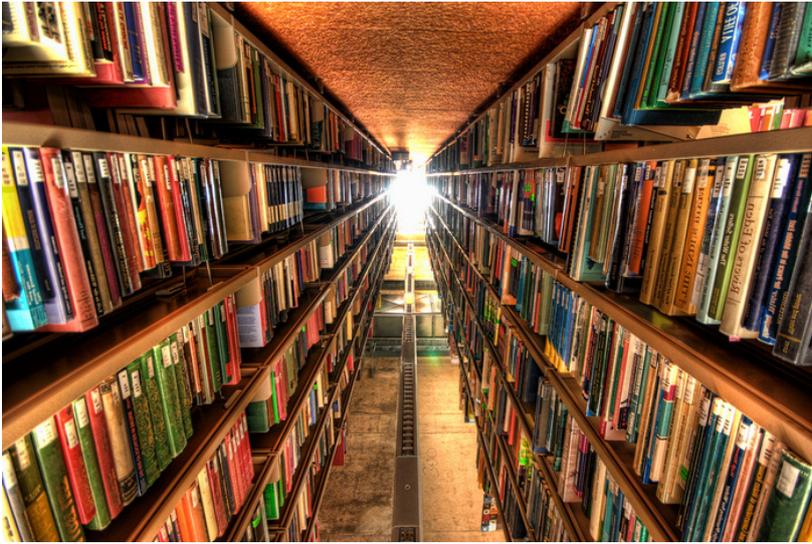


## Applications of Origins in bibliometric research



### Key messages

- Just as occurs in most other professions, university researchers tend to be recruited more from certain minority groups than from others.
- An examination of the names of authors of papers published in academic journals reveals not just which minority groups tend to be under- or over-represented but also unexpected variations in the areas they tend to specialise in.

### Context

Bibliometrics is an academic discipline which involves the quantitative study of research publications. Origins has been used in a number of research studies in this field undertaken at King's College London. Five of these studies have resulted in the publication of papers in peer-reviewed journals as a result of their relevance to priorities in research funding.

## Findings

The first, in 2014, examined the outputs of researchers in two different subjects, astronomy and cancer, and from four countries: Italy, Sweden, the UK and the USA. The Origins software was used to classify their names by ethnicity and by sex. Results showed that researchers in Sweden and the UK were much more ethnically diverse than in Italy and that in all four nations there was a much higher percentage of women authors in publications relating to cancer than to astronomy. In the USA, the largest groups of non-European named researchers were from China and India.

A second study looked at the composition of all world-wide lung cancer researchers. This examined their ethnic distribution within a given country, and the world-wide location of researchers with names indicating an origin from that country. For example it was found that the majority of Indian lung cancer researchers were now working in the USA (and not in India), but that most such researchers from China, Japan and Korea were still working in their own country.

A third study focussed on the three principal ethnic groups involved in research publication in Malaysia, Chinese, Indians and Malays. When Malaysia was granted independence in 1957, legislation was passed to discriminate in favour of Malays to redress the dominance of the Chinese community in commercial and academic life. Origins analysis demonstrated that this legislation had succeeded in increasing the proportion of publications among Malaysian universities by people with Muslim names from 20% in 1972-84 to 65% thirty years later.

The purpose of the fourth and fifth studies was to inform the debate about Brexit by measuring the presence in the UK of cancer researchers from abroad, particularly from the rest of the European Union (EU). The fourth study determined which areas of the UK had most cancer research immigrants (they were mainly London, followed by Cambridge, Oxford, Manchester and Birmingham), and the regions of the world from which they came (principally elsewhere in the EU, followed by South Asia and other Asian countries). It also showed that women had increased their contribution to UK cancer research publications from 35% in 2009-11 to 39% in 2014-16.

The fifth study, published in 2018 in *The Lancet Oncology*, established that UK-based cancer researchers with other European-origin names were involved in 49% of UK cancer research papers during the period 2009-11. These papers were published in journals with a higher impact on other researchers than ones with similar characteristics but no European-named authors.



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