

Monica Alexander

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Academic Appointments

University of Toronto

Assistant Professor, Statistical Sciences and Sociology July 2018 – *current*
(Maternity leave: April 2019 – December 2019, June 2021 – December 2021)

Education

Ph.D (Demography), **University of California, Berkeley**, 2018.

Dissertation title: Bayesian Methods for Mortality Estimation.

Committee: Josh Goldstein (chair); Ken Wachter; Dennis Feehan; Jas Sekhon.

M.Arts (Statistics), **University of California, Berkeley**, 2015.

M.Social Research (Demography), **Australian National University**, 2013.

B.Science (First Class Honors) (Maths and Chemistry), **University of Tasmania**, 2008.

Professional Appointments

Fellow

Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences

January 2019 – *current*

Lead statistical consultant

UN Interagency Group

on Stateless Populations Estimation

January 2021 – June 2022

Lead statistical consultant

World Health Organization Group

on Estimation of Causes of Maternal Mortality

January 2019 – December 2020

Papers

Peer-reviewed articles

Alexander, M., and Alkema, L., ‘A Bayesian Cohort Component Projection Model to Estimate Women of Reproductive Age at the Subnational Level in Data-Sparse Settings’, *Demography*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-10216406>.

Maheu-Giroux, M, Sardinha, L, Stöckl, H, Meyer, S, Godin, A, **Alexander, M.**, and García-Moreno, C. ‘ A framework to model global, regional, and national estimates of intimate partner violence.’ *BMC medical research methodology*, 2022: 22(1), 1-17.

Susmann, H., **Alexander, M.**, and Alkema, L.. ‘Temporal models for demographic and global health outcomes in multiple populations: Introducing a new framework to review and standardize documentation of model assumptions and facilitate model comparison’. *International Statistical Review*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1111/insr.12491>.

- Alexander, M.**, and Root, L., ‘Competing effects on the average age of infant death’. *Demography*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00703370-9779784>.
- Kiang MV, Tsai AC, **Alexander, M.**, Rehkopf DH, Basu S. ‘Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Opioid-Related Mortality in the USA, 1999–2019: the Extreme Case of Washington DC.’ *Journal of Urban Health*, 2021. Published online 2021:1-7. doi: 10.1007/s11524-021-00573-8
- Wilson, T., Grossman, I., **Alexander, M.**, Rees, P., and Temple, J. ‘Methods for small area population forecasts: state-of-the-art and research needs’, *Population Research and Policy Review*, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-021-09671-6>.
- Kiang MV, Chen JT, Krieger N, Buckee CO, **Alexander, M.**, Baker JT, Buckner RL, Coombs III G, Rich-Edwards JW, Carlson KW, and Onnela J-P. ‘Sociodemographic characteristics of missing data in digital phenotyping’. *Scientific Reports*. 2021;11(1):15408.
- Alexander, M.**, Polimis, K., and Zagheni, E., ‘Combining social media and survey data to nowcast migrant stocks in the United States’, *Population Research and Policy Review*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-020-09599-3>.
- Alexander, M.**, Polimis, K., and Zagheni, E., ‘The impact of Hurricane Maria on out-migration from Puerto Rico: Evidence from Facebook data’, *Population and Development Review*, 2019, 45(3): 617-630.
- Hug, L., **Alexander, M.**, You, D., and Alkema, L. ‘National, regional, and global levels and trends in neonatal mortality between 1990 and 2017, with scenario-based projections to 2030: a systematic analysis by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation’, *Lancet Global Health*, 2019, 7(6): 710–720.
- Kiang, M.V., Basu S., Chen J., and **Alexander, M.** ‘Assessment of Changes in the Geographical Distribution of Opioid-Related Mortality Across the United States by Opioid Type, 1999-2016’. *JAMA Network Open*. 2019, 2(2):e190040.
- Gemmill, A., Kiang, M.V., and **Alexander, M.** ‘Trends in pregnancy-associated mortality involving opioids in the United States, 2007–2016’, *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 2019, 220(1): 115–116.
- Alexander, M.**, Kiang, M.V., and Barbieri M., ‘Trends in Black and White Opioid Mortality in the United States, 1979–2015’, *Epidemiology*, 2018, 29(5): 707–715.
- Alexander, M.**, and Alkema, L., ‘Global Estimation of Neonatal Mortality using a Bayesian Hierarchical Splines Regression Model’, *Demographic Research*, 2018, 38(15): 335–372.
- Alexander, M.**, Zagheni, E., and Barbieri, M., ‘A Flexible Bayesian Model for Estimating Subnational Mortality’, *Demography*, 2017, 54(6): 2025–2041.
- Howlett, M.**, Gray, M., and Hunter, B., ‘Wages, government payments and other income of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians’, *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 2016, 19(2): 53–76.
- Hunter, B., **Howlett, M.**, and Gray, M., ‘The Economic Impact of the Mining Boom on Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians’, *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 2015, 2(3): 517–530.
- Gray, M., **Howlett, M.**, and Hunter, B., ‘Labour Market Outcomes for Indigenous Australians’, *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 2014, 25(3): 497–517.
- Biddle, N., **Howlett, M.**, Hunter, B., and Paradies, Y., ‘Labour Market and Other Discrimination Facing Indigenous Australians’, *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 2013, 16(1): 91–113.

Book chapters

Alexander, M. ‘Using social media advertising data to estimate migration trends over time’. In *Big Data Applications in Geography and Planning*. Edward Elgar Publishing. 2021.

Other published papers

Badolato, L., Decter-Frain, A.G., Irons, N., Miranda, M.L., Walk, E., Zhalieva, E., **Alexander, M.**, Basellini, U. and Zagheni, E., 2023. ‘Predicting individual-level longevity with statistical and machine learning methods’ (No. WP-2023-008). Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany.

Chong, M., Alburez-Gutierrez, D., Del Fava, E., **Alexander, M.**, & Zagheni, E. (2022). ‘Identifying and correcting bias in big crowd-sourced online genealogies’ (No. WP-2022-005). Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany.

Winant, C., **Alexander, M.**, Dharamshi, A., Dukhovnov, D., & Barbieri, M. (2021). Methods Protocol for the United States Mortality County Database. <https://usa.mortality.org/uploads/counties/USCountyBayesianEstimationMethodsProtocol20210927.pdf>.

Hunter, B., **Howlett, M.**, and Biddle, N., ‘Modelling Exposure to Risk of Experiencing Discrimination in the Context of Endogenous Ethnic Identification’, *IZA Discussion Paper #8040*, March 2014.

Gray, M., Hunter, B., and **Howlett, M.**, ‘Indigenous Employment: A Story of Continuing Growth’, *CAEPR Topical Issue 2/2013*, Australian National University, Canberra.

Current working papers

Chong, M. Y.C., and **Alexander, M.** ‘Estimating the timing of stillbirths in countries worldwide using a Bayesian hierarchical penalized splines regression model.’ <https://arxiv.org/abs/2212.06219>.

Alexander, M. ‘Decomposing dimensions of mortality inequality’. <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/uqwxj>.

McBrien, H., and **Alexander, M.** ‘Trends in opioid seizure data and their association with opioid mortality’. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2022.10.08.22280845v1>.

Alexander, R., and **Alexander, M.** ‘The Increased Effect of Elections and Changing Prime Ministers on Topics Discussed in the Australian Federal Parliament between 1901 and 2018’. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2111.09299>.

Alexander, M., Chong, M.Y.C., and Pejcinovska, M. ‘Estimating causes of maternal death in data-sparse contexts’. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2101.05240>.

Alexander, M., and Goldstein, J., ‘Deaths without denominators: using a matched dataset to study mortality patterns in the United States’, <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/q79ye/>.

Grants awarded

Principal Investigator:

Data Sciences Institute	2023-2024
Catalyst Grant	
<i>Inequality in childcare: The case of nannies in Canada. (co-PI)</i>	
CAD \$100,000	
Data Sciences Institute	2023-2024
Computational and Quantitative Social Sciences Grant	
<i>Deficits of migration in the age of Covid-19: A new approach to studying changing migration patterns.</i>	
CAD \$10,000	
School of Cities, University of Toronto	2021-2022
Urban Challenge Grant	
<i>Disparities in climate-induced health outcomes in the Greater Toronto Area. (co-PI)</i>	
CAD \$75,000	
Data Sciences Institute	2021-2022
Data Access Grant	
<i>To purchase data for research on disparities in climate-induced health outcomes in the Greater Toronto Area. (co-PI)</i>	
CAD \$10,000	
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council	2019–2023
Insight Development Grant	
<i>Using Facebook data to measure and understand international migration patterns in Canada</i>	
CAD \$59,000	
University of Toronto Connaught New Researcher Award	2019–2021
CAD \$18,900	

Partner Investigator:

Australian Research Council	2019–2022
Discovery Project Grant	
<i>Developing Robust Small Area Population Forecasts for Planning and Policy</i>	

Teaching

University of Toronto	
Applied Statistics II (graduate, statistics)	Winter, 2020–2023
Demographic Methods (graduate, statistics)	Winter, 2019
<i>Materials: https://github.com/MJAlexander/demographic-methods</i>	
Statistics for sociologists (graduate, sociology)	Winter, 2023
Intermediate data analysis (graduate, sociology)	Winter, 2021, 2022
Intermediate quantitative methods (undergraduate, sociology)	Fall 2020, Winter 2023
University of California, Berkeley	
<i>Instructor, Formal Demography Workshop</i>	June, 2017
<i>Instructor, Formal Demography Workshop</i>	August, 2015
<i>Graduate Student Instructor, Demographic Methods</i>	Fall Semester, 2014
Other	
Designed and taught workshop on non-traditional data sources in demography	April 2022
<i>Materials: https://mjalexander.github.io/demopop-workshop/</i>	
Designed and taught workshop on social media in demographic research	April 2021

Materials: https://mjalexander.github.io/social_media_workshop/

Conference presentations and invited talks

2023

Racial disparities in fetal and infant outcomes: insights from, and for, formal demography

Nuffield Sociology Seminar Series, *Oxford University* (March)

2022

Estimating stillbirth rates by timing

IMS International Conference on Statistics and Data Science, *Florence, Italy* (December)

Competing Effects on the Average Age of Infant Death: Reconsidering the Approximation of ${}_1a_0$

Social Statistics Seminar, *University of Manchester* (November)

Racial disparities in infant outcomes: insights from, and for, formal demography

Social Demography Seminar, *Harvard University* (November)

Jointly estimating subnational mortality for multiple populations

Bayesian Methods for the Social Sciences Workshop, *Paris, France* (October)

Stellar Stats Workshop, *University of Toronto* (May)

Future Projections of State-Level Foster Care Populations in the United States

PAA Annual Meeting (April)

Reproducibility in Demography

Toronto Workshop on Reproducibility, *University of Toronto* (February)

Bayesian models and reconciling incomplete demographic data

Demography Seminar, *University of Wisconsin Madison* (February)

2021

The future of data-driven demographic research (Panel member)

MPIDR 25th Anniversary (October)

A Bayesian cohort component projection model for estimating subnational populations

Demography Seminar Series, *Australian National University* (May)

CPC Seminar Series, *University of Southampton* (April)

Pop Center Brown Bag, *Florida State University* (February)

STAB Working Group, *University of Washington* (February)

Overcoming barriers to sharing code

Toronto Workshop on Reproducibility, *University of Toronto* (February)

Using social media data to estimate migration

Mathematics and Statistics Seminar, *Maynooth University* (February)

2020

Future Projections of State-Level Foster Care Populations in the United States
APPAM Annual Meeting, *Virtual meeting* (November)

Bayesian hierarchical models in demographic research
CERSI seminar series, *Yale University* (November)

Using social media data to estimate migration
Toronto Data Workshop (December)
Berkeley Formal Demography Workshop (June)
NEST seminar series, *Western University* (March)

2019

Reproducibility in demographic research
MPIDR Open Science Workshop, Rostock, Germany (October)

Combining social media data and traditional surveys to predict migration stocks
MPIDR-IUSSP Workshop on Migration Data and Models for a Better World: Perspectives from Academia, Data Science, and International Organizations, at ASA 2019: New York, NY (August)
Cornell Population Center, *Cornell University* (February)

2018

Combining social media data and traditional surveys to predict migration stocks
European Symposium in Computational Social Science: Cologne, Germany (December)
School of Geography, *University of Queensland* (November)
Institute for the Study of Social Change, *University of Tasmania* (October)
Symposium of Digital Demography: Rostock, Germany (October)
Center for Population Dynamics, *McGill University* (September)
European Population Conference: Brussels, Belgium (June)

Estimating subnational populations of women of reproductive age
International Society for Bayesian Analysis World Meeting: Edinburgh, Scotland (June)
European Population Conference: Brussels, Belgium (June)
Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (May)
PAA Annual Meeting: Denver, CO (April)
Institute of Disease Modeling Symposium: Seattle, WA (April)

The spatial distribution of opioid mortality by race in the United States
European Population Conference: Brussels, Belgium (June)

Software

Author, *rcbayes*, R package to estimate and visualize Rogers-Castro migration schedules in Bayesian framework.
<https://cran.uib.no/web/packages/rcbayes/>

Contributor, *DemoTools*. R package for demographic analysis.
<https://timriffe.github.io/DemoTools/>

Professional Experience

World Health Organization <i>Consultant</i>	September 2016 – June 2017
Data Science for Social Good <i>Fellow</i>	May 2016 – September 2016
Human Mortality Database <i>Graduate Student Researcher</i>	January 2015 – May 2016
UNICEF Technical Advisory Group <i>Consultant</i>	March 2014 – July 2015
The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research <i>Research Officer</i>	April 2012 – December 2014
Reserve Bank of Australia <i>Analyst/Senior Analyst</i>	February 2010 – June 2013

Honors

Max Planck Sabbatical Award	2022-2023
Doctoral Completion Fellowship (<i>UC Berkeley</i>)	2017-2018
Elizabeth Scott Memorial Award (<i>UC Berkeley</i>) Statistics MA student showing the most promise in statistical research.	2015
Regents-Intern Fellowship (<i>UC Berkeley</i>)	2013-2015
Lado Ruzicka Prize in Social Research (<i>Australian National University</i>) Awarded to the most outstanding Master of Social Research candidate.	2013
W.D. Borrie Prize (<i>National essay competition, Masters category</i>) For best student paper on a population-related topic.	2012
University Medal (<i>University of Tasmania</i>) One of three awarded to the most outstanding Science and Technology undergraduates.	2008
Edith Rita Lowenstern Prize (<i>University of Tasmania</i>) Awarded to the most outstanding mathematics honors student.	2008

Service

Editorial and refereeing

Associate Editor: <i>Demographic Research</i>
Editor: Special Collection on Formal Relationships, <i>Demographic Research</i> (with Josh Goldstein)
Editorial Board: <i>Canadian Studies in Population</i>

University

Panel Member: <i>International Union of Scientific Study of Populations panel on Digital Demography.</i>
Team Member: <i>Consortium on Analytics for Data-Driven Decision-Making (CAnD3).</i>

Community and other

Co-founder and organizer: Formal Demography Working Group. https://formaldemography.github.io/working_group/

Founder and Organizer: *R-Ladies Toronto*

Women in Demography: Maintain a list of active scholars: https://www.monicaalexander.com/women_scholars/