

Origins and Marriage



People get married and women change their names. Doesn't that make Origins inaccurate?

No. There are **four** reasons:

Most people marry within their own Origins group, so a name change makes no difference to their Origins classification

Over 9 out of 10 adults in most minority groups, and more than 24 out of 25 in the White British group partner within their own census group according to ONS, so any name change won't affect their Origins coding.

Many partnered women cohabit, rather than marry; and many married women keep their parents' names anyway

Of 19m families, 3.3m cohabit (12.9 are married or civil partners, 2.8 lone parents). It's estimated that 20 % of women won't change their names to adopt their husbands' names. (See footnote*)

The number of potential name-changers is statistically tiny

To get an idea of the numbers of potential name-changers, let's assume every partnered individual who isn't a cohabitee is or has been married (i.e. around 32m people, ignoring for example, divorced or separated women who have reverted to their parents' name). According to 1 above that means about 1.55 m individuals (max) married out of group. That implies around a maximum of 0.8m women, a fifth of whom won't change their names. So fewer than 0.65m women are likely to adopt a new name on marriage that doesn't reflect their own Origins group. This group of 0.65m women amounts to just 1.0% of the entire population; and their impact on Origins' accuracy is statistically trivial, both for this reason and the fourth reason below.

Men and women are broadly speaking equally likely to marry out; so the statistical effect of name change on Origins is trivial

Men and women in most ethnic groups are equally likely or unlikely to marry out, according to ONS data. Therefore, in most census groups the number of minority women adopting (mostly) “White British” names is balanced by the proportion of women from a “White British” Origins group adopting minority names; so statistically gender and marriage have little impact on Origins coding, since for each of the 2% (0.65m) of women who change from one kind of name to another there is likely to be another woman who makes the reverse change.

References

*<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2017>

Context: married people were a third less likely than cohabitantes to be in an interethnic relationship, thus reducing the impact of marriage on Origins even further.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/articles/whatdoesthe2011censustellusaboutinterethnicrelationships/2014-07-03>)

For further details contact:

Esther Curtis

Webber Phillips

esther.curtis@webberphillips.com