Rohan Alexander

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Education

Australian National University
Ph.D (Econ) *Essays on Applied Historical Labour Economics*   Feb 2015 – Feb 2019 (submitted)
M.Econ   Feb 2012 – Nov 2012

University of Queensland
B.Econ (Hons)   Feb 2004 – Nov 2008

Supervisory panel

John Tang (Primary supervisor)
Senior Lecturer
Australian National University
john.tang@anu.edu.au

Zach Ward (Associated supervisor)
Assistant Professor
Baylor University
Zachary_Ward@baylor.edu

Martine Mariotti (Chair)
Senior Lecturer
Australian National University
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Tim Hatton (Associated supervisor)
Professor of Economics
University of Essex
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Publications

Rohan Alexander and Zach Ward, 2018, 'Age At Arrival and Assimilation In The Age Of Mass Migration', *The Journal of Economic History*, 78(3), 904-937.

> *Abstract:* We estimate the effect of age at arrival for immigrant outcomes with a new dataset of arrivals linked to the 1940 U.S. Census. Using within-family variation, we find that arriving at an older age, or having more childhood exposure to the European environment, led to a more negative wage gap relative to the native born. Infant arrivals had a positive wage gap relative to natives, in contrast to a negative gap for teenage arrivals. Therefore, a key determinant of immigrant outcomes during the Age of Mass Migration was the country of residence during critical periods of childhood development.

Working papers

Monica Alexander and Rohan Alexander, 'The Effect of Elections and Prime Ministers on Discussion in the Australian Federal Parliament (1901—2018)'.

> *Abstract:* A large part of politics consists of reacting to events, but not all events provoke a reaction. As such, understanding political behaviour requires examining the reaction to events and how this changes over time. We systematically analyse how discussion in the Australian Federal Parliament changes in response to two types of events: elections and changed prime ministers. To do this we first create a new dataset of what was said in the Australian Federal Parliament from 1901 through to 2018 based on available public records. We reduce the dimensionality of this dataset by using a correlated topic model, and then analyse the effect of these two types of events using a Bayesian hierarchical Dirichlet model that has several advantages over existing models. We find that: changes in prime minister tend to be associated with topic changes even when the party in power does not change; and elections that do not result in a change in prime minister are rarely associated with topic changes in the first half of our sample, but have been increasingly significant since the 1980s.

Rohan Alexander and Tim Hatton, 'The Making of a Nation: Who Voted for Australian Federation?'.

> *Abstract:* One of the pivotal events in Australian history took place in 1901 when six British colonies federated to become the Commonwealth of Australia. While much has been written about the politics of federation there has been very little empirical analysis of the key factors that underlie this momentous event. In 1898 and again in 1899/1900 the separate colonies conducted referendums on whether or not to join the proposed federation. In this paper we analyse those votes at the district level and associate them with a range of local characteristics. The choice of variables is guided both by economic analysis and by historical commentary. We find little support for the view that sectoral interests were important

as would be suggested by the theory of customs unions. On the other hand, we find greater support for federation in districts with a greater the share of migrants from outside the colony and among those further from the seats of colonial government. Across Australia, voting for federation was associated more with migration and distance than with trade and we conclude by drawing parallels with the 2016 UK vote on Brexit.

Work in progress

Rohan Alexander and Patrick Leslie, 'The Effect of State on Senators' Speeches in the Australian Federal Parliament (1901–2018)'.

Abstract: When Australia federated in 1901, the Senate (upper house) of the Australian Federal Parliament was envisaged as a house to represent the interests of the constituent states. To investigate the efficacy of this we analyse how what is said in the Senate is affected by the state the senator represents and how this has changed over time. We codify two data sources to create a new dataset of who said what in the Australian Federal Parliament between 1901 and 2018. Using the House of Representatives (lower house) as a comparison, we then analyse politician-specific language using a Bayesian hierarchical model. We explore how the effect of the state that a senator represents changes over time, and hence how the representation of states' interests has evolved, and how the state-identity of politicians has been subsumed by party-identity in Australia. We find that: the importance of the state-of-origin has decreased over time; and that substantial changes were associated with the world wars. Our findings have implications for how we think about the Senate as either a 'states' house', or a 'party house'.

Presentations

The Effect of State on Senators' Speeches in the Australian Federal Parliament (1901–2018)
Upcoming, 4–7 September 2019, European Consortium for Political Research, General Conference, Wrocław.
Upcoming, 20–22 June 2019, European Political Science Association, Annual Conference, Belfast.

The Effect of Elections and Prime Ministers on Discussion in the Australian Federal Parliament (1901–2018)
Upcoming, 4–6 June 2019, Canadian Political Science Association, Annual Conference, Vancouver.
Upcoming, 18–20 April 2019, Western Political Science Association, Annual Meeting, San Diego.
Upcoming, 4–7 April 2019, Midwest Political Science Association, Annual Meeting, Chicago.
11 January 2019, Political Methodology Specialist Group, Annual Conference, Warwick.
11 December 2018, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock.
22 November 2018, University of Toronto, Political Behaviour Group, Toronto.
25 October 2018, Australian National University, Research School of Economics, Canberra.
25 October 2018, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, Canberra.
24 October 2018, Australian National University, School of Politics and International Relations, Canberra.

Exploring Australia's Hansard (1901–2017)
Poster, 7–9 September 2018, Economic History Association Meeting, Montreal.

A Surnames-Based Analysis of Tasmanian Social Mobility (1803–2015)
20 May 2016, UC Berkeley, Economic History Lunch, Berkeley.
2 May 2016, Australian National University, Research School of Economics, Canberra.

Teaching experience

Australian National University

Tutor, Macroeconomics 3	Semester 2, 2017
Tutor, Microeconomics 3	Semester 1, 2017
Tutor, Behavioural Economics	Semester 2, 2015
Tutor, Business Economics	Semester 1, 2015
Tutor, Microeconomics 1	Semester 1, 2013
Tutor, Foundations of Economic and Financial Models	Semester 2, 2012

University of Queensland

Tutor, Microeconomic Policy	Semester 2, 2008
Tutor, Microeconomic Theory	Semester 1, 2008
Tutor, Introductory Microeconomics	Semesters 1 and 2, 2007