Population and Reproductive Health Oral History Project

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Northampton, MA

J. Timothy Johnson

Interviewed by
Rebecca Sharpless

June 8–9, 2004
Atlanta, Georgia

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Narrator

J. Timothy Johnson, Dr.P.H. (b. 1939) is with the Division of Reproductive Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. For the past three decades, he has worked in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa, as well as in the United States. Johnson's expertise lies in family planning evaluation and contraceptive logistics.

Interviewer

Rebecca Sharpless directed the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, from 1993 to 2006. She is the author of *Fertile Ground, Narrow Choices: Women on Texas Cotton Farms, 1900–1940* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999). She is also co-editor, with Thomas L. Charlton and Lois E. Myers, of *Handbook of Oral History* (AltaMira Press, 2006). In 2006 she joined the department of history at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.

Restrictions

None

Format

Four 60-minute audiocassettes.

Transcript

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Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms

Audio Recording

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Transcript

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Sharpless All right. It's June 8, 2004. My name is Rebecca Sharpless and this is the first oral history interview with Dr. Timothy Johnson. The interview is taking place in the Centers for Disease Control offices on Chamblee-Tucker Road in Atlanta, Georgia. It's part of the Population Pioneers Project and good morning to you, sir.

Johnson Thank you very much.

Sharpless I'm delighted to be here and thank you so much for making the time to be a part of this project.

Johnson Delighted to be part of it.

Sharpless We'll start with some material this morning, very familiar to you and I just want to find out a little bit about your growing up in England and how you got to the United States.

Johnson I was, indeed, born in England in late 1939. My way of arriving in the States was very circuitous. I actually, when I was one year old, went to South America to Paraguay and lived there for the next seven years.

Sharpless As a result of World War II?

Johnson Well, indirectly. Actually, my parents belonged to a religious commune and many of the members had been—were German and had been expelled from

Germany by the Hitler regime because they were anti-Nazi and they were pacifist and they'd settled in England. But when the war broke out in Europe, they were enemy aliens. So this meant that they were either very restricted in their—in where they could move around in England or they had to leave. Now, my parents were British but had joined this commune in England and my father was actually sent to the United States to look for a place to settle in Canada or the United States. That did not work out. He did get to meet Eleanor Roosevelt along the way because she was quite sympathetic to this group. But we ended up instead, going down to South America.

Sharpless Okay, now, I know you were just a baby—

Johnson I was.

Sharpless But tell me about this commune that your parents had [joined].

Johnson Well, the commune was basically a religious, Christian commune founded in 1920 in the aftermath of World War I by a German theologian and was part of the German youth movement in a way. And they were pacifist and, obviously, ran into—had clashes with the Nazis when the National Socialist regime took over there. And, fairly quickly, it became clear they could not last there and they were actually expelled and settled in other places but mainly in England and then had to, as I said, leave there and they settled in Paraguay. This was extremely difficult. Here you had mainly professional young people going into a region which they knew nothing about how to farm in the Gran Chaco and things like that. It was actually a very harsh environment for them and took a while to get settled. But a good many of

the young kids died during that period.

Sharpless Infant mortality?

Johnson Infant mortality was extremely high, yes, in our group at that time for the first couple of years. There was some maternal mortality too. But, then actually things did start getting better. But, toward the end of 1947, my parents were asked to return to England, where a new commune had, meanwhile, been established by a few people, English folks, who had been left behind.

Sharpless Okay, I'm sorry to interrupt you but does this group have a name?

Johnson It does. It's had several names but the German name is Bruderhof, the place of the brothers. Somewhat sexist too, I might say! But, in English it was the Society of Brothers. They later took on the name of the Hutterian Brethren, which is another group which was founded way back in, I believe it was 1528.

Sharpless The Hutterites?

Johnson The Hutterites, who are known for their extremely high fertility and they come into my story, into my discussion, in just a moment, actually.

Sharpless Okay, I'm sorry. But your parents had been sent back to England?

Johnson Yes. We lived there then until I was sixteen.

Sharpless Where?

Johnson In the midlands, very near the Welsh border in Shropshire, actually. So I am a Shropshire lad, if you're familiar with those poems.

Sharpless Yes.

Johnson My father was sent out in 1954 when I was fourteen or fifteen—was sent out

to the United States to help start a new commune there because there was a lot of interest by Americans in this group. Communal living.

Sharpless Okay, what were its principles besides pacifism?

Johnson Sharing all goods; holding all goods in common—what they referred to as a common purse. It was based on their interpretation of early New Testament doctrines, the Acts of the Apostles and so forth. They took that very literally and this led them to basically say, Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, and so forth. And so, it was a community of goods. Everyone worked hard; had to.

Sharpless Was it mainly agrarian?

Johnson It was. At that time it was primarily agrarian, but it was beginning to get into a few other small manufacturing aspects, activities as well at that point. And it got much more into that later and now is primarily non-agrarian. The Hutterites remain very agrarian. A group was founded in New York State and my father was very much involved with the founding of that group in 1954. In 1955, he returned to England and, later that year, it was decided that our entire family should go out to North America, to the United States.

Sharpless You were a teenager by now?

Johnson I was, yes. The day that we left Englandhappened to be, by sheer chance, my sixteenth birthday.

Sharpless What did you think about it?

Johnson Well, I was excited by the idea of going to the United States. I'd read a lot about it, studied it myself, collected stamps, knew most of the presidents of the United States and things like that. And I found the ideas that I read

about to be very exciting. They were not exactly the community's ideas but they were very exciting. The idea of democracy and so forth. And I'd read a lot of what my father had sent back to me while he was spending this year in the United States. So I was quite excited.

Sharpless Now, did you go to public schools? I mean, I know the England nomenclature is different but—

Johnson Right, right. Yeah, the public schools are private schools there. My father had gone to one of those very upper-crust private schools' actually. No, we had our own community school but by the time that I was leaving, the community was beginning to have some of its young people go to the local public schools. I did not do so because it was very clear I was going to the United States, so I did not. I had never been in a public school at that point. We'd lived a rather isolated life. My only exposure, really, to what we called the "outside world" was through meeting my grandparents and cousins and aunts and uncles and so forth outside the commune. And bicycling around the local neighborhood, things like that. But that was the extent of my exposure to the world at that point. So, it was a new world and quite exciting in a way. We came to the United States and almost immediately we were told—and we may have already learned this just before we left England—that we were actually going to be heading out to North Dakota to join a Hutterite colony, which had expressed considerable interest in modernizing from the, sort of, old school practices that they had had. And my heart sank when I heard that. I knew, more or less, geographically where North Dakota was. This was, by then, November. We actually arrived in the United States

on Halloween evening and that was quite exciting to see these strange ghosts and goblins and so forth. But anyway, within about ten days, we were to head for North Dakota and I was not very happy about this. I knew that the Hutterites, that their communes did not believe in education particularly. I knew they dressed in these strange clothes, which are familiar to most people as sort of Amish-type clothes; it was very similar. And that they were agrarian, not for education. I was right! And the other thing was we were coming into bitter winter and that was quite an experience. I'm glad I did it when I was young. But I spent the next two years there, the better part of two years there. Not starting school at first. But we agitated to be allowed to first take high school correspondence courses through the agriculture extension service at the State of North Dakota, which we did. And then—

Sharpless That was you and your siblings?

Johnson Yeah, well, there were two or three others who came at the same time, actually came with us. Two or three other young people, among a total of twenty people, went out at the same time to this group in November 1955. I did tend to be the ringleader of that group, which got me into a lot of trouble later on. But we were allowed, eventually, to go to the local public school, which was—literally the entire school was in this three-floor building, the entire school, all twelve grades. The high school was one large room and one small room plus a little library. That was the high school, all four grades.

Sharpless What was the name of the school?

Johnson Inkster, North Dakota. It's closed since then. North Dakota was losing

population, had been for several decades. This continued, by and large. It's one of the many schools that have been a casualty of that and no longer exists. It was Inkster, North Dakota. But I didn't last very long there because the commune felt I was too academically oriented and took me out of high school. So I'm actually a high school dropout. And I got to look after the four to six thousand chickens that we had at the commune.

Sharpless Why were they opposed to education?

Johnson The Hutterites basically felt that we did not need a lot of learning, book learning. One expression goes, Reading rots the mind. But, basically we didn't need that for farming and for being faithful to Jesus and God and this sort of thing. And in a way, they were right. But this is not my orientation at all, that is, intellectually very, very inquisitive, very curious. My parents—my dad was actually a lawyer, a young lawyer when he joined the commune. My mother was a schoolteacher in the slums of Birmingham. My orientation was very different. I was the oldest of eight kids and I'm afraid I was a bit of a ringleader for my siblings and for a few other young people, which was why the commune took me out of the high school. That was—that was it for high school for the time being.

Sharpless You said you were intellectually oriented and inquisitive. How did that manifest itself?

Johnson Well, I had already—in England where this was not frowned upon—the commune had really promoted interaction with other young people outside the commune, international work camps and things of this sort. They brought in German war orphans into the commune and things of this sort.

So it was a very different, more of a worldview, than a much narrower, introspective type of view that one got in North Dakota in the Hutterite commune. And so, I'd read a lot there and this was not discouraged, though I was probably doing more of that than most of my peers at that time already. In North Dakota, again, I was reading anything I could get hold of. They didn't believe in radios, but we did have a shortwave radio and I would listen to what was going on in the world and so forth. This of course ran afoul of some of the community values. But even when I was looking after those chickens, I would sometimes find the reading material to follow up on.

Sharpless Did you realize that you were pushing the boundaries at the time?

Johnson Yes, I did, I did! I suppose [there was] an element of teenage rebellion in it. But I was fighting for what I felt were rights that we had. I knew what my age-mates in England, for example, were doing and that what we were doing was, in my view, quite ridiculous, from the standpoint of reaching out to the world. I still thought of myself as eventually joining the commune. I realized, within a few months, that that was not going to happen and I actually dropped out of their worship circle, as they called it, very quickly.

Sharpless How did your parents respond to that?

Johnson It was extremely difficult for them because they, too, had a much more liberal orientation and had done a fair amount of traveling and so forth. But they also saw the commune and the communal life as—my father expressed it once as the "pearl of great price"—as something to fight for and he would put up and did put up with a lot which seems to me quite unreasonable now. And I think, in retrospect, some of it he wondered about as well. But he had

to go along with it, and did. I recognized what the dilemma was for him but basically, where he had been one of the leaders of the commune and came in as the second-level leader in the commune; very quickly he was subjected to so-called church discipline. He could not speak out the way he could before and so forth. And it was extremely difficult for us. But he believed in—that things would work out eventually, that he was on the right path. I think he believed that pretty much until the time he eventually left, which is another two years later, three years later. The commune actually split in two; came to a crisis about twenty months after we arrived, twenty-one months after we arrived there and split. The more conservative wing, which was mainly Hutterites but had one or two others, remained in North Dakota. The rest, including some of the Hutterites, went and founded a new commune in Pennsylvania.

Sharpless And your parents were—

Johnson And my parents were in that group, and I was. I actually drove a bit—well, I'm not going to go into that part of it! We had a month in New Jersey before we found this place to settle in—in Pennsylvania, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, southwestern Pennsylvania—where I was allowed to return to high school, having missed quite a lot.

Sharpless In Uniontown?

Johnson In Uniontown.

Sharpless Okay. So when we left you, you were with the chickens.

Johnson I was with the chickens in North Dakota.

Sharpless And that lasted the whole time you were—

Johnson Well, no. It lasted for nearly a year in North Dakota, in the high school before I was expelled, not by the school. The principal was quite upset. I was one of the brightest students. The teachers were not happy about that at all! But I was out and I looked after the chickens. And then in Pennsylvania, I was allowed to return to school, and the commune was about twelve miles from the school and by then I was a senior. I had to repeat, basically, the first part of the senior year because I was taken out during the term in North Dakota.

Sharpless How did they decide where to place you in North Dakota?

Johnson In terms of the chickens or something else?

Sharpless No, no. In terms of what grade level?

Johnson Ah. It was a little difficult and they first put me at a lower level than I would've been based on what little they could get from my—what there was of academic transcripts. It wasn't much from this commune school. But they quickly realized I was way ahead of much of that. It was actually quite funny that the other students would use me as a source of information. This was kids, not only from the commune, but other kids would use me as a source of information to do their civics homework and things like that. Anyway—

Sharpless And, I'm sorry, one more question about that. How early did your numeracy show up?

Johnson I think—my numeracy, in the sense of my interest in numbers and so forth?

Sharpless Uh-huh. Just your sheer ability.

Johnson Yeah. I think a lot earlier. I did well in school in England and it was recognized. It was not usually communicated to me because everyone was

supposed to be very equal so this was a little bit difficult. But I knew that I was always the one who—almost always—seemed to be the one who won—who led in the mental arithmetic quizzes we had almost every day. And academically, I was clearly doing well. That was clear. I began to realize it later at a point when it was quite obvious when I took a standardized exam in North Dakota that two things happened. One, my—there were only three high school teachers, one of whom was the principal. But he began to take a bit of an interest in me. He noticed I had done very well. The other one was I began to receive letters from universities, coming to the community. And it included letters from the military. And this was very embarrassing to me because these were seen by other people. In fact, I was asked—I was called in once to explain why I was getting these letters from the Air Force and things like that. And I said, "Look, it has nothing to do with me. I did well on these exams that we were given and so I've been getting these letters from these colleges around, inviting me to apply and telling me about the financial aid they had," and so forth. That was interesting. Of course, my grades at the high school were very good, as long as I lasted.

Sharpless But, you got to go back to high school in Uniontown?

Johnson Yes, and I started senior year there. Very quickly I, again, ran afoul of the commune but this time they kindly allowed me to finish high school, but I had to live down in Uniontown, twelve miles from the commune, not being allowed to just go back [home each day] with the other kids. The first ten weeks, I wasn't allowed to come back at all. Then I was allowed to come back for a spring break holiday or something like that.

Sharpless Did they tell you why?

Johnson Oh yes. I was basically—again, I was not sufficiently interested in the inner light, and I was too academically oriented, the same sorts of things, and it was pretty clear I was not destined for the life.

Sharpless So, you were sort of banished?

Johnson Yes, in a way. And I was a bad influence on the other young people is what it came to. Oh, the actually breaking point came—if I could put this in—I believed that we should communicate more with the local high school kids. And I had never attended an American football game. But we agitated a little bit and a couple of us went and attended a local high school, our local high school football team and so forth. Then there was a meeting of the young people of the commune with the man from the commune who was in charge of the young people. And he basically raised questions: Should we be doing these sorts of things? And I argued, of course, in favor of it. In the end, it was left—it was a matter of conscience. It was up to us whether we did this sort of thing. At the next football game, a friend from the commune and I—but he was only, his parents had only very recently joined and were not yet full members—he and I went and attended the football game. The other people did not. Clearly my conscience had led me astray in this matter! This was the beginning of the end in a way.

There were other matters. My sister and I—she'd caught up with me by now because she had not been out of school at all in England and she had not been taken out in North Dakota. So now, we're both in the senior class at Uniontown. She and I were both elected to the National Honor Society

and we're the only kids from the commune who were. Questions were raised at the commune of what was going on. What had we done that we were brought into this? And again—

Sharpless And you stood out?

Johnson Yes, we stood out. We protested; had nothing to do with us! I'd never heard of the National Honor Society until I was told that I'm a member of it.

Sharpless The commune thought you were seeking aggrandizement?

Johnson Yes. And it was worsened a little bit because I did extremely well on a standardized exam at the school, and there were 351 students in the senior class at that point. My picture appeared in the school newspaper along with two or three other kids from the school. And then, each month the school newspaper had a "proudly we hail" student. There was a caricature, a picture and a caricature. And I was asked to become that. So there was a little biography of me and so forth, and none of those things went down very well with the commune. I was very shy about it; I didn't really want to do those things because I knew this could get me into trouble. But I did. And it didn't actually come out until I was already sent out down to Uniontown. I lived in Uniontown, very impoverished. Worked a little bit part-time. But the community did pay my rent.

Sharpless You lived by yourself?

Johnson Yes, though for about three weeks, another kid from the group was sent down to the same place. But basically, that semester I was by myself with—there's a landlady in the place and she had one or two other roomers and so forth.

Sharpless But you went from a household with your parents and seven siblings to living, basically, by yourself?

Johnson Correct, yes. Not pleasant. But I also had befriended one or two of the kids in Uniontown and that was somewhat helpful. And my high school principal began to take an interest in me. When he found out I was living there alone, he began to take an interest in me because I was again—I was one of their academic stars and it put me in an embarrassing situation. Anyway, I finished high school, graduated. I knew I was going to not return to the community except for maybe a few weeks and I thought I'd arrange with them that I would return for a few weeks while I was looking for where I went next. I meanwhile applied to a few colleges and had borrowed a little money from the Bruderhof, from this commune to do so. My principal had been extremely helpful to me in that process even to the point of speaking to two of the universities on my behalf before he even spoke to me about it. And he was one my angels during that period.

But anyway, I did go back to the commune. I took the bus up the—over the first range of the Alleghenies there. I went to the commune. And within a very few days, I was expelled again, and basically it was a rather grim business. I was told fairly late upon a day when I was working at the toy shop. I mentioned they were now into manufacturing type things. They were creating wooden toys, very high quality, very good toys. And I was working in that shop. Unpaid labor, of course, but that was okay! I was at least with my family and things like that. And I thought I'd be there a few weeks before I found a job elsewhere. My father came in and told me that an

episode had occurred a couple days earlier, which meant that I had to leave, and leave that day! He had to drive me up the road, far enough that I couldn't just walk back, to hitchhike out. And so I had my dinner by myself and my mother was almost in tears. My father was pretty grim, ashen-faced himself. And I left and hitchhiked through the night.

Sharpless What happened?

Johnson Well, I had met a man visiting the commune some weeks earlier when I had been allowed to come back for a weekend and had spoken with him and he was a gentleman in Washington, D.C. And he said, "Look, if you're ever in trouble, come over to us." I think he sensed that I was on my way out. And he was extremely helpful and I ended up joining up with him and his wife and daughter.

Sharpless But what was the incident that forced—do you want to talk about that? You don't have to.

Johnson Sure, I don't mind. Yes. I mentioned I took the Greyhound bus. At the bus station, I had to wait a couple of hours. I missed my first bus. And I picked up a copy of *Peyton Place* (Sharpless laughs) and was sort of leafing through it. Some of the kids were reading it at the high school, as it happened and so forth. I didn't know what it was. I knew it was risqué, I knew it had bad words in it and bad actions and things like that. But I did pick it up and when I got to the commune, I was put in a little room which was referred to as the "fire escape room" because everyone would come through it during the daytime to go to the fire escape which is the quickest way downstairs, rather than going to the center of the building where the main stairway was.

This was on the top floor. But it became a bit of the place where the young men would congregate and so forth. One of those young men had read part of *Peyton Place* before. He saw it there, took my copy and began to read it and finished it. He then felt extremely guilty. This is getting too long! He had felt extremely guilty about it and did two things. One, he and another young man who found this a great big joke, burned my copy of *Peyton Place* and I meanwhile gave them a little impromptu lecture on freedom of speech and things like that. But it was a joke to me and a joke to one of them, but not the other young man. And he went and admitted his wrongdoing in having read this book. He claimed later he wasn't trying to condemn me in any way, which obviously was the result! But he went to admit his sins. I was called in to explain this. I explained that I had not actually yet read the book but, yes, I did have it in my possession and so forth and I thought everything was okay. Cool, as we would say later. And it wasn't. I was told I had to leave.

Sharpless Let me turn the tape.

Tape 1, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Sharpless Okay, so your father drove you out and you hitchhiked through the night to—with any place in mind?

Johnson Yes. At that point, the choices were really Pittsburgh, which I'd already visited when I applied to the University of Pittsburgh, to which I later actually went, and Washington, D.C. This was one of the Eisenhower recession years and the employment situation was not good in the Pittsburgh area. Steel mills were already pretty much closed, much was closed there. I decided to head out to Washington, D.C., and I had with me the address, or

at least the work location, of this man who had spoken to me earlier. And I hitchhiked through the night and ended up Washington, D.C., and actually got there early morning, and briefly slept on a park bench outside this obelisk that I recognized as being the Washington Monument. I'd never been to Washington. But I slept on a park bench out there. I linked up the next day or it may have been actually a day later than that, with this man and he invited me to come to his home. And I ended up spending the whole summer at his place with his wife and daughter. I got a job. I tramped the streets for a while to find a job, but I got a job at a bookstore, which I loved. I knew already that I'd been admitted for the following year to the undergraduate program at Johns Hopkins University, but I had applied too late for financial assistance. Once I was settled, I sent a message to the commune, to my dad where I was and so forth. And they were a little disturbed; they hadn't heard from me and they wondered what happened. I think they were quite relieved to hear that I was actually okay. And he told me that they had something from the University of Pittsburgh. I authorized him to open it. He told me that they were offering me a complete academic scholarship, not for room and board but for all books, fees and all these sorts of things, tuition. And did I want to accept it? And I said I need to think about this a little bit. And I spoke to the manager of the bookstore. He offered to make me assistant manager and raise my pay if I'd stay for the following year. But he said he'd understand if I took off and went back to Pittsburgh. And that's essentially what I did. And I end up at the University of Pittsburgh. I got a job there. I was a janitor first of all, but nonetheless a

job, and roomed with a friend whom I had known from Uniontown; not one of the community kids, another chap. I roomed with him and another Uniontown kid from a previous class and then went on from there and that's how I end up at the University of Pittsburgh at that point.

Sharpless That's an amazing saga. How much did you stay in touch with your family?

Johnson Well, quite a lot. My parents got into a bit of trouble with the commune and they actually stayed with me [in Pittsburgh] while my younger siblings stayed back in Uniontown. My parents actually stayed with me for a couple of nights on their way to Cleveland when they were—again, they were themselves expelled for a while. Not a total expulsion but it was part of the church discipline stuff again, where my father was doing certain things for the commune. From there what he did—tried to do—he was not a very good salesman, actually, but doing salesman's work for the commune toys and things of that sort. I knew the problems they were having and I knew that I was part of their burden in a way. But by then my younger brother and my next sister had—my second sister—had been allowed to go from the commune in a much more humane way than I was, to go to a Quaker high school in Ohio, actually. And they were there and within another year or so, my parents were expelled with the younger siblings and by then the whole family, except for my sister who had caught up with me in high school. She remained at the commune for a while and actually went out to another of their branches in New York and she remained there. But my parents left and there are some other chapters in there, but that's the short story. And they left. My father was a lawyer, but he was not credentialed in the United States.

He got a job. Basically, here he was, late forties, but got a job as a legal clerk and saved some money. His dad in England, who was a lawyer but retired by then, had always wanted his son to join him in the practice, but that was too late for that, actually helped him at that point to get back to England. And he went back into law after a while. Took him a while because he'd been out of gainful employment in terms of being a wage earner for twenty-two years at that point. And so it was very difficult.

Sharpless How disillusioned were they?

Johnson It's an amazing thing. There certainly was a lot of disillusionment. And they tried to fight to get back in to explain why they should not be expelled, but the commune—

Sharpless Oh, they didn't want to go.

Johnson They did not want to go at that point. But they were given two hundred dollars and an old Plymouth and they went off with the four young kids and that was basically it. But he had one or two contacts outside because he'd had these other positions from the commune which involved external contact which helped him to get the legal clerk job there. My father was actually quite a remarkable man in many ways. Even when the family was out in Cleveland, very impoverished, he had the kids out collecting for UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] and things like that. He believed there are other things to be doing. This was just great, a good example.

Sharpless He's not one to sit around and feel sorry for himself?

Johnson No, no. Not at all. I think my mother did a bit more. Her world had, sort of, collapsed in a way. But the family recovered and came together again in

England and in later years, they came to have relatively good relations. But once they went to England, which was about three years after I left the commune, I didn't see them for four years because they were in England; I was there in the States. And then it was another four years before I saw them again after that. But we, by then, were corresponding very well and coming together as a family a little bit, and that was good.

Sharpless You mentioned in your e-mail that living with the fertile Hutterites had an impact on you.

Johnson Yes, ah yes. Actually, there are two impacts, maybe three related ones. The first was actually at the commune in England. I first heard from our principal, who was a very young guy; he was only in his late twenties and still doing his teacher's training in London. But he was our principal at our little middle school. Great guy. He had been—I don't know whether he was actually a card-carrying member of the Communist party or not, but he was certainly extremely left wing and was ready to climb that direction and a social activist, but joined this commune. But he—I remember him talking of this person—we were going through history and things like that—Thomas Robert Malthus. And he was anti-Malthus, of course; he was much more Marxist in his orientation. But I remember him speaking of parts of Malthus and using these derogatory terms. But what he actually explained to us about what parts of Malthus and others were saying about the relationship between resources and population made a certain amount of intuitive sense to me. I think I'd seen bits of this in a way and it began to make sense. Some of what I'd seen in Paraguay, some of what I saw on the farm in England, that, you

know, you can't live on beyond what you have available for your sustenance and so forth. So, it actually intrigued me. This was as I was also getting into mathematics I began to enjoy it and so forth. Okay, we go up to North Dakota. I really was aware that our families were very large by world standards. When we got to North Dakota, our family with eight kids was one of the smaller families in this commune. On the one side of us were the Baers, the Baer family, who had ten kids under the age of fourteen and they went on to have several more. On the other side were the Maendels, who had, I believe it was fifteen, and that did not include two who had died. And the oldest of the Maendel kids was already—if I remember right, he was already a father before the youngest ones were born. I became aware of the population, the rapid growth and that this was an unusual population. Also, as I mentioned, my father was a lawyer. The Hutterites in Manitoba in the Canadian prairie provinces, the Hutterites there were expanding rapidly and the provincial legislature was trying to impose legal restrictions on the growth of their holdings, their land holdings. Such things as that they should not be allowed to purchase land next to—directly adjoining land they already had. And my father was asked for legal advice on some of these aspects because he was familiar with the British law, which is fairly—had some parallel obviously, with Canadian commonwealth law. And this was fascinating to me and I began to do my own calculations about how rapidly they were growing. Very unsophisticated; I'd never heard of demography at that point but I could see what was happening, what the rapidity of their growth was and this was fascinating to me as well. So I began to get

interested in that, [as the second impact]. Third, I think I was sort of interested in the world in general at that point. So those were early influences which came into play later, actually when I was doing bacteriology as my undergraduate major at the University of Pittsburgh where I began to note what happened with bacterial colonies and bacterial growth in these test tubes when they had sufficient food to grow and they would grow exponentially until there was nothing else there and they were also poisoning their own environment, the bacteria. And I'd plot the growth and found this absolutely fascinating, what was happening. And were there parallels with humans, with other species? I knew about lemmings, even though my information about them was not very good. But I knew about some of these things of populations crashing. So they all became part of the grist for the mill later on.

Sharpless That's fascinating. What about the maternal and child mortality you were around?

Johnson Right. In Paraguay, this had been extremely high and a lot of the young kids died in the first couple of years.

Sharpless Do you know why?

Johnson Yeah, much of it was diarrhea, severe diarrhea. There were things related to respiratory diseases as well. I don't really know exactly what all the causes of death were. The mother of one of my little friends died. It was the first time I remember seeing a coffin. But death was sort of an ever-present part at that point. But things got better as we had better nutrition. As our capital began to develop, we got a bit more milk, a bit more eggs, a bit more

vegetables and thing like that and we were less close to destitution. By the time we left Paraguay, conditions were very much better. We also, by the end, had established our own hospital. We had a couple of community doctors, very young people, join the commune. And they were serving the local community around us as well. But by then, conditions were definitely improving. But conditions were very harsh during those first years.

Among the Hutterites, it was very different. Actually, I ate better there than I'd ever eaten in England or in Paraguay, there because they had their home-canned vegetables and so forth. During the growing season, fresh vegetables. They had their own honey; they had lots of meat, lots of eggs. They sometimes made their own bread; sometimes they bought it from outside, but it was often something they made themselves. They churned their own butter and basically I ate very well. And of course we used an awful lot of calories on the work that we were doing on the farm, because I didn't only work with the chickens. I also plowed the fields and hoed the fields and harvested and things like that. But we'd each—the Hutterites were basically pretty healthy. And nutritional intake was not a big problem. May not have been terribly well balanced, and they probably ate too much honey. They even had their own homemade beer and wine, which was nice! But they were quite good conditions. And I actually thought at a much later stage when I was thinking about a dissertation topic, should I go back to Hutterites to do an analysis of what was going on there with fertility, with nutrition, with lactation, with a lot of things like that. And I decided against it, but it would've been an interesting study to do. But I did understand the

language, the Hutterish language, which sounds a lot like Yiddish, I understood it a little bit. I couldn't speak it though. But I spoke German quite well, so that helped.

Sharpless Interesting. That's fascinating. So here you are, a freshman at the University of Pittsburgh.

Johnson Yes, not really knowing much about college or anything like that and being very poor, of course. But I entered. I began to major in chemistry and switched to bacteriology very quickly, still while taking chemistry. I enjoyed the natural sciences. I knew almost nothing about the social sciences, but gradually got [exposed to those] a little bit. I did know something about English and I basically took a minor in English. They didn't have official minors, but took a number of courses in English and English literature. And the other interest along with the bachelor in chemistry was actually geography. I loved geography and I could've gone that route too. But I was getting interested in just broadening my horizons at that point, but I really didn't know where I wanted to go. Did I want to go to medical school? Did I want to become a bacteriological researcher? Or just what did I want to do? But I was really fascinated by population and would engage in discussions with people about that as one of my topics and my younger brother was getting interested in it as well.

Sharpless This would've been about 19—

Johnson Sixty-one—'60, '61 and going into '62. But I had not yet made any move in that direction and when I graduated from college, I actually first went into—I was invited by the chairman of the bacteriology department to become a

graduate student, enter the Ph.D. program in his program. I actually entered that, but I quickly realized this was not what I wanted. I found the work they'd been doing to be intellectually stimulating, but I hated sitting over those lines of test tubes and so forth and smearing those Petri dishes with bacteria and all that sort of thing. I decided it really wasn't it for me and—

Sharpless That would've been pure lab science?

Johnson Well, it would've, though I imagine I would've eventually gone into teaching in that area. And again, I did find it interesting doing some very early work on transduction of genes and things like that. Basically genetic transfer from one organism to another and things like that. And one of the graduate students there later became very famous as being the leading scientist for Genentech [Herbert Boyer]. I knew him at that point. And so, I didn't have that head for business that he had and I was not interested in that sort of thing. But I tinkered around with a variety of approaches and was getting more and more interested in population and I actually ended up, after the bacteriology stuff and after a very brief stint actually trying medical school for a little while and not liking that, ended up taking courses—working just because I had to, to pay off some debts [I had incurred] while I was in school even though the tuition was paid. I ended up taking courses at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs where I was already interested in population, and where I was beginning to feel my way. There were no population programs yet at that point. And I'm not sure exactly how it happened, but I found out that the School of Public Health, which I was familiar with—it was just down the street basically—that they had

traineeships; they had funding available for the programs there and I was advised to apply to for that. So I did that from the school of international affairs, applied to the school of public health and was admitted for a master's program there and began to create my own population program because there was none. And I was very fortunate in a mentor who I found, who I'll get to in a moment. But I'll say first that by then, I'd never taken a real course in sociology as an undergraduate. I'd taken one combined sociology/anthropology course and that was it. But I found out that there was study of population in the sociology department. So I took a course in that. Basically it was introductory demography. And I took a course in developmental economics, which again, fitted into where I thought I was going. I thought I was going, probably, in the area of management of population programs and that's why the school of international affairs was attractive to me at that point. At the school of public health, my initial advisor told me about this faculty member who was actually associate dean, who had just come back from spending a year or a year and a half in Pakistan working with them on population, and that really Dr. Sam Wishik was the guy I ought to be working with. And I met Dr. Sam Wishik. We hit it off very well and he took me under his wing and I became his advisee. And he allowed me to be very free in taking courses in other parts of the university, which I did. I eventually got a master's of science at the school of public health, not an MPH [Master of Public Health], with the specialization in maternal and child health. There was no population program, but it was in subspecialties in statistics and population, is what it really came down to, and

I knew that I wanted to go overseas. I was looking for a position. And he was instrumental in my getting a position.

Now I first went to work at the school of public health after I finished my master's, working with one of the early Great Society programs of Lyndon Johnson.

Sharpless Okay.

Johnson And I worked as field coordinator; it was field head for southwest Pennsylvania for a project that was done under the school of public health. So I would be getting around these four southwestern counties on my little motorbike at that point and having a great time.

Sharpless And doing what?

Johnson Basically, finding out what the resources were in these various places. What was it they had, what were the—much of it was library research as well—but how many physicians were there? How many nurses? Where were they located? How does this relate to where the needs were in these places? And it included Fayette County, which is the county where I'd gone to high school. And it was just a lovely job. And as I was doing that, I was also looking for overseas postings and one came along. I was looking at Jamaica and Ecuador and Pakistan.

Sharpless Why did you want to go overseas?

Johnson I just—all right, another minor chapter, okay? John Kennedy—I was quite politically active at the university, all right? End uped actually being head of the Young People's Socialist League on the campus. But John Kennedy came out with what I thought was a great idea called Peace Corps. And the

recruiters came around about the time I was finishing college and were talking to people. And I went up to them and talked to them and the first question they asked me, when they heard my accent was, Are you an American citizen? I hadn't thought about that! I was not an American citizen. I thought it would be a great thing to go overseas and do some work. I felt that I had a bit of an affinity for overseas from my childhood. I knew I could live in thatched, mud-floored cottages with no glass windows. I knew I could do that, or at least I knew I had done it when I was a kid. And I knew I'd survived the rigors of North Dakota, so I thought I could probably hack it. I'll never know from Peace Corps because I never actually did Peace Corps as such. I think I would've, in most places. I think there's some place I'm not sure I would've survived! But anyway, that got me thinking I ought to become a citizen, but it also made me think about other alternatives to Peace Corps for going overseas. I found out that there was this position in Pakistan where my advisor had been and where he knew some of the people. It was with the Ford Foundation as a sort of a junior advisor, what they called a training associate and later when I was there they changed the title and made me a program associate. But I went there as a training associate. They already had a population person working at the Ford Foundation in Pakistan. I knew I would have to persuade my draft board that this was legitimate grounds for deferment because I was already a conscientious objector at that point as well. But they did give me the deferment, occupational deferment, and I went off to Pakistan to work with them for a couple of years.

Sharpless Okay, well, maybe this is a good time to change the tape.

Johnson Sure.

Tape 1 ends; tape 2, side 1, begins.

Sharpless All right, this is the second tape with Dr. Timothy Johnson on June the eighth. All right, so off to Pakistan you went.

Johnson Yes. This was now October 1966 and I arrived in Pakistan. It was miserably hot, but I had experienced heat before so that was not too bad. But I was into a completely new world for me in a number of respects. I was working for the Ford Foundation and I'd previously met with Ford Foundation representatives in New York before going out. Ford Foundation was very much involved in international development at that time. It was more internationally focused then than it is now. But one of the areas of emphasis was population at that point. But it was not solely population. They were also interested in more general economic development and in agricultural development and they were among the funders of the green revolution work and so I was able to actually sit on the edge of a bit of that as well when it was in Pakistan, which was very interesting. I worked out of Karachi with the Ford Foundation offices there. That was at that point, the—still is the main city—but it was really the acting commercial capital. The capital was being moved—the slow process of being moved to Islamabad, which actually opened while I was in Pakistan. But I didn't move to Islamabad until the last couple of months of my two-year period in Pakistan.

Sharpless Who was the population officer for Ford? For Ford in Pakistan?

Johnson Well, they had a—the population group itself, they had a representative who

is the head and then they had about five senior Western staff and then a large body of local staff ranging from quite high-level people to support staff, an active group. In the population group, for example, it oversaw activities by a couple of universities, by Johns Hopkins in Lahore, which was the second largest city in West Pakistan, and by University of California at Berkeley in East Pakistan in Dhaka. I end up being the monitor, if you will, for those activities for the Ford Foundation. It also had a project with the Population Council right in Karachi, and in Rawalpindi, which was next to Islamabad, it also had a small office, but with no westerners there. In a way, all of these people could also be considered as Ford staff. They were not; they were staff at their universities and so forth. But they were part of the Ford family in a way. They were being supported by the Ford Foundation through grants to these universities. And I worked with all of those groups in Pakistan at that time.

Sharpless I had not put together the pre-Bangladesh days; that both halves were ruled from Karachi.

Johnson Correct, at that point. A source of great distress to the East Pakistanis, as they were then!

Sharpless Who began the Bangladesh—

Johnson Oh, yeah. And they were definitely playing second fiddle to what was going on, even though they actually had a slightly larger population in East Pakistan than in West. But they were definitely second fiddle to the West and the president of Pakistan was Ayub Khan, who was very much a West Pakistani and most of the leadership positions were. Nonetheless, there was

some political autonomy at that time, but it was more limited. But I would fly over periodically to Dhaka and work with the numerous California people and the local counterparts and with the provincial government people. It was extremely interesting for a young person to be doing these things, to be able to get about that way and get into the field and get my hands into a lot of different activities. And it went beyond just population because in our office was also the educational advisor and the agricultural advisor. We would have very interesting lunchtime discussions about the interplay of these different activities and for the first year my own boss [Dr. Ralph Sachs] was there until he left and went back to the United States and I then became the program associate and became in charge of that—coordinating that office.

Sharpless I'm sorry, what was your job description?

Johnson Well, you know, it was never terribly clear. My title was training associate, which as I said, became program associate, and the first few month I wondered, What am I doing here?, because it was so unclear to me because my boss basically was in charge. He had the everyday things. So, I was trying to carve out something for myself and what basically was happening was that I tried to make myself useful with these other groups and so I would work with them, with the Pop Council [Population Council] group, for example. I'd work with them on some of the analyses. I'd participate in their morning meetings on what was going on. I also would go frequently down the street to visit with the lady who seemed to be sort of the number two in the family planning program in Pakistan. She was Pakistani and she later became

known to the world as Dr. Nafis Sadik. I knew Nafis when she was just really getting into these things and we talked quite a lot about your basic demography statistics. And she was not a statistician. She'd ask me about these things and it was great [to be in the middle of these things]. I never dreamt that eventually Rafael Salas would take her to be his deputy at UNFPA [United Nations Population Fund] and that she would eventually rise to the top position herself.

Sharpless Right.

Johnson But there were some very dynamic people in the government there. The director, a gentleman named Enver Adil, who held the title of secretary in the government of Pakistan, was himself very dynamic and he actually probably—well, he got a lot done. And more was done during those first five years than during the next period. In fact, things really went downhill after Ayub fell and after Enver Adil was no longer in that position. But he was very dynamic and I think he had a fairly loyal following among his officers in the field, particularly in West Pakistan. But it also led to abuses. Not abuses of women but abuses of the reporting system because there was so much pressure to be performing, to be reporting end results. There was some abuse of some of the—some manipulation, let's say, of some of the quota systems that were imposed and so forth. And that was bad. But nonetheless, there was dynamic movement going on at that time in the program.

It was very exciting for me too, because the Ford Foundation would sponsor people coming in from outside to meet with the Pop Council group,

with the Johns Hopkins group and so on. But also to participate in training programs. Names which were quite well known already in the population field, came through. Donald Bogue, who made his name in Chicago, he came through. I knew who Donald Bogue was from my studies before and so forth. But here I was chauffeuring him around and attending these things that he was doing and participating with him. Howard Gustafson from Berkeley. There were good people who were already known in the field who were coming through. Also, the Ford Foundation itself was led by McGeorge Bundy at that time and he and David Bell, who had been the administrator for AID [United States Agency for International Development] earlier under Kennedy, they came out and I was quite privileged to be able to be part of the briefing for people like that at that point. You're coming from being an impoverished student and now living in a nice apartment, or house actually and having servants and things like that. It's quite a strange thing. It was quite a heady experience to meet with these people. I mentioned the economists. I became somewhat associated with some of the economists who were there and through this—several people who later became Nobel laureates came through. They weren't yet, but they became that. I just got this in because I mentioned the agricultural thing. Norman Borlaug, who is known for his work, and you may be familiar with his work, with the green revolution. And he later won the Nobel Peace Prize for that. I spent two or three days with him in Lahore at the Ford Foundation's staff flat and we discussed population and agriculture and the interplay and how what each of us was doing was essential to the success of

what the others were doing and so forth. A couple of years ago, I had the privilege of meeting Norman Borlaug again at the Carter Center here, and reminding him of that time. It was a great time, when there was this feeling of ferment of what was going on.

Meanwhile, the universities in the U.S. were getting more and more into population. And I was beginning to realize I needed more formal training in this field. I was picking up an awful lot in the field. I was—I knew nothing about how to run a census before and I wouldn't say I knew anything about it by the time I ended. But at least I had been dealing with issues having to do with how does one organize the next census of Pakistan and speaking with some of the advisors who had dealt with these things from outside the country and writing little mini-briefing papers and so forth. And that was really interesting. It was very educational for me. I also began to realize that I was not so much cut out for administration even though I've ended up having to do a fair amount of that in my life. My real interest is more with program evaluation. Trying to understand what was going on and how that understanding could lead to running things better and so I began to think about what it was that I wanted to do in terms of further graduate study.

Sharpless Program evaluation is sort of a systems analysis, isn't it?

Johnson Well, it's—systems analysis is a large part of it, but there are other models which you could use as well in trying to do it. But certainly systems analysis is part and parcel of what is involved in program evaluation. But we can take a narrower focus on achieving specific goals and keep that narrow goal attainment focus as well. And different perspectives, economics perspectives

on analysis, which fit into the systems analysis as well. But all of those became interesting to me and I was reading as much as I could of materials I could get hold of in Pakistan and I was very fortunate again—the Ford Foundation [in New York]. If I identified something I wanted to read, they would get it for me. It wouldn't be overnight, but they would get it for me and so forth. But, you know, this is a day when our calculators—I had a slide rule and I used that a great deal. I did some of the agricultural analyses as well as for the agriculturists as well as the population by using a slide rule. But we had a hand cranked calculator for some of the work that we were doing. And it worked, it worked. You had to think much more carefully what it was you were trying to get out of the analysis because you couldn't afford to waste time on these analyses. But we would get a lot done with those old calculators!

Sharpless And exactly what was it? What were the types of things you were analyzing?

Johnson All right. We got into doing some surveys in both East and West Pakistan. Trying to really get a handle on what the fertility patterns were. This is the days before we spoke of—the world fertility survey didn't exist yet and so forth. We were speaking of KAP [knowledge, attitude, practice] knowledge; actually practice KAP studies and things like that. But we were involved with doing some other studies of various sorts. The Pop Council group there was, at that point, led by a woman named Penny Satterthwaite, Adeline P. Satterthwaite, you may have heard of her. She had been involved, before she came to Pakistan, in work in Thailand but also in, I believe it was the Dominican Republic, but it was somewhere in the Caribbean, in various

studies of efficacy of different contraceptives and she was continuing some of that work with another physician, Gwen Gentile, who was doing some of that work. And I would try to help them, to some extent. We also had a couple of other people working with the Population Council group. Gil Hardee, J. Gilbert Hardee, whose daughter, Karen Hardee, later went into the population field as well—I knew her when she was a little girl. But they were doing studies, among other things, such things as messages, radio messages and what sort of messages are best received by people. What are they interested in?

Sharpless So, early social marketing?

Johnson It really was. We didn't call it that yet but that's really what it came down to, yes. And Barry Karlin was very much a communications person. He came out of the Berkeley tradition, which was that, and which is why I ended up not going to Berkeley, because I was not, myself, into that. But I appreciated the need for demand creation and developing knowledge by the people. But I would spend, fill up my time working with those colleagues and also the Johns Hopkins colleagues in Lahore and, to a lesser extent, the folks over in Dhaka and doing a little analyses and little briefings and things like that. I don't know what the lasting legacy of those things will be. The program didn't go very well later, but those were the days when things were really beginning to move and it looked as though good progress was being made. And then, of course, a year after I left was the downfall of Ayub Khan and within a year after that, the splitting of East and West. Later, I got to go back when it was Bangladesh, and live there. But basically I was something of a

jack-of-all-trades with my focus being on using my skills with numbers, by and large and that's how I was used and glad to be used.

Sharpless All right. But you knew you needed more training?

Johnson I knew I needed more training, more formal training. And I began to look around, and I'd met faculty people from some of these universities who had come through and who were working with the Pop Council. The Pop Council had worked with something called the National Research Institute for Family Planning, which later changed its name a little bit. The University of Michigan was also working with that group and Dr. Les Corsa would come through every now and then and work with the director of that project and he knew Nafis Sadik quite well, again in her pre-UNFPA days. And it really came down to the question of would it be Johns Hopkins, would it be Berkeley or would it be Michigan. And Michigan seemed to me to have the best mix for me. The formal evaluation stuff; I knew that the University of Michigan had a good survey research center and that attracted me. And I decided to go to Michigan and that's exactly what I eventually did. So that's the end of that particular chapter.

Sharpless Okay, so take us to Ann Arbor then.

Johnson All right. I arrived in Ann Arbor and entered the school of public health as a doctoral student and took courses there in the department of sociology, where—which was probably better known than the population planning department in the school of public health. It had people—luminaries such as Ronald Freedman, were there at that time; Al Hermalin was another one. And I took courses there as well as at the school of public health and

summer program in surveys at the survey research center. So, I took the necessary coursework and doing a little bit of work as a—I guess I was a teaching fellow, graduate assistant, I'm not sure what it was, but working with some of the courses that were given for the master's students at that point as well and preparing for—

Sharpless This was a graduate program only?

Johnson Yes, yes. Right. Well, there were a few advanced undergrads who were allowed to take—the special students—to take courses in that program as well. There were just a few special dispensations for such people. I took the prelims eventually and was, of course, working on designing a dissertation topic. I was already thinking in terms of Malaysia as a likely place for that.

Sharpless Why was—

Johnson Well, we had done work—we meaning University of Michigan—had done work in Malaysia. The sociology department had been involved with a survey that was done there, Malaysian family survey, '67—'68, I guess, which was still being analyzed. One of our professors, Yuzuru Takeshita, then known as John Y. Takeshita, had been involved in work in Malaysia as well. He was best known for his work, actually, with Ron Freedman in Taiwan earlier on and I was very familiar with that work and knew some of the people who'd been involved with that. When I was in Pakistan, I had known some of them. But Malaysia seemed to be a good site because it was really getting off the ground later than Pakistan, but it was beginning to gel. I had already met a couple of the Malaysian folks in Pakistan; they'd come over for a conference that we had had and one became a fellow student of mine and

became a sort of colleague of mine when I was in Malaysia, a Malaysian gentleman. But I decided that what I wanted to look at was the question, up to that point the focus seemed to always to be, there's always this battle between demographers and the field people. Does it make any difference to go in there and to run programs and things like that? And I was on the side which was saying, Yes, programs *do* make a difference! [The dominant view was] it's development, it's education, it's women's education; they were always saying that, and socioeconomic status and these things are the real determinants of what's going on. And I accepted that those were all very important.

Sharpless So that discussion was beginning that early?

Johnson Oh yes, it was beginning, yes, it really was. And there were already beginnings of some other discussions that we'll come to shortly, about population and development and this old phrase about that development is the best contraceptive. That stuff, those currents were already beginning there. But it was still the day when the focus was really population and almost—

Sharpless The Rei Ravenholt, if you get them contraceptives, they will use them?

Johnson Rei came into the picture in late '66 and that's when I first met him, either late '66 or early '67 in Pakistan. He was on his first grand tour, after being named as the head of the Office of Population at AID and he was—have you interviewed him yet?

Sharpless Yes.

Johnson Yeah, great guy. But, also a bit of a bulldog. And a bit of a bull in a china

shop at times. He had no use for these sociologists and their views and he basically got known for what was referred to as the inundation program. You've probably heard about that. Basically he said, "Look, there's all this latent demand out there. Women want this thing. You guys aren't getting the picture. All you've got to do is get these things out there." To a point, he was right, but others were trying to rein him in and say, "Look, there's an awful lot we don't know. You can't just toss condoms out there. There are norms and values which surround the use of any contraceptive, including condoms and you need to know, you need to have some understanding of this thing. You need to understand something of the dynamics between men and women, between spouses," and all these other things. And his reaction was, "Look, they'll come later. Let's get those things out there." But Rei was very good. He pushed for things such as the surveys, which became the world fertility surveys, but he was completely new when I first met him in the field and was just trying to get a grasp of what was this new field he'd just been named to be the head of. But he was very dynamic and he organized that office, got some good activist people around him, including some who were trying to rein him in a bit and say, "Rei, it's not quite that simple." But he went on. But he was good. But it wasn't quite yet at that stage. But all the currents were going on. And when I got into it, I felt that a suitable topic might be to see if we could somehow disentangle the programmatic effects from these other developmental effects, and it's not easy. But I was always very interested in multivariate analyses of various sorts and so forth. But what I end up doing, as I was saying—the University of Michigan allowed

me to go for a few weeks to Malaysia to explore the ground and then come back and rewrite what I was doing and then to go back [to Malaysia] and actually do it. But what I thought I would do is to look at the seventy administrative districts of what was sometimes referred to as "Peninsular Malaysia" or "West Malaysia," leaving out Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo island, which they share with Kalimantan, in Indonesia. But I would take those out, because there wasn't much family planning going on in those anyway yet. I would go out and look at what had been done by the government program and by the private Planned Parenthood Federation, which was active in a good many—actually all of the states and in a good many of the districts in that place, and see if we could look at what was happening with development but also what was happening with the organized public and private sector and how that was perhaps influencing changes in fertility or at least in use of family planning, if we couldn't get at fertility directly. And I went out and did that, and I wasn't really dealing with it at the level of individual women. I was looking at—the units of analysis were these seventy administrative districts.

Sharpless Are you saying one seven or seven zero?

Johnson Seven zero, seven zero, right. There were eleven states and some very limited analyses could be done with the eleven states, but that's really too small to do much with, other than to perhaps get some very gross overviews. But the seventy districts, including about half a dozen where there really wasn't any organized family planning going on at all. But the others all had varying levels of involvement by the Malaysian government sector and their family

planning board and by the Planned Parenthood Federation of Malaysia. So I went out and was able to basically get carte blanche, get free access to records of both the Planned Parenthood Federation and the government program. Now, it took a fair amount of talking to people; working with them to make it clear to them that I was not trying to undermine anything. Helping them with other things, doing some life-table analyses of their continuation rates for the Planned Parenthood Federation. I was probably helped by the fact that my wife did a bit of volunteer work for them as well, for the Federation. We got on quite well socially with some of their officers. But I also—my headquarters was really the National Family Planning Board office and I mentioned to you earlier I'd met one of the people in Pakistan who had become a fellow student of mine at Michigan, and much later I was a member of his doctoral committee, but that was a lot later. But he was in charge of the evaluation unit of the National Family Planning Board. And I really worked out of that. I had a lot of support from them and I was really accepted almost as one of them by the staff to the point that when Tan Boon Ann, later Dr. Tan Boon Ann, had to be off on field sites and so forth, I was just accepted as being the de facto head of the unit, which was very nice. I had great access to anything I wanted. I had a letter from the director of the National Family Planning Board, which I could take when I went into the field—a letter which was sent out that I was coming. I had a similar thing from the Planned Parenthood Federation and I just had excellent access. The people were very open. They didn't seem to have things to hide. They sometimes were a little worried I might show that they weren't doing as well

as other federation members and so forth—the state federation groups and stuff. But basically, things worked extremely well and I was able to gather my data and later to analyze that. And basically what I found out was more or less what I expected: that, clearly, there is an effect from socioeconomic development. The indicators we could get of that, that much—the more rural, the more impoverished, more Malay, less educated districts were doing considerably worse than the others. But if you put into that mix what the level of family planning was, then you got an independent effect of the organized services and what they would contribute. And then there's a fair amount of unexplained variance—variance explained by both together. But shared variance in the progress they were making in family planning and getting enrolling acceptors and so forth. And this worked out very well. At the same time, I was gathering other data for the University of Michigan for studies which they were interested in doing in which I was participating. One was an early study of Depo-Provera that they were involved in and I was helping to gather some of the data for that. We did a study, which was later published, on simply looking at acceptors and non-acceptors where women were matched on such things as their ethnicity and rurality and age and number of children and what happened in subsequent years from a given cut-off point, what happened in subsequent years in their fertility, if they accepted or if they did not accept family planning]. So tracing it that way, sort of a quasi-experimental type of approach and we did that and we had about six thousand matched cases for that, which was quite good, over a three-year period.

Sharpless Let me turn the tape.

Johnson Sure.

Tape 2, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Sharpless —you discovered in your dissertation. Was it really was a "both/and"?

Johnson Very much, very much. And it went along very much with what I think many scholars were saying by then. That it isn't just a matter of what the socioeconomic level is—the level of development or anything like that. That it also—that programmatic inputs do matter, do count. And if you have these interventions, they will make a difference. It didn't go directly to such things as will it make more difference if you have a different mix of demand creation activities with service provision activities and things like that. It didn't really get into that. But that just, by merely having these activities going on, that contraceptive prevalence was rising. And I think it was useful. It's one of the relatively few dissertations, I believe, where the country's actually asked for copies of it and then asked for additional copies of it afterwards and used it.

Sharpless That must've felt good.

Johnson It did, it did. It felt very good. One of the other activities I did while I was there was that I was actually asked—the Ford Foundation there—I was funded by AID and I shall get back to that in a minute. But I was funded by them, but I had a little slush fund, a so-called imprest fund from the University of Michigan with Ford Foundation funding to allow me to do some of these other studies as well as to allow me to put my fieldwork, my own fieldwork to do that. And I worked with the Ford Foundation advisor

there who happened to have been the Pop Council person—one of the Pop Council people in Pakistan and we knew each other already. He was many years my senior but by then, we had a much more collegial relationship than when I was a junior and so forth. And I was actually involved by him in something the Malaysian government had asked for additional help in, which was to write the population plan for their five-year program—it was their second five-year program. And basically, I ended up being the one who wrote it, drafted it and so forth. My name doesn't appear on it, but it's there! I'm quite proud of it. They basically used, almost verbatim, what I wrote, and the Ford Foundation was very appreciative. I'm not sure the government wanted that mentioned too much (Sharpless laughs) but it was nice to know that it had been really used, including my estimates of what the benefit/cost ratios were of what they were doing with their population planning program and it was quite well received, so that was nice.

Sharpless What about USAID?

Johnson All right. USAID was beginning to get interested in helping to fund some of the population programs in different universities. The Ford Foundation had provided a lot of seed money to a number of these programs, including Hopkins and Michigan and some of the others. And I had—when I went back to Michigan—I was on a Ford Foundation stipend for my work there. Meanwhile, there was something else that was happening. AID was in negotiations with first the University of Michigan, and they got into some other universities, about having fellowship programs for what became known first as the University Overseas Population Fellows Program, then

University Overseas Population Interns Program and later took other names, such as the Fredrickson Fellows and so forth. But AID was interested in having these things run out of the universities and providing the funding for it. And I became, actually, the guinea pig for that. I was the first University Overseas Population Fellow. And my work in Malaysia was funded from this. And I would've gone anyway, but we took advantage of this opportunity and I became a guinea pig who was able to feed back information to Michigan on how the fellows program was working, how they needed to adjust it for future people and so forth. And I was actually quite well placed for this because I'd already been in Pakistan for two years with this other program with the Ford Foundation. So I could tell them something about what the needs were—stipends for basic housing, for the basic transport, for having these things supported and things of this sort. And I was able to provide feedback to them for this program and they already named a director for it. It was Dr. Johan Eliot at that point. He was the director of it and so I would communicate with him frequently about what the problems were, what the frustrations were. There were many. It was not very well run that first year. Nonetheless, I was very grateful to AID for supporting the—that was my first AID support at that point, even though I had worked with AID a little bit before. And this led to this program by Michigan and by North Carolina and Hopkins. And as I said, I was the first one, but all of these universities had fellows eventually. Later on, that changed and the other universities more or less dropped out and Michigan continued, but there was a hiatus. But the fellowship program was

resumed later on and by then I was, jumping ahead, on the faculty at the University of Michigan and I was on the committee back at Michigan for that program. Much later, that became what still goes on at the university, the Population and Environmental Fellows program, which is still ongoing. There's a thread which goes through all of those things and even while I was at the CDC, I became a member of the advisory board for that. But these programs were very good ways of getting bright young people into the field. Often, they were people who had a bit of experience as a Peace Corps volunteer or something like that. Or they had some relevant academic experience or something like that. And they wanted to get into the population field, now more broadly the population and environment field. And this would get them a step up the ladder for later working with other agencies and a number of them would end up with other UN agencies with AID, some would end up in academia. So it's been a quite rich contribution, I think, by AID, much as Ford Foundation in the earlier era I think made a good contribution by getting young people into that field as well. So, I'm grateful to AID for having done that.

Sharpless You mention that your wife did volunteer work in Malaysia. How did it go moving from Ann Arbor to Malaysia with a wife and—

Johnson No kids.

Sharpless No kids?

Johnson Yeah. Well, my wife had actually lived overseas before, herself. She'd been a Fulbright student. I had not known at the time, but she was in Pakistan at the University of Punjab in Lahore. I had not known her, unfortunately, at

that point. But we met, partly because of that, in Michigan where she was doing studies in political science. She never finished her Ph.D. But she did have a sense of what it takes to be overseas and so forth and—

Sharpless And she was already attuned to international work.

Johnson Yeah, she was. And she was working. She then took a job, actually, with the Association for Asian Studies. She didn't take that until after Malaysia. There's another short digression on that. But anyway, she was attuned to that and she was willing to come with me. We knew—I'd got married while I was at Michigan. And she came with me to Malaysia and she was willing to do it. And she never got a paying job. She never intended to at that point. But she did this bit of volunteer work for the association and she did other things just hobbies of hers. There was a little bit of Chinese and Indian cooking, and she traveled with me quite a lot to the field. And I think just, in general, quite enjoyed the year there. And, yes, that was good. And it was—I must say it was very helpful to have a spouse along there too. And she also helped me with some of my compiling of notes and some of my preliminary analyses and was very helpful to that as well. And later, actually, taking my handwritten initial chapters and turning it into something which was legible, typing them out, which is well beyond the call of duty, I think, even for a spouse! But anyway, yeah, she was sufficiently fitted to it, that she was willing to do that, yes.

Sharpless Okay. So when you came back from Malaysia, you still had to write up your findings?

Johnson Yes. It took me a while to—a couple more years before I actually got the

dissertation finished and got the degree. Nearly two years I guess it was. And meanwhile I was, however, not only doing that, but I was also part-time teaching at the university and doing research with other data that I had collected, with the faculty. And at that point, I had no intention of remaining in academia. I thought I'd be going back into the field but what actually happened was that one of my professors was going on sabbatical and the university asked me whether I'd be willing to come in for the year and teach his basic evaluation course and do some other things, continue with some of the other research that I was doing. I thought, Why not? My wife was quite happy with her job at the Association of Asian Studies at that point, and then the professor decided to remain for another year and I was offered to continue in a more regularized appointment. I still had no particular intention of remaining with academia all my life or anything like that. I always had a very practical orientation. But it was nice to have that and I ended up actually staying several more years. That does happen.

Sharpless So tell me—well, one thing. That first year, when you were back or when you were back at Michigan was when John D. Rockefeller made his speech at Bucharest. What kind of impact did that have on your work?

Johnson Bucharest was an interesting chapter. That was in '74. This was the first of the real population conferences and I don't know it was his speech alone that was a factor; there were many, many currents that were going on there already and some of them were, in a sense, forerunners of what happened in later conferences so I'm not sure. I wasn't at the conference, I was hearing back from people who were there and so—John D. Rockefeller himself, the

III—was himself a real pioneer in the population field, particularly with the Population Council and had supported a lot of very good work. But I think some people saw him as already being a little bit behind the times in some aspects but I'm not sure I feel even qualified to really speak on just what his impact was.

Sharpless Okay, so it did not have an—

Johnson I don't think it had—it was not as though that was a major ripple by itself. There were other things already going on. We already referred to this debate about development and population, how it played out right in this city [Atlanta], I believe it was 1969 at the PAA [Population Association of America] conference. It may not have been '69—'70? I'm not quite sure. But there were already discussions and Bernard Berelson was involved in some of those discussions of population and what its role was in development and should the orientation be "women and development" and forget about fertility as such or was fertility something we should be aiming at directly and that by aiming at that directly, we could even, maybe, shortcut some of the other steps toward development. But the way it was going on—and I remember at the meetings here, a young—I believe he was a Jesuit. But he was actually studying at Michigan at the time—Pierre [Praderrand], raising this question to Bernard Berelson and the quite interesting interchange about the interplay of development and other aspects with fertility.

Sharpless And then your dissertation saying—

Johnson Well, I would say it does make a difference. (talking simultaneously) We need both, we need both. And both are important, and saying we should be

getting into population did not say we shouldn't be getting into women's education. Now, at that point, my orientation, like most people's, was still more on the population than on the health side. But we do recognize the health side and I was very much aware of the spacing, very likely—obviously having effects on fertility rates—but very likely also having strong beneficial effects for the mothers and the children. The evidence was coming along already. It wasn't all that well analyzed, and we couldn't always tease these things out very well, but a good part of the evidence was that these were all important, and that they should all be taken care of and there was a shift from population to more family planning and then of women's health. And there was another thing that was happening at that point which I'm sure has come up in other discussions. We began to get more of—I hope this doesn't sound pejorative—of a feminization of the population field. It had tended to be males in the lead. The people I have dealt with, Sam Wishik—and I ought to come back later to a bit more that he was involved in there. But Sam Wishik at Pittsburgh and others—these were males, were at these places. Sam Keeny in Taiwan, Ron Freedman [at Michigan], the heads of the Ford Foundation, heads of the Population Council—most of them men. There were women. I mentioned Penny Satterthwaite as a lead, and there were others in there. But they weren't as in dominant a position. This was slowly changing, and it changed, I think, particularly once the academic programs got going, where this was a field that was attractive to a lot of women, including some Peace Corps volunteers and people like that. And where most faculty were men, quickly most of the students were women. It

changed over time. Even when I went back to Michigan, there were more men, I believe—don't remember an actual count, but it certainly shifted. By the time that I was teaching, there were mainly women, though again, in the evaluation types of courses, males were still relatively a larger proportion. But things were shifting, there's no question about it.

Sharpless Women's movement coming into play?

Johnson Yeah, yeah. And it was a very interesting phenomenon that was going on there. It was fun to watch it. Yeah, and they would get into the thing of Mexico City.

Sharpless I'm sorry?

Johnson And then we head to things like Mexico City—

Sharpless Yes, yes.

Johnson Can I back up on something?

Sharpless Sure.

Johnson I just want to mention that one of the things that was quite exciting, I don't know if you've ever even heard of a couple year of protection—the couple years of protection index?

Sharpless Yes, yes.

Johnson All right. I was sort of in on the beginnings of that in Pakistan because when I was in Pittsburgh doing my master's, Sam Wishik, who was really the person who developed that first, was beginning to play with this idea. We'd have these discussions about how one could combine contraceptives to see how one could equate the protection provided by different contraceptives, and he was interested because the IUD was just getting underway in places

like Pakistan and really got underway in India to a greater extent. The pill was coming into play to a certain extent. Condoms were in the field before the foaming tablets were. At that point, they didn't have the injectables. But how did one equate these things? Or how did one equate a male/female sterilization with these other supply-based methods? I remember the discussions we had and it involved either airlines or trains, and how you have segments of trips combined for passenger miles and things like that. And it led to this concept of couple years of protection. And Sam Wishik was really the one who first came up with that term and we also played with [alternate terms, such as] couple months of protection and women years of protection. He developed it in preliminary fashion, and I was involved in that to some extent in Pakistan. And there were unpublished mimeographs and things like that at that point, and I may have somewhere the only extant copy that I know of, of the papers often cited from 1967 on couple years of protection, which Sam had. And I was able to give him a copy of it [years later] because he'd lost his last copy too. But there were debates going on in places like Pakistan about using this, which some thought was a really poor, indirect measure of something which we don't really fully understand. [If we say an] IUD produces one and half years, how do we get at that, and so forth. And what is our basis for saying that pills are only one thirteenth or one fifteenth of a couple years of protection per cycle? And how we get at couple years of protection for condoms? And it's extremely interesting because the survey people were saying, basically, Do your surveys; see what they tell you about the prevalence. [Program people] were saying, That's not good enough; the

surveys aren't giving us enough detail, and they're really not very valuable to us when we try to look at different geographical units and comparing those geographical units within a country. You got a big picture from a survey, [but it's not enough]. So we had a lot of instructive discussions about those things. And the first actual published paper in *Demography*, it didn't come out until, I think, early 1969. The article came out under the name of Enver Adil, this very dynamic leader of the Pakistan program, but I'm actually the one who wrote it! I merely appear as a footnote being thanked for the work on this thing. But I was very content, and it was the appropriate role for me to be very much in the background of these things and let others like that take the glory, and of course take the flak and be trying out these trial balloons and so—but it was very interesting working with that, with Sam Wishik and others. He was one of the pioneers really at that time.

Sharpless Now explain to a non-demographer why it's so important to have a measurable unit like that.

Johnson Well, the idea is that when you're running a program, you want to have, as an evaluator, some sense of what you are achieving. And there are a variety of measures of that. One can, simply, look at how many acceptors of a method it can get. But we get into questions of is this an acceptor of *that* method or are they new acceptors of family planning altogether? So, are you a new method acceptor or are you a new family planning acceptor? Are you a new acceptor at this particular clinic? Have you gone somewhere else? Questions of that sort. How do you get at that sort of information if you're trying to assess what is being done at a clinic in terms of its program

outputs? You also have the question that you can probably get a gross national level of an indicator of the prevalence of use; the number of users relative to some denominator of women, through a survey; and you might even be able to break it down by method. So if you have 20 percent prevalence, you might be able to say that, okay, of that twenty, that 8 percent is pills, 6 percent is IUDs and the rest is a mix of sterilizations and condoms and so forth. But you can't break that down from a survey into different geographical subunits or management subunits, administrative subunits because you don't have enough cases to do it. So it's important to have something which programmatic program people can look at as well and say, Okay, this rural area over there is not doing very well. Let's put more inputs into that area. Or, What's going on? Because so many sterilizations going on in this area and so few of other things. Is there some misreporting, or are there some other things going on there? So you need other methods of measurement. So you need the service statistics; these measure new acceptors and women visiting clinics. But you also need—and you need surveys—but you also need something that tries to equate users through dispensed-to-users data to try to put this information together to make sense of the outputs that you're getting in particular areas. And this was something we were grappling with. And the CYP indicator, which has been criticized all along, nonetheless is widely used because it does give some quite good information. We can do continuation studies on IUDs to say the Copper T provides, on average, three and a half years of protection and that the Norplant provides on average 3.8 or 4.0 or something like that. Doesn't

mean it necessarily ends; a particular woman may use it for a much longer time, or she may expel it immediately. But it gives us some common denominator for evaluation and is a very useful tool and one has to recognize its faults, but one has to recognize that it is very useful and therefore gets used. And that, by itself, is an indicator of success, in a way, I think.

Sharpless Let me ask you one question before we close today. It's almost at the end of our time. How much did you go out and ask the questions?

Johnson I did not go out to ask the women because my knowledge of Urdu was extremely limited. I was taking lessons from an Urdu teacher. My information was second and third hand. I would talk to the interviewers. I would talk to the—

Sharpless Were they mainly female?

Johnson The interviewers had to be female in that society.

Sharpless Okay.

Johnson The supervisors were not necessarily female but you had to have interaction—the interactions had to be between females. And this came up again later, when I was working in Bangladesh. I would talk to the counselors in the clinics. They had family planning counselors in Pakistan. I would talk to them. I would talk to our female Western person who spoke Hindi and would go in and she could also do IUD insertions and things like that, which of course, I was not involved in. And she would talk to the women. So I felt I was getting a pretty good handle on what was going on; often a lot better than many of the Pakistanis who were not asking those

questions. So, yes, I couldn't ask directly, but I could ask indirectly.

Sharpless And you could trust the data that you got?

Johnson Yeah, I think so. When we combined the data we were getting from the surveys with what we were hearing and anecdotal information and putting this together with information we were getting by looking at what was the dispensed users information from the clinics, I think we got a fair idea, and we quickly became suspicious about the high levels of reported use in Pakistan and things of that sort. So I think one could get a reasonable view. But no one man, or woman, can get a complete view of any of those things. It's such a rich field that one's working with.

Sharpless Well, let's go. Our lunch partner is here, and so we'll stop and pick it up in the morning.

Johnson Sounds good to me.

Sharpless Thank you, Dr. Johnson.

end Interview 1

Interview 2

Sharpless All right. It is June 9, 2004. My name is Rebecca Sharpless and this is the second oral history interview with Dr. Timothy Johnson. We are in the Centers for Disease Control facility on Chamblee-Tucker Road in Atlanta and this is part of the Population Pioneers. Thank you, Dr. Johnson. I thought we had a great first outing yesterday.

Johnson I enjoyed it.

Sharpless And when we left yesterday, you were at the University of Michigan. You'd finished your Ph.D. and were teaching and administering and researching and doing all sorts of things. And you mentioned to me off the tape the funding streams were beginning to shift there in the 1970s.

Johnson Right. As I mentioned in yesterday's interview, there had been funding from groups such as the Ford Foundation and, to some extent, by AID for population programs if they were established during the sixties, and Michigan was one of those programs. The understanding always was that the universities would eventually take over this funding and this was a clear understanding with, for example, Dean Myron Wegman, the dean of the School of Public Health in Michigan—at Michigan. But when the time came for this transfer, there was a very severe economic crunch in the state of Michigan; and Michigan, of course, was a state university and it simply found itself not in a position to absorb everything you would like to, of increased costs and taking on new programs. This was having repercussions in other universities as well, but I was at Michigan. It became fairly clear that we were not going to get the level of support for the Department of Population

Planning that was needed to continue it, as it had been before, or to grow it. Because, by this point, we had a very active teaching program with two doctoral programs, a Doctor of Public Health and a Ph.D. and actually three different masters' programs in population planning, all within the context of the entire School of Public Health. Because of these problems and some other things that were going on, the School of Public Health decided to somewhat downgrade the population planning activities in the School of Public Health. This actually involved disestablishing the department, which was a very painful process. But what it meant, among other things, was that even though there was a research center continuing and a teaching program would continue, the teaching program would be under other departments, but having, obviously, population titles on the courses and that untenured faculty, such as I was, would then have to compete for tenure in departments which were not our departments and into which we had not been hired. And the handwriting was very clearly on the wall at that point and I began to think about where else I would go. And in my case, I had never really intended to go into university teaching; I had always thought of myself as going into the field. I had a real interest in field applications of the research and of the training that I had in evaluation. So I began to look for other activities. But I also had come to quite enjoy teaching, at the same time, and so I really wasn't quite sure which way I was going to go. But I began to look around at other possibilities once it became clear, and I believe it was, even though the announcement that we would probably be disestablished actually occurred in 1977, I believe that the action did not

formally take place until the following year and it was phased in fairly gradually. Anyhow, I decided I should be looking elsewhere and I did, and I was doing some consulting. I was also doing some other work within the university in the Center for Political Studies and with the Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies. But I began to look elsewhere and one of the places I looked at was one of my old haunts, which had been East Pakistan, by then it was Bangladesh. I'd been there several times since my last time with the Ford Foundation there, which was—1968 was when I left Pakistan.

Sharpless What kinds of things had you been doing?

Johnson Well, I had been working earlier, simply from my Ford Foundation position, in working with one of the groups, the University of California group that was working there as the East Pakistan Research and Evaluation Center for Population Activities—working with them and with the East Pakistan government partly on surveys of people's attitudes and practices and partly looking at reporting procedures, service statistics and how they could be improved. So I had some interest in those aspects. As I mentioned, I had been back a couple of times. I decided to accept a position funded—it was under the World Bank, working with the government of Pakistan. I was funded, actually, by, at least in part by Canadian CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency. I took a one-year position as a sort of personal sabbatical from the University of Michigan to work with the government of Bangladesh with their population planning unit—population evaluation unit, I believe it was called—I don't remember the exact name. So I joined them as the only foreigner in that particular group, but I also did

work closely with other parts of the government dealing with family planning, including a few other overseas advisors. And during that period, I actually worked informally quite a lot with the UNFPA as well.

Sharpless Were you based in Dhaka?

Johnson I was based in Dhaka. I'd actually traveled previously, a fair amount, in the country and during that year, I actually didn't do that much traveling in the country. I end up being mainly stationed in Dhaka but with occasional field trips out. But I worked as an advisor to this unit particularly with the survey work that they were trying to do. Small surveys around the country and trying to increase their own capacity to do things, but also to try to provide information which the government needed for planning its population program. And this was the period when the Bangladesh program was just beginning to take off. It had not done as well, seemingly, in the pre-independence war period as West Pakistan. In fact it probably was doing about as well, but neither was doing well. And then there was a period of transition when the country really had other concerns than population planning in the immediate aftermath of that war.

Sharpless State building sorts of things?

Johnson Pardon me?

Sharpless Becoming a nation?

Johnson Yes, exactly. Nation building and so forth. And there was a lot of political turmoil during that period and it was not long before that that Sheikh Mujibur-Rahman had been assassinated. He was the prime minister and considered as the father of the country and so forth. But population

activities were ongoing and they were actually already picking up by the time I got there. I came out in '74, but then I again came out in '78 and then in January of '79, I came and spent that whole year until December in Bangladesh. During that period, contraceptive prevalence, which had been well under 10 percent, was rising and probably was rising rather rapidly. It was hard to know at any point just what the rate was, but by the time I left it seemed to be already close to 14 or 15 percent and as you're probably aware, continued upward from that point onward. And there was a need to know what was going on. Who was accepting? What were they accepting? What were the changes happening in attitudes? And this included even things like abortion. Under what circumstances was menstrual regulation, as they called it, was this acceptable to people? And to the surprise of most people, it was acceptable under a number of circumstances to the majority of the population of women there. But family planning was what we were really dealing with there and trying to find out what more could be done in introducing effective contraception. And this was what I was working with as well. On the side, I did a little bit of work with others on the national reporting systems for contraceptive acceptance, family planning acceptance, and things of that sort as well. And it was, I think, a useful year and I then returned to Michigan to see what was happening and whether there was a future for me there and fairly quickly concluded that it might be better for me to be moving on. But I was not moving in a precipitous manner. I had a position there. So long as I could secure funding, I could continue there, but it would be untenured. So I was doing other things. I continued to teach at

the School of Public Health, to do some other research, both in that school and the Center for Political Studies. And was meanwhile looking for other possibilities, and CDC was the one I was most attracted to at that point. Already, actually, early in '82—I didn't join CDC until September of '83—but in early '82, I'd been approached by CDC. They tracked me down while I was traveling and said, Are you interested in applying for this position? And I was. But it took a long time to get things moving because this was the Reagan first term and there was a freeze on government hiring and this delayed things very considerably. And even though I came down and gave a talk at CDC and it was obvious they were interested, it was also obvious that it would take a while—and it took longer than, I think, any of us thought it would. But eventually I did join CDC and I was very glad to do so.

Sharpless Let me ask you one more question about the time in Bangladesh and other things. Just looking over your vitae, I see you did work for various entities: for the World Bank, for the Pop Council, for others. How much does the work vary according to who is funding it?

Johnson Well, it does vary, but it's more oriented to the particular task that was there. I don't know whether my vitae mentioned it, but I did some work with a colleague at Michigan, George Simmons, Professor George Simmons, with what was, by then, know as ESCAP, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The economic factor was very important to them—what was going on in Asia. And so we had a small amount of funding to do some rather specific analyses for them and write some—essentially their position papers, working documents which they could use for their internal

use on population and how it interacted with other aspects of development. And we did some of that.

Sharpless So, different funders would request different outcomes?

Johnson Right, they would, yes. The APHA [American Public Health Association] was the one which was actually had both a domestic and international focus. And this one was something where I was simply asked to be the technical—I think they call it provide technical guidance—for a manual that they were developing on service statistics and the sorts of forms that could be used worldwide, and it involved both looking at the logic of evaluation but also looking at what had been done in different countries, what sorts of forms did seem to provide the sorts of information that were needed by program managers. I would hardly mention that one except that I found out years later that this was, in fact, used a lot by, among others, by the international wing of the Census Bureau. I was quite surprised to find that. But this piece of work that I had been involved with, with some other colleagues at APHA, had received quite widespread attention in countries in Africa and Asia, which was, of course, gratifying. But the Population Council, that was a particular task I was asked—I don't even remember the year, I think it was '74, though—to go back to Pakistan and to look at various institutions and what the potential was for using those as sources to be funded to provide certain types of training in population-related aspects. And I knew some of these institutions before, not necessarily well, but I did my analysis and presented a report to the Population Council and it was part of a wider set of activities that they were engaged in and it was used by them for that and that

was an interesting task as well. I also got dragged in, for example, because of my work in Malaysia, which I had mentioned in the previous interview. I was also asked by the World Bank to go and participate in an assignment in Singapore—which, of course, is right next door—where Singapore was concerned that the decline in fertility that they had been achieving was stalling and that they had wanted this to continue. And basically, the little team that I was a part of did some analyses and I was involved more with the demographic analysis of this, and basically assured the country that they were really well on the track of continuing. It was more a matter of what happened with their age structures that led to this apparent cessation of the decline in fertility and indeed that—we said, Look, you're going to very soon be at a situation where you're going to be right at replacement fertility and might even go below it. And they were somewhat reassured by that and that is exactly what happened. We said, This will happen within ten years—and it did. At that point, the government became concerned that now we—what's happening with the labor that we need and so forth and then they began to reverse some of their policies actually. But on that same particular assignment, I was actually asked to go back into Malaysia and join the team that was doing the same thing in Malaysia; it was a different set of problems. But, because I knew Malaysia, to go back—would I please go and do this? And I was very glad to do it, so I did, yes.

Sharpless Thank you for answering that. Okay, so CDC approached you and you worked out a mutually agreeable—

Johnson Yes. It was a position I did have to compete for; I believe there were quite a

number of applicants for it. But I was the person who got the assignment to join CDC. And I joined CDC in September of 1983 and I had actually met a few of the colleagues before. The division director, Roger Rochat, was someone I had met at meetings earlier and had had some interactions with. Leo Morris, who was the head of the program evaluation branch at that time, was someone who I had known at Michigan already. He was older than I was but was finishing his doctorate somewhat later than I was and by happenstance, I actually ended up being on his doctoral committee just for the final stages of that when one of his other professors had to drop out. That is not why I got the job, (Sharpless laughs) but that is a historical footnote. But I respected, very much, the work that was being done by CDC. I'd first come across it when I was in Pakistan when a few CDC people had come through on their way to other places. I remember a visit by Dr. Nicholas Wright, who was from CDC, on his way to take up an assignment in Sri Lanka. I remember the discussions we had about population and how that related to other aspects of public health. And I respected the work that was being done by CDC as being somewhat independent of other parts of the government, being very much evidence driven, science driven. And I really liked that because they also did have an appreciation of aspects beyond the purely medical aspects of fertility control and things of this sort, that they had programmatic concerns. And I was aware and, already when I was teaching at Michigan I would use as reading materials for some of my students, materials developed at CDC in the research that they were doing, both domestically in the greater Atlanta area,

and to a lesser extent, some of the international work. There wasn't as much of the international work yet from them, but it was beginning to develop. And so I saw this as a group that I would be honored to join and so I was very pleased when the offer came and I did join them at that point.

Sharpless What was going on in FPED [Family Planning Evaluation Division] when you joined?

Johnson Well, the group was very active and had a strong international focus. It was actually undergoing some mini crises imposed by certain external forces and we'd had, for example, in the division an abortion surveillance activity and I believe it was actually called the abortion surveillance branch. And that had just been disestablished before I arrived.

Sharpless When Cates had gone over to—

Johnson Yes, exactly. He went over to, I believe, to FHI [Family Health International] at that point. He said he'd—

Sharpless He actually went over to HIV, but—

Johnson Okay, but he eventually went to—

Sharpless Right, he did.

Johnson But there were a number of things there. David Grimes moved on. And there were others. And clearly, these things were sending messages which were somewhat inhibitory to some of the work that was being done.

Sharpless As you say, this was Reagan One.

Johnson Yes, it was, yeah. But we kept on soldiering on. But there were other things that happened. The international activities of the group, of that particular group, well, the—the center was the FPED group but it was the program

evaluation branch—had been involved at the center and branch level with survey activity since 1975 but also with contraceptive logistics activities since 1975. So I was coming in eight years later. But I was aware of some of this work and the survey work we were already actively engaged in before I came—we, the CDC. Again, in trying to find out what was going on in some of these countries through these contraceptive prevalence surveys as they were then. Not only what were the levels of prevalence by different methods, but what was motivating people and how could that help the program planners? So that was already going on quite actively. I mentioned previously that Rei Ravenholt was pushing contraceptive use worldwide very actively but he basically felt that all we need to do is get the goods out there and people will accept them. CDC was saying, We're not sure that's quite accurate. We need to look at the evidence. Find out more about what really is needed out there. And CDC already began in 1975 also to try to be more systematic, to encourage AID to be more systematic in approaching what the contraceptive logistics requirements were for getting goods out, and also what the forecasting requirements were; what was needed out there. And began to develop fairly simple procedures to assist with these forecasting tasks. And even before I came, CDC was beginning to work with what came to be known as the contraceptive procurement tables [CPTs], in which the idea was, don't just look at demographic estimation procedures because there were already, in those days, computerized procedures which simply looked at, Okay, here's the current fertility level. We'd like to get down to this point at some future time. What will this require? So the Pop Council

had already developed some quite nice schemes to get at this, and Don Bogue at Chicago had done so with his ProjTarg, I believe it was called, schemes. And you know, I was quite familiar with those because we'd used them at Michigan and we had students write things on the merits of different approaches. But the CDC approach was, That's all fine and good and will tell you something about what is needed in the longer term, but we also need to know what is the capacity of the system to get these commodities out, so let's look at that. Let's look at the dispensed-to-users information that we can derive from service statistics, and from information which is collected at the service delivery points on acceptors and on continuation of use and things like that. And let's use this information to—as the base for our estimates at future needs. And so CDC was using that approach. It was not ignoring the other, but it was saying, That is not enough. We really also need to know what's going on on the ground. And AID bought into this.

Sharpless Was AID still supplying commodities at this–

Johnson It very much was and it still is now. It's a much smaller proportion now but it was getting very much into the commodities business and providing a variety of methods. Buying—it was buying in bulk different oral contraceptives, both combination pills and progestin only pills. And it was getting the IUDs and at that point, when I started, it was the Lippes Loops and there were the four sizes, the A, B, C, and D Lippes Loops, and getting these widely distributed. Things were gradually moving to the copper, different types of copper IUDs and eventually they'd more or less settled on the Copper T variants of that, which are what is most widely used now. But

we were looking at these things, not only by method but also by major brand differences so that with IUDs, we would look at different types of IUDs and what the demand really was. The injectables were getting into the picture then. At that point, AID was not providing injectables. This got into a number of political issues there, but other donors were internationally providing Depo-Provera. And eventually AID did provide these as well. But we got into this and I never expected—I'd always been interested in logistics and I remember even when I was back in Pittsburgh doing some estimates with Sam Wishik of a country of which I'd yet not visited, namely Pakistan. He asked me to make some estimates of how we would go about looking at the distribution of contraceptives and what would be the space requirements for warehousing and what should go in the field, which meant finding out what were the dimensions of these little things and making estimates. And I remember being fascinated by that.

Sharpless And shelf-life.

Johnson Shelf-life is very much a factor, yes. And all of these things played into it. And so I was interested in it, but it wasn't really the main area I was involved in, but it did interest me. When I got here, I thought I'd be more involved in the survey aspects but, as it turned out, there seemed to be a greater need for me with this other aspect and we had some very excellent field logisticians here. One person who was known in the field, had been in it for ages, was a gentleman named Jack Graves. He's now long retired; he's in his mid-seventies now. But he was well-known in this field for his very practical approaches to what had to be done in the field. And we had some other very

good folks there. They tended not to be as aware of these other approaches to forecasting and so forth. But anyway, I got to go on into this activity and eventually was asked to head up that activity, even though there were others who, I would say, were probably technically more competent than I was at that time. AID quickly realized, and we realized, that we could not keep up with the demand from all the countries where AID was active and that we could not grow because of the restrictions on federal hiring and so forth. And we were actually involved with helping AID to identify what would be needed in a contracting agency, in a collaborating agency with AID, what are now called cooperating agencies, to undertake this task; a group that could grow and could do things which we could not do because we were based in Atlanta and they needed people who could actually work with them in Washington. Eventually, the Family Planning Logistics Management RFA [request for application] was put up and John Snow Incorporated won the first contract. And they have, in fact, been the successful bidders ever since in the different variants of that that have gone on since then. But already by 1986-87, while we were continuing this activity and, to a very small extent, still do, it was clear that someone else was going to be taking the bulk of this. And so we were very much involved with training the JSI people and going with them on joint exercises overseas and I personally went with a number of JSI people to different countries and worked with them; teaching them in the field, hands-on, what was needed. Eventually, they were off and running on their own very effectively and going into areas beyond what we had done, strictly kept to contraceptives. They began to, eventually, get into other

commodities as well and still do that. And they are far larger than we ever were, and they do a very good job.

Sharpless Let me turn the tape.

Johnson Right.

Tape 1, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Sharpless Okay, so you didn't exactly hand the activity off to JSI. What did your relationship with JSI become?

Johnson Right. It was a fairly collegial one. A little awkward in some senses because as a private contractor, collaborating agency, they, of course, were needing to generate funds for their activities from AID and from the missions and so forth whereas our relationship was one where we as a government agency ourselves simply had an intergovernmental agreement. It used to be something called a RSSA, a reimbursable agreement, which was renewed annually with AID where we'd agree with them on what the work plan would be, more or less, for the following year and we would be reimbursed for those activities by AID. John Snow did not have that. They had a, basically, a five-year agreement, which would then be re-bid to undertake certain activities, a number derivable in terms of the countries they would work in, and so forth. I think we always had a pretty good working relationship, but there was sometimes a tendency to feel that, you know, they were trying to undermine us and so forth by some people. I personally didn't feel that.

Sharpless Now, were they contracting with manufacturers, or was AID doing that?

Johnson No, AID. But John Snow was very much involved with the negotiations for

those activities and JSI made itself very knowledgeable about what the manufacturers' specifications were and what AID's requirements were, and helped to write those requirements and was very much involved with the staff at AID that wERE in charge of contraceptive logistics management. And we worked closely with that staff. And there were very excellent people involved there. Carl Hemmer was one figure; you may have come across his name along the way. But he was instrumental in trying to systematize this whole process of procurement and forecasting and there were others on his staff who also were very good, very dedicated people in those areas. And of course they worked with JSI as well. And we even shared the monitor from AID who we had—was also the monitor for JSI. So there were natural linkages. And we used to have annual meetings with JSI. We would get their logistics people together with our logistics people, usually in the Washington area, but once it was down here—just north of here in the mountains, actually—to really discuss latest developments and where things were moving, what research findings there were that we could bring to bear on the work that we were doing and so forth. And I think that on the whole, it was a very good collegial relationship that we had with them.

Sharpless How important were the findings of the prevalence surveys in determining logistical work?

Johnson Right. They were always important as background to what was going on, not only our surveys but the surveys which were coming out from DHS [Demographic and Health Survey] and before that from the World Fertility Surveys and sometimes from countries themselves because some countries

were establishing the capacity to do surveys themselves. And one always needed to look at those surveys to tell something about what was happening with, not only the levels of contraceptive practice, but trends among the methods and what did this tell us about the popularity, the changing popularity of different methods and how did that play into what our projections would be into the future. So it was always very important. It was, however, more important to some individuals and the work that they did, than it was to others. Some tended to simply say, Okay, that's there. That tells us something is going on, but what we really need to do is simply look at what was distributed to users by dispensed-to-users records, and use those records as a basis for it and also look at the shipping records of what was received and what were we finding when we went into the field. You'd mentioned earlier that products expire and that there are shelf-life issues. We'd say, Let's look at how much product do we have that's already sitting on the shelves. How many months of supply do we have there? So looking only at the programmatic aspects of it—others of us would be looking more closely at the surveys as well to help us determine what was going on. But all of us looked at things such as how many, well, what sorts of patterns of stock outs of commodities, different commodities were going on. How long had the country been stocked out, if it had been stocked out?

Sharpless What do you mean by "stocked out"?

Johnson Ah, when a product is not available at all, and this can be because of poor estimation of what was required or that the money wasn't there to get the things in or the goods didn't come out in time. It can be for a lot of reasons,

but one of the worst things you can do is to have a program where you've created demand and then you can't meet the needed supply, and you've got to have products for it. And JSI actually has a slogan: No product, no program. And it's basically something which all of us have preached one way or another but not as an official slogan. But you've got to have the products there and it's no good generating demand if you can't provide the goods. So, we had another expression ourselves and it was attributed to Jack Graves, who I mentioned: "You can't sell from an empty wagon." You've got to have product.

Sharpless What were some of the greatest challenges in that work?

Johnson Well, there were challenges for AID in securing the funding and persuading Congress that this was something that was terribly important. There were challenges when AID could not do this itself in trying to work with other potential donors and, most notably, with UNFPA, in picking up the slack for that. There are always challenges in working in these countries and getting good statistics and in trying to develop statistics in countries where periodically there would be political upheavals and assassinations and things of this sort. So there are always lots of challenges in these matters but one could always get some information which was relevant to what was going on. But those were the sorts of challenges that we dealt with.

Sharpless Looking at your vitae again, it looked like you were doing a lot of work in Africa, particularly in Nigeria. Is that—

Johnson Yes, true.

Sharpless Could you talk a little bit about that?

Johnson Sure. One of the ironies of my life was that when I was hired by CDC, I was hired, at least in part, because of my supposed Asian expertise. I had worked in a lot of Asian countries at that point, both living in them and doing consulting of various sorts there and some research there. And my Africa work, before I came to CDC, was extremely limited. After I came to CDC, my first twenty-five overseas trips were all to Africa. Yes, I had twenty-five before I got back to Asia. But then, I did start getting back to Asia again. Well, my first one was to Nigeria, which was just getting off the ground at that point. And so, almost as soon as I got here, I went on the first major consulting trip by CDC with some others to Nigeria. We'd been asked in by the population officer, a lady named Keys McManus in Nigeria, to come in and do an assessment. There had been, already, some work going on in Nigeria. There was a good training institute, for example, in the second city, in Ibadan, which was training practitioners in family planning. There was already an active family planning association operating in relatively few states, but it was operating fairly actively in a few of those states. And there was beginning to be some interest by some states in having the government get involved. There was one individual in the government who was very interested in promoting family planning and pushing it at that point. And Keys McManus worked closely with that individual, Dr. A. B. Sulaiman, at that point. And we came in and we were asked to go out to some of the selected states where it looked as though there was potential for organized public sector family planning. And we went out and we went to several states in both the southwest, which was the most active part already, and also in

the north of the country, which is generally considered to be less receptive to family planning and that, in fact, is true, but where there did seem to be some interest in getting some activities mounted. And partly that was a matter of parity; you didn't want to go into just one part of the country, particularly in a country such as Nigeria, which is very divided along ethnic and religious lines. We did our job doing some forecasting for what could be started in some of those areas and wrote a quite extensive consultants report. We were asked, in very short order, to come back, and I came back and I ended up being "Mr. Nigeria," in a sense, for this task. So I went back early the next year with a different colleague and then with various colleagues over the years and at that point I was going about four times a year. I've now done twenty-three visits to Nigeria, but only about three of those have been since 1994. But we got actively involved in all states. At one point I could say I'd been in every state in Nigeria doing some family planning related work. That was when they reached twenty-two states in the country.

Sharpless Was it primarily logistics or—?

Johnson Yes, primarily. But we were trying to use other information that was available. There was some limited survey information from different sources, small studies that were being done. The first real national survey was actually not until 1990, but there was some other work that was going on and there were some smaller surveillance activities going on in the country. And we used whatever information we could get. But basically we were trying to set up logistics systems in these countries and we trained the family planning coordinators and deputy coordinators from every state. They would go back

into these states to work with them and try to set up the family planning programs. And the government was backing this fairly well, but it wasn't putting many of its own resources in. It was paying the workers but it was not putting much in the way of infrastructural support in. By 1986—I believe it was late '86, but certainly into 1987—there was a recognition that more was needed and the government lacked the capacity by itself to do all these things and basically almost a quasi-governmental organization was set up, almost a parastatal—what was it called?—FHS, Family Health Services project was set up and this was—it had close links with the government but was funded by AID and was headquartered in Lagos but it was involved with setting up regional warehouses and having regional coordinators and monitors of what was going on. And we kept being brought back in to work with the forecasting and I was usually in charge of this. So, in addition to doing national forecasts, we were actually making the determinations of the contraceptive requirements for each state using the information that was being collected from the states on dispensed-to-user data. Now I need to jump back to 1983-84. One of the things that we did was we devised a system for collecting this data from all the literally thousands of clinics in the country. And it started out with a clinic form, which we adapted from the Planned Parenthood Federation forms. We'd adapted it so it was suitable for helping the clinic workers determine what method was most appropriate to a given woman who came into the clinic. So that's some general biomedical stuff, some demographic stuff. But it also had some information which was just useful on things like religion, but definitely things like number of

children that the woman had and so forth. And this became the form that was then used to abstract daily activity records and these were then aggregated and sent up the line and they were monthly forms. And these came in and the primary form—it initially came into AID before FHS was set up and they would collect it. We always made sure a separate state report went to the federal ministry. But the ministry wasn't set up yet for the staff to handle this information. It took them a while to get to that point. But by then, FHS was set up and they began to collect this information and this became the basis for estimating what the numbers of new acceptors was and what the commodities dispensed were to users from all of these states. And we also knew how many clinics there were, which were supposedly active in the state, how many were actually reporting by month. It was quite a massive undertaking and it was working. Then, however, along came the military government. There kept being military governments, but this was a particularly virulent, vicious military government that came along and culminated with the Sani Abacha period. But basically, AID withdrew a lot of its family planning activities; it had to. It could not work with the government. It continued to work with the private sector; the social marketing program, which remained active and AID continued to supply that private sector group with contraceptives for these heavily subsidized social marketing activities, which was very good. And that kept going throughout the military period—military regime there. But the government sector pretty much collapsed from the AID standpoint. Now, there were already in the pipeline set to be shipped, large quantities of contraceptives,

and AID allowed those to go forward, even newer ones. They were already programmed to come in; those came in. And they came into the country and they went out to the states and some of them got used but some of them, because there was really no infrastructure there, nothing to support what was going on with the distribution, got badly misused. Lots of products expired on the shelves and the program really largely collapsed.

Sharpless How far were you into the work at this point? Were you doing this a lot?

Johnson Well, yeah, the program was moving very nicely. It was still at a very low level in terms of contraceptive prevalence; it was still under 10 percent probably of modern contraceptive prevalence at that point. But it was rising rapidly.

Sharpless What's it like to sit here and watch your work slide back?

Johnson Terrible, terrible. But I'd also seen that in Pakistan and it does happen; one knows it happens. It happened, to a certain extent, in Sierra Leone. But this is the nature of working in unstable parts of the world. One takes great satisfaction in the things which are going well and recognizes that one has no control over certain other things. But it's part of the job. But as I said, there was part of the social marketing program was going on and UNFPA was doing what it could, but it really didn't have the sorts of people who could go into the field and monitor what was going on. The government wasn't able to really pay its workers to do the things that are necessary. Much of the training that we have done gradually, you know, people moved on in their jobs and things like that. I was gratified when I finally went back in about 1999 or 2000 to see that some of the old hands are still there trying to do,

bless their hearts, doing their best to keep things going under these very difficult circumstances. And I will just interject that I've learned to have tremendous respect for field workers. People like the nurses who work under these circumstances, the field workers, the family planning coordinators who soldier on even when they're not getting paid. They just do their best for the women they're working with and I have tremendous admiration for people like that. But, of course, they're working under terrible hardships and the program is just collapsing around them.

Sharpless So what was CDC's role when USAID had to pull out?

Johnson Basically we had to pull out too. We really had no continuing role at that point. Obviously, we kept watching what was going on. And we were glad when the point came, eventually, where we could go back in with AID and with JSI. And I should say that in that period, when CDC was working very actively in Nigeria, we had a lot of JSI involvement as well and I did a number of trips in tandem with several people there. Brice Atkinson was one of those old troopers who really got into the field and had done so in a number of countries before, and he and I worked together very well, and others came in as well during that period but then, you know, all of us were basically out of the picture. AID had to get out. It couldn't do the other things that were going on. On those FHS programs, there's a lot of work, a lot of attention to demand creation activities as well, to educational activities and these also, basically, collapsed. And those were done in conjunction with groups like Johns Hopkins. And there were other groups that you may have heard of; they were involved. It all collapsed and it was very sad. But things

have begun to reverse themselves again. They are picking up again. The social marketing has continued to be active. But the government is still not able and has not yet recovered to the point of where it was in 1994, but it is making some progress back. But that's sad.

Sharpless So, twenty-four trips to Africa. A lot of them to Nigeria. Where else—?

(both talking)

Johnson Twenty-three that I've actually done to Nigeria. Next is the twenty-fourth.

Sharpless Where else were you working in Africa?

Johnson Okay. It was twenty-three to Nigeria. I also did—as I mentioned, I'd thought I'd be more involved with surveys. The one survey I did get involved in was in Swaziland. I had actually been to Swaziland in '85 on a logistics related task and that's a tiny little country in southern Africa, nestled in between South Africa and Mozambique. But I'd done some logistics work there, but then I was asked to co-lead with another demographer colleague from here, Wick Warren. I was asked to work with the Swaziland National Survey. They'd never had a national survey there and so we mounted the first national survey in Swaziland, which was extremely interesting, and I loved the country. It was a nice little country. But they've been ravaged by AIDS, I'm afraid, since then. But AIDS was just beginning, at that time, to show its ugly head. But we were aware of that and we did have some questions in the questionnaire about people's knowledge of AIDS and what precautions they were taking. Obviously their precautions were not sufficient. So I was involved with Swaziland and ended up, in the end, going a total of six trips there. I've—among other countries where I've worked multiple times—I've

been several times to Kenya, several times to Ethiopia, several times to Sierra Leone. Once each to places like Ghana and, let's see, to Gambia a couple of times. Ivory Coast. I tend not to go to French-speaking countries unless it's some particular task where the language factor is not important. So I have actually been to Senegal and I have actually been to Ivory Coast, but other than that, I've not been to francophone Africa. I've been in Zimbabwe, I've been in Madagascar, Zambia. Where else? Well, Ethiopia I mentioned. Egypt too, but I don't think of that really as being part of Africa, but it is.

Sharpless It's much more the Middle East.

Johnson Yes, exactly.

Sharpless Explain to me how you decided where you were going.

Johnson All right. After the request is generated by the country or, more often, by the USAID officer who's in charge of population, health, and nutrition, and they want assistance. And they would ask us. They have a particular task, or AID in Washington would say, We'd like to do an assessment in this country. Can you participate in this as a team assessment or, if it's a more narrow task, can you have one of your people go out, or two of your people go out and do an assessment? And that will often generate additional tasks and will result in us being asked to come back to work in a particular place. Sometimes someone knows an individual here who they worked with effectively elsewhere and say, Look, we think you, X, would be able to help us with a particular problem that we've got here. I've been sent, on a couple of occasions, on troubleshooting missions when there's been a problem in a country and have

been asked to go out, perhaps with someone else, to do a little investigation of what's going on. Can we get a handle on this problem and see where we need to go from this? So, there's that element as well. But it can come from a number of sources. For our survey work, for example, as a group, we've worked a lot in Latin America and this is partly because we got in there fairly early. They know us. They know the work that we do and they're comfortable working with us so they keep asking us to come back. There's that element as well. Nigeria, we got known for the work that we were doing there and kept being asked to come back.

Sharpless Interesting. Let me change the tape.

Tape 1 ends; tape 2, side 1, begins.

Sharpless This is the second tape of the second interview with Dr. Timothy Johnson on June 9. Okay. Anything—well, let me ask. You mentioned that when you were working in Swaziland that HIV-AIDS was just beginning to come up. What impact has that had on your work?

Johnson In some ways, an enormous impact. We already realized, back in—certainly by 1984 that this was going to have an impact one way or another on what we were doing—that—particularly with regard to efforts to prevent the spread of the infection—that this was going to have implications for condom use and condom programming. We, of course, did not know just what those implications would be in terms of what that would do to the acceptability of these methods and the likelihood that people would use those as compared with, say, changes in other patterns of sexual behavior and so forth. But it was quite clear this would have an impact and I think

fairly early on it was also clear that if there were impacts on condoms, in terms of increasing their use, that this had implications for other contraceptives, where resources might be scarce for obtaining contraceptives. One of the early factors in this was that we had to deal with the question that AID had to buy American when it came to contraceptives. The US manufactured condoms are substantially more expensive than those manufactured particularly in the Far East. So, this really meant that for AID, they were beginning to look around. They still do provide condoms, but they were looking around for other donors who could pick up those other contraceptives, and could there be some shifting that maybe AID would pick up more of the other contraceptives? And there was always discussion, background discussion, of that sort of aspect. The impact has really been at a number of levels and it's very hard to know exactly how these things have played out against each other. One of the big picture items in this is that, what does HIV say to people about the need for family planning? Where I would argue that it does not diminish the need for child spacing and so forth and perhaps one could argue, even, that it increases it. On the other hand, if you're in a country which is facing depopulation, there is a very strong argument to be made psychologically: why are we dealing with family planning? And one can understand that and it makes the case that much harder to make that family planning still is an important thing in its own right for the purpose of the benefits of the health of the mothers and the children at both ends of the spacing spectrum. And it makes it very much harder to fight that battle politically.

Sharpless I hadn't really thought about that because you have both birth and death count in the same source.

Johnson Yes, yeah. But at the same time, one also forgets that people do realize that they don't necessarily—if they have HIV—they don't necessarily want to have children who have HIV or they don't want to be dying while the children are young and that could increase it as well. It's even, perhaps, had other things that are harder to get a handle on. Where infection is seen as a risk, do people want to use IUDs, which might actually, they might think, would increase the possibility of women getting infections, simply from the irritation and so forth? And how is this perceived by people, and could that be one of the factors that has led to IUDs not taking off as much in recent years as they had in earlier periods? And it's very hard to really get a handle on that.

Sharpless Because barrier methods would protect against both conception and HIV.

Johnson Right, right. But one of the problems is that barrier methods tend to be more expensive in terms of the product cost per year of protection, say. And in terms of protection, you get much more protection, clearly, by things like male and female sterilization and then, after that by IUDs and then you get to the things like the injectables and then pills and condoms and so forth. But I'm sure that the HIV has driven much of the rapid increase in condom use. On the other hand, condom use remains, worldwide, quite low. When you look at worldwide prevalence, it really is not that high. It's growing rapidly, but it really is not that high and very few countries have that as a major component of their family planning programs or a major contributor

to reducing fertility rates. But HIV has another major effect and that is—has to do with the whole question of resources and where do resources go. HIV has a strong political constituency which pushes both internationally and domestically here, for attention to this, and clearly it's a problem. I mean, it clearly is something which does need to be dealt with, but it also means that it's harder to fight for funding for other activities which are in competition with HIV funds. President Bush has pushed his big program, the PEPFAR [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief] program for providing—for combating AIDS overseas. You don't see any such push on the family planning side and in fact you see, in real terms, a decrease in the money that is available for these other activities, and that is very much a matter of concern to the population community as well. So, yes, I mean, it has an enormous impact and it's one that none of us foresaw really even twenty years ago, even though by then we knew about HIV. But certainly thirty, forty years ago when I was first getting into this field, that did not seem to be the sort of thing that we'd be combating now in the early twenty-first century.

Sharpless Interesting. Well, in talking about the political maneuverings, for lack of a better term, what about things like the Mexico City Policy?

Johnson Yes. Well, this was, again, under the Reagan years. I still recall quite vividly seeing the first draft before it had come out as the Mexico City Declaration, and I literally thought this was a sort of joke. And I thought it was a caricature of something, caricaturing the position of the administration at that point. And then I found out, no, this was James Buckley's actual first

draft, which we had been asked to comment on seriously. And I was appalled, because it seemed to me to so much imply a misrepresentation of what was being done by the people who were concerned with population issues. So, it was something that was rather frightening to us immediately. And it did get modified from that very first draft, but nonetheless, it's had a very chilling effect ever since, that and other things which have grown out of it. You may be familiar with the Tiahrt amendment, which really says some of the same things that one has to be very sure that funding is clearly—well, none of it can be used, obviously, for abortions. You also must not be helping groups that are in any way engaged in abortion and their definition in being engaged in abortion is one which most of us simply do not buy, do not think is at all accurate. It's had a chilling effect, not only on our work with AID but other activities. We were quite actively involved in China, which basically was one of those which was taken off our map for working in because of the real and alleged activities with regard to abortion and to coerced sterilization and things of that sort. This has been, I think, very deleterious to the whole field and has had, probably, the opposite consequences of what was intended. But nonetheless, we're saddled with it and we have to deal with it and, I don't want to say get around it, but we have to simply work with the situation as we find it, to be as effective as we can with our reproductive health work.

Sharpless How do you deal with the pendulum swings? You know, it was in during Reagan and Bush. Then it went out during Clinton. Now it came back in with Bush 2.

Johnson Clinton immediately signed, deleted that, and then Bush put it right back in.

Sharpless So, how do you deal with that?

Johnson Well, you hunker down and wait and watch. When you get an administration which supports that sort of position and then you try to become more active when the pendulum begins to swing back. And, you know, I'm not supposed to go into politics here, but obviously I'm hoping that there will be a swing back of this pendulum. That—it's not a one-way street that we're dealing with. One tries to also, in one's own life, in one's communications with other partners, with the UNFPA and so forth, say, Look, we understand what you're trying to do and you understand our position here but, you know, we recognize the common objectives here that we have, basically to improve the lot of women and children and so forth. And we'll do what we can do and you do what we cannot do. It's that sort of approach I think that some of us take. And we do the things which we can do, such as surveys and we try to take whatever leeway we can in what we can legitimately study where we're told we're not supposed to look at so-and-so. Then, okay, we won't explicitly look at it. And if we're not supposed to be dealing with abortions but we can look at post-abortion care, then we look at the post-abortion care aspects of it and so forth. And we've, of course, never done abortion; we've never been involved with that. But we have studied it just as that surveillance branch never did abortions, it collected the data which one needs if one is to be a policymaker or a manager. And so we try to stay alive, but we stay somewhat under the radar, if we can, but ready to come up.

Sharpless To take you back, we talked about your work in Africa and then after you

went to Africa, you said you got to go back to Asia.

Johnson Yes. Yeah, a few times. Yes, I was asked—well, I went back a couple of times. The last time I'd been in Bangladesh, for example, had been in 1992—well, no, that's not true—that was, I guess, one of my first ones when I was going back to Asia, but that's not true either because I was already, by '88 or '89, getting back into Asia a little bit. And we were asked to go back into Pakistan before what came to be known as the Pressler Amendment, which stopped us from going to Pakistan because of the nuclear activities between them and India at that point. But we did go out, and we worked with the program there on trying to determine what the contraceptive requirements were, both public sector and private. And trying still, really—we were trying to get AID back into activities there and, as I said, that basically fizzled after a while. In Nepal, we—again, Nepal was one [I visited in 1968], first as a tourist when I was living in Pakistan. But I first went there for an actual little task in the early seventies when the University of Michigan was among those that was involved with population activities with AID funding. And I went back a couple of times for logistics related tasks and got out into the field, seeing, you know, what one could do to get contraceptives out in a country where transport, it can be a real problem, particularly when you get up to the mountains. However, the mountains are not really where the people are. The people are actually more in the lowland areas and the transport is not as bad; it was thirty years ago, but now you can get around fairly well in the country. But we were dealing with some of the logistics aspects there and I was also involved with a training of family planning staff

whose work related to contraceptive logistics. And this was done—the last time was actually done in conjunction, maybe the last two times, in conjunction with JSI, which had a physical presence in the country there. Had an actual office there. Bangladesh, I got back there in '92 and this was partly for participating in a seminar where a number of things were being looked at having to do with the reporting systems of the country and how one dealt within the greatly increased demand for contraceptives. With AID, they really couldn't do it all by themselves and they needed to be dealing with other donors, with the World Bank and with UNFPA and so forth. So there were aspects of that. In 1999, I went back to Bangladesh, really because there was—this was a troubleshooting visit, actually. There were some—different estimates had been made of what the contraceptive needs were and what it came down to was a difference between an academic exercise that had been done by a very capable statistical demographer, of what was needed, using some of these computerized programs, versus and what was being said by those who were working in the field and were saying, That's not any representation of reality, of what's really going on and of what is possible. We need to be looking at what is really being dispensed to users, and what the forces are that affect that and so forth. And I was asked to come in to see if I could, in a sense, mediate the battle. And I think I was successful. What basically happened was I understood where the academic was coming from and I was able to work very effectively with him, give him a place at the table, when we had the big national seminar on what the forecasts were. I was at the head table with the head of AID and with the

secretary of family planning for the country and things like that. But I got this gentleman [a respectful hearing for his work]. But I'd already done the homework on what was needed and what were reasonable—basic compromises on what the requirements were. But my presentation also made a strong pitch for the additional information we needed to refine these estimates in the coming years. And it was well-received by all sides and so that was one of my—one moment I was very pleased with, the way that that one all came out.

Sharpless So you add diplomacy to your list of accomplishments.

Johnson Yeah, in a way, in a way. One of the nice things was that the lady from AID who was heading the office there was a woman who's now the head of the office of population at AID, Margaret Neuse. I'd met her before; I'd met her in Zambia, actually. I don't know if Zambia was on my list of countries or not but, anyway, I met her out there in an earlier stage. But that went quite well and the following year, I didn't actually go back to Bangladesh, but they asked me to review the new estimates that came up and to get the feedback that way and so that was what happened there. India—I did go back to India with a JSI colleague when AID was trying to establish a—in a sense, a demonstration project. I'm not sure you really call it a demonstration project when it's for the largest state in India, which has a population—probably now 170 or more million—but had at that time nearly 140 million population. That was UP, Uttar Pradesh. And AID was trying to get this ten-year program launched for improving contraceptive services and increasing contraceptive use in a, up to then, fairly low use state, in a very large and

important state. And I spent a month there at that point participating in that report. And it did lead to a number of activities there. It never became quite the project that was anticipated in terms of its magnitude but a lot was done nonetheless. That was an interesting one.

Sharpless You've worked all over those parts of the world. You've worked in Hindu countries, Muslim countries, Buddhist countries; a variety of ethnic groups.

Johnson I think I've worked in thirty-nine different countries; maybe it's forty now. I don't know.

Sharpless How do you brief yourself when you're getting ready to go, say, to Swaziland for the first time?

Johnson All right. I usually try to get, from whatever source I can, any information I can. So, with Swaziland, there wasn't very much that was available but AID had a little bit of information and there was a little mission there and so they were able to get some information. And I had been in southern Africa before so I had some slight acquaintance with that. I've always, I guess, been interested in things like geography and history and so forth. I knew a little bit about some of those aspects and I knew a little bit about the local culture and what the kingdom of Swaziland was and things like that. But basically, one reads up whatever briefings one can get and that includes, if one can get a CIA-type report, and various kinds of public records. One will use those things to try and get some sense of it. But then, one goes in knowing one doesn't really know a lot. And one talks to people there. Talks to external advisors, talks to local academics and others there, and one travels around. One tries to begin to get a feeling for what is going on and what are the

problems and often there are very knowledgeable people there, people who have worked for years in the family planning associations and things like that, who can give one a lot of insights on the politics and the culture and how these affect what is going on. And one knows one's never going to get it exactly right, but nor is anyone else. One does the best one can and one tries to add to a store of knowledge and insights. And one has to go in with some humility that one knows one isn't going in as the expert. One knows one has some expertise in certain areas and this can be drawn on. So maybe I can use a bit of experience I gained in Zimbabwe when I go into Swaziland, but it may also not be very applicable. But there may be other things I can bring in. And there are certain skills I do have. I'm good with numbers and sometimes one can just ask some key questions about the relationship between numerators and denominators and things of this sort, or get information on vital rates and what do these tell us and so forth. But, you know, it often goes into somewhat uncharted territory and, on that subject, you know, an uncharted territory for me—fifteen years ago, I would've thought that at most about going to any country in the Soviet Union, as it still was then—maybe after I retire, I might pay a visit there or something like that. However, in 1993 already, I was approached about going to that part of the world. I didn't actually go until 1994 for my first trip to the former Soviet Union. After that, I made a number of trips to countries in the former Soviet Union and to my interest—well, the first one I went to was Kazakhstan. And interesting enough, I had completely forgotten it, but I wasn't even the first member of my family who had been

there. My youngest sister had been out there earlier. She was living in England, but she'd been out there, and my brother had been out there for something else. But this happens. But anyway, I went to Kazakhstan—on that trip—to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and I was feverishly studying stuff. Now, already I'd been told earlier that I might be part of a team that was going out and started getting my hands on anything I could. I knew something about the—what we knew about the demographics of the Soviet Union; I'd read stuff for that—I'm a fairly voracious reader—and I had some ideas about that. I'd never lived there. And I went out and I began to find things out, of course. Later, I went to Russia a couple of times. I was involved in a team that was sent out to Russia. It was an AID-supported team with some AID members, but some others as well. And I was sent to provide a bit of demographic expertise, but in the end, it also served to help launch our first Russia survey. But I also knew something about programs in general, though I'd not worked in the former Soviet Union. And so I was part of a team that was going out there and were learning together and meeting people in the field together. Splitting up, too, but getting into places which, were then, basically sort of off the map. I'd heard of Yekaterinburg and Sverdlovsk. Didn't realize they were the same thing. But I did know that that is where Czar Nicholas and his family had been murdered. This was in the Ural Mountains. I never thought I'd get to the Ural Mountains, but I at least knew where they were and things like that. But here I was and it was very interesting. And, again, one tries to understand what is going on; differences in the way that records are kept and what their purposes are. The

differences in the ways that services are provided. The differences in the way the service providers relate to the women. I'm tempted to say the victims, but (Sharpless laughs) to the women in these situations. One learns and tries to also—one has to also be aware of, of course, the political realities, that AID was very interested because the U.S. government was into helping the former Soviet Union at that point. And there were other things going on. I guess the Gore-Chernomyrdin activities were not yet going on; that was a bit later. But that there were currents of efforts to help the former Soviet Union republics. And we were helping to do that. What we, in fact, did was we did look at what was happening and how things were shifting from the public sector; everything was the public sector before that, to the private sector and what the implications of that might be for women who might not have very much in the way of resources to buy contraceptives. We felt one had to continue the public sector for what could not be picked up by the private sector. So we just left the question. But we were also interested in seeing what information was available, nationally or subnationally, on people's attitudes to family planning, to abortion, to health services and so forth. And we, through these activities, and through other work that we'd already done in places like the Czech Republic at an earlier stage and Romania, we were able to use this as leverage to accept offers to go in and work with surveys. So we did a survey, a bit different from most of our national surveys. But we did a survey in Russia which was done at two different time periods, but not nationally. It was done in each of three oblasts. The oblast is a political administrative unit below the level of a republic. And the area around

Yekaterinburg was one of those areas. Another place, Ivanovo, was another one. And then, as a sort of control, where there weren't going to be as active involvements from external sources, we took another place called Perm as the control, if you will. And a survey was done there, which we provided technical assistance for, and then two or three years later, we came back and provided technical assistance for another survey to see what change had happened in those places and whether the changes there differed from what had happened in the control, in Perm.

Sharpless Let me turn the tape.

Tape 2, side 1, ends; side 2 begins.

Johnson In Ukraine, we also were looking at the—we started by looking at contraceptive services and the quality of information on such things as the numbers of IUD insertions and the number of abortions of different types. And we also got, then, into the question of privatization and what would happen, if there were increased privatization, where would it work most effectively? And what were the needs of the service providers in those places? But we also got into the question of surveys and we ended up, then, providing technical assistance for the 1999 Ukraine survey. My role in that was fairly modest. I was involved in showing them what we'd done in other places on my initial visit out there with two CDC colleagues, and at a later stage, was a little bit involved in selecting who would be the group that we'd be working with in the country that would have the technical expertise to actually do the interviewing, because we don't do the interviewing ourselves. We have to do it through institutions within the country. So I was somewhat

involved in identifying the right resource for that as well. And I went back for a couple of additional logistics visits to Ukraine as well.

Sharpless I was going to ask you what the balance has been of your work between logistics and surveys.

Johnson Mine has been primarily on the contraceptive logistics side, but—

Sharpless It—has stayed that way?

Johnson Yes. But, both because of my position as the director of our PASA [Participating Agency Service Agreement], which we can come back to if you wish, and because of my own quite broad interest in all of these areas, including the epidemiological investigations and so forth, I have never shied away from getting somewhat into these other areas and, where appropriate, trying to quietly promote them. So that has also happened. But no, my activities have primarily been on the logistics side, and we used to have a quite large logistics unit here. In fact, it was larger than our survey activities and gradually that diminished once JSI became much more active and was able to grow in the logistics field. We have become just a tiny, tiny group. In fact, it's two people, in fact it's only two part-time people, and I'm one of the part-time people working with that, and another one is Susanna Binzen, who is one of our staff who works out of Hartford, Connecticut. And she is the other remaining one who is directly involved with some logistics work. And our work right now, actually, is oriented somewhat to the issue we've already alluded to, having to do with worldwide contraceptive security, meaning that, what are the needs and how do we secure the contraceptives to meet those needs from different sources, which is a grave concern to AID

and to other donors. And we're trying to contribute to that effort, in part, by bridging what one can get from logistics and related commodities information with what we can get out of surveys. So, we're actually trying to develop tools, which abstract information from surveys which will help determine what the contraceptive needs are and help guide some of this contraceptive security work as well. So we're engaged in that and that's really the only thing that Susanna and I are doing other than, I still go back—I recently went, for example, to Nigeria—sometimes to do a bit of forecasting or other logistics work. But no, my work is mainly on logistics. But our group as a whole, surveys are the single largest activity and there are other activities, particularly the refugee work and to some extent in epidemiology.

Sharpless How did your work change when you became section chief?

Johnson When I became section chief, it was almost a situation where I already, to some extent, was practically in that capacity. What had happened was that, under the old branch before we reorganized, Leo Morris was the branch chief. There was a gentleman named Mark Oberle, a physician, who was his deputy. He took a position elsewhere and I became the acting deputy at that time or assistant branch chief; I never had a formal title, but I became the "acting," for that. And I also became the acting director of the agreement with AID. This changed about the same time that these other organizational changes were taking place where I became the section chief for the program services and evaluation section.

Sharpless And then became the Division of Reproductive Health about the same time.

Johnson Still the same division but there was a renaming of branches and PEB

[Program Evaluation Branch] became the Behavioral Epidemiology and Demographic Research Branch, which Leo headed, and I became the section chief of this other activity in another, larger branch. But, pretty much at the same time, I was asked to become the director of this agreement with AID and we sort of flipped with me and Leo, where he became the assistant or associate director for that activity and I became the PASA director, even though I had a boss, a branch chief, and he was himself a branch chief. Organizationally, it didn't make much sense! But we worked with it. And we did the best we could. And I have—fortunately, I've always had a very good working relationship with Leo, so that's never been an issue. But it was a little awkward, sometimes, for me getting access to the director of the—our particular division. And that became awkward and led to some later changes which we'll get back to. But at that point I had a fairly large section which was doing mainly logistics work, but was gradually phasing down and was getting a little bit into other activities. And this is actually where our work in refugee activities began to come in where one of my staff in particular had a particular interest in that area and felt that we ought to be doing more in refugee or conflict-affected areas. And he began to promote this and I somewhat grudgingly went along with this. It wasn't that I didn't see the importance of it; it's just that I knew that AID, at that point, had mixed feelings about us getting into that area. They felt it was more a State Department area. But gradually, there were people at AID who also felt that maybe they should be more involved with this and gradually this actually developed as a small, separate unit. But meanwhile, the section was

diminishing in size. But I was also the PASA director.

Now, the thing that shifted, and we had come from the RSSA, which was an annual reimbursable agreement, had become this participating agency services agreement, which is a five-year agreement which we've had extended, which we've had continued or renewed several times now. I've been the director of it and I'm hoping, fairly soon, to turn that over to someone else. But that has not happened at this point. But in that capacity, I, of course, continued to work very closely with the survey people and also with the people working with refugee work and with epidemiology, because we have also had always a smaller epidemiology component. Right now, its function—it still does some epidemiological training overseas on occasion, but usually only a couple of times a year and very occasionally get called in for particular epidemiological investigations, but not very many of those. But we do have quite active collaboration with WHO [World Health Organization] and with the reproductive health activities in WHO, and one of our staff, Kate Curtis, is a leader on that activity and we have some others who work part-time on that as well and that's also been supported by AID, I'm thankful to say, yes.

Sharpless Okay. You want to talk a little bit about the reorganization of the—

Johnson Right. I mentioned the reorganization that occurred around 1990, which resulted in my becoming the PASA director and heading that section. There was another fairly major reorganization about three years ago and the ostensible reason was to try to reduce the number of branches in the division of reproductive health. The smallest branch was the behavioral

epidemiology and demographic research branch, which I was not, at that point, a member of. Except that, because my group was diminishing in size, there'd been pretty much an agreement that that was left of my section would actually join with that group. But at the same time, this other concurrent activity was going on and basically, almost by fiat, it was announced that the branch would be disestablished and would be incorporated in some new structures. Really only one branch remained intact as it had before, but the one that, of course, lost out most was our branch, which was eventually combined with the pregnancy and infant health branch, as it was called before, and became part of a new branch of maternal and infant health, which is where we are now. We are the DRPET [Demographic Research and Program Evaluation Team]. We're the demographic research and evaluation team within that. My own role is one-half in that; in the organizational chart, I'm one-half in that activity and one half in the office of the director of the division and that's for being in charge of the PASA, which spans all branches—all four branches in the division. So that's where I am. It's administratively not the most comfortable sort of arrangement but, you know, we make it work and that's where we are.

Sharpless How much—how much of an impact have the different directors had on your work? Does it matter who's the director?

Johnson It matters a great deal. When Roger Rochat was in charge or even before that when it was Carl Tyler, we had tremendous support for the international activities. It's subsequently gradually diminished. There was always interest by whoever was the director; they always wanted to maintain an international

presence and they recognized that that was important. But it was less important to some than to others. Some, I think it was reflecting their own interests, to some extent I'm sure reflecting the fact that CDC's basic mandate is a domestic mandate. But others thinking that, you know, our international work is a terribly important component. So when Jim Marks, who I believe you've met, became our director again of our division, he was very supportive of that work and he remained very supportive as the director of the Center and that helped us. Then we had another director, and I'm not going to be naming names here, who really was less involved, less interested in the international work. The present situation is a little bit difficult because we've had for the last nearly two years an acting director who does not see himself as the next director; he does not particularly want that position. He's been supportive of our activities all along, but we're really waiting for the other shoe to drop to get a new director and to see whether that director is as involved, interested, in the international work. And we, of course, hope that it will be someone like that. And one gets the feeling that stuff won't be happening for quite a while. There's some waiting to see what happens in the November elections to see what the next steps would be. But the couple of times that there's been an attempt to recruit a new director, it has not actually happened. But it is important. It helps us set the psychological framework, in a way, for whatever remains constant under the organizational structure.

Sharpless What have we not talked about that we need to talk about?

Johnson I think we probably have touched on the main things. There's always the

question of where does the population field go from here and where do we go and I don't know the answers. In the short term, you know, we're all waiting to see what does happen in these elections and how does that play out in the next four years and what funding will be available. That's always a concern. There is a concern in CDC that DHHS [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services] is running the show more than it had previously with regard to how CDC operates and we don't know how much that is a temporary phenomenon related to the current administration and the current head of DHHS, and how much this is a permanent change in the way that CDC operates. We just don't know that. As far as the field of population is concerned, we already talked about HIV-AIDS and how that may be affecting things. My own feeling is that population should remain an important concern. Obviously the nature of the problem changes over time but we do need to be working with groups who have become part of our natural alliances, if you will. I think that any groups that are concerned with women's issues, with health issues are among our natural allies. I also think that people in development, more generally, whether that is in education or in environmental capacities and so forth, that those things are also natural alliances that the population community needs to be working with.

Sharpless How much impact did the Cairo Conference have on your work?

Johnson It had—definitely had impact, but partly it was itself, a reflection of other things that were already going on. The problem, to me, is that what it did was it somewhat codified some important principles, but also things which can be used against population in a way. I think it was very important to

recognize that population is part of a broader question of development and that we are dealing with issues of women's rights and human rights and women's health more broadly. And there are just general developmental issues that we're dealing with as well. What it has tended to do, though, is to largely submerge the population part of that equation, which, in the view of—well, with myself and a good many others, remains an important, a very important factor which needs to be addressed, both in concert with those aspects but also independently. And I think that this has had a somewhat negative effect in that sense, that it's given ammunition to those who would like to deemphasize population. But I think that that has been an unfortunate by-product of what was generally a good trend. But it is a matter of concern and I think it's notable that here we are, ten years later, and there isn't another decade conference. You know, there will be other meetings discussing "ten years after Cairo" and so forth, but we don't have another world population conference and I think, perhaps, that's a pity.

Sharpless All right. Any closing statements?

Johnson Closing statements. No, other than to say that I do consider this to be a continuing important area and I know there are a lot of good people still working on this whole issue of population and I'm quite sure they will be going on doing that. Looking back to where we've been—and it's been a very interesting journey and a very important one—but looking forward to where we may be going and it may be a bit clouded. But I think that many good things have already happened and I think we have to build on those in whatever the future holds.

Sharpless All right. Thank you so much for your time, Dr. Johnson. It's been my pleasure.

Johnson It's been my pleasure.

end Interview 2