

Nomination letter for Alberto Palloni to the IUSSP Laureate

Dear Mary Ellen Zuppan
Executive Director, IUSSP

We write this nomination letter in support of **Alberto Palloni** for the “IUSSP Laureate”. The career trajectory of Prof Palloni spans over four decades and throughout this time he has made outstanding contributions to the advancement of population science and has served the profession at large in various capacities. We believe that Palloni’s scientific accomplishments merit the recognition of the largest international organization of population studies such as IUSSP. Below we describe Palloni’s work in greater detail. We also attached support letters from at least five current IUSSP members of different nationalities.

OVERVIEW

Alberto Palloni received a BS/BA in Sociology at the Catholic University of Chile, a certificate in Mathematical Statistics from the Center for Mathematical Statistics in Chile, and a PhD in Sociology from the University of Washington. Alberto Palloni was the Samuel H. Preston and E.T. Young Professor of Population and International Studies at the University of Wisconsin- Madison and is currently an Emeritus Professor of Sociology at UW-Madison and senior demographer at RAND Labor and Population Unit. He has been in the faculty of the University of Texas-Austin, University of Michigan, University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and University of Wisconsin-Madison. Palloni’s international recognition in population studies is testified by his many positions as visiting Professor including positions in Italy (University of Rome, Universities of Florence, University of Siena, and University of Padua), Brazil (University of Minas Gerais), Costa Rica (Centro Centroamericano de Población, Universidad de Costa Rica), and Mexico (El Colegio de Mexico).

His stature in and beyond demography and population studies is attested by the large number of prestigious awards he has received. He was elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, Fellow of the Sociological Research Association, and elected President of the Population Association of America in 2006 —the highest honor for any demographer and population scientist. Palloni has also been recognized for his research contributions, including Fellowships from the Ford Foundation and the Population Council, Guggenheim Fellow, Fellow in the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, *Doctor Honoris Causa*, from the Université Catholique de Louvain-Belgium, and a Merit Scholar from the US National Institutes of Health (NIH).

As an example of the significance of these awards, consider that the Merit scholar award represents the highest distinction from the NIH to a researcher: fewer than 5 percent of all NIH researchers are granted such awards. It is given to “support impressive records of scientific achievement in research areas of special importance or promise.” Eligible scientists must have a record of at least seven years of continuous NIH support; be a leader in their field with “paradigm-shifting ideas;” and have potential for high levels of future productivity.

Throughout his brilliant career, Palloni has also advised international institutions on population matters: the U.S. government on Decennial Census methodologies, the World Health

Organization on the Global Program on AIDS, the US National Institute of Child Health and Human Development through the Population Research sub-committee, the US National Research Council, and is a frequent advisor on population issues at the United Nations, the Pan American Health Organization, and the World Bank.

In addition to his many accomplishments in population sciences, Palloni has also played a fundamental role in the training of new generation of demographers, particularly in Latin America, and has provided ample mentorship opportunities to graduate students, junior faculty and his colleagues. For example, during his time as visiting Professor in Brazil and Mexico, Palloni taught summer courses on advanced demographic techniques (e.g., at CEDEPLAR in Brazil and at El Colegio de Mexico in Mexico City). Palloni also played a key role in the creation of the Center for the Demography of Health and Aging at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and was heavily involved in the grant proposal to Fogarty and NIH that provided financial support to many generations of international graduate students. At Wisconsin alone, Palloni trained over 50 PhD students, including current leaders in the field of population science such as Paula Lantz (Dean and Professor, University of Michigan), Barthelemy Kuate Defo (Professor, University of Montreal), Gilsung Park (Dean and Professor, University of Korea), Victor Gaigbe Togbe (Chief, Population & Development Section, Population Division at the United Nations), and Gilbert Brenes (University of Costa Rica), among many others.

RESEARCH: Outstanding contributions to the advancement of population sciences

Alberto Palloni is one of the most productive, creative, and influential demographers in the world over the past three decades, with an enormously wide-ranging set of contributions. His outstanding scientific discoveries to population sciences is reflected in his research productivity with a cumulative record of peer-reviewed journal articles now including over 140 published articles.

Palloni's contributions to population sciences expand many substantive areas, including first-rate contributions to the measurement of mortality, analysis of interbirth intervals, the study of demographic change in Latin America, the demography and epidemiology of AIDS, household size and structure, the Hispanic "mortality paradox", demographic responses to economic fluctuations and deforestation, biodemography, and more recently, he introduced consideration of early life factors in adult mortality variation, a topic that was the basis of his wide-ranging Presidential Address to the Population Association of America in 2006.

He is an intellectual and institutional leader in demography and population studies in Latin American populations. For example, he has been the Principal Investigator in several funded projects by the US National Institutes of Health that led to the most comprehensive data collection on older adults in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay). In addition, he has produced the most comprehensive dataset of mortality statistics worldwide for 19 countries in Latin America covering the last 200 years. This massive estimation exercise has identified new patterns of adult and old age mortality and has documented over a century of Latin American mortality decline.

A sampling of Palloni's stellar work includes:

- The study of trajectories of health, mortality and longevity in low- to middle-income countries, particularly in Latin America
- The modelling of the spread of HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Africa and its demographic consequences
- Demographic characteristics of the aging process including intergenerational transfers, disability and health
- Study of disparities in socioeconomic mortality and health gradients across Hispanics and non-Hispanics in the US and Mexican born individuals
- The causal links between mortality and fertility, and the implications of those connections for demographic theory
- The first study to consider selection mechanisms arising from early childhood experience as a source of socioeconomic differentials in health and mortality in developed countries
- The first to propose a model that links theories from developmental origins of health and disease to understand adult health and mortality disparities as a function of early conditions, developed a formal model to assess the consequences for adult mortality of the so-called Barker frailty and Barker effects, and empirically estimated the implications of such relations for the future trajectory of health and survival in low- to middle-income countries
- The assessment of data quality in mortality data by using a novel procedure to simultaneously assess completeness of death registration and age-specific distortions in observed mortality patterns
- He pioneered longitudinal data collections in Latin America including in Mexico through the ongoing Mexican Health and Aging Study (MHAS) starting in 2001 (currently in its fifth wave), in Puerto Rico in 2001-2007 through the Puerto Rican Elderly Health Conditions (PREHCO), and in seven capital cities in Latin America through the Survey on Health and well-being of Elders (SABE) in the early 2000s. The importance of Palloni's efforts with these data collections for population science is threefold. First, MHAS was the first international sister survey of the U.S. Health and Retirement Survey (HRS) and the first nationally representative longitudinal study in Latin America. MHAS and HRS have led to a large number of other sister surveys in Europe and Asia (e.g. ELSA in England and SHARE in Europe). Second, an important part of the work in MHAS, PREHCO and SABE involves modules for the study of obesity and smoking and the impact of these on current and future patterns of adult mortality in LAC thereby providing ample evidence to study population processes in these countries. Third, the survey collections is a major contribution to population science because all data is publicly available for use by researchers worldwide, thus magnifying its impact multiple times.
- Demographic assessment of mortality trends in Latin American populations. He recently (August 2015) released the most comprehensive mortality data of Latin American populations containing nearly 450 life tables for 20 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAMBdA) covering the period 1850-2010. The data base is publicly available <https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cdha/latinmortality/> and plans are being designed to attempt harmonization with already existing mortality data bases. This massive estimation exercise that Palloni is conducting will identify new patterns of adult and old age mortality to document a century of Latin American mortality decline and will provide the foundation of new empirical analysis that attempts to illustrate the effects and consequence of developmental origins of health and disease.

Distinguished service rendered to the IUSSP and to the profession

Alberto Palloni has proved ample service to the profession and to IUSSP, including:

| Year | Service to IUSSP |
|-----------|--|
| 1980 | Joined IUSSP |
| 1985-1989 | Committee on Social and Biological Correlates of Mortality, IUSSP |
| 1986 | Seminar on Comparative Studies of Mortality and Morbidity: Old and New Approaches to Measurement and Analysis organized by <i>IUSSP Committee on Comparative Mortality Changes</i> . It led to the publication of a book co-edited by Palloni, Vallin and D'Souza: <i>Measurement and Analysis of Mortality - New Approaches</i> |
| 2004-2006 | Panel on Ageing in Developing Countries (Co-Chair), IUSSP |
| 2007 | Seminar on Ageing in Developing Countries: Building Bridges for Integrated Research Agendas. It led to the publication of a book co-edited by Palloni, Ham-Chande and Wong: <i>Aging in Developing Countries: Building Bridges for Integrated Research Agendas</i> |
| 2010-2013 | Panel on New Challenges in Population and Development (Council Liaison), IUSSP 2010-2013 IUSSP Council |

| Year | Service to the profession at large |
|-----------|---|
| 1979 | Population Affairs Officer, Population Division, United Nations (UNFPA) (Professional group to estimate models of mortality for developing nations) |
| 1983-1985 | Panel on Decennial Census Methodologies, US National Research Council |
| 1988-1990 | Task Force on AIDS, UNFPA |
| 1988-1991 | Advisory Group for the Global Program on AIDS, the World Health Organization |
| 1990-1994 | Member of the Social Science and Population Studies Section, NIH |
| 1995 | Mortality in Developing Countries, UNFPA |
| 1996-1999 | Board of Directors, Population Association of America (PAA) |
| 1996-2002 | Committee on Population, US National Research Council |
| 1998 | Health Conditions of Elderly in Latin America, Pan American Health Organization |
| 1999 | Demographic Aging in Latin America, World Bank |
| 2000 | Living Arrangements of the Elderly in Developing Countries, UNFPA |
| 2001-2003 | Demographic Aging in Latin America, Pan American Health Organization |
| 2002 | PAA Vice-President |
| 2006 | PAA President |

Palloni is also an active member of the following professional organizations: Population Association of America, the American Statistical Association, Sociological Research Association, IUSSP, American Academy for the Arts and Sciences, and American Academy for the Advancement of Sciences. He has also been in the editorial board of the main journals in demography and population studies: *Demography*, *Genus*, *Demographic Research*, *Journal of Mortality Analysis* (WHO), *The Health Transition Review*, *American Sociological Review*, and *American Journal of Sociology*.