

Nomination of Vladimir M. Shkolnikov for the IUSSP-Foundation Mattei-Dogan award 2005

By Jacques Vallin

Vladimir Shkolnikov has a very good profile for the IUSSP-Mattei-Dogan award for comparative research in demography.

He is 48 years (born in 1957). Very good mathematician (Msc in Applied mathematics from the famous Moscow Aerospace Institute) he also soon demonstrated his major interest for social sciences at a time where that field was not so easy in the USSR and he got in 1987 his PhD in Social and Economical Geography (Institute for Geography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR), with a dissertation on "Geographical factors of length of life". He thus enter the field of demography through the door of health and started very soon to develop his main research activity at the frontier between demography and epidemiology.

While he was preparing his doctorate, he served at the Computer Center of the Health Ministry of the Russian Federation for 6 years (1981-86), producing medical and demographic statistics, developing indices of mortality and morbidity, and modeling mortality curves for general mortality and degenerative causes of death. Very well appreciated for that work, he became the head of the Department of Health Economics of that Center in 1987, while he developed methods to estimate the costs of treatment.

In 1989, he got a position of Senior research fellow at the Department of Demography of the Institute for Socio-economic Studies of Population of the USSR Academy of Sciences, where he studied changes in mortality and life expectancy and developed computer programs for decomposition, construction of multiple decrement life tables and other demographic techniques.

In 1991, as soon as Anatoli Vishnevsky founded the Center of Demography and Human Ecology within the Institute for Employment Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, trying to gather the most promising young Soviet demographers, VS was included and recruited as the Head of the Laboratory for Mortality Analysis and Forecasting. For 8 years, as such, he coordinated works on demographic prospects for Russia and its regions for the period of 1993-2015, analyzed more generally population dynamics, developed databases on health and socio-economic indicators, undertook epidemiological and demographic studies on mortality in Russia and Eastern Europe, etc. From there, he developed an important international project on the long-term negative health and mortality trends in the countries of the ex-USSR in the framework of a cooperation project between the CDEH and INED.

Finally, in 2000 he joined the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research as head of the Data Laboratory in Rostock (Germany). Even if that position is very demanding in terms of management and of collection and processing of data he continued to be very productive in terms of research, doing demographic modeling, macro- and micro-level epidemiological studies, etc. He also coordinated important mortality databases like Human Mortality Database, Human Life Table Database, Kannisto-Thatcher Database on Old Age Mortality and designed and organized data for projects on fertility and family planning and on health and health-related behaviors. In the same time, while continuing to actively participate in the CDEH-INED project, he also developed narrow links with the team of Martin McKee and David Leon at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in order to cross demographic findings with epidemiological studies.

In the most recent years VS published a lot of articles in major demographic or epidemiological journals. On population side, we can note the *European Journal of Population*, *Population*, *Genus*, *Demographic Research*, *Population Studies*, and on

epidemiological field, *The Lancet*, the *JAMA*, the *British Medical Journal*, the *International Journal of Epidemiology*, *Social Science and Medicine*, the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, the *Journal of Public Health*, etc. VS also contributed to important collective books like *Heart Disease: Environment, Stress and Gender*, by Weidner et al., *Challenging Inequities in Health: From Ethics to Action*, by Evans et al., *Population under Duress. The Geodemography of Post-Soviet Russia*, by Demko et al., *Premature Death in the New Independent States*, by Bobadilla et al. or *Russia's Demographic Crisis*, by DaVanzo.

That great diversity and quality of support used for disseminating the results of his research is a good indicator of the high degree of pertinence and interest of his work. Furthermore it contributes a lot to the fame of the CDHE and then of the MPIDR, among the international scientific community.

VS has been very active within IUSSP as Chair of the IUSSP Scientific Committee on Emerging Health Threats. In the framework of that position, among others activities, he organized, in Rostock in 2001, a very successful international seminar on "*The determinants of diverging trends in mortality*", and a second one in Ouagadougou, in 2003, on "*HIV, the resurgent infections and population change in Africa*" with the co-sponsoring of WHO and UNAIDS. As a result, VS edited a special issue of *Demographic Research* including the 18 best papers of the first seminar and a book is in preparation with the material of the second one.

Clearly, VS has demonstrated a passion for both international comparisons and links between the different approaches of different disciplines, especially he bridged very well demography and epidemiology. And the first part of his career shows very well how productive could be the next one. Exactly the profile requested for the IUSSP-MD award.