
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

NAME: Alexander A. Weinreb

eRA COMMONS USER NAME: aaweinreb

POSITION TITLE: Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

EDUCATION/TRAINING

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
University of Durham, Durham, UK	BA	06/1991	Philosophy and Politics
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA	PhD	06/2000	Demography and Sociology
University of Chicago, Chicago, IL	Postdoct	09/2000-09/2002	Demography

A. Personal Statement

I am a social demographer, focusing on populations in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Europe. The principal goal of my research program is to find ways to convert hard-to-measure elements of “culture” into valid empirical indicators that can propel our understanding of demographic behavior and, therefore, population dynamics. Much of my work is focused on connections between current demographic outcomes—within the areas of fertility and mortality—and a more general set of social or structural characteristics. Some of these are known drivers of demographic change, though often poorly measured: an example is extended family structures. Others are not usually considered important demographic determinants (e.g., patterns of political representation, modes of social interaction). Others, still, are rooted in long distant events whose shadow, I argue, continues to lie over contemporary demographic behavior and population dynamics (e.g., wars, epidemics, political and religious upheavals).

My primary research cuts across two of the PRC’s primary research areas: Demography: Family Demography and Intergenerational Relationships and Population Health. I am also the founding Director of UT’s new interdisciplinary major in Health and Society, a founding member of the Israel Studies Collaborative at the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, and a principal researcher/lead demographer at the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel. At UT I teach some of the core topics to PhD trainees, including the substantive introduction to the field, “General Approaches,” and the introductory methodological course, “Demographic Techniques.”

Over the next 5 years I will make three major contributions to demographic research. The first, building on a series of earlier publications, is a book project tentatively titled *The Mismeasure of Society*, in which I discuss the evolution of methodological norms in survey research in developing countries, in particular as practiced by demographers, who have long been in the vanguard of this work. Together with my co-author Guy Stecklov (Hebrew University), I demonstrate empirically that cross-cultural differences in patterns of non-response, notions of privacy, gifting and reciprocity, and translation issues affect demographic data, sometimes considerably. This influences not only the strength of associations between variables, but also the direction of effects. This is the first book-length treatment to critically and empirically evaluate data collection norms in the discipline, as they affect demographic and health data in developing countries.

My second contribution over the next five years will be to initiate a project whose key goal is to identify whether innovative behavior in rural settings of developing countries—including innovative health behavior—is facilitated by a sudden collapse of an extended family network. I will be applying for major NIH funding to field a project in Rwanda, which has experienced astonishing health gains since the late 1990s. UT Austin will be the lead institution in this submission, in part because of the excellent infrastructure support, especially for grant submission and subsequent technical and computer support. Our specific goal is to look at post-genocide demographic and economic experiences across families that varied in terms of loss during the genocide. This research gets to the heart of longstanding questions in demography, development, and public health. It also bridges three areas in which I have worked extensively over the last 20 years: 1) Figuring out the best ways to collect valid and reliable data in developing country settings; 2) Mapping and measuring extended family systems; and 3) Evaluating the effects of political and religious structures on individual behavior.

The third major contribution that I will make over the next five years is to help place conflict at the center of demographic study. By conflict I refer not only to actual war, but anxiety about the likelihood of war, the more direct effects of that anxiety on military investments and recruitment, and a broader set of latent tensions that are often framed in relation to political or religious identity, ethnicity, class, or race. In a number of papers—some published, some presented—I have shown how profoundly these factors can influence demographic behavior and, therefore, population dynamics and health in general. They explain, for example, a 0.5 child difference in TFRs in Europe; a significant portion of the variability in life expectancy among the wealthiest 40 countries; and differential patterns of child vaccination, among other outcomes, in many areas of sub-Saharan Africa. My five-year plan for this aspect of my research is to fold them into a more cohesive theoretical model that establishes how critically conflict affects demography, even beyond actual war.

B. Positions and Honors

Positions and Employment

2002-2003	Visiting Scholar, Department of Population Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem
2002-2004	Field Director, Malawi Diffusion and Ideational Change Project
2004-2009	Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem
2009-present	Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, The University of Texas at Austin
2009-present	Faculty Research Associate, Population Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin
2009-present	Faculty Associate, Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, The University of Texas at Austin
2014-present	Director, Health and Society, The University of Texas at Austin
2015-2016	Visiting Researcher, Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University
2016-present	Principal Researcher, Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel

Selected Honors, Other Experience, and Professional Memberships

2004-2007	Recipient of the Alon Prize, Israeli Ministry of Education
2015-2017	Fellow, Alma Cowden Madden Centennial Professorship, UT Austin
Present	Peer Reviewer (last three years): <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> , <i>American Sociological Review</i> , <i>Demography</i> , <i>Population and Development Review</i> , <i>Population Studies</i> , <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> , <i>Demographic Research</i> , <i>Field Methods</i> , <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> , and others
Present	Member, Population Association of America, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Union for African Population Studies, European Association of Population Studies.

C. Contributions to Science

1. Data Collection in developing countries: Since directing large-scale, multi-method fieldwork associated with the U. Penn-based Kenya and Malawi Diffusion and Ideation Change Projects, I have initiated a series of studies whose central goal is to evaluate and improve the quality of data used in demography and related fields, particularly in developing country settings. Many of these studies have been published in leading venues (*American Sociological Review*, *Sociological Methods and Research*, *Population Studies*, *Population Research and Policy Review*, *Demographic Research*, *PLoS One*). The overall goal of this research is to **improve the measurement of key demographic parameters** used to generate demographic data in developing countries, as well as from marginalized or non-mainstream subpopulations in developed countries. The series of studies includes: the first experimental study comparing the quality of data collected by local insider-interviewers rather than stranger-interviewers (an NIH-funded study fielded in the Dominican Republic summer 2010); the first experimental evaluation of incentivizing survey participation in a non-western setting; the first comprehensive empirical studies looking at the effects—in multiethnic and multilingual developing-country settings—of third-party presence and questionnaire translation.

- Weinreb, Alexander. 2006. "The limitations of stranger-interviewers in rural Kenya." *American Sociological Review* 71(6): 1014-1039 DOI: 10.1177/000312240607100607
- Sana, Mariano, and Alexander Weinreb. 2008. "Insiders, outsiders, and the editing of inconsistent survey data." *Sociological Methods and Research* 36(4): 515-551 DOI: 10.1177/0049124107313857
- Derpic, Jorge, and Alexander Weinreb. 2014. "Undercounting urban residents in Bolivia: A small-area study of census-driven migration." *Population Research and Policy Review* DOI: 10.1007/s11113-014-9321-1

- Sana, Mariano, Guy Stecklov, and Alexander Weinreb. 2016. "A test of the stranger-interviewer norm in the Dominican Republic." *Population Studies* 70(1): 73-92, DOI:10.1080/00324728.2016.1139740 PMID: 26988625

2. Extended family structures: Demographers and others have long recognized and documented variability in family structure, even as they conform to international data collection norms and focus on "households." In an effort **to evaluate some of the central conceptual claims in this literature**, especially those relating different types of family structure to subsequent demographic behavior, I have done considerable work on *non-nuclear* families in non-Western societies. I have published on consanguineous marriage in the Middle East, testing anthropologists' accounts about underlying causes, looking at the stability of this type of marriage across time, its interaction with love marriages, and its effects on fertility. I have also worked on extended family structures in sub-Saharan African settings. I organized a survey of 900 couples and a subsample of their parents in Malawi—the Malawi Family Transfers Project—that mapped and valued transfers across a three-generation network that included all surviving uncles and aunts, in addition to siblings and parents. These remain the only such data to have been collected in a less developed society. Among other things, they highlight the breadth of support networks available to singles and couples, the patterns of realignment that can occur as key figures ("bridgers") die (especially elderly parents), and the relative unimportance of formal systems of lineage (patrilineal vs. matrilineal) in determining patterns of transfers with fathers' or mothers' kin. In a related vein, I developed and field-tested a data collection tool used to document *actual* social interaction in a rural setting, as opposed to reported interaction in social networks data. And I led a team that was the first to look at the spatial analysis of orphanhood in a high AIDS setting (also Malawi). We found that at the village level, concentrations of orphans are a product of social mobilization and rewards, not levels of HIV. The planned research on Rwanda (aim #2 for the coming five years) will draw heavily on this accumulated research.

- Weinreb, Alexander. 2002. "Lateral and vertical intergenerational exchange in rural Malawi." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 17(2): 101-138 PMID: 14617969
- Weinreb, Alexander, Patrick Gerland and Peter Fleming. 2008. "Hotspots and coldspots: Household and village-level variation in orphanhood prevalence in rural Malawi." *Demographic Research* 19: 1219-1250 DOI: 10.4054/DemRes.2008.19.32 PMID: 20148129
- Weinreb, Alexander. 2008. "Characteristics of women in consanguineous marriages in Egypt, 1988 - 2000." *European Journal of Population* 24: 185-210 DOI: 10.1007/s10680-008-9160-z
- Manglos, Nicolette, and Alexander Weinreb. [Forthcoming] "Own-choice marriage and fertility in Turkey." *Journal of Marriage and Family* DOI: 10.1111/jomf.12348

3. Population and Religion: Given my interests in culture and demography in non-Western settings, religious identity and religiosity lie at the center of much of my substantive work. My 2012 OUP monograph (with co-author Jenny Trinitapoli), *Religion and AIDS in Africa*, highlights this in a number of ways. Building on fieldwork we initiated in Malawi in 2004, it is **the first comprehensive empirical account of how religion has affected the interpretation, prevention, and mitigation of AIDS** in the world's most religious continent. We confirm the central role played by religious narratives and institutions in the epidemic—a reprise of religion's role in historical plagues—but we also highlight some important differences between religious traditions and denominations, particularly those related to the care of the sick and their survivors. Finally, we flip the causal arrow, discussing how AIDS has affected religion and religious change. Other work on the effects of religion on demography includes a solo project on the effects of plague-related mortality on religious change historically; a project, also with Jenny Trinitapoli, looking at whether ethnic and religious heterogeneity slowed or accelerated the spread of HIV, and at what stage of the epidemic (currently under review). Most recently, I have developed **a number of projects on Jewish demography**. Israel-focused work looks at compositional changes in the Israeli population by religion and religiosity, estimating the magnitude of secularization (within the orthodox and ultra-orthodox population) and "return to religion" within the more secular population, and the net effects of these shifts on national-level fertility, educational attainment, and labor-market characteristics. US-focused work combines Pew data (Portrait of Jewish Americans) with contextual data, including the location of every synagogue and Jewish school (by type) in the US, showing that the availability of these institutions can have quite different effects on Jewish religious vs. ethnic identity. Finally, Europe-focused work documents the effects that migration streams into Europe have had on levels of European antisemitism, projects rises into the future, and the effects of this rise on Jewish emigration.

- Trinitapoli, Jenny, and Alexander Weinreb. 2012. *Religion and AIDS in Africa*. Oxford University Press.
- Manglos, Nicolette, and Alexander Weinreb. 2013. "Religion and interest in politics in sub-Saharan Africa." *Social Forces* 92 (1): 195-219. DOI: 10.1093/sf/sot070
- Weinreb, Alexander, and Jenny Trinitapoli. 2016. "HIV transmission in religiously diverse societies" (Under review)
- Weinreb, Alexander. 2016. "Differential growth rates by religiosity in Israel's Jewish population, 1991-2008, with projected effects to 2025" (Presented at Taub Research Center, Jerusalem)

4. Population and Politics: My work in political demography has emerged from the same interest in broad cultural effects on demographic behavior. There are two main streams in this research. The first looks at the **effects of elite networks and patronage on the flow of development resources**. An article on the political roots of ethnic differentials in Kenyan fertility was published in *Population and Development Review*. It showed that accounting for the seniority of a given area's political representative in the Kenyan government (a Parliamentary system) explained a large part of the ethnic differences in fertility. An equivalent Africa-wide exercise (26 countries) has been presented at brownbags around the country (Columbia, UC Berkeley, UT Austin). It broadens the focus of outcomes of interest to child vaccination, women's education, and women's labor force participation, all of which have well-established effects on population health. Other papers in this stream have looked at how less developed countries' connections to wealthy western donor countries increases their likelihood of tapping into significant development-related resources (in this case, the Global Fund); and how the level of military westernization dampens states' ability to violently repress popular discontent. A second stream in my work on population and politics looks more at how a person's **relationship to the state affects their demographic behavior**. A paper on fertility differentials in Europe over the last 50 years makes this argument (co-authored with Jenna Johnson-Hanks), tracing current fertility behavior to political, military and ideological histories of the 1930s/40s. Somewhat similar model can be applied to fertility differentials in sub-Saharan Africa and other areas with low-intensity ethnic conflict. Other work has shown that the relationship to the state can equally shape both patterns of actual or reported migration, as documented in a paper on urban undercounting in Bolivia. In fact, more generally, political culture affects the very structure of demographic data: whether they exist and in what form; and the strength and direction of social desirability biases.

1. Weinreb, Alexander. 2001. "First politics, then culture: Accounting for ethnic differences in demographic behavior in Kenya." *Population and Development Review* 27(3): 437-467 DOI: 10.1111/j.1728-4457.2001.00437.x
2. Derpic, Jorge, and Alexander Weinreb. 2014. "Undercounting urban residents in Bolivia: A small-area study of census-driven migration." *Population Research and Policy Review* DOI: 10.1007/s11113-014-9321-1
3. Swed, Ori, and Alexander Weinreb. 2015. "Military westernization and state repression in the post-Cold War era." *Social Science Research* 53: 270-287. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2015.06.004 PMID: 26188453
4. Weinreb, Alexander, and Jenna Johnson-Hanks. 2016. "Allegiance and alliance: Low fertility in the long shadow of WWII" (Currently under review; Earlier versions presented at IUSSP, PAA, UC Berkeley, London School of Economics and Political Science)

Complete List of Published Work in MyBibliography:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/myncbi/alexander.weinreb.1/bibliography/51034514/public/?sort=date&direction=descending>

D. Research Support

Ongoing Research Support

None at present.

Completed Research Support

None at present.