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Crossing the Threshold: 'Mixed Marriages' and the Census of the Republic of Ireland

ABSTRACT: Using data from the 2016 Census of Population of the Republic of Ireland which reports on marriages and religions, this paper seeks to address the issue of 'mixed marriages'; not only Catholic-Protestant marriages but others who have crossed the boundary between one realm and another through marriage. Written from the perspective of a demographic statistician this paper uses all 'official' data, limited though that data may be. In particular the paper explores the only census table which deals with marriages between people of different religions. Special attention is paid to those in 'migrant' groups which have increased their numbers dramatically in the least 50 years. Data is explored which distinguishes between those living in Dublin and those living elsewhere; data is also explored for married woman aged under 40. Conclusions are drawn which relate this limited data to historical evidence.

KEYWORDS: Ireland, census, mixed marriage, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Hindu, Orthodox, Apostolic, Buddhist, migrant.

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Introduction

In Ireland a 'mixed marriage' has traditionally referred to a Catholic-Protestant marriage in a society where religious identity has been and in many respects remains an important source of community identity.

Using data from the 2016 Census of Population of the Republic of Ireland which reports on marriages and religions, this paper seeks to address the issue of mixed marriages: crossing the boundary between one realm and another through marriage. Matters which are normally kept separate – conceptually and symbolically – may meet at 'crossing points' in the spiritual journeys undertaken by both parties to a marriage. A mixed marriage may involve participation in religiously significant rituals new to an individual. For some the different realms may be geographically separate, involving physical movement from one continent to another.

This paper is written from the perspective of a demographic statistician using all the 'official' data available, with the limitations and advantages which such data provides. The two relevant sources of data, both produced by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), are the Census of Population itself and the publicly available records of births and marriages.

Although it may seem paradoxical, these sources are addressed first by examining census data on 'no religion' – a statement that the individual has no religion to declare. There follows an examination of the only table publicly provided by the CSO which addresses marriages between people who declared religions or denominations which differ one from the other.

Marriages between two people who declared the same religion or denomination are then compared, religion label by religion label, using births and marriages data to develop an argument about how marriage may have altered in the Republic of Ireland over recent years,

The paper then examines data on those married couples who declared different religions. Special attention is paid to those who declared a religion or denomination of 'migrant' groups which have increased their numbers dramatically since the latter part of the 20th century.

While the census data used applies to the Republic of Ireland as a whole, it proved possible to obtain some additional data from the CSO for two limited selections of religions and denominations. One such table distinguished between those living in the City and County of Dublin and those living elsewhere; the other selection identified (for the whole Republic) data for married woman aged under 40, those aged 40 to 59 and those 60 and above. As much analysis as is possible is generated from these tables.

Conclusions are drawn which note the limitation of the data available but relate that limited data to historical evidence.[1]

[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the joint BASR/ISASR Conference *Borders and Boundaries: 'Religion' on the Periphery* held at Queen's University Belfast 3-5 September 2018.

Historical background

In a mixed marriage maintaining a connection with both communities is likely to have its difficulties, but there are levels of difficulty. Marriage between people of different Protestant denominations might appear on the surface to be rather less difficult than marriage between a Protestant and a Roman Catholic. Marriage involving someone with a Christian background might commonly be thought more difficult if the marriage partner is from a Muslim or Hindu background.

Connections between two religious realms may be more problematic to maintain where there has been no close geographical connection between the realms. However connections may be easier where two communities have occupied the same geography over many generations, as is the case of Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland connections in Ireland.

As Jameson has it (2014, p.65): 'The problems surrounding mixed marriages in Ireland stem not only from theological objections, but also from perceived political affiliations.' In the latter part of the nineteenth century the growth of the demands for land reform, for self-government – or even for independence – was closely associated with Roman Catholics. There were some Protestant supporters of these demands, but the vast majority of support came from Roman Catholics.

After land reform was granted,[2] pressure for the move away from government by Westminster, particularly in the twenty-six counties which later formed the Irish Free State, ensured that Protestants and Roman Catholics, broadly speaking, supported different political solutions for the island.

In the latter years of the 19th century there had been tussles over the religion of children of mixed marriages. In large parts of the country there was a long-held informal convention that children 'went with' the religion of the parent of their own sex: boys with their father's religion and girls with their mother's (Fernihough *et al*., 2014).

This convention also applied in other parts of Europe in the 19th century, with more or less rigour. In Transylvania, for example, this convention had become law in 1791 and continued until the Roman Catholic Church introduced a Code of Canon Law in 1917 which forbade mixed marriage altogether.

Early in the 20th century the Roman Catholic Church, with more than 90% of the population the dominant church in what became the Republic of Ireland, imposed a requirement on all who were not Roman Catholics who sought to marry a Roman Catholic. In order to contract a marriage recognised by the Roman Catholic Church, all 'non-Catholics' were required to sign a legally binding declaration that all children of the forthcoming marriage would be brought-up as Roman Catholics. Although widely thought to be otherwise at the time, it appears that this requirement

[2] Granted not least by George Wyndham's Land Purchase Act, 1903.

by the hierarchy was only indirectly a result of a papal *Ne Temere* decree which came into force in 1908 (Buck, 2011; Dunn, 2012; Jameson, 2014).

It was not until seventy years later that this requirement to sign a legally binding agreement was relaxed by the Roman Catholic Church, but before that it had grown considerably stronger. In the early 1950s it had been incorporated into the law of the land. In the Tilson judgement of 1952 the President of the High Court, Justice Gavan Duffy, confirmed that the *Ne Temere* decree was deemed to be part of the law of the Irish Republic – as the Irish Free State became in 1937. This judgement was confirmed by the Republic's Supreme Court.

Duffy ruled (Jameson 2014, 78) that the prenuptial agreement to bring his children up Roman Catholic which had been signed by a Mr. Tilson, far from being in conflict with the Irish Constitution, was instead "consonant with its spirit and purpose and tends directly" to safeguard marriage, the harmony of the family, and the "innate and imprescriptible right of the child to religious education".

Many historians of the period have noted that most Protestants perceived the state as favouring Roman Catholics over Protestants. As Marianne Elliott has it (2009): "The Tilson case was a reminder, if Protestants needed one, of the way in which Catholic mores pervaded Irish public life."

So throughout the 20th century, almost all of the children of mixed marriages were brought up as Roman Catholic. The extent of mixed marriages was an important issue throughout that period – at least for the 200,000 members of the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church – many of them farming families. The issue of mixed marriages appears to have related to the issue of how much Protestant-owned land would pass to Roman Catholic children.

Research on mixed marriages in the mid-twentieth century

It was not until the late 1960s that any significant research was carried out on the demographic situation of the three longstanding Protestant churches in the Republic, namely the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church.

In the 1960s these three churches constituted only a little over 5% of the population. Brendan Walsh, then a researcher working (inter alia) on demographic issues at the Economic and Social Research Institute, later Professor of National Economics at University College, Dublin, explored the extent of mixed marriages, basing his work on material from the 1961 Census and some material on Vital Statistics produced by the Central Statistics Office.

Walsh (1970, p.27-29) reported that analysis of *both* census data *and* Vital Statistics reports produced by the Registrar General indicated that in the early 1960s about 30% of Church of Ireland and Presbyterian men, and 20% of women, were marrying Roman Catholic spouses. By 1961, he

asserted, one in four marriages involving a Protestant spouse was with a Roman Catholic.

It is plausible to account for the absolute and relative decline in the Protestant population of the twenty-six counties from 8.3 per cent in 1911 to 5.1 per cent in 1961 by the increasing impact of mixed marriages on the Protestant minority during that period.[3]

Walsh's analysis of family size by occupational group suggested that the average family size for Roman Catholic families was significantly larger than that for Protestant families for each occupational group.

Walsh's estimates tally with those of O'Leary who inferred from new data in the 1991 census that the proportion of native-born Protestants marrying Roman Catholics in the Republic of Ireland rose from 6.1% before 1926 to 12.2% in 1942–1946 and 33.5% in 1962–1966. Perhaps because of post-Vatican II liberalisation of Roman Catholic teaching in regard to 'inter-faith' marriages the proportion rose further thereafter.

O'Leary (1999, p.126) suggested that part of the reason for the rise in the proportion of partners recorded with different religions was a reduction in the *post*-marital conversion rate in later decades (from one-half in the 1970s to one-seventh in the mid-1990s). He asserted that urbanisation and secularisation also helped erode the barriers between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

For fifty years or more Protestants seemed to be aware that they were 'losing out' both through the effect of *Ne Temere* 'removing' about one-quarter of 'their' children and through having fewer children when they married a fellow Protestant.

Change in 'Marriage' as an Institution?

Marriage – as understood to be the legal recognition by the state of a formal union between one man and one woman, conventionally before the birth of children – appears to have been almost universal in Ireland from (at least) early in the 19th century until the late 1970s.

The current state of marriage as an institution in the Republic

In the middle of the 20th century a very small proportion of all births were recorded as occurring out of wedlock. This proportion may be lower than expected since anecdotal evidence suggests that many children born out of wedlock were incorporated, at birth, into the family of the mother who may have been either unmarried, or married but not to the baby's father.

[3] The situation in Northern Ireland, where Roman Catholics constituted 35% of the population, was dramatically different: in 1971 only 1.5% (1,177 out of a total of 76,009) of Roman Catholic men were married to Protestant women and only 2,434 of 77,266 Roman Catholic women (3.75%) were married to Protestant men (Lee, 1985).

In the early 1960s 2% of all births were recorded as born out of wedlock; by the early 1970s this had risen to just over 3% of all births.[4] During the late 1970s the numbers of children born out of wedlock doubled from about 2,000 per year to about 4,000. By the early 1980s just over 6% of children were recorded as born out of wedlock.

The doubling in less than one decade (the 1970s) was dwarfed by the increase between the early 1980s and 1991 to over 8,000 births (17%) outside marriage at a time when the number of births overall had declined from almost 71,000 to less than 53,000. This increase was overtaken by a further increase to over 31% in 2000.

From one-in-fifty children recorded as being born out of wedlock in the 1950s and 1960s the rate had risen to almost one-in-three by 2000. In the first two decades of the 21st century children born out of wedlock increased still further. However the increase was less marked than in the 1980s and 1990s; from 2000, when the rate was 31%, to 2019, the rate rose to only 38%.

However while the proportion of children born out of wedlock rose substantially during the late 1980s and 1990s, it seems that the proportion of parents who became married soon after the birth of those children continued to be very high.

It therefore looks as if the institution of marriage remains an established part of Irish society – though its character appears to have changed substantially in the 50 years from 1970.

Change in social structure in the first twenty years of the 21st century

Changes in social attitudes in the Republic of Ireland have been rapid in the period since 2000, but attitudes had already begun to change in the 1980s when four major issues affecting the social structure of the Republic of Ireland – divorce, abortion, contraception and homosexual acts – moved into the public sphere.[5]

In June 1986 a proposal to amend the Constitution of the Republic of Ireland to recognise (limited) divorce was rejected in a referendum by the substantial margin of 63% to 36% – the motion was passed in only six constituencies, all in middle-class parts of Dublin. Limited permission for artificial contraception was introduced in the same period.

Divorce campaigners continued their efforts and the matter came back to the vote in November 1995 when limited permission for divorce was passed by the very small margin of 9,114 votes. While the change in the vote – of almost 14% – was remarkably consistent across the state, there remained a marked urban/rural divide.

Almost 25 years later the limited permission for divorce was removed from the Constitution in a referendum in May 2019. This

[4] All data on births and marriages taken from relevant annual and Quarterly Reports of Vital Statistics compiled by the Central Statistics Office (of the Republic of Ireland).

[5] Details of constitutional amendments and parliamentary debates taken from the *Irish Times* (passim)

referendum proposal was passed by 82% to 18% – every constituency returning at least 75% in favour. As a result divorce became a matter for parliamentary legislation and not for the Constitution.

Abortion also became an issue in the public sphere. In 2002 a constitutional amendment which would have permitted abortion where the life of a woman was threatened was only narrowly defeated. It took until 2018 for a substantial majority in a referendum to remove abortion from the Constitution; as with divorce, abortion thereby became a matter for parliamentary decision only.

Artificial contraception and homosexual relationships also became issues in the public sphere. Both – at least initially – were fiercely opposed by church leaders. Artificial contraception remained illegal until 1980 when a limited reform, the *Health (Family Planning) Act*, permitted medical prescription for family planning. It took several amendments over decades to permit advertising of contraceptives.

Homosexual acts were illegal until an appeal in 1988 to the European Court of Human Rights was successful; the law was repealed in 1993. After a great deal of sometimes acrimonious debate, same-sex Civil Partnerships were recognised by the *Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act* in 2010. In May 2015 same-sex marriages were approved in a constitutional referendum by a larger majority than even liberal elements of the press expected; over 62% voted in favour.

Finding marriage partners

Where have young people circulated in order to identify a potential marriage partner? Thirty years ago the management of schools essentially fell into two categories: well over 90% controlled by one of many Roman Catholic agencies; and the remainder – about 300 schools – controlled by one of many Protestant agencies.

A large proportion of those who attended Roman Catholic schools moved into social or cultural activities in which almost all involved were from a Roman Catholic background. A small proportion took part in sporting or cultural activities with a non-Catholic ethos where they mixed with those who attended Protestant-managed schools. This has been explored by Ruane (2007) as 'de-ethnicisation'.

By 2016 the management of schools fell into three general categories: Roman Catholic, Protestant and a third category comprising an increasing number of schools controlled either by the 'Educate Together' movement or by multi-community groups which explicitly excluded religion from the ethos of the relevant school. Furthermore a few schools managed by church agencies had reduced the extent of denominational teaching and encouraged cross-denominational and inter-religious communication.

The Census of Population and Vital Statistics in the 21st Century

Registration of marriages forms a major part, along with registration of births and deaths, of the Vital Statistics collected by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The CSO is also responsible for the regular five-yearly population censuses.

Censuses of population

After each census the CSO produces a very wide range of reports and tables which seek to make sense of the responses received from the whole population.[6] The issues contained in modern censuses which concern this paper are those on 'religion' and those on 'marriage'.

The issue of religion in the 2016 Census was addressed by the question: *What is your religion?*, with the instruction *Mark one box only* followed by seven boxes in one of which a tick was to be placed:

1 Roman Catholic
2 Church of Ireland
3 Islam
4 Presbyterian
5 Orthodox
6 Other, write in your RELIGION
7 No religion

The issue of marriage was dealt with by the question: *What is your current marital status?*, with the instruction *Answer if aged 15 years or over* followed by seven boxes:

1 Single (never married or never in a same-sex civil partnership)
2 Married (first marriage)
3 Re-married
4 In a registered same-sex civil partnership
5 Separated
6 Divorced
7 Widowed

The three previous censuses in the 21st century {2002, 2006 & 2011] contained the same questions, however the response boxes for the religion question were altered in 2011 to ensure that the five religions with the largest expected numbers of adherents were those specified[7] and the wording of the boxes for the marriage question was altered to take account of legislation in 2010 which permitted same-sex civil partnerships.

Data on religion and 'no religion'

[6] Material herein taken from successive Reports of the Census of Population, compiled by the Central Statistics Office.
[7] 'Methodist' was replaced by 'Orthodox'

Of the responses given by people to the tick-box question *What is your religion?* on the 2016 Census form almost 80% of the population identified as Roman Catholic, a reduction from almost 95% in the 1961 Census.

In 1961 those who had responded *No religion* constituted, at 1,107, (of whom 63.7% were males) only a tiny minority of the population; a further 5,625 supplied no information (52.8% males). By 1971 those who declared that they had no religion had increased to 7,616 (of whom 61.2% were males) and there was a dramatic increase of those who supplied no information: to 46,648 (51.2% of them males). By the 1991 census 66,270 persons – 2.05% of the population – declared they had no religion (60.7% of them males) and a further 83,375 (2.58%) (52.7% of them males) supplied no information.

The number of people who declared that they had no religion rose steadily until the Central Statistics Office decided – for the 2002 census in the first instance – that it was appropriate to include a specific 'no religion' box in which a tick could be placed. In that year (2002) 3.5% declared that they had no religion, this increased in 2006 to 4.4%, in 2011 to 5.9% and to 9.8% in 2016. The gender imbalance reduced, slowly at first – from 59.5% being males in 2002, to 59.4% in 2006 and 58.3% in 2011 – then more quickly to 55.4% being males in 2016.

The appearance of a *No religion* box in the 2002 census appears to have had an impact on the numbers who supplied no information; the number reduced to 79,094 in 2002. Remaining steady in the next two censuses, the numbers who supplied no information rose sharply to 126,274 in 2016.

Vital Statistics: marriages and births

Extensive information on marriages (from the CSO) includes the numbers solemnised in different areas, the ages of the parties involved, and the forms of religious or other celebration used. Despite containing a large amount of data about marriages, CSO reports do not provide any evidence for whether a mixed marriage had taken place.

Marriage does not appear to be a declining institution in Ireland. In the early 1990s there were about 16,000 marriages each year. A referendum in 1995 very narrowly approved divorce; since then the number of marriages has slowly increased – by 2019 there were 17,245 (opposite-sex) marriages which did *not* involve divorcees. In addition 2,428 marriages involving divorcees and 640 same-sex marriages were recorded.

The average age of both parties to (opposite-sex) marriage has steadily crept up in the last forty years. The average age of grooms reduced from 29.4 years in 1965 to a low of 26.2 years in 1977; since then it has increased steadily to a high of 36.8 years in 2019. A similar trend is evident for brides; the average age reduced from 26.0 years in 1965 to 24.0 in 1977, since then it has since increased to a high of 34.8 years in 2019.

These changes indicate that the marriage event takes place later in the lives of many who get married. Comparing data on marriages with data

on births outside marriage, it appears that for many couples the formal exchange of marriage vows now takes place after the birth of one or more children.

As noted earlier, in 2019 over 38% of births registered were born out of wedlock. For over 59% of these births, however, the unmarried father and unmarried mother were registered at the same address, suggesting birth with cohabitation first, marriage – where it happens – later. It is not possible, from available statistical data, to establish to what extent marriage happens before children are born.

Census, Mixed Marriage and Religion in 2016

For those married couples who were both present in their usual place of residence, and both had stated their religion, census data provides a comparison of the answers given to the religion question.

Census data on mixed marriages

Questions about both marital status and age *at the time of the 2016 Census* were asked but the Census did not include 'When did you marry (your current partner)?' nor did it include 'What was your religion when you married?', nor did it include 'What age were you when you married?'. Hence the Census does not provide us with the material we would need to establish a detailed picture of mixed marriages – it is also difficult to comment on the extent of mixed marriages on the basis of Vital Statistics data provided by the CSO.

There is, however, some evidence published by the CSO on the nature of the Census question on religion in the 2016 Census of Population of Ireland and the ways in which it was answered. It can be discerned from a published census table (E8086) which related religion responses given by husbands and wives – as of 2016 – where both were present at the same address on the night of the Census.[8] Table E8086 provides a very wide array of data for those aged 15+ who:

- in response to the census question *What is your current marital status?* ticked either the box *2 Married (first marriage)* or the box *3 Re-married* and
- in response to *What is your religion?* provided an answer which was given by at least 2,600 people in the Republic;
  and
- resided at the same address as the person to whom they were married.

Details were given for 23 labels of religious or denominational responses. As well as those for whom separate boxes were already provided in the Census form, these labels included 'Lapsed Catholic', Atheist, Agnostic and Pagan.[9]

[8] 2016 Census of Population, Table E8086 Married Couples Both Present in Their Place of Usual Residence by Religion of Father, Census Year and Religion of Mother.

[9] A similar table, with fewer labels, had been produced after the 2011 Census.

Religion: at marriage or on 2016 census day?

What do respondents mean by their answer to the religion question? Perhaps, for very many the response recognises a commitment to the religion or denomination identified: involvement in rituals, acceptance of certain beliefs or belief systems.

What of the rest? How do we identify 'the rest' from the 'very many'? As explored later, one explanation is that the 'very many' in mixed marriages do indeed maintain connections with both religions.

Despite the instructions for the religion question in the census form [*What is your religion?*], essentially Table E8086 appears to record religion or denomination at the time of marriage, rather than note any change in religion or denomination since. There is no means of publicly recording individuals who have changed their religion since marriage.

'Un-mixed' marriages

The dominance of Roman Catholicism as an important marker of identity is reflected in Table E8086 which demonstrated that 1,266,314 of 1,341,584 (94.4%) of Roman Catholics were recorded as married to other Roman Catholics.

Roman Catholics

As evidenced in successive censuses, the proportion of Roman Catholics (RC) in the population of the Republic of Ireland has been reducing over the last 50 years. For example among those aged 25 to 34 in the State in 1971, 93.3% identified as RC; by the 2006 Census this had reduced to 82.5%. The ten years between 2006 and 2016 saw a more dramatic reduction: to 78.6% in 2011 and to 68.0% in 2016.

Notwithstanding that 68.0% of those aged 25 to 34 recorded themselves as RC in the 2016 Census, only 12,140 of 21,570 (56.3%) of opposite-sex weddings in 2016 were RC ceremonies. This indicates that, of those who married in the year 2016, a notable minority of couples – at least one-sixth – both of whom had ticked the RC box in the census had a marriage ceremony which was *not* a church wedding.

The number of RC ceremonies reduced further to 52.8% [11,219 of 21,262] in 2017, and still further to 45.0% [8,863 of 19,673] two years later. In 2019 less than one-third of all weddings registered in the Cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford and in counties Wicklow and Kildare were RC ceremonies, however in five rural counties more than two-thirds of weddings registered were of that type.

'Un-mixed' marriages – other religions/denominations

Fewer than 4% of the population declared themselves to be connected with one of the three main traditional Protestant denominations: Church of

Ireland (CofI), Presbyterian and Methodist. So if the married population was genuinely inter-mingled – if religion did not matter in one's choice of marriage partner – then one might expect only 3%-5% of, say, CofI individuals to be married to CofI spouses.

The figure of 94.4% RCs marrying other RCs contrasts sharply with those recorded as CofI, the largest of the Protestant denominations. Only 52.7% CofI (24,064 of 45,630 married) were married to other CofI; for Presbyterians it was 54.6% (4,990 of 9,137 married) and for Methodists 45.7% (1,240 of 2,716).

Of those who recorded themselves as Muslim (Islamic)[10] – the largest of the more recently recognised religious groups in the census – 87.9% (17,904 of 20,379 married) were married to other Muslims. A similar percentage (86.2%) was found among Hindus (3,050 of 3,540 married). The largest of the recent 'migrant' Christian groups also provided similar percentages: Orthodox Christian[11] 85.4% (9,696 of 11,347), 'Apostolic or Pentecostal'[12] 89.9% (3,400 of 3,783) and Evangelical 86.9% (3,246 of 3,734).

Religiously Mixed Marriage in 2016

Extracts from Table E8086 can be used to compare two different responses – two different religions/denominations – for the whole of the Republic to the religion question in the 2016 Census.

Many tables which follow take a similar form to the first, part-filled, table below. Reading across the table is 2016 data for married women: in the first column the total for the Republic, in the second column the total for, say, RC and in the third column the total for, say, Muslim. Reading down the table is 2016 data for married men: in the first row the total for the Republic, in the second row the total for, say, RC and in the third row the total for, say, Muslim.

Republic	**religion**	**RC**	**Muslim**
religion			
RC			***177***
Muslim		***1,444***	

Data italicised and emboldened, here ***177*** and ***1,444***, indicate that of those **men** who were RC ***177*** were married to Muslim women, and of those **women** who were RC ***1,444*** were married to Muslim men.

Roman Catholics and non-Christian religions

[10] Those described as Muslim or Muslim (Islamic), hereafter 'Muslim'.
[11] Those Christians described as Orthodox, including Greek, Russian or Coptic, hereafter 'Orthodox'.
[12] Those described as 'Apostolic or Pentecostal' hereafter 'Apostolic'.

Perhaps the most unusual extracts from Table E8086 compares those who gave the dominant RC response with those who responded as Muslims, Islam being the largest of the religions other than Christianity in Ireland.

Republic	**Religion**	**RC**	**Muslim**
religion	808,983	682,119	9,360
RC	659,465	633,157	***177***
Muslim	11,019	***1,444***	8,952

Of those *men* who identified themselves as RC ***177*** were married to women who identified themselves as Muslim (1.9% of all married Muslim women), whereas of those *women* who identified as RC ***1,444*** were married to men who identified themselves as Muslim (13.1% of all married Muslim men).

One explanation of this contrast between 13.1% and 1.9% is that in the early days of Muslim immigration rather more men than women came into Ireland so, on seeking to get married, there were significantly fewer Muslim women available than Muslim men.

In the 1991 census there were 3,875 individual Muslims: 1,468 women and 2,407 men (62.1%). By 2002 19,147 people recorded themselves as Muslim of whom 61.2% were men; by 2016 there were 63,443 individuals, of whom 56.4% were men.

Comparing RCs with the largest of the religions after Islam, Hinduism, produces a less extreme pattern than that of Muslims, despite there being a similar gender balance among Muslims and Hindus present in the State in 1991: 953 Hindus of whom 381 were women and 572 men (60.0%). A quarter of a century later in the 2016 census 14,332 people recorded themselves as Hindu, of whom 56.9% were men.

In 2016 of RC men ***170*** were married to Hindu women whereas ***393*** RC women were married to Hindu men.

Republic	**religion**	**RC**	**Hindu**
religion	808,983	682,119	1,970
RC	659,465	633,157	***170***
Hindu	3,267	***393***	2,668

While the percentage of all married Hindu men married to RCs was similar to that of all married Muslim men (12.0% and 13.1%) similarly married, the percentage of married Hindu women married to RC men was rather different (8.6% of all married Hindu women, 1.9% of all married Muslim women).

Muslims and other 'migrant' religions

Another extract from E8086 compares these two 'migrant' religions. In 2016 ***11*** (0.14%) Muslim married men were married to Hindu women and ***13***

(0.44%) Hindu married women were married to Muslim men. This demonstrated a very limited incidence of Muslim-Hindu cross-community marriage.

Republic	religion	Muslim	Hindu
religion	808,983	9,360	2,970
Muslim	11,019	8,952	***11***
Hindu	3,267	***13***	2,668

Comparing Muslims in 2016 with the largest immigrant Christian grouping, the Orthodox, produces less dramatic results.

Republic	religion	Muslim	Orthodox
religion	808,983	9,360	11,604
Muslim	11,019	8,952	***117***
Orthodox	10,689	***20***	9,170

Of 11,019 Muslim married men ***117*** (1.06%) were married to Orthodox women; this is markedly higher than the number [***11*** (0.14%)] of Muslim men married to Hindu women (and the ***13*** Hindu women married to Muslim men), suggesting, perhaps, that cross-community hesitancy (Muslim with Orthodox, or Hindu with Orthodox) was slightly less evident than Muslim with Hindu.

These numbers of Muslim married men 'married-out' were in contrast to the numbers of Orthodox married women (***20***) married to Muslim men. The imbalance, noted earlier, between the ***1,444*** Muslim men 'marrying- out' to RC women and ***177*** RC women married to Muslim men, indicated that rather more men than women arrived early to Ireland; there were similar imbalances in the numbers of men of all three 'migrant' religions identified here (Muslim, Hindu and Orthodox).

Muslims and three long-standing Irish Protestant churches

Comparing the numbers of mixed marriages between, on the one hand, Muslims and, on the other hand, those identified with the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church or the Methodist Church produced an extract from Table E8086 not unlike that of Muslims and RCs.

Republic	religion	Muslim	3 long-standing
Religion	808,983	9,360	27,683
Muslim	11,019	8,952	***86***
3 long-standing	29,800	***16***	15,147

Of those men who identified themselves with one of these three churches ***16*** were married to women who identified themselves as Muslim (0.17% of all married Muslim women), whereas of those women who identified themselves with one of the three churches ***86*** were married to men who identified as Muslim (0.96% of all married Muslim men).

This imbalance (of about 6:1) compares directly with that of all married Muslim men who married RC women and all married Muslim women who married RC men, suggesting that there was little, if any, difference (on the Muslim side) between marrying a Roman Catholic and marrying a Protestant.

Roman Catholics and three long-standing Protestant churches

Rather different results on the 'mixing' of marriages emerged on comparing RCs with the long-standing Irish churches.

The largest of these groups, the Church of Ireland, displays a very significant element of mixed marriage. Of RC men ***7,495*** were married to CofI women (34.0% of all married CofI women), whereas of RC women ***9,990*** were married to CofI men (42.4% of all married CofI men).

Links between Presbyterians and RCs were a little less evident: ***1,263*** RC men were married to Presbyterian women (29**.0**% of all married Presbyterian women) whereas of RC women ***1,809*** were married to Presbyterian men (37.8% of all married Presbyterian men).

Republic	**Religion**	**RC**	**CofI**	**Presbyterian**	**Methodist**
religion	808,983	682,119	22,050	4,350	1,283
RC	659,465	633,157	***7,495***	***1,263***	***382***
CofI	**23,580**	***9,990***	12,032	177	108
Presbyterian	4,787	***1,809***	206	2,495	18
Methodist	1,433	***566***	125	22	620

Between Methodists and RCs, ***382*** RC men were married to Methodist women (29.8% of all married Methodist women) and, of RC women, ***566*** were married to Methodist men) (39.5% of all married Methodist men).

Roman Catholics and marginal groups

It is worth considering the extent of mixed marriages in some of the other religious groups where details from Table E8086 permitted comparison of each with RCs. Three such groups are Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Buddhists.

Baptists in the Republic are a small long-standing group which have maintained their doctrinal separation from other Christian denominations rather more than is the case for the three larger long-standing Irish Protestant Churches. In the 1991 census 1,156 Baptists were recorded; in the

2016 census there were 3,957. Of those 3,642 usually resident and present in the State 2,288 were recorded as having Irish nationality (only).[13]

In 2016 being married to a fellow Baptist accounted for 71.3% of all married Baptists (1,078 of 1,512), rather higher than the percentages – in the 50 per cents – for same-denomination marriage among Church of Ireland or Presbyterians.

Republic	**religion**	**RC**	**Baptist**	**% RC**
religion	808,983	682,119	789	
RC	659,465	633,157	***128***	
Baptist	723	***124***	539	17.15%
% RC			16.22%	

Jehovah's Witnesses are a millenarian religion with origins in Christianity which developed its own belief system in the late nineteenth century. In 2016 being married to a fellow Jehovah's Witness accounted for 85.6% (2,652 of 3,098) of all married Jehovah's Witnesses, an even larger percentage than Baptists.

In the 1991 census 3,393 Jehovah's Witnesses were recorded, in the 2016 census there were 6,417: of those 6,264 usually resident and present in the State 3,005 had Irish nationality (only), 1,189 British nationality and 693 Polish nationality.

Republic	**religion**	**RC**	**Jehovah's Witness**	**% RC**
Religion	808,983	682,119	1,668	
RC	659,465	633,157	***143***	
Jehovah's Witness	1,430	***60***	1,326	4.20%
% RC			8.57%	

Buddhism has had a visible presence in Ireland since at least the latter part of the 20th century. In 2016 being married to a fellow Buddhist accounted for 45.6% of all married Buddhists.

Republic	**religion**	**RC**	**Buddhist**	**% RC**
religion	808,983	682,119	2,070	
RC	659,465	633,157	***765***	
Buddhist	1,345	***311***	779	23.12%
% RC			36.96%	

[13] While census reports record separately (a) Irish nationality and (b) Irish nationality combined with another nationality, in each of these sections is noted solely those who had *only* Irish nationality.

The 1991 census recorded 986 Buddhists, the 2016 census noted a ten-fold increase to 9,758; of those 9,358 usually resident and present in the State 3,967 were recorded as having Irish nationality (only), 1,390 had Thai nationality, 850 Malaysian and 652 Chinese.

The three main Protestant churches

Links provided by mixed marriage among the three largest long-standing churches are fewer than marriage links with RCs, no doubt because of the relative size of the Roman Catholic Church. Furthermore there is little difference between men and women in the case of mixed marriage between these three churches, whereas mixed marriages with RCs involved at least 8% more Protestant men than women.

There were ***108*** CofI men married to Methodist women (8.4% of all married Methodist women) whereas of CofI women ***125*** were married to Methodist men (8.7% of all married Methodist men). There were ***177*** CofI men who were married to Presbyterian women (4.1% of all married Presbyterian women) whereas of CofI women ***206*** were married to Presbyterian men (4.3% of all married Presbyterian men). The comparative strength of Presbyterians in two border counties (Donegal and Monaghan) may account for this difference between 4% and 8%.

Comparing the two smaller churches, there were 18 Presbyterian men who were married to Methodist women (1.4% of all married Methodist women) whereas of Presbyterian women 22 were married to Methodist men (1.5% of all married Methodist men).

Comparing mixed marriages among each of the three largest long-standing Protestant churches produced results which do not distinguish greatly between men and women. Presbyterian and CofI produced 0.93% and 0.75%; Methodist and CofI 0.57% and 0.46% and Presbyterian and Methodist 1.40% and 1.54%.

Christian churches with a large 'migrant' element

Another extract from Table E8086 compared the three largest Christian churches which have a substantial migrant element.

Of 13,193 Apostolic individuals usually resident and present in the State, 6,243 were recorded as having Irish nationality (only), 2,491 Nigerian nationality and 2,454 Romanian nationality.

Of 9,368 Evangelicals usually resident and present in the State, 5,426 were recorded as having Irish nationality (only), 541 Nigerian nationality, 414 Brazilian, 369 US and 341 Romanian nationality.

Republic	**religion**	**Orthodox**	**Apostolic**	**Evangelical**
religion	808,983	11,604	1,920	1,936
Orthodox	10,689	9,170	***13***	***8***
Apostolic	1,863	***13***	1,699	***11***
Evangelical	1,798	***5***	***12***	1,623

Of 10,689 Orthodox married men 13 were married to Apostolic women and 8 were married to Evangelical women. Of Orthodox married women 5 were married to Evangelical men and 13 (again) were married to Apostolic men.

Dublin and the Rest of the Republic

It has been possible to obtain *some* further information from the CSO which accounted separately for those living within Dublin City & County and for those living elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland.[14]

Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian[15]

Comparing Dublin City & County with the rest of the Republic revealed hardly any difference for mixed marriages between CofI and RC in the two regions. For CofI women, outside Dublin the percentage was 34.1%, in Dublin 33.4% (1,771 of 5,299); for CofI men the percentage was 42.0% outside Dublin, 43.6% in Dublin (2,497 of 5,723).

However for Presbyterians there were significant differences between city and country. The mixed marriage pattern with Dublin RCs is similar to that for the CofI with RC.

2016	Dublin	RC	CofI	Pres		Rest	RC	CofI	Pres
All	205198	157666	5299	1018		603785	524453	16751	3332
RC	149451	141439	***1771***	351		510014	491718	***5724***	912
CofI	5723	***2497***	2667	***55***		17857	***7493***	9365	***122***
Pres	1072	462	***62***	444		3715	1347	***144***	2051

In Dublin: 351 RC men were married to Presbyterian women (34.5% of all married Presbyterian women) whereas of RC women 462 were married to Presbyterian men (43.1% of all married Presbyterian men).

Outside Dublin the data produces results some 7% lower – perhaps because of the relative concentration of Presbyterians in Donegal and Monaghan. Of RC men 912 were married to Presbyterian women (27.4% of all 3,332 Presbyterian women), and 1,347 RC women were married to Presbyterian men (36.3% of all 3,715 Presbyterian men).

Roman Catholics and non-Christian religions

Comparing data for Dublin with that for the rest of the Republic produces some unlikely conclusions. On the one hand there was little difference between Muslims in Dublin City & County marrying fellow Muslims and Muslims in the rest of the Republic: 95.3% and 95.9% of women, 82.6% and

[14] Thanks are due to the CSO for providing two versions of table E8086 for all of the 23 labels identified therein: Dublin City & County and the rest of the State.

[15] Data on Methodists was not included in the supplementary table provided by the CSO.

80.1% of men respectively. A similar pattern was evident for Hindus marrying fellow Hindus: women 90.3% and 89.2%, men 82.3% and 80.8%.

2016	Dublin	RC	Muslim		Rest	RC	Muslim
All	205,198	157,666	4,407		603,785	524,453	4,953
RC	149,451	141,439	***75***		510,014	491,718	***102***
Muslim	5,085	***608***	4,200		5,934	***836***	4,752

However almost half of all Muslims married to other Muslims (47%) were living in Dublin (8,400 of 17,904); slightly fewer – only 42% – of the RC men married to Muslim women and RC women married to Muslim men were living in Dublin which has greater ethnic and cultural diversity, suggesting that 'marrying out' was somewhat more common where there were fewer Muslims 'to choose from'.

2016	Dublin	Muslim	Hindu		Rest	Muslim	Hindu
All	205,198	4,407	1,688		603,785	4,953	1,282
Muslim	5,085	4,200	***3***		5,934	4,752	***8***
Hindu	1,852	***8***	1,525		1,415	***5***	1,143

Marrying 'in'

There are differences between Dublin City & County and the rest of the State for both Presbyterian and Church of Ireland when considering the percentages of those who married someone of the same denomination. CofI women were 3-4% *more* likely to 'marry in' than were CofI men, whether in Dublin or elsewhere. However for each sex those living in Dublin were 5-6% *less* likely to marry in than those living outside Dublin. For CofI men in Dublin 46.6% married in, for the rest of the Republic it was 52.4%; for CofI women in Dublin 50.3% married in, for the rest of the State it was 55.9%.

'in'	Total			Dublin			Rest		
M	'in'	Of	%	'in'	total	%	'in'	of	%
CofI	12,032	23,580	51.0	2,667	5,723	***46.6***	9,365	17,857	***52.4***
Pres	2,495	4,787	52.1	444	1,072	41.4	2,051	3,715	55.2

'in'	Total			Dublin			Rest		
F	'in'	Of	%	'in'	of	%	'in'	of	%
CofI	12,032	22,050	54.6	2,667	5,299	50.3	9,365	16,751	55.9
Pres	2,495	4,350	57.4	444	1,018	***43.6***	2,051	3,332	***61.6***

Presbyterians demonstrate even bigger differences between city and country. Presbyterian women in Dublin were 2% more likely to marry in than Presbyterian men in Dublin; outside Dublin the difference was over 6%. Outside Dublin Presbyterian women were 18% more likely than in Dublin to marry in, men 14% more likely to marry in; 43.6% of Presbyterian

women in Dublin married in, elsewhere 61.6% married other Presbyterians, whereas 41.4% of Presbyterian men in Dublin married in, outside Dublin it was 55.2%.

% married 'in'	Dublin	Rest	difference
Muslim	88.50	87.30	1.20%
Orthodox	85.45	78.97	**6.48%**
'Christian'	63.72	64.70	0.92%
Hindu	86.16	84.76	-1.40%
Apostolic	90.89	88.90	-1.99%
Evangelical	85.97	87.41	1.44%
Buddhist	52.70	40.45	**12.25%**

For five of the seven largest other significant religious groupings the proportions marrying 'in' differed little between inside and outside Dublin City & County.

Muslim, 'Christian',[16] Hindu, Apostolic, and Evangelical each demonstrated less than 2% difference between Dublin City & County and the rest of the state. Orthodox Christians and Buddhists were the only two of these seven showing a difference of more than 2%: in Dublin over 52% Buddhists married in, whereas outside Dublin fewer than 41% married in.

Different Ages at Marriage

The CSO provided three further tables for 2016 covering the whole Republic, these were reduced versions of E8086, covering only nine religion labels.[17] One of these limited tables was for cases where a married woman was, at the Census, aged under 40, another where a woman was aged 40 but under 60, and the third where a woman was aged 60 or above.

Church of Ireland

The data from the tables taking account of age provided some very striking material on the Church of Ireland. In the first instance less than one-third (29.5%) of CofI men, married to women aged 60+, reported themselves as married to RCs, and less than one-quarter (22.6%) of CofI women aged 60+ were married to RCs.

This accords remarkably well with Walsh's findings in 1970 that about 30% of CofI and Presbyterian men, and 20% of women, were marrying RC spouses, even though most of the marriages recorded in the 2016 tables took place later in the 1970s and 1980s.

[16] In the 2016 census 37,427 individuals were recorded as 'Christian'; of those 35,996 usually resident and present in the State, 22,326 had Irish nationality (only).

[17] The CSO were unwilling to provide data on each of the age groups for Dublin City & County on the one hand and for the rest of the Republic separately.

Married to RC	% of CofI	% of CofI	% of CofI	% of Pres	% of Pres	% of Pres
F aged:	<40	40-59	60+	<40	40-59	60+
Men	**48.1%**	**48.6%**	**29.5%**	40.8%	42.3%	25.1%
Women	41.6%	38.6%	22.6%	34.9%	32.4%	16.6%

However, while it is not unexpected that 48.6% of CofI men were married to RC women aged between 40 and 60, what is a surprise is that the same percentage – 48.1% – of those married to women aged *less* than 40 are married to RC women.

About 40% of CofI women aged under 60 were married to RC men – with only a small difference (41.6% for those under 40 and 38.6% aged between 40 and 60). Presbyterian data is similar.

The lack of difference between those aged 40 to 60 and those aged less than 40 is quite unexpected given the changes in social structure in the first twenty years of this century.

Women aged less than 40:

	Men	**RC**	**CofI**	
F	207,123	150,404	4,818	
RC	156,282	141,595	***2,319***	
CofI	4,719	***1,965***	2,139	41.6%
			48.1%	

Women aged 40-59:

	Men	**RC**	**CofI**	
F	381,150	312,880	11,202	
RC	325,166	299,520	***5,442***	
CofI	10,092	***3,894***	4,971	38.6%
			48.6%	

Woman aged 60+:

	Men	**RC**	**CofI**	
F	220,710	196,181	7,560	
RC	200,671	192,042	***2,229***	
CofI	7,239	***1,636***	4,922	22.6%
			29.5%	

With social attitudes becoming more liberal, the proportions of, for example, CofI married to RCs would be expected to be rather higher for those aged under 40 than for those aged between 40 and 59.

'Migrant' religions/denominations

For both Muslims and Hindus there are considerable differences between the age groups, with striking differences between male and female data.

F aged:	<40	40-59	60+	<40	40-59	60+
Married to RC	**% of Muslim**	**% of Muslim**	**% of Muslim**	**% of Hindu**	**% of Hindu**	**% of Hindu**
Men	**11.35**	**15.90**	**22.91**	10.20	16.01	33.33
Women	1.62	2.40	2.97	3.96	11.65	6.78

About 16% of male Muslims aged 40+ were recorded as married to a RC woman (626 of 3,815), whereas for those under 40 it was only 11% (818 of 7,204). For male Hindus the pattern is similar: 18% of those aged 40+, 10% under 40. By contrast for female Muslims aged 40+ only 2.5% were recorded as married to a RC man, those aged less than 40 only 1.5%. For female Hindus 11% aged 40+ married a RC man, but only 4% of those under 40 did so.

F aged:	<40	<40	<40		40+	40+	40+
	Men	**RC**	**Muslim**		**Men**	**RC**	**Muslim**
Women	207,123	150,404	7,204		601,860	509,061	3,815
RC	156,282	141,595	**818**		525,837	491,562	***626***
Muslim	6,241	***101***	6,007		3,119	***76***	2,945

Orthodox Christian responses to the religion question produced age patterns which differ from each other (male and female) and from those presented above. Over 12% of Orthodox men aged 40+ (491 of 4,000) were recorded as married to a RC woman, whereas for those under 40 it was less than 10% (664 of 6,689); for Orthodox women aged 40+ over 14% were recorded as married to a RC man (621 of 4,317), whereas for those aged under 40 less than 13% (928 of 7,287) married a RC man.

Married to RC	**% of Orthodox**	**% of Orthodox**	**% of Orthodox**
Women aged:	<40	40-59	60+
Men	**9.93**	**11.81**	**20.42**
Women	12.74	14.34	15.15

F aged:	<40	<40	<40		40+	40+	40+
	Men	**RC**	**Orth**		**Men**	**RC**	**Orth**
Women	207,123	150,404	6,689		601,860	509,061	4,000
RC	156,282	141,595	***664***		525,837	491,562	***491***
Orthodox	7,287	***928***	5,811		4,317	***621***	3,359

No Religion

The census does not tell us how those who were of different denominations or religions at the time of their marriage recorded their religion when it came to answering the religion question in the 2016 census – maybe 10, 20, 30 or more years later. The census only provides evidence on religion declared in 2016.

Very few marriages were noted in the 2016 Census where one party declared a specific religion or denomination and the other declared 'no religion'; such marriages were particularly rare where the woman was aged 60 and over.

Religion of partners where 'no religion' is significant

The percentage of those of a particular religion or denomination whose spouse specified 'no religion' ranged widely.

Of the 22 relevant 'religion' labels identified in Table E8086, the seven responses with the largest *percentages* of partners who declared 'no religion' each recorded fewer than 3,100 married persons. Six of the seven recorded a marked imbalance between men and women. Each of these seven labels recorded at least 10% of partners who declared 'no religion'. It may be that some, even many, individuals recorded under these seven labels had altered their religion after marriage, but the census provides no evidence.

Largest seven	**No religion**				**No religion**
Description	Partner	Men	Women	Both	%
Spiritualist	195	321	418	739	26.39
Pagan	133	211	326	537	24.77
Agnostic	244	714	451	1165	20.94
Atheist	325	1192	455	1647	19.73
'Lapsed Catholic'	548	1450	1564	3014	18.18
Lutheran	426	964	1548	2512	16.96
Buddhist	325	1014	1528	2542	12.79

Religion of partners where 'no religion' is rare

Such evidence as there is appeared to contradict this in that Roman Catholics and both the major non-Christian religions (Muslim and Hindu) record very low responses of partners with no religion.

Three of the seven labels with the smallest percentages of partners with no religion – all below 3% – recorded more than 20,000 married persons; only 'Born Again Christian' (Born Again in table below), with 955 married persons, recorded less than 3,700. None of the seven recorded an imbalance between men and women. As noted earlier, among RCs there was a notable difference in the percentage of 'no religion' between those in Dublin City (4.41%) and those in the rest of the state.

Smallest 7	No religion				No religion
Description	Partner	Men	Women	Both	%
Apostolic	31	1,863	1,920	3,783	0.82
Born Again	16	448	507	955	1.68
Muslim	389	11,019	9,350	20,369	1.91
Hindu	132	3,267	2,970	6,237	2.12
Evangelical	69	1,798	1,936	3,734	1.85
Orthodox	604	10,689	11,604	22,293	2.71
RC	39,001	659,465	682,119	1,341,584	2.91

If there is any clarity it is that the very vast majority of those with different religions or denominations at the time of their marriage have appeared to regard the religion question in the 2016 census as a question about upbringing rather than about their current belief systems.

Conclusions

This paper has sought to examine how far participants in mixed marriages maintain connections with both 'realms' as represented by their recorded religious identity in the 2016 census. It has examined evidence from the 2016 Census placing that evidence in its social and historical context.

That Census (like the census of 2011) recorded only the answer to the religion question *as of census day itself*. The vast majority of married couples gave (or continued to give) responses to the 'religion' question as of the earlier time of their marriage.

Some limited data is available which permits comparison between the extent of mixed marriage in Dublin and the rest of the Republic. Limited data available on the ages of those in mixed marriages has also been examined.

The numbers of those in mixed marriages where one party declares 'no religion' and the other declares a particular religion or denomination is small; it is particularly small among those of 60+ years of age. The paper has questioned what can be said (if anything) about those couples who have no involvement in either partner's religion or who have transferred to the religion of their marriage partner, these are questions to which the data available from the Census can provide only limited answers.

By exploring data regarding those married couples who (continue to) give different responses to the 'religion' question this paper reveals the extent of mixed marriages for each denomination or religion.

On the question of how mixed marriages operate in relation to Roman Catholicism, the Republic's major religion, in a period when that church has been relinquishing some of its dominant impact on society, analysis of the data has revealed that considerably over 90% of those who recorded themselves as Roman Catholic were married to another Roman Catholic.

What proportion from a minority group marry into a dominant community? What impact does a particular proportion 'marrying-out' have on a minority religious group – notwithstanding how that group maintains its identity, is maintaining connection between 'realms' particularly relevant where one 'realm' is greatly numerically superior to another?

These questions have been examined specifically in connection with the extent of mixed marriages for the two major Protestant churches, the Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian Church – long-standing minority churches present in Ireland for at least 400 years. These long-standing denominations are the only ones where (almost) half of those recorded are married to Roman Catholics; they appear to have survived, even grown, despite – or even because - half of their number having been involved in a mixed marriage. Perhaps the State may need to sort out its relations with its own Protestant minority, not least how (or whether) it supports schools with different forms of management.

The proportions of long-standing minority denominations who have engaged in mixed marriages are dramatically different to those of other denominations or religions. Are connections between 'realms' more evident where there is cultural or political pressure between groups?

The State is still making sense of its relationships with second and third generation migrants of – particularly – Muslim, Hindu and Orthodox Christian backgrounds. The 2016 Census only provided limited information. Some patterns in the 2016 data have emerged which relate to migrants of the 1980s and 1990s. Fewer of these migrants appear to have needed to go looking for a Roman Catholic to marry – or fewer wish to inter-marry with Roman Catholics – but perhaps another twenty, thirty or forty years may be needed for the patterns to change dramatically.

Debates about 'mixed marriages' continue. Without detail on length of marriage and on religion at the time of marriage, data from the 2022 Census will be of little additional use in those debates.

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