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EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Bob Retherford Interview Narrative

10-9-2009 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

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The **East-West Center Oral History Project** strives to capture the Center's first 50 years as seen through the eyes of staff, alumni, and supporters who have contributed to its growth.

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Bob Retherford

10-09-09 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Personal Background

I was born in New York City in 1941. My father went back to graduate school to get a Ph.D. in physics after the war. He was at Columbia University, and we lived in New Jersey. After getting his degree and working a while at the Columbia University Radiation Lab, he took a job at the University of Wisconsin. So when I was nine, we moved there. And I lived there until age 19.

I did my freshman year at the University of Wisconsin. I was a chemistry major. Then my father decided to leave Wisconsin, and he took a job in California, in the electronics industry, down near Stanford. So I transferred into Berkeley. I switched to a physics major. In my senior year I decided also to complete the pre-med requirements. It took two summer sessions and an extra year of course work to do that.

I applied to medical schools at the University of California in San Francisco, University of Washington in Seattle and Stanford University. I was accepted at all three medical schools, with a small scholarship from Stanford, but by that time I was heavily involved in the civil rights movement.

My roommate, who was also active politically, had shifted from biology to sociology. And I was reading some of his stuff on the side. I decided I would switch to sociology, too, and was admitted to the graduate program in sociology at Berkeley. I met my future wife, Ursula, during the first year of the program. And we got married in '65. So I worked on my graduate degree.

Life at EWC

Postings in Asia

Also during that first year, I saw a Population Council fellowship posted and I thought, “Well, I need the money.” I had no intention of staying in the field of population. I got the fellowship. And I ended up as a Pop Council fellow for -- I don’t know -- two or three years.

And then I got a post-doc from the Social Science Research Council to study in Paris for a year at the National Institute of Demographic Studies. By this time I was hired at East-West Center, which allowed me to take leave for the post-doc even before I arrived at the East-West Center. I left on the post-doc in 1970 and arrived at EWC in early 1972.

What happened was, Paul Demeny, who actually was the first director of the Population program -- at that time, the East-West Population Institute. Paul was at the University of Michigan. He came as a guest professor to Berkeley for a semester while I was still there. And then, after he came to East-West Center, he recruited several of us, out here: Bob Gardner, Griff Feeney, Geoff McNicoll and myself. All four of us came to East-West Center.

After the post-doc I was supposed to come back to East-West Center, but Jay Palmore, whom Paul had recruited from the University of Chicago, was supposed to write a background paper for a conference on population aspects of social development, at ECAFE -- ESCAP, today. That’s the United Nations agency in Bangkok.

For some reason, Jay couldn’t go at the last minute. So Paul called me up in Paris and asked if I would go. So instead of going to East-West Center, I spent five months working in the Population Division at ECAFE. That stands for Economic Commission

for Asia and the Far East.

That was my first time in Asia. It was a great experience. I bought a second-hand Honda 90 motorcycle and put almost 5,000 km on it, exploring Bangkok and its environs.

Ursula stayed back with her family for a while, and then she finally came to Bangkok.

But then, after just a few weeks, she went on to Saigon in December 1972, where we ended up adopting two baby girls, orphaned in the war, which was still going on. I went to Saigon, I think three or four times over weekends to visit her, first in Govap orphanage, second in the old French military hospital where our girls had to be hospitalized (with Ursula living in the same hospital room with them and two other sick babies from Govap), and then in a rented apartment.

I had to leave to start my job at East-West Center in early April 1972, but Ursula did not manage to leave for Hawai'i until July, because it took that long to adopt the girls in Vietnam. We had to adopt them legally under Vietnamese law before they could leave Vietnam. Ursula hired a prominent French lawyer who had remained in Vietnam after the French left. (Being Swiss, she speaks French.) We named the girls My-Hanh (pronounced me-han) and Tania.

Of course, after adopting the two girls and joining me in Hawai'i, Ursula promptly got pregnant, and our daughter Leah arrived nine months later. All of a sudden I was the Catholic father of the year, so to speak, and I was not even Catholic!

Population Institute, 1970s

On my first day at the Population Institute, as it was then called, Bob Gardner introduced me to the people I did not already know. The first person I met was Monica Fong, who was working as a research assistant. My name had been up on the roster for quite a

while, so she knew who I was. She looked at me and she said, “Oh. With a name like Retherford, I was expecting somebody more distinguished- looking.” I got a big bang out of that! I knew I was going to like the place.

Paul Demeny was a great director. He started the [*Population*] Institute off with a bang. We had a lot of money. I became, very quickly, an affiliate graduate faculty in Sociology at UH, to help with the population studies program at the University, which Paul actually started in cooperation with several University social science departments and the School of Public Health.

My Ph.D. dissertation had been on the sex differential in mortality, and I wanted to get a couple articles out of it. So Paul said, “Yes, do the articles.” So I did. I managed to get a couple of journal articles published, and also a book.

But then Paul called me into his office one day and said, “You know, Lee-Jay Cho has been working on fertility estimation from census data, and he’s got this method, the ‘own-children method of fertility estimation,’ that he developed with Wilson Grabill at the U.S. Census Bureau.” And he said that Lee-Jay could really use some help. And so I said, “OK. Fine,” thinking it was just going to be a small task. But I ended up working with Lee-Jay on improving and applying this method in a number of Asian countries for many years. And, actually, I’m still doing work that’s related to that. So many things in life just kind of drop in your lap unexpectedly, and that was one of them.

[Editor’s note: Bob Retherford is currently coordinator of the EWC Population and Health Program.]

And I should say, too, that when I was first hired out here I talked with Ursula, my wife, and we both thought, “Wow. Hawai‘i. That’s sort of out in the boondocks. We’ll stay

out there for maybe a couple of years and then move on.” But it turned out that we really liked it out here. And we’re still here, 40 years later.

Summer Seminar on Population

Paul Demeny left for the Population Council in '74. Lee-Jay Cho then became the director of the Population Institute. He asked me at that time to become the assistant director for professional education. That covered conferences, workshops, interns and that sort of thing.

So I took on that position. Lee-Jay had started the census conferences already before becoming director, and after I came, I helped Lee-Jay organize them. Paul had started the Summer Seminar [*on Population*]. With help from others, I took that over as part of my new job. Our core staff were all young, not long out of graduate school. We did not have much experience. So, initially, the Summer Seminar was not much more than a couple of short courses on demographic methods and social demography.

It was advertised, just like we do now. Except we paid for everything in those days.

There was no tuition or anything. When I took it over, I reorganized it, collectively, with our researchers. We had many meetings deciding how we would do it. But, basically, we set the pattern that has persisted to this day.

The Summer Seminar became a collection of workshops on particular topics, with some common activities. We had lots of funding in those days, and I remember that one of the Summer Seminars had over 100 participants in it. We had six workshops. I remember it very well, because that year we had a big Summer Seminar party out in Kailua at my house, in the backyard. It was a beautiful day, and we had all the food and everything spread out on tables in the yard. We got an EWC vehicle of some kind -- I don't

remember what -- and brought over more than 100 EWC folding chairs, also outside.

And then this cloud came over, and dumped rain for about 10 minutes, hard. (laughter)

And we had over 100 people out there, you know. I mean, it was just really something.

One of life's great experiences.

We tried for a participant ratio of 2-to-1. That was kind of the general rule. Two Asia-Pacific participants for every one U.S. participant. We maintained that, roughly.

Nowadays, it's much more heavily weighted toward Asia-Pacific. We don't get that many from the U.S. any more, because we now charge a fairly hefty tuition. People in developing countries can usually get their way paid, at least partially, by donor agencies, but it is much more difficult for Americans to find funding.

Nobody's going to pay for them. So, you know, we've been asking lately about \$4,000 in tuition. Plus airfare. Very few Americans are going to pay that out of pocket.

My first Summer Seminar was the third, and that was in 1972, so I think it must have started in '70. It was five weeks. Four weeks here, one week in Asia. For years, the fifth week was in Korea. Later it was in some other countries. When funding got tight, we cut the fifth week. For many years it was four weeks. Now this year we cut it further, to three weeks, with a much more flexible format.

And it was like that the entire time I was assistant director for professional education, which was -- looks like five years. '74-'78. Four to five years.

It continued like that for quite a while, until the funding became a problem. Because, initially, the [*Population*] Institute was started with a USAID grant that paid for everything. All salaries, papers, pencils, paper, participants, visiting fellows, the works. It was covered by USAID. We had lots of money in those days. But then, gradually, we

went over to contracts with deliverables to USAID, and then, eventually, even that was phased out, when USAID shifted to global contracts. But we are just regional.

Moreover, a number of Asian countries have become prosperous enough that they are no longer “USAID countries.”

Now we’re going over to a more flexible format. We’re going down to three workshops, now, with flexible timing. Well, Andy Mason is having a conference and workshop on population aging and the generational economy, involving his big project on national transfer accounts. Part of it is going to be a three-day conference with about 60 people. That’s supplemented by a two-week workshop that overlaps the conference. So it’s not only flexible timing but also flexible organization.

And then Jerry Russo is having a workshop on health-care financing and insurance systems that is three weeks here and one week in Manila. Local costs in Manila are being covered by the Philippines Health Insurance Corporation, which is a quasi-governmental organization.

And Sidney Westley’s having her usual “Communicating Population Research to Policy Makers” workshop. But it’s going to be compressed into three weeks, instead of four. Sidney doesn’t like to give up anything, so she’s trying to cram it all in.

Population Institute/Assistant Director for Graduate Study

After a few years of being assistant director for professional education, Lee-Jay asked me to take over as assistant director for graduate study. If I recall correctly, Peter Pirie held that position before me, but then he retired. I served as assistant director for graduate study for 11 years.

That was 1980 until 1991. We spent a lot of time revamping the Population’s graduate

student program -- getting everybody to agree on the new structure. I was trying to tighten up requirements. We had a large number of students on Population Institute scholarships (which were much more generous monetarily than they are now). At any given time, we had about 35 graduate students. But many of them took the money while participating very little in our program – not even attending weekly seminars.

When I took over the grad study program, one of the changes was that pursuing the Population Studies Certificate became a requirement. And we established some benchmarks. Every year, there were some benchmarks. If a student wanted to continue on grant, they had to meet those annual benchmarks. Among our researchers, there was a lot of discussion and disagreement about what the annual benchmarks should be, but we ultimately, over many meetings, achieved a consensus. We put together a fairly lengthy document with the graduate study policies for the Population Institute.

Population Institute/UH Ties

The Population Institute's graduate student program was unique because of our close cooperation with the UH Population Studies Program. None of the other institutes had a similar arrangement with UH. Our program was much more academically oriented. Our requirements were almost entirely academic requirements, so that the student's work could meet both EWPI's requirements and the student's university department's requirements. Involvement in EWPI research usually awaited completion of the UH Population Studies Certificate, and that research was mostly in the form of Ph.D. dissertation research that was closely related to an EWPI research project.

Actually, all the basic courses in the Population Studies Program were taught by East-West Population Institute researchers, who were either jointly appointed with UH,

meaning that they were home-based at UH, or, as in my case, were affiliate graduate faculty at UH but home-based at EWC. And for many years, the secretary for the UH Population Studies program was located at EWPI and paid by EWPI.

The other institutes just didn't have this kind of a link with the University -- partly because, for example, in Environment -- after that institute was formed -- there was no parallel environment program over at the University. Similarly, for Culture Learning, there wasn't any comparable entity over there at the University. So, the different institutes had to forge different kinds of relationships with students and with the University, so our program -- for those reasons -- tended to be much more academic. Our researchers were also much more academically oriented. I know when I came here, I thought, you know, "All this Easty-Westly stuff..." I just want to do good science. So it was only after a period of time that I really began to appreciate the importance and the value of the institution and its mission. Initially, I just wanted to do good population research, publish in top journals, and all that. I still do. But I appreciate much more the role of the East-West Center -- as an institution -- than I used to. I very much appreciate it now. I think it's very important.

Institutional Transitions

Separation of Education & Research Programs

So then, I was assistant director for grad study up until 1991, and I think that was about the time that Oksenberg came in [*as EWC president*]. He caused a great deal of upheaval in the graduate study program, and split it off, basically, from the Research Program. He centralized it. And then when Charles Morrison came in, he centralized it even more. This has its pluses and minuses, but, for the Research Program it's mostly minuses,

because the student program and the Research Program now operate mostly independently of each other. In my view, this is a shame, because researchers have a lot to offer students, and, what is less appreciated, working with students is good for research, because it keeps us on our toes and keeps us from becoming overly specialized.

Intellectual Innovations

Census Conferences

The census conferences were the brainchild of Lee-Jay Cho. During the Korean War, Lee-Jay knew some English and worked with the U.S. Army as a translator. Through contacts made in that job, he got to the United States for further study, first at George Washington University and later at the University of Chicago, where he received his Ph.D. Somewhere along that line, he did some collaborative work with Wilson Grabill at the U.S. Census Bureau.

Together, Grabill and Cho published a paper in *Demography* (the official journal of the Population Association of America) on the “own-children method of fertility estimation,” which they developed. This is a method for estimating age-specific fertility rates and total fertility rates from census data. After Lee-Jay got his Ph.D. at Chicago, he went to the University of Michigan. From there he was hired by Paul Demeny, the first director of the East-West Population Institute, which was founded at the East-West Center in 1969.

Lee-Jay came into a brand-new program with a bunch of young people without a network in Asia, without much experience, and without access to data. And without access to data, you can't do much population research. And at that time, there wasn't that much data available for Asian countries in the area of population. At that time we relied

heavily on census data. But the censuses didn't ask very many questions. So there wasn't that much there.

So Lee-Jay's insight was, "Let's start these census conferences." We had the money. We had this big AID grant. And AID was interested in data for development. Lee-Jay's scheme was, you had the census conference and immediately, you have a network of the major data producers in Asia. We could help them, and they could help us.

I remember Ron Freedman from Michigan -- a very senior person in the population field -- was on our International Advisory Committee, which Lee-Jay had formed. Ron was a bit skeptical of this because census people were "not very academic." But Ron later confided that this was really a stroke of genius on Lee-Jay's part, because Paul [Demeny] had recruited a bunch of highly qualified academically oriented young researchers. So there wasn't much danger that working with census people was going to result in a non-academic enterprise here. But that gave the contacts, from which you could branch out. You had an immediate network, and that grew into our China project.

India Project

Our India project also started out with Padmanabha, who was Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. So we had that contact. Padmanabha came to the first census conferences. He was a great guy, and he liked us. Lee-Jay put me in charge of our India work. At that time, U.S. and India relations were pretty frosty, around the mid '70s. Or early '70s.

India was really more oriented towards Moscow and very critical of American academic imperialism. The Center had virtually nothing going on in India at the time. Lee-Jay saw that there was an opportunity to do something in India -- not just for the population

program, but for the whole Center. Lee-Jay was very good at this kind of strategic thinking. So he asked me to take charge of the India project, which I did. I was involved in that for more than 25 years.

And it all started with the census conferences and India's Registrar General who attended those early conferences. We worked with them for about 10 or 15 years, funded by USAID. And that led to an AID-funded effort to strengthen the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's network of population centers that they supported around the country, mostly in universities.

So they approached me and I said, "Well, you know, we're not interested particularly in just, you know, humdrum demographic methods, teaching demographic methods, to people." There was an opportunity to do more than that, partly because India had not participated in the largely AID-funded World Fertility Survey program, because of hostility to what some key individuals in India saw as American academic imperialism. The World Fertility Surveys were the precursor of the Demographic and Health Surveys. The World Fertility Survey, I believe, was held in about 40 countries. And it was headed up by Sir Maurice Kendall, a very famous statistician. It was a very high-quality enterprise. Kendall recruited a lot of really good people -- headquarters were in London. But it was mainly funded by USAID. And, I think, UNFPA [*now called United Nations Population Fund*] also kicked in, and maybe some others -- I don't remember the funding exactly.

What the World Fertility Survey did was create a common database for 40 countries, or so. The core questionnaire was the same in all countries, opening the door to comparative studies. And for most participating countries the individual record files in

electronic form became available to researchers and graduate students. This data resource became a tremendous shot in the arm for the development of the population field. This was a huge thing. And then it continued with the Contraceptive Prevalence Survey Program -- which didn't last that long. And then it morphed into the Demographic and Health Survey program, which continues to this day. That came into being in, I think, the mid-1980s.

India was not participating in any of this. India's a huge country, and it's got 1/6th of the world's population in it. It was very important to get them in.

National Family Health Survey

So we couldn't do a DHS survey [*with India*] because the DHS survey requirement stipulated being a part of that project -- that multi-country project -- and you had to agree to data coming out of the country for comparative studies. India wouldn't agree to that. So I said, "Well, to make this project interesting, we don't want to just teach demographic methods to them. Let's have them do a big survey, since they've not been part of these earlier surveys."

I said that we can't call it a DHS survey. But we can do a DHS survey, just call it something else. So it ended up being called the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). And then India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and USAID wanted East-West Center to handle the whole thing.

I said, "Look. We're not a survey organization." Meanwhile, Fred Arnold, who worked with us for 18 years, had gone to DHS. He was seconded there. I think, technically, he was still with the East-West Center. But he had been there for a number of years, and so we worked it out that East-West Center would subcontract out foreign technical

assistance to the Demographic and Health Survey organization, which was a private government contractor in the Washington, D.C., area.

So our survey wasn't officially a DHS survey, but in fact it was a DHS survey in terms of everything except name. It was not easy getting it through all the official approvals within the Indian government. There was an element of luck. It just so happened that at the critical time, India was experiencing a foreign exchange crisis. And so the prospect of getting \$7 million to kick off this project seemed attractive, so it got approved by the Finance Ministry. Otherwise, it might not have gone forward.

We had a lot of support from the Registrar General, who sat on a key government committee. The Registrar General said that East-West Center was good to work with. The Registrar General (A. R. Nanda at that time) was highly respected, and his praise for the East-West Center for our years of work with Indian census people swayed the committee.

We'd had the project with them for years. We published a lot of working papers in the Registrar General's working paper series. All these publications were collaborative, involving co-authors from both the Office of the Registrar General and the East-West Center. Many people from the Office of the Registrar General had come to East-West Center over a period of 15 years for training workshops and census workshops of various kinds. So we had had a lot of work with the Registrar General's office over the years.

We had already trained a lot of Indians but they'd all been in the census area. It was fortunate that some of the key people at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare -- Family Welfare being family planning in India -- liked us and wanted to work with us, including the Secretary of the Ministry at that time. There was some resistance from the

representative from the Planning Commission, located in the Prime Minister's office. But when he saw that the Registrar General was for us, he changed his mind on the spot. He said, "OK."

I just happened to be in India at the time and attended that meeting and had to answer a few tough questions. So, this was a very significant development for India. Because up until that time, demography in India was a very statistical field. It was very narrowly focused on birth rates, death rates, age structure and that sort of thing – what we call formal demography. There was not much social demography, partly because there was very little survey data on the economic and social causes and consequences of population change, and the little that there was was not readily available to researchers or their graduate students.

But the DHS -- the National Family Health Survey -- was loaded with this kind of economic, social and health information. So this ended up really changing the whole population field for India. The National Family Health Survey was a huge enterprise. There were over 90,000 women in the survey. And we involved 30 organizations in the different states of India. We asked some questions on HIV/AIDS, working with the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, which is the premier government medical institution in India.

You know, we had major involvement of people in the population field in India. For example, we had a three-day questionnaire design workshop that brought together about 100 top people in the population field throughout India. This was a conscious decision to get everyone on board and generate wide support. Hundreds of people were involved in this enterprise, not counting the many more hundreds who were hired as survey

interviewers. The survey ended up costing a lot more than the initial \$7 million. AID kept having money left over, and -- "Oh, can you use this?" We needed it so we said, "Yeah, sure." We'd do more. And then... another stroke of luck. When we released the first reports, there was a big press conference. I happened to be there for it. A new Secretary had just come into the Ministry. The previous Secretary in the Ministry didn't like our survey and seemed a little anti-U.S. to me. But then she was transferred -- she got promoted to some other job in the government, and a new guy came in. So he was presiding over this press conference, and had just been on the job -- I don't know, I think only for a few weeks. And he comes in, and he's got these reports. One was for the state of Uttar Pradesh. One was a preliminary national report. He said, "These reports are great." He said, "They're just full of wonderful information." Then he says... "You know, these data really should be used."

And then, the representative from AID, Bill Goldman, raised the question. There were about 80 people in the room, I would say. Bill asked, "Do you think that the individual record data could be made available to researchers?" He said, "Oh yes, these data ought to be made available." Bill then asked, "Could the data also be made available to researchers outside of India, too?" The new Secretary said, "Why not?"

So he says this in front of a whole lot of press and officials from within the Ministry. Who's going to contradict him after that, you know? And so that led to release of the data. It still took another year to work it all out, but it got done.

The first time ever outside of India -- even within India. So this ended up sort of revolutionizing graduate study in India in the population field, because all of a sudden, all these graduate students had data to work with. So now all kinds of Ph.D. dissertations

and master's theses are based on these data. Moreover, this then led to public use samples for some other surveys that the government takes. They saw that releasing the data had some good consequences.

Because they were a little afraid -- "Oh, the data aren't so good. We're going to get criticized." Then somebody has to be in Parliament and gets questioned about these embarrassing data from the survey, or something. It's not like in the U.S. The Secretary gets called up before Parliament and they grill him or her. They grill them. If things are going wrong, they're on the carpet. So they show up there with a couple of people that really know all the facts, and they're checking with them and answering questions.

They're on the hot seat. So they tend to be pretty cautious because of that. But they saw that there weren't any bad consequences -- all the consequences seemed to be pretty good. So then, you know, some of the other agencies -- such as the sample registration system -- a lot of these surveys are now available as public use samples. So, this was actually a very important project for population studies in India. The whole population -- the relationship of data to monitoring the family planning program. The Ministry ultimately took the view that, "We want to do this regularly, even if we have to pay for it ourselves."

I think they are, to a significant extent, paying for it by themselves now. AID is still putting money into it, but I think the government is gradually taking over these surveys. We did it by state. From the start. Because, in India, Health and Family Welfare -- in India "family welfare" means family planning -- is actually a state function. So that means you've got all these people in these states -- I mean, like UP (Uttar Pradesh) -- it's a state, but it happens to have about 180 million people in it. If it were a country, it'd be the 11th biggest country in the world, or something like that. Because it's a state

function, you know, the state organizations want state reports. So we produced state reports for two surveys. And the third survey, which we're no longer involved in because it's very repetitive work, now they don't do a full-fledged report. They produce tables, by state. But they no longer do a write-up.

It was just a huge job. For 25 states in India, we produced about -- for a couple of small states, they were combined reports, but somewhere between 20 and 25 300-page reports.

It was a huge job. I mean, I would go to India for three weeks, you know, and work on a 300-page report. And a whole bunch of other people was working on it, too. But I would be one of the two editors that would put it all together, edit it, and put it into better English. Each time it was a very tedious big job. So, eventually, those of us at EWC decided our publication of our work in reputable academic journals was suffering. So we opted out of the third survey.

MACRO [*MACRO International*] itself is now the primary contractor. They were already the primary contractor in the second survey. They couldn't be in the first survey, so East-West Center was the primary contractor -- because the Indian government wouldn't agree to the requirements of the DHS program. The first National Family Health Survey was in 1992-93. Starting with the second survey in 1998-99, MACRO became the primary contractor. So the roles were reversed already in the second survey. East-West Center became a subcontractor.

MACRO is the name of the organization. DHS is the survey -- DHS Survey Program -- Demographic and Health Survey Program -- within MACRO. But they do other surveys, too. But DHS is what MACRO mainly does.

They do them for a great many developing countries. But they also do some surveys in

developed countries. Occasionally they'll get a contract. It's a private organization for profit, so they get contracts. I imagine that they probably like to diversify a little bit, not that all their eggs are in one basket.

[Ex-Population Institute researchers Fred Arnold and Vinod Mishra are with the Demographic and Health Survey Program.]

China Project

The China project was started by Lee-Jay. I was busy with the India project, so I was not in on the China project until fairly recently.

Once China was recognized by the U.N. as officially China, and Taiwan sort of disappeared as far as the U.N. was concerned, then UNFPA got into China. The United Nations Population Fund. They started off with some training and engaged East-West Center to do it.

Lee-Jay went to great lengths to get our China project off the ground, including a great deal of studying of Mandarin Chinese and really becoming fluent in Mandarin. He also did a lot of wining and dining and networking high-level people in the population field, which helped pave the way. What happened was, when UNFPA started the training, they approached East-West Center. Griff Feeney and Fred Arnold on our staff went to China and did some of the training. What often happens with these training workshops is that the most senior people get to attend. But that didn't happen.

China searched around for young people who were really good. One of those people is Jiajian Chen, who works for us now. Another one is Zhang Weimin, who is now one of the top people in the National Bureau of Statistics. Lee-Jay also worked very effectively with the State Birth Commission, which is now called the National Population and

Family Planning Commission. They were the ones in charge of implementing and monitoring China's one-child policy. I would have to check with Lee-Jay, but I think we were already trying to start a project in China before the one-child policy came into effect in 1980. So when it came into effect, we were already there, I think. But you're going to have to interview Lee-Jay on this one.

One of the things the Chinese government did early on was conduct what was called the One-per-Thousand National Fertility Sample Survey. Of course, one in a thousand, out of a billion people, is a million. So it was a big survey. About a million people. And this was an incredibly high-quality survey. Griff Feeney, in particular, worked and published a whole bunch of papers with co-authors from China based on the One-per-Thousand Fertility Survey.

China being an authoritarian country, they would go into a village and just summon everybody to show up in the center of the village. They would have interviewers, and people had to answer the questions. The result was practically a hundred-percent response rate. And the age data were very accurate, which is very important for demographic analysis.

In many countries, such as most countries in South Asia, people don't know their ages very accurately. So you get a lot of age misreporting, which affects the accuracy of fertility and mortality estimates.

But in China, everybody knows their animal year of birth. So the age data are very accurate. So this first major population survey in China turned out to be a very high-quality survey. A lot of very interesting and very useful information came out of it. So we have collaborated for many years with both the National Bureau of Statistics,

which covers a lot more than the census, and the National Population and Family Planning Commission.

Right now the future of the National Population and Family Planning Commission is somewhat uncertain, because China's one-child policy may be relaxed further or even abolished, which would mean major changes in the Commission's mission. The one-child policy was first implemented in 1980. It was intended to be a one-generation policy, which means 30 years. The 30 years are up this year, in 2010. There is currently a lot of debate in China about the future of the one-child policy.

So, you know. I think that's just a sketch. But, if you could interview Fred or Griff or Lee-Jay -- they'll fill in the picture more. I probably have some of the details wrong.

National Transfer Accounts Project

I think Andy Mason's work is very important. Currently, the project is called National Transfer Accounts Project.

All countries have national accounts statistics. These cover all the categories of government expenditures. Where the money's going.

Suppose you want to know about who is taking care of the elderly. Well, the government pumps in money through pensions, Social Security systems, things like that. But families also take care of the elderly. And if you're looking at most Asian countries, Social Security systems are not very well-developed. There are exceptions, like Japan, which is a developed country and has quite an extensive system, more comprehensive than that of the U.S., because it also includes medical as well as pensions. But China is just in the process of trying to figure out how to design a Social Security system. It's very important to get it right, because once you start it, you get all kinds of entrenched interests, so that it

is then hard to change it.

But, while we have a lot of information from national accounts statistics on government transfers to the elderly, national accounts statistics contain nothing on private within-family transfers to the elderly. The government collects taxes from the working-age population and then transfers some of that money to the elderly through Social Security systems, Medicare and the like, and to children via the public education system. These are the public transfers.

But what about information on the private transfers? Not just to the elderly but also to the young. What Andy's project tries to do is make use of existing data to estimate the private transfers, and in a way that is consistent with information already in the government's national accounts. The private transfers are estimated from a number of sources, including censuses, labor force surveys, income and expenditure surveys, other surveys and administrative records. You try to get all that data.

So part of the project is just getting teams set up so they have access to these data in different countries. And then you try to set up these national transfer accounts, which include not only public transfers, but private transfers -- and the whole system is compatible with national income accounts. So it's all one accounting system.

Now, this is very important, because one of the things that happens when you start public transfers to the elderly, or public transfers to education of the young -- then, families say "Oh, good. The government is taking care of it, so I don't have to spend so much. Maybe I don't have to spend anything."

Economists call that "moral hazard." It means that when the government takes over, you don't take your own responsibilities so seriously. So it's sort of a moral thing, in a way.

But to study things like moral hazard, you need to have the basic information on the transfers so you can see if the public transfers go up, do the private transfers go down?

To see that, you've got to know how much the private transfers are.

So this kind of a project has huge policy implications, because so many of these countries, these developing countries, are now in the process of starting to design, or extend, a Social Security system, or extend a rather primitive one that typically starts out with government employees. And Andy's got a great deal of outside funding for it, and he's collaborating with Ron Lee at Berkeley. Ron Lee's one of the top people in our field. It's related very much to population aging, because as fertility goes down and mortality goes down, the percent of the population over 65 goes up. That's the aging of population, as opposed to individual aging, which is typically measured by life expectancy. So, population aging is a very important component of this, because a lot of the Asian populations are aging very rapidly. Mainly because of fertility decline.

NIH Grant/ Low Fertility & Population Aging

Minja Choe is working a lot on low fertility. She's got her project with Ron [Rindfuss] and Larry Bumpass and Noriko Tsuya. They're looking mainly at the institutional context of low fertility. They have a big NIH grant. They're taking surveys in Japan. I think they got about \$2 million from NIH.

Well, the transfers to the elderly become huge as the proportion of the elderly goes up with the population.

It has big implications for care of the elderly. Not just pension, but also medical.

Because medical is also a component of these accounts, of these national transfer accounts. You split it up into a whole bunch of different categories, including medical.

That's one of the categories of the national transfer accounts.

Actually, the biggest reason for the increase in the population proportion over 65 is not mortality decline. It's fertility decline. Because, as fertility declines, the proportion of children declines. And when the proportion of children declines, the proportions in the other age groups have to go up, because everything has to add to 100 percent. If you look at Japan's age distribution, projected for 2050. It's coffin-shaped.

Normally, the youngest ones are the most numerous. The 0 to 4 age group is bigger than the 5 to 9 age group, which is bigger than the... In Japan, in 2050, it's inverted. It's an upside-down Christmas tree, because each successive five-year cohort of births is smaller than the previous cohort.

Normally, mortality tends to thin the population out at the older ages. But below-replacement fertility (below two children per woman) offsets that, in terms of its effects on the age distribution. In fact, low fertility has now become the dominant cause of population aging in many countries. In 2050, the most numerous age group in Japan is projected to be the 75 to 79 age group.

That's going to be the biggest age group. After that, mortality sets in big time, so that beyond age 80 the age pyramid starts tapering off.

Coffin-shaped. Wide in the shoulders and tapering off toward the head and feet.

Age of marriage is now, I think, higher in Korea than it is in Japan. Korea is interesting because almost 80 percent of high school graduates go on to college. Both men and women. It's like 78, 79 percent for both. Men, maybe, are one or two percentage points higher. Or maybe it's women who are slightly higher, I forget. So what happens when people graduate college? Well, it's not the case that 80 percent of the jobs available

require higher education. There are not enough good jobs to go around for all of those college graduates.

A lot of the men who were further down in education, they can't find women who want to marry them. So they import brides. So something like 15 percent of the brides in Korea have been imported from Heilongjiang province of China, which is adjacent to North Korea. Heilongjiang province has a Korean minority. According to Korean colleagues, South Korea has sort of cleaned out most of the daughters of poor peasants who might want to go to South Korea as imported brides and, hopefully, a better life. Typically it's the ones who don't have good prospects in China who then get imported into South Korea as brides.

Same thing in Taiwan. Again, something on the order of 15 to 20 percent of brides are imported. In Taiwan they come mainly from Fujian province, right across the Strait of Taiwan in China, or from Vietnam. This is all organized, with middlemen.

And legal. Yes. They have agents. It's all organized down there. They screen them down there, you know, and it's all kind of organized. No demographer would have predicted importation of brides on that scale. This is shocking to everybody. And then all these educated people who were having trouble finding jobs commensurate with their education, they're forced to take jobs they don't like. So you get a lot of discontented people.

And, for the women, if they get married and have a kid, then for sure they're not going to find a job commensurate with their education. So marriage gets put off and fertility gets put off in hopes that a good job will finally come along. So, you know, these are the kinds of things that are happening in South Korea, and in Taiwan. I just did a paper with

Minja on this. We think that's a major reason why marriage is so late and fertility is so low.

Japan's a little different, because in Japan there are a lot of part-time workers. But the way the labor market is structured in South Korea, there are not many opportunities for part-time work for women. So it's either a full-time job, or no job. Whereas in Japan, among the married women who work, about half work part-time and half work full-time. Actually, a lot of the part-timers work close to fulltime. It's a job category that doesn't have all the benefits that regular full-time workers get.

So the dynamic is, in some ways, a little different in the two countries. But they're very similar in many regards, too. So Minja and her group are working on that. I work on it with Hiro Ogawa [*Naohiro Ogawa*]. We're all working on low fertility. At this point in the program, the focus -- insofar as work on fertility is concerned -- is on low fertility. Because it's extremely low in most East Asian countries. The total fertility rate is about 1.3 children per woman on average in Japan. If a woman replaces herself (and her partner) with 1.3 children, she is about 0.7 child short of the replacement level of two children, right?

Well, if that keeps up, then, once the age structure stabilizes, the population starts declining by about 35 to 40 percent each generation, which is approximately every 30 years.

And of course, if China's one-child policy were completely successful, population would decline by 50 percent every generation.

Start with two, you end up with one. Every generation is half the size of the previous one. People don't think of this. And you think about the implications of that. They're

horrendous, actually.

I don't know how far they really thought it through. But it's all cushioned by population momentum. Because after fertility declines, for say 15 years, you've got a small proportion of children, but there's a big bulge in the reproductive ages, because they were all born when fertility was high. And then the elderly are a small proportion of the population, because they were born when mortality was high. So you get a situation where for a period of about 30 years or so, the proportion of women who are mothers is greatly inflated for a while. So the population keeps growing for a long time. It's a huge effect.

I mean, the fertility dropped below replacement in Japan in 1959. And, despite extremely low fertility for many years, population kept growing until 2006. It grew by about 35 percent or 40 percent. Due to this temporary age structure effect. But it's temporary. So now, that bulge moves into the elderly ages. And the population over 65 gets temporarily inflated. For a while, you have a huge pressure on the Social Security system.

And then, if fertility suddenly increases, population momentum works in reverse for decades. Population keeps on declining for quite a while even if fertility rises to two children per woman.

Health-Related Projects

Health-related projects are mainly Tim Brown's work on HIV/AIDS. But the demographic and health surveys contain quite a bit of health information, so we've also done quite a bit on health in developing countries. For example, we have done a lot of work on infant mortality. All the DHS surveys include a lot of information about vaccination coverage and things like that. A lot of that information is contained in those

reports we churned out for India. So, you know, vaccination rates -- WHO [*World Health Organization*] recommends certain vaccinations. And so we look at the percentages that have actually received each of the various vaccinations. We've also done quite a bit on maternal and child health. At the present time, however, we are not doing much in these areas.

Evolutionary Aspects of Population Changes

I've been interested in the evolutionary aspects of population change. But I haven't done any work on this in some time. But I did, previously. Before the demographic transition, the more socio-economically successful people had more children -- surviving children. Partly because they had higher fertility, partly because they had lower mortality, especially infant and child mortality, which historically varied greatly by social class. But with the advent of lower mortality and birth control, the differential reverses. Now it's the less successful people in society who have more children. Evolution is a matter of differential reproduction (surviving children). The direction of human evolution, in genetic terms, appears to have reversed. There may be some exceptions, but they tend to be rare and fleeting, judging from available data. This is not a racial thing, by the way. The reversal of the direction of human evolution is occurring within all human populations, regardless of country, race, religion or ethnicity.

Best Memories/India Project

Well, in terms of projects, I think the project that I've worked on that was the most successful and the most significant for the Center's mission was the India project. It was a great project. India is a difficult place to work, but we were very fortunate. Somehow, when we were there, the people that were in high places that we had to work

with were supportive. We also had generous support from USAID, so money wasn't a problem. The project had a lot of tough aspects to it, but it was an enjoyable project.

Best Memories/Population Limericks

Oh, well, the limericks. That goes way back. And actually, Bob Gardner started that.

Well, it started when Paul Demeny left for New York. We did a whole book of limericks. It was "Non-Working Paper Number One." It's pretty thick, actually.

That working paper, had limericks about all the different staff members, and stuff. And then it had a long limerick about -- a very long one -- about AID, which was pretty hilarious. Bob was the one that started it, you know. And then the two of us were doing it, and then Fred was very good at it, too.

Every time we'd have a Christmas party, around 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning of the day of the Christmas party, we would get together in my office and collectively compose about 15 or 20 limericks for the party that was going to start in about two hours or something. (laughs)

Those were fun times.

Lee-Jay took off a lot of weight, but he used to be kind of roly-poly, you know. And so we had one that I remember, I think off the top of my head. And of course, he was ambitious, right? He wasn't yet director. So it was kind of prescient. So it was –

"Lee-Jay Cho, never once does he tire

Of finagling to build his empire.

Said Lee-Jay, by jing!

I won't stop 'til I'm king!

And then you can all call me 'Sire'."

OK, another one was about his waistline.

"This verse, in iambic pentameter" -- which, it isn't really, but it rhymed --

"concerns Lee-Jay Cho's broad diameter.

He spends so much time

Taking friends out to dine,

His waistline's an expanding parameter." (laughs)

So we had a lot of limericks. I wish I could remember other things, as well. (laughs)

Best Memories/Population Parties

We had great times. We had -- we called it 'Felch.' It was the Friday noon lunch club. But I don't remember how we got the name Felch out of that. Every Friday noon, a whole bunch of us would head out somewhere for lunch. Mama's Mexican Kitchen, or somewhere.

Somehow, I wasn't making much money then, but I could afford it. Now I always bring a bag lunch! Now I can't seem to afford going out!

EWC's Impact

On Career, Perspectives

I think we have had a lot of influence, and in my own work I would point to the India project especially. But then, I've also done a lot of work in Japan with Hiro Ogawa. I was on his Ph.D. committee here, and now he's Japan's foremost economic demographer. And Hiro has a flair for being on TV, and he testifies in the Parliament before the committees that deal with population matters. So, you know, our work on low fertility has had an impact. Low fertility is something Japan is very concerned about, and Hiro and I and other collaborators have written a fair amount about it.

In fact, I just got something from the Asian Wall Street Journal today that says the Japanese government is now considering paying families \$3,300 a year for every year, for every child, until they reach age 15. They may not do this, but the fact that they're talking about it says a lot. Hiro was just recently interviewed on CNN, by Sanjay Gupta.

EWC Mission

I think we have a very good mission, as stated in the law that established the East-West Center. Charles has restated it in some ways. But it's fine. I don't think the mission has changed much, partly because an institution like this develops over time a lot of inertia. A lot of people like you and me have been around here for a long time. When people try to move the place in what we consider to be a radical direction, it's not easy to do it, and especially with academics. It's like herding cats. Also, people like myself have a huge investment in certain areas. All well and good to say I should work on something else, but, you know -- by the time I would build up enough expertise in an area to do much of anything, I would be retired. You just don't change the place that fast.

(laughs) I guess I'm sort of a stickler for quality. I hate editing books, because of that. I've been involved in two, lately. When I find a paper and I'm the editor of the volume -- say the paper isn't up to snuff but it has to be published anyway -- I end up doing a huge amount of work on those papers. But I got roped into a couple anyway. (laughter)

So what's important to me is doing good work. I don't mind people disagreeing with me, but I like to have their respect. So that's part and parcel of doing quality work. And if I disagree with somebody, I want to be satisfied that at least I've made a good, cogent argument. So I'd like to be remembered for doing good work.

Good quality work, and also that the people I've worked with -- I want to be remembered

for helping them out. That is also important to me.