

13th September 2021

With this letter we would like to support the nomination of Professor Bruno Schoumaker for the IUSSP-Mattei Dogan Foundation Award for Comparative Research in Demography. We believe he is an excellent candidate for this award, especially in view of his innovative and comparative work on the topics of international migration and fertility based on demographic surveys.

Bruno Schoumaker holds a Master's degree in Geography and a PhD in Demography. His academic career is exemplary, starting in 2003 and culminating in his appointment as full professor at the Catholic University of Louvain in 2018.

From the beginning of his career, he has been involved in international research projects where the comparative dimension is omnipresent. For example, between 2003 and 2007, he was involved in the RHIYA project (2003-2007, UNFPA) concerning the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system for reproductive health projects among young people (10-24 years old) implemented by NGOs in 7 Asian countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam).

He was one of the principal investigators of the MAFE project (2008-2013, Migration between Africa and Europe – funding from EU FP7), which was innovative and significant in many ways. This international collaborative research project aimed to collect and analyse new data on migration between sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. The analyses were not only concerned with flows from Africa to Europe, but also - and this is the main contribution of the project - with return migration, circulation and transnational practices of migrants, in order to design better migration policies. The project was based on a corpus of multi-site, comparative and longitudinal surveys conducted in three African countries (Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo and Ghana) and six European countries (Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK). Bruno Schoumaker was one of the key players in this project, as can be seen from the numerous articles published in international journals and his many contributions to the project's synthesis book (Beauchemin C. (Ed.), Migration between Africa and Europe, Springer, Dordrecht, 2018).

His involvement in the field of international migration continued with the LIMA project (2015-2020, Personal Aspirations and Processes of Adaptation: How the legal framework impacts on migrants' agency?), this time within a more multidisciplinary framework (law, sociology, demography). This project focused on the exploitation of administrative data from the National Register and the Crossroads Bank of Social Security in Belgium and the realisation of quantitative and qualitative surveys among migrants of Indian, Congolese and American origin. The objective of this project was to examine how the legal framework - both Belgian and European - influences the migration, family and labour trajectories of third-country migrants, and to what extent this framework is compatible with the fulfilment of migrants' aspirations. It also involved an analysis of the European and Belgian legal framework for family reunification, labour market access and mobility, and the analysis of the administrative, professional and family trajectories of migrants in Belgium.

MAFE and LIMA were comparative studies of migration. Indicative of Schoumaker's stature as a scholar is his entirely separate contribution to research on fertility in Low- and Middle-Income countries, with an emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa. His *curriculum vitae* contains numerous works on the subject, published in major journals; these have acquired an undeniable international reputation, both in terms of methodological rigour and the criticism and validation of available data sources. In particular, Schoumaker

has carried out pioneering and highly creative investigations of the fertility information (birth histories) collected by the Demographic and Health Survey. His probing investigations of the nature of errors in these data has been highly influential. It is safe to say that all demographers who study reproductive change in Africa are aware of this work – Schoumaker is the acknowledged leading expert on DHS fertility data. A spin-off of his own research projects are software tools that are now widely used. In these respects, Schoumaker's contributions go well beyond his own publications. He has influenced, and indirectly facilitated, the research of many other scholars.

The importance of his work and his undeniable expertise on the subject have been recognised by the United Nations and the World Bank, as evidenced by his consultancy missions to these international organisations. His research in this field is also eminently comparative and innovative. His recent work on male fertility around the globe is particularly noteworthy – two recent landmark articles, one on data issues and a second on patterns of male fertility. He highlights the specificities of male reproductive behaviour and demonstrates that analysing fertility from the sole perspective of women is very restrictive in some contexts - particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, in terms of intensity, timing, trends and determinants of fertility. Compiling the data for this project was itself an enormous undertaking. To this point, these comprehensive pieces stand as the definitive comparative analyses of male fertility.

Finally, still in this comparative perspective, it is worth noting the summary articles on the evolution of demography (nuptiality, fertility, mortality, international migration, age structures, urbanisation and projections) in Sub-Saharan Africa (2004 and 2020), the Arab world and the Middle East (2005, 2022 forthcoming) carried out in collaboration with Professor Dominique Tabutin and published in the journal *Population*. These are reference works of undeniable didactic significance.

Another proof of its dynamism is its numerous active participations in major international conferences (IUSSP, PAA...).

In parallel with his research activities, Bruno Schoumaker has been heavily involved in teaching activities. Thus, since 2003, he has been teaching approximately 150 hours of courses per year, covering a wide range of topics, from demographic analysis and quantitative methods in the social sciences to data collection methods and surveys, including the relationship between population, development and the environment, or migration and urbanisation. His commitment to research and teaching activities is also reflected in his significant involvement (as thesis supervisor, member of the supervisory committee and external evaluator) in some 30 doctoral theses and 60 master's theses and in the supervision of 8 post-doctoral fellowships.

Finally, it should be noted that Bruno Schoumaker has recently held several institutional mandates of great responsibility. From 2013 to 2016, he held the position of Director of the Centre for Research in Demography at UCLouvain, and from 2016 to 2019 he became Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences at UCLouvain.

As an accomplished researcher and professor who is internationally recognized for the scientific quality of his work, the omnipresence of the comparative perspective and the thematic and methodological innovation in his work, we believe that Bruno Schoumaker is an ideal candidate for the IUSSP-Mattei Dogan Prize.

Beauchemin Cris, Bocquier Philippe, Calvès Anne, Casterline John, Duthé Géraldine, Pullum Tom, Marcoux Richard, Masquelier Bruno, Samuel Olivia, Soura Abdramane. Tabutin Dominique.

