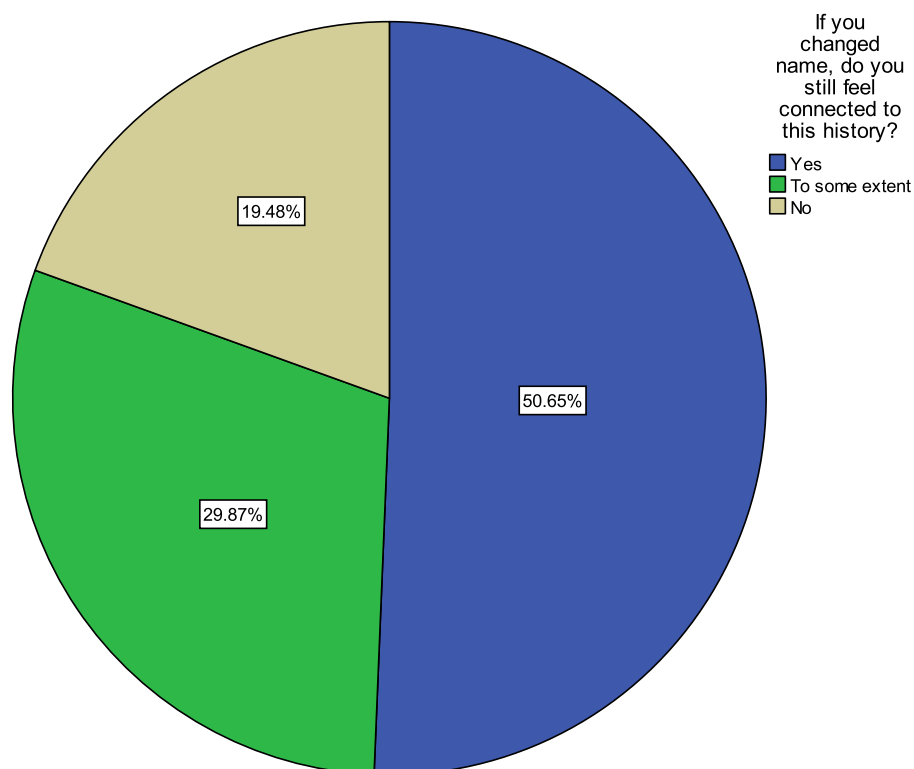
I wanted to keep my father's name... I'm proud of it. The name [and the family] are famous in the French Caribbean and even in France.' (P1: name retainer)

My dad died in 2009 and I wanted his name to continue... grief has made me reconsider a lot of things. (P51: name retainer)

Family members were often inspirational figures rather than people participants had known: participant 88 (name retainer) said there were many 'strong women' on her father's side and, in her interview, participant 96 (name retainer) spoke of the link back to the Suffragette movement that comes through her name: 'there's the background of that name which I could trace back to the Suffragettes which is important to me'. It was not therefore purely a connection with their father, but with the wider paternal family; this had inspired a close affinity with that last name and its history and name retainers did not want to be parted from this. The name for these participants is valuable and is therefore a positive signifier; names lacking in positivity lack value (for some participants after divorce, for example) and can therefore be discarded.

However, just over 50 percent of name changers noted feeling connected into their (birth) family history, so this feeling of connection was not necessarily lost once the name changed (see Figure 6). And, both changers and retainers noted feeling close to their mother's side without a naming link: family is, of course, about more than just names.

Figure 6. Whether name changers still feel connected to their birth family history (percentage)



7.2 'Doing' Family

In Chan's description of family practices in Hong Kong some ideas of how modern families are constructed come to the fore: participants spend time on both paid and unpaid (care) work, invest heavily in child-rearing, and spend time with nuclear and extended family groups (Chan, 2012). Chan's participants were no longer close to their partners, but it can be assumed that if partners were still close spending time together would be important to their idea of family too.

Other forms of family creation are also viable when relatives and partners do not offer the support and emotional bonding necessary: large networks of friends, for example, may provide an exciting and rewarding way of creating a kind of family (Chan, 2012: 35 – 36). Many varieties of family are possible and Britain is seeing increasing diversity in family forms created, for example, through divorce and remarriage. However, this may contrast with how 'doing' family is described: despite the reality of different family forms and

possibilities for who could be included under the banner ‘family’, the desire to adhere to the norm and display a certain form of family remains. This form of family may be perceived to be the most ‘proper’ or respectable, and respectability will be discussed further below.

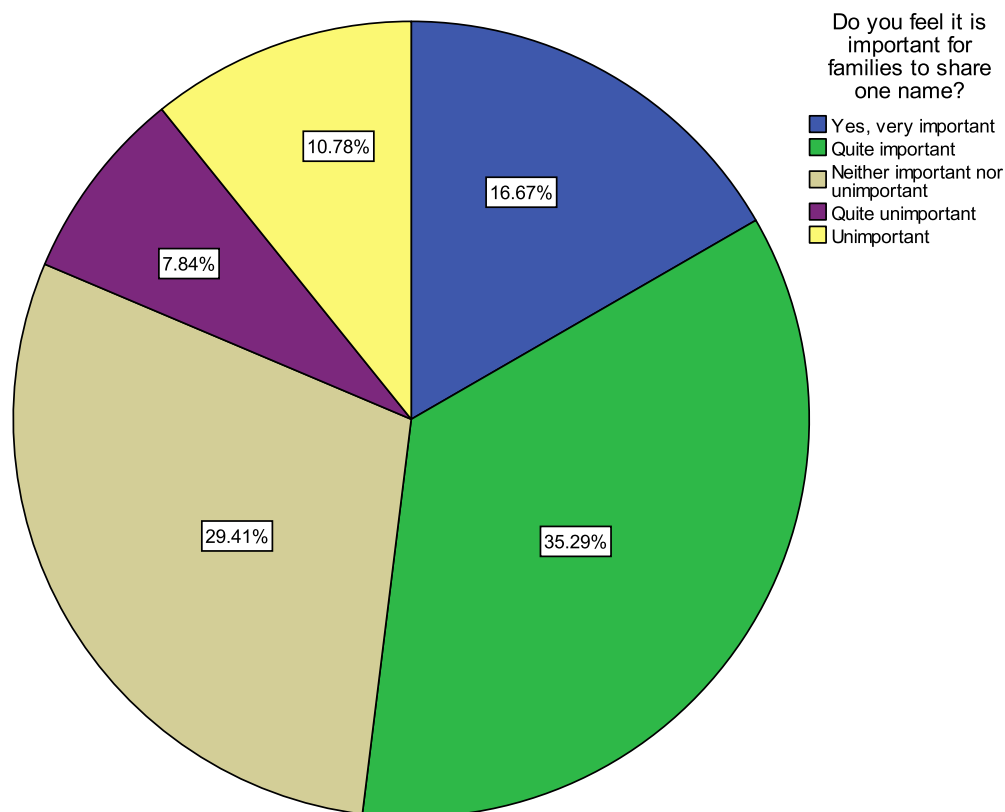
My participants reflected this divide between the norm and the possibilities. In interviews I asked a variation on the question ‘what says “family” to you, other than names?’ and participants talked around ideas of spending time together, sharing memories, and also biological connections in a genetic sense:

P21: Emm, being together I suppose, sticking up for each other, yeah, yeah... covering up for each other I suppose, if one of us has got in trouble, one of them being drunk and having to sneak them into the house without mum and dad noticing, that kind of thing! So, I’d say teamwork really.... but equally with mum and dad, I’ve supported mum and dad quite a lot and they’ve supported us, so yeah I’d definitely say being a team... (name changer).

P100: ...spending time together and therefore having the memories, yeah, yeah... and I would say that for me the the... particularly the blood relationship is important, that whole blood is stronger than water kind of thing... (name changer)

There are various ways of ‘doing’ families (Morgan, 2011). However, in a time of rapid social change, a variety of family forms are proliferating and my participants mention their awareness of these forms of family becoming more normal and everyday. Participant 113 (name changer) wrote of how ‘society can deal with different names now’ and P85 (name retainer) notes that there are now ‘three names in my family’ and that she expects sharing a name to become less common. This kind of comment is then juxtaposed with the desire by just over half of my participants to agree that name sharing in families is either ‘very important’ or ‘quite important’, and that most women in my study did change their name (75 out of 102) (see Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7. To what extent participants think it is important to share one name within a family (percentage)

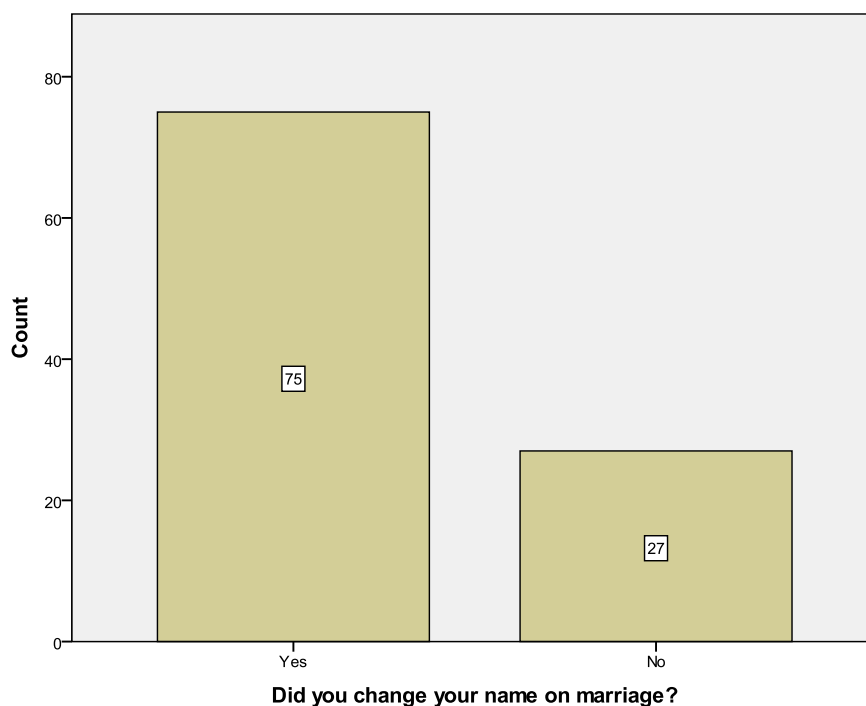


The narrative of proliferating family forms has also given form to the narrative of the decline in sharing one name and the importance of this idea for an idea of family. Yet participants continue in large numbers to adhere to the norm. The numbers and the qualitative data do not correspond in my study, and the question is why?

Klett-Davis claims that family forms are indeed proliferating. She gives evidence of a great deal of research pointing towards this fact, and says:

Children are routinely raised in ‘complicated’ family structures. Families now include a mix of cohabiting parents, stepfamilies, single-parent families, those in civil partnerships and those in living apart together (LAT) relationships as well as the ‘traditional’ nuclear formation (Klett-Davis, 2012: 122).

Figure 8. Whether participants changed names on marriage (count)



New Labour pushed for more recognition of other family forms, not just the heterosexual couple with children (Klett-Davis, 2012: 123), but right-wing stories of the ‘state-dependent single mother’ are common place (Grice, 16th July 2013): social anxieties are displaced onto scapegoat groups, and the gendered, sexualised, classed, and arguably raced figure of the single mother is an easy target. Instead of investigating the poverty of single mothers in terms of gender or other social positionings, women are urged instead to marry and maintain their children within wedlock. Tensions over new family forms are visible.

Participants in my study reflect this tension. Participant 27 (name changer) noted that she had worked with families with several names due to the break-up of the stable married nuclear unit and that the family link was ‘lost a bit’. Participant 36 (name changer) felt children would be singled out if they did not share a name with their parents and believes the way to show you are a unit is to share a name – for her varied forms of family, symbolised by various names, are a problem, certainly for children who may be asked to account for the situation. This last participant’s observation does not suggest an ease with new family forms – if people (in her comment, children) must routinely justify their behaviour there is no sense of the normalisation of diversity. Also, to refer back to the data

I provided earlier on sharing one name within a family, my participants in general were happy to allow ‘others’ to do as they wished, but ‘for themselves’ wanted to change names and share a name within the family unit. The divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’ was clear.

Names and family forms are intimately connected and the two are often conflated – names are even used as a shorthand to refer to varied family forms with, for example, participant 68 (name changer) wanting ‘everyone in my grown up family to have the same name as a sign of togetherness’; she felt she did not belong anywhere in her ‘split family’ as a child as she did not share a name with everyone. Having a different name from other family members was a painful experience for this participant as she was often called to account for it and therefore had to experience the pain of her parents’ separation every time she did so. Her different name was both painful in itself– as it symbolised her feeling of not belonging – and because it was connected to the wider pain of her parental break-up. As sharing a name is such a significant part of displaying the ‘correct’ family form in Britain, it is unsurprising that the two are connected so intimately. It is a means of ‘doing’ and displaying family (Morgan, 2011).

Fryer and Levitt(2004: 801), discussing the importance of race and *first* names, argue that names are in many ways the symbols of underlying systems of unequal relations and oppression. They become significant in varying ways related to time, historical period, and socio-political conditions (Fryer and Levitt, 2004). However, the system is more dynamic even than this– names can recreate ideas and practices in a dialectic process.

Using this line of argument I claim that what is considered the ‘proper’ family form – heterosexual, married, nuclear unit – at this historical moment is reflected in the sharing of one name. Though family forms may be changing and diversifying there remains a certain unease around this change. Names can therefore connote the acceptable and respectable family form, which is considered ideal. In this way participants’ attempts to create biology through the social connection of names makes sense: biological relationships, as we understand them in Britain, are the ideal family relationship and attempting to construct them out of names is an attempt to claim this ideal. Sharing one name as a norm also feeds into the unease with new family forms – people are discouraged from innovation by the

pressure of the norm. They are also discouraged because of the stigma which remains a part of not adhering to the norm.

7.3 Respectability and the Naming Norm

Skeggs argues that heterosexuality is associated with respectability, and that certain types of positioning are therefore distanced from this normative form of sexuality: ‘Black and White working-class women *and* the lesbian’ (2001: 118. Emphasis in original). Therefore equal access to heterosexuality’s respectability is not possible: some women will find they must work to maintain it even if they define as heterosexual. This is equally true for those who transgress the norms of heterosexuality, though those with class and racial privilege could, arguably, cushion themselves from the stigma to a greater extent than those without such privilege. As Skeggs notes, heterosexuality

is where subject positions such as mother, wife, girlfriend, are defined and institutionalized through a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms, a ritualized production, into which we are implicated on a daily basis... Heterosexuality is continually given legitimacy through its repetition and through the silencing and delegitimation of any alternatives (2001: 120).

The naming norm in Britain acts as one of these repeated norms, itself part of the larger ritual of marriage – the taking part in which, my data show, remains the most acceptable route as an adult looking to commit to another person and, especially, to raise children. When women do not follow this norm their respectability can be called into question, as will be outlined below.

Participant 76 shows how tension arises when, on the one hand not being married or having children outside marriage is believed by the participant not to be a moral problem, but that on the other hand stigma continues to exist and pressure to conform is felt. She said she felt ‘no compunction’ at having had her child without being married and that her husband did not feel strongly about marriage either, but that it was such a ‘step change’ for her life course (becoming a mother at 39) that she felt she *should* get married. There was no other explanation for this than the feeling that such life changes should prompt marriage. It appeared that societal pressure was impacting upon this participant and, whatever her political views and her rational level of feeling that conforming to social norms was not important to her, she felt it necessary to marry.

Interestingly, this participant describes her actions in terms of her child – *her child* wanting her to marry and, eventually, all use one name for the sake of schools. She said that if her child had wanted her to legally change her name, she would have. However, her child was very small and unable to make such decisions. Instead it would appear that social norms of heterosexual respectability came into play for this participant on the birth of her child: she therefore married and used her husband's name while her child was small.

Participants who retained names experienced reactions which questioned their feminine respectability, in terms of acting as a wife 'should', through questioning their love and commitment, as has been discussed in the previous chapter. However, there were further examples of questioning respectability coming from those working within institutions. This questioning was often more subtle and shows the ingrained nature of connecting one-name-one-family with respectability:

I was told on coming to the UK that it would be easier for benefits etc. if I have his name. (P63: name retainer)

[Using his name at school and for the NHS] to save confusion and to prove my kids are mine. (P84: name retainer)

I will use his name in [schools/doctors] if there are emergencies and they have assumed, as it's easier for them. (P96: name retainer)

The confusion – and sometime pointed remarks – that participants encountered encouraging them to share names with their husband acted as reminders that, in the UK, one name is normal and understandable. It is also, of course, related to the fact that children are generally given the father's last name. The *intelligibility* of families depends on adherence to this norm. Stepping outside the norm requires explanation and can engender judgement. Women are questioned as to their relation to their children and their lives are made difficult by this institutional confusion. This was more noticeably a problem for women with children who did not share names: it was the lack of a clear social connection between mothers and children that was especially problematic.

The mother-child relationship is made intelligible by the shared name. I would argue, in fact, that the bureaucratic system has been set up in response to this practice as our society has become more dependent on paperwork. This has cemented the norm into daily life at a

time in which the norm could in fact begin to be challenged. Not to fit into these bureaucratic boxes is to be a problem, both in the sense of causing the authorities problems in registering a person and in the sense of being unusual and therefore difficult. Respectability comes from *not* being unusual and difficult and from fitting into bureaucratic forms. It would appear that the institutions of modernity, and the associated bureaucracy, regulate what naming decision many women make, how they then form a sense of self from that name, and how gendered power relations are (re)created via these practices.

The reality of this questioning and the worry over it certainly push women who might otherwise keep their own name or who have been ambivalent about the naming norm to change names. Participant 30 (name changer) is an example of a person who has come through this particular process of decision making.³⁶ She noted that her baby had been the 'catalyst' for this change, as one name 'creates more of a family' and it was important the three of them be united. She worried over the change because 'I'm a very independent person and want to keep my own name as it is my identity from before marriage', but also wants to 'feel I am starting my own family and feel that having my husband's name will help with this.'

Her OFN had close and emotional connections to her family in the north of England who had 'influenced everything I am today'. As a sign of this feeling of independence and 'identity before marriage' she is not going to change her name at work: 'I've made a reputation for myself... it's a major part of my life and very important to me' (this separation of work and home will be discussed further in the next chapter). Nevertheless, having a baby has meant that this name could no longer encompass her identity once she became pregnant: somehow her own name was now inadequate and her husband's name would be able to give her a sense of 'starting my own family'. Becoming a mother and being recognised as such was significant enough for participant 30, and others like her, to change names despite an earlier decision to retain.

Participant 51 (name retainer) suggested that 'children not having their father's surname is a more unusual decision than a woman not taking her husband's name' and, from the

³⁶ At the time of taking part in the research P30 had not finalised her name change, but she was in the process of completing it and made her desire to be considered a 'name changer' clear.

evidence in my study, she seems to be correct as eleven of the eighteen name retaining women who had children had given their children their husband's name. Five women in my sample did however, give their children their name, and two double-barrelled (see Figure 10). P3 (name retainer) noted giving her children her name 'especially because I was unmarried', though she had always wanted to give her children her name. It is clear that, though the decision remains unusual, it is not impossible by any means to do new things with the names of children. This does not, however, make the reactions many women experience from loved ones and institutions less meaningful and the fact that those retainers considering having children made comments such as 'having children might make me reconsider my decision – or we'd both have to' (P101: name retainer) shows the one-name-one-family idea has an imaginative and emotional pull.

Though most participant accounts implicitly discussed respectability, participant 28 (name changer) *explicitly* mentions respectability. She had given birth to her first baby before she married and spoke of the stigma surrounding that event and how it ensured her name change: 'I wanted to be accepted and respectable.' At the time of her marriage (1970s) she said that name changing was 'normal and expected' and that she gave it no real thought. She said that in the 1970s there was little discussion of this and 'a great deal of stigma attached to women who had a different name to their husband or her children'. Marriage and name changing ensured her respectability: following the norms and 'making up' for her past 'unacceptable' behaviour helped her to regain a sense of stability and respect from those around her.

Participant 28 did marry in the 1970s and the stigma of a child born before marriage was greater at this point in time. However, that stigma has not completely disappeared. The most respectable and normalised course of action remains marriage (and name changing) before having children. My participants, whatever their decision, generally wanted to be married before starting a family:

Emm, well to be honest we probably would have been quite happy just continuing to live together but we've both come from stable families so, em, felt that, em, marriage was quite important really and we wanted children and although I wouldn't have minded not being married when we had children our preference was to be married so I guess that's why we did that. It was the catalyst to start thinking about it, it wasn't the only reason, but if we're thinking of having children then

hold on we need to start thinking about getting married as well... (P24: interview data; name changer)

The justifications for this action were usually around stability for children. Marriage is connected with stability and responsibility (Askham, 1984) and provides a certain framework of care, resources, and public recognition from which it is socially acceptable to build a family. Despite other possibilities for family formations in which one could raise a family, participants preferred to marry and raise their children within this setting: the importance of traditional heterosexual rituals remains in place. The significance of stigma and respectability also remains in evidence: transgressing the norms of heterosexuality is an act of distancing oneself from its respectability.

The respectability of heterosexuality rests on a number of things: ideas of sexuality generally as ‘uncivilised’ and needing to be rigidly policed, displays of independence as unfeminine, the othering of those who transgress norms, and the social shame placed upon acts and agents of transgression. Skeggs (2001: 121) has claimed that displaying any form of sexuality was equated with being ‘other’ through colonial discourses about the ‘uncivilised’, ‘base’ races in colonised countries – nature, lack of cleanliness, and base instincts being set up in opposition to civilisation, cleanliness, and restraint. Skeggs argues that white working-class women were also connected with this ‘impurity’ and sexuality in opposition to white middle-class women, during the nineteenth century (2001: 122).

Though her argument holds weight, from this investigation it can be argued that the desire to be respectable and removed from conceptions of ‘base’ sexuality is also important for middle-class women. Middle-class women are also positioned on the negative side of such binaries as listed above due to their being women. They are not cushioned from the need to be perceived as respectable by their class position – they instead must look to maintain strict codes and appearances of respectability so as not to lose this (class) privilege. To be seen to be sexual remains a difficult position for middle-class women to inhabit, as much as working-class women. My sample is, in the main, middle class: they are highly educated and in professional jobs. Yet their class privilege does not enable them to ignore codes of respectable femininity. The intersections of gender and class here are highly important. Nearly three-quarters of my sample follow the normative rules of

heterosexuality to remain connected to its respectability and to maintain their social and gender honour (Sanchez Taylor, 2006: 44).

7.4 Transgression and Accounting

The reactions against name retainers show that not following the norm *is* a transgression. It is a move away from the social and gender order, with masculine identity and authority challenged and the make-up of families made almost unintelligible. It calls into question how we as a society understand ‘proper’ femininity through ‘respectable’ marriage and, usually, motherhood. Without the social link of the name a great deal more work has to be done to establish relations and categorise people: how are they related? Are they ‘respectable’? The stigma (and shame) of having family formations outside the nuclear unit and not all sharing one name is certainly a great deal less significant now than in the past. However, I would claim that, judging by the reactions against name retainers and the continued adherence to name changing and sharing, it continues to exist and is connected with the display of unrespectable heterosexuality which transgresses norms, those ‘quiet subversions’ (Beasley et al., 2012: 67) discussed in the previous chapter.

Transgression is, as Eli Adams argues,

not a radically alien or “unimaginable” phenomenon, but is a constant, central presence of our imaginative lives whose authority can be felt in the intensity with which it is resisted and regulated both by individual agents and by larger social and discursive structures (1993: 208).

The reactions from family and friends, as well as institutional bodies, to name retaining reflects the number of comments from the fifteen participants who felt that life would just be easier with a shared name – and generally felt they had been proved correct:

I just didn't want to be asked why all the time. (P35: name changer)

Life is more straight forward and less confusing in financial, legal, and social terms. (P44: name changer)

It requires less explanation. (P71: name changer)

Heritage has argued that norms only '*tend* to bind' and that agents will be aware of their parameters; those who depart from the norm are those willing to 'stand or forestall the consequences' (Heritage, 2008: 118). The above quoted participants show how difficult it can be to contemplate 'standing' or 'forestalling' the name changing norm. They do not want to be held to account. As Mills noted (1940: 907) 'acts often will be abandoned if no reason can be found that others will accept' and participant 74(name changer) shows this thought process in action: 'no compelling reason not to [change names]'

Certain vocabularies of motive around institutional situations are acceptable: as described in the previous chapter, love is presently one such vocabulary in the institution of marriage. Other vocabularies are less acceptable or unacceptable, and when an agent uses any such set of vocabularies they are 'influencing others' and themselves (Mills, 1940: 907) as to what accounts and actions are in/appropriate. These vocabularies are a form of social control, upheld as 'normal' by the generalised other or society (Mills, 1940: 908). Whenever a person has to account, and to whomever, the person must be able to make a coherent stories based on rules, expectations, and final action.

Garfinkel took this accounting further than Mills, arguing that rules are not seen as organising principles in themselves but that they require to be meaningful to social actors; social actors must be able to find the action and the end point of the rule socially meaningful and intelligible (see Rawls, 2002: 43). As Garfinkel (2002: 172) argued, social order must be accountable and actors must be able to use appropriate vocabularies to make it so. Scott and Lyman (1968: 62) have argued that 'deviant' situations are those which need accounting for. Breaking away from the naming norm is to act 'deviantly' and certainly requires more frequent and considered accounting than following the norm.

Following the norm is, however, to have made sense of rules, expectations, and actions. Name changers must be able to understand the connection of names with intelligible families, for example, and be able to act on that to account for their conduct if necessary. The major difference is that following the norm uses a vocabulary which continues to be widely accepted and is therefore often unspoken. Silences speak, in fact, about power (see chapter 5). In this way, Scott and Lyman's discussion (1968) of deviancy and accounts still stands: the 'deviant' are called to account far more often and more deeply than the

'normal'. As P70 (a name retainer) states it is hard to make other people understand you 'belong to each other!' For her, it is other people who make names problematic. The actions of name retainers are looked at as individual and personal steps, often, as P70 shows, problematic ones which require an explanation, while the norm is allowed to fade into a collective background and goes relatively unquestioned; the justifications unspoken and often mysterious and intangible.

The entirely constructed ease which sharing a name provides for families – after all, other countries function well without this norm – and the reactions to even the suggestion of name retaining correspond to Eli Adams' (1993) description of the intensity of resistance to anything other than the norm. The transgression against normative heterosexuality and against the domination of masculinity will create a level of stigma. Hence, to avoid this stigma and to be properly feminine women will hold to the norms of marriage and naming practices. Those women who do not feel changing names corresponds to 'proper' femininity, or feel less invested in this idea, will be prepared to subvert norms and transgress ideas of 'respectability'. This is very much connected to what participants can even imagine as being possible and this is in part connected with the time in the twentieth or twenty-first century in which they grew up and married.

As Eli Adams says (1993: 208), transgression is a part of our *imaginative* lives – we have to be able to imagine the transgression to perform it. When the norm was so deeply ingrained, women could not have imagined even the possibility of transgressing it. In many ways then, transgression can be thought of as defining boundaries by pointing out their contours: 'transgression is a component of the rule' (Jenks, 2003: 7). Jenks argues that transgression can be looked upon as a productive force for change, but that, nevertheless, for this to be possible we must 'know the collective orders, to recognise the edges in order to transcend them' (2003: 7). Change in this area is slow, but it is true that the ability to think of and enact such a transgression has allowed for the opening up of discussion around the naming norm and the kind of family forms it indicates as being acceptable.

As Goffman (1990 [1963]: 9) indicates, stigma is attached to those are not fully socially accepted. The stigma around families which do not share one name, though far less than in

previous decades, continues to exist: as the participant quotes above show, the norm of one name in a family remains strong and the idea of not following this would bring questioning of family relationships and authenticity as a couple and also for some as a mother. In comparing the Japanese situation³⁷ with that of Western countries without laws on names, Ueno argues that even when no laws exist to force couples to share names, the mother's surname retains the stigma of having been born out of wedlock (Ueno, 2009: 204). The patrilineal conventions of family surname usage and the practices by which last names are passed on, ensure that men's names have a higher (moral) status than women's. More varied and complex family forms would suggest that all children born from the same mother should take her surname, rather than women and children being expected to take on the name of the appropriate (husband-father) man (Ueno, 2009: 204), but there is little call for this in a society which continues to see women's names as inferior (Ueno, 2009: 204).

The need to justify one's actions and not follow rules of femininity and respectable heterosexuality can be enough to put women off transgressing rules. As participant 35 (name changer) stated: 'If the other options were more common I might have chosen one of them' – to put oneself outside the norm can be a burden not worth shouldering.

7.5 The Place of Children in Naming Decisions

The importance of mother-child relationships in accepting the norm have been briefly touched on, but this was such a significant theme for women considering name changing that it deserves closer attention. Women generally looked to their future and familial identity when name changing – they considered the future children they may have and thought very positively about them sharing a name. One name would bind them together as a family unit, giving them all a sense of camaraderie and of being part of a team, and children would feel secure and safe in the knowledge they were a part of a family. Some women felt, from their own childhood experiences, that sharing a name was significant to a child's development in terms of feeling safe and happy. Naming children with anything other than one name was generally deemed too complicated for the child and others to cope with – and indeed, it seems that more than one name in a family *is* too hard for many

³⁷In Japan married couples must legally share one name. This usually means the man's name is shared. There are on-going discussions in Japan about this law.

institutions to cope with, though not necessarily the children themselves, as will be seen below.

The pull of one name in a family – a ‘family name’ – is very strong (see Figure 7).

Women discussed wanting to share a name with their children, changing names after their children were born, or loving the feeling of pride they had in knowing they shared a name with their children:

Felt happier with my name as time went on, but especially once my children were born. (P9: name changer)

I only changed my name after having children. I wanted a ‘family name’. (P11: name changer)

I wanted to share my name with future children. (P19: name changer)

It seems one-name-one-family continues to be an important public symbol of what makes a family. Finch has argued that names ‘map family connections’ and ‘constitute... family relationships’ (Finch, 2008: 710). It is also seen as something which helps children to feel secure enough to build up a sense of themselves within the family:

‘[Helps children] understand who they are and where they come from. [It gives them] security and self-esteem’. (P61: name changer)

[The children] feel a sense of identity from it. (P83: name changer)

In fact, many women felt so strongly about this they would retain their husband’s name even after divorce to provide that security and continuity for their children. P23 (name changer) felt sharing a name was ‘right’ so that her ‘children felt we were all a family’ and security was to be maintained by her keeping her name after divorce, while P26 (name changer) kept her husband’s name for her son’s sake, despite making her feel she is still a part of her husband and his life. This is another example of women putting the feelings of others before themselves (Woodhouse, 1988: 380) – here the security of their children must come before their own desires and wishes, however detrimental this may be to the woman’s own health (Day Sclater, 1999: 180).

The idea that children do feel a sense of security from the shared name can be seen in some descriptions by the women of their own childhoods. Participant 31 (name changer) did not want her own children to face the questions she did about why she had a different name from the rest of her family; P68 (name changer) came from a “split” family as a child’ and ‘wanted everyone in my grown up family to have the same name as a sign of togetherness.’

Some participants expressed annoyance at the idea of children having to ‘explain the unexplainable’ (P33: name changer) if parents did not share a name. Participant 33 continued with the idea that children like to belong and fit in and that it is unfair on them to be expected to face questioning about their name. This argument assumes the norm of women changing their name is correct and unchangeable, and that women who decide to step outside of it are putting their children in a highly uncomfortable position. It is an argument which continues the stigma attached to name retaining. It suggests that women who truly care about their children would not put them in this position for the sake of their own interests, playing on cultural ideas of motherhood and sacrifice. These arguments are a powerful statement in defence of the importance of belonging to sense of identity – both individual and familial.

7.5.1 Belonging

There was a sense of desire to belong to a new family unit of one’s own making. P18 (name changer) spoke of one name making you feel you belong somewhere and P120 (name changer) noted that she likes and enjoys ‘belonging to a family’ and is very happy to be part of the strong family heritage which her name symbolises. Other participants reflected upon the move from their birth family to that of their own family. P31 (name changer) felt she did not belong in her original family and puts this in part down to names and what they symbolised for her. Her father left when she was young and had no contact with her after that; when her mother remarried she was left with her biological father’s name and was the only one to have it. She felt left out and wanted to rid herself of it and be a part of her own family, all sharing a name. She considers her original family name merely the name of the man her mother was married to at the time of her birth and nothing more. For other participants this sense of movement from the single to the married state brought about some sense of separation from their parents, siblings, and other birth family because they had moved into a new couple identity, which name changing reflects.

Belonging can be utilised ‘as a concept that allows for a person-centred, dynamic and complex approach... that understands people as active participants in society’ (Vanessa May, 2011: 367). Belonging can be used to examine the interrelatedness of self and society (Vanessa May, 2011: 367) and has been defined as ‘a sense of ease with oneself and one’s surroundings’ (Vanessa May, 2011: 368), central to identity (Weeks, 1990). It is about recognising what an individual has in common with some and what separates that individual from others. In a state of belonging we can be completely ourselves (Vanessa May, 2011: 368). Belonging connects the individual and the social, and this is significant because

our sense of self is constructed in a relational process in our interactions with other people as well as in relation to more abstract notions of collectively held social norms, values and customs (Vanessa May, 2011: 368).

Shared understandings of the group, who makes it up and how people within it behave can be claims to belonging: this certainly suggests an idea of family. The question remains, however, where these collective rules come from. The decisions about who ‘we’ are, are usually made by those with power and therefore belonging has its own power hierarchy (Vanessa May, 2011: 369). Vanessa May provides a cultural example of ethnic minorities in Britain having their claims to be British rejected (2011: 369) and in my own research I found that the idea of belonging may be shattered when decision making around identity is taken out of the hands of the individual: the women who had not been consulted about their thoughts on their own name as children were the ones left confused and unhappy.

Belonging is a political and collective concept, as well as an individual one; it is emotional for someone wanting to feel at home and political when trying to claim ‘space and... recognition’ (Vanessa May, 2011: 369). If individuals are not involved at every level of decision making around their own identities and sense of belonging they may come to feel insecure.

Rowe argues that any sense of belonging is dependent upon positioning, saying ‘[I]ikewise our belongings are conditioned by our bodies and where they are placed on the globe’ (Rowe, 2005: 36). The sense of belonging engendered by the sharing of a name with other family members is therefore entirely culturally dependent: people in other countries will have other ways of showing their inclusion in a group and will be dependent on them for a

sense of security and feeling at home. Rowe (2005: 16) argues that love is conditioned by these positionings: what and who we value is a part of where we live and the fact displays of love are policed along cultural lines has been shown in the previous chapter.

The relational nature of selfhood is built up within conditions of racialised, sexualised, gendered (and so on) positionings – this includes who we desire to set up a family with, the kinds of people we may want our relatives to be, and the ideas we will pass onto children. Such ideas include the idea of belonging to a group like the one we have been born into. Families are enmeshed in webs of power. Sharing a name therefore encircles a family grouping, bordering off their particular position and displaying to the world their sites of (or lack of) privilege. However, this is an entirely constructed feeling and as such relates back to the feeling work mentioned in the previous chapter: there are socially scripted ways of coming to feel a sense of belonging, which is, in itself, a socially constructed feeling.

Belonging is a part of the everyday when it works, so ‘to belong’ is really to not have to consider it (Vanessa May, 2011: 370). It is when we become aware of going about our daily routine and feeling a sense of unease and/or disruption, that we feel a lack of belonging (Vanessa May, 2011: 370). Vanessa May contrasts this concept with Bourdieu’s *habitus*: Bourdieu’s concept shows how people feel a place is ‘natural’ through habit and use, whereas the concept of belonging allows theorists to understand how and why people can be in an everyday and familiar setting but feel estranged from it (Vanessa May, 2011: 370). Belonging is ‘bound up with being able to act in a socially significant manner that is recognized by others’ (Vanessa May, 2011: 372), and one name in a family continues to be a socially recognised norm.

However, belonging was not discussed as a wholly good thing by participants, and some questioned the ability of name sharing to create a sense of belonging at all. Participant 27 (name changer) wondered whether a mother keeping her own name could actually be ‘a positive influence on children’s abilities to maintain their individual identities.’ However, she still maintained that, within the system we have today, sharing a name in a family is important. The question arises as to what children themselves think.

Hayley Davies' work on what children think of their family name shows that children are aware there is often more than one name within a family – many of them live in step-families or have half-brothers and sisters – and that different surnames do not necessarily mean 'not family'; however it also shows that children still subscribe to the assumption that women will change their names on marriage and children share the names of their fathers (Davies, 2011: 559). This assumption remained in place despite even their own name having been changed over the course of their life due to a mother's remarriage (Davies, 2011: 559). The children participating in Davies' study show the tension between the norm of one name signifying a family and their knowledge of the fact families are now more fluid: they cite other factors such as laughing and talking easily with one another as a sign of family which can override the lack of a shared name (Davies, 2011: 561). However their interactions show that they expect 'full' siblings to share a surname, but understand that those who do not share a surname may still be part of a wider family or kin network (Davies, 2011: 561).

The children understood the importance of a shared surname and deployed it to distinguish family from non-family, but they were aware that it was not the only signifier of familial relationships and that its use was often complicated by the complex make-up of families. Generally though, they subscribed to the norm of name changing by women and sharing a name with their biological fathers. This research shows that children have a nuanced understanding of names and family connections/relationships – the (adult) idea that children need to share a name with parents and siblings to feel part of the family is not true in any straightforward sense. Children, as Davies' argues (2011: 555), remain the recipients of adult decisions around their names in most cases, and it is the parents who are investing the most in naming their child, what that name represents, and who they are visibly connected to through that name. However, children are a part of the wider patriarchal framework and re-iterate the assumptions of patronymic naming practices and the heterosexual family imaginary, whatever the fluid situation of their own families (2011: 567): *real* – in the sense of 'fully biological' – families should be connected by name. The place of children in the decisions of the women in my study was shaped by their own experiences as children, their ideas about belonging, and thoughts about the necessity of being intelligible as family in the public domain, as understood in British

society. To reiterate, others—including the generalised other or society – play a large part in ideas of family and belonging.

I will now move on to look in more detail at the ideas of name retainers surrounding the shared name and ideas of family.

7.6 The Significance of One Name for Name Retainers

For women who retained their name the statistics show a large number of this group feeling it is neither important nor unimportant to share a name (see Table 5).

Table 5. Whether it is important to share names by naming decision (count)

Do you feel it is important for families to share one name? * Did you change your name on marriage?

Crosstabulation

Count		Did you change your name on marriage?		Total
		Yes	No	
Do you feel it is important for families to share one name?	Yes, very important	16	1	17
	Quite important	32	4	36
	Neither important nor unimportant	18	12	30
	Quite unimportant	5	3	8
	Unimportant	4	7	11
Total		75	27	102

When looking at the written comments in conjunction with the numerical data it becomes clear that many of these women were struggling with the tension between their own ideology and the belief that sharing a name can bring a family together – the patrilineal norm. Participant 5 (name retainer) said that ideologically she would say sharing is not important, however she can understand it practically. Participant 76 (name retainer) said that it is quite important to share a name and she feels her child was affected by this once she started nursery. A small number of participants noted that not sharing a name with their husband could become more of a problem for them if/when they have children (see

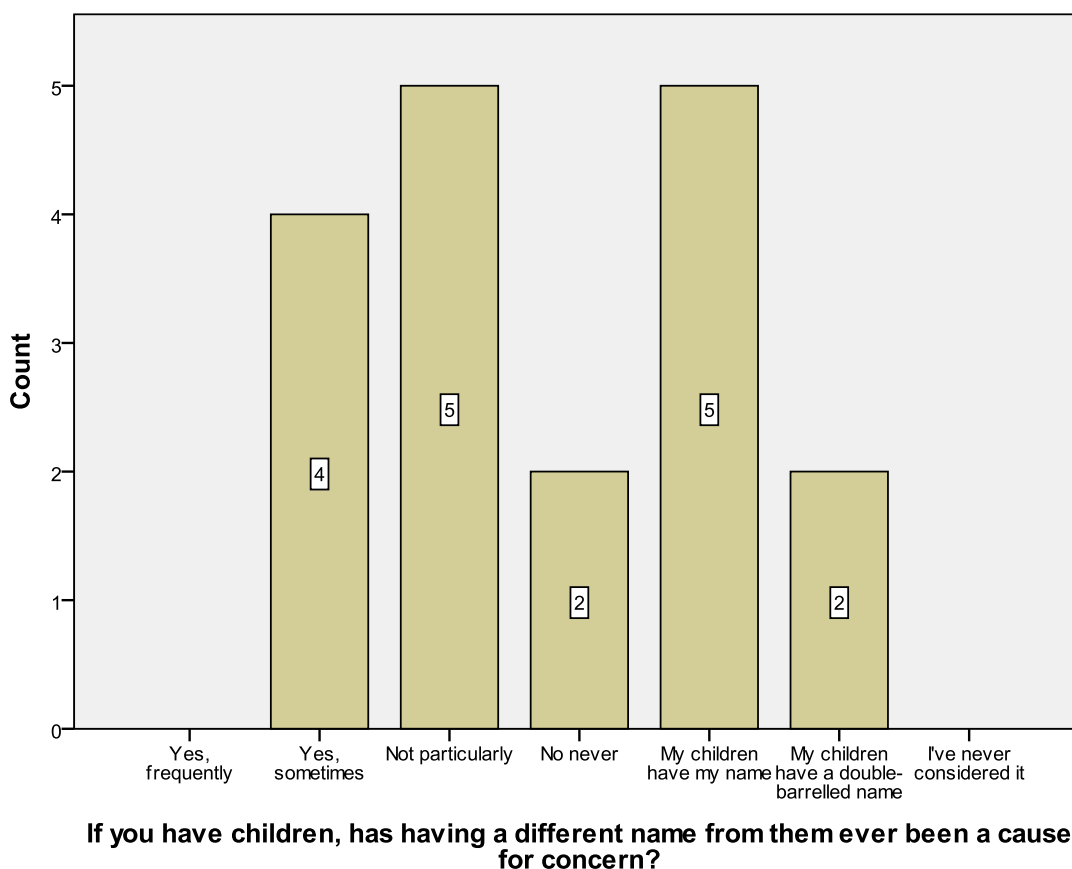
Figure 9). As participant 3 stated, it is often the event of having a child which pushes women to change names even if they are not keen to do so for themselves. It seems that the norm is strong enough to make even those women who have decided to retain their names agree it is useful in promoting a sense of togetherness, belonging, and making things easier for those ‘others’ outside.

Figure 9. Childless name retainers considering having children in the future and impact on their naming choice (count)



The desire to look like a close family who belong to one another in a symbolic and public way causes tension in the thoughts of these name retaining participants, though of course has not yet brought the majority of them to change names. The reality though that their decision is often ignored in the face of finding a family name by which to call the entire unit shows how the norm can be upheld by other people in spite of the woman making a less usual decision. Her individuality is subsumed under the wider group identity, which stems from the husband/father.

Figure 10. How name retainers felt about not sharing a name with their children (including count for those who do share and double-barrelled children’s names) (count)³⁸



There were other women though who found sharing a name to be completely unimportant and even stressed their own experiences as displaying this, either in their own families now or when they were children. Participant 48 (name retainer) sums this up neatly saying ‘[families are] collectivities of people with all sorts of relationships.’ She grew up with a brother with a different name and with foster siblings and truly believes what you call yourself ‘shouldn’t matter a jot’. It is only important to ‘feel your own name, whatever that might be.’ As P48 notes it is often other people who make this important. Only participant 16 expressed her certainty that sharing was entirely necessary and highly important, but she was in the position of her husband having taken her name and her children having that name as well (see Chapter 8). She was the only participant to express

³⁸ The pilot study I carried out suggested women would be more likely to give their children their husband’s name even if they retained their OFN themselves, hence the wording of this question.

such certainty over the norm, though her situation was actually very unusual despite following the accepted and expected pattern of everyone in a family sharing one name.

Name retaining participants were far more likely to have given children their name or a double-barrelled name than the women who changed their names (see Figure 10 for what name retainers did with their children's last names)³⁹. For participant 12 (name retainer) it was important that her children have her name 'since I did all the work in producing them.' The couple double-barrelled their surnames as her husband wanted the children to have his name too. She feels this is not ideal and believes that children should have their mother's name as 'fathers often contribute so little, or are off the scene.' She argues that it makes 'little sense for children to have their fathers' names'. One woman had double-barrelled her child's name but later her husband said he felt it would make their daughter think he did not recognise her so they changed their daughter's last name to only her father's. Double-barrelling remains an uneasy option for some: it seems that for many it can portray a lack of togetherness and, in this case, a lack of love and recognition, despite the fact it would appear to be the most inclusive option. I discuss double-barrelling further in chapter 8.

It could be argued that name retaining participants are more individualistic than their name changing counterparts: they look to their own set of desires and their own future before considering that of a family or wider group identity. However I would argue that these women had often considered future children and a family identity and their part in the creation of this unit. They felt either that they obviously biologically and in a very primal and basic way 'owned' and were connected to their children so did not need to share names; or they showed their connection through the social link of sharing *their* name with their child; or they double-barrelled to give a more inclusive and balanced name to reflect the roots their child had, and in so doing they were actually considering a wider, family identity and inclusivity for their child. The fact many of the name retainers (9 out of 27) did not have children could actually be down to age, and most of them noted thinking about having children in the future – and this, as noted, could be a point at which they

³⁹ The name retaining participants who gave their children their husband's name in the main seemed unconcerned about this as they felt it was obvious they 'owned' their children (biologically), but were irritated by increasingly being called by their husband's name themselves once children came along.

reconsider their naming decision. Children and the importance of being seen and understood as a family clearly have a significant impact on women's naming decisions.

7.7 Conclusion: Collective and Individual Identities

There are complex relationships between ideas of self and genealogy. The maintenance of a collective, familial identity proved an important theme for participants: the feeling of belonging to a unit, pulled together and made intelligible to others by the name. For participants who have retained their original family name this lack of intelligibility could be felt as a problem and one which could result in reconsidering naming decisions at a later date. Children were particularly important to this sense of collective, familial identity and were a significant reason for women changing names after marriage. As children are still commonly given their father's name whatever the mother's decision about her own name, the forceful norm that mothers and children should share a name came to bear on these participants.

On an individual level, participants thought about their own feelings as children towards names, and their own thoughts around biological and social family ties. However, these individual thoughts and feelings were always tied into a wider collective idea(l) of what family is or should be. Participants used individual experiences as children to create a different kind of collective family identity as adults; they expressed their own biological and/or social ideas of families through names, marking out the wider collective and their place within it. This secondary placing of individual identity applies most particularly to the name changing participants. Name retaining participants achieved a more individual place within their family of marriage using their name. However, they still discussed their important connections to their birth family and their children. If mother and child did not share a name this could be a cause for concern and some used their husband's name unofficially at schools and doctors' surgeries to be intelligible as the mother of their children to the staff there, as well as to minimise their own anxiety at not being seen as the mother figure. Collective, familial identity was important to the majority of participants and naming decisions expressed this, be this connection to the original family, the new family created after marriage, or both.

The name links people to others. It acts as a connection between private and public worlds. It can express ideas of biology, social connection, love, and care, or be an uncomfortable reminder of relationships lost or meaningless. The name cannot stand alone, but is made important by what it represents – and what it represents, and the significance of this, are socially constructed. It is a part of our social fabric in terms of how we organise and understand those around us. It is brought to life by real relationships and the important, meaningful connections it represents and as such is significant to selfhood, the theme for the next and final chapter. As P113 (name changer) states:

My name does represent me but only because I've built up friendships and relationships with people who identify me with emotional feelings and moments in their lives. My name identifies me in an ID sense but I've made [my] name live and breathe and exist in the wider world by using it.

Chapter 8 Self and Society

As Brown has argued ‘Few topics engage our attention more completely than the way we think and feel about ourselves’ (Brown, 1998: vii). The self is a point at which ‘questions of ontology, knowledge, and value’ intersect (Meyers, 1997: 1). Selfhood matters: both how one perceives oneself and how one is perceived by others. Most significantly, as Meyers argues, how individuals think of and narrate the story of their self impacts on their wider perspective on the world, ‘opening up social, intellectual, and aesthetic possibilities and concomitantly limiting imagination and action’ (Meyers, 1997: 1). Identity is complex and made up of a myriad of intersecting strands including gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality, and can be related to both the local and wider social situation (Rahman and Jackson, 2010: 156). Identity is about ‘who we are and who we perceive others to be’ (Rahman and Jackson, 2010: 156), but does not encompass all the things selfhood can, including ‘emotions and desires, or personal attributes... which do not necessarily give rise to enduring identity labels’. There is a slight difference in these terms and to what they refer; here I will use them to maintain the distinction as outlined by Rahman and Jackson. The self is social, influenced by the politics and socio-economic position of society in general and the self’s own personal circumstances (which are in turn related to one another): we are shaped by past and present selves and societies, and we look to mould selfhood in a particular way for the future.

Discussion of the self has continued since Plato, with the idea of the core self remaining significant in philosophy and in the cultural imagination. However, other ideas have arisen. Mead’s self, as most salient for my argument, is dependent on context and other people, their thoughts and opinions (1964: 218). The self in Mead’s theories is the social, dialectical, experiential self – constantly changing with the new experiences of the immediate ‘I’ – attempting to form itself into a kind of coherency (Mead, 1964). Mead is a modern theorist, but he is well aware of the contextual nature of the self; a self which is in process and changes with new experiences rather than being fixed.

Gergen goes further suggesting that it would be ‘much more fruitful to speak of multiple conceptions’ of the self (Gergen, 1971: 20). He argues that Western cultures still speak of and therefore imaginatively construct the self in terms of singularity when actually this is a misleading way of articulating the self, as we can construct ourselves differently in

different situations, sometimes using contradictory representations (1971: 19 – 20). The growth of the idea of fragmented selves, which can never be considered whole, Gergen situates within postmodernism, as the modern ideas of linearity and progress have been destabilised (Gergen, 1991).

Unlike Gergen, however, I do not argue that this historical period is ‘postmodernity’, preferring to consider it ‘late modernity’ (Giddens, 1996). The idea of fragmented selves has grown up *within* modernity. A non-unitary self with no single, fixed core can be traced at least to David Hume and the Scottish Enlightenment; Hume thought of the self in terms of ‘bundles of sensations, perceptions and thoughts piled on top of each other’ (Hood, 2012: ix). As modernity has progressed ideas of linearity and progress have been challenged and a singular description of self – though still having a strong imaginative pull on the articulation of (Western) selfhoods – is not the only narrative which can now be utilised and the fluid or fragmented self has gained considerable philosophical credence. Despite this, coherency when telling one’s life story remains significant.

The self has always been an important topic of discussion for feminists investigating the gendered social world, as this expression of personhood and autonomy has often been denied to women or repressed under gendered inequality. Feminist philosophers have entered the debates on what the self ‘is’. Chodorow (1981) argues for the relational self, cared for as a child by adults and building their sense of self from these initial interactions; Kristeva (1987) sees the self as discursively created and non-unitary, working between ‘feminine’ semiotics and ‘masculine’ symbol; and Butler (2004) charges that the self is illusionary, created from discourse and repeated actions and norms. Young (1997) has argued for the displacing of the masculinist narrative of the independent self, who needs no one to sustain it and would be shamed by asking for help. This self is really an illusion, Young argues (1997:124), and the interdependency of selves should be celebrated, legislated for, and used as a narrative for the construction of self in the imagination.

The tendency for feminist scholars of the self to move away from the philosophical tradition of the unitary and singular self can be seen as a part of the project of giving women voice to their experiences and not seeing these experiences and life tasks as secondary to the projects of men. The universalised singular self of classic philosophy has

been seen to hide a masculine identity and exclude the realities of women's lives. The depiction – and historical reality – of the dependency of women on men and the connection of women with caring for others and the messiness of everyday life (Gordon, 1990: 115) was used to argue for their lack of strong individual selfhood and to ensure they were kept out of political and other powerful positions within society (see, for example, Rousseau 1979). The gendered inequality and the material restrictions which flowed from this unequal organisation of society were not recognised by theorists of political philosophy, and were generally argued away as biological and 'natural' (Rousseau, 1979; see also Lister, 1997). Women's selves were to remain within certain strictures and roles and masculinist narratives of independent and linear selfhood were the only acceptable forms. It is therefore unsurprising that feminists have argued for the fluid and creative self when, they theorise, women's lives are more cyclical than men's with the events of childbirth, care work, and the attendant periods away from paid work (see Gordon, 1990).

Participants in this study reflect the complexity of selfhood in the many ways in which they engage with their own selves and the influences of those around them: names are a way of representing the self to the world as well as a symbol around which the person can build up their identity and therefore interact with the creation of a life narrative. The ways in which names are engaged with is gendered, in that women are *expected* to consider discarding one name at particular life turning points which impact heavily on selfhood. In this way, women engage with names and selfhood in a particular way – by this I do not mean to suggest all women engage fully and thoughtfully, as they may make an unthinking decision, but they will become aware of the consequences of their decision as it plays out in their life. It is also not to suggest that men do not engage with names, but that their engagements are not as *expected* by society or as necessarily connected with the life change of marriage. Naming practices are a 'technology of the self' (Foucault, 1988): they regulate behaviour, differentiate between men and women, and are a means of displaying certain qualities to others (loving, committed, adult, wifely, etc.).

What I will discuss in the following sections relates directly to what was presented in the literature review, which is the context for the empirical data presented and the jumping off point for the subsequent discussion. I will first analyse how participants think about their own self in both positive and negative terms, before revisiting the discussion of accounting

as a means to introduce the final section on the dialectic between self and society in the building and making sense of selfhood. The idea of a gendered identity emerging through thought processes around names and the decisions women take will be discussed.

8.1 The Self: Positive and Negative Aspects

In answer to the statement 'Names are important to a person's sense of identity', nearly 52 percent of survey respondents chose 'agree' and 31.4 percent choose 'strongly agree'. In the qualitative sections of the survey, the data showed that most had found that after marriage a period of re-adjustment was needed to re-think the self: that should not imply a purely negative re-adjustment but a process of taking on a new role and processing new reactions to this. Ultimately 73.5 percent of the 102 participants felt either 'positive' or 'quite positive' about the decision they had made with their name. However, the process of coming to this sense of positivity was not always straightforward; at pivotal life stages a person's selfhood comes under consideration: marriage is one such stage. I will now go on to discuss both the positive and the negative thoughts around marriage, wifehood and identity and analyse how the name is used to display positivity and/or reconcile tensions, so that, finally, nearly three-quarters of the women in my study came to be positive about their naming choice.

Feminist analyses of heterosexuality have shown how important this institution is to providing people with a sense of adult status (Hockey et al., 2007: 133). The rites and rituals of heterosexual lives remain important for a sense of order and stability in people's lives: they provide a framework for making meaning out of life events (Hockey et al., 2007: 137). Heterosexuality is 'a largely silent principle of social organisation' (Johnson, 2005: 5), but a significant one, and the highly valued and visible rite of marriage remains powerful. Marriage has always been an important rite of passage (Mansfield and Collard, 1988: 52) though for younger women with more educational, career, and financial options, the importance of marriage as a marker of adulthood may have diminished: it has become one of a series of markers.

The generational differences were clear in my study: participants in their late forties and older explicitly wrote or spoke about their perception of marriage as a marker of adult status. The name change marked this move from single to married; proof of the rite of

passage which women have undergone. This positive change was mentioned by 21.3 percent of name changers who felt marriage and name-changing – becoming ‘a wife’ – were signs of adulthood. They talked of looking for stability and security, of thinking about having children, about feeling they should commit to someone: all ideas connected with responsible adulthood:

I was 25 at that stage and probably felt I should commit myself to somebody...
(P68: interview data: name changer)

It was grown-up to change your name and be Mrs. (P4: name changer)

Changing your name was a public sign of marriage, along with the change in title, and this change symbolised becoming an adult and a person bestowed with status via the marriage ceremony and the creation of a new family unit: this is one example of the name as a technology of the self, regulating behaviour and being used to display certain qualities to the world, here namely responsible adulthood. The fact that for this to be achieved women have to connect themselves to a man via his name and the heterosexual institution of marriage generally went unnoticed by participants and when it was mentioned it was as a relic of the past:

seems strange to have to make a choice between your husband's name and your father's name – a *relic* of a male dominated system which recognised descent through the male line with associated inheritance and succession issues. (P44: name changer)

P44 pointed out that her decision should not be interpreted as her being subservient to her husband or a denial of feminism, but as ‘what you did in working class families then [1980s]’. She feels that society has moved on and people may interpret her actions incorrectly, yet she argues that getting rid of all signs of marriage is not the best course of action – she was happy to be married and this is one sign of her commitment. Signs and symbols of this newly achieved status remain important. In Britain there remains an expectation that women will marry, become wives, and display this publically through the name (and title) change – and following these rules brought a large number of women respect and happiness. In day to day discourse as ‘a wife’, which the name change symbolised to other people, they found connotations of adulthood, responsibility, stability, and respect. This could all be encapsulated within a fluid and adaptable sense of selfhood.

Other name changers' narratives focused more on fragmentation and compartmentalisation of their lives. Participant 52 changed her name on marrying, but kept her original family name at work. For her, marriage had not been an important goal; it was perceived as a means of tying a person down to a boring life, without freedom. In fact, for P52, marriage was seen as provincial and representative of the kind of thing one's parents would do. However, on meeting her now husband this quickly changed and within 6 months they were engaged. The decision to change her name was, however, more protracted – it seemed to reach down deeper into her ideas of selfhood and her values than the act of getting married:

Having... wrestled with this big thing, having a major ideological and personal shift from anti-marriage to pro-marriage and then hey, why not go the whole hog... why not cap it all off with the name... and then I couldn't quite bring myself to do it because... because I mean I'd been single, well I mean not single but not married, until I was 32 and that's quite a long time to be your own person and I'm [Original Family Name], everyone knows me as this, that's me, my work life, everything I've published, that's me... all of the things that gave me my identity – my primary source of identity before was always my career – and if anyone does know me it's as [Original Family Name], that's me! I'm not going to give all that up. It took me a while to figure out I could keep my name at work and change it in my personal life. (P52: interview data: name changer)

In this account P52 reveals the struggle to re-envision her new self after marriage. She feels that marriage has re-orientated the sources of her sense of selfhood and self-worth, but aligning this with her past career-focused self does not appear possible. Her original family name represented this career-orientated self and P52 looked for a way to publically display the changes in her life without dismissing her old name and the connotations of success and personal achievement it held. However, these must be compartmentalised for the contradictions she understands to exist between the categories of 'wife' and 'worker' to be managed. This extract from her interview illustrates this point:

R: Is Ms a positive thing for you?

P52: No, I'd rather not be anything. It's sort of innocuous isn't it? The thing is, I want to avoid being a Mrs at work. Oh no. It's horrible isn't it!

R: (laughter; surprised) Why, explain, explain! Why horrible?

P52: Oh, imagine. It's all those, all those lingering things that I associate with old-school versions of marriage. Mrs. Such-and-such. It's like a lesser, lesser-than....

R: ...But being a Mrs in your personal life you don't feel...

P52: Oh yeah, really good. When you're ordering shoes or something and it's 'is it Miss or Mrs' I always say 'Mrs.'! (sweeps her hair back in a proud gesture)
(laughter)

R: Oh, so that's really interesting, so it really has completely different connotations for you?

P52: Completely! Even, as I say, ordering shoes, like I don't really care what Barretts think of me but I'll still very proudly tick the Mrs box on the thing, I love it, it's great! That Mrs [Married Name] I'm very grown-up, mature adult and everything! Especially when you go and stay in hotels and things, that declaration of Mrs (claps hand together). I think, I revel in it! I think it's brilliant! Mrs, it's really good, but then imagine here, oh it would be awful, I mean, it wouldn't really, but I've got that lingering 'it would undermine my authority as a credible academic to be attached to someone else, an adjunct to someone else'

In one context Mrs Married Name is a source of joy, a sign of adulthood and maturity; in another it would represent a lack of success, a lack of authority, a lack of credibility, and a symbol of being merely an appendage of another person. This divide in selfhood for P52 is strictly observed. Her narrative of selfhood is one of compartmentalisation – in one part of her life she is one kind of person, and in another she has a different sense of what she values and represents to the outside world. Her selfhood is fragmented, divided up between the situations of work and home, and separate names have become a symbol of this and a useful way of managing the contradictions. The enjoyment of the separation of selves into work and home was highlighted by P52's narrative, but can be seen in a less extreme version in another 12 participant accounts.

Re-naming forces a re-thinking of oneself and a re-identification with husbands and the new family unit being created – adulthood, wifhood and moving away from the family of childhood. It is a very relational move: the self in connection with others (husbands, children), and this self must change and adapt to new roles. In a supposedly individualising Western society (Bauman, 2011; Giddens 1996), the relationality of this move may seem surprising. As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue (2010: 74), women continue to be connected more with others through their care work and these

responsibilities allow them less chance to act out the fully individualised self. However, as Young argues (1997: 124), full individualisation may well be an illusion.

The narrative of the fluid and adaptable self of the late modern period is a useful way of describing and justifying the changes taking place: both name change and changes in sense of self. However, compartmentalisation may be necessary to resolve tensions between roles and ideas of self as women struggle between modern individualism and more relational positions: this is a fragmented selfhood. This modern narrative of selfhood – fluid or fragmented – is being used to make a traditional and still highly relational decision coherent in a supposedly individualising society.

For name retainers there was a positivity in the *continuity* of naming they experienced. Keeping their names confirmed their identities on marriage and renewed their sense of commitment to this identity:

[I wanted to] retain my prior identity using the name I had used all my life. (P46: name retainer)

These narratives of selfhood require an idea of identity as linear, continuous, and unbroken for ontological security to be maintained.²² 22 of 27 name retainers (nearly 82 percent) discussed the importance of a *continuity* of selfhood through retention of their name. Though these women would probably not, if challenged, agree they had not changed throughout their lives, they require a justification for not changing names in a society geared towards this. The most positive and socially acceptable reason in an individualising society is one which holds out the person's sense of selfhood as fundamental: each individual person deserves to have their life's narrative respected. Women who work against the grain can use a narrative of linear selfhood – an accepted philosophical idea – as well as the present day individualist narrative of the importance of the individual, to justify their name retention and in this way keep a positive and continuous sense of self. Although the linear, core self narrative has been criticised by feminists as refusing change and not representing women's lives and experiences, my participants use it in a very particular way to thwart a patriarchal norm.

For many of my name retaining participants it was the historical connection of name changing to subsuming women's selfhood that made the idea anathema. Participant 46 wrote that changing her name seemed 'too enormous' when considering the history of the name change (e.g. women as property and loss of individual identity in law). While participant 85 questioned why women should make this change and not men: 'It's unequal and no one's business.' In fact, just over 44 percent of my name retainers saw their action as a feminist decision. Hence they were using a *masculinist* narrative of selfhood to defend a *feminist* decision.

If going against the prevailing norm in any situation can be seen as a 'deviant' decision, then name retainers can be seen to be acting 'deviantly'. Those acting deviantly, it has been argued by Scott and Lyman (1968: 62), are more often called upon to account for their actions than those who conform. This was borne out by my study. The name changers used the narrative of fluid or fragmented self, but implicitly. Name retainers on the other hand were prepared to defend their decision explicitly and used the narrative of core selfhood to do so:

The thought of becoming someone else terrified and outraged me. (P12)

Wanted to get married not lose my identity. (P37)

... changing my name would be such a shift in my mind-set about how I view myself, so I look at other people who've changed their name and sort of think 'why have you done that, you've got rid of your *actual* name?' (P51: interview data)

Name retainers appear then to remain a part of the long-standing philosophical discussion of self in terms of a core, base self. These narratives also fit in with the late modern, individualistic idea that the individual has a right to have their selfhood respected and their life goals unhindered or hampered by others. In this way the name retaining participants perhaps reach out most closely to Giddens' (1996) ideas of the 'self made self', symbolically at least. This individualistic self maintains its own goals as paramount and looks to safeguard itself rather than act in a more relational manner. As most name retaining participants had children or were planning to have children this is not to suggest they actually do less care work or have less interest in this, but that they adopt and make

use of the late modern individualistic narrative that the self should have a certain freedom from others and their demands.

More negatively, however, this narrative of naming denies the relatedness of selves as outlined by Mead and Gergen: instead one is seen to act alone on one's own life path. To use Gergen's framework, in valorising the individual and their personal aims and actions, theories of individualisation suggest a highly modern approach (rather than postmodern). It also prevents name retainers from easily articulating change. However, the justification for acting in a more individual than relational way requires the *credibility* of the narrative of linear selfhood and the importance of the individual. It is a very useful way of expressing a confidence and contentedness with selfhood and, as an accepted narrative of self formation, a rational means to justify working against the norm. Furthermore, it provides the coherency central to ontological security (see 1964; Giddens, 1996). There is a complex – and sometimes contradictory – tension between the narratives used by women, the history and assumptions of those narratives, and the traditional or modern state of the naming decision made, and 'deviant' name retainers need to pay particular attention to how they justify their actions.

8.2 Justifying Your Self: Norms, Deviancy, and their Vocabularies

Forming a coherent narrative of self is pressing: when we do things which are unusual for us, we have to find an excuse or a way of explaining our actions (Hood, 2012: xii). The overarching narrative of our lives needs to make sense, both to ourselves and to others. The act of telling a life history is an act of storytelling (Atkinson, 1998:1). We use stories to make our lives understandable to ourselves and others (Atkinson, 1998: 1) and these have a unilinear direction, relying on people understanding this conception of time and the ideas that stories therefore have beginnings, middles, and ends (Polkinghorne, 1995: 8). Narrative is an important way in which humans make sense of themselves and others, and through which they create that coherent life story deemed so important and necessary; without such a coherent story subjects are open to diagnoses of madness (Wilkinson-Ryan and Westen, 2000: 540).

Janet Askham's study on identity and stability in marriage shows some of the pressures married couples face, both in terms of what roles they must take on and what expectations

are placed upon them to account for themselves positively (Askham, 1984). Her study found that a certain number of gendered role constraints were placed upon men and women in marriage and that these were accepted by married couples: these role constraints meant that possibilities for developing selfhood were curtailed (Askham, 1984: 186 – 187). The institution of marriage is connected with stability and responsibility: the building of families. It provides a certain framework and set of expectations: people are expected to speak of their married life in certain, socially acceptable ways. As Askham argues, marriage is not about varying different identities but of an expected one; the qualities her participants spoke of as having been developed in them because of marriage are ‘common to the married’ (1984: 185). If couples want to show themselves to be ‘normal, respectable, moral people: namely those who are married’ (Askham, 1984: 142) then they are urged to account for themselves in particular ways. Marriage is generally seen as a social good and this is the *vocabulary* to which participants in that institution are meant to adhere.

The vocabulary of marriage must then fit into an overall life story and, as I have outlined above, participants fell into roughly two groups, each with a particular life narrative. It is these two overarching ideas of selfhood which are utilised by participants in my study. Name retainers were *more likely* to appeal to a narrative of core, unchanging selfhood than name changers; name changers on the other hand could justify their decision using ideas of flexible and adaptable selfhood, which made the seemingly traditional decision up-to-date and creative. The tensions here are clear, but participants nevertheless used these narratives to justify their decisions, implicitly or explicitly, and from them formed a coherent story about themselves. This need to account – to the self and others – for decisions around marriage and selfhood suggests Giddens’ theory that relationships are becoming increasingly inwardly referential (1996: 6) is not correct. Participants continue to need to justify themselves to others and consider the thoughts and wishes of others as they do so.

To repeat, certain vocabularies in institutional situations are acceptable, other vocabularies are less or unacceptable, and when an agent uses any such set of vocabularies they are ‘influencing others’ and themselves (Mills, 1940: 907) as to what accounts and actions are (in)appropriate. These vocabularies are a form of social control, upheld as ‘normal’ by the

generalised other or society (Mills, 1940: 908). Whenever and to whomever a person has to account, they must be able to make a coherent story based on rules, expectations, and final action. Breaking away from the naming norm is to act ‘deviantly’ and certainly requires more frequent and considered accounting than following it (Scott and Lyman, 1968: 62).

The self as a whole in Mead’s theorisation (see Mead 1974) is the social, dialectical, experiential self – constantly changing with the new experiences of the immediate ‘I’ – attempting to form itself into a kind of coherency. The sense of coherency and constancy that can be engendered by forming an understandable narrative is, I would argue, a means by which to create a sense of ontological security (Giddens 1996). It provides a sense of stability, a base upon which a person can say they have founded themselves, a set of values which they can see as unchanging and as integral to themselves. This much needed ontological security masks the constant flux and change of selves, the shifting levels and layers of selfhood, which reform and re-gather, much like the moving and changing of Rose’s pleat theory (Rose in Budgeon, 2003: 44).

Bloom and Munro (1995) discuss the humanist idea of the core self as *refusing* the ‘possibilities of changes in subjectivity over time’ and masking the many important roles gender, etc. play, as well as ‘language, social interactions, and pivotal experiences’ (p.100). The core self has been perceived as limiting, particularly by feminists; the non-unitary idea of subjectivity is about a transformational politics, in which selves can always change, re-orientate themselves to the world, and in this way anything and everything can change (Bloom and Munro, 1995: 100). This idea is obviously appealing to a transformational politics as people are never beholden to a core, set self. However, these two narratives of core, unchanging self and fluid self, are both used by participants and are appealed to to help justify particular decisions around the name. They are narratives; they are tools. They are useful in making sense of whether to change a name or not and the impact on selfhood this may have.

Significant turning points provoke reflection upon identity and selfhood, but naming decisions compound the depth of this re-thinking in a gendered way. Name changing remains the norm in Britain (Valetas, 2001: 2) and, as women change the unifying symbol

of their wider sense of self, they have to attempt to reconcile their new identity as wife with previous identity categories. Women, whether positively or negatively re-thinking the self, usually work through this process to come to have a positive and stable sense of themselves as represented in their name. As P61 (interview data: name changer) said: ‘I am [married name] now; that’s me.’ However, as Mead has argued, ‘selves can only exist in definite relationships to other selves’ (Mead, 1964: 227). The thinking the individual person does around their name and sense of self does not exist in a vacuum, but instead is in part provoked and furthered by the thoughts, actions, and reactions of others; it is this dialectic between self and other which I will now analyse.

8.3 The Self and the Social Community: The Reactions of Others

The importance of other people in shaping our sense of self cannot be underestimated. As Gergen has said ‘We appear to stand alone, but we are manifestations of relatedness’ (1971: 170). Other people shape ‘self-definition, self-regulatory processes, and personality’ (Andersen et al., 2002: 159). However, it is not only particular other people who shape our sense of self but institutional practices and the generalised other. To return to Mead, the generalised other is the social community in which each self acts and from which it makes sense of norms and communal standards and values (Mead, 1964: 218): there is a process of constant interaction between individuals, institutions, and the social community to construct selfhood. Before turning to investigate specific reactions to name changing or retaining I wish to dwell briefly on the more general importance of names within wider society and how they are used by others to ‘place’ participants in terms of race, nationality, and class. Participants found the specific name they have, the way it sounds and its connotations, could have real and material impacts on their lives.

Participant 66 has one parent from Syria and one from Britain. Her first name is a common British, female name; her last name reflected her Syrian ancestry and connection with that culture. Before marriage she enjoyed the balance of the two names, feeling they displayed connections with both cultures, while also suggesting to others her Muslim beliefs. She took on her husband’s name when they married and has mixed feelings about this decision: she does not appreciate looking like ‘a 100% British woman’. She had some pressure from her in-laws to do so, but also recognises the importance of name sharing in UK culture, so appreciates the idea of her and her children sharing one name. She has also

experienced racist reactions to having an Arabic name in the past: '[I have suffered] some mild discrimination in the UK because of my Arabic name – especially in airports – and on these occasions I am happy to have an English name.' Participant 66 used her OFN to display cultural and religious connections. She feels that, to an extent, this has been erased from her public persona since her name change (she uses her Arabic name as a middle name, but this is often ignored on official forms, etc.) and dislikes the cutting off from her Syrian heritage that this entails in her everyday life. Her full name before marriage placed her in a way she appreciated and felt truly represented her: it was raced, gendered, and culturally specific. The change on marriage has made her look '100% British', something she does not identify with and would rather her name did not symbolise.

However, this married name has its advantages within Britain and when moving between national borders. The power of the norm in Britain – via parents, her partner, and the example of those around her – has encouraged her to accept the importance of changing her name and sharing one name with her children; specifically her husband's name. The Islamic culture P66 identifies with does not have a history of women changing their names on marriage (see Schimmel 1989), but the cultural importance of it in Britain has been enough to sway P66 to conform to this pattern of gendered naming. Further to this, the impact of world events, economics, politics and power imbalances have impacted upon her. When moving between national borders the cultural capital of being British is useful. Britons are in the enviable position of being able to access the EU without visas, as well as often being able to enter countries that were formerly within the empire without a visa or with one which is simple to obtain (and often free). The accrued capital here is significant, but is gained by a complex mix of historical and present day circumstances, many of which have grown from racism, imperialism, and other cultural assumptions.

Participant 66 lies at a point of intersection between all of this, having a mixed ethnic heritage and the symbolism of her name. She has the accrued cultural capital of being British, but until recently also attracted racist stereotyping and discriminatory treatment because of her Arabic last name. The power of the name as symbol is so great that taking on her husband's last name has ended this discrimination: her ethnic and cultural heritage have been masked by this change and hence her problems have disappeared. This example shows not only how facile and puerile racist assumptions are, but equally how significant a

name can be in terms of placement within society (historical, present day, economic, political), the treatment one can expect to receive, and one's chances for moving across borders.

'Deviant' identities are contextual. Participant 7 was one of my older participants, putting herself in the 76+ age bracket. In my interview with her we spoke of the significance of national identity and the discomfort one can feel when placed differently to how one would wish. Participant 7 married in the 1940s and lived through the Second World War. However, her birth name was German in origin. When attempting to join the naval service for women she was taken aside and told 'there's a problem with your name. It's German you see' and then questioned about the loyalty of her father to the British state. Then, recently, at a party with friends of her generation at which her brother attended and their German name was revealed, one of P7's friends turned to her and said 'oh, so you're German are you!' This interaction left participant 7 feeling uncomfortable. She was aware she was surrounded by friends who felt similarly to herself about the Second World War and the fighting with Germany. Participant 7 is British – her birth name reveals a connection with Germany that comes from many generations before her – however, the name had the power to make her friends look at her a little differently, however briefly, and push her into the uncomfortable position of being identified with Nazi Germany. She said to me

You know, lots of people still have problems with German names and well... let me confess to you, so do I. I mean, when you've been through a war...

To a modern reader this is perhaps difficult reading, but for a woman like P7 and her friends this period in history is a part of their lived experience. The impact of this interaction was therefore real and unpleasant for her; her birth name was used to distance her from her own national identity. Her married name has ensured this discomfort is rare for P7; she has been able to distance herself from the connotations of a German name that may arise in the minds of her contemporaries and place herself as British. She was 'glad to get rid of' her birth name. However, I should note that participant 7 went on to say:

I went to Berlin for the first time three or four years ago as I'd never wanted to go before. Of course once I got there I thought it was wonderful!

Finally, the increasing nuances of class division within Britain (Savage et al., 2013) are reduced in the discussion of names to more overt symbols of class background. The double-barrelled or hyphenated name came under a great deal of criticism from participants, who labelled it ‘pretentious’ (P44; P82), ‘over the top’ (P24), ‘excessive’ (P47). Others worried they were too complicated for forms or for their children to then hand on to their children, and so on: P100 labelled them ‘a nightmare’, while P107 said double-barrelling was ‘too complicated’. Participant 120 wrote that double-barrelling ‘seemed wrong to me. ... I thought it would betray my class identity (!)’, while P115 bemoaned the growth in double-barrelling, seeing it as a middle class aspiration which she thought ‘slightly daft’. My participants were selected to be those who had chosen the norm of name changing or had gone against it completely, so their reactions are no doubt a part of the sampling process and different ideas are likely to have emerged with a hyphenating sample. Nevertheless, these reactions reveal an interesting relationship with the idea of double-barrelling for those who do not choose to do so.

The historical connotation that double-barrelled names have in Britain is with the upper classes. This has been discussed in recent years in Conservative Party circles, worrying that candidates may seem distant from the electorate because of their classed names (Fleming, 1st December 2009). My participants in the main reflect this connection of double-barrelled names with the upper classes. This accounts for P120 stating, if slightly self-consciously, that she would not have wanted to ‘betray her class identity’ and P44 and P82 seeing such names as a sign of being pretentious. Participants 24 and 47 further this argument by seeing the exercise as simply too much: double-barrelled names are unnecessarily showy. Participant 115 sees the growth in hyphenated names as a part of the middle classes taking up this previously upper class preserve. She views this change as an attempt to aspire to be more like the upper classes and thinks it unnecessary.

Theories of classed capital (see e.g. Bourdieu 2010 [1984]) argue that ‘high’ culture is a part of upper class life; art films, for example, are infrequently accessed by lower class people as they are not a part of their ‘cultural repertoire’ (Barnett and Allen, 2000: 161). My sample cannot be defined as ‘lower class’ as it is made up of predominantly middle-class, well educated women, yet there was a definite attempt to set themselves apart from the ‘pretensions’ of the double-barrelling upper classes. Gunn argues that taste, culture,

and morals have always been a part of class – in fact they were part of constituting the concept (Gunn, 2005). The evolving middle class in England (late eighteenth to twentieth century) taught its children to behave respectably (Gunn, 2005: 59) and attend the ‘subscription library, assembly room, literary and philosophical society, scientific association, and soon’ (Gunn, 2005: 51). Women were the prime ‘bearers of class’, having to show off their classed accomplishments (playing the piano) and correct choice of furnishings and fashions (classed consumption) (Gunn, 2005: 55). Middle-class behaviour revolved around self-control and the working of the mind (Gunn, 2005): attention to dress was important, but not to excess, and the work of the middle class was solid and worthwhile, but not manual. This set the middle class against both the upper and the working classes, with the working classes seen as those who did the practical work and were ‘the bone’ of society; the upper classes were described as ‘the belly’, consuming and speaking, but not necessarily adding to society as the middle classes – ‘the mind’ – did (Gunn, 2005: 53).

These class divisions were mostly born out of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but their remnants can be seen in the discussion around names arising from my sample. The upper classes are still defined as rather unpractical, more interested in aesthetics and frippery than they should be – double-barrelled names are ‘too much’, ‘excessive’ and unnecessarily complicated and therefore in bad taste for the middle and working classes. However, as P115 comments, there remains an attempt to aspire to be of a higher class and the growth in a practice associated with the upper classes may reflect this. There can be other readings of the growth of hyphenated names however, such as wanting to symbolically display equality, but my sample was, in general, against the practice and therefore saw it in more negative terms.

These examples show the role names have in communicating certain thoughts and ideas to other people about the person they are dealing with. Names can be used to place people within a social hierarchy and the consequences of this can be highly political. The decision to change or retain a name was frequently political; whether or not participants intended it to be, the reactions of other proved they had made a politically significant step.

Name retainers experienced a wide range of responses from individuals around them and in their dealings with institutions such as banks, doctors, and schools: 29.6 percent of these women explicitly mentioned reaction of some kind from family, friends, or institutions. Participant 14 for example noted in the survey that no one she knew had any problem with her decision, and P1 and 6, for example, found their husbands to be in support. Husbands of name retainers were, overall, supportive of wives' decisions to keep their own name; 3 men in this group changed their last name to their wife's as having one name was very important to them for their idea of family cohesion. P16 noted that she had experienced a wide variety of responses from 'upset or confused to admiring' – her husband has changed his name to hers and her son also shares this name. P16 is an interesting example of a self working against the grain; her story reveals that if it were purely family unity that was important in name changing, the shared name could easily be the woman's. P16's case shows that there is resistance to this idea within Britain and in so doing highlights many assumptions working underneath the naming practice: gendered social hierarchal order is symbolised and maintained in the name. I will first discuss more general reactions to the name retainers and then go on to discuss P16 in-depth.

P70 (name retainer) noted, other people don't understand you 'belong to each other' as married couples are conceived of as one unit, sharing a (man's) name. Explanation of relationships has to follow when the normalised pattern has been broken: people are confused by the move against the gender order and unsure how to cope with its significance. This confusion has led to some name retainers using their husband's name in schools and at doctors to 'save confusion' (P84: name retainer) and to ensure everyone knows that they are the mother of their children. The fact a name carries so much significance in the UK, to the extent that to share a name means a woman will be accepted almost without question as the mother of a set of children, is a real pressure on women. An individual's own wishes may well be subsumed under and into the social norm of the community when such implicit *and* explicit pressure is being put on them by family, relatives, and institutions. Changing names becomes the simplest and most efficient way of dealing with *other* people and not confusing their ideas of social/gender order and power. The institutionalised practice of name changing, in particular, is a part of creating a *gendered identity*.

8.3.1 Gendering Identity

British society, as elsewhere, remains organised in part by the social construction of gender. Femininity and masculinity ‘shape people’ (Holmes, 2009: 36) and our society is organised and made intelligible by and through gender. In this way gender shapes selfhood – understanding oneself, other people and institutions, as well as the ‘generalised other’ (society) is done in part through gender. As Peterson and Runyan (1999) argue, gender is a lens through which we see the world. This lens ‘colours’ all of our interactions and makes them make sense only through our understandings of gender. In the case of my study, gendered identity came clearly to the fore in discussions over whether a woman would change her last name.

Nearly 20 percent of all husbands became ‘very upset’ at even the *suggestion* of their partner not changing names. This often led women, however ambivalent they felt about changing, to accept their husband’s wishes. P95 (name changer) wanted them both to change to a new name but ‘my husband was very against this.’ She felt that changing was ‘a simple thing to do to make him happy.’ Husbands became emotional at the suggestion of their wife-to-be not changing names, taking it as a ‘personal slight’ (P82: name changer). It would appear that some men continue to feel strongly about sharing a name, yet apart from the minority of men in the name retaining group who changed to their wife’s name, appear to have refused to change their own name to achieve this goal. Indeed sometimes the male partner would even suggest not getting married when the idea of name retaining was raised:

Yes, yes... again, I did hum and haw because a few people at work were going, you know, ‘just leave it as it is.’ And actually one of the other girls who got married not long before me, she’d left her name as it was and her husband really wasn’t happy about it. And eh, and I’d sort of jokingly said a couple of times to [husband] ‘I don’t know if I’m going to change my name’ and he said ‘well I don’t know if I’m going to marry you then’ (laughs). (P77: interview data)

To clarify, the man in the couple *assumed* names would be changed, but when his partner raised the fact she was considering not changing ensuing discussion produced strong emotional reactions from the male partner. Refusal to change appears to be a male prerogative: ‘He refused to change his’ (P11: name changer). This refusal did not in any way mean the discussion about the *woman* changing her name was closed: as 75 percent of

women in my sample changed names the discussions ensuing from a woman suggesting she might not change her name usually ended in the man's adamant winning out.

For the 18.5 percent of name retainers who did not have their husband's support in retaining their name, the process was an uphill battle. Husbands sometimes deeply resented the family party being called by their wife's name and some wives had to make sure this never happened to ensure husbands' feelings were not hurt. P8's (name retainer) husband and his family wanted her to change and she had to stand up to the pressure. He wanted them to share but would not take her name, instead using emotion to attempt to force her to change her mind: he said any children they had would be affected (presumably negatively), she was disrespecting his family, and that her mother had changed her name so she should follow her example. He did not take her suggestion to change to her name seriously. P48 (name retainer) also had to cope with strongly emotional statements: her family and his were *very* disapproving of her decision and thought she was "making a point! And "being modern!" Her husband's brother told her husband "well I wouldn't settle for any of that." She continues to receive cheques made out to her in her husband's name – a *highly* common theme for name retainers. These general reactions show that name retaining remains a difficult decision that suggests a threat to an established, gendered social order. This can be seen even more explicitly in the case of P16.

In the survey P16 (name retainer) wrote of always having felt proud of both her names, first and last, as they were symbolic to her as a part of her self. The idea of changing had always angered her and she questioned why this should have to happen. Participant 16 uses the narrative of a core and unchanging self to justify her naming decision – she has kept a stable and reassuring sense of connection with her self and her past throughout her life and has never had to feel the disjuncture she takes name changing to be. As stated above, she experienced a wide range of reactions when people heard about her naming decision.

The reactions P16 has received however, respond to the realisation that it is *her* name which is shared; the confusion, upset, or admiration are all engendered by this fact. The suggestion from this reaction is that she has upset some kind of expected order, as otherwise the fact she *shares* a name would not cause upset. And of course she has upset

an expected order in firstly retaining her name and secondly using it as the dominant symbol of the family unit, which is expected to be the male partner's. The representative of the group has the power to speak for it and all of its individuals as one person (Bourdieu, 1991: 106). Historically this was the role of the husband and father and, with the common last name such a priority for the presentation of family cohesiveness, this power appears to continue, though in a less obvious form.

To repeat, Bourdieu claims that the authority of a person within society is cemented by particular rites of passage, and marriage is given as a specific example. Marriage produces a number of sexual divisions between men and women and masculine and feminine, each boundary entirely arbitrary but made to look natural (Bourdieu, 1991: 118). Once these rites have become recognised and normalised however their 'symbolic efficacy' acts on reality (Bourdieu, 1991: 119). By subsuming women and men under one name, this practice ingrains and emphasises the gendered power within marriage and society more generally: a social order is maintained and innovative ways of dealing with the last name and family groupings are legally and socially discouraged. However, P16 has managed to do just that, and therefore inspires reaction where, had she changed to her husband's name, there would not have been.

My participants, if arguments arose, were more likely to accept their husband's wishes and change their name. It would appear then that feminine submission is also a part of selfhood within coupledness and marriage and that women are used to the idea of a 'proper' couple meaning one in which their identity will be, symbolically at any rate, subsumed under a man's (see also chapter 6). In order to make a coherent narrative of selfhood the women can construct this change in terms of love, unity, commitment, and cohesion. However, few questioned their husband's commitment, love, or desire to form a unit despite his name retention – it remains a man's prerogative to refuse such an identity change, but is something expected of women.

It would seem that a certain kind of masculinity remains bound up with marriage and the symbolic dominance of the family through the shared name. This symbol of patriarchal relations remains intact, with a male head of household subsuming the identity of his wife under and into his own. The fact name changing continues to be the dominant trend shows

that this patriarchal assumption continues to hold sway. The institutionalised nature of name changing ensures a continual re-production of gendered selfhoods in which women are encouraged to give up a part of their wider selfhood for their husband and children in particular. The history of patrilineal property rights and men dominating the family may be historical in a legal sense, but the shared patrilineal last name ensures this situation continues in a more subtle form. The strong reactions of others when the status quo is upset by name retention and by men taking their wives' names clearly exposes the gendered status of name changing and the underlying patriarchal power relations. The name retainers are, from this point of view, working against some very serious societal pressure. Participant 100 (name changer) attested to this in her interview:

one of my friends didn't change her name for quite a long time after she got, after she married and I was always very careful to check I addressed things properly to her and I don't think other people were, I considered it important to me, just like I consider it important if people are a medical doctor or a PhD doctor I always put Dr on rather than calling them Mrs X. But in the end she cracked, she sort of gave up, you know, when she had a child she just sort of gave up, classic case, she thought 'this is too much like hard work' and she couldn't be bothered with having a separate, maintaining, having separate name anymore, so em, yeah, so she, she did, so I know very few people, and most of the people I know, and these are all people who have degrees by and large and I really, apart from [husband's] sister I don't think... I can think of any...body who's kept their maiden name when they've got married, which is really quite surprising, it's slightly scary actually, surely someone should have managed it! I mean [friend] probably held out the longest...

8.4 Conclusion

As Mead's theories describe, the self is created within a dynamic relationship between past and present experience, other people, institutions, and the wider society. The ways we then justify our actions – the vocabularies we use – must make sense to this socially situated self and its others. The name changing norm organises women into gendered, heterosexual units, specifically designating them as *married* women. This re-thinking of the self as married is complex and names become a part of how women think of and present themselves to the world, both positively and negatively. Life narratives must include and make sense of the decisions surrounding marriage and participants use either the narrative of a linear self or a fluid/fragmented self to do this. Name changers can talk about their identities as creative, flowing and changing, allowing the moment of change or adaptation in the name change to sit within a high modern narrative of multiple selves. The name

retainers are, however, more restricted and cannot discuss themselves in terms of growth and change, but must use the idea of (masculinist) linear, core selfhood to justify their deviance from the naming norm, which will need to be accounted for to make sense to others. This long understood philosophical idea has a credibility that is useful when attempting to thwart a patriarchal norm.

Gendered identity is (re-)produced through name changing practices and, for those who did not change, their decisions upset the order so completely that they must account for their decision time and again as others attempt to make them intelligible. Many women entered into a symbolic relationship of submission within marriage by following the pattern of subsuming identity under that of the 'authoritative representative' (Bourdieu, 1991: 106) of the family – their husband. The male prerogative not to change names would appear to be bound up with a particular masculine identity as family head and the dominating, authoritative presence in the hierarchical heterosexual family. This kind of masculinity was called into question by a woman considering her own identity over that of her husband/new family and the result was emotional upset, anger, and argument. Femininity calls for acceptance and maintenance of these male feelings; masculinity does not call for the reverse. Gendered ideas of power, dominance, and credibility continue to be bound up in naming practices related to marriage and the very way in which people build up and think about their sense of self at a pivotal life turning point.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

The norm of name changing in Britain continues to manage two things: societal relationships and population management. Firstly, names reflect systems and systems reflect ideas and ideals. A particular, socially constructed system of name taking and sharing prevails. The 'one name' in families could after all be the woman's or a completely new name made up by couples on marrying. Instead the name is the man's name and this reflects the gendered hierarchy within the institution of marriage. I would argue that the fact the naming norm continues to be so powerful is a part of deep-rooted gendered inequality which continues to exist within British society. The naming norm is a symbol of this inequality and is difficult to erode because of how deeply-held these convictions are.

Secondly, it simplifies bureaucracy for state institutions: the name sets up clearly who is connected with whom and can therefore be called upon to take responsibility for whom. This system is by no means perfect and is certainly culturally constructed: Spain, Iceland and China, for example, manage to exist as nations without the same naming practices as Britain. It remains, however, that changing it seems overly complicated for state institutions, as a proliferation of names would make family relationships harder to discern. This is surely a part of the reason why complex family formations are difficult for state institutions to deal with: proliferation equals more complexity. Names are the symbols of this change in family formations.

As Leonard has argued (1980: 265), paying attention to symbols is important. A decision to change or retain one's name in the modern day, is also a decision about the ideas and ideals one is willing to embody. Though a decision to change a name is unlikely to be a conscious decision to consider oneself lesser than one's husband, it feeds into the gendered inequality that exists within this country and the idea that women's selfhoods are of less consequence than men's (Hochschild, 2003a: 57, 165). It does not necessarily compel one to live one's life in this way, but it is a public statement of acceptance of these ideas on a symbolic and powerful level.

Names and naming are suffused with power: they can quickly connect a person with a set of classed ideas and connotations; furthermore, names can connect people to an ethnic,

cultural, and national background. They can ‘place’ a person within a society and allow others to place them – as insider or as outsider. The gendered power to give a name to a woman in marriage or the expectation that a woman will take on a man’s name illuminates the symbolic hierarchy of significance and power in marriage. This symbolic hierarchy is a part, though, of real and effective gender inequality and has real consequences: more care and emotional labour undertaken by women, for example. Other naming ideas are discouraged within this unequal system.

What is socially and legally *discouraged* expresses what social ideals and values are looked down upon; what is legally and socially *encouraged* expresses those ideals and values which are lauded: this is contextual and constructed. Keeping one’s own name now would not be the same action as that of a Scottish woman pre-nineteenth century, who would be keeping her name as part of the normalised, patriarchal system of marriage in her country; today keeping one’s own name is a stand against the prevailing system and the gendered ideals that remain meaningful to this system. The UK now shares a naming norm and the social, legal, and economic position of women has changed a great deal since the nineteenth century. The paradox is that the English naming norm, historically so connected with women losing their legal personhood and becoming a part of their husband’s public identity, remains so powerful across the UK at a time in which women are apparently becoming increasingly independent. Also, the Western world is meant to be a part of individualising trends which suggest that one’s own public identity would be an important thing to keep and sustain, rather than being defined in relation to another.

It would appear that individualisation theorists like Bauman and Giddens over-estimate the extent to which the Western world has individualised. Tradition and the influence of the past continue to be significant to the decisions we make and the roles we play. Women are certainly still invested in the relational roles of wife and mother and the name change represents the extent of this: losing a symbol of individual self to become more embedded in the familial. Name retainers may be closer to the self of individualisation theories, as they attempt to maintain their individual self within the marriage. However as Young (1997: 124) has argued, no one can be completely independent and live without considering others’ wishes; we are all interdependent. I would therefore look to argue with

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2010: 56) that the women in my study are ‘in-between’ the self of individualisation theories and more relational and traditional identities.

The self, as Mead (1964: 205) has argued, is made up of the dynamic relationship between self and other (be that the ‘other’ of family and friends, institutions, or a generalised society). This interaction is clear in the decisions of my participants as they work to reconcile the thoughts of loved ones, the comments and assumptions of those working in institutions, and the expectations and pressures of the society in which they live. Name changers are working *with* the social norm and are influenced to comply; name retainers have worked against it, influenced by other groupings and life experiences, but having to justify themselves to those around them. Whatever decision is made the naming norm must be negotiated in some way, as a part of the organising principle of heterosexuality in Britain, which in turn limits the possibilities for selfhood.

The naming norm is therefore a ‘technology of the self’ (Foucault 1988), influencing behaviour and what kind of persona the named individual wants to present to the world. Name and title changing allow one to present oneself as a wife with the connotations of adulthood, responsibility, and ‘appropriate femininity’ which go with this. To avoid these connotations and try to redefine heterosexual married identity, name retaining is an option – a quiet subversion (Beasley et al. 2012: 67). Women do have choices, but these choices are limited by a great number of factors including the presentation of (a socially acceptable) self to a wider world.

Appearing to have made an individual and informed choice remains highly significant to my sample. They have been influenced by the idea of choice as key to a well-lived life which pervades modern society, however restricted, in fact, choices may be. Feminists are themselves often deeply embedded in this narrative, hoping the feminist movement can open up choices for women. Though this is a positive goal it should not stop critical engagement with the kinds of choices open to women. In terms of naming decisions, encouraging support of all decisions women make is affirmative but can prevent critical interrogation of the underlying gendered significance of the norm.

The norm is gendered, and conspicuous commitment and love work are encouraged so that women display their married selves and their ‘proper’ femininity through name changing.

The name changing norm encourages women to build their identity around the idea of a loving, family-orientated wife (and mother) who puts the feelings of others first. Attempting to thwart the naming norm is an attempt to keep marriage a private event, refuse the public identity of wife, and ‘quietly subvert’ (Beasley et al., 2012: 67) heterosexual tropes.

Children are highly important to naming decisions. Participants are looking ahead to possible future children in many cases and wanting to have a clear, intelligible connection to them. The understandings of others are important here: to make it easy for *others* to connect child and mother, women change their names. The self interacts with others to become intelligible and socially acceptable. Familial identity takes precedence, with the help of the bureaucracy of institutions cementing the norm into everyday life. Those who keep their own name must face the questioning of those who cannot understand relationships of care without a shared name. Names are integrated into pivotal gendered moments of heterosexual life stories and are therefore a part of making a credible, understandable account of a life. When names become problematic it suggests a controversial decision which must then be explained and justified. This explanation will be the only way to make a couple or family intelligible.

Participants did not have simplistic ideas of names and family, some seeing names as unnecessary or secondary to a sense of family life. However, sharing a name within a family was seen generally as a positive thing and names were used to cement biological links, create social links to smooth over the lack of biological ties, and indeed to take on the heritage of a partner, which was discussed in a literal way by participants. Names are the social signs of biological connections – held up as a significant sign of family in this culture – and could be used to ‘create’ a family even if biological links were missing.

Finally, the gendered importance of the norm to a sense of self remains significant. There continues to be upset when women suggest not changing names, threats of not going ahead with the marriage, and a great deal of silence around other possibilities (aided by classed ideas of other options). A type of masculinity is bound up in the naming norm, as well as a type of femininity. The authority of the father-husband, head-of-household continues to be important to a large number of a partners within this study and therefore possibly to others

like them. Their wives were also a part of this gendering, some wondering whether they could look at themselves as truly committed and loving if they did not follow the norms of marriage, significantly name changing. Their submission to the views of others was a part of their appropriately feminine behaviour. Among the name retaining women, though many of their partners accepted their decision and a small number took their wife's name, some faced an uphill battle against pressure and disagreement from their partner and others. The upset name retaining caused to the gender and social order was perceived as threatening. These participants were called to account in a way name changers were not (except when explaining their feminist beliefs in relation to their naming decision).

'Deviant' decisions still need to be explained – and these explanations need to be socially understandable to be credible. It is useful for name retainers to use a narrative of selfhood which suggests unbroken linear growth and the desire not to disrupt this through the name change, however much this may smooth over and even hide fragmentation and disruption. Name changers, however, could discuss fluidity, disruption, and even fragmentation in their lives and use names to make sense of it; their lives could be presented as creative and adaptable, often therefore hiding the traditional nature of the naming decision they had made. Whatever the decision, the ability to tell a coherent life story was fundamental and paramount.

This summary of findings and discussion of the power and significance of names leads me to outline my contribution to scholarly knowledge in the fields of Gender Studies and Sociology in particular. Firstly my overall aim to explore gendered identity and names is an original one, which has not been the basis for research in the British context. I have collected and explored data relating to various facets of identity and narratives of selfhood themselves. Participants spoke of tradition shaping their identities, political beliefs (feminism), loving couple and family relationships; they created coherent narratives of selfhood in which to situate their decisions. Within this overarching contribution there are several things I would like to highlight.

Firstly, the discussion of Scottish naming practices in history is one little explored or theorised by scholars. Archive custodians and historians have been unable to point to specific reasons for the Scottish practice of name retention and my discussion in relation to

Roman law is one which sheds new theoretical light on this area. I expanded this discussion to take apart a narrow idea of ‘tradition’ around British naming practices, one which homogenises the history of the United Kingdom. I also used this discussion to add further empirical evidence to the body of research which problematises the individualisation theorists’ ideas about modern society, selfhood, and relationships and instead calls for a more nuanced and considered view of the past and traditions which continually shape our lives and decision-making (for example Adams, 2003; Vanessa May, 2011; Smart, 2012).

My concept of ‘conspicuous commitment’ is also original. Women changing their name publically display their commitment to their partner and their marriage with this action. They appear to be both convincing themselves and others that they are settled in their marriage; this is affirmed by the actions and responses of those around my participants, some of whom found their husbands questioning the marriage itself if women suggested not changing their name. Women take themselves ‘off the marriage market’ and display their lack of availability in a way men must never do. I hope this concept will be useful for scholars in the field.

My discussion of narratives of selfhood and their complex intersection with modernity and individualisation also adds a fresh perspective. There is no clear divide between modernity, individualisation, and narrative of self. Participants utilise seemingly contradictory narrative tropes and styles to justify their naming decisions: the masculinist, long-standing narrative for an unusual and often feminist action, and the high modern, fluid or fragmented narrative for a traditional decision. Throughout my data adds to the body of research on accounting, particularly when looking at the standards of a ‘proper’ feminist and name changing, and the ‘deviancy’ of name retainers.

My focus on name retainers as well as name changers is itself original, as there is little data on name retaining and none in reference to identity and name retaining specifically. I have, among other things, investigated the perceptions name retainers have of the private nature of their wedding in which conspicuous commitment is unnecessary, love and name changing are unconnected, feminist political beliefs are particularly salient, and sense of self cannot be narrated in terms of change.

My thesis brings new quantitative and qualitative data to bear on a topic under-researched and lacking in empirical evidence. It explores this topic and allows other researchers to use the new insights gained, furthering the scholarly discussion. It also opens up questions for future research. Having heard from women it would be interesting to ask their partners what their perspective is, whether the name is important to them, and what they feel about the naming norm and their sense of identity. Projects into other naming options would also be useful for this field, to explore more unusual options, their perception by others, and the reasons they were chosen by couples and families. Further sociological work on love is also necessary, including looking at its darker aspects of control, coercion, and manipulation. My project opens up questions about the nature of happiness and its connection to following cultural norms; this in turn produces questions about power and my data suggests many starting points for further discussion of power and gendered relations in Western countries. Finally I would suggest wider cultural comparisons to see how names fit into social organisation, social ideas, and gendered relations on a larger scale. Some of these projects I hope to turn to myself.

To end then, names are significant to identity and are an important part of marriage as a rite of passage and a turning point in the life course; names have a political power. British naming practices are a part of social organisation, gendered identity building, and the maintaining of unequal power relations. They are a part of the everyday and therefore often go unquestioned, but to ignore them is to ignore the more subtle workings of society and to miss the continuing gendered hierarchy within Britain today.

Appendix One: Adverts used to recruit participants

Advert One: Written information posted on websites and intranets

My name is Rachel Thwaites and I am a first year PhD student in the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York. I am researching the decisions that women make when they get married (or divorced) about their last names – whether they retain their original family name or change to their husband's name, and what, if any, impact this has on their sense of self. I am looking for heterosexual British women who are/have been married to take part in an online survey lasting around 15 minutes: the survey would ask questions about you, your naming choices, and your family connections. I would require a postal address to send out consent forms.

If you are interested in more information/ taking part please do email me at ret508@york.ac.uk. Thank you.

Advert Two: Introductory Letter to Community Centres

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Rachel Thwaites and I am a first year PhD student in the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York. I am writing to you in the hope that you may be able to help me get in touch with participants for my research.

I am researching the decisions that women make when they get married (or divorced) about their last names – whether they retain their original family name or change to their husband's name, and what, if any, impact this has on their sense of self. My research is recognised and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

I am looking for women who are/have been married and have changed or not changed their name. I would like to have a range of views from women of all different backgrounds who have differing attitudes towards naming. The participants would take part in an online questionnaire (paper copies can be posted on request) about their name and their sense of identity. It would be anonymous – they would be assigned a number by which they would be known throughout the project. I am bound by the university's ethical codes (and my own!) to maintain this anonymity. Before filling out the questionnaire the participant would receive a consent form to fill out explaining their rights in greater detail. From this they would receive a participant number and could then go on to complete the survey. The survey will be accessible through a secure link only available to those taking part and the results will only be available to myself through use of various passwords – all information will be safe. I would need a postal address to send the consent form, but this would be destroyed as soon as it was no longer needed. There will be an option to take part in an interview on the subject at a later date **but this is entirely optional**. The questionnaire will be available to complete in January/February 2011.

I really hope I can take apart these taken for granted practices and try to understand their significance for women. If you think you could put me in touch with participants/would be happy for me to send you a poster to put up, or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address or by email at ret508@york.ac.uk. Thank you for your time.

Best Wishes,

Rachel Thwaites

Changed your name on marriage? Kept your original family name?

My name is Rachel Thwaites and I am a first year PhD student in the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York. I am researching the decisions that women make when they get married (or divorced) about their last names – whether they retain their original family name or change to their husband's name, and what, if any, impact this has on their sense of self. I am looking for heterosexual British women who are/have been married to take part in an online survey lasting around 15 minutes: the survey would ask questions about you, your naming choices, and your family connections. I would require a postal address to send out consent forms.

If you are interested in more information/ taking part please do email me at ret508@york.ac.uk. Thank you.



THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Centre for Women's Studies

⁴⁰ Poster has been formatted to fit thesis margins.

Appendix Two: Information for Participants (Survey)

Form One: Cover Letter

Dear Participant,

Thank you for offering to take part in this survey research! This letter explains the research in more detail, and gives you information about the forms you need to return.

I am researching the decisions that women make when they get married (or divorced) about their last names – whether they retain their original family name or change to their husband’s name, and what impact, if any, this has on their sense of self. My research is recognised and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. I am focusing on ideas of gender and identity, and trying to pick apart a practice that is often taken for granted in our society and see what it actually means to women. Names are often important to people as a symbol around which to build their sense of identity; name changing remains a much more common stage in women’s lives (through marriage and divorce) than men’s, and hence it is quite a gendered phenomenon. I want to investigate how women feel about such an important symbol of who they are, which they are often invited/expected to change at pivotal moments in their life. The connection between women’s last names and their sense of identity has never been researched before, yet as name changing is such a widely accepted social practice which can have long-lasting consequences for women, I believe it deserves to be investigated.

I would ask you please to read and fill in the consent form attached and send it back to me in the envelope provided.

To complete the survey please follow this secure link:

https://www.kwiksurveys.com?s=HNDNJK_30e09fbd

Password to enter the survey: naming2

Your participant number:

If you have been married more than once, please specify in the 'Final Comments' section at the end of the survey which marriage you are discussing, otherwise I will assume it is your first marriage.

There is a separate form about doing an interview in the next twelve months which you will be asked about in the survey. If you wish to take part in an interview please fill in and return this form in the envelope as well. You do not need to return this form if you do not wish to take part in an interview.

Please complete the survey by:

If you have *any* questions or queries about this study please email me at ret508@york.ac.uk.

Yours Faithfully,

Rachel Thwaites

Form Two: In-depth information about the project

My name is Rachel Thwaites and I am a first year PhD student in the Centre for Women's Studies at York University. I am researching the decisions that women make when they get married (or divorced) about their last names – whether they retain their original family name or change to their husband's name, and what, if any, impact this has on their sense of self. My research is recognised and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

I am focusing on ideas of gender and identity, and trying to pick apart a practice that is often taken for granted in our society and see what it actually means to women. Names are often important to people as a symbol around which to build their sense of identity; name changing remains a much more common stage in women's lives (through marriage and divorce) than men's, and hence it is quite a gendered phenomenon. I want to investigate how women feel about such an important symbol of who they are, which they are often invited/expected to change at pivotal moments in their life. The connection between women's last names and their sense of identity has never been researched before, yet as

name changing is such a widely accepted social practice which can have long-lasting consequences for women, I believe it deserves to be investigated.

I will also be comparing the British situation to that of Chinese women, who are expected to keep their original family name on marriage, as having the same name as your husband suggests you are related to him by blood. The information for this part of the study will be coming from a project between the University of York and the University of Hong Kong.⁴¹

I am looking for British women who are/have been married and have changed or not changed their name – no double-barrelling I'm afraid! As a participant you would be taking part in an online questionnaire about your name and your sense of identity. It would be anonymous – you would be assigned a number by which you would be known throughout the project. I am bound by the university's ethical codes (and my own!) to maintain this anonymity. Before filling out the questionnaire you would receive a consent form to fill out, explaining your rights in greater detail. From this you would receive your participant number and could then go on to complete the survey. The survey will be accessible through a secure link only available to those taking part and the results will only be available to myself through use of various passwords – your information will be safe. I would need a postal address to send the consent form, but this would be destroyed as soon as it was no longer needed. There will be an option to take part in an interview on the subject at a later date if you would be interested, **but this is entirely optional.**

I have already completed a smaller version of this project for my Masters dissertation, which acted as a pilot for my PhD. I am really excited about building on what I have already learned and hopefully learning a great deal more! If you are interested in taking part, or would like to ask any questions at all, please email me: ret508@york.ac.uk. Thank you!

All best,

Rachel Thwaites

⁴¹ Original aim of the thesis which, due to lack of data, has not been investigated.

Form Three: Consent Form

Consent Form

Please read the following information and then state whether you agree or disagree with the statements below by circling the appropriate word.

The questionnaire is anonymous: you will only ever be referred to by an allocated number so none of your data can be traced back to you personally. Any names of places which could be traced back to you will be removed from the final write-up.

Only I and my supervisors will see the raw questionnaire results and I will ensure they are safely stored throughout my research and properly destroyed once it is over, along with any contact information I may have for you.

Once you have posted everything back to me there will be a two week period (from the date of postage) in which you can retract any data you would prefer not to appear in the write-up.

You do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with.

You have a right to remove yourself from this study at any time during the research process.

The final PhD will be available for anyone to request from the University of York library. Information from it may be used in further publications.

- My data can be used in this study, on the understanding that it will be kept anonymous and secure at all times. **Agree/Disagree**
- My data can be seen by Rachel Thwaites. **Agree/Disagree**
- My anonymous data may be seen by Rachel's supervisors. **Agree/Disagree**
- I understand that I can retract data within two weeks from data of postage of this form and can remove myself completely from the project any point during the research process. **Agree/Disagree**
- I understand that this data will be used in a PhD thesis which will be available to the public. **Agree/Disagree**

- I am happy to have my data used in other publications, on the understanding that it will be kept anonymous and treated with respect. **Agree/Disagree**

I understand the aims of this project and my rights as a participant.

Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Form Four: Contact Details for Interview

I would be interested in taking part in an interview to discuss this topic in more depth at some point over the next twelve months.

Name:

Address:

Email:

Participant Number:

I would prefer to be contacted by:

- Post
- Email

Appendix Three: The Questionnaire

Section 1: Background Questions (for all participants)

1. Which of these best describes your present situation? (Please tick.)

- Married
- Separated
- Divorced and single
- Divorced and remarried
- Divorced and in a partnership
- Widowed

2. Please select your age range.

- 16 – 25
- 26 – 35
- 36 – 45
- 46 – 55
- 56 – 65
- 66 – 75
- 76 and over

3. Please tick the highest level of educational qualification you have attained.

- O-Levels/Standard Grades/GCSEs
- Highers
- A Levels
- Advanced Highers
- Undergraduate Degree
- Postgraduate Diploma
- Postgraduate Degree
- Doctorate
- Other qualification (Please specify): _____

4. What is your job/occupation?

5. Please select your own personal income by ticking the appropriate box.

- Less than £15,000
- £15,000 – 25,000
- £26,000 – 35,000
- £36,000 – 45,000
- £46,000 – 55,000
- £56,000 – 65,000
- £66,000 and above

6. Please select your household's average income by ticking the appropriate box.

- Less than £15,000
- £15,000 – 25,000
- £26,000 – 35,000
- £36,000 – 45,000
- £46,000 – 55,000
- £56,000 – 65,000
- £66,000+

7. Where are you from? (Please state wherever feels most relevant to you i.e. place of birth; where you live presently; a city, town or village; a county; or a country.)

8. How would you describe your ethnic background? _____

9. Beliefs:

- Agnostic**
- Atheist**
- Buddhist**
- Christian**
- Hindu**
- Jewish**
- Muslim**
- Sikh**
- Other** _____

- Prefer not to say**

If you would like to note growing up within a particular religion, or having been a member of a religious group previously though no longer identifying with this group, please note this in the space below.

Section 2: Naming Decisions (for all participants)

10. Please state how old you were on marrying and the year the marriage took place. (If you have been married more than once, please write age/year for each marriage in order.)

11. Did you change your name on marrying?

- Yes
- No

12. Can you explain this decision?

13. How do you feel about the decision you made?

- Positive
- Quite Positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Quite negative
- Negative

14. Can you explain your reasons for feeling as you do?

15. Who influenced your decision to change/keep your name? (Tick as many as apply.)

- Myself
- My partner
- My parents
- Siblings
- Other family
- Friends
- Societal expectations
- Other (Please specify): _____

Section 3: Names and Family Connections **(for all participants)**

16. Do you/did you feel a strong sense of connection to your original family name?

- Yes
- To some extent
- No

17. Do you/did you feel connected into a family history through this name?

- Yes
- No
- I've never considered it.

If you would like to make more comments on this question please do so in the space below.

18. If you changed your name on marrying, do you still feel connected into this family history?

- Yes
- To some extent
- No
- N/A – I did not change my name

If you would like to make more comments on this question please do so in the space below.

19. Do you have children?

- Yes
- No

20. Do you feel it is important for families to share one name?

- Yes, very important
- Quite important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Quite unimportant
- Unimportant

Please explain your choice in the space below.

Section 4: Name Changing (this section is for participants who changed their name on marrying. If you have not changed your name please go directly to section 5.)

21. Is your name central to your identity?

- Yes
- It's important, but not central
- It's not very important to me
- No

22. Did changing your name feel like an expected part of the process of marriage?

- Yes
- To some extent
- No
- Not sure

23. Was it important to you to change your name at the time?

- Yes
- Quite important
- I felt ambivalent about it
- No

24. Can you explain this feeling?

25. How do you now feel about changing your name?

- Yes, quite a lot
- Sometimes
- Only briefly
- No

27. Do you feel a strong sense of connection to your married name?

- Yes
- To some extent
- No

28. Has this sense of connection (or lack of) changed over time?

- Yes
- No
- I've never considered it

If you picked 'Yes' can you give some indication of when and why you felt different?

29. Has taking on your husband's name made you feel more or less a part of his family?

- More
- Less
- It has not affected how much a part of his family I feel
- I've never considered it

If you would like to make more comments on this question please do so in the space below.

30. Have you ever felt any sense of separation from your own family (parents/siblings) because of the change in your name?

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No
- I've never considered it

If you would like to make more comments on this question please do so in the space below.

31. Did you and your husband discuss changing your name?

- Yes, we discussed it at length
- Yes, but only briefly
- No, we both just expected it to happen
- No, but I would have liked to

If you would like to make further comments on this question please do so in the space below.

32. Was there ever any suggestion of other naming ideas? For example, your husband taking your name, double-barrelling, choosing a new name for you both, etc.

- Yes
- No

If you picked 'Yes' please explain what ideas were discussed and why you chose to take your husband's name instead.

33. Are there times when you use your original family name?

Please give examples in the space below.

Section 5: Retaining your original family name (this section is for participants who kept their original family name on marrying. If you changed your name please go directly onto section 6.)

34. Is your name central to your identity?

- Yes
- It's important, but not central
- It's not very important to me
- No

If you would like to make more comments on this question please do so in the space below.

35. Did you and your husband discuss you retaining your own name?

- Yes, we discussed it at length
- Yes, but only briefly
- No, we both expected it to happen
- No, but I would have liked to

If you would like to make more comments on this question please do so in the space below.

36. Was there discussion of other possibilities? E.g. you changing your name, double-barrelling your names, both taking on a new name, etc.

- Yes
- No

If you would like to make more comments on this question please do so in the space below.

**37. If you have children, has having a different name from them ever been a cause of concern for you?
(Please select only one option from the following.)**

- Yes, frequently
- Yes, sometimes
- Not particularly
- No, never
- My children have my name/a double-barrelled name (please delete as appropriate)
- I've never considered it
- N/A – I don't have children

If you would like to make further comments on this question please do so in the space below.

38. If you are planning to have children in the future, might this make you reconsider your naming choices?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- N/A – I'm not planning to have any/ any more children

If you would like to make more comments on this question please do so in the space below.

39. Have there been any times in which you have used your husband's name?

40. Has keeping your own name made you feel more or less a part of your husband's family?

- More
- Less
- It has not affected how much of a part of his family I feel
- I've never considered it

41. Has retaining your own name made you feel closer to your own family?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, somewhat
- It has not affected how close I feel to my family
- Not really
- Not at all

Section 6: Names and working life (for all participants in any kind of paid work)

42. Do you use the same name for work as you use in your personal life?

- Yes
- Usually, though there are exceptions
- No

If you would like to make further comments on this questions please do so in the space provided.

43. Did work figure in your decision about what to do with your name on marrying?

- Yes
- To some extent
- No

If you would like to make further comments on this question please do so in the space below.

44. Is work an important part of your life and identity?

- Yes
- To some extent
- No

Section 7: Divorce and Naming Decisions (this section is for participants who have been through a divorce. If you have not been divorced, please go onto section 8.)

45. Did you change your name on getting divorced from your partner?

- Yes, back to my original family name
- Yes, to a new name altogether
- No, I kept my married name
- I had retained my original family name when I married

Unless you picked the final answer, could you give some idea of the reasons for your decision?

46. Have you remarried?

- Yes
- No

47. If you picked 'Yes', what did you decide to do about your name on remarrying?

- I kept the name I had at that point. (Please delete as appropriate: my previous husband's name/my original family name name/a new name)
- I changed my name to my husband's

Can you give any reasons for this decision?

48. Has getting divorced meant that you now have a different name from your children?

- Yes
- No

49. If you answered 'Yes' to the question above, how do you feel about having a different name from your children?

Section 8: Naming and Identity (for all participants)

50. Names are important to a person's sense of identity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

51. I have built my identity around my name.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

52. My first name is more important to me than my last name.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

53. A person's last name connects them into a wider history.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

54. Do you think that having particular kinds of names makes a difference to how a woman feels about taking on her husband's name/retaining her original family name? E.g. names which are hard to spell, may have unpleasant connotations in modern day English, have a different ethnic root, are well-known locally or further afield, are relatively common, are aesthetically pleasing, etc.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

If you would like to make further comments on this question in relation to women in general or yourself/friends and relatives, please do so in the space below.

Section 9: Final Comments

If you would like to make any further comments on the topics covered in this questionnaire, or think something should have been included which was not, please note this in the space below. Please use an additional sheet if necessary.

Please note any comments you may have about the format of the questionnaire in the space below, e.g. how it was laid out, whether it was hard to follow, length, fonts and design, the way the questions were asked, etc. Please use an additional sheet if necessary.

Would you be interested in taking part in an interview at some point over the next twelve months to discuss these issues in more depth? (If yes, please fill in your details on the sheet provided.)

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your time. Your help is much appreciated!

Appendix Four: Sample Characteristics

102 women responded successfully to the survey. If any total figures are below 102 it is because participants declined to answer the questions. All tables give the *number* (frequency) of participants in each category.

Table One: Marital Status of Participants

Marital status		Frequency
Valid	Married	76
	Separated	2
	Divorced and single	6
	Divorced and remarried	4
	Divorced and in a partnership	11
	Widowed	3
	Total	102

Table Two: Age Range of Participants

Age range		Frequency
Valid	16 - 25	2
	26 - 35	31
	36 - 45	29
	46 - 55	19
	56 - 65	18
	66 - 75	1
	76+	2
Total	102	

Table Three: Highest Educational Qualification Attained

Highest educational qualification attained		Frequency
Valid	O Levels/CSEs/GCSEs/Standard Grades	2
	Highers	2
	A Levels	2
	Advanced Highers	1
	Undergraduate degree	41
	Postgraduate degree	39
	Doctorate	10
	Other	5
	Total	102

Table Four: Personal Income

Personal Income		Frequency
Valid	Less than £15,000	13
	£15,000 - 25,000	28
	£26,000 - 35,000	27
	36,000 - 45,000	8
	£46,000 - 55,000	10
	£56,000 - 65,000	2
	Not in paid work	5
	Total	93

Table Five: Household's Average Income

Household's average income		Frequency
Valid	Less than £15,000	3
	£15,000 - 25,000	9
	£26,000 - 35,000	16
	£36,000 - 45,000	18
	£46,000 - 55,000	14
	£56,000 - 65,000	9
	£66,000+	29
	Total	98

Table Six: Where participants said they were from

Where they are from		Frequency
Valid	United Kingdom/Great Britain	9
	London	8
	English city (excluding London)	32
	English shire or county	13
	English other (includes Isle of Wight)	21
	Scottish city	3
	Scottish other	1
	Multiple Roots	5
	Outside the UK	5
	England	2
	Scotland	2
	Europe	1
	Total	102

Notes: Participants were asked to answer this question as they wished. Certain people therefore chose to write 'England', 'Scotland', or 'Europe', others a particular city, town, village, island, county, or area. Those who had been born elsewhere chose to write the name of that country. I grouped together those who said they were from more than one place.

Table Seven: Ethnic Background

Ethnic background		Frequency
Valid	White British	62
	British	9
	White	13
	White English	4
	White Anglo-Saxon	2
	White Scottish	1
	White Irish	1
	White South African	1
	Mixed ethnic background	4
	African Carribean	1
	Hispanic	1
	European	1
	Scottish	1
	White American	1
	Total	102

Notes: Participants were allowed to self-define their ethnic background.

Table Eight: Beliefs

Beliefs and values		Frequency
Valid	Agnostic	16
	Atheist	38
	Christian	31
	Jewish	1
	Muslim	1
	Other	10
	Prefer not to say	3
	Total	100

Table Eight: Naming Decision

Did you change your name on marriage?

		Frequency
Valid	Yes	75
	No	27
	Total	102

Table Nine: Year of and age at marriage

Age and Year of Marriage(s)

		Frequency
Valid	2000-Present Day Under 25	6
	2000 -Present Day 25-30	23
	2000- Present Day Over 30	13
	1990s Under 25	2
	1990s 25-30	7
	1990s Over 30	6
	1980s Under 25	5
	1980s 25-30	4
	1980s Over 30	2
	1970s Under 25	5
	1970s 25-30	5
	1960s Under 25	1
	1960s 25-30	1
	1950s Over 30	1
	1940s Under 25	2
	Multiple Marriages	15
	Total	98

Appendix Five: Interview Characteristics

Table One: Characteristics of the 16 Participants Interviewed

Participant Number	Naming Decision	Marital Status	Age Range	Highest Qualification Attained	Personal Income	Household Income	Where are they from?	Ethnic Background	Year of and Age at Marriage
7	Name changer	Widowed	76 +	Other	Less than £15, 000	Less than £15, 000	English Other	White British	1940s under 25
12	Name Retainer	Married	26 - 35	Postgraduate Degree	£26, 000 – 35, 000	£36, 000 – 45, 000	English City	White British	2000 – 2011 under 25
15	Name Changer	Married	46 - 55	Postgraduate Degree	15, 000 – 25, 000	66, 000 +	Scottish City	White Scottish	1980s under 25
21	Name	Married	26 -	Undergraduate	Did not	£26, 000 –	English	White	2000 –

	Changer		35	Degree	disclose	35,000	city (excluding London)	British	2011 25 – 30.
24	Name Changer	Married	26 - 35	Undergraduate Degree	£15,000 – 25,000	66,000 +	English Shire or County	White British	2000 – 2011 over 30.
46	Name Retainer	Separated	46 - 55	Postgraduate Degree	£56,000 – 65,000	£56,000 – 65,000	England	White British	Multiple Marriages
50	Name Changer	Divorced and Single	66 - 75	Undergraduate Degree	Did not provide this information	Less than £15,000	Multiple Roots	White	1960s 25 - 30
51	Name	Married	26 -	Undergraduate	£15,000 –	£36,000 –	English	White	2000 – 2011 over

	Retainer		35	Degree	25,000	45,000	City	British	30
52	Name Changer	Married	36 - 45	Postgraduate Degree	£36,000 – 45,000	£66,000 +	English Other	White British	2000 – 2011 over 30
61	Name Changer	Married	46 - 55	Postgraduate Degree	Less than £15,000	£15,000 – 25,000	English Shire or County	White British	1990s 25 - 30
68	Name Changer	Married	56 - 65	A Levels	£15,000 – 25,000	£36,000 – 45,000	English City	White British	1970s 25 - 30
76	Name Retainer	Divorced and Single	56 - 65	Undergraduate Degree	£46,000 – 55,000	£46,000 – 55,000	Outside the UK	White English	1990s over 30

77	Name Changer	Married ⁴²	36 - 45	Undergraduate Degree	£26,000 – 35,000	£26,000 – 35,000	English Shire or County	White	Multiple Marriages
80	Name Changer	Married	36 - 45	Postgraduate Degree	£26,000 – 35,000	£46,000 – 55,000	English Other	White British	2000 – 2011 over 30
96	Name Retainer	Divorced and Remarried	36 - 45	Postgraduate Degree	£26,000 – 35,000	£36,000 – 45,000	English Other	White	Multiple Marriages
100	Name Changer	Married	36 - 45	Doctorate	£15,000 – 25,000	£36,000 – 45,000	English Other	White British	2000 – 2011 over 30

⁴² Participant has been through a divorce but chose to define as married only.

Appendix Six: Consent Form for Interview

Consent Form

Please read the following information, circle the statements, and then sign below.

Your data will remain anonymous (you will be referred to by the same participant number as you used in the survey).

The interview will be recorded. I and my supervisors will be the only people to hear the raw interview data. I will transcribe this data into written form and again, only my supervisors and myself will see this raw data.

During the writing up of my thesis I will remove names, geographical places, places of work, etc., that could identify yourself or other friends/family. You can ask to see your transcript once completed and are at liberty to comment on it.

You can ask for certain data to be removed, or for your recording/transcription to be entirely removed from the project, up to two weeks after the event.

You are under no obligation to speak about any topic you find uncomfortable or would prefer not to discuss.

The thesis will be public and I will be publishing smaller articles on the topic also – your data would be included in the same anonymous way.

I will safely store your data throughout my project and I will properly destroy it once it is no longer needed.

- My data can be used in this study, on the understanding that it will be kept anonymous and secure at all times. **Agree/Disagree**
- My data may be seen by Rachel Thwaites. **Agree/Disagree**
- My data may be seen by Rachel's supervisors. **Agree/Disagree**
- I understand that I can retract my data, including removing my recording and transcription from the project entirely within a two week time period (from date of interview). **Agree/Disagree**

- I understand that this data will be used in a PhD thesis which will be available to the public. **Agree/Disagree**
- I am happy to have my data used in other publications, on the understanding that it will be kept anonymous and treated with respect. **Agree/Disagree**

I understand the aims of this project and my rights as a participant.

Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Appendix Seven: Interview Topic Guide

Life History Interview Questions

Family and Childhood

What names were there in your family when you grew up?

What was growing up in your house like?

What was the most significant event in your life as a child?

What kinds of things signify 'family' to you?

What was school like for you?

At what point in your life did you feel you had become an adult?

Love, Heterosexuality, and Marriage

Had you had any serious relationship before your husband?

How did you meet you husband?

How did the relationship develop?

Probe questions: Tell me about your engagement. Did you know it was going to happen?

How were you proposed to/how did you propose?

What was it about him that made you fall in love?

Why did you decide to get married when you did? Had you been thinking about it for a while?

What did getting married mean to you?

What was your wedding like? What did you enjoy about planning it and the day itself; what did you not enjoy?

When did you make the decision to change your name/keep your name; tell me about your reasons for that decision/who influenced you.

What did the name change/retain mean to you?

Do you and your husband share tasks? Do you spend a lot of your leisure time together? What do you do separately?

Preamble about continuing love and commitment then: how do you think you and your husband show this to one another?

Children

Tell me about your children – what are they like? (Use first names if known.)

What name(s) did you give your children and why? (making it clear first names are also a part of this question) *How do you feel about that? Has anything made you question your decision/have there been any difficulties arising from your decision? How do you feel about sharing/not sharing a name with your children?*

Reactions of others

What has the reactions been from family and friends in your life to your naming choice?

What has the reaction from doctors/hospital staff and/or teachers and /or administrators?

Work

What have you done with your name at work? Please explain. *Has keeping your name been an important part of retaining a professional identity?*

Preamble about the idea of women 'having it all': what do you think of this idea?

Is work important to your sense of who you are?

Don't work: have you worked in the past? What made you decide to stop working?

What did retiring from work mean to you? Did you miss it, or were you glad it was over?

What do you enjoy doing with your time now you have stopped working?

Divorce

What did divorce mean to you? Was it a positive change or a negative one?

Tell me about what you did with your name at this point and why.

What has divorce meant for your children?

What happened to your children's names at this point and why.

Widowhood

What has becoming a widow meant for you and how you see/perceive yourself?

How has your life changed since the death of your husband?

Tell me what keeping your husband's name meant to you?

Feminism

How important is gender equality to you?

How do you feel you and your husband show this in your marriage?

Self and Society (possibly quite pointed questions for the end of the interview)

If not spoken about ask about why name changing shows commitment for women, but is not expected of men. What do men do to show commitment?

Do you see yourself as a traditional or progressive person? Can you give examples to illustrate this?

Reference for example questions

Atkinson, R. (1998). *The Life Story Interview*. London: Sage

Appendix Eight: Individual Participant Characteristics

Participant Number: naming decision; marital status; age range; highest qualification; personal income; household income; where they are from (self-defined); their ethnic background (self-defined); beliefs; when they married and age range.

'Present day' = 2011, when survey data collection ended.

Participants who did not return forms are not included – this accounts for any missing participant numbers (102 respondents out of 120 contacted).

P1: name retainer; married, 56 – 65; undergraduate degree; less than 15,000; 15, 000 – 25, 000; outside the UK; African Caribbean; prefer not to say; 1950s over 30.

P2: name changer; married; 16 – 25; undergraduate degree; less than 15,000; 66, 000+; Scottish other; white British; Christian; 2000 – present day under 25.

P3: name retainer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 66, 000+; English city (excluding London); British; Atheist; 2000 – present day over 30.

P4: name changer; married; 46 -55; postgraduate degree; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 66, 000+; London; British; Christian; 1980s under 25.

P5: name retainer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; less than 15,000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; London; white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P6: name retainer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 36, 000 - 45, 000; United Kingdom; white British; Atheist; 1990s over 30.

P7: name changer; widowed; 76+; Other; less than 15, 000; less than 15, 000; English Other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Christian; 1940s under 25.

P8: name retainer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P9: name changer; married; 56 – 65; postgraduate degree; 36, 000 – 45, 000; 66, 000+; London; white Anglo-Saxon; Agnostic; 1970s 25 – 30.

P11: name changer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 66, 000+; Scottish city; white British; Atheist; 1980s 25 – 30.

P12: name retainer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 36, 000 – 46, 000; London; white British; Christian; 2000 – present day under 25.

P13: name changer; married; 56 – 65; postgraduate degree; chose not to disclose; chose not to disclose; English other (includes Isle of Wight); British; Atheist; 1960s under 25.

P14: name retainer; divorced and remarried; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 36, 000 – 45, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; outside the UK; white South African; Atheist; multiple marriages.

P15: name changer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 66, 000+; Scottish city; white Scottish; Agnostic; 1980s under 25.

P16: name retainer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 66, 000+; London; white; Agnostic; 2000 – present day under 25.

P17: name changer; married; 56 – 65; postgraduate degree; not in paid work; 66, 000+; United Kingdom; white; Agnostic; 1970s under 25.

P18: name changer; married; 46 – 55; Other; chose not to disclose; 56, 000 – 65, 000; English shire or county; white British; Agnostic; multiple marriages.

P19: name changer; widowed; 76+; undergraduate degree; not in paid work; 15, 000 – 25, 000; London; mixed ethnic background; Jewish; 1940s under 25.

P20: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; not in paid work; less than 15,000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day under 25.

P21: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; did not disclose; 26,000 – 35,000; English city (excluding London); white; Christian; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P23: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; 26,000 – 35,000; 46,000 – 55,000; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; 1980s under 25.

P24: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 15,000 – 25,000; 66,000+; English shire or county; white British; Agnostic; 2000 – present day over 30.

P25: name changer; divorced and single; 56 – 65; undergraduate degree; 15,000 – 25,000; 15,000 – 25,000; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; multiple marriages.

P26: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 15,000 – 25,000; 56,000 – 65,000; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P27: name changer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 15,000 – 25,000; 46,000 – 55,000; English city (excluding London); white British; prefer not to say; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P28: name changer; divorced and single; 56 – 65; undergraduate degree; 15,000 – 25,000; 15,000 – 25,000; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; 1970s 25 – 30.

P30: name changer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 26,000 – 35,000; 46,000 – 55,000; English city (excluding London); white British; Other; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P31: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; less than 15, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Other; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P32: name changer; married; 46 – 55; doctorate; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 66, 000+; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Christian; 1970s under 25.

P33: name changer; married; 56 – 65; O Levels/CSEs/GCSEs/Standard Grades; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 66, 000+; outside the UK; white Anglo-Saxon; Christian; 1980s over 30.

P34: name changer; married; 36 – 45; O Levels/CSEs/GCSEs/Standard Grades; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); British; did not disclose; 1990s 25 – 30.

P35: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P36: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 66, 000+; English city (excludes London); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P37: name retainer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 66, 000+; United Kingdom; white Irish; Atheist; 1990s over 30.

P39: name changer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 66, 000+; English shire or county; white British; Agnostic; multiple marriages.

P40: name retainer; married; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; United Kingdom; white British; Agnostic; 2000 - present day over 30.

P41: name retainer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 35, 000 – 45, 000; 66, 000+; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; multiple marriages.

P42: name changer; married; 36 – 45; Advanced Highers; Less than 15, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P43: name changer; married; 36 – 45; doctorate; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 66, 000+; English shire or county; white; Atheist; 2000 – present day over 30.

P44: name changer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 66, 000+; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Christian; 1980s under 25.

P46: name retainer; separated; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 56,000 – 65, 000; 56, 000 – 65, 000; England; white British; Atheist; multiple marriages.

P47: name changer; married; 56 – 65; doctorate; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; United Kingdom; white; Christian; did not disclose.

P48: name retainer; married; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 56, 000 – 65, 000; English shire or county; white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P49: name retainer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 36, 000 – 45, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English city (excluding London); white English; Agnostic; 1990s 25 – 30.

P50: name changer; divorced and single; 66 – 75; postgraduate degree; did not disclose; Less than 15, 000; multiple roots; white; Agnostic; 1960s 25 – 30.

P51: name retainer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day over 30.

P52: name changer; married; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; 36, 000 – 45, 000; 66, 000+; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day over 30.

P53: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 36 – 45; A Levels; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 66, 000+; English city (excluding London); white; Christian; 1990s 25 – 30.

P54: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 56, 000 – 65, 000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); British; Christian; 2000 – present day under 25.

P55: name changer; married; 36 – 45; Highers; did not disclose; did not disclose; English city (excluding London); white British; Other; did not disclose.

P56: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; did not disclose; did not disclose; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; 2000 – present day over 30.

P57: name retainer; separated; 56 – 65; postgraduate degree; did not disclose; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; multiple marriages.

P58: name changer; married; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree did not disclose; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; prefer not to say; did not disclose.

P59: name changer; married; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; did not disclose; 46, 000 – 55, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Atheist; multiple marriages.

P61: name changer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; less than 15, 000; 15, 000 – 25, 000; English shire or county; white British; Christian; 1990s 25 – 30.

P62: name changer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 56, 000 – 65, 000; Scottish city; white; Christian; multiple marriages.

P63: name retainer; married; 46 – 55; doctorate; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 66, 000+; outside the UK; mixed ethnic background; Atheist; 1980s 25 – 30.

P64: name changer, married, 26 - 35; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P66: name changer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; less than 15, 000; did not disclose; multiple roots; mixed ethnic background; Muslim; 2000 – present day under 25.

P67: name changer; married; 46 – 55; undergraduate degree; less than 15, 000; 56, 000 – 65, 000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Agnostic; 1990s over 30.

P68: name changer; married; 56 – 65; A Levels; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; 1970s 25 – 30.

P69: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 46 – 55; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English shire or county; mixed ethnic background; Atheist; 1980s 25 – 30.

P70: name retainer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; English other (including Isle of Wight); white British; Atheist; 1990s 25 – 30.

P71: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English shire or county; British; Christian; 1980s under 25.

P72: name changer; divorced and remarried; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; not in paid work; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Other; multiple marriages.

P73: name changer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English other (including Isle of Wight); white; Christian; 1990s over 30.

P74: name changer; married; 56 – 65; undergraduate degree; less than 15, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Atheist; 1970s 25 – 30.

P75: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 46 – 55; doctorate; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Atheist; 1970s under 25.

P76: name retainer; divorced and single; 56 – 65; undergraduate degree; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; outside the UK; white English; Atheist; 1990s over 30.

P77: name changer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English shire or county; white; Agnostic; multiple marriages.

P78: name changer; married; 46 – 55; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Agnostic; 1980s 25 – 30.

P79: name changer; widowed; 56 – 65; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 15, 000 – 25, 000; English shire or county; white British; Atheist; 1970s under 25.

P80: name changer; married; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; English other (including Isle of Wight); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day over 30.

P82: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; less than 15, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English shire or county; white English; Other; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P83: name changer; divorced and remarried; 36 – 45; other; less than 15, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English city (excluding London); British; Christian; multiple marriages.

P84: name retainer; divorced and single; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; multiple roots; Hispanic; Christian; 1990s 25 – 30.

P85: name retainer; married; 26 – 35; doctorate; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 56, 000 – 65, 000; England; white English; Atheist; did not disclose.

P86: name changer; married; 26 – 35; doctorate; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; United Kingdom; white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P87: name changer; married; 56 – 65; undergraduate degree; 36, 000 – 45, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; United Kingdom; white British; Atheist; 1970s under 25.

P88: name retainer; married; 56 – 65; undergraduate degree; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 66, 000+; English city (excluding London); white British; Atheist; 1980s over 30.

P89: name changer; married; 56 – 65; other; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English other (including Isle of Wight); British; Atheist; multiple marriages.

P90: name changer; divorced and single; 46 – 55; Highers; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 15, 000 – 25, 000; English other (including Isle of Wight); white; Christian; 1990s over 30.

P93: name changer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 56, 000 – 65, 000; 66, 000+; United Kingdom; white British; Atheist; 1990s under 25.

P95: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; Scotland; Scottish; Other; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P96: name retainer; divorced and remarried; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 36, 000 – 45,000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white; Christian; multiple marriages.

P97: name changer; married; 56 – 65; postgraduate degree; not in paid work; 15, 000 – 25, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Other; 1970s 25 – 30.

P99: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; less than 15, 000; 66, 000+; London; white British; Agnostic; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P100: name changer; married; 36 – 45; doctorate; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Other; 2000 – present day over 30.

P101: name retainer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 15, 000 – 25, 000; Europe; white British; Christian; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P102: name changer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 66, 000+; English other (includes Isle of Wight); European; Agnostic; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P105: name retainer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 36, 000 – 45, 000; 66, 000+; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white; Atheist; 2000 – present day over 30.

P107: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; English shire or county; British; Other; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

P109: name changer; married; 36 – 45; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 66, 000+; English shire or county; white British; Agnostic; 2000 – present day over 30.

P110: name changer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 36, 000 – 45, 000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day over 30.

111: name changer; married; 46 – 55; other; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 66, 000+; London; white British; prefer not to say; 1990s 25 – 30.

112: name changer; divorced and in a partnership; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; Scotland; white British; Other; 1990s under 25.

113: name changer; married; 26 – 35; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 56, 000 – 65, 000; English other (includes Isle of Wight); white British; Christian; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

114: name changer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 15, 000 – 25, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; multiple roots; white American; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

115: name changer; married; 26 – 35; postgraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 46, 000 – 55, 000; English city (excluding London); white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

118: name retainer; married; 26 – 35; doctorate; 36, 000 – 45, 000; 66, 000+; English city (excluding London); white British; Christian; 2000 – present day 25 – 30.

119: name retainer; married; 56 – 65; doctorate; 46, 000 – 55, 000; 66, 000+; United Kingdom; white British; Atheist; multiple marriages.

120: name changer; married; 36 – 45; undergraduate degree; 26, 000 – 35, 000; 26, 000 – 35, 000; multiple roots; white British; Atheist; 2000 – present day over 30.

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