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**What's in a name? 361.708 euros:  
The effects of marital name change**

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## Abstract

Marital name change is not without consequences. Women who took their partner's name appear to be different from women who kept their own name on a variety of demographics and beliefs, which are more or less associated with the female stereotype (Study 1). Subsequent studies show that women's surnames are used as a cue for judgment (Study 2-4). A woman who took her partner's name or a hyphenated name was judged as more caring, more dependent, less intelligent, more emotional, less competent, and less ambitious in comparison with a woman who kept her own name. A woman with her own name, on the other hand, was judged as less caring, more independent, more ambitious, more intelligent, and more competent, which was similar to an unmarried woman living together or a male. Finally, a job applicant who took her partner's name, in comparison with one with her own name, was less likely to be hired for a job and her monthly salary was estimated €861,21 lower (calculated to a working life, €361.708,20).

**What's in a name? 361.708 euros:****The effects of marital name change**

A majority of women change their surname from the day they put on a wedding dress, walk down the aisle and say "I do" (ranging from 72.6% to 82%: Hoffnung, 2006; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993, Twenge, 1997)<sup>1</sup>. Most women thus choose to answer the phone with a new name, change their e-mail address, introduce themselves with their partner's name or change their signature after their wedding day. In the present paper we will show that marital name change is not without consequences: Women with their partner's name are judged differently than women with their own name and this can have costly consequences.

In most Western countries, women can choose to take their partner's name, keep their own name or combine both names (hyphenate) and in most countries there are no laws that prescribe what to do<sup>2</sup>. Although sometimes legal battles were necessary to establish the right to keep one's own name (e.g., until the mid-1970s many states in the USA did not allow women to vote, receive passports, get paid or have bank accounts in their own names, cf. Twenge, 1997, see also Stannard, 1977), for most women marital name change is nowadays a voluntary and personal decision.

It is unlikely that giving up (part of) one's surname is something women do indifferently. That is, in previous research, names are linked to self and identity and this research suggests that most people assign value to their own names. For example, because one's name is a cue of the self, self-esteem can be implicitly measured by evaluating the letters of one's own name (i.e., 'implicit self-esteem', self-evaluation that occurs in the absence of conscious self-reflection; see Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Koole,

Dijksterhuis & van Knippenberg, 2001). This research shows that positive self-evaluation is linked to a positive evaluation of the letters in one's own name. As people generally evaluate themselves positively, their name is also something of value. This name letter effect (Nuttin, 1985) has intriguing consequences, ranging from predictive value of names on people's attitudes (Chris loves chocolate more than Linda and Linda likes lions better than Chris does, see Hodson & Olson, 2005), to the relationship between names and career choices and places of residence (Suzie is more likely to sell seashells on the seashore than Brad, who is more likely to bake bread in a bakery, see Pelham, Mirenberg, & Jones, 2002).

The connection between names and self-evaluation and the predictive value of names for attitudes and choices thus indicate that names are important for people. Interestingly, even though this importance of one's name, the majority of women choose to change their surname when they get married. Why? Studies in which women were asked why they took their partner's name showed that women mainly do so because of tradition, family unity and social norms. On the other hand, women who kept their own name or chose a hyphenated name, mainly do so because they feel their name is part of their identity (Hoffnung, 2006; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995; Kline, Stafford, & Miklosovic, 1996; Twenge, 1997).

Moreover, women with their partner's name differ from women with their own name not only in their reasons for this choice, but on several demographic variables as well. On average, women with their partner's name, compared to women with their own names, are younger at the moment of marriage, have a lower educational level, are more likely to be Catholic, and are more likely to have children (Hoffnung, 2006). Women

who *want to* keep their own name, on the other hand, appear to have more feminist attitudes and score higher on personal agency (Twenge, 1997, see also Hoffnung 2006).

Apparently, women with their partner's name differ from women with their own names on demographic variables and beliefs regarding feminism and personal agency (Twenge, 1997, see also Hoffnung 2006).<sup>3</sup> These studies suggest that some of the characteristics describing women with their partner's name are more strongly associated with the female stereotype than the characteristics describing women with their own name. Women with their partner's name are associated with tradition, family unity, social norms, mother, lower educational level (more stereotypical female), whereas women with their own name are associated with personal identity, feminism, personal agency, less likely to be mother, higher educational level (less stereotypical female; see also Deaux & Kite, 1993). Although it is unlikely that people are aware of all the demographic differences described, it could be that a woman's surname is more or less *associated* with these group characteristics. This might in turn influence judgment (see also Crawford, Stark, & Renner, 1998; Johnson & Scheuble, 1999; Lawton, Blakemore, & Vartanian, 2003).

That is, recent research showed that the extent to which a person has stereotypical features influences the extent to which a person is stereotyped (e.g., a target with more Afrocentric features is judged as more likely to have traits stereotypic of African Americans, see Blair, Judd, Sadler, & Jenkins, 2002). It is therefore likely that a woman with more stereotypical female features (e.g., the name of her partner) will be judged as a more stereotypical female (e.g., social, dependent, less intelligent, less ambitious, see e.g., Deaux & Kite, 1993; Glick et al., 2004; Kite, 2001) compared to a woman with less

stereotypical female features (e.g., her own name). We thus argue that a woman's surname is such a stereotypical feature, because taking over a partner's name seems more associated with 'typical' female characteristics and keeping one's own name is less associated with 'typical' female characteristics. In line with this, Etaugh and colleagues (Etaugh, Bridges, Cummings-Hill, & Cohen, 1999), showed that women with their partner's name were perceived as more communal, whereas women with their own name were perceived as more agentic. This is the first demonstration that different surnames can affect the strength of the activation of female stereotypes, resulting in judgments that are more or less in accordance with the female stereotype (see for related perspectives Dion & Schuller, 1990; Dion & Cota, 1991).

In the current research we posit and show that a woman with her partner's name will make the female stereotype more salient than a woman with her own name, and that the woman with her partner's name will therefore be judged more in accordance to the female stereotype than a woman with her own name. A woman with her own name, on the other hand, is more a-stereotypical, resulting in judgments that are counter to the female stereotype. As we form impressions of people depending on the accessibility of information, the activation of stereotypes through a characteristic as subtle as a woman's surname may affect judgment importantly. Thus, regardless of the individual qualities of the woman walking down the aisle, the way she will be judged may be determined by the name she chooses after saying "I do".

#### Overview and background of studies

The studies in the present paper focus on several aspects of marital name change and its consequences: We focus on a) differences in demographics and beliefs, b) different

judgment based on surname, and c) implications of different judgments based surnames in a job application context.

The first study tests whether women in The Netherlands with different surnames differ on demographical variables and beliefs. We will see whether we can replicate the demographical differences found in previous research and we will look into several interesting new variables, like family and work norm, working hours and salary. Subsequently, we will experimentally test whether women are judged differently, based on their surname. We compare a woman who took her partner's name with a woman who kept her own name in a scenario study (Study 2). After this, we test our hypothesis more extensively, looking at the effects of both the partner's name as well as a hyphenated name (Study 3). Moreover, we test the direction of the effects (i.e., are women who take their partner's name judged as more stereotypical female or are women who keep their own name judged as less stereotypical female or both), and we test whether our findings are based on the increased salience of the female stereotype to rule out a general 'halo-effect'.

Finally, we investigate relevant and interesting consequences of the predicted differences in judgment in a job application context (Study 4). That is, previous research showed that employment decisions could be influenced by implicit discrimination (e.g., a person with an African-American sounding name is less likely get a callback for a job interview than a person with a White sounding name: Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; see also Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). When women with their partner's name are judged more in accordance with the female stereotype, this can have

negative consequences for the chances that she will be hired for a job and estimates for her salary.

#### Study 1: Differences between name changers and name keepers

We start our investigation by looking at the demographic differences between women who took their partner's name and women who kept their own name in The Netherlands. Before we look into the hypothesized differences in judgment, it is important to find out whether Dutch women with different surnames are comparable to US women with different surnames. Based on previous name research that was conducted in the United States, we predict that also in the Netherlands a partner's name is more associated with 'typical' female characteristics and keeping one's own name is less associated with 'typical' female characteristics. In addition to demographical variables used in previous research, we also tested whether name changers and name keepers differed on a variety of other interesting variables.

#### *Method*

We accessed data from The Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Knijn, Komter, Liefbroer, & Mulder, 2005), which is a large sociological study on family solidarity and consists of a representative sample of Dutch people. We selected the married women in the sample ( $N = 2464$ ) and first looked at percentages of name choice. It appeared that a large majority of the women changed their names (74.8% partner's name, 7.3% hyphenated, 15.4% own name).

We subsequently related marital name choice to a number of variables in the data file. First, we related name choice to variables used in previous research: Age, number of children (open questions), and educational level (on a 10-point scale, ranging from

*incomplete elementary school to post-graduate*). Second, we related name choice to a number of new variables: We looked at family norms (e.g., *'women should stop working when they have their first child'*, *'education is more important for boys'*, *'working mothers are egoistic'*, and *'tradition defines the division of household labor'*, measured on a five-point scales, from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .75$ ).

Regarding work, we looked at work ethics (measured with *'duty first, leisure second'*, *'be prepared to work hard'*, *'I am the happiest after hard work'*, and *'work always takes the first place'*, measured on a five-point scales, from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .73$ ), and we looked at number of working hours per week, and salary (open questions).<sup>4</sup>

### *Results and discussion*

A MANOVA revealed that women with their partner's name, compared to women who kept their own names, are on average older ( $M_{partner} = 48.22$  vs.  $M_{own} = 42.4$  years) and have a lower educational level ( $M_{partner} = 5.27$  vs.  $M_{own} = 7.08$ ). Additionally, women with their partner's name have more children ( $M_{partner} = 2.2$  vs.  $M_{own} = 1.9$ ) and they also showed to have more conservative family norms than women with their own name ( $M_{partner} = 2.44$  vs.  $M_{own} = 1.76$ ). We furthermore found differences regarding work: Women with their partner's name score higher on work ethics ( $M_{partner} = 3.25$  vs.  $M_{own} = 2.89$ ), however, women with their partner's name work fewer hours per week (controlled for age:  $M_{partner} = 22.4$  vs.  $M_{own} = 28.3$  hours) and they have a lower salary (controlled for working hours, educational level and age,  $M_{partner} = \text{€}980$  vs.  $M_{own} = \text{€}1156$ ; all means reported differ at  $p < .001$ )<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, similar to previous research (Hoffnung, 2006; Twenge, 1997), we find that women with their partner's name differ from women with their own name regarding age, educational level and number of children, demonstrating similarities between the Netherlands and the US. Moreover, we find interesting differences in beliefs between name keepers and name changers regarding family and work, and we find differences in working hours and salary.

Women with their partner's name are thus not only associated with tradition, family unity, social norms, communal, mother, lower educational level (Etaugh, et al., 1999; Hoffnung, 2006; Twenge, 1997), but we also find a relation between partner's name and more conservative family and work norms, less working hours and a lower salary (more stereotypically feminine). Conversely, women with their own name are not only associated with personal identity, feminism, personal agency, less likely to be mother and have a higher educational level (Etaugh et al., 1999; Hoffnung, 2006; Twenge, 1997), but we also find a relation between own name and more liberal family and work norms, more working hours and a higher salary (less stereotypically feminine). In the studies that follow, we tested whether these different associations with women's names also affect judgments.

## Study 2

In this study, we tested the hypothesis that a woman with her partner's name will be judged more in line with the female stereotype (more caring, dependent, and emotional, while less competent and intelligent), as compared to a woman who kept her own name, who will be judged less in line with the female stereotype (less caring,

dependent, and emotional, while more competent and intelligent). We test our hypothesis using a scenario.

### *Method*

Ninety Dutch students (36 female, 54 male,  $M_{age} = 21.4$ ,  $SD_{age} = 2.4$ ) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (own name, partner's name).

*Procedure.* Participants were asked to imagine that they were invited to a party of a colleague. At this party they were introduced to the married couple Peter Bosboom and Helga Kuipers (own name) or to the married couple Peter and Helga Kuipers (partner's name). Subsequently, participants were asked to judge Helga on five stereotype-related female attributes (*caring*, *competent*, *dependent*, *intelligent*, and *emotional*) ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely* (see Deaux & Kite, 1993).

### *Results and discussion*

The mean judgments of Helga are reported in Table 1. As predicted, a MANOVA revealed that when Helga used the name of her partner, she was judged as more caring,  $F(1,88) = 41.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .32$ , more dependent,  $F(1,88) = 30.99$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .26$ , less intelligent,  $F(1,88) = 20.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .19$ , more emotional,  $F(1,88) = 8.32$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .09$ , and marginally less competent,  $F(1,88) = 3.54$ ,  $p = .063$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .04$ , in comparison with Helga who uses here own name. We also tested for gender differences, but none were observed in this or any of the other studies.

These results indicate that women with the name of the partner are indeed judged in a more gender stereotypical manner. There are, however, a few questions that remain unanswered. First, we do not know the direction of our effects: Is a woman with her partner's name judged as more stereotypical compared to a control group (woman with

no surname mentioned), or is a woman who uses her own name judged as less stereotypical than the control group, or both? Second, we cannot be completely sure that it is the salience of the female stereotype that drives our effects rather than a general 'halo-effect'. That is, our dependent variables were judgments on traits specific to gender stereotypical traits (e.g., emotional), but to rule out the possibility of a halo-effect, we should show that there are no effects on general traits (e.g., optimistic). Third, we did not include a hyphenated name condition, so we do not know whether women with a hyphenated name would be judged similar as a woman with her partner's name or not. Study 3 was designed to address these issues.

### Study 3

In Study 3, we again tested the hypothesis that depending on surname, women are judged differently. To test our hypothesis, we created an ambiguous story about a person. This person was either a woman with her partner's name, a woman with a hyphenated name, a woman who was not married but lived together with a man, a woman with no surname, or a male. We predicted that the surname of the person in the scenario would activate female stereotypes to a lesser or greater degree, which in turn would be used to interpret the ambiguous behavior of the person described in the scenario. More specifically, we predicted that the woman with a hyphenated name and the woman with her partner's name would be judged more in accordance with female stereotypes than the woman with no surname (i.e., the control condition). A woman who kept her own name; an unmarried woman living with her partner; and a male would be judged as less stereotypical female than a woman for whom no surname information was given.

#### *Method*

One hundred and thirteen Dutch students (58 females, 55 males,  $M_{age} = 21.6$ ,  $SD_{age} = 1.8$ ) were randomly assigned to one of six conditions (partner's name, hyphenated name, own name, not married living with partner, male, no surname).

*Procedure.* In this study, participants were asked to form an impression of the person in a scenario. The person in the scenario was described as dependent in an ambiguous way (see Banaji, Hardin & Rothman, 1993; Stapel & Koomen, 1998; 2001), for example: "Agnetha said she liked her work because she did not have to show initiative or make any decisions", or, "I proposed to go to the movies. She liked the idea, but after asking her boyfriend she said she was going shopping with him instead". The rationale behind this paradigm is that to interpret the ambiguous person's description, people use the information that is available of the person, in this case, the surname of the target person. When differences in interpretation of the ambiguous information, are found, we can conclude that different surnames make different associations accessible resulting in different judgments (see for further details, Banaji et al., 1993; Stapel & Koomen, 1998; 2001).

We introduced the target person keeping the first name of the person constant (which was Agnetha, except for the male condition), and we manipulated the specific surname: Ellemers, own name Vonk (partner's name condition); Ellemers-Vonk, own name Vonk (hyphenated name condition); Ellemers, married with Vonk (own name condition); Ellemers, living together with Vonk (not married living with partner condition); Paul (male condition)<sup>6</sup> or Agnetha (no surname condition). After the participants read the scenario, they were asked to judge the person in the story on three gender stereotypical traits (*dependent, ambitious, intelligent*) and three non-gender

stereotypical traits (*optimistic, greedy, kind*) on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 = *not at all*, to 9 = *extremely* (see Deaux & Kite, 1993).

### *Results and discussion*

We conducted a MANOVA on the judgment scores (see Table 2), which showed, as expected, that the conditions differed for the stereotypical traits dependent,  $F(5,108) = 10.24, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .44$ , ambitious,  $F(5,108) = 6.72, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .35$ , and intelligent,  $F(5,108) = 5.38, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .30$ . As expected, the conditions did not differ for the non-gender stereotypical traits optimistic, greedy and kind,  $F_s < 1$ .

To find out whether the conditions differed in the predicted direction, we conducted simple effects tests (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991). Below we will report the comparison of the different surname conditions to the condition in which no surname was given.

Agneta with her partner's name and Agneta with a hyphenated name was judged *more* stereotypically feminine than Agneta with no surname, such that that *Ellemers, own name Vonk* (partner's name) was judged as more dependent,  $t(107) = 2.73, p < .01, d = .53$ , less ambitious,  $t(107) = -2.19, p < .05, d = -.42$ , and less intelligent,  $t(107) = -2.39, p < .05, d = -.46$ , in comparison with the *no surname condition*. Likewise, *Ellemers-Vonk, own name Vonk* (hyphenated name) was judged as more dependent,  $t(107) = 2.09, p < .05, d = .56$ , less ambitious,  $t(107) = -2.43, p < .05, d = -.47$ , and less intelligent,  $t(107) = -2.24, p < .05$ , in comparison with the *no surname condition*.

Agneta with her own name and Agneta who was living together was judged as *less* stereotypically feminine in comparison with Agneta with no surname, such that *Ellemers, married with Vonk* (own name) was judged as more independent,  $t(107) = -$

3.70,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = -.72$ , more ambitious  $t(107) = 2.57$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .50$ , and more intelligent  $t(107) = 2.65$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d = .51$ , in comparison with the *no surname condition*. Furthermore, *Ellemers*, living together with *Vonk* (not married living with partner) was judged as more independent,  $t(107) = -2.51$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .49$ , more ambitious,  $t(107) = 1.95$ ,  $p = .054$ ,  $d = .38$ , and more intelligent  $t(107) = 3.02$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d = .58$ , in comparison with the *no surname condition*. Finally, *Paul* (male) was also judged as more independent,  $t(107) = -3.46$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d = .67$ , more ambitious,  $t(107) = 2.07$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .40$ , and more intelligent,  $t(107) = 2.17$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .42$ , in comparison with the *no surname condition*.

In sum, Study 3 confirmed our hypothesis that women who changed their name are judged more in accordance with the female stereotype than women who kept their own name. More specifically, both a woman with the name of her partner and a woman with a hyphenated name were judged more stereotypically (more dependent, less intelligent and less ambitious) than a woman for whom no surname information was given (i.e., the control condition). A woman with her own name, an unmarried woman living with her partner, and a man were all judged in less female stereotypic terms (less dependent, more intelligent and more ambitious) than a woman with no surname information.

These results demonstrate that it is not only that women who take the name of their partner or use a hyphenated name are judged as more stereotypical, but also that women who use their own name are judged as less stereotypical in comparison to a woman with no surname. As the means of the control group (woman with no surname) were in the middle, it can be concluded that woman who take the name of their partner or

use a hyphenated name are judged more in line with female stereotypes than women who use their own name.

The results of Study 2 and 3 have shown that women with the name of their partner or a hyphenated name were judged as more caring, more emotional, more dependent, less intelligent and less ambitious. In the fourth and final study, we tested a possible implication of the effects of marital name change on judgment, using a job application context.

#### Study 4

In Study 4, we tested if these stereotypical judgments have more practical consequences. Previous research showed that employment decisions are influenced by implicit discrimination (e.g., a person with an African-American sounding name is less likely get a callback for a job interview than a person with a White sounding name: Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; see also Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). When women with their partner's name are judged more in accordance with the female stereotype, this can have negative consequences for the chances that she will be hired for a job and estimates for her salary as compared to women who keep their own name.

#### *Method*

Fifty Dutch students (30 females, 20 males,  $M_{age} = 20.2$ ,  $SD_{age} = 1.8$ ) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (partner's name, own name).

*Procedure.* The task for the participants was to judge an applicant for the position of Human Resource Manager, based on an e-mail. Participants were told that nowadays the Internet is frequently used in job applications and that we were interested in the

influences of the accompanying e-mail on the selection process. Participants received an e-mail text in which information about a female candidate was given with the instruction to examine this carefully and subsequently answer some questions about the candidate. Besides the message from the candidate, the e-mail also contained a memo. This memo showed information about the candidate, for example the name and the civil state of the applicant. In the *partner's name condition*, the name of the applicant was Roos Ellemers, own name Fischer and her civil state was married to Dirk Ellemers. In the *own name condition*, the candidate was named Roos Ellemers, own name Ellemers and her civil state was married to Dirk Fischer.<sup>7</sup> After participants examined the e-mail, they were asked to judge the candidate Roos Ellemers on the items *dependent*, *ambitious* and *intelligent* (from 1 = *not at all*, to 7 = *extremely*), to indicate how likely they thought it was that the candidate would be hired (from 1 = *low*, to 7 = *high*), and to estimate her potential salary (open question, net per month).

#### *Results and discussion*

The mean judgments are reported in Table 3. A MANOVA revealed that in comparison with the applicant with her own name, the applicant with her partner's name was judged as more dependent,  $F(1,48) = 7.24, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .13$ , less ambitious,  $F(1,48) = 6.04, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .11$ , and less intelligent,  $F(1,48) = 5.51, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .10$ . Furthermore, participants estimated the chances that the applicant with her partner's name would be hired as lower,  $F(1,48) = 4.31, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .08$  and participants thought that she would earn €861,21 per month less in comparison with the woman with her own name,  $F(1,48) = 8.76, p < .01, \eta^2_p = .15$ .

Study 4 showed, consistent with Study 2 and 3, that a woman with her partner's name is judged as more dependent, less ambitious and less intelligent. Furthermore, these judgments affected the chance that a woman would be hired as well as the estimation of her salary: compared to a woman who kept her own name, she was less likely to be hired and her salary was estimated considerably lower.

It is important to note that the participants in this study were all students and it is unlikely that they have a lot of experience with the job market (e.g., applying for a job, hiring employees, estimating salaries, etcetera). This is of course true for both experimental conditions, but this could have affected our results. Furthermore, in daily life it is unlikely that a woman will introduce herself with both her own name and the name of her partner and some women use different names depending on the situation (see Scheuble & Johnson, 2005). Thus, marital name change is not always as evident/visible as in the present study. The effects of marital name change on judgments are likely to occur only when this name change is noticeable for the perceiver, for example when addresses are changed, when forms are filled in, when one sees official documents, or when a woman uses a hyphenated name (see Study 3). In the present study, we did not include a hyphenated name condition, but given the results of Study 3, we would expect that a hyphenated name would have the same impact in an application context as a partner's name. However, to be sure about this, future research might look into this.

### General discussion

A large majority of women change their surname from the day they marry. Based on sociological data, we showed that women who take their partner's name differ on a variety of demographic variables from women who keep their own name. These variables

are to a greater or lesser degree associated with female stereotypes. We subsequently demonstrated that the choice of women to change their surname is not without consequences. In three studies, we showed that a woman with her partner's name is judged as more caring, more dependent, less intelligent, more emotional and marginally less competent in comparison with a woman who kept her own name. Furthermore, Study 3 showed that not only were women who changed their name judged as *less* independent, ambitious and intelligent, but also that a woman who kept her own name, one who was unmarried but lived with her partner, and a male were judged as *more* independent, ambitious and intelligent in comparison to a female for whom no surname information was given. Finally, Study 4 demonstrated that the chance that a job applicant with her partner's name will be hired was lower than that of a job applicant with her own name. Furthermore, the estimated salary of a woman with her partner's name was considerably lower: a difference of €861,21 per month.

It is notable that the effects of marital name change on judgments are specific to gender stereotypical traits and do not affect general judgments. Therefore, the results cannot be attributed to a 'halo-effect', but are more likely explained by the salience of the female stereotype. Apparently, a characteristic as subtle as a surname can cause this effect. Furthermore, both women with their partner's name as well as women with a hyphenated name are judged more in accordance to the female stereotype.

Interestingly, in the relevant literature a common distinction in marital name choice is traditional versus nontraditional and most researches include hyphenating in the nontraditional category, together with keeping one's own name (e.g., Hoffnung 2006; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993; Twenge, 1997; for an exception see Goldin & Shim, 2004).

Women who choose to hyphenate might also view this option as nontraditional, as they appear to have more feminist attitudes and score higher on personal agency – similar to women who keep their own name (Twenge, 1997, see also Hoffnung 2006). Our findings, however, indicate that the ‘nontraditional’ choice of hyphenating has ‘traditional’ consequences for judgment.

Our findings seem, somewhat at odds with the results of Forbes and colleagues (Forbes, Adams-Curtis, White, & Hamm, 2002), who found that women with hyphenated surnames, in comparison with ‘the average married woman’, were perceived as more friendly, good-natured, industrious, and intellectually curious. However, different paradigms could explain the opposing findings. That is, Forbes and colleagues explicitly told participants that the study aimed to test perceptions of individuals with hyphenated last names. Moreover, they explicitly instructed participants to compare a married woman with a hyphenated last name to the average married woman. Because the comparison was made very explicit, participants were likely to focus on the differences between them and married women. Such explicit procedures are susceptible to demand effects. To avoid the possibility that results are driven by the experimental procedures, we believe it is important to be careful with revealing the true purpose of these type of studies and, more important, to use a between subjects design with the different targets in different conditions.

But, in line with Forbes et al (2002), Etaugh and colleagues (1999) find that women with a hyphenated name are judged as agentic as women with their own name, whereas women with their partner’s name are judged as more communal. Thus, even though we showed that women with a hyphenated name were judged in the same way as

women with the name of their husband, it is possible that hyphenating is not always seen as a traditional choice. One explanation for the difference in findings may be that we collected our data in The Netherlands and it is possible that in other countries hyphenating is more associated with being nontraditional. Therefore, an interesting avenue for future research is to investigate cross-cultural differences in marital name change and its consequences for judgment.

A possible limitation of our research is that we did not test whether the names we used are seen as neutral names. That is, it could be that the names are associated with certain judgments (e.g., the name 'Ellemers' might be regarded as more upperclass than 'Kuipers') and that this affected our results. Although this is a possibility, we think it is very unlikely that these associations produced our results, as when this would be the case, it would be more likely that specific name associations would affect the general judgments as well. However, Study 3 demonstrated differences only on traits regarding gender stereotyping. Furthermore, in all three studies different names were used, so the possibility that each of these names would activate the same associations is doubtful.

It is also important to note that the participants in the present studies were all students and it could be that their age affected the results. Maybe we would obtain different results with participants from older generations, for whom keeping one's own name would be uncommon. However, it does not seem to be the case that marital name change is a phenomenon that will soon be history. We conducted a survey among ninety Dutch students (36 female, 54 male,  $M_{age} = 21.4$ ,  $SD_{age} = 2.4$ ) in which we asked females to report their intentions regarding marital name choice, and we asked males what they would like their future wife to do. Of the females in our sample, 83.3% planned on

changing their name (22.2% prefer to take their partner's name, 61.1% prefer to hyphenate) and 81.5% of the males want their wife to change her name (35.2% prefer her to take his name, 46.3% prefer her to hyphenate). Even though this sample is not representative for the Western population and it is too small to draw strong conclusions, the data clearly indicate that the majority of these young and highly educated women are unlikely to keep their own name in the future (but an increase in hyphenating might occur).

A study conducted in the United States also indicated that marital name change is not about to disappear. Goldin and Shim (2004) showed that taking over the partner's name actually increased after the 1990s (based on Massachusetts birth records and Harvard alumni surveys). The reason for this increase is unclear, but the authors speculate about an earlier decrease because of peer pressure and the possibility that keeping one's surname "seems less salient as a way of publicly supporting equality for women than it did in the late 1970s and the 1980s" (Goldin & Shim, 2004, p. 159).

If women knew how they would be judged, would they still change their name? Suppose the differences in salary became reality? What's in a name? Calculated to a working life: 361.708,20 euros. That is more than a million ice creams, a large family house in the middle of The Netherlands, or four luxury BMW's from the 5-series, with all accessories.

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### Footnotes

1. We define changing one's surname as taking over the partner's name as well as hyphenating. Thus, when we refer to change, this includes both.

2. Not all countries have the same practices and laws; however, it goes beyond the purpose of this paper to describe these differences in detail.

3. It is important to note that these are *general* differences and that it is extremely unlikely that the women who take their partner's name and the women who keep their own name are homogeneous groups.

4. The question what name women use had four possible answers: *own name*, *partner's name*, *hyphenated* or *depends*. Women in the category *hyphenated* or *depends* did not differ from *partner's name*. For ease of presentation, we only report the difference between partner's name and own name.

5. Even when the analysis were run with a random sample of 200 participants, a similar significant pattern of results was found.

6. We added a male condition, to see whether the women with her own name would be judged similarly to a man. This would be an indication that women with their own name would be judged less in accordance with the female stereotype.

7. Because the information about surname was explicitly presented on a separate memo, it was clear to the participants that this was relevant information. This makes it likely that participants did pick up this information and judged it in their judgment.

*Table 1.* Mean judgment based on last name (Study 1).

	Own name	Partner's name
Caring	3.84	5.00
Competent	3.58	3.26
Dependent	3.30	5.06
Intelligent	4.16	3.21
Emotional	3.95	4.66

Table 2. Mean judgment based on last name (Study 2). Means in rows with different subscripts differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

	Target					
	Hyphenated name	Partner's name	Own name	Living together	No surname (control)	Male
Dependent	7.32 <sup>a</sup>	7.11 <sup>a</sup>	5.20 <sup>b</sup>	5.58 <sup>b</sup>	6.41 <sup>c</sup>	5.26 <sup>b</sup>
Ambitious	5.05 <sup>a</sup>	4.95 <sup>a</sup>	6.71 <sup>b</sup>	6.84 <sup>b</sup>	6.00 <sup>c</sup>	6.78 <sup>b</sup>
Intelligent	5.00 <sup>a</sup>	5.06 <sup>a</sup>	6.01 <sup>b</sup>	6.76 <sup>b</sup>	5.88 <sup>c</sup>	6.68 <sup>b</sup>
Optimistic	7.18 <sup>a</sup>	7.00 <sup>a</sup>	7.14 <sup>a</sup>	7.62 <sup>a</sup>	6.73 <sup>a</sup>	7.14 <sup>a</sup>
Greedy	3.53 <sup>a</sup>	3.16 <sup>a</sup>	3.10 <sup>a</sup>	3.05 <sup>a</sup>	3.47 <sup>a</sup>	3.11 <sup>a</sup>
Kind	4.69 <sup>a</sup>	4.63 <sup>a</sup>	4.15 <sup>a</sup>	4.58 <sup>a</sup>	4.12 <sup>a</sup>	4.16 <sup>a</sup>

*Table 3.* Mean judgments base on last name (Study 3).

	Own name	Partner's name
Dependent	3.33	4.27
Ambitious	3.96	3.04
Intelligent	3.96	3.04
Chance of being hired	4.33	3.54
Estimate of salary (net a month)	€3020.83	€2159.62