

Game to Name

You don't need to know the concepts of modern Game Theory to name a baby, let alone the Royal baby, arguably the most important name for the rest of this century. It is a personal, family matter of choice, surely not a game! Well, wait, think twice. The theory of games may indeed play a role here; actually, thinking strategically may very well help the Royal couple and the Royal family to make the right decision after the birth.

Clearly, choosing a name for a baby is like any individual's decision to choose a specific model of a car to buy or a breakfast cereal for that matter; it is just a choice problem, not a game. What makes a game a game? A game is a situation where more than one decision maker (individuals, companies, countries) interacts. More importantly, the outcome of the interaction depends on the choices made by all the decision makers or players as they are called. There are many real life situations that can indeed be thought of a game; however on the other hand, many game shows such as Deal or No Deal are not really games as the participants have to choose to accept or not given a particular deal.

Why is Royal naming different from just a choice and is actually a game then? Well, precisely because it is the Royal name; because the Royals ought to be thinking of their "subjects" while choosing the name of the King or the Queen in the late 21st Century. This name has to be accepted by not just the Brits, nor just the population in the Commonwealth nations or the former colonies, instead by the whole world. Just consider the profile of the crowd eagerly waiting outside the Buckingham Palace over recent days. They all need to be convinced, compliant and happy with the name.

To understand this naming game, think of any normal family in this country. If you are British White, you will probably pick one of the common British names for your son or daughter. You need not think of any connotations. According to Bounty, who provide the goodies after every child birth, the top choices in 2012 have been Amelia, Olivia and Emily for girls and Harry, Jack and Charlie for boys. Not much in the above list is Royal (well, except Charlie and Harry perhaps – but that latter must be due to Mr. Potter's first name rather than the Prince's). Unlike the British White population, the minority first-generation migrants are lot more strategic in choosing their babies' names. The main concern for them is acceptability, phonetically and conceptually. Josh is a good choice for an Indian boy being a Sanskrit word phonetically (meaning fame).

So what will be the right strategy for William and Kate, taking the acceptability criterion into account? It has to be a historically accepted Royal name; accepted not just in Britain but elsewhere. My prediction hence will be Victoria and George, the two most popular monarchs in the British Raj.