

Taking Thy Husband's Name: The Role of Religious Affiliation

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This study examined the influence of religion on women's decision to retain their birth names after marriage. Samples ($N=2575$) were derived from wedding announcements in the *New York Times*, a major US newspaper. Multivariate analysis, controlling for age and year of marriage, indicated that the net effect of religion accounted for 2.6 percent of the likelihood of name keeping ($p < .001$). The highest percentage of women retaining birth names were those marrying in civil ceremonies (55.9%). Women marrying in Catholic ceremonies were least likely to keep their birth names (24.6%), followed by those marrying in Protestant (27.9%) and Jewish (37.5%) ceremonies. There was a systematic age-related increase in the likelihood that a woman would keep their birth name that lessened the role of religion on name keeping. Women who married at 35–39 years of age were 6.4 times more likely to keep her birth name compared to women 20–24 years of age. Although women who married in 2007–2008 were 3.1 times more likely to retain their birth names than those married in 1990–1991, the interaction between time period and religion was not significant. We conclude that while religion still exerts a major influence on name keeping, that influence has been gradually diminishing as American women delay age of marriage.

KEYWORDS birth names, women, marriage, religion, age

One of the earliest public challenges to the common practice of women adopting a husband's name was Elizabeth Cady's 1840 decision to keep her surname alongside her husband, Henry Stanton's surname, calling herself Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Stannard, 1977). Elizabeth Stanton's decision was mirrored by a growing trend toward retention of birth names after marriage during the latter part of the nineteenth century (Abel, 2008). However, it was not until the 1970s that noticeable changes in this tradition began to occur in the form of women keeping their birth names at time

of marriage or hyphenating their surnames with those of their husbands (Etaugh et al., 1999; Goldin & Shim, 2004; Kupper, 1990; Scheuble et al., 2000). The present study, based on wedding announcements in the New York area, examined an aspect of this transformation that has not received much attention — the influence of religion on women's decision to retain their premarital surnames rather than the customary tendency to take their husbands' last name after marriage (e.g., Scheuble et al., 2000).

Influence of religion on marriage and name keeping

The influence of religious affiliation on marriage has been studied from many different perspectives including nonmarital cohabitation (Wu et al., 2003), infidelity (Burdette et al., 2007), divorce (Call & Heaton, 1997), gender roles (Hartman & Hartman, 1996), and survival of spouses (Abel & Kruger, 2009). Paradigms informing these studies are derived from Durkheim's (1951 [1897]) theories that religions promote conformity to their respective norms and expectations, through regular interactions with individuals with the same religious affiliation (Burdette et al., 2007). With the weakening role of religious institutions and the increase in secularization (Chaves, 1994; Kosmin et al., 2008), the increased independence of women due to their greater participation in the labor force, and the increased emphasis on gender equality, religion's impact on social norms is being vigorously reexamined (e.g., Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Gay et al., 1996; Mullins et al., 2006; Sherkat & Ellison, 1999). In this study we examine changes in one of the traditional hallmarks of marriage — the adoption of a man's name by a woman.

Surprisingly, little attention has been devoted to the relationship between religion and women's name keeping. Since mainstream religions are patriarchal (Pearson, 1985; Stopler, 2005), encourage bearing and rearing children (Hood et al., 1996), discourage women's involvement in the work force (Xu et al., 2005), espouse an underlying ideology of male superiority and female inferiority and the corollary premise that a married woman has no identity apart from her husband (Hood et al., 1996; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Xu et al., 2005), it follows that mainstream religions should discourage women's name keeping after marriage. The present study tests that expectation. Specifically, we tested several hypotheses that women identifying with traditional patriarchal religions (Catholicism, Judaism, Protestantism) are less likely to keep their own names after marriage than women marrying in civil ceremonies.

Within the contexts of patriarchy and emphasis on marriage and childbearing, we anticipated a negative relationship between religious affiliation and name keeping. This anticipation was also based on a few previous studies of name keeping by American women. These studies indicate that women who keep their own name are less likely to be churchgoers (Murray, 1997; Scheuble et al., 2000) and are less likely to be regarded as religious (Atkinson, 1987) compared to women who adopt their husbands' surnames. A related study of American women found that as the frequency of church attendance increases, disapproval of a woman keeping her name increases (Scheuble & Johnson, 1993). Although that perspective is still evolving in response to contemporary economic and social realities, religions still remain patriarchal, and members of each religion are more similar in their views compared to members of

other religions, or those disavowing religious affiliation (Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Gay et al., 1996; Rourke, 1998).

In this study, we operationally defined religious identification as being married by an officiant of a particular religion. Religious affiliation is not a singular construct, and reliance on a single measure of religious affiliation such as the officiant does not indicate the extent of religiosity. However, the fact that a couple engages in the rituals performed by a particular officiant indicates at the very least, an affiliation with that religion, and presumably its precepts and traditions.

Other factors influencing name keeping

In part, the increasing trend for women to keep their names also reflects the altered status of women in American society from male dominance to increasing gender equality (Pearson, 1985; Stopler, 2005). We discuss these trends and their impact in the context of our hypotheses (see below). Since those achievements are personalized through a woman's name, women who attain those achievements prior to marriage — when women otherwise have traditionally adopted their husbands' names — should be more motivated to retain their birth names.

Women considering keeping their birth names must also weigh their decisions against prevailing stereotypes associated with such nonconventional behavior (Lillian, 2009). These stereotypes include attitudes that women who keep their birth names are less committed to home or family and are overly assertive, more outspoken, and less attractive (Murray, 1997; Scheuble & Johnson, 1998). Although we were unable to include measures of these stereotypes, they should not be lost sight of as factors affecting the name keeping decision.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. Religious Affiliation. We hypothesized that religious affiliation will be related to name keeping. This hypothesis was based on our previous discussion of the patriarchal nature of religion and its encouragement of marriage and childbearing. Since an essence of patriarchy is deference to husbands, it is reasonable to expect that this deference would extend to name keeping. Accordingly, women who marry in religious ceremonies should be more likely to take their husbands' names than women who marry in nonreligious, i.e., civil ceremonies. Since Catholicism is the most patriarchal and pronuptialist of the mainline American religions (Dillon, 1999; Xu et al., 2005) we expected that women marrying in Catholic ceremonies would be the least likely to retain their birth names.

Religious affiliation should also be associated with a lesser tendency of women to keep their birth names because of religion's encouragement of early marriage and childbearing (Hood et al., 1996). This is because early marriage and childbearing decreases the opportunities for higher education and professional attainment, which are in turn related to name keeping (see below). Again this should be most evident for women marrying in Catholic ceremonies because of its pronatalist teachings (Xu et al., 2005). Traditionally, women who strongly identify with patriarchal religions and their traditions of wife and mother, are less likely to pursue higher education or career development (Glass & Jacobs, 2005; Sherkat & Darnell, 1999) and are

therefore more likely to marry at an earlier age than women with weaker religious affiliations (Marini, 1985; Hoffnung, 2004). Participation in a religion's rituals, as led by its officiant, also has the effect of keeping individuals in contact with coreligionists, thereby strengthening normative views of the religious group (Burdette et al., 2007). Although Protestantism and Judaism are also pronatalist, fertility levels for both are less than for Catholics. One reason Jews have the lowest fertility rates of the three is their greater emphasis on educational attainment and its associated delay in marital age (Xu et al., 2005).

Hypothesis 2. Year of Marriage for All Women. We hypothesized that there would be an increase in the percentage of women keeping their birth names in our second time sample compared to our first.

Although the United States is one of the most religious societies in the industrialized world (Pew Forum, 2008), the largest increase in religious identification in both absolute and percentage terms in the United States has been "no religious identification," up from 8 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2008 (Kosmin and Keysar, 2008). This trend toward secularism should be reflected in a higher percentage of women marrying in civil ceremonies and a corresponding increase in the percentage of women keeping their birth names in 2007–2008 than those marrying in 1990 because of the decreased pressures from religious conformity (Durkheim, 1897/1951).

We also expected an increase in name keeping for those marrying in the latter period because of the increased prevalence of nonmarital cohabitation (Wu et al., 2003). Nonmarital cohabitation differs from marriage in several important ways that could influence name keeping. For instance, cohabitations do not last as long as marriages (Wu et al., 2003), so that women who cohabit may be less likely to forsake their identities when they do marry. Although cohabitation leads to marriage more often than separation (Wu et al., 2003), marriages that begin as cohabitation are less stable than those that begin without prior cohabitation (Wu et al., 2003). This may be because women who cohabit before marriage may be less committed to marriage and the traditional surrendering of their names that is traditionally associated with marriage. Cohabitation also tends to attract more liberally minded individuals who are less committed to both the institution of marriage and the relationship of marriage itself (Axinn & Thornton, 1992). Cohabiting women are also more likely to be employed than married women and may regard their relationship as less secure than married women; if they retain that insecurity at marriage they may be less willing to give up their identity, given the frequency of divorce (Seltzer, 2000).

Yet another reason for increased name keeping over time is women's increased educational attainment and gains in professional status and earning potential (Goldin & Shim, 2004; Lillian, 2009). Although there is a positive relationship between educational attainment and age at marriage (Marini, 1985; Hoffnung, 2004), higher education continues to be positively correlated with name keeping after controlling for age (Lillian, 2009; Noak & Wiik, 2008). Scheuble and Johnson (1993) speculate that college graduates are more likely to tolerate name keeping because they have more exposure to such issues, including the experience of having professors who have chosen to retain their birth names. Women who attain professional advancement will have had their names associated with that advancement and may be more loathe to lose that identity by adopting their husbands' names than women who marry after lesser educational attainment or career development (Goldin & Shim, 2004; Scheuble et al., 2000).

Hypothesis 3. Influence of Religion on Name Keeping as a Function of Year of Marriage. We anticipated that women marrying in religious ceremonies in 2007–2008 would also be more likely to keep their birth names than those marrying in religious ceremonies in 1990–1991. This prediction was based on a weakening of norms and expectations among those still retaining religious affiliations (Booth et al., 1995). To test this hypothesis, we used a hierarchical logistic regression model, controlling for age at marriage (see hypothesis 4), and tested this prediction by examining the interaction between religion and time period in this model.

Hypothesis 4. Age at First Marriage Influences Name Keeping. In the last half of the twentieth century and into the present century, there has been a significant increase in age at first marriage (Casper & Bianchi, 2002; US Census Bureau, 1999). One reason for this increased age at first marriage is the increased educational aspirations (Thornton et al., 1995) and increased workplace opportunities for women in the labor market (Thornton et al., 1995). Apart from the association between names, educational attainment, and professional standing, previous studies have found that the older a woman is at the time of marriage, the greater the identification with her name and the greater the motivation to keep that name (Brightman, 1994; Goldin & Shim, 2004; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Lillian, 2009; Noack & Wiik, 2008). We therefore hypothesized that older women would be more likely to keep their birth names, independent of religion and time period.

Methods

Data were obtained from the “Weddings” section of the *New York Times* for the years 1990–1991, and 2007–September 14 2008. Our starting date was predicated on the appearance of age of the bride and groom in the *Times* beginning in 1989 (Goldin & Shim, 2004). We started our data collection the following year because age was not regularly listed until 1990, and terminated at 2007–2008 to achieve an approximate twenty-year-period difference.

Announcements in the *New York Times* are generally about couples from prominent families who live in the greater New York City area. With very few exceptions, both bride and groom are college graduates, and many have advanced degrees. Couples requesting publication of their announcements are required to submit those requests six weeks in advance of marriage dates and are asked to include information about careers and parents. Decisions about which announcements will be published are at the discretion of the editor. There is no cost associated with these announcements. Although not representative of marriages as a whole in the United States, the database is unique in that it is a major national newspaper whose wedding announcements include the names, education, and ages of the bride and bridegroom, and the religious denomination of whoever officiated at the marriage ceremony. The same database has been previously used for similar studies (Goldin & Shim, 2004; Scheuble et al., 2000).

In some instances, specific statements that the bride “is keeping her name” or “will continue to use her name professionally” appeared in the announcement. In instances where specific information regarding the bride’s choice of last name was not given, it was assumed that when she was described as “Ms” she kept her last name, whereas descriptions as “Mrs” indicated that she had adopted her husband’s name. The 136

instances in which the woman was referred to only as “the bride” were not included in the analysis.

Religion was coded into one of six categorical variables (Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Nondenominational, civil, Other) depending on who officiated at the ceremony. Although the ceremony’s officiant does not indicate the degree of religiosity of those being married, conceptually the three mainstream religions (Catholic, Jewish, Protestant) most often mentioned are distinct from one another in terms of practices, beliefs, and historical experience (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000). Nondenominational ceremonies are those incorporating some rituals from these mainstream religions but not to the extent that any one religion is specifically emphasized. Civil ceremonies are those in which the officiant was typically a judge or justice of the peace. “Other” referred to ceremonies which did not fall into one of these five groups, e.g., Hindu, Muslim, Greek Orthodox. Since there were only forty-seven such instances, and no discernible pattern, couples falling into the “Other” category were not included in the analyses.

Marital name choice was recorded as either bride changed her surname to her husband’s surname or bride kept her surname. Women who hyphenated or combined their last names with those of their husbands (less than 1%) were regarded as keeping their names because the new name still included their birth name. (There was only one instance in which a husband took his wife’s name.) We also restricted the analysis to first marriages for women (announcements typically stated that a previous marriage ended in divorce or widowhood) and to women who were less than forty-one years of age at marriage. We restricted the analyses to first marriages because women marrying for a second or third time will have had to make the decision to keep their name on more than one occasion; any such decisions may have been influenced by prior decisions whereas no such influence would occur for first marriages. We did not include women over forty years of age because there were less than ten such women who married for the first time in 1990–1991.

We recorded 1099 announcements for 1990–1991 and 1476 announcements for 2007–September 2008. As a preliminary analysis the two authors each independently scored fifty announcements. Kappa intercoder reliability, indicating the extent of agreement between the two raters, was 95 percent for whether a bride was keeping her birth name, and 91 percent for religious affiliation.

Categorical variables (i.e., where there is only one possible outcome) were analyzed with Fisher’s Exact test and Pearson Chi-square. The Fisher’s exact test allows for comparisons where there are only two possible outcomes. For example, if the question is: are women more likely to keep their names if they marry in 1990 than 2007, there is only one possible outcome (yes or no) and two periods. The Chi Square test is used when there are two or more outcomes (yes, no) and two or more groups being compared (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish women). In this kind of comparison we want to see if one or more groups are more likely to keep their name than the others.

Continuous variables (where the data are numerical, e.g., 1, 2, 3 . . . 10) were analyzed with Student’s Independent Samples T-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The “T” test compares two groups; ANOVA compares three or more groups and determines if one or more groups differ from the others. Categorical (religion) and numerical data (e.g., age at marriage) were analyzed together using logistic regression to determine the association between religion and name keeping.

Differences between age groups were expressed relative to the youngest age category (20–24 years of age); for religion these were expressed relative to the civil category. Interactions between religion and time period, and religion and age were also tested. All significance tests were considered statistically significant if occurring at a chance level of less than five times out of 100 ($p < 0.05$); occurrences of less than one out of 100 are abbreviated as $p < .01$; occurrence of less than one out of 1000, are abbreviated as $p < .001$.

Results

The highest percentage of women keeping their maiden names occurred among those marrying in civil ceremonies (55.9%); the lowest percentage (24.6%) occurred among those marrying in Catholic ceremonies ($p < .001$). The data are shown in Table 1.

A higher percentage of women who married for the first time in 2007–2008 kept their birth names (47.2%) compared to those marrying in 1990–1991 (17.6%) ($p < .001$).

The average (\pm Standard Deviation) age at marriage for all women in 2007–2008 was 29.8 ± 3.7 years compared to 27.7 ± 3.4 years for those marrying in 1990–1991 ($p < .001$). Median ages for all women marrying during these two periods were 29 and 27, respectively. Data for the relationship between age at marriage and name keeping are shown in Table 2. Women who were 20–24 years old at time of marriage were least likely to keep their maiden names compared to women who were older, for each time period ($p < .001$).

Jewish and Catholic women married at the earliest ages (28.5 ± 3.5 , 28.3 ± 3.3 years, respectively) compared to those marrying in Protestant (29.0 ± 4.0 years), civil (30.2 ± 3.8 years), or Nondenominational ceremonies (30.3 ± 3.6 years) ($p < .001$).

Hypothesis 1. Religious Affiliation and Name Keeping. After controlling for age and year of marriage, the net effect of religion accounted for 2.6% of the likelihood of name keeping ($p < .001$). Women who married in Catholic ceremonies were 65 percent less likely than those marrying in civil ceremonies to retain their birth names. Women marrying in Protestant ceremonies were more similar to women marrying in Catholic ceremonies in this regard (59% less likely). Women marrying in Jewish

TABLE 1
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WHO
KEEP THEIR BIRTH NAMES AT FIRST MARRIAGE (N = 2575)

Religion	Percent Keeping Birth Name		
	1990	2007–2008	Total
Civil	41.2	60.9	55.9
Nondenominational	40.0	56.6	55.6
Jewish	19.0	50.0	37.5
Protestant	14.8	42.5	27.9
Catholic	13.8	35.0	24.6
Total	17.6	47.2	34.5
	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 35.1; p < 0.001$	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 42.3; p < 0.001$	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 128.2; p < 0.001$

TABLE 2
 PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN OF DIFFERENT AGES WHO KEEP THEIR
 BIRTH NAMES AT FIRST MARRIAGE (N = 2575)

Age at First Marriage	Percent Keeping Birth Name		
	1990	2007-2008	Total
20-24	7.3	19.7	10.6
25-29	15.6	40.3	28.5
30-34	30.3	53.2	46.2
35-39	24.0	65.5	57.4
Total	17.6	47.2	34.5
	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 39.1; p < 0.001$	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 67.3; p < 0.001$	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 180.9; p < 0.001$

ceremonies were 38 percent less likely to keep their birth names compared to those marrying in civil ceremonies (see Table 3).

Hypothesis 2. Year of Marriage. After controlling for religion and age, women marrying in 2007-2008 were 3.1 times more likely to keep their maiden name than those marrying in 1990-1991 ($p < .001$).

Hypothesis 3. Influence of Religion on Name Keeping by Time Period. In both time periods a higher percentage of women marrying in civil ceremonies kept their names compared to women marrying in the three religious ceremonies. Although women who married in 2007-2008 were more likely to retain their birth names than those married in 1990-1991, the interaction between religion and year of marriage was not statistically significant.

TABLE 3
 ODDS RATIOS* FOR WOMEN KEEPING THEIR BIRTH NAMES AS
 FUNCTION OF AGE AND RELIGION AT MARRIAGE (N = 2575)

	OR	95% CI	Sig.
Year of marriage			
2007-2008	3.06	2.52-3.73	<.001
Age Category			
25-29 ¹	2.49	1.58-3.91	<.001
30-34	4.59	2.88-7.32	<.001
35-39	6.37	3.83-10.62	<.001
¹ Age 20-24 is the reference category			
Religion²			
Catholic	0.35	0.25-0.49	<.001
Jewish	0.62	0.46-0.83	.002
Nondenominational	0.75	0.49-1.14	n.s.
Protestant	0.41	0.30-0.55	<.001
² Civil is the reference category			

Hypothesis 4. Age and Name Keeping. There was a systematic age-related increase in the likelihood that a woman would keep her birth name, with women 20–24 least likely to keep their birth names. Women who married at 35–39 years of age were 6.4 times ($p < .001$) more likely to keep their birth names compared to women aged 20–24 years of age (see Table 3).

Discussion

The present study evaluated the role of religious affiliation as a factor affecting women's marital name decisions. We anticipated that socialization within a particular religion would influence attitudes about whether a woman would keep her birth name. As anticipated, women identifying with traditionally conservative religions (Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism) were less likely to keep their own names after marriage compared to those married in civil or Nondenominational ceremonies.

Our finding that the highest percentage of women adopting their husbands' surnames occurred for women in one of these mainstream religions is consistent with their patriarchal bias. Our related finding that among the three mainstream religions, Catholic women were the most likely to adopt their husbands' names is consistent with Catholicism's highly institutionalized patriarchal religion, with the Pope (Il Papa, the Father) at the top of its pyramidal structural hierarchy. Although there is a strong matriarchal element in Jewish families (Fontes, 1995) this influence does not seem to extend to name keeping.

A major limitation in this study was that we were unable to make finer distinctions between religions in terms of the liberal-conservative dimension. Although Protestant ceremonies often included identifying characteristics such as Baptist, Methodist, etc., these were not consistently made, and within these denominations there are differences in their views of marriage and family life (Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Dillon, 1999; Gay et al., 1996; Smith, 1990). Similarly, there are considerable differences between Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox Judaism in the way in which they regard gender roles (Rourke, 1998). However, from descriptions of where ceremonies occurred (non-Synagogue), it is unlikely that the Jewish couples whose weddings were described and often married in restaurants rather than synagogues were Orthodox and therefore the most patriarchal. Related to this uncertainty in denominations was an absence of information regarding religiosity (service attendance, frequency of prayer). Religious affiliation is a relatively ambiguous indicator of religiosity, but the data do not allow for more than a descriptive evaluation. Nevertheless, the differences indicate that decisions about name keeping are in some way associated with religious affiliation.

Religious affiliation is also a correlate of other factors that may influence name retention. In our study we found that women who married in Jewish or Catholic ceremonies married at a younger age than women who married in Protestant ceremonies and they in turn married at an earlier age than women who married in civil or Nondenominational ceremonies. Several studies have found that the older a woman is at the time of marriage, the more likely she is to keep her birth name (Brightman, 1994; Goldin & Shim, 2004; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Lillian, 2009; Noack & Wiik, 2008). Our data are consistent with that finding. In the present study, three times as many women in the age group 35–39 years kept their birth names compared to women 20–24 years of age in both 1990 and 2007–2008. Women who marry at a

later age are also more likely to have embarked on professional careers which they and others associate with their names and which they wish to maintain (Brightman, 1994; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Scheuble et al., 2000; Twenge, 1997). This latter occurrence may explain the anomaly of Jewish and Catholic women not differing in the age at which they marry, yet differing considerably in the extent to which they maintain their birth names. Jewish women are more likely to continue working after marriage, and after childbearing than are Catholic women (Hartman & Hartman, 1996) and therefore may be more prone to retain the names linked to their professional status.

Another possibility accounting for differences in marital naming that we considered was educational level. Increased educational attainment was related to stronger egalitarian attitudes for women in Great Britain and Scandinavia (Knudsen & Waerness, 2001) and to greater economic independence (Wheeler & Gunter, 1987), which undermine male dominance. Studies are quite consistent in finding that marital name change is related to a woman's level of education, with highly educated women significantly more prone to keep their names (Noack & Wiik, 2008; Goldin & Shim, 2004; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Scheuble et al., 2000). However, differences in educational level could not account for differences in marital name retention in the present study because nearly all the women (and men) were college educated, so that educational level could not have influenced marital naming decisions.

To some degree the general shift in marital name choices over time may also reflect previously mentioned increased trends for cohabitation without marriage and increases in divorce and remarriage. Increasing cohabitation means that women are retaining their birth names during what is essentially a marriage situation. Having held on to those names in such situations, women may not feel as strong a sense of following the traditional practice of taking their husband's name if they do marry (Noack & Wiik, 2008). The increasing trend in divorce rates mean that women are more likely to have mothers who divorced and then changed their names back only to change their surnames again after remarrying. Recognizing the possibility that their own marriages may not last, many women may be hesitant to accept the same circumstances. Keeping their birth identities after marriage reduces this naming dilemma.

Name keeping in general increased from 17.6 percent in 1990 to 47.2 percent in 2007–2008. Using the same *New York Times* database, Goldin and Shim (2004) noted a similar trend from 1975 to 2001. In 1975, only 2 percent of women retained their names; this rose to 10 percent in 1980, 20 percent in the mid-1980s, remained at that level for another ten years and then rose to 32 percent in 2001. The median ages of brides at time of first marriage in the Goldin and Shim (2004) study were 28 in 1991 and 30 in 2001, almost identical to the median ages of 27 in 1990 and 29 in 2007–2008 in our study. A slight difference between our study and Goldin and Shim's (2004; see also Lillian, 2009) is that they counted hyphenated names as a name change, whereas we did not. Since hyphenated names accounted for less than 1 percent of the names in our study, following Goldin and Shim's criterion would not have markedly changed our results. The reason we included hyphenated names as "keepers" is that, while it is a change, it is still a retention compared to a complete abandonment of a name. The percentage of name keepers in our study is also higher than the 20 percent proportion Noack and Wiik (2008) reported for their representative sample of

Norwegian women. However, their study included marriages beginning in the 1980s and none of the women was older than 31 years of age during that period. Our study also differed in that it was based on a non-representative sample consisting of highly educated/high SES women whereas they studied a general population. The lower percentage of name-keepers in that study is likely the result of an earlier date of inclusion with its related temporal disinclination toward name keeping, the lesser percentage of older women in their study population, and differences in representativeness.

There are several limitations associated with this study in addition to those already mentioned. One is that descriptions were written from the bride's point of view at the time when the announcements were submitted and decisions about name keeping may have changed prior to actual marriage. Another is that the data were obtained from the *New York Times* and are not representative of most marriages in the United States (Scheuble et al., 2000). Couples whose announcements appear in the *Times* were nearly all college educated and many had advanced degrees. Our results may therefore pertain to this rather restricted population of highly educated, high socioeconomic status women. A second limitation is that we are unable to address the psychological aspects of name keeping. Names are part of one's identity so that no longer using a surname may seem like a loss of personal identity. Women faced with this decision may be basing their decision on psychological grounds rather than for religious, educational, or professional reasons. Among the reasons for wives adopting their husbands' name that Lillian (2009) found in her study were convenience, tradition, belief that all family members should have the same surname, and the related concern about what to name the children should a wife keep her name. Although there has been an increasing tendency for women to keep their birth names, these latter considerations remain important determining influences on name keeping, and are likely to be strongly correlated with religious affiliation.

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