

Most prefer that men 'Pop the question,' survey finds

February 13 2013



Traditional views on marriage emerge in small on-campus study.

(HealthDay)—You've come a long way, baby, but in matters of love and marriage this Valentine's Day, you'll probably let *him* do the asking.

Researchers from the University of California, Santa Cruz, found that a majority of men and women hold traditional views on proposals. Most women also said they would opt to take their husband's last name.

"I was surprised at how strong the preference was," Rachael Robnett, a doctoral candidate in psychology, said in a university news release.

"Given the prevalence of liberal attitudes among students at the university where data collection took place, it is striking that so many participants held traditional preferences," she said. "Even more

surprising is that many participants overtly state that their preferences were driven by a desire to adhere to gender-role traditions."

In conducting the study, Robnett surveyed 277 undergraduates majoring or intending to major in psychology. All of the students were heterosexual and ranged in age from 17 to 26 years old.

Not one of the 136 men surveyed said he "would definitely want" his partner to propose. And none of the 141 women surveyed said they "would definitely want" to pop the question.

By contrast, two-thirds of women and slightly more than two-thirds of men "definitely" wanted the guy to do the asking, according to the study, which was published in the January issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Research*.

Only 9 percent of women and 17 percent of men said it didn't matter who proposed.

Sticking with traditional views on marriage, 60 percent of women were "very willing" or "somewhat willing" to take their husband's name. Only 6 percent of women were "very unwilling" and just 11 percent "somewhat unwilling" to change their name. Less than one-quarter of women were "neither willing nor unwilling" to take their husband's name.

The participants' traditional views on marriage were likely linked to "benevolent sexism," or the notion that "men should protect, cherish and provide for women," Robnett said.

"On the surface it looks positive. The problem is that benevolent sexism contributes to power differentials between women and men," Robnett noted. "The mindset underlying benevolent sexism is that women need

men's protection because they are the weaker gender."

The notion of benevolent sexism is difficult to challenge because it's "usually viewed as politeness or chivalry," she said. She added, however, that people who endorse [benevolent sexism](#) tend to adhere to traditional marriage roles, including the idea that women should do most of the childrearing even if both partners work. "Research shows it often does a disservice to women," she said.

More information: The Pew Research Center provides more information on [gender roles](#).

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Citation: Most prefer that men 'Pop the question,' survey finds (2013, February 13) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-02-men-survey.html>

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