

A woman's last name at marriage is a study of the mechanisms of maintaining patronymy and patrilinearity in Czech and Slovak society through the practice of changing a woman's name at marriage. By analyzing a sample of internet discussions in wedding websites (i.e. internet sites that focus on the issue of woman's family name at marriage) I am challenging this gender structured practice, which I feel disadvantages women and privileges men. The research starts from theoretical concepts of gender studies and uses discursive analysis as a method to help reveal the mechanisms of function and maintenance of a woman's last name change at marriage. Analyzing the comments in these discussions, I was primarily interested in the attitude of the website participants towards the last name as symbolic source of one aspect of identity. In the second part of my analysis, I follow up with the dynamics stemming from the direct exchange of website discussion participants with the issue of woman's last name. My research is concerned with the historic emergence of the issue of woman's last name at marriage, the gender view of Slovak and Czech legislation dealing with the woman's last name at marriage, and my own location – all of which I see as an important part of feminist research.

Key words: birth name, change of (woman's) last name (at marriage), patronymy, patrilineality, patriarchy, gender, identity, symbolic violence, symbolic domination, symbolic capital