

**Dr. Mary Ellen Zuppan**

**Executive Director, IUSSP**

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**Subject: IUSSP Laureate Award 2022 nomination of Peter McDonald**

**16 September 2021**

Dear Mary Ellen,

We are pleased to nominate Professor Peter McDonald for this Award, based on his decisive contribution to the advancement of demography and population research. Peter McDonald's contributions to the advancement of population science may be grouped into four categories: original contributions to demographic research and demographic theory; service to the scientific discipline of demography; contributions to the training of demographers; and service to governments in relating demographic theory and research to policy and planning issues. These will be discussed in order.

### **1. Original contributions to demographic research and demographic theory**

Professor McDonald's research history shows a judicious combination of sophisticated application of advanced technical procedures, an understanding and appreciation of demographic and social theory, to which he has indeed made a major contribution, an emphasis on social justice and equity and a stress on drawing out the policy implications of his research. The work is often multidisciplinary, applying theoretical perspectives from sociology, economics, history, psychology and anthropology.

His best-known theoretical contribution has been the development in a series of highly cited articles of gender equity theory applied to fertility. In his own words, "Women have achieved high levels of gender-equity in individually-oriented institutions such as education and employment, but equity in family-related institutions such as the family itself and the conditions of work lags behind. Where the level of incoherence between equity in individual and family institutions is high, some women opt to have no children or only one child, placing the societal level of fertility at a precariously low level. The policy implication is that societies must hasten the speed of change in gender equity in family-oriented institutions, especially through policy measures that support the capacity to combine work with parenting." In many Western and East Asian countries, women find it difficult to have children and pursue careers. This family/work tension leads to fertility postponement and small family sizes. This institutional approach, he argues, explains the bifurcation found in advanced countries today between those with very low fertility and those with moderately low fertility. Family organisation is not heading towards one ultimate form in all societies; change and tension will continue because of the strength of the society's idealised family morality in the face of powerful external, ideological forces. These ideas have generated an enormous amount of academic work in the past two decades. It is rare to find a paper dealing with low fertility issues that does not cite Peter McDonald's works.

The broad reach of Peter McDonald's research is remarkable. In the 1970s and early 1980s, Peter made major contributions to research on nuptiality and culture in developing countries including the 1978 Indonesian Marriage Survey, the Asian Marriage Survey and work on nuptiality at the World Fertility Survey in London. While he is best known for his theory of gender equity and fertility, he has made major contributions to demographic research in his home country, Australia, as well as in Iran and Indonesia. In Australia, for example, he has published seminal studies on historical trends in marriage and on the economic consequences of marriage breakdown, and has published widely on migration, ageing and family issues. Recently, he was the instigator of the construction of National Transfer Accounts for Australia.

The jointly authored book (Abbasi-Shavazi, M.J., McDonald, P. and Hosseini-Chavoshi, M., 2009, *The Fertility Transition in Iran: Revolution and Reproduction* (Dordrecht: Springer) is one of the best analyses of fertility transition available for any country – in terms of the careful assessment of data sources, appropriate use of demographic techniques in documenting the changes that occurred, and the application of social and demographic theory to understand what happened. The demographic community is fortunate in having access to this comprehensive study of one of the world's most dramatic fertility declines. The book won the World Prize for Book of the Year of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In Indonesia, Peter McDonald, fluent in Bahasa Indonesia, collaborated with the ANU's Dr. Iwu Utomo in conducting two major field studies – between 2012 and 2018, focusing on the transition to adulthood in Greater Jakarta, and subsequently, the needs of older persons living in villages across Indonesia. These projects resulted in numerous publications, both of an academic and policy-oriented nature, including five one-day seminars with Indonesian policy makers and academics facilitated by the Indonesian National Planning Board. His work in Indonesia and Iran also demonstrates Peter's commitment to first-hand observation of the situation he is researching. This has involved numerous visits to each country spending time in village and city environments, training interviewers and holding discussions with policy makers from the village to the national level.

In summary, Peter McDonald has made major contributions to our understanding of demographic change and its policy implications in the West (particularly Europe), in Australia, in East Asian countries, in Iran and in Indonesia – a seemingly eclectic mix of countries for which his academic publications are of a remarkably consistent depth and breadth.

## **2. Service to the scientific discipline of demography**

Peter McDonald has made a major contribution to the structure and work of the IUSSP over a long period. For 12 years from 2001, he took a leadership role in strengthening the Union, as Chair of the Council's Scientific Committee (2002-2005), Vice President (2006-2009) and President (2010-2013). He enthusiastically supported a new scientific model where activities revolved around a large number of smaller, more highly focused scientific panels with shorter existence than the earlier IUSSP committees. Leadership of these panels was carefully selected based on academic record in the subject matter of each panel. Because of the large number of panels, involvement was spread over a larger percentage of the membership. This model proved to be very successful and is still in operation today. From 1999 to 2001, Peter was chair of the IUSSP Working Group on Low Fertility which brought together international expertise on this emerging issue. Finally, in the 1980s, Peter was a member of the Fertility and Family Planning Committee of IUSSP. In total, to 2013, Peter had a 35-year involvement in the activities of IUSSP.

Peter also played a major role in the revitalization of IUSSP's four-yearly International Population Conference (IPC), playing a major role in the 2005 Conference in Tours, France, the 2009 Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco, and the 2013 Conference in Busan, Republic of Korea, the latter of which he presided over as President of IUSSP. Innovations at these conferences included allocation of a session to each IUSSP scientific panel and to each regional demographic association. Peter was also an invited participant in the plenary debate sessions at the 2001, 2005 and 2017 International Population Conferences and Chair of the debate sessions at the 2013 Conference.

While Peter was on the IUSSP Council, another important contribution to international collaboration in population research was made through the fostering of strong connections between the pre-existing regional associations for Europe, Africa and Latin America, and the newly created Asian Population Association. The IUSSP took on a support role in the organization of the international conferences organized by these regional associations, facilitated meetings of their Presidents, and advertised their activities through its website and Newsletter. He also fostered closer cooperation between IUSSP and the Population Association of America (PAA), following a 70-year history of separation, even rivalry.

At present, Peter is playing a leading role in bringing the 2025 International Population Conference to Australia through an approach to the Australian Prime Minister.

### **3. Contributions to the training of demographers**

Peter McDonald has a long and distinguished record of support for the training of demographers, beginning with his assignment at the University of Indonesia in the early 1970s, where around 100 university staff members from throughout Indonesia were given demographic training as a prelude to providing demographic training in their own universities. Peter also travelled across Indonesia providing support to the graduates of this program in implementing demographic research in their provinces.

Back in Australia, he was instrumental in the establishment in 1976 of a Masters degree in Demography at the Australian National University that was supported by the Australian aid programme and brought students to ANU from all over the developing world, but especially from Asian countries. This programme produced several hundred graduates. It contributed greatly to the development of a group of demographers in developing countries of Asia which were greatly in need of demographers in view of their passage through the demographic transition, and the need for demographic analysis to underpin their population and other development policies. In 1978, based on his considerable experience in demographic training, he was appointed to the IUSSP Working Group on the Teaching of Demography.

After his return to the ANU in 1995, many more Australian students were recruited into the Masters and PhD programme, leading to a significant increase in the number of Australians with advanced training in demography. Over the course of his career, Peter McDonald has supervised the PhD theses of over 50 demographers from many countries, including some who later achieved considerable prominence, both nationally and internationally.

### **4. Service to governments in relating demographic theory and research to policy and planning issues.**

Peter's ability to translate demographic understanding into policy relevant messages is a skill shared by very few demographers and underpins his considerable influence on policy. Gender equity theory has also been accepted by many governments in countries with very low fertility although, facing

opposition from idealised family morality and employers concerned with costs, many have been unable to implement the policy regimes that they would prefer. The theory has also provided support for the continuation of family support policies in countries where these policies may have been under fiscal pressure. Peter has frequently been consulted by governments in Europe and in East Asia about policy to address low fertility and is in demand as a keynote speaker at conferences where the policy implications of the gender situation are discussed.

In Australia, Peter McDonald has made crucial and important inputs into Australia's international migration, workforce, family, social inclusion, fertility and ageing policies. He has played a major role in influencing the way in which Australia measures migration. His work with colleague Siew-Ean Khoo was fundamental in the Australian Bureau of Statistics changing the way it estimates net international migration and hence produces its intercensal estimates of population. He has worked extensively on studies of different categories of permanent and temporary migration which has resulted in important policy changes being made by the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship. He has developed a methodology for projections of households which has been adopted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the National Housing Supply Council. As the Deputy Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies from 1983 to 1994, he played a pivotal role in development of a set of surveys and a research programme which shed unique insights into the demography of the family in Australia and led to policy changes in social security and family law. He has advised governments from both sides of politics about work and families, with a particular emphasis on income support for families with children and on childcare support as part of this process. His contribution to Australian demographic and social policy has been characterised by both breadth and depth.

Peter's work through economic-demographic modelling underpins current immigration policy in Australia and is supported by both sides of politics. One important element of his policy-related research on Australian demographic issues was to specify a range in the level of immigration that optimized the impact of immigration on GDP per capita though its impact on population ageing. This work has underlain Australian immigration policy over more than a decade.

The sterling contribution Peter McDonald has made to population policy in Australia and worldwide was recognized by the Australian Government in 2008 by appointing him as a Member in the Order of Australia. In 2018, the Australian Government appointed a Minister for Population, and created a new Centre for Population in the Commonwealth Department of the Treasury. Peter is working with the centre on a new study of the determinants and future direction of Australian fertility rates. Also in 2018, he was invited by the Prime Minister to address the Council of Australian Governments on population policy for Australia.

In addition to his innovative ideas, Peter McDonald's management skills, frank and honest judgments, generosity and inclusiveness are the main elements of his success. He was Head of ANU Demography for 17 years from 1996 to 2013. His prodigious academic output despite holding significant leadership positions attests both to his discipline in use of time, and excellent collaborations, but underlying it all, his passion for scholarship.

For all the reasons listed above, we believe Peter McDonald has fully met the criteria for selection as the IUSSP Laureate for 2022.

The members supporting the nomination, in alphabetical order, are:

Prof. Aris Ananta, Indonesia

Dr. Meimanat Hosseini-Chavoshi, Iran

Prof. Francesco Billari, Italy

Prof. Leiwen Jiang, China

Prof. John Casterline, USA

Prof. Gavin Jones, Australia

Prof Minja Kim Choe, USA

Prof. Fatima Juarez, Mexico

Prof Albert Esteve, Spain

Dr. Tomáš Sobotka, Czech Republic, Austria

Prof. Stuart Gietel-Basten, UK, Hong Kong

Supporting emails from these members are attached.

Link to Peter McDonalds online CV: <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/mcdonald-pf>